



Newsletter of the Department of Foreign Languages at Millersville University

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*"Studying
Languages in the
context of history,
politics, and
popular culture
can help you
follow
international
events with
insight, opening
up perspectives to
make you an
informed and
responsible
citizen of your
country and of
the world."
(from the MLA
Language Brochure)*

Welcome to the first edition of *Polyglot*, a newsletter designed for foreign language majors at Millersville University and alumni!

Message from the Chair

It is with great pleasure that I would like to introduce the first newsletter to be produced on a semester basis by the department of foreign languages. This tool was developed to keep alumni, friends, current and future students abreast of our activities. If you have any item of interest that you would like to see included or if you would like to be a guest columnist, please contact me at Christine.Gaudry-Hudson@millersville.edu.

In this first issue of *Polyglot*, you will learn about the latest innovations which have been implemented in the department of foreign languages; you will find out about faculty and students' accomplishments which emphasize how committed MU is to teaching, research and service; you will read about some special projects which have taken place during the academic year 2004-5 and finally, you will learn about the fate of the Russian program thanks to the contribution of MU student Guy Hydrik.

2004-5 was a very exciting but also quite challenging year for the department of foreign languages. We moved into new quarters in the newly renovated McComsey Hall which now hosts the departments of history, economics, business, social work, and geography. We have a new state of the art Media Center featuring a Tandberg ICM with Divace Duo Level III Recording 2 channel digital system. Our long-time secretary, Mrs. Carolyn Rittenhouse, accepted another position in the Education Foundations department. We were fortunate to enlist the help of several new (and returning) adjuncts: Annie-Claire Spittle, Donna Chambers, Rita Gargotta, Frank Dell'Estate and Puerto Rican native Katia Caplonch. In collaboration with the office of International Affairs, we established an exchange program with the Universidad de Burgos, Spain, the Université de Caen Basse Normandie and the American Business School in Paris, France. We welcomed back Dr. Börger-Greco who was granted a full year sabbatical and Dr. Caminero who had been on medical leave. German Professor Dr. Susanne Nimmrichter received tenure after a five year probationary period; Dr. Rivera-Hernández was asked to be in charge of the study abroad programs in Spanish-speaking countries. Dr. Marco Antolín became the advisor of the Spanish Club and Dr. André Moine had his book *The Role of Discourse Markers in the Structuring of Discourse: A Study of the Use of the Word Alors in the French Language* published with Edwin Mellon Press. Unfortunately, the department also had some difficult times: we had to say goodbye to the Russian program which had been in place at MU for over forty years and to a special colleague who had

been with us for three years, Dr. Irina Mikhaleva. I would like to take this opportunity to thank International Studies/Geography major Guy Hydrick, who wrote a compelling article in *the Snapper* asking to save MU's Russian program. Excerpts from his article have been included with his permission in this newsletter.

Yours in cyberspace,
Christine Gaudry-Hudson

Past and Current Events

The Thirty-Ninth Annual Millersville University In-Service Foreign Language Conference took place on October 30, 2004.

Keynote speaker, Ms. Nina Holmquist, spoke about "Revolutionizing Your Teaching: A New Look at Teaching Methods and Self-Assessment." 113 participants attended to learn more about the National Board Certification, an advanced teaching credential offered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and to see how this challenging professional development can improve teaching practices.



On February 23, 2005, Fulbright Scholar Dr. Gali Oda Tealakh delivered a short talk sponsored by the department of foreign languages about the Arabic language and its relation to Islam as its religion. Dr. Tealakh is currently the head of the department for cultural and international affairs at Princess Sumaya University in Jordan. He holds a BA and MA in journalism and Russian history from Moscow State University; an MA from the department of Slavic and East European Studies from Indiana University at Bloomington; an MA in religious studies from Temple University and a Ph.D. in modern political history from the University of Durham in the United Kingdom. Millersville University is currently exploring the possibility of an exchange program with the Princess Sumaya university in Jordan.



On April 14, 2005, the foreign language department organized an international delegation luncheon where representatives of our study abroad programs from England, France, Germany and France were present. Our global partners were asked to make a few remarks on the importance of learning a foreign language and how it pertains to their respective institutions. Foreign language faculty



members, a few selected administrators as well as FL majors had the opportunity to ask them questions. This event was held as part of Millersville University's 150th anniversary closing ceremony and members of the French, German and Spanish clubs proudly displayed special exhibits in the Student Memorial Center while a special signing ceremony between MU President, Francine McNairy and representatives of the Université de Caen Basse Normandie and the American Business School of Paris took place. Displays by the PA German Center, the Latin@ Studies program and a special tribute to Nobel Prize Recipient Camilo José Cela were also available.

A foreign Language general advisement session has become part of the MU tradition every semester. Foreign Language majors are invited to a light lunch and they had the opportunity in the fall to attend a special poster session organized with students who had just returned from studying abroad. In the spring, a special guest from Spherion Temporary Agency was invited to talk about how learning a foreign language can give you an edge in the business world.

