



UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

March 2019

Dear Parents,

I am writing you as the Vice President, Dean and Director of the University of Dallas Rome program—one of the premier U.S. study-abroad programs in Italy today. The purpose of this letter is to make sure that you are fully informed as to some of the personal challenges and cultural differences that your child may encounter in the event that he or she attends the Rome Program in the Fall of 2019 or Spring of 2020. I hope that this letter will assure you that the Rome Program is in the position to give your child the safety, security, and excellent education that he or she deserves. By writing you, I also hope to raise your awareness about some of the things that are beyond the program's control—or perhaps, just “come with the territory”—so that you can do your own part to prepare your child for the experience ahead.

As you know, the University of Dallas Rome Program has a distinctive approach to education. Even when abroad, University of Dallas students are still held to the very highest academic standards. Hence, one of the requirements for success in Rome is that participants must dedicate themselves first and foremost to the rigorous academic program that is offered. I know from experience that striking a balance between this commitment and excitement and promise of many new cultural, social, and spiritual experiences can sometimes be challenging for students.

Students in the program live far from home, travel almost wherever they wish and with whomever they wish, and are exposed to new opportunities as well as new temptations. Students may drink legally in Europe, and Rome seems to have almost as many pubs as it does piazzas. This is not to say that Europe is less safe than the USA; but it is undoubtedly true that as in the States there are areas in which one should not venture, and the risks increase at night. In Europe, for those who do not know the local language and customs, and who have been drinking, the risks can be much greater. For this reason we have strict regulations regarding alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and conduct while participating in the Rome program.

Such rules are designed to remind students of their responsibilities as adults and to help them keep themselves and their friends out of harm's way. Students who are not prepared to follow these rules, however, can easily slip into difficulties, even to the point of harming themselves or endangering others. Students live in a tight community on the Rome campus and individuals' actions can impact their own safety and health, the welfare of the group at large, and the success of the program.

On this general point of your child's welfare, please be aware that medical, disciplinary, and academic problems can be more difficult to take care of over here, and sometimes students have to be sent home mid-semester in order that such problems be addressed in the more familiar and supportive circumstances of the United States. If this is necessary, expenses including but not limited to loss of credit hours, tuition and fees, coupled with additional expenses and services, medical care, and multiple airline tickets (if the student needs accompaniment) back to the United States quickly add up and can become a significant financial burden.

You know your children better than I do, and I need your help in deciding whether they are ready to face the various demands of the Rome study abroad program. Not all college students are ready for the challenge, and as the Vice President, Dean and Director of the Rome Program, I think it is important to be frank about this before the rigors of the semester begin. Please speak with your children regarding the wonderful opportunity being presented to them, about how to cope with pressures, about taking care of themselves and about the necessity of mature and responsible behavior. With your help in discussing these issues, I can be more certain that your son/daughter is ready to embark upon this wonderful opportunity at the appropriate time during their academic career at UD.

I look forward to greeting each of the new students personally on the Rome Campus next year.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Hatlie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "P".

Dr. Peter Hatlie
VP, Dean and Director
University of Dallas Rome Campus