

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**Extension of the Application Deadline Date for the Fiscal Year 2019 Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Program**

AGENCY: Institute of Education Sciences, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Institute of Education Sciences extends, for certain prospective eligible applicants described elsewhere in this notice, the deadline date for transmittal of applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2019 under the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Program, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 84.372A. The Institute takes this action to allow more time for the preparation and submission of applications by prospective eligible applicants affected by Hurricane Dorian.

The extension of the application deadline date for this competition is intended to help eligible applicants that are located in an area for which the President has issued an emergency declaration related to Hurricane Dorian in Florida, Puerto Rico, North Carolina, South Carolina, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to compete fairly with other eligible applicants under this competition.

DATES: Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: September 26, 2019.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy Sharkey at Nancy.Sharkey@ed.gov or (202) 245-7689.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On June 19, 2019, we published in the **Federal Register** (82 FR 24695) a notice inviting applications (NIA) for new awards for FY 2019 for the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Program. The application deadline in the NIA was September 17, 2019. We are extending the application deadline for this competition for applicants in affected areas in Florida, Puerto Rico, North Carolina, South Carolina, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in order to allow applicants more time to prepare and submit their applications.

Eligibility: The extension of the application deadline date in this notice applies to eligible applicants under the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Program, CFDA number 84.372A, that are located in an area for which the President has issued an emergency declaration (see <https://www.fema.gov/disasters/>), in Florida (FEMA Disaster

designation 3419), Puerto Rico (FEMA Disaster designation 3417), North Carolina (FEMA Disaster designation 3423), South Carolina (FEMA Disaster designation 3421), and the U.S. Virgin Islands (FEMA Disaster designation 3418). Georgia is ineligible for this extension because, even though some portions of the State have been granted an ongoing FEMA emergency designation, the SEA is not located in one of the 12 “designated areas” covered in Georgia under FEMA Disaster designation 3422.

In accordance with the NIA, eligible applicants for this competition are limited to State educational agencies (SEAs). An SEA is the agency primarily responsible for the State supervision of elementary schools and secondary schools. See 20 U.S.C. 9601 (which incorporates by reference the definition of SEA in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), 20 U.S.C. 7801). The SEAs of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are eligible.

Note: All information in the NIA remains the same, except for the deadline date for these five SEAs.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 9607.

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotope, or compact disc) on request to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. You may access the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations at www.govinfo.gov. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the **Federal Register** by using the article search feature at www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit

your search to documents published by the Department.

Mark Schneider,

Director, Institute of Education Sciences.

[FR Doc. 2019-20113 Filed 9-16-19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**Notice of a Letter Regarding the Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies**

AGENCY: Office of the General Counsel, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department publishes a letter, dated August 29, 2019, notifying the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (“UNC”) of the Department’s review of the Annual Project Reports (“APR”) submitted by the Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies (CMES) during the most recent and prior award periods, and the 2018 National Resource Center proposal.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patrick Shaheen, U.S. Department of Education, Office of the General Counsel, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, room 6E300, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 453-6339. Email: Patrick.Shaheen@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Department publishes this letter, dated August 29, 2019, notifying the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill of the Department’s review of the APR submitted by the Duke-UNC CMES during the most recent and prior award periods, and the 2018 National Resource Center proposal. The letter is in Appendix A of this notice.

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotope, or compact disc) on request to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. You may access the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations at www.govinfo.gov. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have

Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the **Federal Register** by using the article search feature at www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Reed D. Rubinstein,

Principal Deputy General Counsel, Delegated the duties and authority of the General Counsel.

Appendix A—Letter to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

August 29, 2019

Terry Magnuson, Ph.D.

Vice Chancellor for Research

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research

312 South Building, Campus Box 4000
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-4000

Dear Dr. Magnuson:

Thank you for your letter of June 20, 2019, responding to the U.S. Department of Education's questions about the Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies ("Duke-UNC CMES").

