

Dear Representative Gosar,

Thank you for your inquiry into the University of Arizona's Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

A requirement of the Department of Education Title VI funding received by our Center for Middle Eastern Studies states that programming must reflect diverse perspectives and a wide range of views and generate debate on world regions and international affairs. UofA's CMES has been in compliance with this requirement and I have offered examples below that highlight this breadth of perspectives.

Noa Baum, an Israeli story-teller who speaks about Israeli-Palestinian peace-building, participated in 5 events in late September 2019 with multiple co-sponsors that included Judaic Studies, Hillel, Equity, Inclusion & Title IX, Islamic Center of Tucson, and the Honors College. Baum did a workshop at City High School where she workshopped with Cholla High School Students and City High School Students. Baum also visited the Mexican Consulate. She did a performance at the Jewish Community Center entitled, "A Land Twice Promised: A One-Woman Show."

Part of the CMES Fall 2019 film series "On the Job," this movie tells a story of a women fighting sexual harassment in her workplace. The film is in Hebrew with English subtitles. This film is one of many Israeli films CMES has shown in our film series. CMES was the first to screen this film in Tucson where it was provided free of charge and open to the public.

CMES hosted a community trip entitled, "Bosnia: Crossroads of Cultures," to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Led by CMES Director of Educational Outreach Dr. Lisa Adeli, with a PhD specialization in Balkan history, community members toured Bosnia-Herzegovina and learned of its connection to Ottoman/Middle Eastern history and culture. The program included a visit to Sarajevo's Jewish Museum, Ashkenazi Synagogue, the Jewish Cemetery, and a private viewing of the Sarajevo Haggadah. Dr. Adeli arranged a meeting between one of the participants, the head of Georgia's Holocaust Education Commission, to Dr. Eli Tauber, a Jewish Holocaust Scholar and Miriam Tauber, who runs the Sephardic Cultural Center in Sarajevo.

The two faculty members named in the query are not employees of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, nor do they receive any of the Title VI funding support awarded to CMES. In March of last year, when President Trump released the Executive Order on Freedom of Expression, President Robbins issued a statement reaffirming our commitment to protecting free speech. The University also ensured that our policies on nondiscrimination and anti-harassment were in alignment with the President's Executive Order on Antisemitism. In February, our Arizona Center for Judaic Studies hosted an [international conference](#) on Antisemitism, with a strong focus on how individuals and societies can combat it.

We are challenged daily to find the most optimal way to educate our students and America's future workforce in subjects that can be deeply divisive. Teaching the history and origins of these perspectives is critical to developing a student's ability to identify and understand how these perspectives have influenced history and politics in all world regions. This knowledge speaks to the intent of the Department of Education's Title VI programs – to develop world area experts who can understand the origins of viewpoints that have shaped those regions so that effective policies can be developed to support or influence change in service to our nation.

With regard to the inquiry about funding from Qatar, we ensure that all foreign gifts are received and reported accurately to the Department of Education. No foreign gifts are accepted where material amount of goods or services are expected, implied or provided to the donor. Once the University has accepted the gift, it becomes Foundation or University property, and the donor has no further direct decision-making power regarding the gift. Recent funds received from Qatar have been used to pay for student scholarships and poetry books.

If there is additional information that would be helpful to your office regarding this inquiry, we look forward to continuing work with your staff to provide that material.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Folks', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Liesl Folks, Ph.D., MBA
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost