

THE INTERNATIONAL GATOR

University of Florida International Center Newsletter

February 2011

Volume I, Issue III



3rd Place - Study Abroad Students Category
Stephanie D. Don
"La Boca"
Buenos Aires, Argentina
2010

A NOTE FROM THE DEAN

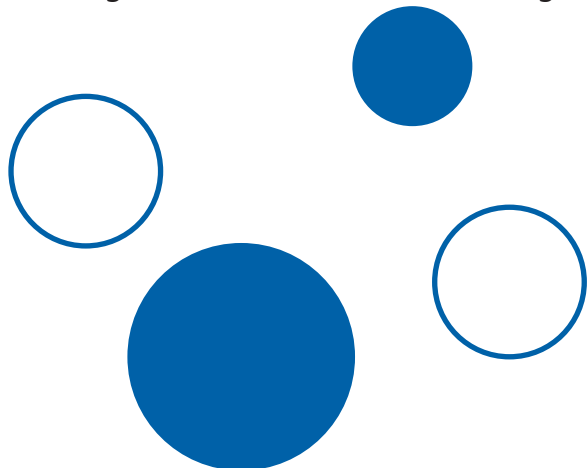
Recently I met with a UF alum in Atlanta who is now the Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of a large and very successful import-export enterprise. During our conversation, he talked about how important UF had been to him in preparing him for his career and how eager he is to hire UF graduates into his business. Interestingly, however, he made the statement: "I will not consider a UF graduate as an employee if their CV does not indicate foreign language competence." With the numbers of students looking forward to successful careers in an increasingly globalizing work environment, language skills are going to become a necessary part of the student's "tool kit." This month's spotlight features the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, part of our continuing series of newsletter features about campus units doing interesting and innovative work in the international arena. A principal mission of that department is, of course, language education as well as linked programs in culture and literature. As you read the pages that highlight their programs, note the many ways that participating students can acquire language skills, among them study abroad, service learning, immersion programs – and formal classroom language instruction. Language is important and our spotlighted department shows many ways by which language skill acquisition can be obtained.

Best wishes,

David Sammons, Dean
UF International Center

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UF International Center UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA PRESENTS:

THROUGH THEIR EYES

THE RHYTHMS OF WEST AFRICA

March 2nd, 11:45-12:45pm

@ THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER (LOCATED IN THE HUB)



THIS SESSION FEATURES MOHAMED DACOSTA, PROFESSOR FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE AND THE CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES. PROFESSOR DACOSTA IS FROM BOKE, GUINEA AND IS ONE OF FEW PRACTICE-BASED CULTURAL AUTHORITIES ON THE TRADITIONAL PERFORMING ARTS OF AFRICA CURRENTLY LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES.



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



5th Annual FILC UF Participants & UFIC Advisors

The International Center participated in the 5th annual Florida International Leadership Conference (FILC), held February 4-6, 2011 at the 4H Camp in Altoona, Florida. This exciting conference gave international and study abroad students a unique opportunity to learn from one another, to share educational experiences, and to promote global education. This was a wonderful opportunity to develop leadership skills and collaborate with other study abroad and international students from across the state of Florida. The goals of the conference were to:

- Enhance leadership skills.
- Promote friendships and networks among international and study abroad students.
- Recognize and reward student leaders who promote international understanding on campus.
- Challenge students to see themselves as global leaders.
- Recognize the differing styles of leadership across cultures.



UF Participants and UF supporters showing their pride – Gator Chomp!



Group picture of all student participants and peer leaders at FILC (yellow shirts indicate previous student participants)

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR: DR. GUIDO GRYSEELS

Since 2001, Guido Gryseels has served as Director General of the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA) in Tervuren, Belgium. This institute is the most important reference center in the world for Central Africa. It is a major research institute on Africa in both the human and natural sciences, and has collaborative research, training and educational programs in more than 20 African countries. Gryseels is chair of the consortium that runs the Congo Biodiversity Initiative that in 2010 organized a major multidisciplinary scientific expedition along the Congo River and established the Biodiversity research center in Kisangani.

Prior to joining the RMCA, Guido Gryseels has been a member and held high level positions in many organizations, including the International Livestock Centre for Africa, the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) in Aleppo, Syria, CGIAR Alliance Board, the CGIAR task force for sub Saharan Africa, and the Change Management Initiative of the CGIAR.

