Welcome to the first annual newsletter of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Inside you will learn about our programs, our activities, and our achievements, including faculty research and student awards. You will also meet our office staff, two recently hired professors, and an alumnus whose son is carrying on a family tradition by participating in the Foreign Language Residence Program.

As you may well imagine, we are a large department of over 75 members among whom are 25 regular faculty, 18 instructors, 19 graduate assistants, four Supportive Professional Staff, three Fulbright Scholars (from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Tunisia), and one intern from Japan. We are also a diverse department, presently able to offer classes in 14 languages that range from Spanish to Russian to Tagalog. We hope in reading this newsletter you will rediscover—or discover—the energy and excellence of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

As you may know, the United States Senate designated 2005 as the “Year of Foreign Language Study,” and requested that the “President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to encourage and support initiatives to promote and expand the study of foreign languages.” Our department is marking this year by promoting foreign language study through its “Add an Accent to Your Major” initiative. This initiative is designed to inform the university community not only about our foreign language minors in French, German, Italian, Japanese and Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and classical studies but also about the professional and personal advantages that come with having learned more than one language.

Many thanks to those of you who made gifts to the department or one of its foundation funds last year. Your donations make it possible for us to initiate and maintain programs that support our students in their academic endeavors. We greatly appreciate your generosity.

Our department office is located in Watson Hall, which also houses our faculty and the Multimedia Learning and Training Center. If you are planning on being in the area, please let us know. I would be delighted to meet you, give you a tour of our facilities, hear about your activities, and, if you so desire, arrange for you to eat dinner with our students in the Foreign Language Residence Program. You may also wish to explore our web site at www.forlangs.net. One way or another, we hope you will pay us a visit. We look forward to hearing from you.

Anne L. Birberick, Chair
Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
We would not be able to survive without them. They are the wonderful people who manage the day-to-day affairs of running an academic department. They are the office staff.

Sonja Herington is the head secretary in the main office. She first came to the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures as a student worker while an undergraduate in 1998. After having worked in the business world for several years, Sonja decided to return to NIU to pursue an M.B.A. degree which she will complete in May 2006. She is amazing at multitasking; she keeps the department budget, handles personnel matters, takes classes, and never loses her cool. We are most fortunate that Sonja chose to return to us.

Having worked with us for over 13 years, Lynne Meyer is a precious resource, knowing more about the department’s history than anyone. The first person you meet as you walk through the door, Lynne is always ready to assist you in any way she can. If she does not know the answer to a question—a very rare occurrence—she will find it. Her perseverance in problem solving is matched by her unwavering sunny disposition. We are delighted to have Lynne with us.

Rhonda Kitsos, who joined the department in spring 2005, is the newest addition to the office staff. She is not, however, new to NIU, having worked 10 years ago for various departmental and division offices. Rhonda quickly caught on to how our complex department works and she does a terrific job with scheduling classes, arranging room assignments, and taking care of graduate student needs. We are pleased to have such a conscientious and cheerful new secretary.

Assisting our secretaries are Daralyn Richardson, Jennifer (Ginny) Cummings, and Elisa Robles. These three student workers—or “the girls,” as they call themselves—are whizzes at doing copy jobs, especially when it comes to producing hundreds of syllabi or exams for the lower-level Spanish classes on short notice. Daralyn and Elisa are working on B.A. degrees in communications while Ginny is working on a double major in mechanical engineering and mathematics.

We thank you all!
Bienvenue! Yookoso! Wilkommen! Salve! ¡Bienvenido! Benvenuto! The Department Welcomes Two New Faculty Members

F. Corey Roberts, assistant professor of German, received his B.A. in German and History from Calvin College and his M.A. and Ph.D. in German from Indiana University. He was first exposed to German language and culture as a grade-school student when he lived with his family for a year in a small town near Frankfurt. As an undergraduate, Roberts spent seven months studying in southern Germany and Vienna, Austria. More recently, he has become fascinated with the city of Berlin and has developed web-based teaching materials centering on the former and new German capital, and this past summer he received a grant to conduct research in Berlin.

Roberts has published articles on German Pietism and on garden design in Dorothea Schlegel’s Florentin. Another article on Heinrich Heine’s Lutherbild is slated to appear this fall in the prestigious German Studies Review. At present, he is completing a book-length study entitled “German Pietism, the Discourse of Experience, and the Birth of Literary Aesthetics,” which examines the 18th-century tradition of Pietist autobiography and traces its influence on models of literary and philosophical works from the second half of the 1700s.

