



SPOTLIGHT: RACHEL STOWE & GIULIANO SCARSI

New Program Managers at FIU Global Campus in Genoa, Italy



Genoa, Italy

FIU WELCOMES NEW PROGRAM MANAGERS TO ITS GLOBAL CAMPUS IN GENOA, ITALY

Rachel Stowe and Giuliano Scarsi joined Florida International Global Campus in Genoa as the new Program Managers in August 2024. To know more about them and FIU's program in Genoa, Christine I. Caly-Sanchez, Associate Director, Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence, interviewed them.

MFJMCE: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Rachel: I am originally from Nashville, Tennessee, but left at 22 to pursue work and travel abroad. I entered the field of International education soon thereafter, teaching English as a foreign language in both France and Italy for the following 8 years. I returned to Nashville where I began working with international students for a university there, earned my Master's degrees - an MBA and an MA in Conflict Management - then returned to Europe where I joined a small university in Lyon, France where I was responsible for all International Development: Admissions, Partnerships, International student services, and Study Abroad. It was during my 5 years there that I realized I wanted to dedicate my time and energy 100% to study abroad.

Giuliano and I are thrilled to have joined FIU and are loving being a part of the team. We have a great group in Genoa this fall and are just really excited to be working with them.

Giuliano: My name is Giuliano Scarsi, I am Italian, I grew up not too far away from Genoa in the north of Italy. The University of Genova is my Alma Mater; I have a degree and a master's degree in science. I lived here in Genova ten years before I started travelling. Since 2007 I have served students of all ages as a science teacher, first in Italy, then in Nashville, US and finally in Lyon, France.

Since August of 2024 with my wife Rachel we manage the study abroad program in Genova. We love working for FIU so far and the students we've had this fall are a pleasure to work with.



Rachel Stowe & Giuliano Scarsi



FIU Global Campus in Genoa, Italy



View of Genoa and its port

MFJMCE: What are your roles and responsibilities at FIU Genoa

Rachel: At FIU World Center, Genoa, Giuliano and I manage all operations. We take care of the students, manage the facilities, the onsite Italian faculty, the local partnerships, and anything involving the students, booking academic travel for incoming groups, helping someone if they need to go to the doctor or just want travel tips or tips around the city...and the list goes on.

Giuliano: I typically handle the "local work" - relationships with local partners, especially the one with the University of Genoa, and the relationships we are working to build within the city, in addition to our local vendor partners. I also manage the FIU Genoa Italy Instagram account.

Rachel: I handle the side of running the office, administrative work, recruitment plans for future groups, organizing for upcoming groups, helping the students resolve any issues, and keeping the website up to date. In our role, no two days are alike. Perhaps one day we are out in the city building collaborations and the next we are helping students with a broken lamp in their apartments.

- ▶ For more information on FIU World Center Genoa, [click here](#)
- ▶ For more information on Genoa, Italy, [click here](#)

MFJMCE: Can you talk more about the programs you are managing?

Rachel: At the present moment, we have a group of students in the UCC program, meaning students generally earlier in their college careers who are here taking Core Curriculum courses, and we have a group of students who are seniors in the Architecture program. The two groups are quite different as the UCC students only have local, Italian faculty, so we are more involved in their day-to-day life. The Architecture students are led by a professor from FIU and therefore the professor is active in the experience.

We will be welcoming SIPA students in the spring who will be working with both FIU professors and local Italian professors to have a semester on the Renaissance in Italy.

For the summer term, there is a group from the School of Hospitality coming as well. We are currently working with a few other colleges to explore adding more groups in the future to fully take advantage of the facility here in Genoa.

MFJMCE: What are your priorities

Rachel: Our priorities are first and foremost to take care of our students onsite, ensuring their well-being and that they are benefitting as much as possible from the program. Secondly, we would like to welcome more students from FIU to Genoa. This campus is the only physical campus abroad that FIU has, so spreading awareness in Miami is paramount. We are strong believers in the power of study abroad and know how much it contributes to student and university well-being, so we want to offer this chance to as many FIU students as possible.

Giuliano: Another goal is to grow the relationship with the city of Genoa; we want to see more and more FIU students meeting more and more local students and building those international relationships both personally and professionally. It is incredibly beneficial for students to learn from locals here and teach them something in the process. Intercultural exchanges help increase life skills, empathy, self-awareness....the benefits are endless!

