

Dearborn Immersion Trip, 16 – 22 March 2013

Encl: (1) Official Itinerary  
(2) Photographs

1. Student Coordinator Comments:

- a. As you can see from Enclosure (1), this Immersion Trip planned a very aggressive schedule for the six days we were in Dearborn. We planned for two or three events per day, which we found to be extremely exhausting. Given this schedule, we did not have adequate time for group preparation, studying FSI materials, or review from previous events. Furthermore, we did not build in enough “free time” that allowed for self-study, personal correspondence, fitness, or other activities that would positively contribute to the success of the trip. Given the packed schedule, we had an opportunity to have a well-rounded experience in Dearborn, which included cultural, diplomatic, and academic events, and well as hear a variety of dialects and speaking levels.
- b. My second comment comes from my personal experience. I recommend only students with above-average listening skills be encouraged to attend the trip. As a student who has difficulty with listening at this point in the training syllabus, I found myself completely overwhelmed at times and subsequently understanding 20% or less of the conversation. While all students struggled to some degree, those with untrained ears received neither good language training nor the cultural information contained in the remarks.
- c. Staff support. I engaged early and frequently with the Arabic Section leadership in order to identify and select the best instructors to accompany the students on the trip. **THIS IS ESSENTIAL** to the success of the trip. As student coordinator, you must insist and demand on the best staff for this immersion. We found the morning prep sessions with the teachers very useful. During this time, we went over pertinent vocabulary, the current news, and had an opportunity to ask questions.
- d. Lodging. The Henry Hotel Dearborn was an excellent choice. The hotel accepted the government rate of \$91 per night. It is centrally located in Dearborn and was within a ten minute drive of many of the activities within Dearborn. There were a few Arabic speaking guests and staff. The hotel did not provide a conference room, but there was a comfortable lobby where we met for class sessions. There was no complimentary breakfast, but there was good restaurant in the hotel serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. Parking was free. There was a pool and fitness center and it was within walking distance of a mall.
- e. Archives. This report, the enclosures, and all planning material can be found on the FSINet Shared Drive under: Student Folders/Arabic/Immersion/2013

2. Instructor Staff Comments:

- a. We recommend that students have a clear communication with the POC about the purpose of the visit and what activities to anticipate while there.

- b. We suggest that students of the same level or almost the same level should be encouraged to participate in the immersion (end of Rotation 5)
- c. We recommend more instructional time for pre-activities and Post-activities. Also to have enough time for reading comprehension, in order to keep up with the curriculum

3. Detailed Critique of Visits:

- a. Sunday, 17 March

**Islamic Center of America**

The Shi'a Mosque at the Islamic Center of America was an excellent location to begin the immersion week. We established a robust program that included a tour of the mosque, breakfast, and conversation time with Imam Sayyed Qazwini. The Imam had a very strong point of view that was an excellent exposure to the types of discussions we are likely to encounter in the Middle East. I recommend visiting here and the Sunni Mosque (Dix Mosque, or Yemeni Mosque) again if only to compare and contrast the two sects, their facilities, and their Imams. The Imam spoke clear MSA Arabic.

**The American Moslem Society**

9945 West Vernor Hwy. Dearborn, MI  
POC: Mosad samsawng@aol.com  
313 505-0193

The group visited a Sunni mosque, known locally as the Dix Mosque due to its location on Dix Avenue, and met with one of the outreach coordinators and the Imam. The outreach coordinator provided the group a brief tour of the mosque, and spoke about the mosque's members and the history of the building. After the tour, the group met with the Imam, who made a few brief comments and then opened the discussion up to questions from students. The entire meeting was conducted in Arabic, which gave students the opportunity to listen to another accent and dialect, and practice their own Arabic; however, the Imam spoke very quickly and at times it was difficult to understand his comments. That said, the Imam was patient and complimentary to all students who asked questions, and was diplomatic in his responses. He also encouraged the group to follow-up via email should they have questions. Visiting this mosque allowed students to speak Arabic, provided useful information on issues of importance to the Sunni community in Dearborn, and allowed students to observe similarities and differences among various Muslim and Arab communities in Dearborn. For future consideration, providing the outreach coordinator and the Imam at the mosque with a more structured framework or specific topics for discussion would improve this visit, as it would give students a better context in which to prepare their questions in Arabic.

