

MUHAMMAD ALI SCHOLARS PROGRAM PROSPECTUS 2005 - 2009



ABOUT THE MUHAMMAD ALI SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Ali Scholars Program, offered to full-time undergraduate students, is a unique 2-year experience combining training, research and service in the areas of social justice, violence prevention and peace building in an urban living context. A special emphasis is placed on understanding and addressing the social conditions that impact those issues.

Through their work with the Muhammad Ali Institute, Ali Scholars develop expertise on a topic of their choice by participating in seminars with renowned practitioners, educators and activists. The Ali Scholars employ a practical solution based approach as they conduct scholarly research related to their “expert area” and its impact locally and globally. Equipped with a solid knowledge base and organizing skills, the Ali Scholars provide service hosting on-campus events, furthering the work of the Ali Institute and Ali Center, and working alongside campus, local, national and international practitioners in their expert areas.

A key component of the program is an international travel experience designed to explore social justice issues in a different cultural, political, social and economic context. Through the Ali Scholars program, students acquire both the intellectual and practical training to take action and leadership on issues of peace, violence prevention and social justice at home and abroad.

HOW THE ALI SCHOLARS PROGRAM WORKS

The Muhammad Ali Institute launched the Ali Scholars Program in the fall of 2005 as its primary vehicle for engaging students in the work of social justice and peace building. The program is marketed on campus and applicants undergo a rigorous selection process including submitting essays, letters of recommendation and a transcript. Students who pass the first phase of review are invited for an interview.

The Ali Scholars progress through the program as a cohort, providing a sense of camaraderie, group identity, and a dynamic peer learning environment. In the first year, the students learn key concepts in social justice, peace building and violence prevention. At the core of the Ali Scholars training is the Ali Institute’s *SeeRedNow* campaign, which provides a social justice-based intellectual framework for understanding domestic, community, economic, environmental, political, and hate violence and examining how they are linked to form a system that impedes peace and justice. Students immediately learn to integrate these concepts as they help plan and implement the Ali Institute’s annual Peace and Justice Week at UofL. Additionally, the students connect with local organizations and begin to do community service. During their first year, Ali Scholars choose a topic in social justice that will become their “expert area.” The students research the topic in depth in preparation for designing a solution based action project to address the issue. Rounding out their first year is intensive preparation for their summer international learning journey that occurs between their two Ali Scholars Program years.

The summer international learning journey is designed to help students put social justice, peace building and violence prevention issues in a global context. The trip requires a significant amount of staff and student time and attention as the Scholars learn about the history and culture of the country they will visit, raise funds and prepare to travel with an open mind and heart. The trip, which lasts approximately three weeks, is conducted in cooperation with a local university. The Ali Scholars interact with their peers at the host university, attend lectures and seminars about local and national issues, and make field visits to organizations and local projects that promote peace and justice. The international learning experience is a critical opportunity for personal transformation and the integration of theories and concepts into meaningful realities.

In their second program year, students combine the knowledge and experiences from their training, studies, research, community service and international trip to implement a culminating project. The projects, done individually or collectively, often in cooperation with a community based organization, are action based and designed to address a specific issue related to peace building, social justice and/or violence prevention on campus, in the local community, or in the wider world. Also in their second year, the students play a central role in recruiting and selecting the next cohort of Ali Scholars.

ALI SCHOLARS COHORTS

Ali Scholars 2005-2007



Ali Scholars and staff at Liverpool Airport in England.

The first group of Ali Scholars was selected in November 2005 and the program began in earnest with seven students in January 2006.

2005-2007 Ali Scholars

Savannah Barrett
Monica Bryant
Maria Teresa de la Cruz
Rashida Francis
Brandon Herring
Randy Johnson
Victoria Richardson

As with any new program, the learning curve was high. While the students began their training, the staff worked hard to plan their international trip in four months. The staff enlisted the help of trusted colleagues and partners to organize a rich international experience. The first Ali Scholars, joined by Ali Institute staff and the UofL Vice Provost for Diversity and Equal Opportunity Dr. Mordean Taylor-Archer, traveled to France, England and Senegal. Dr. Mohamed Mbodj, African historian and professor of history at Manhattanville College, accompanied the group as Faculty in Residence. After a day in Paris, the group proceeded to England, where they were hosted by Youth Charter for Sport, Culture and Arts in Manchester and Liverpool. In Senegal, they visited the famed Goree Island, attended lectures at Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, and traveled to St. Louis to deliver supplies to Ndate Yalla Primary School.



