From the Chair

LLC has seen much faculty change this semester. Our colleague, Charles Rougle, from Slavic and Eurasian Studies, retired at the beginning of the semester following a long and distinguished career as a Russian professor and translator. This December French Studies colleagues Jean-François Brière and Eloise Brière will also retire following illustrious careers in French, specializing in French History and Francophone Studies, respectively. All three are continuing to contribute to the department in a variety of ways sharing their expertise and excellence. In addition, two new colleagues joined the Hispanic Studies Program, David Lisenby (Latin American Literature) and Julio Torres (Spanish Linguistics).

We are proud to share that Eloise Brière was just promoted to Full Professor this semester, a well-earned and too long in coming recognition of her dedication to the discipline and to UAlbany. Mary Beth Winn from French Studies just received, as part of a team of three scholars, the American Musicological Society’s 2012 Claude V. Palisca Award, an international recognition of their research.

On November 2, 2012 LLC held a very successful open house where students interested in any of the languages we offer learned more about our classes and the many extracurricular opportunities available to them. We also inaugurated the LLC Seminar which will bring to campus distinguished speakers and also serve as a venue for our faculty and advanced graduate students to share their research findings with the department and university community. The fall semester also saw the initiation of the World of Languages and Cultures residential Living and Learning Community and the Spanish Club.

Despite many challenges, including a reduction to this fall’s language requirement to one semester, interest in the languages offered in LLC is solid and growing. We thank all of you for your continued support in raising awareness about the importance of languages in the academic preparation of any student. We invite you to visit our webpage (www.albany.edu/llc) and join our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/uallc) to keep up with what’s happening in LLC and if you’re in the area, feel free to join us at our events. We look forward to seeing you and hearing from you.

Lotfi Sayahi

LLC Seminar Series

This fall LLC debuted a new series of seminars showcasing a variety of guest speakers providing faculty and students additional academic dialogues outside the classroom. Fall’s guest speakers included: internationally recognized linguists Barbara Bullock and Jacqueline Toribio (University of Texas at Austin) on “The Value of Real Data: The Mysterious Case of Dominican –s,” Michael Newman (City University of New York) with talk, “No Longer Devil-owned: Native vs. Non-native Contact Effects in New York Latino English,” and LLC’s own Jesse Barker presented “Videogames, Global War and the Multicultural City: an Analysis of the Spanish Novel Ático.” Spring’s seminar schedule is coming soon. See our website or Facebook page for details. All are welcome.

LLC Seminar speakers Jacqueline Toribio and Barbara Bullock with LLC chair Lotfi Sayahi
Critical Speculations – Future Worlds, Perilous Histories and Walter Benjamin Unbound

Faculty and students from around the world participated in this fall’s “Critical Speculations – Future Worlds, Perilous Histories, and Walter Benjamin Unbound,” a conference sponsored by the departments of LLC and English, with additional funding from the UAlbany and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The conference was coordinated by Professor Ilka Kressner of Hispanic Studies and Professor Charles Shepherdson of English, who is also Director of the Liberal Studies Program.

The event began with a reading by fiction author Paul LaFarge (co-organized with the NYS Writers Institute and Judaic Studies) and was followed by a two-day conference where twenty five papers were presented on a variety of topics including: philosophy, literary and media studies, history, psychoanalysis, and risk studies. Keynote speakers Alexander Gelley (UC Irvine) and Kevin McLaughlin (Brown University) presented talks on “Benjamin Dreaming, Awakening” and “Poetic Force: Kant, Benjamin, Hölderlin,” respectively.

Benjamin’s unorthodox and inventive approaches to the humanities and his transgressive impetuousness allowed him to detect areas of particular intensity in his, and now our, time. His theoretical influences are often represented in Hispanic literature. In his time as well as after his death, he gave a voice to the underrepresented. He himself was isolated because of his non-traditional alternative theories on psychoanalysis (he was quite critical of Freud) and Marxism. From his strong background in translation, he theorized that translation is not about finding a fixed meaning, but is a creative process through which meaning is derived from the language you translate into. His philosophical and psychological theories have remained inspirations for contemporary authors who use Benjamin’s concepts as stepping stones for their own critical speculations on theory, art, language and the value of independent interpretation today.

"A speculation is a faculty, an exercise of seeing and comprehending, a contemplation, consideration, an in-depth study of a subject. It is also a conjecture, a game, an exercise to multiply profit, a risky business. It is one of those glimmering and plurivalent words that is so overly present, that it might have become transparent. In this conference, we critically questioned the task of speculation, in relation to the writings of a unique speculator."

