

Professional Reflection

From the moment I enrolled in my first world history course, I knew I wanted to do more than just observe the politics that shape our world—I wanted to be part of the efforts to address global challenges. I became quite passionate about the fascinating accounts of civilizations flourishing and fading, the fights for human rights, and the group efforts to bring about peace. I am a Hispanic woman who firmly believes that participating in international diplomacy is an effective way to make a positive impact and contribute to the welfare of people all around the world, as well as a way to comprehend our complicated global society. For this reason, I graduated from the University of Arizona with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with an emphasis in International Relations and a minor in Psychology in May 2023.

I am currently pursuing my master's degree in the International Security Studies program at the University of Arizona. As for my professional experience, I am working at the International Rescue Committee in Tucson, Arizona, as a public benefits intern. I meet with refugees and asylees from all over the world and help them navigate and educate them on the complex US system to make sure they receive the benefits and support they need to start a new and stable life here.

Every course in the ISS program has been enjoyable, and I have gained plenty of knowledge from them all. I now better understand the security concerns and issues facing nations worldwide. The program helped me define what I want to do with my degree, which is to help vulnerable communities and advocate for human rights and security for those in need.

Given that my job at the IRC is primarily focused on helping refugees and vulnerable populations, it has a direct impact on international security concerns, especially those of

migration and human security. The internship provides practical experience in assisting displaced populations, understanding the difficulties refugees face, and working on advocacy and policy initiatives—all of which are related to international security. My appreciation for peace and security in my life and my country has also grown as a result of this internship. It has, however, also made me realize how crucial it is to use our resources to help others and how vulnerable people are most impacted by fluctuating policies, particularly under the current administration.

The ISS program has been instrumental in enhancing my understanding of global security challenges. The courses covered a wide range of topics that are directly applicable to my work at the IRC. Courses such as Politics and Security in Asia, Europe, and Latin America helped me understand how regional security issues impact migration trends. Courses in Global and Political Economy have allowed me to better understand the economic forces behind displacement and conflict. Courses about the emerging powers in the global system have contributed to my familiarity with how global power relations impact communities. In addition, International Relations theories and practices provided me with analytical frameworks for understanding real-world security dilemmas, and these don't even come close to describing the amount of knowledge I've gained and applied in my career as a result of this program. My capacity to engage with refugee communities and comprehend the policies driving migration and humanitarian aid has improved because of the knowledge I have acquired.

Due to all of the reasons mentioned before, I plan to keep building a career in international security. As a driven individual with a passion for global affairs, my goal is to work in international organizations like the UN, IRC, or NGOs focused on human rights and peace advocacy. I intend to do my bit to make a difference in the world.

I first chose this career path a few years ago thinking I wanted to help others. I wanted to use my knowledge and power to fight for what is right and what everyone deserves. My career goals have only been reinforced by the ISS program, which helped me decide that I want to focus on advocacy, policy work, and human security. By working closely with communities impacted by conflict, displacement, and security issues, I hope to bridge the gap between policy and real-world impact.

This program has enabled me to have the tools and opportunities I need to succeed in the field of international security and realize my dream of making a significant impact. It has already been beneficial and will continue to be. It provided me with an in-depth understanding of security challenges and prepared me for roles in advocacy, policy, and humanitarian aid. I will be better prepared to deal with challenging security issues in my chosen field as a result of the research and analytical abilities I have developed.

The program's global focus guarantees that I am properly prepared to work for any international security or human rights organization. Adding to this, I would still feel as prepared as I am today even if I were to choose a different professional path in the field of international security, such as one that focused more on state security. The program has not only given me knowledge but also a strong network and confidence to pursue meaningful opportunities.

The International Security Studies program has been an invaluable opportunity that has inspired my academic and professional pursuits. Through its diverse and comprehensive coursework, I have gained a deeper understanding of global security challenges and how they intersect with human rights and advocacy. My passion for helping vulnerable populations has been heightened by this program, which has also given me the knowledge and skills I need to have a significant impact. As I continue my work at the IRC and pursue a career in international security, I am

confident that the insights and expertise I have developed will serve me well. I'm determined to use my degree to make the world a more just and safer place, whether that be through advocacy, policy, or direct humanitarian work. I am incredibly grateful for the ISS program and excited to see where this path takes me in the future.