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**Middle East Institute at Columbia University**

**National Resource Centers and Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships Programs**

**PART III/B: List of Acronyms**

AATA American Association of Teachers of Arabic AATP American Association of Teachers of Persian

AATT American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages ACO Arabic Collections Online

ACTFL American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages AKU Aga Khan University

AKU-ISMC Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Cultures AIYS American Institute for Yemeni Studies

A&S Arts & Sciences

ARC Academic Review Committee

ARIT American Research Institute in Turkey AUB American University in Beirut

AUC American University in Cairo

AY Academic Year

BLN Black, Latinx and Native

CAC Career Advancement Center (SIPA) CASA Center for Arabic Studies Abroad CALL Computer-Assisted Language Learning CCE Center for Career Education

CCLS Center for Comparative Literature and Society CDRS Center for Digital Research and Scholarship CEO Columbia Experience Overseas

CGC Columbia Global Centers

CIAO Columbia International Affairs Online

CCNMTL Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning CFIS Center for Iranian Studies

CLS Critical Language Study (fellowship)

CLS Collaborative Learning Space (language learning facility) CPS Center for Palestine Studies

CSSAAME *Journal of Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* CSME Center for the Study of the Middle East (Indiana University Bloomington) CSMS Center for the Study of Muslim Societies

CSSD Center for the Study of Social Difference CU Columbia University

CUIT Columbia University Information Technology CUL Columbia University Libraries

CUNY City University of New York

DAATL Deep Approach to Turkish Teaching and Learning DGS Director of Graduate Studies

DUS Director of Undergraduate Studies GEPA General Education Provisions Act GLP Global Language Project

GSAS Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

GSAPP Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation HBCU Historically Black Colleges and Universities

HSI Hispanic-Serving Institution

IAS Institute of African Studies

ICLS Institute for Comparative Literature and Society IIJS Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies

IIS Institute for Iranian Studies

ISCG International Studies Consortium of Georgia ISMA Islamic Studies MA

IRCPL Institute for Religion and Culture in Public Life IRWGS Institute for Research on Women, Gender and Sexuality ISHR Institute for the Study of Human Rights

JTS Jewish Theological Seminary LMTs Language Maintenance Tutorials LRC Language Resource Center

MaRLI Manhattan Research Library Initiative ME Middle East

MESAAS Middle East, South Asian and African Studies (Dept.) MEI Middle East Institute

MEMP ME Materials Project

MENA Middle East and North Africa MIA Master of International Affairs

MLIS Master of Library and Information Science MSA Modern Standard Arabic

MSI Minority Serving Institution

NYPL New York Public Library

NYCDOE New York City Department of Education NYATC New York Arabic Teachers Council OCLC Online Computer Library Center

OPI Oral Proficiency Interview

PBI Predominantly Black Institution

PD Professional Development

SAI South Asia Institute

Sciences Po Institut d’Etudes Politiques (Paris, Menton) SHARES (formerly) Research libraries group shares SIPA School of International and Public Affairs TC Teachers College, Columbia

TFs Teaching Fellows

UGE Center for Undergraduate Engagement URM Underrepresented Minorities

UTS Union Theological Seminary, Columbia

PART III/C

# PROJECT NARRATIVE

1. **Commitment to the Subject Area**
	1. Columbia’s Strengths. Columbia University (CU) has a long and distinguished history in

the academic study of world cultures. The university’s professional schools have trained scores of individuals who have been leading figures in world affairs. With the opening of nine Global Centers in the past thirteen years, including three in our region (Amman, Istanbul, and Tunis) the university has further extended and deepened its international engagement. The Global Centers supplement CU’s curriculum with international programming, including study abroad and internship opportunities, as well as course offerings; facilitate research opportunities for CU students and faculty on globally relevant, interdisciplinary topics; provide access to area experts for media inquiries, and provide a point of ongoing engagement for international alumni. Columbia’s ability to deepen its global focus is due in no small measure to its existing strengths in area studies, in particular ME studies. CU continues to be one of the leading American academic institutions in research, outreach, and the range and depth of its course offerings in ME languages and literatures, history, the social sciences, and international affairs. Adding to existing professorships in Modern Arab Studies, Israel and Jewish Studies, and the Social Sciences established in the past two decades, the university has established several new endowed positions: the Richard

W. Bulliet Chair of Islamic History; the Maan Z. Madina Visiting Scholar position in the Department of Middle East, South Asian and African Studies (MESAAS); the Moinian Professorship in Pre-modern Middle Eastern Cultures and Civilizations at affiliated Barnard College; and the Sakıp Sabancı Chair in Turkish Studies.

The MEI engages not only with faculty and students from more than a dozen academic departments, disciplines and schools but also with a set of specialized centers. The MEI utilizes NRC resources in directly funding programming, co-sponsoring events, providing administrative support, and sharing faculty participation with a range of other campus units, which are of two types. The first type focuses on analytic themes or projects, such as “public religion” (Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life, IRCPL), “Muslim societies” (The Center for the Study of Muslim Societies, CSMS), “women and gender” (Institute for Research on Women, Gender and Sexuality, IRWGS), “social difference” (Center for the Study of Social Difference, CSSD), and “international affairs” (The School of International and Public Affairs, SIPA). The second type are affiliate units that provide specialized expertise within the institute’s regional purview: Iran (Center for Iranian Studies, CIS), Turkey (the new Sakıp Sabancı Center for Turkish Studies, SSC), Central Asia (Harriman Institute), Islamic Africa (Ifriqiyya Colloquium), Israel (Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, IIJS), and Palestine (The Center for Palestine Studies, CPS).

Among the MEI’s new initiatives, CSMS is conceived of as an umbrella for faculty collaborations in cutting-edge research, integrated programming and innovative teaching across the related fields of research on Islam and Muslim societies. The center capitalizes on some 43 scholars in over ten departments, who are leaders in research and teaching on Islam and the Muslim world, and on established projects, such as MEI’s innovative Sharīʿa Workshop (Budget G.b). One of MEI’s new programming initiatives, Climate Change Consequences/ Water Management (Budget F2.c) draws on collaborations with Columbia’s newly established Climate School, SIPA and the Aga Khan University (AKU) and its network. A proposed new academic workshop, in collaboration with Center for Palestine faculty, is a collaboration between researchers in Palestine, Europe, and the US, seeking to foster an interdisciplinary and comparative analysis of the different aspects of Palestinian

intercommunal violence, in its historical and ongoing dynamic relationship with the Israeli state (Budget G.c).

In the past twelve years, the recruitment of dynamic senior and junior faculty in political science, modern political history, religion, Islamic law, the history of science in the Arab world, Arabic and Hebrew literature, and Mediterranean studies, enhanced by the creation of two recent faculty positions in Indo-Persian history and literature, religion, and Islamic philosophy, a new tenured position in Armenian Studies and the tenuring of junior faculty have further strengthened the ME program across departments. Columbia’s ME program continues to attract talented PhD candidates as well as MA and undergraduate students. Following recent negotiations with the graduate student labor union, PhD stipends were increased by 11% to $39,000 for this academic year and are expected to grow by 3 to 5% each year. In total, the institutional support this year for the 83 PhD students working on the ME, amounts to $7,886,992 in tuition remission, stipends, and fees, and 332,000 in summer research funds. Support for area and language faculty salaries grew from

$11,668,674 in 2018 to $13,058,556 in 2021-22 (11%). The MEI’s director, Brinkley Messick, a senior Anthropology professor, and its faculty committee, have successfully advocated for the continued expansion and strengthening of ME studies, in particular for the creation of focused academic centers such as CSMS. The MEI is housed in a building with MESAAS, the South Asian Institute (SAI) and the Institute for African Studies (IAS). With classrooms and seminar rooms used primarily by the 3 regional institutes and the department that houses a majority of the ME faculty, the building is a hub for students interested in our region and allows for closer cooperation among the institutes and with MESAAS. Among the innovative projects that bring affiliated faculty together is the *Journal of Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East (*CSSAAME), edited at CU since 2012, which has become a leader in publishing interdisciplinary research.

MEI has been administered by the Arts & Sciences (A&S) since 2009, connecting it more closely with CU’s core mission in the training of undergraduates, including the expanding Global Core Curriculum. MEI continues to collaborate with SIPA, where it was previously housed, ensuring coverage of ME courses of interest to international affairs students. The MEI’s ability to strategically use its Title VI grant funds to pay for adjunct salaries ensures that needed courses on the Gulf, Iran, Afghanistan, as well as contemporary politics, ME security and environment/climate change in the region, are available at SIPA and through the A&S departments, with the university committed to cost-sharing. As of fall 2014, MEI assumed responsibility for the interdisciplinary Islamic Studies MA (ISMA) and as of 2020 for the Dual Degree in Islamic Studies and Cultures with AKU-ISMC, adding a new Faculty Advisor, a dedicated core course and increased faculty participation.

The university’s direct funding for the MEI’s operations, while fairly modest, is a stable and solid source of income. University cost sharing for new staff for the MA programs in Islamic Studies, has allowed us to better support the MA Faculty Advisor and Senior Lecturer. The university provides the MEI free office space and reduced-cost access to lecture/conference facilities across campus. CU continues to enhance support of ME library collections, with the annual allocation for the purchase of ME monographs rising from a healthy $348,285 in 2018 to $376,954 in 2021.

**Table 2: Columbia’s financial commitment to Middle East programs ($/year) for 2021-22**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Area faculty salaries | $11,668,466 | Operation of the MEI\* | $139,0000 |
| Language faculty salaries | $1,390,090. | PhD Fellowships (incl. summer) | $3,569,000 |
| Library staff salaries | $464,928 | Library acquisitions | $376,954 |
| Total salaries | $13,523,484 | Faculty research/housing subsidy/travel allocation | $5,40,000 |
| Amman, Istanbul, Tunis Global Center operations | $2,750,000 | **TOTAL:** | **$20,219,438** |

*\*does not include use of office space and facilities or student support provided free of cost to MEI*

We continue to foster connections with institutions and scholars in the ME, in part through memberships, with American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS), American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT), American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS), Center for Arabic Studies Abroad (CASA), and by hosting visiting faculty and researchers from the region at the MEI and in various departments and centers In response to the ongoing displacement of scholars from the region, MEI has joined the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Global Academy project and has offered mentorship opportunities to two scholars from MENA yearly by having them join in interdisciplinary research collaborations with counterparts at Columbia. A new 3-year project housed at MEI and spearheaded by Lisa Anderson (former President of AUC and SIPA Dean Emerita) and other CU senior faculty, aims to improve the quality of social science research on, and in the MENA region. A working group of academics from the region have been meeting with the goal of establishing mechanisms for greater co-operation among social science communities within and beyond the Arab Middle East and North Africa so as to strengthen research designed and conducted by local scholars.

MEI Endowment funding allows us to bring in the annual ARCAPITA Visiting Professor in Modern Arab Studies and the Mahdi Fellow in Shi’i Studies from the MENA region. Our new partnership with the Aga Khan University’s Institute for the Study of Muslim Cultures (AKU-ISMC) through a new Dual MA degree (see p.4) will result in new exchanges and collaborations between students and faculty.

