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▶ Re-Entry Workshop is a Success! ◀



Approximately seventy-five Fulbright and Israeli-Arab Scholarship grantees arrived at Washington, D.C. on March 8, 2007 to attend the annual Re-entry Workshop, which is designed to prepare students for the difficulties they may experience when they return to their prospective home countries.

The evening began on Thursday with a moonlight Monument Bus tour, and with a couple of unexpected delays and the patience of a number of students, continued the next phase of the journey on Friday night. For most, it was their first chance to explore Washington, D.C. and get to know the AMIDEAST staff and their fellow Fulbrighters from the Middle East and North Africa.

Early next morning, we gathered for breakfast with representatives from the U.S. State Department.

AMIDEAST Fulbright Program Officers Stephanie D'Souza and Elisa O'Keefe facilitated the sessions, which began with a warm introduction to the workshop and presented our opening speakers: Kate Archambault, Vice President of Exchange Programs at AMIDEAST and John Sedlins, the Branch Chief, at the U.S. Department of State's Office of Academic Exchange Programs for the Near East, North Africa, and South and Central Asia. We also had the opportunity to welcome Amal Salah, from the Fulbright Egyptian Commission, who met with students and assisted with the Workshop.

Later in the afternoon, Deborah Hefferson, an independent consultant and professional moderator, gave a presentation on reverse cultural shock and en-

Story continues on page 4

As Graduation Nears...



If you need to request a transfer of your DS-2019 sponsorship to your university to complete the original academic program for which you were given your Fulbright grant, or to begin a second, higher degree program, you must also submit a request to your AMIDEAST advisor at least six weeks in advance. You should submit a letter written by you, a letter from your academic advisor, and a letter from the university office responsible for issuing immigration documents.

Please remember that if you want to request permission for Academic Training, you must submit a request to your AMIDEAST advisor at least six weeks before you complete your degree. Academic Training requests will only be considered for exceptional students who have been offered full-time employment directly related to their field of study for a period of up to twelve months. In order to request Academic Training you must submit a letter from your prospective employer, one from your academic advisor, and one written by you.

Happenings at Headquarters

AMIDEAST/HQ added a couple new faces to the Fulbright Department. However, we also had to say good-bye to some of our former staff as they explore other opportunities. Good luck!

Tempe Carlton, Program Assistant, recently joined AMIDEAST in February 2007. Tempe has extensive experience abroad, having studied for a year in France and Italy and a summer in Germany, and having worked for a few months in Spain. Upon completing her Bachelor's degree in International and Area Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Tempe first worked in international politics and polling before entering the nonprofit sector and then joining AMIDEAST. She is assisting with the support and placement of Fulbright grantees from Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia, and is supporting the Fulbright Alumni Program and the Israeli-Arab Scholarship Program.

Manuel Mendoza, Senior Program Assistant, was on the AMIDEAST Fulbright team from October 2005 to February 2007.

He assisted with the placement and supervision of Fulbright recipients from Morocco, Lebanon, and Tunisia, and for the Israeli-Arab Scholarship Program. He also supported and developed various projects for the Fulbright Alumni Program. Manuel now works with AMIDEAST in the Exchange Programs Department on the administration of two State Department funded Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) grants.

Prior to AMIDEAST, Manuel was a research assistant for the Director of International Affairs at the Kettering Foundation, also in Washington, DC. Manuel is a 2004 graduate of The George Washington University. He has a B.A. in International Affairs with a concentration in Conflict and Security and a minor in Religion.

Megan Worley, Program Assistant, will leave AMIDEAST in the next couple of months to live in Indonesia for one year with her husband, Doug Krugman. All of us at AMIDEAST wish the very best for the two of them as they share their new life together!

Current Student Updates



(Above) Ghinwa Alameen in front of the St. Patrick's Day parade in Washington, D.C.

