Dear students, alumni, colleagues and friends:

There is a saying that change is inevitable. There are times when we receive it with open arms for the new opportunities and challenges that it brings. There are times, however, when it makes us nervous or leaves us wishing it wouldn’t come. Nonetheless, it is true that change is indeed inevitable.

In the spring of 2012 and fall of 2013, Dr. Eva Santos Phillips and Dr. Dominique Thevenin announced their respective retirements (see our current and previous Polyglot newsletters) and with these two big changes we lost more than 40 years of expertise and dedication as well as valued colleagues. However, we were fortunate to be able to welcome Dr. Bibiana Santos Phillips and Dr. Kelly Biers (French) just this fall who look to continue the years of excellence and collegiality that Eva and Dominique provided to their students and colleagues. What is more, we were also very fortunate to welcome Dr. Kaishan Kong, our first ever tenure-track professor of Chinese studies here at UWEC. In this current edition of the Polyglot you will have the chance to meet our new colleagues and learn a little about them.

It is with very mixed emotions, however, that we confront the news of change for one person who has been, for the last 19 years, the foundation of our department. On October 31 of this current semester, Judy Ramsey let me know that she was going to retire as of January 2, 2015 (see article inside). At first I was hoping that it was a “trick or treat” effort on her part. However, after weighing the pros and cons of retirement, Judy had no tricks up her sleeve and she realized that the time for this momentous decision was right. It is true that change is inevitable and we will find someone else who, eventually, will become what Judy has been throughout these years for our department. Nonetheless, we will all miss her very much. I know that in my few years as department chair, Judy is the one who daily made my work easier, seamless, and productive. What is most important, however, is that Judy has been the welcoming and caring face of our department for so many people — current faculty and staff, current and prospective students, and the university population in general — during the past two decades.

She looks forward to more time with her husband Ed and their children and grandchildren and we wish her nothing but the best in the years to come. There will be someone who will take her place in the department. But Judy will never be replaced.

I encourage all of you who had the opportunity and the pleasure to work with Judy, as a colleague or a student, to contact her and wish her the best in this new stage of her life. You can email or send her a letter here at the Department of Languages. We’ll make sure that it gets to her!

Carter Smith, Chair 
Department of Languages

The International LLC at UWEC

An International Living Learning Community (LLC) has been established this year for international students and American domestic student roommates in the Towers South Residence Hall. Most of the students on the floor signed up for the experience when they first signed up for housing here at UWEC, and so they were excited for this great opportunity. Overall, everyone on the floor has learned a great deal about other cultures and how to get along and enjoy living with people who are both different and very similar to themselves.

As a floor they have already done some really cool things, such as having cross-cultural dinners, playing on a floor volleyball team, and going to a family farm for a picnic. Recently, domestic students had the opportunity to support their friends from around the world at the International Folk Fair held in the Davies Center. Last weekend the students enjoyed a Thanksgiving dinner held at a nearby church — it was a blast, and the international students really loved all the new food they experienced!

Here are some comments on living in the International LLC from Heath Hill, the LLC programmer: “The overall atmosphere of our floor is one of inclusion to an extent that I was not expecting before the year began. Students of all cultures hang out together in a genuinely friendly environment, studying or playing sports, or whatever else comes up in the college life on campus. It is such a gift to be neighbors with people from Brazil, China, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Japan, and Thailand! And to be such good friends and learn about...”

(continued on page 5)
Trees and creek banks stained black with petroleum. Lakes too polluted to fish. Villagers suffering skin and organ ailments associated with contaminated water.

This was just part of the evidence Shauna Stoeger (2012 Spanish Business major) uncovered when she spent four months in remote Amazonian villages to investigate the effects of oil drilling on local people and their environment. Now she says, she’s hoping to publish the master’s thesis she wrote as an Florida Golf Coast University graduate student so she can spread the word and help the people whose lives and way of life may have been tainted by poorly maintained oil pipelines.

“In the long run, I want to start a nonprofit to raise money to bring professionals down to the area for health testing, water and soil testing and healthcare services,” says Stoeger. “I want to do more studies that the people (in Peru) can use to demand change.”

