

Gilman Alumni Representative

Ismail Warsame

Egypt, Academic Year 2006-2007

University of Maine



I was born in Somalia and became a U.S. citizen in 2006. My family was amongst the many families displaced by the Somali civil war in early 1990s. We were resettled in Portland, Maine in 2001. I attended Portland High and University of Maine respectively. During the academic year 2006-2007, I had the opportunity to study abroad in Egypt. With the help of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, I was able to cover the cost of travel, tuition, and living in Egypt.

I experienced life in Cairo, a vibrant ancient city with modern high rises and sky scrapers. My study abroad program was at the American University in Cairo, one of the most prestigious higher education institutions in the region. I attended classes and received academic credit towards my International Affairs Bachelors degree, but more importantly, I took accelerated Arabic classes and supplemented street conversation with the Egyptians to further enhance my language acquisition. I have seen the world through a different perspective, which has prepared me well to deal with multiculturalism and to overcome language obstacles.

Upon my return from the study abroad program, I worked as a peer advisor at the Office of International Programs at the University of Maine. I advised an average of about ten overseas-bound students per week. This was the perfect job for not only completing my Gilman Follow-on Project but also molding my future career interest in the international education field.

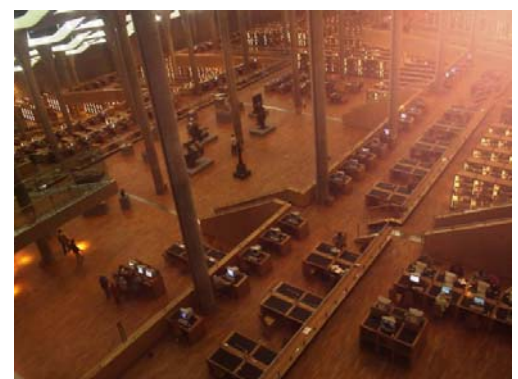
Working at the Office of International Programs gave me a glimpse of what it was like to not only work one-on-one with students, but also gave me an avenue to do what interested me - advising students about the different study abroad programs that were offered at the University of Maine. I always knew that I enjoyed working with people and not with machines, but I did not know exactly how and where to proceed. Now as a graduate student in the Higher Education program, many undergraduate students turn to me for advice regarding study abroad and scholarships, I always tell them about the opportunity provided by the Gilman International Scholarship.



Ismail visiting the Pyramids of Giza.



Ismail with the Alexander the Great statue outside the New Library of Alexandria.



Inside the New Library of Alexandria, which is dedicated to recapture the spirit of openness and scholarship of the original Bibliotheca Alexandrina.