Homeland Security Federal Semester: 
START Collaborates with Undergraduate Studies

Press Release
For Immediate Release

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College Park, MD – Federal Semester is a unique academic opportunity provided by the University of Maryland Office of Undergraduate Studies to give students a background in federal policy and offer them a professional experience in the field. The 2008-2009 program marks the first Homeland Security Federal Semester and joint collaboration with START.

This competitive program draws together Maryland students of junior and senior standing from a variety of disciplines to explore the field of federal policy. Upon entering federal semester, students select a theme of interest to pursue. In this way, they have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of a specific issue, and therefore, specialize within the homeland security field.

START’s Assistant Director for Education, Katherine Worboys, comments on START’s involvement in the program:

“We here at START were excited to work with Undergraduate Studies on the Homeland Security Federal Semester because it gave us the opportunity to significantly expand our educational offerings. The Homeland Security Federal Semester is designed to draw on START expertise on the study of terrorism and responses to terrorism, while also bringing in START colleagues from the federal government, offering students a much more hands-on approach to the study of homeland security than had previously been possible. Federal Semester students have the opportunity to study homeland security policy with a veteran policy-maker, the opportunity to fulfill a federal homeland security policy internship, and, perhaps most excitingly, the chance to participate in the federal government first Quadrennial Homeland Security Review through work with the program’s first instructor, Magdalena Bajil.”

Over the course of one year, students complete a seminar, internship, and supplemental coursework for the program. A Number of START courses are part of the supplemental course list:

- BSOS 330 Terrorist Motivations and Behaviors
- BSOS 331 Responses to Terrorism
- BSOS 332 The Practice of Terrorism Studies
- BSOS 388 Terrorist Tactics and Innovation
- BSOS 388 Terrorism Analysis for Intelligence Analysts
- BSOS 388 Counterterrorism in the European Union (Study Abroad)
A number of students in START’s Terrorism Studies Minor Program are enrolled in the Federal Semester Program. One of them, Sabrina Hammouda, comments:

“A great part of the program has been the speakers that come in [on Mondays]. We have had [speakers from] the private and public sectors.... It really helps you get a feel for what it’s like working in homeland security in different professional communities (public vs private). It has been a great way to understand the policymaking process and see the difficulty in operationalizing homeland security policy as well as understanding all the players that are involved in homeland security.”

For more information on Federal Semester, see www.federalsemester.umd.edu. For more information on START’s educational programs, see www.start.umd.edu/education/.

START The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, is a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence based at the University of Maryland. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods, and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics, and social and psychological impacts of terrorism. Additional information on START is available at: www.start.umd.edu.