On Campus

CAA Hosts Barcelona Trip

Summer 2011



Columbians on a recent CAA-sponsored trip to Barcelona, Spain, are pictured here in architect Antoni Gaudi's Parc Guell. (Javier Almar)

In May, about 100 Columbia alumni and friends gathered in Barcelona to experience the art, architecture, history, music, and food of the scenic Mediterranean coastal city. The four-day trip, a signature event of the Columbia Alumni Association (CAA), included private tours and discussions with Columbia faculty.

“We had alumni of all ages come from all over the world,” says Ilene Markay-Hallack, the Office of Alumni and Development’s executive director for University events and programs. “There was a wonderful energy — it was like getting to participate in Columbia classes, except while viewing a beautiful city.”

On a walking tour, Columbia architecture professor Jorge Otero-Pailos explained how Barcelona’s old Gothic Quarter has been restored over the past century as part of a deliberate project to celebrate Catalonian culture; arts dean Carol Becker brought the group to museums showcasing the city’s vibrant contemporary art scene; and economist Xavier Sala-i-Martin delivered an entertaining talk about how the Spanish clothing company Zara liberally institutes its employees’ suggestions — a successful approach that Sala-i-Martin cautiously translated into parenting advice.

The weekend also included a two-day CAA International Club Leaders Conference, where alumni leaders exchanged ideas about how best to run their clubs.



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