Greetings from LLC! Our heartfelt congratulations to all our graduates and their families! We are always delighted to see our students heading out to their next adventures and doubly so whenever we hear back from them. Congratulations also to our scholarship awardees (details within) and many thanks to all those friends of LLC who contribute to make these scholarships a possibility.

This fall LLC welcomes four new full-time faculty, Assistant Professor Alejandra Aguilar (Washington University, St. Louis-SPN), Assistant Professor Megan Solon (Indiana University-SPN), Lecturer Luis Cuesta (UCLA-SPN) and Visiting Assistant Professor Denise Osborne (University of Arizona-POR). Conducting four searches has made for a hectic year, but we look forward to their bringing more breadth and depth to our program offerings and enriching the department in all aspects. We will conduct a national search this year for a full-time Portuguese lecturer.

This fall we are implementing some significant changes to our programs made over the spring and summer that should benefit our students and strengthen the department. We have reduced some beginning or lower intermediate language courses to 3 credits (from 4 or 5) making these more competitive with the university’s primarily 3-credit course offerings, added new Spanish courses, and revised the Spanish major and minor. We anticipate adding more courses in new areas this coming year based in part on the diverse research strengths of our new hires.

As usual, this summer many of our faculty were busy traveling abroad, building their knowledge base and engaging in a variety of research endeavors that are only possible in the field. The richness they return with every fall adds new dimensions to their classes and enhances our students’ experiences as well as that of the whole community at UAlbany.

Our newsletter here is full of the many activities LLC faculty, students and staff have been engaged in this spring and summer 2015. I hope you’ll take a few moments to browse through it. Our website (www.albany.edu/llc) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/uallc -- feel free to join for regular updates) list the latest news and when and where we are meeting for films, seminars, language clubs, tables and special events. You are always welcome to join us in any of our activities. Area cultural events that may be of interest are also posted there.

As always, we look forward to hearing from you. Very best wishes,

Maurice Westmoreland, LLC Chair

 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.
El Club de Español (Spanish Club) had a busy spring with many different activities, including participating in UAlbany’s Relay for Life, holding multiple events to build language skills like game nights to work on grammar, vocabulary exercises or formulating sentences, and movie nights in a variety of genres!

On April 18 members of La Dolce Vita (the Italian Club) enjoyed a day trip to New York City’s Museum of Modern Art followed by lunch at the Italian restaurant, Pasta Lovers. The afternoon was spent exploring the city before returning to UAlbany.

Le Cercle français (French Club) co-hosted LLC’s annual end of semester gathering. Students, faculty and staff from all LLC programs gathered informally just before finals to visit and enjoy afternoon refreshments. Events like this connect students outside of class with other students, provide opportunities to engage with faculty in a relaxed setting and allow those in different programs to interact.

Contacts for Clubs and Tables

Deutsche Kaffeestunde (German Table)
Contact Undie Giguere
ugiguere@albany.edu

El Club de Español
Contact Jordan Lavender
jjlavender@albany.edu

Le Cercle français (French Club)
Contact Véronique Martin
martin49@gmail.com

La Dolce Vita (Italian Club)
Contact Maria Keyes
mgkeyes@albany.edu

La Pause café (French Table)
Contact Cynthia Fox
cfox@albany.edu

Russian Learners Club
Contact Tim Sergay
tsergay@albany.edu

Tavola Italiana
Contact Patricia Keyes
pkeyes@albany.edu

UAlbany Tango Club
Contact Jonathan Augustin
sunyalbanytango@gmail.com

UAlbany Capoeira
Contact Mr. Eng - Wen Ong
capoualbany@gmail.com

Tango Clubs meets weekly and has a growing following.
Spanish Program Updates
The Spanish Program spent the last year revising courses and the Spanish major and minor. Students admitted to UAlbany starting fall 2015 will be subject to the new requirements for the major; those already enrolled will follow the requirements for their bulletin year.

Changes include:

♦ Elementary Spanish II, ASPN 201 (formerly ASPN 104) now counts toward the major

♦ Heritage speakers and non-heritage speakers have improved course offerings to meet their specific needs

♦ The required core of the major has been updated with new courses, offering students an even more well-rounded base in Hispanic culture and language

♦ There are now two specializations (Language, Linguistics, Teaching or Hispanic Literature and Culture) instead of the previous three concentrations

♦ Some course and credit numbers have changed

♦ More upper-level electives count toward core and specialization requirements so students will be able to better customize taking courses that meet their needs and interests

♦ A capstone course is now required in the senior year.

Questions regarding the changes? Contact Spanish Advisor Dr. Elizabeth Lansing (elansing@albany.edu).

LLC News

MACLAS Conference

Professor Carmen Serrano, accompanied by graduate students Jaime Mundo and Katja Higgins, attended the Middle Atlantic Council of Latin American Studies (MACLAS) conference at Ithaca College this year. Their panel, “Cuerpos alterados mexicanos: Ciborgs, vampiros y alquimistas,” was chaired by Serrano, who also presented a paper, “Sorbos perturbadores que alteran y desdibujan los limites en Vlad por Carlos Fuentes.” Katja Higgins, participating in a conference for the first time, presented “La alteración del corpus feminae en la novela Como agua para chocolate de Laura Esquivel” and Jaime Mundo presented, “El escritor ciborg: La identidad poshumana en La Novela Perfecta de Carmen Boullosa.”

LLC Graduate Students at End of Semester Event

LLC always welcomes your

Comments, Feedback and Updates

Contact us at:

Languages, Literatures and Cultures
University at Albany
Humanities 235
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12222
language@albany.edu
Conflict in Ukraine: Civil War or Russian Invasion?

LLC joined the Office of International Education, the Departments of History and Political Science, the Center for Jewish Studies, and the Judaic Studies Program in sponsoring a public lecture, “Conflict in Ukraine: Civil War or Russian Invasion?”

Atlantic Council Senior Fellow Adrian Karatnycky, an expert in both Ukrainian affairs and Ukrainian-Jewish relations, is a frequent contributor to the PBS NewsHour and MSNBC’s The Last Word with Lawrence O’Donnell. His March 11 lecture drew an audience of over 100, including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University. Mr. Karatnycky reviewed both intrinsic and extrinsic factors in the armed conflict that has affected Kiev, Odessa, Kharkiv and the south-eastern region of Ukraine since the Maidan (Independence Square) protests of 2013–14 in Kiev resulted in the ousting of former president Viktor Yanukovich. The event was recorded as an MP3. Email tsergay@albany.edu if interested in hearing the lecture.

