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Center for Middle Eastern Studies The University of Texas at Austin Grant Proposal

For the Continued Support of the National Resource Center (NRC) and Foreign Languages and Area Studies (FLAS)

At the University of Texas at Austin Submitted to

The International and Foreign Language Education (IFLE) Office At the Department of Education (DoE)

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February 11, 2022

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# Commitment to the Subject Area (5 points)

* 1. ***Center operation.*** UT provides $**5,953,076** toward the operation of the Center.

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| **Table A.1 Institutional Support for Middle Eastern Studies, 2020-21** |
| **Program operations** |  | **Teaching** |  |
| Administrative staff | $213,481 | Faculty | $4,669,984 |
| Operating expenses\* | $34,000 | Instructional assistants | $267,378 |
| *Total program operations* | $247,481 | Faculty travel\*\* | $0 |
|  |  | Research grants | $73,256 |
| **Student support** |  | *Total teaching staff* | $5,010,618 |
| Non-resident tuition waivers | $87,000 |  |  |
| Fellowships/scholarship | $101,858 | **Outreach/events** |  |
| *Total student support* | $188,858 | Outreach/events staff | $49,691 |
|  |  | Publications staff | $35,568 |
| **Library resources** |  | Book production | $13,200 |
| Library staff | $144,670 | Events and exhibits | $5,000 |
| Acquisitions | $257,990 | Total outreach/events | $103,459 |
| *Total library resources* | $402,660 |  |  |
| **Total institutional support** | **$5,953,076** |

\*UT has committed a substantial increase in institutional funding in the form of IT support starting in 2022-23

\*\*COVID-19 drastically impacted faculty travel in 2020-21; usually, this figure is closer to $28,800/year.

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) is housed within the Department of Middle Eastern Studies (DMES) in Calhoun Hall, which has 48 offices for faculty, staff, visiting faculty, Teaching Assistants (TAs), and Assistant Instructors (AIs); a reading room; a meeting room; a designated classroom; and two copy rooms. MES staff, including the DMES chair and the CMES director, share an office suite. CMES also has 17 graduate student workstations in Homer Rainey Hall and 10 in Flawn Academic Center. The College of Liberal Arts (CoLA) houses DMES.

* 1. ***Teaching staff.*** CMES has 62 faculty affiliates in 15 departments and five colleges/professional schools (Appendix 4). Among these, 49 are tenured/tenure track: six assistant professors; 21 associate professors; 17 full professors; and five professors emeriti. The 37 faculty on the CMES Graduate Studies Committee supervise MA theses and PhD

dissertations. Our teaching staff also includes 15 TAs and two AIs. Ten of our current faculty have been hired since the last grant cycle, including an associate professor and nine lecturers. Two faculty members have been promoted from associate professor to full. MES has updated the previous strategic hiring plan, which yielded three hires, to focus on two positions still unfilled, in history of Israel/the Levant and Bible/Ancient Near East (this search is currently underway).

* 1. ***Library resources.*** UT Libraries (UTL) supports MES substantively. Two librarians specialize in the Middle East; annually, a total of $133,995 in salaries (3.51 FTE) supports the Middle East collection; $185,772 supports acquisition of library materials in all formats and Middle Eastern languages. In 2021-22, over $262,348 was allocated to collection-building in Middle Eastern Studies (MES), with an average of 2,500 new items added annually. As of 2021, UTL’s Middle Eastern language holdings totaled 210,893. Additional MES materials are housed in other UT libraries and archives. Other than around $53,000 from the Title VI grant in 2018- 22, library staff and acquisitions are funded entirely by UT.
	2. ***Linkages with institutions abroad.*** CMES has strong links to institutions abroad. We plan to renew a collaboration with the University of Oslo (UiO), hosting workshops on language pedagogy and cultural competency (line 33). This Spring, a CMES faculty member will travel with an American delegation to the University of Central Asia (UCA) in Tajikistan to meet with American Councils for International Education (ACIE). This joint effort will help develop language pedagogy programs and assess UCA’s potential for attracting U.S. students for study abroad of Farsi, Dari, or Tajiki.

Since 2018, CMES faculty have served as fellows or guest professors (for instance at the European Institute for Advanced Study) and engaged in new and ongoing collaborations with faculty at UiO, the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, University of Edinburgh, Charles Sturt

University (Australia), and American University in Iraq Suleimani (AUIS), among others. For a series of workshops on new media in the Middle East, CMES will collaborate with faculty from the American University of Beirut, Georgetown University in Qatar, and the University of Victoria in Canada. CMES regularly hosts visiting scholars from overseas institutions, for example from Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, and Sweden.

UT’s Education Abroad programs maintain robust linkages with institutions abroad, including the American University of Sharjah, Boğaziçi University, Koç University, Middle East Technical University, the American University in Cairo, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, University of Haifa, and Tel Aviv University. Additionally, Arabic Flagship Program (AFP) students complete a yearlong overseas Capstone program at the Arab American Language Institute in Morocco (AALIM) in Meknes, Morocco.

Texas Global (TG) supports or administers many experiential learning opportunities. A new competitive fellowship program, the President’s Award for Global Learning (PAGL), funds international projects implemented by students, faculty, and international partners. Last year, MES students and faculty won the PAGL and traveled to Amman to collaborate with the University of Jordan. UT’s Global Career Launch (GCL) supports the Contemporary Jerusalem Internship Program, a partnership with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HU) focused on community development. A Global Virtual Exchange (GVE) between UT and HU has produced a virtual course, “Multicultural Israel,” now an established part of the TG curriculum. Two other GVEs – with Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University (Turkey) and AUIS (Iraq) – will focus on translation studies. A Faculty Research Seed Grant (FRSG) will support a collaboration with institutions in Egypt on “Housing and the Urban Poor in Cairo;” another supports a partnership between UT and the National Academy of Performing Arts in Karachi, Pakistan. TG’s Global

Innovation Lab hosts two Department of State programs in the Middle East: Empowering Saudi Women Through Entrepreneurship (at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology); and the Fulbright Egypt Junior Faculty Professional Development Program (with AMIDEAST). The CMES director regularly engages with other area studies centers and CoLA to implement paradigms that enhance the internationality of UT students and the UT campus.

* 1. ***Outreach activities.*** UT funds 50% of the salaries of the CMES Outreach Director and the Events Coordinator, helps fund CMES outreach activities at Explore UT, and also hosts foreign language and career fairs in which CMES regularly participates. UT is instrumental in supporting our commitment to provide educational resources and opportunities to other UT programs and colleges, other two- and four-year institutions of higher learning, K-16 educators, businesses, the media, and the community.
	2. ***Qualified students in MES-related fields.*** More than 50 students major in MES. Currently, 15 students are enrolled in the MES MA program and 21 in the Middle Eastern Languages and Culture (MELC) PhD program. CMES benefits another 20 graduate students working directly on the region in subjects such as history, literature, government, public affairs, and foreign language education. Since 2018, 41 students have earned MA and PhD degrees in MES. The Graduate School provides, on average, $124,960 per year of fellowship/stipend support for MES students. UT also provides an annual average of seven non-resident tuition exemptions (NRTEs) for MES students, ranging from $4,000-$8,000 each, worth a total annual average of $42,000. The Graduate School and other campus partners award travel funding for MES students to present at national conferences. Several small named fellowships support the study of specific languages (Hebrew, Arabic, Persian).
	3. ***Financial support for FLAS fellows.*** CoLA provides CMES with NRTEs to allow out-of- state students with competitive fellowships of at least $1,000, including FLAS fellows, to pay resident tuition, cutting tuition costs from $19,325 to $5,429 for undergraduates, and from

$8,847 to $4,464 for graduate students. NRTEs greatly aid in recruiting out-of-state graduate students to CMES. Further, CoLA has committed to providing health insurance stipends to CoLA FLAS fellows ($3,190/AY and $800/Summer). For non-CoLA FLAS fellows, Texas Global has committed $30,000/year toward the costs of health insurance expenses.

# Quality of the Center’s Language Instructional Program

***B.1a Extent of instruction.*** MES provides instruction in Arabic, Hebrew (modern and Biblical), Persian, Turkish, and the ancient Semitic languages of Akkadian, Aramaic, Classical Ethiopic, Syriac, and Ugaritic. The modern languages, offered yearly, follow an intensive language sequence that condenses two years into two semesters. This intensive curriculum offers a three- year sequence in Arabic and a one-year sequence for Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish. Students of these three languages move into a standard-paced, one-semester intermediate course, followed by an advanced content course in their second year. After completing the core language sequences, students of all modern languages can continue their study in advanced content-based and Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) offerings. LACs offer disciplinary instruction in the target language, either as a stand-alone course or as a complementary section linked to an English-language course. Table B.1a outlines each language sequence.

The prestigious Arabic Flagship Program (AFP), established at UT in 2007, is a Department of Defense funded initiative to promote global professionalization by guiding students to Superior proficiency in Arabic. Besides providing opportunities for the study of Arabic throughout the academic year, AFP also supports undergraduate study through

scholarships for summer and overseas language programs. AFP is integrated into the MES and Arabic programs with courses open to all UT students. Further, AFP increases Arabic teaching capacity, provides co-curricular language supports (i.e., language partners and events), strengthens linkages with institutions abroad through its overseas programs, and helps evaluate the Arabic program through regular proficiency testing. Eleven years ago, MES launched the Arabic Summer Institute (ASI) with start-up funding from AFP and the Consortium of Middle East Centers (CMEC). ASI offers courses at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels, and is open to students at all institutions and to professionals seeking career advancement.

Since 2018, we have worked with CMEC and the University of Arizona to develop online Beginning Kurdish courses; we will continue supporting this initiative (line 20). In collaboration with other institutions, we will develop online Beginning Pashto courses (line 21). Starting in Summer of Year 1, we intend to offer online Pashto yearly through UT Extension (UEX), which ensures their availability beyond UT. These programs serve a crucial need for high quality domestic language programs.

