Letter from the Chair

Hello Alumni and Friends!

In the first issue of the newsletter, I had the pleasure of introducing you to our programs and faculty. Now, I write with a sense of enormous pride about the awards my colleagues have received this past academic year, their fine scholarly publications and their efforts to engage students in the classroom. When you read about their outstanding accomplishments, I think you will see the degree to which we all share a deep commitment to excellence in teaching and scholarship as well as making a difference in the world around us.

It is becoming more apparent that we are living and working in an increasingly international environment. In 2005, the United States Senate noted the need for American students to study foreign languages and designated it the “Year of Foreign Language Study.” Achieving global competence involves not only promoting the study of foreign languages but also urging students to spend time living abroad. Congress recognized the importance of study abroad and proclaimed 2006 as the “Year of Study Abroad.” Of course, we in the department did not wait for a congressional declaration to promote cultural exchange. Our summer programs in Costa Rica and Spain remain popular; our students continue to take advantage of three study abroad scholarships; and we again have Fulbright exchange students from Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. And this year, for the first time, we are participating in a Fulbright Teacher Exchange with the Universidad de Cuyo in Mendoza, Argentina.

We appreciate your warm response to our first newsletter. It was good to hear back from you about your activities as well as learn that you thought “Lingua Links” was a success. We also send thanks to those of you who made gifts to the department or one of its foundation funds last year. As always, your support makes it possible for us to initiate and maintain programs that are crucial to our students’ continued success.

This summer we revamped the department website, making it more user friendly and informative. We invite you to visit us at www.forlangs.net. The Foreign Language Residence Program will be celebrating its 35th anniversary next fall and we hope you will be able to join us in commemorating this event. As always, we look forward to hearing from you.

Anne L. Birberick, Chair
Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
Comings and Goings: The Office Staff

We in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures are most fortunate. Indeed, we experience our good fortune daily. How so? We have a terrific office staff that keeps the department running smoothly. Although this past year has brought some changes, our staff remains outstanding.

In July, we said good-bye to Sonja Herington who had been with us first as an undergraduate student worker, and then as staff secretary while she pursued her M.B.A. Sonja graduated in May but has not moved far away, since she accepted a position in the Department of Psychology. While those of us who worked with Sonja knew she was amazing, others at NIU found out this spring when she received one of the 25 Amazing Women Awards.

In August, we welcomed Renée Kerwin as our new staff secretary. She comes to us from the Department of History where she worked from 1992 to 2006. Drawing upon her previous experience, Renée quickly picked up the rhythms of our complex department and has been doing a first-rate job handling both the budget and personnel matters. Yet she has brought more than experience to her new position. Her low-key sense of humor has helped to keep the office a friendly place.

Lynne Meyer is still the first person you meet when you walk through the door. And Lynne has still retained her sunny disposition. This is all the more impressive when you consider that she was frequently called upon—often at short notice—to furnish data to those of us who were working on the department’s program review this past year. Rhonda Kitsos continues to be a whiz at scheduling classes, arranging classrooms and taking care of the graduate assistants. Although she is now commuting to work from Barrington, Rhonda finds time to spend with her son John and is looking forward to celebrating her 7th wedding anniversary.

Our student workers—or the “girls,” as they call themselves—are as busy as usual assisting the faculty with their copy jobs. While Jennifer (Ginny) Cummings graduated this past May with degrees in mechanical engineering and mathematics, Daralyn Richardson and Elisa Robles are with us for a while longer. Daralyn will, however, graduate this coming December with her B.A. in communications. Joining them is Joy Rios, our newest student worker. As yet undecided about a major, Joy will be competing in the upcoming Unity in Diversity speech contest.

We thank you all!
Our congratulations go out to Louise Ciallella, Frances Jaeger, and Francisco Solares-Larrave, all of whom received tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor of Spanish in the Spring of 2006. After a career in international business, Louise Ciallella, received her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and became an Assistant Professor of Spanish at NIU in 2000. Her essays have been published in such leading journals as Cervantes, Feminist Media Studies, and Decimonónica. Her book on early Spanish Modernist texts, “Quixotic Modernists: Reading Gender in Tristana, Trigo and Martínez Sierra,” will be published in early 2007 with Bucknell University Press. She is a Faculty Associate of Women’s Studies as well as of the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies. Currently, she is working on an interdisciplinary project that explores representations of gender and class in photography, films, and literary texts at the turn-of-the-20th century in Spain.

Frances Jaeger received her M.A. and Ph.D. in Spanish from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and joined the faculty in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures in 2000. She has published widely on Central American and Caribbean literature in journals such as Casa de las Américas, Revista Iberoamericana, Explicación de textos literarios, Istmo and Alba de América. In addition, she has presented scholarly papers at both national and international conferences. She has completed a book manuscript dealing with Nicaraguan women poets (“Utopian Dreams, Revolutionary Realities: Women Poets during the Sandinista Years”) and is currently working on a second manuscript that examines the poetry of Nicolás Guillén, Roque Dalton and Ernesto Cardenal. Jaeger is also the Coordinator for the Division of Spanish and Portuguese and as such, is responsible for advising all majors and minors in Spanish.