– Ilka Kressner, Spanish Program, LLC

LLC Mission Statement

The Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures helps students to develop communication skills in foreign languages—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—and also to understand the linguistic phenomena, literatures, and cultures common to the speakers of those languages. The department regards proficiency in foreign languages as not only a professional and intellectual asset, but also as the key to effective citizenship in a globalized and multicultural world.
LLC Open House

LLC held an open house on November 2, for UAlbany students interested in studying foreign languages with plenty of pizza, soda and laughter. Faculty and staff mingled and chatted with numerous new students and some current students, answering questions about the programs, activities and degrees offered in LLC. Students who attended received a purple T-shirt printed in gold with the department’s name on the front and the university’s motto “The World Within Reach” translated into all 10 languages taught in LLC on the back (see back cover of the newsletter). Other students, seeing the T-shirts around campus and online, are inquiring about them. Since the open house our chair has been making quick classroom visits encouraging beginning students to consider taking additional language classes and reiterating the importance of getting to know other languages and understanding other cultures in today’s global society and the value added in the current job market.

On the Defense

LLC graduate students meet monthly to provide feedback and advice to each other on their dissertation topics. Attendees have fifteen minutes to give a rough presentation of their defense topic which is followed by a ten minute discussion session involving all who are present. Discussions consist of constructive criticism, feedback and advice. Fellow grad students’ reactions and input can help bring into focus areas that need to be fleshed out more or that need to be better explained. The sessions can also bring to light additional research materials that could help further support the topic. Alice Krause (ABD), who is pursuing a PhD in Spanish Linguistics, initiated the group. Because LLC students study such a diverse array of topics, she thought it would be great to get together, share what they do, and give each other support. “We’ve actually seen a lot of commonalities in each other’s work and are able to understand a lot more about each other’s topics than we thought we might. Also, because interdisciplinary studies have become increasingly important in academia, it’s important to be cognizant of what your colleagues are working on.”
Clubs

LLC offers a variety of extra-curricular groups...

Deutsche Kaffestunde / The German Table
Tuesdays from 11:35 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Campus Center
Contact: ugiguere@albany.edu

La Dolce Vita / The Italian Club
Members are emailed meeting dates.
Contact: lavita10@albany.edu

Le Cercle Francais / The French Circle (club)
Members are emailed meeting dates.
Contact: lecerclefrancais.ualbany@gmail.com

Tavola Italiana / Italian Table
Wednesdays from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. in Dutch Quad Cafeteria.
Contact: mgkeyes@albany.edu

The Russian Learners Club
Fridays from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. in HU 354
Contact: tsergay@albany.edu

The Spanish Club
Wednesdays at 6 p.m. in HU 354
Contact: plawrence@albany.edu

Meeting times and locations may change each semester.

Let’s Tango

The UAlbany Tango Club is open to all and is well attended by the university community. Every Sunday from 3 - 5 p.m. the group meets in the Dance Studio on the third floor of the Athletics Center for free lessons. In addition, students have set up free practice sessions on Wednesday evenings. In both sessions, the first 30 minutes are dedicated to pure balance with walking exercises, practice and dance embraces as well as partner-exercises (such as size of steps with changing dance partners and lead-and-follow techniques in very basic steps).

Happy New Year

from your LLC staff,
Janna, Amber and Joane

Help UAlbany GO GREEN!
Thanks to all of you who have asked to receive the newsletter via e-mail!
If you haven’t yet, share your email!
We’ll add you too, save the trees and put the funds to other uses
Email: jmacmillan@albany.edu
Undergraduate Student News

Spanish major David Benedict went to Spain at the beginning of August on a year-long SUNY CRUE scholarship and has had one great adventure after another ever since. He found an apartment in the very picturesque old town of Santiago de Compostela and learned his neighbors were from Mexico—they have been helping him improve his Spanish. He recently emailed LLC and shared, “Santiago has a constant flow of tourists and pilgrims because of the Camino de Santiago, a pilgrimage that has people walk the distance of the whole northern coast of Spain. The cathedral is very pretty and is on the 1, 2, and 5 cent coins from Spain. I took a trip to Costa da Morte this past week and it’s one of the most gorgeous things I have ever seen. I’m currently taking Geography of Spain and our class had a field trip on which we got to walk along a river that starts in the countryside and winds through town. Santiago and all of Galicia has food very unique to the region [with] a lot of seafood and peppers called pimientos de Padrón. The old town has streets filled with restaurants that have octopus in the window. The whole uniqueness of this part of Spain keeps me guessing what I’ll find next and even when I leave in June, I am not sure I will have seen all the intricacies of the region!”

