Greetings from the chair

DEAR FRIENDS OF WORLD LANGUAGES!

It will soon be that time of year again when most of us gather to enjoy happy pials of turkey, stuffing, and cranberry sauce, and contemplate what we are thankful for. Perhaps some of our declarations of gratitude are mostly syrup-laced, rose-colored visions. Yes, the truth is that none of us would be here if we were not for the support of others. In WLL, we have a lot to be thankful for. Our programs, faculty, and students have received national and international recognition. Our classes fill term after term with motivated students who make us eager to step into the classroom each day. In addition to the hard work of our faculty, friends of WLL have made many of these achievements possible. In just the past year, long-time PSU supporter Theresa and Bill Farnes have established an endowed study abroad scholarship that will bring one or two students per year that much closer to becoming the global citizens we hope them to be. The ScanDesign Foundation continues to help two students each year study in Denmark. Larry Grahnall supports students of Japanese; the National Security Education Program granted our Russian Flagship Center ongoing funding; and the Gamba-Stiernsen San Francisco and Matt Kade Foundation continue to be fundamental to the success of our Deutsche Studienkolleg am Pulsfus, the nation's premier German immersion program. With the support of the National Italian American Foundation, we were able to put on an Italian lecture series, and the PASA Community Foundation sponsored a sold-out Italian music concert, lecture on Persian culture, and Visiting Scholar Dick Davis. Thanks to the support of the Qualtrics/United States University Grant Program, we were able to hold the American premiere of a合格的韩国 movie, invite the Famille Liger to play music for us, and host speakers from Canada. Finally, thanks to the Oregon Korean Foundation, the American Association of Teachers of Korean, the Pader Oboe Pro-Stacia Foundation, and our long-time supporter, the Scandinavian Heritage Foundation, we are offering courses this year that otherwise would not be available, such as Korean Popular Culture, Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish film.

While contemplating what you are thankful for this November, I encourage you to remember the Department of World Languages and Literatures. Please consider contributing to the programs that were integral to your own growth and success. Visit www.pdx.edu/wll, click on “Support Us” and follow the prompts. We would not be here if we were not you and, for that, I thank you and with you, we have been appointed.

Jennifer B. Pielwutten


to attend a world language class event.

Click on “Alumni” and follow the prompts.

Tell us about your continuing connections with language learning, and consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Department of World Languages and Literatures.

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Students achieve advanced language proficiency in classes that focus on interdisciplinary goals and use authentic materials and activities to immerse them in language learning.

In an increasingly globalized world, the need for multilingual people has never been greater, and PSU is on the national forefront of world language instruction. Over 24 languages are taught in the Department of World Languages and Literatures, and students achieve advanced proficiency in many. An interdisciplinary, cross the curriculum approach is the key to success in many of these courses. There are numerous success stories within the department, but several noteworthy programs deserve a standing ovation.

When students engage in “real” creative challenges, they develop higher levels of language skills and cultural understanding. PSU offers an innovative language course that puts this concept into dramatic action. Laurence Kominski, Professor of Japanese, offers a course designed for fourth-year students of Japanese in which students perform in a kabuki theater production for the community at large.

This innovative course is unique to PSU. “It is a rare opportunity for students to be able to study kabuki theater in a university setting,” observed Kashi Godfrey, Senior Instructor of German and past conference coordinator for the National Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum (CLAC) Consortium.

William Fischer, Professor of German, has long recognized that many of his language students also have a strong interest in business, and he pioneered a course that addresses both.

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Polyglot

Department of World Languages and Literatures

Fall 2012 Newsletter

www.pdx.edu/wll

LANGUAGE TAUGHT ACROSS THE CURRICULUM:

Innovative world language classes set stage for stellar student success

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Oksana Krizel, Russian Flagship Instructor, uses across the curriculum language instruction to help develop her student’s higher level thinking skills.

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Rusian Flagship students Michelle Carabine, Christian Jenson-Wolff, Adeline Thomas, and Vasilisa Spirko discuss cultural implications of an image with Russian Instructor Daria Kivets (right).
SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION SPECIALIST EAGER TO HELP:

Steven Thorne offers leading-edge research and instructional collaboration to faculty and students

TWO YEARS AGO, STEVEN THORNE, Ph.D., embryonically accepted a position in the Department of World Languages and Literatures as a specialist in Second Language Acquisition. The opportunity to work at Portland State University and live in Portland was irresistible to Dr. Thorne, who is an internationally recognized Trailblazer in the fields of Second Language Acquisition and Applied Linguistics.

Dr. Thorne seems to have the energy of three people; he is a prolific author with more than 60 scholarly books, articles, and book chapters published. He also currently contributes to five national or international grant projects and networks, and is a much-sought-after presenter at international conferences.

Additionally, Dr. Thorne holds a secondary, part-time faculty appointment in the Department of Applied Linguistics at the University of Genoa in the Netherlands. But when asked where his academic home is, Dr. Thorne doesn’t hesitate—the Department of World Languages and Literatures at PSU is exactly where he wants to focus his work. “PSU is one of the up and coming universities in the US, and the collegiality and professionalism within the department are tremendous; as are the opportunities for interdisciplinary research.”

