

# Why GPS: Turning passion into reality



**As part of an ongoing series, we give students the creative liberty to opine on their favorite memories from the School and “why GPS” is a solid fit to pursue their graduate education**

By Ashley Halabi, 2018 MIA candidate | GPS News



Who knew making an error when entering a GRE code would turn out to be the best mistake of my life?

While deciding whether or not I wanted to pursue my master's degree in the U.S., I had very little time to search for schools in California. I decided to apply to only two—neither of which were at UC San Diego.

After taking my GRE exam, I mistakenly put the code for UC San Diego instead of another university I wanted, as they were next to each other in the drop-down list. Weeks later, I realized this mistake and was torn between which universities to apply.

I decided to take a closer look at the programs at UC San Diego and quickly grasped how much I could gain from the [MIA](#) program at the School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS). Not only would I study a new language and focus on a specific track and region of my choice, but I would also meet and learn from amazing faculty.

In the beginning, traveling abroad for a master's degree was a decision I had to think about a lot. I had to decide whether I wanted to pursue a future in the U.S. directly after graduation and whether the degree I applied to was going to help me do that.



It's safe to say—after only two quarters—my experience at GPS has been very rewarding. The support systems at this school helped me adapt to life abroad and continue to give me reassurance that I always will be guided.

The Career Services team is a perfect example of this. It makes sure we are on track for success after graduation. Another example would be the GPS community and the long list of new and old student organizations that provide students with a platform for their diverse interests.

This program constantly proves to me I couldn't have been more satisfied elsewhere.

From the start, I met amazing people from all over the world with diverse experiences. Also, I had the chance to pursue my dream of advocating for human rights and raising awareness on violations that are neglected by the international community through the newly established human rights organization at GPS, [Ceasefire](#).



This experience, along with the students, staff and faculty involved, has allowed me to grow as a person and learn how to turn my passions into practical goals.

This couldn't have come to existence if I hadn't crossed paths with students who were not only as passionate as I am about human rights but also more determined to make an immediate and lasting change in our school and among our classmates.

Finally, this program offered me a new perspective on how people from different academic and professional backgrounds can sit in one classroom and learn about how to turn their visions into clearly stated goals.