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TRANSMITTAL AND ABSTRACT OF SENATE REPORT

Date Presented to the Senate: April 21, 2008

Presenter: Carmen Balthrop, Chair, Senate Programs, Curricula, and Courses Committee

Subject of Report: Proposal to establish B.A. in Arabic Studies

Senate Document Number: 07-08-32

**Voting: (a) on resolutions or recommendations one by one, or
(b) in a single vote
(c) to endorse entire report**

A. Statement of Issue:

The College of Arts and Humanities and the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures (SLLC) propose to establish a B.A. in Arabic Studies. This new academic program responds to University and national education priorities, growing student interest in pursuing a degree granting program in Arabic language, literature and culture, and to the increasing professional and strategic importance of the field.

The B.A. program will consist of 42 credits. As a prerequisite, students pursuing the major must have completed the elementary language course sequences (or demonstrate equivalent knowledge) in Modern Standard Arabic, the formal variety of Arabic used particularly for reading and writing, and Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, one of the major spoken varieties in the Middle East. The 24-credit core for the proposed B.A. provides study through the advanced levels of Modern Standard Arabic and the intermediate levels of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. The academic program also includes 18 elective credits (a minimum of 9 in courses taught in Arabic and a maximum of 9 in courses taught in English) in literature, cinema, media, Islamic culture, Arab culture and civilization, and commercial language and translation studies. The B.A. program in Arabic Studies will prepare students for a range of academic and professional opportunities including graduate studies and careers in government, education, business, and international development. Approximately thirty majors are anticipated steady state.

The proposal was submitted to the Senate by the Office of Academic Affairs following favorable recommendation by the Academic Planning Advisory Committee (APAC) on March 31, 2008. The Senate Programs, Curricula & Courses Committee unanimously approved the proposal for the B.A. in Arabic Studies on March 28, 2008, pending approval by APAC. If the Senate approves the proposal, it would still require further approval by the President, the Board of Regents and the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

B. Recommendation:

The Senate Committee on Programs, Curricula, and Courses recommends that the Senate approve the B.A. in Arabic Studies.

C. Committee Work:

The Committee considered the proposal for the B.A. at its meeting on March 28, 2008. Elizabeth Loizeaux, Associate Dean for the College of Arts and Humanities, Alaa Elgibali, Professor of Arabic, and Amy Weinberg, Associate Professor of Linguistics and Associate Director of the Center for Advanced Study of Language were present at the meeting to respond to questions.

D. Alternatives:

The Senate could decline to approve the B.A. in Arabic Studies.

E. Risks:

The new program in Arabic Studies is an important component of the University's overall goal to internationalize the academic curriculum and to develop further a campus-wide focus on Middle East studies. If the Senate did not approve the B.S. in Arabic Studies, these strategic goals would be placed at risk.

F. Financial Implications:

The development and initial implementation of the B.A. in Arabic Studies will be supported partially by the National Security Education Program's (NSEP) Flagship Initiative. The University of Maryland was awarded designation as one of three flagship programs in Arabic in the nation. As part of its flagship program support, the NSEP will provide salary funding of two years for two new tenured/tenure-track faculty in Arabic who will be hired respectively for fall 2008 and fall 2009. The College of Arts and Humanities then will reallocate resources to support these two lines. Additionally, the College will base-budget two existing soft-funded lecture positions over the next two years. NSEP also will provide funds to build library resources over three years. Additionally, NSEP will sponsor competitive undergraduate fellowships for students who major in Arabic at UM and to all UM students for study abroad in Alexandria, Egypt.