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King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies

2016

Annual Report, 2016

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences. King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies

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University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences. King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies. (2016). Annual Report, 2016. *King Fahd Center for Middle East & Islamic Studies Annual Report*. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/mest-ar/11>

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ANNUAL REPORT

King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies
Tom Paradise, Director

I. Summary of Achievements and Change

A. Department/Program/Center Highlights

1. Middle East Studies Undergraduate Research Conference

The King Fahd Center sponsored its first regional Undergraduate Research Conference in Middle East Studies, bringing together students from Arkansas and Missouri to present research in culture, history, politics, religion, geography and more. The goal of the conference, which will occur again in December 2016, is to provide undergraduate students conducting research on topics related to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) with a forum in which to present their work and collaborate with peers. The conference aims to advance undergraduate scholarship at the University of Arkansas, as well as encourage interest in the geopolitical region, while building academic bridges and social interaction between nearby schools and students with similar MENA programs and interests.

Tom Paradise, Director of the King Fahd Center, welcomed students to the event and introduced Lynda Coon, Dean of the Honors College, who spoke on the importance of undertaking and facilitating research at the undergraduate level. Twelve undergraduate students from a variety of majors presented their research in five hour-long sessions moderated by members of the MEST Undergraduate Conference Committee (Chair: **Nani Verzon**, King Fahd Center Program Coordinator; Members: **Sarwar Alam**, Instructor of MEST; **Spencer Allen**, Instructor of MEST; **Dan Brown**, Visiting Assistant Professor of PLSC; **Sanket Desai**, Graduate Teaching Assistant in of HIST; and **Matt Parnell**, Instructor of HIST). Students presented for fifteen minutes and took part in a communal Q&A at the end of the hour.

The conference had an unexpectedly large attendance with more than 100 students and faculty from across campus and the region.

2. Increase in Funding for MEST Undergraduate Academic Scholarships

The King Fahd Center has increased award monies associated with its competitive Middle East Studies Academic Scholarship. Previously, partial scholarships of \$3,000 and full scholarships of \$6,000 were available to MEST majors entering their junior or senior years with a GPA >3.25 and a demonstrable commitment to Middle East Studies. As of the 2016-2017 funding cycle, scholarship amounts will increase to \$5,000 and \$10,000 for partial and full scholarships respectively.

Awardees for the 2016-2017 academic year reflect a continual trend of excellence among Middle East Studies majors, awardees boasting an average GPA of 3.66, well in excess of the minimum GPA requirement of 3.25. The award of eight full and two partial scholarships reflect a financial commitment of \$90,000 for the academic year, nearly double the commitment from Academic Year 2015-2016.

3. Increased Support for Undergraduate Research

In addition to the establishment of the MEST Undergraduate Research Conference and the growing emphasis by faculty on academic writing and the mentorship of undergraduate research, Conference Travel Grants have been made available to undergraduate students whose papers have been accepted at regional or national conferences. These grants help to defray the cost of travel for student presenters.

In 2015-2016, the following papers were accepted for presentation:

Nathaniel Bailey's (PLSC) paper 'Brother Whom I Love: Alternative Sexual Relations in Turkey' was presented at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion/Religious Research Association Annual Meeting in Newport Beach, California, October 2015.

Candace Ginn (COMM) presented 'Is God Afraid of Women's Hair? Religious Discourses and Cultural Practices of Maintaining Women's Hair in the Middle East and West' at the 2016 Undergraduate Research Conference at Butler University in April, supported by an Undergraduate Conference Travel Grant from the King Fahd Center.

Abram Greenbaum (PLSC, MEST) presented 'Desecration of the Body: Tattoos in Middle Eastern Culture', at the 2nd Annual Undergraduate Research Workshop 2015 Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting in November, supported with an Undergraduate Conference Travel Grant from the King Fahd Center. Greenbaum was one of just nine participants selected.

Austin Keefe's (PLSC, MEST, IREL) paper 'Glory be to God, I Have Killed My Daughter: The Tradition of Honor Killing in Jordan' was presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion/Religious Research Association in Newport Beach, California, October 2015.

Marcos Macias' (IDST) paper 'Violence in Islam: Perception, Propaganda, and the Jihad' was accepted for presentation at the 2016 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting in October and will attend with support from the King Fahd Center.

