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Department of Asian Languages and Cultures | UW-Madison

2016-17 ALC Newsletter

A NOTE FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR Dr. Junko Mori



The University of Wisconsin-Madison has been a nationally and internationally known center for the study of Asian languages and cultures for decades. Inspired by the university's motto, "All Ways Forward," we continue to explore ways to realign our practices with the current and future needs of our students and communities. How can we embrace the traditional strengths in respective language and regional programs while enhancing the increasing significance of transregional and transdisciplinary approaches to the understanding of cultural, social, political, and moral issues? Our answer has been the new Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, launched in July 2016.

Our inaugural year was filled with exciting developments. As part of our continuous restructuring efforts, the department successfully proposed new undergraduate and graduate majors in Asian Languages and Cultures, which will start in Fall 2018. We welcomed Dr. Anthony Cerulli to the department in Fall 2016. Dr. Cerulli's current projects include an edited volume on ethnographies of the gift in India; and an English translation of a Sanskrit allegory (Jīvanandanam); a monograph exploring changes in education in Ayurveda (one of India's classical medicines) from 1890 to 1975; and a multi-volume / multi-exhibit photoethnography project on the aesthetics of manuscript archives in India. We also completed an open-rank faculty search, which resulted in the hire of Dr. Tyrell Haberkorn, currently affiliated with the Australian National University. Dr. Haberkorn is a specialist of state violence, human rights, and dissident cultural politics in Thailand, with a long list of publications including *Revolution Interrupted: Farmers, Students, Law, and Violence in Northern Thailand* (2011, University of Wisconsin Press). She will join the department in the spring of 2018. In addition to these major accomplishments by the department as a whole, we were blessed with a plenty of success stories of our students, staff, and faculty. They are just too many to share, but some highlights are featured in this newsletter.

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ABOUT THE NEW DEPARTMENT

The Department of Asian Languages & Cultures at UW-Madison is student-centered and driven by research that is integrated into the classroom.

Created from the combination of two former departments, the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures and the Department of Languages and Cultures of Asia, the new department serves as a bridge between the two to create an all-inclusive learning experience for students.

Read more about the new department at alc.wisc.edu.



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TERRY NEALON RETIRES AFTER 53 YEARS

Teresa "Terry" Nealon has been with the College of Letters and Science since 1964, and with the Department of East Asian Languages and Literature since 1975.

Last July, Terry watched the merging of two departments and helped to usher in the new Department of Asian Languages and Cultures. She made sure that ALC was well underway before announcing her retirement. Her last day in the department was July 7.

ALC chair, Professor Junko Mori, says of Terry, "She is a truly remarkable staff member who has sacrificed herself so much for the good of everyone in the department. She has assisted a large number of faculty, staff, and students over the five decades of her career."

In these days, it is unusual to celebrate someone who has served UW-Madison in a staff position for as long as Teresa Nealon has. Her departmental and campus historical memory is something to be celebrated!

"She is a truly remarkable staff member who has sacrificed herself so much for the good of everyone in the department."

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

- Yixuan Cheng wins Grand Prize at 31st Annual Japanese Language Speech Contest in Chicago (pictured below)



- Ashley Collar, Raymond O'Connell and Benjamin Jones will travel to China for the Aston Educational Group English teaching internship
- Chinese major Alison Sharpless received the 2017 Hilldale Undergraduate Fellowship
- 32 students graduated in the Chinese and Japanese majors this May, as well as 32 who received a Chinese or Japanese Certificate for Professional Communication

GRANT SPURS COLLABORATIVE TRAINING

Asian Languages and Cultures professors William Nienhauser, Rania Huntington and Mark Muelenbeld teamed up with faculty in the history and art history departments to pursue a new method of study for graduate students interested in Pre-Modern China.

Nienhauser, Huntington and Muelenbeld applied for the funding in early fall 2016.

The cross-disciplinary training model, an initiative made possible by Graduate School Senior Associate Dean Daniel Kleinman, accepted proposals from faculty in a myriad of fields that sought to share a collaborative research agenda.

"Scholarly knowledge production is increasingly collaborative and interdisciplinary," Kleinman said. "We are also realizing that there are multiple professional paths for people with Ph.Ds. This seemed the perfect time to promote a training model aimed to prepare students for a changing world."

The departments of Asian Languages and Cultures, History and Art History have long shared a model of cross-departmental graduate education. The new training model will provide graduate students with the opportunity for student rotations and seminars outside their home departments.

The students will be provided with close faculty mentoring, as well as the opportunity to add a new professional development seminar for Chinese studies.

"There will be a change in emphasis from coursework in one discipline to professional apprentice-style work in multiple disciplines," said Joseph Dennis, an associate professor of history. "[The grant] will result in a more rigorous program, which when combined with pre-graduation publishing opportunities and the enhanced ability to talk to scholars outside their own narrow disciplines, will make the students more competitive on the job market."