- b. Monday, 18 March

**Consulate General of Iraq Visit**

This was a very successful visit due to the quality and comprehensibility of the discussion, unique perspective from an Arab mission in the US, and generous hospitality of the Iraqi Mission. The Iraqi diplomat who coordinated the event with us, Abraham Malek, was very cooperative and organized. We were greeted by the Consul General Almanhal Alsafi, who spoke with the group for nearly an hour on issues related to their work in Dearborn and Iraq's political situation. We were then given a tour of their Consulate before heading to a lunch at an upscale restaurant, which was provided by the Iraqi Mission. Several Iraqi junior diplomats

accompanied us and served as excellent interlocutors. Students reported high satisfaction with the comprehensibility of the Arabic, as well as the generosity the group received, and a number claimed that this was the best meeting of the trip. This is a highly recommended visit to make in the future, and the Iraqis demonstrated a keen interest in welcoming future groups.

### **Consulate General of Lebanon Visit**

Lebanese Consul General Bilal Kabalan spoke with the larger group for over an hour and then the group broke into three smaller discussion groups with two of the Consulate staff, as well as the Consul General. It was useful to compare and contrast the two Consulates' work, though Mr. Kabalan's use of more formal fusha (case endings, etc.), versus our more informal use of it, led to some difficulties in fully appreciating the scope of his comments. Note: Be sure to caffeinate before/during meetings after a formal lunch.] Mr. Kabalan expressed sincere interest in meeting with future immersion groups and is very open to suggestions for how to tailor future visits.

He also had a number of helpful additional schedule suggestions which we couldn't accommodate given the tight schedule. He suggested a Dearborn diwaniya hosted by Abu Ali (Ramez Bazzi, cell: 313-663-1222), should future groups be able to schedule it during one of their evenings. We just ran out of energy by 9 pm.

### **Mother of God Chaldean Church Visit**

This was a successful, if somewhat unorthodox visit, which allowed students to interact one-on-one and in small groups with a group of Iraqi Christians. We planned to spend 45 minutes visiting with the priest, Father Wissam Matti, and members of his weekly bible study, but ended up spending over two hours in small discussion with the congregation. Fr. Matti was very welcoming and provided each of us with music CDs from his church. The meeting began as a large (45+ people) roundtable in which basic questions were asked by the Chaldeans and our group – for the future, we recommend holding to a brief introduction of both groups to avoid a drawn-out exchange across such a large gathering. As informative as the plenary meeting was, the students reported that the informal discussions over coffee immediately afterward were far more productive both for using Arabic and directly interacting with our hosts. This community has a strong sense of discrimination and vulnerability in the Middle East (and to some extent in the U.S.), so expect strong – and occasionally politically incorrect – opinions to be expressed on sensitive subjects such as sectarian conflict, religious tolerance, and the war in Iraq. We recommend meeting with this group again to expose students to this less well-known segment of Arab society. Some students said this was the best meeting of the immersion trip.

c. Tuesday, 19 March

### **New Yasmeen Bakery**

We visited New Yasmeen Bakery from 11:00-1:30 pm. The store manager (Tarek) was a great host and greeted us with pastries, coffee, and tea. We then took turns in groups of three working behind the counter for 20 minutes. This provided an opportunity to speak in Arabic to the people working at the bakery as well as hear what customers said to them. We also learned the names of fruits, vegetables, and kitchen items. There was some downtime given that only three people could participate at a time. Following work, we ate lunch at New Yasmeen Bakery and bought authentic Lebanese products from the store. The visit was enjoyable and worthwhile. The next group may consider visiting the bakery in the morning when it is not so busy. We were there during the lunch rush.

### **Arab American Museum**

The museum is interesting and extensive – it gives an excellent overview of the history of the Arab community in the U.S. and also has compelling exhibits on culture, discrimination against Arabs and individual Arab communities, like “Little Syria” in New York. Our tour guide, Wisal Samaha, gave an energetic hour-long tour in fusha, so it was excellent language practice. She and her husband also met up with our group for dinner in Ann Arbor for some more language practice. The only negative was that this was one of the few events that cost us money -- \$5 for students and \$10 for teachers, but we thought it was worth the price.

