

Education has played a critically important role throughout my life, from my first days of entering elementary school, to this last semester before being awarded my Bachelor of Arts in International and Global Studies from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and finally onto my strong desire to continue with graduate studies for the Master of Arts in Applied Arts and Sciences.

I have always been very passionate about liberal arts education, which was a significant reason why I chose to attend UNCG for my undergraduate studies. Liberal arts schools are very important because their emphasis is not just about learning one's area of expertise but on forming well-rounded individuals who have knowledge of many disciplines. These schools, like UNCG, cultivate within their students a desire to reach for goals while also taking them out of their comfort zones. As a result, these students become top contenders in the professional world for their leadership, group, and presentational skills. Mastering these skills is crucial because many graduates face and encounter difficulties in the business world but liberal arts colleges help their students pull through these challenges to become successful professionals.

The Master of Arts in Applied Arts and Sciences program, with a Global Studies Certificate, is a game changer for both my personal and professional aims for three reasons. First, learning about other countries, cultures, societies, governments, and languages has sparked a keen interest in me since I was a little girl. To me, nothing is more fascinating than learning about how other groups (nations, cultures, etc.) shape the changing world around us. In today's interconnected life, it is imperative to understand the world around us and this program allows its students to grow in understanding and knowledge from very qualified and extraordinary professors. Second, expanding learning opportunities beyond North Carolina and even the United States is something I recognize as a key component of my graduate school education and preparation for life.

During the second semester of my junior year I had the opportunity to study abroad in Hull, England. This experience changed the trajectory of my life because it helped solidify in me a professional desire to function within the larger global community. While abroad, I became more independent, organized, ambitious, and confident. This graduate program is different from many others because it grants students the possibility to study abroad. If I were to study abroad again, I would go to Malmö University in Sweden. I know that even though I would face challenges in studying abroad, the graduate program would help shape me further into the professional I plan to be. Third, and finally, through this program I will continue to gain professional skills, experiences, and a graduate degree with marketable credentials that will help me now and later on in my career.

My academic background includes a Bachelor of Arts in International and Global Studies from UNCG (Fall 2014-Spring 2018). While at the university, I was able to grow in skills (presentation, communication, technology, and leadership) that have prepared me well at the undergraduate level. In addition to a strong academic record, I completed an on-campus Event Coordinating Internship with the United States Peace Corps. This internship required me to develop and coordinate a university-wide educational/recruitment program at UNCG to focus attention on volunteer opportunities. Students from across university programs came to hear presentations from Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, including a professor from UNCG, regarding their experiences of serving abroad. Finally, my academic career included membership in the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and Alpha Lambda Delta, as well as several student clubs. During my time at UNCG I have grown from a nervous freshman to a hard working and driven senior who is intent on continuing the educational journey this Fall.

There are several personal skills that I gained from my undergraduate studies which I will bring into graduate studies. One, I have dramatically improved my organizational skills. Two, I am a very hard working student. Three, I am driven to achieve and to be all that I can be. Four, I am open to learning new things and being exposed to different ideas. I want a graduate education that forces me to examine new ways of thinking and to experience the world from the perspective of others. Five, I am truly grateful and understand the privilege afforded to me to have access to such outstanding public education. Having had the opportunity to visit countries such as Honduras, Belize, and Mexico, I know that the educational opportunities available to us here in the United States are very different than those in so many other countries around the world. I sincerely believe that these personal traits will contribute to my engagement in this graduate program.

In addition to the personal skills that I will bring to the program, I also have life experiences that will enrich my participation in the program. For example, I have studied abroad in England, Spain, and Costa Rica. My studies in Spain and Costa Rica involved immersion-type Spanish classes while residing with host families. While studying abroad was a fantastic and life-changing experience, there came an adjustment period to a new lifestyle and I would bring to class discussions the perspectives of one familiar with the pains of adjusting to a new culture or language. All of these experiences have helped shape me into the person that I am and will help me to be a superior and exceptional graduate student and professional.

The graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro is an extraordinary school that seeks those who are willing to learn, grow, spread their wings, and soar. The Master of Arts in Applied Arts and Sciences helps build, administer, and solidify skills that last a

lifetime. I am pleased to submit this essay as part of my application for entry into the program in the Fall of 2018.