Morgan Michel's (IREL/MEST; ARAB minor) paper 'But God Said She is Free: A Critique of the Methods Used in Islam to Restrict Women's Rights and Movement' was accepted for presentation at the Pacific NW Region American Academy of Religion/American Schools of Oriental Research 2015 Annual Meeting, as well as the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Commission on Religious Studies.

Stephen Tate's (PLSC) paper 'Killing in the Name of God: Does the Qur'an Justify Honor Killings' was accepted at the annual conference of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. The conference is to be held in Atlanta, October, 2016.

Peyton Watts (IREL, PLSC) presented 'Jihad: For the Qur'an Tells Me So. The Mystical Journey of Jihad al-Akbar' at the Southwest Commission on Religious Studies (SWCRS) in March 2016, supported by an Undergraduate Conference Travel Grant from the King Fahd Center.

Claire Williamson (INST, MEST) presented 'Cover Yourself, and Cover Your Feelings: The Double Standard of Women of Faith' at the Southwest Commission on Religious Studies (SWCRS) in March 2016, supported by the King Fahd Center.

4. Largest Graduating Class of MEST Majors

A record number of MEST Majors graduated in Academic Year 2015-2016 - 9 students in Fall 2015 and 20 in Spring 2016, with an additional student seeking graduation over the summer for a total of 30 students. This figure is double the average number of students to graduate per academic year over the last three years, and reflects positively on efforts by MEST administrators to more closely track and guide students through successfully navigating the program.

B. Department/Program/Center Changes

1. Tom Paradise Appointed as Director

Tom Paradise, Professor of Geosciences and long-time regional expert, was appointed the new Director of the King Fahd Center in August. He succeeds Joel Gordon, Professor of History, who stepped down in June 2015 after a Directorship of 5 years.

Since 1990, Paradise's work has focused on the ruined classical city of Petra in southern Jordan, now one of the new Seven Wonders of the World. His research on the architecture, urban morphology, and cultural resource management of the region and city has been published in three books, and more than fifty peer-review papers, reports and book chapters. His work has been supported by various international agencies including National Science Foundation, USAID, USIA-USIS, Petra National Trust, NMERTP, US State Department, CIES-Fulbright, and the Jordanian Department of Antiquities. Within his decade with the University of Arkansas, twelve graduate students have published related research, theses, and

dissertations on topics and projects from Jordan and Petra as well. In addition, Paradise has published more than 3,000 maps related to his work in Petra, across the Levant, Mediterranean, and the US.

Paradise joined the faculty of the Geography division of Geosciences in 2000 from the University of Hawaii to teach courses in regional geography, cartography, hazards and risk, cultural heritage management and historic preservation, and geomorphology. His research includes cultural resource management, specifically regarding the deterioration of classical architecture, stone weathering, hazards and risk, and human impacts on the Mediterranean landscape. Paradise previously served as Interim Director of the King Fahd Center from 2006 to 2009.

With a background in regional geography, geology, cartography, and architecture, Paradise will bring a new approach to the undergraduate Middle East Studies Program, integrating the Center's conventional focus on regional history and politics with natural and cultural resource management, regional geography, and vernacular architecture and Islamic art to create one of the largest regional and national Middle East educational and resource centers in North America.

2. Addition of new faculty

Kelly Hammond (PhD East Asian History, Georgetown University 2015) joined the faculty at the University of Arkansas as an assistant professor of history. Her work specializes in the history of Islam in East Asia, particularly focusing on the political, social and cultural history of Chinese Muslims from the Qing Dynasty through into the People's Republic of China. Her current project argues that Chinese Muslims living under occupation who collaborated with the Japanese were actively involved in creating an on-going dialogue between the Japanese Empire and the Chinese Nationalists about strategies for managing minority populations. Her courses on Islam and Asia will be included as part of the MEST curriculum.

Spencer Allen (PhD Hebrew Bible and Assyriology, University of Pennsylvania 2011; MTS Scripture and Interpretation, Harvard Divinity School 2001) joined the King Fahd Center in 2015 as an Instructor. Allen has previously taught courses on ancient Near Eastern history and religion, biblical and early Christian history, and early biblical interpretation at the King Fahd Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Arkansas, in the Division of Biblical Studies at John Brown University, and in the critical writing program at the University of Pennsylvania. His courses on early Christianity, the rise of monotheism, and Hebrew language and literature will be included as part of the MEST curriculum.