Thomas Mackey, an adjunct instructor in Forensic Studies who advised Stoeger and helped her raise $6,000 for the project, called her research “groundbreaking.”

“A peer journal will jump on publishing this piece,” he says. “Shauna discovered some things and answered some questions and at the same time raised a number of other questions. Good research does that. With increased awareness, our hopes are that the world will recognize the challenges the indigenous peoples of Peru face. Tragically, they lack a voice.”

The issue is just beginning to make headlines outside South America. Last April, about 500 indigenous protesters occupied Peru’s biggest oil field in the Amazon rainforest near Ecuador to demand the clean-up of decades of contamination from spilled crude, according to news reports. Over the past year, the Peruvian government has declared three environmental emergencies in large areas of Amazonian rainforest after finding dangerous levels of pollution.

Peru is the seventh-largest crude oil reserve holder in Central and South America, and much of its oil lies deep in the Amazon region. Since 2003, nearly three-quarters of the Peruvian Amazon has been leased to international oil companies, according to the nonprofit Amazon Watch, which works to protect rainforests and human rights.

Stoeger first saw evidence of environmental damage and community health problems when she traveled to Peru to do research as an undergrad majoring in psychology and Spanish at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. She returned a year later to work as an interpreter.

“Being there two years in a row, I saw how many issues there are related to oil drilling – environmental issues, human rights abuses, crime,” she says.

Here is an excerpt from Shauna Stoeger’s master’s thesis, “Impact on Rural and Indigenous Populations by Oil Corporations in Peruvian Amazon”:

The Peruvian Amazon contains about 10 percent of the world’s biodiversity, making it an important biological zone. It is also home to multitudes of indigenous groups that have traditionally lived harmoniously with the environment. Within the past several decades, oil corporations have started extracting oil in areas overlapping traditionally indigenous lands. Due to this overlap, there have been complaints of environmental and human rights abuses that have gone underreported and under researched.

This research examined the question “Do oil companies in the Peruvian Amazon increase environmental and human rights abuses?” The research found that oil companies do correlate with higher instances of environmental contamination and a significantly changed lifestyle, although further studies would have to be done to determine the source of health issues to further analyze the question of human rights abuses related to oil.

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**Grad Student Investigates How Wisconsin Accent Has Changed Over Time**

**Fox Says How Wisconsinites Talk Corresponds With Shifts In Culture**

*Adapted from Wisconsin Public Radio website, original article by Christie Taylor*

A former Wisconsinite who has spent the last seven years researching the Wisconsin accent says that looking at how people talk can be a way of tracking changes in culture from generation to generation.

Michael Fox, a graduate student at North Carolina State University and a University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Japanese alumnus, said on Monday that the Wisconsin accent is changing as time passes. For example, one new trend involves the merger of the “aw” and “ah” vowels, so words like “cot” and “caught” sound the same.

(continued on page 4)
German professor honored for commitment to students

EAU CLAIRE — Dr. Martina Lindseth, a professor of German in the department of languages, is the 2014-15 recipient of the Maxwell Schoenfeld Distinguished Professorship at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

The professorship recognizes a faculty member’s commitment to the university, achievement in scholarship and commitment to student learning and life.

“It is a great honor to have received this award and to see my name added to the list of all the amazing past recipients,” Lindseth said. “Throughout my career at UW-Eau Claire, I have strived to sustain a meaningful relationship among my teaching, scholarship and service, and to assume leadership roles in these areas on university, UW System and national levels. This award is special because it acknowledges the importance of this relationship. In a special way, this award recognizes the Power of AND.”

Lindseth’s ability to successfully combine her scholarship, teaching and commitment to students makes her a highly valued member of the university community, said Dr. Carter Smith, chair of the department of languages.

“Dr. Lindseth’s scholarship, teaching expertise and commitment to the students of the German program are uniquely intertwined and work so closely together that, were they to be separated, each part would suffer,” Smith said. “Her work demonstrates quality and a very high commitment to the institution and to the students. Not only is she an internationally recognized scholar in the field of oral proficiency, she is also a top-notch instructor.”

