Message from the Chair

Greetings to our alumni and other friends of the UCM Modern Languages Department! I hope this newsletter finds you all well. As we inch towards spring weather, we are gearing up for our end-of-year activities and are able to look back with satisfaction at our accomplishments. As you’ll see reflected in this issue, ML faculty and students remain engaged and productive. We see ever-increasing numbers of our alums going on to graduate study both in the U.S. and abroad, and we are proud of our role in helping them gain a solid foundation on which to build successful careers. Please keep in touch and let us know what you’re doing!

This year we’ve had to bid farewell to Dr. Joshua Davis, who accepted a position at the University of Montana. We wish him the best in his new job! We are also very happy to welcome Dr. Kristy Boney, our newest tenure-track department member. Kristy is already doing excellent work in her role as the German program director.

If you have not already done so, please join our Modern Languages Group page on Facebook. It’s a great way to keep in touch with other alumni, and of course we always like to know what our former students have gone on to do.

Wishing you the best in all your endeavors,

Study Abroad: Letter from Alcala, Amanda McCoullough

Halfway through my time here in Alcala, it’s as if I’ve lived here for years. The buildings, people, and customs that were so different now seem normal, but on the other hand, I can’t believe I’ve been here for two months. The adjustment period at the beginning took a while, but getting used to my new friends, house, family and school was a pretty smooth process. I’ve spent lots of time enjoying tapas and taking way too many pictures. I have attended classes, of course, but it’s nothing out of the ordinary. The traveling here is amazing. You can go to so many places so quickly
and cheaply, that it would seem like a waste if you didn’t take advantage of it. At times I have had awkward moments—I don’t know the language or customs—but it’s all laughable in the end. The plan for the rest of my time here is to soak up as much of Europe as I can—traveling, eating, and drinking; with a little school on the side, of course.

Alcala continued.

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Fokus auf Deutsch: German minor Jacob Roller

My name is Jacob Dale Roller, and I am from Cassville, MO. I am majoring in voice and minoring in German. I enjoy music, botany, great novels, video games with compelling storylines, writing, and of course, singing. After I graduate, I plan on pursuing a Master’s in voice at a conservatory. After that, I plan on pursuing a doctorate, or applying for Young Artist Programs or both. I have been singing German art songs for some time, and I became attached to the language. There was not a German program at my high school, so, last semester, I began my German studies here. I truly enjoy the German language. It is easier for me to sing in German than in English sometimes. The thing I most enjoy about learning a new language is that a person can gain an entirely new perspective on the world just by studying how another people use something as basic as words to express themselves and their environment. This is important to me. There is always another perspective from which to look at ourselves and our planet. Learning a new language can reveal a new vantage point.

The largest challenge I face in learning German is that I often get stuck on the fact that it’s not always like my mother language. I can learn something about Akkusativ and then completely fail to relate that to English. I think that it’s important for a student to regard the similarities and differences of his or her primary language and the language they are studying. Remembering the gender of new nouns is also hard for me. One piece of advice I would give a new language learner is that it is important to pick up the language daily. Make charts, flashcards, anything colorful to help you remember new words and how to conjugate irregular verbs and the like. This is important!
Enfoque en español: Spanish major Elizabeth Wylie

My name is Beth Wylie. I am a non-traditional student and the mother of a 12 year old son. In addition to studying Spanish, French and German languages and culture, I have a variety of interests. My aunt and I organize and put on children’s tea parties in Paola, Kansas. I also like to crochet, karaoke, and belly dance. While working as a high school secretary in 2005, I was given the opportunity to be the facilitator of an ITV Spanish class at Calhoun High School, and I discovered a passion for connecting students to the Spanish language and cultures. The year I spent assisting in the Spanish class, after a year of substitute teaching in local schools, I decided to return to academia to pursue a Spanish Education degree. I enrolled at UCM and started classes in the fall of 2007. I plan to graduate in May 2011 with a Bachelor of Science in K-12 Spanish Education with a minor in World Languages, specifically French and German. I see great potential in today’s youth and am eager to introduce students to opportunities and diversity through exposure to the Spanish language and culture. After graduation, I hope to work with in education, conservation, and communication. I am also looking forward to “studying abroad” with my son in Europe so I can enjoy the benefits of understanding and appreciating Spanish, French and German language and culture. Personally, the best part of learning languages is cultural connections. Through studying languages, I have found that I am able to express myself more clearly and completely. I would advise new language learners to experiment with all four facets of language learning – reading, writing, listening and speaking – in ways that are authentic and relevant. I subscribe to foreign language newspapers and magazines related to travel and parenting, and even my son likes the jokes in the Selecciones magazines (Spanish language Reader’s Digest). I audio-commute to and from campus using music, podcasts and instructional CD’s in foreign languages. I watch foreign films and always use the subtitle feature to practice making connections between spoken and written words. I also correspond and communicate with fellow students, professors, and community members using my foreign language skills.

