

DIALOGUE
INSTITUTE



Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on Religious Pluralism in the United States

June 2016

Greetings! We want to extend our congratulations to you for being selected to participate in the Summer 2016 Study of the U.S. Institute (SUSI) for Student Leaders on Religious Pluralism in the United States. You are one of 20 outstanding students from Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Syria chosen to participate in this unique five-week learning experience.

Funded by the Study of the United States Branch, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State, your program is designed to include academic study as well as direct experiences with many Americans from diverse backgrounds. The course will offer you a variety of learning opportunities including lectures, classroom discussions, field trips to historical and religious sites, volunteer service projects, cultural events and a multi-state study tour within the USA – all designed to help you increase your understanding of American democracy and the way in which religious practice is protected and expressed in U.S. society.

One of the key features of our program is the opportunity for you to observe and learn about different religious groups and their worship, devotional, and community practices. We will do this through several site visits – to Christian churches for Sunday morning worship, to a synagogue for a Friday evening Shabbat service, to Friday prayers at a local mosque, as well as visiting and talking with practitioners of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu and indigenous faiths. We know this will be a new experience for many of you, and the experiences may feel challenging at times, but students in previous SUSI programs have found these visits to be a unique and rich learning experience, and one of the highlights of the program.

Your program is taking place in the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which was the first capital of the United States. It is being created by two educational organizations – the Dialogue Institute (DI) and the International Center of Contemporary Education (ICCE). The Dialogue Institute was founded in 1978 to advance interreligious/cross-cultural understanding and scholarship through education, networking and resource development; it is related to the Department of Religion at Temple University. The ICCE, with offices in Philadelphia and Jordan, runs domestic and international programs which promote cultural understanding, and tolerance for religious, ethnic and racial differences. Together we are very eager to welcome you to the United States and to offer you a wonderful learning experience based at Temple University.

Specific information you will need before arriving in the United States will be posted on this web page: www.dialogueinstitute.org/susi-2016. Please be sure to check the page regularly as information will be added and updated as we get closer to the start of the Institute; you will want to pay special attention to the "Preparing for Your Trip" document. Likewise, feel free to email us with individual concerns or questions. And of course, when you arrive here we will be ready to orient you to the program, to the Temple University campus and to our city of Philadelphia. Above all we want you to feel comfortable throughout your program.

We sincerely hope that you will have an excellent experience here that will enrich your personal development as a student and a leader within your own community. Likewise we want to encourage connections amongst all of us that will be long-lasting, valuable and enjoyable to everyone over the years to come.

Looking forward to meeting you and sharing memorable weeks together,



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