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| **Table B.1a: Language Course Sequences** |
| **Semester** | **1st** | **2nd** | **3rd** | **4th** | **5th** | **6th** | **Advanced** |
| **Arabic** | Intensive I | Intensive II | Intensive III | Intensive IV | Intensive V | Intensive VI | Advanced Content Course |
| **Hebrew, Persian, Turkish** | Intensive I | Intensive II | Intermediate I | Advanced Content Course | Advanced Content Course | Advanced Content Course | Advanced Content Course |

1. ***1b Enrollment.*** Since 2018, enrollments have remained steady, with slight drops in all languages due to the pandemic (11%) and an increase in graduate students taking Arabic (23%).

|  |
| --- |
| **Table B.1b Language Enrollment, 2019-20 and 2020-21** |
|  | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | Summer 2020 | Summer 2021 |
| Language | Courses | Undergrad | Grad | Courses | Undergrad | Grad | Total | Total |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Arabic | 14 | 355 | 30 | 16 | 342 | 37 | 41 | 25 |
| Hebrew | 7 | 80 | 7 | 6 | 55 | 8 |  |
| Persian | 7 | 48 | 17 | 7 | 39 | 11 |
| Turkish | 4 | 12 | 12 | 2 | 7 | 0 |

* 1. ***Levels of language training; language courses in disciplines other than language, linguistics, and literature.*** We offer three or more levels of training in all four modern languages (Table B.1a). Beyond the second or third year, instruction is content-based, with courses on history, religion, media, culture, literature, and linguistics. Table B.2 specifies content courses in disciplines other than language, linguistics, and literature. In addition to regular content courses conducted entirely in the target language, LAC courses supplement an English-language course by providing an opportunity to discuss texts in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish. For all upper-division courses, students are encouraged to take an LAC for additional language support.

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| **Table B.2 Advanced Content Courses *\*****indicates courses not focused on language, literature, or linguistics.* |
| **Arabic (8)** | *Advanced Spoken Media Arabic, Arabs and Modernity\*, Contemporary World Challenges\*, Egyptian Culture & Society\*, Modern Arab Culture\*, Palestine and Palestinians\*, Political Speeches: War & Peace, Qur’anic Arabic,* |
| **Hebrew (2)** | *Hebrew Through the Media, Innovation and Tech in Israel\** |
| **Persian (7)** | *Advanced Persian Grammar, Classics of Persian Poetry, Graffiti and Poster Art in the Muslim World\*, Iranian Cinema\*, Media and Migration in Iran\*, Media Persian, Veiling Culture\** |
| **Turkish (2)** | *Turkish Cinema, Turkish Society and Culture* |

* 1. ***Language faculty.*** We have maintained our faculty strength with 13 Arabic faculty (three associate professors, seven assistant professors, five assistant professors of instruction, one professor emeritus), seven Persian (one professor, one associate professor, three assistant professors, one assistant professor of instruction, one professor emeritus), four Hebrew (two professors, one associate professor, one assistant professor of instruction), and one Turkish (assistant professor of instruction). On average per semester, we have eight TAs and two AIs in our language classrooms. Our language instructors are regularly nominated by students for the Foreign Language Teaching Excellence Award offered by the Texas Language Center.

All language faculty have extensive training and experience in performance-based language pedagogy. Many have published popular textbook series used in the US and around the world. Faculty participation in language pedagogy training is supported by CMES and the CoLA Lecturer Travel Fund. In Fall 2018, UT hosted the CMEC Language Pedagogy Workshop, in which our language faculty led sessions and facilitated discussions. In 2021, our Persian and Turkish Language Coordinators presented at the CMEC Language Pedagogy Workshop in Arizona. We request funding to continue supporting this workshop at University of Arizona in Year 1, and to host this workshop in Year 3.

CMES faculty and guest speakers present on language pedagogy and technology in collaboration with the Texas Language Center (TLC). They also take advantage of opportunities for pedagogical training by attending year-round workshops at the Center for Open Educational Resources and Language Learning (COERLL), which, like TLC, is located on the UT campus. Graduate students also attend COERLL workshops; one created an open-source lesson on a modern Persian poem, and another is pursuing a certificate in language pedagogy alongside his PhD coursework. CMES language faculty mentors train new instructors in the intensive teaching model for which our language programs are known.

Our language faculty’s pedagogical training includes Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI), the tool we use to assess student proficiency. We train UT language faculty as well as language teachers from across Texas on ACTFL proficiency levels and OPI administration. We have helped fund OPI training and certification for our faculty, including an ACTFL workshop at UT in 2018. We will continue to ensure faculty familiarity with ACTFL proficiency levels.

Graduate students in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish take a foreign language pedagogy course, 398T, that involves classroom observation and supervised teaching. A faculty

language coordinator ensures pedagogical consistency and coordination among courses in each language. Coordinators supervise TAs through weekly meetings and class observations. In the next grant cycle, CMES will establish a new MA program in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) to train a new generation of highly qualified Arabic teachers.

***B.4a Performance-based instruction.*** All language faculty and instructors have extensive training and experience in performance-based language teaching. CMES faculty regularly develop cutting-edge language textbooks using these methods. Dr. Jeannette Okur’s new Turkish Open Educational Resource (OER) textbook and online curricular materials, *Her Şey Bir Merhaba ile Başlar,* published in 2021, are aligned with the ACTFL standards for Intermediate- and Advanced-level communicative skills and intercultural proficiency descriptors, and have received outstanding reviews from foreign language educators. Additionally, the *Al-Kitaab* textbook series, created by Dr. Kristen Brustad and Dr. Mahmoud Al-Batal, is firmly established in the field of teaching Arabic as a foreign language. Former MES faculty Dr. Blake Atwood and Anousha Shahsavari’s two-volume *Persian of Iran Today* has been adopted by over a dozen institutions since its publication by CMES Publications in 2013. In addition to her classic *Modern Hebrew for Beginners* and *Modern Hebrew for Intermediate Students,* Dr. Esther Raizen published *Hebrew from the Heart of Texas;* it includes 20 units of listening comprehension exercises intended to help students reach Intermediate-low or higher levels of Hebrew.

Besides textbooks, UT faculty in Arabic, Hebrew, and Turkish produce complementary online autocorrect teaching/learning materials and curricula, which give instant feedback to students and thus release class time for active student performance. The flipped classroom model enabled by use of autocorrect technology at home results in increased retention of aural language

content, more active use of the language in the classroom, and hence, faster language acquisition. These materials are used by increasing numbers of language programs nationwide and globally. We have developed additional innovative internet-based teaching materials to supplement classroom instruction, such as *Aswaat Arabiyya*, a public-access database of Arabic listening materials and a website containing modules and demo lessons for Arabic teachers, as well as the *Humpty Dumpty* portal for Hebrew listening practice. In all four languages, UT faculty produce materials and curricula used by increasing numbers of language programs.

***B.4b Adequacy of resources.*** UT’s extensive foreign-language library resources complement the widely used materials developed by our faculty, enhancing the language program with texts, films, journals, and other materials beyond the classroom. CMES maintains a multimedia resource library of Middle Eastern films and other materials for MES faculty and students.

MES language instructors have access to many resources to enhance their pedagogical skills, for example, workshops offered by TLC and COERLL. Most recently, DMES has supported TLC’s proposal for a new Graduate Portfolio Program in Language Teaching and Program Coordination (LTC). This 12-credit hour portfolio program, with its capstone teaching project, prepares students for the responsibilities of language instruction and positions them to become leaders in their field as future program directors, coordinators, and researchers.

1. ***4c Language proficiency requirements.*** Our language requirements include standardized proficiency benchmarks for each level, special requirements for graduate study, and the continual development of new interactive materials. We document students’ success in meeting proficiency benchmarks through internal and external evaluation, including exit-level OPIs. Our goal is for students to reach Level 1 proficiency at the end of the first year of study on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale and ILR-2 proficiency no later than the end of the

third year. We achieve this goal through the intensive language sequence (six contact hours per week); additional staff support in the classroom; and online instructional support. TAs facilitate guided student-to-student interaction and provide ample feedback in the classroom. Our curricula emphasize equal competence in all four modalities (speaking, listening, reading, writing). Our Arabic students learn both colloquial and formal Arabic via the integrated, communicative approach for which the *Al-Kitaab* series is known; we offer course sections in Egyptian, Iraqi, and Levantine Arabic. AFP students enroll in an online Moroccan Arabic course via the University of Arizona to prepare for overseas study. Our Persian curriculum operates similarly, with instructors teaching both the spoken and written forms of the language from day one. This integrative approach ensures our students gain a comprehensive understanding of modern Persian and can engage with the language in all its forms.

In the next grant cycle, CMES will continue to utilize external assessment of learner outcomes in its modern language programs to verify the quality of language instruction and strategically improve our programs. Our external assessment plan includes exit-level OPIs at the end of first-year language instruction. Further, all AFP students are tested annually in reading, listening, and speaking. Also in the next grant cycle, we will collaborate with the Persian Language Flagship program at the University of Maryland to help create an online platform for the Persian language skills tests (listening, reading, and writing) they developed to complement OPI testing. This will create a national resource for the assessment of Persian language skills (line 22).

1. **Quality of the Center’s Non-language Instructional Program.** CMES’s degree program promotes academic excellence and professional expertise. The breadth of our course options serves many students enrolled in courses at the university, while the depth of intensive courses at

the upper levels of undergraduate and graduate programs offers substantive expertise for those centering their studies in the region. As of Fall 2020, we consolidated our previous three BA programs (MES, Islamic Studies, and MELC). The new MES major combines language study with courses in the social sciences, history, and humanities. Students pursue a specific track (Arabic, Ancient Near East, Hebrew, History, Islamic Studies, Literatures and Cultures, Persian, or Turkish). MES majors also complete the research- and writing-intensive senior capstone course. These features of the new major prepare our undergraduates for graduate school and careers in government service, business, and nonprofit work.

* 1. ***Disciplinary breadth; professional schools.*** CMES offers a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to MES, bridging programs across UT. We expand the disciplinary breadth of MES by encouraging MA students to work on theses and reports with affiliate faculty and cross-listing courses with departments across CoLA and other colleges and professional schools. In 2018-22, 228 non-language MES courses were offered across UT. Of these, 175 undergraduate courses had an enrollment of 6,063 students; 53 graduate courses had an enrollment of 521 students. A total of 27 (non-language) graduate seminars originated in MES, with 268 students enrolled. Appendix 2 details courses with at least 30 percent MES content.

CMES has 62 faculty housed across 15 departments and five colleges/professional schools (CoLA; Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs [LBJ]; College of Fine Arts; Moody School of Communication; and College of Education), ensuring breadth in the MES curriculum. Their courses originate in diverse fields, including art history, ethnomusicology, literature, media studies, Asian studies, history, sociology, government, and religious studies (Appendix 2). Undergraduate courses include first-year Signature Courses; general surveys of the history, politics, and cultures of the region; upper-division courses focused on a particular

topic; and innovative experiential courses. For example, a CMES faculty affiliate in the LBJ School teaches “Coexistence, Shared Society, and Peace in Israel/Palestine,” which takes students to the region to meet key figures in the non-profit sector. Graduate courses address the Middle East theoretically or thematically. Graduate students can acquire a Dual MA Degree in MES and one of the following: Global Policy Studies; Public Affairs; Law; Business Administration; Information Sciences; Journalism; Radio-Television-Film. As of Fall 2019, non- MES graduate students can acquire transcripted MES expertise through an MES Graduate Portfolio.

