Letter from the Chair

So Long, Alumni and Friends!

Although it seems like only yesterday, it was six years ago that I assumed the position of Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Tempus fugit. Much of what we set out to do during these past six years has happened. Thanks to talented students, distinguished faculty, and engaged alumni, we have spread the word about the importance of foreign languages in this age of internationalization and globalization. As the pages of this newsletter have shown, those who study foreign languages, literatures, and cultures excel in their pursuits, whether they be scholarly or professional.

The current issue of the newsletter continues to document the achievements of our foreign language ‘extended family.’ You will learn how the department is establishing a core of new or recently tenured faculty whose research addresses 21st-century issues. You will also learn about the numerous awards received by our students such as USOAR, Fulbright, and Forward Together Forward Scholarships. And finally, you will learn about the significant contributions made by staff, faculty, and alumni to the department and its programs over the years.

As I leave my duties, I realize I would like to write about the future as well as the past. Challenging times lie ahead. A sputtering national economy combined with a steady loss of state tax dollars has put the college education of many students at risk. For foreign language students, several newly created scholarships will help relieve some of this financial stress. But not all assets are monetary. So, I would like to thank all you alumni who have reconnected with the department over these past six years, and ask that you stay connected in the years to come. And, I would like to invite other alumni to become connected. Your involvement with students—at career days, honor society ceremonies, FLRP events—plays an important role in their formation as global citizens.

Au revoir, mes amis. Let’s look to the future as we build together, under the leadership of chair-elect Professor Katharina Barbe, a place where a new generation of foreign language students can prosper.

Anne L. Birberick
Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
Dear Friends,

Let me briefly introduce myself: I came to Northern in 1989 after finishing my Ph.D. at Rice University. I have taught a wide variety of classes in our German division. Upon receiving tenure in 1996, I succeeded Professor Osterle as Coordinator of the Division of German, Classics, Slavic, and Asian languages. After the reorganization of the department, I assumed the position of Assistant Chair in 2008. Throughout the years, I have maintained an on-going research agenda by writing, publishing, and presenting papers. I am also passionate about teaching: I continuously try to improve my classes and the materials I use. A highlight in my teaching career was receiving the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award in 2006. In my over 20 years at Northern, I have sat on numerous department, college, and university committees.

I am excited to take over from Professor Anne Birberick on July 1, 2010. Anne has done an outstanding job and it will be difficult to follow in her footsteps. Fortunately, we have always worked very closely together and her invaluable and friendly advice will pave the way for a smooth transition. As I step up to the position of Chair, the position of Assistant Chair will be occupied by Professor John Bentley (Japanese). I am happy to report that Francisco Solares-Larrave will remain as Undergraduate Director and Frances Jaeger as Graduate Coordinator. We have an excellent team in place, and we all are looking forward to working together for the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

Best wishes,

Katharina Barbe
Associate Professor of German

Letter from the Chair-elect

Department News

Katharina Barbe

Office Happenings

Congratulations go out to Office Manager Renée Kerwin, who has completed 20 years of service at NIU. Kerwin joined FL&L in August of 2006 after having previously worked in the Department of History for over 15 years as well as in the Center for Governmental Studies. She first came to NIU back in 1989 as extra help in the Department of Electrical Engineering. Although her position in the department focuses more on business aspects than students, helping students has always been a priority: “The best part about working at NIU is when a student says ‘Thank you so much for helping me!’ That goes for faculty members also but students really think you saved them.” Kerwin lives in Rochelle and has three children and three step-children who have kept her busy for the last 24 years. Although her youngest is now 19 and she is not as yet “suffering” from empty-nest syndrome, she is looking for something to occupy her time other than her three-year old granddaughter. From all of us in foreign languages, thank you for taking the time to help us!

Congratulations also go out to our work-study student, Joy Rios, who graduated with a B.A. in Communications in December 2009. Joining the department are two new work-study “girls”: Tracy Hartley and Marissa Jambrone. Both are in their junior year at NIU but pursuing different interests. Since her own kindergarten days, Hartley wanted to be a kindergarten teacher and is majoring in early childhood studies in the College of Education. In addition to working with kids, she enjoys reading romance novels and baking treats such as cookies, brownies, and cupcakes. As a marketing major in the College of Business, Jambrone is interested in going into pharmaceutical sales after graduation. She is also an avid Harry Potter fan and loves to travel to tropical climates. Jambrone has already taken two cruises to the Caribbean and has a cruise to Mexico planned for this summer.

The main office has taken on a new look. After ten years of daily wear and tear, it was time to refresh Watson 111 by replacing carpet and repainting walls. So come on by to see how we’ve gone “green” and say “hello.”

