

SCHOOL OF LITERATURES, CULTURES & LINGUISTICS



Students take to Athens for service-learning course with help of Reveliotis Family Hellenic Travel Scholarship

When you're a student, there are moments—both on and off-campus, both big and small—that you know will stick with you forever, even as you're experiencing them.

For one group of students at the University of Illinois, studying abroad in Athens, Greece with the help of the [Reveliotis Family Hellenic Travel Scholarship](#) was one of those key moments.

"It was so special to explore the country and see the different cultures and traditions," said [Janna Fouly](#), a senior majoring in social work. "I loved trying to learn the language and trying new foods. My experience was so good, I wanted to stay longer."

Fouly was one of five students who traveled to Athens this summer after receiving this year's Reveliotis Scholarship and one of four who participated in "Social Work 330/561," a two-week, international service-learning course based in Athens.

The award—which is supported by alumnus [George Reveliotis](#) (BA, '96, history) as part of his pledge of \$1.5 million to the Department of Classics—is given to Illinois students who have demonstrated scholastic excellence in classics and a keen interest in Hellenism.

While the trip abroad was memorable on its own, it was the service aspect that made it stand out to Fouly and her social work classmates. As part of "Social Work 330/561," they were able to

learn directly from four non-governmental organizations focused on the needs of refugees fleeing to Greece, ranging from social services, psychological support, educational support, and material support, such as providing food and clothing.

"We sat in on social work meetings and law and job appointments and were able to really see how they help these people," said [Alexis Tzortzis](#), a social work major with a minor in psychology. "It was eye-opening to see that we don't necessarily handle situations the same way—not that one is good, and one is bad, but it was just interesting and informative."

While Tzortzis and her classmates prepared for the experience by taking an eight-week course on Greek culture on campus, they said the cultural immersion is what turned it into a core memory. [Continued inside](#)



“It was an amazing experience,” said **Jessica Burgess**, a first-generation and returning student studying social work and anthropology. “I learned more about myself and the world, made lifelong friends, and gained [a new] perspective about my own potential to make change.”

She said that experience wouldn’t have been possible without financial support in the form of the Reveliotis Scholarship. Other recipients said the funds allowed them to fully enjoy their time abroad, without having to worry about finances.

Now, the students are taking what they learned and applying it to their future.

“I hope to continue to do work that increases the accessibility of resources to those who have typically been discouraged or disadvantaged,” said **Brooke Wilson**, a social work major with minors in public health and psychology. “Gaining insight into how a different culture does similar work will allow me to think outside of my U.S. cultural box in future work.”

That focus on improving intercultural competence was a common thread among the recipients.

“[This experience helped me] see that we will always have our own biases, but staying and continuing to be curious is more important,” said Foully. “[It helped me] build my cultural competence and my lens to learn and help more. I truly gained so much and will be taking everything I learned with me for the rest of my life.”

This year’s fifth Reveliotis Scholarship went to Kyriaki Karavasis, a Greek-American mechanical engineering major with minors in Spanish, Greek, and math. She attended the Lambda Project Standard Intensive Modern Greek Course in Athens to improve her Greek speaking skills and learn more about her culture.

To learn more about investing in the future of our students, please contact Ai Niemeyer at yamaguc2@illinois.edu.



Letter from the director

It was a year of change for our school, with transitions not just in leadership and staff, but also in the way we view the world and our community “post-pandemic.”

The beginning of the 2022-23 academic year saw the departure of director **Elena Delgado**, who served our school for three years with passion, dedication, and tireless commitment, and the assumption of interim leadership of **Antony Augoustakis** in the fall.

As I begin my own tenure as director alongside associate director **Ryan Shosted**, my focus is not only on our continued return to “normalcy,” but on looking toward the future and helping the school realize its potential.

The more I learned about the school while acting as interim director this spring, the more I saw that potential for the school to be an inclusive space for intellectual growth and community belonging for faculty, staff, and students. The opportunity I have been given to position the school as a leader in language-related research and pedagogy, as well as cultural, literary, and linguistics expertise, is an honor.