* 1. ***Depth of coverage.*** Students earning MES degrees build expertise through intensive upper- level undergraduate courses and graduate seminars that allow them to gain in-depth knowledge in specific areas. In the MES Capstone course, majors develop research and writing skills over the course of a semester culminating in a research paper they present in a public colloquium, the crowning achievement of MES undergraduates in the senior year. The MES Departmental Honors Program offers students the opportunity to gain more profound knowledge of the region by writing an honors thesis under the supervision of a faculty advisor. Graduate students, too, attain depth through specialized course coverage in one or more disciplines and in one or more Middle Eastern languages. Highly focused graduate seminars provide students with depth and expertise as the foundation of their professional and academic development. MES MA students produce a thesis or report, working closely with a faculty committee during one to two semesters, while PhD students produce a doctoral dissertation that speaks to the expertise they have gained in a particular MES-related field. Appendix 2 lists relevant courses.
	2. ***Teaching faculty.*** Of the Center’s 62 affiliated faculty, 37 are non-language faculty. This number allows the Center to provide a well-rounded, multidisciplinary program of study and

offers students a wide range of choices for graduate supervision. Graduate students acquire pedagogical experience as TAs and AIs in courses across the university. UT’s Graduate School, CoLA, and MES regularly offer pedagogy training workshops for graduate student instructors. DMES also offers 398T, Supervised Teaching in Middle Eastern Studies, required for AIs and open to all graduate instructors. MES grants TAships for a variety of courses, including lower- division, upper-division, large and small enrollment, writing intensive, and LAC.

* 1. ***Interdisciplinary courses.*** On the graduate level, MES students are required to attend a weekly Proseminar in MES, which introduces students to MES faculty working in a wide range of disciplines. For MA students pursuing a Dual Degree, the course requirements are inherently interdisciplinary, as they originate in two different colleges. Further, many of the graduate courses offered by MES faculty are, by design, interdisciplinary, encompassing fields such as history, geography, sociology, media, government, literature, art and art history, ethnomusicology, anthropology, religion, and more. MES majors take two required courses: a lower-division “Gateway to the Middle East” course that brings different MES faculty affiliates to the classroom weekly to discuss their areas of expertise and introduce students to the region through various disciplines; and the senior capstone course, “Engaging the Middle East,” where they write a substantive research paper and present it at a public capstone colloquium. This course exposes students to diverse research methodologies and approaches to the Middle East.

MES courses provide an interdisciplinary dimension to a variety of required courses beyond the MES major. The School of Undergraduate Studies Signature Courses, a core requirement for all undergraduates, provide the opportunity to engage with cross-disciplinary themes as students encounter new subject areas. In the past four years, MES faculty have taught 11 Signature Courses with a total enrollment of 647 students. MES courses can be applied

toward the major in International Relations and Global Studies (IRG), to the certificates in the Bridging Disciplines Program (BDP), to the Medieval Studies Minor (MDV), to the Entrepreneurship Minor in the Business School, and to the Cultural Expression, Human Experience & Thought (CEHET) requirement for CoLA students. Several MES courses count towards the new Race, Indigeneity, and Migration (RIM) major. IRG and RIM coursework covers broad geographical regions encompassing multiple nations or territories. BDP certificates (for instance, in Conflict Resolution and Human Rights and Social Justice) combine interdisciplinary coursework with hands-on research, internship, or creative experiences. The MDV minor involves courses in history and literature. CEHET courses emphasize diversity in thought and expression. For MES courses with interdisciplinary content, see Appendix 2.

# Quality of Curriculum Design

* 1. ***Undergraduate programs.*** In Fall 2020, we consolidated our three undergraduate majors (MES, MELC, and Islamic Studies). Within the new MES major, students choose a track: Ancient Near East, Arabic, Hebrew, History, Islamic Studies, Literatures and Cultures, Persian, or Turkish. MES major requirements are: nine hours each of lower-division courses, upper- division electives, upper-division track coursework; and 18 hours of a Middle Eastern language.

CMES plays an active role in the instruction of undergraduates across campus, reaching beyond the MES major through our language and core curriculum offerings. In 2021-22, nearly 400 undergraduates are enrolled in our language courses and 164 are pursuing a Transcript Recognized Minor (TRM) in the areas listed in Table D.1. These students have primary or secondary majors in Government, History, Women’s and Gender Studies, Advertising, Public Relations, English, Psychology, Communication Studies, Plan II Honors, Sociology, Philosophy,

Radio-Television-Film, Economics, International Relations and Global Studies, Health and Society, Journalism, Sustainability Studies, Finance/Business honors, Chemistry, and Biology.

|  |
| --- |
| **Table D.1: TRM requirements and enrollment** |
| **Minor** | **Requirements** |
| Arabic | 18 hours in Arabic, at least 6 upper-division |
| Hebrew/Turkish | 15 hours of Hebrew/Turkish, at least 3 upper-division |
| Persian | 15 hours of Persian, at least 6 upper-division |
| MES/ISL | 15 hours of MES/ISL, at least 9 upper-division |

The School of Undergraduate Studies (UGS), which establishes the core curriculum at UT, requires undergraduates to take a first-year Signature Course. MES offers four to five Signature Courses yearly on topics such as Stories from the Muslim West, Jerusalem, and Al- Jazeera News. UGS also requires undergraduates to complete courses satisfying six core curriculum “flags.” The Global Cultures (GC) flag, carried by most MES courses, designates courses that familiarize students with cultural groups outside the US. In 2021-22, 1,766 students completed an MES course with a GC, Writing, and/or Ethics and Leadership flag. Through TRMs, flags, and Signature Courses, MES impacts the University’s core educational mission.

* 1. ***Graduate programs.*** Graduate degree offerings cover a broad base of Middle East-related fields. The MELC degree in DMES currently trains 21 PhD students in various specializations, including Ancient Near East/Hebrew Bible, History, Islamic Studies, Linguistics, and Literatures and Cultures. CMES administers an interdisciplinary MA degree in MES that cultivates an understanding of the region and advanced proficiency in a Middle Eastern language. Since 2018, C/DMES have awarded 41 MAs and PhDs to students specializing in history, religion, sociology, linguistics, language pedagogy, anthropology, literature and cultures, and comparative literature. MES faculty also regularly supervise dissertations and MA theses in other units.

The 2-year MES MA consists of either 30 hours with thesis or 33 hours with report. The required thesis/report ensures that graduates gain experience in original research in a primary Middle Eastern language and in scholarly writing (see degree requirements in Table D.2).

Notably, CMES’s MA curriculum encourages both dual-degree and dual-language acquisition. The Dual Degree Program allows students to earn an MA in MES and a second degree from one of UT’s professional schools: Global Policy Studies, Public Affairs, Information Studies, Law, Business Administration, Journalism, or Radio-Television-Film. Of CMES’s current 15 MA students, three are enrolled in the Dual Degree Program. MA students are also incentivized to participate in the Dual Language Track to develop advanced proficiency in two Middle Eastern languages. In 2021-22, four of 15 students are pursuing the Dual Language Track. We aim to increase this number with perks like tuition waivers for the Arabic Summer Institute and other opportunities. MES students can also apply to the Israel Studies Dual Language (Hebrew and Arabic) Fellowship. Our goal is to continue to increase enrollment in this program and to be the leader in producing students proficient in two Middle Eastern languages.

CMES plans to establish an MA program in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) (Appendix 7). This would be only the second Arabic-specific MA pedagogy program in the US. Building on UT’s high-caliber Arabic language program and its faculty’s substantive education experience and credentials, the TAFL MA will provide practical training in cutting- edge language pedagogy methods, including digital and virtual approaches, to produce language instructors who will shape the teaching of Arabic at the K-12 and college levels.

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| **Table D.2: CMES MA requirements, 2018-22** |
| Thesis | 12 hours of MES grad courses, 6 hours of upper-division language courses (in 2 languages for Dual Language students), 6 hours in concentration courses, 6 hours in Thesis |
| Report | 15 hours of MES grad courses, 6 hours of upper-division language courses (in 2 languages for Dual Language students), 9 hours in concentration courses, 3 hours in Master’s Report |

The PhD program in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (MELC) has five tracks: Literatures and Cultures, Ancient Near East/Hebrew Bible, Islamic Studies, History, and Linguistics. All tracks require 30 hours of MELC courses, nine hours of language seminars, three or more hours of comprehensive exams, reading knowledge of French or German, mastery in a Middle Eastern language, and at least six hours of dissertation courses.

We encourage our PhD and MA students to acquire portfolios in other programs both to broaden their disciplinary knowledge and scholarly expertise and to strengthen their job placement prospects. Portfolios pursued by our PhD students include Language Teaching and Program Coordination, Religious Studies, Women and Gender Studies, and Digital Humanities. Since Fall 2019, non-MES students can pursue an MES Graduate Portfolio to earn transcripted credentials in MES by taking four approved MES courses and participating in CMES events.

We continually evaluate and improve our programs via the annual UT-mandated assessment process and through internal initiatives led by program advisors, department chair, and center director. In the last grant cycle, we implemented curricular improvements in each program, including: benchmarks for language proficiency by the end of the first year (BA and MA); expectations for research in the target language for theses and reports (MA); and yearly expectations for academic writing (PhD).

* 1. ***Academic and career advising.*** The C/DMES Graduate Advisors and the MES Graduate Coordinator share advising responsibilities for MES graduate students. The Graduate Advisors, tenured MES faculty, advise students on academic progress and professionalization. The Graduate Coordinator, an experienced staff member, manages administrative responsibilities, implements university policy, and ensures timely completion of degree requirements. MES offers annual professionalization workshops on job interviews; academic job talks; applications

to and presentation in conferences; dissertation writing; and academic publishing. The MES Graduate Student Association offers a peer support network for MES students.

The Undergraduate Coordinator is a staff member who provides academic and career advice for MES students, supported by extensive networks in CoLA and professional advisors’ associations. Undergraduates in special programs (AFP, Liberal Arts Honors, and Departmental Honors) receive support and advice from faculty and staff of these programs. The Graduate and Undergraduate Coordinators disseminate academic and career information in individual advising sessions and by emailing announcements of jobs, internships, conferences, overseas programs, and funding opportunities. Individualized academic advising is conducted at least once per semester for every undergraduate and MA student, and each graduate student in our MA and PhD programs receives written feedback on overall academic progress. Additionally, multiple units on campus serve students to ensure academic and professional success.

