

1 Question 1

Question 1: What are your personal and academic reasons for wishing to participate in this Dialogue of Civilizations program?

Personally, I have always wanted to visit intellectual high points in other countries. For the most part, when I visit a new country, I travel with my family and together, we visit the standard tourist locations. We walk the walk, and we see the sights. For example, when I visited Dubai for a week, I saw many attractions, which include the Burj Khalifa, Burj Al Arab, the man-made palm islands, the famous indoor ski slope in the Mall of the Emirates. While all of these sights were fascinating, and enjoyable to watch, not once did I experience the brilliant intellectual legacy that the Arabs left us. I did not see a single university, or museum, or place of learning. I marveled in the standard views that every other person who walked my footsteps had seen. I wanted something more. I wanted to see the tools that early Arab astronomers used to follow the movements of the celestial bodies. I wanted to see the books that early mathematicians wrote to explain the concept of zero. I yearned to appreciate the contributions that these early intellectuals allowed us to come so far. This is something that I hope this trip to Italy will help me to achieve. We will visit places like the Museum of Computational Tools and Fondazione Scienza e Technica. Both of which places that represent and portray significant human intellectual advancements.

I also wish to experience the culture of this country without that layer of tourist clouding my vision. When I typically visit another country, I typically only stay for a week. That is not enough time to develop a schedule to incorporate leisure time to truly *live* in that country. To talk with the locals, learn from them. That is what I believe it means to truly experience a new culture.

2 Question 2

Question 2: How will the program further your academic and career goals?

I am a Computer Science major. Design algorithms, analyzing their complexity and optimizing them is my thing. The morning class we will be taking every morning in Italy will be catered to different revolutions in scientific thought. Professor Meleis described 2 periods in particular. The first was an era of significant scientific progress. This was a period that scientists believe that any problem can be solved with enough brain power and resources. The second was an era in which scientists discovered that there were particular problems that were extremely difficult to solve. There might even be a possibility that they cannot be solved in an efficient manner. I believe understanding these types of problems is a way to truly grasp the limitations of certain algorithms and understanding the predicaments of computer science at its core. In Theory of Computation, we discussed problems of NP completeness and undecidability problems in relation to proving their theories. In this study abroad class, I

expect to see more concrete and real examples of the theories we discussed in class. This will help solidify and connect the theories to the concrete. These are problems that are tackled every day in back-end software design. Coming up with the most efficient way to design and implement algorithms is a useful skill, and knowing the upper bounds of those limitations can only help.

3 Question 3

Question 3: What is your previous travel and language experience, if any?

4 Question 4

Question 4: What courses have you taken which are directly relevant to the program?