

My main goal by applying to this program is to increase my knowledge on interfaith issues for myself, and for the Sunni-Muslim community that I come from. Growing up in the environment that I did and then coming to college with a diverse undergraduate population made it apparent that many of the Muslim communities, especially Muslim youth, are uneducated on issues facing countries in the Middle East. In these scenarios I think its important to foster pro-interfaith approaches within Muslim communities so that a holistic understanding of political issues can be obtained, and there can be a basis for dialogue rather than unnecessary tensions.

While I am constantly learning more through interfaith discussions as well as my classes on various parts of the region, I feel that it is difficult to obtain an activist position within my community with only an academia standpoint. That's why I believe the program will help me to really experience the region and be able to put the knowledge that I've gained into a real-life perspective, giving me the real experience to serve as a reliable source and advocate within the Muslim community. The experience from the program can also be something that translates in to my academic experiences, giving me more realistic insight within my classes so that I can gain even more from them, as well as be able to contribute to my peers in seminar classes. I would hope that with my interfaith involvement it might inspire others within the community to understand and converse with members of other faiths in a more serious light.

Being able to experience the different yet similar cultures through the Leadership and Dialogue Program and conversing with different people from these countries will be extremely significant for me personally, as well as hopefully inspiring, allowing me to achieve a slightly newer and cultural perspective on countries, religions, and political issues surrounding them.

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