3. Mounir Farah Retires

Mounir Farah, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, retired in December 2015 after 20 years of service to the U of A, the College of Education, and the King Fahd Center. He joined the U of A in 1995 and brought a wealth of experience in Middle East Studies to the MEST program. Professor Farah was a founding member of the Middle East Outreach Council, a vital branch of the Middle East Studies Association, and has remained an active participant in their annual meetings. He served the Fahd Center as Associate Director, Outreach Director, and Interim Director, and joined the faculty of the College of Education and Health Professions in 1997. He has given that college an unprecedented international presence, both in terms of the students he has worked with, from nearly every Arab country, and in his own work toward curricular reform and development with education ministries and universities, particularly in Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan.

4. Creation of a MEST Advisory Committee

A MEST Advisory Committee consisting of tenured faculty members affiliated with the King Fahd Center was formed in April 2016, and conducted its first meeting in May. The Advisory Committee will convene to legislate issues such as staffing, curriculum, operations, programming, and funding. A second meeting has been tentatively scheduled for September 2016.

Committee members include: **Joel Gordon** (HIST), **Adnan Haydar** (WLLC), **Mohja Kahf** (ENGL), **Tom Paradise** (GEOS), **Jerry Rose** (ANTH), **Ted Swedenburg** (ANTH), and **Nani Verzon** (King Fahd Center Program Coordinator).

II. Achievements in Teaching, Research and Service

(top 3-5 highlights in each section, more are optional as desired)

A. Enhancements to Teaching, Academic Programs, and Curriculum

1. Middle East Studies Undergraduate Research Conference

See Item A1 in Section I

2. Addition of new courses

A number of new courses have been proposed and/or approved for addition to the MEST curriculum:

MEST 2203/H Introduction to Christianity Introduces the geography, events, characters, and histories that formed Christianity--from bands of Jews into its global and colonial ascendancy. Focus on region, people, conflicts, disagreements, theological locations and the influence of geo-politics and effects of financial, political and/or military control. (Also approved for RLST credit).

MEST 3003/H Islam: Theory & Practice Explores the relationship between teachings, norms, customary practices and Muslim perception of Islam. Examines theoretical concepts and practices, such as war and peace, democracy, pluralism, modernity, human rights, environment, gender, Islamic law, nation-state, and citizenship in addition to the basic tenets of Islam. (Also approved for RLST credit).

MEST 3203 Christianity: Theory & Practice Focuses on essential doctrines of the Christian faith, historical contexts from which these doctrines grew, and scriptural and traditional arguments made by different theological and regional positions in both ancient and modern doctrinal debates. Examines the experiential side of Christianity, emphasizing the worship and ritualistic observances of various ancient and modern communities. (Also approved for RLST credit).

MEST 3303 Hebrew Literature & Language I Introduction to biblical Israel and Judah. Examines the ancient Hebrew language, focusing on sacred texts produced during Israel's Iron Age II period. Introduces the ancient Hebrew alphabet, biblical Hebrew vocabulary, morphology, and syntax in the context of the Old Testament. Some extra-biblical Hebrew texts will also be considered.

MEST 340V MEST/H Independent Study An exploration of varied topics related to the Middle East and North Africa studied independently with the supervision of a faculty member. Credit arranged with instructor.

MEST 420V Internship Internship experience with a group, firm, agency, or non-profit organization related to the Middle East and/or North Africa (MENA). Local, regional, and international internships (paid and unpaid) may take place with various NGOs, related corporations, and US Agencies and Departments.

B. Research and Creative Activity (top 3-5 highlights from Bibliography)

1. **Mohja Kahf** (ENGL) published her book of poetry *Hagar Poems* (ISBN 978-1-68226-000-5) in August 2016 with the University of Arkansas Press. The central matter of this daring new collection is the story of Hagar, Abraham, and Sarah—the ancestral feuding family of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These poems delve into the Hagar story in Islam. They explore other figures from the Near Eastern heritage, such as Mary and Moses, and touch on figures from early Islam, such as Fatima and Aisha.
2. **Spencer Allen** (MEST) published *The Splintered Divine: A Study of Ištar, Baal, and Yahweh Divine Names and Divine Multiplicity in the Ancient Near East* (ISBN 978-1-61451-236-3) with De Gruyter in March 2015. This book investigates the issue of the singularity versus the multiplicity of ancient Near Eastern deities who are known by a common first name but differentiated by their last names, or geographic epithets. The conclusions drawn about the singularity of local manifestations versus the

multiplicity of independent deities are specific to each individual first name examined in accordance with the data and texts available for each divine first name.