Lindseth, an expert in the area of second language acquisition and oral proficiency development, has published articles in national and international journals. Since 2005, she has been a certified oral proficiency tester for the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Public and private entities all across the world use testers like Lindseth to rate a candidate’s language proficiency in a second language.

In 2011, Lindseth received the distinction of ACTFL OPI Trainer in German and English, allowing her to train and mentor faculty at UW-Eau Claire and elsewhere in the United States in oral proficiency assessment and curriculum development. In 2012, the director of the ACTFL Professional Programs promoted her to the Quality Assurance Team, a five-member team that oversees national initiatives to support the entire network of testers and raters, and to maintain ACTFL standards for inter-rater reliability. Lindseth is one of only three ACTFL-certified Oral Proficiency Trainers in German in the country.

Working with her colleagues, Lindseth spearheaded a recent initiative to reform the German curriculum at UW-Eau Claire. Since the changes were implemented three years ago, there has been an almost 40 percent increase in the number of students with German majors and minors on campus.

“Martina was my mentor when I arrived at UW-Eau Claire and she continues to hold that role even now in my career,” said Dr. Josh Brown, assistant professor of German. “I would be lost without her wise guidance and steadfast support. Colleagues consistently seek out her expertise on language pedagogy and classroom management; students are drawn to the pleasurable and challenging classroom atmosphere that she creates.”

Lindseth will use the funds awarded with the Max Schoenfeld Distinguished Professorship to travel to Germany to collaborate with leading European scholars at Leipzig University on the study of language acquisition and assessment. She also plans to attend a workshop at Stanford University relating to the development and assessment of writing proficiency, gathering new ideas to further enhance UW-Eau Claire courses.

The award is named for Dr. Maxwell Schoenfeld, a respected history professor and scholar who taught at UW-Eau Claire from 1964-96. It is funded by the UW-Eau Claire Foundation.

DR. BROWN RECEIVES GERMAN EMBASSY TEACHER OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

Dr. Josh Brown has been selected as one of three German Embassy Teacher of Excellence Award recipients nationally for 2014. This annual award recognizes outstanding young university faculty members and schoolteachers who are engaged in innovative teaching and successful program building and reform — and who are actively involved in the work of their local chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG).

In Brown’s three years at UW-Eau Claire he has worked with his colleagues in German to increase the number of German majors and minors by more than 30 percent and to reform and streamline the curriculum. He also has authored and edited several important books and articles on the Amish, Mennonites and Hutterites, especially relating to their diversity and changing narratives as early German-speaking immigrants in America. Brown also has published significant articles on German language pedagogy as well as more broadly on language and gender identity. In addition to his work in German, he is an affiliate faculty member in women’s studies and a member of the campus LGBTQ Advisory Board.

Brown was honored during the awards presentation at the AATG Annual Meeting held in conjunction with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Annual Convention and World Languages Expo Nov. 22 in San Antonio, Texas. His award includes an all-expense-paid immersion trip to Germany to participate in a professional development seminar for German faculty.
Welcome New Faculty!
Department of Languages welcomes French, Spanish and Chinese instructors

The Department of Languages welcomed three new long-term faculty members this fall. We asked each of them to introduce themselves to our readers, and here we present these introductions.

Dr. Kelly Biers, French Instructor:
Dr. Kelly Biers is a recent graduate of Indiana University-Bloomington, with a Ph.D. in French linguistics. He has taught a variety of introductory French courses at IU as well as a conversational practice course that incorporated French films. He also taught for a study-abroad program for high school honors students throughout the state of Indiana. These students spent six weeks in Saumur, France learning French through coursework, a homestay experience, and various excursions. Kelly taught a French culture course for this program for three summers, and fulfilled various administrative duties.

Kelly’s research is focused primarily on French sociolinguistics, with an interest in the relationship between language and gender. His dissertation, Gender and Interlocutor Effects in French, explores the role that gender plays in conversational interaction, especially concerning the use of speech features that are stereotypically considered feminine. In addition to further work on this topic, his current research includes two collaborative projects with students. The first of these concerns the relationship between gender and student motivation in learning French pronunciation. The second is a project to study and promote Eastern Wisconsin Walloon, a linguistic variety that is related to French and that was brought over to the United States by Belgian immigrants. Kelly is elated to have found so many students at UW-EC with an interest in French linguistics and gaining research experience, and to have the opportunity to provide hands-on training within his fields of interest.

