

# INTERN PERSPECTIVES



LANA MAKHZOUMI • SANDRA KHALIL • FAIZA KAU KAB • NAOUFAL GUELZIM • SAM SEHAM • NOOR HAMADEH  
AMERICAN-ARAB ANTI-DISCRIMINATION COMMITTEE • 2015 • [ADC.ORG](http://ADC.ORG)

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## What is the ADC?

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, which is non-profit, non-sectarian and non-partisan, is the largest Arab-American grassroots civil rights and civil liberties organization in the United States. It was founded in 1980 by former Senator James Abourezk. ADC has a national network of chapters and members in all 50 states.

The ADC Research Institute (ADCRI) is a section 501(c)(3) educational affiliate of the ADC.

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## ANTHONY SHADID SUMMER INTERNS

### ORGANIZING

#### NAOUFAL GUELZIM

George Mason University  
Global Affairs  
Class of 2014

### LEGAL

#### NOOR HAMADEH

George Washington University  
School of Law  
J.D. Class of 2017

### POLICY

#### SAM SEHAM

Amherst College  
Political Science & Government  
Class of 2016

### PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

#### SANDRA KHALIL

Binghamton University  
Political Science & Arabic  
Class of 2015

#### FAIZA KAU KAB

George Washington University  
School of Law  
J.D. Class of 2017

### COMMUNICATIONS

#### LANA MAKZHOUMI

Southern Methodist University  
Fashion Media & Advertising  
Class of 2016



## ANTHONY SHADID

*"I was an ADC intern many years ago and it's an experience I doubt I will ever forget. I learned a lesson that has guided me and my journalism since then, and it's that being right is a relative term, and most importantly that no voice should be silenced."*

- Anthony Shadid (1968-2012)

### *A message from ADC President*

Since 1981, the ADC has hosted hundreds of promising students and graduates through the Anthony Shadid Internship Program. These young people have continued to make robust contributions in numerous fields, such as government, law, communications, and the non-profit sector, with the memory and experience of ADC driving them. I personally began my journey with ADC as a legal intern, and proudly serve today as the national President.

Each intern and fellow, from organizing to communications, to legal and policy, to work in the President's office, undertakes an important responsibility in carrying out our mission. He or she experiences first-hand the transitions we make as a community and the political and civil rights issues all Americans are faced with every day. At a time when the crises of the MENA region project onto the lives of Arab Americans in the United States, discrimination, racism, and restricted rights plague communities on a daily basis.

This summer, four skillful interns and two outstanding legal fellows from around the world joined us in our 35th year of commitment to civil rights. They have individually and collectively excelled in their departments, and have gone above and beyond expectations to adopt the ADC's initiatives as their own. From hard work at the ADC 2015 National Convention to assistance in landmark casework, the ADC flourished this summer at the hands of these passionate individuals.

To Naoufal, Faiza, Noor, Sandra, Lana, and Sam, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation for all the work you have done, and commend you on the robust talents and skills you have displayed in your time with the ADC. As it has done for me, this internship will give you a new perspective to carry throughout your careers. I wish you all the best, and look forward to your endeavors in the years to come. Make us proud.

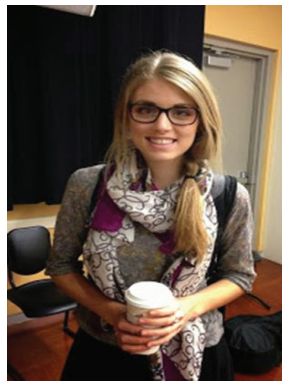
Samer Khalaf  
ADC President

### *Jack Shaheen* **MASS COMMUNICATIONS SCHOLARSHIPS**

### **TWO ARAB AMERICANS WERE AWARDED FOR DEMONSTRATING EXCELLENCE IN THE FIELD OF MASS COMMUNICATIONS**



Anisa Mehdi is an Emmy Award-winning journalist and writer specializing in religion and the arts. She is the founder and president of Whetstone Productions and is a Professor of Communications at Seton Hall University where she lectures on Islam in the media. Her main focus when producing programs and documentaries is around religion. Her most notable documentary, which was produced by National Geographic, is called *Inside Mecca*.



