

SCHOOL OF LITERATURES, CULTURES & LINGUISTICS



A lifelong journey, not a destination

School hosts discussion on intercultural competence as part of new initiative

What is intercultural competence?

That's a question **Darla Deardorff**, executive director of the Association of International Education Administrators, has been exploring for the past decade. It's not a question with an easy answer, but during a virtual talk this year, Deardorff shared that it does have a clear and common goal: to bridge the gaps and divides that are growing within societies across the world.

"There's so much that is happening, certainly in the last two years, that we've all lived through, all the conflict and war that is happening around the world," said Deardorff.

That's why she believes intercultural competence is needed now more than ever.

"There's a need to build relationships, to ensure that we demonstrate respect, that people are being seen, heard, and appreciated. Intercultural competence is one way to do that," she said.

The talk, titled the Intercultural Competence Imperative, is the first in a new initiative from the School of Literatures, Cultures & Linguistics, which was created with support from the Presidential Initiative: Expanding the Impact of the Arts and Humanities. It's called the Intercultural Competence Initiative, and its goal is to drive the systematic integration of intercultural competence across the Illinois curriculum and make it a distinguishing component of the academic culture across campus.

If the term "intercultural competence" isn't familiar to you, you may have heard it phrased differently. There are more than 30 names for the concept, often depending on discipline.

Deardorff said what's important, though, is to understand what we mean by the terms we use, as well as what we're hoping to get out of an exchange. In the end, it all comes down to what Deardorff describes as the desired external outcome: behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately.

"If you want a short definition of intercultural competence, it's this," said Deardorff. "The effectiveness has to do with whether we've each met our goals or not, but the appropriateness is really where the competence part comes in. Did we meet [our goals] appropriately or not? It's very much about our interactions with others."

Deardorff covered a lot of ground in a short amount of time, including strategies and key questions to consider, specifically in a higher-education setting, but she said when all is said and done, it's about looking at intercultural competence as a lifelong journey, not a destination.

"This is a lifetime commitment," she said. "It's about every day, thinking about how we can live an intercultural lifestyle, to go toward that which we don't know, to be willing to stay with it in the long-term, to work through it, to understand that at the end of the day, it's about our shared humanity as fellow humans on this planet."



Boundless generosity: A tribute to Dara Goldman

The School of Literatures, Cultures & Linguistics is remembering **Dara Goldman**, professor of Spanish, following her unexpected loss this year.

Dara joined the Department of Spanish & Portuguese at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 1999 as a specialist in 19th and 20th century Latin American literatures and cultures. While her focus was the literature and culture of Cuba and Puerto Rico, she had a wealth of knowledge not only about the Hispanic world, but also

Latina/o studies and world literatures.

Her wide-ranging interests were reflected in her affiliations with the Program in Jewish Culture & Society, the Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies, the Program in Comparative & World Literature, the Department of Gender & Women's Studies, the Department of Latina/Latino Studies, the Unit for Criticism & Interpretative Theory, the Center for Global Studies, and the Women & Gender in Global Perspectives Program. *(continued on page 3)*



A year of recovery, growth, and finding kindred spirits

It was another year of unique challenges brought on by the pandemic, a year marked by change and loss, by new and old trials, but it was also a year of growth and perseverance.

Just as the world has adapted to the difficulties thrown its way, so has our school and our community. It is because of the hard work, dedication, talent, and innovation of our faculty, students, and staff that we have been able to not just stay the course but make significant strides towards our goals during **the 2021-22 academic year**.

Our intercultural competence initiative, supported by the Presidential Initiative: Expanding the Impact of the Arts and Humanities, is well underway. Our talk featuring **Darla Deardorff**, the

intercultural competence expert to whom we introduced you in our cover story, was just one piece of that puzzle.

Along with the Intercultural Competence Imperative, we offered two other workshops and webinars to continue the conversation. We held our first symposium in collaboration with the Humanities Research Institute, and we cosponsored a speaker series with The Center for Just Infrastructures.

We moved forward with efforts to provide students with the global skills needed to succeed in a 21st century workplace. We created small grants for the integration of intercultural competence into existing undergraduate courses, which will be electives for the intercultural competence certificate that is currently in development. The first pathway course for that certificate has already been created.

We've made a lot of progress, but there's always more work to be done. Our

initiative has been extended through December 2023 to allow us to complete our plans and continue to raise awareness about the need for intercultural competence in all fields of discipline and in all aspects of life, personal and professional.

