

AMIDEAST امديست

PALESTINIAN FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PFDP)

Second Quarter
Performance Monitoring Report
January 1 – March 31, 2007



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Executive Summary

The second quarter of FY07 involved several key milestones.

- TOEFL and GRE testing of all candidates was completed
- Final selection of candidates was completed
- The placement process began for 18 PhD finalists
- Pre-academic training courses were begun.
- PFDP Needs Assessment Report

Project implementation regarding the first four bullet points is on target and progressing as expected. Each of these issues is highlighted in the full report.

The PFDP Needs Assessment Report was an unplanned activity that required considerable investment in labor and effort. The final product will be a useful resource to USAID in terms of careful documentation of Palestinian higher education priorities and challenges. This information may well have relevance to other activities beyond the PFDP. The results of the report, in tandem with the expectation that there will be an opportunity to reprogram existing project funds, have sparked a useful discussion among USAID, OSI and AMIDEAST about how to use such funds most appropriately and effectively.

In addition, the report helped clarify how to modify existing program components. This discussion continued throughout this reporting period and remains undecided. However, there is a consensus to expand the fields of study for the Short Term Fellowships (STF), add a research component and possibly add some level of salary assistance or a family fund in order to make the Short Term Fellowship component more attractive and less a financial burden for applicants. Discussion regarding both of these issues, modifying the STF component and adding new components with reprogrammed funds will continue into the third quarter.

1. Testing of Applicants

A critical part of the selection process for cohort II involved testing PhD applicants in the GRE and TOEFL tests, and similarly testing the Short-term Fellows using the TOEFL. Importantly, all applicants had previously submitted an ITP test (unofficial TOEFL exam) in their applications to determine eligibility. Official GRE and TOEFL exams were used to inform the final selection of candidates and their scores will be used for placement at US universities. Testing was completed at AMIDEAST Ramallah's Computer-based Testing Lab, as well as at AMIDEAST Gaza using paper-based exams.

Once again, the timing of the GRE exam was critical because the Educational Testing Service has only permitted the GRE to be offered twice a year in the paper-based format. Hence, our PFDP candidates in Gaza only had a single opportunity on Feb 10 that could not be missed. They also had no flexibility in the TOEFL test dates and took their exam on Nov 14 which also could not be missed. These restrictions limited the amount of test preparation AMIDEAST could provide to semi-finalists. In total, 33 applicants took the TOEFL test and 29 completed the GRE in West Bank and Gaza. Overall, English skills of the finalist were surprisingly high while GRE scores were, not surprisingly, low.

2. Final Selection Interviews

The results of AMIDEAST's approach toward outreach, recruitment and selection is illustrated in the Summary Data of Applications (see Annex A below). Interviews of the applicants were conducted between January 6 and 8, 2007 in Ramallah, as well as via DVC in Gaza. The interview committee was composed of eleven individuals. Given the number of applicants needing to be interviewed we divided up into discipline teams of two each, and organized a complicated matrix of interviews that happened simultaneously in various rooms at AMIDEAST over three days. The interview committees were composed of the following:

Education

1. Lou Cristillo
Professor, Columbia Teachers College
2. Chris Shinn
PFDP Chief of Party, AMIDEAST
3. Ashraf Shuaibi
Aid Program Development Specialist, USAID West Bank/Gaza

Political Science

1. Ron Tammen
Professor and Director, Hatfield School of Government, Portland State University
2. Joseph Glicksberg
PFDP Program Manager, Open Society Institute

Public Policy/ Public Administration

1. Bassam Kort
PFDP Contracting Technical Officer, USAID West Bank/Gaza
2. Professor Bruce Clary
Professor and Senior Research Associate at Muskie School of Public Service

at the University of Southern Maine

Urban Planning

1. Ruth Steiner

Associate Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Florida

2. Joseph Glicksberg

PFDP Program Manager, Open Society Institute

Social Work (by video conference late January)

1. Alex Irwin

Deputy Director, Open Society Institute, Network Scholarship Programs and Social Work Fellowship Program

2. Margaret Lombe

Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Boston College

3. Joseph Glicksberg

PFDP Program Manager, Open Society Institute

The interview committees used standardized Interview Guidelines and an Interview Rating Sheet for each interview. Both of these forms are attached in Annex B and C. Interviews typically lasted 30 – 40 minutes. A period of discussion among the interviewers then occurred after the candidate had left the room. A wrap-up session also took place at the conclusion of all the interviews for that discipline. The aim of this discussion was to review the full range and quality of applicants and make final decisions regarding who would be selected and who would not. Candidates were not formally ranked in priority; however, a number of candidates were flagged for further discussion among the entire group of interviewers. These individuals, as well as the highlights of each selection committee, were discussed in a general forum at the conclusion of the entire selection process on.

Logistically the interviews went extremely well. The exception was that Dr. Margaret Lombe (a Zambian national) was unable to make the interview trip to the West Bank because she was denied a visa from the Israeli Consulate in Boston. Therefore, she conducted interviews with 6 social work finalists with Joe Glicksberg and Alex Irwin by videoconference from OSI's office in NY at the end of January. The demands of time on each interviewer were significant. However, enthusiasm for the quality of applicants grew as the process progressed. During the general forum discussion involving all of the interviewers there was mixed reviews about the quality of the total applicant pool. The interviews for the education and public policy candidates tended to be more critical, whereas the interviewers for the other three disciplines were more impressed by caliber of the interviewees. Candidates asked few questions during the interview. The guidelines and rating sheets were found appropriate and useful. Finalist selection results include 18 PhD finalists and 5 Short-term finalists. A detailed breakdown can be found in Annex A.

3. Pre-Academic Training

An integral part of the PFDP program is to provide the PFDP participants with a variety of pre-academic professional training to enhance their capabilities and better prepare them for their scholarship.