Our school saw another big change this past academic year. The building our school calls home, the Foreign Languages Building, is now the Literatures, Cultures & Linguistics Building. You can read more about the change on the next page, but I will say this: We are home to a diverse set of faculty, staff, and students, who research, teach, support, and study

literatures, cultures, and linguistics in the U.S. and around the world, and this name better represents that.

It is those faculty, staff, and students—who then turn into alumni—who make us who we are. Our school could not persevere through change, challenges, and crises without your support. My hope for this year is to make sure each one of you feels that gratitude, from the bottom of my heart.

To quote Marjorie Hass, “Leadership is an incredible privilege. It offers the opportunity and the responsibility to make meaningful, lasting change in your institution and therefore for generations of students” (A Leadership Guide for Women in Higher Education, 2021). To lead SLCL is an honor that I aim to fulfill with integrity, transparency, empathy, and a strong commitment to serve others.

Mariselle Meléndez
Professor of Spanish
Director SLCL

Colleagues honoring Dara Goldman and Bruce Rosenstock

Faculty and students in the School of Literatures, Cultures & Linguistics—and across campus—are celebrating the life and work of two late faculty members.

This spring, the Department of Spanish & Portuguese and the Program in Jewish Culture & Society hosted a tribute to **Dara Goldman**, professor of Spanish and director of the Program in Jewish Culture & Society, following her passing last year.

Friends and colleagues from various units attended the event, which consisted of the dedication of the Dara E. Goldman Collection in the Spanish & Portuguese Departmental Library—standing room only—and a lecture by author **Achy Obejas**.

The turnout is just one example of the immense impact Goldman had on campus.

“Dara had a dizzying array of affiliations with other units,” said **Melissa Bowles**, head of the Department of Spanish & Portuguese. “Dara was officially 100 percent Spanish & Portuguese, and officially zero percent in her other affiliated units. Even though those were zero percent appointments, she gave 100 percent of herself in everything she did.”

Dozens of people shared memories of Goldman during and ahead of the event, either in-person, via Zoom, or via written statements. It was an outpouring of love for the late professor, with common threads like a shared appreciation for Goldman’s warmth and friendship tying the speakers together,

and it was both melancholy and joyful.

“I do not want to remember Dara with sadness, because Dara was joy,” said **Elena Delgado**, professor of Spanish. “Dara was the most joyful person I’ve ever met. She brought joy to everybody who met her. Even in the most difficult circumstances, she tried to find something positive, something to look forward to, and something to celebrate.”

Delgado said having a space dedicated to Goldman’s memory is invaluable.

“[The fact] that we now have this place for her, dedicated to her and her memory, to her beautiful spirit, to her intellect, [is so] special,” said Delgado. “She may not be here in person, but her name and her memory will always be here with us, and in that room.”

This fall, the Department of Religion and the Program in Jewish Culture & Society will host an international conference honoring **Bruce Rosenstock**, professor of religion and director of graduate studies in the Department of Religion.

Rosenstock, who was known for his energetic and serious commitment to faculty issues and his active involvement in the mentoring of students within his department, passed away in January.

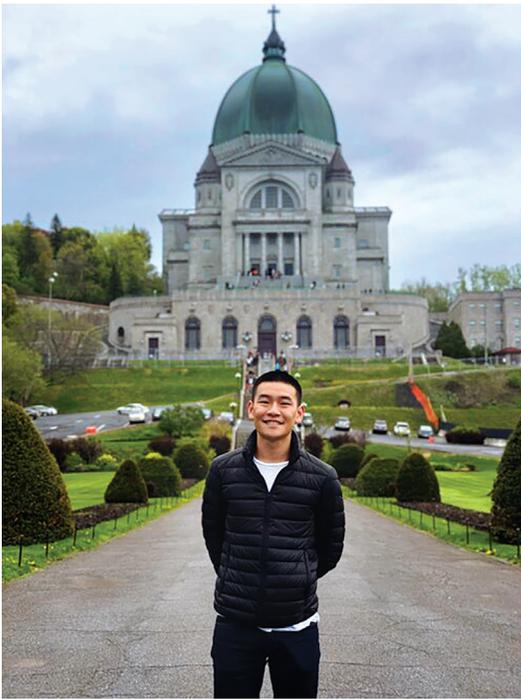
The conference celebrating his life and career will take place October 2, 2023, with a welcome dinner scheduled for October 1.