David Benedict (left) pictured with housemates on one of the Islas Cíes in Spain.

Graduate Student News

Nabila El Guennouni, LLC lecturer and French PhD student (ABD), will present a paper at this January’s MLA Convention, “La violence de l’écriture et l’écriture de la violence dans l’œuvre de Malika Mokeddem: les risqués, les enjeux et les défis.”


Alejandra Olarte, doctoral candidate in the Latin American Literature Program, is currently a teaching fellow at Hamilton College (Clinton, NY) teaching one class per semester as well as helping organize the Spanish Club and the Spanish Table. She also plans and broadcasts the Hispanic Studies Radio Show Tumbao Hispanoamericano, a program that presents diverse aspects of Hispanic culture in addition to playing music from Latin America and Spain. Most recently she interviewed Cuban film director Karel Ducasse and Chilean scriptwriter Camila Gutiérrez-Berner.
Charlie Rougle, who came to us from the University of Stockholm with a PhD in Slavic Languages and Literatures, has been with the university since 1985. A scholar of 20th Century Russian Literature and a noted and prolific translator from Russian and Swedish, he retired in summer 2012, but has continued to help teach Russian classes this fall. His dedication to the Slavic and Eurasian Studies Program at UAlbany, as well his tireless oversight of high school Russian students via the University in the High School program and the annual NY State Olympiada of Spoken Russian competitions, have enriched the lives of literally thousands of native and non-native speakers of Russian, from high school through the doctoral level. His many contributions to the Slavic Department and, subsequently, the Department of Languages, Literature and Cultures have included serving as Russian Undergraduate and Graduate Director, Director of the Russian and East European Studies Program, chairing several University departments (including being LLC’s first chair) and serving as co-director of the SUNY Center on Russia and the United States. He has received the University’s highest award for Excellence in Academic Service and spent the 2005-06 academic year as a Fulbright scholar in Moscow. Rougle’s current passions, besides extending his most impressive linguistic range and flexibility, include increasing his artistry in woodworking and breaking new ground—if there is any still left—as an extraordinary master chef. Colleagues and friends in the program and department are greatly indebted to him and wish him all the best.

Eloise Brière retired December 2012 after 30 years of dedication to Francophone Studies at UAlbany, a field which she was instrumental in creating. With degrees from four countries, culminating in her PhD from the University of Toronto, she settled at UAlbany and has been going non-stop ever since. She has been chair of LLC, the French undergraduate and graduate director, received the Chancellor’s & President’s Awards for Excellence in Teaching as well as the Diversity, Service and Research awards, taken students on several study trips to Haiti and Senegal, been on the Fonkoze board (an organization improving life for Haiti’s poor), vice president of the University of Fondwa, Haiti, and president of the Franco-American Federation of New York. Her distinct community approach in all that she does, drawing others into her excellent work and providing tools and networks for others to connect with excellent opportunities and enhance their careers, has made her an outstanding resource on campus as well to graduates. She has recruited many international students and regularly brought speakers to campus enriching the university environment. Recently promoted to full professor, a too long in coming recognition of her academic stature, Professor Brière plans to continue to teach with the university through 2013 and take students on one more study trip to Senegal in summer 2013.

Jean-François Brière also retired December 2012 after 33 years of teaching excellence in the French Studies Program. A French native, he came to UAlbany from York University where he earned a PhD in History. He has been instrumental in the development of courses in French culture and civilization, helping thereby to diversify the curriculum and to build an even more well-respected and recognized program in French Studies. He established student exchange opportunities with the University of Montpellier, where he also taught summer courses. His co-authored textbooks in French culture are widely used in colleges throughout the USA, and students have long admired his ability to teach them to examine and appreciate cultural differences. Having held many positions on and off campus, including chair of LLC and the French Department, and French graduate and undergraduate director, he has served on a multitude of academic committees, as well as on the Executive Boards of the Conseil International d’Etudes Francophones and the Société des Professeurs Français et Francophones en Amérique. He will continue to teach in the Honors College in spring 2013 while actively pursuing his research on Franco-Haitian relations.
**Faculty News**

**Susan Blood,** Associate Professor of French Studies, proposed and will chair a special session for the Modern Languages Association Convention in Boston, January 2013 on the topic: Violence and Women’s Writing in Francophone North Africa.

