

GlobalTalk

Fall 2015

Special points of interest:

- New Spanish Faculty Member
- New Master of Education in Spanish Program
- Chinese Cohort

Inside

Study Abroad	3
Dr. AB	4
3MT winner	6
New MA in Spanish Ed.	7
Latin and New ASL Course	8
Dept Awards	9
PSI Ceremony and Study Abroad Coordinator	10
Gift Bay	11



Message from the Chair of the Department, Dr. Claudia Vance

Dear Alumni, Current Students, and Friends,

It has been an exciting year for the Department of Foreign Languages. Our professors **Dr. Alejandra Alvarado-Brizuela, Dr. Craig Christy, Dr. Scott Infanger, Dr. Keith Lindley** and I have been involved in initiatives aimed at internationalizing the University through curricular innovation, study abroad, faculty and student

exchanges, lectures to domestic and international students, and through the support of **Dr. Chunsheng Zhang** and the Office of International Affairs.



In the last year the Department has offered faculty-led study abroad trips to Paris, Perú, and Costa Rica, more than any other academic department on campus. Every member of the faculty has been involved with leading, planning, and facilitating study abroad initiatives for students. The Department, in conjunction with the Office of International Affairs, has brought the world to UNA as well. The

(Continued on page 2)

UNA Welcomes Chinese Cohort in New 2 + 2 Program

In the Fall of 2014, The Department of Foreign Languages welcomed a contingent of new Spanish majors from Tianjin Foreign Studies University in Tianjin, China. Expected to be at UNA for

two years, these students had completed two years of academic work, including courses in Spanish language and literature, prior to their

(Continued on page 9)



From left to right: Chenyue Guan, Jinli He, Yuwei Liu, Sheng Wang, Xiao Liu, Hang Song, Ying Gu and Zhenying Zhai

Message from the Chair of the Department, Dr. Claudia Vance

(Continued from page 1)

Department launched a 2+2 program with Tianjin Foreign Studies University and welcomed its first cohort of Chinese Spanish majors. The Department tailored the program to the needs of these students and welcomed a new cohort in the fall of 2015. Thanks to UNA Arts and Sciences Dean, **Dr. Carmen Burkhalter**, and **Dr. Michael Schnepf** from the University of Alabama, the Department joined in an ongoing partnership with the University of Alabama to send students to Cuba to study abroad for an entire semester. This spring marked the first time that UNA sent a study abroad student, **Kennedy Pope**, to Cuba. This trip gave Mr. Pope the opportunity to create an amazing artistic documentary entitled *Manos Cubanas* on our website.

Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Department, we are able to support international student involvement through scholarships for students majoring or minoring in Foreign Languages. This year we awarded one

\$3000 study abroad scholarship to Cuba, two \$500 study abroad scholarships to Costa Rica, and eight general \$200 scholarships.

Our faculty travels abroad annually to stay abreast of the changing world. In 2014 alone faculty members from our department presented papers in the United States, Portugal, England, and Perú. Every member of the faculty has been involved in giving presentations to domestic, international and visiting students, as well as international panels regarding a variety of international interests including literature, international issues, cross-cultural differences, and study abroad opportunities and benefits. Additionally, faculty members and our adjuncts, **Dr. Rob Banks** (Latin), **Dr. Todd Hughes** (Online Spanish), and **Ms. Rebecca Linam** (German) foster interest in foreign languages and cultures through active sponsorship of extracurricular activities including the French Table, the German Table, the Spanish Table, the Foreign Languages Club, and the Hispanic

Culture Organization.

The members of the Department of Foreign Languages share their experiences in the classroom to enrich instruction and to generate interest in global cultures, languages, and study abroad. In the way of curricular innovations this year, the Department developed the Global Studies Certificate open to domestic and international students. Additionally, the Department worked with the College of Education and received state approval to begin its first graduate program in Secondary Education for teachers of Spanish beginning in the fall of 2015. Needless to say, the Department continues to spread the word about the value of international education and involvement, and we are happy to answer questions about our programs or about study abroad opportunities. Please look at our website www.una.edu/foreign-languages for information and announcements. See you on Facebook and Twitter. We want to hear from you!

