

# Annual University Student Washington, DC Internship Program: May - August 2011

The National Council's Model Arab League/Arab-U.S. Relations Youth Leadership Development Program has been linked for many years to the Council's **Annual University Student Washington, DC Summer Internship Program**. The Summer Intern Program's participants are alumni of the Models and other rising young American leaders of tomorrow. U.S. Ambassador Edward Gnehm (Ret.) made it possible for the 2011 program to be administered again in association with The George Washington University's (GWU) Institute for Middle East Studies in the Elliott School of International Affairs. Ambassador Gnehm is a member of the GWU faculty where he is the Kuwait Professor of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Affairs. As in previous years, the 2011 Internship Program provided fertile training ground and an invaluable firsthand professional work experience for young American leaders interested in a career devoted to improving U.S.-Arab relations.



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*The National Council expresses its appreciation to The George Washington University and The Elliott School of International Affairs for the use of its seminar facilities for the 2011 Summer Internship Program in the nation's capital.*

The program, which lasted from May 31 - August 5, provided 32 students an opportunity to work in the nation's capital at 18 organizations involved in one way or another in efforts to improve Arab-U.S. relations. The experience is one that could not possibly be duplicated or paralleled by the students' university studies on campus. In addition to their time assisting with the office routines of their host organizations, the interns met and were briefed as well as mentored several times a week by some of America's most renowned specialists in international relations as they pertain to the Arab world.

By design, the primary focus of the academic component of the program centers on a sub-region of the Arab countries, the Middle East, and the Islamic world: *Arabia and the Gulf*. The reason relates to three truisms with implications for American and other countries' needs, concerns, interests, objectives, and relations. First, this particular region, together with its maritime and aviation routes, has

long been regarded globally as the epicenter of the most strategically and economically vital energy resources that drive the engines of the world's economies.



*As these maps illustrate, the academic focus of the internship program is on Arabia and the Gulf which, despite being of vital strategic and economic importance globally, remains little understood by most Americans and many others.*



*National Council Internship Program participants visited and were briefed by diplomats at the U.S. Department of State.*



*National Council Internship Program participants met with and were briefed by Dr. Abderrahim Foukara, Washington, DC bureau chief for Al-Jazeera, during a visit to Al-Jazeera's Washington offices and studio.*

Second, Arabia and the Gulf are front and center among some of the most pressing international issues relating to war and peace as well as world economic growth. Indeed, it is the one part of the planet more than any other to which, on three separate occasions, large numbers of American and other foreign armed forces have been mobilized and deployed in the past quarter of a century. Third, the ongoing importance to much of humankind represented by these nine countries – Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen -- is undeniable. Despite this, the number of Americans who specialize in this sub-region and its member states, or can legitimately claim to be well-informed about the external and internal political dynamics of these countries, remains exceptionally limited.

Accordingly, one of the program's objectives is to increase the number of foreign affairs practitioners that are as knowledgeable of Arabia and the Gulf's internal and external dynamics as possible. To that end, most of the lectures address issues related to the member-states' systems of governance, political realities, economic and social development, as well as foreign affairs, on one hand, and, on the other, the relationships of the United States with this Arab sub-region and its neighbors -- and *vice versa*.



*The interns gather for a final meeting at the Summer Wrap-Up Session before returning to their home universities to continue their studies.*



*National Council President and CEO Dr. John Duke Anthony addresses interns on the topic of "Understanding the Arab World: Lenses Through Which to Look and Learn"*



Internship Program alumni currently serve as senior diplomats in American embassies in the Arab world, in U.S. government executive branch agencies as well as Congressional committees dealing with U.S.-Arab policy issues, major national and international print as well as broadcast media, leading American corporations engaged in U.S.-Arab trade, investment, technology cooperation, and the establishment of joint commercial ventures, and as teachers of Arabic and Arab area studies in American universities.

The Arab-U.S. relations programs, activities, and functions represented by the eighteen organizations and corporations that provided the professional work experience component of this year's program are varied. Included among their missions and activities are educational development and exchange, bimonthly and quarterly publications, humanitarian relief, public broadcasting, academic area studies, international transportation, foreign trade, and peace and justice advocacy. An additional feature of the Internship Program is site visits to public and private sector institutions such as Arab embassies, energy corporations, congressional committees, and government agencies.



*An intern program participant with Ms. Harriet Fulbright, President of the J. William & Harriet Fulbright Center and Founder of Harriet Fulbright College at the program's Summer Wrap Up session.*



*The interns meet with and were briefed by National Council Arab World Journalism Intern alumnus Mr. Afshin Molavi, Senior Research Fellow at the New America Foundation and author of The Soul of Iran: A Nation's Journey to Freedom.*

Administering the 2011 program were National Council President Dr. John Duke Anthony as Chairman and lead lecturer, Director of Student Programs Megan Geissler as Coordinator, and staff members Josh Hilbrand, Chelsey Boggs, and Colin Moore as Assistants. Included among the many lecturers were Dr. Hussein Ibish, Senior Research Fellow, The American Task Force on Palestine; Dr. Peter Bechtold, former longtime Chairman, Center for Near East and North Africa Country and Area Studies, George Schultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center, U.S. Department of State; Bill Corcoran, President, American Near East Refugee Aid; Ambassador Joesph LeBaron, former U.S. Ambassador to Qatar and Mauritania; Major General Mohammad Al-Keshky, Air, Army, Navy, and Marine Attaché, Embassy of Egypt; Afshin Molavi, Senior Research Fellow, American Strategy Program, New America Foundation, and Alumnus, National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations Morris Arab World Journalism Program; Dr. Ahmed Achrati, Academic Director, Arabic Language & Culture Institute, Georgetown University; Ambassador Ronald Neumann, President, American Academy of Diplomacy; John Moran, Distinguished Diplomat-in-Residence at the National Council and career member of the U.S. Senior Foreign Service; Ambassador Walt Cutler, President *Emeritus*, Meridian International Center; Wassane Zailachi, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco; and Ambassador Maen Rashid Areikat, Chief Representative of the Palestinian Liberation Organization Mission to United States.