The home of the School of Literatures, Cultures & Linguistics officially has a new name

The Foreign Languages Building (FLB) is now the Literatures, Cultures & Linguistics Building (LCLB). Faculty, staff, and graduate students in the school decided on the new name in 2022, with a majority voting for the building to match the name of the school. The proposal to rename the building received final approval from the Board of Trustees this spring.

“We are comprised of 12 units that strongly focus on literatures, cultures, and languages throughout the U.S. and the world,” said **Mariselle Meléndez**, director of SLCL. “The board agreed with our recommendation that the name of the building better represent the wide range of interests that characterize teaching and research in SLCL.”



‘A WHOLE NEW WORLD’: *Change in study abroad plans leads to eye-opening experience*

Yang, whose research interests include Siberian Indigenous literatures and understanding Russian colonialism through Indigenous theory, was planning on learning Sakha—or Yakut, an Indigenous Turkic language of Siberia—in Yakutsk, a city in Siberia. Then the Russian invasion of Ukraine happened, and all U.S. funded programs to Russia were cancelled.

Instead of giving up on his plans, Yang improvised.

He decided to improve his Russian language skills instead and went to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan through Arizona State University’s Critical Language Institute. The country was part of the Soviet Union from 1919 until the collapse of the USSR in 1991.

“It was an eye-opening experience,” said Yang. “It opened a whole new world for me to practice and use the Russian language in a context outside of Russia. It was also interesting to see how the Kyrgyz people continue to use Russian but in a distinctly Kyrgyz way.”

That distinct language use is something that stuck with Yang, even a year after his experience.

“One of my biggest takeaways is [the importance] of being conscious of the history of imperial lingua francas, like Russian,” said Yang. “While Kyrgyzstan does designate Kyrgyz as an official language, Russian is still widely used. [This] allows foreigners to get to know the people and begin to appreciate the culture and history of the country, but if I could’ve done anything different, it would be to take advantage of being in the region and learn Kyrgyz alongside Russian.”

While he has fond memories of his travels to carry him through to his next trip—snapshots of Kyrgyzstan’s remote corners and the natural beauty of the mountainous Kyrgyz landscape—he said he does still carry that one regret.

“Next time, I would like to better connect with the people, history, and culture,” he said.

When Russia began its attack on Ukraine, colleges across the country recalled students already in those two countries and put future study abroad trips on hold.

More than a year after the invasion, the impacts of the war continue, including in the sphere of higher education. **Brian Yang**, a PhD student in the Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures, experienced one of those impacts first-hand in the summer of 2022 when he found his original study abroad plans were no longer possible.

UIUC and leading tech companies launch Speech Accessibility Project

The University of Illinois is leading a research initiative to make voice recognition technology more useful for people with diverse speech patterns and disabilities.

The Speech Accessibility Project launched last fall with cross-industry support from Amazon, Apple, Google, Meta, and Microsoft, as well as nonprofit organizations whose communities will benefit from this initiative.

While the project is happening at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, the Department of Linguistics is also playing a key role. Linguistics professor **Heejin Kim** is on the research team, and the project is being led by **Mark Hasegawa-Johnson**, an affiliate professor of linguistics.

The project began enrolling participants in March, with a focus on recruiting those with Parkinson’s for its first phase. Further phases are expected to begin this fall.