# Quality of Language Instructional Program

* 1. Language Instruction. MESAAS has a robust language program including Arabic,

Hebrew, Persian, both Modern and Ottoman Turkish, as well as Armenian, with a faculty of 11 full-time lecturers. The Arabic program is one of the largest in the country. Large

enrollment undergraduate courses such as “Introduction to Islamic Civilization,” as well as popular survey courses such as “History of the Modern Middle East” (143 enrolled in Fall 2021) have helped maintain relatively steady language enrollments (Table 4) despite yearly fluctuations, with undergraduates making up 65% to 75% of most language class enrollments.

**Table 4: Number of Students Enrolled in ME Language Courses**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ARABIC****ARABIC (SUMMER)** | **17-18** | **18-19** | **19-20** | **20-21** | **21-22** |
| 27047 | 26742 | 23640 | 18836 | 214tbd |
| **ARMENIAN** | 11 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 8 |
| **HEBREW** | 129 | 163 | 139 | 86 | 114 |
| **PERSIAN** | 75 | 83 | 69 | 56 | 57 |
| **TURKISH – MODERN** | 18 | 37 | 47 | 42 | 43 |
| **TURKISH - OTTOMAN** | 3 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 7 |
| Total | 553 | 605 | 540 | 419 | 443 |

Credit points for Arabic, Turkish and Hebrew courses were raised a decade ago from 4 to 5 credits (in line with languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Russian). The increased contact hours allow for additional material and greater opportunity for in-depth study. New technologies are used extensively in the classroom and are available to students outside of it. Classes are held in “smart” classrooms found throughout the university, including Knox Hall where most of our language classes are taught. The LRC offers cutting-edge learning spaces and tools for enhanced teaching and learning, including Collaborative Learning Space (CLS), ideal for student collaboration, team and project-based learning activities, and conversation groups, as well as Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) spaces with computer terminals that support multi-language input (including non-Western characters) for international word processing. MESAAS and MEI jointly run weekly

“Language Circles” for Arabic and Persian with activities such as viewing and discussing films from the region. Supervised by graduate students who are native speakers, the circles expose students to cultural knowledge and allow them to practice their language skills

outside the context of the classroom (Budget I2. b). In the past 4 years we have also partnered with NaTakallam, an organization that connects refugees and displaced persons with language learners worldwide for online language practice and cross-cultural exchange, providing affordable and enriching opportunities that complement existing coursework.

Individual language learning sessions are available in Persian (Farsi and Dari dialects), Kurdish, and Arabic (MSA, Lebanese, Levantine Syrian, Levantine Palestinian, Egyptian, Yemeni, Iraqi and Sudanese dialects).

* 1. Armenian. CU is one of the few universities to offer the study of Armenian, which is

taught at the elementary and intermediate levels, including an intensive intermediate course designed for heritage speakers. The advanced level is offered as an independent study. While making use of existing textbooks, largely grammar based, the courses are also designed to reflect current developments in language pedagogy. Material created by the instructor is task- based, promotes communication in real-life situations, makes use of authentic reading materials like short stories, newspapers articles, short films, and online broadcasts. The program also strives to reflect the current merge between Diaspora communities and the Republic of Armenia by introducing material in both Western and Eastern Armenian.

* 1. Arabic. MESAAS’s Arabic language program, directed by Dr. Taoufik Ben Amor, is staffed by 7 full time instructors, as well as 2 graders, all native speakers. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is taught as a living language to a diverse body of students with a wide range of academic and professional needs and courses aim to develop all five skills, listening, speaking, reading, writing and culture. With the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines as a model, the program uses performance-based standards not only to test its students but also to design and review all its courses to ensure that students achieve needed competencies. Four of the seven instructors are certified Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) testers. New teaching and

assessment tools are shared through an online Teachers Resource website. The *Alif*

*Baa* and *Al-Kitaab I, II,* and *III* textbooks are used in Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Arabic along with vocabulary expansion and grammar packets developed by the instructors, and supplementary material drawn from media, modern and classical primary sources. The program offers courses at four levels as well as graduate reading seminars. A total of 5 Elementary sections, 4 Intermediate, and 1 Advanced/Third Year section are offered. Off- sequence courses (for both elementary and intermediate Arabic) are available, so that students can start their study in either the fall or the spring semester. “Arabic for Heritage Speakers,” one of the first such programs in the US, which combines the curriculum of First and Second Year MSA has been taught for the past 10 years. “Spoken Arabic I and II” (Levantine) is offered for students who have completed two years of MSA. Fourth-year Arabic includes 4 courses: “Modern Arabic I &II,” “Advanced Grammar Review,” and

“Classical Arabic I and II.” The department has specialist courses based on Arabic sources, including “Readings in Sufi Texts” (Hallaq) and “War, Love, and Exile” (Al-Musawi), and “Themes in the Arabic Novel” (Bin Tyeer). These are taught in a mixture of English and Arabic, with readings in Arabic. Courses on MSA teaching pedagogy and translation are under development to respond to the needs of MESAAS graduate students who go on to teach Arabic and to start the building blocks for an MA in Language Teaching and Translation. We request grant funding for a summer pilot program on MSA teaching pedagogy, which will be open to teachers of Arabic in the K-14 school system and

coordinated with the New York Arabic Teachers Council (NYATC), (Budget H3). MESAAS offers three intensive summer programs, one at CU and two abroad which are also open to non-CU students. The program in Amman, Jordan, significantly expanded since its inception in 2010, offers intensive Arabic courses through the 4th year level, and Levantine/Jordanian Arabic. The MENA Arabic summer program, launched in 2014, combines the study of MSA in Amman with the study of North African culture and history in Tunis and offers *darija*, the dialect of North Africa. We expect these programs to resume as soon as it is safe to do so, most likely in 2023. The Arabic faculty have been active in developing materials: *Shahid*, a website housing a series of special videos supports, expands students’ listening

comprehension, reinforces vocabulary and introduces students to the culture, history and politics of the region. A teaching manual for heritage speakers was developed, with plans to make it available for wider dissemination (Budget I1). A 77-lesson grammar series, hosted on YouTube, is now in the program. MESAAS and the MEI organize a weekly Arabic Circle led by a graduate student, who is a native speaker, and attended by students of all levels.

* 1. Hebrew. The teaching of Hebrew has been significantly restructured in the past 6

years. The program, directed by Dr. Naama Harel who is assisted by two other full-time lecturers, offers Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced Hebrew classes, a Hebrew course for Heritage speakers, and a Readings in Hebrew Texts, developing reading, writing and verbal skills and cultural awareness. As students progress, they build vocabulary, learn complex grammatical, morphological and syntactic structures and read authentic texts.

Elementary and intermediate level courses have been upgraded to 5 credits, allowing the program to bring students to an advanced level more quickly. Several content courses are offered, beginning in third-year, allowing students to advance their skills and broaden their understanding of Israeli culture and society through various thematic prisms. One of the third-level courses examines Israeli cultural representations of biblical narratives. Using a variety of sources – literature, visual arts, popular music, television shows and films – the course examines how biblical themes are evoked in contemporary contexts. Another course,

focuses on Israeli cinema. The study of films, coupled with readings, provides insight into the social, historical and aesthetic concerns of Israeli cinema. Since 2015-16, two Advanced Plus courses have been on offer: Readings in Hebrew Texts classes are designed to give students extensive exposure to Hebrew literary works of prose, poetry and drama that represent diverse voices within Israeli society and critically engage conflicts and complexity from multiple viewpoints. One Readings in Hebrew Class deals with the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict, and another one focusses on ethnicity and immigration. MEI has also sponsored Hebrew language programming to complement the current offerings, including talks by Israeli authors in Hebrew. We aim to continue this successful program, as part of MEI’s *In Their Own Words* series (Budget F1.c).

* 1. Persian. Dr. Saeed Honarmand, directs the Persian language program. Three levels of

instruction are currently offered. We hope to be able to offer a course for heritage speakers, in AY 2022-23 to respond to student demand. The program trains students in all aspects of Persian and utilizes a variety of primary sources. *Āmuzesh-e Fārsi: Elementary Level* and

*Āmuzesh-e Fārsi: Intermediate Level* textbooks and associated multimedia components are used in first three years of instruction. The curriculum also draws on authentic texts from news outlets, social media, literature and film to foster a deep cultural awareness while developing students’ reading, writing, oral and aural skills. Grammar and elementary conversation and reading skills are introduced in the first year. These skills are further developed in the second year, with an emphasis on reading comprehension, writing, conversational skills, grammar and syntax, and standard Persian vocabulary acquisition, in preparation for reading and comprehension of advanced literary texts. The third year focuses on culturally specific idioms, expressions, and more advanced Persian texts. Grammatical structures are explicated as necessary. For the most advanced students, the department offers an individual supervised readings course, designed to further expand vocabulary, enhance reading comprehension and engage students in a comprehensive and critical study of classical and modern literary texts.

G.6. Modern Turkish and Ottoman Turkish. Under the direction of Dr. Zuleyha Colak since 2010, the Turkish program at CU has served as one of the pilot sites for the implementation

of the Deep Approach to Turkish Teaching and Learning (DATTL) program, pioneered by a group of researchers at the University of Wisconsin. ACTFL standards have been integrated with the Deep Approach pedagogy since the beginning of implementation. From their first semester of Turkish, students are considered curriculum builders and are given opportunities to pursue real life projects and make oral presentations. Working with authentic materials such as newspapers, Turkish films, TV series, and songs, the program teaches language by emphasizing culture. Teaching modules developed through the DATTL program are available for downloading for instructors and students. Students have shown remarkable progress in proficiency in the 5 language learning skills. Assessments using the ACTFL OPI conducted by the program’s instructors have shown that by the end of the year, the majority of the students in Elementary Turkish reach the “intermediate low” level and those who complete Intermediate Turkish reach the “advanced” level on the ACTFL scale. Students who complete Advanced Turkish, taught as an interdisciplinary research seminar, usually

achieve the “superior” level on the ACTFL scale. Most students spend at least one summer studying Turkish abroad. In addition to modern Turkish, we also offer 2 semesters of Ottoman Turkish for students working with sources from the Ottoman period.

B.7. Performance-Based Instruction and Proficiency Testing. To ensure functional language

acquisition by students, all classes are currently taught using performance-based instruction that conforms to established national standards. Training in proficiency testing and performance-based pedagogy is required of all full-time language instructors. A two-day introductory training for new instructors is provided by the LRC, which also works with instructors on producing performance-based materials and developing other teaching resources.

# Quality of Non-Language Instructional Program

1. 1&2. Depth and Breadth. In 2021-22, the university offered 110 courses with significant

ME content distributed across 21 departments at CU and Barnard, as well as through the graduate professional schools of Journalism, GSAPP, SIPA, and TC. Of these courses, 24 were new. Offerings were balanced between humanities and social sciences.

