

**A History of The Bologna Consortial (Cooperative) Studies Program  
on the Occasion of its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
2015-16**

The Bologna program was founded in 1964 by Professor Mark Musa of Indiana University, the first U.S. study abroad program established at the University of Bologna. Merle Simmons, of the Department of Spanish in that era who collaborated at that same time with other language faculty to create programs in Madrid, Hamburg and Strasbourg, recalled that “the final administrative decisions to establish and finance a program in Bologna with Professor Musa as its first director in 1965 were part of negotiations that took place between IU and Professor Musa at a time when the latter was receiving some attractive offers from other universities who were seeking to recruit him.” (*Retrospective*, p. 22; Also see *Musa’s letter to the University of Bologna dated November 13, 1964 and the Rector’s response on February 17, 1965*). Professor Musa had professional contacts at the University of Bologna, including the distinguished director of the *Istituto di Filologia Moderna*, Professor Ezio Raimondi. Raimondi, a leading figure in the field of Italian literature, served as the official sponsor of the program and one of its key teachers and advisors until 1980.

*Program Structure*

The administrative structure of the program, from the beginning until 2003, involved a rotating faculty director and a local assistant/secretary who helped the students to settle in to life in Bologna. The first assistant was Giulia Quagliano, hired by Mark Musa. The two-person team, located at a center at Largo Trombetti 3, very near the university, helped students find housing which ranged from apartments (with one another or with Italians) to *pensioni*, with an occasional student seeking a host family. In 1967-68 IU faculty director Mariquita Norris commented in her mid-year report about the trials and tribulations the students faced when seeking housing—including one student who rented an apartment that only had a wood stove for heating and no bathtub or shower which was pretty rugged even for Italy in those days.

The program included a six-week preparation course that started in September involving 90 teaching hours on literature, history, art and language which the faculty director planned for the subsequent year since it had to be ready when the next group of students arrived. Given that the majority of the directors were professors of Italian, they were well suited to determine the content of these preparation courses. Their frustrations often stemmed from the fact that the faculty at the University of Bologna may not have had experience teaching U.S. students so they weren’t aware of their knowledge gaps. Or, as in the case of the language courses, how much grammar or syntax the students had internalized in previous courses.

The director also arranged to have faculty from the University of Bologna teach a handful of courses to the U.S. students so that they could more easily adapt to the direct-enrollment full-year courses at the University which entailed a monographic and a general component. Even back in the earliest years, the program courses focused on politics, history, art, language and literature, the same curricular emphasis which continued over the decades for program courses. However, the contact hours of those special courses have increased considerably over time (from as low as 20 to the current high of 40), reflecting expectations by U.S. institutions as compared to their European counterparts which traditionally offered fewer contact hours. The direct enrollment courses began later in the fall, usually in mid-November. The earliest directors met with the students on a monthly basis to track their progress. Students took oral exams at the end of the year which ran from 30 to 50 minutes each. Cultural excursions to other sites in Italy were also included as part of the program design, allowing directors and staff to select areas of interest for their groups while also providing bonding experiences for them.

Directors passed along their institutional memory and guidance for all aspects of program life through regular reports that were sent to Indiana University—first to the associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences with responsibility for the academic year programs abroad and after 1972, to the Director of the Office of Overseas Study. Walter T. K. Nugent held both of those positions sequentially, from 1967 to

1976. The first four faculty directors in Bologna—Mark Musa, Richard Newton, Mariquita Noris and Louis Kibler had academic appointments at Indiana University.

### *Political Unrest*

In 1968 Dean Nugent was scheduled to visit IU programs in Europe for the first time. He reorganized his schedule to visit Bologna longer than expected since word had reached him from Professor Noris that a few of the program students were joining their fellow Italian students for sit-ins at the university which resulted in the authorities threatening to terminate them and cancel the IU program. The late 1960's were a turbulent time in Europe and administrators, by nature, were viewed by students with suspicion and distrust. Correspondence from that time showed deep tensions between the students and the directors, between the program and the officials at the University of Bologna and even among the program students themselves who were not in agreement with one another over the reasons for the demonstrations. Program liaison, Professor Raimondi, played a pivotal role during this time as did Dean Nugent. The latter's visit to Bologna in the spring of 1968 to talk the students out of demonstrating also coincided with the tragic news of the assassination of Martin Luther King. Nugent conjectured that his own relative youth (33 years old), coupled with his obvious grief over the news about Martin Luther King, resulted in the students being more amenable to his advice that they cease their political activities or "for everyone to get thrown out of the university (and out of Italy, since their visas were contingent on their enrollment)." He also argued that "they ought to think not only of themselves but of future groups who would never have a Bologna experience if this group continued to strike." They subsequently agreed to stay away from the sit-ins. (*Retrospective*, pp. 33-35).

Although Indiana University was the sole institution administering the program in its first few years, students who participated came from different universities. For example, during 1968-69, Louis Kibler had 11 students from IU, University of Colorado, University of Maryland, Middlebury College, The University of Washington, Wells College and Vanderbilt. He set the ground rules right from the start, prohibiting political demonstrations and illegal drug use. His own memories of that year (see *Resident Director Testimonials*) review some of the minor challenges he and the students faced. Of deeper concerns were the Prague Spring, which cast a shadow across Europe earlier that year, as well as U.S. involvement in Vietnam which put Americans in an unfavorable light with rumors circulating about whether American programs were engaged in intelligence gathering.

### *Nicoletta Bonafè*

A new program secretary/assistant was hired by Professor Kibler in February of 1969 after Giulia Quagliano got married and moved to Milan. Nicoletta Bonafè, who had formal training in accounting, was hired and stayed with the program up through 2000 although by then her title had been changed to assistant director. Louis Rossi, the director from the University of Wisconsin in 1975-76 warmly commented that "Nicoletta continues to hold center stage, continually engaged in listening to students' confidences and conversation, and mildly interjecting corrections of their Italian. Our best Italian language teacher. So far all the problems have been solved in the outer office, and I come out only to smile my approval."

Many directors depended on Nicoletta throughout the three decades she was on the staff although, as was the case in many study abroad programs, a strong local assistant could at times seem to overshadow the titular head of the program, a U.S. academic who often found him or herself unable to address a wide range of student questions. In his final report of 1976-77 Walter Robert complimented her as "efficient, dependable, loyal and honest" but "due to the lack of permanence in the directorship, she is of course the power not only behind, but before the throne." While he respected her, he mentioned that the program would gain immeasurably by getting a permanent director since he admitted that his own preparation for the position, coupled with his being unfamiliar with Italian academic institutions, made him entirely dependent on Nicoletta throughout the year as was the case for other directors for the next two decades. In 1985 Peter Bondanella, from Indiana University, wrote that "I cannot imagine what my year might have been like without her." A decade later, James Hay, from the University of Illinois, said he felt

lucky in having had such an “able, responsible, motivated, efficient, generous and witty assistant” although she relied very much on habit and the way things had “always been done.”

Despite Professor Robert’s recommendation that the program would benefit from a permanent director, rotating faculty directors continued up through 2002-03 but Nicoletta left BCSP in 2000 after a restructuring of the program. The consortium decided that a study abroad program like BCSP in the 21<sup>st</sup> century needed a full-time coordinator with a university degree, computer skills and bilingual ability in order for it to evolve to a new level, compete with other programs and meet student expectations.

#### *Addition of University of Wisconsin*

In the same period in the late 1960’s, Professor Nugent invited the University of Wisconsin to join the IU program in Madrid, which already included Purdue as a consortium partner, and to also join the program in Bologna. In 1969-70 Silvano Garofalo was Wisconsin’s first director in Bologna out of ten Wisconsin Bologna directorships, including a second stint by Professor Garofalo in 1977-78. He also became the director of the study abroad office at the University of Wisconsin for a number of years in the 1990s. In his final report that first year, he commented that “for most of the students it was their first experience in a foreign land; therefore, they were prone to pass hasty judgments and make very serious mistakes. In this difficult period they have an urgent need to discuss their problems and their impressions of Bologna, and a dialogue with someone to whom they can confide is most helpful.” This statement underscores the critically important role the directors (and their spouses) played in supporting the students throughout the year with personal advice, social invitations, academic counseling, cultural information, etc.

#### *Graduate Fellowships*

As early as 1967 the program offered a graduate fellowship (which included a stipend and a fee remission) to a graduate of the University of Bologna to attend Indiana University. This offer continued as a gesture offered by Indiana University, even after adding institutions to the consortium, until 1995 when the University of Bologna requested that the program offer instead undergraduate exchange placements across the entire consortium. Many graduates from the University of Bologna stayed at Indiana University to earn a Ph.D. and then joined academic life in the U.S. or elsewhere. Among them are the renowned astronomer, Riccardo Giovanelli, award-winning professor at Cornell University, Italian scholar Francesca Parmeggiani at Fordham University and Italian scholar and current chair of French and Italian at Indiana University, Massimo Scalabrini, to name a few. The University of Wisconsin also offered occasional assistantships for graduate students from the University of Bologna. Raffaella Baccolini, currently a professor of English at the University of Bologna was the first to benefit from one of those assistantships, completing both her MA and Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin.

