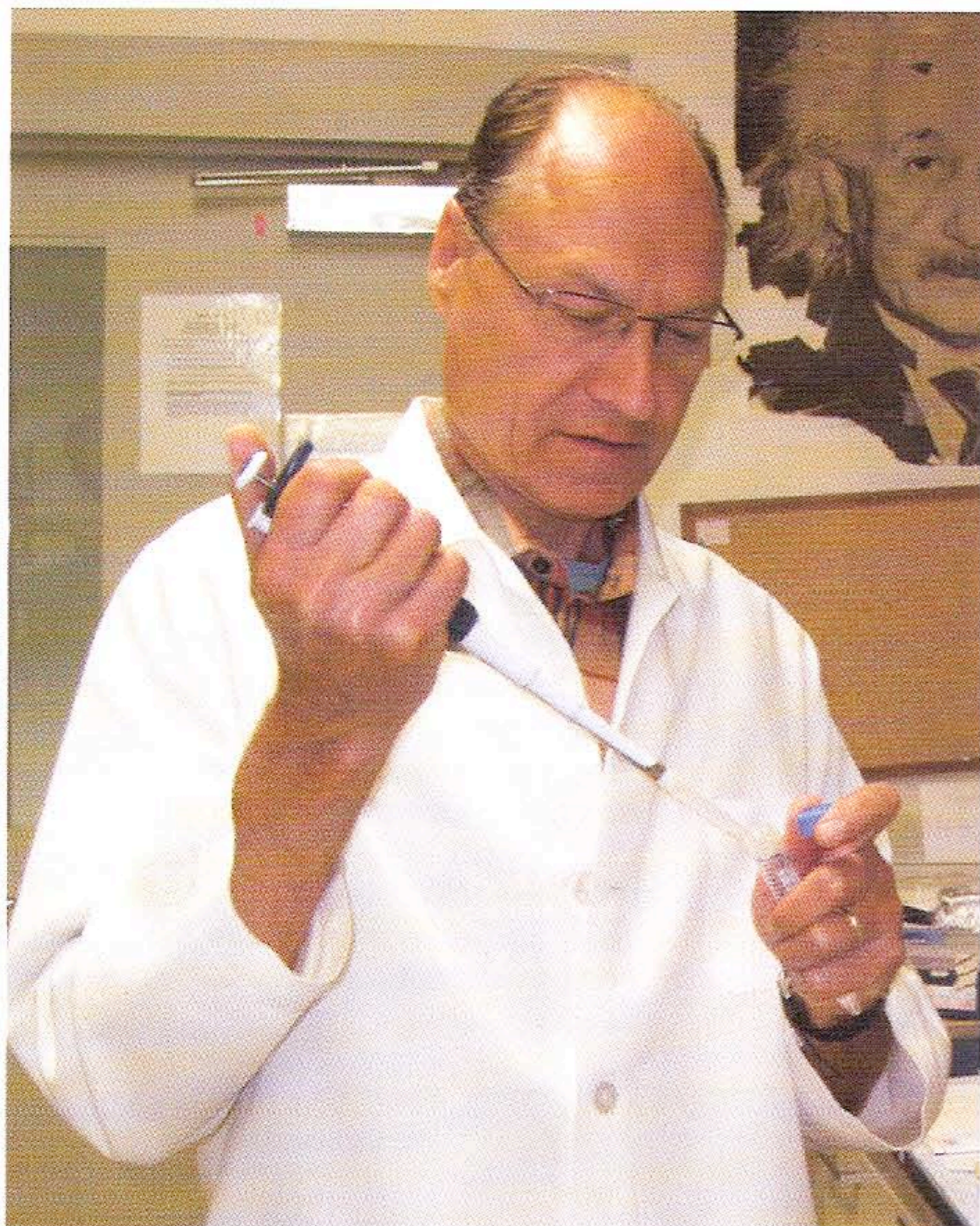




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Dr. Allen Taylor '67, founder of STEP-GTP, and Director of the Laboratory for Nutrition and Vision Research, Tufts University.

A CCNY Alumnus Takes a Step Towards Peace In the Middle East

By Kim Kronenberg

immigrants from the Ukraine and Rumania. Yiddish was the language of our home and the streets. Dad had gotten as far as fifth grade, and worked as a wood carver in a millinery shop. I would have landed a similar job, but a friend's mother insisted that I fill out applications for college. I didn't know

about out-of-town colleges. So CCNY was it. It was either in or out. Luckily I was accepted."