**Table 3: Sample New Courses Offered in 2021-22\***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Department** | **Course Name** | **Professor** |
| History | *Istanbul: Places, People. Everyday* | Zeynep Celik R |
| Architecture | *The Arab City in Film* | Yasser Elsheshtawy |
| Human Rights | *Refugees, Forced Migration, And Displacement* | Lara J Nettelfield |
| MESAAS | *Anticolonial Resistance in the Maghreb* | Nadia Sariahmed |
| Political Science | *Israeli National Security Strategy, Policy and Decision Making* | Charles D Freilich |
| Religion | *Gender, Islam and Society in North Africa* | Meriem El Haitami |
| Asian and ME Cult. | *Outlaws & Tricksters of Arabic Literature* | Matthew L Keegan |
| SIPA | *Central Asian Politics and Security* | Lawrence Markowitz |
| History - East Asian | *Islam in China and Inner Asia* | David Brophy |
| MESAAS | *Islamic Thought in an Age of Print* | Ahmad Shah |
| SIPA | *Arab Identity and Its Politics* | Safwan M Masri |

\*Partial list – see Appendix B for comprehensive list

Introductory courses on the region for undergraduates (Section H.1) are among the most popular offerings. *Major Topics in the Civilizations of the Middle East and India*, *Islamic Civilization*, and *Contemporary Islamic Civilization* each draw close to 100 students. The basic Core Curriculum course, *Contemporary Civilization*, includes study of the Quran. Each year a member of the ME program faculty offers a pedagogical seminar session devoted to teaching the 50 instructors and preceptors in this course how to present the Quran for student discussion. The Anthropology Department teaches popular undergraduate courses such as *Muslim Societies, Arabia Imagined, Women and Gender Politics in the Muslim World* that cross regional borders and count towards the “Global Core” requirement. Since 2013, the

themed sections on women’s studies and on human rights in University Writing (required for first-year students) have used a basic segment on the ME.

A post-disciplinary and interregional department, MESAAS covers the ME, South Asia and Africa, and is unique in this respect. Its faculty are pioneering an interdisciplinary approach to regional studies focused on both textual studies and social and political theory, with courses on topics ranging from Islamic science and Islamic Law, to gender, colonialism

and the history and politics of the ME, as well as courses on cinema and literature. Department members are trained in anthropology, history, philology, political science, and sociology in addition to those teaching literature and languages. The department has been strengthened in the last decade by the hiring of Timothy Mitchell, an eminent social scientist, as well as Wael Hallaq, a senior Islamic Law scholar, reinforcing our resources in this important field. Mana Kia, hired in 2013 and recently tenured has added a new dimension to departmental offerings with her focus on Indo-Persian cultural and social history. Recent hires, Assistant Professor Sarah Bin Tyeer in Arabic Literature and Gil Hochberg, the current MESAAS chair and Ransford Professor for Hebrew and Comparative Literature, have added needed courses and new perspectives. The most recent recruits are Elaine van Dalen, who works on Greek and Arab medicine and science and Laura Fair a historian of 20th century East Africa and the Swahili coast in particular. We also expect a new tenured appointment in Armenian Studies to be made in time for Fall 2022. Lecturers Sonia Ahsan (Climate and Globalization) and Kathryn Poots (Foundation to Islamic Studies) are also appointed in MESAAS. The A number of senior faculty (Diouf, Khalidi, Mamdani, Messick, Anidjar) hold joint appointments in MESAAS and in their home departments. At Barnard’s Asian and ME Cultures Department, Hisham Matar, the Libyan-British writer, winner of the 2017 Pulitzer prize for fiction, teaches courses on global literature. The Art History Department has two full professors who focus on our region, Avinoam Shalem, a historian of Islamic Art, and Zainab Bahrani (Ancient Near Eastern Art and Archeology). French has three faculty members working on issues relating to our region. Madeleine Dobie and Emmanuelle Saada both focus on France’s former empire and North Africa in particular. A preeminent expert on Islamic Philosophy, Souleymane Bachir Diagne, is jointly appointed in Philosophy and French. With two senior socio-cultural anthropologists, Lila Abu-Lughod (Gender, Egypt) and Brinkley Messick (Islamic Law, Yemen); Naor Ben Yehoyada, a recent hire working on

Mediterranean societies; and two tenured professors in Barnard’s Anthropology Department, Brian Larkin and Nadia Abu El-Haj, CU has one of the largest concentrations of ME anthropologists in the nation. The Religion faculty with expertise in Islam and ME Judaism includes Gil Anidjar, who focuses on Jews and Arabs, Political Theology, and Race and Religion, as well as Najam Haider who teaches both the main introductory course on Islam for undergraduates, as well as courses on various aspects of Islam Katherine Ewing, who focuses on North Africa as well as Turkish and South Asian Muslims in the diaspora, and Clémence Boulouque who works on Jewish thought and mysticism with a focus on the Sephardi world. The most recent hire, Aziza Shanazarova, is a junior scholar with a focus on Sufiism and on Islam in Central Asia. The Religion Department also has three senior faculty in Jewish Studies. At Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), a CU affiliate, Burton Visotsky heads the Interreligious Dialogue Program which fosters Jewish-Christian and Jewish- Muslim understanding and partnership. Jerusha Rhodes, at Union Theological Seminary (UTS), another CU affiliate, teaches courses on Islamic religious thought and interreligious engagement. In History, Tunç Şen who covers the late Ottoman period, Marwa Elshakry, a historian of science who specializes in the ME, Manan Ahmed, who focuses on Muslim intellectual history, and Paul Chamberlin, a historian of US international relations with the ME, complement the History Department’s two senior faculty members (Van de Mieroop, Khalidi). Zeynep Celik, the new Sabancı Visiting Professor in Turkish Studies and a distinguished senior scholar of history, art and archeology, has joined the department this academic year. In Political Science, Daniel Corstange works on ethnic politics in the ME and Lisa Anderson (former President of AUC and Dean Emeritus of SIPA) teaches courses on regime change and democratization in the ME and North Africa. There are two Barnard- based political scientists: Alexander Cooley, who works on state formation in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and Kimberly Marten, whose courses on political violence, weak states and

non-state actors include a significant focus on countries in the ME. Pier Mattia Tommasino (Italian) and Seth Kimmel (Latin American and Iberian Cultures) work on the relations between Southern Europe and the Muslim World, and Alessandra Ciucci (Music), is an ethnomusicologist focusing on North African music.

A significant number of faculty, both at SIPA and in the A&S departments, are strong on contemporary politics, with tremendous geographic range. Courses on international security issues (Gentry, Gottlieb, Betts, Weinberger), energy (Bininachvili), and human rights and conflict resolution (Barkan) focus in large part on the ME. The expanse of territory encompassing the Arabian Peninsula, the Persian Gulf, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and Central Asia is exceptionally well covered, with SIPA and A&S faculty providing expertise on Arabia (Messick), the Persian Gulf (Potter), on Turkey (Tunç), on modern Iran (Potter, Dabashi, Moradian), on Afghanistan and Pakistan (Potter, Marten), on Armenia (Mouradian) and on Central Asia (Sestanovich, Markowitz, Cooley). Israeli history, politics and society are covered by Yinon Cohen (Sociology), Michael Stanislawski (History) and Israeli culture, film and literature by Gil Hochberg (MESAAS). Rashid Khalidi and Paul Chamberlin (History), Timothy Mitchell and Joseph Massad (MESAAS), teach courses that focus on the modern history, gender, political economy, international relations, politics and culture of the region. Khalidi and Massad also teach courses on Palestine and Israeli-Palestinian relations. Mahmood Mamdani (Anthropology, MESAAS, SIPA) teaches courses on Islam, state violence, and international relations. Visiting Professorships in ME Studies, Turkish and Israel Studies typically add 2-3 courses yearly to the ME offerings. Recent courses include,

“History of Jews in the Arab World,” “Islamic History in an Age of Print,” and “Gender, Society and Islam in North Africa.”) A long-established Visiting Professorship in Armenian Studies allows for a semester-long hire in this field.

Among the other professional schools at CU, GSAPP, has become a hub for ME experts and projects on the region. Former dean Amale Andraos, Hiba Bou Akar in addition to Laura Kurgan, Ziad Jamaleddine and Yasser Elsheshtawi offer programming on architecture, design, and urbanism in the ME not found elsewhere. Fostering dialogue and cooperation, GSAPP has offered workshops at the Columbia Global Center (CGC) in Amman that brought faculty and students from the US, Israel and the UAE to develop proposals for new forms of public space. A number of faculty at the Graduate School of Journalism, most prominently Dean Steve Coll, publish extensively on the ME and national security issues. TC’s International and Comparative Education program (now International and Transcultural Studies) was established in 1899 making it the oldest such graduate program in the US. Offering courses on ME education and fostering strong connections to the region are hallmarks of the institution. TC’s Office for International Affairs is currently involved in several projects in the region, including professional development programs to upgrade English language instruction at universities in Tunisia and Algeria over three years as well as professional development of university faculty in Iraq.

Two current TC faculty members, Amina Tawasil (women’s Islamic education) and Amra Sabic-El-Rayess (Salafism and radicalization) focus on topics involving the region. Thea Renda Abu El-Haj (Education, Barnard) works on Muslim and Arab American youth. In the past four years, we have collaborated with TC to offer *Teaching ME History,* a course specifically targeted to social studies teachers. We request grant funding to support this course again on a regular basis for the next 4 years. (Budget H1.)

* 1. Interdisciplinarity. The undergraduate Core Curriculum is explicitly interdisciplinary.

MESAAS is designed at both undergraduate and graduate levels to provide perspectives on the ME that cross disciplines, with its faculty drawn from history, sociology, anthropology,

political science, and comparative literature. Many MESAAS courses are cross-listed with ICLS and co-taught with faculty from other departments. Anthropology faculty members teach courses that draw on other fields: women and gender studies (Abu-Lughod), media studies (Larkin), science studies (Abu El-Haj), history and law (Messick). The new survey course for the two MA degrees in Islamic Studies, “Foundation to Islamic Studies and Muslim Societies*,*” is organized around weekly lectures by CU faculty from various academic departments. Within professional schools, SIPA offers more than 15 interdisciplinary courses in which students can develop case studies on the ME or make it the primary focus of seminar research, including courses such as Lisa Anderson’s

“Authoritarianism.”

The MEI offers a setting in which specialists and students with diverse disciplinary interests meet to debate issues and are exposed to diverse ideas and perspectives while working in close partnerships with regional institutes and university-based centers and institutes. CSMS and IRCPL bring together scholars and students in religion, anthropology, history, political science, etc., to sustain multi-disciplinary analyses that address the rapidly changing role of religion in culture and political life. The Ifriqiyya Colloquium joins scholars of the ME and Africa in interdisciplinary inquiry on Islamic Africa. The newest interdisciplinary endeavor, the Adab Colloquium, brings together scholars of Islamicate languages who study the cross-cultural, transregional phenomenon of adab (Budget G.a).

