

UNIVERSITY OF **LOUISVILLE**

MUHAMMAD ALI INSTITUTE FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

2023-2024



120 EAST BRANDEIS AVENUE
CULTURAL & EQUITY CENTER
LOUISVILLE, KY 40292

WEBSITE: [HTTPS://LOUISVILLE.EDU/ALIINSTITUTE](https://louisville.edu/aliinstitute)

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NEW BEGINNINGS!



Sherry Durham
Co-Director,
Muhammad Ali Institute for Peace & Justice



Marian R. Vasser
Assistant Vice President,
Inclusive Excellence & Belonging
Co-Director,
Muhammad Ali Institute for Peace & Justice

WELCOME MESSAGE

We are excited to embark on this new journey as Co-Directors of the MAI! We are committed to fostering an environment where learning, inspiration, and collaboration thrive. Together we aim to honor Muhammad Ali's commitment to social justice, equality, and humanitarian efforts.

By working together, we can make a significant impact on the world just as Ali did. The Institute is dedicated to fostering belonging, compassion, and empowering positive change in society. Understanding this work can only be achieved through collective efforts, we invite you to join this journey with us!

Yours in solidarity,

Sherry Durham

Marian R. Vasser

UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISVILLE

MUHAMMAD ALI INSTITUTE
FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

MISSION & VISION

Mission

The University of Louisville Muhammad Ali Institute (MAI) for Peace and Justice aims to advance the work, study, and practice of peacebuilding, social justice, and violence prevention through the development of innovative educational programs, trainings, service, and research. The MAI's approach to peacebuilding, social justice, and violence prevention are guided by Ali's Six Core Principles:

1. **Confidence:** Belief in oneself, one's abilities, and one's future.
2. **Conviction:** A firm belief that gives one the courage to stand behind that belief, despite pressure to do otherwise.
3. **Dedication:** The act of devoting all one's energy, effort, and abilities to a certain task.
4. **Giving:** To present voluntarily without expecting something in return.
5. **Respect:** Esteem for, or a sense of the worth or excellence of, oneself and others.
6. **Spirituality:** A sense of awe, reverence, and inner peace inspired by a connection to all of creation and/or that which is greater than oneself.

Vision

Drawing strength from the vision and work of Muhammad Ali, the MAI promotes support for human dignity, promote conscientious civic engagement, furthers peace and justice, and explores the impact of violence in local, state, national and international arenas. The MAI exposes college students to the scholarship and best practices concerning peacebuilding, social justice, and violence prevention, with the goal of cultivating safe and thriving communities.



Strategies

In this spirit, we offer workshops, trainings, service opportunities, research, student leadership development, and programs. We further this commitment through a strong partnership with the Muhammad Ali Center.

Workshops & Trainings

The MAI provides workshops and trainings to raise awareness, educate, and engage participants in difficult but meaningful dialogue designed to dismantle oppressive barriers preventing people from different backgrounds from existing in community with one another. The workshops and trainings are designed to embrace differences and foster inclusive environments, decrease conflict, and bring about real change. These include but are not limited to:

- CHAMPioning Positive Change and Embracing Diversity: Centering Ali's 6 Core Principles
- Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution:
 - Implemented in the Muhammad Ali Scholars Program Curriculum
 - Restorative Justice Workshops



Service Opportunities

The MAI provides service opportunities that address various needs locally, domestically, and globally. Service opportunities are provided for Muhammad Ali Scholars, campus partners, and local residents to engage and impact positive change in the community. Opportunities include institute-wide local service opportunities, Muhammad Ali Scholars service (1 required each semester), domestic and global service. Past projects include but are not limited to:

- Ali's Grand Avenue home revitalization project
- Change Today, Change Tomorrow's Feed the West collaboration
- Partnering with New Roots to expand the "Fresh Stops" for local produce in Louisville
- Louisville Youth Group collaboration and more!

Research

MAI conducts research by engaging with communities, gathering data, and collaborating with community members to understand their needs and perspectives. Research for the MAI includes Ali Scholar research projects and institute-wide and cohort collaborative research.