Sincerely,
Dr. Claudia Polo Vance



UNA in Paris Continues

Twenty-one students and faculty participated in UNA in Paris 2015, departing the United States on May 11th and returning on May 21st. The trip combines educational experiences with the culinary and artistic offerings of Paris, including visits to the Louvre, the Orsay (home of Impressionist and post-Impressionist works by, among others, Degas, Renoir, and Van Gogh), the Orangerie (where Claude Monet's famous panels depicting water lilies at Giverny are housed), and Musée Carnavalet (the museum of the history of Paris). Students also toured the 850-year-old Notre Dame de Paris, the Latin Quarter (home of the Sorbonne and the Panthéon), and Marais (the ancient Jewish quarter and site of aristocratic mansions dating from the Renaissance and Classical periods), and artist's quarter near the Basilique du Sacré



-Coeur on Montmartre, the highest point in Paris. A one-day excursion to London included a visit to the Tower of London, the London Eye, and a bus tour of the city. Enjoy 2014 trip participant Allyson Cagle's excellent video record of the trip linked to our website: <https://vimeo.com/114408830>.

For more information, contact:
Dr. Keith Lindley at 256-765-4602 or kwilindley@una.edu.



Dr. Scott Infanger Leads Group to Perú

At Spring Break 2015 **Dr. Scott Infanger**, Associate Professor of Spanish, collaborated with **Dr. Michael Pretes**, Professor of Geography, to lead ten students to Peru. The tour included Lima, the Peruvian capital, Macchu Picchu, Cuzco, the Sacred Valley and the Amazon Basin. Courses taught in association with the trip included Latin American Geography and Global Perspectives in Study Abroad.

For more information, contact:
Dr. Scott Infanger at 256-765-4982 or srinfanger@una.edu.



UNA in Costa Rica 2015

Dr. Claudia Vance, Associate Professor of Spanish and Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages, and **Dr. Alejandra Alvarado-Brizuela**, Assistant Professor of Spanish, organized and led a group of fifteen students and two community members to Costa Rica in July. Students lived with Costa Rican families while taking Spanish courses ranging from elementary to advanced levels at the Centro Panamericano de Idiomas (CPI). The trip included visits to Arenal volcano, Sarchí, a village where typical Costa Rican arts and crafts are produced, the Café Britt coffee plantation, the Pacific coast at Manuel Antonio National Park, and the national capital of San José. In San José, the group visited the national theater and experienced *noches típicas*, an evening of traditional Costa Rican dances and cuisine.

For more information, contact:
Dr. Claudia Vance at 256-765-4501 or cpvance@una.edu.

New FL Faculty Member

Dr. Alejandra Alvarado-Brizuela joins Department of Foreign Languages

In the fall of 2013, Dr. Alejandra Alvarado-Brizuela joined the Lion Pride as assistant professor of Spanish. She teaches a wide variety of courses in Spanish as well as courses on cross-cultural interaction and foreign language pedagogy. This issue of GlobalTalk gives us the first opportunity to introduce our new colleague and teacher. Here Dr. Alvarado-Brizuela, known to her students as “Dr. AB”, answers a few questions so we can get to know her better:

Can you tell us about your experiences growing up in Costa Rica? What do you miss most about it?

I truly feel blessed of having been born and raised in Costa Rica. This, however, is something I didn't fully understand until I had the opportunity to travel and experience life in other places. My siblings (two brothers and two sisters) and I are first generation high school and college graduates and I am the first in my family and extended family to earn a terminal degree (not

because I'm that smart, but because I'm stubborn . . . or persistent, I can't decide which). As a proud graduate of Costa Rica's public education system I believe that getting an education is the key to many doors, especially after seeing all the hard work my parents had to endure to put all of us through K-12 and college. I have been in the U. S. since 2002, and I have missed different things at different times: I miss Costa Rica's mild weather when it's winter here; I miss the food when I realize I can't cook; but most importantly, I always miss my family. I know I have their love and support regardless of where I am, but since my four siblings live at home with my parents (No, it's not weird. Yes, they are still very independent individuals), sometimes my apartment seems to be a little too quiet.

What is your educational background?

I graduated in April of 2002 from the Universidad de Costa Rica, Sede Rodrigo Facio, with a B.A. in Teaching English as a

Foreign Language. In August, 2002 I had the opportunity to participate in an exchange program through the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) which allowed me to learn about U. S. culture and practice my English while taking classes in Cornell College, Iowa, for a year. After one year in Iowa, I moved to Terre Haute, Indiana, to pursue an M.A. in Linguistics at Indiana State University (Go Sycamores!). I graduated with a Master's degree in 2005 and I decided to stay at ISU for a Ph. D. in Curriculum, Instruction, and Media Technology with a specialization in Language Education. During this time I accumulated 18 credits of graduate work in Spanish and I taught online and face-to-face as a teaching assistant and as adjunct faculty. I earned my Ph. D. in 2012.

How have your first years at UNA been? Have there been any difficulties you hadn't expected? Any pleasant surprises?