Joshua Rodriguez, assistant professor of Spanish, received his B.A. and M.A. from Brigham Young University and his Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 2004. Although his father was from Guatemala, he learned very little Spanish as a child. At the age of 19, however, he served a two-year long mission for his church in Honduras and Belize where he developed a passion for Spanish language and culture. This passion continues today. As a linguist, Rodriguez is intensely interested in grammar—the use of articles, the preterit/imperfect contrast, evolution of verb conjugations—and theoretical and formal approaches to linguistic analysis. He has delivered several scholarly papers at professional conferences on his current research on the use of the conditional mode.

In addition to being passionate about Spanish linguistics, Rodriguez is passionate about music. He plays the piano, saxophone, flute, and clarinet. His wife is an excellent violinist and violin teacher who is now teaching with the Community School of the Arts here at NIU. They have been married for over 11 years and have three active children.

Cela and Ramon J. Sender. He is co-editor of a volume of essays entitled Traces of Contamination: Unearthing the Francoist Legacy in Spanish Discourse that was published this fall by Bucknell University Press. Currently, Merino is completing a book-length monograph on the political identity of Camilo Cela. The department is pleased to have him as a member of our tenured faculty.

Felicitationes

Our congratulations go out to Eloy Merino who received tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor of Spanish in spring 2005. Merino received his Ph.D. from the University of Miami, Coral Gables and joined our faculty in 1999. He has published extensively in the field of Spanish literature from the early Franco period (1939-1945) as well as on the writers Camilo J.
2004 Faculty Publications and Presentations

Atlee, Carl
Barbe, Katharina
“New Literacies: How Instructional Technologies can Help with L2 Reading Comprehension.” Presented with Jessamine Cooke-Plagwitz at the Northwestern University Language Symposium 2004: The Place of Reading in the Foreign Language Curriculum, Evanston, IL
“Deutsch für berufliche Situationen von Anfang an.” Presented with Volker Langeheine at the 2004 AATG-ACTFL, Chicago, IL
Bentley, John
Conference: “The Search for the Language of Yamatai.” Midwest Japan Seminar at Loyola University, Chicago, IL
Birberick, Anne
Ciallella, Louise
Conference: “Making Emotion Visible: Reading/Narrating Women’s Images as Cinematic in a Spanish Modernist Novel.” The Modernist Studies Association Sixth Annual Conference, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, British Columbia
Cooke-Plagwitz, Jessamine
Jaeger, Frances
Article: “Para demostrar que podemos aportar algo al país: la poesía de Humberto Ak’abal y la nueva nación guatemalteca.” In Ilustrés autores guatemaltecos del siglo XIX y XX. Ed. Luís A. Jiménez and Oralia Preble-Niemi. Guatemala: Artemis-Edinter, pp. 211-26
Conference: “Nicolás Guillén and Poet Profiling.” MLA Annual Convention, Philadelphia, PA. Also chaired and organized this MLA special session.
“Respuestas poscoloniales de una cultura defensiva en El diario que a diario de Nicolás Guillén.” XXV International Congress of LASA (Latin American Studies Association), Las Vegas, NV
Kat, Joanna
Article: “Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska’s Baba-Dziwó: Experimenting with the Popular.” Canadian Slavonic Papers. 46.3-4 (September-December 2004): 343-59
Linden, Susan
Lukacher, Maryline
Conferences: “Grandeur et servitude du roman-feuilleton: Consuelo.” Colloque de Cerisy. Cerisy, France

Book Review:

Mazzola, Michael
Conference:
“L’analyse soujacente à la diglossie.” XXIVe Congrès de Linguistique et Philologie Romanes. University of Wales, Aberystwyth, UK

Merino, Eloy E.
Article:

Conference:
“Explorando lo camp en Julián del Casal.” XXIV Summer Cultural Convention, Círculo de Cultura Panamericano, Miami, FL

Morris, Michael
Conference:
“Creating Interactive Instructional Environments: Lessons from Honors Foreign Language Classrooms.” American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Chicago, IL

Nissen, Christopher
Book:
Giulia Bigolina, Urania, the Story of a Young Woman’s Love; The Novella of Giulia Camposanpiero and Thesibaldo Vitaliani. Ed. and Trans. Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies (MRTS)

Conference:
“I Drew forth an Image… Renaissance Woman Writer Views Women and Art.” Twenty-fourth Annual Conference of the American Association for Italian Studies, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Roberts, F. Corey
Article:
“German Pietism and the Genesis of Literary Aesthetics: The Discourse of Erfahrung in the 1700s.” Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte. 78 (2004): 200-28

Conference:

Rodriguez, Josh
Conference:
“The Spanish Imperfecto: Resolving Some Issues of Aspect and Modality.” Twenty-third West Coast Conference of Formal Linguistics at University of California-Davis, Davis, CA

Radio Interview:
“The Problematic Female Nude in Firenzuola’s Delle bellezze delle donne and Bigolina’s Urania.” Twenty-fourth Annual Conference of the American Association for Italian Studies, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Salare-Larrave, Francisco
Article:
“Crónicas, retratos y documentos: trampas a la historia en Los Nazarenos (1867), de José Milla y Vidaurre.” In Ilustres autores guatemaltecos del siglo XIX y XX. Ed. Luis A. Jiménez and Oralia Preble-Niemi.