At work in the Louisville community

In their second year, the Ali Scholars continued their community service and completed a number of projects, including hosting a major exhibit on Darfur and lecture by an internationally renowned photojournalist and doing leadership development with a girls' group in Louisville.



Ali Scholars at closing celebration in Senegal.

Ali Scholars 2007-2009

The Ali Scholars Program grew in exciting ways with the second cohort. The vibrant group of eight Scholars included the first Ali Street Scholar, a young person in the Louisville community with demonstrated commitment to social justice. The group began to bond immediately during a three day training/planning retreat held in Indiana. The Muhammad Ali Center Council of Students joined the Scholars for the first day of the retreat to gain a foundation in peace building and social justice.

2007-2009 Ali Scholars

Lecia AM Brown
On'Draya Green
Felicia Hogan
Tiffany Miller
Colin Ogilvie
Rosie Washington
Tytianna Wells

The Ali Scholars played a key role in planning and implementing Peace and Justice Week in the November 2007. The group installed a major campus display promoting the Ali Institute's *Do No Harm Campaign* with facts about local, national, and international manifestations of domestic, community, economic, political, environmental, and hate violence. Additionally, they created a display of 400 scarves honoring women in Darfur. Their efforts culminated in a rally bearing the theme of the compelling initiative, "That Ain't Right!" Faculty, staff and students participated in the rally that exhorted people to do something about the social injustices they see in their communities and in the world. The event ended with a talk by the King Kigeli V, the former king of Rwanda, who shared his story and warned about repeating the genocide that devastated his country.

The Ali Street Scholar left the program and the second cohort of Ali Scholars, now seven students, traveled to Senegal for their summer international learning journey. In addition to participating in the first Ali Scholars Academy, the group partnered with seven students from the host institution Université Gaston Berger in St. Louis, Senegal. Besides the shared social and educational experiences, the students joined forces to create "Living Newspaper" dramas about two current issues in Senegal – the plight of talibes and the challenges of young women seeking higher education. The students performed the dramas for an audience of UGB faculty and students and led a lively discussion about the issues. The international trip of the second cohort marked a critical moment in the life of the Ali Scholars Program. Hosting the Academy and arranging the interaction of the students laid the groundwork for the future Ali Scholars Program at UGB. After their amazing two weeks of discovery in St Louis, the Ali Scholars spent a week in the capitol city of Dakar.



Ali Scholars and UGB Scholars in deep discussion at the first Ali Scholars Academy.

Again in 2008, the Ali Scholars played a major role in Peace and Justice Week. The Ali Institute and red7e advertising firm transformed the *Do No Harm Campaign* into *SeeRedNow*. The Ali Scholars installed displays on campus to market the campaign and played leadership roles in launching the new effort. Their culminating project was a series of campus and community events creatively highlighting the six manifestations of violence and bringing *SeeRedNow* to life.



Ali Scholars at the launch of *SeeRedNow* at Peace and Justice Week 2008



The best part about being an Ali Scholar is making new friends.

Ali Scholars 2009-2011



2009-2011 Ali Scholars at their induction ceremony.



Ali Scholar Mohamad Ndiaye spoke out to combat violence against women at the Take Back The Night rally at UofL. (By Michael Clevenger, The Courier-Journal) September 29, 2009

At the writing of this document, the 2009-2011 are just beginning their journey in the program. There are several major advancements that should prove to impact the way this Ali Scholars cohort experiences the program.

This cohort will be the first to be trained in the Muhammad Ali Institute's curriculum, *Service for Social Change*. *Service for Social Change* offers an intellectual framework for understanding some of the tough issues facing communities and guides practitioners through a process of designing service projects that seek to change conditions instead of just alleviating symptoms. The toolkit incorporates critical thinking, research, planning, and project management and helps individuals and organizations do transformational

community-based work. The students will utilize the curriculum as a guide to start significant community service early in the program.

The Ali Scholars will participate in the pilot of *Champions*, a joint program of the Ali Center and Ali Institute designed to get students involved in community service that addresses the underlying social issues that their work targets. The students will work intensively with residents of the Park Hill community in Louisville and develop innovative programs and projects. Additionally, The Ali Center and Ali Institute are partnering to develop a curriculum to operationalize the Ali Center's Six Core Values – respect, dedication, confidence, conviction, giving and spirituality. The new curriculum will be integrated into Ali Scholars training and activities.