Syria

Ghinwa Alameen, MA/Applied Linguistics/ TESL, Iowa State University:

Ghinwa is the recipient of the Aubrey Galyon Award 2007 for academic excellence. She recently presented at MIDTESOL and TSSL con-

ferences on "Teaching Linking" and "Digital Storytelling and ESL" respectively, and will soon have two articles published in *Speak Out* and *TESL-EJ* journals for Teaching English as a Second Language. Ghinwa attended the AMIDEAST Re-entry workshop in Washington, D.C. this March and met many friends and the AMIDEAST staff. She also had a chance to watch the Washington D.C. St. Patrick's Parade in wonderful spring weather!

Yemen

Mohammed Al-Hamdani, MA/English Language and Literature, Radford University: Mohammed was a featured guest speaker to the Fulbright Association's Blue Ridge Virginia Chapter. He gave a lecture entitled, "Decoding Islam," in an effort to bring about continued understanding in the Middle East and abroad. Mohamed spoke to students, faculty and staff members, as well as Fulbright alumni from all around the world.

Tunisia

Slim Menzli, MSME/Mechanical Engineering, University of Central Florida: Slim has been incredibly busy since arriving in the United States this past fall. The Mid-Florida Fulbright Chapter took Slim, along with Fulbright grantees from local universities, to visit the Florida Aquarium. Slim exclaims, "it [was] just so relaxing to inhale the breeze of the coast again!" Slim has also been to Disney World and a University of Central Florida football game!



(Left) Miray Zaki, pictured second from right, with other students from the Chicago GSB and Harvard GSB during a conference in Puerto Rico.

winter sales, the audience was so enraptured by Said's enthusiasm and knowledge for the topic that the thirty minute lecture gradually turned into an hour. After the presentation, Said answered questions for more than an hour. It was such a big success that he was even invited to give the same presentation the next day!

(Below) Said Hassan with Professor David Scott, Chair of the University of California, Los Angeles Getty Conservation Program.

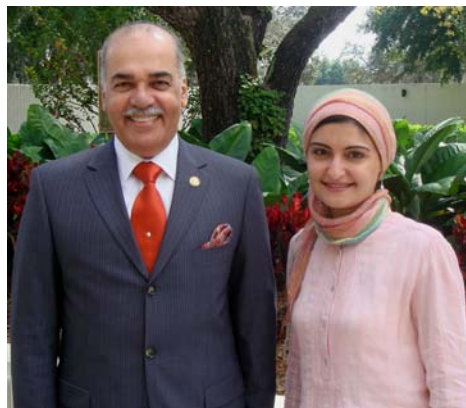


Egypt
Miray Zaki, MBA/Business Administration, University of Chicago, Graduate School of Business: Traveling from Chicago to Montreal, London, Ottawa, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Puerto Rico and back to Chicago has been Miray's schedule for the past two months! In her effort to research and explore the principles of international business and finance, she has met with businessmen and women from around the world to discuss contemporary economic, financial, sociological and even environmental changes worldwide. Most recently, the mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg, discussed the dramatic changes in the financial landscape with London surpassing New York as the Financial Center of the world. Today's businesses have reached horizons of global outreach they have never thought they would this soon. This year has not only been exhilarating in terms of the academic knowledge she has acquired but also in the market dynamics she has witnessed first hand.

Radwa Badran, NDR/Accounting, University of North Texas: Radwa attended a seminar, led by Professor Letitia Meier Pleis from the Accounting Department at the University of North Texas, called "Investment Decisions: Influence of an Internet Stock Message Board," which addressed the effect and influence of new sources of information, including Internet message boards, on investment decisions.

Said Hassan, NDR/Archeology, Getty Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles: The day before Thanksgiving, Said gave a presentation entitled, "Conservation of the 18th Century Dimiana Coptic Icons from Egypt." Despite the holiday weekend, when there is a frantic rush to visit family and friends and celebrate the season's

Bahrain
Hala Faraj, MBA/Business Administration, University of South Florida: In November 2006, Hala had the opportunity to meet Dr. Naser M. Al Belooshi, the Bahraini Ambassador to the United States. The event, hosted by the university's Dean of International Affairs, Dr. Maria Crummett, gave Dr. Al Belooshi the chance to discuss his country's initiatives and development strategies in the areas of energy, science, and technology with the local business communities and university officials in the region. At the conference, Hala was invited to discuss present initiatives to encourage further funding for cultural exchange programs.



(Above) Hala Faraj next to the Bahraini Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Naser M. Al Belooshi, in Tampa, Florida on November 8, 2006.

"Chicago can be fun...but what's more fun is meeting exciting people that are capable, through their positions, of changing the dynamics of markets." — Egyptian Fulbright grantee, Miray Zaki, MBA from the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business.

Updates (continued from page 3)

Bahrain (con'd)

Ala Ghawas, MA/Marketing Communication and Advertising, Emerson College: Ala has continued to cultivate his interest in music and has finally launched his own music website at www.alaghawas.com. An excited Ala explains, “[t]he website contains a collection of my own music compositions, it’s getting popular among my colleagues here in Emerson college,



(Above) Ala Ghawas performing at a local music festival.

which makes [me] really happy about it.” He has also performed in couple of festivals, one in Boston and the other one in Stamford, in order to promote his music.



(Left) Abdullah Aljumah with other students at Eastern Michigan University.

Saudi Arabia

Abdullah Aljumah, MA/Applied Linguistics, Eastern Michigan University: During the annual Family Day at Eastern Michigan University, Abdullah participated with other student volunteers to educate young children about their home countries. To do this, Abdullah wrote their names in Arabic, which they thoroughly enjoyed!

“I have never had the chance to experience fall before nor have I ever experienced the four seasons!”

— Saudi Arabian Fulbright grantee, Abdullah Aljumah, MA in Applied Linguistics at Eastern Michigan University.

Continued from page 1

-couraged participants to think about how they have changed during their time in the U.S. Ms. Hefferson discussed different theories pertaining to re-entry and provided students with strategies on how to cope when they return home.

We then divided into groups where students had the chance to present different cultural situations that they might face and possible solutions to overcome them.

Later, guest speakers were invited to discuss their own experiences with reverse cultural shock in order to compliment the academic perspective. Two Americans shared their personal experiences about re-entry into American society. Mara Kronenfeld, Senior Program Officer in External Affairs at AMIDEAST and Jesse Lynch, National Flagship Arabic Fellow at the University of Maryland and a Master’s candidate in International Affairs at American University spoke about the drive of consumerism and mass consumption in the United States.

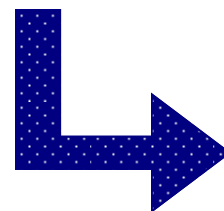
Similarly, Dr. Mardeyah Al-Bardisi, Professor of Social Studies at King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and Dr. Suaad Zayed Al-Oraimi, Assistant Professor in Sociology at United Arab Emirates University, expressed their personal experiences and the responsibility of improving

their local communities upon returning home. At times, the presentations ignited strong debates among students who disagreed with the particular characterizations of the Middle East and “Arab” culture, but overall, the discussions proved useful for students.

Towards the end of the workshop, Camille Franklin, Director of Career Development at American University gave a highly energetic lecture with the practical advice on how students can improve their job prospects and develop tools to enhance their resumes and/or C.V. upon returning home.

We later heard about alumni development opportunities from Nathan Kleecamp, Alumni Regional Coordinator at the U.S. Department of State and Marshall Ellis, Senior Director of the Fulbright Association, who discussed how Fulbright alumni can continue to develop Fulbright chapters in their home countries.

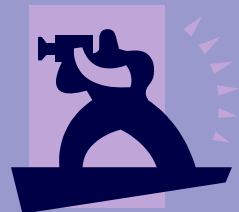
The entire AMIDEAST staff wishes all of our students the best of luck in their academic pursuits and future endeavors!



