



Today's Scholars. Tomorrow's Leaders.



Spain

2010/2011
Academic Year

*Apply to be a one-year exchange student
in one of the finest independent schools
in the United States.*

The Opportunity

Since its founding in 1968, ASSIST has selected and placed more than 3,800 international students from 44 countries for study in American independent schools. The goal of ASSIST is to identify student ambassadors with exceptional talents – academic, personal, artistic, musical, athletic – to play important roles in America’s best secondary-level schools.

Students selected through country competitions receive scholarships to attend independent day or boarding schools. They are valued members of the school communities and are supported by school faculty and ASSIST staff throughout their exchange year. Students find their ASSIST year to be life-changing, and their views of themselves and the world are transformed over the course of ten months.

ASSIST has been active in Spain for 35 years, with 293 alumni from schools and cities across the country. ASSIST is represented in Spain by Mr. George Semler and Ms. Katherine Semler.



ASSIST

ASSIST is a nonprofit educational and cultural exchange organization that promotes dialogue among many nations and the United States. ASSIST is officially recognized by the U.S. government as an authorized exchange program.

ASSIST’s central headquarters are located in Suffield, Connecticut, USA. ASSIST also has colleagues and affiliate offices in:

- Australia
- Austria
- Bulgaria
- China
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Germany
- Hungary
- Israel
- Lithuania
- Moldova
- Slovakia
- South Africa
- Spain
- Sweden
- Vietnam

ASSIST is governed by a 24-member Board of Directors. In January of 2000, the Board appointed Robert A. Stanley, Jr. as the third president of ASSIST. Mr. Stanley served in American independent schools for thirteen years and also has experience in the corporate world. He manages the staffs of the affiliate offices around the world and is responsible for the daily operations of the organization. Mr. Stanley is a graduate of Suffield Academy, Brown University and Yale University Divinity School.

The Member Schools

Independent or private schools in the United States are famous for their high scholarship, for their small class sizes, for the personal attention given to the specific talents and interests of students, for their programs and facilities in studies, the arts and athletics, and for their highly qualified faculty. These schools prepare students to attend the most selective American colleges and universities.

All schools are members of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and so share a serious philosophical commitment to education in the broadest sense – intellectual, moral, physical and emotional.

These schools rarely grant scholarships to international students. Through a partnership with these schools and by virtue of the long record of success of ASSIST students, schools seek ASSIST students actively and offer scholarships to recognize the impact the students are expected to make on their peers, host families and faculty members in the community.

Program Overview

Each student will depart for the U.S. in August 2010 to participate in an Orientation program organized by ASSIST. After four days of orientation, ASSIST makes arrangements to send each student to his or her school. If the school is not already in session, a brief stay with a host family associated with the school will be arranged prior to the opening of the academic year. Students attending boarding schools reside in dormitories; students attending day schools reside with volunteer families selected by the school.

ASSIST stays in touch with students throughout the year through a monthly mailing, periodic reminders and paperwork, and visits to a segment of the schools. ASSIST staff are available to students, parents and schools should questions or difficulties arise.

Students are required to stay in the U.S. for the entire ten months. Students in boarding schools spend vacations and holidays with the families of classmates. Parental visits are welcome in the second half of the year. The school year ends in late May or early June.

Students must return home at the conclusion of the ASSIST experience to share with peers, friends and family what has been learned, the foundation that makes ASSIST an exchange experience.



The ASSIST Class of 2009/10

In the past year, ASSIST conducted competitions in 14 countries on behalf of member schools. ASSIST representatives and colleagues in those countries reviewed the credentials of more than 1,500 applicants. Of those candidates, ASSIST staff and Board members traveled to interview 710 finalists. From this impressive candidate pool, we placed 76 students on full scholarship and 45 students on partial scholarship at 77 member schools.

Students are encouraged to undertake challenging course work, and a vast majority select honors or AP courses among their scheduled subjects. All students are required to take English Literature and United States History. In addition to their challenging course load, students make notable contributions to extra-curricular activities. Each is supported by an academic advisor, and an ASSIST liaison colleague is designated at each school.



ASSIST alumni are always eager to speak of their experiences and share what they have learned. You may be interested to speak with a peer who has been an ASSIST student. Please notify us if you would like to contact an ASSIST alum in your area.

Your Candidacy

Candidacy for a place in the ASSIST program is very competitive and is open to students between 15 and 18 years of age. Criteria for selection include:

- Academic achievement
- Special talents
- Strong interests
- Personal qualities

Students make written application through ASSIST's in-country representative, and interviews are offered to the most impressive candidates. Interviews are held in Barcelona, Zaragoza and Madrid in January 2010, and decisions are made immediately after the interviews. Scholars selected will begin their American year in August 2010.

