Aghiad Al Khiamy  
(Damascus, Syria)

When he finished high school in Damascus, Syria, Aghiad decided to go abroad for his college education. “The current situation in my country helped me make this decision. I heard about WSU through my uncle who has been living in the U.S. for 30 years so I decided to apply.” Aghiad came to WSU in August 2014. He enrolled in LEAP Level 3 and was the first student to earn both the LEAP TOEFL Waiver and pass the TOEFL test at the same time. In Summer 2015, Aghiad started his academic program in Biomedical Engineering at WSU.

Asked about his experience in LEAP, Aghiad says it was very helpful to prepare him for his academic studies. “I learned a lot about different university services. LEAP also taught me how students should communicate professionally, like how to send good emails, and the appropriate way to speak to professors and things that I wouldn’t have known due to cultural differences.” He enjoyed the atmosphere in the program, how the faculty works together as a “big family” and teach students not only to improve their English, but help them learn about American culture as well. Aghiad advises new students in LEAP to work hard and ask for help when they need it. “You can’t build a high building with many floors without having good basics. LEAP for me is like the strong base of my academic career achievements so far.”

After completing his studies at WSU, Aghiad hopes to work in the U.S. for a while before returning to Syria. “I have two dream jobs. The first is to work in a company that creates prosthetics and to be the one who has enough engineering and human structure information skills so he can connect the two fields together and come up with a device that helps humanity. My second dream job is to go back to Syria and help people who suffer and have lost part of their bodies from the aggressive war that is happening there, to try to enhance what is left in their lives. My biggest hope is to see my country safe again, and to go back there and rebuild the oldest city in the world.”

This summer, Aghiad will do an internship through WSU’s College of Engineering and Computer Science. He will be a lab research assistant in the new Neuroscience building on campus. WSU is lucky to have Aghiad!