



SLU-Madrid Spring Newsletter

A Message from the Rector

Dear alumni, supporters, and friends of Saint Louis University-Madrid:

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the new SLU-Madrid alumni newsletter! I am thrilled to see the launch of this newsletter as part of our focus on deeper and stronger alumni engagement. I am eager to share news of exciting things happening in Madrid, as well as to hear back from you regarding the exciting things you, our alumni, are doing around the world.

The story of SLU-Madrid is a story of exciting growth. We have more than 1,600 students on campus this semester — a new record enrollment. The diverse student body is exceptional, with degree-seeking and study abroad students from more than 80 countries, creating a culturally rich and vibrant environment that reflects diverse languages, cultural traditions and faith traditions. Yet, each student shares common characteristics of the desire to be bold and adventurous and commitment to understanding the world better. Our students give me so much hope for the future.

Growth has not been limited to the student body. The campus footprint, made up of five distinct properties, continues to grow. We offer 23 majors that can be completed entirely at SLU-Madrid. We have added professional positions in academic advising, career services, institutional advancement and more to better support our students. We have expanded the faculty body, hiring incredible scholars from around the world who sought to become part of something special. It is an exciting time at SLU-Madrid. I feel so privileged and blessed to be part of this community.

Yet, even as that exciting growth takes place, SLU-Madrid continues to be the campus you know and love: a close-knit community where human connection, relationships and a sense of belonging are paramount and where our shared mission matters. Those things will endure.

Enjoy this inaugural issue. Keep in touch and let us know how you're doing. And let me know when we can expect you back on campus. We look forward to welcoming you home!

William P. Johnson, J.D.

Rector

Saint Louis University-Madrid

Student Spotlight: 2026 Trip to Kenya



Over the Semana Santa break, Saint Louis University-Madrid students participated in a 10-day conservation field course in Kenya led by Professor Iván Sánchez, Ph.D., in collaboration with Asociación Biomas (Bio+). Building on the success of the inaugural experience in 2025, the program blended hands-on ecological research with community-based conservation, working alongside

Indigenous groups such as the Yaaku of the Mukogodo Forest. This academic trip offered students the opportunity to engage directly with local communities, deepen their understanding of African ecosystems and contribute to ongoing environmental initiatives.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Alumni Spotlights

The Hon. Richard Tognarelli ('71 A&S, '74 LAW) was inducted into the Christian Brothers College High School Alumni Hall of Fame in September in recognition of his outstanding contributions as a student and alumnus. He is retired from the Madison County Circuit Court. He and his wife, Gail, were members of SLU-Madrid's first class.



Felipe Queipo Rego ('06) and Professor Laura Muro Royano, Ph.D., participated in the Second World Social Summit for Social Development in Doha, Qatar, in November. Queipo Rego is a program management and communications officer with the United Nations and has served for 17 years with a passion for strategic partnerships, civic engagement and sustainable development. On April 9, he received the Professional Achievement Award at the SLU-Madrid Distinguished Alumni Awards for advancing SLU's mission through his work at the UN.

Iván Lopez ('94) is the Managing Director of Deloitte in Madrid, Spain, where he leads strategic initiatives and advises clients across multiple industries. A dedicated alumnus, Ivan has played a key role in strengthening the connection between Deloitte

and SLU-Madrid. Through his support and mentorship, many students and young alumni have secured valuable internship and employment opportunities at Deloitte.

María Trigo Yuste ('22) holds a Master's in International Cooperation and Development from the Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo. Now a *técnico económico y de proyectos* officer at the CIDEAL Foundation, she spends part of each year in Mauritania, Africa, supporting sustainable, climate-adapted agriculture and helping communities build self-sufficient irrigation systems.

Faculty/Staff Spotlights

César Rioja, SLU-Madrid's Sports Director for over 25 years, has long built community through sports and student life. His children, Rodrigo Rioja Achiaga '28 and Alejandra Rioja Achiaga '29—both International Business students—continue that legacy, sharing his Billikeño identity and passion for basketball. Rodrigo plays center in the Real Madrid Liga ACB League, while balancing athletics and academics, reflecting a family commitment to excellence and community and love of SLU-Madrid's global campus.





Professor Paolo Saona, Ph.D., was an invited international scholar at the International Postgraduate Week hosted by Universidad Católica de la Santísima Concepción in Chile in November 2025. He led lectures and research workshops on sustainable finance and advanced methods, mentored graduate students, and presented work on ESG disclosure, corporate gender diversity, and governance—strengthening collaboration and enhancing postgraduate research and global engagement.

Upcoming Events

- **June 2:** [SLU-Madrid Alumni Reception in St. Louis](#) - Reconnect with classmates, meet Rector William P. Johnson and hear the latest updates from the Madrid campus.
- **June 6:** [SLU-Madrid Alumni Reception in Chicago](#) - Hosted by fellow SLU-Madrid alumni Brian, Barbara and Aaron Morrow, come together over Spanish tapas and hear the latest from the Madrid campus.
- **Nov. 4-8:** **SLU-Madrid Homecoming in Spain** - Save the date and join us in Spain as we celebrate SLU-Madrid's Homecoming Weekend! Whether you studied at SLU-Madrid for a semester or all four years, all alumni and current parents are invited to this special weekend of events in Spain.

Alumni Tool and Opportunities

- SLU-Madrid's [Department of Career Services](#) can help alumni find opportunities, assist with graduate school applications and provide coaching and mentoring. Learn how to get involved, support current students and use resources to leverage your own next career opportunity.
 - Alumni with an active SLU email account are eligible for a [free ApplyLab subscription](#). Find thousands of listings, get instant feedback on your resume, discover career fairs and networking opportunities worldwide and track the application process to keep yourself organized and see your growth over time.
 - We invite all alumni to stay connected and help shape the next generation of leaders. If you're interested in mentoring a student, offering internship opportunities at your company or sharing career guidance, please take a few minutes to complete our [alumni engagement survey](#). Your involvement can make a lasting impact on students' professional journeys.
 - Are you an alum who graduated with a degree in psychology, or are you working in a similar field? Join the [SLU-Madrid Psychology Alumni LinkedIn Group](#) to connect with fellow professionals.
 - Join the [SLU-Madrid Alumni LinkedIn Group](#)! Open to all alumni, whether you spent a semester or four years on campus, this is a space to connect, share opportunities, exchange ideas and celebrate achievements. Stay engaged with events and updates while strengthening ties across Madrid, St. Louis and our global Billikeño community.
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Share Your Story

We'd love to hear your SLU-Madrid story! Share it with us to help strengthen our alumni network and develop meaningful resources.

- Fill out the alumni engagement survey.
- [Submit an alumni story, accomplishment or update](#), and we will contact you.

The Billikeño Alumni Newsletter is published by the SLU-Madrid Office of Advancement. For questions or submissions, email alumni-madrid@slu.edu. We encourage you to forward and share this newsletter with the SLU-Madrid alum in your life, whether they studied on campus for a semester or four years.