Tracy Hartley, Renée Kerwin, and Marissa Jambrone
Bienvenue!
Department Welcomes New Faculty Member

For Robert Reichle, Assistant Professor of French, the love of languages started early on. In middle school he began to learn French and, when he progressed to high school, he studied Greek and Latin. Fascinated by the historical development of Latin into French, Reichle moved into the field of linguistics during his college years at Rice University, pursuing a double major in French and linguistics (with a specialization in cognitive science). He completed his Ph.D. in French linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin in December 2008 and joined the faculty in Foreign Languages and Literatures in August 2009.

Reichle’s interest in cognitive science and French has led him to pursue a series of behavioral and electrophysiological (ERP) studies on the ways in which speakers emphasize and de-emphasize parts of speech. His current research involves two projects. The first is a series of experiments designed to examine the differences in language processing between native speakers of French and learners of French as a second language. The second is a collaborative study with members of the NIU Center for the Study of Family Violence and Sexual Assault; this study looks at how language processing varies among groups with different risk levels for physical abuse.

In addition to his research, Reichle enjoys traveling around the world with his wife, Elizabeth. Most recently, they have visited Costa Rica, Tunisia, and Iceland. In June, they will embark upon a new adventure with the arrival of their first child. Félicitations!

Foreign Language Quiz

1. List two official languages of Latin America.
2. The three official languages of Belgium are…
3. This language has the greatest number of native speakers in the world.
4. This language has the greatest number of non-native speakers in the world.
5. What is the official language of Iran?

SOURCE: ACTFL: DISCOVERING LANGUAGES

Answers on page 10
We are pleased to announce that Jessamine Cooke-Plagwitz and Philippe Willems have both been granted tenure and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor.

As Associate Professor of Foreign Language Instructional Technology, Jessamine Cooke-Plagwitz is, in her words, “a great fan of all things related to cyber culture.” Indeed, she claims to love gadgets so much that if she had the money to pay for all of them, she would want to attach the devices to her person so as to take on a cyborg appearance. It should come as no surprise, then, that her research sends her into the virtual worlds of Active Worlds, Second Life, and There as she explores the impact these 3D-immersive environments have on foreign language learning and instruction. She has already published extensively in this area in journals such as British Journal of Educational Technology and Journal of Language Teaching Technologies. Currently, she is preparing several articles on the nature of social presence and role playing within Second Life as well as finishing up a book project that examines the effects—good and bad—that technological innovations have had in the language classroom. “Research into effective technology-enhanced foreign language instruction is of considerable value to educators,” she says, “and my goal is to assist language teachers and administrators in identifying effective (and feasible) pedagogical methods to meet the needs of their tech-savvy students.” Yet life for Cooke-Plagwitz is not always virtual, since she lives in DeKalb with her husband, twin daughters, two dogs, one cat, and a hermit crab.

“My learned how to read by myself with comics before starting school,” says Associate Professor of French Philippe Willems. “The ‘Franco-Belgian school’ of comics has a strong tradition of slipping entertainment spiked with culture to unsuspecting kids, and I was lucky enough that my young parents were into that.” This early passion for comics has led Willems to his present-day research on 19th-century French graphic narratives or sequential art. He has already published his work in highly respected interdisciplinary journals such as Mosaic and Word and Image as well as been invited to speak at the American Comparative Literature Association Conference at Harvard University last spring. Currently, he is writing an article on the French photographer Nadar, who was also a pioneer in comics in the 1840s. “I just love the exoticism of images and articles that were funny or educational to someone in, say, the 1830s, and require a different kind of cultural awareness to understand today.” Although collections of these kinds have increasingly been made available digitally, Willems still enjoys the touch and smell of pages that are almost 200 years old. When he is not studying comics, Willems spends time with his wife, who is Japanese, and friends. One of his favorite things to do is go camping in one of Utah’s national parks where he can sit on a flat rock miles away from civilization and take in the sunset.

The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.
Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen mainer Welt.
—Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1889-1951
Vale! ¡Adiós!  
Time to say good-bye!

As the school year comes to a close, we find ourselves saying good-bye to Antoinette Brazouski, Margaret Steward, and Irene Medina, three retirees who have taught in Foreign Languages and Literatures for a combined total of over 60 years.

Antoinette Brazouski began teaching at NIU in 1989. Over the years she has taught the very popular course in Classical Mythology as well as courses in elementary, intermediate, and graduate-level Latin and Ancient Greek. Brazouski holds a Ph.D. in Classics from Loyola University in Chicago. Originally she had planned to become a kindergarten teacher but once she began to study Latin, she was so intrigued by the language that she wanted to study it in depth and share her knowledge with others. She has always felt at home at NIU. She has really enjoyed sharing her knowledge of classical literature with the students and learning from them. Every semester, she says, students raise interesting questions about classical literature that she had never even considered. Now Brazouski is looking forward to spending more time with relatives and friends, reading novels, and trying out some of the many recipes that she has collected over the years.