Read the full story by Alissa Ewer via grad.wisc.edu

JOHN DUNNE'S MEETING OF THE MINDS

Professor John Dunne, UW-Madison's Distinguished Chair in Contemplative Humanities and professor in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, has a knack for mindfulness.

He's also an expert on areas where science and spirituality overlap. A few years ago, Dunne and other researchers studied the effect of compassion on the mind, asking a group of advanced Tibetan meditators to practice while having their brains scanned.

When they ranked the quality of their meditation, all gave their efforts low marks, which surprised most of the researchers—but Dunne understood that since humility was central to their culture, they would never describe themselves as great.

Today, Dunne focuses on Buddhist philosophy and contemplative practice, especially where they overlap with cognitive science and psychology.

He is a part of the Center for Healthy Minds, which asks what it means to be truly healthy through a scientific understanding of the mind. In his work, he helps scientists look at data through a humanist lens. The Center places a large emphasis on cross-disciplinary collaboration between physical, natural and social sciences and the arts and humanities.

Dunne brings additional context to different aspects of scientific research, like consulting Tibetan texts that describe the experience of a person achieving mindfulness, or exploring the philosophical mechanisms involved in being aware of one's own emotions.

"Often those kinds of questions are handled by a single discipline," Dunne said. He added that the involvement of several disciplines offers multiple perspectives, enriching understanding of scientific results.

Dunne said he appreciates being part of a team conducting research to benefit people throughout the world.

Read the full story by Katie Vaughn via ls.wisc.edu

Continued from "A note from the department chair," front cover

Unfortunately, not all developments in 2016-2017 were positive. The most devastating was our unexpected loss of Ms. Kannikar Elbow, a long-time, well-loved instructor of Thai, who touched so many students' and colleagues' lives. Her cheerful energy and compassionate teaching will be remembered for years to come. We will also miss faculty and staff who have found new paths in their lives: Nicole Huang, Mark Muelenbeld, Farooq Muhammad Asif, Dee Van Ruyven, Mike Baumann, and Terry Nealon. But we welcomed new members, including Rachel Weiss (Undergraduate Advisor and Graduate Program Coordinator), Alyson Amenda (Department Administrator), Haiyan Wei (Financial Specialist), and Gwendolyn Kirk (Urdu Lecturer).

A year ago, with honor and humility, I agreed to serve as the inaugural chair of the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures. As someone who was on the committees that developed the blueprints of the new department, I approached its takeoff with anticipation and apprehension. Thanks to hard-working members and their remarkable teamwork, passion, patience, and understanding, we have made great progress. I am confident that the incoming chair, Professor Steve Ridgely, who will start his term later this month, will lead us to a new level of success. Congratulations to all of us involved in this transformation, and happy new academic year!

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM ALUMNI

"While you're still in school, cultivate a wide range of interests and experiences. Join some organizations, take part time jobs, find internship opportunities, rebuild a car, volunteer at a veteran's shelter, be an Uber driver. Whatever it is, do more outside of your coursework and comfort zone to build your resume and become a more well-rounded person."

-Keith Booton, Japanese, 1997



Keith is currently the president of Ivor Andrew, an integrated marketing communications agency. He said the language skills and cultural background he learned from UW's Japanese program opened many doors for him.

"You will make mistakes and you will feel embarrassed at some point in time—or many times! Being able to be humble and learn from your cultural or linguistic missteps will go a long way in helping you grow both personally and professionally."

-Merritt Huang, Chinese, 2006



Merritt is currently an associate program director with the Global Executive MBA programs at the University of Minnesota.

GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESSES

- Dr. Laura Jo-Han: tenure-track job at Randolph-Macon College
- Masha Kobzeva: Mellow-Wisconsin Summer Dissertation Fellowship
- Lu Liu: teaching fellow for College of Letters & Science
- Michael Toole: interpreter for Ikeda Manabu on Wisconsin Public Radio
- Akiko Imamura: visiting assistant professor at Swarthmore College

UNDERGRAD SUCCESSES

- Yixuan Cheng and Daniel Nachreiner: Cameron G. Keith Memorial Scholarship
- Nathan Heinrich: Lawrence Louey Merit Award
- Mariah Julson and Yixuan Cheng: internships in Japan
- Alison Sharpless: Fisher Award,
- Margaret Radl: Thomas W. Parker Scholarship
- Clare Kai Cimperman: Ralph B. Abrams Scholarship
- David Bangs: Thomas W. Parker Scholarship
- Farhat Bhuiyan, Markayle Schears: Chou Kuo-P'ing Book Award

LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLERS LEARN KOREAN

Students from across Dane County are embarking on an exploration of Korean language and culture this summer.

The UW-Madison STARTALK Korean Language and Culture Academy, directed by associate professor Byung-jin Lim, will allow the students to be immersed in Korean cultural activities like martial arts, cooking, drumming and dance workshops.

In addition to learning about Korean culture, students will improve their language skills through teleconferencing with South Korean students.

“We want to build linguistic competence as well as intercultural competence,” Lim said. “By sharing their culture, students can see themselves through others.”