#### *Tight Bonds*

It appears that the Bologna group that has maintained the strongest bonds from their time in Italy was the 1970-71 group which was under the directorship of Professor Christopher Kleinhenz from the University of Wisconsin. They have stayed so connected that 13 out of the 16 participants attended a reunion in Bologna forty years later in 2010. And many of them will be on hand as well for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program. In providing a testimonial for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kleinhenz commented that, “Indeed, five years ago we met for a glorious reunion in Bologna, and it seemed as though the years melted away as we talked and walked and ate our way through *La Grassa*. And now again, as the program turns fifty, we cherish the opportunity to recognize the great and lasting impression that the city – its people, its places, its institutions, its food – made on us.” For their retrospective and a full description of that reunion, see: <http://news.ls.wisc.edu/global/looking-back-on-bologna-alma-mater-studiorum/>.

#### *Dark Days*

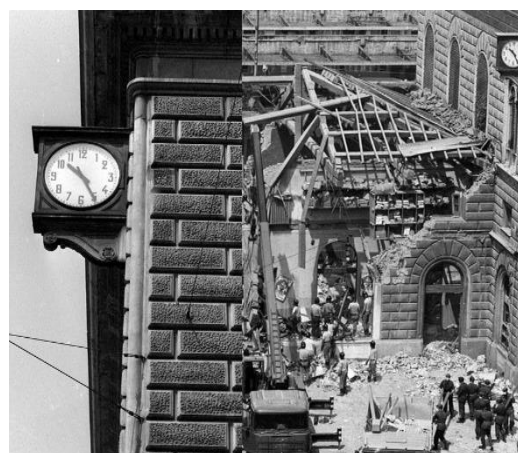
While we prefer to focus on the positive elements of the outcomes of this unique program, as evident in the previous paragraph, we should also be reminded that some directors often despaired of how superficial students could be due to a lack of academic seriousness or cultural awareness. In 1976-77 Italian-born IU Professor Walter Robert found that most of his students were looking for what he called

“snap courses,” showing little interest in cultural activities or other extra-curricular opportunities. He felt they were only in Italy to travel widely while not attending orientation classes designed to help them with their proficiency and academic preparation. Being a musician he used the analogy that “even a Toscanini cannot conduct an orchestra that isn’t there.” He was disappointed that his relationship with the students was marred by his strict attitude on attendance but inviting them to his home for social events seemed to soften their resentment.

He found it ironic that the student problems he was warned against (e.g., drug use, demonstrations, homesickness, etc.) never materialized, despite local political unrest which often resulted in cancelled classes. He described Italy as a country in very bad shape and on a “suicidal course” with its weak government, terrorist groups, demanding unions, etc. And he lamented that the program did not have a high profile within Bologna, which minimized the role and stature of the program director. He did not regret his year in Bologna but felt that the program needed to be made more academically viable.

Observant and articulate directors like Walter Roberts helped IU, as the managing institution, focus more attention on aspects of the program that could be improved in subsequent years, including student selection. And his hiring Daniela Calò as a language teacher that year ended up as a formidable legacy since she taught successfully for the program for the next few decades.

Professor Casagrande’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary testimonial in 2016 regarding his year in Bologna points out that upon his arrival by train from Rome in August of 1980, he was confronted by the shocking condition of the Bologna train station which had been bombed by terrorists just a few weeks before, killing 85 people and injuring more than 200. In many ways, it was the bleak culmination of a difficult period in Italy. When looking back at the history of the Bologna program, it is important to remember the complex political, social and economic context within which the U.S. students were living. Their education went far beyond the walls of the classroom. As we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program, it is sobering to see a new type of violent terrorism hit Europe again, emanating from different groups with novel destructive tactics.



*Bologna Train Station, August 1980*

### *Brighter Moments*

While Italy went through many challenging moments in the 1960’s, 1970’s and early 1980s, which reverberated in various ways in the lives of program students, there were always moments of unexpected cultural and intellectual opportunities that created memories of a lifetime. Edoardo Lebano, from Indiana University, was director in Bologna twice—1973-74 and 1978-79. Among the special moments he spent with his students, the one most mentioned by them in subsequent years is when they met the famous Italian author, Giorgio Bassani, invited by Lebano to visit the Indiana-Wisconsin Center to lecture and interact with program students. He even accompanied them as their guide on a special tour of Ferrara, where they visited his famous home which was memorialized in his masterpiece, *Il Giardino dei Finzi Contini*. For photos of those visits, see: <http://www.giorgiobassani.it/Lebano%20photos/indice.html>

In preparation for BCSP’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, Professor Lebano learned that Janis Russell, a student he encouraged to stay in Bologna rather than go on to France after the summer of 1973, started her singing career in Italy that year which led to a lifetime career as a nationally-renowned gospel singer. Many Bologna alums have had careers enriched by their experiences in Italy, including many who relocated there after graduation such as Laurel Grant Spani (1970-71), Michael Karris (1973-74), David Stockdale (1978-79), Susan Kazmierczak Muratori (1980-81), Anne Christopherson (1984-85), Lisa Marie

Gelhaus (1985-86), Mimma Silvestri (1986-87) and Margaret Russo (1997-98) to name a few. (See Alumni Career Paths in a separate section of Anniversary documents.)

#### *AACUPI and Inter-Institutional Cooperation*

Gino Casagrande, director from the University of Wisconsin in 1980-81 indicated that he regularly attended meetings of AACUPI, the American Association of College and University Programs in Italy, and had renewed the program's membership. The organization began in 1978 which means the Indiana-Wisconsin program was a member almost from the start:

[www.aacupi.org/30th\\_anniv\\_volume/pdf\\_files/02\\_aacupi\\_history\\_eng.pdf](http://www.aacupi.org/30th_anniv_volume/pdf_files/02_aacupi_history_eng.pdf). AACUPI has been very helpful to BCSP as well as other U.S. programs in Italy. Professor Casagrande indicated that their meetings were "very informative and quite professional." A few years later Peter Bondanella (1984-85) pointed out that legal and financial issues (as related to IVA) occupied every meeting of AACUPI that year and he offered to present those issues to the consortium, given their complexity, upon his return. The organization has been invaluable over the years in providing detailed information about government regulations that impact programs in Italy, particularly as those regulations have changed over time. AACUPI has also been a strong advocate against detrimental changes in Italian law that could have a negative impact on study abroad programs.

Professor Casagrande also mentioned the close collaboration the program had with the John Hopkins University program which permitted the IU-UW Bologna Program students to use their large library that at that time had 50,000 volumes in addition to periodicals, serials and microfilm. And he had made overtures to Dickinson College which also had a rotating director. Inter-institutional cooperation of this informal type, separate from the more formal AACUPI connections, has always characterized the program over the decades, providing collegial support among programs and allowing programs to speak with one voice when necessary.

Keeping up with visa issues and program legalization issues have challenged the program from the start. Managing directors of the program at Indiana University, in consultation with rotating faculty directors of the Bologna program, over the years have kept apprised of labor laws, even paying a labor counselor on retainer so that staff and faculty contracts, salaries, taxes, etc., were brought into line according to Italian law. James Hay, from the University of Illinois in 1995-96, spent considerable time in his final report explaining AACUPI instructions regarding the complex issues of taxes for teachers and program staff and how those needed to be withheld and paid directly to the government. Keeping up with such changes usually meant the budget had to expand to meet the cost of those increasing benefits.

Professor Dino Cervigni, from UNC in 1997-98, devoted his year to these legal issues and ensured that all BCSP instructors had legal contracts with appropriately withheld taxes, benefits, etc. He also regularized the program's legal relationship with the program assistant by securing a signed formal contract that was in compliance with current laws. In addition, he confirmed the program's legal status which had been updated in 1991 as a not-for-profit educational entity. He hired a new accountant/labor counselor office—Studio Natali—for the program, a relationship which has continued until the present.

Italian laws appeared arbitrary at times in terms of how different programs were perceived. BCSP's status as a multi-institution consortium has always made it particularly complex. During the last round a decade ago the program was deemed to be in legal compliance with Italy's position regarding not-for-profit educational entities as determined under a previous iteration of the Barile Law.

#### *Expanding the Consortium*

Indiana University and the University of Wisconsin carried the program into 1981, when two additional member institutions were brought in – Queens College and the University of Pennsylvania, which widened the base for student and faculty recruitment considerably, though students were still enrolled from schools across the nation. The expanded consortium, under the management of IU, became the Bologna Cooperative Studies Program (BCSP) in 1981. Queens College participated up through 1995-96, sending two directors during those years—Frank Rosengarten in 1981-82 and Herman Haller in 1986-

87. The University of Minnesota joined by 1983 and then other institutions also asked to join. By the mid-1990s, the consortium had grown to eight members with the addition of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, the University of Chicago and Northwestern University. Each of these member schools provided faculty resident directors in rotation until 2003, recruiting advanced students of Italian while IU continued to recruit additional students nationally. Since Italian departments are by nature quite small and since the program only accepted students with at least two years of college Italian, strengthening the recruitment base was a constant necessity.