Francisco Solares-Larrave was born in Guatemala. After having received his B.A. in philosophy and literature from the Universidad Rafael Landívar in Guatemala, he came to the U.S. to complete M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. By the time he joined the NIU faculty in 2000, he had already published articles on Rubén Darío, Fernando del Paso, Armando Chirveches and Miguel Angel Asturias. His book-length study on Rubén Darío’s early works has been accepted for publication by the Romance Language Studies series of the University of North Carolina Press. Solares-Larrave is presently at work on a second monograph project that deals with 19th-century historical novels. He enjoys living in DeKalb, a fertile ground for his photographic exploits, some of which were selected for the exhibit “DeKalb Streetscapes,” organized in commemoration of the city’s Sesquicentennial.
Recognizing Excellence: Faculty, Staff and Department Honored

This has been a stellar year for the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures as members of its faculty, staff and the department itself received university recognition for outstanding achievements.

John Hartmann, Professor of Thai, was named as one of three NIU 2006 Presidential Teaching Professorships. Begun in 1990, Presidential Teaching Professorships recognize outstanding teachers among the faculty. Each receives a $2,000 boost in base salary as well as a grant of $5,000 per year for their four-year appointment to help improve teaching. After four years, they become Distinguished Teaching Professors.

Having joined the faculty in 1974, Hartmann’s academic career reflects a first-rate scholarly record combined with a devotion to student learning both within and outside the classroom. “I believe teaching has a civilizing effect on students and on society as a whole. Here at Northern we have unique opportunities to take young people and help shape their lives to become civic-minded and help contribute to the commonweal, the betterment of society,” Hartmann says. As a professor of a less commonly taught language—Thai—he was a pioneer in the use of technology as a tool to assist both teacher and learner. All his class materials are on the Web at www.seasite.niu.edu/thai – there is no textbook, permitting a “natural” conversation—and his students collectively construct Friday exams as well as maintain weekly e-mail journals of their accomplishments and concerns. In return, Hartmann sends constant feedback and reinforcement. And, he says proudly, classes become families after two semesters of daily meetings.

Katharina Barbe, Associate Professor of German, was one of three professors to be awarded the 2006 Excellence in Undergraduate Instruction Award. This award, begun in 1966, is intended to honor excellent undergraduate teaching in the university, encourage improvement of instruction and promote discussion among members of the university community on the subject of teaching.

For Barbe, the goal is to move students beyond conjugating verbs and submerge them not only in the language but also in the culture from which it emerges. In teaching her classes, she employs an unusual conglomeration of materials ranging from the latest hip hop in Berlin to movies tracing the history of Germany since World War II to German newspapers and literature. “The most important thing about learning a language is that it exposes you to another culture and shows you that there are many different ways of doing things,” she says. To further reinforce that lesson, Barbe is a strong advocate of students spending time overseas, sometimes helping them land Fulbright scholarships or internships to make the experience more affordable. Her dedication extends well beyond class hours. She has directed several Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program projects, been an active participant in the Foreign Language Residence Program and worked with the Goethe Institute of Chicago to help support teachers of German in 13 Midwestern states. In addition to these commitments, Barbe continues to be an active researcher whose current project involves linguistic analysis of Nazi newspaper propaganda.

Two members of the department’s supportive staff also received recognition. Greg Ross, Coordinator of the Foreign Language Residence Program (FLRP), was the recipient of the 2006 Dolby Award for the Enhancement of Racial and Ethnic Diversity and Robert Walsh, Assistant Coordinator of Foreign Language Teacher Certification, was honored with a certificate from the Supportive Professional Staff Council for his contributions to NIU.

Ross’ commitment to enhancing cultural diversity has been far reaching. In 2005, for example, he helped students organize a panel discussion on “Erasing Racism” during International Week; he arranged for the
Counselor General of the El Salvador Embassy to visit and meet with students during Latin Heritage Month; and he began the Partners in International Education Program (PIE), which pairs American students with exchange students as roommates in the International House.

Being engaged is a priority for Walsh. Not only is he actively involved in all aspects of our teacher certification program, he is also a key participant in the Master’s Plus Program, which is designed for teachers in outlying districts who are working simultaneously on regular certification and an M.A. degree. Walsh’s engagement extends to the community as well; he worked to create the Hispanics Health Literacy Project and is a current member of the Rochelle Township High School District 212 school board.

In November 2005, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures itself was one of two NIU departments to receive an Outstanding Departmental Contribution to International Education Award. Presented by the Division of International Programs, this award recognizes those departments that have contributed significantly to international education through teaching, research and public and student service.

Portions adapted from release provided by the NIU Office of Public Affairs

Spotlight on New Faculty

If the world is a stage, then Linda Saboriò will most surely play a major role. Having received her Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2006, she joined our department this fall as an Assistant Professor of Spanish. Saboriò is passionate about all aspects of theater, from the staging and production to the research and criticism. But what she is most passionate about is Latino and Mexican theater. The interest in Latino theater grew out of her experiences living in Santa Ana, California, a rather large, primarily Hispanic city that is located approximately two hours from the Mexican border town of Tijuana. In addition to her worldly experiences in California, she has also spent several years living in Costa Rica and traveling around Central America. Now she is pursuing research on Elena Garro’s theater and the Mexican playwrights Sabina Berman, Emilio Carballido and Victor Hugo Rascon Banda. Saboriò will continue her travels this year as she attends the Mid-America Conference on Hispanic Literature in the fall to present a paper entitled, “The Anomalous Reality in Luis Valdez’s ‘The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa’ and ‘The Mummified Dear’” and the Festival/Conference on Latin American Theater Today in the spring.