Last quarter the training focused on test preparation for the TOEFL and GRE standardized tests. This quarter PFDP embarked on additional pre-academic training. In Gaza, a Public Speaking Seminar was given for the finalists running from March 3 to 14 and a Presentation/Communication Skills Seminar was given from March 17 to 28. In Nablus, a Public Speaking Seminar was given from March 15-17 while Ramallah finalists attended a two part Presentation/ Communication Skills Seminar from March 16 to March 24. In April the Ramallah residents will attend the Public Speaking Seminar while the Nablus group will attend the Communication Skills course. During the spring and summer PFDP will conduct a series of intensive seminars on academic writing, SPSS and research methodology. An English Language course will also be tailored for those who need it from the PFDP finalists. Once again, managing the logistics, securing very qualified trainers and ensuring high attendance from the finalists remain top priorities for AMIDEAST staff.

4. University Outreach Meetings

During the past quarter PFDP staff visited every Palestinian university except Al Aqsa University in Gaza (as per USAID's No Contact policy we cannot speak with faculty from this institution) to promote four new program components to be launched in 2007. These new components are described in a press release we distributed during these meetings (see Appendix D). Most visits involved two meetings, one with senior university administration and department deans and the second with general faculty. The meeting with senior faculty revolved around PFDP staff describing potential new activities (other than those mentioned in the press release) followed by an interactive discussion to obtain feedback and comments (see below). The meetings with the general faculty focused on promoting the new program components. PFDP staff answered questions and provided clarifications on eligibility and requirements.

5. PFDP Needs Assessment and Academic Survey

AMIDEAST conducted a comprehensive needs assessment of the Palestinian academic community in terms of the aims and scope of the Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP). This initiative was never part of the annual Work Plan but came about as a result of discussions between AMIDEAST and the sponsors for a clearer understanding of faculty priorities. It was also apparent by late-January that only 18 PhD Fellows would be finalists, however, funding exists for 24 slots. This difference created an opportunity to suggest ways of reprogramming funds based on the results of the needs assessment.

AMIDEAST staff conducted visits to ten Palestinian universities between the period of February 18 and March 13, 2007. In addition, the AMIDEAST staff distributed Arabic and English versions of an Academic Survey, in both hardcopy and electronically, to the same ten Palestinian universities, as well as UNRWA's Men's and Women's Training Centers in Ramallah. 167 surveys were completed and returned. The strategy discussions were designed to complement the results of the Academic Survey. The combined results of these efforts were summarized and published as a report. A partial version of the report can be found in Annex D. AMIDEAST staff invested approximately 200 hours of labor in producing this report, which it is hoped can be used as a more general reference for setting priorities within Palestinian higher education.

6. Open Society Institute US-Based Activity

OSI finalized the interview teams in early January and made all of the ground and air travel arrangements for the five individuals flying from the US to the West Bank.

The first cohort short-term fellows arrived in the US in early January. OSI facilitated their arrival arrangements and logistics and ensured a smooth transition for each of them.

Throughout the quarter OSI staff in New York City began approaching US host universities. All universities currently hosting cohort 1 PFDP grantees were contacted along with additional institutions from the OSI Network. In February, OSI staff prepared and mailed approximately 100 packets to potential host universities to begin individual finalist placements. The packets were mailed to doctoral program directors, associate deans of graduate studies, and select faculty members in approximately 75 departments at 45 public and private universities. The packets were discipline-specific and contained: a) a cover letter; b) finalist files with interview comments summaries; c) a program and PhD component overview; d) ranking instructions; e) a ranking sheet; and f) a host university application. Follow-up was conducted throughout March by phone and e-mail and is ongoing.

OSI continued grantee monitoring. The first cohort of PhD Fellows received their first semester grade transcripts. All grantees received satisfactory performance, some excelled their first semester.

7. Administration and Reporting

Financial: AMIDEAST submitted its second quarter financial pipeline report on March 15, 2007. This report included estimations for the month of March. The total cumulative expenditures reported in the pipeline report were \$230,642. Total actual expenditures were estimated to be \$167,057 as reported in the SF269 submitted on April 28, 2007. The discrepancy stems from OSI incurred USAID expenses (living stipends and tax withholding) during the period which have not yet been reimbursed by AMIDEAST to OSI, and therefore, have not registered in AMIDEAST accounting system.

USAID Audit: Price Waterhouse Coopers is the firm assigned by USAID to audit the PFDP project. The first meeting was held on January 15 and the field work began shortly after. All field work will wrap up by the end of April and the audit should be complete by the end of May.

Annex A
Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP)
Summary Data of Applications
2007 Recruitment- Cohort II

Category	Full Applications Reviewed	Semi-Selection Results	Finalists
Total Applications (WB &Gaza)	53	41	21
WB Applications	39	28	16
Gaza Applications	14	13	5
PhD Fellowship Applications	47	35	17
Short-term Fellow Applications	6	6	4
Applied for 1 st Cohort	28	22	8
Male Applicants	45	33	16
Female Applicants	8	8	5
Universities			
Birzeit University	13	8	5
An Najah National University	11	8	5
Al Quds University	3	3	1
Al Quds Open University	6	6	4
Arab American University	1	1	0
Hebron University	4	2	1
Bethlehem University	0	0	0
Polytechnic University	1	1	0
Al-Azhar University	3	3	2
Al-Quds Open University-Gaza	1	1	0
Islamic University	6	6	3
Community College of Applied Sciences and Technology	3	1	0
Palestine University (new)	1	1	0
Discipline			
Education	16	11	7
Public Admin/Public Policy	14	9	3
Political Science	8	6	3
Urban Planning	11	9	4
Social Work	6	6	4

Notes:

- 11 applications received were found ineligible because of connection to the PA, J2 requirements unfulfilled, citizenship and/or extremely low ITP scores etc therefore are not included in the numbers of applications received.
- One finalists originally from AlQuds Open submitted a nomination form from AAUJ when he was selected as a semi finalists this is not reflected above
- An additional PhD fellow who was deferred from last year will be included in this cohort but not mentioned above. Shaden Awad is an Urban Planner from BZU. There will be a total of 18 PhD finalists for the 2nd cohort.
- One Gaza PhD semi-finalists will be offered a short term fellowship if she is interested.