Foreign Language in Business

French Studies introduces today’s globally minded student to Beginning French for Business, FRE 270, a course designed to prepare students interested in having a French influenced linguistic and cultural perspective in business to take the Diplôme de français professionnel – niveau A2 exam (DFP A2). Those who pass the exam are certified to have specialized training in French business practices, including oral and written proficiency in professional settings. After attending two workshops sponsored by the Paris Chamber of Commerce French Language Center last summer, Véronique Martin, French lecturer and University in the High School French liaison, developed AFRE 270. According to Martin, it “…seemed to be a good way to diversify current course offerings while proposing a course with a more professional orientation that could appeal to our minors and students from other fields, particularly business. One of the goals of this course is to prepare students for the exams leading to the Diplôme de français professionnel (DFP). The diploma is granted by the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry and is recognized by French companies. This diploma is very useful for anyone planning to work at any company that uses French language as a means of communication. It teaches students about French business culture, giving them useful linguistic competency necessary to function in such an environment.”

Consulting with Professor Emeritus, Jean-François Brière, who first taught the course in spring 2000, Martin and Professors Cynthia Fox and Susan Blood completed the complicated application process to become an official testing center for the exam and were approved this spring.

“In May 2015, we administered the exams for the first time. Students in Public Affairs, Chemistry and Nanoscale Science & Engineering successfully passed. We are now officially an accredited test center for UAlbany students and for any person seeking to take these exams to obtain the DFP certification. We plan to offer the Beginning French for Business course again next spring and supple-ment it with an upper level course with the corresponding higher level exam the following year.”

Interested students can now come to UAlbany to take this specialized course and exam. For more information, contact Véronique Martin (martinv49@gmail.com).
LLC welcomed contemporary novelist Ernesto Quiñonez to UAlbany in March. *Bodega Dreams*, his first novel, is hailed as a true portrayal of life in Spanish Harlem. For Quiñonez, writing is a way to share his hopes, dreams and ideas about life. He said, “I believe in books. It’s sort of my church. I see myself as a child of modern civil rights.” Using his life experiences as the foundation and expressing Hispanic culture through literature, his writing style paints a vivid picture of where he came from giving the reader the true essence of Spanish Harlem.

When asked if he was working on a sequel to Bodega Dreams, Quiñonez responded, “Sequel culture! You have the story, you don’t need a sequel! Create your own ending if you have unanswered questions about characters.” The reading was followed by an intensive Q&A where he discussed his inspiration for the novel.

Spanish major Teresa Peralta had the opportunity to share lunch with Quiñonez, whose *Bodega Dreams* novel became known as a “New Immigrant Classic” by the *New York Times* and was declared “Notable Book of the Year” by the *Los Angeles Times*. “I got to ask him about his professional role as a scholar. He humbly shared that as an associate professor at Cornell University, one of the most important personal contributions to students he has made is to motivate them to stay in college and pursue their dreams despite any obstacles or problems they might go through. I enjoyed his sense of humor when he shared a memory of his dad coming back from a supermarket saying the family would eat *atún* (tuna) for a week because it was on sale, however, since the food packages were in a foreign language little did he know it was cat food! Quiñonez also visited two literature classes. In Professor Serrano’s class he spoke about his perspectives on *El realismo mágico* (Magical Realism) and in Professor Kressner’s, he sat down to view students’ work and gave positive feedback on group presentations. Thank you to LLC and Professor Quiñonez for making my experience at UAlbany and in this department an unforgettable one!”

The event was co-sponsored by the Center for Latino, Latin American, and Caribbean Studies, the Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies and Fuereza Latina.

Mary Ellen Scullen, Associate Director of Languages, Literatures and Culture at the University of Maryland and author, visited LLC in April. She discussed data collected from case studies at the University at Maryland analyzing classroom technology use. Findings show that blended learning fosters better communication between students and teachers. According to Scullen, online modules in addition to in class time complements course discussions, making class time more productive, but joining technology with class time does not necessarily yield program cost savings nor does it reduce workload demands. The impact lies more in how students process course materials. Blending creates a better work environment making it easier for students to interact with one another. Implementing blending only minimally changes the class structure for instructors. Daily quizzes help encourage class participation. Having the two structures working together simultaneously allows instructors to offer more individualized instruction. With blending still in the early stages of development, in-depth data is not readily available, but findings thus far indicate dual use of technology and in-class instruction is a successful fusion of teaching methodologies.
March 11 Véronique Martin, French lecturer and UHS liaison, hosted Francophone Day, an annual event celebrating French culture in its many international forms. This is a day high school students visit the UAlbany campus not only to gain an early college perspective, but also to have a French culture immersion experience very different from the classroom setting. From a scavenger hunt to a roundtable session with native speakers all entirely conducted in French, the day’s activities helped encourage students to use their language skills in realistic circumstances. Students enjoyed live traditional Canadian folk music and traditional dance lessons with Homespun Occasions, a group led by alumnus Paul Rosenberg (BA German, 1975). Students also competed by making French desserts that were judged by former UHS liaison and French instructor Susan Cumings (now with The Program in Writing and Critical Inquiry), French Professor Emeritus Jean-François Brière, and Anthropology Professor Lee Bickmore.

Professor Cynthia Fox orchestrated Taste of Haiti, a campus celebration of Francophone Day. UAlbany’s Patroon Dining Room chefs prepared a Haitian menu consisting of traditional dishes such as soupe joumou (butternut squash soup), griot (fried pork), diri jon jon (mushroom rice), diri ak pwa (rice cooked with beans, salt and pork) and banann peze ak pikliz (flattened fried plantain served with a spicy, pickled vegetable medley) followed by a dessert of pain patate (sweet potato and banana pudding). Faculty, staff and students enjoyed lunch conversing in French.
Spanish lecturer and UHS liaison Leonardo Correa organized Hispanic Heritage Day on March 9. High school students from around the capital district who were enrolled in the University in the High School Spanish Program participated in this Spanish immersion experience. A live, spirited performance by Mundo Nuevo, a local band specializing in traditional and contemporary jazz from the Spanish-speaking Caribbean added an air of excitement to the day’s activities. Students, their teachers, volunteers, UAlbany students, faculty and staff enjoyed dancing around the Campus Center Ballroom. Other activities included a tour of UAlbany’s campus, a scavenger hunt executed in Spanish, a Q&A with LLC graduate students and Spanish majors, and games. A dessert contest with students sharing with judges their interpretation of traditional Hispanic dessert dishes concluded the day. Correa shared, “Our hope is to encourage UHS students and teachers to feel more connected with the university and the LLC Department. The feedback we received from students, teachers and parents makes it clear that the event was a success. We plan to hold the event again next year, bringing new activities and opportunities for UHS students to experience Spanish in a deeper way and to feel part of the LLC family.”

