Hello Alumni and Friends!

Communication. Cultures. Connections. Comparisons. Communities. These are the 5 Cs put forth by the American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages as the framework for instruction in foreign languages, literatures and cultures. While the 5 Cs certainly reflect what goes on in our classrooms, they also point to the values and beliefs of the department as a whole.

Members of the department continue to have a strong commitment to promoting deep trans-lingual competence and cross-cultural understanding. As you will learn in the pages that follow, our means of achieving these goals take many paths. You will see that original research by faculty expands the knowledge base and offers insights into other mentalités. You will find that participation in international programs, such as Fulbright, provides unique opportunities for cultural exchange. And, you will discover how involvement with students, alumni, and professional organizations not only contributes to but also enriches cross-cultural experiences.

Given the globalization of the 21st century, students understand the importance of studying foreign languages and cultures. Over the last few years, we have seen an increase in the number of students choosing to major and minor in foreign languages. In French and German, the number of majors and minors is steadily rebounding from a steep drop that occurred in the early 2000s. Of course, Spanish continues to be a big draw for students, especially for those interested in the minor. The department has witnessed a 67% increase in Spanish minors from fall 2005 to fall 2008.

The second biggest increase in minors has occurred in Chinese and Japanese, which have grown 28% over the same time period. The significance of these two languages is reflected in the newly created Advanced Placement (AP) exams now available and the need for qualified teachers in Japanese and Chinese at the secondary school level. Finally, the department has seen growth in its programs in Russian and Italian, with the expansion in Italian mirroring the 22% nationwide overall increase of students enrolled in Italian classes. We hope you find this news about foreign language study at NIU as encouraging as we do.

With our many successes, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures contributes to the vibrancy of the campus, the community, and the profession. Please join us in our endeavors!

Anne L. Birberick, Chair
Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
Two New Faculty Members Join the Department

For James Collins, Professor of Malay and Indonesian and the new Director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, joining the faculty at NIU represents a Midwestern homecoming. Although he was born on Chicago’s Southside and received his Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of Chicago in 1980, Collins has been living and working in Malaysia for the last 14 years. There, he was a research fellow at the Institute of Malay World and Civilization located on the campus of the National University of Malaysia. He has produced an impressive and wide-ranging body of scholarship on places such as Borneo, East Indonesia, and the Malay Peninsula.

The NIU Center for Southeast Asian Studies is one of only nine federally designated national resource centers in the country. Among his duties as its Director, Collins will oversee an active research faculty of over 30 associates and affiliates as well as the internationally recognized SEAsite (www.seasite.niu.edu), an interactive website that offers language and culture training programs. Within FL&L, he plans to offer courses on Indonesian and Malay as well as a course on endangered languages.

Stephen Vilaseca, Assistant Professor of Spanish, is fascinated by space, both real and fictional. How is space used or misused? Who inhabits a particular space? Why? These are some of the questions he explores in his research on the relevance of space to issues of cultural transgression in three Spanish generations: Generation of 1950 (Ana María Matute, Juan Marsé, Carmen Martín Gaite), Generation of 1968 (Rafael Chirbes, Rosa Montero, Javier Marías), and Generation X (José Ángel Mañas, Ray Loriga, and Gabriela Bustelo). But his research on this subject goes beyond looking at how space is represented in literary works to investigating how a group such as the okupas, contemporary Spanish squatters, have taken possession of unused spaces in Madrid and Barcelona, converting them into housing and social centers. He has already published some of his findings in the Bulletin of Hispanic Studies as well as presented it at scholarly conferences.

Vilaseca received his Ph.D. in Spanish from the University of Minnesota in 2006. He and his wife, Emily, have two sons, Tryggve, age 3, and Viggo, 6 weeks, which keep them both busy. They will begin house-hunting in the spring, adding another dimension to Vilaseca’s preoccupation with space. Location, location, location.

IRSP Grant Allows for Script Rewrite

SEAsite, the comprehensive, web-based interactive learning resource for studying Southeast Asian languages and cultures, will be getting a much needed makeover of its “exotic scripts” thanks to John Hartmann (Professor of Thai and NIU Presidential Teaching Professor), Saw Tun (Associate Professor of Burmese) and two Associate Professors of Computer Science, George Henry and Robert Zerwekh. As a result of their efforts, this interdisciplinary team of researchers landed an International Research and Studies Program grant from The U.S. Department of Education to improve the infrastructure of SEAsite. The three-year grant, in the amount of $300,000, runs from August 2008 to August 2011.

