EHHS Hosts 23 Saudi Teachers: More Yet to Come

On a hot August day at Cedar Point, EHHS’s Beth Thomas, enjoying the rides with her family, was struck by the number of Arabs at the park. It wasn’t until she returned to work, that she learned that the Saudi educators with whom she shared rides were participants of an EHHS Program. These Saudi teachers are accompanied by husbands, wives, brothers, fathers, sons and daughters—in total 70 people are here as part of the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) Program, entitled, Building Leadership for Change through School Immersion. Unlike most other international teachers exchanges, this project involves the entire family impacting the communities as well as the university. Kent City Schools will have additional 30 Saudi ESL students in their schools as a result of this program.

The proposal to host these Saudi teachers was originally written by Alicia Crowe, Alexa Sandmann, and Steve Mitchell. Ebed Sulbaran, former CIIE Graduate Assistant, has been hired to serve as the Project Manager. The summer program included ESL instruction provided by the ESL Center, in collaboration with Deb Rozner, and cultural activities such as Cedar Point, Hale Farm, and the Ohio State House and Supreme Court in Columbus. For the fall semester, local schools will host the Saudi teachers who will also take special classes taught by TLC faculty. School districts active in the KEEP ACADEMY project will be hosting the Saudi teachers.

Mitchell says, “The group will be able to see a variety of schools, and then will spend time in one particular school under the mentorship of a teacher, administrator or counselor. This will enable them each to identify aspects of their school experience that they can take back and implement in Saudi Arabian schools. We anticipate that program participants will go home and become instigators of change within the “Saudi education system.”

Other faculty working with the project include Marty Jencius, Elizabeth Testa, Martha Lash, and Michelle Heron who serve as faculty mentors. Marty Jencius also was involved in cultural orientation during their first days at Kent State.

Currently two other American universities host similar programs—University of St. Louis and Oakland University. The goal of the Saudi government is to eventually send nearly 50,000 teachers to America to study in extensive immersion programs like this. Other groups of teachers are studying in Canada, Australia, and Great Britain. This exchange program is part of a major education transformation that also includes curriculum and textbook revisions.
September Activities Kick Off Study Abroad

**STUDY ABROAD for ALL**

Encourage your students to Expand Their World.

Monday, September 11 11:00-2:00, Room 200 White Hall, 2017-2018 Study Abroad with EHHS. For students going this year.

Wednesday, September 13, 11:00-2:00 Room 200 White Hall, Is Study Abroad for me? Planning for the future...scholarships, schedule, financial aides, where to go.

Thursday, September 14, 11:00-2:00 Second Floor of the Kent Student Center. Education Abroad Expo, Expand Your World.

Karen Kritzer’s Deaf Education in Mexico is one of 11 undergraduate and 2 graduate EHHS study abroad programs for ours students.

### Saudi Grant Continues for 2018

With the success of the summer program, the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission is eager to renew the program and send nearly 70 teachers to EHHS in December. The program has been modified to allow for more in-depth immersion experience and to broaden the exposure for the teachers.

Alexa Sandmann explains, “The 2018 Saudi cohort will be with us for the full calendar year which will enable them to have a much deeper experience than the current six month cohort. They will experience more schools and will be able to gain a better understanding of the American education system. And of course they will also be able to see more of the United States as they will be here over the summer months.”

Alicia Crowe emphasizes, “This is a great opportunity for the College of EHHS to further the mission, and that of KSU, of increasing global and cultural understanding. Not only will participation in this program increase and diversify our graduate student body, we also hope that it will do so on an annual basis. Our relationship with the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission is strong with the success of our initial cohort, and we anticipate this continuing into the future as the Saudi government seeks to develop its own education system with the help of US institutions.”