### **Dearborn Police Department**

The police really gave us an extensive program: individually prepared briefing folders with each student’s name, Dearborn police water bottles, and a tour of the department’s garage, where they keep their SWAT and bomb removal equipment. We also had an hour-long-meeting with Chief Haddad. The problem, however, was no Arabic! We did the entire meeting in English, with a short interlude in Arabic with one of the department’s Arabic-speaking lieutenants. I still think there’s value to visiting the police. The chief talked about working with federal authorities and how Dearborn has been affected in the wake of September 11.

d. Wednesday, 20 March

### **Arab American Chamber of Commerce**

While previous FSI’s Arabic language students have reviewed meetings with the Arab American Chamber of Commerce (AACC) positively, the chamber was unresponsive to our requests for a meeting this year. The director of the AACC changed in 2011, and along with the change of leadership came a loss of both AACC’s institutional knowledge of previous FSI visits as well as our principle POC therein. This confluence was likely the cause of the lack of response from the AACC. Considering that the AACC has extensive reach into the Arab American business community both in Dearborn as well as across the Near East, we remain optimistic for future meetings.

### **Dearborn Academy**

Mr. Majid Younes, our POC and the director of the Arabic program at Dearborn Academy was welcoming and went to great lengths to accommodate and facilitate our visit to the Academy. The visit consisted of an Arabic language introduction to the school, its charter, the demographic makeup, as well as the challenges it faces maintaining an Arabic-English bilingual education system. Mr. Majid made clear to us the benefit they hoped to derive from this annual visit was to instill in the students of Dearborn Academy, a pride in their Arabic language ability. As Mr. Majid put it, most of the Arabic students find themselves in the midst of an identity crisis, causing them to perceive their Arabic heritage and associated language a crutch rather than an asset. As such, our role was to meet with students of various ages and grades, discuss our respective roles in diplomacy (in both Arabic and English) and witness bilingual education in practice. From here, FSI students split up into three groups, visiting three different classes at the 7th grade level. Mr. Majid’s goal is for next year’s FSI group to meet with the same students, who will then be 8th graders, for continuity sake. Demonstrating the school’s generosity, and the importance they place on FSI’s annual visit, the school provided FSI students with an Arabic lunch, the costs of which they insisted on covering. From a cultural and experiential perspective, this trip was fruitful; however, our opportunities to use Arabic were somewhat limited - relative to the language ability of the students we were individually paired with. The Arabic speaking staff did join us for lunch, which provided an ideal medium for language use, but this was only a small part of the overall visit. In sum, the Dearborn Academy visit was enjoyable and positive from both a linguistic as well as cultural perspective. We highly recommend continuing the tradition of visiting this school to future immersion students.

### **Charmed and Co.**

2013 marked the first year FSI Arabic immersion students visited this small boutique jewelry store - owned and operated by Mr. Majid Younes (Arabic program director for Dearborn Academy). Charmed and Co. gave FSI immersion students a complete Arabic-language tutorial on jewelry making, jewelry symbolism in the Arab world, and simultaneously walked students through the process of making their own keepsakes, free of charge. The experience allowed students to learn and employ a new set of Arabic vocabulary, not generally covered in studies of politics, human rights, and the like - jewelry. Although there was likely, in part, a marketing and financial motivation behind the invitation to visit the jewelry store, no pressure was placed on students to purchase anything following the Arabic language workshop and this motivation did not detract from the experience, nor the language benefits derived from there. Mr. Majid was, once again, very accommodating and warm toward the students and teachers, many of whom, in the end, did buy jewelry from his shop -- a Win/Win scenario. Holding this visit in the afternoon was also ideal in that the environment was relaxed and students were able to migrate directly to dinner thereafter - the adjacent Mongolian Grill. Majid and his assistant, as well as one of the Arabic language instructors from Dearborn Academy joined us for dinner that evening, which allowed for continued informal discussions in Arabic, greatly benefiting the students.

e. Thursday, 21 March

### **Arab-American and Chaldean Council**

We visited the Arab-American and Chaldean Council's Detroit office, where we learned about the social services and outreach programs that the Council provides for not only the large Arab community in Michigan, but also for all immigrants in the metro-Detroit area. The COO of the organization, Dr. Radwan Khoury, gave us an overview of the Council in Arabic, and after the overview we had lunch with some of the directors of the Council, and were able to break up into small groups for a chance to practice Arabic one-on-one and in a smaller, more open atmosphere.