In her spare time, Saboriò enjoys taking Taekwondo classes with her daughter and riding bikes with her family. Of course, she also enjoys attending theater productions.
## 2005 Faculty Publications and Presentations

**Atlee, Carl**  
**Conference:**  
“Sincere Advice or (not-so) Veiled Threat: The Text, Context and Subtext of Gomez Manrique’s Coplas para Diego Arias de Avila,” 40th Annual International Congress of Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 2005

**Barbe, Katharina**  
**Conference:**  
“Wirtschaftsdeutsch im Anfangsunterricht,” Werbeseminar Pro-Deutsch! Goethe Institute, DeKalb, Illinois, March 2005

**Birberick, Anne L.**  
**Article:**  

**Ciallella, Louise**  
**Book Chapter:**  

**Bentley, John R.**  
**Conference:**  

**Cooke-Plagwitz, Jessamine**  
**Abstract:**  

**Coozad, Mary Lee**  
**Conference:**  
“How Language Teachers are Using Technology,” Faculty Summer Institute (FSI 2005), Invited lecture at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, May 2005

**Cozad, Mary Lee**  
**Conference:**  
“Adventures in Teaching: Helping Language Teachers Discover the Joy of Teaching with Technology,” FLEAT 5: Uniting the World, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, August 2005

**Cooke-Plagwitz, Jessamine**  
**Abstract:**  

**Conference:**  
“How Language Teachers are Using Technology,” Faculty Summer Institute (FSI 2005), Invited lecture at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, May 2005

**Cozad, Mary Lee**  
**Conference:**  
“How Language Teachers are Using Technology,” Faculty Summer Institute (FSI 2005), Invited lecture at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, May 2005

**Cozad, Mary Lee**  
**Conference:**  
“How Language Teachers are Using Technology,” Faculty Summer Institute (FSI 2005), Invited lecture at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, May 2005

**Hartmann, John**  
**Conference:**  

**Jaeger, Frances**  
**Book Chapter:**  

**Article:**  

---

**Atlee, Carl**  
**Conference:**  
“Sincere Advice or (not-so) Veiled Threat: The Text, Context and Subtext of Gomez Manrique’s Coplas para Diego Arias de Avila,” 40th Annual International Congress of Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 2005

**Barbe, Katharina**  
**Conference:**  
“Wirtschaftsdeutsch im Anfangsunterricht,” Werbeseminar Pro-Deutsch! Goethe Institute, DeKalb, Illinois, March 2005

**Birberick, Anne L.**  
**Article:**  

**Ciallella, Louise**  
**Book Chapter:**  

**Bentley, John R.**  
**Conference:**  

**Cooke-Plagwitz, Jessamine**  
**Abstract:**  

**Conference:**  
“How Language Teachers are Using Technology,” Faculty Summer Institute (FSI 2005), Invited lecture at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, May 2005

**Cozad, Mary Lee**  
**Conference:**  
“How Language Teachers are Using Technology,” Faculty Summer Institute (FSI 2005), Invited lecture at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, May 2005

**Hartmann, John**  
**Conference:**  

**Jaeger, Frances**  
**Book Chapter:**  

**Article:**  
Kot, Joanna
Conference:
“Maria Morozowicz-Szczepkowska’s The Falling House: The Development of a Feminist,” Kentucky Foreign Language Conference, Lexington, Kentucky, April 2005
“Changing Perspectives: The Development of Maria Jasnorzewska as a Playwright,” National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Salt Lake City, Utah, November 2005

Lukacher, Maryline
Article:

Mazzola, Michael L.
Conference:
“Social Hypotheses and Formal Proposals,” XVII International Conference on Historical Linguistics, Madison, Wisconsin, July 2005
“Procès systématiques de variation en français,” Phonological Variation Conference: The Case for French, University of Troms, Norway, August 2005

Merino, Eloy E.
Edited Book:

Morris, Michael
Textbook:
Article:

Nissen, Christopher
Article:
“Paragone as Fiction: The Judgment of Paris in Giulia Bigolina’s Urania. Italian Quarterly 42.165-66 (2005): 5-17
“Giulia Bigolina la prima romanziere italiana. Una donna dell’Alta Padovana tra i letterati del ’500.” Alta Padovana 4 (2005): 50-64

Solares-Larrave, Francisco
Article:

Tun, Saw
Article:
“Books on Languages of Myanmar Nationalities” [tain-yin bathazaga kyan], Stine Thit Monthly, Number (143), Yangon, July 2005: 30-39
“Skills in Writing Myanmar Prose” [myanma zagabje ayeatha lecinza], Stine Thit Monthly, Number (144), Yangon, August 2005: 24-39
“Myanmar Linguistic Map” [myanma naingan bathazaga myeboun], Stine Thit, September 2005: 40-52

Willems, Philippe
Conference:
“Albert Robida: From Historical Research to Prospective Science Fiction,” Invited lecture at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, April 2005
“Nineteenth-Century Pedagogy and Sequential Art,” Invited lecture at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, April 2005
“Scholarly Slapstick of the Romantic Age: A Rare View of the Early Nineteenth Century,” 19th Century French Studies Colloquium, University of Texas-Austin, October 2005
Past (Im)Perfect

Understanding the present relies, in good part, on understanding the past. But is the information we receive about the past always accurate? And what happens, when it is not? John Bentley, Associate Professor of Japanese, and Eloy Merino, Associate Professor of Spanish, found themselves coming to terms with these questions in their recently published studies, which respectively focus on important periods in Japanese and Spanish history.