C. Public Outreach and Service (especially those of national, regional, or statewide significance)

1. In November of 2014, Lebanese Zajal, the sophisticated art of spontaneous verbal dueling, was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In celebration of this great honor, **Adnan Haydar** (WLLC) and **Paula Haydar** (MEST) organized a poetic duel between two of Lebanon's master poets, Antoine Saade and Elias Khalil, bringing this revered Lebanese oral tradition to the 2015 Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, sponsored by the King Fahd Center. The event was received positively and was attended by several hundred members of the international organization.
2. **Tom Paradise** (GEOS), Director of the King Fahd Center, was the Distinguished Speaker at the US State Department's Fulbright Conference and Pre-Departure Orientation for all US Fulbrighters heading to North Africa and the Middle East (June 14-17, 2016), organized and overseen by the Office of Academic Exchange Programs in the Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. Paradise spoke on the impact of his Fulbright Senior Scholar Grant (1998-2000) and its influence personally and professionally - from his years at the University of Hawaii and his early work in Petra, Jordan, to working in the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas and his participation in the award-winning PBS Special *Petra: Lost City of Stone*. Paradise spoke at a number of meetings, in addition to his plenary presentation.
3. **Ted Swedenburg** (ANTH) was recently elected to the Middle East Studies Association board of directors. The Middle East Studies Association, based at the University of Arizona, is a private, non-profit, learned society that brings together scholars and educators from all over the world who are involved in the study of the region. Founded in 1966, it has more than 2,800 members and it serves as an umbrella organization for more than 60 institutional members and 39 affiliated organizations.

In addition to serving on the nine-member board, he will chair the association's publications committee, which oversees the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and the *MESA Review of Middle East Studies*. Swedenburg also serves on the editorial committee of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, and has been invited to sit on the editorial board of *Anthropologica*, the journal of the Canadian Anthropology Society/la societe canadienne d'anthropologie (CASCA). He is also a contributing editor of *Middle East Report*.

D. Facilities and Equipment (can put "N/A" if not applicable)

1. N/A

E. Serving Students

1. Number of students directed in independent study courses
 - a. 1
2. Number of senior theses directed
 - a. n/a (accounted for under faculty member's primary department)
3. Number of honors theses directed
 - a. n/a (accounted for under faculty member's primary department)
4. Number of master's theses directed
 - a. n/a (accounted for under faculty member's primary department)
5. Number of doctoral dissertations directed
 - a. n/a (accounted for under faculty member's primary department)
6. Number of undergraduate students advised

- a. 60+
- 7. Number of graduate students advised
 - a. n/a (accounted for under faculty member's primary department)
- 8. Other service to students

F. Study Abroad

1. Scouting beneficial programs for U of A students

a. Oman, UAE

During Spring Break 2016, **Adnan Haydar** (WLLC), **Paula Haydar** (MEST), and DeDe Long (Director of the Office of Study Abroad and International Exchange), traveled to Oman and the UAE to visit study abroad programs at the Noor Majan Training Institution in Ibri, Oman, and the American University in Dubai (AUD).

While in Ibri, they visited classes, attended lectures, and were treated to a tour of the area. The Noor Majan Training Institute offers four, six and eight week programs in Intensive Arabic throughout the year. The staff and faculty are highly qualified and have teaching and training experience with the US Department of State's Critical Language Scholarship Program. 26 CLS students will be hosted by the Institute this summer.

The American University in Dubai offers a semester-long study abroad program designed to provide students with a snapshot of the Middle East through the study of language, history and culture, with special attention on Dubai. AUD also offers a Middle East Studies Certificate, an 18-credit hour program designed to give students in the area an appreciation and understanding of the region.

b. Cyprus

Tom Paradise (GEOS/MEST) and Fiona Davidson (GEOS/EUST) visited the University of Nicosia in June 2016, representing Middle East and European Studies. Located in the nation's capital, the University of Nicosia is a global educational center with 20% of its 5,000 students coming from abroad, representing over 60 different countries in a multicultural learning environment. With instruction in English and an emphasis on critical thinking and lifelong learning skills, the University of Nicosia's diverse range of academic programs at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level prepare students for leadership roles in the private and public sectors. Language instruction in Turkish and Arabic is being developed to augment the University of Nicosia's unique placement in Middle East affairs.

