

# LEAP Scholars

**Recent graduates accepted to prestigious Arabic language program**

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Thursday, June 24, 2021

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**VIRGINIA WALSH '21 AND EMILY JUDKINS '21**

Virginia Walsh '21 and Emily Judkins '21 both took Arabic at the University of New Hampshire to better communicate with and understand other cultures, believing cross-cultural competence would help them in their respective military careers.

The two recently learned they have been accepted into a prestigious Language Enabled Airmen Program (LEAP) — two of only four ROTC Air Force cadets selected from

across the nation to develop their language skills in Modern Standard Arabic. And only another eight were selected from the Air Force Academy.

“I applied to this program because, during my time studying Arabic, I learned how much I love languages and the idea that I could communicate with people I may have never been able to communicate with before,” Judkins explains. “I’ve always loved learning about different cultures, and language — especially Arabic — can greatly influence a culture.”

The program allows them to continue learning Arabic at no cost as they embark on their new careers. Both graduated from UNH in May — Walsh as a Phi Beta Kappa, and Judkins, *magna cum laude*. Walsh is a newly commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. She is stationed at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, as a logistics readiness officer. Judkins, also commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant, is based at Goodfellow Air Force Base in Texas, where she is training to be an intelligence officer.

While they both love learning new languages, they agree they were especially inspired by their teacher, UNH lecturer [Islam Karkour](#), who teaches Modern Standard Arabic and common dialects in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures (LLC).

“He is an amazing, thoughtful, selfless and inspirational professor,” Walsh says. “His energy and enthusiasm for language learning motivates me to work harder and do better. We couldn’t have done it without him.”

While LLC has been offering Arabic courses for years, a program in Arabic has not been available until now. Starting this fall, students may pursue a minor in Arabic language.

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