

American Student Melissa Dzenis seeks out LERC

Friday 11th August 2011, LERC, NDU

Reported by Elie Nabhan

The Lebanese Emigration Research Center at NDU welcomed to its premises American graduate student, Miss Melissa Dzenis. She was recommended to come to LERC by Dr. Melani Cammett, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of Middle East Studies Program at Brown University, who visited LERC a few years ago. Ms. Dzenis arrived at the Center to discuss the subject of her Master Thesis. Ms. Dzenis is an MA candidate in International Relations and Middle Eastern Studies.

According to her biography, Ms. Dzenis has internship experience with various Non-Governmental Organizations both in the United States and abroad, including Amnesty International, the East West Institute and most recently, MedVida-, a South-American based NGO which seeks both to mobilize local physicians and to provide primary healthcare to impoverished indigenous populations.

Ms. Dzenis is of Latvian and Filipino descent and was a former resident in Latvia, where she worked as a translator and researcher at the Latvian Occupation Museum in Riga. Her international outlook was further cultivated in Morocco, where she attended the Qalam wah Lawh School of Arabic Language in Rabat to strengthen her Arabic-speaking skills and to be introduced to the field of post-colonial Arab identity studies.



Ms. M. Dzenis pictured at the Lebanon Migration Nucleus Museum at NDU (August 2010).

Ms. Dzenis met with LERC Director Ms. Guita Hourani and LERC Adjunct Researcher Dr. Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous for advice and information on her research interest in Lebanese youth's expressions of religious and national identity and the way in which those expressions reconcile with western influence.

Ms. Dzenis was given a presentation of LERC's electronic archives and database and taken on a tour of the Lebanon Migration Nucleus Museum at NDU. Ms. Dzenis is expected to return to Lebanon in 2012 to conduct her research at LERC and to do her fieldwork among university students in various parts of Lebanon.