MFJMCE: What do you hope FIU students will gain by studying in Genoa?

Rachel: Firstly, the benefits of study abroad itself: self awareness, emotional intelligence, exposure to new things, cultural exchange, cultural diplomacy.



FIU Global Campus in Genoa, Italy



Santa Maria di Castello, Genoa

Giuliano: FIU's space is within a convent that has been here for hundreds of years. It is a well-known historic place that everyone in Genoa knows. It is called Santa Maria di Castello and is located right in the Historic Center of the city, which really enriches the experience.

Another unique feature of this program is that our students are placed in apartments throughout the city. They are in residential buildings, giving them an authentic living experience. They are not in dorms or student housing, they are living like locals. This is another factor helping FIU students to be truly immersed in Italian life.

“Genoa is a fantastic city with wonderful people,”
Why would you encourage students to come to Genoa? What Genoa has to offer?

Giuliano and Rachel: The reason we love doing this in Genoa is that Genoa is a unique city for study abroad. It is not necessarily a mainstream city like

Florence or Rome, and that is why it is special. Students are forced to learn some basic Italian (and hopefully more!!) because it is less touristic than other parts of the country. It has everything an Italian city has to offer: culture, history, art, FOOD, architecture...but without the same crowds. Genoa is a very complex city that famously holds secrets that require our students to dig in and explore, it is not a city that serves all the evident hot spots on a silver platter...students have to make an effort and that reaps a much bigger reward.

The Professors who lead faculty led opportunities as well as the local Italian professors we work with are also excellent at using the city as their classroom. They spend a lot of time taking students around the city so they are learning about their subjects in the context of everyday life - something Italy is so special for. Why look at art in a textbook when you can see the original within a short walk or train ride?

What opportunities do you see?

Rachel: FIU has a strong relationship already with the city thanks to our predecessor, Matthew Rice. Those relationships have potential to grow, enhancing both the student experience and FIU's international profile. For example, FIU and University of Genoa have a longstanding relationship that has great opportunities to grow, find new departments to collaborate, explore new research collaboration opportunities and so on. We could also increase the number of UniGe students on FIU's campus as our agreement allows for this kind of exchange.

What is worth to explore in Genoa?

Giuliano: Old town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site; Via Garibaldi, where you find the grandiose Palazzo Rosso, Palazzo Bianco, and Palazzo Doria Tursi; San Lorenzo Cathedral.



Old Town of Genoa



San Lorenzo Cathedral, Genoa



FIU Global Campus in Genoa, Italy



Palazzo Rosso, Genoa



Piazza De Ferrari, Genoa

Genoa is famous for the *caruggi* or *vicoli*, tiny medieval streets that run throughout the city; There are many amazing shops, cafes, and piazzas hidden within these streets

The waterfront or *Porto Antico*, where you find the largest Aquarium in Europe as well as wonderful cafes and shops; Plus the Port of Genoa is deeply felt within the city, adding character to the city itself. All around the city you can go up funicular trains to see incredible views - Genoa is squeezed between the sea and the mountains so you are quickly at high altitudes overlooking the city; then other small villages considered parts of Genoa are Boccadasse, Nervi, and within a short train or boat ride, you can reach the world famous Portofino and San Fruttuoso.

MFJMCE: Do you have any last thoughts to share?

Rachel: I believe strongly in the power of international education and that experiences abroad can be transformational. I have dedicated my career to it. FIU has a unique setup here in Genoa that is not available in typical Study Abroad programs. Students have a chance to be truly integrated in Italian culture with the support of Giuliano and me to help them navigate the culture shock, excitement, fun, challenges, changes they will undergo, growth and development, and so on. FIU has an invaluable experience here that I hope to see more and more students take advantage of. Our goal is that they take what they learn back to Florida - or whatever community they end up in - and it stays with them for the rest of their lives. I also hope it encourages them to continue to explore the world they live in.

Giuliano: When I was studying in Genoa, the Erasmus program had just started. At the time, I didn't take advantage of it, and I didn't fully understand the potential of this initiative to empower a new generation through study exchanges and travel. I was fortunate enough to participate in other programs that allowed me to work abroad, but I sometimes feel regret for missing that early opportunity. That's why I want our FIU students to have a great experience, and I will do everything I can to encourage them to study abroad, and support them while they are here living out this experience.

By Christine I. Caly-Sanchez



Genoa, Italy