For John Bentley, the problem dates back to 1680 when a minor historian in the employ of the venerable Tokugawa Mitsukuni put forth a theory that Sendai kuji hongi (more commonly known as Kujiki) was little more than a plagiarized version of three older Japanese chronicles. Until that time, Kujiki had been acclaimed as the work of Shotoku Taishi (574-622 CE), Japan’s George Washington, and revered as one of the tripartite scriptures of Shinto for nearly eight centuries. But the new forgery theory caused an avalanche of fresh research, which had the ultimate effect of sweeping Kujiki from the shelves of Shinto and into the trash.

In late autumn of 1986, Bentley embarked upon his journey to determine whether Kujiki was authentic or nothing more than a pastiche of plagiarized sections taken from other works. While his task was often frustrating, he was rewarded for his efforts when, in 1992, he discovered an until-then-unknown manuscript fragment of Kujiki which preserved a line of the textual stemma that no longer existed. From this discovery of the handwritten manuscript fragment, Bentley was able to determine that Kujiki did not plagiarize other works, but had relied on earlier drafts of these historical documents. He published his findings in a book-length study entitled, The Authenticity of Sendai Kuji Hongi: A New Examination of Texts, with a Translation and Commentary (Brill Pub., 2006) and, in doing so, rescued a valuable text from decades of misunderstanding.

Eloy Merino’s journey to the past has a more recent starting point. In 1999, while at the 20th Louisiana Conference on Hispanic Languages & Literatures, he attended a panel on the Falangist cultural influence on democratic Spain. The Falange, to which the term “Falangist” refers, was a political organization founded in 1933 by José Antonio Primo de Rivera that drew its core inspiration from Italian fascist ideology. What caught Merino’s attention as he listened to the presenters was that they all shared the view that the Falangist movement has minimal or non-existent ideological influence today. Merino decided to explore the truth behind this view and to that end he, along with a colleague, assembled a group of scholars to examine the issue. What emerged from their collaborative undertaking was Traces of Contamination: Unearthing the Francoist Legacy in Contemporary Spanish Discourse (Bucknell UP, 2005), a collection of essays to which Merino was both co-editor and contributor. The essays discuss memoirs, historical novels, testimonial literature, political proselytism, journalism, popular culture, and ficción. The result is a work that illustrates the degree to which Falangist ideologies, which ruled life in Spain for close to forty years (1939-1975), continue to infect the contemporary Spanish psyche.

In addition to the above collection, Merino was co-editor of two other volumes of essays just recently published. One is on the noted Catalan intellectual Eugenio D’Ors (1882-1954) and the other is on the Spanish writer Camilo Jose Cela (1916-2002). At present, he is working on a book project that studies the political identity of Cela in his early creative years.
Back to the Classics

Latin, a dead language? Antiquity, out of date? The department’s two classics faculty, Antoinette Brazouski and Lucinda Alwa, would disagree. They know that classical studies is not only alive but also thriving, and based on enrollments in the “Elementary Latin” and “Classical Mythology” courses, their students would agree with them. On average, 40 students enroll in beginning Latin while 100 students enroll in each of the four sections of the popular “Classical Mythology” course. In other words, over 400 students each semester are deepening their knowledge about the present by means of studying the past.

In large part, this desire to delve into the past is the result of the outstanding instruction students have received over the years from Brazouski and Alwa. For both, the fascination with antiquity dates back to high school Latin classes where, in addition to studying the language, there were discussions on everything from love to war to atomic theory as they read Vergil, Catullus and Lucretius. The study of Latin—as well as ancient Greek—continued while they were in college, leading each one to eventually pursue graduate studies. Brazouski holds a Ph.D. in Classics from Loyola University in Chicago while Alwa earned her Ph.D. in Classics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Now, students at NIU are taking advantage of Brazouski’s and Alwa’s impressive training.

The course on classical mythology, which examines stories about deities and heroes of ancient Greece and Rome, continues to be a favorite with students. Although primarily a literature course, it draws on a variety of disciplines such as art history, archaeology, psychology, philosophy, and even astronomy. Students are introduced to several theories of mythology as they consider the influence ancient myths have had on almost every academic discipline. Additionally, students come to see the myriad of ways in which ancient myths permeate contemporary American society, whether it takes the form of ads (the messenger god, Hermes, is the symbol for FTD Florists) or company names (the name for Nike refers to the Greek goddess of victory) or common expressions (“Achilles’ heel,” “non sequitur,” and so on).