Sarah Aziza Shihadah is a writer and freelance journalist specializing in Middle East and social justice issues. Shihadah graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Pennsylvania in 2014. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Near East Languages and Civilizations and Comparative Literature. Throughout her time at Penn, she was greatly involved in Penn for Palestine and served as the President.

# NOOR HAMADEH

Legal

ADC's legal department deals with a wide range of issues affecting the Arab-American community ranging from asylum applications to employment discrimination. The ADC legal department receives various complaints from Arab-Americans around the country seeking legal advice and, as a legal intern with ADC, I was fortunate enough to speak to community members and provide them with legal assistance and advice. I also wrote complaints to various government agencies on their behalf, such as the Department of Justice (DOJ) or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Working with ADC was an extremely rewarding experience. I was able to see the impact my work had on community members. However, some of ADC's work, outside of taking complaints from community members, impacts the community in a larger scale. The ADC legal department also works to represent the interests of Arab-Americans by ensuring government policies and legislation do not negatively impact the Arab-American community. As a legal intern with ADC, I helped find flaws in and develop alternative language for bills that ADC felt would harm the Arab-American community. For example, when the Every Child Achieves Act (ECAA) was being drafted, I helped ADC ensure that the interests of our diverse community would be met. In particular, ADC focused on including language that ensured better resources for ESL students and ensuring that there were methods of accountability to better incentivize school districts to implement ECAA provisions. I also had the opportunity to attend meetings with the Leadership council on Civil and Human Rights as well as with government agencies such as the Department of Justice, Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). These meetings were enlightening as I was able to see and understand how conversations and dialogue between government agencies and various civil rights organizations can create changes in the law to better serve the interests of larger groups of people.

Open dialogue about the shortcomings of laws and their implementation paved the way for projects to reframe legislative implementation efforts. Overall, I greatly enjoyed my internship with ADC. After a year of learning about the law, it was great to be able to apply the things I learned and see them in action.



**FAVORITE ADC  
MOMENT:  
WORKING ON MY FIRST  
CASE!**



**with Noor**



**Hometown:** Chicago, IL

**University:** The George Washington University Law School

**Favorite Movie:** The Lego Movie

**Life Goal:** To be the first Muslim/Arab President of the United States

**Favorite food:** Mexican Food

**If she had a superpower what would it be?:**  
To be able to Apparate (Harry Potter Reference)



# SANDRA KHALIL

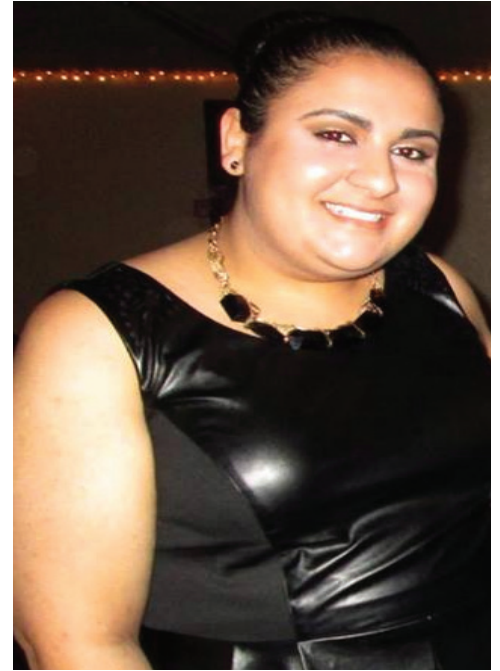
President's Office

One hot summer evening in a crowded courtyard, I mingled with ADC co-interns and acquaintances over dinner. I was sweaty, uncomfortable, and internally loathing the swarm of mosquitos making a meal out of me. As this characteristically restless train of thought derailed, I was introduced to a new addition to our circle. I quickly realized this fellow Arab-American, John, had been the recipient of one of my many relentless phone calls encouraging members and organizations to join ADC for the Annual 2015 National Convention. He playfully mentioned I had an intimidating disposition during the call, which barely fazed me at the time. After all, New Yorkers are widely known for that. We laughed it off; I apologized and assured him I was really a pleasant person.

