A defining aspect of the Flagship undergraduate program is the year-long overseas component. Many Arabic Flagship undergraduates study at the Arabic Overseas Flagship Center at Alexandria University in Alexandria, Egypt. This capstone experience is reserved for students who have achieved high proficiency (the equivalent of at least Intermediate–High but more likely Advanced–Low on the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages scale) in Arabic. It is the culmination of years of hard work at one of the undergraduate domestic programs at the University of Maryland, College Park; the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Michigan State University; the University of Oklahoma; or the University of Texas, Austin. The year spent abroad provides an opportunity for U.S. students to immerse themselves in Arabic language and culture, far beyond what they have learned from textbooks, lectures, and off-campus events.

“I had an incredible and life-changing experience in Alexandria this past year,” says Jennifer Nation, an Arabic Flagship student from the University of Texas, Austin. “I felt truly immersed in the culture, made many lifelong friends, learned an incredible amount about Egyptian society and culture, and greatly advanced in my skills in Arabic. I am grateful to have had the chance to participate in the overseas segment of the Flagship program and hope to apply it in a career in diplomacy.”

The Arabic Overseas Flagship Center at Alexandria University is one of 11 Overseas Flagship Centers across the globe and is unique in the field of Arabic language education. It carefully integrates immersion in language and culture with participation in academic and professional activities, thereby creating meaningful opportunities for students to become true global professionals. The program supports students to reach Superior language proficiency in both Modern Standard Arabic and Egyptian colloquial Arabic through intensive small-group coursework focused on the development of advanced language and professional discourse skills.

In terms of academics, all Flagship students at Alexandria University are required to direct-enroll in courses in their majors. They are paired with Egyptian academic partners who provide one-on-one review of content and language after each class to ensure that students have correctly understood the course discussions. In addition, Egyptian peer tutors help Flagship students acclimate to life in Alexandria. Speaking only in Arabic with their assigned students, tutors help students explore the city, teach them how to use the public transportation system, and discuss...
In the Spotlight ... (from page 1)

current events and other topics. Flagship students also are exposed to Arabic print and broadcast media and learn about Egyptian art and culture through planned events as well as interactions with guest speakers and classmates (in and out of the classroom).

In terms of professional activity, each Arabic Flagship student in Alexandria is required to complete an internship in an area that matches his or her interests. This opportunity allows students to work alongside native speakers while gaining workplace experience in the language and culture studied—useful knowledge that otherwise would be difficult to obtain. Students in the 2008–2009 program interned with organizations including the Suzanne Mubarak Regional Centre for Women’s Health and Development, the National Council for Women, and the New Library of Alexandria (Bibliotheca Alexandrina).

Alaa Eligibali, director of the Arabic Flagship Center and professor of Arabic at the University of Maryland, College Park, emphasizes that articulation between the domestic and overseas programs is necessary to ensure successful outcomes: “The main concept of turning out global professionals ... is always kept in mind while creating the [Flagship] curriculum and program design.” The stateside undergraduate programs are created with the assumption that they will be continued overseas. Thus, Eligibali adds, “activities are geared toward preparing the domestic students to function effectively in an overseas academic environment.”

The Arabic Overseas Flagship Academic Council, chaired by Jerry Lampe of the American Councils for International Education, manages the rigorous task of ensuring a smooth curricular transition from domestic institutions to the Overseas Flagship Center in Alexandria. The key to this smooth articulation is “cross-fertilization” between Flagship faculty and staff in the United States and in Alexandria. Every semester, two Alexandria University staff members travel to a Flagship institution in the United States; faculty and staff from stateside programs engage in training seminars during visits to Alexandria, where they gain a profound perspective on life in Egypt that helps them prepare students for immersion. These reciprocal visits allow instructors to learn teaching methods from each other while providing opportunities for career development and advancement.

The success of this Arabic Overseas Flagship Center can be attributed to the strong partnership between Alexandria University President Hassan Nadir Kheirallah and the U.S. Flagship institutions. This positive alliance was demonstrated at the official inauguration of the center in February 2009, when U.S. Ambassador Margaret Scobey joined Kheirallah, Dean of Arts Ashraf Farag, and the leadership team of The Language Flagship at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new e-classroom gifted by The Language Flagship. This e-classroom includes smart-board technology, two-way video capability, and Internet access for teacher training between the United States and Egypt.

Dan Davidson, president of American Councils for International Education, which coordinates overseas operations for The Language Flagship, emphasizes the importance of this partnership. “This high level of cooperation is one of improving and expanding American opportunities in Arabic education as well as developing positive relations between American institutions and an Egyptian university partner,” he says. “It is telling that a senior ambassador took the time to travel to Alexandria to dedicate the center and meet with Flagship students. It indicates the importance of the Flagship program for the positive development of U.S.–Egyptian relations.”