* 1. Pedagogy and Resources. PhD students in the A&S are offered teaching fellowships as

an integral part of their professional development. The Graduate School of Arts & Science (GSAS) Center for Teaching and Learning’s Teaching Development Program (TDP) allows doctoral students to cultivate, document, and reflect on teaching development across the arc of their graduate school career. The Foundational Track introduces graduate students to

fundamental concepts and practices in student-centered learning, deepening the experience of TAships by connecting early instructional experience to proven and sustainable pedagogical practices. The Advanced Track puts emphasis on transferable professional skills that are cultivated through teaching practices, which culminates in the development of a digital teaching portfolio containing evidence of inquiry-based teaching development. The Center provides numerous resources for teaching fellows including workshops on course design, credentialing in teaching and pedagogy, and individual consultations to discuss pedagogical methods.

# Quality of Curriculum Design

* 1. Undergraduate Instruction. CU is renowned for its undergraduate “Core Curriculum,”

which includes a rigorous area studies component. All undergraduates must take at least two courses to fulfill the “Global Core” requirement, which asks students to engage directly with the variety of civilizations and the diversity of world traditions, and ME courses are popular ways to fulfill this requirement. Undergraduate interest in the ME is greatly enhanced by these requirements, and students pursue additional coursework in related fields. Enrollments continue to be robust in both language and non-language offerings on the region (Table 5).

**Table 5: Enrollments in ME Courses**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Undergraduates** | **Graduates** |
| AY | **2018-****19** | **2019-****20** | **2020-****21** | **2021-****22** | **Total** | **2018-****19** | **2019-****20** | **2020-****21** | **2021-****22** | **Total** |
| Area Studies | 1788 | 2207 | 1793 | 2219 | **6538** | 846 | 904 | 879 | 985 | **276**8 |
| Language | 472 | 412 | 354 | 380 | **1890** | 133 | 128 | 63 | 65 | **389** |
| **Total** | 2260 | 2619 | 2147 | 2599 | **8428** | 444 | 1056 | 1096 | 1041 | **3637** |

Our ME majors are found in the MESAAS department and are expected to develop two closely related skills. The first is linguistic expertise: a minimum of two years of course work

(16-20 credits) in one language is required, and further work (including intensive summer language study) is greatly encouraged, with the aim of learning how to study a cultural field through its own texts. Students begin their work with an introductory course on the region (*Contemporary Islamic Civilization*) followed by a small-group seminar course (*Major Texts ME*) in which they explore selected classic texts of the region. An additional 5 courses and a capstone seminar in their senior year complete the major requirement. A senior thesis, while not required, enables a student to be considered for departmental honors. In addition to MESAAS majors, we also track students in other departments who take a minimum of 12 credits of ME classes, including language (Table 6).

**Table 6: ME Degrees**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Degrees | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | **TOTAL** |
| BAMESAAS majors Total BA/UG | 6939***108*** | 5836***94*** | 4325***68*** | 5132***83*** | 221132***353*** |
| MAMESAAS majorsMA in Islamic Studies Total MA | 50104***64*** | 37154***56*** | 43139***65*** | 461412***72*** | 1765229***257*** |
| PhM | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | ***18*** |
| PhD | 7 | 10 | 11 | 9 | ***37*** |

Undergraduates at the School of General Studies have the option of enrolling in the dual degree program with Sciences Po, now in its eighth year, allowing them to spend their first 2 years in France at one of the specialized area campuses. Since the inception of the program, 264 GS students attended the program in Menton, where the curriculum focuses specifically on the ME.

* 1. Graduate Training. Graduate training relating to the ME occurs mainly through the

GSAS and in SIPA. GSAS departments that recognize the ME as a special area of study are Anthropology, History, Political Science, and MESAAS. Religion recognizes Islam as a specific area of graduate concentration. Graduate students in Sociology, Ethnomusicology, Art History, Comparative Literature, French, and at TC and Mailman School of Public Heath

have also produced dissertations focused on the ME. Requirements for dissertation defense stipulate that two members of every 5-member defense committee be from outside the sponsoring department. Consequently, students working on the region typically work extensively with ME specialists from departments other than their own. There are currently 83 PhD students working on topics related to the ME: 31 in MESAAS, 10 in Anthropology, 3 in Political Science, 13 in History, 7 in Religion, 4 in Ethnomusicology, 8 in French, 4 in Art History, 2 in Architecture and 2 at TC. Students interested in gaining a competence in ME affairs before joining the work force or going on to another graduate degree normally enroll in MA programs in A&S departments, with the majority found in MESAAS (10 MAs in 2021-22), but also in Anthropology, Religion and International History. The MESAAS MA program requires 30 credits of non-language courses, proficiency at the intermediate level of one regional language, and a thesis. Students interested in the study of the larger Islamic world can enroll in the two interdisciplinary MA programs in Islamic Studies, ISMA and the new Dual Degree with AKU-ISMC (See Section A1). There are currently 20 students in both programs, an increase of over 60% from 2019. The Masters of International Affairs (MIA) program at SIPA allows students to pursue a “specialization” in ME (34 students in 2021-22) and requires foreign language competency; those in the ME specialization study Arabic or one of the other ME languages. Law, Business and Journalism students enrolled in dual- degree programs with SIPA have the opportunity to focus on language and area studies courses, as do Journalism students who pursue a dual degree with Religion. Many of these dual degree candidates specialize in the ME. CU has a well-established dual degree program for graduates (in addition to the newer program for undergraduates) with Sciences Po in France which offers a large number of courses on the modern ME as well as advanced Arabic. There are currently 14 SIPA students in their 1st year studying in Paris at Sciences Po in the Dual Degree Program, many of them focusing on the ME and studying Arabic.

Teachers College (TC), one of the leading graduate schools of education in the U.S., which offers courses on the ME and the Muslim world, has a regular cohort of graduate students pursuing academic or professional careers in this field.

* 1. Academic and Career Advising. Advising takes place at the level of each student’s

school and within departments at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Professors are designated as Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) and Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and each student also chooses an individual advisor from among the faculty in the field. Advisors provide counsel and information about course selection, outside funding opportunities, theoretical development, language training, and job search strategies and opportunities. The university’s Center for Career Education (CCE) helps students assemble dossiers for prospective employers or graduate and professional programs. SIPA maintains its own Career Advancement Center (CAC), advising students on job placement and internships, including placements in ME-related jobs. Both of these offices sponsor recruiting events for employers, including government agencies seeking students with regional expertise.

The MEI begins each semester with an orientation for SIPA students who are interested in the ME and continues to advise them throughout their time at SIPA. The Institute also holds information sessions for graduate and undergraduate students on summer language programs and organizes career talks with alumni for job information specific to the region (Budget I3). The MEI also spends significant time advising students interested in applying for the FLAS fellowship, ensuring that the requirements of the program are well understood.

* 1. Research/Study Abroad

The university has made “global studies” a central part of its mission and is funding various initiatives to increase the range of international experiences available to undergraduates in research, work, or study abroad. Study abroad opportunities for undergraduates are coordinated through the Center for Undergraduate Global Engagement (UGE) as well as

Barnard College’s Office of International Programs. For our region, during pre-pandemic times, there were 14 approved junior year study-abroad as well as summer programs in addition to CU’s own programs in Amman (the Intensive Arabic Summer Language Program and the MENA Studies program in Amman and Paris). 31 students were studying in the region for 1 or 2 semesters during AY 2018-19, and 45 students were pursuing intensive language study in the MENA region during Summer 2019. A small number of students were able to travel to study abroad in Summer 2021, but most (including FLAS recipients) attended summer language programs online. We are cautiously planning for a resumption of some study-abroad programs for summer 2022 and AY 2022-23. CU students have been very successful in obtaining Critical Language Study (CLS) fellowships to study Arabic, Turkish, and Persian in the region. The availability of summer FLAS awards for undergraduates, the Presidential Global Fellowship for rising sophomores and the new De Bary Summer Fellowship have allowed talented undergraduates to spend time abroad for summer research and language acquisition. Political instability in recent years and related State Department travel restrictions have reduced the number of students spending time abroad and have shifted student travel from some destinations such as Egypt to destinations, like Morocco and Oman. Nevertheless, there is still great interest and demand from students for pursuing overseas experiences in our region, such that the number of qualified Summer FLAS applicants greatly exceeds the number of fellowships we have to offer. For the past 10 years, MEI funding has helped undergraduates pursue summer research projects and unpaid internships in the region (~ 3-5 awards per year) and we have also supported TC graduate students with dissertation

travel and research grants, something not available to them through TC. Students going to Israel for short term study projects, internships, and volunteer positions have been funded by the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies (~ 15 awards annually). Working with the Global Centers and CU alumni associations in over 10 countries, UGE and CCE have created the new Columbia Experience Overseas (CEO) program, which offers high quality internship experiences in a diverse array of industries. Students have interned in Amman, Tunis Istanbul, as well as a number of Gulf countries.

SIPA requires students to pursue a semester long internship and many students specializing in ME choose to fulfill this requirement during the summer, interning at organizations in the ME. Most doctoral students spend between one and two years abroad conducting dissertation research in the ME with departmental or external funding. In 2019, 49 PhD students received $196,000 in funding from CU for summer travel and research in the region. Graduate students in all departments are also very successful in raising dissertation research funds from the Social Science Research Council, the Fulbright program, the National Science Foundation, and others.

# Quality of Staff Resources

* 1. Faculty. CU’s ME faculty are highly productive and nationally visible, with firm links

not only to national and international scholarly networks, but also to the disciplinary departments in which they are appointed. Of the ME faculty who hold full-time professorial appointments or lectureships and typically devote 50-100% of their university effort to the ME region, we have 70 full-time appointments, including 41 Professors, 10 Associate Professors, and 19 Assistant Professors in tenure track positions. In addition, there are 25 lecturers (11 of which are language lecturers) and 15 adjuncts most of whom have been teaching long term, as well as 3 to 5 visiting faculty each year.

CU’s commitment to excellence ensures that it recruits only the most highly qualified faculty for its programs. All full-time faculty are chosen in a rigorous search process; positions are advertised nationally and internationally. Tenure requires excellence in teaching, university and professional service, and national recognition as a published scholar. Committees on Instruction scrutinize courses, and students are asked to evaluate faculty teaching. All faculty expect to be called upon to advise students, write letters of recommendation, and supervise special projects, along with formal classroom activities. The university offers strong support in faculty development, granting tenured faculty a semester of paid leave (or a year at half pay) every 3.5 years. Assistant professors are granted a similar leave during their first five years of teaching. CU supports research and travel through yearly allocations (Table 2) and faculty have also been very successful in securing additional funds to support travel or research residence in the region. Virtually all of the core faculty can be expected to spend time in the ME over any given four-year period. We request grant funds to assist regional travel by our regular adjunct faculty for whom travel funds are not available (Budget C2).

* 1. MEI Staff and Structure. Brinkley Messick, Professor of Anthropology and MESAAS,

has directed the MEI since 2015. His courses and scholarship focus on the anthropology of law, legal history, written culture, and the circulation and interpretation of Islamic law. He is a co-founder of the Center for Palestine Studies (CPS) (2010), the Sharīʿa Workshop (2015), and the new Center for the Study of Muslim Societies (CSMS) (2018). His *Sharīʿa Scripts* (2018) is a work of historical anthropology focused on Islamic Law. The MEI’s Associate Director, Astrid Benedek, was hired in December 2003 and holds an MA from SIPA and a BA in ME and African Studies from Georgetown University. She previously spent 15 years in the not-for-profit sector managing international education programs for the Open Society

Institute. Simone Rutkowitz, the Program Manager for the CPS, oversees its programming and outreach. She holds an MA in Near Eastern Studies from NYU.

