Hello, Alumni and Friends!

This has been a year of changes for Modern Languages, and I’m happy to say that all of them were good. The new Modern Languages Major became official in the fall semester, and its streamlined nature, combined with unique opportunities for pairing languages with professional training, has attracted interest from other universities around the state. We have also spent the year getting to know our wonderful new colleagues, the faculty of the Political Science and International Studies programs; the new GISL Department is off to a terrific start, with several faculty members already working on interdisciplinary projects and courses. It’s very easy for faculty to get stuck in their own academic “silos,” and that tendency can impact students as well, who often fail to see the many important links between the various disciplines. I’m very encouraged to work with all of the GISL faculty, who take a more comprehensive view of higher education; I am certain that all of our students will benefit from our collaboration. And of course, the newly combined department also has a new home in 203 Wood. Beginning next fall, the Modern Languages Laboratory will also be located just down the hall from us in the Wood Building. If you’re in the neighborhood, please drop by to see us! We wish you the best in the coming year. Please stay in touch; you can always find us on Facebook; just look for UCM Modern Languages.

—Michael Sawyer
Ever since I was in high school I had wanted to study abroad. My dream was to go to none other than Japan, but when the opportunity finally came, I decided on studying in South Korea. As it turns out, it was one of the best decisions I have made in my life. I chose International Student Exchange Programs (ISEP). ISEP is a rather convenient study abroad option as it allows you access to universities which do not have a direct exchange agreement with UCM. Studying through ISEP may also grant certain benefits such as a meal stipend and dormitory placement that might not otherwise be guaranteed. Because the Korean language is something not commonly taught in the United States, I took it upon myself to study it on my own and, of course, with my Korean exchange student friends prior to leaving.

My trip to Korea marked the first time I had ever rode on an airplane. It was quite an exciting experience—not scary at all. As soon as I landed at Incheon International Airport all the way from Kansas City, I immediately felt a mixture of familiarity and inexperience. Here were all these modern buildings that may just as well be in New York or Chicago, and here was the Korean alphabet I had so diligently learned in America. But there was also a different feeling. These aren’t the same kind of individuals I can meet in my hometown of Cassville, Missouri. This language isn’t the English that every native speaker seems to take for granted. This is Korea: a country with an ancient history, a country ravaged by wars and invasions over the centuries, a country that little is actually known about by the average American.

Even though I had nearly completed an entire elementary textbook on Korean, I realized that I could barely utilize the little I knew upon my arrival. This was a shocking experience for me—supplanting myself into a society where I was alienated even from coherently communicating with more than half of the people. Without a doubt one feels lonesome when isolated on one side of a language barrier, but it is also a terrific motivator. As it turned out, the university that ISEP placed me at was the world’s premier university . . . for women. Ewha Woman’s University, (continued on the next page.)
located in the heart of Seoul, is both an historic and beautiful place, adorned with flowers and featuring architecture designed by famous French architects whom no one can seem to recall the name of. I was very fortunate to have had the chance to walk through the beautiful campus for a nearly a year and meet new friends I would have never had the opportunity to meet otherwise. I was also lucky to be able to attend a university with such a wide variety of English taught classes (more than 100 each semester). This made my year in Korea productive as well as emotionally and spiritually nurturing.

Even though my life at Ewha Woman's University was far from difficult, there were definitely some negative aspects. For one thing, it is slightly awkward when only two students out of a class of 30 to 50 students are male. Over time this doesn’t remain an issue, but it is difficult in the beginning as the girls are not used to having men, let alone foreign men, alongside them in their classes. In addition, Korean men constantly told me that I was so lucky to be surrounded by all these beautiful women, and they always seemed to ask me to set them up on a blind date with one of my friends (a common practice in Korea). Needless to say, hearing everyone telling you how lucky you are happens to become very tiring very fast (especially when you don’t feel the same way), and setting up every man that asked on a blind is a task as far from possible as you can get.

Because I had studied hard prior to coming to Korea, I was placed in the second level class. The class met nearly three hours a day, Monday through Thursday (8:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.). It was difficult to wake up early everyday, but well worth it. The university’s method of teaching Korean is quite different from the way I studied German in the classroom at UCM. For one thing, the class meets for nearly twelve hours a week. That kind of intensive language experience is not something that is offered at UCM. In addition, the way I learned Korean was based on learning grammar patterns and memorizing vocabulary through the grammar pattern exercises. At first it was a difficult transition, but I became adjusted to the classroom setting over time. In fact, I could feel that I had made significant progress at the end of the second level class. I had never dreamed that I would be able to utilize the Korean I used in the classroom so readily. I am currently completing the fourth level class this semester. Aside from solid Korean language instruction, I met most of my best friends in my intensive-learning Korean classes. The teachers are also very kind and they speak very clearly so you can understand them no matter how weak your listening ability is.

