GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

NIDAL DAJANI

For many international students, coming to the United States can feel overwhelming. For Nidal Dajani, he embraced the new experience and threw himself straight into life in Michigan without hesitation.

Dajani is a recently graduated senior from Jordan, who majored in economics. Growing up he didn't want to leave Jordan, but as he grew older and experienced learning in an intercultural environment, studying in Michigan was an opportunity he couldn't pass up.

"I remember when I came, I was still 17/18, and it was beautiful. It was different, but I was so excited. People tend to be afraid when they first travel, but for me it was the opposite. I was like, I'm so ready to just check everything out."

Three and a half years later, Dajani was preparing to graduate a semester early. "I think personally, I like to develop to the next stage super quick in a way. And I feel like I took my time in my undergrad and I did everything I wanted to do from the beginning. And I thought this is the time for me to just go to the next stage. Why wait another five months while I can do it now?"

Before MSU, Dajani lived in Jordan, where he was born and raised. "I think it's beautiful. It's my home. I love my home and I grew up there all my life, born and raised in Jordan," said Dajani.
His early years were spent in a culturally familiar community, but that began to change in high school.



"So up till the age of 16, 17, I was not that much open to diversity, but then I went to an international school. So that was a life-changing experience for me. I had to meet people who come from different backgrounds, different mentalities, different visions for their future," said Dajani.

That exposure to different perspectives was what ultimately influenced his decision to study abroad, even though he initially planned to stay in Jordan.

After applying to universities in multiple countries, he chose the United States, and Michigan State based on aligning academic programs. On campus, he quickly became involved, joining the International Student Association and later working in admissions to help recruit prospective students from abroad.

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"The International Student Association helped me meet a lot of great people, and helped me find a lot of other opportunities that were also amazing. So that was something that really impacted my involvement in MSU and the community and the network that I have."

He also worked for the Office of Admissions, where he worked on helping recruit other international students. "It was mainly reaching out to students from around the globe. It was a great experience, I met a lot of people, and it allowed me to talk a lot more and to build a lot of skills."

Dajani always remained positive when it came to adjusting to life and the culture in the United States, taking every experience as a learning opportunity. "It was not weird, it was like, wow, this is how they do things. Getting to know how different the culture is was eye-opening."

Dajani has fully embraced the opportunity to immerse himself within the community at MSU, and has built strong connections that he will carry with him beyond his time at MSU.

"I think that's the best part of MSU, just meeting all these different people. It's a huge campus. I can see someone today and I'll never see them again. So I think that's a big value of just truly enhancing your network."

Making an effort to integrate himself within both international and domestic communities, Dajani has found a way to connect with many students at MSU from all backgrounds, and was able to find a well-rounded cultural experience throughout his time at MSU due to his openness to meeting new people.

"With international students, you get to talk about their journey at MSU, and when you talk to Americans, you get to know more about their life and what they do outside academia and college. You really get to know their cultures and their interests and their hobbies. So it's beautiful. It's a beautiful thing to do."

Whilst he has embraced everything the United States has to offer, he ultimately plans to move back home to Jordan, as he has a strong desire to contribute to the growth and success of his country with a strong skillset and experiences.

"My goal is to go back home and hopefully work back home in the transportation investment industry back home." Dajani is currently still in the United States working in the transportation industry on OPT.

When asked to give advice to his fellow international Spartans, Dajani said "Don't be afraid to go out of your comfort zone, trust the process, and always take your identity and your values seriously."

"The number one privilege I would say as a student here is that you can do so much within this campus. Whatever you're into, you're going to find a place here, and there is a community that you will fit in. It's really important to cherish who you are, your values, where you come from and the identity that you represent because people truly value that. Even if you don't realize it, it's a beautiful asset to have."

By: Bronte Noble