In the past 5 years, the MEI has cut down its administrative staff by sharing the administrative workload with another regional institute, and has instead hired more professional staff. Kathryn Spellman Poots, hired in 2017 to upgrade advising and core

course instruction in the institute’s MA programs, is Senior Lecturer and the MA Academic Program Director. We are in the process of hiring a new part-time Outreach Coordinator to fill the current vacancy. A SIPA-funded student and other student workers assist the Associate Director with our communications (website, newsletter, social media) as well as event organization. The MEI operates with an Executive Committee consisting of senior faculty representing ME faculty across academic departments in the social sciences and humanities.

* 1. Nondiscriminatory Employment Practices.

Since 2005, Columbia has invested $185 million to diversify its faculty, the largest public commitment made by an Ivy League institution to support faculty recruitment and development. Among CU’s most notable initiatives is its Faculty Recruitments in Race and Racism Scholarship, which involves a Faculty Cluster Hire Initiative, launched in 2020, which invited schools to submit proposals for recruiting outstanding tenured and tenure-track faculty engaged in race and racism scholarship Also notable is the Inclusive Faculty Pathways Initiative, which creates opportunities for talented students from underrepresented groups to pursue Columbia's graduate programs, with particular emphasis on pathways toward the professorate. The percentage of tenured and tenure track women and BLN (Black, Latinx and Native) faculty have steadily increased in the past decade. Since 2016, the percentage of women tenured and tenure track faculty has increased from 29.6% to 34.2%,

while the percentage of BLN tenured and tenure track faculty has increased from 6.7% to 8.8%. Women make up 38-49% of new tenure and tenure track faculty hires for each of the last 5 years. In the last decade, BLN faculty have made up 10-15% of new tenured and tenure track hires every year. In 2021, CU welcomed the most racially and ethnically diverse cohort of new tenure and tenure-track faculty hires in its history, (29% Black, Latinx, or Native), and with 47% of tenure and tenure-track hires identifying as women, the gender diversity of this cohort was the second highest in our history. Data from 2021 indicate that 10.6% of full-time faculty were Underrepresented Minorities (URM), while 4.8% were international, and 18.9% were other minorities (total of 34.3% for these categories combined). Data from the same year indicate that 18.2% of full-time faculty were Asian, 5.4% Hispanic/Latino, and 4.7% Black/African American. In 2021, 46.2% of full-time faculty were women. Additional data on faculty diversity at CU is available here: <https://provost.columbia.edu/content/faculty-diversity>. In 2021, CU also welcomed its first

woman University Provost, Mary Boyce, previously Dean of the School of Engineering. Women head 9 of CU’s 14 schools with currently appointed deans, including the School of Law, School of the Arts, and School of Public Health.

# Strength of Library

* 1. Collections. Columbia University Libraries (CUL) has a long history of collecting

materials about Islam and the ME to support the network of departments, centers, institutes and programs that host and foster research and learning on the ME and Islam. Our ME collections serve both multidisciplinary and specialized scholarly interests in the ME at CU and reflect the University’s mission to “support research and teaching on global issues… to create academic relationships with many countries and regions… and to convey the products of its efforts to the world.” Outstanding in their deep and comprehensive coverage of Arabic,

Persian and Turkish cultures and languages, and their relevance to current research and public debate about the ME, the collections also display a unique commitment to documenting the diversity of languages and cultures that flourish in the ME, including Armenian, Assyrian, Kurdish, and Maltese, among others. The collections include materials from and about the region and individual countries, in major Western languages as well as in the many languages of the area. Geographical coverage ranges from Morocco to Afghanistan and from Turkey to Sudan; chronological coverage extends from the third millennium BCE to the present; and subject matter spans virtually all disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. Blanket order contracts with vendors (and our participation in the Library of Congress ME Cooperative Acquisitions Program) cover almost all ME countries and document underrepresented minorities in the ME. Special attention is also given to materials about and from ME diaspora communities in Europe and the US, and about Islam and Islamic groups in Africa, Europe, the US, and Asia. The number of monographs in the ME collections approaches half a million titles (including 147,620 titles for Arabic, 53,755 for Hebrew, 58,530 titles for our outstanding Turkish collection, and 26,394 titles for Persian). Other languages in the collection include 11,053 titles in Armenian, 3176 titles in Kurdish, and 702 titles in Maltese. Subscriptions to serials and periodicals from and about the ME currently number over 1,300. Electronic resources with dedicated ME and Islamic Studies content include the Brill’s Online Reference Collection, Index Islamicus, the ME and Central Asian Studies database, Oxford Islamic Studies Online, Oxford Bibliographies in Islamic Studies, Early Arabic printed books from the British Library, Confidential Print, Cambridge Histories Online and KotobArabia collection of e-books. Most recent acquisitions include Al-Ahram Digital Archive, Oxford Handbooks Online, Arabic Literature of Africa Online, complete set of primary sources from Cambridge Archive Editions, Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan 1834-1922, MagIran periodical database and Persian E-Book collection from Miras Maktoob

series. Most of the newly acquired electronic resources are exclusively held by CUL in the New York metropolitan area. These resources are complemented by a growing number of general electronic resources that have substantial ME-related content, e.g. ATLA Religion Database, ISI Emerging Markets and Factiva news, government, business and financial/economic information, the Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Reports, 1941-1996, and the MideastWire (news translations from regional sources). While most major newspapers from the region are now available online, the library also provides access to news through airmail subscriptions to print ME newspapers such as: al-Ahrām, al-Ahram Weekly, Iṭṭilāʻāt, Kayhan International and Cumhuriyet. The libraries’ media center houses a growing and heavily consulted collection of audiovisual materials from and about the ME. It currently holds over 1,300 documentary and feature films in ME languages, some of which are unique holdings in North American libraries. Our Rare Book and Manuscript Library houses over 2500 important Judaic, Hebrew, Islamic (Arabic, Persian and Turkish) as well as Indo-Persian manuscripts, and a number of unique archival collections (e.g. the records of the Robert College, the first American liberal arts college in the region).

* 1. Support for Acquisitions and Staff*.* CUL allocated $376,954 in FY 2020-21 for

collecting ME materials. Additional funds from gifts and endowments are available for the acquisition of materials to support Armenian, Ancient Near East, and Israeli and Jewish Studies. These expenditures do not include funds expended by other library units for materials in English and Western European languages from and about the region (e.g. the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, the Music Library, the Burke Theological Library). Significant expenditures from general library funds were made for some electronic books, databases and journals. CUL spends approximately $464,928muslimper year on salaries for staff directly associated with selecting, acquiring, processing, and preserving ME

materials and Islamic studies materials, and for research support services. This includes support for a full-time ME and Islamic Studies Librarian and a Librarian for Jewish Studies who devotes part of her time to the ME.

The MEI Librarian, Peter Magierski, has an MA in ME Studies from New York University and an MLIS from Rutgers University and is an active member of the ME Librarians’ Association and the Middle East Materials Project (MEMP). He coordinates the development of the collections and works with faculty to support research and teaching about the ME at the University and beyond. He is responsible for reference consultations, library instruction sessions, targeting faculty, students, ME scholars and professionals at CU, and in the broader research community.

* 1. Collaboration and Resource Sharing. The University participates in various inter-

institutional cooperative endeavors on the local, national and international level.

CUL takes seriously its public role and contributes to the creation and dissemination of valuable resources about the region to a diverse public.

In 2019, Columbia expanded the Research Collections and Preservation Consortium (ReCAP). This shared collection service was originally developed in partnership with Princeton University Library and The New York Public Library (NYPL). The partnership now includes materials from Harvard University Libraries and makes available over eight million items from NYPL, Princeton and Harvard libraries for request through CUL’s CLIO catalog. CU faculty, students, and staff can request direct delivery of these items to campus.

In this context, CUL collaborates with Princeton and Harvard colleagues to analyze and evaluate their own collections, reduce unnecessary duplication and free up funds for strategic acquisition of unique materials.

BorrowDirect is another example of a very popular resource-sharing service. CUL was a

founding member of Borrow Direct consortium, which provides expedited access to circulating books held at Brown, CU, Cornell, Dartmouth, Duke, Harvard, MIT, Princeton, U Chicago, U Pennsylvania, Stanford and Yale. The service allows users to request a book from any partner library’s collection, choosing from around 90 million items. More than 270,000 items are shared each year across 13 participating institutions.

CUL also participates in an open access project, namely the Arabic Collections Online (ACO) project which is a partnership between six leading academic libraries: NYU, Princeton, Cornell, CU, American University in Cairo, American University of Beirut and UAE National Archives. ACO made available online Arabic books dating from the mid- nineteenth century to as late as the 1990s, in a variety of subjects, including: literature, history, law, and Islamic studies. During the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic, and due to access challenges to Libraries’ physical collections worldwide, ACO experienced an unprecedented 700 percent increase in user traffic.

CUL is also engaged in another collaborative project, the Muslim World Manuscript project, centered around digitizing Islamic manuscript collections currently held in North American university libraries. The project is a collaboration between CU, the University of Pennsylvania, the Free Library of Philadelphia, Haverford College, and Bryn Mawr College. The project has made available online over five hundred Islamic manuscripts, 350 of which came from the collections of the Columbia University Libraries, thus allowing previously unknown and underutilized works to reach the widest possible audience. We request grant funding for an exhibit highlighting the manuscript collection and a student-led conference on manuscripts and Islamic science based on the exhibit and our larger collection. (Budget F2.c) The Middle East Studies librarian is a co-founder of AMIR MidEast, a very popular web- based publication (over one million views) that distributes information on Open Access resources in ME and Islamic Studies.

Within the NYC area, the Libraries have strong ties with the NYPL and NYU Library. CU and NYU have reciprocal access agreements and collaborate on North Africa collection development policy. The Manhattan Research Library Initiative (MaRLI) enables CU and NYU doctoral students, faculty, and librarians and NYPL researchers to borrow materials from all three institutions. CUL is also a member of a variety of regional consortia, including the North East Research Library Consortium, the North East ME Libraries Consortium, and the NY State Library Consortium. Nationally, the University is an active member of OCLC and SHARES, which provides on-site reading and interlibrary loan privileges to patrons of member libraries. Membership in the Center for Research Libraries and its ME Studies- specific group, the ME Materials Project (MEMP), provides access via interlibrary loan to rich collections of foreign newspapers, specialized, rare, or unusually expensive materials.

CUL is also a member of Ivy Plus Libraries, a partnership of 13 leading academic research libraries, which promotes building collective collections as well as teaching, research, and public missions of the respective institutions and the global scholarly community.