The Ali Scholars will enroll in a credit bearing Social Justice Course, the Social Change Minor Seminar. The course will be co-taught by Interim Director Stacy Bailey-Ndiaye and Anne Braden Institute Director Cate Fosl. The one-credit course will serve as a pilot for ultimately establishing a three credit on-line social justice/ peace building course. The new Ali Institute Research Scholar, faculty member Kevin Chapman, will provide support to the Ali Scholars, strengthening the research component of the program.

The Ali Scholars Third Year has been established. Recent graduates of the Ali Scholars Program who will be enrolled at UofL for a full academic year beyond their cohort years can be Third Year Ali Scholars. These students have a higher profile at the Ali Center and support the MACCS. They also support the current Ali Scholars



Getting to work early – the new Ali Scholars help Fern Creek High School build its peace garden.

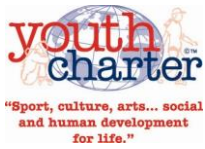
2009-2011 Ali Scholars

Kathreina Greenwell
Jonathan Krigger
Bristol Mann
Mohamad Ndiaye
Whitney Newell
Gwendolyn Rucker
Janessa Siegel
Amanda Simmons

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

Youth Charter for Sport, Culture and Arts – United Kingdom

The Youth Charter for Sport, Culture and Arts (Youth Charter) is a UK registered charity and UN accredited non-governmental organization with the overall mission and aims of providing all young people, through sport and the arts, with the opportunity to develop in life.



Youth Charter hosted the Muhammad Ali Scholars on their first international trip to France, England, and Senegal in 2006. The itinerary in England included:

- Attendance at "Tackling Racism Together" conference on hate crimes held in Liverpool
- Tour of Liverpool
- Visit to the Powerhouse community center in Manchester for the launch of the 12 Year Youth

Charter Report

- Visit to Youth Charter offices in Manchester
- Visit to Ahmed Ichbad Center at the University of Manchester
- Lecture at University of Manchester
- Two Ali Scholars were interviewed on BBC Radio
- Reflection and processing sessions

Additionally, Youth Charter chair Geoff Thompson met with the Ali Scholars while he was visiting Louisville, KY. In February 2007, while a guest of the Ali Institute as its first World Changer in Residence, Mr. Thompson reconnected with the Scholars he hosted in England. In March 2008, while a guest of the Muhammad Ali Center, he met with the 2008-09 Scholars to discuss international relations in preparation for their trip to Senegal.

The Youth Charter is scheduled to host the Ali Scholars for five days in London before they head to Ghana. The Ali Scholars will connect with students from Roehampton University to explore social justice issues in the UK and will also examine the legacy of the colonial relationship between England and Ghana.

The Ali Institute and Youth Charter have a Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate on programs and projects. The two organizations will partner to develop a *Social Coach* model to compliment the Ali Institutes *Service for Social ChangeSM* curriculum that will be used as core training tools for Ali Scholars worldwide.

Université Gaston Berger- Senegal

Université Gaston Berger (UGB) hosted the Muhammad Ali Scholars in St. Louis, Senegal for two weeks in May 2008. Joining the Scholars was a faculty member from the College of Arts and Sciences and six students affiliated with the UofL Theater Department. Under the coordination of Omar Sougou, Director of Cooperation, UGB faculty, staff and students provided exceptional hospitality. UGB furnished housing at a discounted rate, and even renovated a house ahead of schedule in anticipation of the Ali Scholars' arrival. The staff arranged transportation and gave the group open access to university facilities.

Most importantly, the English Department selected seven students to serve as UGB Scholars for the duration of the visit. These students embraced the UofL Scholars as friends, hosted them at the university, took them to classes, welcomed them into their social circles and gave the Ali Scholars an intimate window into Senegalese life by sharing of themselves.



In a gesture of friendship, Ali Institute staff present UGB Rector (president) with a boxing glove signed by Muhammad Ali.

All of the students participated in the first Ali Scholars Academy, a two-day series of lectures and discussions led by Ali Institute staff and UGB faculty members. The Academy covered a wide range of topics related to culture, social justice and youth activism.