Annex B

2007 Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP)

Interview Guidelines

Procedure

Interviews are scheduled for one hour time slots. We will spend about 45 minutes talking to each semi-finalist and about 10-15 minutes completing the interview form and preparing for the next interview. Because we will be interviewing in teams of two, you may find it easier for one of us to take the lead in asking questions, while the other writes down the responses on the form. However, each team is free to set up its own system. It is quite likely that team members may have differing opinions of the same candidate. This is to be expected but needs to be noted on each interviewer's form.

It is important to write detailed comments about each semi-finalist on the interview form. We rely heavily on them during the host university placement stage. Thus, while "applicant shows tremendous potential for multiplier effect in urban planning in Gaza with her previous work at XYZ, plans to teaching XYZ course upon her return, wants to initiate XYZ policy changes in her department" is a very useful comment, "interesting background – a definite finalist" is not! Descriptive notes will not only help you defend your position (and refresh your memory!) when discussing the applicant with other interviewers.

Upon completing all the interviews in your field, please compose the following field-specific lists:

- a) A *ranked* list of interviewees your committee chose as finalists.
- b) A list of interviewees that your committee does not feel should become finalists.

Overview

When interviewing candidates, please consider not only their academic abilities and potential for success in a PhD Program or Short-Term Visiting Placement in their field, but also their compatibility with the goals of the program, which are: 1) to "promote the professional development and retention of promising Palestinian academics", and 2) "to revitalize and reform the teaching of selected disciplines at Palestinian universities and promote an institutional culture of teaching and learning".

Although we will use a uniform set of questions on standardized rating sheets to help us to obtain consistent interview results, we encourage interviewers to ask additional questions and initiate discussions in the interview. This helps assess candidates' motivation and English language proficiency and can be useful in keeping interviewers interested. Therefore, please feel free to ask open-ended questions, i.e., questions that do not lead the candidates to appropriate responses, but rather allow them to express themselves. Whenever possible, please encourage interviewees to give specific or anecdotal examples which support broad statements.

Competitive Finalist Profile

A competitive candidate should express a strong commitment to Palestine and offer examples of reform or changes he/she would implement in their field of specialization. It is also important to assess whether a candidate possesses the personal qualities (e.g., flexibility, willingness to change, open-mindedness) needed to adapt to a new cultural and educational environment. **The ideal candidates will be:**

1. Dedicated to Teaching. In the case of two candidates that you rate equally, we ask you to give preference to those that show a stronger interest in teaching than research.

2. Able to Match or Fit with a US PhD Program or Host Department. We ask that you think of strong candidates as those who you can envision being accepted into an academic program in the US due to ability *and* potential “match” between applicant interests and particular faculty interests and/or departmental strengths. In this regard, please envision that anyone who is selected at this stage should have what you would consider to be a 75% chance of actually being placed in a US graduate program (PhD Fellows) or host department (Short-Term Scholars). (There is no specific limit to the number of finalists that should be chosen per field.)

3. Able to show a Strong Potential for the Multiplier Effect and Ability to Contribute to a US and Palestinian Universities: Ideal candidates will show potential for the multiplier effect – i.e., have potential for generating change in research and instructional methodologies among their Palestinian colleagues and at Palestinian institutions of higher education. In addition, they will be able to positively contribute to their US host departments.

4. Able to show Competency in English and Research Methodology. When evaluating these categories, please keep in mind that *all finalists will receive extensive academic training before starting their programs in the US.* This training will include extensive research methodology training, so please consider your views on a candidate’s research ability accordingly. In this area, we ask reviewers to give candidates some benefit of the doubt.

5. Able to Convey that they have a Strong Understanding of Their Field. Candidates should exhibit an understanding of their field, and have realistic goals for their PhD program or short-term visit in the US as well as their future career development.

6. Able to Show that they have an Appropriate Professional Status. This award is not meant for individuals who wish to drastically change their career so much as for those able to enhance their abilities in their current field or gain expertise in a *new but related* field. The nature and quality of the candidate's professional or academic experience should be related to their chosen field.

7. Able to Exhibit Strong Character. Ideal candidates exhibit resourcefulness, self-confidence, focused motivation, and a high level of maturity, which enables them to fully exploit the fellowship’s cultural and professional opportunities.

8. Dedicated to the West Bank/Gaza. Individuals who express a desire to remain in or emigrate to the US do not meet the program’s goals; applicants must be dedicated to fulfilling their J-1 visa return commitment. Please note on the rating sheet if an applicant appears to express an intention to emigrate.

9. Previous international experience. If choosing between two identical potential finalists, those with less international experience (from studying or working abroad) should be given preference.

Further Points to Keep in Mind Regarding Selection

Points to keep in mind as you evaluate both PhD and Short-Term Scholar semi-finalists:

1. Palestinian universities have long been operating in an environment of political, social, and economic crisis. **Many Palestinian academics may therefore have not had exposure to**

international academia, professional development opportunities, and publishing options that scholars from other areas of the world may have had.

- 2. Universities in the West Bank often have better facilities, international connections, and resources than those in Gaza.** The backgrounds of scholars from the West Bank and Gaza may reflect this discrepancy.

Confidentiality

Ranking and interview results are completely confidential. A strong ranking does not guarantee finalist placement at a host university. Please do not discuss the interviews or ranking with anyone that is not on the PFDP Interview Team.

Annex C
2007 Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP)
Interview Report Form

Applicant: _____ PhD or STS? _____	Interviewer: _____
Applicant's Affiliation: _____	Interviewer's Affiliation: _____
Applicant's Major Field and Subfield: _____	Date and City: _____

1. Has anything in your application changed since you submitted it? Your job or address, etc.?

2. What are your career goals? How do you think doctoral study or a short-term visit at a US institution will help you accomplish your career goals?

3. What is your specific area of interest within your major field? Do you have any professional, teaching, or research experience in this area? Why does this subfield interest you?

