FOR APPROVAL

TO: Arts & Science Council

SPONSOR: Dwayne Benjamin, Vice-Dean, Graduate

CONTACT INFO: vicedeangraduate.artsci@utoronto.ca

DATE: February 5, 2020 for February 12, 2020

AGENDA ITEM: 7

ITEM OF BUSINESS:
Proposal to establish the Institute of Iranian Studies as an EDU:C in the Faculty of Arts & Science.

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:
As per IV-9 of the Faculty of Arts and Science Council Constitution, “Council shall also review and approve or recommend for approval to the Governing Council proposals concerning Extra-Departmental Units in the Faculty, pursuant to the Policy on Interdisciplinary Education and Research Planning.” The creation of closure of an EDU-C requires final approval by the Faculty of Arts & Science Council.

GOVERNANCE PATH:
1. Arts & Science Council [For Approval], February 12, 2020.

HIGHLIGHTS:
The Institute of Iranian Studies is proposed as an EDU:C in the Faculty of Arts & Science (FAS), with affiliated faculty supporting the Institute from FAS, the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) and University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC). The purpose of the Institute is to make possible a coordinated program of activities, serve as a focal point for scholarship on contemporary Iran and Iranian civilizations, advance understanding about Iran in society, inform the general public, and raise the profile of the Iranian studies endeavours at U of T. The Institute would focus primarily on research and outreach by leveraging the strong educational programming already in place across the University, fostering advanced research in a collaborative community, and promoting community and intercultural dialogue. The institute will establish a physical presence as well as an online presence, through a website and digital archive for Iranian studies at UofT.

NOTION OF MOTIONS:

Be It Resolved
THAT the Institute of Iranian Studies be established as an EDU:C in the Faculty of Arts and Science, effective July 1, 2020.
EDU: C PROPOSAL
INSTITUTE OF IRANIAN STUDIES

Statement of Purpose
This is a proposal to establish an Institute of Iranian Studies. This will be a new Institute, with an administrative home in the Faculty of Arts & Science. With affiliated faculty supporting the Institute from all three campuses, UTM and UTSC will be associated with this EDU. Pending governance approval and a signed agreement for philanthropic support, the launch of the Institute would be scheduled for July 1, 2020.

Academic Rationale
The establishment of the proposed Institute of Iranian Studies would make possible a coordinated program of activities that would provide a focal point for tri-campus scholarship on contemporary Iran and Iranian civilizations, advance understanding about Iran in society, inform the general public, and raise the profile of the Iranian studies endeavours at U of T. The Institute would focus primarily on research and outreach by leveraging the strong educational programming already in place across the University.

We have identified the incredible strength of faculty members, post-doctoral fellows and graduate students in the field, and we aim to convene these leading thinkers in order to promote conversation, galvanize research and create a collective sense of community.

There are more than 20 faculty members at U of T whose core expertise is Iranian studies or whose research deals in some way with Iranian studies. In addition, U of T boasts a strong cohort of graduate students in the field. These individuals currently are investigating Iranian-related themes ranging from history, language, religion, film, music, art, and politics. The cross-disciplinary nature of this phenomenal foundation of expertise is reflected in the breadth of divisions and units represented:

- Faculty of Arts & Science: Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, Anthropology, Study of Religion, History, Cinema Studies, Medieval Studies, Women and Gender Studies
- University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM): Historical Studies, Language Studies, Sociology, Women and Gender Studies
- University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC): Anthropology, English

The Institute of Iranian Studies will serve as an institutional focal point for scholarship and outreach by:

- Appointing a Director to formally lead the Institute and serve as an institutional point-person;
- Developing a stronger network of scholars from across the University;
- Fostering advanced research by nurturing an interdisciplinary, collaborative community;
- Establishing a physical and centralized presence on U of T’s St. George campus that can foster intra- and inter-institutional collaboration;
- Promoting community among Iranian people and those interested in Iranian culture, as well as intercultural dialogue;
• Creating a unified web presence and digital archive for Iranian studies at U of T; and
• Establishing partnerships with other leading research universities for information sharing, student and faculty exchanges, international conferences, special events, etc.

The Institute, together with Advancement services, will aim to secure charitable donations in order to enhance opportunities for faculty and students in the field of Iranian studies.

The Institute will not deliver its own teaching programs, as these courses are already offered across the University.

Consultation
This proposal was developed in the Department of Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations. The Department had several discussions with the Faculty of Arts and Science, the proposal reflects these discussions. Consultations with colleagues took place across all three campuses including of Departments of:

• UTSG: Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, History, Linguistics, Study of Religion; Women and Gender Studies
• UTM: Historical Studies, Languages Studies, and Sociology
• UTSC: English

The Institute for Islamic Studies was also consulted, and they, along with the listed Departments, all expressed support for this initiative.

In addition, the Dean’s Offices for UTM and UTSC were all contacted to advise them of this proposal, to encourage their sharing of this information, and to provide feedback. All representatives not only indicated no issue with the proposal but looked forward to the opportunities it may provide to their faculty members and students.

Faculty Participation
Please see Appendix A for a Faculty list.