In the summer of 2008, UGB Director of Cooperation Omar Sougou visited the University of Louisville to meet with faculty and staff. Mr. Sougou also met with staff from the Ali Institute and the Ali Center to discuss the establishment of a Muhammad Ali Scholars Program at UGB. As a result of the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the University of Louisville and UGB, opening channels for faculty and student exchanges and the creation of the first Ali Scholars Program abroad.

PROGRAM IMPACT

The 2007-09 Ali Scholars were asked to evaluate the program by providing written responses to a number of questions. In heartfelt detail, students conveyed how being an Ali Scholar impacted their personal and intellectual development, expanded their worldview, increased their mastery of specific skills, and enriched their overall college experience. Please see the attached **ADDENDUM** for selected Ali Scholar comments.

THE FUTURE OF THE ALI SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Muhammad Ali Institute and Muhammad Ali Center are partnering to develop a plan to extend the Ali Scholars Program on a global scale in collaboration with selected colleges and universities around the world. The program offers student-scholars the opportunity to gain awareness and insight about social justice, violence prevention, and peace building, and learn the skills that allow them to work for social justice locally and globally.

While the students in each program explore similar subject areas, each country brings its unique set of realities, cultural perspectives, and needs. The dynamic exchange between fellow Ali Scholars across national lines creates fertile ground for the sharing of ideas, work and friendship. Participants are exposed to the most cogent theories, strategies, and practices related to social change and are able to work alongside esteemed educators, researchers and practitioners on their campus, in their local community and at participating campuses around the world. They also employ Muhammad Ali's six core values – respect, dedication, conviction, confidence, spirituality and giving. Through this experience, scholars become trained and empowered to take individual leadership on issues of peace, violence and social justice.

Ali Scholars acquire a broad understanding of issues and are guided and supported in using this understanding to develop their expertise as leaders, activists and agents for social change. Ali Scholars develop particular expertise in an area of the work that best connects to their skills, interests and abilities and conduct a project in this “expert area.” Program students are expected to emerge with a values- based, spirit centered model of leadership, impacting their home communities, and ultimately their nations and the world.

Ali Scholars have opportunities to travel, participate in national and international conferences, as well as serve in social justice and violence prevention organizations in their local community. Scholars are connected to their counterparts at participating campuses around the world via video conferences, internet-based distance learning experiences, and international gatherings that bring together the Scholars and faculty and staff at participating universities.

While the structure of the program is currently in development, there will be several key components:

- An Ali Scholars Oversight Team consisting of stakeholders will review requests to establish a new Ali Scholars Program
- Ali Scholars Program Oversight Team will conduct a site visit to potential host universities
- Ali Scholars Program staff at the host university will participate in training conducted by Ali Center and Ali Institute
- All Ali Scholars Programs will be subject to review and evaluation by the Ali Scholars Program Oversight Team
- Ali Scholars will progress through the program in 2-year cohorts, with the opportunity for an optional third year. The students will receive a full tuition scholarship for their participation in the program.
- Every two years, the Ali Scholars International Academy will take place in Louisville, Kentucky drawing students and program staff from Ali Scholars Programs worldwide. The International Academy will be an important opportunity for the exchange of scholarly work, seminars on critical issues and pertinent research, skill-building/training workshops, sharing of service projects, social gatherings and cultural exchanges. The two-week International Academy will feature:
 - Lectures and leadership development by renowned scholars and practitioners hosted at the Ali Center
 - Showcase of Ali Scholars projects
 - Meetings of worldwide Ali Scholars Program staff to share strategies and set a common agenda
 - Activities to develop friendship and cooperation amongst Ali Scholars worldwide
 - Visit to New York City to attend meetings at the United Nations and international organizations
 - Visit to Washington, DC to meet with US governmental and international agencies
- In alternate years, Ali Scholars Programs will visit their counterpart programs in other countries for their International Learning Journey. The travel schedule will be determined in consultation with individual Ali Scholars Programs and the Ali Scholars Oversight Team.

Potential Ali Scholars Program Sites as of October 2009

Africa: *Senegal – Université Gaston Berger*

- Hosted Ali Scholars in May 2008
- Site of the first Ali Scholars Academy
- MOU signed between UofL and UGB
- Expected start date of first International Ali Scholars Program – October 2010
- Site for African Virtual University

Ghana – University of Development Studies

- Ali Institute exploratory/ planning trip October 2009
- Ali Scholars trip planned in May 2010

South Asia: *Bangladesh – Chittagong University*

- Ali Institute visits 2008 and 2009 through “Religion and Society: A Dialogue” (State Department grant funded program)
- Expressed interest in International Ali Scholars Program and Muhammad Ali Chair in Political Science Dept.

