March 28, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO:       James F. Harris
           Dean, College of Arts and Humanities

FROM:     Phyllis Peres
           Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs

SUBJECT:  Proposal to add a Minor in Arabic (PCC log no. 07049)

At its meeting today, the Senate Committee on Programs, Curricula and Courses unanimously approved your proposal to add a Minor in Arabic. A copy of the approved proposal is attached. However, the Committee did express some concern about the practical aspects of a minor with such a substantial number of specialized prerequisite courses and requested careful monitoring of this issue. The School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures may want to consider revising the Minor into a Certificate if in practice the prerequisites prove too weighty to allow it to truly function as a minor.

The Minor is effective Fall, 2008. The College should ensure that the Minor is fully described in the Undergraduate Catalog and in all relevant descriptive materials, and that all advisors are informed.

CWR/

Enclosure

cc:       Carmen Balthrop, Chair, Senate PCC Committee
           Sarah Bauder, Office of Student Financial Aid
           Laura Slavin, University Senate
           Barbara Hope, Data Administration
           Denise Nadasen, Institutional Research & Planning
           Anne Turkos, Archives
           Linda Yokoi, Office of the Registrar
           Scott Wolpert, Undergraduate Studies
           Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux, College of Arts and Humanities
           Amy Weinberg, Linguistics
           Alaa Elgibali, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures
THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK
PROGRAM/CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

DIRECTIONS:
- Provide one form with original approval signatures in lines 1 - 4 for each proposed action. Keep this form to one page in length.
- Early consultation with the Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Planning & Programs is strongly recommended if there are questions or concerns, particularly with new programs.
- Please submit the signed form to Claudia Rector, Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs, 1119 Main Administration Building, Campus.
- Please email the rest of the proposal as an MSWord attachment to pcc-submissions@umd.edu.

DATE SUBMITTED__Feb. 14, 2008__

COLLEGE/SCHOOL__ARHU__

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM__ARAB__

PROPOSED ACTION (A separate form for each) ADD___ x___ DELETE_______ CHANGE_____

DESCRIPTION (Provide a succinct account of the proposed action. Details should be provided in an attachment. Provide old and new sample programs for curriculum changes.)

Minor in Arabic

The School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures proposes a 21-credit minor in Arabic.

Enclosed:
1. Rationale/Resources
2. Catalogue description
3. Staffing plan

JUSTIFICATION/REASONS/RESOURCES (Briefly explain the reason for the proposed action. Identify the source of new resources that may be required. Details should be provided in an attachment.)

The Minor in Arabic will prepare students to read and write and communicate orally in Modern Standard Arabic at a level allowing them basic functionality in an international setting, and to recognize and respond to cultural patterns of Arabic-speaking peoples.

Its structure will allow students majoring in other disciplines, particularly government and politics, business, journalism, and the sciences, all of which have heavy credit loads, to focus on Arabic language studies and adhere to their four-year plans for graduation.

The development of this program will be supported in part by the National Security Education Program’s Flagship initiative. The University of Maryland is currently one of three nationally-designated U.S. Flagship programs in Arabic (University of Texas at Austin and Southern Methodist University being the other two). A Graduate Certificate and Masters of Professional Studies in Arabic are already successfully launched. An undergraduate Major in Arabic Studies is being proposed as well.
APPROVAL SIGNATURES - Please print name, sign, and date

1. Department Committee Chair: Laura A. Clough, Chair 2/4/08
2. Department Chair: Pierre Verdict, Chair 2/14/08
3. College/School PCC Chair: Maximo Venit, PCC Chair 3/24/08
4. Dean: Elizabeth Lendow, 2/3/08
5. Dean of the Graduate School (if required): 3/25/08
6. Chair, Senate PCC: 3/28/08
7. Chair of Senate: 3/28/08
8. Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost: Phyllis Press 3/28/08

VPAAP 8-05
Minor in Arabic

Rationale:

The School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures is pleased to propose a Minor in Arabic. The Minor in Arabic responds both to national educational priorities and to student demand for official recognition of Arabic language studies. It reflects the internationalization of the University, as well as the desire of SLLC to recognize the increasing importance of Arabic in strategic, economic, and intercultural spheres.

The 21-credit Minor in Arabic is designed to allow students with little or no background in Arabic to complete the 300-level in Modern Standard Arabic. The 12 prerequisite credits represented by ARAB104 and ARAB105 lay the groundwork for intermediate and advanced work. (There are no prerequisites for students with equivalent knowledge of Arabic. SLLC language minors begin at the 200-level in general. While this brings the total credits, including “hidden” credits, to 33, we have designed the minor this way to provide for a satisfactory language competency as an outcome.) Students who satisfy the requirements of the Minor in Arabic can expect to be able to read and write and communicate orally in Modern Standard Arabic at a level that would allow them to interact with native speakers, to engage with authentic texts, and to write connected text of paragraph length. The materials used in language classes are culturally rich resources, and students with the equivalent of 33 credits of Arabic will have become familiar with many of the cultural patterns, social issues, historical events, artistic traditions, and elements of daily life of the people whose cultures are rooted in Arabic. They will have increased respect for cultural difference arising both from their knowledge of (and struggle with) linguistic difference and from the materials used in the classroom. They may be moved to continue their study of Arabic in the classes in dialect (permitting more natural interaction with native speakers) or in advanced cultural, literary or political areas; they may choose to expand their cultural knowledge past the Minor through courses taught in English from the list proposed for the Major in Arabic Studies.

Students with no Arabic would start their study of MSA with ARAB104 (6 credits), moving to ARAB105 (6 credits) in second semester, and beginning the minor in the 3rd semester. The minor can be completed in three years, making it possible for students who begin their study of the language in the sophomore year to minor in the language. The minor will also serve the heritage population, offering students who enter with some knowledge of the language the flexibility of advanced courses in Arabic more suited to their needs. All courses applied to the Minor in Arabic must be taught in Arabic.