Dr. Bibiana Fuentes, Assistant Professor of Spanish:
I worked at UWEC from 2002 to 2005 as a Spanish lecturer in the department of Languages. Thanks to this department’s intellectual environment I was able to explore my interests and continue to pursue my professional goals. After working at UWEC, I went to pursue my Masters at Marquette University and was awarded a PhD in Hispanic Cultural and Literary Studies from the University of Illinois at Chicago in August 2013. I am very excited to return to a department that has had such an impact on my professional decisions. This semester I have had the chance to reconnect with old friends and make new ones both within the department and across the university. Everyone has been extremely supportive and welcoming. Furthermore, I have had many rewarding experiences, for example, having the opportunity to meet and interact with this year’s LAS week keynote speaker Juanita Jiménez. It has been wonderful to work with the Spanish Club and meet so many students who are both interested in and excited to learn more about the Spanish-speaking world. I have had excellent students this fall and I am looking forward to teaching a Latin American novel course in the spring. I currently live in Chippewa falls in a beautiful and quite neighborhood, it is the perfect environment to be with a book and cup of Colombian coffee. Right now I am immersed in Argentinian writer Alan Pauls’ literary universe. It will keep me warm until the winter break when I go home to Colombia to spend the holidays with family and friends. Happy holidays! — Bibiana

Dr. Kaishan Kong, Assistant Professor of Chinese:
你好(nǐ hǎo)!
My name is Kaishan Kong (孔凯珊) and I am a new faculty member of the department! I feel very fortunate to join this community and embrace the opportunity of building a Chinese program in UW-EC. I came from the south part of China—Guangdong province (originally called Canton), so I speak both Mandarin and Cantonese. If you wonder where Guangdong is, you may look at a map of China, the shape of which looks like a chicken, and Guangdong is the chicken’s feet. To make it more memorable, Guangdong is famous for the snack chicken feet, in addition to being the birthplace of Kungfu and its dim sum culture.

I received my undergraduate education in China and majored in English, and later received my Master’s Degree in Intercultural Communication in England. While I was in China, I taught various English courses at college level for five years and was involved in building multiple study abroad programs. Since my immigration to the U.S. in 2009, I not only attained my doctoral degree in Second Languages and Cultures Education at University of Minnesota, but I also accumulated several years of experience in teaching Chinese language and culture to various communities, including K-12 students, business professionals, and community members. I have great admiration for language professors because their roles go beyond producing language speakers—they nurture cultural communicators. I want to be one of those professors!

Grad Student Investigates How Wisconsin Accent Has Changed Over Time
(continued from page 2)

These changes also follow patterns: women are faster to pick up innovations in accents than men, for example, and older people are less likely to alter their accents even as regions change.

“It takes generations for (changes) to be fully adopted by a particular community,” Fox said.

Fox also said that transportation pathways can be part of how accents travel. In his research of the Eau Claire area, he looked at the effects of travel along Interstate 94 between the Twin Cities and Madison as one influence on the area’s changing accents.

By looking at changes in accents, Fox said, researchers could also track local culture.

“Language is a social tool that we use every day,” he said. “It’s how we transmit, how we interact with people, how we conduct the majority of our everyday lives.”

He added: “In order to understand social behavior, we have to understand the meanings behind why we speak a certain way.”
Goodbye Judy! We will miss you!

On January 2, 2015, Judy Ramsey, our Academic Department Associate of over 20 years, will be retiring. Her helpfulness, amazing problem solving abilities, thoughtfulness, upbeat nature, and smile will be missed by us all. When our newsletter staff asked the department faculty to send us fond memories of Judy and tell us what they would miss most about her, we were overwhelmed with the kind words that came pouring into our email box. As one professor says, “I can’t tell the number of times that I have seen her go above and beyond her job description to make things in the department run smoothly nor the number of times that I have seen her reach out to a colleague, who was having a bad day, with a kind word.” Another professor tells us, “Her constant cheerful attitude always brightens my day.”