Evening of the Arts

Thanks to Visiting Assistant Professor Diana Aldrete, LLC’s third Evening of the Arts was a great success. Evening of the Arts is a night of fun, artistic activities that encourages faculty, students and staff to get to know each other better. Participants shared their many talents and displayed various creative pieces. German lecturer Undine Giguere read Goethe, Spanish teaching assistant Nicholas Figueroa gave an emotionally charged rendition of Machete, a poem written by his brother. Undergraduate Ambar Quelis read an excerpt from a favorite text. Spanish lecturer Aída Torres-Horwitt read a self-translated poem by Maria Beneyto I. Cuñat and displayed her oil paintings. Graduate student Katja Higgins displayed caricatures of herself. Professor Emeritus Charlie Rougle displayed his woodworking craftsmanship. Teaching assistant Benjamin Mielenz played his guitar and sang Spanish poetry to music he wrote. LLC Secretary Amber Stephens showcased a variety of her knit creations. Administrative Manager Janna Harton shared nature and travel photos. Professor Carmen Serrano displayed culinary prowess with a homemade traditional Spanish seafood bisque. Associate Professor Ilka Kressner and graduate student Thomas Sullivan performed beautiful Tango dances.
Each year LLC inducts exceptional students into the French and Spanish Honor Societies.

La Société d’Honneur Française Nationale (The National French Honor Society)
Avançons, amis fidèles de la culture française (Forward, faithful friends of French culture)

The main objectives of Pi Delta Phi (Chapter Zeta Gamma) are to recognize outstanding scholarship in French language and francophone literatures, to increase the knowledge and appreciation of Americans for the cultural contributions of the French-speaking world and to stimulate and encourage French and francophone cultural activities. This year’s honorees are Shirley Bushuyu (not present), and pictured above: Kathleen Barakat (L), Michael Maneen (C) and Zena Zimmerglass (R).

Sociedad Nacional Honoraria Hispánica (The National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society)
Spanías Didagèi Proágomen
(Let's go forth/continue forth under the teaching/guidance of the Spanish language)

Sigma Delta Pi (Chapter Eta Psi) recognizes high academic achieving Spanish majors and students who have taken Spanish coursework at an annual spring initiation ceremony. Sigma Delta Pi, with over 170,000 members worldwide, is devoted exclusively to students of Spanish in four-year colleges and universities. Inductees enjoy the benefit of scholarship opportunities both at the undergraduate and graduate level. This year’s inductees, pictured above are: Denelle Gail-Marie Abel, Brian Bhola, Andrea Jeannette Briceño Toledo, Linda Castillo-Torres, Josh DeClerck, Nicholas James Figueroa, Stephanie Flores, Amanda Flinter, Taylor Grzywacz, Emma M. Halvorson-Phelan, Victoria Maresca, Emily Navarrete, Steven Blake Padasak (not present), Ana Delia Romero, and Edgardo Zea.
Congratulations to all LLC graduates!

Special Awardees:

The Eleanor Bazzoni 1906 Fellowship Award
Jonathan Augustin & Siena Phillips

The Frank Carrino Memorial Scholarship
Victoria Robertson

The Class of 1952 Scholarship
(2015 award honors modern language faculty Frank G. Carrino, J. Wesley Childers, Edwin C. Munro and Arlene F. Preston)
Teresa Peralta

The Guy Enfanto Memorial Award for Excellence
Shirley Bushuyu

The Anthony M. Gisolfi Memorial Award
Latiqua Liles

Italian Excellence Award
Alexandra Bricault

Teaching Assistant Excellence Award
Victor Lucio

For more commencement pictures:
www.facebook.com/uallc
Victoria Robertson graduated in spring with a BA with honors in Spanish. She was awarded the Frank Carrino Memorial scholarship for her outstanding academic performance. As proof of her excellence in academia, she shares, “I was very fortunate to be able to share my undergraduate honors thesis research at the annual Undergraduate Research Conference held at UAlbany in April, held in the LCs. I participated in the poster presentations where I had the opportunity to speak with different faculty members and other students of the university about the research I had done. I enjoyed the experience because it gave me the opportunity to have an informal discussion about the research that I did and my experiences in Chile gathering data with people who were interested in hearing what I had to say. My research involved gathering data from recorded interviews with Chilean natives during my semester abroad in Santiago, Chile. I interviewed both men and women from different social classes between the ages of 17 and 70. The interest for my research project was sparked by a conversation I had with a Chilean when I first arrived who said that I was crazy to come to Chile to learn Spanish because Chileans had the worst Spanish of them all. I soon discovered that many of them thought this way and often attributed it to the fact that they tend to be ‘lazy’ with their pronunciation of the /s/ and exclude it in many words. So upon listening to the recordings I took, I coded 1110 cases of the /s/ for different variables (including type of word, position of /s/ in word, if it was a plural marker, gender of speaker, level of education of speaker) and what I found was that in most cases the Chilean speakers articulated the /s/ rather than aspirating or deleting it, meaning they have this negative attitude toward their own dialect and the way they speak, which isn't as present as they think. The main focus of my abstract was to analyze recorded interviews with 11 Chileans to show that while the aspiration or deletion of the /s/ is a common trait in Chilean Spanish, it does not occur with nearly as much frequency as many Chileans seem to think. As a result, I look to question Chileans’ attitudes toward their dialect.”