The formal agreement between the University of Bologna and its consortium members has been renewed every five years since the inception of the program. It is important to note that the official program advisor/liaison with the University of Bologna always played a critical role at the time of renegotiating the agreement. Professor Pazzaglia took on this position in 1980 and according to Frank Rosengarten, director from Queens in 1982-83, was “our most important contact with the University.” He was responsible for the creation of the *Dipartimento di Italianistica* and also taught literature courses for the program for many decades, alongside his colleagues Vera Fortunati, Claudia Fanti, Paola Vecchi, Bruno Basile and Daniela Calò. He served as the program advisor/liaison until 1994.

Further expansion of the consortium occurred in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a number of private institutions sought a more formal relationship with the program in order to facilitate their students’ utilization of financial aid and their transfer of credit from Bologna. According to Richard E. Stryker, managing director of BCSP from 1989 – 2007, in the 40<sup>th</sup> *Anniversary Retrospective* (p. 147).

“In the early 2000’s, the consortium created a new category of Associate membership, and additional institutions joined the consortium: Columbia, Barnard, Cornell, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, Notre Dame, Northwestern (which changed its status from full membership) and then Michigan later on in 2011. These changes resulted in an enlarged consortium of seven full members and eight associate members. Full members provided faculty directors in rotation (up through 2003), paid a consortium fee per student, accepted exchange students from the University of Bologna and had voting rights. Associates did not provide directors, had their students register at Indiana University and had priority access for them over students recruited externally and they had a voice in the annual consortium meetings. The name was altered to the Indiana University Bologna Consortial Studies Program (still BCSP), not because we valued cooperation less but because the “cooperative” reference carried distinctive political overtones from an earlier era in Bologna’s colorful history, referring to the communist-based rural Cooperative movement.”

The inclusion of more members widened the pool for applicants but enrollments still ebbed and flowed over the subsequent years.

#### *Academic Challenges*

As has been the case in other direct-enrollment programs abroad, academic challenges, including advising, grading and course equivalency issues, have been a constant thread in the communications of resident directors in Bologna over the decades. From the very beginning a grading scale was devised, based on recommendations by those with knowledge of the U.S. and Italian academic systems, but it was ironic that professors at the University of Bologna often were more lenient with students with the least proficiency while being more demanding of those who could hold their own in Italian.

And knowing how to advise students into courses was a big challenge for one-year directors since they did not know the professors. Students had to rely on anecdotal comments on evaluations or what previous students had shared with the local assistant. At times it seemed that students were steered into courses known for high grading and little academic work. Thomas Connolly, from the University of Pennsylvania, director in 1982-83 commented that “advising is such a problem for a one-year director and

the university courses and teachers are so uneven and hard to fathom. Some teachers, who have been dealing with our students for a number of years now, are undoubtedly too lenient to them.”

It was not uncommon for students to question minimal enrollment expectations for full-time enrollment that were set by the consortium—24 credits in addition to the 6-credit pre-session. Students often pushed the directors to allow them to drop below that number, particularly when their own academic requirements were fewer. Marilyn Schneider, from the University of Minnesota in 1983-84, raised this issue in her final report, emphasizing student complaints about the requirements. Ron Martinez, resident director from the University of Minnesota in 1987-88, found himself under siege by students insisting on dropping courses at a time when they felt they were getting mixed messages between their home institution and consortium policies. And he vented his frustration at his role as director, describing the University of Bologna as a “Hydra, with a multiplication of entities that would have discomfited Ockham, and to gather all the information regarding courses, professors and so on would be a time-consuming affair.” Minimal enrollment arguments seemed to peak in the 1980’s which may mean that students’ expectations have changed over the years, particularly among “millennial students” who tend to follow rules without questioning authority.

Directors consulted lists of course equivalencies that students had received in previous years, particularly students enrolled through Indiana University where such lists were updated each year but, as the consortium grew, member institutions had differing approaches to equating courses to home school requirements which made the role of the resident director even more challenging. In 1985, David Rosen, representing the University of Wisconsin in Bologna at that time, wrote that “in my January report I complained that there was too little information available from BCSP schools about academic policy...I now realize that there is probably no way that the Resident Director can realistically expect to receive from the consortium members the information that would allow him/her to tell the students, “Yes, of course the Italian department at University X will (or will not) accept a course on Italian Political Parties (or Dialectology, or Filmologia, or any subject since [ even though] it’s taught in Italian) towards your Italian major.” Trying to track the expectations of 15 institutions, which was the case by the early 2000’s, was no easy task so it is not surprising that many of these academically-related issues were not cleared up until after 2003 when a permanent academic director replaced the rotating one-year director model in Bologna.

It would take a completely separate history of the program to do justice to all the observations and comments the directors made over the years with regard to the differences in the academic systems in Italy and in the U.S. Each report tried to capture the frustrations both they and the students experienced, trying to ‘get it right,’ that is, trying to match up student interests, preparation and ability in Italian with the right courses and professors.

Guiding and advising the faculty hired to teach BCSP courses has always required good communication skills to get the course content right as well as the best delivery system (since U.S. students were not used to a lecture-heavy model). Sometimes the professors themselves were pleased at the U.S. student approach. Julia Bondanella, from Indiana University in 1993-94, quoted art historian Vera Fortunati that the program students were more observant than her Italian students—“willing to look at the paintings without preconceived notions and ‘read’ them in interesting ways.” Professor Bondanella points out that professors in Italy are “less accountable than professors in American universities...occasionally they teach in a kind of stream of consciousness, without organizing separate lectures according to topics. Others are fine teachers, although they are probably much less concerned about the form than the substance.” There are numerous anecdotes in director reports about the behaviors of professors during oral exams, including those who nodded off to sleep or those who took smoking or coffee breaks in the middle of the exams. Over the years the students always had a mix of positive and negative reactions to their University of Bologna courses. Professor Bondanella agreed that it was impossible to predict the variation in types of exams (some too hard and some too easy) as were the differences in the grades.

In *Postcards from Italy*, a new twist on the annual newsletter in 1993-94 produced by the outgoing students, Carrie Flintoft, from Northwestern advised future students that “the best way to choose classes

at the beginning of the year is to go to class and then immediately talk to the professor. In my experience this year, I have found my relationships with professors almost more important than the coursework...If the professor recognizes constant effort, he/she should treat you accordingly.”

Academic life itself experienced major changes after universities in the European Union adopted the [Bologna Process](#) in 1999 which resulted in the introduction of semester-length courses. However, unlike many institutions in Europe, the University of Bologna maintained ‘long’ courses that used to last a year and, instead, crammed them into one semester. Therefore, BCSP students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century faced a very different type of academic schedule than their predecessors in the previous four decades. Eventually, shorter courses were introduced as well so students could combine ‘short’ and ‘long’ courses along with their BCSP semester-long courses.

While the humanities and social sciences attracted the majority of BCSP students, particularly literature, art history and history, there was a slow diversification of academic disciplines among program students. Issues related to contact hours and minimal course load were regularly discussed by the consortium at its annual meeting. And the orientation program had to be shortened from six-weeks to three when the Bologna Process moved up the start date of regular university courses from mid-November to early October. Given the changes in the curriculum that resulted from the Bologna Process, the program opened a spring-only semester option in 2001 which became quite popular. Semester-length programs have quickly replaced academic year programs as priorities for students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A fall-only option was implemented as a pilot but was problematic, given the few courses available, and was not reintroduced until 2011-12 when more fall-only courses became available, allowing students to return home in late December without missing classes.

#### *Housing Challenges*

While students lived in a variety of situations in the earliest years of the program, by the 1980’s the standard was to house them together, with other program students in apartments that the staff negotiated with landlords year after year. Dividing up the students into those apartments became the challenge of each newly arrived director. Professor Marilyn Schneider, director from the University of Minnesota in 1983-84, commented in her final report that “housing heads the list of “weak spots”...Students must know that they may not get their preferred apartment, may not get a private room, may live with roommates they later discover are not to their taste. Even though they will probably adjust and get on just fine, hindsight does not compensate for the sleepless and tearful nights of the whole month of September.” Students often complained that most of the program apartments were outside the city walls, thus necessitating their use of public transportation to come and go from the downtown area.

Some directors devised creative ways to parcel out the students and apartments—some used a lottery system, some brought students together for a pizza party at which time they met one another and chose roommates based on that social interaction, some just assigned students to places for a few weeks and then students were able to swap by request and some housed students temporarily in a *pensione* while the sorting out process could be determined. Various versions of these placement methods took place until programmatic changes were implemented in the early 2000’s.

