Dear Alumni, Current Students, and Friends,

It is my pleasure to write to you on behalf of the Department of Foreign Languages to share exciting news. We have undergone a variety of changes in the last year. First, I would like to congratulate Dr. Craig Christy on his new appointment as Director of the Center for Global Engagement in the Office of International Affairs. Because he has accepted this new position, I became Chair of Foreign Languages on August 1, but we are fortunate that Dr. Christy continues to serve part time as a professor in our department and as Director of Critical Languages. Second, I would like to congratulate Dr. Robert Adler, Associate Professor of Spanish, on his retirement this past June. We thank him for his many years of service at UNA and wish him all the best as he pursues new adventures in his retirement. On behalf of our departmental members, Dr. Craig Christy, Dr. Scott Infanger, Dr. Keith Lindley, and myself, I would like to thank you all for your

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Dr. Christy brings Extensive International Experience to Prestigious New Role as Director of the Center for Global Engagement

On August 1 Dr. Christy, who served as Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages since 1999, left that position to take on his new role as Director of the Center for Global Engagement. In this capacity he is working to enhance internationalization throughout the campus. This will involve curricular innovations, inter-departmental collaborations, study-abroad initiatives, facilitation of articulation arrangements with foreign institutions, faculty exchanges and related issues, all of which will contribute to integrating UNA and its programs into the globalized world. In 2014 the Department of Foreign Languages, for example, will welcome to campus a cohort of 20 Commercial Spanish Majors, who will complete the final two years of their undergraduate degree at UNA. Ensuring that these students experience a smooth transition and are able to complete their degree in a timely fashion will require careful study and alignment of prerequisites and core requirements at both institutions. Additional partnerships and exchanges are also being explored, particularly with a view to increasing the percentage of UNA students who enrich their understanding of multiculturalism through study and travel abroad. Foreign language study is clearly a central component of internationalization, as are courses throughout the curriculum which address global issues. Dr. Christy is confident that the campus is already energized to expand its embrace of globalization.
support of our program and would like to assure you of our continued commitment to pursuing excellence and improving our instruction and course offerings this year and beyond.

This fall, our department has begun a search for a Spanish faculty member who will join us in 2013 and who will contribute to our growing department. As we continue to expand, we are gauging interest in a possible Master of Arts degree in Spanish Secondary Education. This offering will provide an opportunity for current and future Spanish teachers to pursue a Master’s Degree in this region. I encourage you to contact me or to call our office if you are interested in pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Spanish Secondary Education at UNA.

We would also like to welcome three new instructors to our department this fall: Dr. Todd Hughes (Online Spanish), Mrs. Mirelly Buitrago González (Spanish), and Ms. Rebecca Linam (German). These instructors bring a wealth of knowledge and have introduced exciting extracurricular activities which are already popular with our students. We have begun the Spanish Round Table, a weekly opportunity for students of Spanish at all levels to practice the language in an informal setting. Our Foreign Language Club has also paired with the Office of Diversity to celebrate Hispanic culture. Some of our recent activities have included Salsa Night on October 11 for music and dancing, Día de los Muertos in Birmingham on November 2, and the excursion by French students to view Impressionist works at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta.

One of the most exciting things that our department continues to offer is the opportunity to study abroad in a variety of countries. In 2013 Dr. Lindley will once again offer a ten-day trip to Paris during Spring Break. Dr. Mike Pretes will pair with Dr. Scott Infanger to offer a two-week interdisciplinary trip to Perú in May for Geography students interested in South America, and in July Dr. Infanger and I will take a group to Costa Rica for a month-long study abroad trip. We are very happy to answer questions you may have about any of these trips. Please look at our website www.una.edu/foreign-languages for more information regarding study abroad, scholarship opportunities, and updated announcements. For more information or to let us know how you are doing, please contact us on our new Facebook page (UNA Department of Foreign Languages Alumni and Friends). We want to hear from you!