Members of the UIUC research team (Heejin Kim, second from left, and Mark Hasegawa-Johnson, right)



Providing a new kind of learning

A professor from the Department of Linguistics and an alumna from the Department of French & Italian are bringing virtual reality to underserved schools, with the help of a \$350,000 grant.

Professor **Randall Sadler** and **Tricia Thrasher** (MA, '18; PhD, '22; French) received the funds from Meta Platform Technologies—formerly known as Facebook—and Immerse, a virtual reality language learning platform. Their project will provide 500 headsets to nine schools in Illinois, Texas, and California, as well as training for teachers.

“Our expectation is to have an impact on thousands of students, because it won’t be just one teacher using these headsets five days a week,” said Sadler. “It’ll be spread out at the schools and among classes, and the cumulative impact, I think, will be pretty strong.”



Students address cycle of violence through staged reading

Speaking out about community violence, trauma, and injustice is never easy, but it’s especially daunting when you’re a teenager.

This spring, classics professor **Angeliki Tzanetou** gave high school students in Champaign-Urbana a platform to come together and discuss the impact of these issues in a more accessible way.

Following up on the success of last year’s staged reading of an urban adaptation of the Greek tragedy “Antigone,” Tzanetou and several collaborators organized a staged reading of Luis Alfaro’s “Electricidad” this year. The play transports the story of Electra—a Greek tragedy by Sophocles—to a

Chicano neighborhood and explores cycles of violence and paths to redemption.

Tzanetou said it was that shared focus on cycles of violence in young communities that made “Electricidad” the perfect sequel, but much of the project’s impact comes from the art of theater itself.

“I think theater is important for young people, especially at this time, because it gives them the opportunity to speak about not just their own struggles, but also political issues,” she said. “It gives them a place to come together with care to go over the issues, what it means to be stuck in a system if violence, and the trauma that results.”

SLCL faculty collaborate on multi-year ISBE project

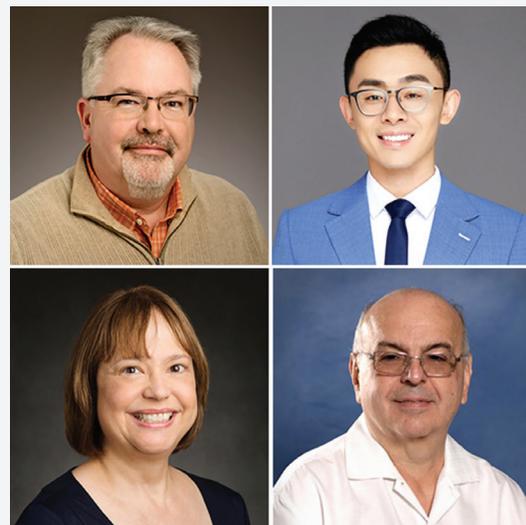
Faculty from Second Language Acquisition and Teacher Education (SLATE), the Department of Linguistics, and the Program in Translation and Interpreting Studies (TIS) are collaborating with the Illinois State Board of Education to develop a new online training program for interpreters.

The five-year, \$5 million project follows a recently enacted law that requires qualified interpreters to be present when teachers and parents meet to discuss individualized

education programs (IEPs) for students with special educational needs.

“K-12 kids who have IEPs and who come from a home where English is not the main language spoken will be much better served,” said **Joyce Tolliver**, director of TIS.

The program being developed at UIUC will establish language proficiency and train future interpreters in the ethics, protocols, and skills required for interpreting and translation.