One of the repeated complaints across the years from the students was due to the absence of telephones in the apartments. European billing systems in those days made late bills inevitable so there was a general fear on the part of the landlords (and the program assistant) that students would leave large unpaid international phone bills. The lack of phones often resulted in students pressuring the director and the assistant to allow them to receive or make calls from the office which interfered with program operations. Phones were eventually introduced into the apartments in 1990-91 but the complex bureaucracy surrounding them challenged all subsequent directors and staff. The telephone company required very large deposits, installation fees and required that the telephones be returned at the end of the year. It wasn’t until the advent of the ubiquitous cell phones that telephone problems were resolved



James Davis, director from the University of Pennsylvania in 1987-88, indicated in his final report that “what would make this year really worthwhile for students would be share apartments with Italian students. However, Nicoletta tells me that at present the problems in having all our students renting apartments with Italian students would be insurmountable.” Eventually, for a few years towards the end of the program apartment housing system in the late 1990s and early 2000’s, at least one room in each apartment was reserved for an Italian student in order to promote more cultural immersion among the students. But it wasn’t always easy for students to find an Italian student willing to rent a room from them. And they weren’t the easiest roommates, particularly when outnumbered by American students, but the system worked reasonably well. It was obvious that close friendships with Italian students enriched the lives of BCSP students. Tom Longo, a student from Georgetown University, in 1994-95 advised future participants that “all Italy has to offer is best enjoyed with friends—be they Italian or American. So never have any apprehension to take the initiative to make friends. I found Italian students to be very open and friendly, but often you must make the first move. The friendships you make in Italy will greatly enhance your experience—they did for me.”

Elissa Weaver, from the University of Chicago and Director in 1998-99, was happy to report that she and Nicoletta had secured a second family to provide another host family option since students occasionally preferred living with a family which was not a common custom in Bologna. She remarked that the continuing family from two previous years were “gems”. And she was the first director who managed to rent an apartment for the director which was closer to the downtown, inside the city walls, which was a welcome change. Most of her predecessors were not happy about the previous arrangement which involved bequeathing an apartment somewhat reluctantly from director to director. However, apartment turnover among subsequent directors happened more frequently.

As the city of Bologna became more welcoming to students from all over Europe participating in ERASMUS exchanges (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students), it became easier for students to secure apartments themselves on the open market. For a while the program convinced its network of landlords to continue to hold on to some of the apartments so they could be rented by program students but as students became more comfortable choosing their own places, the program ended its relationship with those landlords.

Having students in program apartments had occasionally led to suspicious accusations that the program staff was somehow benefitting from financial arrangements with the landlords. Such concerns arose since they paid their rent through the program office, a system designed to facilitate payments for them as well as the landlords. And students insisted that their friends were in cheaper apartments but the explanation from the staff was that those were most likely rent controlled which was not the case with the apartments kept for program students where landlords also calculated the 12-month cost into 10 months since they remained vacant in the summer. Students were also perplexed by the utilities payment system whereby they paid a certain amount up front but then had to wait for BCSP staff and landlords to do meter readings which meant they might owe more at the end. This was done so that the landlords received what was due to them. Concettina Pizzuti, from Northwestern University and Director in 1996-97, reported that from 1997 forward rent payments “will be given directly from the students to their landlords.” She also suggested that the students also handle their telephone bills independently, to avoid unnecessary disputes.

Getting away from those longstanding apartment arrangements was a move that was made easier after there was a change in staffing. Julie Wade, a former BCSP participant from 1991-92 who had remained in Italy, applied for the staff position after Nicoletta Bonafè left the program in 2000. Julie was followed in January of 2003 by Marina Zaccarini who had worked previously for the John Hopkins Program. As the renamed “program coordinators,” they each implemented new approaches to housing. Danielle Di Leo has been in the coordinator position since 2009 which is now entitled Student Services Coordinator to encompass all her responsibilities, including working with outgoing exchange students from the University of Bologna.

Program students now seek their own housing options with the program's expectation that they will live only with Italians or Italian-speakers. The Student Services Coordinator provides detailed information, advice and assistance in helping students navigate the rental system and she also tracks average rental costs and other data each year to facilitate their searches. Since this approach was implemented, housing complaints stopped and students have succeeded in acquiring a multitude of Italian friends.

A fall-only option was added in 2011-12 which has put pressure on landlords to rent to students for just the fall term. Consequently the program has been flexible in allowing a few fall-only students to have an occasional American roommate in addition to Italian ones. They also have access to university residences.

### *On The Move: Changes*

The program center moved for the first time in 1988-89 from Largo Trombetti to Via Zamboni, 34 which was nestled in a parking lot outside Magistero among various University of Bologna administrative buildings. Due to its proximity within the university, visitors could not approach the office when the university was closed since the outer gates were controlled by university personnel. And walls of glass facing the sun were a new challenge that was partially addressed by special drapes. The move happened under the directorship of Ron Martinez. But for the next decade, until the next move, every director commented on it being an awkward space—too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer.

During the same time period the office inched towards purchasing a personal computer (a major step which was resisted by both Mark Musa and Nicoletta Bonafè in 1989-90 until the directorship of Thomas Brylawski, a mathematician from the University of North Carolina, in 1990-91). Mark Musa's second stint as director was characterized by adjusting to the new physical space as well as juggling the challenges of a lengthy student strike that lasted six weeks and closed every facoltà except Magistero which is where the program office was located. Program courses continued during the strike, given the dedicated BCSP professors. Students who were registered in Magistero courses were able to attend class but other students were unable to do so. The program assisted students who were locked out of courses by being in touch with the professors on behalf of the students and setting up special reading/study activities for them so they could prepare for the final exams in June. Musa offered himself as a tutor for students in need of literature preparation. It is of interest in hindsight (given Musa's role in establishing the program in 1964 with a rotating directorship) that among the final words of his end-of-the-year report are, "I think the Consortium should consider the possibility of sending a Director here for a two-year period or even more because once he learns the ropes it is almost time to go home. How about a permanent Director? It's a great program!"



*Mark Musa, BCSP Office, Via Zamboni, 1990*

As mentioned above, Thomas Brylawski ushered the program into the computer era which resulted in his transferring all program documents onto computer disks to facilitate the work of his successors as well as being able to more easily submit lengthier reports. As a mathematician, his contacts in Bologna were different from previous directors which he built on by offering math seminars to Italian students. He also revamped the annual 'newsletter' (a document created each year with advice for the next group of students) into a year-book format for the outgoing students and each one received a medal inscribed for some special quality for which they were best known. Out of the long list of his achievements he typed up in his final report, he felt that one of his most important accomplishments was having had telephones installed in some of the apartments. Although his selection as director came as a surprise to many, since

he was the first (and only) Bologna director to come from outside the humanities or social sciences, he put his heart and soul into student services in a new way that reflected the growing trend on our home campuses of injecting school 'spirit' into everyday student life.

Continuing with the theme of "on the move," the program finally acquired e-mail in 1992-93 which revolutionized communications between the home offices and the program, despite the cumbersome method for extracting the disjointed messages (using the print screen button!) that came over the Bitnet system. Of course with the introduction of technology, directors found themselves dealing with a variety of technological issues, both related to hardware and software, in addition to pressure from students for computer access. The office eventually purchased a fax machine in 1992-93 and a few years later, a photocopier. New acquisitions like these required office policies for student use. James Hay, from the University of Illinois in 1995-96, also suggested that it was time to purchase an answering machine but the assistant saw it "as a waste of money that might better be invested in a cellular phone for the resident director. (Ah, these Italians and their cellular phones)." No one could have imagined back then the way cell phones would eventually dominate all of our lives around the world.

### *Student Selection*

A recurring plea across the years from directors was the need for increasing the standards for selecting program participants. Walter Robert (1976-77) opened his final report with the realistic observation that "The selection of students is not entirely objective because a minimum number is required to make the program viable and considerations of this sort impinge upon the judgement of the academic situation." This tension between member institutions accepting the right kind of students and having enough students to keep the program running has been a thread in the directors' correspondence through the past five decades. However, with the expansion of program models in Italy and copious program details available on-line, there seems to be better self-selection today among students themselves than there was years ago.

Tom Cravens, from the University of Wisconsin in 1991-92, eloquently pointed out that the major concern related to the selection of students is "to avoid frustration and disappointment on the part of those who would be happier in a different study abroad experience." He wrote that his group profited considerably because of increased selectivity within the consortium and guessed that the Gulf War tensions the previous year probably resulted in students being more self-selected. He lists the five main characteristics that committees should consider when screening students: "1) Responsible self-starters; 2) Resilience, optimism and a sense of humor; 3) Well-rounded academic background; 4) More-than-basic literacy; 5) Linguistic agility and preparation in Italian." These continue to be key elements demonstrated by the most successful BCSP participants.

Dino Cervigni, from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 1997-98 wrote that he had "nothing but the highest praise for the BCSP students...they have all behaved very well; they have been very pleasant and also quite studious, even though a few had some harsh surprises during their final examinations and were asked to take them again at a later date (a not uncommon practice in Italian universities)."