4. What is the most recent professional article you have read in your field? What was it about and why did it interest you?

5. What are some of the obstacles to the improvement of teaching, research, and higher education in general in Palestine? Can you discuss some ways in which you personally would like to

make changes in the way your field is taught or in how higher education is administered at various levels in Palestine?

6. What are your plans if you do not receive a fellowship?

7. Give an example of a situation where you initiated a change, or an accomplishment you're proud of.

Please rate all of the candidates by using the following scale:

Cannot Assess, Poor, Fair, Good or Excellent.

No Show

	1.	English
	2.	Understanding of Field
	3.	Commitment to Field
	4.	Leadership Potential
	5.	Presentation/Communication Skills (not English ability)
	6.	Maturity/Independence
	7.	Motivation
	8.	Match w/ Program Goals
	9.	Overall Rating

Additional comments:

Placement suggestions:

1.

2.

3.

Annex D



Open Society

Palestinian Faculty Development Program Launches New Components in 2007

Launched in October 2005, the Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP) aims to increase capacity within the higher education sector in the West Bank and Gaza and address long-term issues of reform in teaching and learning practices. The program, which is funded by USAID and the Open Society Institute (OSI) and administered by AMIDEAST and OSI, has two main objectives: 1) to promote the expansion, retention, and professional development of promising academics teaching in the social sciences and humanities; and 2) to revitalize and reform the teaching in these areas at Palestinian higher education institutions, as well as promote an institutional culture of teaching and learning. The PFDP has already placed 21 faculty members in Ph.D. programs at U.S. universities and sent seven Short-Term Fellows to visit the United States for semester-long programs to further their professional development and to develop new academic courses. In addition, the PFDP recently selected 18 new Ph.D. and four Short-Term finalists. A third round of recruitment for Short-Term Fellows is planned for September 2007.

The PFDP is pleased to announce that the following four activities will be offered in 2007. All four activities will take place in the West Bank and Gaza. For further information visit:

www.amideast.org/programs_services/exchange_programs/PFDP/default.htm.

Faculty Grants: Faculty grants to support the scholarship and best practices in teaching and learning at Palestinian universities and colleges will be awarded in spring 2007. The awards will vary in size, ranging from \$5,000 per person up to a possible \$25,000 for academic teams. Grant projects might include organizing internal, multi-disciplinary workshops on topics such as effective lecturing; coordinating a local conference on teaching techniques; or covering the cost of a faculty member's time in order to take a sabbatical and develop a new departmental course. Projects may also be research oriented. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that involve more than one faculty member, such as for projects that will be administered by a small team of academics from similar departments but different universities. Grant applications and complete guidelines are now available on AMIDEAST's website. The deadline for applications is March 30, 2007. Proposals will be reviewed by a Faculty Grants Review Committee in the spring so that grant activities may start in summer 2007.

Teaching Excellence Awards: The awards are designed to spotlight the importance of teaching in higher education, inspire teachers within academia, and recognize success. Individual awards of \$2,000 will be given to faculty for outstanding achievement in teaching. Eligible individuals include full- and part-time faculty with at least five years experience currently teaching at a university or college in the West Bank and Gaza. Faculty who can demonstrate an uncommon commitment to teaching, who use especially effective

teaching strategies, and who have enabled notable achievements by former students are encouraged to apply. The awards will be announced during the Academic Colloquia in July. The deadline for submission is June 1, 2007. Complete application guidelines will be available on AMIDEAST's website soon.

Academic Colloquia: The first of a series of Academic Colloquia will comprise the largest gathering of academic faculty from Palestinian universities in recent memory. An objective of the conference will be to provide a local framework for the exploration of excellent teaching within the humanities and social sciences, thereby enhancing the development of individual faculty and improving learning in the university classroom. The colloquia will also provide a forum for academic faculty in the West Bank and Gaza to network, exchange ideas, and present research. The colloquia will build on each of the previous components of the PFDP. The first colloquia will be hosted by AMIDEAST in Ramallah from July 12-14, 2007. Solicitations for academic presentations will be made in the coming months. Conference participation and events will be free, and registration information will be available shortly.

Seminar for Excellence in Teaching (SET): SET was developed by the Central European University's (CEU) Curriculum Resource Center and will be delivered by two CEU trainers. SET exposes faculty to a variety of teaching approaches and key issues associated with course design. The goal is to encourage an understanding of the university teacher as a professional scholar ready to engage in teaching that is informed by research and discussion of models of good practice. SET helps faculty cope with the increasing demands for professionalism by providing appropriate strategies required of university faculty. SET is designed as a two-part, two-week intensive seminar. It will be offered to Palestinian faculty living in the West Bank and Gaza in June and July 2007. Applications for participation are now available on AMIDEAST's website.

About AMIDEAST

America-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc. (AMIDEAST) is a private, nonprofit organization that strengthens mutual understanding and cooperation between Americans and the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa. Every year, AMIDEAST provides appropriate English language skills training, educational advising, and testing services to hundreds of thousands of students and professionals in the Middle East and North Africa; supports numerous institutional development projects in the region; and administers academic exchange programs. Founded in 1951, AMIDEAST is headquartered in Washington, DC, with a network of field offices in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen. For more information, visit AMIDEAST's website at www.amideast.org.

For information, contact AMIDEAST West Bank/Gaza, Ph. (972) 2-240-8023, Email cshinn@amideast.org

Annex E
PFDP Needs Assessment:
A Summary Report of the Academic Survey and
Strategy Discussions with Senior Palestinian Faculty

I. Executive Summary

The Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP) seeks to increase capacity within the higher education sector in the West Bank and Gaza. It is doing so by promoting the expansion, retention, and professional development of promising academics teaching in the social sciences and humanities. Another central aim of the PFDP is to revitalize and reform the teaching in these areas at Palestinian higher education institutions, as well as promote an institutional culture of teaching and learning. The PFDP is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Open Society Institute (OSI).