CUL works closely with Digital Scholarship Center, which engages in outreach, education, and advocacy to ensure that the scholarly work produced at CU has a global reach and accelerates the pace of research across disciplines. The Center is actively developing and promoting Academic Commons, a digital repository of open access scholarship. Academic Commons allow faculty, students, and staff of CU and its affiliate institutions to deposit the results of their scholarship online.

The Libraries is an active partner in promoting and providing venues for lectures, presentations and fora of faculty and guests from MEI and MESAAS.

# Impact and Evaluation

G.1. / G.2. Impact, Activities that Address National Need and Generating Information for the

Public. The data in Table 1 shows that our activities in the past 4 years have trained a large

number of foreign language specialists in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, as well the number of specialists who graduate with a significant number of ME area studies courses. Placement data suggests that a meaningful percentage of our graduates pursue employment in government. Details on Columbia’s programs for facilitating undergraduates and graduates

entering careers in government are described in detail in the “Statement on Promoting Areas of National Need” and in Section H.3 on career advising. MEI’s emphasis in the coming grant cycle will be to continue to reach beyond our own campus and work with both Hunter College in NYC and ISCG (representing a number of MSIs and 2-year colleges) to develop student interest and build institutional capacity and to extend our teacher training activities in order to incorporate knowledge about the ME into the K-12 curriculum, resulting in an increase in the quantity and quality of specialists ready to pursue employment in areas of national need.

**Table 1: Impact of Activities on University, Region and Nation, 2018-2022**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Activity** | **Impact** | **Output Indices** |
| Training students | Language Instruction | Increased ME language expertise in the U.S. | 2,007 students enrolled in ME languages68 students registered for individual tutorials in Arabic and Persian through NaTakallam |
| Undergraduates | Increased awareness and knowledge of ME among college-trained Americans | 6,538 undergraduates enrolled in area studies courses 132 MESAAS majors353 students graduate w/15 or more ME credits 32-35 students/year in dual-degree program with Sciences Po focus on the ME |
| Graduates | Increased number of ME specialists prepared for academia, government, and the professions | 83 PhD students working on ME in 7 departments in 2021-222,768 graduate students enrolled in area studies courses257 MA graduates w/15 or more ME credits, 37 PhDs awarded |
| FLASFellowship | Increase in studentspursuing advanced ME language proficiency | 40 AY FLAS, 45 Summer FLAS awarded45% studying at Advanced Level, 35% at Intermediate Level |
| Study and Internships Abroad | Enhanced experience for American students in the ME | 76 undergraduate students studying abroad 2018-19 & 23 pursuing internships in ME,14 approved programs, including in person andvirtual programs |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  | Funding for language study, research and other projects funded through MEI and IIJS grants, as well as CU Presidential FellowshipsColumbia Experience Abroad program provides internship in region for undergraduates |
| Placement of Graduates | Grants for Research & Conferences | Facilitate dissertation research in the ME and professional development opportunities for PhDcandidates | 43 PhD students funded in summer 2019 for research in region/Over 47 papers at conferences, with over $25,000 in conference travel funds |
| Career Placement | ME studies graduates placed in a variety of positions in education, government, NGO sector, and business | 28.1% SIPA 2020 graduates work for US federal and local government16.8% of undergraduates working in education, 7.9% in government and military |
| Curriculum & Staff Development | New Course Development | Building a curriculum to meet the trainingneeds and attract more students | 110 area studies courses in 2021-22, 24 of them new MEI funded courses on region to cover curricular gaps |
| Staff Development | Building Staff capacity to meet the teachingand research needs on the ME at Columbia | 2 new chairs and 1 visiting position established6 junior faculty tenured, 11% increase in area faculty salaries |
| Faculty Research | Furthering and disseminationknowledge about the ME | 121 Books, 13 edited books, 237 Articles$959,000 in research funds |
| Outreach to postsecondary institutions, general public, schools and media | Library Resources | Increasing access to the ME collection for theuniversity, region and nation. | 32 visiting scholars in ME provided access to library www.virtualMElibrary, 20,000 hits/monthAMIR (Open Access ME resources), 1,000 subscribers |
| Online Resources | Providing comprehensive resources for collaboration, research,news, opportunities, events, and publications | Gulf 2000, 2,000+ experts sharing information on Persian GulfColumbia on YouTube, TCs “ITunes” site CIAO website, 45,000 hits/monthMEI subscriber list, 2300 |
| Post-secondary conferences & events | Increase exposure to expertise on ME for students, faculty and community; engage with ME specialistsworldwide; | Total events: 114, w/average attendance ~27, total attendance 12,500; 32 events on current affairs, covering region (Iran, Iraq, North Africa, Israel. Palestine, the Gulf, Levant)15% jointly with regional institutes, 29% with other units of the university, |
| K-12 | Exposing K-12 pupils in NY region to ME Training teachers to integrate ME into theK-12 curriculum | 279 teachers reached through professional development workshops, collectively teaching over 9,000 students/year |
| Media, Business, General Public | Increasing exposure of general public to ME-related knowledge and information | 40 to 60% of audience for MEI public events are members of general public; over 75 media appearances, including interviews or op-ed pieces/year by ME faculty |

G.3. Equal Access. As pursuant to Section 427 of GEPA, CU and MEI in particular are

committed to equal access and treatment of students and program participants. CU employment policies and admissions policies expressly prohibit discrimination and actively encourage increased minority participation in the academic mission of the university. Within the Ivy League, Columbia College has the highest percentage of minority students enrolled. Since Columbia College shares courses with Barnard, approximately two-thirds of the undergraduate population is female. The School of General Studies (GS) hosts a number of programs to encourage increased minority student participation in international affairs and area studies programs, including the Foreign Policy and National Security Initiative Program (Serrano Scholars), which is designed to prepare non-traditional college students for leadership roles in foreign affairs and national defense. The program brings students from Hostos Community College in the Bronx to GS and then to SIPA and is supported by grants from the Department of Defense and the Department of State. GS is home to a large population of student veterans who attend through the Yellow Ribbon and other programs. In the past 4 years, a total of 2,625 veterans were enrolled across 20 schools with 60% enrolled at GS and SIPA. The great majority of these veterans have spent time in the ME and Afghanistan and many are interested in building upon this experience by studying the languages, history and culture of the region.

All events, competitions, courses, and projects operate in accordance with Columbia’s strict guidelines on affirmative action (see GEPA). Redesigned walkways and building entrances, new ramps and elevators make the campus more accessible to wheelchair-bound people. Elevators refurbished with Braille control panels and equipped with audible floor indicators have improved facilities for the blind. Restrooms in many buildings, including Knox Hall where many ME classes are taught, are now wheelchair accessible. Free “reporter” services are provided for deaf students. The MEI is also working with the university’s

ethnicity coding project, which collects data for the federal government’s IPEDS program, to specifically monitor participation rates of minority students and students with disabilities in all ME related programs.

G4. Evaluation Plan The external evaluation of the MEI will be conducted by the Center for

Evaluation, Policy and Research (CEPR), a nationally and internationally recognized external evaluator. CEPR’s content-diverse portfolio of projects includes extensive experience conducting external evaluations of programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education (USED), Department of State, National Science Foundation and NATO; and evaluation technical assistance for the Office of Management and Budget, and the Office of Innovation and Improvement (USED). CEPR has served as an external evaluator and/or provided technical assistance for twenty NRCs and Area Studies Programs across four universities (Indiana, Georgetown, Harvard and Columbia). CEPR Project Director for this evaluation, Dr. Ruddy, has served as an Advisory Board member to the USED postsecondary office providing consultation on a survey administered to FLAS fellows; and has worked closely and collaboratively with MEI and other CU NRCs during the most recent Title VI funding cycle. CEPR’s prior experience working with Title VI centers over twelve years, and with MEI in 2014-22, will provide a strong foundation for the proposed external evaluation; and will allow the MEI to efficiently and effectively use evaluation results to improve the ongoing activities and to measure impact.

G.5 Evaluation Components. The external evaluation conducted by CEPR will be

complemented by ongoing internal evaluation. Both the internal and external evaluation will include comprehensive formative and summative evaluation of center activities and NRC collaborative efforts. The evaluation specifically focuses on measuring the extent to which

the MEI successfully meets the GPRA measures and the three established goals (corresponding to the Title VI priorities): Engage MSIs to develop student interest and build institutional capacity; extend teacher training activities to incorporate knowledge about the ME into the K-12 curriculum; and increase quantity and quality of specialists ready to pursue employment in areas of national need.

CEPR worked closely and collaboratively with MEI to develop meaningful and specific goals and corresponding evaluation questions and to develop project-specific, and quantifiable, outcome measures to assess progress towards goals. Detailed evaluation questions, measures and data collection methodology are included in Appendix D.

G.6 Evaluation Timeline. ***Formative Evaluation:*** The first half of the project will focus on

evaluating the extent to which new or redesigned programs/activities are being implemented as intended and accomplishing their stated need. The resulting feedback will allow for continuous improvement to help ensure that program goals are met. 2. ***Summative Evaluation:*** Evaluation in years 2-4 will primarily analyze the outcomes of the MEI activities/programs. For example, CEPR will measure the extent to which MEI has impacted students, faculty, and the community. To accomplish this, CEPR will follow up with former participants, including those from K-12 schools, community colleges, businesses and the media. An online *Outreach Survey* will be administered to determine the extent to which the MEI has impacted participants’ teaching, career, research, studies, and language use in Years

2. An *Academic Affiliate* Survey, will be administered to all academic program affiliates of the NRC including current undergraduate and graduate students, alumni, with a focus on MEI’s MA Program in Year 2. The survey will determine the impact MEI has had on their current/future studies and careers. Additionally, MEI can use the data gathered on this survey to report on its participants’ current status, employment, and use of cultural knowledge/language in their current studies/employment.

1. 7 Previous Evaluations.

In AY 2016-17, the MEI and the ME program at Columbia underwent a multistage major review mandated by the Columbia University’s Academic Review Committee (ARC). Starting with a detailed formal Self-Study prepared by the Institute, the review proper was initiated by the multiple-day visit to campus of an External Review Committee, composed of distinguished scholars in the field of ME Studies (from Harvard, American University in Beirut (AUB) and UC Davis), who conducted interviews with MEI faculty, including the Director and the Executive Committee; with the relevant deans; and with students, undergraduate and graduate. Their External Review Committee Report was submitted to the university ARC Committee, and to the delegated committee of CU faculty, who conducted another series of interviews and data collection, and issued an encompassing final report. The process concluded with a letter from and a meeting with the academic deans.

The final ARC Report found that “MEI has maintained its strong commitment to its traditional mission and has fulfilled the obligations stipulated by the Title VI grant… The public events are well attended, the program with Teachers College is well established and

the collaboration with La Guardia Community College seems promising.” The report closely examined the workings of the new Islamic Studies MA (ISMA) and made valuable recommendations, which we have followed, such as hiring a faculty advisor and introducing a dedicated introductory course.