### *Major Programmatic Change: Reciprocity*

During one of Richard Stryker's annual visits to the program in 1993, he was joined by Kathleen Sideli, associate director for academic affairs at Overseas Study, which was her first visit to the program site despite ongoing communications with program directors since 1979. Their joint visit was most notably characterized by an unexpected turn of events that came about during a meeting where they began discussions to renegotiate a new agreement with the University. Professor Zucchini, the head of the international division at the University of Bologna, demanded that the consortium provide reciprocity to its undergraduate students rather than paying for *corsi singoli* for the visiting BCSP students as had been the practice until that time. When Stryker and Sideli reminded him that IU and UW had provided an annual fellowship or assistantship to graduate students, he insisted that those were no longer valued. Instead, due to the proliferation of exchange arrangements that were part of the Erasmus program, officials wanted access for their undergraduates to U.S. institutions as well.

Sideli and Stryker spent a couple of intense hours trying to make the case that the current program model of a rotating faculty director with local staff working out of a program office, arranging a pre-session and special courses for program students, could not be financially maintained if the program switched to an exchange model. Traditional exchange programs rely on the receiving institution taking care of all aspects of student life. It was clear that the University of Bologna was not yet equipped to provide the support necessary for advising and tending to the needs of U.S. undergraduates from the BCSP consortium, so relinquishing the program director, an assistant and an office was not a viable option.

The breakthrough that day came after considerable number crunching—the compromise would be that a new agreement would be signed if the consortium would accept University of Bologna students on a 2:1 basis. That is, for every two BCSP students headed to Bologna, they would send one Bologna student to a consortium partner institution. The challenge was to return to the U.S. and work out how such a wide-ranging exchange of students would work, a challenge subsequently managed. Over 275 exchange students have attended consortium institutions over the past two decades. While the arrangements have been complex—trying to keep the 2:1 balance across seven institutions sending various numbers of their own students to Bologna—the impact has been positive on both sides of the exchange. The BCSP staff and directors have assisted the Italian students at the program office to sort through and finalize their academic options while the receiving institutions have welcomed them into their international student populations. The exchange students have made important long lasting friendships on both sides of the ocean but the addition of this component made an already complex consortium even more complex! And Indiana University, the managing institution, had to work out the financial and administrative logistics for running a hybrid program—that is, a staffed study abroad office for U.S. students while also juggling a bilateral exchange program.

Michael Stoughton, resident director from the University of Minnesota in 1994-95, oversaw the first group of undergraduate exchange students who, as late as June 1, 1995, were in various stages of preparation. He found himself involved in their registration issues, visa questions, banking statements, halls of residence reservations, etc. He commented in his final report that, “I am trying to wean them from my help, since they will be on their own with final questions after my departure.” Eventually, these issues were dealt with by University of Bologna staff and the BCSP Housing and Exchange Coordinator as information about the multiple consortium institutions was collected through annual charts updated by Indiana University for that purpose. One realizes how nimble the program was, even after 30 years, when Stoughton commented at the end of his final report that the University of Bologna exchange was “now, old business.” He himself was surprised at how little space needed to be devoted to it in his reports. This reciprocity brought the consortium and the University of Bologna much closer together as partners.

In adding his comments to those of the 1994-95 participants in their *Postcards from Italy*, Professor Stoughton pointed out to the next group of students that “Bologna is the perfect location for BCSP—it is unimaginable elsewhere.”

### *Transitions*

Looking back at program correspondence, it seems obvious now that a number of major changes took place within BCSP during the years encompassing the decade 1993-2003.

Did those changes take place because...

...communications between the BCSP office and IU, the managing institution, were made easier and faster because of new technologies like fax and e-mail?

...for the first time in three decades, the managing director of BCSP remained in his administrative position for a lengthy period, unlike his predecessors, giving him a deeper understanding of the program?

...changes at the University of Bologna itself resulted in a different relationship with U.S. partners?

...the consortium expanded to almost double the size, resulting in increased enrollment?

...students themselves brought new expectations (e.g., seeking semester options), more resources and a more worldly perspective?

...a new program liaison—Tiziano Bonazzi, longtime chair of the *Facolta di Scienze Politiche*, was designated as BCSP sponsor in 1994, bringing a fresh view to the partnership?

It was probably due to the confluence of all these elements that there were major shifts in the decade 1993-2003 that would forever impact BCSP— minimizing its weaknesses while enhancing its strengths.

Stefania Buccini, director from the University of Wisconsin in 1999-00, was the last director to work with Nicoletta. As mentioned in a previous section, it was determined that the program was at a point that it needed a different type of administrative staff going forward so arrangements were made to wind down Nicoletta Bonafà's role in the program in the spring of 2000. By the end of Professor Buccini's time in Italy, the program had hired Julie Wade, an alumna of the program, as the new local staff.

Julie Wade had the challenge of learning the administrative side of the program along with Stuart Curran, director from the University of Pennsylvania in 2000-01. That was also the year that the program launched a pilot spring semester program for the first time which was successful. They purchased a TV-VCR for the office which was a first for BCSP. They guided the pre-session teachers to develop a more practical approach to language usage, getting away from the more traditional grammar/syntax model used previously.

And they renegotiated with the International Office to permit BCSP students to sit in on courses in various facoltà before committing to their final registration. Curran observed in his spring report that "the ways in which Italy always seems to manage to function in the midst of what appears suspiciously like anarchy is illustrated by the fact that the BCSP and the University of Bologna have managed to cooperate amicably in partnership and even to innovate and professionalize their exchange for the last two years under an expired agreement."

Susanna Ferlito, from the University of Minnesota 2001-02, had the unenviable task of being director of the program on 9/11. She wrote four single-space pages on reactions to 9/11 as part of her 6-page report. It was touching to read that Rettore Pier Ugo Calzolari actually went to the program office to give his personal condolences. He even hugged the director on his way out while everyone stood in utter silence. Dottore Natali, the labor counselor, sent an e-mail of condolence to Richard Stryker, to share his "*più profonda solidarietà e affetto, insieme alle condoglianze più sentite.*"

Professor Ferlito and Julie organized a communal watching of CNN for program participants on September 15 during which students created an art project to express their feelings. 23 of the 38 students attended the event. They each had a triangle to decorate as part of the mosaic they created. One of the students commented "spending an evening with your family feels like being home." The students, particularly those from the East Coast, were emotional about not being able to provide more support for those at home directly impacted by the tragedy. They all felt very distant and helpless. She reflected that



*Nicoletta Bonafè, BCSP Office, Via Zamboni*

attitudes changed about “America as Home.” Students disagreed with one another about many aspects of what had taken place as they had different reactions to the terrorism. She noted that “Being American is suddenly an issue and an experience that goes far beyond a question of language competence. Students are feeling that they are suddenly seen as ‘representatives’ of America. They felt like they are seen as speaking for an entire nation.” It was an inauspicious beginning to the year but the students, director and staff pulled through it together.

2001-02 was also the last year for the program to be located at Via Zamboni which raised concerns since the newly designated space, rumored to be at Via Val D’Aposa, 7, would house multiple American study abroad programs, thus raising their physical profile. Following 9/11, this anticipated move seemed like a step fraught with security issues which concerned each of the programs involved—E.C.C.O and the University of California. As plans began to take effect for the move, Julie Wade took another position that was easier on her family life and the program hired Marina Zaccarini who, as mentioned previously, had worked for the John Hopkins Program for many years. The two of them hired a program assistant, Loredana D’Elia, given the increased size of the program and the need for improved student services.

Wayne Storey, from Indiana University 2002-03, was the last rotating director and also was responsible for moving the program to the new location. As hard as it is to believe, the delayed move took place on August 20, in the intense heat of summer and just a few days before the arrival of the students on August 26! The new space was light and airy, at the top of the building, with glass dividers that gave the office a sense of spaciousness while also providing private offices. In his first report, Professor Storey echoed his predecessors about student selection, pointing out that “every immature, troubled and/or unprepared student the interview committee passes along to the on-site team in Bologna takes the space, time and energy that could have been devoted to five or six students.” He made an interesting observation about the ripple effect of well-prepared students, “the better prepared the students are before they leave, the better they do while they are here and the better program is; the better the program is, the better the students are who want to apply.”

Another major transition was the utilization that year of the University of Bologna language preparation program, through CILTA, instead of a BCSP-arranged course. CILTA’s intensive language courses were designed to prepare ERASMUS students for course work in Italian. This was an interesting experiment for a few years. It was a good way to get students immediately into contact with students from throughout Europe who used Italian as their lingua franca. On the other hand there were some pedagogical disadvantages and it was very difficult to extract final grades from them. 2003 also saw the arrival of a larger contingent of spring-only students—nine of them—who joined the February CILTA course upon arrival.

#### *End of an Era*

2002-03 also witnessed the conclusion to a multi-year discussion within the consortium about moving towards a different administrative model. There was a convergence of concerns regarding the time commitment expended by IU to administer such a complex consortium with the obvious frustration experienced annually by rotating faculty who had to adapt to legal and academic issues for which they felt unprepared, despite documentation and orientation provided by IU and their predecessors.

At first the managing director, Richard Stryker, entered into discussions with an established program provider that had shown interest in taking over the program. However, negotiations broke down after a presentation to the consortium when it became evident the provider could not easily juggle a consortium comprised of both public and private universities which also included a bilateral exchange component.