Student Leadership Development

The MAI strives to foster a supportive environment that encourages students to take on leadership roles without fear of failure. The MAI offers students opportunities to apply their leadership skills in real-life situations such as organizing events, leading teams, and/or managing projects. This is done through:

- The Muhammad Ali Scholars Program
- Muhammad Ali Scholars Society
- One-on-one coaching appointments
- Peacebuilding and conflict resolution workshops and training
- Research
- Service
- Program Developing
- Experiential Learning

Programs

The MAI offers comprehensive programs focused on raising awareness, social justice initiatives, community service, and more! Past programs include, but are not limited to:

- 2022 Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Awardees Fireside Chat
- Women of the Resistance: Celebrating Our Stories Panel
- Cultural Conexiones: Black Excellence in Media (Collaboration with Hispanic, Latinx, & Indigenous Initiatives)
- Bold, Brilliant, & Beautiful Art Show (collaboration with the Black Male Initiative)
- Activism Then and Now: Muhammad Ali and the Anti War Movement
- Peace & Justice Week
- Activism Then and Now: The US Immigration Rights Movement
- Ali in Focus Lecture Series: Muhammad Ali's Conviction

Partnerships

In addition to our signature partnership with the Ali Center, the MAI is committed to enhancing campus, community, and global partnerships. We will continue to grow partnerships to foster collaboration and collective impact in our shared goals. MAI partnerships include but are not limited to:

- Muhammad Ali Center
- Central High School Magnet Career Academy



MUHAMMAD ALI SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Inspired by the Greatest of All Time, the Muhammad Ali Scholars Program (MASP) was created in 2004 with the goal of continuing Ali's legacy and commitment to social justice. The MASP exposes students to the scholarship and best practices as it pertains to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. This unique two-year experience for undergraduate students cultivates social justice leadership development, academic research, community engagement, and service. With a focus on violence prevention, this program aims to engage youth through mentoring, service, and programming. As participants in the program, scholars host on-campus and community events, further the collaborative work of the MAI and the Muhammad Ali Center, and work alongside campus, local, national, and international practitioners learning about community action to promote positive change.

Included in the program is a unique domestic and/or international learning experience which explores social justice issues in varying cultural, political, social, and economic contexts. This experience blends academics and experiential learning; provides exposure to diverse social justice and peacebuilding strategies; and connects students with like-minded leaders. Previous travel experiences include Arizona, Belize, the Civil Rights Trail in Alabama, England, France, Ghana, Mexico, Navajo Valley (visiting a Native American Reservation), Peru, Rwanda, and Senegal. The MASP journey offers a breadth of experiential learning exploring the history and culture of countries, interaction with peers at host universities, seminars focused on domestic and global issues, and immersive learning and service opportunities.



Scholars engage in dynamic community-based projects drawing connections between domestic and global social justice issues. Past projects include:

- Ali's Grand Avenue home revitalization project
- Change Today, Change Tomorrow's Feed the West collaboration
- Louisville Youth Group collaboration
- A major Darfur, Sudan exhibit and lecture by an internationally renowned photojournalist
- A Peace and Justice Week
- A health and food justice project with Wesley House creating a healthy eating curriculum and community garden
- Partnering with New Roots to expand Louisville produce "Fresh Stops"
- A College Readiness Video project in collaboration with Louisville's 15,000 Degrees Initiative
- Partnering with YouthBuild on community outreach for the Smoketown Laundromat Project
- "The Beauty of Our Struggles" film

MASP REQUIREMENTS

The MASP is a two-year commitment offered to full-time undergraduate students who can devote four semesters to the program. Student participants receive a \$500 stipend each semester, for a total program stipend of \$2,000. Ali Scholars must maintain a 2.7 gpa. Students may be subject to the University's Over-award and Stacking Policies, found on the UofL Financial Aid website. In these cases, the MAI may provide other permissible research support or a student may choose to participate in the program without receiving the scholarship.



MASP PROGRAM OUTCOMES

As a result of participation in this program, scholars will:

- Understand frameworks for violence and social change
- Identify and articulate manifestations of violence at the local, national, and international levels
- Engage in community service and social change
- Provide peace and justice education for campus and community partners
- Synthesize current research findings on one topic of your choosing into community-engaged scholarship, research, or creative activity (develop sustainable solutions)
- Strengthen leadership skills while engaging in work with communities addressing social justice issues
- Develop a sustainable solution to a specific community issue by employing project management skills toward the creation of a group social change project

MASP RESEARCH PROJECTS

During the first year of the MASP, students select a focus topic. In the first year, students will interview at least two individuals in their respective research areas and/or professionals from local community organizations or individuals. These interviews assist scholars with learning more their work, areas of need in the community, and any research needs. Next,, students identify needs/inequities and work with the MAI on how they would like to shape their plan and research toward contributing to a solution.