As the circle's conversation splintered off, John and I exchanged questions about interests, backgrounds, etc. Logically following our discussion, I asked, "So, what do you do?" His reply confused me. "That's such a D.C. question," he retorted. Flustered, I explained that I was just curious and didn't intend to be invasive. It was clear that he was put off by the apparent compartmentalizing aspect, and did not favor being characterized by the type of work he does. Despite my explanation, I felt as though I had received strike 2 with John. (Strike 1 was my "intimidating" invitation to the Convention.) We then delved into a discussion about the pros and cons of networking, in which he shared some negative thoughts about the forced conversation and lack of sincerity in the process. While I understood his point, I advocated the beneficial partnerships and mutual understanding one may create through successful networking. At the end of my spiel, I felt as though I had fallen into a deeper hole, painting an opportunistic portrait of the pleasant person I had promised him. I finally struck out.

After the gathering, I replayed the exchange in my mind. The situation made me feel misunderstood and small. How would John react if I was someone else asking him the same question? Would it still be such a "D.C." question, a cutthroat, "networky" approach to making friends, or would it just be a component of an average conversation? Why did he react then the way he did? In the 21st century, I would hope people aren't turned off by the idea of a woman, or anyone else for that matter, broadening horizons through networking, taking control of their destiny, or, dare I say, bridge gaps by asking another person what he or she does. That exchange made me nervous. I was instantly apologizing for my self-possession, my candor, and everything I was ever taught about becoming someone in this world in order to salvage the remnants of an uncharacteristic impression of myself.

In her best-seller "Lean In," author Sheryl Sandberg encourages women to "put up their hands, speak out, accept a challenge, and take their seat at the table." Women aren't told to adopt uncharacteristic qualities in order to reach their full potential, but rather to exercise attributes of confidence to be recognized and advance. Sandberg's words speak to the nature of this scenario. While the situation with John is minor, it serves as a major impetus to analyze energies in exchanges. The way I presented myself at the gathering was in accordance with my attributes of success - sincerity, confidence, friendliness, etc. Had I attempted to alter myself in order to make others happy, wouldn't that make me insincere? While I am not immune to having flaws, I am shamelessly unapologetic about the self-possessed, determined young woman I present, both professionally and personally. I stand by me. I continue to be proud of who I strive to be, and never apologize for the things I've worked for. There are bound to be people who don't understand, but so long as I have authenticity and integrity, I'll be content, especially with my D.C. questions.



## SANDRA SAYS...

**Hometown:** Bellmore, NY

**University:** Binghamton University

**Major:** Political Science and Arabic

**Life Goal:** To achieve nirvana

**Favorite food:** Sushi

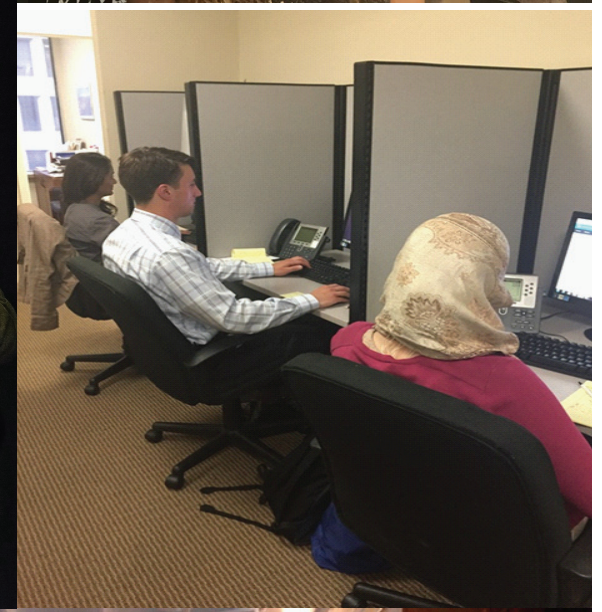
**If she had a superpower what would it be?** Superhuman intelligence