Solares-Larrave, Francisco
Conference:

Radio Interview:
What do Giulia Bigolina, a 16th-century Italian novella writer, and Albert Robida, a 19th-century French author of science fiction, share in common? The first English translation of their principal work was published in 2004. **Christopher Nissen**, associate professor of Italian, published his translation with commentary of Bigolina’s *Urania: the Story of a Young Woman’s Love & the Novella of Giulia Composanpiero and Thesibaldo Vitaliani with the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies*. Assistant professor of French, **Philippe Willems’** translation, with critical introduction, of Robida’s masterpiece, *The Twentieth Century*, appeared with Wesleyan University Press.

For Nissen, the project began in 1996 when he received an American Philosophical Society grant to examine Renaissance novella manuscripts in Italian libraries. While working in the Marciana Library in Venice, he came upon an 18th-century anthology of novellas which included one by an author of whom he had not yet heard, Giulia Bigolina, a woman who had lived in Padua during the 16th century. Intrigued by this discovery, he discussed Bigolina with colleagues who, to his surprise given the critical interest in Renaissance women writers, had never heard of her. In the summer of 1998, Nissen returned to Italy and discovered in the Trivulziana Library of Milan a 16th-century manuscript of Bigolina’s greatest unpublished work, the prose romance *Urania*. A second visit to Italy funded by a Gladys Krieble Delmas grant in 1999, allowed him to track down numerous archival documents, letters, and manuscripts of Bigolina’s two surviving works in the libraries and archives of Padua, Venice, and the Vatican. He now had enough information to produce his critical edition of Bigolina’s works and, in doing so, assure her literary legacy.

At present, Nissen is working on a scholarly monograph on Bigolina, which will describe her place within the literary and artistic culture of early modern Italy. The book will emphasize her innovative view of the relationship between portrait painting and literature, as well as her unique perspectives on notions of female beauty and love.

Willems came across the works of Albert Robida while a doctoral student at the University of Colorado-Boulder. Struck by the uniqueness of Robida, who was considered in his day a famous artist and writer, Willems decided to undertake the first English translation of this author’s masterpiece: *The Twentieth Century* [Le Vingtième Siècle]. The result is a work that will, in the words of one reviewer, “allow us to see at last one of France’s hidden treasures.” While the 1882 novel recounts the numerous adventures of its heroine, Hélène Colobry, it also offers a vision of the future (Robida’s 1952) with women’s liberation, flat-screen television, ultra-liberal prison reform, and airborne restaurants and casinos. But the novel is more than a work of futuristic fantasy. As Willems eloquently argues in his 60-page introduction, Robida is not only one of the first science fiction illustrators, he is also the father of the modern graphic novel, since his illustrations provide visual details and information that expand the novel’s meaning beyond the written word.

Continuing to explore the intersection between text and image, Willems has begun work on a new project that investigates two pioneers of the bande dessinée or comic strip: Rodolphe Töpffer (1799-1846) and Georges Colomb (1856-1945), who is also known as Christophe. In the spring of 2005, the Department of French at the University of Illinois-Urbana invited him to present a lecture on this new research.
Student Awards, Honors, and Accomplishments

This past year has been an exciting one for our students. In the Spanish M.A. program, Jennifer Weger presented a conference paper entitled “La variedad de pronombres personales: estrategia legitimadora de Carlos Fuentes en La muerte de Artemio Cruz” at Arizona State University in April (2005) while Michelle Farfán published her essay, “Un análisis de la modernidad en Aves sin nido por Clarinda Matto de Turner,” with the online journal Hipertextos. Luis Guzman, who received his M.A. degree in the spring, began teaching Spanish at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia this fall.

An undergraduate majoring in French, Emily Nothnagel, was one of 20 students who received the prestigious USOAR award, a grant designed to fund student-generated research projects. Emily will use her award this fall to travel to Rwanda where she will study the effect the country’s civil war has had on elementary education. Valerie Shive, who received her B.A. in French Language and Literature in May 2005, will spend this coming academic year in Tours, France as part of the French Assistantship Program sponsored by the French government. In Tours, she will work with teachers from a local high school as she assists them in teaching English to their students. Two undergraduate students in Spanish, Yahaira Diaz and Rebecca Forbes, were honored with NIU Outstanding Women Students Awards.

