

USEFP News

THE UNITED STATES EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION IN PAKISTAN

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Getting Involved: The World Beyond the Classroom

Editorial by Melinda E. Inman, Assistant Director, Student Activities Office at Wheaton College.

Campus life on a college or university is an exciting world full of new people, organizations, and opportunities. Regardless of the institution you choose, there will be many opportunities to get involved in the world beyond the classroom. During this transitional period from high school to college, it's a good idea to think about what will be important to you during your college career. Getting involved should be high on your priority list. I've compiled a short list of why getting involved is worth your time. Here are my top five:

1. Give of yourself to something bigger than yourself.

The community life of a college campus is based upon students who give of their time and energy to something bigger than themselves. Most will not get paid for their efforts, but their hard work to enrich campus life will provide them with a priceless gift of working for something bigger than themselves. When you place value on serving others, the reward is sweeter than you'd think. Getting involved is a powerful way to learn the important life lesson that the world doesn't really revolve around you. Use your motivation of wanting a new experience to help others and your school. You'll be amazed at how good it feels to give of yourself to something bigger than yourself.

2. Don't be lopsided!

It's easy as a college student to live a life that is lopsided. It's either all or nothing. This mentality can set in before you know it. So it's important to branch out and get involved outside of the classroom to balance the experience that you're gaining inside the classroom. One of the greatest aspects of college is that there is an amazing amount to get involved in. Those who don't take advantage of it,

truly miss out. If you have a strong interest in a certain area, whether it's a political affiliation, a social justice issue, or certain cultural background, getting involved with a student organization will provide opportunities for you to grow in your area of interest. Being involved in a student organization provides you the opportunity to live a college life that is balanced and well rounded. It's not impossible!

3. It should always be about the people.

Being an active participant in a student organization, athletic team, or even an artistic troupe will, without a doubt, greatly impact you. Regardless of the group, your involvement will connect you to the personality and heartbeat of your school. This happens through the interaction you'll gain with your peers and with the faculty/staff advisors. Your social sphere will exponentially grow. You will get to know fellow students that maybe live in a different residence hall or who commute to campus. You will get to work alongside faculty or staff members who have given their careers to helping young people like you. Get-



ting involved provides those priceless opportunities to make new friends and to grow in relationships that would have never crossed your path otherwise.

4. "I get to do what?"

This is a phrase I often hear from my student leaders. Student organizations provide college students with unlimited opportunities to gain life experience. Experience that includes but is not limited to: event planning, managing a budget, running a meeting, team building, updating campus policy, producing a concert, or planning a campus wide celebration. Working with both peers and faculty/staff members, students are given the opportunity to learn the "how to" of these important skills in a flexible and fun environment. As you grow intellectually, being involved in a student organization is often teaching you about the life lessons that are needed for the everyday life which happens outside the classroom.

5. Its pays to have connections... seriously.

Before you know it, you'll be walking across the stage at your college graduation. Even before that ceremony, you'll be asked a million times what careers plans you have for the future. One of the major benefits of getting involved while in college is that you've created a bigger world for yourself. Often times, college students get involved in a certain area of interest that will lead to a future career path (i.e. joining the Tutoring Society if you might be interested in becoming a teacher). Not to mention, the relationships you formed along the way may lead to either job leads or strong recommendations from your faculty/ staff advisor. Resume building should not be your sole reason for getting involved, but it is one of the brightest benefits. Along with the experience and training you'll gain, your involvement in college will play a large role in where you end up after college.

As you can tell, I'm highly biased about the importance of getting involved in college. After signing up for classes and settling into your residence hall, finding out how to get involved in your school should be next on your to-do list. It will play a major role in how satisfied you are with your college experience. The benefits are directly related and far outweigh the option of just keeping to yourself! As a new student, it's important to find the small ways for you to get involved that will open other doors for future campus leadership. Remember... getting involved is up to your initiative and your interest and you don't have to sign up for everything. Put yourself out there and as scary as that might be, it's worth it. I promise!

USEFP Interviews two Students Admitted to MIT

Article and Interview by USEFP Educational Advisor **Shazieh Gorji**

Isra Shabbir and Saad Shaheen are students from Roots International School. Both have been accepted to M.I.T for the fall semester of 2010. We at USEFP interviewed them to get a peek into their application process. Congratulations Isra and Saad: we wish you all the best!

When did you decide you wanted to go to the United States for Higher Education?

ISRA: Approximately 5 years ago when I was in grade 8, my sister was applying to colleges in the US. Looking at her do all the hard work, I too made a resolution then and there, that I'd pursue my higher education not anywhere but in the US. And God has helped me immensely with this ambition.

SAAD: I decided three years ago, in 2007. So many people around me were going to the US and it inspired me to start working hard to go there.

Why M.I.T.?

ISRA: There are just innumerable reasons to this question. Basically, MIT has been my dream school ever since I entered high school. I would always read blogs of current students, learn about their eccentric lives, and actually advocate MIT to my friends. However the main reason why I always wanted to go to MIT was because I found myself a match for the Institute.

