



GLOBAL DIPLOMACY & PEACE ACADEMY (GDPA)

2026-2027 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

*A Flagship Leadership Program of the
Institute for Global Justice & Diplomacy
at Winona State University*

A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS IMPROVING OUR WORLD

Winona State University | Institute for Global Justice & Diplomacy

INTRODUCTION

The Global Diplomacy & Peace Academy (GDPA) is the flagship leadership program of the Institute for Global Justice & Diplomacy (IGJD) at Winona State University. Designed as a high-impact, cohort-based experience, the Academy prepares emerging and established leaders to navigate today's complex global landscape through diplomacy, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and international cooperation. Participants learn directly from former ambassadors, senior government officials, policymakers, and internationally recognized practitioners while strengthening the knowledge, perspectives, and leadership skills needed to address pressing global challenges.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Global Diplomacy & Peace Academy (GDPA) develops globally minded leaders who advance diplomacy, strengthen international cooperation, and promote peace through ethical leadership, cross-cultural understanding, and informed engagement.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

GDPA is a virtual, cohort-based leadership program that examines diplomacy, international security, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, human rights, global governance, and emerging geopolitical challenges through expert-led discussions, applied learning, and interdisciplinary dialogue. The Academy equips professionals, educators, students, and community leaders with the global perspective and practical insight needed to lead in an increasingly interconnected world.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the Global Diplomacy & Peace Academy (GDPA), participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of multilateral diplomacy, international institutions, and global systems.
- Apply conflict resolution and peacebuilding strategies in diverse international contexts.
- Interpret and analyze international human rights frameworks, humanitarian law, and global governance.
- Examine the challenges of migration, displacement, and fragile states with clarity and depth.
- Reflect on the principles of ethical and effective leadership in global affairs.
- Assess the role of soft power, public diplomacy, and strategic communication in shaping global engagement.
- Integrate cultural competence and cross-cultural collaboration into international engagement.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Global Diplomacy & Peace Academy (GDPA) is designed to provide a flexible, engaging, and high-impact learning experience for participants from diverse professional and academic backgrounds.

VIRTUAL FORMAT	All instructional sessions are delivered online, allowing participants to participate from anywhere in the world.
COHORT-BASED MODEL	Participants progress through the program together, fostering meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and professional networking.
BI-WEEKLY SESSIONS	Sessions are held every two weeks, allowing time for reflection, continued learning, and practical application between sessions.
CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION	Participants who successfully complete the Academy will receive a Certificate of Participation in Diplomacy, Conflict Resolution & Peacebuilding from the Institute for Global Justice & Diplomacy at Winona State University.
RECOGNITION CEREMONY	Participants are invited to an optional, in-person recognition ceremony at Winona State University celebrating the successful completion of the Academy.

DISTINGUISHED INSTRUCTORS & PRACTITIONERS

Participants learn directly from former ambassadors, senior government officials, policymakers, scholars, and internationally recognized practitioners with extensive experience in diplomacy, international security, humanitarian affairs, peacebuilding, and global governance. Some of our 2026-2027 instructors include:

- **Ambassador Stephen Michael Schwartz** - Former U.S. Ambassador to Somalia; Senior Foreign Service Officer (Ret.)
- **Haroon Azar** - Senior Fellow, UCLA Burkle Center for International Relations; Former Regional Director, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- **Elisa Moskowitz** - Former Department of Defense Official, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
- **Michelle Strucke** - Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Partnerships
- **Irfan Saeed** - Former Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of State; Former Head of Strategic Engagement, OSCE
- **Professor Ronald Bee** - Foreign Policy and International Security Expert; Former Director, Charles Hostler Institute on World Affairs
- **Michael Duffin** - Former Senior Advisor, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism
- **Ahmed Isse Awad** - Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Federal Republic of Somalia
- Additional distinguished instructors will be announced.