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| **Table D.3: Additional UT Resources** |
| Vick Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling | Sanger Learning Center |
| Liberal Arts Career Services (undergraduate students) | University Writing Center |
| Texas Career Engagement (graduate students) | Liberal Arts Dissertation Bootcamp |
| Clements Center for National Security fellowships | Liberal Arts Grants Digest |
| Intellectual Entrepreneurship Pre-Grad Internship Program | Global Professional Training (Texas Global) |
| Graduate School Professional Development Travel Grants | Harry Ransom Center Fellowships and Internships |

* 1. ***Education abroad.*** UT offers students varied experiences in the Middle East region. Texas Global lists 22 education abroad programs in the Middle East/North Africa, in Turkey, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates. Students can also participate in 13 approved programs outside the region that offer coursework in MELC. In 2018-22, 221 students completed programs in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates. AFP administers yearlong study in

Morocco with a focus on attaining Superior language proficiency. In 2021, an MES faculty affiliate was awarded a Global Career Launch grant to develop an internship program in Jerusalem for students interested in community development.

UT supports student engagement in international activities through scholarship programs funded from endowments, institutional funds, grants, and donor contributions. Over $1.2M in scholarships are awarded to students annually, administered by Texas Global and individual colleges and schools. Undergraduate education abroad can be supported with funds from AFP, Liberal Arts Honors, the Liberal Arts Council, other university scholarship programs, federal student aid (to select programs), and FLAS. AFP offers scholarships to an average of four students annually for the yearlong Capstone program in Morocco. From 2018-22, 13 UT students won a Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) for language study, seven received the Boren Scholarship for Arabic study, and one received the Gilman Scholarship. Since 2018, 16 Summer FLAS awards have been granted to MES students for international study. Texas Global maintains Global A$$ist, a database of scholarships and awards for education abroad. The Education Abroad Office (EAO) in Texas Global holds regular information sessions on the MENA region. Further, our language coordinators share summer language study and funding opportunities with students, such as the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) and various flagship programs. Graduate students receive financial support for education abroad from the Graduate School, CoLA, MES, FLAS, and the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies.

# Quality of Staff Resources

***E.1a Faculty qualifications.*** Our faculty and staff offer strong expertise in Center activities. The CMES Director, Karen Grumberg, is a Professor specializing in Hebrew Literature and affiliated with the Program in Comparative Literature. She completed her PhD at UCLA and published her

first book with Syracuse University Press (2011) and her second with Indiana University Press (2019). The DMES Chair, Na’ama Pat-El, is a Professor specializing in Semitic and historical linguistics and affiliated with the Department of Linguistics. She completed her PhD at Harvard and published a monograph with Gorgias Press (2012). The profiles in Appendix 4 summarize individual CMES faculty qualifications. CMES has 62 faculty affiliates in 15 departments and five colleges/professional schools who focus on the Middle East region: 17 full professors, 21 associate professors, six assistant professors, five professors emeriti, eight assistant professors of instruction, two associate professors of instruction, and two senior lecturers. Many are internationally recognized and have been awarded major research grants and awards by agencies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities. Our faculty have won competitive teaching awards and prestigious book prizes such as the James Henry Breasted Prize, Hamilton Book Award, and the Syrian Studies Association Book Prize. Our Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish faculty have produced language textbooks and online resources used all over the world. ***E.1b Professional Development.*** Professional development opportunities for faculty include domestic and international travel for conference presentation and research. We can typically expect UT to provide $28,800 a year in support for MES faculty conference travel. Three UT programs provide paid teaching release on a competitive basis: Faculty Research Assignment (FRA), Summer Research Assignment (SRA), and College Research Fellowship (CRF). UT tenured and tenure-track faculty have access to the Faculty Travel Grant, which provides

$1,400/year for conference travel. Lecturers who present on language pedagogy at a conference qualify for travel funds through CoLA. CMES requests supplementary funds to support travel for language faculty presenting work on language pedagogy (line 11). CMES faculty will continue participating in NYU’s virtual Language and Culture Educators workshops, and we request

funding to help support this series (line 24). We also offer grants for graduate students and faculty to study relevant languages not offered at UT, such as Kurdish (lines 6, 9, 29). The Faculty Innovation Center (FIC) provides training opportunities to help faculty become more effective instructors. CMES staff take advantage of UT’s staff tuition assistance program (STAP); the Administrative Manager is pursuing an MA in Educational Policy and Planning and the Outreach Director has taken MA coursework in MES. Several staff members have experience teaching Middle Eastern languages and others have completed courses in software and graphic design. We request funding to support travel awards for staff professionalization (lines 8, 12).

***E.1c. Faculty participation in teaching, supervision, and advising of students*.** CMES’s 49 tenured and tenure-track faculty teach six credit hours per semester, while our 12 non-tenure track faculty teach nine to 12 credit hours per semester. On average, three AIs and 18 TAs are assigned to one course each semester. Teaching staff also oversee language tables, which emphasize dialects, conversation skills, and cultural competency. From 2018-22, 39 MES faculty supervised 25 MA theses and 16 PhD dissertations; 12 faculty have supervised 12 undergraduate honors theses. The Undergraduate Coordinator advises undergraduate students on major and minor degree requirements. The MES faculty Honors Advisor helps students seeking departmental honors identify appropriate faculty supervisors. The C/DMES faculty Graduate Advisors and the Graduate Coordinator oversee PhD and MA student advising. Faculty advisors, in consultation with faculty supervisors, guide students on course selection and academic training, while the Coordinator advises students on program requirements, deadlines, and policies. CMES faculty oversee the Proseminar in MES required of first-year MA students.

Faculty also offer semesterly writing and professionalization workshops to MES MA students.

***E.2a. Staffing for administration and outreach.*** CMES is supported by the Director, Outreach Director, Events Coordinator, Administrative Manager, Assistant Manager, Faculty Graduate Advisor, Graduate Coordinator/FLAS Coordinator, Undergraduate Coordinator, and Publications Editor (lines 1-4). In a shared expense with COERLL, a UT LRC, and CoLA, CMES is supported by a full-time technology expert. To ensure the success of this new hire (housed in COERLL but shared with all five UT Title VI centers), CoLA has pledged $75,000 annually over the grant cycle, for a total of $300,000 in collaborative UT/NRC/LRC cost-sharing.

***E.2b. Staffing involving faculty from different departments, schools, and the library.*** The CMES Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), chaired by the CMES Graduate Advisor, includes 35 faculty; the DMES GSC, chaired by the DMES Graduate Advisor, includes 42 faculty. GSC members hail from a wide spectrum of departments (such as Government, Religious Studies, and Sociology) and professional schools (such as Business, Global Policy, and Law). Faculty who request to join either GSC must have a PhD, teach graduate seminars related to the Middle East, and be qualified to supervise MES-related theses and dissertations. Membership is subject to approval by the current GSC members. The GSC is responsible for the yearly evaluation of each MES graduate student; for the fair distribution of funding; and for degree assessment. The main governing structure of DMES, which houses CMES, is the Executive Committee (EC), comprised of 11 elected DMES-affiliated faculty from various departments: eight tenured, at least one tenure-track, and at least two non-tenure-track (non-voting). The EC works with the DMES Chair on strategic planning, oversees faculty annual reviews and merit reviews, and votes on new faculty hires. The CMES Director, through meetings and regular online communication, keeps faculty affiliates apprised of activities and strategic initiatives. Two area librarians specializing in Hebraica/Judaica and MES enhance the research and teaching of CMES faculty.

***E.3 Nondiscriminatory hiring and equal access.*** The Center is committed to providing equal access and treatment to eligible students and other participants who are members of traditionally underrepresented groups. UT prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, and sexual orientation. CoLA scrutinizes the hiring process of faculty and classified staff members to ensure that members of underrepresented groups are given serious consideration, requiring all faculty who serve on search committees to undergo training on diversity and inclusion; the college also requires substantive documentation of relevant efforts made during recruitment, interviewing, and hiring. UT and CMES have sought and encouraged faculty, staff, and student applications from members of underrepresented groups and have drawn upon designated funding resources for qualified students from these groups. UT’s Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office ensures students with disabilities have equal access to their academic experiences by determining eligibility and approving reasonable accommodations. SSD also provides training for faculty and staff to create accessible classrooms and academic programming.

# F. Strength of the Library

***F.1a. Strength of Library Holdings & Services.*** UT has built one of the largest library collections in the US, one that grows significantly each year and proactively responds to and supports evolving research and teaching practices. UT Campus Libraries (including the University of Texas Libraries [UTL], the Tarlton Law Library, the Briscoe Center for American History, and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center) hold over 11.8 million volumes, ranking 14th in North America in size. The library is a leader in online access, with over 1.6 million e-books, 967,192 e-journals and 970 e-databases in its collection. It continues to be a national trailblazer in “evidence based” and “demand driven access” to electronic content with

thousands of titles readily available to users. Recent notable additions to the electronic collections at UTL include resources such as Oxford’s Online Bibliographies and Handbooks corpus and streaming film packages such as Docuseek’s Complete and Environmental Justice Collections, Alexander Street’s LGBT Studies in Video, and the PBS Video Collection. Besides electronic content licensed or purchased outright, UTL also creates and curates freely available online content for researchers worldwide, for example the Perry-Castañeda Library (PCL) Maps Collection and the post-custodial Latin American Digital Initiatives (LADI). Reflecting needs in traditional area studies as well as thematic and cross-regional global studies disciplines, the UTL collection is particularly strong in international content, distinguishing it in the region (especially in Texas): over 32% of its collection is in languages other than English; 45% was published outside the US (Appendix 6, Table 6.1).

UTL leads in the national information literacy sphere, providing active reference and instruction platforms (including newly renovated collaborative learning spaces) and abundant public facing informational tools (over 500 active LibGuides). UTL also promotes and supports emerging methodological approaches, including vibrant digital scholarship workshop series (Data & Donuts, Digital Humanities Workshops, Digital Scholars in Practice) and support for “collections as data” interpretive techniques.

Combined funding from UTL and CMES has enabled the building of an MES collection that is among the top ten in the country and unparalleled in Texas and the southwest region. The collection includes a comprehensive set of Western-language reference works, general texts, monographs, and essential journals (print and electronic) that support teaching at all levels, alongside a large body of specialized books, periodicals, manuscripts, archival documents, and electronic resources serving the needs of advanced researchers. Over 110,000 items are in

Arabic, over 34,000 in Persian, and over 14,000 in Turkish, among other languages such as Ottoman Turkish, Armenian, and Kurdish. Among the collection’s strengths are robust holdings of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Arabic periodicals; works of Islamic law; Arabic, Persian, and Azeri literature; a unique set of microfilms of Arabic manuscripts of the Zaydis of Yemen; Middle East banking ephemera; and Iranian cinema and film studies.