(Continued on page 5)

Dr. Alejandra Alvarado-Brizuela (cont.)

(Continued from page 4)

My first years at UNA have been great! I love the fact that I can really get to know my students and see them grow and make progress in their second or third language. Since this is my first tenure-track job, I feel like there is always something to learn about the inner-workings of the University, but I'm lucky to be part of a very supportive department. My colleagues have been very helpful and I couldn't ask for a more collegial place to work. Pleasant surprise: there is always coffee!!!!

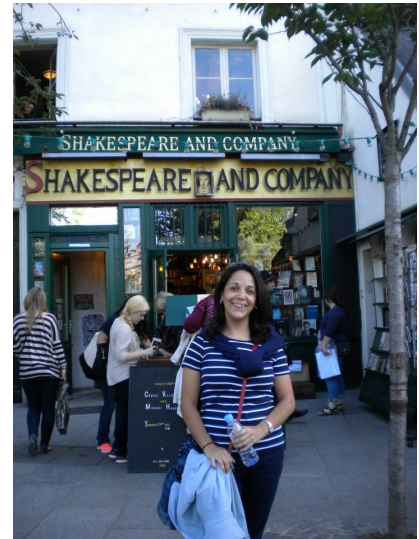
What is your favorite course to teach and why?

I remember being asked this question during my campus visit and I still don't have an answer. On the one hand, I really like teaching Introduction to Languages and Cross-Cultural Interaction because I can have stimulating conversations and discussions with the students on many different and interesting topics; but on the other hand, I also enjoy teaching the lower-level Spanish classes because they allow me to witness and to be part of the students' journey to learn a second or third language. I feel this question is like asking someone "Who is your favorite child?" And we all know the truth: we do have a favorite, but it changes from time to time.

What are your research interests? Why are you intrigued by that particular area of scholarship?

My research interests are very eclectic. They include Spanish American literature, second language acquisition (SLA), language education, and linguistics. Spanish American literature fascinates me because of the many different themes, like feminism, cultural identity, social struggles, and language that it covers. Literature allows me to see the world through someone else's eyes and I love looking for clues and hidden messages, even social commentaries in novels, poems, or plays. SLA intrigues me from two different perspectives: as a language learner myself, and as a teacher. I look at SLA for ways to improve my own language as well as to incorporate new tools and/or strategies to help my students learn better. Language education is my passion. I believe everyone should learn at least two languages in their life, and I also believe that the sooner you start the better. Linguistics will always be my first love! (You know, the one you always keep in the back of your mind and smile when you think of it.) Linguistics fascinates me because of its many different components. I love looking into language and culture, as well as language and social change. There is always something going on in language because language is constantly evolving and that fascinates me.

Which extracurricular endeavors have you become involved in? What are you plans, if any, for becoming



involved in study abroad?

I volunteer as an interpreter in the Lauderdale County Courthouse, as well as La Clínica Cristiana, and the Annual Masters' Clinic for the World's Tang Soo Do Association, these last two with upper level students. I am looking forward to participating in study abroad. I took students to Costa Rica (how convenient!) in July, along with Dr. Vance and I so enjoyed the opportunity. I also participated in the study abroad trip to Paris before going to Costa Rica to have an idea of what to expect as a study abroad director and to learn as much as possible about the process. I am definitely interested in taking UNA students to Spain or maybe the Caribbean!

You are successfully bicultural and bilingual, and as so many students know, studying a foreign language and living in a different culture can be

(Continued on page 6)



Spanish Major wins Campus-wide Three Minute Thesis Competition

Danae Thackerson, Spanish and Secondary Education Major, placed first in the 2015 Three Minute Thesis Competition held on April 6th 2015. This annual competition seeks to encourage students to conduct original research in their chosen academic field, and to present the results in a professional, scholarly fashion. Mentored by **Dr. Alejandra Alvarado-Brizuela**, Assistant Professor of Spanish, Danae explained

her research in a presentation entitled “Cognitive Benefits of Childhood Bilingualism”, beating out eighteen other student researchers for the top prize. This is the second year that a foreign language major has won this competition, with Spanish graduate **Lauren Daley** winning in

2014 for “Catalan and Gallego: the Status of Minority Languages in Spain”.



From left to right: Dr. AB, Three Minute Thesis winner Danae Thackerson, and President Kenneth Kitts

Dr. Alejandra Alvarado-Brizuela (cont.)

(Continued from page 5)

challenging. What advice or suggestions would you give to students who aspire to fluency in a second language and intimate familiarity with a culture other than their own? How has becoming bicultural and bilingual changed your life?