Sincerely,
Dr. Claudia Polo Vance

Department of Foreign Languages Cultivates Study Abroad Opportunities

Study abroad opportunities in the Department of Foreign Languages continue to grow and flourish. Programs in Costa Rica, Perú and Paris give our students in-country experiences with the languages and cultures they study here at UNA, and are led by professors students have already come to know in the classroom: Dr. Vance (Costa Rica), Dr. Infanger (Perú and Costa Rica), and Dr. Lindley (Paris). Study abroad will remain a central focus of the department as the University of North Alabama seeks to globalize its curriculum and to encourage students to expand their horizons through foreign travel. GlobalTalk spoke with Drs. Vance and Infanger about their respective programs. See their comments in this issue.
Study Abroad Costa Rica Q&A with Dr. Vance:

What do you think is the highlight of your trip for students? Why?

Although students love the opportunity to bungee jump and zip line and to travel on the weekend excursions to Arenal Volcano and to the Pacific Ocean to see sloths, monkeys, and exotic flora and fauna, what sets this study abroad experience apart from other venues is that it provides students with a unique opportunity to learn Spanish and to experience the culture of Central America both inside and outside of the classroom. Students find that living and interacting with a host family gives them a unique and authentic perspective on how people live in Costa Rica. Each family is different, but students will share a variety of experiences with “family members,” including eating meals at the table, shopping together, attending family gatherings, playing sports, and going to church. Many past UNA study abroad participants still stay in touch with their Costa Rican families years later, proving that the friendships created on these trips are long-lasting and rewarding.

What is the most valuable experience you believe students derive from studying abroad in Costa Rica specifically?

Typically students who study in Costa Rica gain a great deal of confidence. On the first week, they go through culture shock but soon learn to adapt to their new school, new family, and new language. As they learn to interact with their hosts, teachers, and merchants, as they sample new foods and music and as they learn their way around town, they are empowered. Those who rise to the challenge of bungee jumping or zip lining are also earning lifelong bragging rights!

For how many years have you led this trip? Will you lead one in 2013? If not, why?

The 2013 trip will be the fourth trip to Costa Rica for me. CPI language school in Costa Rica is top notch and the country is very safe. We are very proud of the strides that our students make in Spanish while in Costa Rica.

What course credits can students earn through this trip? Do you think the study abroad experience is a good substitute for the Spanish coursework they will miss at UNA? Why?

Beginning Spanish students may get credit for the first year (SP 101/111 and SP 102/112) intermediate students may get credit for the second year (SP 201 and SP 202) of Spanish in Costa Rica. Upper-level students can take up to nine hours of courses ranging from SP 320 Grammar; SP 350 Conversation and Composition; SP 390 Special Topics in Latin American Civilization and Culture: Costa Rica; and SP 420 Advanced Grammar. Study abroad is an excellent way to complete a minor or to get ahead more quickly because students are immersed in the language constantly and therefore motivated to use it much more than a student in a traditional classroom setting.

What has been the most fun/eye-opening/unexpected specific cultural experience that you and your students have shared on this trip before?

This year our trip culminated with Guanacaste Annexation Day – a national holiday that celebrates Costa Rica’s annexation of a beautiful region on the Pacific Coast. Students were surprised and wowed by a beautiful fireworks show which made our last night in Costa Rica very memorable and bittersweet.

What would you say to the student who is considering attending the Costa Rica trip but is afraid he or she will not be able to communicate effectively or function well away from the U.S.?

The Costa Rica trip is a faculty-led trip, and while students will need to speak Spanish there, they are never truly isolated. Teachers at the language school and host family members are very patient and accustomed to dealing with foreign students learning even very basic Spanish. Our excursions have bilingual guides who give information in both Spanish and English. The entire study abroad experience is carefully designed to place students in a setting where they are learning Spanish comfortably and enjoyably. As far as communicating with family in the U.S., students have free wifi connection and free calls to...

“Studying abroad opens opportunities to students to learn about and experience new languages and cultures in a safe and controlled environment...”
Study Abroad Costa Rica Q&A

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the US at the language school, and Facebook is readily available.

Does having a study abroad experience make foreign language students more employable? Why?

Absolutely! In this day and age, even small companies have to be able to function in a global market. The student who has first-hand experience in a foreign country is far more desirable as an employee than the one who has only read about it.

What has been the general consensus among the students at the end of past trips? Did they enjoy themselves? Do they want to return to Costa Rica?

Yearly surveys conducted after the trip show that Costa Rica participants are maximally satisfied with their overall experience abroad. In fact, I’ve had participants return on subsequent Costa Rica trips and I have learned that a group of six students who studied abroad with UNA this year are planning a return trip next year. Three of our UNA participants this year loved Costa Rica so much that they have interviewed with CPI language school to work there during the summer next year. I think that speaks volumes about the sort of experience these students have had as study abroad participants.

Dr. Robert Adler Retires

After eighteen years of service to UNA and the Department of Foreign Languages, Dr. Robert Adler, Associate Professor of Spanish, retired June 30th, 2012. A graduate of Washington University in St. Louis and a native New Yorker, Dr. Adler adopted Alabama as his home, serving on the faculty of several universities and colleges in the state before coming to Florence. Widely known on campus and in the community for the many groups he led to Spain over the years, the former professor remains very active, flamenco dancing with Co-razón Flamenco of Birmingham, serving as a member of the Alabama Holocaust Commission, working as an interpreter and translator in local and State courts, and, of course, returning to Spain as often as possible to visit his numerous friends there.

He writes:

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2012 Costa Rica program participants Jesse Faulk and Laura López created a Costa Rica booth for Weeden Elementary’s Hispanic Heritage Month celebration and taught students more about the country.
Study Abroad Perú Q&A with Dr. Infanger:

What do you think is the highlight of your trip for students? Why?

I try and offer a wide variety of experiences that will appeal across a broad range of interests. Students have been thrilled with the condors in Colca Canyon, the Nazca Lines flyover, and of course, Machu Picchu. Although all of the sites and cities we visit are amazing, the students have had the most positive response to the floating islands (uros) of Lake Titicaca. I guess there’s something about seeing a millennial culture still thriving that touches you in ways experiencing remnants of ancient civilizations (no matter how great) never can.

What is the most valuable experience you believe students derive from studying abroad in general? In Perú specifically?

Any time a student braves a trip out of their home town, state, and country, he or she is going to encounter a range of experiences that will alter his or her understanding of the world around them forever. Studying abroad opens opportunities to students to learn about and experience new languages and cultures in a safe and controlled environment while they are still relatively unencumbered with the cares and concerns of life (think family and full-time employment) that so often make travel difficult if not impossible. Experiencing and interacting with foreign cultures gives students confidence in themselves and in their ability to operate effectively outside of their comfort zones. I would say that in general, students who have studied abroad have a richer vision of humanity and understand their position in the global community in such a way that makes them more human in the sense that they can better relate to people of a different culture, language, religion, and color. In addition to all of this, students studying in Perú have not only have the opportunity to speak Spanish if they choose, but they are also given a broad vision of thousands of years of history and humanity as it has adapted and developed with the arrival of different civilizations and their respective technologies.

For how many years have you led this trip? Will you lead one in 2013? If not, why?

I have led my trip to Perú for the past two years (May 2011 and May 2012) and will be collaborating with Dr. Pretes from the Geography Department at UNA for the trip in May 2013.

What course credits can students earn through this trip? Do you think the study abroad experience is a good substitute for the Spanish coursework they will miss at UNA? Why?