Check out more photos from the Re-entry Workshop on page 5-7!



Lights!
Camera!
Action!

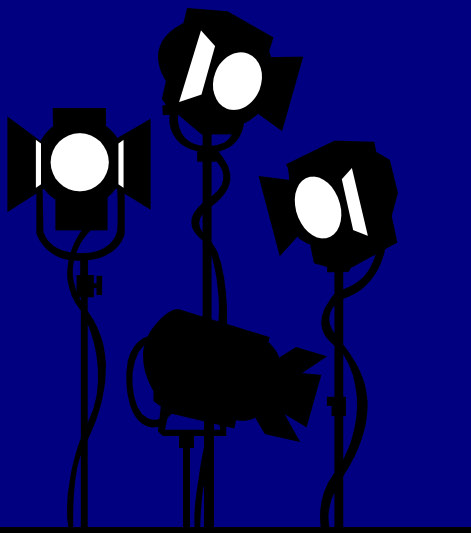


More Photos!



Re-entry Workshop Photos

- (1) Iness Aguir, Tempe Carlton, Mehdi Rhaiem
- (2) From left: Eman Gawish, Ayah El Said, Azza Raslan, Sonia Farid, Ahmed El Gody, Bassem Abbas, Iman Al Ayouty, Samar Nour Abdel Galil, Reham Shubair Alhossary, Hazem Shebl, Kamal El Gazzar, Omar Ibrahim, and Omar Farahat
- (3) Lama Nassif and Noha Saoud
- (4) Clockwise from back: Eman Gawish, Reham Shubair Alhossary, Samar Nour Abdel Galil, Iman Al-Ayouty, Sonia Farid, Ayah El Said, Azza Raslan, Omar Farahat, Ahmed El Gody, Hazem Shebl, Omar Ibrahim, Mohammed Jabber, and Kamal El Gazzar
- (5) Bassem Abbas
- (6) Khaldoun Rishmawi and Zaki Diab
- (7) Yaser Abun Nasr
- (8) From left: Mehdi Rhaiem, Tami Rafidi, Mohammed Jabber, El Mustapha Azelmad, and Ala' Khalifeh
- (9) Mohamed El Aoufi and Manuel Mendoza
- (10) Omar Ibrahim, Naeem Al-Shukaili Azza Raslan, Samar Nour Abdel Galil, and Hadi Sabaa
- (11) Said Hassan, Samira Halabi, Layla Radhi, Ibrahim Amer, Hazem Shebl, and Ayman Faza
- (12) Rabab Husain and Sonia Farid
- (13) Omar Farahat and Hussam Batshon
- (14) Sahar Kawasmi, Hadi Sabaa, Azza Raslan, Omar Ibrahim, Samar Nour Abdel Galil, Asmaa Shehata, and Naeem Al-Shukaili
- (15) Aicha Rochdi and Nedaa Karawan
- (16) Kamal El Gazzar, Dalia Al Hussein, and Taghrid Obied



From the Maghreb Atlas Mountains to America's Appalachian Mountains

Slim Menzli, a Fulbright student from Tunisia, is currently pursuing his MSME in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Central Florida. Below is the interview he conducted with the Tunisian musical group, Kantara, this past fall.

"As a Tunisian Fulbrighter, I was so jubilant to discover Kantara, a Tunisian-American group that epitomizes the cross cultural exchange, openness and tolerance through art.

Kantara is a celebration of melodies, colors and perfumes across the

Atlantic from the Maghreb to America. The rhythms bring a well-balanced mix of two seemingly different yet harmonious styles.

Kantara is a call to acceptance and diversity. Kantara is just what the humanity needs: not walls but bridges.

I interviewed Kantara's lead singer and multi-instrumentalist Brennan Gilmore via e-mail in late February and would like to thank him and his mates from this tribute on behalf of all Tunisian Fulbrighters and Plusers here in the US.