Study Abroad Scholarships were awarded to the following students:

J. Suhadolc Scholarship: Juliya Gilburd (French)
Levin, Jachman, Greenberg and Wagman Scholarship: Emily Stephens (French)
Lillian Cobb Scholarship: Kyle Bergemann (Spanish) Juliya Gilburd (French) Sarah Lynch (Spanish) Catherine Lyons (Spanish) Rebecca Norman (Spanish) Rick Reyes (Spanish) Erika Varela (Spanish)

Other awards included:

Dean’s Award

Jennifer Garden (German)
Nicole Taylor (French)
Catherine Lyons (Spanish)

The Award for Academic Excellence

Jeffrey Bainbridge (Spanish)
Jill Fensler (Spanish)
Giovanna Giustino (French and Spanish)
Catherine Lyons (Spanish)
Adrianna Mascorro (Spanish)
Carmen Pulgar-Vidal (French and Spanish)
Anne Rangel (Spanish)
Andrea Rappa (Spanish)
Valerie Shive (French)

National Spanish Honor Society

On February 4, 2005, under the able guidance of chapter president Victoria Contreras, the Beta Upsilon Chapter of the National Spanish Honor Society-Sigma Delta Pi initiated eight new members. See below:

Pictured (from left): Vicky Contreras, President; Katie Lyons, Vice-President; Linda Schumacher; Danielle Mikos; Anne Rangel; Andrea Ester; Brianna Doyle; Kyle Bergemann; Megan Dawson; Jeff Bainbridge, Co-President; and Amy Cain
Study Abroad Students in Costa Rica

Spanish Language and Culture Program in Costa Rica

Students of Spanish at the intermediate level can improve their language skills while enjoying the study abroad experience through the NIU faculty-led program in Costa Rica. During their stay, they study the Spanish language, take NIU language courses, and become familiar with the culture, food, history, parks and beaches of Costa Rica. During the summer of 2004, 17 students attended the program, directed by NIU Spanish professors Francisco Solares-Larrave and Frances Jaeger.

This program has been in operation for 10 years, but NIU partners in Costa Rica, Marielos Calvo-Flahive and María Hernández, have been hosting American students since 1984. Their school, aptly named Costa Rica Study Abroad and located in Tibás, provides students with a hands-on experience of Costa Rican culture. Students learn Spanish the best possible way: by using it on a daily basis. The families with whom our students stay are used to hosting U.S. students and happy to share their culture with them. In fact, these families have been known to forge strong relationships with students, who often return to visit them.

Since it is an intermediate program, students who want to participate in the Costa Rica Program should have some knowledge of Spanish. Ideal candidates should have taken Spanish Advanced Grammar (FLSP 301), although they still can apply if they are currently enrolled in the Spanish Intermediate Conversation course (FLSP 211). The NIU courses offered in Costa Rica are Advanced Conversation (FLSP 311), Introduction to Literature (FLSP 320), Spanish Advanced Composition (FLSP 411) and Spanish for Business (FLSP 414). This variety of classes helps participants advance in their major by one semester, or finish a Spanish minor within one year.

Besides these academic possibilities, students in Costa Rica have a number of choices for cultural activities: among those available are visits to museums such as the National History Museum, Biodiversity Park, and the Gold Museum, which become an integral part of their classwork. The program also includes a visit to one of Costa Rica’s most beautiful beaches: Manuel Antonio (also a national park). In addition to these activities, students get cultural input from local instructors who, together with NIU faculty, prepare students to face the grammatical intricacies of the Spanish language and introduce them to Spanish-American literature in a setting known for its friendliness and charm.

A small Spanish-American country, Costa Rica is located in Central America, between Nicaragua and Panama. Its territory hosts 4% of all the animal species in the world, and beautiful beaches on both coasts. Known as “The Central American Switzerland” because of its political stability, Costa Rica has maintained peaceful relations with neighboring countries, and it is very proud of its long-standing tradition of democracy held since 1948, when the Costa Rican government suppressed the army and devoted all its resources to education. Although it’s mostly an agricultural nation, well known for its banana, coffee and cotton production, Costa Rica is also an emerging player in the world economy (tourism, electronics, industry).
Spanish Language and Culture Program in Spain

The NIU Spanish Language and Culture Program in Toledo, Spain was directed last summer by Pablo Virumbrales, a professor of Contemporary Spanish Literature in our department. Virumbrales was accompanied by 20 undergraduate students eager to study Spanish language and culture. The Español en Toledo Program also known as ESTO began in 1984, under the auspices of the University of Castilla–La Mancha and the sponsorship of the Patronato Universitario de Toledo. The program gives students the opportunity to live in Spain for five weeks while studying the language and culture of contemporary Spain, as well as Spanish business and commercial correspondence. The students also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of lectures and field trips on dance, film, cuisine, monuments and museums.

