

New American Citizens: Opportunities and Obligations for Somalis Fifth Annual Civic Forum

St. Paul, Minn. – What does “New American Citizens: Opportunities and Obligations for Somalis” mean? Faculty and students will answer that question during the **fifth annual Civic Forum at Macalester College from 6:30 to 9:40 p.m. Thursday, April 7**, in the John B. Davis Lecture Hall at the Ruth Stricker Dayton Campus Center. The event is free and open to the public.

The keynote speaker, **Cawo Mohamed Abdi**, assistant professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota, will talk about “*The Newest African-Americans?: Somali Struggles for Belonging.*” She received her PhD in Sociology from the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom. Abdi’s research focuses on the gender and transnational relations of Somalis in Minnesota and East Africa, as well as comparative transnational relations of East African migrants in different parts of the world. She has published on patterns of migration out of Somalia, experiences living in Kenyan refugee camps, and migrant experiences of dislocation and integration.

Responding to Abdi’s presentation will be **Wendy Weber**, visiting instructor in Political Science at Macalester. She received her BA and MA from the University of Manitoba in Canada. Her academic interests focus on contemporary global governance especially around issues of human rights and humanitarianism. She teaches courses on international politics, global governance, human rights, humanitarianism, and gender and world politics.

Two Macalester students will also make presentations.

Owen Truesdell ’11, a Political Science major focusing on International Relations and the European Union, will speak about “E Pluribus Unum: 21st Century Citizenship and the Somali-American Experience.” Originally from Appleton, Wis., Truesdell is currently completing an honors thesis analyzing the European Union’s Common Foreign and Security Policy. As president of the Macalester College Student Government, Truesdell has concentrated on promoting political diversity at the college.

Louise Dickson ’11, a Twin Cities native, is an International Studies and History double major. She will talk about “Revival of the Civic Spirit: Contradictions in Somali-American Citizenship.” A member of the Phi Alpha Theta history honors society, Dickson is pursuing an honors thesis in the History Department. She has immersed herself in the Somali community, teaching a citizenship class at the Minnesota Confederation of Somali Community in Minneapolis. Upon graduation, Dickson plans to enlist as an American Foreign Service Officer.

The Civic Forum is sponsored by Macalester’s Institute for Global Citizenship to examine concepts of civic engagement and global citizenship—that is, citizenship that is at once local, national, and transnational.

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 1,958 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu/>)

April 1 2011

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