The attached catalogue-style description of the minor lists the courses that can be used to satisfy its requirements. Courses shown in italics are under development, in conjunction with preparation for the proposal for a Major in Arabic Studies.

The form of this minor follows the university requirements that a minor have no more than 24 credits, and that 9 of these credits be at the upper level. Arabic is a more
complex language to learn than most others – its dual nature means one is essentially mastering two systems – but we are confident that focusing on the formal variety, a lingua franca of sorts, will give students who do not have the option of majoring in the language (at 42 credits) a strong and useful base. We polled Departments whose majors are themselves particularly complex and the subject matter of which seemed a likely complement to the proposed major (GVPT, JOUR, business, sciences), and feel that this minor will respond to the interests of their students, without requiring them to strain their 4-year plans.

Description:

The Minor in Arabic (21 credits) provides a solid grounding in Modern Standard Arabic. Students who satisfy the requirements of the Minor in Arabic can expect to be able to read and write and communicate orally in Modern Standard Arabic at a level that would allow them to interact with native speakers, to engage with authentic texts, and to write connected text of paragraph length. The materials used to further language acquisition are culturally rich resources, and students completing the minor will have become familiar with many of the cultural patterns, social issues, historical events, artistic traditions, and elements of daily life of the people whose cultures are rooted in Arabic.

Prerequisites (12 credits):

ARAB104 Elementary Modern Standard Arabic I-II (6 credits)
ARAB105 Elementary Modern Standard Arabic III-IV (6 credits)

No prerequisites are required for students with equivalent knowledge.

Courses required for Minor (21 credits):

All prerequisites imply “or equivalent knowledge.” All courses are 3 credits unless noted otherwise.

ARAB 204 Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic I (6 credits) (prereq 105)
ARAB 205 Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic II (6 credits) (prereq 204)
ARAB 304 Advanced Modern Standard Arabic (prereq 205)
ARAB 305 Advanced Modern Standard Arabic (prereq 304)

One additional upper-level course taught in Arabic.

Upper-level courses taught in Arabic include (courses in italics are in development; syllabuses have been received for courses marked *):

ARAB 311 The Arab World Today * (pre-coreq304)
ARAB 312 Islamic Culture * (pre-coreq304)
ARAB 321 Arabic Media * (pre-coreq304)
ARAB 322 Commercial Arabic* (pre-coreq 304)
ARAB 401 Readings in Arabic Literature (prereq 305)
ARAB 402 Arabic Translation* (prereq 305)
ARAB 411 US-Arab Relations (prereq 305)
ARAB 412 Modern Arabic Literature: A Survey * (prereq 305)
ARAB 499 Special Topics in Arabic Studies *

Other courses taught in Arabic may be included with permission of the minor advisor.

Notes:

Because Modern Standard Arabic is primarily used for written communication, students are encouraged to complement their study of Modern Standard Arabic with courses in Egyptian dialect.

Once credits have been received for a higher-level language focus course, a lower-level course in the same strand (written or spoken) may not be taken for credit. (ARAB204 may not be taken after ARAB205, for example.)

In cases where a student has equivalent knowledge, required courses are replaced in consultation with minor advisor. All courses applied to the minor must be taught in Arabic.

Students who begin their study as heritage speakers must seek the advice and written permission of the advisor before choosing the courses they will use to replace any required minor courses.

A maximum of 6 credits can be applied to the minor from courses taken at other institutions. No more than 6 credits of the minor may be used to satisfy the requirements of a major. No courses in the minor may count toward another minor. All courses presented for the minor must be passed with a grade of 2.0 or better.

Students interested in pursuing the Minor in Arabic should contact the undergraduate advisor, who will be responsible for oversight and record keeping. Students should declare the Minor in Arabic at least one year prior to graduation.

Resources:

Resources for the Minor in Arabic are linked to the development of the proposed major in Arabic Studies (see below). The search currently underway would provide the second tenure-track faculty member needed to staff courses in the minor. Two of the lecturers needed, currently entirely soft-funded, will be hard-budgeted over the next two years.
Library resources: After consultation among Deans Harris and Lowry and Desider Vikor, the library is undertaking research to determine requirements for providing adequate library resources for these programs. The NSEP Flagship program will contribute up to $15,000/year for three years, should research show that this is necessary to adequately serve the undergraduates’ needs.

The University currently hosts a Graduate program in Professional Studies in Arabic leading to either a professional certificate or a masters. The program is largely funded by the National Flagship Language Program (NFLP) and National Security Education Program (NSEP) with the goal of producing students with high proficiency Arabic who agree to a term of government service after receipt of this degree. These sponsors are anxious to partner with the University and to refocus its efforts on fostering language and cultural understanding at the undergraduate level, this time with no government service component. The sponsors understand that the success of the full B.A. and minor programs will depend on a strong supporting undergraduate environment, and therefore they are willing to support the full spectrum of our undergraduate endeavors, even those not directly involving Flagship students. The NSEP will partner with the university in several ways:

Faculty: The undergraduate major will require 2 faculty in addition to Prof Alaa Elgibali, a tenured linguist with expertise in second language acquisition. One scholar will add expertise in the cultural domain and a second will specialize in Arabic literature. The sponsor has agreed to provide funds to hire at either the Assistant or Associate Professor level for the first two years and the University has agreed to pick up these costs starting in the Fall of 2010. We currently have a search underway for this Faculty Member. Dean Harris has also agreed to a search for the 3rd required member in Fall 2008. In addition, two of the lecturers needed, currently entirely soft-funded, will be hard-budgeted over the next two years. (See attached documentation.)