The best piece of advice I can give students is to always keep an open mind. It is very easy to look at a new culture and think “well, that’s just not what we do back home,” but

guess what? That doesn’t mean that you are right or that those in your new culture are wrong. People’s perspectives vary and the best you can do is to think. Yes, just that: think! Think about what a specific action means to the people around you, think about their values, beliefs, and/or intentions. Don’t lose sight of who you are and where you came from, but be willing to keep learning about the culture, the people, the language, and most importantly, keep

learning about yourself. Embrace your mistakes and be willing to take risks and try new things (within most of your comfort zone, of course. No need to try fighting a shark with your bare hands, for example!). I believe that being bicultural and bilingual has made me more flexible and understanding not only of my surroundings, but also of those around me. I can now look at my own culture critically as opposed to just accepting it and conforming to it and that is something for which I will always be grateful.



New Master of Arts Degree in Spanish Education

By Bryan Rachal, University Communications
Aug. 13, 2015

FLORENCE, Ala. – Once again the University of North Alabama is setting itself apart by offering the only program of its kind in the area. Beginning fall 2015, UNA will offer a Master's of Education in Spanish.

According to Dr. Claudia Vance, chair of the UNA department of foreign languages, the program was recently approved and is mainly targeted at teachers in the region who already teach Spanish, or those who just finished an undergraduate program in Spanish and are interested in continuing their studies.

"It's going to be a rigorous program, but it's also a program in which we've had a lot of interest. A lot of people have wanted us to offer this as long as I've been at UNA," said Vance.

The new graduate degree will feature two tracks: traditional and alternative. The traditional M.A. in Spanish education is for students who have undergraduate degrees in Secondary Education and Spanish. The alternative track is for students who want to teach Spanish but have an undergraduate degree in something other than education.

Vance said that students must pass The Praxis II Exam in Spanish, an American teacher certification exam, to complete the degree.

"We're only going to offer maybe one or two courses per semester as part of the Spanish portion. As far as the education portion, a lot of that is currently online," she said. "We understand that a lot of our potential folks will be teachers who work from 8 to 3 and can't come see us on a regular basis. So we're going to work with them on the Spanish portion online and maybe offer some additional courses over the summer," said Vance.

The program will begin this fall with the Spanish Literature I (SP 505) course.

For more information about this course: Dr. Scott Infanger at srinfanger@una.edu or 256-765-4982. For more information about the Spanish program: Dr. Claudia Vance at cpvance@una.edu or 256-765-4501.

For more information about the MAED at UNA: <https://www.una.edu/education/graduate-programs/index.html>

For more information about graduate admissions: <https://www.una.edu/admissions/apply-to-una/graduate-school.html>

For more information about the MAED at UNA: <https://www.una.edu/education/graduate-programs/index.html>



From left to right: Administrative Assistant Joy Kelly, New MA student Andrea Watson, and Dr. Claudia Vance

New Courses Offered

Department of Foreign Languages Now Offers Introductory Latin

In Fall 2013, Latin was added to the department's offerings. This is UNA's first foray into the Classics in many years, and the course has proven popular with a range of students, in particular those whose primary academic focus is History. Both Latin 101 and 102 have been taught by **Dr. Rob Banks**, who holds a PhD in Early Christian Studies from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.



Dr. Rob Banks, Latin instructor

Department offers American Sign Language

In fall 2015, the Department of Foreign Languages offered American Sign Language (ASL 101) for the first time ever. The decision to do so was prompted by student interest and the availability of a highly-qualified instructor, **Mrs. Linda Cole**, the director of the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind. American Sign Language, or ASL, is a fully-formed means of communication that emerged in the nineteenth century and later developed a fixed grammar and syntax. It is the predominant sign language among deaf communities in the United States and the English-speaking areas of Canada. On August 19th, seventeen students will begin work in the Department's newest language offering.



Mrs. Linda Cole, American Sign Language instructor

Department of Foreign Languages Makes Strong Showing at Arts & Sciences Awards Event



From left to right:
Associate Dean Christopher Maynard, Dr. Scott Infanger, Dr. Alejandra Alvarado-Brizuela, Dr. Claudia Vance, and Dean Carmen Burkhalter



Ms. Ashley Grissom (middle) won Outstanding Senior Research Award 2015

At the College of Arts and Sciences annual awards, the Department of Foreign Languages and two of our students were recognized for excellence in multiple areas. Of seventeen departments in the College of Arts & Sciences, Foreign Languages won the 2014-2015 International Involvement Award for its extensive involvement in study abroad offerings and for its focus on international education and attendant issues. Spanish major **Miracle Osborne** competed for and won the Outstanding Senior in the Humanities Award based on her accomplishments at UNA, while dual French and Spanish major **Ashley Grissom** won the Outstanding Senior Research Award. Ashley's research focuses on culture, literature and international business, and has been conducted in English, French, and Spanish. The Department continues making strides towards creating a culture of international involvement among its students and faculty, reflecting the increasingly global outlook of the University of North Alabama.