**Maria Keyes,** Italian instructor and University in the High School Italian liaison, was invited to serve on the 2012 AP Italian Language and Culture Standard Setting Panel of the College Board Advanced Placement Program in Cincinnati, Ohio. The panel recommends to the board the best standards in testing and scoring exams taken by students enrolled in college level Italian courses across the nation.

**Timothy Sergay**’s translation of *A Gloom Descends upon the Ancient Steps (Ložhitsia mgla na starye stupeni)*, a fictionalized memoir of a hardscrabble boyhood on the outskirts of Stalin’s empire by Aleksandr Chudakov (1938–2005), is under contract with the British-Dutch publishing house Glagoslav. The extensively annotated 800-page volume provides a fine-grained focus on “ordinary” daily Soviet life that is rare for translated memoiristic literature and refutes many clichés about the “victim” status of intellectuals and freedom of individual action during late Stalinism and the “Thaw.”

At its annual meeting in New Orleans in November, The American Musicological Society awarded its 2012 Claude Palisca Award to *Mary Beth Winn,* Professor of French Studies (LLC), Laura Youens, Professor of Music at George Washington University, and Barton Hudson, Professor Emeritus of Music at West Virginia University, for their critical edition of Thomasii Crequillonis Opera omnia, Vols. 18 and 20. The Claude V. Palisca Award annually honors a scholarly edition or translation in the field of musicology deemed by a committee of scholars to “best exemplify the highest qualities of originality, interpretation, logic and clarity of thought, and communication.” This is the first time the prize has been awarded to a team of scholars. Their landmark publication offers a thorough critical edition of both the poems and the music of Crequillon’s songs, and represents the culmination of more than 20 years of collaborative research. Winn, in collaboration with Daniel Sheerin of Notre Dame University, also will be publishing an article in *La Bibliofilia:* “Mixing Manuscript and Print: Franciscan offices, Venetian borders, and Kerver’s 1510 Hours in Newberry Library Wing MS ZW 5351.1.” The article examines an unusual 16-page manuscript that Winn discovered bound at the end of a book printed in Paris in 1510 and that is now housed at the Newberry Library in Chicago.

**Julio Torres,** came to LLC this fall from Georgetown University where he is finalizing his dissertation on cognitive and task-based approaches to heritage and adult second language acquisition. He holds an MS in Spanish Linguistics from Georgetown and an MA in Spanish Literature from Saint Louis University, Madrid Campus. His research interests include heritage/second language acquisition, bilingualism, cognition and task-based language learning. Torres is a certified Spanish teacher in the state of Pennsylvania where he taught high school Spanish for six years and served as the department chair for a high school and two middle schools. He also has experience teaching elementary school children and English as a second language to adults. He recently attended Columbia University’s Roundtable on Second Language Studies to engage in a discussion of the Interlanguage Hypothesis, a paper published in 1972 by researcher Larry Selinker that set the course for the field of Second Language Acquisition. As an outcome of the symposium he is involved in discussions with Selinker and esteemed colleagues on the issues of linguistic transfer in the acquisition of a third and fourth language.

**Ilka Kressner**’s article, “Counter (Current) Discourses: Rivers in William Ospina’s *Ursúa and El país de la canela*” has been accepted for inclusion in an edited volume on the role of rivers in the Spanish American Imagination, *Troubled Waters: Rivers in the Latin American Imagination.* Eds. Ana María Mutis and Elizabeth Pettinaroli, University of Minnesota Press. She will also present the paper “Okupa Teatral – Contemporary Spanish American Plays for Abandoned Spaces” at the national annual convention of the Modern Language Association in January 2013 in which she analyzes recent theater productions from Latin America that are staged in unoccupied spaces, mostly run-down mansions or old factory buildings and interprets this form of artistic short-term squatting as an act of an alternative community-making through theatrical exchange.
David Lisenby joined LLC this fall after completing his PhD at the University of Kansas with a dissertation on contemporary works of Cuban literature, theatre, and film that use racially charged 19th-century figures and tropes. In addition to his work on Cuba, his research and teaching interests center on representations of cultural identity in the Spanish Caribbean, the Andean region, Brazil, and Mexico. Lisenby grew up in Houston, received his undergraduate degree from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, and taught high school in Denver. He has recently written two peer-reviewed articles, “Decolonizing Tepan: Adaptive Resistance and Alternative Nationhood in Elena Garro’s La dama boba.” Chasqui: Revista de Literatura Latinoamericana, which will be published in May 2013 and “Frustrated Mulata Aspirations: Reincarnations of Cecilia Valdés in Post-Soviet Cuba” Afro-Hispanic Review, which will be published shortly. His transition to the northeast has been a pleasant one with the warm welcome he has received from LLC and he has enjoyed exploring the cultural offerings and outdoor activities in and around Albany.

