



David Wolfe Bender · Oct 20, 2022 · 2 min read

I'm Heading Overseas in January with the Geller International Fellowship



The flag of Israel is seen flying over a building in Jerusalem (Photo Credit: Taylor Brandon, Unsplash)

It's no secret that I enjoy discussing foreign affairs, politics, government, and business. Also not a secret is my adoration for Israel and the Middle East. One of the best experiences of my life was traveling to Israel in August 2021. Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was dazzled from the minute we landed at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv.

Since my return flight landed in the United States in August 2021, all I've wanted to do is return to Israel. Today, I'm excited to announce that I am going back this winter!

I am honored to be named to this year's class of Geller International Fellows. The Geller International Fellowship selects only 40 students to embark on a 10-day trip to Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

That trip commences in early January. It will be my second time in the Middle East and my first time in an Arab-majority country. I want to thank the Israel On Campus Coalition for extending this offer to me. I am eminently grateful and excited. This fellowship will serve as a wonderful opportunity to intensely discuss the complex issues of our time and also witness the effects of the Abraham Accords up close and in person.

(Also: I have not eaten shawarma since I was in Israel, and I chalk that up to a lack of authentic shawarma in the United States. My point? I'm beyond excited to eat shawarma again. And hummus. And falafel. And babka. Okay – all of the food.)

I'll release a full recap of my year in mid-December, as always. But since we just started Q4 of 2022, here are some highlights from my semester so far:

- **ON-CAMPUS VOTER OUTREACH:** as the director of city relations for IU's student government, my three priorities are increasing student voter registration, expanding voter engagement, and advocating for pro-student initiatives across the city. We are nearing the 2022 Midterm Elections, and your vote is more important than ever. If you're an IU student, learn how to vote [here](#). We're also giving out free Uber rides to the polls this year. You can find more at the same link.
- **HALF-WAY DONE:** we are almost halfway through IU's classes for the fall 2022 semester. I'm taking another 18 credits with classes focused on economics law, public finance, business law, political statistics, and more.
- **BACK HOME:** Late in September, I went back home to Washington DC for the Fall 2022 American Enterprise Institute Fall Summit. This is a conference I attend each semester, and it always creates great discussion about a variety of political issues. I also got to spend time with my friends Agrayan Gupta (IU), Arunabh Sinha (IU), Garrett Wright, Nidhi Krishnan (Washington University-St. Louis), and more! Our most interesting panel discussion was a conversation with Klon Kitchen about technology policy in the United States.
- **CONCERTS:** when I was in DC, my friends Nidhi Krishnan, Selia Jindal, and I, all went to see Alec Benjamin – one of my favorite singer-songwriters – in concert at The Anthem.
- **MEET YOU AT MIDNIGHT:** Taylor Swift releases her *tenth* studio album at midnight on October 21, 2022. I am so excited; I haven't been able to pay attention in classes all week.



Me, standing on the roof of the American Enterprise Institute's headquarters in Washington DC