



## Gonzaga-in-Florence

**BEGINNING THIS FALL, GONZAGA** teacher education students can take their passion for the classroom across the globe to Italy. For the first time, courses required for teacher certification are offered in Florence, providing opportunity for teachers-in-training to study abroad and stay on track for graduation.

“It’s very difficult for education students to finish in four years,” said Jon Sunderland, dean of the School of Education. “They major in a subject area in the arts and sciences, then have the core to complete, and on top of that have their certification courses. Before the addition of the education courses in Florence, it would have been nearly impossible for these students to study abroad without getting behind.”

Education students can choose a semester or the possibility of year-long study, depending on their status with core classes and their particular major.

“We asked ourselves,” said Sunderland, “what best benefits the students in terms of their courses that we can combine with the study abroad program in Florence?” He tipped his hat to the School of Engineering for paving the way in designing a collection of courses for single-semester study.

“Let’s say you’re a social studies teacher – and now you’ve walked across the Colosseum; you’ve trudged across the same ground as Roman soldiers. This so expands the horizons of the students, in their own aesthetic understanding and reasoning,” said Sunderland. “They begin to ask, ‘We are in the cradle of the renaissance; how does that inform my teaching?’”

Education courses often are tied to a field experience, in which students observe, plan and teach lessons in the classroom. Providing that extra structure required meticulous planning, Sunderland said. “Gonzaga-in-Florence Dean Patrick Burke has been very

helpful in setting up intentional, careful partnerships with the international schools (that teach in English) in Florence. Now we are able to provide an in-school experience for our students.”

Courses offered in Florence include assessment methods, classroom literacy, classroom management and the connected field experiences.

“We are not living in isolated countries restricted by artificial boundaries of travel limitations. We live in an increasingly international community,” Sunderland said. “Our students need to experience how education works in other countries. They will see the education systems of Italy, of Europe, and be able to make comparisons between how things are done there and how they are done here. They will start to view education as a worldwide system.”

– Autumn Jones (’10)