Looking for interesting coursework or continuing education classes, but aren’t free to take classes at the usual times or aren’t living nearby? LLC offers online courses for you. Undergraduate student Katrina Abad, a junior majoring in Spanish took SPN 333, Hispanic Literature in Translation, this summer and shared, “It was my first online course and prior to my enrollment I had had a preconception that a program without face-to-face interaction and feedback might not be as productive and efficient as one set in a regular classroom. What I experienced with Professor Serrano’s course immensely exceeded my expectations. The accelerated literature course focused on the supernatural symbolism of 20th century novels by Hispanic authors, required many hours a day of independent reading and essay writing. I found the Blackboard format and scheduling of daily requirements user-friendly and easy to follow. The work was well-paced over a span of four weeks. I got to study four novels, respond to daily analytical questions, write an in-depth critical essay on each book, and receive individual constructive feedback on every written assignment. The extensive forum discussions I shared daily with Professor Serrano and my classmates aided me in understanding the multiple facets of the material. Perhaps the greatest advantage of the class was not being constrained to one place, but rather being able to participate in discussions anywhere at any time. I was deeply encouraged by my experience with this class to continue taking online courses in the future. I would highly recommend taking such a course to anyone seeking a rigorous, intensive, yet profoundly engaging and rewarding curriculum in the convenience of a virtual setting.”
“It was as if someone had pressed the pause button, freezing communist Cuba in time. From antique cars to colonial style houses motionless since the 1950s, I could feel Cuba’s passion coupled with pride, its unity and artistic expressiveness. Cuba’s past, aside from its political, economic and social constructs, does not mirror what is presented by US academia. Small segments may encompass Cuba’s beautiful side, but because of the 1960 economic embargo imposed by the United States, that beauty is hidden behind a wall of immobilization, essentially barricading Cuba from the rest of the world. This fostered a false idea of Cuban culture, hindering the rest of the world from experiencing the country firsthand and enabling the internalization of negative stereotypes of Cuba and its people. Cuba was reduced to being seen as communist, dangerous, oppressive, ruthless, militant and even savage. I saw for myself that there were two existing ideas of Cuba. I applied for an educational visa to study and collect doctoral research in Cuba for my PhD in Spanish Linguistics. I traveled with the Autonomous University of Social Movements and SUNY Albany to Havana. Throughout the five week residency program I participated in an intensive curriculum, meeting some of Cuba’s most distinguished faculty, including doctors, political/community figures, social icons from the Universities of Havana and Pinar del Rio; leading research institutes, including Centro de Investigación de la Economía Mundial (CIEM), the Instituto de Investigaciones Culturales Juan Marinello, and the Centro de Estudios sobre Desarrollo Cooperativo y Comunitario. We were able to immerse ourselves in the culture, living with Cuban host families throughout the five weeks abroad. All 17 of us, university students from across the United States, had all our preconceived notions discredited by our daily interactions. With Cuba’s characteristics of socialism, it was unfathomable to imagine that universal health care and education are free! The absence of advertisements, chain companies and corporations like McDonalds, Applebee’s and Nike was astounding. While in Varadero, I suffered from gastritis. When I arrived at a health clinic, they simply asked for my name and age, after which I was immediately attended to by a doctor. I was in shock at the unnecessary proof of insurance and swift diagnosis. The answers to questions I had prior to my arrival were found in what I learned from the Cuban people I met. They expressed nothing less than strong family bonds and care for one another. The neighborhood of Pogolotti, Marianao, a predominantly Afro-Cuban barrio (neighborhood), had a strong communal bond of care and love for one another, a feeling that I had felt since the moment I had walked off of the plane. Drugs and violence are against the law, crime and sickness are statistically low, and there is a feeling of safety throughout the island. The program routinely took us on trips, enabling us to visit other cities and provinces throughout the island, such as Varadero, Cienfuegos, Trinidad, and Santa Clara. From the beautiful multicolored buildings, the cobblestone roads, the multitude of small Cuban bands playing music throughout the streets to the appearance of art and culture resounding through the neighborhoods, we were able to experience Cuba’s historical sites, cultural traditions and customs. The experiences with Catholicism and Santería, watching an exciting and intense baseball game, and riding in the cab rides in the old máquinas (cars) for 20 pesos to Habana Vieja (Old Havana) were breathtaking. We saw newspaper facilities and women’s centers that have added to my understanding of Cuba on a communal level. With a strong resemblance to my family home life in Puerto Rico, the food, natural fruits and drinks were refreshing alongside humble daily meals of rice and beans served with meat, mango or guayaba juice, tea or coffee. I still think of these simple, delicious yet filling, snippets of Cuba’s culture. The five weeks had gone by exceedingly fast, the last few days filled with sadness. The connections, amazing conversations, personal experiences and relationships with the people that we had met would cease as we would soon be leaving. That realization, along with the understanding of the minimal to non-existent use of internet and phone, made it clear that staying connected with our host families would not be technologically easy. My experience in Cuba was nothing short of amazing. Now that I’m back, I plan to educate others, not only about my experiences but to put to rest clouded portrayals and stereotypes towards the Cuban people, dispelling the belief of them as inadequate, impoverished, dangerous, militant, and uneducated. I witnessed nothing less than the contrary: speaking and interacting with educated, knowledgeable, caring, resourceful, loving, approachable, humble, traditional, family-based and hardworking people.

(The Revolution, continued on top of page 12)
This summer LLC graduate student and teaching assistant **Joshua DeClerck** traveled to Spain studying abroad to complete his degree requirements for the one year Spanish MA. He participated in a four week program at La Universidad Complutense de Madrid, the alma mater of LLC’s Professor Lotfi Sayahi. “The whole trip was amazing, from the food to the sayings and mannerisms, to words unique to Spain. I learned a lot about the culture. Our excursion to Pamplona will always be with me. The culture I experienced during running of the bulls was incredible. There were fireworks every night, a carnival with carnival food (churros, fried foods) and rides, local restaurants set up tents with food (paella, patatas pobres, chorizo, tortilla española, patatas fritas con ketchup y mayonesa), vendors with tents and blankets on the ground sold clothes, knick-knacks, artisan goods. Almost everyone wore the traditional white shirt and pants with red scarf and belt (el panuelo y la faja). In Madrid we took a double-decker bus tour which stopped at all the cultural points where you could hop on and off throughout the day. The biggest take away was learning how to maneuver in situations that are different than what I am used to. I loved the experience. It helped me grow closer to the Spanish culture and language and was one of the most enjoyable experiences of my life.

**Komla Amegashie**’s review of *Sens et signification dans les espaces francophones* was published in the LINGUIST List, an online journal, on June 8, 2015.