In 1988, Margaret Steward began teaching Spanish at NIU. A native of Warsaw, Poland, Margaret’s first language is Polish. Being the daughter of a diplomat, she had to move often and adjust to new cultures, new schools, new friends and, yes, learn a new language every time her family relocated to a new country. In addition to living in Poland she also lived in the United States, and the Netherlands, where she studied French, learned Russian, Dutch, and English. Returning to Poland for graduate studies in Spanish at Warsaw University, she also studied some Latin, Portuguese, Basque, and Catalan. Steward says that she became a language teacher because she knew from personal experience what it takes to learn a foreign language—after all she was exposed to nine different languages. Her future plans include beginning a new career in the medical field as a certified medical recorder.

A Spanish instructor since 1986, Irene Medina first arrived at NIU in the 1960s, as an undergraduate. Initially, she had considered becoming a mathematics teacher but that changed after her first semester of studies when she rediscovered how much she loved the Spanish language and culture. Medina dates her first contact with Spanish back to the late 1950s, when she worked with migrant worker families and their children. She pursued her interest in languages in high school where she became extremely enthusiastic about learning Spanish because once again she was able to practice with members of migrant families. Later in life she had the opportunity to study, travel, and work in Mexico and Colombia as well as visit Venezuela and Costa Rica. Her experience of living in Spanish-speaking countries has enriched not only her but also her students with whom she has shared stories of her fascinating adventures. Upon retiring, Medina plans to spend time gardening as well as going to Arizona to prospect for gold.

To our dear colleagues, we give many thanks and best wishes for the future.
2008 Faculty Publications and Presentations

**Barbe, Katharina**

**Article:**

**Conference:**

**Book Review:**

**Bentley, John R.**

**Book:**

**Article:**

**Conference:**
“Sendai kuji hongi: imitator or facilitator.” *UCLA, Los Angeles, California, March.

**Early Japanese historiography.” University of Edmonton, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, September.

**Birberick, Anne**

**Edited Book:**

**Book Chapter:**

**Brain, Dennis**

**Conference:**

**Book Review:**

**Ciallella, Louise**

**Conference:**
“Metaphors of Photography as Literary Mask: The Martínez Sierra’s ‘Instantáneas articles (a snapshot).” *The Modernist Studies Association Tenth Annual Conference, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, November.

**Collins, James T.**

**Book Chapter:**


**Conference:**
“Sejarah, Diversitas dan Kompleksitas Bahasa Melayu di Indonesia Timur.” Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar, Indonesia, October.

“The Concept of the Malay World and ASEAN” *Goethe-Universitaet, Frankfurt, Germany, November.


**Cooke-Plagwitz, Jessamine**

**Article:**


**Conference:**
“Virtual Worlds and Language Teaching: Real Ideas for a Virtual Classroom.” Pre-Conference Workshop, CALICO with IALLT, Bridging CALL Communities, University of San Francisco, San Francisco, California, March.

“An Assessment Model for an Undergraduate Foreign Language Program.” *Chicago Language Symposium, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, April.

“Exploring the Use of 3-D Attributes for Online Problems Based Learning: An Application of the Community of Inquiry Model.” *AECT, Rays of Change, Orlando, Florida, November.

**Book Review:**

**Cozad, Mary Lee**

**Review Article:**
Hartmann, John
Book Chapter:

Morris, Michael
Article:

Kot, Joanna
Conference:

Book Chapter:
“The Two-norm Theory as an Emblem of Political Power and Historical Invention.” In Eighth International Conference on Late and Vulgar Latin. Ed. R. Wright. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 591-599.

Mazzola, Michael L.
Book Chapter:
“The Two-norm Theory as an Emblem of Political Power and Historical Invention.” In Eighth International Conference on Late and Vulgar Latin. Ed. R. Wright. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 591-599.

Merino, Eloy E.
Conference:
“Si yo fuera una hermosa princesa: la poesía de Juana Borrero y su truncada esfera de posibilidades.” XXVIIIth Congreso Cultural de Verano, Círculo de Cultura Panamericano, Miami, Florida, July.

Book Review:


Morris, Michael
Article:

Nissen, Christopher
Conference:

Book Review:

Rodriguez, Joshua
Book Chapter:

Conference:
“Eventive Nouns and Progressivized Stative Verbs in Spanish.” Linguistic Symposium on the Romance Languages, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, Illinois, April.

Saborío, Linda
Article:

Conference:


Solares-Larrave, Francisco J.
Conference:
“De influencias y originalidad en Rubén Darío.” IV Transatlantic Congress, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, April.

Tun, Saw
Article:

Vilaseca, Stephen Luis
Conference:
“It Hurts to Look at You: The Petrifying Store in Gabriela Bustelo’s Veo veo.” Midwest Modern Language Convention, Minneapolis, Minnesota, November.

Willems, Philippe
Article:

This spring semester, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures inaugurated its Annual Essay Contest as part of a series of special events that celebrated the 50th anniversary of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The purpose of the essay contest is to highlight the importance of foreign languages and literatures within a liberal arts education. The topic for this year was: “Learning a Foreign Language: Experience and Expectation.” French Language and Literature major, Bethany Brown, received the $250 first prize with an essay comparing learning a foreign language to climbing a ladder to the top of a popular water slide. The exhilaration that comes with having learned a foreign language is like the thrill one experiences going down the water slide. The second prize of $150 went to Lucas Schuneman who graduated this May with a minor in Japanese. His essay focused on the different experiences he had learning Mandarin while teaching English in China and learning Japanese in a NIU classroom. The winners of the essay contest, as well as all the participants, were recognized at the department awards ceremony held in March.

Promoting foreign languages is also the goal of two new fellowships sponsored by Interpro Translations Solutions, Inc.: the Foreign Language M.A. Support Scholarship Fund and the Foreign Language Residence Program (FLRP) Study Abroad Fund. CEO of Interpro Translation Solutions, Ralph Strozza (B.S. French, B.S. Marketing, 1981), created the fellowships to offer financial assistance to students with exceptional language skills. One M.A. fellowship is available each year to either a new or continuing student in the French and Spanish Master’s degree program. Recipients of the fellowship are selected by members of the M.A. Graduate Admissions Committee. The Study Abroad Fellowship is open to students who have actively participated in FLRP for at least one year. “My NIU education—and especially my semester in France and my experiences in FLRP—really influenced me in my career choice,” says Strozza. While a student, Strozza knew of several fellow language majors who did not have the financial means to participate in a study abroad program. “I felt that was a real pity because my semester in France was the single most rewarding experience I had during my college years.” Now, thanks to this new fellowship which is designed to assist with travel expenses, FLRPies have the opportunity to benefit from living and studying in-country.
German Students Receive Prestigious Fulbright Awards

Three students from the German Division have won Fulbright Fellowships. Melissa Shalter and Brandi Smith will become Fulbright fellows for the academic year 2010-2011 and Lauren Hansen is returning from her Fulbright stay in Germany last year. The highly competitive Fulbright U.S. Student Program offers graduating college seniors the opportunity to work and study abroad for one academic year.

Melissa Shalter, who is fluent in German, recently completed teacher certification in German. She has always loved Austria and was hoping to go back there one day for a longer stay, so she decided to apply for a teaching assistantship through USTA (Fulbright in Austria). She was awarded one of the 100 teaching assistantships and will spend the coming school year at the largest technical school in Europe, the Höhere Technische Lehranstalt Mödling in Mödling, Austria. Mödling is a suburb of Vienna. There she will be teaching English conversation. Shalter is thrilled to have the chance to live in Austria for longer than the typical study abroad period. As she explains: “I’m excited for the chance to experience everyday life in Austria—not as simply a student or tourist. When I return to the U.S., I plan to teach German at a high school, and this teaching assistantship will give me not only more experience teaching but also a better grasp of the Austrian people and culture and the German language. I’m hoping also to get an updated perspective on ‘teenage’ culture in Austria and Germany. Vienna is one of those cities that I never got the chance to spend much time in, so I’m definitely planning on getting to know the city better.” She chose Austria because she has already studied in Salzburg. She intends to perfect her knowledge of German (and Austrian) while there and to travel around Austria and other European countries.

Brandi Smith, a double-major in Spanish and German, also will be in Vienna. Smith is one of about twelve recipients of a “combined” award. She will be holding a teaching assistantship at an Austrian secondary school and will be a part-time student at the Universität Wien. She intends to study and teach English there part-time while completing her own language and policy related research. She got her first immersion experience in our Foreign Language Residence Program (FLRP), which, as she says, “was great preparation for studying abroad. I learned to make mistakes and laugh them off.” After her FLRP experience, Smith spent two years abroad, one in the Dominican Republic and one in Lüneburg, Germany. During her Fulbright year, she will work on a research project tentatively titled “The Role of Language in Public Policy,” in which she intends to study how Austrian educators approach the teaching of foreign languages and intercultural competence in their classrooms as well as how their instruction prepares Austrian students for the realities of 21st century competitiveness. Although Smith is excited about the opportunity to study and work in Austria, she is a bit nervous about being a teacher’s assistant; however, she believes her role is about more than helping someone with language skills. “I will also be a cultural ambassador.” But for the moment, she is busy trying to find a place to live in Vienna.