Spanish Visiting Assistant Professor Jesse Barker organized panels and presented at the Modern Language Association convention on topics from his dissertation: “Hybrid Spaces in Contemporary Literature and the ‘Mutants,’ a New Wave of Spanish Writers.” He published an article in December 2011 on these authors in the Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies, has recently submitted two more articles to academic journals, and is developing his first book. LLC wishes Barker success as he moves on in January to a permanent position at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. He shared he has enjoyed working with faculty and staff at UAlbany, teaching such a diverse group of students, and he hopes that he has sparked a continuing interest in students in the topics he taught here, including urban culture, the cultural foundations of Spanish literature, and the twenty-first century Spanish narrative.

Emeritus News

Professor Emeritus Willard Skidmore celebrates his 100th birthday in May with his son David and friends.

Comments, Feedback, and Updates

LLC thanks everyone who has taken time to write us. We always appreciate your feedback! Contact us at:

Languages, Literatures and Cultures
University at Albany
Humanities 235
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12222

or email languages@albany.edu

We look forward to hearing from you!

Join LLC’s new Facebook page:
Facebook.com/uallc
Almost immediately after graduating in December of 2010 with an MA in Spanish Linguistics, Nyssa Knarvik rewarded herself with a six-month road trip—two months in northern Mexico rock-climbing, two months in Utah, Idaho and Wyoming skiing, and the rest of the time in between. She returned from her trip in summer of 2011 and applied for and received a job at Ohio University in Athens, OH teaching first- and second-year Spanish. “I am now in my second year of teaching Spanish here and I am still excited to go to work each day and to teach students about the language and culture that I love.” Since moving to Ohio she has been learning Portuguese, thoroughly enjoying the challenges and excitement of learning another language.

Candice Tournier Martin (BA German Education, 1974) received her MA in German from Ohio State University in 1976 and is currently chair of the Foreign Language Department at Westside High School in Anderson, SC where she has taught German, and occasionally Spanish, in Anderson School District Five for the last 12 years. She is certified to teach German, Spanish, and French in South Carolina and New York and has travelled with students to Germany, Puerto Rico, Spain, France, and Israel. She has two sons and recently celebrated her 35th wedding anniversary with her husband.

LLC instructor and alumna Danielle Jouët-Pastré (PhD, French 2012) supports UAlbany’s “The World within Reach” motto by fostering a rich localized learning environment. Her Portuguese 201 students recently engaged in an extracurricular activity where they partook in a campus tour given in Portuguese with a Brazilian native and a Portuguese alumna who took classes with LLC four years ago! In the activity students had the opportunity to merge grammar and vocabulary into active learning exercises fused with spontaneous, hands-on approaches to language acquisition. Students have also visited the University Art Museum on the uptown campus where they were able to make the subjunctive mood more tangible through statements about what the artists desired to convey in their works. In her classes she includes many interactive activities such as students ordering food from a Brazilian restaurant over the phone, simulating an open air market, and trying on and buying clothing. According to Jouët-Pastré, “After more than 10 years of teaching at LLC, the creativity of my students is what inspires me the most!”

Portuguese has a long history at SUNY and has served many students, many of whom have a Portuguese background and are interested in learning more about the language and culture of their families.

Bonnie Youngs (BA French, 1984. MA French 1986) received her PhD in French Literature and Linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania. For the last 19 years she has taught in the Department of Modern Languages at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and is now a Full Teaching Professor of French & Francophone Studies. She states: “I take pride in my abilities as an educator and I am constantly looking for ways to improve both my style and my classroom in order to maximize student learning. To this end, Second Language Acquisition, Applied Linguistics, and Computer-Assisted Language Learning are important aspects of my research agenda, blending perfectly with my educational goals.” Her most recent research project centers on the hybrid and distance learning of elementary French and includes collaborative multicultural online learning with collegaues in France. In the near future, she will work on a curriculum revision for a study abroad program in Aix-en-Provence.