It is because of the support of all our friends on and beyond campus – our colleagues, our alumni, our faculty and staff, and our students – that we have been able to advance our mission through every challenge and crisis. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your support and your friendship.

To quote author Leah Hager Cohen, “In this day . . . community has come to mean less a geographic neighborhood than a broader, sketchier network of colleagues and kindred spirits.”

Luisa Elena Delgado
Professor of Spanish
Director SLCL

LAS graduates remain successful at launching careers

An annual, university-wide study of the early career paths of recent U of I graduates reveals that new alumni from the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences remain successful in finding jobs and other first destinations within six months of graduation.



1,484

LAS 2020-2021
Graduates Surveyed
(roughly 43% of the total)



93%
Secured First
Destinations



\$63,045

Average Starting Salaries
(third highest amongst
all colleges on campus)



43%
Employed



50%
Continuing Education



>1%
Volunteering

(continued from page 1)

Remembering Dara Goldman

February 21, 1971 - May 13, 2022

In the past decade or so, she had started to work on Jewish cultural production in Cuba and had a part in shaping the evolving role of “diaspora” and diasporic studies in contemporary cultural studies. Those two topics were very close to her own life and identity.

Dara spoke Spanish like a native speaker, and many people thought she was Cuban or Puerto Rican. With her characteristic wit, she would often joke that she was a Jewish woman who took a wrong turn at diaspora. But jokes aside, she could be at the same time a Jewish woman from New Jersey and an adopted daughter of Puerto Rico and Cuba, two cultures she knew intimately and loved very deeply.

Her commitment to Jewish culture was evident not just in the crucial work she did as director of the Program in Jewish Culture & Society, but also in her social engagement. In her last trips to Cuba, Dara worked with the local populations and authorities to bring resources to Jewish communities in the island. In doing so, she helped build bridges between people with very different ideologies and beliefs.

Dara loved all kinds of music: from opera to reggaetón. In that, as in everything else, she was not bound by categories. Neither was she limited by hierarchies of taste. In the many well-deserved tributes written for her, various people referred to her love of dancing: she had numerous “dancing parties” at her house, where people from very different departments and disciplines came together to eat, laugh, and dance.

Dara had a profound sense of commitment to the academic communities she was a part of while she worked at the University of Illinois. Her service was extensive and covered all administrative areas. In this, as in everything she did, she acted with great selflessness, and purpose. Her generosity was boundless.



She taught a variety of courses in the Department of Spanish & Portuguese and was an outstanding teacher, selected for the List of Teachers Consistently Ranked as Excellent for more than 17 semesters. In fact, Dara always selflessly offered to teach any course that was most needed by our students so they could advance in their degrees.

The Department of Spanish & Portuguese will not

be the same without Dara. The school will not be the same either, nor the Program in Jewish Culture & Society, nor the university. Our loss is great, but we will remember Dara for the wonderful colleague, teacher, and friend that she was. She left her mark wherever she went and always did so with a great sense of humor. We were all enriched by her fierce intelligence, her collegiality, her generosity, and her joy. The echoes of her inimitable, hearty laughter will resonate within our halls for a long time.

Our clocks stopped suddenly at 4:45 p.m. Friday, May 13, 2022, when Dara’s heart gave out. She had given so much to so many, in her much too short life. And after all is said and done, it is her heart that we most remember, because she put so much of it into everything she did: her scholarship, her teaching, her mentoring, her love for her family and friends.

We know that Dara is now in a place full of music, laughter, beautiful words, love, and views of her beloved Caribbean Sea, where she can also watch over the family that she loved so much: her husband, Itai; her parents, Clifford and Karen; her sister, Elissa; and her in-laws.

Her memory is already, and will always be, a blessing for all of us.



Unique college experiences lead to unique paths after graduation

Students are often lumped into one all-encompassing category the moment they step foot on a college campus: 18-to 22-year-olds who are on the precipice of adulthood, preparing to make their marks on the world.

But for each student, the path to graduation is a unique one, even within the same school or college. What comes after graduation is often just as unique.

You don't have to look any further than **Kolten Conklen** (BA, '22, global studies and East Asian languages & literatures) and **Mimi Quinn** (BA, '22, Spanish) for an example.

Conklen is pursuing a PhD in sociology at the University of Southern California after receiving the Beinecke Scholarship, a highly competitive award that supports graduate studies in the arts, humanities, or social sciences.

His path was shaped by not just his dedication to learning, but also his passion for traveling and understanding the global world.

"I'm from rural Illinois, so I always felt like an outsider to that world, not coming from a big metropolitan area, a place that was full of diversity," said Conklen.