We are welcoming home Lauren Hansen, a recent German graduate and former FLRPie, who completed her Fulbright year in Germany where she taught English at the Sebastian Münster Gymnasium in Ingelheim. Her teaching duties during the year were varied. She taught a conversation class for students between the ages of 15 and 17 as well as assisted other faculty with their courses by preparing activities to use with the students. In addition, she taught a course designed to prepare students for the English portion of the Abitur, which is the German exam for students who would like to enter the university. Reflecting on her experience, Hansen says: “Teaching the English language was a secondary goal to me. What I took more seriously was my effort to represent the U.S. in a positive way and dispel any misconceptions or stereotypes while doing so. It has been extremely rewarding to teach students about my culture and to learn about theirs in the process.” Having become passionate about German language and culture, she is sad to leave all her new friends behind. In the fall, Hansen will begin a new chapter in her life as she begins her graduate studies in German at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. We wish her well.

Katharina Barbe
Associate Professor of German
Student News

Forward Together Forward Scholarships Awarded to Two Foreign Language Students

Deanna Bach and Brittany Sheldon, two students in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, were among the recipients of the Forward Together Forward Scholarships awarded in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Created through the generosity of over 1,600 donors, the scholarship honors the memory of the five NIU students—Gayle Dubowski, Catalina Garcia, Julianna Gehant, Ryanne Mace, and Daniel Parmenter—whose lives were lost in the tragic February 14 Cole Hall shooting. The endowment fund allows for up to five scholarships of $4,000 to be awarded annually to continuing undergraduate students who demonstrate strength of character, academic excellence, and a commitment to service.

A 2009 recipient of the award, Deanna Bach graduated this spring with a B.A. in Spanish Language and Literature and teacher certification. During her time at NIU, she was a peer advisor for the Honors Program and worked for three semesters as a community advisor in the residence halls. Bach has served as an after-school tutor for Conexión Comunidad, volunteered for the American Red Cross and NIU Cares Day as well as worked at the Wheaton Park District’s Safety City Preschool for six years. A self-taught musician and song writer, Bach composed a very moving song about the February 14, 2008, tragedy which was featured on national news. The song is also available on YouTube.

For Brittany Sheldon, receiving one of the 2010 awards had special significance, since she was a close friend of Ryanne Mace. The two were not only classmates but had also worked together at a DeKalb department store. Sheldon is a double major in Spanish Language and Literature and Elementary Education. She has been active with Rotaract, a collegiate branch of the Rotary Club, and with the Lutheran Campus Ministries. Her involvement with LCM has included a mission trip to Guatemala where she helped build a school. It is her hope to teach there one day. Sheldon says that she “will strive to keep alive the feeling of unity and service that was prevalent on campus in the aftermath of the shootings.”

To know another language is to have a second soul.
Savoir une autre langue, c’est avoir une deuxième âme.
—Charlemagne 742-814

Answers to Foreign Language Quiz

1. Spanish, Portuguese, French, Guaraní, Quechua, and Aymara
2. Dutch, French, German
3. Chinese
4. English
5. Farsi (Persian)

SOURCE: ACTFL: DISCOVERING LANGUAGES
Student Awards, Honors and Accomplishments

The accomplishments of foreign language students have taken them all over the world. Spanish M.A. student, Linda Schumacher, received a second Graduate Student Research Grant to continue her research in Ecuador on the variety of Quichua loan words in Quiñeño-inflected Spanish. Spanish major Chelsey Newcomb traveled to Costa Rica last summer on a USOAR grant to study legal and cultural perspectives on immigration. During her stay, she interviewed professors in the field, judges, an attorney, and foreign-born permanent residents. Germany was the destination for three German majors pursuing teacher certification. Melissa Shalter, Trisha Wagner, and Carolyn Scheele all participated in a four-week teaching seminar in Leipzig from June 13 to July 11, 2009. Only 20 students were chosen from across the U.S. to participate in the seminar, which focused on the theoretical basics of acquiring competence in communication. Sprinter Kaylee Walters, who is majoring in Biology and French, went to Saint Louis, Senegal, last summer where she helped train and teach underprivileged children. During her two-month stay, she not only enjoyed working with the kids but also immersing herself in francophone culture.

Back in Illinois, students have also received awards. Congratulations go out to Bradley Broughton, a triple major in Spanish, Geography, and Political Science, who was first alternate for the prestigious Lincoln Academy Student Laureate Award. Congratulations also go to Spanish majors Bryant Cobb and Amanda Wills, who are the 2010 recipients of the Exemplary Student Teacher Award.