The positives: Very receptive to what we asked for (specifically to speak in Arabic and slow MSA); chance to break into small groups to practice Arabic; able to see an organization that not only helps the Arab community but also all immigrants in the metro-Detroit area; staff were quite excited to have us; free lunch!

The negatives: Possibly very receptive to what we asked for because I specifically requested it; it was a bit far of a drive from Detroit to Ann Arbor (maybe next time do this meeting on the same day as other meetings in Dearborn or Detroit rather than the next meeting in Ann Arbor); they probably could have spoken a little bit slower in Arabic as well, but all in all I think the Arabic was helpful and there was more opportunities to speak in this meeting than others.

### **Arabic Flagship Program University of Michigan-Ann Arbor**

The event consisted of a second-year MSA class, a third year Egyptian dialect class, a tour of the language lab, a brief discussion with university students, and a chance to attend a movie presentation. Following the event we went to dinner in Ann Arbor with some Arabic speaking students from the University. The classroom portion was nominally useful; the class was conducted almost entirely in Arabic but aside from about a 10-minute conversation one-on-one with the students, we did not have a chance to speak. It did not appear that the Flagship Program Coordinator, Sofia Rosenberg, had informed the professor that we were Arabic students that wished to practice instead of simply observe the class. A few of us also attended

an Egyptian dialect class with the same professor. The language lab tour was conducted in English and the movie presentation turned out to be an English language movie which we declined to attend. Overall, this event did not offer much of a chance to practice our speaking skills. This event would have been better if we had asked the university to set up a discussion with Arabic students and skipped the classes and tours. Alternatively, we could have attempted to set up meeting with some Arabic student groups instead of the Flagship program.

# School of Language Services

## *Itinerary for Arabic Section Immersion Trip to Dearborn Michigan 16-22 March 2013*

<b>Friday, 15 March 2013</b>			
<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>POC</b>	<b>Description</b>
1200 – 1400	Depart FSI	Aaron Weiss	Pickup Van from Main State; Van staged overnight at FSI parking Lot

<b>Saturday, 16 March 2013</b>			
<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>POC</b>	<b>Description</b>
0730 – 0800	Assemble in FSI Parking Lot	Aaron	Load luggage and prepare for transit to Dearborn MI
0800 – 1730	Transit to Dearborn, MI	Aaron	300 Town Center Dr Dearborn, MI 48126
1700 – 1815	Arrive Dearborn, The Henry Collection Marriott Hotel	--	Check-in to rooms and prepare for dinner
1815 – 1830	Assemble in Hotel Lobby	Ben	Walk to Restaurant
1830 – TBD	Dinner at Ollie's Cuisine	Ben	16351 Ford Rd #100 Dearborn, MI 48126
2030	Return to Hotel	--	Schedule Complete

<b>Sunday, 17 March 2013</b>			
<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>POC</b>	<b>Description</b>
0730 – 0830	FSI Class	Instructors	Location: TBD
0830 – 0900	Transit	Aaron	19500 Ford Rd, Dearborn, MI 48128
0900 – 1400	Islamic Center of America and Mosque	Eide Alawan	0900 – 1000: Tour of Islamic Center 1000 – 1100: Breakfast and Dialogue 1100 – 1200: Imam Sermon in Mosque 1200 – 1330: One on One with Imam Qazwini 1330 – 1400: Prayer
1400 – 1430	Transit	Danielle	9945 Vernor Hwy, Dearborn, MI 48126
1430 – 1500	FSI Recap	Instructors	Location: TBD
1500 – 1700	American Moslem Society	Mosad	1500-1600: Discussion on Islam 1600-1700: Question and Answer Period
1700 – 1730	Transit to Dinner	Danielle	12710 W Warren Ave, Dearborn, MI 48126
1730 – 2000	Al-Ameer Restaurant	Danielle	
2000 – 2030	Transit to Hotel	--	Schedule Complete

