

Q&A with Slma Shelbayah, broadcast journalist and adjunct faculty at Brenau University, about her experience at the 2010 Annenberg-Oxford Summer Institute



Slma Shelbayah (right), with Roxana Radu, CEU student and AnOx 2010 participant

1) What session did you like the best and why?

I believe every session had its own flavor with, at the very least, one thing that I savored. I particularly enjoyed all the sessions we had on Strategic Communications, but the best out of them would have to be Mr. Conrad Bird's session on *Strategic Communications: An FCO perspective*. I found it to be very relevant to one of my areas of interest, which is using effective strategic communication within the Arab community to create a more positive and accurate image in the media.

2) What was the most interesting thing you learned?

My principle idea on Freedom of Speech, as an American, was founded on providing all individuals of a society access to liberally express themselves, regardless of the point of view they share or the impact they may have on members of their society. This understanding has shifted toward a meaning that is now much more inclusive and flexible to the diverse communities we have in our world. It now bears a sense that considers the social norms, religious traditions, cultural standards and needs of different communities while, most significantly, allowing the society the freedom of choice to practice this free speech. My previous understanding of Freedom of Speech was a generalized notion that was perhaps disrespectful of the different communities which exist among us. Based on the experiences of our diverse group of participants representing many communities from different countries all across the world, I now see that communities should have the freedom to define what constitutes the aspects of Freedom of Speech and the extent in which they choose to implement this practice.

3) How was the summer school enhanced by being located in Oxford?

Oxford is an astounding learning location that breeds diversity, culture, history and knowledge. Since the course was catering to an international group of participants about an international topic of global impact, Oxford was simply the perfect atmosphere to allow for the conversation flow on Global Media Policy and Regulation.

4) What have you taken away from the experience?

Aside from the wealth of knowledge I received from our invaluable speakers and intellectually stimulating conversations, I am mostly grateful for what I know will be life-long friendships with a very diverse group of individuals that share very similar interests on Media, Policy and Regulations. I can honestly say I have at least one good friend in almost 20 countries all across the world! Their insights and perspectives were priceless in providing me with new outlooks, fresh ideas and accurate perceptions of the current policies and regulations that shape media in our global world.