MASP previous research projects include, but are not limited to:

- **Research Topic:** *High Education Opportunities/Resources for First-generation Students/Immigrants*
 - **Research Project:** A linktree of resources to be shared amongst high school students in JCPS allowing students to have more resources from an experienced college student to explore options as a student at an earlier age.
- **Research Topic:** *Black Art & Activism*
 - **Research Project:** Ali's 7th Core Principle: Raising awareness of the rich Black art history of Louisville, connecting to Ali's life and making the case for Creativity as Ali's 7th Core Principle.
- **Research Topic:** *Mental Health Resources for Underrepresented Students*
 - **Research Project:** A pamphlet with mental health resources for students. This pamphlet addresses misconceptions surrounding mental health and also includes different resources for students such as therapists in Louisville, group therapy meetings, and more information about different organizations at the University that support mental health.
- **Research Topic:** *Education with Lower Income and Diverse Groups*
 - **Research Project:** A mentorship program for high school students providing an opportunity to engage with University of Louisville students at the University of Louisville and guide them toward pursuing higher education.
- **Research Topic:** *Injustices Within the Criminal Justice System (Bail Reform)*
 - **Research Project:** A research project and interactive session focused on the "Bail Project" to spread awareness about unfairness surrounding bail reform.
- **Research Topic:** *The Myth of the Model Minority*
 - **Research Project:** Interviews of lived experiences of South Asians compiled into a podcast to better understand the unique impact of the myth of the model minority on South Asians.



2023-2025 MUHAMMAD ALI SCHOLARS COHORT

09



Zina Alyasseri

she/her/hers

Major: Psychology

Zina is a junior double majoring in Psychology and Neuroscience with a Pre-med track. Born and raised in Louisville most of her life, Zina is the daughter of Iraqi refugees. She loves learning about the way people think, behave, and why.

"I hope to achieve a career that in professional healthcare to improve the medical experience of women of color, and ESL patients."



Sarah Baker

she/her/hers

Major: Public Health

Sarah is a sophomore majoring in Public Health with an intended Health Management minor. She is an active participant in the Vietnamese Student Association and completed her time with Task Force Freshmen last year. Sarah enjoys reading, playing a variety of games, and going to school events.



Kaamraan Iqbal

he/him/his

Major: Industrial Engineering

Kaamraan is a junior with various interests, including watching film, creating art, listening/making music, and playing sports like volleyball and basketball. Kaamraan is currently interning at GE Appliances as an Advanced Manufacturing Engineer and will be working as an intern for their sourcing department fall 2023.



Bryan Lopez

he/him/his

Major: Criminal Justice

Bryan is Cuban-American, born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky. He is a first-generation college student. Bryan is a junior minoring in Professional and Public Writing and Spanish. Bryan is a Porter Scholar, a Diversity Student Ambassador for Admissions, Vice President of the Black and Brown Honors Society, and a member part of the 2023 Stanford Law Scholars Institute. He hopes to become an attorney and advocate for human trafficking victims and confront injustices within the criminal justice system.

Fun Fact about Bryan: he loves hanging out with friends or watching Netflix!



Coby Mask

he/him/his

Major: Health & Human Performance,
Track: Exercise Science

Coby is a junior and Vice President of Brothers United. Coby works for the Health Promotions Food and Nutrition team. He loves to workout and read books in his free time.

"I'm excited to make a real change in my community with the Muhammad Ali Scholars Program!"



Ella McCutchen

she/her/hers

Major: Sociology,
Track: Diversity & Inequality

Ella is a junior and passionate about connecting with other activists at UofL. She has previously worked with Students Demand Action, a youth-lead organization working toward gun violence prevention in the US, as a volunteer and chapter lead. For Ella, the fight for justice is a deeply personal journey.

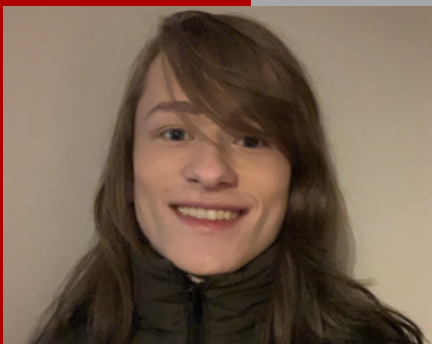


Solyana Mesfin

she/her/hers

Major: Sociology & Pan-African Studies

Solyana is a member of the Black Student Union, NAACP, Sociology Student Association, Intramural Soccer Team, Task Force Freshman (Equity Initiative), African Student Association, Black & Brown Honors Society, and a Porter Scholar. She is the inaugural student member of the Kentucky Department of Education. Solyanna is passionate about establishing and advocating for Black prominence in positions of power in all societal systems.



