

Libyan Students at Michigan State University; spring 2011

Background

There are 59 Libyan students at MSU and an equal number of accompanying family members. All students are sponsored by the government of Libya, but they are in two distinct groups.

- The National Economic Development Board (NEDB) is funding 35 non degree students holding J visas for a special two year program in diplomacy that was scheduled to finish in December 2011. NEDB notified MSU on March 29 that funds for this program would terminate March 31. Thirteen of the 35 have informed us they will depart on April 30. The others appear to be making all efforts to remain in the U.S.
 - MSU has arranged to continue this academic program through the end of spring semester 2011. There is no plan as yet to prolong the program beyond May 6 which is the end of spring term.
- The Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) is the sponsoring agency for 24 graduate students on F visas in degree programs, nearly all of whom are in the College of Engineering. Their degree completion dates vary widely. CBIE has notified MSU that these funds would terminate May 31.

Legal issues

- Immigration: Many of these students have indicated they felt they would be at risk if they returned home at this time. These students need expert legal advice about options available to them if their F and J visas are no longer an option due to the withdrawal of funds. They would like more information about the process of Political Asylum. The U.S. government has given no indication that they will grant Temporary Protected Status to Libyan nationals.
 - The permission to remain in the U.S. for the NEDB group will end on May 6 and MSU is required by law to terminate their DS-2019 forms when there is no longer a program being offered. These students will then have a thirty day grace period which takes them to June 5. Their legal permission to be in the U.S. will end June 5, 2011.
 - The CBIE graduate students on F visas do not have the same immediate status crisis as the NEDB sponsored students. MSU will terminate their I-20 forms if they are unable to register for fall semester 2011. This notification would not likely take place until around October 1, 2011.
- Employment: These students do not yet have permission to legally work off campus
 - The F visa students can apply to Homeland Security for permission to work off campus due to economic hardship and we are told that DHS will expedite these requests and mostly likely waive the normal \$390 processing fee.
 - The J visa students will be out of status shortly and will not have work authorization.

- Housing: Most of the Libyans currently live in apartments off campus. MSU has offered housing and meal tickets to the NEDB sponsored students and their dependents, but this is temporary and cannot be extended for a long period of time. MSU has not yet made this commitment for the CBIE sponsored students, but is likely to do so shortly.
- Due to financial concerns, many Libyans are hoping to terminate their lease agreements as early as possible in order to find less expensive accommodations. MSU is writing letters for each student to verify the termination of funding, but it will be up to each landlord to decide how to handle such requests.

Financial issues

All the Libyans were receiving a monthly maintenance allowance to meet their costs for housing and food.

- Health insurance was also part of their overall package. MSU is exploring alternate insurance programs.
- MSU's offer for housing and meals to the NEDB sponsored students is temporary and prevents an immediate social crisis.

Assistance

Staff from ACCESS in Dearborn <http://www.accesscommunity.org/site/PageServer> will come to MSU to conduct an assessment of the situation with Libyan students and explore ways they might play a helpful role. ACCESS provides many services and is a valuable source of assistance.

Fundraising

Some offers of help have come forward and an account has been set up to accept financial help. See below: **Regarding the Libyan Student Fund.**

Donations in support of Libyan Students at MSU can be made by check, cash or credit card, or by using the University giving site on the web at www.givingto.msu.edu/gift/. Please make your check out to MSU and note the designation "Libyan Student Fund" in the remarks section of your check.

Checks can be mailed to Michigan State University, University Development, 300 Spartan Way, East Lansing, Mi. 48824.

The Libyan Student Fund supports emergency needs of Libyan students studying at MSU and their families including their personal livelihood (housing and food), their health and health insurance needs as well as other urgent financial needs related to their current studies at MSU.

Emergency aid will be awarded based on need as determined and at the discretion of the MSU Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS). Any remaining or unspent portions of the

fund will be utilized for future emergencies of the MSU international student population at the discretion of OISS.

Questions regarding the Libyan Student Fund and how to support this fund can be directed to Rolf Dietrich, Development Director International Studies and Programs by E-Mail at dietri48@msu.edu or by phone at (517) 432-7091. Thank you for considering supporting international students at MSU who's livelihood has been severely affected by war.

Internally, University Development will forward expendable donations through our existing accounting and donation system to ISP/OISS. The gifts will represent OISS expendable donation income. We will establish a separate new internal allocation code for these funds, which I can report upon, similar to the other existing gift funds in ISP.

All of the above is based on our earlier discussion, please let me know if you see anything which concerns you. We will accept those gifts to be used for emergency needs for Libyan students as determined by OISS and at the discretion of OISS.