**Favorite Place in DC:** Amsterdam Falafel Shop in Adams Morgan

**FAVORITE ADC  
MOMENT:  
WORKING AT THE  
ANNUAL ADC NATIONAL  
CONVENTION**

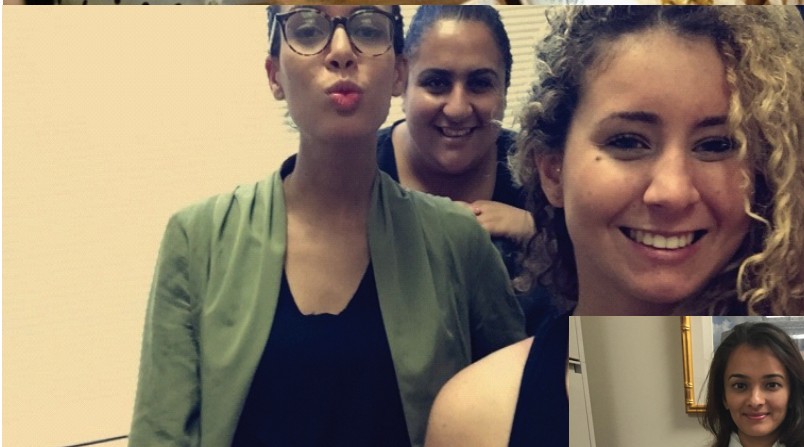


# SUMMER MEMORIES AT THE ADC





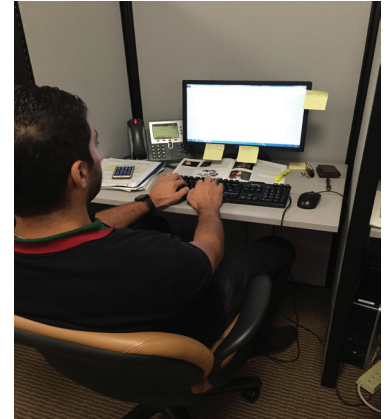
# SUMMER MEMORIES AT THE ADC





# NAOUFAL GUELZIM

Organizing



My time as an organizing Intern at ADC was one of the most memorable personal and professional experiences that I have ever experienced, as it was very informative and hands-on in many ways. First things first, I have to admit that prior to my internship, I was not very familiar with ADC and its mission, but at least I knew what the acronym stood for, which put me a step ahead of many of my friends, some of whom thought that ADC was an IT firm. As an American-Arab myself, working at ADC provided me with the chance to contribute toward defending the rights of my people, myself included. I recall my phone calls to American-Arab Citizens who were stranded in Yemen during the political unrest. I was tasked with gathering information from them to assist in getting help from the U.S. government. These calls were, by far, the most surreal and overwhelming experience during my internship, and also the most rewarding. This work was rewarding and I knew it carried great significance and imposed on me a great responsibility. I knew that every word I said could help determine the fate of many innocent lives. While at the ADC, I was also fortunate to help organize and participate in the inaugural National Arab-American Cultural festival which – among many other things - promotes the rich cultural Arab heritage. I also helped organize and execute ADC's annual National Convention, which is their largest and most widely attended event of the year. Both the festival and the annual Convention made me appreciate my heritage, be proud of who I am, and brought me even closer to my roots by introducing me to the diverse Arabic traditions, music, food, as well as civil right issues that American-Arabs face on a daily basis. For example, the Alex Odeh assassination was one case I learned about in detail, and if it weren't for ADC I would not have heard of it (and even if I did it would not have been from an American-Arab perspective). I believe that it's beneficial for everyone to get involved with ADC – either as an intern, volunteer, or even just a member - because civil rights is an issue that affects all of us, regardless of race, color, background, or religion. Any violations of Arab American civil rights not only demean American-Arabs, but also place the civil liberties of all Americans in jeopardy. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "We must scrupulously guard the civil rights and civil liberties of all our citizens, whatever their background. We must remember that any oppression, any injustice, any hatred, is a wedge designed to attack our civilization." Therefore, ADC's mission is important to me, not just as a person of Arab heritage, but as an American – just as this mission should be important to all Americans. Now that my internship has come to an end, I will be leaving with a better understanding and appreciation of the issues faced by the Arab- American community and a better appreciation for the important mission of ADC.