J. Suhadolc Scholarship:
Kristen Roenfanz (Spanish)

Lillian Cobb Scholarship:
Deanna Bach (Spanish)
Mallory Maier (Spanish)
Jacqueline Rossbach (Spanish)
Benjamin J. Tatham (Spanish)
Amanda Wills (Spanish)

2009 Outstanding Women Student Awards:
Dina Baker (Spanish)
Jessica Cozza-Benedik (Spanish)
Heidi Collander (Spanish)
Leah Gilmour (Japanese)
Stevie Munz (German)
Carolyn Scheele (German)
Kerri Simons (Spanish)

Dean’s Award (Given to a graduating student who has achieved at least a 3.0 G.P.A.):
Michael Ferker (Russian)
Lisa Lemaire (French)
Kathrina Rainault (German)
Kerri Simons (Spanish)

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.):
Lauren Hansen (German)
Lisa Lemaire (French)
Stevie Munz (German)
Andrei Rosulescu (German)
Herveline Sartori (French)
Kerri Simons (Spanish)
Michelle Zasada (German)

Degrees with Distinction:
Summa Cum Laude:
Nyssa Bulkes (German)
Lisa Lemaire (French)
Herveline Sartori (French)
Kerri Simons (Spanish)

Magna Cum Laude:
David Duma (Spanish)
Stevie Munz (German)
Carolyn Scheele (German)

Cum Laude:
Carlos Castro (Spanish)
Michael Ferker (Russian)
Kelly Manis (Spanish)
Rachel Wilschke (Spanish)

Phi Sigma Iota: International Foreign Language Honor Society
On Friday, February 19, 2010, five members were inducted into the honor society at a ceremony held in The Chandelier Room. Associate Professor of Spanish Louise Ciallella, who is the faculty advisor, presided over the evening’s events, which were attended by family members and friends of the inductees, faculty members from the department, and returning Phi Sigma Iota alumni. The new initiates are:
Jessica Camargo (Spanish)
Brandi Smith (Spanish and German)
Monica Tapia (Spanish)
Benjamin Tatham (Spanish)
Daniel Tito (Spanish)

Sigma Delta Pi: Spanish Honor Society
In 2009 and 2010, a total of eighteen new members were inducted into the Spanish Honor Society. We would like to thank Rajiv Rao for having served as the faculty advisor in 2009 before leaving NIU. Taking over these duties is Associate Professor of Spanish Eloy Merino who presided over the 2010 induction ceremony on Friday, April 2.

Christine Anderson
Deanna Bach
Carlos Castro
Jessica Cozza
Sandra Diaz
Leticia Durán
Evelyn Galindo-Doucette
Tina Hartman
J. Anthony Howard
Megan Johnson
Meghan Kelly
Kelly Lyell
J.G. Matekaitis
Chelsey Newcomb
Brandi Smith
Benjamin Tatham
Jenna Tisoncik
Amanda Wills

Provost Ray Alden and Kerri Simons at Outstanding Women Student Ceremony
Greetings again from the Foreign Language Residence Program (FLRP)! The 2009-2010 academic year has been a good one. We welcomed several new native speakers this year. In addition to our returning natives, Jean-Philippe Schmitt (France), Stefan Groebel (Germany), Yasunori Kano (Japan), and Jessica Ibares (Mexico-USA), we were very pleased to welcome Tabitha Ilboudo (Burkina Faso/French), José Badillo (Mexico/USA), and Yan Zheng (China-USA). With thirty-eight participants, the total for our program, including native speakers, rose to forty-six. This was an increase of four students from the previous year.

Our kickoff event this year, held in conjunction with the Partners in International Education (P.I.E.) and International House, was the Mystic Blue Architectural Lake Michigan Cruise. Under a flawless, September afternoon sky, we sailed the Chicago lakefront while a docent explained the history of Chicago’s world-famous skyline. Following our excursion on Lake Michigan, fifty-two students from both FLRP and I-House, dressed to the nines, boarded the NIU express for the Lyric Opera of Chicago for Giuseppe Verdi’s Ernani, a nineteenth-century opera about court intrigue and star-crossed love.

During NIU’s International Week, November 16-20, the Foreign Language Residence Program, in association with International House, presented its annual Global Market Exchange exposition in the Southeast Conference Room of Neptune Northeast. With student designed panel boards representing thirty-nine different countries, the Global Market Exchange exposition has grown significantly, and showcases different cultures.