Alwa and Brazouski have also cultivated students’ passion for Latin itself. As a result of these language classes, students come to see how Latin connects with modern life. For example, they become aware of how Latin provides a framework for understanding much about the history of western culture as they develop a vivid sense of the details of life in ancient Italy. They also gain an excellent foundation for improving their verbal skills; for instance, the roots of everyday vocabulary and scientific terms become not only intelligible but also fascinating. Of course, Latin facilitates the study of other modern Romance languages, since much of its grammar and syntax forms the basis out of which Italian, French, and Spanish developed.

There is evidence to suggest that studying Latin improves a student’s ability to solve mathematical problems as well. So, as the students today will tell you, Latin is alive and well.
The Fulbright Experience

Spanish instructor Kerry Chermel received a prestigious Fulbright Teacher Exchange grant and is spending the fall semester at Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, located at the foot of the Andes in the city of Mendoza, Argentina. She is teaching two sections of English literature at the university. Her counterpart in the Fulbright Exchange, Professor Amparo Argerich of the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo is visiting NIU and assuming Chermel’s teaching responsibilities, which include four sections of Spanish. Professor Argerich is here with her husband, Carlos, and their two children, Federico, 14, and Virginia, 12. They are residing in International House—a wing of Douglas Hall.

Chermel was initially concerned that as a U.S. citizen she would encounter anti-American sentiment, but that has not been the case. According to Chermel, “Mendocinos (as the people of Mendoza are called) are very gracious and polite. There is always something to do in Mendoza. There are cafes, excellent restaurants, theatres, museums and cultural events. Every night you can see people strolling through the plazas or sitting at an outdoor café, or even enjoying mate, a strong and bitter tea that one drinks with friends.”

Chermel is enjoying teaching at the Universidad de Cuyo and has wonderful colleagues and pleasant students. She says that in Mendoza teaching is much more of a collaborative effort and that teachers spend a lot of individual time coaching students on their oral presentations and essays. “My colleagues and I will gather and discuss how we are going to present a specific topic or class. In addition, the responsibilities of teaching one course are shared among many teachers. As a result, students will have a different teacher everyday.” At NIU most of Chermel’s students are taking Spanish to fulfill a language requirement, but the students she teaches at UNCuyo are not very different from students at NIU.

Both Chermel and Argerich highly recommend living and working abroad to other professionals. Chermel says that it has been very helpful to observe different teaching methodologies and to learn about the Argentine university system. It has given her a broader perspective on education. Argerich shares this view: “I have found that there is so much to see and to learn in an experience like this. It is obvious that the person participating in a teaching abroad experience should be accommodating, should like adventure and should trust Fulbright, because one is really in good hands.”

---

2006 Year of Study Abroad

In 2004, The President and Congress appointed a 17-member bi-partisan “Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program” to recommend ways to greatly expand and enhance opportunity for American undergraduates to study abroad, with special emphasis on diversifying destinations, institutions and students. The Report: “Global Competence & National Needs: One Million Americans Studying Abroad” was issued on November 14, 2005. In 2005, the 109th Congress passed Senate Resolution 308 designating 2006 “The Year of Study Abroad,” extending the life of the Commission to further promote study abroad, nationwide.

http://www.yearofstudyabroad.org/studybroad.asp
Students in our M.A. program continue to excel. In Spanish, Jennifer L. Weger published an essay in the electronic academic journal Hipertexto. The title of her essay is “Modernización y Género en ‘Clemencia’ de Ignacio Altamirano.” Erica Hawkinson has accepted a position as a full-time teacher at the American Language Academy in Madrid, Spain, while Nicolás Concepción (M.A., Summer 2006) has begun his Ph.D. in Spanish linguistics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Julie Sorrentino spent last spring (2006) at the Universidad Veracruzana, Xalapa, Mexico, studying contemporary Mexican literature and translation. In French, Nataliya Zimmerman (M.A., December 2006), was one of NIU’s Outstanding Women Student Award recipients. This award honors selected women students for their leadership, scholarship, and community service.

Study Abroad Scholarships were awarded to the following students:

**J. Suhadolc Scholarship:**
- Chelsey Newcomb (Spanish)
- Amelia Smajkan (German)
- Olga Tehterkova (Russian)
- Rachel Wilchke (Spanish)

**Levin, Jachman, Greenberg and Wagman Scholarship:**
- Amanda McCoy (French)

**Lillian Cobb Scholarship:**
- Amanda McCoy (French)
- Mumo Musei (French)
- Tara Reimer (Spanish)
- Lindsay Savio (Spanish)
- Cynthia Szewczuk (Spanish)

Other awards included:

**Dean’s Award (Given to a graduating student who has achieved at least a 3.0 grade point average):**
- Florence Mathieu (German)
- Deana Morissette (Spanish)
- Emily Stephens (French)

**The Award for Academic Excellence (Given to graduating majors who have achieved at least a 3.65 grade point average in the major and overall G.P.A.):**
- Maria Besten (German)
- Ryan Brown (Spanish)
- Marta Hall (German)
- Mark Haugen (Spanish)
- Sarah Lynch (Spanish)
- Florence Mathieu (German)
- Laura Morrissy (Spanish)
- Rebecca Norman (Spanish)
- Amanda Romero (Spanish)
- Nicole Taylor (French)
- Marcel Van Camp (German)
- Ashley Wager (German)
- Gretchen Weber (French)
- Adriana Zaragoza-Lara (Spanish)