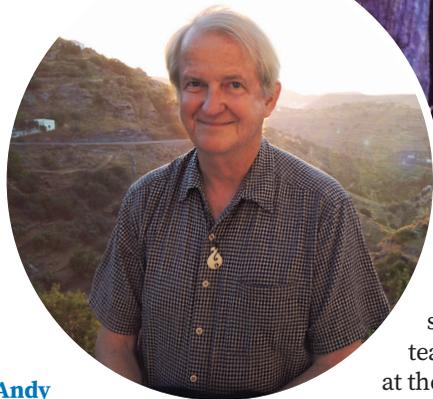
Left to right: Kiel Christianson, director of SLATE; Xun Yan, professor of linguistics; Joyce Tolliver, director of TIS; Reynaldo Pagura, professor of TIS

THE FIVE LOVES

of comparative literature alumnus
Andy Horton



Left to right: Andy Horton, director Bozidar Nikolic, and Brad Pitt



Not many people can say they once gave advice to Brad Pitt and mentored a student who went on to create a critically acclaimed TV series currently airing on Hulu. **Andy Horton** (PhD, '73, comparative literature & film studies) can.

A juggernaut in the film industry, there really isn't much Horton hasn't done in his life and career.

After graduating high school in 1966 during the Vietnam War, Horton was drafted and later received permission to teach in Greece. There, he fell in love three times. First, with Greece, then with teaching, and then with a Greek.

He found his fourth love at the University of Illinois.

"When I was looking at PhDs as I was finishing my master's, I talked to different people and they said you've got to go to the University of Illinois," he said. "They have a comparative literature degree, so you can combine the Greek culture more. I went and fell in love with [the program] immediately because of the courses and the teaching."

He found his fifth and final love when he went back to Greece to teach film—something no one else was really doing at the time, at least not in the university setting. That love was screenwriting.

He's since made a career out of writing screenplays, teaching—most notably at the University of Oklahoma, where he is the

Jeanne H. Smith Professor of Film and Video Studies Emeritus—and publishing books, but there's one project that stands out in a big way.

To set the scene: It was the late 80s, and Horton was working with a producer from the former Yugoslavia who had approached him with a jumble of an idea and asked him to turn it into a screenplay. He did. Then, he got the leading casting director in Hollywood involved.

"They chose this guy who was 23 and had been in a couple of TV shows," said Horton. "He was good."

That guy was **Brad Pitt**, and the movie was "The Dark Side of the Sun" (1988), Pitt's first feature film, which was filmed in Yugoslavia.

Horton was only able to be on the set for one week because of his teaching responsibilities, but it was a memorable seven days, both for him and Pitt.

"I'd been on different movie sets, so [the experience itself] wasn't really a surprise for me," recalled Horton. "It was more of a surprise for Brad, who wouldn't let go of me. He had been

trying to break into Hollywood, so I said, 'Hey, hang in there, and enjoy it. The world out there—there are so many opportunities outside of this.' I think that opened his mind—and just look what this guy has done."

While Brad Pitt is arguably the biggest name attached to Horton, he isn't his only success story. His most recent example is Sterlin Harjo, a former student from his time teaching in Oklahoma. Harjo created the Hulu series "Reservation Dogs," a comedy about four Native American teenagers growing up on a reservation in eastern Oklahoma.

"The world loves it. The New York Times, everybody loves the show," said Horton. "It's so honest and real, and everything about it is Native American. I'm so proud of him."

Horton said it was his time at the University of Illinois that inspired him to pay it forward and help others make a name for themselves.

"I give the University of Illinois the credit for helping me find my own little world at a big school," said Horton. "I had a lot of help from people at Illinois, so [I decided] I wanted to help students, too. Even now, as a retired professor who got his degree from Illinois and learned a lot in Greece, I'm happy I can continue to help people."

Shifting the narrative of the Black experience in America

Scholars work to diversify views of Black religious life in North America

When you think of Black religious history in America, one image likely comes to mind: the Black Church.

Scholars regard the Black Church as the oldest Black institution in the United States, one that has given Black people a space to worship on their own terms and work through shared questions about their future in this country.

While **Leonard Cornell McKinnis II** and **Alexia Williams**, professors of religion and African American studies, join religious scholars across the country in recognizing the strength of the Black

Church in history—they're also working to widen the narrative.