After receiving his undergraduate degree in chemistry, Taylor earned his PhD at Rutgers and did postdoctoral work in biochemistry at the University of California/Berkeley. He has received several major awards including a Guggenheim grant, and the Fulbright Senior Scholar Award that allowed him to spend a sabbatical year in Israel.

What Taylor found in Israel enthralled and delighted him, but also left him dismayed. "During 1998-99 it was relatively quiet, although I slept with a gas mask under the bed and a Patriot missile battery was located behind my house." After his first month, Taylor wrote home: "It's hard to ap-

preciate how delicate the political balances are here." Six months later, after Ehud Barak became Prime Minister, he wrote: "The mood is one of cautious optimism."

But that optimism proved short-lived. A peace accord between Prime Minister, Barak and the President of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, failed, as did all subsequent efforts. Borders were closed, Israelis and Palestinians became increasingly isolated from one another, and intense internal strife in both societies weakened the leadership's ability to build what the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Arafat had called the "peace of the brave."

Taylor's fierce desire to help secure and build Israel became even stronger as his sabbatical ended. What was needed, he concluded, were interpersonal contact and dialogue, not closure and isolation. After meeting with Israelis and Palestinians to see how he could help, Taylor decided to start with what he knew best: science. "Science knows no borders," he said. "I have seen how people from different cultures and worlds come together and bond when confronting a common scientific challenge." That is how the program entitled Scientific Training Encouraging Peace-Graduate Training Program, or STEP-GTP, was born.

STEP-GTP is a unique person-to-person, cross-border science-training program that will provide pairs of student fellows (one

For Allen Taylor '67 the choice of Israel for a sabbatical was not just professional. He hoped to delve into the history and culture of a land that had occupied his imagination since he was a little boy. Taylor planned to spend his sabbatical as a Fulbright Senior Scholar working at a renowned cell/molecular biology laboratory at Tel Aviv University and editing a book, *Nutritional and Environmental Influences on the Eye*. By the year's end he had accomplished that, and much more. "It was one of the best years of my life," he said. "I was almost in tears when I had to return home."

Allen Taylor's laboratory at Tufts University in Boston conducts research to prolong vision in the elderly, primarily using nutrition. He is a professor of nutrition, biochemistry and ophthalmology, concepts he barely knew before college. His academic career began at CCNY in 1962.

"City College was far from my home in the Bronx, and I don't mean in miles," remembered Taylor. "For a kid from a poor immigrant family living in a three room flat, CCNY was worlds away. My parents were

"By pairing Israeli and Palestinian students in rigorous graduate programs, the unique STEP-GTP initiative will help train the next generation of scientific and medical leaders while advancing the critical goals of dialogue and peace in the Middle East," said President Larry Bacow of Tufts University.



Congressman Barney Frank (above left with Allen Taylor '67) has endorsed STEP-GTP. He stated: "I believe that an educated population, especially one which acquires medical and technical skills, can be an important support for a genuine two-state solution, which means that the work that you do is important not only for the direct benefits it provides but is part of a broader approach."

being conducted at Tufts, which will be the initial host institution. STEP-GTP is expected to enroll its first pair of fellows in 2011.

"Our challenge now is fundraising to enroll young scholars," said Taylor. "A generous donor has offered a matching grant of \$100,000, and we're seeking to match that and raise additional funds to endow the program." ■

Allen Taylor is Director of the Laboratory for Nutrition and Vision Research and Professor of Nutrition, Biochemistry, and Ophthalmology, USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging, at Tufts University. He is also Director of Scientific Training Encouraging Peace-Graduate Training Program, International Nutrition Foundation, at Tufts.

Alumni interested in helping STEP-GTP may contact Dr. Taylor at: 617-556-3156; or <http://www.step-gtp.org>



Left to right: Kim Kronenberg (Assistant Director), Congressman Michael Capuano, Allen Taylor '67 (Director).