**Exemplary Student Teacher award (Given to student teachers who are selected for outstanding performance in the classroom):**
- Maria Besten (German)

In the spirit of the organization’s renewed focus on service activities, the active members planned and carried out a trip to an area high school to promote learning Spanish. They also maintained a tutoring service, with hours of staffing in central areas on campus, for students of Spanish during spring semester exam week. In the photograph: The advisor, Professor Ciallella, at the far left, together with Chapter officers and the new initiates immediately after the initiation ceremony.

**Spanish National Honor Society: Sigma Delta Pi**

The Northern Illinois University Beta Upsilon Chapter of the Sigma Delta Pi Spanish National Honor Society initiated 11 new members in February 2006:
- Cristina Arroyo
- Cosme Becerra
- Nicholas N. Concepción
- Lucio Diaz
- Maureen LaBotz
- Melanie Lanni
- Rebecca Norman
- Rick Reyes
- César Rosales
- Amanda Srail
- Erika Varela

In the spirit of the organization’s renewed focus on service activities, the active members planned and carried out a trip to an area high school to promote learning Spanish. They also maintained a tutoring service, with hours of staffing in central areas on campus, for students of Spanish during spring semester exam week. In the photograph: The advisor, Professor Ciallella, at the far left, together with Chapter officers and the new initiates immediately after the initiation ceremony.

Pictured (from left) first row: Linda Schumacher (President), Erika Varela, Amanda Srail, Melanie Lanni, Mauren LaBotz, Cristina Arroyo, Lucio Diaz, Nicholas Concepción. Back row: Professor Louise Ciallella (Advisor), Rebecca Norman, César Rosales, Rick Reyes, Cosme Becerra, Kyle Bergmann.
The Foreign Language Residence Program will celebrate its 35th anniversary in 2007. The events and activities scheduled to commemorate this important milestone will be announced after the beginning of the year. As NIU’s longest standing academic residential program, FLRP continues to be a very strong and dynamic presence on campus. This year, we have a diverse community of 60 participants representing 11 different countries including the United States of America. For the 2006-07 academic year, we have six new native speakers with a wide range of backgrounds and interests.

The French native speakers are introducing us to the cultures of francophone countries from around the world. Ali Myombo Mbanza from The Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire) is a Political Science major and an aspiring poet, interested in pursuing a career in law. From Cameroon, Fabrice Tefoung is a mechanical engineering major and has served as a math tutor. This year, the head native speaker in French, Jéhame Dorian-Lefranc is an exchange student from the University of Avignon in France. He is an avid Michael Jackson fan and recently completed his master’s degree in France on “The Socio-economic Situation of the Tribal Cherokee of Eastern Oklahoma in the 1960’s and 70’s.”

The native “hispanohablantes” also represent a variety of countries and cultures. Michelle Vargas, who is from Costa Rica and El Salvador, is in her first year of the program. She is a double major in Spanish and History. Hector Ortega from Mexico City, Mexico, is also a first-year student and is majoring in biology/chemistry.

After dedicating her entire undergraduate career at Northern to FLRP, Cristina Santiago, from Barcelona, Spain, is graduating in December with a degree in Marketing from the College of Business Administration. She began her residence in the United States as an au pair in St. Charles, Illinois. Christina has been very instrumental in guiding the Spanish group over the past four years. As the head native speaker in Spanish, she is a talented and experienced choreographer with a flair for getting students involved in learning the cultural dances of her country. We wish her continued success in her professional life. Christina will be greatly missed by all of us.

Priscila Alfaro-Barrantes, from Costa Rica, the graduate assistant to the program, is completing her master’s degree in Sports Management this December. She has provided expert technological assistance and unbridled enthusiasm and support to all of our participants. She will remain with the program until the end of May 2007 when she will enter graduate school as a doctoral student at a university in the United States.

Hailing from Fukuoka, Japan, Rie Tameyori, is introducing us to Japanese language and culture. She is a graduate of Kyushu University with a degree in Japanese linguistics and an interest in teaching Japanese to American students. And from Germany, Iska Hoerner is introducing us to German language and culture. She is a secondary education major and plans to teach German to English-speaking students.

The Foreign Language Residence Program is very proud of its thirty-five years of excellence in foreign language education and we recognize that this success is due to the dedicated support and enthusiasm of its staff and participants. We look forward to many more years of leadership at Northern Illinois University and sincerely hope that you will continue to support our efforts.

Greg Ross, Foreign Language Residence Program
Almost as soon as we finished digitizing the old cassette tapes in the Learning Center, book companies started shipping their “ancillaries,” all those supplements that accompany a text, on CD. We still got involved in converting all that CD information into a more compressed format, MP3, to preserve space. And just when textbook companies gave us a chance to look forward and started asking us what we wanted, they decided to deliver what they thought we needed via the web. So much for “ask and you receive.” This evolution is part of a path of change that we both try to determine and end up following to varying degrees.