“Traditionally, when Americans describe the Black Church, they think of a Black, Protestant, male-led movement that is unified and has a shared sense of identity and sociopolitical destiny,” said Williams. “But really, there are so many diverse religious experiences among Black peoples in America. Focusing on the Black Church as a symbol of all Black religions makes it difficult to recognize traditions that didn't emerge from antebellum slavery.”

Both Williams and McKinnis are working to change that through their teaching and research.

North America, particularly within non-mainstream Christian churches.

Williams' work-in-progress—titled “Black Revolutionary Saints: Roman Catholicism and the U.S. Racial Imagination”—examines veneration of African Americans on the path to sainthood to understand how Roman Catholicism operates as a site of Black political organizing and cultural production.

Their ongoing—and necessarily disruptive work—is part of what makes them such impactful additions to the Department of Religion and campus as a whole.

Part of what we are up to as scholars is trying to complicate the story,” said McKinnis. “We are both trying to articulate a more comprehensive story of race, religion, and identity in America. Students at the U of I won't get that same one-dimensional story of the Black Church from us.”

It's that work and that mentality that **Jon Ebel**, head of the Department of Religion, finds most inspiring.

“They've been proposing and teaching new classes, teaching old classes in new ways, and traveling all over the country to deliver talks and to show colleagues from coast to coast how vibrant the study of religion is at Illinois,” said Ebel. “They inspire me and the rest of our faculty every day.”



McKinnis' new book, “The Black Coptic Church: Race and Imagination in a New Religion”—the result of a 10-year ethnographic study of the Black Coptic tradition—provides a more complex look at the diverse world of Black religious life in

Spanish students work to advance health equity

Isela Villasenor and **Brandon Snipe** are the first two students to participate in the Mayo Clinic & Illinois Alliance's new Health Equity Research Experience (HERE). It's a pilot program for Illinois undergraduate students interested in conducting health equity research in a biomedical setting.

Through HERE, Villasenor—a molecular & cellular biology and Spanish major—and Snipe—a community health major minoring in Spanish—are spending 10 weeks at Mayo

Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida, where they are working with their faculty mentors on health equity research and community-based projects.

“This experience will empower me with needed data and insight that I can use to effectively advocate for disenfranchised populations—especially those members of my community who have been denied the care they deserve for far too long,” said Villasenor.



ACHIEVEMENTS IN SLCL

SLCL students receive awards for study and teaching abroad

Six students and recent graduates from SLCL are studying and teaching around the world during the 2023-24 academic year with the help of various prestigious awards and scholarships.



DREW TO SPAIN

ALEXANDRA TO AUSTRIA

MATTHEW TO COLOMBIA

MAXINE TO INDIA

TINA TO TOKYO

JACQUELINE TO SOUTH KOREA

FULBRIGHT AWARDS

These grants allow students to pursue international education, research, and teaching experiences around the globe.

Drew Gooding (BS, '23 information systems and marketing) will go to Spain to teach English. They minored in English as a second language while at UIUC.

Alexandra Schneeberger (MA, '23, Germanic studies; BA, '21, Germanic languages and literatures) was offered a Fulbright student award but has instead accepted a U.S. teaching assistantship, administered by Fulbright Austria.

Matthew Schultz (BA '21, Spanish, French, and political science) will teach in Colombia.

BOREN AWARDS

These awards are funded by the National Security Education Program and provide students with an opportunity for intensive language study and cultural immersion.

Maxine Katz, a master's student in religion, will study Hindi through Boren's South Asian Flagship Languages Initiative, beginning with a summer program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, followed by a year at the American Institute of Indian Studies in Jaipur, India.

Tina Wayne, a senior majoring in political science and East Asian languages and cultures, will study Japanese at the University of Tokyo during the next academic year.

CRITICAL LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP

This program provides full scholarships to students to spend eight to 10 weeks abroad studying one of 14 critical languages.

Jacqueline Becerra, a senior double-majoring in English and linguistics and teaching English as a second language, was awarded a U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship to study advanced Korean abroad this summer.