Significant portions of the website are displayed in languages, such as Thai, Burmese, Lao, and Khmer, that use non-Latin alphabets. In the mid-90s, special fonts were created in order to produce these pages as well as to allow users of the site to access and print out materials. The fonts, however, have become outdated over time, making usage of the site unnecessarily cumbersome. The IRSP grant, which funds writing a computer program to carry out conversion of the legacy fonts to Unicode, obviates the need for manual conversion. Once the project has been completed, users will no longer need to download fonts. Another major renovation of SEAsite, which includes Indonesian and Vietnamese as well, will be the conversion of older sound file formats to mp3. In the end, SEAsite will be even more accessible and portable than it is now.
What happens when the promotion of nationalism bumps up against minority cultures and languages? That is one of the issues that John R. Bentley, Associate Professor of Japanese, examines in his latest book, *A Linguistic History of the Forgotten Islands: A Reconstruction of the Protolanguage of the Southern Ryúkyūs* (Global Oriental, 2008).

Bentley’s study focuses on Sakishima, a chain of islands situated between the large island of Okinawa and Taiwan. The largest island in Sakishima is Iriomote, only 1 1/2 square miles in area, while the smallest inhabited island, Hatoma, is 4 square miles in area. The total population of Sakishima is roughly 110,000, but within this area three distinct languages exist: Miyako, Yaeyama, and Yonaguni. As a result of the imperially mandated overthrow of the King of the Ryúkyū in late 1879, Okinawa and Sakishima officially become territory of Japan. Along with this annexation, the government of Japan decreed that Japanese was to be the official language of the area and labeled these indigenous languages of Sakishima ‘dialects,’ which meant that they were forbidden to be used in public. Although this strict atmosphere regarding language dissipated after the end of the Pacific War in 1945, the damage had already been done. The majority of people living in these many islands speak Japanese, and even those who speak the native languages speak a variety that includes many Japanese words. Today, these precious Sakishima languages are on the verge of complete extinction within one generation.

*A Linguistic History of the Forgotten Islands* attempts to record important data about the phonology and grammar of these languages. Japanese is currently considered an isolate language, meaning that the majority of scholars cannot discover the genetic relationship of Japanese with any other language in Asia—other than Ryúkyūan. Because of the label ‘dialect’ that was imposed on these three languages over a century ago, most Japanese scholars in and outside of Japan have had little interest in the study of these languages. Bentley’s book represents an important first step at a better understanding of the language history of Sakishima and its relationship with mainland Japanese.

The ways in which artistic choices influence instructional agendas serves as the starting point of a collection of essays, *The Art of Instruction: Essays on Pedagogy and Literature in 17th-Century France* (Rodopi, 2008), edited by Anne L. Birberick, Chair and Associate Professor of French. The nine essays comprising the volume look at the ways in which seventeenth-century French writers embraced both sides of the Horatian ideal that literary works combine the utile with the dulce so as to be pleasingly instructive. In doing so, the authors consider the full range of meanings associated with the term “art”: learning, science, method, means, artifice, beautiful expression, aesthetic creation or artifact. The notion of “art,” standing as it does at the junction of form and content, becomes central to the volume.

In her own essay, “Behind Closed Doors: Theater, Pedagogy and the ‘Crisis’ of Esther,” Birberick explores the centrality of this term within the context of the institution of Saint-Cyr, a school for the daughters of impoverished nobles founded by Mme de Maintenon in 1686. In keeping with the school’s innovative curriculum, Maintenon commissioned Racine, France’s most celebrated dramatist, to write a play that would instill piety in her young pupils. The result was the biblical play *Esther*. The outcome of this pedagogical experiment was, however, quite unexpected. The staging of the play as well as its subject matter awakened, as Birberick shows, a desire in the *st-cyriennes* to participate in worldly court society, a desire that ultimately led to unruly—not pious—behavior.

Birberick intends to continue examining the relation between artistic expression and pedagogy in the works of other writers such as Fénelon, La Fontaine, and d’Aulnoy.
2007 Faculty Publications and Presentations

Barbe, Katharina
Article:

Conference:

Birberick, Anne
Conference:

Ciallella, Louis
Book:
Quixotic Modernists: Reading Gender in Tristana, Trigo, and Martínez Sierra. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press.

Conference:
“Reconciliation of Mother and Performer in Martínez Sierra’s El agua dormida.” XVII Congreso de la AILCFH, Sevilla, Spain, October.

Collins, James
Book:
Penghayatan ilmu linguistik melalui pemaparan dialek Melayu seAlam Melayu. Bangi: Penerbit Universiti, Kebangsaan, Malaysia.


Cooke-Plagwit, Jessamine
Article:

Conference:
“Generic Software for Foreign Language Instruction: A Snapshot of Teachers’ Approaches.” Third Annual Conference on Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Research, March.

Cozad, Mary
Conference:
“Internal Receptors and Metacommentators in Pre-Cervantine Romance.” Mid-America Conference on Hispanic Literature, Madison, Wisconsin, October.

Hartmann, John
Article:


Conference:


“Thai Literature on the Move: From Dial-a-Poem to i-Pod Provocations.” 17th Annual Conference of COTSEAL/SEASSI, Madison, Wisconsin, July.

“Regional Naming Practices of the Tai: Chiang and Viang.” Council on Thai Studies, Madison, Wisconsin, December.

Ingram, Amy
Conference:

Book Review:

Jaeger, Frances
Conference:

“Meslizaje and Jim Crow in Rosa Maria Britton’s Esquina del paraíso.” Mid-American Conference on Hispanic Literature, Madison, Wisconsin, October.

Kot, Joanna
Article:


Conference:
“Variety of Form and Critical Reception of Polish Inter-War ‘Women’s Drama’.” Annual Meeting of AATSEEL, Chicago, Illinois, December.

Lukacher, Maryline

**Book:**


**Conference:**

“George Sand et les transgressions romanesques: Lucrezia Floriani et Elle et Lui.” Colloque International George Sand, Clermont-Ferrand, France, June.


**Book Review:**


Morris, Michael

**Conference:**


Nissen, Christopher

**Conference:**


“Artists as Rhetoricians in Sannazarro’s Arcadia and Bigolina’s Urania.” MLA Annual Convention, Chicago, Illinois, December.

Rao, Rajiv

**Article:**


**Conference:**


Rodriguez, Joshua

**Article:**


**Conference:**

“The Structure of Telic Sentences with Durative Adverbs.” 11th Hispanic Linguistic Symposium, San Antonio, Texas, November.

Solares-Larrave, Francisco

**Book:**


**Conference:**

“Darío, Gautier, sus princesas y la transculturación.” Mid-American Conference on Hispanic Literature, Madison, Wisconsin, October.

**Book Review:**


Tun, Saw

**Article:**


Vilaseca, Stephen

**Conference:**

“Rethinking La Transición: Castrated Bodies in Rosa Montero’s Crónica del desamor.” Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association (PAMLA), Bellingham, Washington, November.

**Book Review:**

Family Ties: Argentinean Fulbright Teacher Exchange

It was a reunion between old friends. That is how it felt to NIU’s Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo in Mendoza, Argentina when they participated for the second time in a Fulbright exchange. In fall 2008, Mirta Pagnucci, an instructor in French, Italian and Spanish, traveled to Mendoza as she swapped places with English professor Corina Murcia who came to DeKalb. Both were recipients of the prestigious Fulbright Teacher Exchange grant that is awarded on the basis of academic and professional achievement.

At UNCUYO, Pagnucci taught English literature and composition to approximately sixty Argentinean students in a collaborative setting with five other faculty members. “I enjoyed this new way of working,” she said. “I was very impressed by the dedication of the teachers as well as that of the students. With very little technology and indeed very few resources (often just a bare piece of chalk on an old scratchy blackboard), both the students and instructors exceeded my expectations in the quality of their work.”

She also lived with the family of Amparo Argerich, who had participated in the original exchange with NIU Spanish instructor Kerry Chemel in 2006. This living situation afforded a wonderful opportunity to absorb the Mendocino way of life on a daily basis as well as participate in various family activities such as birthday parties and extended family dinners.

As with the first exchange, Murcia resided in International House, which is located in Douglas Hall and comprises both the Foreign Language Residence Program (FLRP) and the Partners in International Education (P.I.E.) program. Murcia participated actively in the goings-on of the wing. She attended FLRP dinners, participated in the FLRP Lorado-Taft retreat, joined the P.I.E. participants on local excursions, and introduced I-House residents to Argentinean food and culture. She also taught four courses in the department that ranged from intermediate Spanish language to a beginning Spanish conversation class.

The exchange benefited all who were involved. Students found their classroom experience enriched by having a professor from Argentina or the United States, while Pagnucci and Murcia were able to experience first hand different educational systems. But more importantly, strong ties were established between two “sister” institutions. Already, some of the organizational groundwork has been laid for establishing a NIU-UNCUYO study abroad program.

Rwandan Director Screens “Behind this Convent”

On April 6, 1994, President Juvénal Habyarimana was assassinated when his plane was shot down. The event served as the catalyst for the Hutu militia to begin its campaign of genocide against the Tutsis. Within the short span of 100 days, hundreds of thousands of Tutsis were murdered not only by the militia but also by their Hutu friends and neighbors. For Rwandan film director and actor, Gilbert Ndahayo, who was 13 years old at the time, the Tutsi Genocide was a very personal affair. His parents and grandparents, along with 200 people from his village, were massacred. Their bodies later found in a pit behind his house.

“Behind this Convent” chronicles Ndahayo’s own struggle as well as the nation’s to come to terms with the genocide. Through the testimony of survivors, witnesses, and the confessions of his father’s killer, Emmanuel aka “Red Cross,” he tells an unforgettable story of horror, pain, remembrance, justice, and the challenge to forgive. The film premiered at the Zanzibar International Film Festival in July 2008 where it garnered two awards: Verona Award for Best African Feature Film and Signis Commendation for Best African Documentary Film.

On November 17, 2008, as part of NIU’s International Week, Ndahayo screened his film in Faraday West to an audience of over a hundred students, faculty, and members of the DeKalb community. A reception followed the showing. The afternoon of the screening, Ndahayo also had the opportunity to meet with some of Professor Laura Vasquez’s students from the Department of Communication to discuss a few of the challenges he encountered in making the documentary.

This event was made possible through the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, the Foreign Language Residence Program, and International House. Additional support was provided by the Department of History, and the Zeta Gamma Chapter of the Phi Beta Delta International Honor Society.
The department is thrilled to have Tatiana Kaledina join us this year as our Fulbright Teaching Assistant in Russian. Tatiana earned her B.A. degree in English and received her teaching certificate in English (major) and German (minor) at Kaluga State Pedagogical University, where she has been teaching since 2003. As an FLTA at NIU, she works closely with Joanna Kot, Associate Professor of Russian. Her duties have been wide ranging: teaching conversation, assisting with beginning Russian classes, designing course materials, and offering tutoring sessions.

Shortly after her arrival in the fall, Tatiana started a Russian Club, which now has between ten and fifteen members. Every week, the group gets together to discuss a particular topic and drink tea. The club has also held other events, such as a movie night, in which the members gathered in the Learning Center to watch and discuss a Russian film, and a Russian party night in which Tatiana cooked traditional Russian food for the group. In March, the group will celebrate Pancake Week—a festivity in which Russians are only supposed to eat pancakes for an entire week—with, of course, a pancake party.

We caught up with Tatiana to ask her a few questions about her experiences so far as well as her plans for the future.

**Q:** Why did you apply for a Fulbright?

**T:** I've always wanted to take part in an international students’ exchange program. In 2007, I heard about the FLTA program and decided to apply. The program sounded interesting because it was about teaching (which I really like to do) and the USA (the country I'm connected to). I was really surprised when I was selected and my life theory that dreams come true was proven again.

**Q:** How have you found NIU and DeKalb?

**T:** I like DeKalb a lot; it's small and quiet but very nice. Besides, it is situated near Chicago and I'm in love with Chicago. I like the climate in this area because it reminds me of home. NIU is probably one of the best places I've worked—my colleagues are friendly and help me a lot.

**Q:** Why did you decide to start a Russian Club?

**T:** I'm proud of being Russian and like my country. I noticed that my students had many questions about Russia, which I could not answer during the lesson because of the time limit. So I suggested we should meet once a week and talk about Russia. Every week, I prepare a topic for discussion and sometimes show videos or pictures. And the nicest part, I guess, is drinking tea.

**Q:** What are your plans for the future?

**T:** I have a lot of them as usual. One of them is to continue my education. Right now, I'm applying for the M.A. degree in Linguistics in the Department of English at NIU. This is my plan A. If it doesn’t work out, there are always plans B and C. So, we'll see what is going to happen. I'm rather optimistic about my life and future.
The department fielded a team at NIU’s American Cancer Society Relay for Life, sponsored by Colleges against Cancer. The event was held overnight April 11-12, 2008 at the Convocation Center. Relay for Life is the American Cancer Society’s yearly fundraiser, with entertainment, games, food, music, informational tables. This year the event included an inspirational speech by cancer survivor Coach Kill and a visit by State Representative Robert Prichard.