Judy says this is the perfect time to start her retirement, as she is in good health and will have a chance to enjoy herself. She assures us that retirement will not entirely be restful, saying, “I will keep myself busy.” She looks forward to spending time with her two grandsons, one of whom is less than two months old. When asked what she will miss about UWEC, she replied, “Most of all I will miss the wonderful people I work with;” adding, with a slight smile and wink, “and the four flights of steps that keep me moving.” She says she will also miss “the wonderful international foods at potlucks.” During her two decades in our department Judy has thoroughly enjoyed working with UWEC students on a daily basis, she says “The students we get here are really great students.” She has also enjoyed hearing the wide variety of languages spoken in the department, adding, “Even though I don’t speak the languages. It’s been so much fun hearing them.”

We will all miss you Judy, and we wish you all the best. This final quote from one of our faculty members summarizes what we are feeling right now and what we will most likely be thinking in the semesters ahead, “Judy is the sunshine of our Department… I will miss her professionally and personally. But I know that everyday I will think of her as I try to fix my problems by asking myself: ‘What would Judy do?’ ”

Dr. Dominique Thévenin’s Retirement

Our dear colleague, Dr. Dominique Thévenin, announced her retirement last fall, 2013, and made it official this past spring, 2014. Dominique came to UWEC in the fall of 1987 directly after having finished her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. During her long and productive career here, she taught practically every French course in the curriculum, and shared with some three thousand students her deep passion for the language, as well as for the culture, civilization and cinema of her native France and other Francophone countries.

Dr. Thévenin presented at numerous regional, national and international conferences on French literature and pedagogical issues related to the teaching of civilization, cinema and literature in the language classroom. She led many semester abroad programs in France, was a faculty mentor for the French Club and Honor Society, served as the French section head for many years and as Chair of the Departmental Personnel Committee for three years, and was an active, knowledgeable, and caring advisor for countless French majors and minors.

While we miss her in the department, we know that she is enjoying her retirement filling time with such pleasures as cooking and travel, and that she continues to stay active in scholarly ventures since a book review of hers was published just this past October in The French Review. Still, the department is not quite the same without Dr. Thévenin’s ringing “Bonjour!” every morning, her singing French accent when she spoke English, and generally, her cheerful presence.

Au revoir, Dominique!

The International LLC at UWEC

(continued from front page)

others’ cultures is amazing. The residents on the floor are more than comfortable spending time together, across cultures and genders, and it is noticeable considering the amount of time they do so. I am looking forward to doing some fun events in the snow with the residents such as sledding/tubing, or just going outside to have snowball fights. For many of them, the first snow they ever see will be this year. This community has been exciting to live in and it is such a great opportunity to meet and become friends with very unique and friendly individuals from around the world. The pictures are of our Pumpkin Carving event that we had a couple weeks before Halloween this year. Our hallway was very decorative and many students said they enjoyed carving pumpkins because it was their first time!”

The International LLC

The International LLC is a learning community located in the lower level of the Sunnyside Residence Hall. It is an LLC that provides a diverse learning environment for students from all over the world. The International LLC is a community that celebrates diversity and encourages cross-cultural interactions. The residents of the International LLC are from many different countries, and they come together to learn about each other’s cultures and to celebrate their shared experiences. The International LLC provides a supportive community for students from different countries, and it helps them to feel comfortable and welcome on campus.

It is a unique learning experience that provides opportunities for students to learn about different cultures and to develop cross-cultural skills. The International LLC is an important part of the UWEC community, and it helps to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students.
After two weeks of immersion in the Spanish language, 7-year-old Kaylee Schneider said she can read books, count and identify colors and foods in Spanish for the first time.

"I learned how to read in Spanish because all the books are in Spanish," Kaylee said, holding up a book in the "biblioteca," or library, section of the classroom.

More than 100 students participated in Bilingual Beginnings, a total immersion language camp for first- and second-graders put on by UW-Eau Claire for the first time this summer. Students could choose between Spanish, German or French and participate in the camps led by university students studying language and education.