AMIDEAST conducted a comprehensive needs assessment of the Palestinian academic community in terms of the aims and scope of the Palestinian Faculty Development Program. The assessment involved both qualitative and quantitative methods, including discussions with 65 senior faculty from ten universities and analysis of 167 respondents to an academic survey. Four types of faculty development opportunities were highlighted: 1) visiting international scholars, 2) short-term training – which includes short term fellowships for administrators; 3) research fellowships; and 4) collaborative projects that support teaching. In addition, general feedback was solicited on any other faculty development activity.

Results indicate a very high level of interest in short term fellowships to the US for one semester or even longer for the purpose of conducting research. Short-term fellowships targeting university administrators to attend 3-6 weeks of training at a US university were also prioritized. Following very closely priority was the concept of engaging in collaborative academic projects based on a single theme involving small groups of faculty meeting regularly over a period of 12-24 months. Given the creative and complex nature of this suggestion, the level of interest and suggestions were very high. Visiting international scholars received the least priority, although not because of less need or usefulness. There was a belief that the current security situation and denial of re-entry by the government of Israel for faculty wishing to spend longer than 3 months precludes the feasibility of this type of activity at most Palestinian universities.

Two themes emerged that were not directly solicited in the discussions with senior faculty. There was unanimous consensus that further PhD scholarships were needed. Similarly, that these scholarships needed to represent the full spectrum of academic disciplines, and not be limited to the social sciences and humanities. The discussions and the survey also revealed a very strong need for e-learning or developing resources for the integration of information communication technology into traditional face-to-face teaching. Finally, embedded in much of feedback was the desire to more systematically develop institutional linkages with US or European universities.

II. Introduction: Scope and Design of Needs Assessment

The Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP) seeks to increase capacity within the higher education sector in the West Bank and Gaza. It is doing so by addressing long-term issues of reform in teaching and learning practices, thereby setting in motion a process that will address the quality of higher education well beyond the project's six-year life span. Against this backdrop, the PFDP has two main objectives:

1. To promote the expansion, retention, and professional development of promising academics teaching in the social sciences and humanities;
2. To revitalize and reform the teaching in these areas at Palestinian higher education institutions, as well as promote an institutional culture of teaching and learning.

The PFDP is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Open Society Institute (OSI). OSI is a private foundation based in New York City that serves as the hub of the Soros Foundations Network. The PFDP will be administered by AMIDEAST and OSI. The project commenced in October 2005 and will conclude in September 2011.

The PFDP has already placed 21 faculty members in Ph.D. programs at U.S. universities and sent seven Short-Term Fellows to visit the United States for semester-long programs to further their professional development and to develop new academic courses. In addition, the PFDP recently selected 18 new Ph.D. and four Short-Term finalists. A third round of recruitment for Short-Term Fellows is planned for September 2007.

In this context, AMIDEAST conducted a comprehensive needs assessment of the Palestinian academic community in terms of the aims and scope of the Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP). AMIDEAST staff conducted visits to ten Palestinian universities between the period of February 18 and March 13, 2007. In addition, the AMIDEAST staff distributed Arabic and English versions of an Academic Survey, in both hardcopy and electronically, to the same ten Palestinian universities, as well as UNRWA's Men's and Women's Training Centers in Ramallah. The strategy discussions were designed to complement the results of the Academic Survey. The combined results of these efforts are summarized in this report.

All of the university visits involved the Chief of Party (COP), Dr. Chris Shinn and Program Officers Nariman Rajab and Ahmed Tannira. Program Assistant Saba Shami also attended some of the meetings. The purpose of these visits was to highlight four new PFDP program components, and more importantly, to engage in a discussion with senior faculty about possible programmatic changes or additions to the PFDP. In total, 76 faculty or university employees attended the ten separate meetings. The meetings typically lasted 60-90 minutes and started with the COP reviewing the PFDP press release translated to Arabic describing the four new program components. Commonly, a few questions and answers followed. The focus of the meetings, however, was on soliciting opinions and insight in terms of future faculty development needs. The initial context conveyed to each group was that PFDP sponsors were examining how to revise the existing Short-Term Fellowship component and interested in exploring new components (under an assumption there may be an opportunity to reprogram existing funds).

Five main issues were addressed in each strategy discussion: 1) adding short term fellowships explicitly designed for research; 2) adding short term fellowships explicitly targeting university

administrators; 3) the need and/or feasibility of international visiting faculty; 4) explaining and soliciting general feedback on ‘collaborative projects for teaching and learning’ a concept borrowed from OSI’s Regional Seminar for Excellence in Teaching (ReSET); and 5) open invitation for any other suggested faculty development training. The nature of this approach could be criticized as leading. On the other hand, this focus helped move the discussions toward concrete suggestions and explore the viability of options that fit within the existing mission and parameters of the PFDP, as well as options the sponsors, USAID and OSI, as well as AMIDEAST had discussed.

The following analysis comes from the accompanying minutes of each meeting, as well as the results of 167 Academic Surveys. The seven-page survey was designed in collaboration with representatives from OSI, USAID and AMIDEAST, as well as in consultation with an American researcher from Columbia University with experience in survey design. The survey basically mirrored the approach and format of the strategy discussions, and included six open-ended questions which produced several hundred written responses. An example survey can be viewed in Addendum E. These responses were recorded, translated from Arabic to English (this was not necessary in all cases) and coded. A summary of the responses for four of the six questions are included as addendums to this report. Furthermore, some of themes derived from the comments are incorporated as analysis. A handful of quotes are also included.

III. Target Audience:

The ten university visits involved discussions with 66 individuals who can be classified as senior faculty based on their roles and responsibilities within their respective institutions. The minutes of each university visit, which can be found in Addendum F, includes the names and titles of all those who attended. Among the 65 senior faculty, the COP sought opinions and feedback from 5 university presidents, 8 vice presidents, 21 deans, 8 directors and 8 department chairs.