With the support of the Global Studies Digital Projects (GSDP) Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) since 2020, the MES Librarian has overseen the digitization and addition of the early twentieth-century Egyptian intellectual magazine *Jaridat al-Balagh al-Usbu’i* to the UTL collection portal, as well as a first round of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to make the text fully searchable. The GRA contributed to the digitization proposal and to the mapping of the magazine images in the software DocWorks, which facilitates the application of OCR.

Established in the late 1930s, UT’s Hebraica, Judaica, and Israeliana collections comprise over 90,000 holdings in a wide variety of disciplines. Over 36,000 items are in Hebrew, 11,000 in Yiddish, and the rest in English and other languages. In recent years, collection development in this subject area has focused on Israeli and Palestinian culture, history, and politics, the Israeli- Arab conflict, and human rights in Israel and the Palestinian territories. Among our unique Israeli resources are cinema periodicals in print, the literary journal *Iton 77* and the fanzine *Queer Eye* digital materials, a collection of Arabic publications by the Palestinian Forum of Israel Studies based in Ramallah, and a collection of publications by the Zochrot NGO, Tel Aviv.

***F.1b. Institutional Support for the Library: Budgets and Staff.*** In 201-20, UT Campus Libraries reported $21,880,424 on materials expenditures of which $7.3 million was cooperative purchasing in partnership with the entire UT System. UTL international, area, and/or global studies acquisitions budgets for 2021-22 are just over $2M ($2,012,801). MES library

acquisitions are supported by one-time, ongoing, grant, and endowment funds. In 2021-22, the Libraries allocated over $257,990 to collection-building about the Middle East (Appendix 6, Tables 6.2, 6.3). MES at UTL is supported by 3.51 FTE for a total of $133,995 in salaries (Appendix 6, Table 6.4).

***F.2a. Partnerships: Cooperative Agreement.*** UT Campus Libraries partner to acquire, create and preserve materials, for example hosting the Texas Digital Library and leading initiatives for the entire UT System. We are a founding member of the Texas Library Coalition for United Action, an alliance of 43 libraries from across Texas organized to change current models and relationships between academic institutions and publishers. Ongoing memberships to the Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA) and the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) further bolster the national collective collection. UT Campus Libraries have several cooperative arrangements for accessing materials held at other libraries, including the TexShare Library Card Program (a reciprocal agreement that provides free borrowing privileges for students, faculty, and staff at participating Texas institutions of higher education and public libraries), the UTL Reciprocal Borrowing Program (for all UT system institutions), the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Advisory Committee Reciprocal Faculty Program, and the Research Library Cooperative Program (a resource-sharing program among UT, UC Berkeley, and Stanford). Other cooperative arrangements include UTL’s participation in the Middle East Materials Project (MEMP) of the CRL, phase 1 of the Global Press Archive project of the CRL and Eastview Information Services, and the emerging Middle East Cooperative Development Initiative (MECDI).

***F.2b. Resource Access and Sharing: Interlibrary Loan and Open Access.*** UTL is committed to developing new models of resource sharing that are freely accessible. Beyond creating our own digital collections, we seek opportunities to participate in and lead change as evidenced in our

founding memberships in initiatives such as the Luminos Open Access monograph publishing program and the Global Press Archive. Locally, we have developed robust institutional repositories for text, data, and geospatial data (Texas ScholarWorks, Texas Data Repository, and Texas Geodata Portal). Responding to the crisis in textbook costs for students, UTL promotes and helps develop Open Educational Resources (OER) for global free use and re-use. In addition to seamless electronic and cooperative access, the interlibrary loan (ILL) service at UTL, with one librarian, nine staff and 15 additional student workers, has a budget of $120,000 for lending and borrowing, and an additional on-demand purchasing budget of $40,000. In 2019-20, UTL was the ninth highest independent OCLC lender in the country, filling over 21,717 loan requests from our collections. Over 86% of our lending activity is not to other large research institutions but to smaller, less-resourced academic institutions (such as regional universities and colleges, junior/community/technical colleges), theological, law and medical schools, and public libraries.

# G. Impact and Evaluation

***G.1a Enrollments and graduate placement data.*** From Fall 2018 to Spring 2022, total MES enrollments were 521 for graduate courses and 6,063 for undergraduate courses. Advanced language courses had an enrollment of 816 undergraduates and 190 graduate students; advanced area studies courses had an enrollment of 2,973 undergraduates (Appendix 2).

After graduating with their MA, CMES students work in public service (for example, as an extremist analyst for the federal government), in the private sector (including for Facebook and IBM), for non-profit NGOs (such as Civilians in Conflict and the Stimson Center), and in higher education (for instance, Program Coordinator of the Persian Flagship Program at the University of Maryland). We obtained information for 21 of the 25 CMES graduates from 2018-

22: five work in the public sector, six in the private sector, four in nonprofit organizations, four in education, and two are pursuing PhDs (University of Virginia and UT).

Our PhD graduates since 2018 have found employment in tenure-track positions (Virginia Tech; Mercer University; UNC-Wilmington; University of Colorado Boulder Law School); teaching positions (Virginia Military Institute; UT); and postdoc fellowships (Tufts University; Escuela de Estudios Árabes, Spain). Three graduates work in the private sector; another is the Marketing Manager at the University of Washington Press; another is Associate Director of the Clements Center for National Security. Our undergraduate and graduate alumni find that MES at UT has been instrumental in preparing them for diverse professions after graduation, as reflected by the sample of testimonials included in Appendix 8.

***G.1b Events participation rates.*** Since Fall 2018, CMES sponsored or co-sponsored 195 events, with each event including at least one partner. We partner with units across campus as well as community organizations (such as Austin Film Society), federally funded entities (such as the Arabic Flagship Program), and non-governmental academic entities (such as the Robert Strauss Center for International Security and Law). Some events attract a broad community audience (for example, panels focused on current events); others are geared toward a university audience (such as colloquia, lecture series, and reading groups). Events like the Bereket Middle Eastern Ensemble biannual performance and the Children of Abraham/Ibrahim Film Series bridge the Austin community and the University, together attracting, on average, over 600 people.

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| **Table G.1b: CMES Events** |
| **Academic Year** | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
| **Events (all in collaboration with other units)** | 75 | 60 | 60 |
| **Attendees** | 2,189 | 1,953 | 1,449 |

1. ***1c. Usage of Center resources.*** The Refugee Student Mentor Program (RSMP) profoundly impacts refugee children, volunteers working with them, and their schools, facilitating understanding among students, teachers, and administrators and easing the transitional experience of refugee absorption for families and schools. From 2018-21, 38 Austin area schools have benefitted from the RSMP. Since 2018, 127 UT students have volunteered, covering 25 languages; 51 potential volunteers attended training sessions. A Fall 2021 fundraiser raised

$8,215 for volunteer transportation costs. The program and fundraising efforts were featured on CBS Austin, KXAN (Austin’s NBC affiliate), and in *The Daily Texan* and *Community Impact* newspapers. RSMP was also featured in the National Humanities Alliance’s Humanities for All initiative, and in their report on Goals for Publicly Engaged Humanities. We continue to build our resource library of books and activities RSMP mentors can use in schools.

CMES hosts language practice/conversation opportunities aimed at students but open to the public, impacting the university and the community. The language tables encompass various dialects and cover three to four languages per semester, with an average attendance of 10. We offer at least two different Arabic dialect tables weekly (10-15 students per session). In Spring 2021, students viewed a TV series in their chosen dialect throughout the semester; discussions in the relevant dialect followed. Weekly Turkish Tea and Conversation Tables for intermediate, advanced, and native/heritage speakers of Turkish in the UT community drew around 10 participants; in 2020-21, online meetings regularly had guest participants from Norway (UiO) and Turkey. An average of 12-15 students in the Persian Film Club watch Persian-language documentaries monthly, occasionally hosting Iranian filmmakers; our monthly Persian Table is occasionally joined by members of Austin’s Iranian community. In 2020-21, we offered Persian language partners; nine students met with partners 8-10 times per semester. We also offer Café

Ivrit, a biweekly Hebrew conversation club, which draws 6-10 students. To help expand opportunities for putting language in practice, we request funds for Arabic and Persian conversation partners and for a new Arabic reading club (lines 39, 40).

Methods and materials developed by CMES faculty leave their mark locally, nationally, and internationally. Besides UT, eight institutions from across the US use *Her Şey Bir Merhaba ile Başlar* (the multimedia textbook and the supplementary YouTube and H5P materials) to teach intermediate Turkish, including Stanford, the University of Pennsylvania, UCLA, University of Pittsburgh, Duke, Vanderbilt, UNC Chapel Hill, and the University of Virginia. UT faculty have also developed Arabic, Hebrew, and Persian textbooks used at institutions all over the world.

In 2020-21, CMES and Hemispheres reached 376 participants nationwide at virtual conferences. They hosted 47 K-16 learning opportunities with 1,334 participants. Further, by hosting cultural activities for K-12 students at Explore UT, they reach an average of 600 participants per year when in person and 100 virtually.

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| **Table G.1c: Outreach Activities** |
| **Academic Year** | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
| **Attendees** | 8,801 | 12.045 | 10,274 |
| **Activities** | 145 | 223 | 271 |
| **Collaborations** | 86 | 83 | 94 |

Since 2018, our publications program, which specializes in translations of Middle Eastern literature, has sold 2,846 books (nine titles), which have received accolades and awards including the PEN Translation Prize, the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and the Booker International Prize. Recently, the program launched a new online journal, *Y’Alla: A Texan Journal of Middle Eastern Literature*, to showcase writing by emerging and established writers.

***G.2 Placements in areas of national need; relevant trainings.*** Placement data demonstrates that our graduates are filling areas of national need in the public and private sectors. CMES’s language pedagogy across all four modern languages stresses communication skills. We host regular, widely advertised language tables or equivalent activities, where students hone conversation skills in Arabic (multiple dialects), Persian, Turkish, and Hebrew. In the classroom, our Arabic program, recognized globally as the leader in the teaching of Arabic dialects, regularly offers Moroccan, Iraqi, and North Levantine Arabic.

