



My name is Livia Benitez, born and raised amidst the picturesque landscapes of Cuba's westernmost region, encompassed by tobacco and sugar cane plantations in a small town in Pinar del Rio, I bring with me a unique narrative of resilience and hope. My journey in the United States mirrors that of any immigrants, marked by numerous challenges, unwavering determination, and the persistence that has brought me to where I stand today. I firmly believe that our experiences shape us and how we approach the world as we pass by it. My origins have propelled me to actively seek and enact the change I envision.

In choosing my academic path, I held a clear and resolute vision; put simply, my ultimate aspiration is to act as a catalyst for transformative change on a global scale. With this goal in mind, I pursued a major in International Relations, recognizing its broad scope encompassing my interests, spanning history, the arts, and politics. My passion soon gravitated toward foreign policy and the complex dynamics of international affairs, which have far-reaching implications on both domestic and global fronts.

Following the completion of my Associate Degree at the Miami Dade Honors College, I transferred to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where I earned my Bachelor of Arts with a double major in Political Science and Global Studies, with a specialization in International Politics and social movements.

My unwavering belief in immersive learning led me to seek firsthand experiences during my undergraduate years. Engaging in seminars and programs such as the Burch Field Research Seminar in Europe, centered on Transatlantic Security within NATO and the EU, the KAKEHASHI Inouye Program in Japan focused on strengthening U.S.-Japan relations through collaboration with Japan's foreign ministry, and the Washington Center Seminar on Media and Politics in Washington, DC, these diverse experiences provided valuable insights into global issues and policymaking, and offered unique lenses through which to understand the intricacies of comparative politics.

My unquenchable thirst for knowledge propelled me to study abroad on five occasions, taking me from the hallowed halls of academia to the vibrant streets of Salamanca, Kumamoto, Florence, Brussels, London, and now Bologna. These journeys, both political and culturally rich, expanded my abilities and skills, including different language proficiencies. Currently, I'm fluent in English and improving my Italian and Portuguese in addition to my native Spanish.

My program in Brussels, particularly against the backdrop of the Ukraine conflict, and later the Russian-Ukrainian war, prompted a significant shift in my personal and professional aspirations towards strategy, conflict resolution, and peacekeeping.

Enrolling in the SAIS Master of Arts in Global Risk (MAGR) program, I anticipate a transformative experience that will equip me with a comprehensive understanding of today's global challenges. MAGR's interdisciplinary approach, melding economics, international relations, policy analysis, and strategic studies, aims to provide the knowledge and analytical skills crucial for addressing complex global risks, including economic crises and security.

Engaging with distinguished experts and engaging in hands-on experiences, I look forward to gaining invaluable insights into risk management, policy development, and international cooperation. As a SAIS student, my objective is to continue to consistently challenge my boundaries and foster a profound understanding of global risks, developing the confidence and expertise required to navigate this multifaceted landscape effectively. Ultimately, I aspire to leverage this knowledge to pursue a rewarding career in foreign policy, diplomacy, international organizations, consulting, or other spheres where I can actively contribute to addressing and resolving pressing global issues. Ultimately, I aspire to leverage this knowledge to embark on a fulfilling career in foreign policy, diplomacy, international organizations, consulting, or other fields where I can contribute substantively to global change.