In addition, the work and programs of the MEI are regularly reviewed and evaluated by its governing bodies. The Executive and Administrative Committees have helped

introduce improvements to the program, making sure that the MEI’s activities achieve their intended goals and contribute to the strengthening of ME studies at Columbia. The executive faculty committee has been deeply involved in establishing and recently helping to significantly expand our Islamic Studies program, in particular through a new partnership

with the Aga Khan University (AKU) Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations (ISMC) and the creation of a new Dual Degree Program in Islamic Studies between CU and AKU. It has also spearheaded the creation of the new Center for the Study of Islamic Societies (CSMS) and validated our close collaboration with other area institutes to break down the artificial barriers between regions, including in particular South Asia and Africa, regions neighboring the ME that share with it cultural, religious, and social characteristics, as well as a shared colonial past and post-colonial present.

# Outreach Activities (NRC)

* 1. Elementary and Secondary Schools. MEI reaches out to schools and teachers in a variety

of ways: through our professional development workshops for teachers, our collaborations with community colleges and our ongoing partnership with Teachers College. Our major outreach vehicle is a series of PD courses for NYC teachers, which have been upgraded to meet the standards and needs of educators using the K-12 NY State Global Studies Curriculum (Table 8). The majority of our workshop participants are high school teachers, but elementary, middle school, and two-year college instructors also attend. The courses are organized as one or two day-long workshops featuring faculty from CU, TC, advanced CU doctoral candidates, and full-time faculty from other universities. In summer 2018 and 2019 we offered two courses: “Decentering the State: Refugees, Migration and Displacement” and “Collecting Muslim Oral Histories,” both accredited by the NYC DOE for PD credit. Both courses are content-driven and discuss how to bring relevant ME material into curricula.

Educational materials, including primary sources, are provided and implementation methods discussed. For the upcoming academic year and summer, we are planning to organize several teacher training events including “Understanding Muslim Cultures through the Arts" and "Religious Worlds of New York" in collaboration with Dr. Katherine Merriman, head of

Muslim History Tour NYC (Budget H4.) and “Gender and Islam” with TC PhD candidate Afaf al Khoshman (Budget H2.)

Our fruitful partnerships with Teachers College allows us to reach a wide audience. TC is uniquely positioned to extend MEI’s outreach activities. Its extensive contacts with schools, administrators and the educational research community are a starting point for developing strong audiences in education—from teachers to policy makers—who can best

guide us in serving the K-12 needs for ME outreach. In 2018 and 2019 we partnered with the Department of International and Transcultural Studies at TC to jointly offer PD courses for teachers led by TC faculty member Dr. Amina Tawasil. In fall 2018 and fall 2019 we provided funding for a new survey course on the ME at TC, mainly for pre-service and in- service teachers enrolled in the social studies education MA program. We request continued funding for this course (Budget H1.)

Over the past 6 years, MEI has supported the work of the NY Arabic Teachers Council (NYATC), an organization that works with K-16 Arabic language educators throughout the NYC tri-state area to provide a forum for them to collaborate on innovative approaches to teaching, with the goal of strengthening and professionalizing the field. In 2018 and 2019 NYATC held two of its core programs, including the summer STARTALK teacher training program at Columbia thanks to MEI support. We seek to build on this partnership and offer NYATC members and others interested in upgrading their teaching credentials the opportunity to participate in MESAAS Arabic-language teaching pedagogy summer workshops, as well as opportunities for practical training/student-teaching for CU’s Arabic language summer program. (Budget H3).

**Table 8: Prof. Development Course/Teacher Training 2018-2021**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Semester & Attendance | Course Title | Partners | Speakers |
| Summer 2018: 38 K-12teachers; 4 two-year college instructors | NYATC S2018 Conference; STARTALK Teacher Training Program: Highly EffectiveTeacher by Design IV | CUArabic Dept. | 1. CU FT Fac;
2. Other Inst.
 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Spring 2018: 42 K-12teachers, 3 two-year college instructors | Decentering the State: Refugees, Migration and Displacement (PD credit) | TC | (1) CU FT Fac;(2) Other Univ FT Fac; (1) ABD CU |
| Summer 2018: 54 K-12teachers; 4 two-year college instructors. | Collecting Muslim Oral Histories: An Era of Restrictions and Bans (PD credit) | TC | (4) CU FT Fac;(3) TC FT Fac;(8) Other Univ FT FAC |
| Summer 2019:36 K-12teachers; 3 two-year college instructors | NYATC S2018 Conference; STARTALK Teacher Training Program: Highly Effective Teacher by Design V | CUArabic Dept. | (1) CU FT Fac.(3) Other Inst. |
| Summer 2019: 51 K-12teachers; 6 two-year college instrucs. | Collecting Muslim Oral Histories (PD credit) | TC; | (4) CU FT Fac;(3) TC FT Fac;(1)Other Univ FT Fac |
| Fall 2020 | -TC Student Workshops* Countering Islamophobia Through Education
 | TC | (8) Grad Students |
| Spring 2021 | TC Student Workshops* Incorporating Islam into the

Mainstream Education System: A Strategy to Counter Islamophobia | TC | (8) Grad Students |
| Spring 2022 (planned) | Gender and Islam (PD Credit) | TC | (1) TC Phd |

MEI will continue to offer Professional Development courses and other teacher workshops during the AY and summer (budget H2) including “Understanding Muslim Cultures through the Arts" and "Religious Worlds of New York” and maintain its close collaboration with NYATC for Arabic teacher training (Section B.3 & H.1).

* 1. Postsecondary Institutions. CU’s principal vehicles for outreach to faculty at other

universities and colleges in the NY metropolitan area are the Columbia University Seminars, five of which focus specifically on the ME. There are specialist seminars devoted to Iranian, Arabic, Jewish and Israeli, and Ottoman and Turkish studies. These provide one of the city’s premiere venues for academics in these fields to meet on a regular basis. The “Middle East Seminar,” run by Gary Sick, focuses on the modern ME and brings together policy makers, journalists, and other professionals with scholars from NY area universities on a monthly basis. The CUL grant scholars in the NY area and adjoining region, including members of the University Seminars and Visiting Scholars, access to its collections. Faculty from the CUNY

system, in particular, have benefitted from this access and we seek to facilitate this process and expand the numbers of faculty from Title III and V schools who have access to the library system and the ME librarian, especially about the many free and licensed online resources in ME and Islamic Studies.

The MEI has worked closely with 2 CUNY colleges, Hunter College and LaGuardia Community College over the past 4 years. A CU PhD candidate taught a course on ME film in Fall 2019 at La Guardia and MEI co-sponsored the annual New York Forum for Amazigh Film at LaGuardia in 2019 and 2020 (virtually). In 2019 over 500 students and faculty attended the three-day event of films, music, food, and discussions, with faculty designing specific assignments for the students to complete following their attendance. We have also been working closely with the Hunter College Arabic department over the past 6 years, providing a summer FLAS award to a Hunter student each year. See Letter of Support from Hunter (Appendix C) for details about how invaluable this support has been to their students. As of this year, we are also providing Hunter students with additional opportunities for language practice through NaTakallam tutorials with native speakers and will continue to support this program during the next 4-year period. (Budget H6). Over the past three years, as part of our Title VI mandate to reach out directly to post-secondary institutions, in particular those receiving Title V and III support, we have developed a new partnership with the International Studies Consortium of Georgia (ISCG). The Consortium’s 17- member colleges and universities collectively reach more than 78,000 students. (See details in Appendix C.).

We have supported the Consortium’s 2020 Conference on the ME and are planning on continued support for the ISCG’s yearly faculty training conferences (Budget H7).

* 1. Business, Media, and the General Public. The MEI organizes and promotes conferences,

lectures and cultural events for the general public covering a broad range of topics. During

normal times, we sponsor approximately 35-40 in person events a year. As many other institutions, our Spring 2020 semester event programming ended abruptly in early March and did not start again until Fall 2020. Our events in the past 2 years have been held exclusively online. In some cases, this has proven to be advantageous, with cost savings on travel, lodging, and facilities and has allowed for increased attendance, in particular for our film showings and cultural performances. Over the past 4 years, we sponsored 114 events (reaching more than 12,500 people). Advertised through our e-newsletter (~2300 subscribers), social media, the CU online events calendar, and the MEI website (<http://www.mei.columbia.edu/>), the programs draw a public from within and outside CU.

Our close affiliates, IRCPL, CSMS, CPS and the Sabanci Center for Turkish Studies are an additional source of public event programming on the ME and we feature these events prominently in our newsletter and social media communications. The newsletter is also a vehicle for advertising MENA related jobs, internships, funding and language learning opportunities, providing an invaluable service to our public.

**Table 9: ME Events, September 2018-December 2021**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Total Events | Total Attendees | CULecturer | Non-CU Lecturer | Inter-national Lecturers | Cosponsor w/ NRC | Cosponsorw/ other units | MixedPanels/ Conference |
| # | 114 | 12,500 | 11 | 103 | 62 | 15% | 29% | 29 |
| Country | Gen ME | Iran | Iraq | Israel/ Palestine | Turkey/ Ottoman Empire | Gulf | Egypt | Syria, Jordan, Lebanon | North Africa | Other |
| # | 45 | 10 | 2 | 12 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 13 | 10 |
| Event Type | Films | Academic | Current Affairs/Politics | Literature | Cultural Events | Information Session |
| # | 7 | 51 | 32 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| Lecturer Type | Academic | Literary | Govern- ment | Journal- ism | Film | Panel | Arts | Grad Student | Professional |
| # | 75 |  | 5 | 5 | 3 | 13 | 5 | 8 | 14 |

Our faculty are called on for their expertise by local, national, and international media. Former MEI director Rashid Khalid and Professors Sick, Dabashi and Franke alone have

given more than 50 interviews to the media over the past 36 months and contributed dozens of articles/op-ed pieces to a variety of printed and online outlets. Sick’s *Gulf / 2000* blog surveys articles and commentary on Iran and is a valuable resource for relations in the Gulf. Experts associated with CU’s Global Centers in Amman, Tunis and Istanbul have become invaluable sources of information on fast moving political developments in the region. In addition to the electronic resources available through CUL (Section E.1) there are other important online resources aimed at both non-scholarly and academic audiences. In 2014, Web-CSSAAME was launched, providing open access to original articles linked to this important, CU-edited journal on the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. Our close affiliate, CPS regularly posts videos of its major events on its website, and live-streams its most prominent programs. Most recently, CPS has commissioned four plays for radio from artists based in Palestine and in the diaspora, each of which will receive two world premieres in the form of dedicated Arabic and English productions. Both versions of the plays will be accessible on the CPS website for audiences to enjoy and for educators to use as teaching materials. We are requesting grant funds to partially fund production and dissemination of these plays. (Budget F3.a)

Other resources available to non-CU affiliates are the recently launched CU on YouTube channel (Section F.3) as well as CIAO (Columbia International Affairs Online), an Internet-based, full-text resource that offers journal articles, reports, studies, conference proceedings, books and works in progress for all areas of international affairs.