Centre d’intérêt sur le français: French major Angela Cook

Well, I’m Angela Cook. I am from Blue Springs, Missouri, and I am studying French education. I like politics, playing the piano, my youth group (Liahona), cooking, and traveling. After graduation I am hoping to teach English in France for a year or two before I teach high school French. I chose French because I really wanted to learn a foreign language and French is such a beautiful language. I knew before I started taking the language that I wanted to travel to France and that I loved the culture. I wasn’t planning on continuing with my French studies past level 2 in high school, but I discovered that I really liked it. I enjoy learning other languages because I like talking and meeting new people, people of different cultures, histories, and lives. I like learning about other cultures both because I think it’s interesting and because I like the insight into our culture. The most challenging part of learning a language for me is learning the idioms and phrasing of the other language and staying away from direct translation. To all of the new language learners out there just remember that making mistakes is OK and natural; you learn from mistakes!
Departmental Faculty News and Notes

Michael Sawyer – PhD, Texas Tech University — Dr. Sawyer specializes in Postcolonial Theory and Latin American literature, particularly that of Cuba and Brazil. He teaches Elementary Spanish, all levels of Spanish Composition, and Spanish-American Civilization & Literature.

Dr. Kristy Boney — PhD, The Ohio State University — Dr. Boney joined the department this year. This year she taught Holocaust in Literature and Film and will have developed by summer the first online German language class. She also presented a paper last October at the German Studies Association in Washington, D.C., entitled, “The New German Superhero . . . dressed in red, white, and blue?: America’s Comics as Weapons of Ideology in Post-War Germany.” She advises the Mod Lang Club and organizes the Foreign Flicks film series. Currently, she is working on her book project on topographies found in the works of James Joyce and Uwe Johnson.

Dr. Della Goavec — PhD, Vanderbilt University — has published on animated films in the classroom on http://www.mondesfrancophones 2009. The paper is entitled «Les films d’animation dans la salle de classe: ‘Le Crapaud chez ses beaux-parents’ de Jean-Michel Kibushi Ndjate Wooto.» She also presented at the Homeland Security Conference organized by the Department of Justice at UCM in March 2010 on “Rape and Warfare: Its impact on the female body: The Case of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Additionally, she’ll present the paper in June 2010 at the Peace Conference organized by the CIDEF-Université Ouverte, a University institution based in Goma in DRC. She hopes to present on “Tradition et Modernisme dans la chanson de Jean-Bosco Mwenda wa Bayeke,” which will be part of the conference organized by the University of Lubumbashi in DRC to celebrate 100 years of the City of Lubumbashi in September, 2010.

Ms. Amber Hutcherson — MA, University of Missouri, Kansas City — Ms. Hutcherson taught for two years at State Fair Community College before coming to UCM in 2005. Her scholarly interests include 20th century Latin American literature and U.S. Latino literature as well as indigenous studies of the Americas. She recently presented a paper on “Teaching to Multiple Intelligences in the Foreign Language Classroom” at the annual conference of the Foreign Language Association of Missouri.

Dr. Monty Laycox — PhD, University of Georgia — Dr. Laycox received his Ph.D. from the University of Georgia in 2004. Since that time, he has taught at Kennesaw State University, near Atlanta, and Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, GA. He is currently collaborating with Dr. David Rice
of the History Department on a course in the Writers of the French Revolution and Napoléonic Era. He is working to bring French to a wider audience through the development of an online beginning French course, which will debut this summer. As in past summers, Dr. Laycox will be a reader at the Advanced Placement French Exam in Cincinnati, Ohio. His scholarly interests include French Medieval allegory and courtly literature.

