Note from the Chair

The fall semester never fails to bring new energy and life to campus and to the Department of Language and Cultural Studies. This year has been no exception as we’ve ushered in new courses, welcomed back returning study abroad students while sending off others, and celebrated our second annual World Languages Day focusing on the timely theme of “Breaking Barriers with Language.”

In this issue, I hope you’ll enjoy reading about some of our recent events, including the ever-popular Japan Night, the French play from Compagnie Caravague, and many more. You’ll be inspired by the numerous accomplishments of our students, alumni, and faculty.

With best wishes,
Sandy

Second Annual World Languages Day

On October 4th, 2019, more than 350 high school students of foreign language and culture and their teachers visited campus for the second annual World Languages Day, a celebration of foreign languages and those who study them. They were greeted by more than one hundred student volunteers, who helped to guide the visitors through contests, games, and multi-media competitions in the target languages of Spanish, French, and German. In addition the high schoolers could try their hands at ASL and Japanese, and even learn some K-pop dance moves. Tarun Narayan of Marquette High School described the event as “a good test of our abilities. We have been talking the entire time with the teachers and students in French.” It was a great opportunity for the students to showcase their skills, get outside recognition for their accomplishments, and get to know what UMSL has to offer in foreign languages and beyond. This year’s event drew more than 500 people, including high school students, UMSL language student volunteers, and LCS faculty and staff.
French Play
Thanks to the generous support of Provost and Interim Chancellor Kristin Sobolik, the Société Française de St. Louis, and other organizations from the St. Louis area, UMSL welcomed the Compagnie Caravague from Paris during its yearly American tour. Playwright and actor André Nerman and dancer Nicola Ayoub interpreted Albert Camus’s La Chute (The Fall). This year, 76 people were able to witness an outstanding performance that heightened the emotional nature of Camus’s thought-provoking monologue.

Apple Picking with Lingua and EAP Students
International and local students enjoyed picking apples and eating frozen custard at Eckert’s in Belleville, Illinois.

Japanese Heritage Month
The Hispanic Latino Association at UMSL (HISLA), in collaboration with LCS, celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with various events, such as Café con Leche gatherings, Food Tastings, and a Salsa Night.

Programs and Events
A wonderful group of 11 students participated in this year’s Strasbourg French Language Program. During their three week-stay, students completed coursework at the Institut Stralang, enjoyed local cuisine, and toured major sites of interest. New additions to the program included a moving visit to the European Center for Deported Resistance Members at the former Natzweiler Concentration Camp in Struthof and a cooking class at the home of local chef and author Leïla Martin. For the first time, the program welcomed students who were satisfying the last three credits of their language requirement before advancing towards their minor or major as well as language teachers whose final project was an IPA based on their experience in Strasbourg.
It is with a very heavy heart that we are sharing the terribly sad news that our dear former colleague, Natasha César-Suárez, passed away in her home in Alicante, Spain, surrounded by the love of her family. After several years of experience teaching in Cuba, Spain, Portugal, and the United States, Natasha taught in the Department of Language and Cultural Studies from 2017-2018 with interest in offering courses related to her research, such as the travel literature in the Hispanic Caribbean and US Latina/o literature and culture. Natasha will be deeply missed.

Assistant Teaching Professor of Spanish, Tim Albeln, welcomed baby Mateo, who was born on April 17th, 2019. He is doing great and already learning to fight with his big sisters Camila and Maya. Congratulations to Tim and his growing family!

Assistent Teaching Professor of Spanish, John Trevathan, gave a presentation at the University of Missouri Research Summit, “Road to Resilience – Disaster to Social and Environmental Resilience Summit.” The summit showcased interdisciplinary efforts from all four UM System universities, focused on disaster preparation and recovery. Prof. Trevathan’s talk was focused on the connections between mass extinction and language death as well as the rich history of human interactions with the biosphere.

Assistant Teaching Professor of French, Violaine White, presented UMSL’s French curriculum development efforts at the Foreign Language Association of Missouri Conference held on October in St. Charles, Missouri. Her presentation was part of a panel entitled “The State of Teaching French in Missouri: Challenges and Opportunities” which was organized in collaboration with colleagues from the Greater St. Louis Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French.

Assistant Teaching Professor of Spanish, Maria (Marité) Balogh’s short story “Keeping the Promise” has been chosen for publication in the 2019 issue of The Central Dissent, a literary and academic journal of the Women’s Research Center & LGBTQ+ Student Center of the University of Central Oklahoma. The journal is currently being printed and Balogh will receive her complimentary copy at the conference in October. Another of her works, Ode to the N, drew the interests of LatinX Artist Network of St. Louis, who requested a reading of the poem at an August event, as well as alumna and Ph.D. student, Angela Blash, who plans to incorporate it into a presentation.