Europe: *United Kingdom – Roehampton University*

- Youth Charter for Sport, Culture and Arts hosting UofL Ali Scholars in May 2010, building on 2006 Ali Scholars trip to England
- Ali Scholars will be partnered with students from Roehampton University
- Existing MOU between Youth Charter and Ali Institute

University of Leeds

- Expressed interest in international student exchange

- Ali Center visited August 2009

Ireland – University of Limerick

- Expressed interest in international student exchange
- Ali Center visited August 2009

Middle East: *Qatar – University City*

- Ali Center exploring opportunities for partnership

ADDENDUM

CASE STUDY

Learning to Be Bold: That Ain't Right! Peace and Justice Week 2007

The Ali Institute's Peace and Justice Week traditionally takes place in the November. When the new 2007-09 Ali Scholars began their program in August, they were intimidated by the idea of planning a major campus event in three months. Initially, they decided to invite some of the well known community leaders typically associated with activism in Louisville. With encouragement, coaxing and outright directives, the new Ali Scholars began to view themselves as leaders. With boldness and creativity they students planned and brilliantly executed "That Ain't Right!" a combination of major campus installations, a social justice rally, and a social justice campaign.



"Another thing when looking back at our experience that had a significant effect on me was the installations we completed for "That Ain't Right!" I remember walking past all the scarves after we had finally tied it all together and displayed it, and I thought, 'Wow! We did that!' It was really great to see that we had the power to help other people see, and that we had the power to help other people find their own power. The [scarf display] in particular was a beautiful experience for me because it felt as if we were speaking for people that deserved to be remembered. It just seemed so right and just to display that in their honor. And the saying really is true- knowledge is power. In helping people come to an awareness of what was going on in Darfur it felt like we were giving them power of their own. Also, the installations incorporated statistics we had found about different manifestations of

violence. While I don't remember the exact stats, I recall I researched CEO salaries and how much they make compared to everyday people, the domestic abuse faced by women in the U.S., and how many kids were living in poverty in the state of KY. Researching these statistics was really eye opening to me. Poverty is an issue I am deeply troubled by and the statistics kind of gave shape to my convictions. The statistics on women similarly strengthened my resolve towards injustice towards women. And like the scarves display, presenting to statistics felt really great. It felt like I was teaching someone and making them better for the knowledge I could present to them." – Ali Scholar

ALI SCHOLARS PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

What components/ activities of the program had the greatest impact on you? Why?

"Our trip to Senegal clearly had the greatest impact on my life. I know I would probably never have had the opportunity to travel out of the country if it wasn't for our trip. There is something so beautiful in experiencing a different culture. Not only does it allow you the opportunity to see the things you have in common with people you'd assume to be a lot different, it allows for great opportunities to learn the beauty and complexity of another and incorporate all that he/she teaches you into your own life to make you better. In Senegal, we were met with such generosity and sincerity that it allowed me to think about my own life and how I treat people. The gratitude for life, the deep spirituality, and the amazing sense of community convicted me deeply of my own greed, negativity, and selfishness. It was as if I could see God everywhere in everything while we were in Senegal- for not only was my life filled with a lot less material clutter to distract me from seeing my God and my brother, but my heart was cleared of a lot of clutter as well. Seeing the goodness of others stripped me of my own baggage so it seems- they humanized me as they truly took time to see me, and challenged me without knowing it by living a life I respected and admired. The vibrancy and life we encountered is something I will treasure for the rest of my life."

“By far I would say my travels to Senegal, which took me out of my comfort zone and caused me to expand my thinking and interactions. Being that this was my first trip abroad it really was eye opening, as I came ready and willing to experience and grow. It was scary and exciting to step beyond the North American borders and travel to the continent of Africa. I believe that this trip had the greatest impact on me because of the season in my life, where I was really searching for many personal unknowns. I believe this journey helped to clarify issues of identity, consciousness and humanity from my perspectives. Also, being African-American it was so refreshing to look around and see people like me everywhere on billboards, working in the community and able to be proud of their culture without regards to what others may think.”