The demographics of the 167 Academic Survey respondents were also captured. 85% were full-time faculty, and 81% were men. The 19% who were women represents a slightly higher percentage than the actual 13% of women who make up the ranks of all faculty. 51% had a PhD, while 45% have a masters degree, and nearly half noted they have 5-10 years of experience in academia. 25% also had less than five years of experience and an equal percentage noted they had more 15 years of experience. There were 46 different academic disciplines represented by the respondents, although those in the education field outnumbered all others by far. Please refer to Addendum A for the list of fields and their represented frequency.

Several themes emerged that were not directly solicited in the discussion groups. There was a nearly unanimous consensus that further PhD scholarships were needed. Similarly, there was a consensus that these scholarships needed to represent the full spectrum of academic disciplines, rather than be limited to the social sciences and humanities. In this respect, the Academic Survey specifically asked respondents to prioritize ten fields of study that might be added to the eligibility criteria within the PFDP. Current target fields include public policy / public administration, urban planning, political science / international relations, social work, and education. The ten potential additional fields were ranked in the following order:

- 1) Environmental science/management (78)
- 2) Public health (77)
- 3) Economics (43)
- 4) Anthropology (42)
- 5) Sociology (41)
- 6) Journalism/media studies (39)
- 7) Cultural Studies (32)
- 8) Law (24)
- 9) Philosophy (13)
- 10) History (9)

The numbers in the parentheses represent the number of “ticks” each discipline received. Respondents were allowed to tick more than one discipline. Respondents were also invited to write-in “other” disciplines. In this regard, there were nearly 70 responses representing a vast range of academic fields or general domains with little redundancy. Correlating the top ten replies above with the academic field of each respondent allowed for some general conclusions. Respondents tended to prioritize fields that closely represent their own academic background. For example, those who teach humanities subjects like English and education often picked social sciences, media, anthropology or cultural studies as fields they would like to see added to the PFDP.

IV. Analysis of Four Activity Areas:

A. Short-term Fellowships for Research

There was overwhelming support for the addition of short-term fellowships designed to allow faculty to focus on research at a US university. This component received a dominant priority in the Academic Survey when the four components are compared. In addition, 99% of respondents said research fellowships were needed and a similar majority also preferred that the experience involve collaboration with an American professor/mentor, as opposed to working independently at a US university. One survey respondent summed up the issue; “Our universities lack many qualifications needed for research. What is more, the faculty lack the skills needed in designing complete research, therefore, our universities need to enhance their abilities in doing research.”

Importantly, 77% of respondents replied that they felt their direct supervisor would encourage participation on such a fellowship. Interestingly, two-thirds of respondents said they would go even if their university did not cover their salary. This survey response was somewhat contradicted in the discussions. The prevailing sentiment expressed among senior faculty was that some level of salary replacement would be needed to make any fellowships attractive. This discrepancy could be explained by the fact that senior administrators have a greater self-interest in getting a donor to help cover such costs rather than utilizing scarce university funds for salaries. It is worth noting 64% of the respondents felt their university would not cover their salary for such a short-term opportunity.

The appropriate length of time for a research fellowship varied in the discussions and in the survey results. A narrow majority of respondents, 31%, felt longer than six months was appropriate and many senior faculty members said the same. On the other hand, 23% preferred the summer only, and this option was also prevalent in the senior faculty discussions. The notion of the two-visit structure is not an intuitive approach for Palestinian faculty, and it was suggested only once. The overwhelming

majority, 75% of survey respondents, expressed an interest in visiting an American institution, with the attraction of a European university a distant second registering 16% and an Arab institution even less at 9%. However, when Europe was singled out in the Academic Survey, 20% felt visiting a European university would be a “high priority” and a further 47% felt it would be “very useful”. The strategy discussions revealed a similar high level of interest in American universities, and considerable interest in going to European universities, as well as select, well-known regional institutions like the American University of Cairo or the American University of Beirut.

Other comments worth noting from the discussions on this topic include an interest in funding local research. Many respondents expressed that they would like to see local research projects supported in Palestine similar to those funded by USAID under the Academy for Educational Development’s (AED) Higher Education Support Initiative (HESI). A small component of HESI involved awarding approximately 30 local research grants, ranging from \$7-15,000 each, to university professors. Faculty submitted the grant proposals to the Higher Education Research Council for review. A former AED employee within HESI felt these grants were neither well engineered, nor results driven. A USAID employee familiar with the project noted to their knowledge little has come of the roughly \$400,000 investment.

B. Short-term Fellowships for Administrators

During the strategy discussions, which involved faculty largely charged with university administration, there was overwhelming support for the addition of short-term fellowships targeting university administrators. In the Academic Survey, 62% of the respondents had some administrative duties, and 50% of the respondents considered short-term fellowships for administrators as “very attractive”. A further 30% considered this opportunity “somewhat attractive.” In the open ended questions, one respondent noted, “attention should be considered for motivating administrations at the various Palestinian universities [about] the importance of their faculty members’ capacity building. University administration is among the authentic hinders [i.e. barrier to] of developing Palestinian faculty.” This comment underlines how important international training experiences are for all sectors of academia.

In terms of types of training, Addendum B provides a list of the kinds of university administrative short-term trainings that are of interest to Palestinian faculty. The list of 60 suggestions reflects a wide variety of training, from crisis management to library science. Similarly, there were variations on how a training opportunity should be structured. The discussions revealed concerns about the timing and length of time away, noting many administrators were so instrumental in the basic functioning of their university that they simply could not be absent from their post for a period exceeding 2-3 weeks during the semester. 34% of survey respondents said such a fellowship should take place only in the summer. This suggestion was also frequently cited in the discussions. A similar question in the survey revealed 80% of the respondents preferred short-term training up to two weeks to take place in the summer. 23% of respondents suggested a fellowship not last more than one month, and this result also mirrors senior faculty discussions. A further 19% of respondents felt 1-2 months would be appropriate.