**Katja Higgins** attended the 2015 MACLAS (Middle Atlantic Council of Latin American Studies) conference at Ithaca College and for the first time participated in a panel discussion chaired by Professor Carmen Serrano, on altered states in Mexican literature. She presented a paper on Laura Esquivel's novel *Como agua para chocolate*. She shared, “Thanks to feedback, questions, and suggestions from peers and faculty attending the panel, I was able to add reading material and useful details to my research which I hope to publish. The MACLAS conference was an extremely positive learning experience for me both academically and personally. I expanded my circle of connections and I am especially grateful to Professor Serrano for her time and guidance and to LLC for opening this door for me.”
While working on his undergraduate degrees in Spanish and Africana Studies, graduate teaching assistant Benjamin Mielenz was one of the three UAlbany students awarded the SUNY CRUE Scholarship, sponsored by Banco de Santander. Intended for students who plan to work in Spanish education, the full scholarship allows an excellent immersion experience in Spanish culture without the usual worries about financial support. While there, he attended the University of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia taking courses to develop his foreign language teaching skills. Mielenz returned to UAlbany in fall 2012 much more fluent in Spanish and wondering where his next overseas adventure would take him. He shared he was “…impressed by the number of motivated students…who (were) building careers in commitment to (helping improve) their communities.”

Following graduation, Mielenz received a Fulbright Scholarship to work as an English teaching assistant at the Universidad de La Guajira in Columbia. In addition to his teaching responsibilities there, he worked with a non-governmental organization, Aguayuda, a group helping bring clean drinking water to the region. Because Albany felt like home, Mielenz then decided to return to UAlbany for his graduate degree in Spanish. He easily transitioned to the role of teaching Spanish and gained a new perspective on language acquisition.

This spring Mielenz applied for and received a Critical Language Scholarship providing full financial support for his trip this summer to Turkey which has helped clarify his dissertation direction. Mielenz discovered “Ladino combines Spanish with a world of culture and diversity that I want to learn more about. It’s a mix of Spanish grammar and Turkish vocabulary that evolved from the Jews being expelled from Spain in 1492. During their mass migration around the Mediterranean, many settled in Sephardic communities in what is modern-day Turkey. I was born into a Jewish family, but adopted. Being Jewish has always been a part of my identity, but has not been a clear connection given I wasn't raised in the religion. Judeo Spanish offers me the opportunity to make my studies more personally relevant, and that connection keeps me curious and engaged.”

Mielenz shared for students that “Traveling is not an impossible dream. Little methodical steps toward the goal will get you there. Life is often scary right here in the US. What better way to confront that than to build a stronger set of references for what goes on elsewhere and how others deal with their challenges, learn from them and try to apply the lessons at home? It's not always glamorous, but when it is it surprises you and knocks your senses around in a way that the glamorous in Albany just isn't prone to do.” Mielenz says students wanting to travel, but facing financial hardship should consider service based scholarship programs. “I've found that traveling with a commitment to service allows me two luxuries I don't otherwise have. Service forces the traveler to make honest attempts adapting to the host culture and provides a deeper immersion experience. It connects you to real people who are working and living in the country you're visiting and that makes the places I've visited feel more like real homes. It's hard not to invest emotionally in a town where you have a commitment to making a positive difference. It's important to note that whatever small difference I get to make is far outweighed by the beautiful time I spend learning to be ‘a part of’ rather than ‘apart from.’” If you get an opportunity to study abroad, “Remember to be teachable. Look for lessons and learning experiences everywhere. People might look at you funny. Doesn't matter. If you have an open mind, who knows how many doors you'll open. If you have a closed mind, everything is predictable and boring. Accept the fact that you are going to make mistakes and feel like an idiot. Turns out it’s not a big deal. Try not to worry. Do your best, and let go of the idea of being perfect. Most importantly remember you are not in the host country to fix hosts. They are not defective. You are there to have an honest conversation with fully-developed, capable partners who have their own ideas and goals that should be respected and heard. Don't trample others with your good intentions, belief systems, and American imperialism. That causes damage. Slow down, take a deep breath, and listen as much as you speak.”

“I first started learning Spanish as a kid. When I was a teenager I played in a rock band with two guys from El Salvador and Chile who were like big brothers. Spanish informed my dynamic with them and became part of what I love about the world. When I came back from a trip to Malawi, it just made sense to me to start studying the language in a more formal and structured way. I don't give second language acquisition all the credit for my adulthood, but it deserves a healthy dose of gratitude. I wouldn't change a thing even if I could. I've been blessed with really cool opportunities and am happy doing what I'm doing now.”

How are you using your language skills? Send us an e-mail: language@albany.edu
LLC welcomes our new faculty and lecturers for Fall 2015!

Before coming to UAlbany, **Denise Osborne** taught various levels of Portuguese, Portuguese Linguistics, and Latin American Popular Culture at the University of Arizona and the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. She has also taught Portuguese literature and grammar to high school students in her native country, Brazil. Her area of interest is second language acquisition, especially the study of sounds. She plans to defend her dissertation this fall at the University of Arizona. “My research is about the perception and production of initial plosives in Portuguese and L2 English. I am also interested in second language assessment and teaching, such as the application of cinema as art and drama techniques in teaching a second language, as well as the use of technology in the L2 classroom. I hope to energize and expand the Portuguese program at UAlbany by creating, for example, the Portuguese Language Club, expanding the breadth of courses offered, strengthening the Portuguese-speaking community, and much more! I’m very glad to be working in this exciting and invigorating department. Um abraço a todos e até breve!”

**Luis F. Cuesta** holds a PhD in Hispanic Languages and Literatures from UCLA. His area of interest is 20th-21st Century Peninsular literature, sports and film studies. He comes to us from the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at University of Missouri and will help build and strengthen new areas in the Spanish Program.

**Alejandra Aguilar Dornelles** received her PhD from Washington University in St. Louis and also completed a graduate certificate in Women, Gender, and Sexualities Studies there. Her areas of interest include 19th Century Latin-American literature, Caribbean literature, Gender Studies, Cultural Studies, Visual Studies, and Afro-Latin American Diaspora. She has published articles on Caribbean narrative and poetry in such journals as *Confluence* and *Latin American Literary Review*, and collaborated in the volume *Cantos y poemas: antología crítica de autoras afro-descendientes de América Latina*, edited by María Mercedes Jaramillo and Betty Osorio. During the last year she presented papers in workshops (“On Circulation” at Rutgers University) and in conferences (KFLC at the University of Kentucky, the First Annual African and African Diaspora Studies Conference at City University of New York, College of Staten Island). Her current book in progress is *Herederos de la libertad: criminalización, heroicidad y escritura de afro-descendientes en Colombia, Brasil y Cuba.*

French alumnus **Lou Stelling** has taught French at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts since he left UAlbany in fall 2008. He is excited to return and shared, “My research continues to focus on the sociolinguistics of Franco-American French. In fact, I recently coauthored an article with Cynthia Fox in the Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics.” The article “Language Variation and Change? Gender agreement in Franco-American Descriptive Adjectives.” Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics 17.1 (2014):101-128, is available online at [http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/CJAL/index](http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/CJAL/index).

**Megan Solon** completed her PhD in Hispanic linguistics at Indiana University. Her research interests include second language acquisition and second language phonetics and phonology, with special attention to the acquisition of variable structures in Spanish and the role of the context of learning in language development. She is co-author of a forthcoming article on the impact of short-term study abroad on the acquisition of Spanish phonetics and phonology, which will appear in *Studies in Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics*. This fall she is setting up a linguistics lab in the Humanities Building for data collection and research collaboration. The lab will provide access to high quality recording equipment in a sound-attenuated environment for the collection of data involving Spanish language speakers and learners from UAlbany and the surrounding community.
Summer 2015 Angela Commi
to was overseas, continuing her archeological field work at the port city of Notion on the Aegean coast of Turkey. She shared, “This cistern is one of about a dozen that we have documented on the site, and there were probably more. It’s an underground cavity carved out of the bedrock and lined with waterproof mortar. Rainwater from the roofing system of buildings built on top (and sometimes other surfaces) was channeled into the cistern and stored there. It’s a significant find! Notion (which means "the southern place" in ancient Greek) was a harbor town connected to a nearby sanctuary of Apollo (where there was an oracle) and a larger town called Kolophon. It provided access to the sea and therefore to trade and communication for these other settlements and for people living in the surrounding countryside. It is a pretty typical Ionian city, with a grid-planned street system and major public monuments such as a theater, agora, and council house. Notion is special because the remains are very legible on the surface and it has never been excavated comprehensively, so it provides a unique opportunity to study an ancient Greek city using the most up-to-date research methods and techniques.” Commi
to and her colleagues just finished the second year of a 5-year urban survey project documenting the city and recording finds using a combination of geophysical survey, photogrammetry achieved with a drone, study of the pottery including other artifacts collected on the surface, and traditional architectural documentation. When the survey is complete, they will apply for a permit from the Turkish government to begin excavation. Commi
to is interested in how ancient communities interacted with the surrounding natural environment, including how they obtained the water and other natural resources vital for maintaining a successful town. Notion is situated on two promontories (raised masses of land) that jut into the sea; it has no local water supply. Cisterns were a way to obtain water, but this water was not always reliable. It was better to have an aqueduct bring in fresh water from a spring. “We think Notion probably had an aqueduct, and next summer we will try to find it. One of the products of our research will be an interactive 3D model of the site, which users can explore like a video game. There are lots of beautiful pottery fragments, colorful glass, a stone axe head, silver coins with beautiful impressions of the god Apollo, and (what I like most), a bunch of clay pipelines for channeling water into cisterns!”

Cynthia Fox recently published *Le lexique du français franco-américain: étude comparative* in the volume *Les français d’ici: du discours d’autorité à la description des normes et des usages* edited by Wim Remsen (Laval University Press). The paper, which developed out of work that began as a collective research project in FRE 499/599 in the spring of 2012, acknowledges the contribution of the 18 students who were enrolled in that course. While her Franco-American work continues, the discovery of an intriguing article about a French-speaking enclave in western Ohio published in the French Review in 1946 has opened new areas of investigation into North American French heritage communities that were settled by immigrants arriving directly from France rather than having migrated here from older settlements in New France and Acadia. Funding from the UUP union allowed her to travel to Darke County, Ohio in March to learn more about these communities and to look for locally available materials. She and Indiana University colleague Deborah Piston-Hatlen presented preliminary findings at July’s annual meeting of the American Association of Teachers of French in Saguenay, Quebec. In addition to her teaching and research, this summer and coming year she is serving as President of the University Senate.

In March Timothy Sergay gave a lecturer on “Rachmaninov, the Movies, Orientalism, and Hooey” following the concert “Sergei Rachmaninov & Russian Orientalia” (Yehuda Hanani-cello and Roman Rabinovich-piano), presented by Close Encounters With Music at the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Great Barrington, MA. He acted in two speaking roles in a Russian-language children’s theater production of Pushkin’s fairy tale in verse *The Tale of Tsar Saltan*, presented by the New Russia Cultural Center Drama Club under the direction of Yury Naumkin at the Mohawk Golf Club in Schenectady in December and at the Reformed Church of Poughkeepsie in January. Sergay also performed classic Russian World War II-era songs and poems in a small choral ensemble for a Russian Victory Day concert presented by the New Russia Cultural Center Drama Club at the Old Chapel of Union College in Schenectady on May 7, and the West Albany Italian Benevolent Society on May 9.
Ilka Kressner received tenure and was promoted to associate professor. In spring she co-edited *Walter Benjamin Unbound* with Alexander Gelley of UC Irvine and Michael Levine of Rutgers, a publication with its genesis in the Benjamin conference Kressner co-organized in 2012. In April, she chaired a panel at “Rethinking Sovereignty,” a conference organized by UAlbany’s Liberal Studies Program and other university departments. Panels explored nation-state sovereignty versus a planetary and ecological approach, the concept of sovereignty and human rights, rethinking the death penalty, and the connections between sovereignty and aesthetics. Kressner also chaired the final roundtable with keynote speakers Greg Lambert (Syracuse University), Kalpana Seshadri (Boston College) and colleagues Kevin Attell (Cornell) and Morton Scholman (Rockefeller College). In addition, her essay “Collecting Revisited (and Left Behind): The Treasure Chambers in Ruy Guerra’s ‘Erendira’ and ‘Portugal S.A.’” (edited by Maria Mercedes Andrade, University of Bogota, Colombia) has been accepted for publication in *Collecting from the Margins—Collections in Latin American Literature and Film* with Bucknell University Press. It explores the practice of collecting in two films by Mozambique-born Brazilian director Ruy Guerra. Kressner shares, “Traditionally the activity of collecting is associated with colonizers and refers to the legacy of the colonial past (think of all the riches amassed in European museums; why almost every museum has an Egyptian or Mesoamerican section, why the Nofretete is in Berlin, and why an Aztec god’s statue appears in Rome). I study what happens if collectors are from colonized or formerly colonized countries and how the practice of amassing commodities and collecting curiosities changes in a different (postcolonial and postmodern) context.”