When it comes to technology, there is a never-ending learning curve and constant flux. We were one of the very first installations at NIU to get involved in video and audio streaming. Even that dimension of our learning center took months to iron out. After all parties involved stopped blaming each other and settled down to looking at the actual factors involved, we made some real progress. We keep an open door to brainstorming about customizing someone’s laptop to support Asian characters or left-to-right Arabic fonts. Group and individual training get more attention, while all our other materials waiting in the wings become a part of our assumed library of resources.

I am fond of noting that when students first came to us almost ten years ago, they felt overwhelmed by all the technology and gadgetry. And now the new waves come in demanding that everything work and that the computers better darn well let them multitask in a way they’ve become accustomed to elsewhere. Of course, the new students have never known not having a PC. It is increasingly difficult to surprise such people, but sometimes we manage to do just that.

While we compile a log of videos and DVDs that is cataloged on our own website, we provide a local service and get international inquiries about the availability of foreign-language films. The “loading” of ancillaries is no longer a challenge. We are now moving on to making world-class translation programs, such as TRADOS, available to future translators or assisting students in putting their own portfolio materials on navigable CDs or DVDs for archiving and future professional use.

We track current changes not just for the sake of keeping up but also to try and understand the process of change. Understanding this process enriches (language) learning at a higher level. If we can convey the enjoyment of embracing change and be an expression of how this enjoyment fits into language learning, then our place for delivery has more potential.

Grant Olson
Foreign Language Multimedia Learning Center

Learning to Lead and Follow

Almost as soon as we finished digitizing the old cassette tapes in the Learning Center, book companies started shipping their “ancillaries,” all those supplements that accompany a text, on CD. We still got involved in converting all that CD information into a more compressed format, MP3, to preserve space. And just when textbook companies gave us a chance to look forward and started asking us what we wanted, they decided to deliver what they thought we needed via the web. So much for “ask and you receive.” This evolution is part of a path of change that we both try to determine and end up following to varying degrees.

When it comes to technology, there is a never-ending learning curve and constant flux. We were one of the very first installations at NIU to get involved in video and audio streaming. Even that dimension of our learning center took months to iron out. After all parties involved stopped blaming each other and settled down to looking at the actual factors involved, we made some real progress. We keep an open door to brainstorming about customizing someone’s laptop to support Asian characters or left-to-right Arabic fonts. Group and individual training get more attention, while all our other materials waiting in the wings become a part of our assumed library of resources.

I am fond of noting that when students first came to us almost ten years ago, they felt overwhelmed by all the technology and gadgetry. And now the new waves come in demanding that everything work and that the computers better darn well let them multitask in a way they’ve become accustomed to elsewhere. Of course, the new students have never known not having a PC. It is increasingly difficult to surprise such people, but sometimes we manage to do just that.

While we compile a log of videos and DVDs that is cataloged on our own website, we provide a local service and get international inquiries about the availability of foreign-language films. The “loading” of ancillaries is no longer a challenge. We are now moving on to making world-class translation programs, such as TRADOS, available to future translators or assisting students in putting their own portfolio materials on navigable CDs or DVDs for archiving and future professional use.

We track current changes not just for the sake of keeping up but also to try and understand the process of change. Understanding this process enriches (language) learning at a higher level. If we can convey the enjoyment of embracing change and be an expression of how this enjoyment fits into language learning, then our place for delivery has more potential.

Grant Olson
Foreign Language Multimedia Learning Center

Global Plug-In

Native Speakers in the U.S.

Which languages in the U.S. have the largest number of native speakers? Here’s the answer, according to the 2000 census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>215,423,557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>28,101,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>2,022,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>1,643,838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>1,383,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>1,224,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>1,009,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>894,063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>706,242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.nvtc.gov/lotw/members/USlanguages.html
Making a Difference

Marianne Zemil (M.A., B.A., 1997) has been teaching French and German at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools for the last nine years. She has also played an instrumental role in designing a new digital media center for her department as well as being an active member in the Chicago chapters of the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) and the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG).

Zemil did not begin her professional life as a language teacher. After graduating with a B.A. in French Commercial Studies, she worked in the field of international banking for seven years. Realizing that banking was not the career path for her, Zemil embarked upon an M.A. degree in French at NIU. We asked her about her graduate student days.

Q: What attracted you to NIU’s M.A. program in foreign languages?
Z: I set out to find a program that could provide me with several things: an M.A. in French, a second B.A. in German, a teaching certificate, and a graduate assistantship to defray the costs. I must have called every possible university in the Chicago-land area to assess programs. I was amazed at how few schools could offer these options to me. Even if I were to just settle for the M.A. in French and the teaching certificate, many of the French departments at the schools I visited told me that based on my language experience in Dijon and an interview in French, that I would be bored in their graduate programs because the majority of their students had not been abroad. It also just so happened a co-worker knew a current graduate student in NIU’s French program. After talking to her, I scheduled an appointment with the then Department Chair, Ray Tourville. After one meeting with him, I knew I had found the right school.