In 2011 Youngs taught and served as a mentor for first time graduate students of Carnegie Mellon’s newly established Masters in Applied Second Language Acquisition program. She teaches methodology and two practicum courses in which the graduate students develop their teaching skills by designing and implementing lesson plans for Carnegie Mellon undergraduates. In 2012 she won the Dietrich College Elliot Dunlap Smith Award for Distinguished Teaching and Educational Service. She remembers fondly her courses and professors at Albany and describes her undergraduate and graduate work at Albany as what made her “the teacher she is today.” She went on to say that “Without my professors and mentors at Albany, most specifically what I learned from Eloise Brière, I would not have been able to continue as a TA/PhD student at PENN and gotten this great job at Carnegie Mellon.” In addition, Youngs has enjoyed using Jean-François Brière’s book with Lawrence Wylie, Les Français, with her advanced undergraduates. “The department at Albany set me on the path to where I am now. It’s a total shock and a huge shame that other students won’t get the opportunities that I had, due to the restructuring at SUNYA.”
Alumni News

Amy Savage (MA Spanish, 2010) is currently using her language skills helping medical staff gain a working knowledge of Spanish. Since fall 2010 she has been working with Albany Medical College as an instructor of medical Spanish. The course is structured to give medical students maximum oral practice an hour a week (to fit into their rigorous schedules) in order to help them develop communicative proficiency, cultural competence, and better rapport with Spanish-speaking patients. By the end of the intermediate course they are able to conduct basic patient interviews, histories, and physical exams in Spanish and more fully understand the process and the importance of working with medical interpreters. Vocabulary, aural and oral practice are emphasized for communication in the medical setting. Savage shared, “In the future, I would like to provide opportunities for students to practice with Spanish-speaking standardized patients outside of their regular class practice. The medical students understand the importance of speaking the patients’ language(s) and understanding their culture(s) to obtain accurate histories and determine diagnoses, provide follow-up and preventive care, and to improve patient satisfaction with care. Of course, these students are highly motivated to improve the health care of all their future patients, but particularly laudable is their willingness, as adults, to learn a language while in medical school in order to improve conditions for under-served populations.”

Magdalena Kura graduated December 2010 with a dual degree in Russian and Business and minored in Spanish. Languages have always been a passion of hers—she’s now proficient in Polish, English and Spanish, is at the intermediate level of Russian and has a basic knowledge of Portuguese. After receiving her BA, she enrolled in a Master of Public Administration program where she focused her studies on Global Affairs. She spent her last year of the program in Madrid, Spain where she worked for the Fulbright Commission of Spain while finalizing her Master’s thesis. While in Madrid, she fell in love with the mission of a local non-profit called Worldreader, a European-American charitable organization that uses advances in technology to help children in developing countries get a better education. She recently shared, “After I returned to the US this October, I decided to train for a fundraising marathon sponsored by the organization. I truly believe in the cause—using leaps in technology to help us achieve developmental goals in educating the young.” She hopes to raise $2,600 for Worldreader which will translate to 520 electronic books for children in Africa. If you’d like to learn more, visit http://fundraise.worldreader.org/myrunforkids.

After graduation, Michael Kuss was unsure of what direction he wanted to steer his career. Yearning to see the world, he accepted a flight attendant position with CommutAir in Syracuse, NY. Shortly after he was hired, he was informed that employees based in Syracuse would have to relocate to Washington D.C. Not wanting to make such an extreme leap, he resigned searched for something that would allow him to remain close by. In December of 2012, he was hired as a French/English Client Service Representative by Disability Management Services, Inc, located in Syracuse, NY. They are a third party administrator and consulting firm for disability insurance providers. “They have a large presence in Quebec and I was hired due to my background in French and customer service. I handle many of the Quebecois client base and also perform extensive translation of French. Disability Management Services, Inc. also has clients in Puerto Rico and I have gotten to put my knowledge of Spanish to use as well.

My advice to current LLC students is to never lose hope. Constantly look for opportunities that are available. It is your responsibility to be persistent, because most things in life aren’t going to come to you without a little effort and dedication.”

Calling all alumni!

We love hearing from you - where you are now, what you’re doing with your language degree, if your work has taken you abroad, if you’re in a position to help new language graduates find jobs, etc. And, if you’re in touch with other alumni, encourage them to email us too. If they don’t get the newsletter and would like to, we would be happy to send it to them. Email us at language@albany.edu
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Thank You! ¡Gracias! Merci! Grazie! Danke! Toda! Spasibo! Shukran! Obrigado! Gratus!