Instead, at the BCSP annual consortium meeting in October 2001, the majority of the members voted to end the rotating faculty directorship and, instead, begin a search for a permanent director. It was anticipated that the new director would become well informed and practiced in the administrative, legal and academic aspects of the program as well as learn the differing characteristics of each consortium institution. One of the consortium representatives stated that rotating faculty directorship could be

construed as “professional development at the expense of the students,” an assumption that most, if not all, BCSP faculty directors would dispute, given the intensity of the time and effort they invested in attending to student needs. However, it reflected a growing opinion in the field of education abroad about an administrative model that may have outgrown its usefulness. And the proliferation of more third party provider-organized programs around the world attracted students who were drawn to sophisticated marketing and increased student services. If BCSP was going to survive, it had to compete in a new study abroad environment.

Stryker and his colleagues Al Balkcum, Peter Wollitzer and Iñes DeRomaña presented on this topic at the annual NAFSA conference in 2002 and then published an article based on the debate (*Rotating Faculty or Permanent Resident Directors? Alternative Models for Resident Directorships Abroad* (NAFSA International Educator, Winter 2002). For those interested in this ongoing discussion regarding resident directors, see material from a 2015 conference presentation on the issues raised in that article: <http://forumea.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Resident-Director-Models-Combined-Presentations.pdf>).

### *New Beginnings*

The consortium assembled a three-member search committee for a permanent director, circulated a job description widely and conducted interviews of numerous candidates both in the U.S. and in Italy in the spring of 2003. The position was offered to Andrea Ricci, a graduate of the University of Bologna with a Ph.D. from Indiana University who was teaching at Princeton but wanted to return to Italy for family reasons. Ironically, he was among Mark Musa’s last graduate students which brought a cyclical nature to his appointment as director of BCSP.

Ricci was introduced to consortium members at the annual consortium meeting in the spring of 2003 and began his directorship on July 1 that year. At that same meeting it was announced that Richard Stryker was retiring in August from his position as Associate Dean of International Programs and Director of Overseas Study, succeeded by Kathleen Sideli, the office’s longtime associate director for academic affairs. Sideli announced that it had been agreed upon at Indiana University that in his emeritus status, Stryker would remain as the managing director of BCSP, given the complexity posed by the Bologna consortium, particularly during this time of transition, although she would have fiduciary responsibility for the program and would be closely involved with all aspects of the program. Additionally, IU would assemble a BCSP team comprised of two other staff members—Laura Kremer, financial manager, and Melissa Thorne, senior student services coordinator. Stryker remained with BCSP in this new capacity until 2007 at which time Sideli became the managing director of BCSP.

Ricci quickly got up to speed as an administrator, engaging in frequent communications with Stryker and the BCSP team. He met all the key players in Bologna—administrators, faculty, accountants, lawyers, etc. And he became the program’s official representative in Italy and was given Sideli’s power of attorney in order to represent IU and the program in Italy. The consortium quickly began to focus on maintaining or even boosting enrollment since the director’s salary was now the responsibility of the consortium budget rather than paid by the institution with the rotating director, as was the case in the past. It was also agreed that Ricci would teach a BCSP course on film each year which was considered a way for him to maintain his academic interests while also allowing students to see him as an established academic rather than just an administrator.

### *New Consortium Practices*

It became clear early on under the new structure of a permanent director that, without rotating resident directors who could serve as local resources upon campus after returning from abroad, the program had to devise other ways to keep faculty and staff informed about the program. Therefore, a number of components were added to existing consortium practices.

*Director Visits:* Scheduling Andrea Ricci for visits to consortium institutions was introduced as an expected part of his directorship. Such visits were essential for him to become informed about the special characteristics of the various member institutions as well as meet their Italian faculty and potential

program participants. Starting in 2004, when the annual consortium meeting was scheduled to coincide with a conference at the University of Minnesota, Ricci has made 61 institutional visits—to each of the 15 members of the consortium (ranging from 1-6 times each) as well as occasional visits to non-member institutions with strong Italian departments. These visits are planned well in advance, in conjunction with the annual consortium meeting which often takes place during the same week as the annual conference of the Forum on Education Abroad, in order to take advantage of the natural confluence of consortium members in the same city. He visits institutions either before or after the conference, makes presentations in classes or at special information meetings, meets colleagues, discusses program policy and application processes with administrative offices and, on occasion, enjoys meeting up with former students. And he has accomplished most of these visits by driving from site to site, given the distance of most consortium institutions from airports. He knows the U.S. terrain better than most of us who welcome him to our campuses! His knowledge of the participants' home campuses (i.e., their advisors, their teachers, their requirements, home institution ambiance) allows them to have confidence in his advice and guidance during their time abroad.

*Familiarization Trips:* The BCSP team recommended sending faculty and staff from the consortium institutions on a rotating basis to the program site so they could better understand the environment to which they were sending their students. This helped advisors better decide which students would be best served by a semester or year with BCSP rather than another study abroad program in Italy. The trips have taken place once a year, either in the fall or the spring, for a three-day period during which the attendees visit classes, meet with faculty and staff, tour the university, meet with all the participants as well as have private sessions with their own students and learn more about Bologna and Italian culture. 26 individuals have visited the program on these trips, usually as part of a group of 3-5 individuals. Almost half have been faculty and the others were advisors or administrative staff. At first it was thought to group them separately, according to their role on the home campus, since it was assumed that the faculty would want to conduct all their interactions in Italian. However, in recent years the groups have been mixed (staff along with faculty) which provides both of them with the others' differing perspectives on the program (i.e., academic components vs. student life issues). The evaluations of these events have underscored how valuable the visits have been.

*Faculty Exchange:* Although the program technically added a faculty exchange component in 1998, it was not routinely active until after Ricci became involved with the program since he could serve as a knowledgeable liaison between the consortium and the University of Bologna. Until 2003 only six faculty members had been involved—four from the University of Bologna who visited consortium institutions and two from the consortium who went to Bologna. Since then 39 faculty members have exchanged (23 to the U.S. and 16 to Bologna), involving 10 consortium institutions and the University of Bologna. The arrangements have become more complicated in the last few years as the University of Bologna has become stricter in its own vetting process of individuals going in either direction. Ideally, two professors would exchange in each direction a year, not necessarily to/from the same consortium institutions.

These are short-term stays of usually just a few weeks, with expenses shared among the University of Bologna, BCSP and the receiving or sending consortium institution, which the faculty have found to be very worthwhile and have involved a wide range of disciplines—kinesiology, philosophy, history, sociology, political science, Italian studies, etc. <http://www.bcspbologna.it/exchange/faculty-exchange/>. It is hard to imagine the faculty exchange having functioned as smoothly as it has without the consistent presence of a permanent director in Bologna. And having more faculty on the home campuses knowledgeable about the partnership has been a positive element across the consortium although it hasn't had the same impact as the director's visits to campus and the familiarization trips.

*Program Review:*

The consortium agreed at its annual meeting in 2006 to schedule a formal review of the program in May of 2007. Such reviews had become a best practice in the field of education abroad. The consortium agreed upon a three-person team comprised of faculty representatives from consortium institutions: Kathleen McDermott (Columbia University), Susan Noakes (University of Minnesota) and Massimo



Scalabrini (Indiana University). IU provided the team with a notebook containing information about BCSP including enrollments, course descriptions, [syllabi](#), course evaluations, student evaluations, agreements, student [handbook](#), resident director's manual, [faculty](#) and staff CVs, academic statistics, orientation material, [housing instructions](#) and other program materials as well as a template for their evaluation report. The team produced a 24-page report which they completed on the fourth day of their visit to Bologna. (Please note that links provided are to current materials.)

In the executive summary they commented that “all aspects of the program are strong and confirm its reputation as one of the very best American study abroad programs in Italy, in terms of academic quality and students' integration into an Italian university environment.” They outlined eight particular strengths of the program: 1) excellent and mature students, with a strong language background and a clear focus on academic and intercultural goals; 2) a first-rate faculty comprised of expert teachers and leading scholars in their field; 3) a thorough on-site orientation addressing issues of language and cultural adaptation; 4) well sequenced courses of high intellectual quality; 5) a first-rate location: a university that is Europe's oldest and arguably Italy's most prestigious in a city that is rich in history, culturally vibrant and increasingly cosmopolitan; 6) an impressive level of students' integration into the community as a result of program assistance and housing arrangements; 7) excellent communication between sending institutions, IU-BCSP management team and Bologna office staff and 8) competent, efficient and caring program administrators.

Despite their positive assessment of the program, they outlined 19 recommendations on various aspects of the experience. The IU Bologna team worked with Andrea Ricci on these and reported back to the consortium on their progress which ranged from including more of a focus on semester students in the handbook to requiring more written work in the BCSP courses, introducing elements to develop critical thinking skills, introducing more active strategies to assist students to navigate the Italian academic system, encourage more rigorous language screening at the home institutions, seeking more space for the office, etc. Overall, the review was a positive learning experience for everyone involved.

