

THE CAMPAIGN

*Choose to Be
Great*

Two Gifts to Anchor New Center for Middle East Studies at Pardee

Center's agenda to
include civil society,
economics, environment,
health, human rights,
poverty, and trade



By Jeff Cruikshank

Two major commitments to BU—one establishing a faculty position and one a lecture series—will support a new Center for Middle East Studies proposed for the Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies.

The Arab Spring made clear that “the ‘Middle East’ is far more than many in the West understand it to be,” says Adil Najam, dean of the Pardee School. “In fact, it is a region of extraordinary challenge and opportunity, at the center of the world.”

“This is a truly exciting development, both for the Pardee School and for the University,” says Adil Najam, dean of the Pardee School and a professor of international relations and of earth and environment. “It will help us serve our students better, and it will help us carry out our global mission.”

The first of the two commitments—made anonymously by a generous supporter of the University—establishes a new faculty position, endowed at the \$4 million level. The incumbent in the chair will serve as director of the Center for Middle East Studies (CMES) and will work with the dean to establish its agenda, likely to comprise such topics as civil society, economics, environment, health, human rights, poverty, and trade in the Middle East.

Jean Morrison, University provost and chief academic officer, says the center’s scope is ambitious. “We believe that the proposed center can play a unique and vital role—as convener, idea-generator, educator, and ‘honest broker’—both within the Middle East and between that critical region and the rest of the world,” she says. “We have a distinctive perspective and skill set that have been honed over many years, both of which will position us to help advance the well-being of the many constituencies in the region.”

The second commitment, of \$2 million, supports a lectureship at CMES. The gift was made by Shahpari Zanganeh (CAS’86), the mother of Kamal Edin Khashoggi (CGS’13, CAS’16, GRS’16). The Shahpari Zanganeh Lectureship will provide annual funding for a world-class lecture series to promote greater understanding of issues of importance to the Middle East.

Zanganeh, a member of Presi-



The Pardee School, established in 2014, builds on the University’s oldest traditions, including a commitment to a productive and practical engagement with the world.

dent Robert A. Brown’s International Advisory Board, has long advocated for BU to deepen its engagement with the countries of the Middle East. When CMES began taking shape at the end of 2017—a joint initiative of Brown, Morrison, and Najam—Zanganeh stepped forward to lend momentum to the effort.

Najam stresses that CMES, along with the Pardee School’s other centers and institutes, is a centerpiece of the school’s strategy. “The Arab Spring was certainly a complex phenomenon, with confusing and contradictory messages,” he says. “But one message that came through loud and clear was that the ‘Middle East’ is far more than many in the West understand it to be. It is far more than the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. In fact, it is a region of extraordinary challenge and opportunity, at the center of the world.

“We need to give voice to many more constituencies in the Middle East,” Najam adds. “We need to create a safe convening place where those voices can come together and be heard—

and where true learning and understanding can arise. The Center for Middle East Studies, now anchored by a professorship and a distinguished lecture series, can be such a place.”

The Pardee School—established in 2014 through a generous endowment from Frederick S. Pardee (Questrom’54,’54, Hon.’06)—builds upon the foundation of several of Boston University’s oldest and proudest traditions. These include a commitment to being global, to cutting-edge scholarship that helps its faculty understand a complex world, to a productive and practical engagement with the world, and to preparing a generation of leaders motivated and empowered to make the world a better place.

It also builds on the work of the international relations department, which for many decades was a distinguished department within the College of Arts & Sciences. Today, the IR group is part of the Pardee faculty, and the department’s 7,000-plus graduates are considered Pardee alumni.