College of LAS honors SLCL ALUMNI

Two alumni from SLCL departments were recently recognized by the College of LAS for the impact they've had on their fields and communities.

T. Markus Funk (BA, '91, Germanic languages and literatures; BS, '92, business administration) received the 2023 LAS Alumni Achievement Award.

He is a partner in the international law firm Perkins Coie and previously served as a federal prosecutor and with the U.S. Department of State.

Funk tracked numerous odd, high-profile cases during his time as a prosecutor, but the most defining was "Operation Family Secrets." Described as the largest mob murder case in U.S. history—the 1995 movie "Casino" was based on the charged criminal activities—the case was prosecuted by Mitch Mars, John Scully, and Funk, who was, at the time, the youngest and most junior member of the team.

"It's a case that I will never forget," said Funk.

From there, Funk took a two-year

side-tour to the Department of State, where he served as a section chief in post-war Kosovo. Now, he primarily conducts internal investigations as a partner at Perkins Coie, handling complex commercial litigation for clients from around the world.

"It's been a really varied career," said Funk. "[As for the] LAS Alumni Achievement Award, suffice it to say it's a great honor. Having your alma mater recognize you and think that there is something noteworthy about your life or your career is something I would imagine most people would love to experience. I am incredibly grateful for it."

Douglas H. Hoffman (BA, '75, religious studies) received the 2023 LAS Distinguished Service Award.

He has retired from a dual-faceted career as both a member and employee of Cboe Global Markets and is an active volunteer with the Program for Jewish Culture & Society.



Left: T. Markus Funk receives LAS Alumni Achievement Award from Venetria K. Patton, Harry E. Preble Dean of the College of LAS; Right: Douglas Hoffman



"I succeeded at a high level in business, both as an exchange member and manager because I was able to think deeply, analyze clearly, and speak and write with clarity, as a result of my education at Illinois," said Hoffman. "Now I'm in a position to pay back the Department of Religion. I want to spread the word of the valuable education offered there and champion the study of religion at Illinois."

Hoffman does this by sponsoring the Hoffman Family Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Study of Religion, which goes to an outstanding graduating senior in the department. He has also launched a fund to support a professor teaching topics of Judaism and hosts an annual dinner for all the department award recipients.

He is, as he says, "a cheerleader" for the department: engaging with students, speaking with faculty, and encouraging fellow alums to give.



William Bernhard, interim vice chancellor for academic affairs and provost, and Mariselle Meléndez

Mariselle Meléndez receives 2023 Campus Executive Officer Distinguished Leadership Award

Mariselle Meléndez, professor of Spanish and director of SLCL, has received the 2023 Campus Executive Officer Distinguished Leadership Award.

This award recognizes outstanding academic leadership and vision by an executive officer who has led

diverse groups through strategic improvements within their college or campus unit.

Meléndez, who previously served as the head of the Department of Spanish & Portuguese, was one of four faculty members honored by the Office of the Provost.

2023 SLCL AWARD WINNERS

The School of Literatures, Cultures & Linguistics is pleased to announce the recipients of this year's service, fellowship, and scholarship awards.



MARITA ROMINE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

This award honors a selected staff member for outstanding contributions to the school.

Jazmine Summerville,
East Asian languages & cultures
and Slavic languages & literatures

DISSERTATION COMPLETION FELLOWSHIPS

These awards provide advanced doctoral students with an academic year of support to complete their dissertations. These fellowships are supported by the generosity of Donald and Barbara Smalley and Edward McBroom.

Katie VanDyne, Spanish & Portuguese

Nicholas Rudman, classics

Julien Berthelon, French & Italian

Ping-Lin Chuang, linguistics

Lucía Sánchez-Gilbert, Spanish & Portuguese

Zachary Hader, Germanic languages & literatures

Katie VanDyne has also won the Kibbee Award, given to the dissertation project that is deemed to show particular scholarly significance and promise.