Let's begin from the start. How did the idea come up in the first place? How did the group get together?

Kantara was born in Sidi Bou Said in the fall of 2005. I met Riadh Fehri in the summer of 2005, and knew that he was renown in Tunisia for his music and his work at the Sidi Bou Said conservatory. Riadh and I began to jam informally and over the months began to compose and arrange together. At first we hadn't planned to create a new group. I played guitar with the last performance of Riadh's Minaret et la Tour project, and following this we decided it would be interesting to develop a group that fused Arabic and Appalachian music. We played our first performance in Italy in November 2005, and were joined by Lassaad Hosni on darbouqa and bendir, and Amel Boukhchina, who sang. In March 2006, we played our first concert with the current line-up, including Ann Marie Calhoun on violin, Brian Calhoun on guitar, and Zack Blatter on bass, in addition to the Tunisian musicians. This concert took place at the Theatre Municipal in Tunis .

Tell us more about your music? How did you find that fine balance between two seemingly different musical styles whether in terms of instruments or rhythms?

Our music brings together Appalachian and Tunisian traditional folk melodies. However, we also compose much of our own material, using this fusion as a base, and we are influenced by musical styles not limited to these genres. Our compositions and arrangements take elements unique to each musical tradition, but create a sound that is entirely new. For example, we use Appalachian harmonies, with Arabic melodies, or Tunisian rhythms with Appalachian songs. Finding the balance is an ongoing process, and we only arrive at that balance after much experimentation.

When the whole group is satisfied with the arrangement, then we've found the balance. Every musician does what comes natural in their respective traditions with an ear to opening their perspective to the music of their counterpart. When we work together we try to compliment, not overshadow, each other.

Both your band and music are a celebration of the Tunisian American long friendship. Your titles (Kantara, larmes, Way faring stranger, Encuentros, Tempérament, Awtar, Middle of the road, Pureté...) convey a message of diversity, tolerance and openness regardless of languages, origins and ethnicities. In your understanding and experience, how can music be an efficient tool in an existing environment where mutual understanding is very much needed?

We have seen through our experience with Kantara that music is truly the universal language – five members of the group don't even have a common language to speak with, yet have still become great friends. Our music highlights the beauty of two different cultures, and is an active example of positive collaboration that transcends national or cultural identity. From the reactions of our audiences both in Tunisia and abroad, we have seen that there is a thirst for this message. There has been a focus in the media on anti-Americanism or anti-Arabism, to the point where in the minds of many, the gap has become almost too wide to bridge. Kantara proves on stage that this is not the case. When audiences have left our performances, they constantly remark on the sense of fraternity among the members of the group – the harmony, not just of the music, but of the family of musicians on stage.

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Are there any plans to extend the band to more nationalities for the sake of more diversity?

Kantara is a small group, that is focused on combining two distinct musical traditions – Tunisian and Appalachian music. Of course, this music is derived from diverse traditions – African, Irish, Spanish, Turkish, etc.

You have been doing concerts in Tunisia and Italy. When will your public in the States be able to attend your concerts? Any CDs to be released soon?

We are planning our first mini-tour in the U.S. in late May/Early June. Fans can check out details at our website: www.kantaramusic.com. At this time, we are also planning on heading into the studio to record our first full-length CD. In the meantime, four songs from our demo are available for free download from our website.



(Left) Picture of Tunisian music group, Kantara.

Would you like to say a word for your Tunisian fans here in America?

'Aslaama. We look forward to showing our friends and fans in the U.S. the unique beauty of Tunisian music and culture, and hope to see you at a *Kantara* concert soon!

**CULTURAL
SPOTLIGHT**

A Pilot Genetic Study on the Effect of Lifestyle in Morocco

Youssef Idaghdour, a Fulbright student from Morocco, is currently pursuing his PhD in Genetics at North Carolina State University. He is conducting a pilot study of the effect of lifestyle on gene expression under the supervision of Dr. Gregory Gibson, a William Neal Reynolds Professor at North Carolina State University. Below is an excerpt of his research during his travels to meet the Bedouins in Morocco.