Currently, Guido Gryseels is on the Board of Directors of the Belgian Fund for Scientific Research and of Belgian Federal Science Policy. He is also Chair of the jury of the Development Cooperation Prize and of the Louis Malassis International Scientific prize for Food and Agriculture, and is a member of the jury of the King Baudouin International Development Prize. He also serves as an advisor to the Belgian federal ministers for science policy and for development cooperation, and to the European Commission.



Dr. Guido Gryseels
Center for African Studies
February 15, 2011
3:30 p.m.
427 Grinter Hall



DISTINGUISHED VISITOR: DR. GEBISA EJETA

The 26th York Lecturer, Dr. Gebisa Ejeta, has led a comprehensive educational and research program at Purdue with emphasis on African agricultural research and development. He currently holds the position of Distinguished Professor of Plant Breeding & Genetics and International Agriculture at Purdue University. Among his many awards, Gebisa Ejeta was the recipient of the 2009 World Food Prize, and a national medal of honor from the President of Ethiopia.

Professor Ejeta has served on numerous science and program review panels, technical committees, and advisory boards of major research and development organizations including the International Agricultural Research Centers (IARC), the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. He was a member of the team that launched the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa, a joint effort of the Rockefeller and Gates Foundation. Dr. Ejeta has served the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), the largest publicly funded agricultural research consortium in the world as member of its Science Council (2008-2010) and currently as member of its Consortium Board. He is also a board member of Sasakawa Africa Program. Dr. Ejeta was recently designated special advisor to USAID Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah.



Dr. Gebisa Ejeta
York Lecture
February 22, 2011
2:00 p.m.
President's Room,
Emerson Alumni Hall



THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

RECOGNITIONS

UF RANKS #2 IN PEACE CORPS

The University of Florida ranked second in the United States for the number of volunteers who join the Peace Corps from a large university. In the past year, 97 undergraduate alumni joined the program, with first place University of Colorado at Boulder contributing 117 undergraduate alumni. UF also ranked in second with the number of graduate alumni volunteers who join the Peace Corps, with 20 volunteers, only one student less than first place University of Washington who had 21 graduate volunteers.

The Peace Corps program has had a presence on the UF campus for about 20 years. The number of Peace Corps volunteers from UF has steadily been increasing in the past five years from 16th place to fifth place and now at second. The increasing success of the program can be marked by two events: the first is UF's focus on internationalizing the campus and curriculum; the second is the efforts made by former Peace Corps volunteer and current UF Peace Corps Recruiter, Amy Panikowski. Working with future volunteers as early as their freshman year, Panikowski makes sure that they are prepared and qualified to serve in the Peace Corps by the time they are eligible to apply. Employing Facebook as a means to reach audiences and keep volunteers connected has also proven to be a successful strategy.

CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE

After months of discussion, collaborations between UF and the University of South Florida (USF) for a Confucius Institute (CI) are finally propelling forward – it must be the year of the rabbit!

Based in over 88 different countries and regions, CIs provide the following services: Chinese language teaching, Chinese language instructor training, Chinese language proficiency tests and teacher certifications administration, Chinese education consultations and cultural exchange activities between China and other countries. In the United States, there are over 60 CIs and CI classrooms. In Florida, the only two CIs reside at USF and Miami Dade College.

On January 24th, representatives from numerous UF colleges met with USF CI representatives, Director Kun Shi and Assistant Ryan Walsh. The meeting took place at the Harn Museum where meeting participants got a sneak-peek into the much anticipated David A. Cofrin Asian Art Wing – scheduled to open in 2012. Now, as a result of this meeting, UF and USF have sent a budget proposal for future activities to Hanban. Hanban is located in China and is the primary funding and governing body of all Confucius Institutes.

The first of such activities is a K-12 Chinese Conference that USF is hosting on February 18th. The first of its kind in Florida, this conference will provide Chinese language and cultural administrators and teachers with professional development training sessions and speakers. Fortunately, UF will be sending six representatives to the conference.



For more information about USF's Confucius Institute, visit: <http://www.global.usf.edu/confucius/index.php>

SPOTLIGHT ON: DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE STUDIES

"Studying abroad is one of the best decisions I've made in college. It challenged me to try new things, meet new people and explore new places. The...experiences I had abroad will stay with me for life. If I could do it all over again, I wouldn't have it any other way!"

