DEAR FRIENDS OF WORLD LANGUAGES!

Ah, fall and its promise of new beginnings. In that spirit, we welcome two new department babies, little Nadya and even littler Maya, both honorary members of our Russian section. I am also delighted to introduce an alumni of our M.A. in Japanese program, Jessica Kindefer, who has enthusiastically and capably assumed the responsibility of writing the newsletter you have in front of you. I think she pulled it off with aplomb, don’t you?

Of course, this means we must say “goodbye” to Diane Hofland who tirelessly interviewed faculty, photographed people and events, and wrote, redacted and printed the past several issues of Polyglot. Diane was the consummate professional, and I thank her for our years of successful collaboration. Diane, we wish you many happy journeys to come.

For those of you who prefer numbers to babies, here are some facts. Spanish remains the department's most popular major and minor. The second most frequently declared major: Japanese, with French close behind. As for minors, Arabic is next in line after Spanish which boasts the highest registration numbers of any language. However, enrollments in American Sign Language (ASL) are up over 50% from last fall which makes it the fastest growing language in the department. We are so pleased to have hired our first full-time faculty member in ASL, Dr. Jonah Ewekwe, to oversee this important and burgeoning program.

I invite you to consider these facts in light of your experiences with language learning at PSU. Please remember to keep in touch and enjoy your new beginnings!

Jennifer R. Pelham

Visiting professors enjoy the sites at Vista House on the Columbia River. Pictured, left to right: Professor Jaishanti Dimri from India, Professor Olga Revere from Sweden, Professor Alexander Kochetkov from Russia, Professor Werner Schade from Germany, and Professor Xiangdong Chen from China.

PSU’s INTERNATIONAL VISITING PROFESSOR PROGRAM:
Bringing the World to PSU and the Portland Community

FOR TWENTY YEARS Portland State’s International Visiting Professor (IVP) program has welcomed educators from around the globe to teach and lecture here at Portland State University. Serving not only the Department of World Languages and Literatures, the IVP program has also brought visiting educators to many parts of campus, including the School of Business, the Departments of Engineering and Economics, Science, and the University Honors Program. Visiting professors come at the invitation of the various academic departments and form lasting connections between PSU and their home universities worldwide.

In recent years, a number of international scholars have offered courses in World Languages and Literatures. The Russian and French sections of the department in particular have seen repeated visits from international faculty. In 2011, IVP hosted Russian Professor Natalya Grickaya, who taught contemporary Russian culture, and French Professor Marie-Francoise Sanconnet, who taught a course on contemporary French literature. The following year, visiting Professor Vladimir Tikhonov offered a course on Russian America from 1733 to 1867, while Professor Francine Tolentino taught a course on the history of French fashion.

This past summer, IVP again hosted scholars from France and Russia, as well as a professor from India. Other departments welcomed professors from China, Germany, and Ukraine. Each professor developed courses that challenged students to study their disciplines from an international perspective.

In 2013, this year’s visiting French professor, Émilie Bonnet, gave a four-week course on the image of the French woman, focusing on the role women have played throughout French history. Professor Bonnet is part of an annual exchange with the University of Arènes which has continued for more than twenty years. The visiting professor from India, Jaishanti Dimri taught a course on Bollywood cinema and Indian fiction. Her students, she says, were a “lovely group,” and their class discussions comparing Indian and American cinema piqued her own interest in Hollywood films.

Professor Alexander Kochetkov taught two courses in Russian from June to August and was very impressed by his students. Kochetkov says: “Professor Sandra Fick and her team are doing a great job at PSU. Their students speak very good Russian, and they are motivated. I am sure they will continue working for the benefit of America and Russia.” He is proud to report that two of his PSU students have been selected for internships for the upcoming Olympics in Sochi.

However, it is not only PSU students who benefit from the IVP program. The “Visit the World at Home” lecture series lasts the summer and is free and open to the public.