Ms. Dolores Mercado—MA, Texas Tech University — A native of Monterrey, Mexico, Mercado teaches all levels of Spanish Grammar and Conversation classes. Her scholarly interests include Latin American women writers, and is currently working towards her PhD at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Dr. Sandra Merrill—PhD, University of Illinois — A native of Colombia, Dr. Merrill teaches Spanish language, civilization and literature classes. She serves as an academic advisor for Spanish majors/minors. Sandra has organized a Study Abroad trip to Valencia, Spain, and is also involved with student organizations such as the Modern Language Club. Her scholarly interests include the Spanish Golden Age and the novels of contemporary Latin American women writers.

Julie Stephens-DeJonge—PhD, University of Kansas — Dr. Stephens-DeJonge teaches all levels of Spanish language, Spanish Civilization and Literature, Cinema of the Spanish-Speaking World, and Twentieth Century Literature of the Spanish-Speaking World. This year she presented a paper on a study about comprehensibility of Spanish in foreign films at the University of Missouri in June 2009 for a conference on technology and foreign language teaching. In addition, she is teaching this Spring her first online Spanish language class. For the third year Dr. Stephens has organized the highly successful Film Festival, which showcases original foreign language films created by area high school students. This year, we had close to 500 students attend.
News from beyond the ‘Burg!

We asked alum Stephen Lightle what he has been up to since graduation.

I graduated in December of 2007 in Spanish, with a minor in International Studies. After graduation I taught high school Spanish for a semester before moving to Madrid. My first year in Madrid I taught English in an elementary school in a suburb of the city while I did a masters in Spanish philology at the University of Alcala de Henares. This year I am teaching in the same school, Colegio Villalkor, giving English classes and preparatory classes for the Trinity GESE (Graded Examinations in Spoken English). Since graduation my language skills have helped me immensely not only in my professional and academic endeavors, but in my personal life as well. None of the opportunities I have enjoyed post-university would have been available to me if I didn’t speak Spanish, and the professors in the department have been and continue to be extremely helpful and supportive. I plan on returning to the U.S. after the school year, where I would like to find work teaching Spanish and/or in a support center for Spanish-speaking immigrants. I would also like to continue my studies as well as learn another language. ¡Adios!
Scholarships and Awards

Elizabeth Callaway Award
Given through the UCM Foundation for a student majoring in Spanish. Made possible thanks to a gift from Dr. Betty Gomez Lance.

Jagriti Bhattarai

Dalsy Deliens Brown Scholarship
Made possible by way of memorial gifts from the family and friends of Dalsy Deliens Brown for students in Spanish.

Elizabeth Wylie

Student Success Award
Given by UCM to a full-time student in recognition of their outstanding performance

Elizabeth Wylie

Congratulations also to our Outstanding Students!

Outstanding Spanish Major:
Kelly Zeilstra
Outstanding Spanish Minor:
Caitlin Keith

Outstanding French Majors:
Angela Kahl, Shannon Piehl
Outstanding French Minor:
Natalie LaRose

Outstanding German Minor:
Karen Rahmmoeller

Outstanding students in Spanish 1601
Austin Harding
Dalton Moberly
Carmen T. Watson
Jenna Cordes
Jordan Webb
Sarah Clark

Outstanding students in Spanish 1602
Brittany Baur
Becky King
Annie Lewis-Jones
Kristen Hirlinger
Karley Kersting
Spencer White

Outstanding students in Spanish 2601
Amber Scroggs
Tariq Shaded

Outstanding students in Spanish 2602
Maggie Quinn
Michael Moore

Outstanding students in German 1301
Jacob Roller
Mallory Cole
Cherise Boyce
Courtney Cleveland
Joyce Cerere

Outstanding students in German 1302
Michael Kailus
Alison Scherer

Outstanding students in French 2201
Laura Nordyke

Anne Gardner Harris Award
Kenny Beck
Mark Garcia
Cassidy Temm

Keynote Speaker Ms. Emma Pyska, Instructor of Spanish and former UCM student

Outstanding German minor student and Spring German tutor, Karen Rahmoeller

Jagriti Bhattarai, winner of Elizabeth Callaway Award
We’re on the web:
www.ucmo.edu/modlang
Follow us also on Facebook!

“The sum of wisdom is not contained in any one language”—Ezra Pound