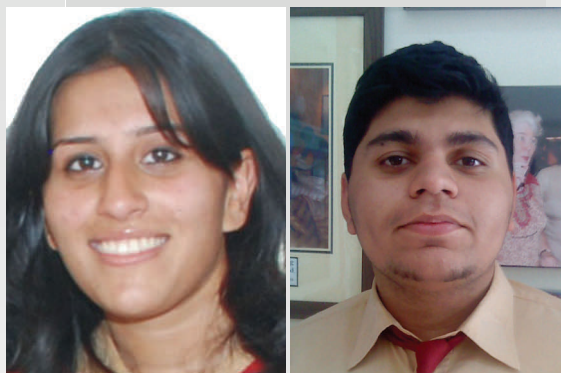
MIT's mission is to bring a positive impact in the world- this goes hand in hand with my goal of contributing to the betterment of society through the years of my education. I know this is a long term goal, but I am indisputably assured that MIT will equip me with the tools I need in order to achieve this goal in life. Moreover, I believe in an education where research is fostered at the undergraduate level. MIT's extensive research opportunities will be great to start off with! Lastly, I like the crowd at MIT. Everyone is so highly accomplished, smart [or rather genius] but still very helpful and friendly toward each other.

SAAD: There is no parallel.

How did you select MIT and what other schools did you apply to?

ISRA: By God's grace, my sister is also an

MIT graduate and that's how I first got to know of this amazing Institution. Eventually, I made all possible searches about it, read their blogs/research articles, and became so impressed that the Institute always topped my application list. Other colleges I've applied to are: Reach Colleges- Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Williams, Amherst, NYU Abu Dhabi; Mid-tier colleges: Middlebury, Smith, Bowdoin; Safety schools: Ohio Wesleyan



"If you have a dream, pursue it!"- Isra Shabbir

"Go to your dream university"- Saad Shaheen

University, Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

SAAD: I also applied to Princeton, Harvard, Richmond, Yale, Swarthmore and a couple of others while also applying to the UK. I was interested in LSE until I got my acceptance from MIT. Like I said, there is no parallel.

When did you start the application process?

ISRA: I would say by the beginning of my freshman year at High School. What I mean by freshman year is that it was when I actually started preparing myself for being in a better position to apply to colleges. But in a more specific sense, I began the application process in September of 2009.

SAAD: I started in the summer of 2009 by registering for the Stanford Summer School, working on my essay writing and making sure my extracurricular activities were fitting my focus.

Did you apply for an early decision anywhere?

ISRA: No, I did not apply for Early Decision

anywhere. I wanted to keep my options open.
SAAD: No I did not.

What program have you applied for?

ISRA: I'm still undecided about my program; I have tentatively planned to major in one of the following courses: Course 14 (Economics), Course 16 (Aeronautics-Astronautics), Course 9 (Brain and Cognitive Sciences). MIT has its unique system of naming its courses with numbers- I thought it'd be interesting to share some of them here.

SAAD: Economics! I want to return to Pakistan as a top economist and help with the economy.

What was the most daunting aspect of the application process?

ISRA: Having to sum up my whole life, my thoughts and perspectives, my experiences and my dreams in the best possible way in a mere 1000 words essay.

SAAD: The amount of colleges to choose from and the deadlines!

How many revisions of your college essays did you have to do?

ISRA: Hmm, maybe 5. I just wrote a planned draft and then modified the grammar and the phrasing wherever necessary.

SAAD: I wrote many supplementary essays and revised my essays at least 20 times. During the summer school counselors advised us and we got help through writing workshops.

What was your essay about?

ISRA: My essay was a brief insight into my life; main inclusions were my family background, the place I grew up in, my school life, hardships on my way, values that mean the most to me and most importantly what my dreams and goals are all about.

SAAD: My main essay was about the Economic Conference I arranged at school.

Have you ever been to the United States? What do you know about Boston?

ISRA: I haven't been to the United States, but I have viewed most of the country vicariously backed by web info. As far as I know Boston/Cambridge is home to some of the biggest Educational Institutions, is one of the big hubs

USEFP Interviews two Students Admitted to MIT

Continued...

of the United States and owns a very rich history. I am very excited to explore the museums and old structures located in the City. I also read somewhere that people of Boston are quite frank and friendly; so that's something else I look forward to experiencing.

SAAD: I have never been to Boston but I hear it is the city of lights, institutions and universities. It is my dream to go there.

What are your apprehensions/if any? What are you most excited about?

ISRA: Well my greatest apprehension is being away from family. But I believe that's what taking pains and being patient is all about. We need to sacrifice one thing over another. But I'm definitely also excited to live independently, to interact with people from so many different places of the world given my love for diversity, and of course to add unimaginable amounts of information to my knowledge in the next four years.

SAAD: Meeting new people, meeting scholars and professors. I have a mix of apprehensions yet it is also exciting.

What is the one most important item you will take with you?

ISRA: My parents' prayers and their wishes, and the principles and values they have nurtured me with.

SAAD: I have not thought about it yet.

Are you going for the Pre-orientation?