DEPARTMENT OF WORLD LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

JENNIFER R. PELHAM

Join our alumni listserve at http://pdx-alumni.org
Click on “Alumni” and follow the prompts.
Tell us about your continued connections with language learning, and consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Department of World Languages and Literatures.

Dynamic • Nurturing • Kaleidoscopic • Multi-Cultural
Inclusive • Stimulating • Collegial • Professional
Diverse • Accommodating
Friendly • Alternative
Multi-Lingual • Engaged
Committed • Caring
Eye-Opening
Ground-Breaking
International • Collaborative • Research-Based • Success-Oriented
Experimental • Evolving • Green • Hands-On • Inspiring • Fun

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Fall 2013 Newsletter
www.pdx.edu/wll/
TEACHING CULTURE ACROSS THE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM:
Different Approaches to Culture and Civilization
Enliven Language Learning

As anyone who has studied another language knows, speaking it involves more than simply memorizing vocabulary and conjugations. Studying the cultures behind a language is crucial to mastering its nuances and to interacting with native speakers.

AT PSU, students are given the chance to do just this in the Culture and Civilization course offered across the curriculum. While some are taught in English, others are taught in the target language. Just as each culture differs, each instructor has developed a unique approach that gives students a look into the cultures of the countries whose languages many of them are also studying.

Anousha Sedighi, Associate Professor of Persian, seeks to give students a broad overview of Iran’s history through her Persian Culture and Civilization course. Her curriculum incorporates information on everything from Iran’s ancient history to its traditional festivals and cuisine. To give the students a chance to personally interact with the culture, Sedighi takes them to a Persian art store and invites a musician to class to demonstrate traditional instruments. In the popular Russian Culture and Civilization course, Sandra Firelos, Professor of Russian, includes as many visual and aural materials as possible to “give a sense of what it feels like to walk around and be part of the culture, to be a person who cared about what they saw and heard.” In Russia’s various historical periods, Firelos has developed detailed lectures for her popular course that take the place of a textbook. Likewise, in Professor Dr-Lyss Ortland’s Spanish Culture and Civilization course, students read extracts from many different sources to explore the Spanish Middle Ages, an era when Christians, Arabs, and Jews coexisted peacefully. Ortland uses these different texts to give her students a chance to experience history from the perspective of each of these groups.

This year, for the first time, Tim Nidever, Instructor of Latin, is offering a course on Roman Culture and Civilization. “Because the shadow of Rome has loomed so large, it really illuminates aspects of our own lives,” Nidever said.

PSU’s International Visiting Professor Program continued from page 1.

to the public. Organized by David Brands, International Scholar and Faculty Advisor, this series features PSU’s international scholars who speak on topics ranging from Indian art to Chinese economic development. While these lectures are usually held on campus, the IPV program occasions an event at one of Portland’s cultural institutions. Last year, the event was hosted by the Portland Art Museum.

“Our mission is to bring the world to the university,” says Brands. “We want the people of Portland to have access to cross-cultural learning, and to see the rich resources this university has to offer to everyone here in Portland.”

News Briefs

A DIGITAL TAKE ON STUDY ABROAD

Seth O’Malley, the first recipient of the Parrent Endowed Study Abroad Scholarship, is making the most of his time in Istanbul, Turkey.

Not only is Seth busy taking upper division language and culture courses at Istanbul’s reputable Bogazici University, he is also blogging from Istanbul for a class of eighth grade Talented and Gifted students here in Portland as part of his University Studies Capstone. In “Reporting Live from Istanbul” (reportinglivefromistanbul.wordpress.com), Seth recounts his own experiences in Turkey, and includes posts on Turkish culture, history, and current events for the students to discuss online and in class.

Majoring in Applied Linguistics and minoring in Turkish, Seth was selected for the Parrent Scholarship from among many candidates throughout the Willamette Valley.

TAKING A STEP FORWARD: JAPANESE FACULTY DEVELOP NEW TEXTBOOK

A desire to develop an effective method of teaching Japanese language steps students in Japan’s past.