To increase the number of students who go into jobs in areas of national need, we sponsor and co-sponsor opportunities for interaction with figures central to areas such as intelligence and diplomacy through lectures, professional development workshops, and discussion sessions on relevant topics. A Texas Global program, Diplomacy Lab, allows students to explore real-world challenges identified by the Department of State. A Diplomacy Lab team is comprised of State officials, university faculty members and student participants (undergraduate and graduate). Students earn credit while contributing directly to the policymaking process and helping the Department of State achieve its goals. CMES began a collaboration with the Army National Guard’s Language Maintenance Program by connecting advanced MES students with army personnel for language tutoring; though the pandemic halted progress on this partnership, we hope to revisit it. The MES Dual Language Program makes students more competitive on the job market, equipping them with broad and intensive language training and positioning them favorably in areas of national need. The MES Dual Degree programs with Law, Public Affairs, Global Policy Studies, Business, Journalism, Information Studies, and Radio-Television-Film allow students to integrate critical knowledge pertaining to the Middle East in a variety of professional contexts. MES graduate students gain experience in planning, networking, and

coordination by organizing their own large-scale events, such as the annual New Generations Conference. Finally, we encourage students to apply for fellowships and scholarships that contribute to areas of national need through their goals and requirements, such as the Critical Language Scholarship, Boren, Fulbright, and FLAS fellowships. Many CMES students have received such fellowships, increasing the pool of qualified contributors to areas of national need. Between 2018-22, MES students have used these fellowships to study abroad in Tajikistan, Morocco, Jordan, Turkey, and Israel. MES students also have a successful record of securing internships in areas of national need, including in the US Department of State, the Center for Civilians in Conflict, and the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project.

From 2018-22, CMES awarded 67 FLAS Fellowships to students who went on to work in areas of national need. One student interned for the US Embassy in Algeria; another is a researcher at Womxn for Weapons Trade Transparency; another is a Senior Fellow at the Strauss Center for International Security and Law. Students from units other than MES have also benefited from CMES FLAS awards. For example, one student awarded a FLAS to study Persian went on to work for the Department of State as an Iran Political Research project intern.

***G.3a. Addressing national needs.*** CMES addresses national needs primarily through teaching, outreach, and events. Our rigorous language training programs produce students with high proficiency levels in Middle Eastern languages. We also encourage the study of more than one Middle Eastern language through our Dual Language Program by prioritizing students committed to a second language for travel funding and other opportunities; for example, the ASI provides two to three tuition waivers annually to CMES Dual Language students. Consequently, over the last four years, 10 of CMES’s 25 students have studied two or more Middle Eastern languages. Our Arabic Flagship Program positions UT and CMES as a main artery of Arabic

language study in the US; CMES supports AFP students through FLAS, and collaborates with AFP to bring speakers to campus. AFP regularly hires CMES graduate students to work as tutors and language partners. CMES is a partner in one of the only online Kurdish courses in the US. Language textbooks produced by Center faculty are widely used, meaning that students across the US are trained by materials developed by our faculty. Further, some of our language programs offer special advanced sections in professional language training (for instance, our advanced Hebrew course, “Innovation and Technology in Israel,” is part of the Entrepreneurship minor in the McCombs School of Business). We encourage MES majors to pursue a second major or certificate program; many acquire a double major in International Relations and Global Studies (IRG), enhancing their qualifications to work in areas of national need. Numerous certificate programs allow non-MES undergraduates to learn about the Middle East, while our MES Graduate Portfolio allows graduate students in other fields to acquire knowledge of the region. Finally, our students benefit from our highly regarded faculty, many of whom are regularly consulted by the media for expertise on current events regarding the Middle East, Islam, and US/Middle East relations (for example, Jeremi Suri, Denise Spellberg, Stephennie Mulder, and Hina Azam). CMES faculty have showcased their expertise on the region in national and international media publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *The Boston Globe*, *Foreign Policy*, *The Washington Post*, *The Telegraph*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Time* magazine. Since 2018, a faculty member in MES/Art History has run an international Wikipedia edit-a-thon under the hashtag #StudentsOfIslamicArt, an international semester-long collaboration whereby students assess weaknesses in an existing Wikipedia article on Islamic art, do research, draft an improved article, and collectively upload the edited articles. Since 2018, UT students have improved 120 articles. Last year, they received 145,000 page

views, reflecting the project’s impact in disseminating information to the public. A faculty specialist in Middle Eastern media was hired recently as part of a cluster on “Global Media Flows and (Dis)information” consisting of faculty in CoLA, the School of Information, and the Moody College of Communication. The initiative created the Global (Dis)Information Lab (GDIL) in 2020 to encourage collaborative interdisciplinary academic research on the digital global circulation of information, misinformation, and disinformation. The GDIL promotes a deeper understanding of national and regional contexts in which such information is generated as well as the ways in which it is harvested, circulated, and weaponized, seeking to impact the public realm by generating policy recommendations and possible solutions to disinformation.

***G.3b. Disseminating information.*** CMES faculty publications disseminate information to scholars and to a broader public on the history, politics, and cultures of the Middle East. Our new Digital Humanities (DH) initiative will train students and faculty to use digital and social media platforms to disseminate information and knowledge about the region to the public. In collaboration with partners at UT and beyond, this initiative encompasses both experiential learning and practical hands-on training. As such, it will help produce and disseminate to the public a widely accessible, diverse spectrum of information on the Middle East.

The CMES Outreach program generates materials fundamental to national needs, providing teacher training and curricular development related to Middle Eastern language, culture, and society, and ensuring the representation of the Middle East in K-12 curricula.

The CMES Events program disseminates information and impacts a broad public audience through lecture series, panel discussions, and workshops by experts on topics such as national security, intelligence, and the cultures, histories, and languages of the Middle East.

***G.4 Evaluation plan and improvement of Center.*** An on-site external review of MES took place in Spring 2019, by a committee of two reviewers: Dr. Nasrin Rahimieh, University of California, Irvine and Dr. Michael Bonner, University of Michigan. This committee assessed the MA and PhD programs in C/DMES and provided detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement. The reviewers emphasized the positive collaboration between the center and department, noting: “DMES and CMES stand out for the exceptionally close collaboration and coordination between them. It is much more common for area studies centers, including those funded through Title VI, to be separated from relevant academic departments not only administratively but physically.” Impressed by the units’ vision and execution, the reviewers wrote: “Instead of looking back, they are training their focus on the future, re-defining their programs and generating an exemplary vision that takes account of current transformations in Middle East Studies as well as in adjacent academic fields.” They underscored the innovation and effectiveness of our five areas of doctoral training, which offer a high-quality education in specific areas of strength. The reviewers found MES students to be highly qualified, mature, and committed; they also noted the sense of community among students. Observing the enthusiasm, collegiality, and commitment of the faculty to the vision of MES and to graduate students, they commended the transparency and consultative process in MES. They evaluated MES as one of the top five departments nationally, listing its competitors as the University of Michigan, UCLA, NYU, the University of Chicago, Harvard, and Princeton, all of which had better graduate funding than UT. The reviewers asserted that “training in Middle Eastern languages is as good or better at UT as anywhere in the country.” The report mentions the high caliber of scholars in the department and the professionalism of MES staff, noting that staff work “effectively and knowledgeably.”

The reviewers also offered several recommendations. First, they recommended hires as the most crucial measure, accepting the department’s strategic plan to prioritize hires in modern Arabic literature, Persian literature/culture, and Ancient History; per these recommendations, we have recently hired faculty in Arabic literature, Persian literature, and Middle Eastern media, and are in the midst of hiring an additional tenure-track faculty in Ancient Near East. Second: given the success of the MES programs, the reviewers recommended increased resources to graduate students and programming in MES; UT has recently increased funding across the board for graduate students. Third: in order to allow more flexibility and better support within a constrained budget, the reviewers recommended reducing CMES cohort size; CMES had already started reducing incoming cohorts prior to the review. Finally, the reviewers recommended developing a regular seminar for graduate cohorts in MES; we designed and implemented a regular Proseminar for first-year MA students, currently in its third year, and are working to design a similar course for PhD students. For the next external review of our graduate programs, scheduled for Spring 2026, we plan to build upon our improvements following the 2019 review.

In 2019, MES produced an internal self-study report to evaluate the ranking of our graduate programs in comparison to those at peer institutions; outline our strategic hiring plan; examine our current admissions process; and identify strengths and weaknesses. The report found that UT’s MES degree programs are internationally recognized, consistently producing excellent graduates. Our students have maintained a strong record of time-to-degree and have met degree milestones. The report found two challenges, both in accordance with the findings of the external review report: the rising cost of living in Austin; and reductions in faculty lines in the humanities broadly and in foreign languages specifically, leading to shrinking graduate course offerings. Since the report, we have met both challenges: UT’s Graduate School increased

graduate student funding substantively; and MES hired three tenure-track faculty members in key areas (Arabic literature; Persian literature; and Middle Eastern media) to help address our students’ curricular needs and continue providing the highest quality graduate education. We continually assess our outcomes and placement data using tools such as the Graduate Student Information System to track graduate student progress; an exit survey for graduating students; and an alumni listserv for fostering alumni engagement. We plan to increase the use of our social media networks to bolster alumni participation, networking, and responses to alumni surveys.

CMES participates actively in the University-administered Institutional Assessment process, led by the Office of Strategic Academic Initiatives (OSAI). Through systematic planning and methodical data collection, MES has continuously improved its educational effectiveness and professionalization training for undergraduates and graduate students. Each assessment cycle is five years long – four years for active assessment planning and data collection, and a fifth for reflection and reset. CMES strives to meet three educational goals for MA students: academic research skills training, Middle Eastern language acquisition, and professionalization. We pursue the first two goals through specific program strategies, namely, imposition of measurable standards in thesis completion and language study; since 2018, CMES has met or exceeded most of its targets for these two goals. When targets were not met regarding thesis completion in 2018-19, CMES tightened its mentoring and oversight, leading to successful outcomes (100% target-met) in 2020-21. In Fall 2021, CMES established the third goal of professionalization, demonstrating the Center’s commitment to continuous improvement and support of student success post-graduation. For the BA program, there are three educational goals: Middle East content knowledge, Middle Eastern language acquisition, and experiential learning. The first two goals are pursued through foundational coursework and language study;

since 2018, BA students have met or exceeded most targets for these two goals each year. The goal of experiential learning was established to enrich BA students’ learning and enhance professionalization through real-world training. For the PhD program, there are three educational goals: academic writing skills training, Middle Eastern language competency, and pedagogy training. The first goal is pursued through coursework; since 2018, doctoral students met or exceeded the target for this goal each year. We established the two new goals of language competency and pedagogy training to formalize degree standards and increase the competitiveness of our graduates in the academic job market. PhD student progress and performance is evaluated annually by the MES Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). Besides the regular Institutional Assessment, MES faculty undergo annual evaluation by a departmental evaluation committee, which assesses faculty productivity, teaching, and service. We supplement faculty reviews with information gathered through semesterly Course Instructor Surveys (CIS).

In 2021, Hemispheres hired Dr. Sarah Santillanes, an Education faculty member at Huston-Tillotson University, as an outside evaluator. She conducted a qualitative evaluation by interviewing educators who had participated or presented in Hemispheres activities in 2018-21. They indicated feeling inspired by Hemispheres Summer Institutes and noted that they used our curricula and digital resources; graduate students who presented their research at workshops or Summer Institutes indicated that the experience helped strengthen their skills and broaden their research interests. Participants in our online Summer Institutes and workshops noted that they liked the flexibility of these options and would not have been able to participate otherwise.