The theme for 2008 was “Follow the Cancer-Free Road.” Our team, The Profe’s Posse, was one of only two that came in costume, with Captain “Auntie Em” (Mary Cozad, also the Faculty Advisor to Colleges against Cancer), Co-Captain “Dorothy Gale” (Lynne Meyer, complete with her own Toto), “Glinda the Good” (Jessamine Cooke-Plagwitz), and the “Wicked Witch of the East” (Katharina Barbe). “The Wizard” was Michael Morris. The team decorated its campsite with emerald tablecloths, a “yellow brick road” and replicas of the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Cowardly Lion. We raised over $1,200 for ACS, and the entire event netted $70,060, after expenses.

“Back to the 80s” is the theme for the 2009 Relay for Life, which will be held on April 17-18. At that time, The Profe’s Posse will once again spring into action.

D. Raymond Tourville Teacher Fund

The DeKalb County Community Foundation will establish and administer the D. Raymond Tourville Illinois Foreign Language Teacher Fund for the Future. This fund will be an endowment in perpetuity that will permit the Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ICTFL) to distribute the fund’s investment income to support foreign language teachers at three different points in their career: in the pre-service or student teaching phase, in the first five years of their professional career, and at the point at which they would be recognized as the ICTFL Teacher of the Year.

Tourville, who passed away in April 2004, was chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures as well as an active member of ICTFL. The fund, established in his honor, pays tribute to his longstanding commitment to promoting foreign language education.
Learning a foreign language can be like running an obstacle course. There is the challenge of learning a new grammar system; the challenge of amassing sufficient vocabulary on various topics; the challenge of mastering a different accent and intonation. Then, there is the biggest challenge of all: putting the pieces together to communicate. Given such obstacles, it is not surprising that foreign language learners, especially those who do not intend to be majors or minors, may feel frustrated, disheartened and overwhelmed by the task before them.

Enter the SI Access Pilot Program in Spanish. ACCESS is the office on campus that coordinates tutoring services. Among the programs they offer is one called Supplemental Instruction (SI). The SI program concentrates on lower-level course sequences that have historically proven difficult for people who are not majoring in that area. An upper-level student (preferably a major, though not necessarily) with proven success in the subject matter is hired as an SI leader.

In fall 2008, Foreign Languages and Literatures began a pilot SI program for undergraduates in select beginning and intermediate Spanish classes. The impetus for starting the pilot program came from Spanish instructor Candy (Carlson) Medina. Working with the ACCESS office and the faculty in Spanish, Medina identified overall grammar and language preparation, and those who have availed themselves of the SI offerings have found additional help to strengthen those areas, as well as provide them with useful practice and study ideas,” she says. Medina has also seen a greater bond develop among the students within the class as they spend extra time together attending the sessions.

The department hopes to continue the program next year, since preliminary results have been fruitful.

What is your name?

in languages taught by our department:

- Burmese မည်သည်။ သင်အမည်က ဘာဘာလေး?
- Chinese 你叫什么名字?
- French Comment t’appelles-tu?
- German Wie heißen Sie?
- Indonesian Siapa nama Anda?
- Italian Come ti chiami?
- Japanese お名前は何ですか。
- Khmer អ្នកឈ្មោះឡ្លងម៉ោង?
- Latin Quid est nomen tuum?
- Portuguese Como se chama?
- Russian Как вас зовут?
- Spanish ¿Cómo te llamas?
- Tagalog Ano ang pangalan mo?
- Thai คุณชื่ออะไร
Exploring Costa Rica

Participants in the NIU Alumni trip to Costa Rica found the golden rule that “a traveler always has tales to tell” particularly applicable. While the week-long adventure in March 2008 promised an introduction to this Central American nation’s spots of natural beauty, participants came home with more than exotic souvenirs and impressive photos. Besides a greater understanding of this land and its people, NIU alumni reconnected with the university and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

Unlike most alumni trips, the trip to Costa Rica differed in its focus on adventure travel and its inclusion of a new volunteer activity at a local elementary school. Another unique aspect is that the alumni trip picked a country where the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures has been sponsoring a summer program in Spanish Language and Culture for many years. In fact, the faculty host from our department, Frances Jaeger (Associate Professor, Spanish), was the director of the program for two years and visited Costa Rica on numerous occasions. In this way, NIU alumni had a taste of a country many Spanish majors and minors had visited over the years and often considered their home away from home.