Natalie Mudd

she/her/hers

Major: English

Natalie is a Jones Scholars, FAR scholar, involved in E-sports, and First-gen Cards. Natalie enjoys writing fiction varying from high-fantasy, dystopian, and sci-fi, often meshing the three together, and the sound of clocks ticking.

Fun fact about Natalie: *"The most money I've one off a lottery ticket was \$5!"*



Nadia Pratt

she/her/hers

Major: Secondary Education
(English Concentration)

Nadia is a sophomore majoring in Secondary Education and minoring in Journalism, which align with her passions. Nadia is the President of the Minority Future Educators Association and Vice President of KEA-connected.

"I am so proud to be a Muhammed Ali scholar and can't wait to see what I can bring!"



Ayanna Sarr

she/her/hers

Major: Neuroscience

Ayanna is a sophomore, passionately pursuing a future in research, biotechnology, and precision medicine. Ayanna spent the summer as a research intern conducting structural studies of proteins that cause epithelial cancers.

"It is truly an honor to be an Ali scholar, and I hope to one day make a difference in medicine for marginalized groups."



Lauren Whalen

she/her/hers

Major: Business Administration

Lauren is a sophomore from Elizabethtown, KY. Lauren serves on the Student Orientation Staff, a Cards Camp Counselor, Porter Scholar, and a member of Project Sunshine.

"I am so excited and thankful to be a Muhammad Ali Scholar and I am looking forward to the next two years!"



Naya Wimberly

she/her/hers

Major: Public Health, Track: Pre-Med

Naya is a junior and member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She is a Porter Scholar, Porter in Medicine Scholar, Louis Stokes Alliance Minority Participant Scholar, NPHC Community Engagement and Development Chair, and a Vice Chair of Engaging Issues of the Student Activities Board. Naya is passionate about Louisville and committed to supporting the community and spends time giving back and volunteering.

"I believe that giving is an essential principle for creating positive change in the world."

MAI 2023-2024 PROGRAMS

SEPTEMBER

September, 13, 5-7pm, SAC W116-117:
Activism: Grass Roots
with Dr. Trinidad Jackson
(Collaboration with the Cultural Center)

OCTOBER

October 19, 12-2pm, Cultural & Equity Center, MPR:
A Social Justice Career Journey
Speaker: Aaisha Hamid,
Muhammad Ali Scholar Alumni

NOVEMBER

November 3rd, 10-11:30am, UofL-Belknap Campus (TBA)
Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Awardees Fireside Chat
Ali Humanitarian Fireside Chat led by Ali Scholars

November 14th, 6-8pm, Thornton's Academic
Center of Excellence
Student Athletes & Activism
(Collaboration with Student-Athletes of Color Combining
Opportunity and Responsibility for Excellence-SCORE)

DECEMBER

December-TBD
Muhammad Ali Scholars Winter Break Celebration!

SPRING 2024 PROGRAMS/EVENTS

JANUARY

Ali Scholars Day of Service to honor Muhammad Ali's Birthday!
(Determined by Ali Scholars spring 2024 schedule.)

FEBRUARY

February-TBD
Serving the People Networking Event

MARCH

March-TBD
Women of the Resistance Panel

APRIL

April 13, 4-6pm
Bold, Brilliant & Beautiful Art Show

**For additional program information and updates: visit our website:
<https://louisville.edu/aliinstitute>*





MUHAMMAD ALI SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The average GPA of Muhammad Ali Scholars in 2022 was a 3.54 and in spring 2023 was 3.60. MAI has supported students through coaching campaigns each semester. Ali Scholars attended monthly meetings to check-in and focus on programs and events.

Muhammad Ali Scholars quotes:

"Ali Scholar Program has expanded my perspective of social justice activism."

"The program inspired me to make a difference after graduation."

"The program boosted my confidence and level of conviction that I did not have before."

"The Ali Scholar program inspired me to make a positive impact in West End."

MUHAMMAD ALI INSTITUTE FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

The MAI creates space for learning social justice topics, art, activism and service for the campus community.

Ali Scholars attend one-on-one coaching appointments with MAI leadership. Students have attended two justice learning trips including, but not limited to:

1. Various locations focused on Black, Indigenous, People of Color (focused on the Civil Rights Movement in the south, visiting a Native American Reservation in North & South Dakota and Arizona, and Latinx populations at the US border);
2. Chicago, IL to learn and experience art, The Chicago School of Freedom, and various activities focused on social justice education.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

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