I offer a 3-credit course (FL 201 Global Perspectives through Study Abroad) and an optional 2-credit IE 499 (Intercultural Experience) course for students participating in this trip. The FL 201 course satisfies General Education course requirements in Area IV, and the IE 499 satisfies 400-level elective credit, so all UNA students can benefit academically from participating in this program. Students don’t have to be a Spanish major, minor, or even take Spanish to participate.

What has been the most fun/eye-opening/unexpected specific cultural experience that you and your students have shared on this trip before?

Each trip I have led to Perú has yielded its own unique experiences. The first year, it was the political demonstrations and protests in the week leading up to the national election that I would consider to have been the most eye-opening. Last year, it was our excursion to the floating islands on Lake Titicaca that students were most impressed with.

What would you say to a student who is considering attending the Perú trip but is afraid he or she will not be able to communicate effectively or function well away from the U.S.?

All of our excursions in Perú are led by English-speaking guides. The rise in tourism in Perú over the last twenty years has led a majority of Peruvians to learn at least a basic amount of English, so even when students are on their own at the handicraft market or in a restaurant, they will be able to communicate with the Peruvian people. If it’s a question of being able to communicate with your family in the U.S. wifi is available everywhere in Perú, so you’re never going to be left incomunicado. Although email and facebook are available in Perú, students often realize within the first couple of days that these things aren’t necessary for survival.

“Each trip I have led to Perú has yielded its own unique experiences.”

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Study Abroad Perú Q&A with Dr. Infanger:

(Continued from page 5)

Does having a study abroad experience make foreign language students more employable? Why?

Absolutely! In this day and age, even small companies have to be able to function in a global market. The student who has first-hand experience in a foreign country is far more desirable as an employee than the one who has only read about it.

What has been the general consensus among the students at the end of past trips? Did they enjoy themselves? Do they want to return to Perú?

I have never had a student return from a study abroad trip and say that he or she regretted going. Even those that struggled at times with the language or food or money or homesickness returned to the U.S. with a love (or at least a deep appreciation) for the Peruvian people and culture. Most of my students have expressed a desire to return for a longer stay. There’s just something about Perú that becomes a part of you once you have been there.

New Adjunct Instructors Join Department

The Department of Foreign Languages faculty has been strengthened this semester by two new adjunct instructors in Spanish and one in German. Mrs. Mirelly Buitrago, a native of Puerto Rico now residing in Madison, Alabama, most recently held the position of lecturer in Spanish at Clemson University in South Carolina. She holds both Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees from the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, and currently is in the writing stages of a thesis for the degree of Educational Doctor from the Metropolitan University of Puerto Rico. Ms. Rebecca Linam teaches German courses both at UNA and the Shoals Christian Academy. Also a teacher at Cherokee High School since 2002, Ms. Linam holds a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education in German and Mathematics as well as a Master of Arts in German Philology with a minor in Russian from the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. Dr. Todd Ford Hughes, Director of Instructional Technologies at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, has undertaken the teaching of Spanish 101 Distance Learning courses for the department. He holds the Bachelor’s degree in Spanish from Rutgers University, a Master’s degree in Spanish Literature from the University of South Florida, and a PhD in Second Language Acquisition and Technology from the University of Pennsylvania. Our students in both Spanish and German are fortunate to benefit from Mrs. Buitrago’s, Ms. Linam’s, and Dr. Hughes’s extensive teaching expertise and enthusiasm.

Dr. Adler’s Retirement

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Now that I’m retired, I’ll be staying in the Shoals because I’m involved in a number of organizations, activities and events plus, even though I’m originally from New York City, I firmly believe the Shoals, and Alabama as a whole, is a wonderful place in which to live. I must say I’m extremely thankful for the honor and privilege to have taught in and served the State of Alabama, UAB, the University of Montevallo, Samford University, Birmingham Southern College and especially UNA during the 31 years I’ve been in this State and to have provided a skill to students who continue to use Spanish and other languages in their professional and personal lives, many of whom are still in contact with me.

Again, I wish to thank my colleagues and friends and the communities, institutions and organizations of the State of Alabama and of the South that I’ve worked and shared with.