As you are aware, in Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, Congress authorizes grants to protect the security, stability, and economic vitality of the United States by teaching American students the foreign languages and cultural competencies required to develop a pool of experts to meet our national needs. 20 U.S.C. 1021. The Secretary of Education may make Title VI grants to institutions of higher education or consortia of such institutions only for the purposes of establishing, strengthening, and operating comprehensive foreign language and area or international studies centers and programs, and of establishing, strengthening, and operating a diverse network of undergraduate foreign language and area or international studies centers and programs. 20 U.S.C. 11 22(a)(1)(A). Federal funding is conditioned on a demonstration that a given center or program is a "national resource" for teaching of any modern foreign language; for instruction in fields needed to provide full understanding of areas, regions, or countries in which such language is commonly used; for research and training in the international and foreign language aspects of professional and other fields of study; and for instruction and research on issues in world affairs that concern one or more countries. 20 U.S.C. 1122(a)(1)(B).

It is unlawful for institutions of higher education to use Title VI funds differently.

After reviewing your letter, the Annual Project Reports ("APR") submitted by the Duke-UNC CMES during the most recent and prior award periods, and your 2018 National Resource Center proposal, the Department is concerned that most of the Duke-UNC CMES activities supported with Title VI funds are unauthorized and that Duke-UNC CMES may not qualify as an eligible National Resource Center. Among other things:

- You report that 6,791 students were enrolled in taxpayer-funded Middle East studies course but that only 960 students were enrolled in Middle East language courses. It is unclear whether this means 960 different people participated in foreign language instruction or if the total headcount in foreign language courses was 960, meaning that some students could have been counted more than once because most of your programs require students to complete three to eight semesters of foreign language. Similarly, you do not clarify how many of those students took three or more semesters of a given language or the level of language fluency they achieved.

- Your application asserts collaborations with other academic departments. However, these departments are not, for the most part, aligned with the requirement that National Resource Centers help students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields achieve foreign language fluency. See 20 U.S.C. 1122(a)(2)(j).

- Many of the topics and titles listed under the area studies section of your prior APRs have little or no relevance to Title VI. For example, although Iranian art and film may be of subjects of deep intellectual interest and may provide insight regarding aspects of the people and culture of the Middle East, the sheer volume of such offerings highlights a fundamental misalignment between your choices and Title VI's mandates. Although a conference focused on "Love and Desire in Modern Iran" and one focused on Middle East film criticism may be relevant in academia, we do not see how these activities support the development of foreign language and international expertise for the benefit of U.S. national security and economic stability. Similarly, the link between the statutory goals and the academic papers referenced in your grant proposal, *Amihri Hatun: Performance, Gender-Bending and Subversion in the Early Modern Ottoman Intellectual History*, or *Radical Love: Teachings from Islamic Mystical Tradition*, is patently unclear. While the Duke-UNC CMES may certainly offer programs in Iranian art and film, these programs should not be funded or subsidized in any way by American taxpayers under Title VI unless you are able to clearly demonstrate that such programs are secondary to more rigorous coursework helping American students to become fluent Farsi speakers and to prepare for work in areas of national need.

- The Duke-UNC CMES appears to lack balance as it offers very few, if any, programs focused on the historic discrimination faced by, and current circumstances of, religious minorities in the Middle East, including Christians, Jews, Baha'is, Yazidis, Kurds, Druze, and others. Also, in your activities for elementary and secondary students and teachers, there is a considerable emphasis placed on the understanding the positive aspects of Islam, while there is an absolute absence of any similar focus on the positive aspects of Christianity, Judaism, or any other religion or belief system in the Middle East. This lack of balance of perspectives is troubling and strongly suggests that Duke-UNC CMES is not meeting legal requirement that National Resource Centers "provide a

full understanding of the areas, regions, or countries" in which the modern foreign language taught is commonly used. See 20 U.S.C. 1122(a)(1)(B)(ii) (emphasis added); 34 CFR 656.3(b)(1).

