

One of my goals for my time as president of the Williams College Jewish Association is to help strengthen the connection between the Jewish and Muslim communities on campus. Though many members of the Jewish community have friends who are Muslim, the organizations have historically not collaborated much in the past. I believe this is because members of both organizations are afraid of discussing Israel. A personal first step I need to make to being able to bring the organizations closer is learning more about the Levant and Gulf, as many of the students in the Muslim organization are from countries in the Middle East. Simply studying the countries in a class setting would not help me achieve my goals of better understanding the narratives of these countries, as the narratives are always changing, and exist solely in the ideas and actions of people currently in the societies. I hope that by traveling and talking with leaders and activists in countries in the Middle East, I will be able to return to Williams and have an entry point by which to begin discussions which will hopefully lead to the organizations being closer.

After completing the Ibrahim Leadership and Dialogue Program, I look forward to returning to another summer at Artsbridge. I hope to bring a broader understanding of the Middle East and its complexities to my interactions with the participants in the program. Particularly, I hope that the experience at the Ibrahim Leadership and Dialogue program will help me to learn to ask better questions about ethnicity and religion.

In the future, I hope to find a job working to help bridge the divide between Jews in Israel and in the United States. I believe that there is a great deal which the American Jewish community does not understand about Israel, and a great deal that Israeli Jews do not understand about American Jews. I hope to spend my life engaged with the cultures, and helping to foster dialogue between them. I also hope to do interfaith work in the United States helping to bridge the divide between the Jewish community and other faith communities in the United States, particularly the Christian and Muslim communities.

Finally, I also want to take away from the program a renewed sense of hope and opportunity for the Middle East. So much of what I've heard in my life about the Middle East have been stories of suffering and pain. I want to learn about organization on the ground in the Middle East which are working to improve the lives of people in the region. I hope to take this knowledge back with me to the United States, and be able to share it, in order to translate those ideas to improve life and understanding in my community.

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