Conklen grew up watching PBS and travel shows, and until high school, that was how he toured the world and sparked that

passion for travel. He was a rotary youth exchange student and lived in South Korea his junior year of high school. Once he arrived at the U of I, he studied abroad twice more.

"I was actually studying abroad in South Korea when the pandemic started," said Conklen. "Social questions about rural/urban inequalities, migration, and xenophobia started rising, and since I had so much free time during the pandemic, I started to explore those. I think that's what signaled the switch to pursue graduate studies."

Quinn is also pursuing a graduate degree, but not in a field you would typically expect from a Spanish major and political science and business double minor. She's pursuing a master's degree in nursing at the University of Illinois Chicago.

Throughout her childhood, she dreamed of becoming a doctor – or a teacher, but mostly a doctor. She began studying Spanish in middle school, and when it was time to decide on a college major, she picked Spanish education.

"But by the end of freshman year, I realized I didn't want to teach Spanish the way I thought I did," said Quinn. "What I was really passionate about was being able to speak the language with other people."

She dropped the education part of her major and spent time exploring other

paths, but it wasn't until her junior year, when she had to have major surgery, that she came to terms with her desire to work in a medical environment.

Completing a Spanish major, two minors, and the prerequisites for a nursing program is no easy feat, but Quinn did it while on another journey, one of personal growth. She was a foster child, which put her in a different position from other students arriving on campus.

"It was the first time since my early childhood that I was in a place where no one knew me. It was interesting and difficult because I was so used to people knowing I was a foster child," said Quinn. "I started to grapple with this feeling of a lost identity, almost, because I didn't recognize how much that title of foster child had been attributed to me by other people, until I was in a place where no one knew."

Quinn said she did a lot more intentional soul-searching than the typical college student. It was that self-reflection that led to what she calls her biggest accomplishment.

"It really drove home and helped solidify within me a lot of my internal moral beliefs about the world and how we should treat other people," said Quinn. "Just being kind to other people, because you have no idea what they could be going through."

Dania De La Hoya



Language skills put to use among immigrant communities during pandemic

Navigating the pandemic hasn't been easy for anyone, but some communities have people like **Anthony Erlinger** and **Kathleen Flores** standing behind them.

Erlinger, a Spanish and global studies major, was a pandemic health navigator at Immigrant Services of Champaign-Urbana, and Flores, a Spanish and psychology major, worked at The Refugee Center in Champaign. They supported programs to help immigrant communities during the pandemic, often using their Spanish language skills to connect with clients. It was the course SPAN 232: Spanish in the community that served as the catalyst for their work, but it was their passion for service that inspired them to stay the course. "It really widens your perspective about who we are as a community and what we can continue to do to better ourselves," said Erlinger.

Recent SLCL graduates offered Fulbright grants

Five recent graduates from SLCL were offered Fulbright grants to pursue international education, research, and teaching experiences around the globe this coming year. They're among 16 UIUC students and recent graduates who were offered the grants.



Amanda Oversen, who graduated in December with a minor in Spanish, has been awarded a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Spain.

Janani Comar (MA, '19, religion) has accepted a Fulbright-Nehru Student Research grant to India.

Sophia Ebel (BA, '22, comparative literature and Germanic studies) was awarded a Fulbright combined award to Austria.

Jan Balan (BA, '22, teaching of Spanish) has received a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Spain.

Ksenia Polyarskaya, who graduated in May with minors in Spanish and English as a second language, has accepted a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Award to Kazakhstan.

Summer fellowship shines a light on severely endangered language

It was once used in the territory of today's Greece because of migrations. Now, the language of Arvanitika is classified as "severely endangered," and if the situation doesn't change, it might only have a few decades left before its extinction.

The old variety of Albanian isn't a commonly researched language, but it's the subject of Italian professor **Eda Derhemi's** summer faculty research fellowship from the Humanities Research Institute.



Derhemi is spending the summer conducting fieldwork in the small mountainous village of Zeriki. She's working with two sisters, 91 and 89 years old, who recreate, on a small scale, an actual "community" of Arvanitika speakers, which is impossible to find anywhere else in Greece today.



Students use Antigone adaptation to process community gun violence

High school is a time for growing and learning, but for many students, it's overshadowed by something no teenager should have to worry about: gun violence in their hallways and in their community.

It's not an easy thing to talk about, but classics professor **Angeliki Tzanetou** was determined to make it a little easier for students in Champaign-Urbana to share their experiences.

