

NMU Title VI Grant Update

In 2009, NMU received a Title VI grant from the federal government to develop its International Studies and language curricula. A little more than a year into the grant period the project is going very well. Dr. Tim Compton, Project Director, reports that the major components of the proposal are well underway. "Our main goal was to strengthen the International Studies major. After interviewing numerous people from a variety of international careers and studying the curriculum at any number of universities, we created learning objectives for students within the major. We then worked backwards to create a curriculum which would lead students to meet the objectives. We have sent a major curriculum proposal to the Committee on Undergraduate Programs, and we hope the new curriculum will be in place by the beginning of next academic year. We are convinced the new curriculum will help our graduates in International Studies be more prepared than ever before to take advantage of increasing international careers and opportunities."

One focus area for the Title VI grant for 2010-11 is capacity building among NMU faculty in the area of Middle Eastern studies. Thirteen faculty members from across campus have embarked on a year-long study of the Middle East which will include a visit to the region in the spring of 2011 and which will culminate in adding to NMU's Middle East courses and content. Faculty members on this "team" include Ansley Valentine and Shuang Xie from Communication and Performance Studies, Carol Steinhaus and Charles Rayhorn from Business, Gabriel Brahm, Jaspal Singh and Peter Goodrich from English, J.D. Phillips from Mathematics and Computer Science, Maya Sen from Psychology, SaraJane Tompkins from the Library, Michael Loukinen of Sociology, Rebecca Ulland from Modern Languages and Literatures, and Rob Legg from Geography. The group benefitted greatly from a two-day workshop this Fall presented by Middle East scholars from the United States Institute of Peace. Compton stated that he thinks this year of study will help raise awareness among faculty and students far beyond the "team" about this key area of the world for years to come.

"Although the curriculum revision is at the heart of the project, we are making progress in a number of other areas as well," reports Compton. "The grant has made it possible to start an international film series, help finance several acts of the International Performing Arts series, and purchase materials that will be with NMU permanently." In addition, in conjunction with the grant the Committee on Internationalization at NMU is working to create a Global Faculty Recognition and a Global Student Recognition. These recognitions aim to encourage people at NMU to pursue things international.