The idea is that the incidence of complex diseases such as diabetes, asthma, and depression is almost epidemic in many countries because of incompatibility between existing genetic variation and the modern environment. The team is interested in comparing the sources of disease susceptibility between peoples who lead traditional and modern urban lifestyles. As Dr. Gibson explains, “whether it is diet, stress, immune exposure, or other factors, it is apparent that the transition from traditional rural lifestyles to urban living is exacerbating disease. The objective of our work is to determine whether there is a signature of this shift in gene expression, using the very latest genomic “microarray” technologies at our disposal.”

The team recently completed the first phase of the project in Morocco, sampling from Bedouin nomads in the Sahara desert and genetically related Berbers living in and near the city of Agadir. Before heading to Morocco, the research team acquired all the necessary permits from NC State University and the Moroccan Ministry of Health. The project has also been supported by HRH Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz and the



(Above) Youssef Idaghdour is welcomed in a Bedouin tent

International Foundation for Conservation and Development of Wildlife, which is based in Agadir, Morocco.

A great part of this fabulous field trip was the combination of theory and practice. The ideas I am learning in the academic field are great, but they become even more meaningful and have a greater impact when we actually see how they are reflected in real life. It was terrific to be able to develop a close connection with the people. Their hospitality and generosity touched all of us deeply. We were treated with typical Moroccan hospitality. These were truly moments to remember. The three weeks of intense fieldwork not only helped me to appreciate all that I had done with genetics, but it also made me see a bridge between research and real life. Everything came together.

The trip back from the desert started in the splendid dunes of Merzouga and the team journeyed across the snow-capped High Atlas Mountains to end in the fabled city of Marrakech. We visited the Medina through its narrow streets and the famous Djamaa-el-Fna square at night with its musicians, dancers, water-sellers, story-

“...for me, it was a re-discovery of the geography and values of my country after spending some time in the United States.”

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tellers, snake-charmers, and the fragrant smells from the numerous food stalls.

The highlight of the Atlas Mountains section of the trip was a donkey ride up a valley to a remote collection site and spending two nights in an old-style Berber house similar to where my mother grew up in the middle of the last century.

The trip was an opportunity to experience the geography of Morocco with all the senses – sight, sound, smell and feel – and to contrast different rural, urban, ancient and modern faces of Morocco.

Accordingly, Dr. Gibson described the one-day journey from Merzouga to Marrakech as like driving from Arizona through Colorado, Wyoming, Oregon, and northern California in a single afternoon, except that the landscape is dotted with ancient villages instead of strip malls! However, for me, it was a re-discovery of the geography and values of my country after spending some time in the United States.

When we returned to the city, Agadir, Dr. Gibson spoke to a group of undergraduate, graduate, and several high school students in the Biology Department at Ibn Zohr University. The lecture, entitled “Genomics of the Human Cultural Transition,” gave all the students the opportunity to ask questions and search for answers about the latest technologies to advance the study of genetics.

All too soon, the trip came to an end, and it was time to fly back to the United States and work on the samples we collected during our field research. The trip was a life-changing and memorable experience for me. We discovered that in addition to hereditary factors, the physical environment does affect how a population’s genome, the DNA code, reacts.



(Top) Youssef Idaghdour, pictured third from the right, in a group photo with classmates and the Bedouins.

(Above, immediate) Youssef Idaghdour and classmates having lunch and Moroccan tea with the Bedouins.



CELEBRATING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING EVERYWHERE!

Slim Menzli, a Fulbright grantee from Tunisia, who is studying at the University of Central Florida in the MSME program in Mechanical Engineering, sent this picture (see left). When the Tunisian music group, Kantara, was in the studio in Tunis on July 2006 recording a demo CD, band members had the opportunity to witness a cross-cultural experience of a separate breed altogether when one of the studio’s stray cats cuddled with a small turtle and two other cats.

