

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

FROM: Carl Ernst, Director, Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations

RE: Annual Report and Requests

DATE: July 12, 2006

Grant Applications. This report follows on the recent announcement of Title VI National Resource Center awards; we were disappointed to learn that our consortium application as a Middle East center was unsuccessful. Indications are that the competition was extremely tight; the increase in funding for Middle Eastern and South Asian regions in 2003 was reversed in this competition, those funds being spread out among all centers. The result was paradoxically less funding available for the Middle East and South Asia (the North Carolina Center for South Asian Studies, NCCSAS, which received an award in the current competition, is facing an \$80,000 cut in its proposed budget). When the reviewers' comments arrive, we will naturally scrutinize them closely to see where we may have fallen short. Nevertheless, we will regroup and make plans for the most promising prospects for future grant proposals, possibly including an application this fall to the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Languages (UISFL) program (see below for other fund-raising initiatives).

In any event, we feel that the intensive process of information gathering and consultation required for this grant application was an extremely productive exercise for identifying strategic program goals on a long-term basis throughout the Triangle universities. We deeply appreciate the support and dedicated work contributed by faculty, staff, and graduate students, and we are confident that the depth of talent and resources embodied in our Middle East and Islamic studies programs will continue to provide an example of significant academic achievement. Relevant units at UNC are already considering how best to address the areas of need that would have been funded by this application. We are now at work with other UNC centers for international studies (particularly UCIS, NCCSAS, and African Studies) on programs for next year that were part of our planning process; as an example, UCIS will be providing major support for a conference on "The Global Middle East."

Recent Hires. Several significant faculty appointments have been made in our field at UNC this past year: Glaire Anderson, a specialist on Islamic art (especially Muslim Spain), Assistant Professor of Art History; Omid Safi, a well-known scholar of Islamic and Iranian studies, Associate Professor of Religious Studies; and Afroz Taj, a Hindi-Urdu literature and language pedagogy expert, Associate Professor of Asian Studies. All of these individuals will add important depth to our inter-regional expertise in Muslim civilizations. We will also have a visiting Fulbright scholar from India in the fall to teach a course on Islam in South Asia, Dr. Meenakshi Khanna. Two searches (Arabic language and literature, Middle East politics) were unsuccessful, but we are hopeful that appropriate candidates can be found this time around to meet current demands.

Curriculum. The Center continued to manage the Middle East track in the Curriculum in International and Area Studies, offering 8 courses on the modern Middle East in 2005-6 (along with 6 more available at Duke), plus 4 years of Arabic, 3 years of Modern Hebrew, and 2 years of Persian;

in 2005-6 there were 17 students in this concentration.. Student demand continues to increase in all these areas. 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 a successful Carolina Study Abroad Program in Amman, Jordan, in Summer 2005, though with the departure of Edward Curtis that now will become a UNC-approved program of Indiana University; other study abroad opportunities for UNC students exist in Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, and Turkey. CCSMEMC faculty members are pursuing other possible venues for study abroad in the Middle East; ongoing video conferences and e-mail exchanges with classes at the American University in Cairo have encouraged us to try to develop this partnership more intensively. 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. Including courses available at Duke, UNC students had access to a total of 80 Middle East-related courses in fall 2005 and 83 courses in spring 2006.

Extra-Curricular Events. Through its Carolina Seminar on Comparative Islamic Studies, the Center sponsored 17 extracurricular activities in 2005-6 for students and faculty members 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 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. In 2005-6, the second, third, and fourth volumes of the UNC Press series on "Islamic Civilization and Muslim Networks" appeared:

- Bruce Lawrence and Miriam Cooke, ed., *Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip-Hop*
- Ebrahim Moosa, *Ghazali and the Poetics of Imagination*
- Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry*

These three signature volumes, which showcase the distinctive contributions of UNC and Duke faculty members, are already making an impact with awards, translations, and foreign editions. Five additional volumes that have been contracted and are in production will feature an impressive range of new scholarship in Islamic studies from different American and international universities.