<b>Monday, 18 March 2013</b>			
<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>POC</b>	<b>Description</b>
0830 – 0930	FSI Class	Instructors	Location: TBD
0930 -- 1000	Transit	David	16445 W. 12 Mile Road, Southfield , MI 48076
1000 – 1330	Consulate General of Iraq	David	1000 – 1100: Tour of Consulate General 1100 – 1120: Meeting with CG Almanhal Alsafi 1120 – 1200: Meeting with Iraqi diplomatic staff 1200 – 1330: Lunch hosted by Consulate staff
1330 – 1330	Transit	Amy	Suite 560, 3031 W Grand Blvd, Detroit, MI 48202
1330 – 1500	Visit to the Lebanese Consulate	Bilal Kabalan, Consul General	Opening discussion with the Consul General about his work with the 15,000 families in his consular district of 12 states. Then, break into smaller groups for discussion with him and his staff.
1500 – 1530	Transit to Hotel	--	
1530 – 1630	FSI Class (Review)	Instructors	Location TBD

1630 – 1730	Executive Time	--	
1730 – 1745	Transit to Dinner	Aaron	7107 Chase Rd Dearborn, MI 48126
1745 – 2000	Sinbad Grand Café	Aaron	
2000 – 2030	Transit	David	25585 Berg Road, Southfield, MI 48033
2030 – 2200	Mother of God Chaldean (Iraqi) Catholic Church	David	Discussion with Father Wisam Matti and members of church's evening bible study – topics include Christianity in the Middle East, experiences of Iraqis under Saddam, and immigration to the US
2200 – 2230	Transit to Hotel	--	Schedule Complete

### Tuesday, 19 March 2013

Time	Event	POC	Description
0800 – 0900	FSI Class	Instructors	Location: TBD
0900 -- 0915	Transit	Emily	Warren Avenue, Dearborn MI
0915 – 1100	Warren Avenue Shopping	Emily	Concludes at New Yasmeen Bakery
1100 – 1200	New Yasmeen Bakery	Emily	Tour and Discussion (13900 West Warren Ave)
1200 – 1300	Lunch at New Yasmeen Bakery	Emily	Lunch
1300 – 1345			
1345 – 1400	Transit	Jerome	13624 Michigan Ave, Dearborn, MI 48126
1400 – 1600	Arab-American Museum	Lindsay Robillard	Tour of the museum with Wisal
1600 -- 1630	Transit to Hotel		
1630 – 1700	FSI Class (Review)	Instructors	
1700 – 1745	Executive Time		
1745 – 1800	Transit	Jerome	
1800 – 2000	Dinner with Wisal, location TBD	Jerome	Dinner with tour guide from Arab-American Museum and some of her friends/family.
2000 – 2030	Transit to Hotel	--	Schedule Complete

### Wednesday, 20 March 2013

Time	Event	POC	Description
0730 – 0830	FSI Class	Instructors	Location: TBD
0830 -- 0900	Transit to Dearborn Academy	Ben	19310 Ford Rd Dearborn, MI 48128
0900 – 1300	Dearborn Academy	Majed Younes	0900 – 1130: Tour, classes, student interaction 1130 – 1300: Lunch provided with discussion
1300 – 1330	Transit	Jerome	16099 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn, MI 48126
1330 – 1430	Dearborn Police Department	Nancy Hamood Strutz	Chief Ronald Haddad and Deputy Lt. Issa Shahin
1430 – 1445	Transit to Hotel	--	
1445 – 1530	FSI Class	Instructors	Location: TBD
1530 – 1545	Executive Time	--	
1545 – 1600	Transit	Ben	1029 Howard St, Dearborn, MI 48124
1600 – 1730	Jewelry Making at Charmed & Co	Majed Younes	
1730 – 1745	Transit to Hotel	--	
1745 – 1815	Executive Time	--	Hotel
1815 – 1830	Transit to Dinner	Marlo	22681 Newman, Dearborn MI
1830 – 2030	La Pita Restaurant	Marlo	
2030 – 2045	Transit to Hotel	--	Schedule Complete

