

I believe that if I am accepted into the 2015 Ibrahim Leadership and Dialogue Program, I will use the experience and knowledge acquired to educate my community about the positive happenings in the Middle East that the media does not broadcast. I will actively use the knowledge I acquire to help eradicate misconceptions that many Americans have about the Middle East. I also hope that I can use the experience to influence other college students that are on my campus to choose to study abroad in the Middle East instead of the more conventional destinations such as England and Spain.

I plan to write articles in the NJCU student newspaper The Gothic Times, about the newly emerging grassroots, social activists in different areas of the Middle East. I also plan to reach out to NJCU's Muslim Student Association and organize fundraisers and plan events with the organization to bridge the gap between different religions that are seen in the Middle East. I would like to demonstrate that just because there might be differences in religions, it does not mean that the people cannot get along. Volunteering with local Muslim and women non-profit organizations in my community is also another way that I can uphold the objectives of the Ibrahim Leadership and Dialogue Program.

In becoming an immigration lawyer, it will enable me to advocate for women in the Middle East who are denied an education. I have faith that making new friends in the Middle East who are actively solving social problems in their countries, will inspire me to help change and improve foreign policies when I become an immigration lawyer. Helping to build tolerance and understanding among Americans and the cultures of the Middle East is a strong goal of mine, and I believe the best path in achieving this is as an immigration lawyer.

Jessica Coke