"We try to only speak Spanish to the kids, so that’s how they’re learning," said Charlie Mabie, a UW-Eau Claire student and one of the Spanish camp teachers.

Each camp, hosted at the university’s Children’s Nature Academy at The Priory, southwest of Eau Claire, lasts for two weeks and focuses on different areas of interest related to nature. The theme of Kaylee’s camp was the market, or "el mercado."

Katrina Schmudlach, a UW-Eau Claire student and one of the camp teachers, said camp workers use songs, actions and descriptions to help kids catch on to the vocabulary quickly.

"You don’t need to know everything we say. Just listen, and we do a lot of actions," she said.

To help students learn, Schmudlach and Mabie also use plenty of cognates, words that sound the same in another language as they do in English, such as lemon and limón.

The progress children made during the course of the camp was remarkable, Mabie said.

"The third day was really the turning point, where the kids stopped being frustrated about not understanding us, and we started to get better at getting them to understand us," he said.

‘IDEAL OPPORTUNITY’

Carter Smith, chairman of the department of languages at UW-Eau Claire, said the department had wanted to do a language immersion program for a long time. The opportunity presented itself in 2012, when the university called for bids for programs at The Priory.

"This seemed like an ideal opportunity, and we proposed the idea, and it was accepted by the university," Smith said, noting grant money paid for writing the program curriculum, training and materials.

The willingness of the Eau Claire school district to pay the $200 cost of admission for district students involved in the program is a big help as well, Smith said.

"Even though $200 isn’t a lot for what students are getting, we wanted it to be something that’s open for all," he said.

Kaylee’s mother, Heather Schneider, said Spanish isn’t offered at Sam Davey Elementary School, where Kaylee will be a second-grader in fall. So she was happy her daughter got exposure to another language and culture this summer.

"She never got to do that," Schneider said. "They don’t teach you that in our school."

The final Bilingual Beginnings camps this summer wrapped up Aug. 22, but the program will continue next summer with talks of expansion. The camp may be open to third- and fourth-graders next summer, Smith said, and may involve other school districts.

"A lot of time that cultural immersion doesn’t happen in little Eau Claire, so this is a great way to open up that door," Mabie said.

“Bridging Russian and American Cultures Through Intercultural Immersion” Program

Emilia Oswalt, who teaches Russian at UWEC, and Jeff De Grave, who teaches for the Geography and Anthropology Department, brought ten UWEC students to historic Fort Ross, in the San Francisco area, last March as part of a program entitled “Bridging Russian and American Cultures through Intercultural Immersion.” Students learned about the historic site, Russian immigration and the interactions Russians had with Indigenous peoples, Mexicans, and Americans over the past two centuries. Students were impressed with the “hands on learning” experience at Fort Ross, and the on-going research at this historic site. UWEC is the first Midwestern university to visit the site.
Alumni will be spotlighted in the Spring newsletter

We want to have a special spring edition of the Polyglot dedicated to “news from our alumni.” This will be a great opportunity for alumni to reconnect with each other and with our current students. We are asking all alumni to update us on what they are doing. We are especially interested in hearing about ways alumni are currently using their language majors and minors. Please send all alumni updates as emails to duvvf@uwec.edu. Please include your name, name of your language major or minor, and the year in which you graduated.

SO ALUMNI: PLEASE SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Support Your Department of Languages

The Department of Languages welcomes and invites your support. Private gifts to the Department of Languages Advancement Fund enable us to address needs that cannot be met by the state-assisted operating budget. This fund provides resources to endow existing or create new student scholarships, to schedule extracurricular events such as conferences with invited guest speakers, or to enhance the learning environment for our students.

Your contribution to the Department of Languages Advancement Fund will be gratefully accepted by the UW-Eau Claire Foundation, Inc. You will receive a receipt for tax purposes. Most important, your gift will enable the department to continue to build upon its reputation for excellence and to provide future generations the same quality education you received and more.

Please use this form to send in your contribution and know that you are making a difference in the future of our department. You may also simply go to www.uwec.edu/fndn/giving.htm where you will find easy instructions for online donations.

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