Explain how the program helped you develop the following skills:

- a. Problem solving**
- b. Project/ event planning**
- c. Effective communication**
- d. Critical analysis of current events/ issues**
- e. Others**

“The way I address a problem is completely different. I actually take steps to getting things done without just jumping into them and watching it crumble due to poor planning. I have learned how to organize things big or small and how to ask for help. Asking for help is a huge problem I still face, but with the program I have learned that there are reliable people and that things are more effectively done when you put your heads together. The program has also opened my eyes to many issues in the world. Since all the scholars had different interests they all brought something unique to the table and always allowed me to learn more outside of my interest of medicine.”

“Critical analysis was a big part of everything we did. It was really important for us to think critically about issues the whole time we were scholars. One thing I learned while as a scholar is that there are always two sides to every story, and it’s important to hear from both sides. Oftentimes people are being oppressed, but if you only listen to the oppressor convince you otherwise you’d never believe it. One instance of critical analysis of current events that clearly stands out in my mind is how we went to Senegal and researched things that were going on in the society. We learned of the dual role many women were facing as they not only wanted to please their families, but also wanted to get an education and have a career. This particular issue became crystal clear because we were offered the opportunity to become friends with young Senegalese women. The reality of the issue became so clear to us because we were allowed to see it. Similarly, our research on the Talibe was truly eye-opening. Just learning of the issue impacted us a lot, but being in the middle of the society where we could clearly see every point of view made it much more real to us. We began to understand the social context of Islam and why the government’s hands were tied; we saw the marabouts and their perspective as they were faced with great responsibility and little resources; and we were definitely able to see the talibe perspective everyday as we saw them hungry and in the streets. I am convinced there is nothing on this earth that could’ve taught me more about how to really critically understand something. I realize the issue has to become real to you, you must understand what is happening by increasing your knowledge and sometimes even immersing yourself in the middle of the problem in order to gain understanding. This is a lesson I will forever value and try to utilize to the benefit of others. I know you cannot bring about a solution until you are totally familiar with the problem.”

How did your experiences as an Ali Scholar challenge any of your previously held ideas about

- a. social justice**
- b. the world**
- c. the United States**
- d. your community**
- e. other people**
- f. yourself**

“Going to Senegal gave me the greatest truth to my own identity. When I moved to the US I lost sight of who I was and what I stood for as a Jamaican citizen. I often found myself trying to represent America or defending Americans and not so much realizing my stance in the bigger picture. Realistically I was not American at all but through assimilation I became a part of them and did not know the difference between who I was and who I became. Going to Senegal gave me back the understanding of being proud and acknowledging that I am is very important to my future. After coming back from Senegal I re-evaluated my life plans and decided to do Doctors Without Borders as well as represent my country in volleyball and hopefully also in track and field. This has taken me to a better understanding of myself, my culture and what I stand for in life and I am looking forward to where it will take me in the near future.”

“The Ali Scholar Program has challenged me to see problems with our community that I would’ve otherwise never imagined. I think it is safe to say this developed most in the way I now see issues more critically—especially issues that don’t personally affect me. The institute aided me in seeing everything in the eyes of a justice standpoint. Before the program it probably would’ve never occurred to me that issues of race, sexual orientation, gender, and other minority statuses can completely define a person’s entire life. Especially my status as a white female previously kept me from truly seeing certain issues of race, not because I didn’t care, but because I wasn’t mindful of it. Before the program, when going in to the Broadway Kroger I probably would’ve never noticed that there is less availability of essential staples to a person’s diet, or that the majority of job availability is in the East End of town, completely opposite of where the greatest levels of joblessness exist.”

“When thinking of my notion of social justice before I began the program, I think I probably saw this term as so broad and abstract that it wasn’t “real.” I felt it was just unachievable jargon in the same ranks as “world peace” and “the end of poverty.” The program though, allowed me to understand social justice as more than words, but as truly an action. Sometimes it is easy to get overwhelmed in how big the problem is that you talk yourself out of working to combat it altogether. But nothing great ever got started because people were too scared or too cynical to *get started*. When you break it down and see how much can truly be affected by attempts for change it’s worth the effort.”

“More than anything I feel the Ali Scholar program challenged my complacency when thinking of the world. I have never been one to keep up with world issues or current events, but I have come to understand that this is a travesty. I cannot understand my place in the world if I do not understand the world. The program also opened my eyes to my lack of understanding. While I never claimed to have everything figured out, our experiences really humbled me to know that there is so much I don’t know about the world, and that many of my previous and even existing assumptions do not hold true.”

