CMES NEWSLETTER

Title VI Showcase

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES), the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS), and the Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language, and Literacy (CERCLL) recently held an event showcasing their accomplishments in international and foreign language teaching, research, and outreach during the current U.S. Department of Education Title VI federal grant cycle (August 2010 to August 2014). These three Title VI centers are an integral part of area and language studies at the University of Arizona.

What is Title VI?
The National Defense Education Act was passed in 1958 to create federal support for international studies. It was designed to create and sustain a group of experts knowledgeable about world regions and their languages, able to educate students and the public about them. In 1965 the funding continued under the Title VI of the Higher Education Act and is administered through the US Department of Education.

Competitive programs under the act fund numerous activities, including:

- National Resource Centers (NRCs) to improve national capacity in teaching foreign languages and to promote instruction and research that enhances academic and public understanding of world regions and countries;
- Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships to assist undergraduate and graduate students learning modern foreign languages and related area or international studies, and,
- Language Resource Centers (LRCs) to improve national capacity for teaching and learning foreign languages through teacher training, research, materials development, and dissemination projects.

CMES, though founded in 1969, became a Title VI NRC in 1975. CLAS, also an NRC, was founded in 2000. CERCLL, an LRC, opened in 2006. All 3 UA Title VI centers are funded during the current grant cycle and generate over $4 million in center and fellowship support. The Showcase captured highlights from all three centers and was attended by senior administrators, deans, faculty, and staff from across campus.

Center for Middle Eastern Studies

Education Abroad

Last summer CMES, in conjunction with the UA Office of Study Abroad & Student Exchange (SASE) and the School of Middle Eastern & North African Studies (MENAS), launched the university’s first-ever study abroad program in the Middle East. While SASE has long had affiliations with programs in the region, the new “Arizona in Jordan” program is the first UA faculty-led program on which students receive UA credit. Arizona in Jordan is located on the campus of Yarmouk University in Irbid, Jordan. Yarmouk University is one of the most renowned institutions of higher education in the Arab world. Students take Arabic courses at Yarmouk’s language center and can choose either Modern Standard Arabic or Jordanian Arabic. Students are paired with local language partners to give them at least twenty hours of speaking practice.

In addition to the language courses, students may opt to enroll in the “Ethnography of the Middle East” course and earn 3 units of Middle Eastern Studies credit. This course takes advantage of the program’s location and requires students to engage in local fieldwork and participant observation.

Project Global Officers (GO)
The Center for Middle Eastern Studies, in conjunction with MENAS, received a multi-year grant to offer enhanced Arabic language and culture training to ROTC cadets at the University of Arizona. Project GO is a Department of Defense initiative and administered by the Institute of International Education in Washington, DC. Here at UA the program is administered by CMES. In its inaugural semester, Project GO enrolled 13 cadets from the Air Force, Army, and Naval ROTC programs. Cadets receive weekly tutoring as well as practice with language partners from the Arab world.

The cornerstone of Project GO is the summer intensive language program. ROTC cadets may enroll in an Arabic language program abroad or in the US. CMES received funding to support ten cadets on its Arizona in Jordan program and six to study Arabic at the University of Arizona. Of the ten ROTC cadets heading to Jordan this summer, seven are from the UA Project GO program.
In April 2012, the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center (SQCC) based in both Washington DC and Muscat, opened two unprecedented, interactive exhibits featuring the Omani falaj irrigation system in Tucson, AZ. The exhibit was constructed at Biosphere 2.

The opening festivities included a symposium on April 20, 2012 at UA, featuring scholars on water resources from both Oman and the United States, a banquet that evening hosted by Her Excellency Hauïnna Al Mughairi (Omani ambassador to the US), and ribbon-cutting ceremonies at the Biosphere 2 on April 21. Also at Biosphere 2 was a photography exhibit put together by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies featuring images from Oman which together highlighted Oman’s traditional water systems, Omani culture and society, and the country’s diverse landscapes. Entitled “Photographs from Sea, Sands, and Oases” the exhibit was on display at Biosphere 2 for six months and then went to Washington, DC where it was put on display at SQCC. The exhibit was made possible by Tucson community member Entissar Sabbagh to honor His Excellency Sultan Hamdooon Al Harthy, Chairman of the Muscat Municipality and graduate of the University of Arizona.

The next big outreach event is the World War One in the Middle East workshop, which will take place at CMES from April 5-7, 2013. It is a weekend workshop that explores the Great War in the region through the lens of literature and history. The workshop is also a networking opportunity for community college educators to connect with their counterparts teaching at high schools and universities. For more information, see: cmes.arizona.edu/outreach/wwi_middleeast.

CMES and its outreach program are working closely with the Tucson Unified School District to support the teaching of Arabic in middle and high schools. The goal of this cooperation is to ensure that students who are learning Arabic before entering college are receiving adequate instruction and preparation so they succeed in their language courses when they arrive at the University of Arizona.

Business Outreach
CMES recently conducted an intercultural business training for Alicat Scientific in Tucson. Alicat is a local technology business seeking to expand its market abroad, particularly in the Middle East. The company’s president and two staff will be representing Alicat at the ArabLab technology trade show in Dubai and needed local expertise to help them understand business culture in the Gulf.

UA and the Sultanate of Oman
In April 2012, the Sultan Qaboos Cultural General of the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science. The delegation visited the Sultan Qaboos University in Muscat and the University of Nizwa (Nizwa), the Sultan Qaboos College for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers, the Ministry of Higher Education, and the National Field Research Centre for Environmental Conservation. UA looks forward to welcoming Omani PhD students from a variety of fields to Tucson, to sending UA students to Oman for Arabic language study and research, and to developing student and faculty exchanges.

The Middle East in Europe
On April 19, 2013, CMES and the Department of German Studies are hosting a one-day interdisciplinary symposium, “A Moveable East? North African & Middle Eastern Community, Education, & Media in Modern Europe.” A Moveable East explores how the cultures and societies of North Africa and the Middle East shape the concept and practice of Europeanness, through transnational and local forms of community, education, and media. There will be three panels, followed by a keynote address by Dr. Fatima El-Tayeb from UC San Diego. The title of her talk is Permanent Migrants, Muslim Europeans and the Racing of Religion. The three panels are:

- Conceptions of Community & Citizenship
- Education & the Public Sphere
- Media, Identity, & the State

Co-sponsors of the event include: Africana Studies Program, Department of French and Italian, School of International Languages, Literatures and Cultures (SILLC), and the School of Middle Eastern & North African Studies (MENAS), the Institute for LGBT Studies, and the Speaking of Gender Reading Group. For more information about the symposium: http://cmes.arizona.edu/middle-east-in-europe

Faculty Hires
New positions leveraged by CMES Title VI funds during this grant cycle include Dr. Sonia Shiri and Dr. Loulou Kobeissi. Dr. Shiri is assistant professor of Arabic and Middle East language coordinator at MENAS. Dr. Kobeissi is assistant professor of Middle East public health at the College of Public Health and MENAS. Dr. Kobeissi is currently planning a project to examine health issues with women from Tucson’s diverse Middle Eastern community.

Outreach
CMES does extensive outreach to local schools and community colleges: sending speakers to classes and school events, maintaining a lending library of books/materials, posting nearly 100 lesson plans on our website (http://cmes.arizona.edu/outreach/lessons), keeping instructors informed of Middle East-related learning opportunities, and organizing workshops for educators and high school students. For the past five years, the Center has partnered with Cholla High Magnet School to offer a high school Middle Eastern Studies class and has worked with Cochise Community College so that some students in that class are simultaneously earning 3 college credits in Middle Eastern Humanities.

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