Structure / Administration
The Faculty of Arts & Science would serve as the lead administrative home for this unit. It is proposed that it be established as an extra-departmental unit (EDU) type C. As an EDU-C, this Institute is a multidisciplinary, multi-departmental unit designed to foster research, scholarly interest and community engagement in Iranian Studies.

The Institute would not offer academic programs nor make primary faculty appointments, as it is critical that all faculty members have a base in disciplinary and professional U of T units.

A Director of the Institute will be appointed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Science; a Director would in turn be responsible for all activities of the Institute. The Director of the Institute will report administratively to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Science (or designate) for financial and administrative matters. Responsibilities include the general operational and financial management of the Institute and its initiatives. The Director’s mandate also includes responsibility for consulting collegially with relevant communities of Iranian studies scholars within U of T. Administrative personnel would support the operations of the Institute; additional administrative staffing may be considered in the future based on the needs of the Institute’s activities.
An Advisory Board for the Institute will be established to act as the consultative body for the Institute, its Director and the Faculty of Arts & Science. The Advisory Board may include U of T faculty members as well as external friends of the Institute, chosen, in line with the Provost’s Statement on the Role of Advisory Bodies\(^1\), for their ability to contribute both academic and community-based experience and expertise, and for their commitment to the University’s mandate, policies, and principles. The advice offered by the advisory bodies will assist the Director of the Institute and/or the Dean of the Faculty who hold authority for decisions under University policy.

The Director will be a full-time, tenured faculty member (at the level of full or associate professor) in Persian/ Iranian studies. The Director will be a distinguished scholar and teacher, with a demonstrated ability in organizing academic programs, conferences, cultural events and other community outreach initiatives. Appointments will normally be for five-year terms.

Principal responsibilities of the director shall include:

- Organizing and participating in Iranian studies related conferences and events;
- Community outreach;
- Administration of scholars’ award programs, postdoctoral fellowships and student scholarships;
- Fundraising together with university advancement staff to attract supplementary funding to enhance the University’s and Institute’s capacities; and
- Support departmental chairs with facilitating academic interchange via exchanges and organizational networks.

The director will anchor a set of initiatives to enhance existing Iranian-focused programming at the University. The director will also be expected to develop collaborative and supportive relationships with counterparts at other prominent universities, as well as with colleagues active in Iranian studies in Canada and around the world.

By stimulating productive dialogue among leading scholars and helping media, members of the public and policy makers gain a more informed and nuanced appreciation of the social, cultural and political forces at work in Iran and the global diaspora, the director will raise the profile of the Institute, both nationally and globally.

**Budget**

The Institute would initially seek external sources of funds through philanthropic donations. The creation of this EDU-C is subject to confirmation of required external funding as determined at the discretion of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Science.

The goal would be to receive a $10,000,000 endowment, with an expected payout of approximately 4% or $400,000 yearly. The Institute would not administer research funds.

**Space**
The Institute would develop a plan in consultation with the A&S Office of Infrastructure Planning. In line with the Faculty’s vision to promote intercultural dialogue, the FAS Office of the Dean has space for the Institute in the developments of the new University building at 90 Queen’s Park Crescent, so that it remains in close proximity to the Department of Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations.

**Review**
In line with normal practice, this EDU:C will be subject to periodic review (normally every five years) by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Science. The first review would be scheduled for 2025-2026. Any review would normally assess the EDU’s sustainability, performance, and achievements to the goals set out at its establishment. Possible outcomes of the review could include closure.
APPENDIX A: Faculty

The University of Toronto boasts an exceptional consortium of faculty members who are leaders in the multi-disciplinary field of Iranian Studies. The following faculty members will have the opportunity to participate in the Institute as affiliated scholars (including but not limited to):

Miguel Angel Andres-Toledo
Yangshater Assistant Professor of Avestan and Pahlavi Languages, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto (St. George)
Dr. Toledo has 14 years of teaching experience in ancient Persian languages and a distinguished record of publication in the field of Iranian languages and Zoroastrian studies. During his interview he suggested a variety of interesting courses for developing the curriculum of ancient Persian languages including: languages courses in Avestan, Old Persian, and Middle Persian (Pahlavi), as well as Zoroastrian literature and linguistics courses. He has a very strong research profile, with three books, 23 articles, and 28 e-publications.

Laura Bisaillon
Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto Scarborough
Among other projects related to the politics of health and illness, socio-legal studies and immigration studies; Dr. Bisallon is conducting a project on discrimination in health care from the standpoint of Afghan Iranians.

Amir Harrak
Professor, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto (St. George)
Dr. Harrak studies Old and Imperial (biblical) Aramaic dialects, as well as Syriac language and literature.

Ayesha Irani
Assistant Professor, Department of the Study of Religion, University of Toronto (St. George)
Dr. Irani’s research specializations include Islamic traditions of South Asia, Sufi and bhakti literatures, religious biography and hagiography, translation and religious conversion, and religion and visual culture.

Jennifer Jenkins
Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Toronto (St. George)
Dr. Jenkins is a professor of German and European History. She is author of a book on German-Iranian relations from the Crimean War to Operation Barbarossa entitled Weltpolitik on the Persian Frontier: Germany and Iran in the Age of Empire.