2. MEST Undergraduate Students Abroad

James Arnold (PSYC, MEST minor) will study abroad in Amman, Jordan with AMIDEAST during Summer 2016.

Kalynn Barlow (IREL, MEST) was accepted into the Northeastern University Project GO Amman, Jordan program for Summer 2016 with a full scholarship.

Colette Brashears (IREL) received a Sturgis International Fellowship and will study abroad in Nepal, Jordan and Chile during Fall 2016.

Sarah Cory (GEOG, MEST) attended an ISA study abroad program in Amman, Jordan during Spring 2016, supported by a Sturgis Study Abroad Grant from the U of A Honors College.

Chris Cowan (IREL, MEST) will study Arabic this summer in Jordan at the Qasid Arabic Institute, and as part of the AMIDEAST Intensive Arabic program, supported by a Sturgis Study Abroad Grant from the U of A Honors College and a MEST Study Abroad Scholarship from the King Fahd Center.

Claudia De Santiago (PLSC, MEST) studied abroad in Amman, Jordan with ISA during Spring 2016.

Jessica Garross (BSIB) studied abroad in Morocco with ISA during Fall 2015.

Macyn Hunn (COMM, MEST) studied abroad in Amman, Jordan with AMIDEAST during the Fall 2015 semester, supported by funding from the King Fahd Center.

Marcus Montgomery (PSYC, MEST minor) studied abroad in Amman, Jordan with CIEE during the Fall 2015 semester.

Jamie Nix (IREL, MEST) studied abroad in Morocco with ISA during the Fall 2015 semester.

3. MEST Graduate Students Abroad

Kaveh Bassiri (PhD CLCS) spent Spring 2016 in Iran undertaking research on Persian poetry, supported by a Sturgis International Fellowship.

Ali Capar (PhD HIST) travelled to Turkey in Fall 2015 to undertake research toward his dissertation, supported by the King Fahd Center and the government of Turkey.

Sanket Desai (PhD HIST) will conduct archival research toward his dissertation on the development and creation of the Iraqi nation in London, supported by a grant from the King Fahd Center and the Willard B Gatewood History Graduate Fellowship.

Nicole Fares (PhD CLCS) will undertake research this summer toward her dissertation on the evolution of discourses in gender and sexuality in Beirut, Lebanon, supported by the King Fahd Center.

Kaelin Groom (PhD ENDY) undertook dissertation research in Jordan during the Spring 2016 semester, supported by a Sturgis International Fellowship. Her dissertation will look at the effectiveness and necessity of rapid field assessments for cultural stone decay in heritage management using rock art as a medium, with case studies from Arkansas, Grenada in the West Indies, and Petra, Jordan.

Mehreen Jamal (PhD HIST) presented 'Feminine Voices in Pakistani Literature: A study of Nationalist works' at the 25th International Pakistan History Conference in Karachi, Pakistan in January 2016.

Steve Moog (PhD ANTH) will undertake preliminary research toward his dissertation on the intersection of Islam and the punk rock scene in Jakarta, Indonesia this summer, supported by the King Fahd Center.

Erika Morey (PhD ANTH) will conduct archival research at the Griffith Institute Archives at Oxford University, supported by a grant from the King Fahd Center.

Ethan Morton-Jerome (PhD ANTH) presented 'Trials and Tribulations: Palestinian Workers in Israeli Settlement Industrial Zones Demand Their Rights' at the International Conference on Critical Geography in Ramallah, Palestine in July 2015 and 'Seltzer Colonialism: Palestinian Labor in Israeli Industrial Zones' at the Conference on Settler Colonialism in Palestine & Workshop on the Naqab Bedouin at Exeter University in October 2015. He concluded three years of dissertation fieldwork in Ramallah, Palestine in June 2016.

Mitra Panahipour (PhD ANTH) will undertake research at the National Museum of Iran in Tehran this summer, supported by the King Fahd Center.

Keith Whitmire (PhD ANTH) undertook research toward his dissertation on the formation of masculinity in cafés in Cairo, Egypt during Spring 2016 and will continue into the summer, supported by the King Fahd Center.