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 in the second year of a three years' sequence of annual meetings of the Middle East Studies Association. In 2005-6 Director Carl Ernst gave invited lectures and workshops in Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Paris, London, Lahore, Berlin, Lisbon, and a number of American universities. Associate Director Charles Kurzman made presentations to government agencies, a variety of American universities, and a dozen student and community groups in North Carolina. Other Center faculty won prestigious fellowships from the National Humanities Center (Sahar Amer) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (Sarah Shields). Center faculty members regularly receive State Department-sponsored delegations of visitors from the Middle East. The Center continues to collaborate actively with the other area studies centers on subjects that cross regional boundaries. We are especially proud of the third annual graduate student conference on Islamic studies, organized by graduate students from Duke and UNC, highlighting our growing strength in this field.

Administration and Funding. The Center has been ably advised again this year by members of our Advisory Council, which draws from units across the university. This past year was the first in which administration of the Center received significant College support, including course releases for the Director (two courses) and for Associate Director Charles Kurzman (one course), plus a graduate

research assistant (webmaster John-Charles Duffy) and accounting services from the Carolina Asia Center (Peter Landstrom).

Next year we will be heading for a different model, in conformity with the other area studies centers, in which the Director will have a one course release, we will seek to hire a non-faculty Associate Director, and Kurzman will join the Faculty Committee. The Center will also have two offices in the new Global Education Center when it opens in January, one for the Director and one for the new Associate Director. We expect to continue to benefit from one third of the time of Peter Landstrom, plus the services of a graduate research assistant and webmaster hired with Center funds (see attached personnel chart). If the Title VI application had been successful, we would have been looking for a full-time Associate Director; but by previous agreement with the Dean, the College will still support the hiring of a halftime non-faculty Associate Director for a period of two years.

The Center requests that steps be made to authorize the half-time Associate Director position as soon as is possible.

Currently the Faculty Committee is described in our Title VI application as consisting of several core faculty members: Sahar Amer, Banu Gökariksel, Sarah Shields, and Nadia Yaqub, although this has never been a formal College committee assignment. The contributions of all these individuals have been critical to the success of our Center. In view of the importance of our core faculty members' commitment to this area, we feel that it would be desirable to signal to department chairs that this is a significant responsibility, by making it an official appointment by the Dean; to clarify its role, it is proposed that its name be the Faculty Advisory Committee to CCSMEMC. In addition to those named above, it would also be desirable to include Charles Kurzman and Omid Safi on the committee (Shields is on leave this year).

The Center requests the formal naming of a Faculty Advisory Committee with three-year appointments for the above-named individuals.

In terms of current program funding, the Center currently has available a total of \$3470 for next year, and we expect a further \$1500 for the program activities of the Carolina Center for Comparative Islamic Studies. In addition, by agreement with the College, the Director has access to a discretionary research fund, which may be employed for program functions of the Center.

Fundraising. Extensive interaction with colleagues at Duke over a number of years has made it clear that collaborative activities in Middle Eastern/Islamic studies are mutually beneficial, and indeed essential, for the success of programs on both campuses. Last summer, a milestone occurred for Duke with the formation of the Duke Islamic Studies Center (DISC), which was launched with a major gift of \$1.5 million to fund a chair in Islamic studies in a social science field (although the search was unsuccessful last year, it will proceed again this year). DISC has an external fundraising board that is strong, with good international connections, and an ambitious plan for developing Islamic studies; it also has the full support of the Duke administration. The most recent event has been the collection of a \$1,000,000 fund to support graduate fellowships at Duke in Islamic studies.

The largest item in the Duke Islamic studies development plan is an extensive collaborative program with UNC in the field of Islamic studies, modeled on the Robertson Scholars program. The planning for this program is still in the very beginning stages, so at this point we need to initiate discussions for planning the administrative complements of convergence between CCSMEMC and DISC in terms of curriculum, faculty, visitors, and events. We also need to set up a meeting of the

directors of both centers with development officers of the two universities to discuss the vision for this program. In addition, we feel that this fall would be a good time to stage a significant event close to the time of the DISC Advisory Board meeting (November 10-11) in a way that would be attractive to potential donors.

The Center requests support of the College in pursuing this major collaborative initiative in fundraising with Duke in the area of Islamic studies.

If, in addition, the Center could play a significant role in activities around the launch of the Global Education Center, that would be a welcome indication of our role in international studies at Carolina.