

## **GU-Q program wins international recognition**

Georgetown University in Qatar's (GU-Q) co-curricular program entitled Zones of Conflict, Zones of Peace (ZCZP) has been recently selected as the winner for the NASPA Best Practices in International Education Award for International Exchange. The Best Practices in International Education Award recognizes domestic and international colleagues and institutions for exceptional work related to international higher education. International and U.S. programs are honored for their commitment to advancing the dialogue and practice around international higher education in 4 different categories including International Exchange which recognizes programs that promote global competency and cultural exchange via campus sponsored travel initiatives. Commenting on the NASPA award honors, ZCZP program co-founder and Associate Dean of Student Affairs at GU-Q, Brendan Hill, said that this recognition embodies a significant achievement for the program. "We are truly honored that a GU-Q initiative has been recognized by NASPA this year. Since 2008, GU-Q has been taking students to zones of ethnic, political and religious conflict, with the goal of better understanding both the causes of the conflict, and the difficult process of reconciliation, and I strongly believe that every student who has taken part in our program has developed greater ability to understand the challenges and the legacy that exist in the wake of any conflict."

"The idea for the ZCZP was initially created when we visited a refugee camp in Jordan through GU-Q Community Engagement Program we had organized back in 2008, where we saw students starting to ask questions and really examine the causes of conflicts that produce refugees. They wanted to better understand the conflicts impacting their own region by understanding the conflicts around the world," Brendan Hill explained further about how the idea to establish the ZCZP program first started.

The ZCZP program was co-created by Dr. John T. Crist, Director of Research at SFS-Qatar, responsible for supporting and promoting SFS-Qatar's growing research culture among faculty, staff, and students.

GU-Q Education Enrichment Manager, Sheena Martinez, who has been managing the program for the past three years and is responsible for building the program curriculum said that this program fosters connections between in-class experience and hands-on experiences and increases student understanding of the challenges faced by local and global communities. "Students engage with communities abroad to better understand the people and systems that have contributed to the conflict, as well as those that have been involved in the reconciliation, reparation and rebuilding," she said, commenting on the international exchange elements of the program.

The ZCZP course focuses on conflict management and conflict resolution and the accompanying processes. 30 students are chosen each year for the program, and students are selected for two different trips to conflict sites at different stages of resolution. The most recent program trip examined the topic of Islam in America by sending a group of 11 students to Dearborn, Michigan and Washington, D.C., focusing on social aspects of being Muslim in America post 9/11 and emergence of ISIS.

NASPA Awards will be distributed at a ceremony on Saturday 21 March in New Orleans, Louisiana.