The issue of length of time is closely linked to the actual timing of Palestinian university semesters. During discussions a common recommendation was not to send someone at the beginning of a semester and ideally during a break, such as the summer or winter. However, there was also acknowledgement that individual university calendars – both in Palestine and US host institutions – could provide sufficient flexibility if, for example, one semester starts late and the other starts early. For example, Palestine Polytechnic University does not start until mid-September (other Palestinian universities also start about this time). Therefore, if an administrator attended a US institution that

started in mid-August (very common in the US), then the first four weeks up until mid-September could be utilized for the fellowship. The point is that if a fellowship is sufficiently tailored and planned, then the hurdles associated with the timing and length of time could probably be overcome to produce an experience worth the investment in time and resources.

All of the discussions revealed faculty eager to explore this concept and able to nominate individuals in priority departments. Some of the interest came from senior administrators who remember the AMIDEAST-administered, USAID-funded Human Resource Development Project (HRDP) of the 1980's and 1990's. HRDP funded 105 university staff on 40 day training programs at US universities in the fields of library management, educational administration, personnel administration and instructional technology. Perhaps as a result of how HRDP was managed, it was also clear that senior faculty administrators (some of whom were alumni of HRDP) were interested in managing the process (e.g. identifying and nominating participants) in a manner that differed from how short-term fellowships for curriculum development or research were presented. In the Academic Survey, respondents were asked if they preferred attending a US-based short term training composed of a small group of Palestinian university administrators, or having an individual experience. In this regard, 70% noted they would prefer to be part of a small group, with 19% preferring an individual experience.

During the strategy discussions it was suggested that intensive English training in the US also be added to the experience. The feedback on this point varied considerably, with some faculty feeling that such training would be highly valuable and should be viewed as a capacity building component in and of itself. Others felt just the opposite and argued that English training is simply not needed. In the Academic Survey 88% of respondents felt their English was sufficiently strong to receive training entirely in English. Finally, there was a certain tension or recognition in the strategy discussions that short-term fellowships lasting only two or three weeks meant the experience would not be particularly in-depth. As a result, the fellowship could forfeit other benefits from the experience, such as developing institutional linkages through more binding personal relationships.

It is worth noting that the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest regularly conducts training workshops of 2-3 days in length for visiting international faculty. In December 2006 the CEU hosted three groups of faculty administrators from a variety of countries, including 12 Palestinians faculty serving as administrators at Birzeit University and Al Quds University. In addition, the Public Affairs Office at the US Consulate in Jerusalem is considering targeting university administrators within the Internationals Visitors Program. The concept is to send 4 to 8 (maximum) West Bank and Gaza faculty to visit the United States for 2 to 3 weeks during the summer of 2008. They would visit their counterparts in various universities and academic NGOs across 2 to 4 states. All of their interaction will be in a meeting format, not training per se, with the overall goal being networking, as well as a learning experience.

C. Collaborative Projects in Teaching

Feedback from the senior faculty discussions about collaborative projects in teaching was only canvassed at four of the ten meetings. In order to better understand what this concept is and how it was presented to the target audience, refer to Addendum D. This addendum also lists the types of project ideas that survey respondents suggested. It is important to note that this concept is based on the Open Society Institute's (OSI) ongoing Regional Seminar for Excellence in Teaching (ReSET). ReSET is organized by OSI's Higher Education Support Program, which is based in Budapest. Its staff has facilitated over 30 ReSET projects across Central Asia. Interestingly, a second open-ended question, which received 65 comments, asked respondents to recommend how they might implement a

collaborative group project. Cumulatively, the range of answers reflected most of the key elements of OSI's existing ReSET program. The results of this question illustrate a complex understanding, at least in theory, of how beneficial collaborative academic work can be.

In addition, the Academic Survey revealed that the concept overall was highly rated as a type of opportunity. Comments from the senior faculty were also positive and included useful suggestions. Importantly, 91% of respondents felt participation in such an activity would interest them, and a further 94% expressed an interest in working collaboratively with Palestinian faculty. It is also worth noting that during the discussions Palestinian faculty members expressed that they do not have much experience, particularly in recent years, in working collaboratively. The reason for this was not stated, except for being attributed to "the situation." The lack of collaboration may be due to restrictions on freedom of movement, less opportunity for physical association with colleagues from other institutions, and the general state of crisis management within Palestinian universities, which has de-prioritized academic collaboration.

When survey respondents were asked if they would take the time to attend a project conference lasting two weeks for two to three summers in a row, 71% said they would, the remaining 29% saying no. The issue of maintaining momentum or enthusiasm for project activities was discussed in the strategy meetings. Senior faculty noted strong leadership was critical and that the expected outcomes or agendas from the summer and interim meetings need to have relevance to the universities of the participating members. It was also suggested to explicitly create an entity within the university to encourage direct and continued involvement.

Only 29% of survey respondents said they personally knew of an international resource faculty member who might be interested in leading a project. However, during the strategy discussions several examples of activities were mentioned that contained clear similarities to this idea (or ReSET). Palestine Polytechnic University faculty have actively participated in a regional summer faculty development seminar focused on training and networking with collaborative projects often evolving out of the associations made during the summer gathering. Apparently the event is funded by the French government, uses French faculty as trainers and has typically involved approximately 20 Palestinian faculty from various universities. The annual event has also included up to 100 faculty from universities in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The training did not take place last summer due to the war in Lebanon, although it is planned to take place in Jordan in the summer of 2007. The training is usually in specialized fields. In essence, different groups attend different trainings based on their discipline.

Another similar type of program was initiated by the European Union's Tempus Program in December 2005 and is continuing. It is a regional project involving five Palestinian universities: Birzeit, Al Quds Open, Al Quds Abu Deis, Hebron and An Najah. The primary objective of the project is to have the universities network and work together on issues related to e-learning and multi-media. Each university is asked to be a leader in a specific sub topic based on a pre-approved pilot project. Projects were suggested, reviewed, approved and then assigned to teams (committees). The leader of the pilot project must have two other counterparts from the other 5 universities. The leader of each project will travel to Europe to meet with four university partners in Spain, Belgium and France. The near-term goals involve understanding the needs behind the development of e-learning courses, studying the organizational structures for successful delivery and surveying the experiences of e-learning in an international context. The structure and regional focus is very similar to an OSI-funded ReSET project. In short, there is some precedent for this type of activity. On two occasions during the strategy discussions, as well as in the

open ended questions, it was suggested there actually be a regional focus; a collaborative effort that is not limited to Palestinian faculty.