# ACCORDING TO SAM

**Hometown:** Chappaqua, NY

**Favorite Food:** Mexican Food

**University:** Amherst College

**If he had a super power, what would it be?:** Flight

**Major:** Political Science & Government

**Favorite Place in DC:** The terrace of my friend's apartment

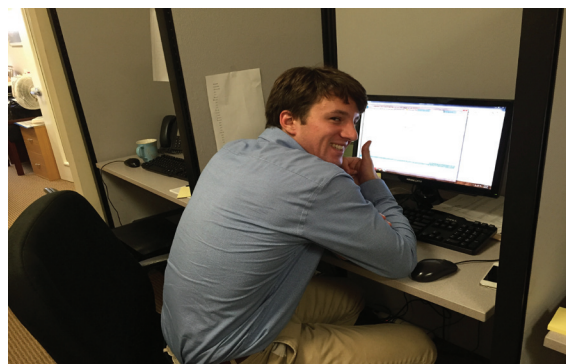
**Life Goal:** To be a Legislative Director on the Hill

**FAVORITE ADC MOMENT: DANCING DABKE AT THE CONVENTION**

## SAM SEHAM

Policy

What I've most enjoyed in my time working with the ADC is the work I've been able to do focusing on the situation in Yemen. There are more than 1,000 American Citizens trapped in Yemen due to the violent Civil War in that country. Although Yemen has not made headlines for several months, the conditions there worsen daily and many people lack food, shelter and suffer from the terrors of armed conflict. Several Americans have been killed or kidnapped since the U.S. Embassy closed in February and the U.S. Government has done very little to rescue others since then. The ADC along with CAIR and other civil rights organizations took up these people's cause. The coalition, with the help Representative Debbie Dingell of Michigan, was able to introduce an amendment to the Houses' version of the National Defense Bill that asked President Obama to take any and all measures to rescue Americans stuck in Yemen. I have been able to track this piece of legislation through multiple stages: from the House, to the Senate, to conference committee and hopefully to the desk of the President. Along the way I have been able to meet and talk to the people that really run the government on a day-to-day basis. The prospects for our amendment are looking pretty good and it gives one hope about the accessibility of the Government and the possibility of effecting change.



# FAIZA KAUKAB

Legal



## FAVORITE ADC MOMENT: ATTENDING AN INTER-AGENCY MEETING AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

**Hometown:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Life Goal:** To make Noor the President of the United States