### Thursday, 21 March 2013

Time	Event	POC	Description
0830 – 0930	FSI Class	Instructors	Location: TBD
0930 – 1000	Transit	Marlo	62 West 7 Mile Road, Detroit, MI

1000 – 1230	Arab-American and Chaldean Council Detroit Outreach Center	Dr. Radwan Khoury	1000 – 1020: Welcome by Dr. Khoury 1020 – 1045: Overview of the Arab-American & Chaldean Council 1045 – 1130: Visit PATH & Health programs 1130 – 1215: Working lunch with question/answer session in Arabic (lunch provided by ACC) 1215 – 1230: Conclusion by Dr. Khoury
1230 – 1315	Transit to Ann Arbor	--	
1315 – 1400	Executive Time / FSI Class	--	Location: TBD
1315 – 1400	Transit	Patrick	University of Michigan Ann Arbor, Thayer Building, 202 South Thayer Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
1400 – 1900	University of Michigan – Ann Arbor Arabic Flagship Program	Sofia Rosenberg	1345-1400: Meet at Arabic Flagship Program Office Divide Group according to ability and preference: 1400-1600: Attend Second Year Arabic Class 1600-1730: Egyptian Colloquial (Advanced Students) 1730-1800: Discussion with Flagship Students (All) 1800-1900: Arab Spring Movie (All) 1900-2030: Dinner at Pita Kabob
2030 – 2145	Transit to Hotel	--	Schedule Complete

### Friday, 22 March 2013

Time	Event	POC	Description
0800 – 0830	Assemble in Hotel Lobby	Aaron	Check-out and Prepare for Departure
0830 -- 1900	Transit	Aaron	
1900 – 1930	Disembark at FSI Parking Lot	Aaron	
1930 – 2000	Return Van to Main State	Aaron	If Motor Pool closed, store van in FSI Parking Lot for remainder of the weekend
TBD	Immersion Trip Complete	--	

### Points of Contact:

	313-441-2000	The Henry Collection Marriott Hotel
Eide A. Alawan	313-506-3353	Islamic Center of America
Mosad	313-505-0193	American Moslem Society
Abraham Malek	571-275-8037	Consulate General of Iraq
Bilal Kabalan	313-772-5530	Consul General, Lebanese Consulate
Father Wisam Matti	248-356-0569	Mother of God Chaldean Catholic Church
Tarek	313-582-0233	New Yasmeen Bakery
Lindsay Robilliard	248-462-1163	Arab-American Museum
Wisal	734-717-7753	Arab-American Museum
	313-982-1300	Dearborn Academy
Majed Younes	313-529-7326	Director of Arabic, Dearborn Academy; Charmed Jewelry
Nancy Hamood Strutz	313-943-2236	Dearborn Police Department
Dr. Radwan Khoury	248-559-1990	Arab-American and Chaldean Council Detroit Outreach Center
Sofia Rosenberg	734-763-8177	University of Michigan Ann Arbor, Arabic Flagship program
	313-253-1010	Ollie's Cuisine
	313-582-8185	Al Ameer Restaurant
	313-582-9915	Sinbad Grand Cafe
	313-563-7482	La Pita Restaurant
	734-622-8082	Pita Kabob Grill
Atef Nazir	703-405-6065	
Amy Schedbauer	973-752-5671	
Patrick Ball	202-538-1396	
Emily Harter	202-431-4955	
Jerome Sherman	412-527-7267	

Ben Zemek	575-621-2224	
Aaron Weiss	202-731-5708	
Marlo Cross-Durant	734-358-5030	
Danielle Picariello	213-810-0974	
David Martinez	575-312-0041	
Maggie Daher	571-277-8955	
Bassima El-Masri	703-628-1658	
Nada Chadli	703-587-9060	



# ARABIC SECTION IMMERSION TRIP TO DEARBORN MICHIGAN

16 – 22 March 2013





# Islamic Center of America





# CHALDEAN (Iraq) Catholic Church



# YASMEEN Bakery









# Tour of Arab-American Museum



# DEARBORN Academy









# At the Police Station







# Making jewelry

## Discussion about Arab cultural symbols









**Dinner with  
instructors  
from  
DEARBORN  
Academy**



# Arab-American & Chaldean Council





# University of Michigan ANN ARBOR