By Emiko Konomi Patricia Wittet

Nurun Nikobi and Laura Konomi

“Studies in Japanese” is the name of the new textbook. Last year, Wietel and Konomi began plotting Steps in Japanese in their first-year Japanese class and have received highly positive feedback from students. Some of the advantages Steps offers are its updated and enhanced vocabulary and practice dialogues, as well as a more practical and efficient ordering of materials. In the creation of Steps, Wietel and Konomi strove to establish a more user-friendly structure and to develop a comprehensive learning experience with an accompanying workbook, audio, and, in the future, possibly a website and teacher’s manual. Because many students struggle with the dense, lengthy grammatical explanations found in other Japanese textbooks, Wietel and Konomi incorporated information on Japanese culture alongside concise and to-the-point grammar notes in their book. The new textbook is based around a “looping” method, constantly reiterating past material into new dialogues and drills to enhance students’ retention of the language. Because this is a pilot text, much of the material is available online for students to download and view digitally. For our tech-savvy students, this has proven to be a boon rather than a hurdle. While plans for publication are still up in the air, Wietel reports that students are very enthusiastic about the “fresh” new textbook.

GLOBAL LEARNING OUTCOMES OF A DOMESTIC FOREIGN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM

Our congratulations go out to Senior Instructor of German Kathleen Goedfry, who graduated this past June from PSU’s School of Education with an Ed.D in Educational Leadership: Postsecondary Education, after the successful defense of her dissertation in March. In Global Learning Outcomes of a Domestic Foreign Language Immersion Program, Goedfry examined how a language immersion program influences three areas of global development: how a person thinks; forms a sense of identity, and relates to others. Goedfry’s research demonstrates that the language immersion experience is beneficial to students of varying backgrounds, an important outcome considering the university’s diverse student population. The results of Goedfry’s study highlight the benefits of immersion learning and also point to practices that are adoleable to other kinds of language programs.

WELCOME NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

Three new faculty members joined the Department of World Languages and Literatures this fall. A warm welcome is extended to:

Jonah Eloweke, Senior Instructor of American Sign Language. Lina Quiroga, Instructor of Spanish, and Ergenia Wilkins, Instructor of Russian.

Focus on Faculty

Tim Nidever
Instructor of Latin

Personal: Raised right here in Portland

Life Altering Experience: “Nothing profound, other than the usual fare, such as getting married.”

Credentials: Received B.A. from PSU in philosophy in 1998, took many years off, then pursued an M.A. in Classics from the University of Oregon in 2009.

Professional Side job: Served as Adjunct Instructor of Latin from 2010 to 2011 before being hired as fixed-term instructor at PSU in fall 2012

Special Interests: Ancient philosophy (but interests range widely over the whole of antiquity)

Primary Courses Taught: 1st- and 2nd-year Latin and, beyond that, by arrangement, Roman culture, and Roman literature in translation

When Not at PSU: Enjoy baking naturally-fermented bread on hot stones, foraging for wild mushrooms (of the culinary, not trippy, sort...), roasting coffee, learning to play the viola da gamba (an early music instrument), and pedaling around Portland's neighborhood on his bicycle

EXEMPLARY TEACHING HONORED

Lina Gomaa
PhD candidate in Linguistics

Stephanie Roublon
French, who each received the John Eliot Allen Outstanding Teaching Award for the 2012-2013 academic year. Brava!

Thank you to Barbro Other Pro Suecia Foundation for its generous contributions toward the teaching of Swedish language classes.

Emiko Konomi Patricia Wittet
Nurun Nikobi
Laura Konomi

Thank you to
Barbro Other Pro Suecia
Foundation

for its generous contributions toward the teaching of Swedish language classes.

Eighteenth-Century Political Cartoon, Russian that go unexamined,” Nidever says. He is excited to explore with his students the cultures and civilization courses also are offered in French, Italian, Korean, Modern Greek, and Turkish, with plans to offer a Dead Languages course through the department’s American Sign Language program in winter 2014.

Emiko Konomi Patricia Wittet Nurun Nikobi

2013

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