Toledo, the site of the program and the most important city in Medieval Spain, has a very rich cultural history and is one of the most picturesque and beautiful places in all of Castile. A fortress town since pre-Roman times, Toledo was the ancient capital of the Visigoth Kings. Retaken from the Moors by the King Alfonso VI in 1085, it became the most important political and social center of Spain throughout the Middle Ages and early Renaissance.

Classes are held at the University of Castilla–La Mancha in the Palacio de Lorenzana. The University of Castilla–La Mancha is a modern comprehensive Spanish university, with campuses in Albacete, Cuidad Real, Cuenca and Toledo. It was founded in 1982 by combining several university centers that had formerly been under the direction of the University of Madrid. Today it consists of 33,000 students, 7,000 of them at the Toledo campus, and 1,200 faculty members organized into 25 departments.

Study Abroad Students with Professor Pablo Virumbrales (pictured center above and left below)
The Foreign Language Residence Program (FLRP) at Northern Illinois University will be celebrating its 34th anniversary this year. Professor D. Raymond Tourville, who passed away in April 2004, founded the program in 1972. It was NIU’s first academic residence program. Today it continues to be an intellectually stimulating program and a wonderful opportunity for students passionate about foreign languages and culture to practice their language skills and explore the intricacies of diverse cultures. This year the program has eight native speakers from six different countries: France, Belgium, Spain, Costa Rica, Germany, and Japan. The program is located in International House (Douglas Hall, B-Wing) which was redecorated two years ago with five murals depicting scenes from North America, the Hispanic World, Africa, Europe, and Asia.

A community of 48 residents, FLRP participants dine in a private dining room (Douglas Cafeteria D), four times a week (Monday through Thursday) from 4:15 to 5:30. Professors from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and other academic departments often join the participants and native speakers to create a convivial and relaxing dinner environment where students and professors can share a meal and speak in a foreign language.

Our two annual, overnight Lorado Taft Retreats in Oregon, Illinois provide the perfect getaway from the stress of campus and courses. The participants in this program are regaled with international culinary delights whipped up by the experienced head chef. In addition, there is an international film festival in five languages and other activities that are always a great source of fun as well as being instructive.

This year, Judith Olivier is the exchange Assistant Native Speaker from the University of Avignon, France. She is the second exchange student from France who has participated in FLRP. Three years ago, FLRP sent its first student to study at the University of Avignon. Since then, there have been three other FLRP students who have studied at this venerable institution as part of the exchange program. We have also sent a total of three students to study in Spain, two to Costa Rica and one to Ecuador. Diego Pascual y Cabo, who was the Head Native Speaker in Spanish from Spain, three years ago, returns to Northern this year as a Spanish Instructor, accompanied by his wife who was one of the participants in the program. Diego finished his M.A. in Spanish Linguistics in 2003 and Laurie will be finishing her B.A. in English this year. The Foreign Language Residence Program boasts eight marriages during its 34-year existence. Another former alumnus of FLRP is Ralph Strozza, the current owner and CEO of Inter-Pro, an international translation company in Chicago. His son, Nicholas Strozza, has kept the family tradition alive and is currently a FLRP participant.

The Foreign Language Residence Program is a source of tremendous pride for Northern Illinois University and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. It is a one-of-a-kind program in the Midwest. For our 30th anniversary, former participants from all over the world came back to Northern to attend the celebration and to renew old friendships. We will be gearing up for our 35th anniversary next year. If you are a former FLRP participant, we hope that you will join us to make this wonderful program a continuing success.
A Family Tradition

Ralph Strozza (B.S., 1981) is the president and CEO of Inter-Pro Translation Solutions, a company he founded in 1994 and is headquartered in Lombard, Illinois. Inter-Pro provides its clients, which include Hewitt Associates, Honeywell, IBM, Toshiba, and Zebra Technologies, with a comprehensive range of quality language services. While pursuing his undergraduate degree in marketing and French at NIU, Strozza was an active participant in the Foreign Language Residence Program (FLRP). Now his son Nicholas Strozza is beginning his sophomore year at NIU where he will major in interactive marketing and minor in French. Nicholas is also beginning his second year of living on the FLRP floor in Douglas Hall. We asked both of them about their experiences.