Why study Korean you ask? Korean is an exciting living language and is among the world’s twenty foremost languages.

(continued on the next page)
There is so much history in the heart of Seoul including five intact palaces and the sacred shrine of the remains of the kings of ages past. If you go a just little beyond Seoul you can discover even more of the true Korea: beautiful pastoral scenes, stately mountain peaks, living Buddhism, rural villages, the oft visited beach of Busan, and Jeju Island—the Hawai‘i of Korea. You may have watched news reports detailing the threats and nuclear potential of North Korea, but rest assured that South Korea is one of the safest countries in the world. At no point in time here did I ever feel in danger for my life, and no Korean I have ever spoken with has ever felt in danger of their life because of their neighbor.

Korea is a country most Americans know little about aside from the Korean War and North Korea. Take some time to get to know Korea, and you may find your study abroad adventure waiting for you in the Land of the Morning Calm.
Enfoque en español: Spanish Major Amber Scroggs

My name is Amber Scroggs and I am a Criminal Justice and Spanish major. I fell in love with the Spanish language during a conversation group. All the vocabulary words, verb conjugations, and grammar rules transformed into fluent conversation, friendship, and laughter. The group took me beyond the monotony of worksheets and practice, and added a whole new aspect to my life that has formed my current interests and goals. Since then, Spanish has consumed my life: I tutor high school students in beginning levels, listen obsessively to Latin American and Spanish music, and stay in regular contact with conversation partners via Skype. It may seem silly, but the proudest moment of my life occurred when I was in Madrid, Spain, and successfully bought the correct stamps for postcards from a tobacco store, conducting the entire conversation in Spanish. This summer I plan to use my language skills while volunteering in Costa Rica and in the fall I will be studying abroad at the University of Alcalá in Spain. Never give up an interest in a foreign language: I struggled with Spanish all four years of high school and was happily set on never taking another class when suddenly everything that I had learned made perfect sense!

Learning a second language is an opportunity that I am extremely grateful to have and I plan to continue the adventure for the rest of my personal and professional life.

"It may seem silly, but the proudest moment of my life occurred when I was in Madrid, and successfully bought the correct stamps for postcards, in Spanish."
Fokus auf Deutsch: German major Rachel Schlarman

Hallo! My name is Rachel Schlarman: major, Modern Languages with an emphasis on German and a minor in English (not for education). Studying German suits my nature as language acquisition is my strength and it compliments my love for literature. I am of a strange stock in that, unlike many Americans, I find the German language’s sound aesthetically pleasing. Many people’s exposure to the German language is limited to war movies, wherein Germans are our loud, angry enemies. That hateful rendering does not do the language justice, when spoken in a casual manner it sounds much softer, beautiful in fact: a fierce beauty.

As a fan of reading, to study German is to experience some of the finest literature in the world history. One of my favorite stories at the moment is Jenny Erpenbeck’s Geschichten vom the Old Child; it is available in English under the latter title and I highly recommend giving it a read. While I will not wholly experience it till I study at Philipps Universität in Marburg, Germany this fall semester, culture is a point of interest to me. In fact, after my pleasure in the aesthetics of the language, it is the force that drove me to study German above all other languages. Their unique (often joked to be non-existent) sense of humor is amusing, direct manner of speaking is admirable, appreciation of hard-work is praiseworthy, and their film industry is first-rate. My most beloved film is Fritz Lang’s Metropolis. A positively well-done movie; it’s influence can teach in a university, and if I am able to land a job, then I should like to live in Germany and teach English literature. However, if favor and circumstance dictate I stay in America then I will obtain at least a masters degree in German and teach it as a second language.

My plans for the future are ambiguous at the moment. To teach at the university level is the ultimate goal, however, what country and which language I instruct is up in the air and will remain so until I return from Germany in the fall. If the country suits me as a home, if I am able to complete the necessary degree programs to teach in a university, if I am able to land a job, then I should like to live in Germany and teach English literature. However, if favor and circumstance dictate I stay in America then I will obtain at least a masters degree in German and teach it as a second language.
Chinese at UCM

Chinese is a popular course at UCM, taught by Ms. Qiu-yun Wang. Dr. Boney bugged the students in Elementary Chinese II to explain why’d they take such a completely different, (and challenging!) language.

To the instructor Qiuyun Wang: What is the most rewarding or challenging aspect to teaching Chinese to American students?