In the fall of 2008, I-House and FLRP were pleased to welcome Tatiana Kaledina from Kaluga, Russia, as a Fulbright Teaching Assistant. Since joining us, she has matriculated into the Master’s degree program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language offered through the English Department. She expects to graduate in December 2010.

Speaking of graduation, we are at once happy and sad. Leaving us this year to begin a new chapter in his life is Jean-Philippe Schmitt who finished his M.A. in French. Jean-Philippe has been with us for three years. Also saying good-bye to us after two years as head Japanese native is Yasunori Kano, who is getting his degree in Business Administration. He will be returning to Japan before launching his career in the U.S. Tabitha Ilboudo (Communications), and Yani Zhang (Business Administration), both of whom have been native speakers for one year, will also don their caps and gowns at the end of spring semester to receive their well-deserved degrees. They will all be greatly missed, and their names will be forever etched on the FLRP roster of native speakers. Thank you and good luck! We will miss you!

We are looking to begin the academic year in August with new faces and renewed commitment. We hope that you will join us at our daily dinners in the C/D cafeteria Monday through Thursday. It is an opportunity to relax with the students in a congenial atmosphere and enjoy some good food. Please come join us.

Gregory T. Ross Coordinator of FLRP and International House
Destination: Italy

Italy consistently ranks as the most popular destination for Americans, yet very few people in this country learn to say much more than “ciao” and “grazie” before making the trip. There are sixty million people in Italy who wish to know more about our country, and even though millions of American tourists go there every year, the language barrier inhibits the meeting of the two cultures. The tourist experience can only become so much richer when it includes knowledge of the language. This is a situation that the Italian faculty at NIU, Christopher Nissen, Mirta Pagnucci, and Maddalena Ham are working to change.

Italian is a romance language, closely related to the other romance languages taught at NIU (Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Latin). Since about half of English vocabulary derives from romance languages, Italian is not hard for Anglophones to learn. However, a certain amount of body language, including shrugs, wry expressions, and peculiar hand gestures might be required for the subtleties of communication.

The Italian program, which includes a minor, has been growing in recent years. Between seventy-five and a hundred students are enrolled in Italian in a given semester, and at present there are sixteen declared minors. The Italian minor provides an essential supplement to such major programs as literature, history, art history, and music. It is also often a choice of students who study fashion, or business majors who want to work abroad.

The faculty members who teach the courses hope to inspire students to love and admire the Italian language and culture as much as they do. Nissen has a Ph.D. in Italian literature form the University of California at Berkeley, and specializes in the literature of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Pagnucci has a Ph.D. in Italian literature from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and has also taught French and Spanish at NIU. Ham, a native of Rome and Cortona, has an M.A. in French from NIU.

Tuscan landscapes, Romanesque cathedrals, Dante’s Comedy, opera, fettuccine, fine wines, pesto, and pizza—Italy has so much to offer. The key to knowing it thoroughly begins with the study of language. The Italian program invites you to lose yourself in pleasures of both the mind and the senses, by exploring one of the world’s richest and most fascinating cultural experiences.

Christopher Nissen
Associate Professor of Italian

Maddalena Ham, Christopher Nissen, and Mirta Pagnucci
The year 2009 marks the 50th anniversary of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. To celebrate this golden occasion, the College sponsored a series of events throughout the school year. The first of these was a gala dinner held in September that honored 50 Golden Anniversary Alumni Award winners. For each of the five decades the College has been in existence, the accomplishments of ten alumni were recognized. The final event was a luncheon held in April to honor 10 faculty and staff members for the outstanding contributions they made to a liberal arts education. Among the select honorees were two foreign language alumni, Ralph Strozza and Ninja Maria Nagel, and the past chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, D. Raymond Tourville.

Ralph Strozza (B.S. French 1981; B.S. Marketing, 1981) credits his NIU education—and especially his experience in the Foreign Language Residence Program (FLRP)—as greatly influencing his career choice and giving him the tools to pursue his goals. As founder and CEO of Interpro Translation Solutions, Strozza brings together his love of languages, his skills in business, and his interest in things international every single day. He has also played an integral role in assisting the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures for well over a decade. His donation of Trados translation software to the Multimedia Learning Center has provided students with an unparalleled opportunity to train on a system used by professional companies. He has also sponsored internships for students as well as participating regularly in the department’s career day events. Strozza has created a positive experience for our students through his very personal commitment of time, talent, and resources.