The evaluation included several recommendations. First, educators emphasized a need for more digital resources and recommended organizing them more clearly on our website; in response, Hemispheres is creating a new website, and we request funding for the development of

digital resources (lines 22, 45). The new, more streamlined website will allow us to share curricula, events, media, and other resources in a more accessible way. Second, teachers requested more materials for educators in every stage of service. In response, Hemispheres will work with UTeach to develop a primer for the Teaching from Digital Archives Summer Institute to introduce various archives and provide training on how to use them in teaching and research.

CMES requests funding to hire an external evaluator in years two and four of the next grant cycle to evaluate CMES and Hemispheres outreach activities (line 16). Based on the results of our recent outside evaluation, Hemispheres also plans to create a teacher focus group in the next grant cycle to further expand on the needs of educators in our region.

To attract students to our language classrooms, CMES launched energetic social media campaigns to advertise Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish; undergraduate enrollments began to increase. Though the pandemic disrupted this trend, we maintained steady numbers in all languages over the last four years. We offered six sections of first-year Arabic and four sections of second-year Arabic. CMES conducted an evaluation of the Dual Language Program and found that the program was under-enrolled; we created an additional, more flexible, dual language option. The goal was to increase enrollments particularly in Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish by three to four students per year for each language, in the hopes of eventually requiring all CMES MA students to study a second Middle Eastern language for at least two semesters. To help reach this goal, we prioritize dual language students for travel funding and waive their tuition for the Arabic Summer Institute (ASI). During the current four-year cycle, 25 students have graduated with a CMES MA; of those, 10 studied more than one Middle Eastern language.

In the current grant cycle, CMES evaluated our first-year language courses in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish annually by administering OPIs to a random sample of students.

The data we gather allows us to assess whether our students are reaching the proficiency goal of intermediate-low by the end of the first-year intensive language sequence. In the next grant cycle, we will expand this assessment to the higher levels of language courses in our programs (line 17).

In the previous grant cycle, CMES undertook an external evaluation plan of Title VI data, conducted by an independent consultant, Dr. Jessica Hartos, Associate Professor at the University of North Texas and a specialist in program evaluation. Dr. Hartos regularly assessed CMES activities, including course enrollments and trends, degree attainment statistics, events, outreach activities, and collaborations between CMES and other units. In the current grant cycle, we have implemented and streamlined the data-gathering tools and processes initiated by Dr.

Hartos to continue evaluating Center activities each semester. Based on the data we gathered, we have identified areas of potential growth: Digital Humanities, TAFL, refugee outreach, MA student professionalization, and hands-on advising and mentorship for students. Our review also determined five key areas that would benefit from revised collection methods: the identification of MES-aligned students across campus; student diversity and financial need; the standardization of tracking surveys for relevant alumni; the compilation of funding opportunities for which MES students are eligible; and the recording of grants secured by UT MES faculty. In the next grant cycle, CoLA will commit the time and expertise of its Data Analyst to partner with UT NRCs to gather and analyze language and area studies data across campus to better systematize this work and enhance the program evaluation component of the NRC and FLAS grants. In Year 4, we will hire an external evaluator to assess all Center programs and activities (line 18).

***G.5 Equal access and treatment.*** CMES adheres to UT’s commitment to equal opportunity, as outlined in its official policy: “It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin

(“University”) to provide an educational and working environment that provides equal opportunity to all members of the University community. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits unlawful discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status and genetic information. The University also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.” UT has three offices to handle inquiries regarding the university’s non-discrimination policies: the Title IX Coordinator; the Age Discrimination Act Coordinator; and the Office for Inclusion and Equity. In 2019, UT created the Longhorn TIES (Transition, Inclusion, Empower, Success) Initiative to address the needs of neurodivergent students. CoLA has also created an Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI). CMES takes seriously reports of discrimination and accommodation requests from students with disabilities. We work confidentially with students to ensure their needs are met, that they are treated fairly, and that they can access campus resources. CMES faculty, staff, and graduate students have attended the DisABILITY Advocate training, the Gender and Sexuality Ally training, and the Creating an Accessible Classroom workshop. We invite a mental health counselor to the annual MES graduate orientation to address coping methods for sensitive issues in the classrooms where many students will teach. We also invited representatives of UT’s BeVocal program to speak to faculty about bystander intervention.

CMES has created a tuition waiver program to encourage minority students to attend the Arabic Summer Institute (ASI). UT’s recent designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution enhances our existing commitment to Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs). In accordance with the Competitive Preference Priority, CMES is deeply committed to our collaborations with other

MSIs, which will have a long-term impact on the educational trajectories of students and instructors there.

# Outreach Activities

* 1. ***Elementary/Secondary Schools.*** CMES and Hemispheres outreach efforts will continue to focus on training in-service and pre-service K-12 educators, through summer institutes, regional workshops, webinars, development of curricular and digital resources, and experiences abroad. Hemispheres offers three summer institutes: the flagship Hemispheres Summer Institute; Teaching from Digital Archives, a partnership with UTeach and the Harry Ransom Center (HRC); and Critical Literacy for Global Citizens, a collaboration with doctoral students in UT’s College of Education (CoE) for bilingual and ESL K-5 educators (lines 41-45, 48, 60, 61). In a new collaboration with the Texas Language Center (TLC) and UTeach, Hemispheres will offer a new summer institute for foreign language educators focused on world language instruction and cultural competency. On campus, Hemispheres participates in Explore UT, an annual event that brings 50,000 K-12 students to campus for activities, demonstrations, and performances that showcase all UT has to offer, exposing children to the languages and cultures of our regions.

We encourage students of Arabic to complete Arabic teacher certification through UTeach, and will work with the Arabic Immersion Magnet School (AIMS) in the Houston Independent School District (HISD) to recruit teachers for their school. We will offer fellowships to support teacher certification for students who commit to teaching Arabic at AIMS (line 30).

Together with the University of Chicago, we recently began a collaboration with Afikra, a global organization promoting the diversity of the Arab world. We will help establish and support Afikra’s global outreach program for high school students.

CMES is an institutional member of the Middle East Outreach Council (MEOC), which awards the prestigious Middle East Book Award for high quality picture books, young adult fiction, and nonfiction books that contribute to meaningful understanding of the region. Our Outreach Director is President-Elect of MEOC. CMES and MEOC collaborate with other world area book awards to offer the annual Global Read Webinar Series for K-12 educators. In the next grant cycle, CMES publications and outreach programs will collaborate to work with K-12 educators to create curricula based on CMES young adult publications, which we will provide as open educational resources on our website.

The CMES Refugee Student Mentor Program (RSMP) began in 2015 and profoundly impacts local refugee children and the volunteers who work with them. It creates opportunities for understanding among students, teachers, and administrators, easing the transitional experience of refugee absorption for the schools and the refugee families. Between 2018 and 2021, 38 Austin schools have benefitted from the RSMP. Since 2018, 127 UT students have volunteered in RSMP, covering 25 different languages; 51 potential volunteers attended RSMP volunteer training sessions. RSMP held a fundraiser in Fall 2021 and raised $8,215 toward student volunteer transportation costs. The program and fundraising efforts gained visibility through feature stories on local television stations and newspapers. We continue to build our outreach resource library of books and activities our RSMP mentors can use in schools.

* 1. ***Post-Secondary.*** CMES and Hemispheres collaborate with many post-secondary institutions to offer programming for K-16 educators, community college and MSI faculty, and the general public. Hemispheres will continue its collaboration with Huston-Tillotson University (HTU), a local Historically Black College and University (HBCU), to incorporate international and global dimensions into HTU programs. We support MES courses towards HTU’s Global Studies major.

We enhance Global Studies through a global speaker series, support for HTU’s Global Studies program coordinator, and a faculty retreat. We have expanded the Austin Community College (ACC) Faculty Learning Community (FLC) by offering two annual cohorts. FLC members from diverse disciplines attend monthly talks on global human rights and gender studies to help internationalize their curricula. In 2021, Hemispheres partnered with Community Colleges for International Development (CCID), an organization for community colleges that promotes the integration of international perspectives and experiences into curricula and campus culture. We will continue to work with them to engage community colleges nationwide. Hemispheres will also work with the Texas Alliance for Geographic Education and Texas State University, a local HSI, on pre-service educator training and curriculum development (line 43, 53-59).

In the current grant cycle, CMES worked closely with UC Berkeley, Portland State University, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to offer professional development for the first cohort of the Qatar Foundation International (QFI) Teacher Leadership Program. In years two and four of the next grant cycle, Hemispheres will collaborate with the University of Florida to offer a conference for community college and MSI educators.

* 1. ***Business, media, general public.*** CMES faculty will continue collaborating with Human Dimensions of Organizations (HDO) by leading internationally focused seminars open to the general public and intended for professionals in corporate, government, and other sectors. CMES supports local media and service organizations by hosting public events, including the annual Children of Abraham/Ibrahim film festival at Austin Film Society and concerts by UT’s Middle Eastern ensemble Bereket. Hemispheres supports *15 Minute History*, a podcast featuring concise, accessible content aimed at the general public. The CMES publication program’s new online journal, *Y’alla*, brings work by Middle Eastern writers to the public.

A new MES hire in media, a former broadcast journalist, is planning initiatives to bring media training and awareness to UT students and the public. MES and the School of Journalism and Media will bring a MENA-based journalist to UT annually for a public lecture and workshop on the profession. Another project, part of the UT Cluster on Global Media Flows and (Dis)information, is a lab where scholars from across campus (including several Hemispheres partners) investigate transnational conspiracy theories in various media formats.

Our RSMP provides an essential service to the local community and CMES routinely lends its expertise on engaging with refugee students through teacher workshops. The RSMP has gained recognition through features in local and national media.

# Program Planning and Budget

* 1. ***Instructional Programs.*** To complement our MES degree programs (BA, MA, PhD), CMES seeks funding to develop and maintain several online language initiatives and a new MA program. In collaboration with Georgetown University, the University of Michigan, the University of Arizona, and UT’s South Asia Institute, we plan to develop online beginning Pashto courses, small, conversation-based classes (line 21). Starting in Summer of Year 1, we intend to offer online Pashto yearly through UT Extension, which will make such courses widely available beyond the UT community. We will also continue to support the Consortium of Middle East Centers’ (CMEC) online beginner Kurdish courses (line 20).