Summertime, time, time...



During the summer session, full-time summer enrollment is not required for J-1 visa holders, but it is necessary if you choose to remain in the United States.

If your department is not offering classes that you will count toward your major, you can either enroll in thesis credit hours or arrange independent student with a faculty member.

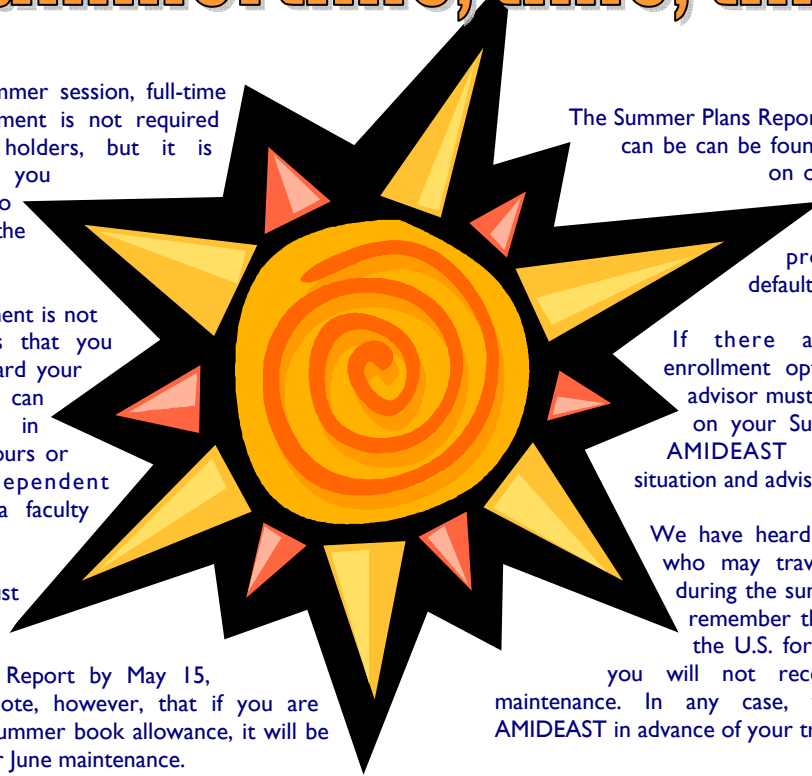
Everyone must complete and return the Summer Plans Report by May 15, 2007. Please note, however, that if you are eligible for a summer book allowance, it will be included in your June maintenance.

The Summer Plans Report can be found on our website at <http://www.amideast.org/programs/et/fulbright/default.htm>.

www.amideast.org/programs/et/fulbright/default.htm

If there are not summer enrollment options available, your advisor must explain the situation on your Summer Plans Report. AMIDEAST will review your situation and advise you accordingly.

We have heard from a few of you who may travel outside the U.S. during the summer months. Please remember that if you are out of the U.S. for more than 29 days, you will not receive your monthly maintenance. In any case, you MUST inform AMIDEAST in advance of your travel plans.



EMERGENCY SAFETY TIPS

Do you know what to do if a natural disaster or other emergency strikes your area?

✓ Follow all instructions given by your university and local authorities. Obey any evacuation orders, and contact your AMIDEAST advisor if you need help arranging your evacuation.

✓ If you evacuate, remember to bring your passport, DS-2019, cell phone, cell phone chargers, and any other valuable items such as a laptop.



✓ Call your AMIDEAST advisor as soon as possible to let them know your situation and/or temporary address. AMIDEAST has a toll-free number: 1-800-368-5720. Continue to call or email each day to update them with your status.

✓ Finally, don't forget to call your family back home to let them know you are okay! We can also contact your family members on your behalf!

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AMIDEAST
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