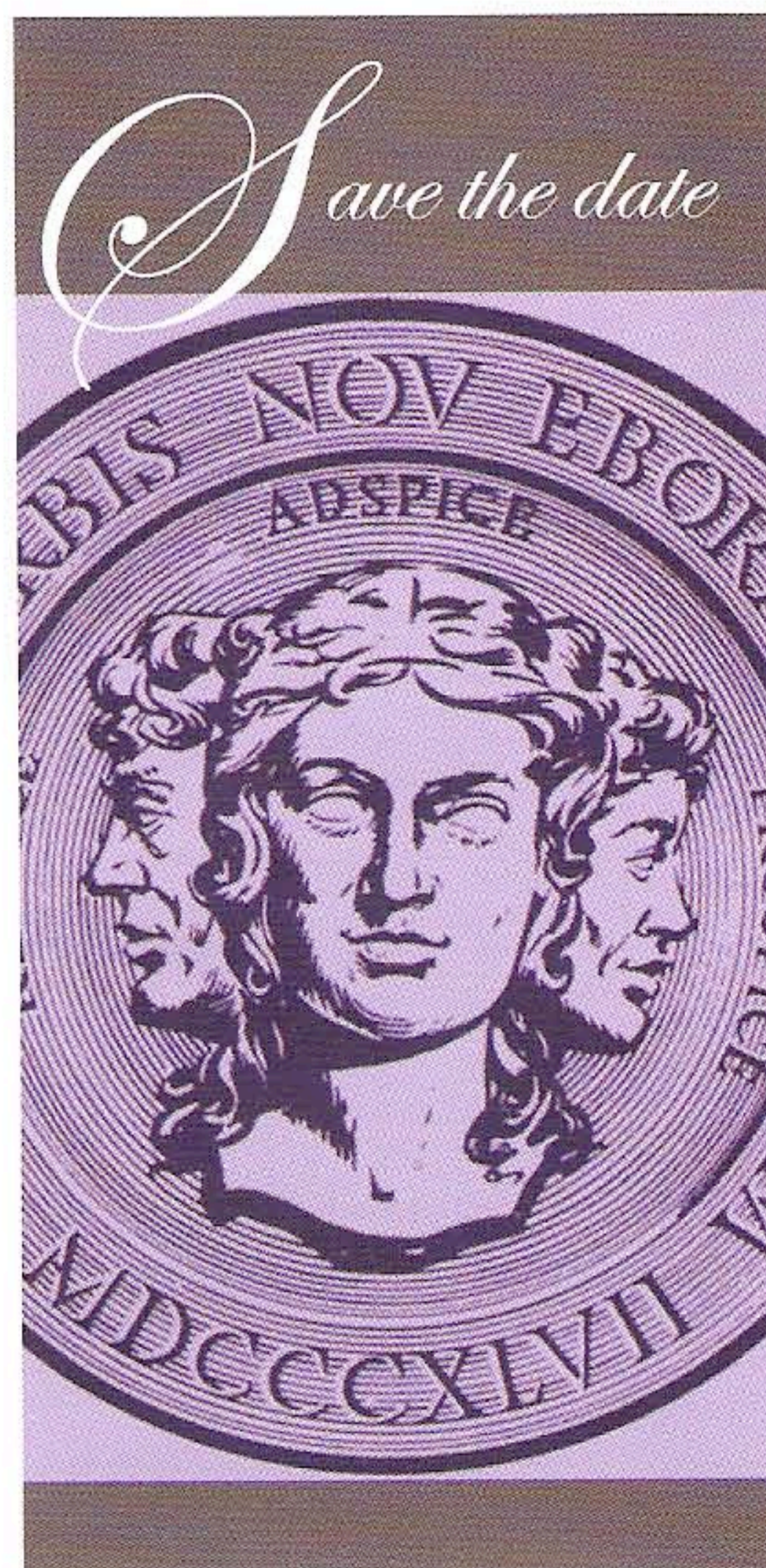
"STEP, Science Training Encouraging Peace, would certainly be a step in the right direction. Pairs of Israeli and Palestinian post-docs, jointly committed to learning and healing, would return to the Middle East with U.S. credentials and an experience of cooperation. Their example could inspire others to work together for the good of their peoples."

Congressman Michael Capuano

Israeli, one Palestinian from the West Bank or Gaza) with advanced, critical medical and health science education. In addition to enhancing their scientific expertise, the program is designed to encourage the partners to become professional colleagues. Beyond academic training, STEP-GTP will also assist the fellows with job searches at home in the Middle East, while encouraging them to remain mutually supportive after they complete their STEP-GTP fellowship period and as they build their professional lives as teachers, clinicians, or creators of new enterprises.

"STEP-GTP envisions an additional benefit as the communities that are served by the fellows recognize the value of cooperation," said Taylor.

Three academic institutions are cooperating in organizing and guiding STEP-GTP and selecting student fellows: Al-Quds University in East Jerusalem; Ben Gurion University in Israel; and Tufts University in Massachusetts. Program management is



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