How did being an Ali Scholar affect your overall college experience?

“It took me outside of the norm. I am a student athlete and so most of the time I was surrounded by other athletes. We all love to workout, play our sport, and sleep. That was my routine. After becoming more involved I was able to meet other with other interests and opened me up to what is going on campus. I’ve now met what I would consider lifetime brother and sisters through the Ali Scholars Program and it is definitely an experience I hope many others get to have.”

“My time as an Ali Scholar has immensely benefited my overall college experience. College for me was all about growing and using the knowledge I received to make me not only a better citizen, as I became equipped for a future career, but a better person—more self-aware, more resolute in my beliefs, desires, and convictions. The Ali Scholar Program truly enhanced this growth for me. It was a reminder of what was important. Every time I found myself caught up in due dates and my agenda, and every time I just got off track, being an Ali Scholar brought me back to myself and helped me once again remember the purpose of my education, and even the purpose of my life. In a way, it helped elaborate on the skeletal framework of knowledge that I received. The program helped put flesh to the theory of my education. Sometimes that’s all I saw my education as—beneficial theories, yet broad and unpractical because I didn’t know how to translate that in to real life. The Ali Scholar Program was the thing that brought my education to life. It made my coursework practical and useful. It helped me understand how my education truly related to the world and my part.

Similarly, the program enhanced my college experience because of the social component I gained. Not only did I feel more useful in my college experience as the Institute helped me put theory to action, but I gained a great source of friendship as well. The majority of my college experience was filled with school and work, nothing else. I didn't live on campus and I wasn't from Louisville, so I didn't really have a consistent and stable pool of friends. Our weekly meetings were so good for me. That sometimes was the one time a week I had to talk to people my age about something other than paper deadlines and taking notes. It was even more fulfilling that I was with a group of my peers that held similar convictions as me, that I respected, and that made me better. The Ali Scholar Program was truly my greatest, and probably my only source of connection while in college."

Did your Ali Scholar experience relate to any of your academic coursework? How?

"My scholar experience related to all of my academic coursework. As a sociology major the vast majority of my coursework was concerned with matters of justice on society- virtually every single class meeting taught me about social problems and their resolutions. Much of what I learned dealt with issues of minority status and injustice. I feel this related very much to what we discussed and learned in the Ali Scholar Program, especially in relation to the manifestations of violence. A great deal of my courses and electives were also *influenced* by my experience as an Ali Scholar. For one, I never really felt deeply concerned about women's issues until I became a Scholar. That is disappointing to me now, but it is true. What I learned about women's issues as an Ali Scholar encouraged me to take the course Women: International Perspective. This was an upper level sociology class and I learned so much in that class! My knowledge base was increased to a tremendous degree and my concern for women was also greatly increased. I can say I began to treasure my status as a woman and I began to treasure other women much more because of the program and this particular course. I even see this showing up now in the topics I teach girls at the Portland Promise Center in our Girls Rock class.

Not unlike my choice to take Women: International Perspective, the Ali Scholar Program also challenged me to take various courses dealing with issues of race. I took several classes in PAS and various sociology courses relating to issues of race and class. The Ali Scholar Program brought such issues to the forefront of my mind and encouraged me to learn all I could about what was truly going on in relation to these topics. I found myself hungry for the truth on these topics. I didn't want to hear what the government or university wanted me to know, but I wanted to learn the realities. All of this coursework inspired by my time as a scholar benefited me more than I know how to put into words."

Please add any other comments.

"Not many programs are like this, at the University of Louisville or across the country. The concept of getting back to addressing the true issues of humanity is at the core of this program; a concept that has been lost in many academic institutions. The Ali Scholars program embraces students [and encourages them] to look at themselves and how they impact the world. We need more programs where people are allowed to develop themselves and not just leadership skills or their resume."

"I have absolutely loved the experience with the Ali Scholars. You have truly helped me grow and develop as person. You have opened my eyes, heart and mind to depths I never knew possible with my past and present experiences. You have given me a gift many will never receive in a lifetime and for this I am thankful and blessed."

"Answering these questions doesn't really seem to give justice to all that I learned and how much I grew as a result of the Ali Scholar Program. I feel so honored to have been a part of this experience. Thank you so much for the privilege of being a scholar. I know I am so much better and so much different for this experience. I grew in ways that I know I could've never reached in my life if it hadn't been for this opportunity. "