Diana Aldrete (PhD Spanish, 2014) Spanish Visiting Assistant Professor and alumna accepted a Visiting Assistant Professor position at Trinity College in Hartford, CT fall 2015. She will be teaching Elementary Spanish and Advanced Composition and Conversation. In spring she will be teaching Advanced Composition and Conversation in addition to a film class. She will co-chair a roundtable panel on Human Rights and Latin America in the spring 2016 NeMLA.

Olimpia Pelosi presented a paper at the National Conference, “Authority and Materiality in the Italian Songbook: From the Medieval Lyric to the Early-Modern Madrigal” in May sponsored by the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at the Binghamton University. The title of her paper was “‘Free to Sing my Liberty’ Autobiography, Space, and Construction of the Literary Self in Gaspara Stampa (1523-1554) and Louise Labe’ (1524-1566).” She also gave a speech on women writers of the Renaissance at the Beverwyck Senior Center this spring.

This summer Sarit Moskowitz taught Intermediate Hebrew seven weeks at Middlebury Language School. “I lived in the dormitories with the students, taught my class in the morning and ate three meals daily with the students and staff in a section designated only for Hebrew speakers. In the afternoon students engaged in homework and participated in program activities including Hebrew folk dancing, cooking, sports, radio, ceramics, readings of academic articles, sing-alongs, films, discussions about Israel’s current events and news, yoga and more. Students took an oath at the beginning of the program to only speak Hebrew. The idea of exclusively speaking a foreign language may initially make some students uncomfortable, but once they use and internalize it, they develop their own persona and it becomes part of them. The curriculum is intensive with students daily spending four hours in class and three to four hours on homework. I get to work with colleagues who teach at other universities, to discuss ideas and methods, with them and to immerse in the language. I enjoy seeing the process that the students go through where the language is acquired in both formal and informal settings. This program is great for serious students who are willing to commit the time and effort to work hard, but who cannot afford travel to Israel for Hebrew immersion. While immersion conditions can be somewhat stressful for beginners, learning this way is a faster means to communicating. This year a student from Saudi Arabia who only spoke Arabic came to Middlebury to learn Hebrew. On a trip to NYC the students spoke Hebrew and met an Israeli who assumed they were from Israel because their Hebrew was so good. The last day of the program the language oath was lifted, but after a few minutes of English, the students automatically returned to Hebrew. Having bonded using Hebrew, they naturally reverted to it to communicate. Students plan to stay in touch via Facebook and email, in Hebrew!”
Emeritus News

Professor Emerita Eloise Brière of French Studies continues to actively pursue her research on topics related to France’s colonial history. She presented, “Whose Voice is it? Colonial Ventriloquism and Senegalese Literature,” at the French Colonial Society Meeting in Siem Reap, Cambodia this spring, as part of a series of articles she is currently developing for publication. Forthcoming are “Colonial Ventriloquism and the Problem of Voice in Abdellatif Kechiche’s Venus Noire” to be published in a special issue on Abdellatif Kechiche in the CELAN Review and “Writing in Cameroon, the First Hundred Years” to be published this November in Tydskrif vir Letterkunde, a peer-reviewed journal that showcases unpublished research and articles on various aspects of African literature and cultural practices. “Writing …” will appear in Vol. 53, No. 1, in a special issue on Cameroon Literature. Brière also presented “Lucie Cousturier, precursor of Negritude?” at the annual New York African Studies Association Meeting in April.

On March 20 French national TV channel 2 aired a special evening news segment in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the National Library of France. At the request of the Director of the Rare Books Division, Professor Emerita of French Studies Mary Beth Winn was interviewed in the story as a foreign scholar conducting research at the library (www.francetvinfo.fr/france/a-la-decouverte-des-secrets-de-la-bibliotheque-nationale-de-france_854683.html at 2:43). She appeared examining a deluxe copy of the prose romance Lancelot, illuminated for King Charles VIII, which was published in Paris in 1494 by the renowned libraire Anthoine Vérayd. Winn has for many years pursued research on Vérayd and is completing for the Éditions Classiques Garnier a critical edition of another of his publications, Le roman de Tristan, first printed in 1489. She recently discovered a previously unknown devotional book prepared by Vérayd for Louise de Savoie, mother of King Francis I and will be publishing an article on this in the Bulletin du Bibliophile. Winn collaborated with musicologist Thomas G. MacCracken on the edition of the chansons of Renaissance composer: Jean Mouton: Opera Omnia, vol. V: Missae Sine nomine I & II, Credo a 4, Magnificat et Cantiones, issued by the American Institute of Musicology in Fall 2014. Her chapter, “Beastly power, holy justice in late medieval France: from Robert Gobin’s Loups ravissans to Books of Hours” was published in June in Representations of Power and Justice in Medieval Manuscript Culture, ed. Rosalind Brown-Grant, Bernard Ribémont, Anne D. Hedeman (Ashgate).

Professor Emerita of Hispanic Studies Alicia de Colombi – Monguió was honored by alumna, Associate Professor Eva Mendieta of Indiana University Northwest in her most recent publication, Homage to Alicia de Colombi-Monguió, published by Juan de la Cuesta-Hispanic Monographs, November 2014. Professor Mendieta shared what inspired her to write the book. “A group of her former graduate students and I wanted to honor the career of a professor who we all deeply admire. While completing my PhD at UAlbany, Dr. Colombi – Monguió was professor and chair. She became a mentor and role model for us all! Beyond excerpts from her former students, the volume also includes articles contributed by her colleagues, who also wanted to honor her contribution to the field of Hispanic Studies. If you read Spanish, I suggest that you read the “Semblanza,” a very touching profile of Dr. Colombi – Monguió, written by one of her graduate students in Albany. Also, the introduction provides a much more detailed account of the content of the book and Dr. Colombi – Monguió’s research history. As an editor, and having worked closely for over two years with all twenty-two authors, I was truly impressed by the admiration and affection we all feel towards her. She is a very special teacher and colleague who has made a lasting mark through her talent, dedication and generosity. All the articles relate to topics, authors and themes that had been research interests of Professor Colombi – Monguió during her long academic career. As evidenced by the index of the book, her range of research is remarkable—Renaissance Spanish poetry and Colonial authors to Latin American literature from the last two centuries! At the end of the book is a Tabula Gratulatoria listing private individuals and institutions who contributed financially to the publication of the book. I am glad that through your publication the university where she taught for most of her career will know about this book and the conference associated with it.” In celebration of the publication and the academic accomplishments of Professor Colombi – Monguió, fellow alumnus Professor Jordi (Jorge) Aladro (PhD Spanish, 1992), coordinated a symposium held at UC Santa Cruz in March of this year. “A number of my fellow PhD students from UAlbany also participated in this special tribute. It was a great success, very moving. People came from different parts of the US, Mexico, and Spain. Professor Colombi – Monguió attended the conference and gave a wonderful closing speech which I hope will be published someday.”
Emeritus News

From Henryk Baran, In Memoriam: Sophia Lubensky, internationally recognized expert on lexicography, author of the Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms, Professor Emerita of Russian at the University at Albany, passed away Tuesday, 15 September 2015, in New York City. She was 80 years old. Born in Kharkiv, Ukraine, she completed her MAs in Classics (Leningrad U, 1957) and English and Linguistics (Kharkiv U, 1963) and her PhD in Linguistics (Leningrad U, 1972).