Owing to the competitive nature of the program, ASSIST cannot guarantee places. It is important, therefore, for each candidate to keep other options open. A few well qualified students not selected for full scholarships can also attend American independent schools on partial scholarships. These students pay part of the direct cost of attending the school.

For information and application materials, please contact:

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Family Expenses

To underwrite the organizational costs involved, a fee is charged to all participants. The ASSIST program fee for the 2010/11 academic year is US\$9,950. ASSIST's program fee covers administrative costs, an Orientation program upon arrival in America, transportation for each student from the Orientation to the host family or school, and general operating expenses, which include communication with and support of students, parents and schools throughout the year.

Each year, ASSIST receives many more applications from qualified students than we have full scholarships to offer. In these instances, partial scholarships may be offered to candidates. The ASSIST program fee in 2010/11 for partial scholarship students is US \$23,500.

In addition to the fee, families are responsible for round-trip airfare expenses from Spain to the U.S., the return trip from the school to the port of entry at the end of the year, health and accident insurance, the medical examination, spending money (about \$150/month), and any activity fees and expenses (such as books and supplies) charged by the school.

Those selected for ASSIST full scholarships are exempted from the school tuition charges, which range to \$46,600 at boarding schools in 2009/10.



What ASSIST Alumni Are Saying

Each year, we ask ASSIST students to give thought to their experiences and to complete a thorough questionnaire. The reflections below were shared by recent ASSIST students.



Before school started, all of the new students were gotten together and we were asked to write a motto by which we would like to live our experience here, and then put it in an envelope that we would get to see when we finished the school year. I wrote to myself that I should prove that a student from a country that nobody knows is able to participate in the life of this school and become a part of it socially, academically, and athletically. I think I have lived up to this...this means a lot to me as a person and as a representative of my country and culture.

I spent Christmas with my best friend's family. I started to feel a little bit homesick at this time, and was thinking about my family at home. This was the first Christmas I spent without my mother. All of us sat down to have dinner, and my best friend's mother said: "Lana, I know that I can not take the place of your mother. But I want you to know that we consider you a part of our family. We lead a very modest life, but we have each other and you will always have us." That meant a lot to me, and I really enjoyed spending that special holiday with them.

In February, as part of a month long Experience Centered Seminar, I got an opportunity to learn sign language and to volunteer as a helper in the Colorado School for The Deaf and Blind. It was an amazing learning experience. It changed some of my beliefs and views, especially when it comes to the deaf culture. Also, however clichéd it may seem, this experience did help me to appreciate life more.

The most important experience for me was that I was able to participate in a school community where I was completely trusted and respected because of my personality and the achievements I have made. I can not point out enough that I have never experienced a community with such a commitment to trust, respect, and honor.

The accomplishment that meant the most to me was winning a heat in the New England swimming championships. I dropped 3 seconds in my time. I heard my teammates screaming "German Power" and saw my coach looking at

me (like "are you serious????") and pointing at my time. That was the best feeling ever...On the other hand, I really enjoyed going to church with my roommate's family. My roommate is black, and I was the only white guy in the church. I love the way that his family celebrates God and I won't ever forget this experience.

You know, every friendship consists of two parts - giving and learning. I learned a lot from my friends and I hope that they learned about many different things from me. I think that most of these friendships will last for a lifetime...

My favorite courses are US History and English, because you learn a lot about America and its culture, by learning on the one hand about the history, but also by reading the works of American writers, which gives you the impression of the feelings that Americans had at certain points in time. It is a lot of fun to learn about a culture in this way - you get to see the world out of another point of view. I think it makes you a more knowing, caring, and accepting person.

I earned some athletic honors, like first team all metro conference, 1st team all district, number 3 player in the district, and state honorable mention...Still, I missed a penalty kick in the boys regional finals (we lost the game). It was one of the saddest moments of my exchange year, but the way my teammates cheered me up was incredible.



Many people told me that the friendships here would not be really good ones, but I have to say, I have found some of the best friends I have ever had. I have three friends with whom I really talk about everything, and I can not imagine leaving them and my other friends soon. I think that these friendships are just "better" because I have more in common with these girls and also because we live together. I think another important part is that we do not have boys at our school. We do not have to hide behind a mask to please the boys.

I just want to thank ASSIST for this incredible opportunity. Being in the USA for one year changed my entire view of life and my opinion about a lot of things... I do not know how my life is going to be after I return to Bulgaria, but I know that being able to share my experiences with others is something very important and something that I owe my country.



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ASSIST is a nonprofit organization with tax exempt status and is incorporated in the state of Vermont. ASSIST is designated by the United States State Department as an authorized Exchange Visitor Program. ASSIST is also able to facilitate the issuance of the J-1 visa under which our students study in the U.S. for one academic year on Exchange Visitor status.

ASSIST does not discriminate nor does it condone harassment on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, age, sexual orientation or any other basis proscribed by applicable policies or laws.

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