With help from collaborators, Tzanetou organized a staged reading and discussion of Nambi E. Kelley's *Xtigone*, an urban adaptation of *Antigone* that speaks directly to the trauma of gun violence and the need for change, as well as a series of workshops for students.

"It was amazing," said Tzanetou. "(The students) came together as a group and found it empowering to be able to talk about gun violence. They spoke about wanting to bring about change—emphasizing that nothing has changed in a long time."



Army veteran and translation & interpreting studies alumnus finds success in literary translation

Hadi Umayra's (MA, '18, translation & interpreting studies) life doesn't look much

like it did a decade ago, but there's been one constant throughout the years: his passion for language and translation.

Born and raised in Iraq, Umayra's journey with the English language and English literature has been a long one, taking him from his homeland, to the U.S. Army, to UIUC, and finally to a successful career in literary translation.

One example of that success is Umayra's nomination for the Pushcart Prize, which honors the best literary works published in the small presses over the previous year. Umayra said the recognition came with an indescribable feeling.

"I felt I had wings and flew into the sky," he said.

Achievements in SLCL



Professor's novel weaves clues to a mysterious disappearance with whales trying to save the planet

"Rare Stuff," the debut novel of

Brett Ashley Kaplan, tells the story of a daughter's search for answers about her mother's disappearance, as well as a magical realism tale of Yiddish-speaking whales trying to save the planet.

The novel's subjects may seem far removed from the academic work of Kaplan, a professor of comparative & world literature and the director of the Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies, but its themes and literary references connect with her research interests.

"A lot of traces of my Jewish studies scholarship are in the novel. My academic work is inflected with stories of loss and questions of genocide and the history of the disappearance of Yiddish, which itself is both about assimilation and Nazi genocide," Kaplan said.

Germanic languages & literatures professor named director of Campus Honors Program



Laurie Johnson, professor of Germanic languages & literatures, is the new director of the Campus Honors Program (CHP).

Johnson had been serving as interim director of the program, which enrolls approximately 600 students and offers about 50 courses per year, since May 2021.

"Our students represent all colleges and a huge variety of majors on campus. The chance to work in a student-facing, campus-level program was irresistible," said Johnson.

SLCL faculty members receive Campus Awards for Excellence

The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & Provost is honoring three SLCL faculty members for their service to campus and devotion to student learning.



Raquel Castro Goebel, a professor in the Department of Spanish & Portuguese and the director of the Portuguese language program, and **Daniel Leon**, a professor in the Department of Classics, received the Campus Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.



Florencia Henshaw, director of advanced Spanish in the Department of Spanish & Portuguese, received the Campus Award for Excellence in Online & Distance Teaching.



José Ignacio Hualde, a professor in the Department of Spanish & Portuguese, received the Illinois Student Government Teaching Excellence Award.

Jude Krushnowski named new director of FLTE



The Foreign Language Teacher Education program has a new director. **Jude Krushnowski** (BS, '10, psychology and Hispanic linguistics; MA, '19, linguistics)

will be taking over the role after serving as interim co-director of the

program with Florencia Henshaw during the 2021-22 academic year. His vision for the program aligns with areas of high priority for SLCL and the College of LAS, including expanding the program and increasing visibility with a focus on recruiting students of diverse backgrounds.

"I am excited for the work of promoting the program and helping it grow," said Krushnowski. "The pandemic has presented challenges in terms of enrollment, so there is much to be done, but this also presents opportunities."

SLCL students receive Critical Language Scholarships

Two SLCL students were awarded U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarships to study foreign languages this summer.



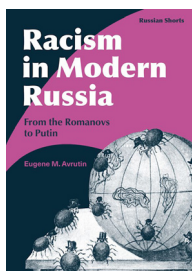
Caleb Apperson, an East Asian languages & cultures major, was offered a Critical Language Scholarship to study Chinese. His goal is to become a foreign service officer with the State Department.



Dahlia Davis, a double major in linguistics and East Asian languages & cultures, was offered a Critical Language Scholarship to

study Korean. She aspires to work on Korean unification issues within a government agency.

The scholarship program is part of a U.S. initiative to expand the number of Americans studying and mastering critical foreign language and cultural skills to enable them to contribute to U.S. economic competitiveness and national security.



Professor's book examines racism in Russia

Russia, under President Vladimir Putin's administration, is perhaps the most dangerous country for racial violence in the world, according to history professor **Eugene Avrutin**, an affiliate in the Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures.

That wasn't always the case. In his new book, "Racism in Modern Russia: From the Romanovs to Putin," Avrutin explores the history of racism in Russia over the past 150 years. Until recently, scholars have dismissed the wider impact of race-based thought and practices, Avrutin wrote. That's because Soviet Russia promoted a social utopia based on equality, with a single national identity.