D. International Visiting Scholars

There was broad agreement with the utility of the concept of visiting international scholars. Faculty members from all the universities could cite positive examples of when visiting scholars had spent time on their campuses. However, this idea received the least interest in the survey results, as well as during the senior faculty meetings. Although 95% respondents noted a visiting international scholar could provide a useful contribution, there was a sense of realism about this possibility in the discussions. This may have been due to the recognition that the current political/security environment makes such a possibility difficult.

Gaza faculty had little to say about this idea, while Birzeit University faculty were very enthusiastic. It is worth noting the US Department of State, and specifically the US Consulate in Jerusalem, recently approved re-starting the visiting Fulbright Senior Scholar Program for both lecturers and lecturer/research. Americans can now apply for up to three awards to teach or conduct research for the academic year starting in 2008 at Birzeit University, Bethlehem University or Al Quds University. However, the faculty must live in East Jerusalem. This program had been suspended for years due to the security environment in the West Bank and Gaza.

Most Palestinian faculty did not feel that lecturing in English would be a significant impediment. Most universities have some departments that teach in English. In addition, most senior faculty responded that they already had contacts in the US or Europe and could suggest specific individuals as visitors. The fields of study most often suggested did not correspond to the social sciences or humanities. It was also noted that shorter visits of less than a semester were more feasible, particularly since a number of universities have recently had to deal with the Government of Israel denying entry to visiting faculty who had already spent three months, and then left (ostensibly only for a few days) to renew their three month visa, never to be allowed back into Israel (and by default the West Bank). On the other hand, 45% of the survey respondents suggested visiting faculty stay for the entire academic year, while 35% suggested a visit of only one summer.

The Academic Survey asked respondents to suggest types of assistance or training visiting foreign faculty could provide at their institution. The overwhelming majority felt visiting faculty could conduct workshops and seminars, as well as teach a course for a semester or two in their field of specialization. They also suggested that visiting “experts” provide Palestinian faculty with new and effective methods of teaching and research methodology. For example, assistance in curriculum development and course evaluation were cited. Many respondents wrote that an implicit goal of visiting faculty should be to develop institutional linkages. Similarly, one respondent felt that having international faculty could “provide a beginning for cooperation and understanding between cultures. They could also offer their expertise to our universities and help with our ongoing research projects”. This sentiment captures much of the implicit public diplomacy goals of the PFDP. Finally, many noted that they would appreciate training in e-learning technologies by international experts. This potential activity area is expanded upon in the next section and reflects widespread interest in the introduction of information communication technologies within university teaching.

V. Other Suggestions

Several consistent themes came up as a result of canvassing other faculty development suggestions during the senior faculty meetings. Virtually every group mentioned the need for e-learning or developing resources for the integration of information communication technology into traditional face-to-face teaching. One survey respondent summed up this need:

Current advancement in computing infrastructure, learning theory, interactive multimedia, highly effective online learning systems, and distributed communications have created an enormous opportunity to effectively improve knowledge dissemination and learning techniques in order to satisfy individuals' needs. Palestinian universities need to craft and implement new strategy to utilize modern teaching/learning technologies and to benefit from the abundant offerings of the internet age to enhance, support, and develop the current teaching/learning environment. Unfortunately, a digital gap does exist between the knowledge providers and recipients or the "Digital Natives".

For example, the British Council funded a pilot project in 2004 linking the Islamic University of Gaza and Middlesex University. Middlesex University provided work-based professional development in e-learning for 35 academics from the Islamic University of Gaza. This project ran over 6 weeks during May and June 2004 and was delivered fully on-line. The course used a mixture of pedagogies (learner agreements, peer-review) and a range of distance learning techniques (on-line learning environments, webcams and videoconferencing). This project offered a solution to the isolation and challenges Islamic University Gaza faculty face and provided practical experience in e-learning. The project won the *Times Higher Education Supplement* e-tutor of the year award. Every group discussion mentioned the need for a variation of this approach.

In a similar vein, virtually every group suggested funding digital video conferencing between Palestinian university groups and American university groups for the purpose of supplementing teaching or conducting workshops. Once again, a British Council pilot project is illustrative. The British Council has sponsored a series of video conference forums with the aim to connect Palestinian policy makers and practitioners with their UK counterparts to share experiences and explore issues of concern around e-learning including pedagogy, models, evaluation and assessment methodologies.

Another consistent theme was the prevailing interest in systematically developing institutional linkages with US or European universities. It was understood that the current short-term fellowships for developing new course curricula can indirectly further institutional linkages through random faculty relationships. However, senior faculty seemed to want support for more organized approaches that could result in faculty twinning arrangements, collaborative degree programs, credit exchange arrangements and memorandums of understanding with concrete agendas.

Survey respondents were also asked to describe other types of faculty training that are needed within academia. Addendum C provides a lengthy list of suggestions some of which are examples of the types of programs explored more thoroughly in this report. Finally, several faculty also suggested developing a central research center or a central teaching center, where knowledge and experience in either of these areas for Palestinian academics is housed. Similarly, some suggested developing centers for teaching and learning where senior faculty will be exposed to new methods of teaching and junior faculty are trained on the most effective methods of teaching. Faculty commented that a "center" at a university will institutionalize such an effort so that it is sustainable. It is worth noting funding centers for teaching and

learning was an original component of the PFDP. However, complications in disbursing funds for such an endeavor due to the USAID-required Anti-Terrorism Certificate resulted in shifting the funds for a similar purpose but through individuals rather than institutions.