Kheirallah says, “We at Alexandria University are delighted to have partnered with The Language Flagship program for Arabic language instruction and are excited about the global teaching and training opportunities that the new e-classroom provides us.”

The Language Flagship Group, a nonprofit group led by Ambassador Michael Lemmon, is following in the steps of leaders like Representative Rush D. Holt to advocate for more effective foreign language learning nationwide.

Other evidence of support for language learning includes the May 2009 Language in the Disciplines workshop, where experts from the applied, natural, and social sciences committed to working with language experts to strengthen the linkages between languages and the disciplines. Also, more students and parents are recognizing the importance of another language and culture.

Word from
Flagship

In these times of economic uncertainty, students are increasingly aware of the need to separate themselves from the pack to compete in a global job market. The defining difference may require developing the tools of a global professional, which include a solid understanding of another language and culture.

Sadly, language education has long been marginalized in the United States. But a recent attitude change on the part of many students, parents, educators, and some political leaders has focused attention on the role of language in our education system. The Language Flagship Group, a nonprofit group led by Ambassador Michael Lemmon, is following in the steps of leaders like Representative Rush D. Holt to advocate for more effective foreign language learning nationwide.

Most telling of all, the 2008–2009 Flagship programs reported a 170 percentage increase in student enrollments over what they had projected the previous year, and similar increases are expected for 2009–2010. It is an exciting time for The Language Flagship, as our goal of implementing a new paradigm for advanced language education moves closer to achievement.
Leadership Award … (from page 1)

A longtime champion of U.S. foreign language programs, Holt introduced the National Security Language Act in late 2003 to increase federal investment in foreign language education throughout the public education system. Holt is an influential member of both the House Committee on Education and Labor and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. He also is chairman of the Select Intelligence Oversight Panel, which helps write the budget for and oversee the U.S. intelligence community. In this role, Holt has been instrumental in increasing federal funding for NSEP and the National Security Language Initiative.

In a Sept. 18, 2008, Huffington Post article entitled “Why Foreign Language Education Matters,” Holt highlighted the urgent need for the U.S. government to address the shortage of critical language experts. “Language learning is a long-term process; unfortunately there is no shortcut to acquiring fluency in a foreign tongue,” he states. “It takes hard work, individual commitment, and the proper institutional support. Our government must change course and stop undervaluing and underinvesting in foreign language education.”

A former physics professor at Swarthmore College, Holt is passionate about science and technology issues and has supported funding increases in these fields as well.

Looking to the future, Holt said, “I’m very hopeful that President [Barack] Obama and Secretary [Arne] Duncan will provide real leadership on language issues, but it will take our cooperative efforts to make sure they are pushed to the forefront of a busy education agenda.”

Op-ed: Making Language Education a National Priority

Ambassador (retired) Michael Lemmon Chair, Board of Directors, The Language Flagship Group

A well-known chronic deficit in language capability and cultural understanding undermines the United States’ ability to communicate effectively with others around the world; The Language Flagship Group has accepted the challenge to address this shortcoming within the context of the American education system.

An independent nonprofit organization, The Language Flagship Group seeks to contribute to an effort to promote more effective methods of learning world languages across the United States. Now is the opportune time to make language education a national priority and to produce globally competent graduates for the 21st century.

To move this agenda forward, The Language Flagship Group partnered with the Henry L. Stimson Center in Washington, D.C., to plan and conduct a series of National Language Policy Roundtables. These events bring together major stakeholders from government, academe, and business to discuss the importance of foreign languages relative to critical political, economic, security, and social challenges facing the nation.

Roundtable discussions also focus on how foreign languages fit into the Obama administration’s vision for an education system designed to help students succeed, professionally and personally, in the 21st century. The administration’s education plan calls for setting “world-class standards” to help students “race to the top,” and the roundtable series intends to identify concrete steps to make language learning an integral component of this plan. In addition, the Flagship Board of Directors recently met with key congressional staffers to provide our independent optic on possible legislation affecting language issues.

My fellow board members and I are excited about new initiatives on the group’s agenda for the coming months, including a proposed expansion of the highly successful state Roadmap to Language Excellence project to additional states and close collaboration with The Language Flagship on a strategy to bring the business sector more fully into the language equation. Our hope is that through continued strategic efforts and partnering with key stakeholders at the federal, state, and local levels, this national imperative for language education will become a reality in the near future.