**University:** George Washington University Law School

**If she had a superpower, what would it be?:** Mind reading

**Favorite place in DC:** Eastern Market area

**Favorite Food:** Pasta

In this day and age, we don't like to talk about race or racism in general. We may like to believe that we have moved beyond it and that we live in an age where it is no longer an issue. The good thing about this is that we assuredly believe that no particular race or ethnicity is superior to any other. Taking this same thought further, it means that people of all races should be treated equally and given equal opportunity and chances. We may approach racism in a very American way, believing that since there is no racism and since we live in an egalitarian society, we all automatically have the same opportunities and any differences that appear in our lives are because of our own efforts. As a visible minority in most of the countries I have lived, I know that this idea of an egalitarian society is not true, even on the surface. Granted overt discrimination, hate-based violence, racism, harassment is not an everyday occurrence for most of us, but that is not to say that it is uncommon in America, or just a 'few bad apples' perpetuate it. It is fueled everyday by a covert racism that we all perpetuate and tolerate out of ignorance. It is this racism that leads us to perceive men of color and people with certain accents as dangerous, and project our insecurities and fears onto people who are different from us. This racism somehow tells us that there is no chasm wider than the one between us and this different "other." It is undoubtedly part of the human experience to fear the unknown, but how we handle that fear is what sets us apart and on a path towards greater understanding. We may not even realize that our way of viewing the world is patronizing, and that the belief that our culture is surely superior and our moral fiber surely stronger, colors all our interactions. Loaded words are in our language and in our attitudes. For instance, I know a South Asian investment banker who was often taken for an IT guy by colleagues, and I know Americans of Middle Eastern descent told by fellow students that they cannot vote because they aren't American. I have tried to pay a young Black man who helped me get some bulky furniture from my car in to my apartment only to have him turn it down and tell me that he's a banker at Citigroup. It makes me wonder- how many other stereotypes do I ascribe to? When we see an Arab man, do we assume he must not like working with women? When we see a woman with a headscarf, do we assume she must not be allowed to think for herself? Most of all, I wonder how we can catch ourselves and be aware that we are perpetuating forms of racism. How can we push ourselves to acknowledge that this world is far from perfect and that it is so because of us? I am no longer sure that travel is the answer, as it is all too easy to travel whilst maintaining a safe distance from any unfamiliar thought or idea, and to interact only in the comfortable overlapping spheres of interests at hotels and restaurants. Regardless of whether we travel or stay put, we can listen up. There are conversations on structural racism happening on the local and regional level in the US. These are the conversations we need to be a part of; these are the conversations that shouldn't only be happening within select communities but rather be part of a wider sphere to engage our understanding of what it truly means to be different but connected. Once we reach out and engage in these conversations, will we be able to get a glimpse into what it means to be a Black woman or a South Asian man in a turban. Not only do we move beyond our fear, as the unknown becomes more known, but we are no longer plagued by what the author Chimamanda Adichie calls "the danger of a single story." The danger of a single story arises when the same negative story of poverty, violence or struggle is exclusively told and heard, and it ends up defining a whole community or ethnicity. This one story gives no access to the multi-dimensional make-up of our lives; it gives us no humanity or connection. To move beyond that one story is not easy, but it is crucial to listen up and be open to learning and changing our point of view. Hearing others' stories is not about winning debates, but rather putting down our walls and opening our hearts and minds. I can be the first to admit the difficulty of accepting of new ideas and philosophies, especially if they shake the very foundation of my belief system. I have spent the summer as a legal fellow at ADC pushing myself to explore and understand the issues facing Arab-Americans. While I am neither Arab nor American, I have come away with a better understanding of what it means to be different but connected to others around me. This intersectionality transcending color and culture has to be at the forefront of doing away with racism, and my summer here is only a start.



# LANA MAKHZOUMI

Communications



This past summer at the ADC is one I will never forget. When I first heard I had been accepted into the Anthony Shadid Internship Program, I was overwhelmed with joy as I was about to embark on a new adventure to a place I have never lived before. I was greeted by Mona's smiling face on my first day arriving at the ADC. When Nabil took me around the office to introduce me to everyone, I already felt comfortable with the staff. Since then, I have had the pleasure of getting to know the staff and interns throughout the summer. Throughout my internship, InDesign became my life as I worked on the ADC Convention book, ADC Times, the 2015 Recap Report, Membership Renewal forms and this book right here all on the computer program. I learnt what the concept of time and effort throughout the work given to me as each book or magazine, took a lot of it. I also had the experience of working on ADC's social media sites and the technology side to the ADC. Cristina Hawatmeh and I produced a Live Twitter Feed from her new company, Protestify, for this year's convention. We received around 1000 live tweets about the convention this year which gained a lot of buzz and popularity on Twitter. Working at the ADC is one of the best experiences I have received so far, as I have learned more about what my passions and interest are which will aid me in the future. I really learnt the impact that ADC has on diminishing Arab stereotypes and helping the Arab American community. It is inspiring, amidst all the chaos in the Middle East right now, to have an organization so dedicated and determined to help Arab Americans. During my internship this summer, it felt good to know I was making some sort of positive impact on the world. One lesson I learnt this summer was that the problems and issues that surround Arab Americans don't define us, instead, our reaction to these issues is what truly defines us as a community. The interns became my family this summer as we would help each other out when it came to work, we created a special bond through our intern adventures and lunches. The amount of connections you gain by just saying "I intern with the ADC" is absolutely amazing. I feel proud to have worked at such a great organization and the knowledge I gained during my internship will forever benefit me and I am grateful to have interned at the ADC.

