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### **GW'S INTERNSHIP PROGRAM PREPARES STUDENTS TO FILL CRITICAL NATIONAL SECURITY GAPS**

**WASHINGTON--**Thirty-one high caliber students from around the country have received coveted internships at the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Homeland Security as part of The George Washington University's National Security Internship (NSI) program.

The nine-week program, which began June 8, 2009, was created through a partnership with the Classics and Semitics program in GW's Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Homeland Security. Its goal is to prepare the next cadre of civil servants with the skills necessary to serve the country, focusing on cultural and linguistic proficiency in matters related to the Middle East.

"The United States was not prepared for 9/11," said Mohssen Esseesy, executive director of the NSI program and director of GW's Arabic program. "We need to focus on filling the critical gap of national security personnel who have thorough knowledge of the Middle East. This internship program will help train those people."

In its second year, the NSI program had more than 200 applicants, who faced rigorous academic screenings, including a review of transcripts, recommendations, an essay and an Arabic language proficiency test administered by the FBI. Accepted students also had to receive high-level security clearances. In return, participants receive full tuition coverage, free room and board and 11 transferrable credits for their respective colleges.

The internship offers students a full schedule that includes a challenging academic curriculum, as well as important on-the-job training at either the Department of Homeland Security or the FBI. Beginning at 8:15 a.m., five days a week, students attend an Arabic language class to continue honing their linguistic skills. That is followed by an Arab culture and film course or a national security seminar. By noon, students head to their internships, where they remain until the end of the workday. Throughout the program, they also take trips to tour the National Cryptologic Museum, the FBI Academy in Quantico and the National Islamic Center.

Another significant advantage of the NSI program is that it provides close interactions with prestigious guest lecturers. This year, some of the speakers are Michael Scheuer, a 22-year veteran of the CIA, who led the Counterterrorist Center's Osama bin Laden unit; Vahid Majidi, assistant director of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate at the FBI; and specialists in Islam, national security and terrorism. Notable guests last year included Department of Homeland Security's chief of staff and former Ambassador to Kuwait Edward "Skip" Gnehm.

Dr. Esseesy added, "We hope that the National Security Internship program will serve as a model for all other languages critical to U.S. national security, as well as empower Muslims and Arabs to play a positive role in securing this country."

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