From left to right: Dr. Claudia Vance and Miracle Osborne

UNA Welcomes Chinese Cohort in New 2 + 2 Program (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

arrival in Florence. Once at UNA, they began work towards a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish. In May of 2013, **Dr. Claudia Vance**, chair of the department, visited their home institution, Tianjin Foreign Studies University, spoke with vari-

ous members of the administration, and interacted with the potential incoming Spanish majors. It is anticipated that the number of Chinese students coming to UNA to major in Spanish will continue to grow, with a sufficiently large population potentially requiring the

addition of another faculty member at the instructor level. Existing faculty members have responded with enthusiasm to the addition of these students to their classes and to the unique experience of bringing Hispanic, American, and Chinese cultures into a single educational environment.



Phi Sigma Iota
is the most
prestigious
Foreign
Language
Honor Society
in America.

Phi Sigma Iota Spring Induction Ceremony

On March 10th, 2014, the Department of Foreign Languages held its annual induction of outstanding students into Phi Sigma Iota, the national foreign language honors society. In attendance were all full-time members of the departmental faculty, inductees and their guests, and this year's invited speaker, **Mr. Dustin Williams**. This year, 18 new members were inducted, the largest number ever, reflecting the growth and forward momentum the department has been experiencing recently. Mr. Williams, Instructor of Spanish at the University of Memphis and a 2008 graduate with a BA in Spanish from UNA, spoke to the gathering about the transformative power of foreign language study as well as study abroad, deftly weaving thoughtful general commentary with his own personal experiences as an undergraduate and graduate student and as a teacher in Spain.



From left to right: (Front Row) Kris Lard, Samantha Johnson, Celia Bostick, Dillon Green, Jordain Crump, Dr. AB, Christy Bush, Jessica Dunn, Lauren Daley Farris, Johnna Dixon, Elyse Eckl, Kristen Tatum; (Second Row) Jordan Graham, Tiffany Newton, Cody Lyman, Danae Thackerson, Anna Barrera, Jessica Hept, Scarlett Robinson, Joseph Sharif, Kathleen Franks, Ashley Grissom, Luisa Oswalt; (Back row) Elizabeth Bledsoe, Marcela Villagrana, Linda Massey, Joe Stetzer, Jordan Killough.

Infanger named Study Abroad Coordinator



On February 1, 2015, Dr. Scott Infanger began serving UNA as the University Study Abroad Coordinator. This position is the result of a shared governance proposal written by Dr. Infanger with the support of several UNA faculty members who lead study abroad programs to locations across the globe. After review and approval by the University International Programs and Offerings (IPO) Committee, the Shared Govern-

ance Executive Committee (SGEC), and the Council of Academic Deans, the Provost's Office extended the invitation to Dr. Infanger to serve in this capacity with the charge to centralize all of the information and harmonize the planning, approval, and execution of the various study abroad programs currently in existence at UNA while supporting the development of additional programs to new venues.

As the Study Abroad Coordinator, Dr. Infanger serves as a liaison between faculty leading study abroad programs and the university administrators and staff who oversee the day-to-day operations of the University. He is available to advise faculty seeking to establish a new study abroad program, as well as support experienced faculty members who have existing programs.

ROARLIONS!



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What your gifts can provide

Students

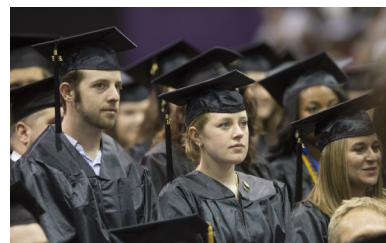
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- Research Assistance
- Conferences

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Direct comments or questions about this newsletter to
Dr. Keith Lindley: kwlindley@una.edu

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We couldn't do it without you!

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Let us to hear from you! Call us at the Department of Foreign Languages at (256) 765-4390 or visit our website at www.una.edu/foreign-languages. Our alumni are very important to us, and we continually update our contact information on each of you. If you have recently experienced a change in your life, especially a move or a name change, or if you know of alumni who do not receive our newsletter, please let us know! Please stay tuned for more information on our upcoming alumni survey.



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