## TALKING with Lana

**Hometown:** Dubai, United Arab Emirates

**Favorite Food:** Italian Food

**University:** Southern Methodist University

**If she could live anywhere in the world it would be:** Washington, D.C.

**Major:** Fashion Media & Advertising

**Favorite Place in DC:** Medium Rare

**Life Goal:** To make a positive impact on the Arab World



**FAVORITE ADC MOMENT:**  
**VISITING THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**





930 MASON ST. DEARBORN, MI • PHONE: 313-581-1201

From left to right:

**Christina Do**, University of Michigan, Public  
Allies Metro Detroit

**Areeba Jibril**, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

**Tala Taleb**, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

**Crystal King**, Michigan State University

**Abdulkarim Saad**, Michigan State Law School

**Attorney Fatina Abdrabboh**, ADC Michigan  
Director

**Attorney Reem Subei**, ADC Michigan  
Legal Fellow

**Jana Al-Akhras**, Ohio State University Moritz  
College of Law





## INTERN ADVENTURES

# THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES



The interns visited the League of Arab States on July 15th. They met with Deputy Chief Representative Sameh Alfonse to discuss current issues in the Middle East as well as the history of the League of Arab States. After the interns introduced themselves to Mr. Alfonse, they watched a brief video on the history of the League of Arab States. Afterwards, the interns asked questions to Mr. Alfonse concerning the status of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict and how the League of Arab States are handling the current situations in the Middle East. Mr. Alfonse emphasized the need to raise awareness and educate all people about the Middle East, hence the start of Arab American Day which falls on December 5th. Mr. Alfonse champions the work of ADC and continues to cultivate a relationship with them.

## FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

On July 16th, the interns visited the Federal Election Commission where four lawyers did a question and answer session about their duties at the FEC and how much influence they have when candidates are running for office. All lawyers were very informative and offered advice from their backgrounds and past to interns who are interested in public government owned firms. The session was very informative and at the end, interns got to talk one on one with the lawyers. In addition, other interns from other organizations also attended.



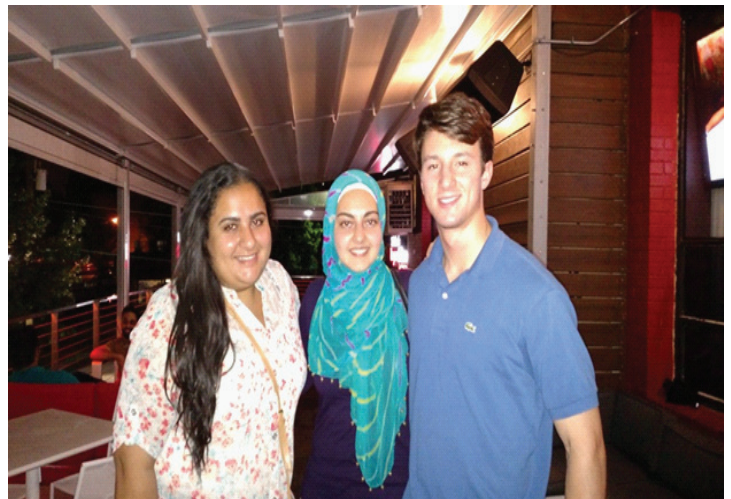
## INTERN ADVENTURES

## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

On July 17th, ADC interns went to the office of the Department of Homeland Security where they met Kareem Shora, Section Chief of the Community Engagement department. Mr. Shora talked about how his department helps refugees that come from the MENA region, to integrate into American society with more ease. His department also holds quarterly conferences with different minority groups to make sure their voices are heard. In addition, Mr. Shora is an ADC alum and worked with ADC for 10 years. He pointed out that civil rights groups such as ADC are essential to these minority groups. ADC interns also met with Department of Homeland Security interns to learn about their experiences so far.



## INTERN AND STAFF IFTAR DINNER AT DARNA





# Special Thanks to Mitra Moin and Dima Calnan!



## INTERN AT ADC!

Since 1981, over 500 students have participated in the intern program of the ADC Research Institute (ADCRI). Students from all over the country gather at the national office in Washington, DC, each year to gain first-hand experience and knowledge about ADC issues and campaigns.

The intern program offers a variety of positions for leadership development. It educates students on issues of civil rights, the Arab heritage, and current events in the Middle East. Students gain practical training in community organizing, media relations, research and writing, legal issues, political action, educational outreach, and routine office work alongside our regular professional staff. The first few weeks of the summer program are centered on the annual ADC National Convention in June.

Candidates must have completed at least one year of college. They can be undergraduates, recent graduates, or graduate and law students. Each department has its own requirements. Visit [adc.org](http://adc.org) for more information!



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