Even though the twenty-one travelers, including the chair of the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department, Anne Birberick, hiked along the La Paz waterfalls, marveled at the postcard-perfect view of the Arenal volcano and zip-lined through the rainforest, most participants agreed that the most rewarding experience was the visit to the Panama Beach elementary school in Guanacaste. The travelers received a warm welcome from the students and teachers, were treated to a presentation of local dances and were taken on a tour of the school. As part of the volunteer experience, participants brought donations of school supplies, educational equipment, kitchen utensils and clothing. In exchange, students gave handmade pictures and provided the group with homemade snacks. The response from the entire group was overwhelmingly positive with many affirmations that the school visit had been the highlight of the trip. As a result of the success of this first venture into adventure travel in combination with volunteer work, the NIU Alumni Association is considering incorporating similar activities in other trips.

For more information regarding the Alumni Association travel program, please contact Pat Anderson at the NIU Office of Alumni Relations.

Frances Jaeger
Associate Professor of Spanish
The M.A. program in French and Spanish remains strong. In 2008, the department graduated three students in French and eight students in Spanish. As in the past, some of our students elect to continue on with advanced studies. Jonah D. Connor is currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Spanish at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Leah James, who was one of the recipients of the prestigious Jeffrey T. Lunsford Minority Fellowship and graduated in December, will pursue her Ph.D. in French next year. Congratulations go out to Linda Schumacher, M.A. student in Spanish, who received for a second time a grant from the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies to pursue research in Quito, Ecuador this past summer.

Agueda Formoso-Mayan (M.A. Spanish), Marisela Gradilla (B.A. Spanish), Lucy Sosa (B.A. Spanish), and Nadia Mohamed (B.A. French) were all recipients of the NIU Outstanding Women Student Award while Holly Dieter (B.A. Spanish), Albertina Gaebler (French minor), and Chelsey Newcomb (B.A. Spanish) were inducted into the Zeta Gamma Chapter of Phi Beta Delta, Honor Society for International Scholars.

Matt Konfirst (B.A. German; Ph.D. Geology) was one of two NIU students to receive the highly competitive Fulbright U.S. Student Award. As a result of his award, Konfirst was able to work with scientists at the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research in Germany. Joseph Petitti (Chinese minor) received several different study abroad scholarships including the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to use toward his study in China this academic year.

Study Abroad Scholarships in the department were awarded to the following students:

- J. Suhadolc Scholarship:
  - Amelia Smajkan (German)
- Levin, Jachman, Greenberg and Wagman Scholarship:
  - Alan Frazier (French)
- Lillian Cobb Scholarship:
  - Nika Ankou (French)
  - Stephanie Brooke (Spanish)
  - Sam Defalco (Spanish)
  - Holly Dieter (Spanish)
  - Betsy Roloff (Spanish)
  - Jacqueline Rossbach (Spanish)
  - Amelia Smajkan (German)
  - Kelly Tate (Spanish)
  - Jenna Tisoncik (Spanish)
- Dean’s Award (Given to a graduating student who has achieved at least a 3.0 G.P.A.):
  - Iska Hoerner (German)
  - Kathy Love (Spanish)
  - Mumo Masesi (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.):
  - Oswaldo De La Hoya (Spanish)
  - Ana Dominguez (Spanish)
  - Laura Harrison (Spanish)
  - Dana Hochleutner (Spanish)
  - Iska Hoerner (German)
  - Alise Kohler (Spanish)
  - Kathy Love (Spanish)
  - Amanda McCoy (French)
  - Nadia Mohamed (French)
  - Travis Moore (German)
  - Amy Poirier (French)
  - Taylor Reed (German)
  - Lucy Sosa (Spanish)

Degrees with Distinction:

- Summa Cum Laude:
  - Paisley Fort
  - Laura Harrison
  - Kathy Love
  - Amanda McCoy
  - Lucy Sosa
  - Travis Moore
  - Taylor Reed
- Magna Cum Laude:
  - Megan Baldauf
  - Ana Dominguez
  - Dana Hochleutner
  - Amy Poirier
  - Cum Laude:
    - Rosa Campos
    - Amanda Ferro
    - Marisela Gradilla
    - Mumo Masesi
    - Cynthia Szewczuk