Q: What did you enjoy the most about FLRP?
R: What I enjoyed most about FLRP was living in a multicultural, multilingual environment with fellow students whose interests went beyond the East and West coasts of the U.S. At any time you could find yourself listening to or participating in discussions ranging from the ramifications of the latest presidential elections in France, the economic climate in Argentina, or where to find (in DeKalb) what could pass for the proper ingredients for making authentic paella a la valenciana. And most of these conversations would take place in a language other than English.

Q: Why did you decide to live on the FLRP floor?
N: I decided to live on the FLRP floor because I wanted to be part of something in college. I wanted to learn more about the French language and culture and meet new people. I felt that living in an environment that would encourage my learning would be the best way to start off my college life.

Q: What did you like the most your first year on the floor?
N: I enjoyed the dinners the most. I felt relaxed and it was nice to meet new people and talk about the most basic of things.

Q: How would you describe your experience this past year?
N: The experience itself was rewarding but also required commitment at the same time. It is not something one could just take easy. I enjoyed speaking French with native speakers and teachers and getting to know them more to the point where I can consider them friends. By learning from the best, anyone can learn a language if the time is put in.

Q: How do you feel the FLRP experience benefited you with respect to your personal and professional goals?
R: For someone like myself who wanted a career in international business, FLRP exposed me to the people, activities, and opportunities that would give me a head start in realizing my goals even before graduation. Obviously, speaking French and Spanish with native and non-native speakers on a daily basis helped tremendously in improving my communication skills in those languages.

Q: Would you recommend FLRP to other students?
N: Yes, but only if you are serious about learning another language. It is a great experience for students looking to meet new people and have a good time. It requires time and effort. That is why the FLRP students improve their language skills so much. Looking back on my first year in the program, I am happy with my results and how the year went.

R: The best answer to that question is that my son Nicholas will be returning to FLRP for his sophomore year this fall semester. Truthfully, and as with most things, FLRP is not for everybody. However, for students with an avid interest in foreign languages, in international affairs and travel, and who hope to embark upon a career in international business or politics, in teaching or translating foreign languages, or who just want to be exposed to foreign cultures, FLRP is THE place to be at NIU.

Nicholas and Ralph Strozza
**Language Instruction Down Under**

During the summer of 2004 Professor Michael Morris, coordinator of the department’s teacher development program, traveled to Melbourne, Australia to work with that country’s foreign language teachers during their winter school term. Morris was eager to see how Australian schools handled language learning in their multicultural society. His itinerary included an address to an organization of Spanish teachers, a series of teaching workshops, and consultation work with authorities of the governing body of education of the Australian state of Victoria. His visit made him aware of some issues faced by Australian foreign language educators. It also surprised him a bit to learn how much they had in common with their U.S. colleagues.

How an understanding of multiple intelligences can inform the classroom practices of language teachers was the theme of Morris’ address to the Victoria Association of Teachers of Spanish. Conversations with members of the association at the meeting revealed that Spanish constitutes a less commonly taught language in Australia. Most Spanish teachers work part-time or provide private instruction, or teach other subjects in addition to that language. Teachers of almost a dozen European and Asian languages attended a weeklong series of workshops led by Morris at Swinburne University, one of the largest universities in Melbourne. Workshop themes included techniques for teaching languages at the primary school level and working with learning disabled students. Language teachers in Australia revealed they deal with many of the same issues faced by their counterparts in the States: working with students of different ability levels in the same classroom, convincing the public of the importance of language learning, and identifying sources of support for language programs.

During his stay in Australia, Morris also met with members from the LOTE (Languages Other Than English) section of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, which is responsible for implementation of educational policy in Victoria. With VCAA representatives he discussed strategies for strengthening the position of languages in school curricula, as well as current research that examines the benefits of language learning for learners and society as a whole.

Morris’ work in Australia will certainly enrich the methodology courses for pre-service teachers he teaches at NIU, and provide fertile ground for research in cross-cultural work in language teaching. He hopes to return to Australia in 2006 to strengthen the connections he has made with the language-teaching community.

**Foreign Language Professors Play Host**

This past March, Katharina Barbe (associate professor of German) played host to 30 high school and college teachers of German from all over the Midwest. Working with Daniela Pruss of the Goethe Institute of Chicago and John Paluch of Northwestern University, Barbe both organized and participated in a three-day workshop entitled “Pro-Deutsch! Promoting your German Program.” Christopher Gwin, of Haddonfield High School in Pennsylvania, was the keynote speaker and he introduced to the group the new and revised “Advocacy Binder for Teachers of German in the USA” that he had compiled. Attendees at the workshop included several teachers who had completed their undergraduate degrees in foreign languages at NIU.