# Program Planning and Budget (NRC)

I.1 Program Planning and Institutional Goals. Three institutional goals guide the initiatives

for which we seek funding for the next four years:

1. **Teacher Capacity Building and increased participation in, and impact of, K-14 teacher and language instructor training**. We seek to (a) further develop our New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) accredited Professional Development (PD) courses for classroom teachers, including intensive summer institutes and short workshops. Our PD courses build on Columbia’s strengths, faculty interests and Middle East Institute (MEI) programming. In Fall 2022 we will run a workshop on “Understanding Muslim Cultures through the Arts" and in Summer 2023 a workshop on “"Religious Worlds of New York.” We are requesting grant funds to allow us to upgrade our outreach staff position in order to retain and attract the most qualified candidates (Budget A1.2). We seek to (b) continue our long-time partnership with Teachers College at Columbia University (TC) and to encourage more TC students to study the diversity of the Middle East (ME) by (i) continuing to support TC graduate students research on the ME with summer funding; and

(ii) maintain our support for the introductory course on the ME for social studies teachers at TC (Budget H1). We will also (c) deepen our collaboration with NYATC to provide professional pedagogical training for Arabic language teachers through summer workshops taught by Columbia Arabic Department faculty (Budget AH2); See Letter of Support from NYATC: Part III/, Appendix C).

1. **Strengthening ME area studies and language capacity at Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) and 2 year colleges** (a) by intensifying our partnership with ISCG to stimulate student and public interest in the ME and raise the profile of ME studies by providing significant support for yearly conferences for faculty to help them to integrate international and cross-cultural perspectives into their courses and the general education curriculum (Budget H7); (b) expanding our partnership with the Hunter College Arabic Department to increase capacity and offer enhanced Arabic conversation practice for students

through *NaTakallam*, a non-profit organization that pairs Syrian and Iraqi refugees as conversation partners with students studying Arabic; as well as continuing to ear-mark one of our Summer FLAS awards for an eligible Hunter College student; and (c) continue to include CUNY faculty to select CU faculty initiatives, such as the Shari’a and Islamic History workshops (Letters of Support from Hunter College and ISCG: Part IV, Appendix D).

1. **Increase participation of professional school students in area studies and in the study of priority ME languages** by (a) covering disciplinary gaps through continued **support for area studies course offerings** on the modern ME (including courses on Iran, the Gulf, Afghanistan, Security Issues/Politics), which are of special interest to students in professional schools; (b) sponsoring **lecture series and conferences on current topics**, such as (i) the *MENA Forum*, a visiting lecture series with policy makers and other experts from the region (Budget F1.a); (ii) *Book Talks* to highlight new works by academics, journalists and others writing on the region (Budget F1.c) (iii) our new programming on the *environment and climate*, a collaboration with the South Asia Institute, Aga Khan University and the new CU Climate School and (iv) *Arts and Culture* programming including Film Festivals (Budget F3.b); (c) providing our language faculty with continued **professional development** opportunities, as well as funding to develop teaching resources (Budget I1&I2); and (d) continuing to support initiatives that **bolster language practice outside of the classroom**, including (i) lectures in Hebrew and Arabic (Budget F1.b), (ii) support for language tutorials through NaTakallam and (iii) weekly language tables, as well as (iv) foreign language film screenings (Budget F3).
	1. Development Plan. Funds representing 16% of the 2022-26 budget request will

strengthen and expand our teacher training capacity and K-12 outreach programs and further

strengthen Columbia’s ability to train teachers who are knowledgeable about the ME; 4% of our request will be allocated to expenditures that strengthen our collaboration with MSIs (not including the Summer FLAS fellowship support for Hunter College). 11% of our budget request will support area studies instruction and 5% of our requested budget will provide support to language programs at CU and Hunter. Workshops, conferences, public lectures as well as cultural events, representing 6% of NRC funded activities, will improve the breadth, depth, and quality of student training in Middle East studies. Institute administration costs, including personnel and evaluation costs are 43% of our request.

* 1. Costs. The costs of the proposed activities are substantial yet reasonable and are

leveraged with other funds wherever possible. In 2022-23, we will host a 2-day workshop (accompanied by an art exhibit) *on Gender & Body Politics: Arts in the Middle East and its Diasporas*, as part of a joint series with Brown University and are requesting. $ 3,500 of USED funds, with Brown providing equivalent funding and in-kind support. Costs for a Lebanese Film Festival ($3000 from USED funds) planned for fall 2022 will be shared with the School of the Arts, providing screening space and other needed facilities. Next fall, MEI will share costs with Indiana University on a live performance in NYC of *Moses Man: Finding Home,* which weaves stories of contemporary refugee experiences into the true saga of a Holocaust survivor. The *New Works* book launch series is a collaboration between MEI and other units and academic departments, including the Amman and Tunis Global Centers, the Heyman Center, MESAAS and IRCPL. In Year 2, a 2-day conference exploring the challenges of water management in the Middle East and South Asia, will be co-sponsored and co-funded with the South Asia Institute and Aga Khan University and the Aga Khan Development Network. We will partner with the new CU Climate School, on a host of new programming, including a series on *Ethics and the Environment*. A conference on *Islam*

*across World Regions* planned for 2025, will be co-funded with SAI and the Weatherhead East Asian Institute (WEAI).

The $22,000 on average per grant year we are requesting for adjunct salaries to teach needed courses on the region represents less than 0.2% of what Columbia spends directly for ME area studies alone.

* 1. Long-Term Impact. A regular yearly course on the ME for current and soon to be social

studies teachers will increase the number of qualified teachers in US schools teaching about the Middle East. The funds allocated for the training of new and current area Arabic language instructors teaching in K-14 schools, as well as our collaboration with MSIs, will build much- needed capacity, widening the pool of qualified Arabic language teachers, and expanding the pool of students with ME knowledge in our region. Robust public affairs programming, as well as funds provided to the language department for enhanced teaching resources will enhance the quality of the training and attract more students into the field at an earlier stage of their studies. Continued funding and expansion of curricular offerings for the professional schools, in conjunction with increased study-abroad opportunities and internships will increase the number of students with regional experience and advanced language proficiency.

# Competitive Preference Priority (NRC)

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 11: NRC Absolute and Competitive Preference Priorities** |
| **NRC: Absolute Priority 1**—Diverse Perspectives and Wide Range of Views in Funded Activities**&**Encouraging Government Service In Areas of National Need | * Ensuring that speakers, visitors and other programming represent diverse viewpoints.
* Encouraging research, teaching and debate across disciplines, topics and analytic perspectives
* Enabling balanced and multi-faceted outreach to teachers and language instructors
* See “Part III, Description” attached to grant proposal
* Robust and sector-focused career events for students organized by CCE, CAC, and the MEI
* MEI organized career talks with alumni working in government, security and other priority sectors
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | * Large veteran student population at GS who have served in the ME studying and upgrading qualifications and employability options
 |
| **NRC: Absolute Priority 2** —Teacher Training | * Yearly pre-service course on ME at Teachers College
* MEI teacher professional development workshops
* Summer workshops on Arabic language teaching pedagogy for Arabic Teachers (K-14) with CU Arabic Dept and NYATC professional development network
 |
| **NRC: Competitive Preference Priority 1**: Sustained collaboration with MSIs and /or 2-year Colleges | * Offer enhanced Arabic conversation practice for Hunter College/CUNY students through *NaTakallam*,
* One Summer FLAS award earmarked for qualified student from Hunter College Arabic Program
* Substantial support for ISGC for annual training conferences for consortium faculty across 17 colleges in Georgia, Michigan, Mississippi, and Tennessee
* Expanded access for faculty from Title III and V schools to CU library system including the many free and licensed online resources in ME and Islamic Studies
 |

1. **Awardee Selection Procedures (FLAS)**
	1. Advertisement. The Institute solicits applications from across Columbia’s undergraduate

and graduate schools, including its professional schools. The competition is advertised through admissions and financial aid offices, departments, faculty, and directly to students. The MEI website describes FLAS and links with the university’s main FLAS pages, which feature an outline of the program, a list of eligible languages and world areas, instructions, announced priorities, and an on-line application. MEI posts flyers and ME faculty make classroom announcements. Listserv messages reach faculty and students across the university. In the coming grant cycle, we are continuing our commitment to open up the Summer FLAS competition to qualified students from Hunter College as part of our partnership. We will work with faculty and administrators to advertise this opportunity and advise Hunter College students on the process.

* 1. Schedule. *Mid- November:* the FLAS competition is announced. *Mid-January*: the on-

line application site is opened and the selection committee is formed. *Mid-February*:

Deadline for application submission. *Mid to Late February*: Applications are available for committee members to review. *Mid-March*: Committee meets and draws up a ranked list of candidates and alternates and following committee meeting successful candidates are informed of award Candidates have 10 days to accept or decline. Alternate candidates are notified immediately as awards are declined.

* 1. Application. Application are submitted via an on-line application site. Applicants provide

information on education and language training as well as a personal statement describing academic and professional goals and the role of the target language in achieving them.

Applicants provide transcripts, a recommendation from an area studies faculty member and an evaluation from a language instructor. As with the current grant cycle, applicants will be advised to file the FAFSA form to meet the competitive preference.

H.4. Criteria for Selection. Need-based criteria are now part of the FLAS deliberations, with

Columbia Financial Aid Offices providing the Estimated Family Income (EFI) based on the FAFSA. The Committee will review the applications based on the selection criteria (below) to identify suitable candidates. The Committee will prioritize award to fellows from a list of candidates who meet both merit and need-based criteria.

*Selection Committee*: The FLAS Selection Committee includes faculty from the humanities, social sciences, professional schools, and language programs.

*Selection Criteria*: MEI administers FLAS using USED guidelines and priorities. We evaluate applicants on the basis of merit as indicated by previous academic performance, potential contribution to their field or career, and national need in particular fields and

careers. Applicants for intermediate or advanced training are given preference over beginners, except for second ME language acquisition. Each committee member reads and reviews all applicant files and rates them according to academic merit. Ratings will be aggregated to select an initial list of meritorious candidates. The competitive priority criteria outlined above will be applied to the merit-based list to prioritize those candidates who meet the need-based criteria.

We regularly receive significantly more qualified applications than there are awards available, especially for the academic year. In particular, we receive applications from students admitted to study at our graduate and professional schools and who, in the absence of FLAS funding, very often decide that they cannot afford to attend Columbia. We request 8 graduate and 2 undergraduate academic year fellowships, and 8 summer fellowships for each of the four grant years. The summer competition will be open to both undergraduate and graduate students. As with the current grant cycle, one summer FLAS award will be set aside for a qualified student from Hunter College for the study of Arabic.

# I. Competitive Preference Priority (FLAS)

**Table 12: FLAS Competitive Preference Priorities**

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| --- | --- |
| **FLAS Preference Priority 1:** Fellowship awardpreference to students with financial need | * FLAS awards will give competitive preference to qualified applicants who file FAFSA to demonstrate financial need
* One Yearly Summer FLAS award ear-marked for student of Arabic at MSI
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| **FLAS Preference Priority 2:** 25% or more academic year FLAS fellowships inU.S. DoE LCTLs | * 100% of FLAS awards made in LCTL (Arabic, Hebrew, Turkish, Persian)
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