Teaching Professor of EAP Denise Mussman earned her EdD in Global Education and Leadership in May. Her dissertation was The Process of Oral Academic Discourse Socialization and Workplace Enculturation of International Graduate Students of Business, a study of how a group of IMBA students from China and Taiwan developed oral communication skills needed for U.S. graduate classes and for working in St. Louis at area internships. In July, she was awarded a grant to participate in the UMSAEP faculty exchange to teach at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa. There, she instructed a course in academic English skills for bilingual students to increase retention. She collaborated on a chapter about the findings from the course, published in Beyond Language Learning Instruction: Transformative Supports for Emergent Bilinguals and Educators, edited by Dr. Alina Slapac, Professor of Education at UMSL, and Dr. Sarah Coppersmith of Lindenwood University.

In Memoriam

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Dept. of Languages and Cultural Studies (Spanish) alumna, Angela Blash, recently started a Ph.D in Hispanic Studies at the University of Georgia’s Department of Romance Languages where she teaches Spanish language classes. Her research aims to uncover the marginalized voices of Latin America and restore them through academic scholarship and in-class instruction. Angela recently worked with the Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos to edit the forthcoming special edition “Con el lápiz en la mano: representación de la mujer en el cómic en español.” Her article with Dr. Kelly Lovejoy “On the Path to Intercultural Transformation: Experiential Learning Outcomes in Learners of Spanish as a Second Language” is also forthcoming this Fall along with three translated articles.

In summer 2019, 27 students from Chuo University in Tokyo attended a three-week long intensive English program at UMSL. The students were tasked with making a business plan for their unique company ideas. With the help of their resilient professors, hardworking RAs, and “genki” TAs (all from the LCS Department), these students were able to experience all St. Louis has to offer while also gaining experience drafting a real proposal. This program featured visits to local companies such as Vinyl Images and guest speakers from Nidec Motor Corporation as well as trips to local landmarks like the St. Louis Arch and the Zoo!

Congratulations to our recent scholarship recipients!

BOND INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS AWARD: Molly Motes (Japanese)
BRIDGING SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDY ABROAD IN JAPAN: Molly Motes (Japanese)
MEEHAN SCHOLARSHIP:
Danielle Bischoff (Japanese), Eric Eggers (Japanese), Seth Hamra (Japanese), Kay Hood (French, Japanese), Amy Seidel (Japanese)

GERMAN
Seth Huntington

DUAL LANGUAGE
Deborah Garcia
Abby Naumann

FRENCH
Jesse Louis
Kayla McAllister
Jean Petty
Sabrina Romine

JAPANESE
Megan Goodman
Seth Huntington
Cameron Jensen
Kaitlin Johnson

SPANISH
Nicole Culbertson
Joshua Hammon
Adrien Jones
Kay McDaniel

Amanda Ottenger
Natalia Valero
Rodney Whitney

Spring 2019 Graduates

GERMAN
Seth Huntington

DUAL LANGUAGE
Deborah Garcia
Abby Naumann

FRENCH
Jesse Louis
Kayla McAllister
Jean Petty
Sabrina Romine

JAPANESE
Megan Goodman
Seth Huntington
Cameron Jensen
Kaitlin Johnson

SPANISH
Nicole Culbertson
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Adrien Jones
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Natalia Valero
Rodney Whitney

Featured Spring 2020 Courses

INQUIRIES IN THE HUMANITIES: GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE (FL 2311) explores issues of gender and sexuality depicted in art, film, literature, gender rights, articles, social spaces, and especially, language. Emphasis on the Hispanic world, but other languages and cultures will be viewed as well.

L’ART DE LA GUERRE (FRENCH 4311/5311) examines various texts by male and female writers created on the front and at home on topics such as the relationships between nationalism and art, literary commitment, masculinity and heroism, conventional and unconventional warfare, colonial and postcolonial subjectivity, personal and national memory, and the ethics of war.

CULTURE OF REFUGE IN SPAIN AND LATIN AMERICA (SPANISH 4311/5311) This course focuses on literary and cultural representations of both refugees and fugitives in order to reconsider the concept of the refuge in regards to the current trends of planetary migration. We will examine letters, poetry, essays, short stories, podcasts and interviews from a variety of contexts in both Spain and Latin

We would love to hear from Alumni!

Please send us your career updates, recent accomplishments, and any other news you want to share. We are working on the “Alumni News” section for our Spring 2020 newsletter.