FRANCES E. SMITH SCHEIDEL SCHOLARSHIP

These awards are given to undergraduate students who have overcome significant hurdles to achieve academic success. This scholarship fund was established in 2007, thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Frances Scheidel.

Julia Barrientos, teaching of Spanish major

Amaiya Johnson, Spanish major

Caitlin Niesman, Spanish and mathematics major with bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) endorsements



“Yellow Peril Redux” listed as Chancellor’s Call to Action research project

A project focused on anti-Asian rhetoric known as “Yellow Peril” won a grant from the Chancellor’s Call to Action to Address Racism & Social Injustice Research Program for 2022-23.

“Yellow Peril Redux: From Coolies to Concentration Camps, Trade Wars, and Coronavirus” received \$75,000 in funding from the Chancellor’s Office.

The project, which was developed from a course in the Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures, follows a pandemic-inspired resurgence of this rhetoric and its consequences.

“The timeliness of the topic has greatly increased in recent years,” said project lead **Shao Dan**, professor of East Asian languages and cultures. “The longstanding bias, discrimination, and violence perpetrated against Asian Americans is more apparent in our current moment. We want to increase mutual understanding between not

only different ethnic and racial groups within the U.S. but also different languages and countries in this era of cross-cultural and transnational interactions.”

With the support of this grant, Dan’s team is creating an array of resources for the public, educators, researchers, and students at local, state, and national levels. They also ran a speaker series in the spring to raise awareness and stimulate discussion.

The ultimate goal is to identify, understand, and overcome the wrongs of anti-Asian racism.

“We hope to move beyond just documenting episodes of violence or misunderstanding and move toward a process of building tolerance, understanding, and common humanity,” said Dan.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN SLCL



FLTE rated exemplary by the Illinois State Board of Education

The Foreign Language Teacher Education program has been rated exemplary by the Illinois State Board of Education.

This is the highest rating offered in ISBE's report card for teacher education programs.

Each program is evaluated along four metrics: candidate selection, knowledge and skills for teaching, performance as classroom teachers, and contribution to state needs. FLTE's overall rating for its French, Latin, and Spanish programs was exemplary.



KATIE VANDYNE



VALERIA SOBOL

A professor and a graduate teaching assistant from SLCL are being honored for their dedication to student learning.

Professor **Valeria Sobol** from the Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures was selected for the Campus Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching after receiving the LAS Dean's Award in the same category.

This award recognizes sustained excellence in undergraduate teaching and contributions beyond classroom instruction that have a positive impact on student learning.

Professor and graduate teaching assistant recognized for excellence in undergraduate teaching

"This teaching award is one of the most amazing things that has happened to me professionally," said Sobol. "I'm very moved by the support I received from my colleagues and students during the nomination process."

Katie VanDyne, a graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Spanish & Portuguese, was also selected for the LAS Dean's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

VanDyne has taught 11 different courses in her six years with the

department, with a focus on undergraduate Spanish language and linguistics courses. While she hopes to impart a solid understanding of the content taught in these courses, it's not her only goal when she steps into the classroom.

"I hope my students connect with the language on a new level, ignited by their deeper knowledge of the structure of the language," said VanDyne. "I want students to feel more ownership and confidence towards (sometimes daunting!) topics like grammar."



SCHOOL OF LITERATURES, CULTURES & LINGUISTICS
707 S. MATHEWS AVENUE | URBANA, IL 61801



\$74,705

AVERAGE
STARTING
SALARY

94%

SECURED
THEIR FIRST
DESTINATION

LAS graduates remain successful at finding first destinations

An annual study of recent alumni reports that 94 percent of LAS alumni who graduated during the 2021-2022 period secured first destination jobs, continuing education, or volunteer/service positions within six months of commencement. 3,286 LAS alumni from the 2021-22 graduating class surveyed (roughly 53 percent of the total).

52%
found employment

42%
continuing
their education

>1%
pursued volunteer/
service opportunities