



# INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Insider Visits to  
Global Industry Leaders



## International Perspectives Overview

ACIS International Perspectives are behind-the-scenes visits to leading international organizations such as the BBC, Atletico Madrid Football Club, FAGE Yogurt Factory, United Nations, BMW and more. Every International Perspectives visit will include a tour of the facility, a presentation by a company representative on a current topic of interest and the opportunity for students to ask questions they've prepared, engaging in a meaningful and culturally-relevant dialogue.

The visit to Atletico Madrid, for example, might be with the director of ticket sales or marketing. Following a tour of the stadium and offices, students will enjoy a presentation and subsequent discussion revolving around the challenges faced by a professional sports club to bring in revenue and attract a global fan base.

International Perspectives are a valuable educational addition to your ACIS itinerary, designed to promote critical thinking about the interconnected global economy as well as your students' own skills and future opportunities.

### An Educator's Insight



*Lynn McGovern, Ph.D., is a professor of Spanish and Cultural Studies at Merrimack College and Past Academic Director of their Short-term Study Abroad programs. She shares her thoughts below on the strength of the International Perspectives concept:*

Educational travel is one of the most important components of a 21st century education<sup>1</sup>. Despite the fact that globalization is changing the way the world works and that **employers are increasingly seeking hires who have international skills and experience**, only about 10% of American students study abroad. ACIS is helping teachers and students exceed these expectations by designing travel experiences with an academic and real-world focus in mind.

With the "Generation Study Abroad" initiative<sup>2</sup>, it has become clear that **international experience is essential for developing students' intercultural competence**. For that reason, creating strategically designed international travel programs is more important than ever. ACIS is partnering with global organizations in destinations worldwide to provide students with transformational programs in real life contexts. Called International Perspectives, these visits with international industry leaders provide exposure

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to business environments, improve cultural competence, develop 21st century skills, help boost college applications and post college employment, and form a bridge between a group's travel experiences and school curriculum.

Students who have chosen an international travel experience benefit from greater employability and attractiveness to college admissions; certainly at Merrimack College. It indicates they are curious, thinking about the future. Experiential learning helps them develop a global perspective, in general, and a business perspective through ACIS' International Perspectives in particular. This type of real-world exposure helps to shape what students might want to pursue in the future and their long term goals. Even a relatively brief three-hour visit to an international industry or organization can begin to build intercultural competence. It takes them out of the standard bubble that they have lived in and opens up a new way of seeing the world. Often they get the bug for travel and this sets the stage for more and longer study abroad opportunities down the road. **They are gaining a knowledge base (gathering tangible intercultural competencies through observations, such as: attitude, flexibility, and curiosity)** that becomes the skills that will enable them to interact across cultures and will expand their options as they begin to plan out their future.

The video, "Did you Know,"<sup>3</sup> addresses the fact that Millennials will be changing jobs many times during their lifetime and to do this well, they must be flexible and adaptable. These are competencies gained as part of their knowledge base during international study experiences.

ACIS partners with educators to provide students with opportunities to be open and curious, enabling them to acquire the necessary knowledge to interpret and compare others' beliefs, values, and behaviors, learning to be conscious of others' perspectives. Like educators, they are keenly aware that critical reflection during these key moments is essential. ACIS' goal is to achieve intercultural learning outcomes by engaging and empowering students to become global citizens through first-person awareness. As intercultural competence increases by way of learner-centered activities and reflection, **participants are engaged and empowered to discover and embrace their identities as global citizens**—effectively learning to live, study, and work in multicultural contexts. These successful intercultural interactions are at the heart of international education.

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*Dr. Lynn McGovern, Ph.D. is a Professor of Spanish and Cultural Studies and Past Academic Director of Short-term Study Abroad at Merrimack College. She is the past President of FLAVA (Foreign Language Association of Virginia), headed the BCA (Brethren Colleges Abroad) program at Bridgewater College in Virginia and was Director of Sweet Briar College Junior Year in Spain until she accepted her current position at Merrimack College. Dr. McGovern has a significant body of research and publications dedicated to understanding education abroad and helping students become more inter-culturally competent. She has presented nationally and internationally at ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages), MLA (Modern Language Association), and other venues on the value of multicultural experience at home and abroad and is the recipient of numerous related honors, awards, and grants.*

Check out the full list of  
International Perspectives at:  
[www.acis.com/IP](http://www.acis.com/IP)



<sup>1</sup> The Role of Study Abroad in Global Education. (2014, November 17). Retrieved from Institute of International Education: <http://www.iie.org/Who-We-Are/News-and-Events/Press-Center/Press-Releases/2014/2014-11-17-Open-Doors-Data/>

<sup>2</sup> Earlier this year, Institute of International Education launched Generation Study Abroad, a national campaign to double the number of students who study abroad by the end of the decade. Institute of International Education: <http://www.iie.org/Who-We-Are/News-and-Events/Press-Center/Press-Releases/2014/2014-11-17-Open-Doors-Data/>

<sup>3</sup> "Did you know?" 21st century skills. Video about Millennials presented to educational communities with an overview of characteristics as compared to students of prior generations. (2008). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cL9Wu2kWwSY>