In May, the First International Conference on Lao Studies was held at Northern Illinois University. An active participant in bringing about this event was John Hartmann (professor of Thai). Hartmann, along with Sue Russell and Julie Lamb from the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, have been working for the past several years with the leaders of the 15,000-strong Lao-American community here in Northern Illinois. This inaugural conference was an enormous success as over 350 people from five different continents gathered together to discuss and learn about Laos and its people, culture, history, and language.
Training Today’s Foreign Language Speakers

NIU Foreign Language Learning Center
As a result of the drive and dreams of D. Raymond Tourville, our old language "lab" went through a major reincarnation during the summer of 1997 and became the Foreign Language Multimedia Learning & Training Center. The new center was outfitted with several dimensions of state-of-the-art technology to enhance the language-learning experience, and we have been able to keep it on the cutting edge ever since its inception. The new Learning Center has the following features:

- Over 60 computers running up-to-date software for language study and translation
- Numerous legacy tape cassette stations, VCRs and DVD players
- Networked video/audio streaming at the click of the mouse
- MP3 audio recording
- Satellite TV from various parts of the world fed to each computer via a WIN/TV card
- Internet access and network printing
- The Tandberg ICM system for controlling signal sources and interacting with students
- Screen-sharing among over 40 computers
- Central servers for language software and networked scorebooks
- An oral testing facility that can capture multiple responses by a group and collect these responses onto one cassette tape or send them to a server (as MP3 files) for easy distribution and evaluation
- A log-in attendance system for tracking students’ activities

When students first came into the new Center, their reaction seemed to be, “Are we going to have to use all this stuff to study foreign languages?” But as students began to arrive who had grown up with the internet, the response has been, “All of this stuff better work!” On a busy week, the Learning Center may see up to 2000 logins, as it continues to motivate modern language learners.

News from the Foreign Language Teacher Development Program
The teacher development program of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures is pleased to prepare middle and secondary school teachers who obtain jobs at the best schools in Northern Illinois and elsewhere. Currently the total number of candidates pursuing teacher certification in French, German, and Spanish exceeds 90. Students who completed the program during 2004-2005 have found employment as teachers in excellent high schools in this region, including Hinsdale Central, Downers Grove South, Prairie Ridge (Crystal Lake), Thornton, Plainfield, and Bartonville Limestone. Three graduates in French and Spanish were commended for their overall performance at the Outstanding Student Teacher Award ceremony, sponsored by the NIU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in May 2005. Adrianna Mascorro was recognized as the outstanding foreign language student teacher of the year and both Andrea Rappa and Jennifer Moore received honorable mention for their work.

In 2005-2006 more than 30 pre-service teachers will be completing their student teaching, the largest group at any one time in many years. To accommodate the increase in the number of candidates, the program has in the last two years engaged several experienced language teachers to assist longtime faculty Michael Morris and Robert Walsh. The department is grateful for the contributions of Jan Modloff and Sharon Tourville, who have ably served as student teacher supervisors. A third supervisor, Mirta Pagnucci, has also served as an instructor in one of the collegewide clinical courses required of all teacher candidates.
The spirit of the German saying, “Wenn man reist, hat man was zu erzählen” [A traveler has tales to tell], definitely infused the enthusiasm of the 65 NIU alumni and staff as they embarked on their spring break adventure to Barcelona, Spain. Of course, after the orientation by their faculty host, Frances Jaeger (Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures), the participants expected to be wowed by the art, architecture, food, and wine of Spain’s second city. Nevertheless, during check-in at O’Hare on Friday, March 5, 2004, no one suspected that they would come home with extraordinary traveler’s tales.

NIU alumni were impressed by the most beautiful street in the world (Las Ramblas), the port, the Olympic stadium, the Gothic Quarter and numerous examples of Art Nouveau architecture. Besides a guided tour of the city, which included a visit to the Cathedral and a demonstration of the Catalonian dance, the sardana, participants enjoyed an early music concert at the awe-inspiring Palau de la Música. In between sightseeing, alumni sampled local delicacies such as butifarra and fuet (sausages), turron (Spanish sweet), handmade chocolates, fresh seafood, and wonderful wine. Some participants decided to expand their Catalonian experience beyond Barcelona and visited sites on the famed Costa Brava (Wild Coast) to the north of the city. The crisp and sunny day spent exploring the medieval town of Gerona (we even saw Lance Armstrong’s house!) and the resort of Tossa del Mar made famous by Ava Gardner and Marc Chagall was especially memorable.

There was much to see and do, and participants were looking forward to a free day to explore more sights such as the Picasso Museum or the fantastical Guëll Park, when news of the Madrid bombings came on the early morning newscasts of March 11. NIU alumni immediately felt a connection to Spain as they witnessed the country come to terms with the worst terrorist attack in its history. More than a vacation and a chance to bond as NIU alumni, the trip became a very real lesson on how we are connected across the globe. Many participants were moved and impressed by the numerous peaceful demonstrations against terrorism that took place on Friday. In the end, all left Spain with the most important and memorable traveler’s tales.