#### *Professional Development:*

Once the program had a permanent director, the consortium determined that it was essential for him to have professional development opportunities both in the field of education abroad and in his own academic field of Italian film studies. Andrea Ricci attended the University of Minnesota conference on Curriculum Integration in the spring of 2004. Afterwards he attended conferences regularly, including the Forum on Education Abroad conferences in Boston (2008 and 2011), Charlotte (2010), Dublin (2012), Chicago (2013) and New Orleans (2015) as well as academic conferences for AAIS –American Association for Italian Studies--in Chapel Hill (2005), Charleston (2012), Zurich (2014); joint conferences of AAIS and AATI—American Association of Teachers of Italian--in Genova (2006) and Taormina (2009) and AATI conferences in Lecce (2010) and Siena (2015). The Forum conferences have provided excellent information on critical issues in the field of education abroad, best practices in issues related to crisis management, health and safety, advising, orientation, language learning, intercultural issues, etc. He has been a presenter at conferences as well, both at the Forum and the academic conferences. Such conferences also allowed for networking opportunities as well as chances to talk in depth to administrators and faculty who send students to Bologna. While BCSP has sponsored ads in the Forum conference program each year, it has never arranged for an exhibit space since the purpose of the director's attendance has been for professional development rather than a recruitment opportunity.

#### *Outcomes assessment:*

In keeping with another best practice in the field of education abroad in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the consortium arranged for a research study about its students to get objective data on program outcomes. It was decided to utilize the Global Perspective Inventory which was created by Dr. Larry Braskamp, a well-known researcher long involved with issues of accreditation in higher education. He created an instrument that many programs (and institutions) use to assess students before and after educational activities which focuses on three dimensions—cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal. <http://www.gpi.hs.iastate.edu/> He conducted pre and post on-line surveys for three cohorts of students in

2013-14—academic year, fall-only and spring-only, which included open-ended questions designed just for BCSP and face-to-face interviews he conducted with students on site in the spring of 2014.

His final report essentially corroborated that the program achieves its main goals of immersing students in the academic, linguistic and cultural environment of the city and the university. He concluded that “BCSP is a highly effective study abroad program, particularly for students who seek out a study abroad program that requires them to speak the host country language, provides them with freedom in finding housing, and rooming with and forming relationships with other young persons in the host country.” His executive summary focused on three ways that the program might alter its approach in order to further its positive impact on students—ensure that the students choose this program for the right reasons, have the onsite staff provide more intentional assistance to the participants as they navigate their way through the demands of the program and provide more opportunities for the students to reflect and share their experiences with their fellow students. As a consequence, the program now includes more reflection activities. When they arrive they are asked to list three objectives for their time in Bologna. The staff returns those objectives to the students later in the semester and has the language instructor build into her course some formalized reflection exercises. By reflecting on their experiences in the language course, students are able to practice their language proficiency at the same time as they share their thoughts with their program peers.

#### *Programmatic Changes*

While the above activities were added as new elements to BCSP practices after the hiring of a permanent director, there were also internal programmatic changes as well, even though the core structure of the program remained as it had for the previous four decades.

#### *Lifting Enrollment Limits*

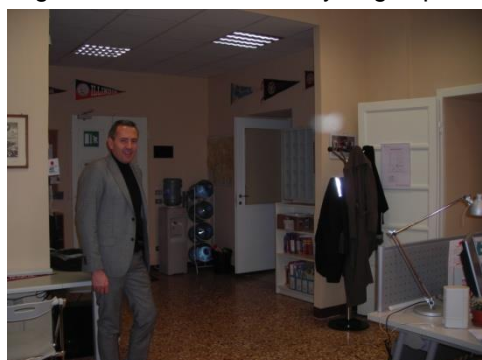
When the consortium invited associate members to join the consortium, they were promised priority access for their students over non consortium students. However, when the semester option was created, there was a limit of one spot per each consortium institution since there was a concern about overwhelming the program with semester enrollments. At the annual consortium meeting in 2008, when the enrollment in the spring program reached only 14, the consortium realized it had an enrollment challenge on its hands. After all, the only way to afford a permanent resident director was to keep enrollments healthy since the consortium budget had to cover all staffing costs. It also became clear that academic year enrollments were declining and would never rise to the previous average of c.30 a year. (Academic year enrollments had reached an all-time high of 38 in 1992-93, a number not matched again until 2001-02 but were in decline afterwards, dropping to an average of 20 over the following years with a record low of 11 in 2015-16.)

The consortium representatives in 2008 shared with one another that their students were wary about applying to a program with an enrollment cap since they didn't want to wait to see if more spaces opened up so they applied to other programs instead. Therefore, the consortium voted to lift the caps which produced immediate results the following year with 36 spring enrollments in 2009—more than double the previous year. Once the cap was removed, it meant that the combined enrollment during the spring semester (between academic year and spring-only students) began to reach the 50-60 range. With a stable, experienced staff, these numbers were challenging but manageable, a reality made possible by the program's move in 2009 to a bigger space.

As mentioned previously, a fall-only option was formally adopted in 2011-12 in response to consortium members whose students were clamoring for a fall-only immersion option in Italy. The fall-only option was made academically possible by changes within the University of Bologna since more departments were offering courses that ended prior to the holidays. Fall-only enrollments have averaged 22 over a five-period while also posing challenges regarding their housing search, since landlords prefer to rent to students who will stay through their spring, and their proclivity for cramming so much into the short semester, including traveling far and wide, which can often compromise their academic performance.

### *Space*

Starting in 2006 there were rumors that the University of Bologna was going to move all the study abroad offices out of their location at Via Val d'Aposa where they had been since 2002. At first it seemed BCSP might have access to a very large space on the first floor of that building that could be shared with



*Andrea Ricci, BCSP Office, Malcontenti*

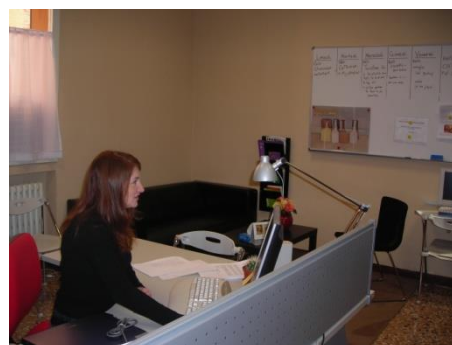
another program. However, it became clear that there were complicated interests across a number of Bologna administrative offices vis-à-vis that space. Of deeper concern was the fact that the University would no longer subsidize an office for BCSP or any other program. Therefore, in 2009 the program moved to an apartment building very near the campus, on Malcontenti where it acquired significantly more space on the second floor. It also meant that the rent was going to more than quadruple, another reality that underscored the importance of program enrollment! The space included a large classroom as well as two private offices and an ample

reception area that could accommodate numerous student computers. When Ricci wrote to Sideli that the landlords were the Poveri Vergognosi, she chuckled at the fascinating

confluence of the street name and the landlord's name—a bad omen of things to come? That group has since been renamed the ASP Città di Bologna and the relationship with them could not be better. In 2015 the center was completely renovated to give it a more modern look while also utilizing the space more effectively. It is a welcoming space where students get their mail, consult with the staff (always in Italian!), attend BCSP classes and an occasional program event. They do not spend their leisure time there. And its proximity to the University facilitates the staff's contact with Unibo faculty and staff.

### *Staffing*

Programming needs over time have impacted the makeup of the staff over the years, particularly over the past decade. It was determined in 2009 that another staffing shift was necessary, given the results of the program review as well as the type of assistance students needed, particularly given the proliferation of semester students during a period when overall enrollments were also shaky. The program found itself with a need of a strong student-services staff rather than a part-time administrative-finance person with a program assistant since program finances are handled mainly by a local accounting agency, given the strict laws that govern all staff and faculty payments. Hence there was a restructuring whereby Danielle Di Leo, an alumna of Barnard and the E.C.C.O program who returned to Bologna after receiving an MA from Middlebury, became the full-time housing and exchange coordinator in 2009 after the departure of Loredana D'Elia in 2008 and a year later, Marina Zaccarini. During intense periods the program also has a student intern provided by the University of Bologna. A couple of years ago the program rehired one of those interns, Lorena Leoni, as a part-time staff member.



*Danielle DiLeo, BCSP Office, Malcontenti*

### *Experiential Activities*

Another programmatic change which was in keeping with best practices in education abroad was getting students engaged in experiential activities—unpaid non-credit internships and volunteer experiences. These have included assisting staff with guided tours at the local Musei Civici, teaching English classes in local schools, translating for law firms, providing communication assistance for the City of Bologna's website, grooming horses for equine therapy sessions, creating art and theater activities for immigrant children, volunteering at the desk of a local hospital, managing social networking sites at a local fashion

and business school. Student comments included, “Working in an office in contact with Italians improved my language skills and expanded my knowledge of Italian culture” and “I feel more confident now and I was able to personally see my influence on kids, which was very rewarding.” In recent years, about half of the program participants (in each cohort—semester or academic year) have been participating in these non-credit experiential activities. Their engagement reflects the millennial generation’s interest in volunteerism as well as giving them a competitive edge in the job market after graduation. The BCSP staff does an effective job of guiding students into these opportunities, maintaining good relationships with the businesses, schools and organizations who utilize their services and charts for the consortium the exact level of activity from semester to semester. Such efforts are critical in keeping these opportunities on the forefront of the BCSP experience. Separate from these program-arranged opportunities, students also have the option to teach English and provide child care for a fee, arrangements which they make on their own, without staff involvement.

