



## Who we are

### OUR INSTITUTE

Gustolab International Food Systems and Sustainability (GLi) is the first center of study and research in Italy dedicated to academic programs on the theme of Food Studies and Sustainability. GLi is the academic headquarters for Study abroad programs specific in Food, Media and Nutrition for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst. GLi's programs and courses focus on food themes and promote critical thinking, trans-disciplinary and multicultural knowledge acquisition through field research that incorporates ethnographic analysis and interactions with communities and visits to territories that are vital for food production and food culture in Italy. Students emerge with skills and training that can be implemented in their future studies and careers (the future experts of food systems and sustainability).

<https://youtu.be/Ffb8UnQb180><https://youtu.be/333hkrbYrWY?list=PLm-vA9zG8sakUaFt9ted34ZQvhTtEerDR>

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### Directors' Message

**Dear Students and Faculty,** as CEO of Gustolab International Food Systems and Sustainability (GLi), I am pleased to welcome all of you here in Rome! As an Italian, I know the importance of food culture in Italy and have always considered Italy to be the perfect laboratory for studies related to food. I am happy to share that our center is celebrating its 10 anniversary this year. I remember when in 2005, following my true passion and through the opportunity to work with an enthusiastic team, I proposed and launched the idea for the first program on Food and Culture in Italy together with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This idea became a reality in 2007. Since then, Food Studies as field of study has increased in importance by becoming a field that is fundamentally interdisciplinary, and therefore many food-related study abroad programs are now flourishing as a response to the increasing awareness and demand in society. I am sure that, through our programs, you will be able to appreciate food as a cultural product of Italy but also to use food as an instrument



of analysis of our economy, society and politics. My wish is that during your study abroad, you will be able to immerse yourselves completely in the Italian culture, to have a unique experience and to broaden your horizon. Buon lavoro!

**Pier Alberto Merli, PhD**





**Exploring and driving the future of food through awareness, higher education and changing perspectives.** Gustolab International Food Systems and Sustainability (GLi) in Rome provides a strategic European base for education and research collaborations. Since its establishment with the first University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign Program in 2007, thousands of foreign students and researchers have benefited from our center’s strong links throughout Europe. I have been privileged to work as Director of GLi since its inception. As a researcher and innovator, I have found GLi to be an incredible place to foster cross-disciplinary thinking, and to educate and inspire and to enable new thinking and innovations to reach the food world and market. The synergies, collaborations and new endeavors that have come out in our programs have been spectacular right from the start. Several new initiatives and fast moving programs emerged from the first pilot program of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, including Faculty-Led Programs, Food Tours and Alumni excursions. In 2010, as a result of growing interest across UMASS Amherst, GLi together with select UMASS Amherst faculty, conceived a focused open study abroad program entitled “Critical studies on Food” to bring together different disciplines, students, professors and approaches and to help reimagine and reinvigorate the future of food. This unique, cross-disciplinary program educates, informs and prepares future food studies experts and students who want to approach the food field to understand and recognize the opportunities and influences of the exponentially growing trends, policies and technologies within agribusiness, food consumption trends and practices, as well as to understand the number of rapidly developing and converging fields that affect the future of wellness, sustainability, food practices and industry. Vibrant



community engagement programs ensure that GLi's visiting staff and students are embedded in the local context and have the opportunity to develop their understanding of contemporary Italian and European food culture. We welcome proposals for collaboration in education and research and encourage you to visit us when you are next travelling through Europe. Ciao!

**Sonia Massari, PhD**

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