Phi Sigma Iota: International Foreign Language Honor Society

On Friday, November 21, 2008, Phi Sigma Iota inducted eleven new members, nine undergraduates and two graduate students into its society. The ceremony was held in Watson Hall and attended by foreign language faculty as well as family and friends of the inductees. Louise Ciallella, the society’s faculty advisor and Associate Professor of Spanish, presided over the evening’s events. The new initiates are:

- Deanna Bach (Spanish)
- Dina Baker (Spanish)
- Alia Casas (Spanish)
- Jessica Cozza (Spanish)
- Albertina Gaebler (French)
- Megan Johnson (Spanish)
- Amy Jordan (French)
- Stevie Munz (German)
- Kaitlyn Servarino (Spanish)
- J. Anthony Howard (Spanish, grad)
- Leah James (French, grad)
Greetings from the Foreign Language Residence Program! The Residence program welcomed eighteen new members this past fall semester (sixteen frosh) to our community of forty-eight on the second floor of Douglas Hall International House. Corina Murcia, the exchange Fulbright Teacher from Argentina, was a guest native speaker at our daily dinners, and at the fall Lorado-Taft Retreat. In addition to Ms. Murcia, Baptiste Rouers, from Nancy, France, was an invited guest at the retreat and presented a power point presentation on the history and development of Louis Vuitton and his fashion empire. The fall semester was a busy one for FLRP, Partners in International Education (P.I.E.) and International House. Our kickoff event, the Mystic Blue, Architectural Lake Michigan Chicago Skyline Cruise was a resounding success with forty-five students participating in the three-hour cruise. Following this excursion, in November, a group of forty-eight boarded one of NIU’s new luxury cruisers to attend The Lyric Opera of Chicago’s production of Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess, which had been absent from the Lyric for 54 years. It gave all of us a good reason to don our most elegant attire and spend a few pleasant hours in The Lyric’s jewel-box like theater.

To begin the 2009 spring semester, I-House co-sponsored, with Believe in Culture (BIC), a trip to Chicago’s Chinatown in celebration of the Chinese New Year: The year of the Ox. Forty-six students attended the event; happily, the weather cooperated with rising temperatures and sunshine.

On the athletic front, our coed and men’s soccer teams made it to the playoffs this past year before being eliminated. The men’s team won the championship in 2007. Join me in applauding their terrific effort.

Please also join me in welcoming three new Native Speakers to our program. We are fortunate to find each year a great group of native speakers to serve as language mentors to the participants. Stefan Groebel, a business major from Germany is the German native speaker. Yasunori Kano, a business major from Japan, is the new Japanese native speaker while Cristina Padilla, a marketing major from Mexico, is the new head native speaker in Spanish. These new speakers join Mathilde Gleizes and Jean-Philippe Schmitt in French, Jessica Ibarres, from Mexico, in Spanish and Eric Pin Chi Su, from Taiwan, to round out our staff of seven native speakers.

On the third floor of I-House, the P.I.E. program welcomed six South Korean exchange students from Kyung Nam University, a Canadian student, three Chinese students, and an Austrian to the community. This is the third year for the PIE program and I hope the program continues to grow. They have been active participants in all of I-House programming.

We would like to extend an invitation to all of you to come to our daily dinners in the C/D cafeteria Monday through Thursday. It’s an opportunity to relax with the students in a congenial atmosphere and enjoy some good food. All alumni and faculty guests do not have to pay for their meals. Please join us.

Gregory T. Ross
Coordinator of FLRP and International House
The Learning Center’s Good Fortunes

A grin is based on good backing... and being backed up.

We are not bound by knowledge on shelves. However, such volumes have supported us for years.

A good teacher never gives up learning, especially when it comes to technology.

A good teacher knows how to point the way; a good student knows how to persist and focus attention.

A healthy mind shares an abundance of resources: while working alone we learn confidence, while sharing we learn transcendence.
A Year in France

Practice your French while being paid to teach English in France. Oh la la! That is what the French Ministry of Education and the Cultural Services at the French Embassy are proposing to American students. For Valerie Shive and Erica Goldberg, who received their B.A.s in French in 2005 and 2006 respectively, this was an offer they could not refuse.

