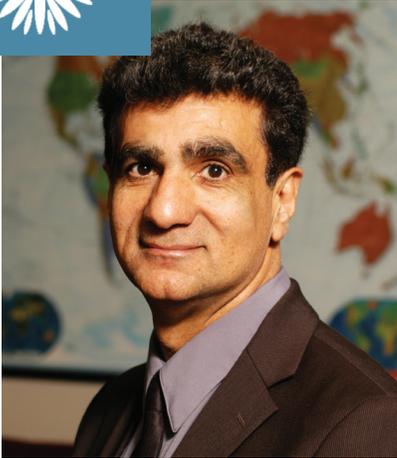




Endowment to Expand Persian and Iranian Studies at UA



Kamran Talattof

By: Lori Harwood, UA College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

A \$2 million commitment from Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute will be used to bolster the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences' scholarly depth in Iranian and Persian studies, the University of Arizona announced.

The Persian and Iranian Studies program, offered by the School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, is already among the largest in the United States. The grant will facilitate the creation of the Roshan Graduate Interdisciplinary Program in Persian and Iranian Studies and support the program's components, including a new endowed faculty chair and an endowed professorship, the Master of Arts and doctoral programs that are currently under development, and programmatic activities. The first \$1 million of the grant has been received.

Kamran Talattof, a professor in Middle Eastern and North African Studies whose work focuses on issues of gender, culture and Persian language instruction, will hold the Roshan Institute Chair in Persian and Iranian Studies. Talattof, who initiated the grant process, also will serve as chair of the Roshan Graduate Interdisciplinary

Program's executive committee, which includes faculty experts from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences as well as other colleges across campus.

The holder of the endowed professorship, the Roshan Institute Professor of Persian and Iranian Studies, has not been named.

In addition, the grant from Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute will be used to:

- ▶ Support academic programming on topics such as ancient Iranian languages and religion, Iranian Sufism, and Iranian arts and literature.
- ▶ Expand UA connections with academics in Iran.
- ▶ Increase academic and extracurricular activities by bringing in visiting scholars.
- ▶ Support community outreach activities such as conferences, symposiums, film series, lectures and cultural celebrations.
- ▶ Provide access to an electronic database on Persian texts, translation and criticism.

The grant puts the UA closer to its goal of raising \$1.5 billion during Arizona NOW, the comprehensive fundraising campaign distinguished by its unprecedented scope and focus on improving the prospects and enriching the lives of the people of Arizona and the world. Thanks to the generosity of nearly 85,000 distinct donors, the campaign is well ahead of pace, with more than 90 percent of the goal already raised.

Endowed chairs advance the UA in perpetuity by supporting faculty year after year using the payout from the gift's principal amount. With government funding for higher education at a historic low, endowments are increasingly important to recruit and retain exceptional faculty.

"I am very grateful to Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute for this transformative grant," said John Paul Jones III, dean of the College of Social and Behavioral

Sciences. "It will enable us to build upon the School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies' already strong program in Persian and Iranian Studies while advancing interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching in the historic and contemporary dimensions of this important world region."

"As a global university with strong partnerships in and around the Persian Gulf region, the UA is well positioned to make further important contributions to the interdisciplinary study of Persian language, culture and heritage," said UA President Ann Weaver Hart. "International partnerships of the kind that this gift is designed to encourage are absolutely critical for the future of the UA, and I am very grateful for Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute's continuing generosity."

I look forward to the impact that this gift will have here at the UA and around the world."

~ Ann Weaver Hart

Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute supports cultural and educational activities that help the transmission and instruction of Persian language and culture. Founded in 2000, the institute has awarded millions in grants for the strengthening or establishment of academic Persian programs throughout the world.