As head native speaker in German and an enthusiastic participant of FLRP, Ninja Nagel received her B.A. in German and Teacher Certification in 2003. Upon graduating, she accepted a position at Buffalo Grove High School and then at Prairie Ridge High School in Crystal Lake where she received tenure and will become, next year, the head of the foreign language department. A “born teacher,” Nagel’s outstanding teaching has not only been recognized at Prairie Ridge, where she single-handedly increased German enrollments by three sections, but also by colleagues in regional and national professional organizations. She is the youngest member of the Goethe-Institute Trainer Network Midwest, a group of accomplished teachers who offer workshops. Last summer, she taught a week-long immersion workshop in Casper, Wyoming entitled “Don’t Be Afraid to Use Technology in Your German Class.” Nagel keeps her NIU connections strong by attending FLRP special dinners and participating in bi-annual Taft Retreats.

D. Raymond Tourville was among ten faculty and staff members to be honored for their contributions to NIU and the College. He had been a member of the NIU community for 42 years when he passed away suddenly in 2004, just months before his planned retirement. Tourville was an innovator. In 1972, he founded the Foreign Language Residence Program (FLRP), which provides students with a foreign language immersion experience while they live in one of the residence halls. This program was the first of its kind in the nation and today, 38 years later, it is going strong with over 50 students participating in five languages: Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish. Tourville also understood the important role technology could play in language learning. He realized his dream of creating a state-of-the-art Multimedia Learning Center when the LC opened its doors in 1998. Tourville is remembered, with appreciation, for his passion for foreign languages and his commitment to the principles of a liberal arts education.
Globe Trotting: FL&L Study Abroad Reunion

For foreign language students, the world is their oyster. On October 9, 2010, over 40 current and past students of foreign languages discovered just how true this statement is when they attended the department’s first Study Abroad Reunion. In addition to participating in the two study abroad programs directed by NIU faculty—one in Costa Rica and one in Spain—our students have traveled to over two-dozen different countries on six different continents (including Antarctica).

At the reception, fellow globe trotters had the opportunity to reminisce about their travels while nibbling on appetizers and sipping wine. They also were able to reconnect with faculty members Pablo Virumbrales, Linda Saborio, Michael Morris, and Francisco Solares-Larrarve, all of whom have directed over the years the two Spanish study abroad programs. French M.A. alumnus, Marianne Zemil, spoke to the group about her own experiences, first in France and, then later, in Germany, and the ways in which studying and living abroad had changed her outlook on life. Also present at the festivities was Anne Seitzinger, Coordinator of the NIU Study Abroad Office, who has helped students realize their dreams of living abroad.

The department intends to hold Study Abroad Reunions every few years. Until then, we wish all of you a “Bon Voyage”!

Alumni Class Notes

Thanks to all of you who update us on your activities. Please continue to keep us informed. Here is what some of you told us.

Janet (Bollman) Blees (B.A. 1966) currently lives in Miliani, Hawaii, where both she and her husband own and operate the Blees Piano Service.

Ella M. (Desbles) Campos (B.A. 1984) currently lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she teaches Spanish. She and her husband have three boys. Nicolas, 21, is attending Ohio State University in the engineering program; Phillip, 18, is at the University of Cincinnati in the aeronautical program; and Corey, 17, is a junior in high school.

Leonce (Kepner) Carlson (French, 1974) is currently retired and living with her husband, Gordon (a NIU graduate himself), in Rochelle. For many years she taught French at DeKalb High School and occasionally at NIU.

Carrie Fischer (B.A. 1990) is currently Director of Localization at Oracle Corporation. After graduating with her degree in French Business and Translation, she took a job at Transparent Language, Inc. in New Hampshire, moving later on to Hyperion Solutions, which was acquired by Oracle.

Jaime L. Henrey (B.A. 2006) is working as a unit clerk and translator at Rosecrance, a substance abuse facility for adolescents. She is considering returning to school to pursue a M.A. in International Relations.

Asha Kansal (B.A. 2009) was accepted into the teaching assistantship program sponsored by the French Ministry of Education. She has spent the past year teaching English to French high school students in Nancy.

Luke Lorenc (B.A. 2008) accepted a position to teach English in a Chinese university. He left in February for the city of Qingdao and will be there for almost a year.

Dmitri Peskov (B.A. 1996, M.A. 1999) is a Chicago-based choreographer whose work has been presented throughout the United States and Russia. In 2008 he was awarded the Illinois Arts Choreography Fellowship. His next concert, “Of Fleeting Things,” will be presented in Chicago in June.

David F. Phelan (B.A. 1953) retired from Carlsbad, New Mexico, Municipal Schools in 1992, where he worked as the band and choral director. He has taken “three musical” tours to Europe, cruised the Caribbean, and visited Alaska. Now he volunteers at the local hospital and library.

Roberto Terrasi (M.A. 2009) is currently teaching French to high school students in the American Virgin Islands. The move allows him to reconnect with friends and family, since he had been going to the Virgin Islands since he was a child.

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.
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 kbarbe@niu.edu.

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