- It appears from your APRs that the Duke-UNC CMES offers very little serious instruction preparing individuals to understand the geopolitical challenges to U.S. national security and economic needs but quite a considerable emphasis on advancing ideological priorities. For example, the description of an activity described as a "conversation" with Dr. Rosemary Corbett is "Dr. Corbett traces the broader history of pressures placed on religious minorities in the last century to conform to dominant American frameworks for race, gender and political economy. These include the encouraging of community groups to provide social services to the dispossessed in compensation for the government's lack of welfare provisions in an aggressively capitalist environment." Another activity called "Music on the Porch" describes an outdoor concert series as an international program focused on Islam, music, and social change. The featured artist, Marco Pave, is described as a "millennial Muslim from Memphis," who conducts workshops around the country on hip-hop and social justice, and he advocates greater support for the arts." It is hard to understand how these things are consistent with a National Resource Center and lawfully supported by taxpayer funds to ensure the "security, stability, and economic vitality of the United States in a complex global era[.]" 20 U.S.C. 1121(a)(1).

- The job placement results included in your grant proposal indicate that the Duke-UNC CMES provides opportunities and support primarily for individuals to pursue academic careers rather than in government or business as Congress directs. That 35 percent of program graduates go to higher education positions and only 11 percent to government positions suggests that there are critical shortcomings and impermissible biases in the programming.

- The teacher-training activities hosted by the Duke-UNC CMES lack lawful focus on language development and instead advance narrow, particularized views of American social issues. For example, a teacher training seminar included in a prior APR is described as having provided an opportunity for teachers to explore "issues of multicultural education and equity to build a culture and climate of respect in the classroom. Educators dove deeper during interactive break-out sessions focused on unconscious bias, safe classrooms for all, using film for global education, why culture matters and working across cultures, serving LGBTIQ youth in schools, culture and the media, diverse books for the classroom and more." There is a startling lack of focus on geography, geopolitical issues, history, and language of the area, as Congress required in Title VI.

The Department believes the Duke-UNC CMES has failed to carefully distinguish between activities lawfully funded under Title VI, and other activities, perhaps consistent with and protected by general

principles of academic freedom, that are plainly unqualified for taxpayer support.

Furthermore, it seems clear foreign language instruction and area studies advancing the security and economic stability of the United States have taken “a back seat” to other priorities at the Duke-UNC CMES. Notably, most of the instructors of foreign language courses are nontenure track lecturers or teaching assistants, whereas most of the instructors of other courses are tenured faculty. Given the important role tenured faculty play in attracting students to foreign language instruction and majors and enabling students to overcome the difficulty of mastering a language, the lack of tenured foreign languages faculty relative to the number of tenured culture studies faculty, may signal a potentially serious misalignment between Title IV requirements and the Duke-UNC CMES’s orientation and activities.

The Department will hold the Duke-UNC CMES accountable for ensuring all Title VI funded or subsidized activities directly reflect express Congressional mandates and purposes. Therefore, as a condition for future Title VI funding, the Duke-UNC CMES is directed to provide a revised schedule of activities that it plans to support for the coming year, including a description demonstrating how each activity promotes foreign language learning and advances the national security interests and economic stability of the United States. For example, cultural studies providing historical information about customs and practices in the Middle East and assisting students to understand and navigate the culture of another country, in concert with rigorous foreign language training, could help develop a pool of experts needed to protect U.S. national security and economic stability and therefore may well be within Title VI’s ambit. To be clear, activities focusing on American culture or academic preferences that do not directly promote foreign language learning and advance the national security interests and economic stability of the United States are not to be funded under Title VI.

Also, the Duke-UNC CMES is required to demonstrate that it has prioritized foreign language instruction as required by law. More equal utilization of comparably credentialed faculty in foreign language instruction might prove to be an appropriate measure in this regard.