### *Academics*

Former students and former directors would probably recognize the academic structure of the program today, aside from semesterization which resulted in the introduction of ‘long’ and ‘short’ courses. But other than that change, perhaps the most abrupt difference from the first decades of the program is the prevalence of course information on-line. Many resident directors lamented the scarcity of information available to students even after arriving in Bologna. They used to have to stand in front of bulletin boards to figure out what courses were being offered and when, only to find that schedule changes happened on a regular basis. Today students have access to that information at the tip of their fingers. IU’s Office of Overseas Study has continued to manage BCSP course registrations for those enrolled through IU and makes available a list of previously taken courses with links to the on-line course descriptions and syllabi. See: <http://www.overseas.iu.edu/docs/Equivalencies/Bologna.pdf>. This compendium gives students a sense of what previous participants have studied.

Andrea Ricci does a copious analysis each year of student academic outcomes which is shared at the annual consortium meeting. In that way, BCSP representatives know exactly how many students enrolled in the various BCSP classes and what the average grades were. Likewise, he tracks enrollments across University of Bologna courses, including a breakdown of how many of each type of grade was received by BCSP students in those course categories, divided by cohort (fall, spring or academic year students). Taken together, during the last three years, 75% of the BCSP students received B+ (27) or higher in their Unibo courses, including 35% who received 30s! Occasionally students fail classes but it is very uncommon. Students continue to self-select for this program and they also receive careful advising from Andrea Ricci who knows the faculty and courses, given his years of experience with them. He steers students away from courses where he knows the professors are undemanding (as instructed by the consortium). He also provides a detailed academic handbook to guide the students’ expectations: [www.bcspbologna.it/pdf/handbooks/BCSPAcademic\\_Handbook.pdf](http://www.bcspbologna.it/pdf/handbooks/BCSPAcademic_Handbook.pdf) 75% of program participants in 2014-15 indicated that they “had to study and prepare for my Unibo courses on a regular basis to earn satisfactory grades.” While it would be nice to see that number higher, it represents a large majority of the students (fall, spring and academic year).

*Pre-session:* From the inception of the program it was determined that students needed additional language training upon arrival. After the initial excitement of placing students into CILTA language classes, alongside Erasmus students, which continued for a few years, Andrea Ricci recommended in 2006 that BCSP once again hire its own instructors to ensure more consistent quality as well as courses that would serve the academic needs of U.S. students while also aligning with the students’ academic schedule at the University of Bologna. But the new pre-session had to be shortened to no more than three weeks, given that Unibo classes started much earlier than in the past. The language instructors are carefully selected and the students are divided into levels. Occasionally, if the students show similar language levels, there may only be one section. Ricci also received the consortium’s support for his suggestion that the language course offered by the program during the semester be required of all students unless the director made an exception based on the student’s fluency. The requirement has proven to be a positive aspect of the program with the instructors using up-to-date pedagogy. Given the

increasingly earlier start date for Unibo classes in the second semester, the spring-only students needed a different pre-session course. The consortium and Ricci determined that the best solution was to offer a semester-long language course divided into two segments—a two-week intensive course that starts upon their arrival then a continuing language course with a less-intense schedule throughout the semester. This combination has proven successful.

*BCSP Courses:* A hallmark of BCSP has always been the set of special courses taught in Italian for them by local faculty. The students have benefitted from exceptional teachers throughout the years, too numerous to mention here. The current faculty have their syllabi and CVs on the website:

<http://www.bcspbologna.it/academics/syllabi/>. As has been the case, there is usually a language course, a history course, an art course and a humanities course. Ricci has taught a film course each year and one of the most recent additions was a course on food anthropology, a burgeoning field that has become popular in Italy and elsewhere. Students take a minimum of one BCSP course each semester but most will take a second one as well, along with Unibo courses. In their 2014-15 evaluations 100% of the academic year students indicated that they had to “study and prepare for my BCSP courses on a regular basis to earn satisfactory grades” with comparable data from fall and spring students (97% and 96%). Anyone who tracks study abroad evaluations knows this detail is worth noting. And 100% of each group would recommend this program to another student.



A major key to the success of the program’s ability to recruit fine faculty members for the BCSP courses has been the close relationship the program develops with the University through the program “sponsor” or “liaison” which the University assigns to BCSP. When Tiziano Bonazzi stepped down in 2009 the program was fortunate that Raffaella Baritono took on that role, particularly since she had worked closely with him over the years. As has been the case with our past sponsors, she is also critical in guiding the program through the process of negotiating its institutional agreement which happens every five years. She and Andrea Ricci have developed a very cordial relationship.

*On-line Presence:* Perhaps one of the most significant breakthroughs in the program’s ability to portray itself well was through the use of on-line resources. Andrea Ricci realized that using the web would not only convey important aspects of the program to prospective students, their advisors and faculty but it could also serve as a creative platform for program participants. Talented student videographers and bloggers expressed themselves through visual and written depictions of their experiences which then served to attract future students. <http://www.bcspbologna.it/living-in-bologna/student-blogs/> The participants also created resources that portrayed the unique aspects of the program—like the independent housing search—as an exciting opportunity rather than a challenging obstacle. <http://www.bcspbologna.it/housing/>. In recent years the staff in Bologna has updated the website to keep up with various advances in social media. A group Facebook page is where the program is able to post photos of student activities while attracting past participants to stay informed about the program as well. Ricci also communicates with a wide range of stakeholders at consortium institutions through an electronic newsletter which highlights program activities. While previous generations of participants were able to convey their knowledge and experience through printed newsletters and comments in handbooks, the immediacy of the web and social media have made those earlier attempts look almost quaint.

#### *Consortium Relations*

A hallmark of BCSP, from the moment Indiana University invited other institutions to join its efforts in Bologna, the annual consortium meeting has been a longstanding tradition. Despite the ease of electronic communications in the past two decades, the member institutions still send a representative

once a year to meet face-to-face with their BCSP colleagues to discuss all aspects of the program. The Office of Overseas Study at Indiana University, as the managing institution, prepares documentation for the meeting, including academic data, housing statistics, information on experiential opportunities, program evaluations, cultural activities, enrollment trends, course updates and information about the faculty exchange. Together the members set consortium policy regarding eligibility requirements, course load and all other matters related to the program. Both members and associate members participate in these discussions. The collegiality engendered by these meetings has made the program a collaborative effort which has also resulted in maintaining strong institutional history at each member school.

The consortium celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006 by sending a representative from each member institution to Bologna where they joined dignitaries from the University, BCSP faculty, program alumni and colleagues from other Italian program at a gala event to recognize their years of collaboration together. As a gift to the University of Bologna, IU invited a BCSP alum, [Susan Snyder](#), an artist who learned how to make majolica pottery in Italy, to design a large round platter to capture the occasion. Presentations were also made to the three successive faculty advisors to the program (Professors Raimondi, Pazzaglia and Bonazzi).

#### *50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration*

In preparing to recognize the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BCSP, the consortium cast the net wide to invite as many alumni as possible to the events. It was a challenge to try to track down contact information for over 1,500 U.S. students, the majority from BCSP member institutions but over 200 from external institutions, 280 undergraduate exchange students and another few dozen graduate exchange students. It has been encouraging to see the excitement among the dozens of former students who have agreed to reunite in Bologna along with over a dozen former resident directors, representatives from most of the BCSP institutions and many guests. President Michael McRobbie and Rettore Francesco Ubertini will preside over the anniversary event which will recognize the individuals who together have made this unique program such a success over the decades. In a world where globalization has become a desired outcome of higher education, it will be evident on May 27-28, 2016 in Bologna, Italy that immersing students in another culture was recognized as a valuable asset going back to November 13, 1964 when Professor Mark Musa wrote to the Rettore of the University of Bologna.

**This history was compiled by Kathleen Sideli, managing director of BCSP (2007 to present), from written reports and correspondence of former resident directors\* as well as the recollections of past managing directors of BCSP, including Walter T. K. Nugent (1967-76), Peter A. Sehlinger (1976-79), Louis F. Helbig (1979-1985), Rodney B. Sangster (1985-88), E. Philip Morgan (1988-89) and Richard E. Stryker (1989 – 2007), and former Overseas Study assistant directors Lois Hendricks (1972-1984) and Elizabeth Gitlitz Devoe (1984-2001) as captured in *40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Retrospective: Overseas Study at Indiana University, Kathleen Sideli and Walter Nugent, Editors. Author House, Bloomington, IN 2014.***