Overview and Learning Outcomes

History:
Pizza & Politics was started by CMUQ alum, Mustafa Hasnain (BA, ’08), in 2007, as a forum for the community to come together and discuss a variety of political topics. It has transformed itself again and again, as the student population has changed and as new staff members have joined the Division of Student Affairs. Now it exists as a regular program, coordinated by the Office of International Education (OIE). It has gained a following of students and other CMUQ community members with attendance at each program averaging between 55 – 75 people. Program topics are typically set to address one of three levels of ‘scope’: international/regional, local to Qatar/Doha, and local to CMUQ.

Though this program is organized by OIE, we value collaboration and believe it is essential to meet our stated goals. For example, collaboration with the Office of Health & Wellness took on the issue of AIDS and Qatar immigration policies as a part of World AIDS Day. Faculty and staff have also been involved leading discussions on the “Bachelor Ban in Doha,” “Who Should Bail Out Wall Street?” and “Israel/Palestine Conflicts”. Collaborations have also taken place with student groups. For example, students in the Carnegie Skills Workshop facilitated a discussion on sharing the building with Northwestern University (as an exercise in processing information). Students in the GPS leadership program facilitated a discussion as a means of understanding the concept of controversy with civility. The Debate Society has also facilitated discussions on issues ranging from the “KONY – Legitimate Human Rights Activism” to issues surrounding the “2022 World Cup in Qatar”.

Looking ahead:
We expect to continue our partnerships with students, faculty and staff for the facilitation of discussions. We look forward to connecting course subjects with the P&P discussions as well, in order to extend the conversations beyond the classroom and program. Additionally, with a division-wide social media plan, we will occasionally incorporate the use of Twitter, both during and after the programs, to continue conversations and assess the impact of these discussions on students. Lastly, we will continue to collaborate with other programming efforts throughout the year, whether directly related to OIE or other activities within Carnegie Mellon and the Education City community.

Vision:
The Pizza & Politics program aims to create an environment where students experience vibrant and principled discussion, and where students’ understanding of diversity is subsequently broadened.

Learning Outcomes:
As a result of participation in this program, students will:
- Describe how different worldviews are formulated based on a complex web of elements such as culture, history, politics, gender, religions, etc. (INTERCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE and COMPETENCE)
- Listen to and reflect on others’ reactions to their opinions and statements in a positive and appropriate manner. (EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION)
- Acknowledge the existence of and articulate different sides/perspectives of the issues. (CRITICAL THINKING)