Eileen Cowdery, UF in Santander participant, 2010



UF students do a Gator Chomp on Florida Street in Buenos Aires

In today's global marketplace, and particularly in the state of Florida, the importance of knowing Spanish and Portuguese, and of understanding the cultures where they are spoken, cannot be underestimated. The department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies continues to see growing numbers of majors and minors who are aware of this fact, and each term we welcome more double majors who recognize the value of language study to supplement their primary major. We offer our students diverse opportunities in language, literature, culture and linguistics courses. We further recognize the importance of immersion, or study abroad, in the language acquisition process. Over the years, we have developed a number of successful, and unique among themselves, programs designed not just for our own students but also students of other fields who wish to supplement their education with the linguistic and cultural enrichment offered by study abroad.

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE LEARNING, FOR STUDENTS OF ALL MAJORS

ANTIGUA/GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA

We are especially excited about our newest program, UF in Guatemala: International Service Learning, which will inaugurate its first group of students this summer, accompanied by faculty members Kathy Navajas and Cindie Moore. It is UF's first-ever program that gives students credit for doing volunteer work overseas. This program revolves totally around that volunteer work. In fact, the academic part of the program is designed to teach students about the causes of the situations that their volunteer work aims to address so that they understand the forces at work and the historical-cultural context. (Students are required to have taken SPN 2240 or have equivalent knowledge for this program, although no language courses per se are offered in Guatemala.) The program offers students the chance to work with the least privileged people, live with the middle class, and study among the most privileged class, thus learning to see the situation from various perspectives. This is full immersion, as students will be volunteering 12 hours a week, traveling by bus for over an hour a day, taking six credit hours of class, and living with Guatemalan families. While there are planned cultural excursions, the commitment of this program is service; what we can give to others and what we can learn from engagement with a whole range of people. The snapshots these students take home from Guatemala will include more people than places, more Guatemalans than classmates. They will come home with a new way of seeing Central America and a new way to see the United States.



Volunteers work with local community members in Guatemala



A volunteer treats a young girl at the clinic in Guatemala

A PROGRAM GEARED TOWARD THE PARTICULAR NEEDS OF BILINGUAL SPANISH SPEAKERS

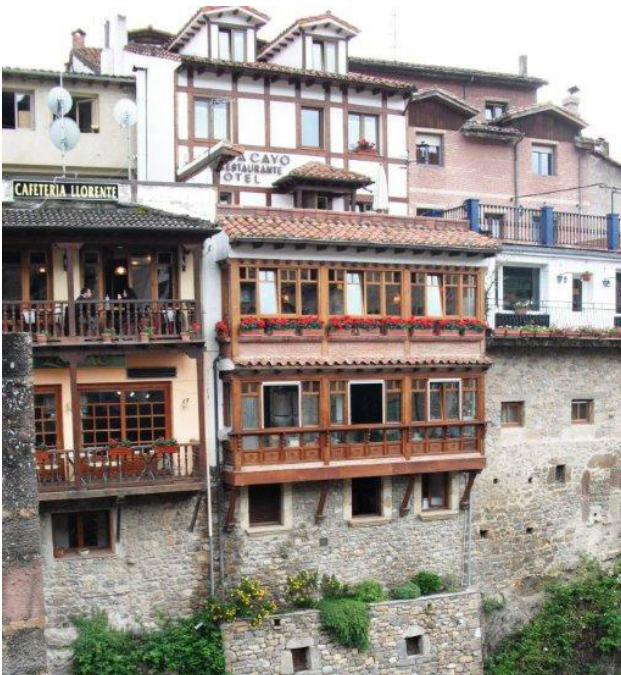
BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

In summer 2010 we had the pleasure of introducing a new study abroad program, our first in South America, and the first especially designed for Spanish/English bilingual students. The city of Buenos Aires welcomed Professor Susana Braylan and eight curious and bright heritage students who enrolled in two classes: an Argentinean culture and Literature class and either the last course in the composition series in UF's bilingual program or a course in Translation. New to this program, students lived in dorms instead of with families, sharing their experiences with Argentinean and South American students who also lived there. Students were fascinated with many of the traits that make Buenos Aires such a cosmopolitan, fast track, European-like city; from fashion to food, from traveling to dancing the night away, students could not help but enjoy every minute of their time in the city while honing their stylistic skills in Spanish. Many are planning to visit again soon.