Students' Highlights:

Two departmental Honors theses were successfully defended in the spring of 2005. Congratulations to French/Spanish major Allen Evanko for his work on "Les Etats-Unis d'Europe ou l'Union européenne" and to Spanish senior Natalie Funk for her research on "Literatura realidad o ficción."

Congratulations also to German majors Joshua Belice and Zane Akers who received a scholarship to attend a four week intensive German program at the Goethe Institut in Germany!

Faculty Highlights:

Millersville University's foreign language faculty members are actively engaged in their field of expertise. During the academic year 2004-5, fourteen papers/workshops were presented/organized at local, national and international conferences; nine reviews/articles/books were published and twenty-three conferences/professional meetings/workshops were attended! Special kudos to Dr. Nimmrichter who applied and received a \$12,000 grant from the Goethe Institut!

Study Abroad Special Opportunities:

A special thank you to Faith Niesley who was the first student to participate in the exchange program at the Université de Caen Basse Normandie and to Erica and Mike Acedo-Malaney who went to the Universidad of Burgos in Spain in the spring semester 2005 as MU's first exchange students. A unique travel course to France organized by Dr. Christine Gaudry-Hudson took place over spring break.

Students were required to read Armand Idrac's book entitled *Memoirs from Normandy*. They spent a week in France where they had the opportunity to meet and interact with the author; they also learned about the history and culture of France as it pertained to Idrac's life.

Also, a special meeting was set up with the mayor of Sainte-Mère Eglise, the first city which was liberated by U.S. troops and a journalist recorded the event in the local paper. Students also spent a morning at a local middle school and interacted with students, teachers and the principal.



Alumni Section:

Please note that this section will expand as alumni find out about our newsletter and keep in touch with us on a more regular basis! Spanish alumni Jarred Miller ('05) is now working for Brodart, a publishing company. French/Spanish alumni Allen Evanko ('05) is doing an internship at the Mexican Embassy in Washington D.C. this fall; German graduate Tony Jannotta ('05) has been offered a teaching position at Conestoga Valley High School.

Save Millersville's Russian Program by Guy Hydrick (from *the Snapper*):

Millersville University, celebrating 150 years of tradition and innovation. I guess that includes doing away with a program that has been at the University for over

40 years. As of the end of the summer two session, the Russian program here at Millersville will be gone, along with the professor who teaches it, Dr. Irena Mikhaleva. According to Dr. Leroy Hopkins, professor of German, former chair of the foreign language department, and former student of Russian here at MU, the decision was made five years and a couple of deans ago. It was decided that the program would be dropped due to dwindling class enrollment, and that the tenure slot would go to the art department. Until the decision would be implemented, an adjunct would be hired to teach Russian – Mikhaleva. However, in the years that Mikhaleva has been teaching, enrollment has steadily improved. Russian 101 generally has between 20 and 30 students per semester, while Russian Folk Culture (HUMN 370) has been so full that Mikhaleva has had to turn people away. It took me three semesters before I could get into the class. Why get rid of such a popular class, which is surely a moneymaker for the University? Good question I say.

What do the students and faculty think of this decision? The sad part is that most students and even some faculty members are unaware of this decision. Those who are, however, do not seem to be happy with the situation. The foreign language department has attempted to resist losing one of their own and has written a letter to the administration. In this they point out the University's mission statement, which states, "Millersville University seeks to prepare its students to live in an increasingly diverse, multicultural and technologically complex society." How can this be done when language programs are being eliminated? Dr. Saulis Suziedelis, professor of Russian and European history, wonders this himself. "This decision doesn't make much sense. Actually, it doesn't make any sense at all." He points out that as Russia is becoming more of a player on the world scene, we are ironically getting rid of the Russian program. Dr. Robert Bookmiller, director of the International Studies program, agrees. He thinks that we should be expanding the study of foreign languages, to include languages such as Arabic, Russian and Chinese. Take a look on the web sites of most government agencies and you'll see that there is a demand for Russian. With the recent events in places such as Ukraine and Central Asia, the knowledge of Russian history, language and culture is becoming more important on a national level.

The students at Millersville stand to lose the most with the program's elimination. According to Mikhaleva, many of her students are science majors. This makes sense as Russia has long been known for the achievements of its scientists and mathematicians. Many students say they chose Russian because it is different and something more than what they could have taken in high school. Kevin Miller, a student of Russian at MU, wrote letters to his federal and state representatives about the issue, as well as President McNairy. Chris Colber and James Bowen, who are currently taking Russian 101, found out about the plans to eliminate the Russian program just recently. They were planning on continuing their study of Russian, and were rather upset by the administration's decision. I found myself in a similar situation. I have been studying Russian here since spring of 2003, and have had to jump all kinds of hurdles to declare a minor, which happens to still be on the books and is still being taught. Unfortunately, it appears that I may be the last one to graduate with a Russian minor. It is a shame that other students will be robbed of this opportunity.