The Language Flagship and the National Science Foundation Team Up for Groundbreaking Workshop

Representatives from language fields and various disciplines convened in Washington, D.C., in May 2009 at the Language in the Disciplines workshop. Cosponsored by The Language Flagship and the National Science Foundation, the event focused on ways to provide students and scholars in a range of academic disciplines with the language skills needed to advance their research and careers.

This workshop was unique in bringing together language experts and experts from the applied, natural, and social sciences as well as other subject areas. Participants discussed the challenges and opportunities for emphasizing language learning as a core element of disciplinary study in the 21st century. Discussion topics included current efforts to link languages with disciplines and possible new paths. All participants agreed that the existing academic structure, which segregates language learning from academic study, should be reexamined.

The meeting discussions created a sense of urgency regarding the need for future collaboration in research, public policy, and program development across the various fields of study. One direct result of this workshop is that engineering and language experts plan to continue their discussion at the 12th Annual Colloquium on International Engineering Education to be held at Iowa State University in October 2009.
Korean Flagship Student and Boren Fellow Selected for Prestigious Cross-Cultural Exchange

Boren Fellow Sherrie Chung, a student in the Korean Language Flagship Center at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM), was among 20 South Korean and American students to participate in the U.S. Congress–Korean National Assembly Youth Exchange Program in July 2009. Conducted by the Meridian International Center and administered by the U.S. Department of State, the program took place over 3 weeks in Washington, D.C., and Seoul, South Korea.

Congressman Neil Abercrombie (D-Hawaii) says, “I was honored to support Sherrie in her nomination for participation in the exchange program. Her enrollment in UHM’s Korean Language Flagship, the only [advanced Korean language training program] in the nation, made her the perfect candidate to represent the United States in this timely diplomatic initiative.”

In Washington, Chung met the Korean participants and took part in team-building exercises. She also attended briefings on Korean culture and current issues between the United States and Korea (North and South). The agenda in Seoul included a weekend homestay with a Korean family, meetings at Korean organizations, and local sightseeing excursions.

“The curriculum at Flagship is designed not only to elevate our language skills but also to help us become Korea specialists,” says Chung. "My studies prepared me well for the exchange program and have given me a strong foundation for my future career."

Chung received a Boren Fellowship to fund her current capstone year of immersion at the Korea University Overseas Flagship Center. After completing the Flagship program, she plans to pursue a job analyzing North Korean affairs.

Flagship Centers and Partner Programs

**African Languages**
- Howard University
- University of Wisconsin, Madison
- Ibadan University, Nigeria*
- Zanzibar University, Tanzania*

**Arabic**
- Dearborn Public Schools K–12 Flagship Program
- Michigan State University
- University of Maryland, College Park
- University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Flagship Partner Program
- University of Oklahoma Flagship Partner Program
- University of Texas, Austin
- Alexandria University, Egypt*
- Damascus University, Syria*

**Central Eurasian Turkic Languages**
- American Councils for International Education

**Chinese**
- Arizona State University Flagship Partner Program
- Brigham Young University
- Indiana University Flagship Partner Program
- Ohio Public Schools K–12 Flagship Program
- Ohio State University
- Portland Public Schools K–12 Flagship Program
- San Francisco State University Flagship Partner Program
- University of Mississippi
- University of Oregon
- University of Rhode Island Flagship Partner Program
- Nanjing University, China*
- Qingdao University, China*

**Hindi/Urdu**
- University of Texas, Austin
- Jaipur Hindi Center, India*
- Lucknow Urdu Center, India*

**Korean**
- University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa
- Korea University, South Korea*

**Persian**
- University of Maryland, College Park
- Tajik State National University, Tajikistan*

**Russian and Eurasian**
- American Councils for International Education
- Bryn Mawr College
- Middlebury College
- Portland State University Flagship Partner Program
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of Maryland, College Park
- Saint Petersburg State University, Russia*

*Overseas Flagship Centers

The Flagship Mission

The Language Flagship leads the nation in designing, supporting, and implementing a new paradigm for advanced language education. Through an innovative partnership among the federal government, education, and business, The Language Flagship seeks to graduate students who will take their place among the next generation of global professionals, commanding a superior level of proficiency in one of many languages critical to U.S. competitiveness and security.

What Do We Do?

Flagship Centers offer students intensive language instruction to enhance their academic degrees, graduating students with superior-level language proficiency. Programs are available at undergraduate and post–bachelor’s degree levels and include periods of rigorous language and cultural immersion at Overseas Flagship Centers. The Language Flagship also funds a select number of pilot K–12 programs designed to provide an articulated path of language instruction for students from elementary school through college.

Flagship graduates leverage their superior language and cultural skills in various careers, offering an intercultural perspective to employers in the federal and state governments, global businesses, and nongovernmental organizations.

THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

Creating Global Professionals

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