Dr. Thorne collaborates with faculty and students on issues of foreign and second language pedagogy and how to improve learning outcomes. He also has an active research agenda which focuses on the preservers of language development, use of new media, and new theoretical frameworks for understanding human interactivity.

Dr. Thorne enjoys the classroom as well and is currently teaching a “Language of the World” course. He also periodically teaches “Foreign Language in Popular Culture, “Uses of New Media in Second Language Education,” and “Language and Power.”

Dr. Thorne is eager to establish more connections with Willamette faculty and students in order to foster innovation in foreign language teaching and learning. “Things already go very well here, and there is tremendous potential in the department to continue developing and innovating in ways that are central to the mission of the University.” He pointed to some current programs that are strong examples of success. “They’re doing incredible things in the Russian Flagship Center to achieve advanced proficiency, and PSU’s emphasis on Capstone projects has tremendous potential to include foreign language learning or even the use and learning of multiple languages.”

And the special appeal of living in Portland? “Hobbiness,” he answered, “It’s a wonderful place to raise a family, and I really enjoy the bike culture here.”

Thank you, Theresa & Bill Farrera for your generous donation that establishes the Farrera Endowed Study Abroad Scholarship.

This important gift will give wings to one or two undergraduate students per year.

OREGON’S FIRST PERSIAN MINOR UNDERWAY AT PSU

The opportunities for PSU students and community members to study Persian and Iranian literary traditions have never been brighter. Beginning this fall, students may now earn a minor in this critical world language. “Iran is among the least understood countries in the world,” says Anousha Sedighi, Associate Professor and Persian section head, “and the Persian minor allows students to learn through their language, literature, and culture.” Professors Dick Davis, a renowned Persian scholar, joined the program this winter as a visiting scholar to teach “Persian Literature in Translation” and “Iranian Women Writers.” Spring classes include “Introduction to Persian Literature,” “Persian Mythology and Folklore,” “Keep an eye out for upcoming events open to the public as well!”

WELCOME NEW FACULTY MEMBERS!

Four new faculty members joined the Department of World Languages and Literature this fall. We warm welcome is extended to:

Lina Gomez, Senior Instructor of Arabic;
Tim Niederer, Instructor of Latin; Moshe Rachmuth, Ph.D., Senior Instructor of Modern Hebrew; and Craig Epply, Ph.D., tenure-track Assistant Professor of Spanish.

EXEMPLARY TEACHING HONORED

Congratulations are in order to Anna Atienza, Russian, and Isabel Juan-Pellillo, Spanish, who each received the John Elliot Allen Outstanding Teaching Award for the 2011-2012 academic year.

FIRST PSU ARABIC MAJORS GRADUATE

Thumma up to Ravi Chittamall and Gayle Fischer. PSU’s first two majors in Arabic, who graduated last spring with a Bachelor of Arts. Ravi is now a graduate student at the Monterey School of International Studies, and Gayle is a graduate student of Library Science at the University of Texas at Austin.

‘REPORTING LIVE’ PROJECT DEEPENS CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC AWARENESS

Jordan Horner is pursuing a double major in Spanish and Speech and Hearing Sciences, and she was determined to move away from telling overly romanticized travel tales or focusing on “us versus them” stereotypes during her PSU Capstone project. Her “Reporting Live” project capitalized on her 2011 study abroad experience in Spain, and Jordan’s primary project goal was to authentically share her experience abroad with the seventh- and eighth-grade students in Portland’s Herofld Middle School Spanish Immersion program. Jordan hoped to engage “her” students in an active bilingual dialogue via the Internet throughout the four months she lived in Spain. Jordan shared her day-to-day interactions, cultural experiences, and linguistic observations in her biweekly written and video posts, and she was frequently amazed by the insightful and passionate articulate responses she received. Jordan said the project turned out even better than she had hoped because the students became so involved in it.

Jordan’s favorite part focused on family and gender roles in Spain, which tend to be very strict and traditional. A lively exchange ensued as the students discussed gender roles in their own families. “My students really opened up, and I was so impressed by the level of analysis and reflection I got from them.”

Living abroad and working on her Capstone project were formative and Jordan said, “I will definitely put these experiences on my résumé!”

FALL 2012

FOCUS ON FACULTY

Yasmeen Hanosho
Assistant Professor of Arabic


LIFE ALTERING EXPERIENCE: “Moving to the United States Before this I only had classroom English experience.”

CREDENTIALS: Ph.D. in Arabic Language and Literature from University of Michigan.

PROFESSIONAL SOLIDAR: Came to PSU in 2010. Previously taught several years at University of Michigan, in addition to teaching at a visiting instructor at Al-Akhbar University in Brunei, Malaysia: The American University in Beirut, Lebanon; The University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA; and Wellesley College in Wellesley, MA.

SPECIAL INTERESTS: Iraq literature, literary translation, and Arab cinema. Also enjoys connecting with her Arab students with “Better Life – USA,” a local nonprofit organization that helps Iraqi and other Arab refugees adapt and settle into their new life in Portland.


WHEN NOT AT PSU: Enjoys dancing, fiber arts, writing and critiquing in both English and Arabic, traveling, and riding bikes with her five-year-old son. “I ride almost daily to his school.”