For almost a decade now, the French government has offered approximately 1,500 English-language teaching positions in French primary and secondary schools. Assistants are assigned a 12-hour teaching schedule that may be spread across three schools. Duties involve instructional activities such as conducting conversation classes in English, providing small group tutorials or serving as a resource person. The government pays assistants a monthly gross salary of 945 euros, which provides them with enough money to live the lifestyle of a typical French student.

In October 2005, Shive headed off to the town of Bourges, which is located directly in the middle of France. There, she worked at two different lycées. The lycée professionnel was comprised of about 300 students who would mostly become trades people while the other lycée, having 3,000 students, was more comparable to an American high school. Goldberg began her assistantship in October 2007, teaching at a school in Chalon-sur-Saône, which is located about one and a half hours from Lyon in the Burgundy region.

Shive and Goldberg are two among several French majors from the department who have participated in the program over the years. We caught up with both of them and asked them about their experiences.

Q: What motivated you to apply for the program?
G: I had studied abroad for a semester in Avignon in fall 2004, and I wanted to live abroad again because I missed the European lifestyle that I had enjoyed so much while in Avignon. Also, I was trying to decide if I wanted to go back to school to get a Master’s in education, and I figured the program was the perfect way to “get my feet wet” and see if I really would enjoy teaching.

Q: How did you find the French students you worked with?
S: I experienced great variety amongst my students. Many of the students were hesitant to practice English, fearful of making mistakes. Yet they enjoyed activities and learning first hand of certain American customs and cultures. Those students who were eager to converse, ask questions, and apply what they had learned.
Thanks to all of you who updated us on your activities. Please continue to keep us informed. Here is what some of you told us.

**Erica Goldberg** (B.A. 2006) spent last year teaching English to French lycée students in Chalon-sur-Saône in Burgundy. This fall, she began graduate studies in French at the University of Iowa.

**Aleasa (Thomsen) Green** (B.A. 1997) worked for several years in international marketing. Currently, she is teaching bilingual kindergarten in Elgin while working on her Master's degree in Bilingual Education.

**Walter Gutierrez** (B.A. 1967) is a Spanish instructor at Kishwaukee Community College.

**Teri Hinrichsen** (B.A. 2001) is currently teaching English as a Second Language at Woodruff High School in Peoria, Illinois.

**Steve Rubinson** (B.A. 1985) met his wife Jenny (a German minor) while they were both living on the FLRP floor. They have been married 22 years, have four children, and live in Caledonia, Wisconsin. Steve is a licensed U.S. Customs broker who is currently employed as Director of Global Import/Export at JohnsonDiversey in Sturtevant, Wisconsin.

**Jon Shultz** (B.A. 1977) is teaching in the Chicago public school system.

**Niki Taylor** (B.A. 2005) works in the Inside Sales department at the world headquarters for Molex in Lisle, Illinois. About 25% of her clients are in Québec, so she uses her French almost every day. Niki remains interested in learning other languages and has recently begun studying Japanese.

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**Alumni Class Notes**

Q: Would you recommend this program to other recent graduates in French?

G: Yes! Typically, students go abroad to study; however, this program gives recent graduates the chance to go to France in a different capacity and, thus, influences our opinion of France and of French people in a unique way. Of course, it’s a fabulous way to improve your French and learn about yourself in the process. Also, it’s a huge résumé booster.

S: I completely recommend this experience. My teachers treated me to excursions into the countryside to visit their homes, nearby castles, the Poêle de Porcelaine, the vineyards of Sancerre, and the village of the potters. Living in France gives you the opportunity to travel and the time for doing it. The monthly salary is adequate if budgeted properly. There are many other fabulous advantages to becoming involved with this program. Amazing France always defies adequate description. See for yourself!

Q: How do you think the experience changed you?

G: I haven’t changed; I’ve just matured. I’m still the same person I’ve always been. I’ve just grown a thicker skin. As a foreigner in France (and especially as an American in France), you’re forced to look at your country in ways you hadn’t before. French people are very curious in nature and constantly ask questions. In fact, they asked me questions, which I had never even thought about before. My worldview has definitely expanded as a result of this program.

S: From the experience itself, I learned more cultural sensitivity and flexibility. While I was there, the many grèves [strikes] that went on to effect the dispersal of the CPE created havoc for the school schedules. Sometimes I came to school to find I had no class. Sometimes, the class was still in session. At times, I was told I did not have class; other times, I just had to arrive there to find out.

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Printed by authority of the State of Illinois.
www.niu.edu 2/09 45239