



What Happens When Georgetown Students from Doha and DC Come Together?

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DC Come Together?

Georgetown students from Doha and DC recently united through the DC-Doha Dialogue, a program designed to spark meaningful conversations and foster collaboration between the campuses.

This year, the program brought eight Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) students to Washington, DC, where they joined four DC-based peers to explore how communities can work

together to create lasting change. For the first time, it featured two GU-Q students studying abroad in DC.

“The theme was ‘People for Others’ and social justice,” explained Zain Assaf (SFS’23), a Student Development Officer at GU-Q who helped organize the trip. “We worked to incorporate a social justice lens into every aspect of the experience.”

Through meetings with notable figures like Adnan Syed from Georgetown’s Prison Justice Initiative and leaders from disability support services, the students gained insight into how these impactful programs came to life. The group also engaged with activist groups and faith leaders from Georgetown’s Campus Ministry, including Imam Yahya Hendi and Father Gregory Schenden, to explore how the Georgetown value of “People for Others” resonates across different faith traditions.

Jay Pacer (SFS’26), a GU-Q student studying abroad in DC, shared how the trip reshaped his understanding of social justice. “My understanding of social justice was limited to protests, hunger, poverty, and debates on social media—familiar but abstract ideas. However, this experience transformed that perception... Social justice became something tangible—something I, too, can live and influence.”

During their stay, students participated in a range of service projects and cultural visits, including to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Museum of the Palestinian People. A visit to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial further enriched their reflections on history and building understanding.

For many of them, the volunteer work at local organizations like Martha's Table, a nonprofit organization, was the most transformative experience. Jay shared: "It was my first time volunteering for a cause that felt truly meaningful. I wasn't there because of an academic obligation or external pressure; I was there by choice, helping people by packing groceries."

He added, "It made me realize just how interconnected we all are, despite the vast distances, different backgrounds, and life circumstances that separate us. I wasn't just giving out watermelons, or pears, or collard greens, or squash—I was contributing to a bigger cause, becoming a small part of a community that cared for one another, even if only for a brief moment."

Hilltop student Betsabe Alfaro (C'25) was similarly impacted, though for her, the highlight was the cultural exchange. "Learning about different cultures and ways of life at the other campus was so interesting," she recalled. "Talking about the norms in DC, I realized that the way we live can sometimes be quite comical to people who are from different parts of the world."

In the evenings, the group would find moments of laughter and connection. Areesha Fatima (SFS'25), a GU-Q student, shared, "My favorite part was when we would all come together every night for a game of mafia. After a long day of sessions and debriefs, it was the perfect way to unwind, relax, and have a good laugh! These games were the perfect bonding opportunity for all of us. Further, what brought us all closer was living together as a community and even cooking together. It felt like being part of a family—as we call it, 'the DDD Crew.'"

These lighthearted moments often flowed into reflective conversations, allowing the students to critically engage with their experiences. "I grew up around similar communities my entire life, and it felt amazing to finally be in a position where I get to give back. It was heartwarming to see my peers gain a new perspective on the world," said Betsabe.

As the DC-Doha Dialogue continues to grow, organizers are already planning future themes and activities. Its mission is clear: to challenge students to live out Georgetown's values—both on campus and in the broader world.