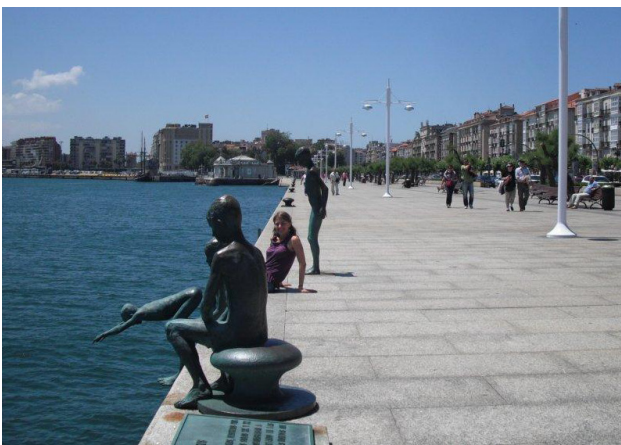
ADVANCED SPANISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

SEVILLE, SPAIN

The UF in Seville Summer program (Summer A) is now in its tenth year, and has served over 250 students during the past decade. Participants are accompanied by a professor from the department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies who offers an on-site upper-division course in either Spanish literature or linguistics. This year, professors Shifra Armon and Carina González are team-teaching a new course entitled *Voces de Exilio / Voices of Exile*, which combines their expertise in Spanish and Latin American literature. A second course in either Spanish culture or Spanish communication rounds out the academic offerings. As with most of our other programs, students live with host families, and occasionally the faculty members do to, simply because it is such an enjoyable experience. The first time Dr. Armon led this program, in 2001, she lived with a señora; a wonderfully civilized woman named Carmen who showed off photos of her nephews yachting with Prince Philip. Her spacious piso (flat) was two apartments put together to form one large “double-wide” unit, right down the street from Seville’s imposing Cathedral. Dr. Armon looks forward to catching up with Carmen again this summer. Speaking of the Cathedral, Gators of all stripes will feel right at home there: one of its portals—la Puerta del Lagarto--features an Egyptian crocodile hanging from the rafters!



Houses above the sea in Santander, Spain



Graduate Teaching Assistant Katherine Honea enjoys some time by the sea in Santander, Spain

INTERMEDIATE SPANISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

SANTANDER, SPAIN

This is a program offered during Summer A and intended for intermediate level Spanish students, in an effort to entice students into our major and minor. In the beautiful city of Santander, on the northwestern coast of Spain, students study at the Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo. Situated in the region of Cantabria, travel to the Basque Country, Asturias and Galicia is possible within just a few hours. Students spend the summer months living with welcoming, hospitable families that cook traditional meals for them. Urban space in Santander is tightly integrated with the surrounding sea, via stairs and balconies that open access to many beaches, and summer heat is moderate, making the climate a welcome change from the head and humidity of Gainesville! Students are often struck by cultural nuances they don't see at home, such as motorists who willingly and happily yield to pedestrians, even without traffic lights or laws requiring them to do so; picturesque statues on every block, erected in honor not of political figures but of poets, painters and artists. According to Dr. Ximena Moors, who will lead the program this summer, Santander is an ideal place to take a group of American students to practice their Spanish and better understand, and appreciate the Spanish culture.

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

The UF Language and Culture program in Rio de Janeiro, which takes place every year during Summer B, is the oldest and most successful summer study abroad program in Brazil. Heading in to its 33rd year, the program has offered hundreds of students the opportunity to experience Brazilian culture while refining their language skills.

In Rio, through coursework in language and culture, students come to understand and appreciate the world that surrounds them. They take an intensive language course, often as part of a Portuguese Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS). The UF program is one of only two study abroad programs in Brazil that have been approved for these fellowships. The second course participants take is a culture course, and rotates according to the director's specialty and contemporary interests. Last year, for example, the course focused on favelas, the low-income communities surrounding Rio. Professor Libby Ginway, who co-directs the program, focused on favelas and their representation in and role in the arts, humanities, and the social sciences to help students come to a greater understanding of these communities.

In addition to coursework, students enjoy out-of-class excursions that allow them to explore the city and surrounding attractions. A crucial part of the experience is that students live with host families who are under strict instructions not to use any English, in order to enhance the immersion experience. As with our other programs, these families often end up becoming an important part of the students' lives – one 'host mother' even came to Gainesville to see one of the students graduate from UF!

We in the department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies are deeply committed to the value of study abroad for linguistic, cultural and personal benefits to all those involved. Furthermore, we believe it should be a central part of a broad-based liberal arts curriculum. We live by the words of Mark Twain:

"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views ... cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime"
(Innocents Abroad, 1869).



More about the department's study abroad offerings can be found at <http://www.spanish.ufl.edu/study-abroad.html>.