"We are pleased to establish the first Roshan Institute graduate program at the University of Arizona, home of one of the oldest and strongest Persian programs nationwide," said Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali, chair and president of Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute. "The vision for the Roshan Graduate Interdisciplinary Program in Persian and Iranian Studies is to support research, teaching and programmatic activities that are necessary (continued on page 28)

Aid for Rural Mexican Students

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from Mexico, pairing them with University faculty members. Maria Teresa Vélez, associate dean of the Graduate College, was a key supporter of cross-border, collaborative partnerships.

“The feasibility and effectiveness of links between universities can arise due to the world prestige of the UA,” said Ismaylia Saucedo Ugalde, a professor and academic program director of engineering in computer science at Universidad Politécnica de Sinaloa. “We are confident that our students will have the competencies and skills to be successful.”

The Office of Latin American Initiatives Partnerships has facilitated those research experiences. All told, about 220 students sponsored by countries that include Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico have since been engaged through programs offered in the summer, winter and fall.

From Internships to Industry

Michelle Quintero was living in Mazatlan when she learned about the collaboration. During her studies at the Universidad Politécnica de Sinaloa, she was able to gain a one-year, research-focused internship at the UA toward her professional goals to work in the pharmaceutical industry.

“I was able to put my English into practice, and I also expanded my resumé

by reinforcing my skills in the laboratory,” said Quintero, who now lives in Tucson and is in the process of applying to master’s degree programs in chemical engineering. “Since the UA ranks among the best global universities, students from Mexico can expand their resumé and find great job opportunities.”

Alvarez Mexia also points to political and social changes in Mexico driving the need for partnerships with global institutions such as the UA.

She explained that access to higher education in Mexico historically has been reserved for individuals from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. A more recent emphasis has been on expanding competency-based higher-education access at all levels, with a strong emphasis on science and technology.

Also, Mexico has experienced a greater influence from countries that include Korea and Japan, which is influencing the need for stronger workforce development countrywide, Alvarez Mexia said.

Alvarez Mexia said that in addition to building the engineering capacity, the country is encouraging more training toward professorships.

“Some states in Mexico are beginning to welcome international companies for business that bring job opportunities,” she said, “and these are not just workers — these are careers.”

Persian and Iranian Studies at UA

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for the training of Persian and Iranian studies scholars and Persian language teachers. We are delighted to partner again with the University of Arizona, knowing that our first graduate program is uniquely poised to make a real impact for generations to come.”

This is the institute’s second grant to the UA. In 2003, Talattof worked with Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute to establish a \$300,000 endowment in the UA School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies to provide fellowships to outstanding graduate students in Persian and Iranian studies.

With the support provided by this new endowment — which comes from the Roshan Cultural Heritage Fund, an advised fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation — Talattof says the UA is on its way to having one of the best Persian and Iranian studies programs in the country.

“There are perhaps 20 universities in the United States where Persian language instruction has been offered substantially and for any significant length of time,” Talattof said. “Of these, a few have offered specializations or higher degrees. However, these numbers constantly fluctuate, indicating the volatility of the field in the face of sociopolitical changes and economic conditions. The Roshan Program will be a secure, nationally recognized home for the continuous pursuit of excellence in Persian and Iranian studies.”

2015 Global Excellence Awards

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Since 2012 he has worked as a coordinator for the program. His background in STEM fields, with a B.S. in Chemistry, Pharmacology, and Biology and research experience in molecular biology, makes him particularly aware of the needs of STEM education in a global context. Adrian is very active in recruitment of Latin American top undergraduate students and has strengthened partnerships with Latin American universities and the University of Arizona.

Excellence in Global Education:
Ricardo Castro-Salazar, Vice President for International Development, Pima Community College. Ricardo Castro-Salazar has dedicated his career as an educator to promoting the understanding of global interdependence, international connections, and the influences of diverse cultures in US society. He holds MA degrees in education and international topics from the US, Mexico and the Netherlands, as well as a doctoral degree in intercultural education from the UK.

He began working for Pima Community College (PCC) in 1994 as an intern in their Office of International Projects. Since then, he has served as Lead International Business Faculty, Department Chair, Academic Dean, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor, and now as the Vice President for International Development.