Thank you and God bless the USA and all the world,
Robert L. Adler, Ph.D.
**How Do You Use Your Foreign Language?**

Dr. Vance recently posed this question to our graduates on our Facebook page UNA Department of Foreign Languages Alumni and Friends. Here are just a few of the responses. Check out our page for more, and while you’re there, be sure to bring us up to date on what’s going on with you!!

**Brittany Thompson (Spanish):** I am a Spanish/ELL teacher in Cullman County, so I use mine to teach my Spanish students and to communicate with my ELL students and their families when necessary. Outside of work, I use my Spanish to stay in touch with friends in Mexico and Costa Rica as well as some Spanish-speaking friends I’ve met in this area. My sister and I also use it to communicate when we don’t want anyone else to know what we’re saying.

**Jeremy Woods (French):** I recently graduated, and I hope to do French translation on the side along with seminary. The past two summers, I went to Quebec as a summer missionary, and I got to practice French while I was there. Also, I hope to be a language exchange partner with someone at the University of Louisville in French or Chinese (since I took Chinese my last semester at UNA).

**Ana Perez Perry (Spanish):** I not only get to use Spanish, I teach it every day at Florence High School!

**Emily West (French):** This is my 7th year to be teaching High School French. I taught levels 1-4 and IB 11 & 12. This year I am teaching levels 2-4 and the IB’s, I have built the French program up over the past few years to where there is now a half time French teacher who teaches the level ones!! I am also the French Honor Society sponsor at my school! I absolutely love what I do and all my kiddos each year! They are my joy, my passion, and the reason I get up every day and do what I love, and also I get to share with them and teach them something that I am passionate about as well!! I know that I have been truly blessed!

**Amber Rice Morgan (Spanish):** I am still living in Navarre Florida. I taught HS Spanish for 7 years, 2 in AL and 5 at Fort Walton Beach HS. This year I am trying something new and teaching elementary Spanish, still in FWB and I am a Lion again (our mascot). I am also currently working on my masters in Foreign Language Education through Auburn University’s distance program. I still treasure all my memories from UNA so much and am going to try and get over to the campus this weekend for homecoming since we will be in town visiting! Go Lions!

**Katherine Ray (Spanish):** I teach a computer Spanish elective for middle schoolers for my elective course and I have a student in my homeroom whose parents speak very little English so I email and call to help her other teachers with home communication. My knowledge of Spanish allowed me to start picking up Portuguese in Japan while I was there (it is pretty common as a secondary language there)

**Traci Venable Saavedra (Spanish):** My Spanish Major literally changed my entire life. So rather than saying how I use Spanish, it is easier to say how I don’t use it.

Phi Sigma Iota Spring Induction Ceremony

The annual induction ceremony of the Phi Sigma Iota Foreign Language Honor Society was held on Thursday, March 8, 2012 in Stone Lodge. Dr. Michael Pretes, Associate Professor of Geography, spoke to the inductees and their guests about his experiences living abroad and the value of foreign language skills today. A reception followed the ceremony. 2012 inductees were: Laura López, Andrea Watson, Lacy Triplett, Amanda McGough, Robbie Gilmore, Caitlin Shelton, Ivannoel González, Katie Maples, Tiffani Barnett, Anna Brasher, Elizabeth Spurr, Casey Smith, Sarah Tominack, Amber Huett, Tamsen Brooks, Claire Stewart, and Alex Lindley. Congratulations to all of them on this great achievement in their university career!

Pictured from left to right: (Front) Claire Stewart, Tamsen Brooks, Amanda McGough; (Back) Amber Huett, Beth Spurr, Robbie Gilmore, Andrea Watson, Lacy Triplett, Anna Brasher, Tiffani Barnett, and Ivannoel Gonzalez.

The Department of Foreign Languages—Your Key to the World.

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

www.una.edu/foreign-languages