QW: The most rewarding thing for me is that I can utilize my teaching passion, skills, and experience to help American students to learn the language and culture of China. I feel proud of my students. All of them work hard and gain a great achievement.

So, Students, why did you take Chinese?

SD: I was tired of romantic languages. JS: Yes, but Chinese has millions of more people speaking it than English.

AD: It’s an intriguing language for us all and you get to experience something new.

Chinese is certainly completely different. What do you like about the language in particular?

AD: I like that it is pictographic—you never run out of things to learn. DR: I like that, but also because of its age and historical significance. SD: Chinese has a lot of culture tied to it. JS: And it’s nice to know I can speak one of the hardest languages for the Western world.

What can you recommend to other language learners who decide to take Chinese?

JS: Study a lot.

KR: I would say that it is a lot of work, but very rewarding when you can speak and come up with sentences on your own.

SD: And you have to be very open minded, because there isn’t really any connections to English.

Do you think you’ll use Chinese one day?

(a resounding yes, though RM added…

RM: I do not know if it’ll be useful with my majors; I just enjoy the class.)
Foreign Language Film Festival—Five years strong!

Dr. Julie Stephens reflects on the fifth anniversary of the annual Foreign Language Film Festival.

Films have always had the power to move us emotionally, to communicate ideas and experiences, and to challenge our notions about many issues. However, until the last decade, expensive cameras and high editing costs meant only well-established filmmakers could afford to express themselves through film. Happily, the medium has become increasingly democratic; anyone who wants to communicate ideas via film can do so inexpensively. Over the last five years, the Modern Languages program has championed film as a tool to develop communication skills in a foreign language by sponsoring the Foreign Language Film Festival for student filmmakers. The medium is ideal because it integrates a number of skills and abilities; students write their own original script and act in the film, which reinforces the correct use of vocabulary, grammar, idioms etc., as well as pronunciation.

The Department of Government, International Studies and Modern Languages celebrated its 5th festival on April 4, 2012. Students in grades 7 to 12 from schools throughout Kansas and Missouri may participate in the festival by creating short films (5 to 10 minutes in length) in one of four foreign languages: Chinese, French, German, and Spanish. Students add English subtitles, create a sound track, edit, direct, and act in the film. Also, students enter their film in one of five genre categories: drama, comedy, mystery/thriller, science fiction/fantasy, or historical/biographical. The films are submitted for possible awards to be shown on campus during the day of the festival. Each year, the festival brings hundreds of junior high and high school students to campus. In 2012, about 80 films were presented in all four languages. In 2012 the festival was held in conjunction with the Political Science Program’s annual Politics and Social Justice Week, the week of April 2-6; this year’s entrants will have the option to submit a film in the thematic category of social justice.

Julie Hume, German teacher at Lee’s Summit West High School, has participated in the festival every year since 2008. In 2011, her students’ film, Die Bank, won Best Overall Film. Julie commented that her students gained a lot from their experience, “My students learned so many skills from putting together a movie. They had to work on their writing skills to put together a script, their translation skills to come up with the subtitles and their pronunciation skills in order to act in the movie. They also got to do something a little more creative than usual for this class and they got to work on technology while filming and editing the movie. The project also required a lot of teamwork. I still have old students come back to tell me that their favorite part of my class was working on the film project.” In 2011, Teacher Kim Fish’s Spanish students at North Daviess High School in Northwest Missouri made films for the first time. She was surprised when one of their films won several awards, “We here at North Daviess are still in shock after participating in our first film festival! We wrote arti-
Film Festival...through pictures

cles yesterday for local papers; the students are so proud! . . . I think they were amazed that a little school could compete with Kansas City schools.”

The festival also invites international filmmakers to be keynote speakers. In past years, filmmakers presented films about music in Morocco, poverty in Nicaragua, and undocumented immigrants in Kansas. In 2011, a short filmmaker from Spain talked about the making of two of his films. This year, the Department invited Pepe Danquart, an Academy-Award winning German filmmaker whose work focuses on social issues to be the keynote speaker.

