

TO: Arne Kalleberg, Senior Associate Dean for Social Sciences and International Studies
College of Arts and Sciences

FROM: Charlie Kurzman, Interim Director
Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations

RE: Annual Report and Requests

DATE: June 2, 2005

This brief report summarizes the work of the Center in 2004-2005 and sketches out the decisions that need to be made for 2005-2006.

Curricular activities

The Center continued to manage the Middle East track in the Curriculum in International and Area Studies, offering 10 courses on the modern Middle East in 2004-2005, plus 4 years of Arabic, 2 years of Modern Hebrew, and 2 years of Persian. A list of these courses is available at the Center's website, <http://www.unc.edu/mideast> (click on "Past Courses"). In addition, the Center helped to develop the Carolina Study Abroad Program in Amman, Jordan, which is being inaugurated in Summer 2005. In keeping with its mandate, the Center maintained lists on the same site of courses on the pre-modern Middle East and on Muslim civilizations outside of the Middle East, though these courses do not count for the Middle East track.

Extracurricular activities

Through its Carolina Seminar on Comparative Islamic Studies, the Center sponsored 15 extracurricular activities in 2004-2005 for students interested in the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations, including films, cultural events, meetings with Middle East experts, lectures, and conferences. The Center listed these and more than 200 other Triangle-area events related to the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations on its clearinghouse webpage, also available at <http://www.unc.edu/mideast> (click on "Local Events").

Research-related activities

Center members -- listed at <http://www.unc.edu/mideast> (click on "Center Members") -- continue to be active in their fields, with the Center's founding director Carl Ernst leading the way by receiving awards in Egypt, Malaysia, and Turkey for his recent book, *Following Muhammad* (UNC Press, 2004). The Center continues to gain prominence nationwide for its cross-regional approach to Middle East studies. It is sponsoring a "thematic conversation" on this subject at the next three years' annual meetings of the Middle East Studies Association. The Center continues to collaborate actively with the other area studies centers on subjects that cross regional boundaries.

Administration

The Center continues to be operated largely on a volunteer basis. The Center director and associate director are donating their time. The College of Arts and Sciences allocated \$6,000 for programming and \$5,000 for a graduate research assistant (John-Charles Duffy), who is working 10 hours a week. The Center's account is managed by Peter Landstrom of the Carolina Asia Center, who devotes 5 percent time to our Center. The Center's interim director has joined the regular meetings of the leadership of the area studies centers, in order to facilitate joint planning, especially with a view toward generating efficiencies

through shared operations when the new Center for Global Education opens. In March 2005, the Center completed an inclusive planning process that led to a new Strategic Plan, which is available at <http://www.unc.edu/mideast> (click on “Planning Documents”).

Fund-raising

The Center has participated in various activities led by development officer Raymond Farrow and his successor, Cindy DiCello. In addition, the Center has arranged two meetings with the grant officer for Islamic studies at the Carnegie Corporation of New York, David Speedie, including a visit to Chapel Hill that involved meetings with College and University officials and faculty. The Center submitted an unsuccessful application to the U.S. Department of Education for a two-year UISFL grant (Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Languages). We should have the reviewers’ comments in June. Planning has begun for a collaborative application with Duke and N.C. State, due in Fall 2005, for a four-year Title VI National Resource Center grant (see question 3 below).

Requests

1. Replacement in Religious Studies

Ed Curtis’s departure from the Department of Religious Studies leaves a gap in our rotation for the core course in the Middle East Track, the two-semester series “Islamic Civilizations” (HIST 36-37/RELI 25-26).

The Center requests the immediate replacement of this Islamic Studies faculty position in the Department of Religious Studies.

2. Growth in North African Studies

Well before Ed Curtis even considered leaving UNC, the Center’s members felt that these popular core courses needed a fourth faculty member in the teaching rotation, in addition to Carl Ernst (Religious Studies) and Sarah Shields (History). As spelled out in the strategic plan, the ideal person to fill this position would be a historian of North Africa, who would balance Sarah Shields’s research focus on the Levant (the other wing of the Middle East region). The Department of History tried to hire just such a person this year, post-doctoral fellow Shaun Lopez, but lost him when it was unable to identify a tenure-track position for his wife, who is a psychologist working on public health issues. It is unclear where History will list this region on its request for positions. However, there are several other possibilities, including the Department of African and Afro-American Studies, which has expressed an interest in a North Africa specialist, and the Curriculum in International and Area Studies, which has made the Middle East a top priority in order to bring course offerings in this regional track up to the level of the other regions. Adam Versenyi of CIAS says that the Curriculum has a half-position available due to the departure of a faculty member in December 2005, and has indicated that he would like to find a department to partner with in Middle East studies.

The Center requests that a faculty position be authorized in North African Studies, shared between CIAS and either History or African and Afro-American Studies.

3. Growth in Asian Studies

As enrollment in Arabic language courses has grown beyond the capabilities of our two Arabic language faculty members to handle the instruction, we have come to rely on a part-time lecturer. I gather that

Asian Studies has requested a third tenure-track line to handle this student demand in a more long-term fashion. This is also one of the top priorities in the Center's strategic plan.

The Center requests that the Department of Asian Studies' request for a third Arabic-language faculty position be authorized.

4. Title VI Planning

The attached spreadsheet contains a rough preliminary budget for the joint UNC-Duke-NC State Title VI application in Middle East studies. Please note that the consortium would be based at UNC, and that federal funds would support 50 percent time for an associate director and 25 percent time for an office assistant. The budget also allows 50 percent support for new tenure-track faculty lines. For the UISFL application in Fall 2004, the College agreed to create a tenure-track faculty line with 50 percent federal funding in the initial two years. We request two such lines for this Title VI application. Since the grants will awarded in late Spring 2006 and the first search could not be conducted before Fall 2006, this would mean one new line in 2007-2008, with 50 percent federal funding in 2007-2008/2008-2009, and one new line in 2009-2010, with 50 percent federal funding in 2009-2010/2010-2011. The actual positions to be created depend on the College's response to the previous three requests. If all of them are granted, the next-highest priorities in the Center's strategic plan are an open-department position on Islamic movements and a position in Islamic art history, which I gather is included in the Department of Art's request for positions.

The Center requests that the Mideast Title VI application include two UNC faculty positions and two UNC staff positions:

- **The two UNC faculty positions would each be funded with 50 percent federal funds and 50 percent College funds for the first two years, then wholly by the College after the first two years.**
- **A full-time associate director would be funded with 50 percent federal funds and 50 percent College funds for the entire duration of the four year grant.**
- **A half-time office manager would be funded with half federal funds and half College funds (that is, 25 percent time for each funding source) for the entire duration of the four year grant.**

4. Administration

The Center's volunteer administrators are suffering burn-out. Course releases and more stable administrative assistance would reduce the burden and demonstrate University support that will increase the likelihood of success in the Title VI application.

The Center requests that the College support:

- **Two course releases annually, beginning in 2005-2006, for the Center director.**
- **One course release annually, beginning in 2005-2006, for the Center associate director (while the associate director is a faculty member).**
- **A 25 percent time office assistant, beginning in Fall 2005 (with the rest of this person's time to be shared with the African Studies Center, the Carolina Asia Center, and/or the South Asia Center).**

Thank you for reviewing this report and considering the Center's requests.