**The Consortium of Educational Resources
in Islamic Studies**

**Program Highlights 2016-17
& Recommended Action Steps**

CERIS is a well-recognized, successful consortium of diverse membership, including 31 private and public colleges and universities, K-12 schools, and community organizations in Ohio

and Pennsylvania, reaching over 200,000 students and 19,388 faculty. Responding to the increasing interest in Islamic studies, CERIS hosts annual events for undergraduates and faculty to encourage inquiry and research, and collaborates with local, national and international institutions to broaden opportunities and resources for programming in our region. Now entering our 15th year, we are proud of the programming offered at member institutions and of the community of faculty CERIS has been instrumental in forming for on-going collaboration and mentorship. While the expansion of curriculum at CERIS member institutions related to Islamic Studies is evident, the need and interest for more continue to grow.

We are grateful for the leadership of Michael McKale, Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Institute for Ethics, Saint Francis University, for his leadership as President of CERIS for the last three years. In May 2017 Rachel Sternfeld, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Indiana University of Pennsylvania assumed leadership for a two-year term. The president is supported by CERIS Executive Director, Elaine Linn, (Assistant Director for Academic Affairs, Global Studies Center, University of Pittsburgh) and by representatives from member institutions. CERIS representatives meet twice each year: in October at Seton Hill University and in February at the University of Pittsburgh. Faculty members from Washington and Jefferson, California University of Pennsylvania, Seton Hill University, University of Pittsburgh Johnstown, and University of Pittsburgh Bradford, have served as presidents since the 2002 inception of CERIS. Again we thank Mike McKale for his recent leadership, service, and commitment to CERIS.

Member institutions are encouraged to consider both the contributions CERIS can make for programming at your institution, as well as CERIS’s ability to network with a wide audience to promote that programming. Our website, [www.cerinet.org](http://www.cerinet.org), highlights member institutions and hosts a large selection of resources, including curricula, video links, funding opportunities, and useful contacts and connections. A weekly mailing to over 500 faculty at member institutions is generated each week from the events posted on the site.

Please see the recommended action steps that follow the summary of our activities:

**CERIS highlights 2016-17**

**Education Opportunities:**

* Arabic and Turkish continues to be offered at the Summer Language Institute at Pitt. Through this intensive program students at CERIS institutions can receive one year of university language study in eight weeks of coursework. Scholarships, including Foreign Language and Area Study Fellowships are available to students wanting to attend from CERIS institutions. Arabic language instruction is being offered this year at the **Pennsylvania Governor’s School for Global and International Studies** at the University of Pittsburgh June 18 – July 14, 2017 **(**free to all Pennsylvania in-coming junior and senior high school student registrants)

 **Faculty and Institutional Resources:**

# **Our faculty book discussion remains a popular nexus of learning and engagement for member faculty.** Joseph Heim, Associate Professor of History, California University of Pennsylvania, facilitated a discussion of *A Sultan in Palermo* by Tariq Ali, for 20 educators in October 2016 at Seton Hill University. In March 2017, Dr Patrick Hughes, Assistant Director NCTA Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh, presented *Thomas Jefferson’s Quran: Islam and the Founders* by Denise Spellberg, to a group of 22 educators at the University of Pittsburgh. Faculty can participate in the book discussion in person or via video-conference, and up to 20 participants receive a free copy of the book. The next book for discussion at Seton Hill on October 27, 2017 is *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid*.*

* **Faculty grants** **for professional development** are available to member institutions. An award this year was given to Dr. Joseph Heim, California University of Pennsylvania to support his fellowship at St. John's Oxford this summer, where he will conduct research on England and the Islamic world in the 17th century.
* The annual national CERIS **Undergraduate Research Symposium** was held on April 9, 2017, co-hosted with Duquesne University’s Christian-Muslim Dialogue Committee. Fifteen students participated from five CERIS member institutions (Duquesne University, Mercyhurst University, Saint Francis University, Slippery Rock University, University of Pittsburgh); and nine faculty from five institutions participated as respondents  (Duquesne University, Saint Francis University, Seton Hill University, Slippery Rock, and University of Pittsburgh). Student presentations were clustered around the themes of Global Expressions of Culture and Identity, Muslim Experiences in the United States, and Policy and Politics. Fr. Michael Calabria, OFM, Director for Arab and Islamic Studies, St. Bonaventure University presented the keynote address entitled “*Hearing the Call: A Franciscan Journey with Islam.*” Roxanna Cazane, Assistant Professor of English, Saint Francis University, read her original poetry on migration and flight.
* **A new dimension of community engagement was initiated with the premier screening of *The Sultan and the Saint* by Unity Production Films, to full-house of 250 guests in February at the University of Pittsburgh. Prior to the screening CERIS hosted a dinner and book discussion with 40 clergy from diverse religious backgrounds on the book *The Saint and the Sultan* by Paul Moses. Discussion was led by Rosemary Juel Bertocci, Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Saint Francis University, and Dr. Francis Rohlf, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Mt. Aloysius College. Seton Hill University will screen the film this coming fall.**
* **Hosting speakers on current topics and issues** is made possible through CERIS networks. Ninety-eight **lectures/conferences/events were hosted/announced and disseminated to 550 CERIS faculty** and community members.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS:**

1. Encourage your institutional representative to disseminate opportunities to faculty and administration through appropriate channels on your campus. Like CERIS on Facebook too.
2. Contact Executive Director Elaine Linn (cerisnet@gmail.com) for the password to update and maintain your institutional profile on the new CERIS website.
3. Encourage faculty members to apply for CERIS faculty and curriculum grants to expand their research on topics related to Islamic Studies.
4. Offer at 1-credit Muslim Migration course to be held November 3 – 5, 2017 at the University of Pittsburgh. This weekend course brings together scholars and policy experts and is available to CERIS member institutions by either hosting the course via the internet or students and faculty can attend as guests at no charge.
5. Urge faculty members to facilitate student research on topics related to Islamic studies and participate in the CERIS annual research symposium. Bring non-presenting students along to foster their inquiry and comfort for future participation.
6. Encourage faculty members to participate in the dinner and book discussions (in person or via video-conference), planned for October 27, 2017 at Seton Hill University. The book to be discussed is *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid*.*
7. Utilize your CERIS membership to supplement and broaden the programming capacity at your campus.
8. Collaborate with CERIS when generating proposals to government agencies and foundations to enhance impact.
9. Tap into the network of local scholars available to present on such topics as: The History of Islam in America, Conflicts and Instability in the Middle East, Terrorism Analysis and Counter-Terrorism, Gender in the Arab World, Being a Muslim Ally, etc. Contact Elaine Linn at cerisnet@gmail.com

CERIS is an invaluable resource for member institutions in our global village of the 21st century. We encourage you to consider new ways to take full advantage of the opportunities it has to offer for your students and your institution.