More information can be found on the department’s website: http://ucmo.edu/modlang/festival.cfm. Special thanks should be given to the Greer Oppenheimer Awards Committee, whose grant helped make the festival possible.
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.
Lindsay Schroeder

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

Kenneth Gordon Scholarship
Given by UCM in French or Spanish in education in recognition of their outstanding performance
Cassandra Puckett

Anne Gardner Harris Award
BreAnne Schaefer

Outstanding Majors:
Amber Scroggs (Spanish)
Stephanie Colvin (French)
Austin Thomas (German)

Outstanding Minors:
Brooke Wehar (Spanish)
Fiona Stevenson (French)
Megan Riff (German)

Outstanding Students in Chinese:
Daniel Ross Bryanne Comine Briana Marsh
Jonathan Yaeger Katsuyo Miyamoto
Thomas Pollard

Outstanding Students in Spanish
Evan Edwards Taylor Burnett Justin Bounds-
Maryam Jaffer Yeon Soo Seo Chelsea Ducatte
Nora Wombwell Amanda Sasek Amy Davis
Cortney Wolters Tymesia Casey Kayla Otto
Callie Edwards Jamie Spencer Brooke Cooley
Allie Rexroat Jessica Mathes Darien Collins
Kristina Caldwell Nellie Enneking

Outstanding Students in German
Kelly Klein Julia Majerek Jillian Barber
Megan Barber Mike Stowe Megan Riff
Kasey Wood Sean Weston
Emma Kostopolus Garrett Klierew

Outstanding Students in French
Hailey Reed Kris Brecklin Rebecca Conrad

Keynote speakers and Alums
Ms. Leana Rathert and Mr. Dusty Andes
Staff Spotlight: Ms. Sandy Christ

Anyone familiar to Government and International Studies and Languages will learn quickly that Sandy Christ is an invaluable asset to the department. She does more than her job—she is a part of the UCM community.

Sandy first joined the ranks of UCM in February 1998, where she worked at the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences. As an assistant to the Dean’s Secretary, she served as a receptionist and helped in conducting the day-to-day required tasks. In May of 2002, when Dr. Ruth Doyle took over as Interim Chair of Modern Languages, she recruited Sandy—who also speaks Spanish!—to work as the Office Professional in the Modern Languages Department.

In the last year, however, Sandy’s experience and ability to work efficiently has been more than critical in that she oversaw the complicated merger of the Modern Languages and Political Science departments. In every one of her responsibilities, her work has doubled (without additional compensation, no less), and yet she still enjoys working with us (whew!) and is willing to take on new challenges. Her infectious smile and laugh and her cheerful disposition make the department not just a department, but a warm and welcoming place to be.

Modern Language Faculty News and Notes

Dr. 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. Recently published a book chapter, entitled, “Hope, Reality and Cuban Independence: Cirilo Villaverde’s Cecilia Valdés” in International Relations, Culture and Global Finance: An Introduction, published by the Athens Institute for Education and Research.

Dr. Kristy Boney — PhD, The Ohio State University — Dr. Boney teaches all levels and all things German. She presented a paper last July at the infamous San Diego Comic-Con on German modernism in comics; she presented some of her ongoing work on Uwe Johnson and James Joyce at the German Studies Association in Louisville in September, and finally, she presented in November at the MMLA Foreign Language Film Conference a paper on the pedagogy of film in the classroom.
**Departmental Faculty News and Notes**

**Dr. Della Goavec** — PhD, Vanderbilt University — is a native of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Dr. Goavec’s teaching background includes all levels of French language, French and Francophone literature. She has also taught Swahili. Her research interests include Francophone African literature with a focus on women’s studies.

**Ms. Amber Hutcherson** — MA, University of Missouri, Kansas City — Ms. Hutcherson completed her play for young audiences entitled *Tales and Tails: Mitos de Mexico* and entered it into a national playwriting competition. If selected, it will be produced in October and entered into competition for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival.

**Dr. Monty Laycox** — PhD, University of Georgia — Dr. Laycox has taught at Kennesaw State U, near Atlanta, and Armstrong Atlantic State U in Savannah, GA. He is currently working to improve the teacher education program for foreign language teachers. His scholarly interests include French Medieval allegory and courtly literature. This past year, he pioneered a collaborative program with three other public Missouri universities by offering the Methods course online to students at those schools. As in past summers, Dr. Laycox will be a reader and exam grader at the Advanced Placement French Exam in Cincinnati, Ohio.

**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 is involved with student organizations such as the Modern Language Club and the Latino Student Union. Her scholarly interests include the Spanish Golden Age and the novels of contemporary Latin American women writers. As in past summers, Dr. Laycox will be a reader and exam grader at the Advanced Placement French Exam in Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Dr. Julie Stephens-DeJonge** — 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 20th Literature of the Spanish-Speaking World. This year she presented a paper on film pedagogy at MMLA in St. Louis. For the fifth year Dr. Stephens has organized the highly successful Film Festival, which showcases original foreign language films created by area high school students.
Team UCM, including many of the GISL faculty, at the International Trivia Night sponsored by the Kansas City International Relations Council. Team UCM came in fourth place!

“We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives.

— Toni Morrison
We’re on the web:
www.ucmo.edu/modlang
Follow us also on Facebook! Find us under
UCM Modern Languages.

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