ISRA: I will be going for the International Students orientation; it starts prior to the regular orientation. And I hope to attend another program with the name of FPOP- Freshman Pre-Orientation Program.

SAAD: No. I have too many things to do: A Levels to clear and summer work to complete. Besides, this is a final choice; I do not think I need to attend it.

Were you confident about getting accepted at MIT?

ISRA: To be very honest, I wasn't. As much as I always wanted to go to MIT, and believed I was a good match for the Institu-

tion, I still never expected I would actually get in considering the Admission rate for Internationals (which was 3% this year).

But I always believed in my God, and it's this Faith along with my beloved ones prayers that perpetually kept me going and got me to this position.

SAAD: Not too much. It is so competitive. So many great students from our school applied and there was a lot of competition not only at our school but also around the world.

Why did you apply to the US and not other countries?

ISRA: US education is all about quality and experience. The main reason why I like US education is because it moulds all aspects of a student's personality in a way that he or she feels more competent and polished to face the rigors of life. Secondly, US education is backed with immense opportunities for hands on research. In this way students skillfully apply their knowledge before actually going out to work in their fields and are also given the chance to be innovative and inventive in their college years itself. Lastly, colleges in the US are a home to diversity. I believe in learning amongst people who have had different backgrounds and different approaches to life. I want to share my experiences with them and in turn learn from them as life is all about mutual interdependency and adapting new ways while discarding unneeded ones. All of this can be achieved quite effectively in a US college.

SAAD: I applied to the UK as well.

What role did your advisor play in the application process?

ISRA: A very significant role. I moved to Pakistan with the aim of enrolling myself in an Institution where education was not all about A levels or the curriculum, rather where students' skills and talents were exploited and student initiatives were given a chance. Roots has played a very supportive role.

SAAD: Those who have counsel-

ors should respect them as they are playing a major role in their application.

Is there something you would like to share with other students about the process?

ISRA: I shall like to candidly admit and share with other students that the application process is extremely challenging and no matter how talented or ambitious the student is, it is not possible to achieve success without equal if not more involvement of the career counselor and the school. Students need support and guidance at each and every step of the application process, so make the right choice for your high school as I am fortunate to study in the school where my dreams and aspirations were shared by my guidance counselor.

I also want to say that, if you have a dream, pursue it. Even if you do not end up realizing it [that's why we call them dreams], you will still end up learning so much in the process that you'll be as happy in the end had you actually realized your dream. Last, Life is not about MIT or Harvard, Life is about how you live and contribute in it. So make sure you give it your best shot!

SAAD: Make up your mind from the first day that you have to go to your dream university. Have a target and work towards it. Don't miss any opportunities- grab them. Form clubs, play sports, participate in leadership opportunities, internships and work in the summers. Take on everything. Don't miss anything.

How does your family feel about you going to the US (far from home)?

ISRA: My family is apprehensive but at the same time relieved and grateful at this achievement. They are much more confident this time as my sister is also in the US and has gone through the same experience already. :)



**Massachusetts
Institute of
Technology**

Florida Institute of Technology Visits USEFP

Dear Advisees,

The Florida Institute of Technology visited USEFP on 3rd April 3, 2010. Those of you who attended received first hand information about opportunities at FIT and availed the chance to interact with FIT representatives. As a reminder for all those who attended and an update for all who were unable to attend:

- FIT is offering an **undergraduate and graduate application fee waiver** for all USEFP advisees
- The April 1st **undergraduate deadline has been extended** to April 15th 2010
- An **UNDERGRADUATE** Alumni Discount of \$3000 towards tuition is being offered to all candidates who write to: Fulbright and FIT Alumni Zeeshan Usmani. You will all need to have your alumni waiver signed by Mr. Usmani. Please email : zusmani@giki.edu.pk
- **Graduate Student Assistantships** available
- **Undergraduate Scholarships Available**
- **Cost of Tuition and Living is reasonable:** \$25,000- \$30,000 per annum
- **80% job placement for FIT Graduates**
- Generous Undergraduate Scholarships Available

We hope you will avail these opportunities. For further information, please visit: <http://fit.edu>

Best of Luck,

Education Advising Department USEFP



Upcoming Test Dates for TOEFL, GRE, and SAT

<http://www.usefpakistan.org/testinghome.html>

SAT:

General and Subject Test

Test Dates:

May 01st, 2010

June 05th, 2010

International Registration:

Please check for early registration options for international candidates.

IBT TOEFL:

Test Dates:

April 10th, 2010

April 24th, 2010

May 08th, 2010

May 16th, 2010

May 22nd, 2010

June 12th, 2010

GRE:

The GRE Test is offered four days a week, Monday through Thursday, throughout the year.

Please visit our website or call in order to register for a particular test day.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT USEFP, APRIL 2010:

Undergraduate Seminars

Graduate Seminars

College Search

Effective Essay Writing Tips and Statement of Purpose Workshops

School Counselor Training

Please contact your local office to register for upcoming events and receive additional information:

Islamabad: advising@usefpakistan.org; **Karachi:** advisingkarachi@usefpakistan.org;

Lahore: lahoreadvising@usefpakistan.org



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