The two Thai guides were named Mem and Mem, and so they dubbed themselves “The Siamese Twins.” Their initial good humor set the tone for what some frequent travelers called “the best NIU tour ever.” Highlights included a trip to the Grand Palace, a New Year’s Eve rickshaw ride around Phitsanulok (with stops to eat fried worms, bugs and scorpions, as well as a chance to try and catch flying fried morning glory after sampling Thai whiskey) and an elephant ride through the jungle.

Grant Olson, coordinator of our learning center, was invited to be the farang host. His role was part guide, interpreter and storyteller. Towards the end of the journey, one of the Siamese Twins told him that she was not sure if she should address him in Thai or English; she laughed and said that “maybe he had been a Thai in his previous life.”
Remembering Ray Tourville
By Grant Olson

I have kind of a funny story: Just after Professor Tourville offered me the job to care for his new Foreign Language Learning Center, I almost quit. He had given me over one hundred purchase orders to study and the phone numbers of people in New York and Finland who never seemed to be in their offices. I met with him and told him I was having a hard time synthesizing his vision, making sense of all the various aspects of his long-standing dream. He barked at me, and I left his office with my tail between my legs.

I went to talk to my mentor at that time, Linda Tillis at Housing. She said you ought to give it one more shot. It’s my understanding that when you work for Ray and he wants to get something done it’s like having a whole army behind you. “Tell you what Grant, go back and tell him what your approach to work is all about; see how he responds…”

I went back to tell Ray how I would like to run the Learning Center, and he settled down and listened. It did not take long to arrive at a point of mutual respect. He was the most supportive boss I have ever had; and for that I will be eternally grateful. But don’t think for a minute that he was going to change his style because of me!

I want to say one small thing, but I believe it speaks volumes: At the end of the day, when I went home to my easy chair, I never once had to waste a single, stressful minute wondering what my boss thought of me; I always knew. He never spoke behind my back, and I returned the favor.

You can say whatever you like about Professor Tourville, but Ray was a straight shooter, a patriarch with a big, soft heart. He once gave me some advice that some of my colleagues questioned. It may not have been exactly correct according to the letter of the law, but I stand by it, because it was true to the heart.

We talked about a lot of stuff, and from what I saw Ray did not have a phony bone in his body. And for that he deserves his own easy chair in heaven (even though he will probably never use it).

Finally, I’m glad that our conversations always ended with a mutual interest, a subject that has no bottom line: wine. Ray would tell me about one of his latest finds and light up: South Africa, California and, of course, France…. Last Saturday, I opened my last, irreplaceable bottle of his favorite Zinfandel, the kind of wine that might shout at you: “Aren’t you glad to be here!” I toasted his love for life… took a long sip… And the bold flavors seemed to take on a whole new dimension.

Remembering Catherine Faires
By Kerry Chermel

Catherine Faires was a loyal and supportive friend, as well as a professional and dedicated colleague. We remember her best for her great compassion, faith, courage, and spirit of adventure.

Catherine’s love of the Spanish language began when she ventured on an incredible journey from a small, rural town in southern Illinois to Costa Rica when she was only 17 years old. She earned her high school diploma in Costa Rica and then attended Eastern Illinois University where she received a B.A. in Spanish Literature. She later completed an M.A. from the University of Illinois at Champaign. After completing her graduate studies she moved to the Chicago area where she taught Spanish at a Catholic High school on the south side. In August 2001 she joined the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Northern Illinois University as an instructor of Spanish.

Catherine had a bright presence in the classroom, and was well known for her interactive and dynamic teaching methods. She often used her sense of humor as a way to engage students in the class. In addition to being a highly effective teacher, she was also very empathetic with students and would often go out of her way to listen to a student’s problem or to offer guidance. As a colleague and friend, Catherine was very supportive. She was always willing to share ideas or give advice. Even while battling cancer, she was known to us in the department for her positive attitude and witty comments.

Catherine’s interests and activities included genealogy, travel, reading, religious studies, music, and cats. She was a very active participant in her church. She thoroughly enjoyed working with people and her greatest personal achievement and satisfaction always centered on helping others. She was very loyal to family, friends, and colleagues. She touched the lives of all of us who knew her.

In April 2005, colleagues from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures participated in the annual American Cancer Society Relay for Life in honor of Catherine.
Let Us Hear From You

We would like to keep up with you. Let us know what you are doing. Send information about yourself to the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois 60115 or e-mail annie@niu.edu.

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