G. Concerns & Other (can put "N/A" if not applicable)

1. **Facilities:** Despite the King Fahd Center's growth, its facilities continue to diminish. Currently MEST allocated space includes only an office suite (202 Old Main) where two full-time staff members and the MEST Director share space that doubles as a venue for study groups, club and faculty meetings, small scale programming, masters and honors' defense presentations, and a staging area for instructors and graduate students currently without assigned office space. Former resources included Old Main rooms 104 and 105 on the basement floor of Old Main; 105 was lent to the History department to house graduate students, instructors and visiting assistant professors, and was subsequently reallocated to the Dean's Office. Old Main 104, a former psychology observation booth/storage closet, is currently shared by a 75% instructor and a senior graduate student, but has been recently reallocated as well.

In recent years, the Old Main office has become a frequently visited site for students and faculty affiliated with the MEST program. The Center has opened its office to prominent speakers in Giffels Auditorium (recently this has included Senator Boozman and a series of distinguished lecturers hosted by Curt Rom and the Agriculture faculty) to use as a 'green room'. However difficult the management of crowded spaces in Old Main, additional space would be helpful in increasing MEST visibility on campus, as well as accommodating Instructors who are currently without designated office space.

2. The King Fahd Center continues to be burdened by the subsidized salaries of two professors without requisite expertise in Middle East Studies. This sets a potentially dangerous precedent for administrative fiat and threatens to reinforce an earlier, historical view of the program – one that we have endeavored to overcome in recent years – as a cash cow for Fulbright College or the UA at large.

This issue was resolved under former Dean Donald Bobbitt (current U of A System President) when he removed the MEST subsidy after discussions with MEST Interim Director Paradise (2008-2009), Fulbright College Accounting, and the U of A Legal Counsel. These salary subsidies were then reinstated and increased under former Dean Roberts in 2013-2014, and have continued despite many conversations with Fulbright College administration regarding plans to redress the issue (in annual increments or otherwise), and return the subsidies currently at \$136,000 per year. No action has yet been taken on the part of Fulbright Administration, however discussions or partial annual reimbursements from ENGL to MEST continue.

III. Funding

The King Fahd Center dedicates a substantial portion of its annual budget to the facilitation of scholarship at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, in addition to subsidizing faculty development with research funding and project grants.

Graduate Student Support

In the 2015-2016 academic year, the Center supported 15 Graduate Assistants across seven affiliated departments/programs (Anthropology, Creative Writing and Translation, Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies, History, Geosciences, Political Science, and Public Policy); 12 of these Graduate Assistants are enrolled in Doctoral programs and the remaining 3 in Masters. This represents a financial commitment of approximately \$232,000 in salaries and benefits.

The King Fahd Center supports graduate summer research and language study with competitive grants. 6 grants were issued for Summer 2016 ranging from \$1000 to \$2500, totaling over \$11,000. Additionally, nearly \$3000 in competitive grants was issued supporting participation at national and international conferences.

Undergraduate Student Support

The King Fahd Center offers competitive one-year academic scholarships to the Middle East Studies majors who have shown a commitment to study and excellence in the classroom. These scholarships are renewable up to 2 years (4 semesters) and may be used toward semesters abroad. In 2015-2016, full scholarships of \$6000 and partial scholarships of \$3000 were awarded to 10 students, totaling approximately \$51,000.

The King Fahd Center also supports summer study abroad in the Middle East and North Africa with competitive scholarships. A total of \$5300 was awarded.

In alignment with its increased focus on research and scholarship at the undergraduate level, the King Fahd Center began offering competitive grants to support undergraduate students travelling to regional or national conferences to present their work. Over \$2300 was awarded.

Programming in Middle East Studies

In addition to course curriculum and financial awards for research and excellence in scholarship, the King Fahd Center is also dedicated to providing and quality academic programming, utilizing sponsored cultural events, workshops hosted by faculty, and lectures by visiting scholars to augment the expertise of its affiliated faculty. In 2015-2016, the Center expended over \$14,000 on programming that included guest lectures, workshops, and outreach events, in addition to supplementing the annual Fulbright Language Competition, a highly visible cultural event at a major conference in Middle East Studies (see section 2C1), and the first ever MEST Undergraduate Research Conference (see section IA1).

IV. Faculty Accomplishments

A. Awards

1. n/a (accounted for under faculty member's primary department)

B. Appointments

1. n/a (accounted for under faculty member's primary department)

C. Other (can put "N/A" if not applicable)

1. n/a (accounted for under faculty member's primary department)

V. Achievements of Students and Alumni

A. Students

Ali Almajnooni's (PhD CLCS) translation of Nella Larson's novel *Passing* into Arabic was published by Athar Publishing House (2015).

