

Stories from Our Turkish Fulbright Grantees

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I used to watch on the television broadcasts of special celebrations in which many celebrities were participants. I had the privilege of attending such an event at the University of Virginia under the sponsorship of the Institute of International Education. As a Fulbright student, it was a spectacular experience for me to participate in such an event and to attend the awards dinner.

In March 2016, I responded to an e-mail sent by the IIE regarding the Global Leadership Forum at the University of Virginia stating that I would like to participate in the forum. I was selected as a participant on the Climate Change and Sustainable Resource Management Panel. I talked about my involvement in the Unpark Yourself competition at Duke University in March 2015. In this competition, I led a team of graduate students and professors. We named our team Eco(no) parking. As the team leader, I organized all team activities and made sure that all members had completed their duties.



The mission of our team was to encourage our friends to use sustainable commuting options to reduce our carbon footprints in order to help save the environment. The competition took a month. To increase the awareness

of using alternative transportation methods rather than driving individually to campus, I organized many events with my colleagues on the team. Throughout the competition we stayed active on social media and shared our experiences while using more eco-friendly transportation methods. It was a challenge to change people's customary behaviors and to motivate them to engage in sustainable behaviors such as walking to campus, riding bikes, taking the bus or carpooling. Among 1,990 participants and 122 teams, we finished the competition in second place.

I am devoted to social and environmental issues. In my panel presentation, I emphasized that though what we did at Duke University was a local competition, it would be easy to organize such competitions and events in other places and in different settings.

At the Global Leadership Forum, I had the opportunity to meet many interesting and accomplished leaders from more than 45 countries. The US Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Chairman of Amar Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, the President of the University of Virginia, and Founder of the Presidential Precinct were some of the plenary speakers. As a panelist, I also was invited to the awards dinner in which former Secretary of

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State Madeleine Albright received the inaugural Edward R. Stettinius, Jr. Prize for Global Leadership. Also, Toyosi Ogunseye, 2014 Mandela Washington Fellow and editor of Punch Newspaper in Nigeria, was awarded the inaugural Young Leader Award presented by the Presidential Precinct.

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