



YOUNG SOUTHEAST ASIAN LEADERS INITIATIVE

WINTER 2016 YSEALI INSTITUTE ON RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Host Institution – Temple University in Philadelphia, PA
January 9 – February 13, 2016

Deadline for Applications: October 4, 2015

Institute Objectives

In 2013, President Obama launched the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) to enhance the United States' relations with future leaders of Southeast Asia and foster an ASEAN community. YSEALI offers education on regional issues, professional skills-building, and opportunities to put those skills into action through educational exchanges to the United States, professional development workshops in the region, online networking, and project seed money. YSEALI activities focus on four themes: economic development, environmental protection, education, and civic engagement.

As part of YSEALI, the Study of the U.S. Branch will sponsor the YSEALI Institute for Student Leaders on Religious Pluralism in the United States in support of the civic engagement theme. .

Program Description

Utilizing the Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) for Student Leaders model, the YSEALI Institute is an intensive academic program whose purpose is to provide groups of young leaders, selected from undergraduate students and recent graduates, with a deeper understanding of the United States, while simultaneously enhancing their leadership skills. The YSEALI Institute on Religious Pluralism in the United States will consist of a balanced series of seminar discussions, readings, group presentations, and lectures. Educational travels, local site visits, and volunteer opportunities will complement the coursework and classroom activities. The YSEALI Institute will include an academic residency component of approximately four weeks and a domestic travel component of approximately one week, including a 2-3 day closing program in Washington, D.C.

The YSEALI Institute on Religious Pluralism in the United States will explore U.S. history, society, and institutions within the context of religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue. Topics will include, but are not limited to, early religious traditions in the United States; the separation of church and state; immigration and the introduction of new religions in the United States; protection and representation of minority groups and religions; and interfaith dialogue. Fellows will meet with U.S. community leaders of different faiths that advocate for collaboration and tolerance among religious groups, examine the leadership role that religious officials play in their own societies, and develop ideas for how they can work with leaders, of similar or different faiths, to bring about positive social change. During their four-day study tour, participants will travel to the American Southwest where they will have the opportunity to visit historic and cultural sites and discuss topics related to immigration and the Native American experience.

Program Funding

Through an award to Temple University, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) will cover all participant costs, including: program administration; international and domestic travel; ground transportation; book, cultural, mailing and incidental allowances; and housing and subsistence.

Fellows should plan on bringing their own spending money if they wish to purchase souvenirs or other items during their time in the United States.

Housing and Meal Arrangements

Fellows will be asked to share rooms with another participant of the same gender in a full-service hotel in Philadelphia. Per-diem will be provided for participants to purchase meals at the hotel, at campus eateries, and at cafes and restaurants surrounding the campus. Some meals will also be arranged by the program.

Care will be taken to ensure that any special requirements regarding diet, daily worship, housing, and medical care are satisfied.

Health Benefits

All Fellows will receive the Department of State's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the duration of the program with coverage up to \$100,000 with a \$25 co-pay. Pre-existing conditions are not covered.

Program Requirements and Restrictions

Fellows are expected to participate fully in the academic program. They should attend all lectures and organized activities, and complete assigned readings. Candidates should be made aware that the YSEALI Institute is very intensive and that there will be little time for personal pursuits unrelated to the program.

Fellows will NOT be allowed to arrive in the U.S. prior to the start date of the YSEALI Institute or remain in the U.S. after its end date. Similarly, Fellows will not be allowed to leave the YSEALI Institute to visit relatives or friends while in the U.S. If a relative or friend wishes to visit them, it will be addressed on a case by case basis, in consultation with ECA and the host institution.

Violations of program rules, host institution rules, or local, state or federal laws can be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. It is important that these requirements and restrictions be made clear to all candidates before nominations are submitted.

English Language Ability

All candidates should be proficient in English so that they can fully understand lectures, actively participate in discussions, and read and write assignments in English. Host institutions will take into account that the level of comprehension and speaking ability of Fellows may vary, and will prepare lectures and discussions that meet the highest academic standards while using language appropriate for Fellows where English is their second or third language.

Candidate Description and Qualifications

The YSEALI Academic Fellows are expected to be full-time undergraduate students from college, university, or other institutions of higher learning; or have graduated in the past four years, who demonstrate leadership through academic work, community involvement, extracurricular activities, or their profession. While all candidates should have a **strong** interest in religious pluralism, their fields of study can be varied, and may include the sciences, social sciences, humanities, education, business, and other professional fields. Emphasis should be made on recruiting Fellows from non-elite backgrounds, from both rural and urban areas, and with little or no prior experience in the United States

or elsewhere outside their home country. In addition, recruitment of Fellows should include the underserved including indigenous groups, ethnic minority communities, candidates with disabilities, etc.

Successful applicants for this program should:

- Be between 18 and 25 years of age at the time of application; represent diverse ethnic and religious groups;
- A Malaysian citizen or permanent resident
- Proficient in reading, writing and speaking English;
- Demonstrate **strong** interest in religious pluralism;
- Demonstrate strong leadership qualities and potential in their university, place of work, and/or community;
- Demonstrate a commitment or interest in community service, volunteerism, or mentorship;
- Indicate a serious interest in learning about the United States and ASEAN as a region;
- Be willing to actively participate in an intensive academic program, community service, and study tour;
- Have a commitment to return to their home country to apply leadership skills and training to benefit their community, country, or the ASEAN region; and
- Preferably have little or no prior study or travel experience in the United States or elsewhere.
- Be mature, responsible, independent, confident, open-minded, tolerant, thoughtful, and inquisitive;
- Be willing and able to fully participate in an intensive academic program, community service, and educational travel; and,
- Be comfortable with campus life, prepared to share living accommodations, and able to make adjustments to cultural and social practices different from those of their home communities.

To Apply for the YSEALI Institute

Applicants should submit an application for this program by e-mail. The application deadline is October 4, 2015. The electronic application form may be downloaded [HERE](#).

Applications must include the following documents:

1. Application Form which includes a personal statement of not more than 500 words.
2. A recommendation letter from university or employer.
3. Certificate/evidence of English fluency.

Note: All applications must be submitted via email to KualaLumpurYSEALI@state.gov

All interested candidates are welcome to send in enquiries on the program to the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy Kuala Lumpur via the given email or phone call at 03-2168-5000; ext. 4974.

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