Q: How would you describe your experience as a graduate student in the department?
Z: In many ways, this was one of the best periods of my life. I was given time and resources to investigate and research the nature of language learning. However, it wasn’t just the academic and intellectual atmosphere. There was also a great sense of camaraderie among us graduate assistants. I really feel the process of writing my thesis on an applied linguistics topic helped to shape my teaching philosophy and reaffirm my decision to become a language teacher. I might add that commuting 74 miles one-way three times a week for three years should be testament enough that I was convinced that NIU’s program was of great value.

Q: The department is most appreciative of your support to its programs in the form of the Levin, Jachman, Greenberg, and Wagman study abroad scholarship. Why did you decide to create this scholarship?
Z: My husband and I were so grateful for the education I received through my assistantship and the tuition waiver that came with it that we decided it would only be right to give something back to the school. Having studied twice overseas and knowing how much it changed my life and improved my language skills and broadened my view of the world, I thought this kind of scholarship would be the best. The names in the scholarship are those of grandparents and great aunts who had passed away and valued learning. This year, with the recent passing of my father, Howard Levin, there will be another reason for us to contribute to this scholarship. Though it may not be the largest scholarship, it has always been our hope that we might make just the right difference in a student’s ability to afford a trip abroad.

Q: What advice do you have for today’s students?
Z: Follow your interests. Don’t study something simply because you think it will take you on the “right” career path. The world is full of people who just clock in and out of their jobs deriving no satisfaction from something that constitutes the majority of their waking hours. If you follow your interests and your heart, you will ultimately find a way to make that passion become a means of support.
Alumni Class Notes

Thanks to all alumni who updated us on their activities. Here is what some of you told us.

Gloria Abeja-Ortiz (B.A. 1992) is now teaching Spanish to lower- and middle-school children after having used her Spanish skills to work for the federal government conducting investigations. She is married to an NIU alumnus and, together, they have five children.

Mary K. (Hensley) Anderson (B.A. 1994) is, in her words, “a domestic engineer” as she home schools her three boys, ages six, five and one and a half years.

Jennifer Corry (M.A. 1994) received her Ph.D. in Medieval Spanish from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2000. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor of Spanish at Moraine Valley Community College. She and her family have traveled to Europe, Mexico and the Caribbean.

Todd Olson (B.A. 1986, EMBA 2002) recently returned from Vieux-Charmont, France, where he spent two and a half years living and working. Now he is back in Illinois where he continues to work for Burgess-Norton Mfg. Co. in Geneva as a manager in market development.

Leonard D. Projansky (B.A. 1955) is now a retiree from the Cook County Department of Corrections. He has drawn upon his French major during his travels to Europe and the Middle East. Currently, he is learning Spanish.

Carolina Lopez (M.A. 1996) currently teaches at Arizona State University, Glendale Community College, and The American Graduate School of International Business. She organized a trip to Spain during the summer of 2006.

Madalyn (Walsko) Michels (B.A. 1971) loves teaching Spanish and art and is now an adjunct professor of Spanish at Moraine Valley Community College. She and her family have traveled to Europe, Mexico and the Caribbean.

Todd Olson (B.A. 1986, EMBA 2002) recently returned from Vieux-Charmont, France, where he spent two and a half years living and working. Now he is back in Illinois where he continues to work for Burgess-Norton Mfg. Co. in Geneva as a manager in market development.

Leonard D. Projansky (B.A. 1955) is now a retiree from the Cook County Department of Corrections. He has drawn upon his French major during his travels to Europe and the Middle East. Currently, he is learning Spanish.

Theresa A. Pruneda (B.A. 1995) works in the mortgage and lending industry but she is starting up her own French translation business.


Jennifer Zammuto (B.A. 1994) works in international business as the Senior Communications Coordinator for Caterpillar, Inc.

John Zimnie (B.A. 1969) is now teaching part time at Romeville High School after having taught for thirty-five years at Naperville Central High School. At Romeville, he is working on growing the German program.

Your Support Helps

If you are considering making a gift to the department, please feel free to get in touch. There are existing funds to which you might contribute, or you may wish to establish a new one. We’ll be glad to discuss it with you. Donations, however modest, make a real difference and enable faculty and students to continue excelling in their teaching and research activities.

Thank you very much!

in languages taught by our department:

Burmese  မိုးအိန်းကြက်
Chinese  非常感谢
French  Merci beaucoup!
German  Danke schön!
Indonesian  Terima kasih banyak!
Italian  Grazie tanto!
Japanese  ありがとうございます
Khmer  អរគុះអស្ករសូម្ពោះណាមួយមួយ
Latin  Tibi gratias maximas ago!
Portuguese  Muito obrigado!
Russian  Большое спасибо!
Spanish  Muchas gracias!
Tagalog  Maraming Salamat!
Thai  ขอบคุณมาก
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.

Last Name | First | Initial | Birth surname
--- | --- | --- | ---

Address

City | State | Zip
--- | --- | ---

E-Mail

Degree and Year | Telephone
--- | ---

Occupation

Employer/Firm

Northern Illinois University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status, national origin, disability, status based on the Victims’ Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA) or status as a disabled or Vietnam-era veteran. Further, the Constitution and Bylaws of Northern Illinois University provides for equal treatment regardless of political views or affiliation, and sexual orientation.

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois.

www.niu.edu 10/06 36858