Kaveh Bassiri (PhD CLCS) spent Spring 2016 in Iran undertaking research on Persian poetry, supported by a Sturgis International Fellowship. He presented 'Whatever Happened to The Little Black Fish?: Defanging a Classic Iranian Revolutionary Text' at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association. He continues to write regularly for *Michigan Quarterly Review*, contributing the recent postings: 'Grammar of Touch' (January 2, 2015); 'Modern Iranian Poetry in Translation' (March 27, 2015); 'The Enduring Disappointments of Orientalism' (April 13, 2015); and 'Resources for Iranian Cinema' (October 5, 2015).

Dhia Ben Ali (PhD PUBP) co-presented 'All Politics Is (Not) Local: The Regional Impact on Democratization in Tunisia' at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association. He was awarded a Sturgis International Fellowship and will undertake research in Tunisia during the Fall 2016 semester.

Sanket Desai (PhD HIST) is the recipient of a Faculty Diversity Fellowship from Montgomery County Community College in Blue Bell, PA. The fellowship will entail a 2 - 3 teaching load with a salary and research stipend, and will commence Fall 2016.

Nicole Fares' (PhD CLCS) translation into English of Sahar Mandour's novel 32 was published by Syracuse University Press in March 2016.

Kaelin Groom (PhD ENDY) undertook dissertation research in Jordan during the Spring 2016 semester, supported by a Sturgis International Fellowship. She presented two research papers on Petra and cultural heritage management at University of Nancy/UNESCO Conference 'Deserts & Man II', in Amman, Jordan in October 2015.

Mehreen Jamal (PhD HIST) presented 'Images of Women in Egypt and Pakistani Literature: Two Classic Works by Latifa al-Zayyat and Khadija Mastoor' at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association.

Ethan Morton-Jerome (PhD ANTH) presented 'Enforce the law? Politics and labor organizing with Palestinians on Israeli settlements' and 'Palestinian Labor in West Bank Settlement Industrial Zones' at the Middle East Studies Association and American Anthropological Association 2015 Annual Meetings in November 2015. He has been selected as a fully-funded participant in the Middle East Political Economy Summer Institute sponsored by the Political Economy Project, held at George Mason University in June 2016.

Matt Parnell (PhD ANTH) was invited to speak about his experience as a Fulbright Program Fellow at Fulbright College's Fulbright Birthday Commemoration, and served as a delegate from the U of A to advocate for increased federal funding toward international educational exchange in discussions with the Office of Arkansas Senator John Boozman in April 2015. He was invited to present 'Lessons learned from my Fulbright Experience to Egypt' to Fulbright International Scholars in August 2015, and was a discussant on Ozarks at Large segment 'The Fulbright Impact' that aired September 2nd.

Parnell was awarded a three-year Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellowship at the American University in Cairo, to commence August 2016.

Wawan Yulianto's (PhD CLCS) translation of 'Sleepless', a short story by Rahmad Ali, was published in Annie Tucker (Ed.), *A Graveside Ritual: Contemporary Indonesian Short Stories* (Rosda International 2016).

B. Alumni

Khalid Ahmadzai (BA IREL, MEST 2015) published editorial 'Passing judgment: Parallels in the Christmas story' in the *Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* on November 20, 2015.

Asaad al-Saleh (PhD CLCS 2010) began a tenure-track position in Arabic Literature at Indiana University in August 2015.

Ahmet Akturk (PhD HIST 2012) published 'Female Cousins and Wounded Masculinity: Kurdish Nationalist Discourse in the Post-Ottoman Middle East' in *Middle Eastern Studies* (September 2015).

Cole Bockenfeld (BA IREL, MEST, PLSC 2008) is Advocacy Director for the Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED). He co-authored, with POMED Executive Director Stephen McInerney, 'State, Foreign Operations, & Related Programs: Appropriations Bills, FY16' (September 2015).

Jamie Hamadi (MA ANTH 2014) graduated with an MFA from Parsons Paris program in Design and Technology. Her final project, Refuge Network, is an anonymous information sharing feedback system that works to connect refugees to help and use their input to discern their needs and bring global awareness to the current refugee crisis.

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End of report.