Her inability to compromise with the Soviet system combined with widespread Soviet antisemitism placed severe limitations on her academic prospects. Prior to leaving the Soviet Union in 1976, as part of the Third Wave of emigration from that country, she worked as a freelance editor-consultant on the English edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia. In the US she worked at the Russian-language daily newspaper Novoe Russkoe Slovo. In 1977 she joined UAlbany’s Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures as an Assistant Professor of Russian. She retired a full professor in 2007. She played a major role in creating the Certificate of Advanced Study in Russian Translation and Interpretation and her scholarship in language pedagogy and lexicography led to Russian-language textbooks in first- and second-year and advanced courses.

Her true love, scholarship in Russian-English lexicography, was rooted in her multilingual background and training in the Soviet Union, her experience as translator and interpreter, and the challenges she faced as an émigré. She had a superb command of English and was drawn to the subtle differences between English and Russian. These interests led to her many years’ labor on her magnum opus – the 1995 “Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms.” A leading Russian linguist, on receiving the Dictionary, told her that an entire institute in Russia would have been needed to equal the amount of work she and her assistants had carried out. The Dictionary is overwhelming in the number of Russian idioms it includes, in the sophistication and rigor of the lexicographic principles on which it is based, and in the richness and stylistic variety of the many English equivalents offered for each Russian example. An essential tool for the translator, it is a treasure house for the lover of language, for anyone wishing to explore the breadth and depth of Russian and English and the cultural history behind each. The original edition sold out – a notable achievement. It garnered numerous laudatory reviews in scholarly journals, as well as one in the New York Times. Of how many reference works could the same be said? If her textbooks brought her national recognition within the professional circles of teachers of Russian in this country, the Dictionary established her international reputation as a lexicographer and linguist. The 1997 Russian edition and a 2004 revised Russian edition of the Dictionary sold out rapidly. When Yale University Press proposed publishing a revised edition she welcomed the opportunity to update her work to take account of changes Russian had undergone in the late 20th – early 21st century. The revision was thorough and she worked hard to finish the job during a period of mounting health problems. This 2013 edition was awarded “Best Contribution to Language Pedagogy” in 2014 by AATSEEL (the American Association for Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages).

Sophia Lubensky was always searching for excellence – she strove for it in her own work and expected it from others. She asked her students to do their best and in return gave generously of her time, attention and energy. She inspired students, drew them into her research projects and gratefully acknowledged their contributions. Many went on to academic and professional careers involving the Russian language or dealing in some way with Russia.

Within the past couple years Sophia, who had had a prior history of health problems, faced new challenges. She underwent major surgery that required adjustments to her daily routines, but she made up her mind, and managed to find a balance that allowed her not only to enjoy her life, but to engage in new scholarly work. In November 2014, she delivered a keynote speech at the annual American Translators Association conference. Most recently she co-edited a round-table discussion in a special issue of the International Journal of Lexicography. In mid August she indicated she had come up with new ideas that, she hoped, she would have the opportunity to explore.

People who knew Sophia Lubensky characterized her as a “strong, brave person” – in Russian, «сильный, мужественный человек». It took courage and strength of will to emigrate alone, embark on an academic career in a new country, to achieve so much as a teacher and scholar and to face several major operations and their aftermath. No less important was her interest in people, her ability to enter into their concerns, to love and support them. When Sophie would ask “How are you?” she would listen and enter into a substantial conversation. If action was called for, if there was something she could do, she would offer to do it and she followed through on her word. She was deeply committed to old friends and their families and established new friendships with people from very different backgrounds. In a rapidly changing world where it is so easy to retreat from or reject change, she remained open to it, and found a common language with those very much younger than herself.

In her last few weeks she displayed to the utmost her strength of will and love and care for people. She made decisions regarding her situation and looked for ways to share with, to help those around her. Removing the irony from Pushkin’s famous line, one can only say, with all sincerity about her life: «Ее пример другим наук» - “Her example’s a lesson to others…”

Alumni News

“After spending a year in Madrid working as a language assistant and cultural ambassador with the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport I must say it was the best decision I have ever made. Prior to my trip to Spain I was filled with questions, doubts and even fears of what awaited me across the pond. On arriving in Madrid in September 2014, I found an apartment within a few days and began re-exploring the city where I had studied abroad a year before. Although a tourist destination, the Madrileños are filled with joy and excitement to receive tourists and newcomers to their city. My job with the ministry program began on the first of October, and from the get-go I felt at home. I worked at a primary school in a little city called Fuenlabrada which is outside the center of Madrid. I worked with children from first to fifth grade and at every level I felt appreciated not only by the teachers with whom I worked, but also by my students. Waking up every morning at 7am rarely felt like a struggle, knowing I was going to a job which I enjoyed so much. The role of each assistant varies from school to school, but the main idea of the program is the interaction with the students in English and teaching them a little about American culture. Discussing Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and so on with them made me appreciate our culture even more. No money can buy the excitement I got to see in those children's eyes whenever I introduced something new to them. Apart from teaching, I spent my time exploring Madrid, taking long walks on weekends and at night during the week. I can honestly say I probably walked most of the city in the year that I spent there. It's easy to say that I considered Madrid my new home. I've never felt so comfortable and safe in a city. In that year, I improved my Spanish which was my main goal prior to going to Spain, and I learned many important life lessons. I can't wait to return "home" to Madrid in September for my second year working as a language assistant. I would urge any Spanish majors who want to learn more Spanish and who want to learn more about Spanish culture to consider applying for programs like this.

Thank You! ¡Gracias! Merci! Grazie! Dankel! Toda! Spasibo! Shukran! Obrigado! Gratus!

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