CMES plans to establish an MA program in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) (Appendix 7). As only the second Arabic-specific MA pedagogy program in the US, it will address the growing need for qualified K-12 and college Arabic instructors. The TAFL MA program will build on UT’s high-caliber Arabic language program and its faculty’s substantive education experience and credentials. Its goal is to provide practical training in cutting-edge

language pedagogy methods, including digital and virtual approaches, to produce language instructors who will shape the teaching of Arabic. We request funding in Years 1 and 2 for course development funds for the faculty designing the curriculum and in Years 3 and 4 for annual Arabic language pedagogy workshops required for TAFL MA students (line 31).

CMES will support the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies (SCJS) in hosting a teaching fellow to teach on the Levant and Israel and work with existing faculty on events highlighting comparative study of the region. SCJS will fund the fellow’s salary, while CMES will provide funding toward relevant events throughout the contract period (up to three years), course development funds, and office space (line 32). By connecting MES and SCJS, this position helps attract a breadth of students from across campus to the MES program.

We have recently implemented a Graduate Portfolio program in MES, allowing students from across campus to acquire a transcripted area of expertise in MES. We will increase the visibility of this program through advertising to relevant UT units. To expand students’ international experience, we will offer grants to allow CMES faculty to work with faculty at institutions abroad to develop Global Virtual Exchange courses run by Texas Global (line 27).

* 1. ***Teacher Training*.** In the next four years, training in-service and pre-service educators will be a focus for CMES. Hemispheres activities for K-12 teachers include: annual summer institutes, regional workshops, webinars, the development of curricular resources, and in-country experiences abroad led by the Outreach Director (lines 41-45). We request support for teacher travel stipends in years one and three (line 47). We will continue to work with campus partners to offer summer institutes: the flagship Hemispheres Summer Institute (line 41), Teaching from Digital Archives (line 48), Critical Literacy for Global Citizens (line 60), and a new summer institute on world language instruction and cultural competency (line 61)*.* We encourage students

studying Arabic to complete Arabic teacher certification through UTeach and will work with the Houston Independent School District’s (HISD) Arabic Immersion Magnet School (AIMS), a Title I school, to recruit teachers; we will provide fellowships to offset the cost of teacher certification for students who commit to teaching at AIMS (line 30). We plan to work with Qatar Foundation International (QFI) on language pedagogy workshops and other teacher training activities. We will align our publications program with outreach by working with educators to create open-source curricula based on CMES young adult publications. We request funding for honoraria to educators who produce lessons related to our publications (line 50).

* 1. ***Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) Partnerships (Competitive Preferency Priority).*** In collaboration with Hemispheres, CMES maintains substantial partnerships with two MSIs in Texas: Huston-Tillotson University (HTU) and Austin Community College (ACC). We request funding for a Middle East-related HTU course annually (line 57), textbooks (line 56), a Global Studies faculty retreat (line 55), and a Global Studies coordinator (line 55). Hemispheres will work with the Pulitzer Center to offer a global speaker series at HTU (line 58) and a workshop for their pre-service teachers. Our ACC partnership includes support for the Faculty Learning Community (FLC), which now includes two cohorts focusing on global human rights and gender studies (line 53). In the next grant cycle, Hemispheres will collaborate with the University of Florida on a conference for community college and MSI educators in years two and four (line 59). In 2021, Hemispheres partnered with Community Colleges for International Development, and we will work with them to engage community college faculty nationwide, many of whom are employed at MSIs.
	2. ***Community Engagement.*** CMES is committed to advancing understanding of the Middle East through outreach to academic and community networks. We therefore seek support to co-

sponsor cultural events (such as film series and concerts) (lines 82-90); a robust program of lecture series (lines 71-81); and nine academic conferences (line 62-70). We also request funding to hire a part-time graduate student coordinator for RSMP (line 49) and to expand its resource library (line 46). CMES and RSMP recently established a new partnership with GirlForward, an organization providing mentors to refugee and immigrant girls in grades 9-12; RSMP mentors will offer practical college preparation and community-building workshops. We request funding for scholarships for teachers to take our courses in Kurdish, Pashto, and Arabic, languages often spoken by refugees (line 51). CMES and the University of Chicago recently partnered with Afikra, a global organization focused on cultures of the Arab world, to support their high school outreach program. We request funds for two students to participate annually (line 52).

CMES outreach and publications are collaborating to publish books for K-12 educators.

In 2021, they began developing an Afghan poetry anthology as a resource for educators, volunteers, and Afghan communities. We seek funding to purchase and disseminate copies to educators and librarians and for our RSMP and outreach libraries (line 46).

We are partnering with the University of Arizona (UA) to spark broad public interest in the Middle East through Middle Eastern Science Fiction. In support of a Science Fiction Publications Series, we request funds toward costs of a contest for translations of science fiction from Middle Eastern languages; winning translations will be published in *Y’alla* (line 25). We request funds in Year 2 to support a MENA Science Fiction conference at UA. Open to the public, it will attract new audiences to Middle Eastern literatures and acquaint them with alternative Middle Eastern approaches to time and space (line 26).

* 1. ***Digital Humanities.*** A new initiative brings together MES and Digital Humanities (DH). We recently held the first of a series of annual DH events, a workshop where experts discussed their

experiences bringing MES to a broad nonacademic public through digital and social media platforms. Cosponsored by the Center for East Asian Studies, UTL, and LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, this series facilitates the creation of public-facing content about the Middle East, and trains and supports students, faculty, and professionals who engage in well-informed public outreach about the region (line 37). We will create a freely accessible platform to host these materials for use by the public, K-12 educators, and the media.

We request funding to support a Global Studies Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) in collaboration with UTL and other UT NRCs (line 28). The GRA will help improve access to digital materials and methods for lesser-resourced institutions and independent scholars.

CMES has initiated a collaboration with Diarna, a geo-museum that digitally preserves physical remnants of Jewish history in MENA. We request funding for a Digital Mapping internship program with Diarna for UT MES students (line 34). Interns will draw on their knowledge of Middle Eastern languages and cultures and cultivate skills in cutting-edge technology. This program will be a collaboration with other UT partners, including the SCJS.

CMES faculty members also have individual DH initiatives, such as an OER edited volume on the Kurdish wave in Turkish literature and cinema. These DH activities will be supported by UT’s new Initiative for Digital Humanities (IDH) which facilitates the application of digital technologies and computational methods to the humanities (lines 35, 36).

* 1. ***Other Activities.*** We request funding for a bi-annual external assessment (line 16)*,* travel support for CMES faculty and staff (lines 6-13)*,* library acquisitions (line 15), general program expenses (line 14, 38), and salary for key program personnel (lines 1-5).

# FLAS Awardee Selection Procedures

***J.1a Advertisement, schedule, priorities*.** Each fall, the FLAS competition is announced to graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in or applying to MES, other students with Middle East-focused research interests, graduate and undergraduate coordinators and advisors across campus, all students enrolled in a Middle Eastern language course, and all MES faculty members. Two annual FLAS application information sessions, hosted jointly by UT Title VI Centers, provide guidance, and address potential applicants’ questions. CMES also maintains a web page dedicated to FLAS application procedures, deadlines, and frequently asked questions. The MES Graduate Coordinator serves as the FLAS Coordinator. Besides guiding faculty and students, she works with the Undergraduate Coordinator to create and disseminate a poster and digital advertising campaign that provides details regarding the FLAS competition. The competition begins when the fellowship is advertised in early Fall, typically November 1. The application deadline is February 1. The committee reviews files in early February, meeting in mid-February to discuss individual rankings and to collectively establish a list of prioritized applicants for funding. Applicants are notified of their status in early March, and confirmation of acceptance is due from awardees in late March for currently enrolled students and April 15 for incoming graduate students. Competition priorities are communicated to committee members before they meet so they may take them into account while ranking and selecting the most qualified applicants from a pool of graduate and undergraduate applicants. In accordance with the first FLAS Competitive Preference Priority, our Center will prioritize applicants who demonstrate financial need given formal federal criteria as evidenced through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In accordance with the second Preference Priority, all our FLAS fellowships are awarded for the study of Less Commonly Taught

Languages (LCTLs). We further prioritize students at ILR1+ and higher levels of proficiency, and those who intend to go abroad.

***J.1b Application process.*** Students applying for FLAS submit applications detailing relevant academic, professional, and personal background information. Required materials include a statement of purpose that outlines academic and professional goals, addresses the relevance of the language to be studied, and justifies the intended language program as FLAS eligible.

Applicants also provide a CV, academic transcripts, and two letters of recommendation, one of which must be from a language instructor evaluating the applicant’s aptitude for language learning. Applicants are required to submit a FAFSA and will be asked to electronically consent to allow the FLAS coordinator to obtain their FAFSA Financial Need Ranking from UT’s Office of Financial Aid. Those whose proposed FLAS activities involve travel to restricted regions must apply for written approval from Texas Global’s International Oversight Committee.

***H.1c Selection committee and criteria.*** The Director appoints the members of the selection committee, which is composed of at least six members, including five faculty representing the four languages offered and the FLAS coordinator. Students are selected on the basis of several criteria: demonstrated excellence in area studies and language acquisition; genuine potential for future achievement in research or public service in Middle Eastern Studies or related fields; commitment to using language and cultural training in future careers; and overall academic performance. The committee prioritizes students with documented financial need, as indicated by the Financial Need Ranking provided by UT’s Office of Financial Aid. Awards are not granted to native speakers. We seek and reward a broad representation of graduate and undergraduate students from the social sciences, humanities, professional schools, and interdisciplinary programs. Preference is given to students at Intermediate-High and Advanced proficiency levels.

During the 2022-26 grant cycle, CMES will organize career workshops featuring FLAS alumni discussing academic and non-academic career paths. These workshops will be geared toward current FLAS fellows to expose them to diverse career opportunities. Former FLAS fellows have found employment as an analyst for the US Department of State, as a K-12 teacher in the Houston Independent School District, in various non-profits serving refugees, as the Program Coordinator for the Persian Flagship Program at the University of Maryland, as well as positions within academia.

# K. FLAS Competitive Preference Priorities

***K.1a. FLAS Competitive Priority 1***. In accordance with the first FLAS Competitive Preference Priority, our Center will prioritize applicants who, in addition to their academic achievement and language abilities, demonstrate financial need through formal federal criteria as evidenced through FAFSA. Among those deemed applicants of the highest caliber, with perceived ability to increase proficiency in their selected priority language as well as potential to use language in their intended professional path, we will privilege those with identified financial need.

***K.1b. FLAS Competitive Priority 2.*** In accordance with the second Preference Priority, all CMES FLAS fellowships are designated for the study of Less Commonly Taught Languages/priority languages, including Arabic, Hebrew, Turkish, and Persian. We further prioritize students at ILR1+ and higher levels of proficiency, and those who intend to go abroad.