"But by rejecting the premise that an individual could belong to multiple identities, the state's classification system primed people to see the world in unambiguous racial terms," he wrote.

Fast forwarding to today, and contemporary Russia has seen an upsurge in racial violence and xenophobic attitudes. Several factors, including the uneven economic recovery and anxieties over an influx of migrants, have contributed to this racial strife, Avrutin said.

Department marks 50 years of the study of religion at U of I

Back in 1973, it was unclear what the study of religion would contribute to a state-run university. Fifty years later, the Department of Religion is filling an important and growing role at the U of I.

Today, students can study Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism full-time at the university, and last fall, the department received its largest donation ever: \$1 million to establish a program in Jain studies.



It's collaborating with the College of Veterinary Medicine to offer students a wider perspective in their work with animals, and other similar partnerships are in the works.

"We heal and support people better when we understand something about their religious perspectives," department head **Jon Ebel** said. "So, what we hope to do is help train better, more religiously alert, religiously sensitive, doctors, nurses, veterinarians, and over time expand these types of offerings into other corners of the university."

See more about the study of religion at U of I in the Fall 2022 issue of "The Quadrangle," which will reach your mailbox soon.

Classics donor receives special service award

University of Illinois alumnus **George Reveliotis** (BA, '96) received the 2020 Special Service Award from the Classical Association of the Middle West and South at the group's annual meeting, held in person this year at Wake Forest University in North Carolina.

Reveliotis donated \$1.5 million to the Department of the Classics in 2019 and received the LAS Quadrangle



Award in 2020. Classics professor Antony Augoustakis, pictured here, read the citation at the award presentation.

2022 SLCL Award Winners

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

Xiaohui Zhang Diversity & Community Engagement Award

- Amber Dunse,
English as a second language
- Ky Merkley,
Classics

SLCL Diversity & Engagement Award

- Jude Krushnowski,
Foreign Language Teacher Education

Marita Romine Distinguished Service Award

- Robb Larson,
Student Services

2022-2023 Dissertation Completion Fellowships

- Zhi-Ling Lien,
East Asian languages & cultures
- John Slattery,
Germanic languages & literatures
- Gorrety Wawire,
linguistics
- Mary Casey,
comparative & world literature
- Wafa Abdulla,
linguistics
- Miren Antón Lobato,
Spanish & Portuguese
- Lingxiao Zhou,
East Asian languages & cultures



The gifts to last a lifetime

In honor of those who helped her earn a degree at UIUC, Amy Seetoo (司徒達森) assists students studying the teaching of English as a second language

For more than 150 years, Chinese students have traveled to the U.S. seeking higher education. The Seetoo family has followed that tradition for nearly as long.

The first Seetoo in America—the grandfather of U of I graduate **Amy Seetoo** (司徒達森) (MA, '70, teaching English as a second language)—was **Fucheng Seetoo** (司徒傳權, 字夢岩), who arrived 118 years ago. He left Shanghai at the age of 16 and docked in Massachusetts in 1904. By 1914, he had graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Amy Seetoo learned of her grandfather's accomplishments at an early age from her father, **Chin Cheng (C.C.) Seetoo** (司徒金城). The stories he told were "gifts to last a lifetime," she said.

And she made good use of those gifts. With her family's accomplishments and wishes for her in mind, she left her birthplace of Taipei, Taiwan, for Champaign-Urbana. In 1970, she graduated from the U of I with a master's degree in teaching English as a second language.

In her career, Amy Seetoo has served as a reference librarian at U of I, a manager at University Microfilms (the predecessor of ProQuest), and as an interpreter for medical clinics and courts in Michigan. She has managed rental properties for more than 30 years.

"What I learned at UIUC from the TESL program was the importance of cross-cultural communication," Seetoo said. "One may know how to write a good sentence, read widely, and pronounce words correctly, but one still has to be well versed in the culture—the unspoken part—of the English-speaking society in order to communicate effectively."



Seetoo believes TESL teachers, in addition to teaching the language itself, should teach aspects of day-to-day culture to help students succeed in English-speaking countries. That's why Seetoo has established the C.C. Seetoo Family Scholarship Fund to benefit graduate students at UIUC.

She said those who receive and benefit from the award have her father, her mother, and her grandfather to thank: "I have been so nurtured and inspired by them that I'll be remiss if I don't do anything to honor them."

To learn more about investing in the future of our students, please contact Paul Winterbotham at paulww@illinois.edu.