The Duke-UNC CMES is further required to provide the Department with a full list of courses in Middle East studies, including academic rank and employment status of each instructor who teaches each course.

Finally, the Duke-UNC CMES is further required to develop and implement effective institutional controls ensuring all future Title VI-funded activities directly promote foreign language learning and advance the national security interests and economic stability of the United States, thereby meeting statutory requirements and meriting taxpayer funding.

The Department must obligate the funds to continue support for the Duke-UNC CMES by no later than September 30, 2019.

Consequently, it is critically important that you respond in writing to this letter with a preliminary plan and timetable for carrying

out the above-specified compliance activities on or before September 22, 2019.

Sincerely,
Robert King
Assistant Secretary

Cc: Charles Kurzman, Ph.D., Professor,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Kevin Guskiewicz, Interim Chancellor,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Richard Stevens, Chair, University of North
Carolina Board of Trustees
Vincent E. Price, President, Duke University
Jack O. Bovender, Jr., Chair, Duke University
Board of Trustees

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BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board, Oak Ridge; Meeting

AGENCY: Office of Environmental Management, Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a meeting of the Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EM SSAB), Oak Ridge. The Federal Advisory Committee Act requires that public notice of this meeting be announced in the **Federal Register**.

DATES: Wednesday, October 9, 2019; 6:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: DOE Information Center, Office of Science and Technical Information, 1 Science.gov Way, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Melyssa P. Noe, Alternate Deputy Designated Federal Officer, U.S. Department of Energy, Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management (OREM), P.O. Box 2001, EM–942, Oak Ridge, TN 37831. Phone (865) 241–3315; Fax (865) 241–6932; email: Melyssa.Noel@orem.doe.gov. Or visit the website at: <https://energy.gov/orem/services/community-engagement/oak-ridge-site-specific-advisory-board>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose of the Board: The purpose of the Board is to make recommendations to DOE–EM and site management in the areas of environmental restoration, waste management, and related activities.

Tentative Agenda

- Welcome and Announcements
- Comments from the Deputy Designated Federal Officer (DDFO)
- Comments from the DOE, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, and Environmental Protection Agency Liaisons

- Presentation: Processing of Uranium 233 Materials
- Public Comment Period
- Motions/Approval of September 11, 2019 Meeting Minutes
- Status of Outstanding Recommendations
- Alternate DDFO Report
- Committee Reports
- Adjourn

Public Participation: The meeting is open to the public. The EM SSAB, Oak Ridge, welcomes the attendance of the public at its advisory committee meetings and will make every effort to accommodate persons with physical disabilities or special needs. If you require special accommodations due to a disability, please contact Melyssa P. Noe at least seven days in advance of the meeting at the telephone number listed above. Written statements may be filed with the Board either before or after the meeting. Individuals who wish to make oral statements pertaining to the agenda item should contact Melyssa P. Noe at the address or telephone number listed above. Requests must be received five days prior to the meeting and reasonable provision will be made to include the presentation in the agenda. The Deputy Designated Federal Officer is empowered to conduct the meeting in a fashion that will facilitate the orderly conduct of business. Individuals wishing to make public comments will be provided a maximum of five minutes to present their comments.

Minutes: Minutes will be available by writing or calling Melyssa P. Noe at the address and phone number listed above. Minutes will also be available at the following website: <https://energy.gov/orem/listings/oak-ridge-site-specific-advisory-board-meetings>.

Signed in Washington, DC, on September 12, 2019.

LaTanya Butler,

Deputy Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 2019–20114 Filed 9–16–19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. ID–8770–000]

Merchant, Robert F.; Notice of Filing

Take notice that on September 10, 2019, Robert F. Merchant filed an application for authorization to hold interlocking positions, pursuant to section 305(b) of the Federal Power Act, 16 U.S.C. 825d(b), Part 45 of the Federal