

U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship goes to Macalester student

St. Paul, Minn. - Abigail Massell '18, of Burlington, Vt., has been awarded a U.S. State Department Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) to study Arabic in Amman, Jordan this summer.

Massell is one of 550 U.S. undergraduate and graduate students who received a scholarship from the U.S. Department of State's Critical Language Scholarship Program in 2015. She is a double major in International Studies and Arabic at Macalester, and started studying Arabic in high school.

"During my sophomore year of high school, I spent four months studying Arabic in Rabat, Morocco with a U.S. State Department program like CLS, but for high school students," said Massell. "That semester jumpstarted my love for the Arabic language and ever since, I have been pursuing opportunities that provide linguistic growth as well as further cultural understanding of the region. It is an honor to accept this scholarship and continue on a path towards fluency, which dovetails with my other interests in International Studies."

CLS participants will spend eight to ten weeks in intensive language institutes in one of many countries to study 13 CLS languages: Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bangla, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Turkish, and Urdu.

The CLS Program provides fully funded, group-based intensive language instruction and structured cultural enrichment experiences. Participants are expected to continue their language study beyond the scholarship and apply their critical language skills in their future professional careers.

Massell will be in Amman, Jordan from June 3 – August 3, 2015. During that time, she'll be living with a host family, studying the Arabic language, and be immersed in intensive Arabic language programs.

"My previous cross-cultural experiences have taught me the value of linguistic and cultural immersion," said Massell. "In order to glean all I can from this opportunity, I will use language as one method of breaking down cultural barriers that I inevitably will encounter. Living with a Jordanian host family will not only strengthen my grasp of Arabic, but it will also provide unique insight into an incredibly rich culture."

The 2015 CLS Program received over 5,500 applications. Selected finalists for the 2015 CLS Program hail from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.



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Formal classroom language instruction is provided for a minimum of 20 hours per week. Extracurricular activities are designed to supplement the formal curriculum, including regular one-on-one meetings with native speaker language partners for conversational practice, as well as cultural activities and excursions designed to expand students' understanding of the history, politics, culture and daily life of their host country.

Consistent with the U.S. Department of State's goals to increase diversity among international educational exchange program participants, the CLS Program actively recruits in states and regions of the United States that have been historically under-represented in international exchange and encourages students from diverse backgrounds and academic majors to apply.

The CLS Program also promotes diversity in the independent review process, and includes readers and panelists from 43 states and the District of Columbia and 183 institutions, including land-grant public universities, liberal arts colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Ivy League institutions, and community colleges.

Massell has only been at Macalester for one year but has an idea of what she'll do once she graduates.

"As of now, I plan to double major in International Studies and Arabic," said Massell. "Whether this eventually leads to a career in diplomacy with the State Department, an English teaching position in the Middle East, or nonprofit work with refugee resettlement in the Twin Cities, my experience this summer will no doubt be transformative."

For further information about the CLS Program or other exchange programs offered by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, please visit <http://www.clscholarship.org> (<http://www.clscholarship.org>) and <http://exchanges.state.gov> (<http://exchanges.state.gov>).

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,045 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu/>)

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