SESSION DATES & TIMES

All instructional sessions are held virtually from 4:00-5:30 PM Central Time (CT). Attendance at all required sessions is expected for successful completion of the Academy. The Recognition Ceremony is optional and held in person.

SESSION	DATE	TIME
Orientation	December 1, 2026	4:00-5:30 PM CT
Session One	January 7, 2027	4:00-5:30 PM CT
Session Two	January 21, 2027	4:00-5:30 PM CT
Session Three	February 4, 2027	4:00-5:30 PM CT
Session Four	February 18, 2027	4:00-5:30 PM CT
Session Five	March 4, 2027	4:00-5:30 PM CT
Session Six	March 18, 2027	4:00-5:30 PM CT
Session Seven	March 25, 2027	4:00-5:30 PM CT
Session Eight	April 1, 2027	4:00-5:30 PM CT
Session Nine	April 15, 2027	4:00-5:30 PM CT
Recognition Ceremony (Optional, In Person)	April 29, 2027	4:00-6:00 PM CT

SESSION TOPICS

The 2026-2027 Academy will feature sessions addressing key areas of diplomacy, leadership, international affairs, and global cooperation. Session topics include:

Inside Diplomacy: Reflections on Leadership and Representation

A behind-the-scenes exploration of diplomatic leadership, international representation, embassy operations, cross-cultural engagement, and the realities of diplomatic service.

Global Security and Strategic Threats

An examination of geopolitical instability, transnational threats, and the role of intelligence, diplomacy, and strategic policymaking in advancing global peace and security.

Crisis Response and the Practice of Policy

An applied look at how governments prepare for and respond to international crises through policy development, interagency coordination, strategic decision-making, and international cooperation.

Humanitarian Diplomacy and Global Response

An exploration of how governments, international organizations, and humanitarian agencies respond to global crises at the intersection of national security, human rights, international law, and ethical leadership.

International Institutions and Global Governance

An examination of the role of the United Nations, regional organizations, and other international institutions in shaping policy, strengthening cooperation, and responding to global challenges.

Conflict, Power, and Diplomacy in the Middle East

An analysis of regional conflicts, peacebuilding efforts, diplomatic challenges, and the influence of global and regional actors on international security and stability.

Public Diplomacy and International Influence

An exploration of how nations use strategic communication, cultural engagement, educational exchange, digital media, and soft power to build trust and advance foreign policy objectives.

The Horn of Africa: Diplomacy, Regional Cooperation, and Strategic Competition

Explore the geopolitical dynamics of the Horn of Africa, focusing on regional diplomacy, security, economic cooperation, and the growing influence of global powers.

Additional Sessions

Two additional sessions will be announced and will address emerging priorities in diplomacy, peacebuilding, global leadership, and international affairs.

WHO CAN APPLY?

The Global Diplomacy & Peace Academy welcomes applicants from diverse academic, professional, and leadership backgrounds who are committed to diplomacy, ethical leadership, global engagement, and public service. The Academy is designed for undergraduate and graduate students, educators, government and public-sector professionals, military and law enforcement professionals, nonprofit and community leaders, business professionals, and individuals seeking to strengthen their leadership in global affairs. Applicants from all backgrounds and disciplines are encouraged to apply.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Admission to the Global Diplomacy & Peace Academy is competitive and based on a holistic review of each application. Applicants must complete the online application and submit a leadership reflection describing their interest in the Academy, how the program aligns with their goals, and how they intend to apply what they learn. Applicants selected for admission will receive instructions to confirm their participation and submit the \$1,000 program fee to secure their place in the cohort. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis until all available spaces are filled, and early application is strongly encouraged.

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

Participants who successfully complete the Global Diplomacy & Peace Academy will receive a Certificate of Participation in Diplomacy, Conflict Resolution & Peacebuilding from the Institute for Global Justice & Diplomacy at Winona State University. Participants will also be recognized during the Academy's optional in-person Recognition Ceremony.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions about the Global Diplomacy & Peace Academy, the application process, or partnership opportunities, please contact:

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