Arsalan Kahnemuyipour
Associate Professor, Department of Language Studies, University of Toronto Mississauga
Dr. Kahnemuyipour’s areas of linguistic expertise are syntax and phonology. He works on a number of languages, including his native Persian, as well as English, Armenian, Turkish, Niuean, among others.

Neda Maghbouleh
Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto Mississauga
Dr. Maghbouleh’s scholarly interests lie in the production of racial categories and identities with a
special emphasis on Middle Easterners. Her upcoming project will analyse the disparate racial categorization of Iranians across Europe and North America.

Enrico Raffaelli  
"Associate Professor, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto (St. George)"  
Professor Raffaelli’s primary research interest includes the history of the Zoroastrian religion, with a particular focus on its literary expression in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods. He also investigates Iranian philology, with a particular focus on the Avestan and the Middle Persian languages.

Clemens Reichel  
"Associate Professor, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto (St. George) and Associate Curator, Royal Ontario Museum (ROM)"  
Dr. Reichel is a professor of Mesopotamian Archaeology. His research interests concentrate on complex societies and the evolution of urbanism. Dr. Reichel has excavated and surveyed extensively on sites in Syria, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq.

Karen Ruffle  
"Associate Professor, Department of the Study of Religion, University of Toronto (St. George)"  
Dr. Ruffle specializes in Indo-Persian Shi’ism. Her research and teaching interests focus on devotional texts, ritual practice, and Shi’i material practices in South Asia.

Sara Saljoughi  
"Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Toronto Scarborough; Cinema Studies Institute, University of Toronto (St. George)"  
Dr. Saljough is a professor of Cinema Studies whose research focuses on cultural studies, immigration and diaspora studies, and Iranian Studies.

Walid Saleh  
"Professor, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, Department of the Study of Religion, University of Toronto (St. George)"  
Professor Saleh is expert on the Qur’an and the history of its interpretation. He has published extensively on the Qur’an, Qur’anic exegesis, apocalyptic literature, and mirabilia Islamic literature.

Rivanne Sandler  
"Professor Emeritus, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto (St. George)"  
Dr. Sandler’s teaching and research focused on twentieth century Persian literature especially women poets and writers. She presently teaches a first-year seminar on memoirs by Iranian women. She serves as the Executive Director of the Association for Iranian Studies (AIS) and is the Persian Literature and Culture Book Review Editor for the journal “Iranian Studies.”

Roger Savory  
"Professor Emeritus, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto (St. George)"
Dr. Savory’s teaching and research focused on the history of Iran and Persian language. He is a specialist on the Safavids. His numerous writings on Safavid political, military history, administration, bureaucracy, and diplomacy-translated into several languages have had a great impact in understanding this period.

Kyle Smith  
*Associate Professor, Department for the Study of Religion (St. George) and Department of Historical Studies, University of Toronto Mississauga*

Dr. Smith studies early Christianity. His primary research focus is late ancient Syriac Christianity in Roman Mesopotamia and the Sasanian Persian Empire.

Maria Subtelny  
*Professor, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations and Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto (St. George)*

Professor Subtelny specializes in research on the cultural history of Iran, classical Persian literature, Islamic mysticism, Perso-Islamic political philosophy and the history of medieval Iran and Central Asia.

Victoria Tahmasebi  
*Assistant Professor, Department of Historical Studies, University of Toronto Mississauga*

Dr. Tahmasebi is a professor of Women and Gender Studies, specializing in feminist theories in relation to continental and transnational contexts, critical theories of women’s movements in the Middle East, digital activism, gender and ethics of non-violence, and contemporary history of social and political thought.

Azita Taleghani  
*Associate Professor (Teaching Stream), Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto (St. George), and Department of Language Studies, University of Toronto Mississauga*

Dr. Taleghani specializes in modern Persian language and literature and linguistic aspects in literature. She teaches courses in Persian language, modern Persian poetry, and structural development of Iranian languages. She is currently developing a language hub for teaching Persian at UTM.

Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi  
*Associate Professor, Department of Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations (St. George) and Department of Historical Studies (UTM)*

Dr. Tavakoli’s areas of specialization encompass Middle Eastern history, modernity, nationalism, gender studies, spatial governmentality, Orientalism and Occidentalism. In addition to numerous articles, he is the author of two books: *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography* (Palgrave, 2001) and *Tajaddud-i Bumi [Vernacular Modernity]* (Nashr-i Tarih, 2003). He has served as President of the International Society for Iranian Studies (2008–10). He is currently the Editor-in-Chief of Iran Namag, a bilingual quarterly of Iranian Studies, and is the co-editor of Iranian studies book series published by Routledge. He holds a BA in political science and an MA in history from the University of Iowa, and a PhD in history from the University of Chicago.
Shafique Virani
*Distinguished Professor, Department for the Study of Religion (St. George) and Department of Historical Studies, University of Toronto Mississauga*

Dr. Virani’s research focuses on Islamic history, philosophy, Sufism, Shi’ism, and Islamic literatures in Arabic, Persian and South Asian languages.