Byung-jin Lim leads the STARTALK Academy and is an assistant professor in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures. Read the full story by Steven Barcus via international.wisc.edu.

STARTALK is free to participants as it is funded by the National Security Agency. Program administrators say it will hopefully inspire in students a long-term study of the language, which Lim said will be to the world's benefit.



“I think the U.S. government also understands that to raise the next general of world leaders they need to understand others through language and cultural learning,” Lim explained.

CERULLI NAMED 2017 MOESON FELLOW

Professor Anthony Cerulli has received the Florence Tan Moeson Fellowship to conduct research within the Asian Division of the Library of Congress this summer. During his fellowship he'll work on The Manuscriptistan Project, a photo-ethnography project on manuscript archives in India.

“At the LoC, I'll be accessing the Library's collection of Hindi, Malayalam, and English periodicals and newspapers from Independence in 1947 through the 1950s and 60s to gather institutional data about India's archival spaces,” Cerulli said.

The work will ultimately be published as a book after its exhibitions, the first of which begins in January 2019.

Anthony Cerulli joined the department in Fall 2016.

ASIA NIGHT: WISCONSIN IDEA IN PRACTICE



More than 150 students, teachers and community members gathered to celebrate a multitude of Asian cultures at the Badger Rock Neighborhood Center in April.

The Asia Night CommUNITY event was co-sponsored by the center and UW-Madison's Department of Asian Languages and Cultures as well as other UW partners.

Eventgoers had the opportunity to learn about several cultures of Asia in many different ways, from Lion Dance and Drumming to Zen Turtle Yoga to traditional Hmong and Indonesian dances. Country tables also boasted a wide variety of information about different Asian locations, and a Hmong dinner was served to guests.

By sharing the cultures of Asia with the Madison community in a fun, accessible environment, UW partners fulfilled the Wisconsin Idea's call to extend the university's knowledge through the boundaries of the state.

BECKHAM BEGINS NEW HINDI COURSE

Sarah Beckham, an instructor of Hindi for the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures within the College of Letters & Science, received a grant for creating a blended course for Elementary Hindi.

This type of blended course is designed to increase student learning outcomes by boosting face-to-face time with instructors while using the target language.

Those who have heard of the “flipped classroom” will recognize a bit of that in this design as well— the instructor of the blended course will use that same “backward” approach that will allow learners to acquire and apply foundational knowledge in a different kind of learning environment.

The course will also be available through an open-access, adaptive e-text, which will develop and enhance national standards for an Elementary Hindi curriculum by making it widely accessible.

Read the full story via edinnovation.wisc.edu.



Photos by Rachel Weiss

“This was a golden opportunity to really open the eyes of four students to things they never would have seen otherwise.”

A JAPANESE FIELD TRIP TO REMEMBER

Four students from Professor Adam Kern’s Japanese literature class were able to embark on the trip of a lifetime this past February.

It started cloaked in mystery—Kern wrote to them in an email, asking them to come to his office early the next morning.

“If you already have plans, please reschedule them,” he wrote. “And I would please ask that you not tell anyone about this, at least not for the time being!”

Within a few months, the group was off to Japan for a free, week-long stay. Kern had been asked by the popular prime-time show “Japan’s Cultural Foundations” to be filmed for an extensive profile, and the show’s producers followed him and the students as he lectured them about the Japanese art of manga.

Manga, which Kern described as “comics on acid,” provided them with a myriad of opportunities while abroad—from handling rare comics from the 18th century to touring a Japanese publishing house to sitting in on a production meeting with a top-selling manga storyteller.

Kern himself is a manga expert. He said studying manga gives people a glimpse into one of the world’s greatest civilizations. Manga is also the oldest comic book tradition in the world.

“This was a golden opportunity to really open the eyes of four students to things they never would have seen otherwise,” Kern said.

The students, Jeff Chiqui, Austin Castleberry, Mingyue Zhang and Kayla Lewis, described the whirlwind experience as truly life-changing.

Lewis, who hopes to pursue a career in clinical psychology, said she knew how she could use manga to reach people that she’ll be working with in the future.

“Adam is my mentor,” she said. “He really inspires me, because I don’t think a lot of people who just drop everything to teach four students something new like this. I really appreciate what he’s done for all of us.”

Read the full story by Doug Erickson via news.wisc.edu.



Photos by Adam Kern. 5

STUDENTS PLACE HIGH AT SPEECH CONTEST

Several students from the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures collected some serious hardware at the 2017 U.S. Midwest Chinese Bridge Speech Contest, bringing home four first-place and five second-place medals.

The contest served as part of a UW-Madison event promoting relations between the U.S. and China, which included a lecture from visiting Chinese Consul General Lei Hong and received broad support from the campus community.

ALC students Courtney Stobbie, Jake Lee, David George Burnett and Tucker Penney outspoke others from sixteen universities in several states to capture first place in their respective categories. Isaac Mades, Heather Brevard, Sunny Yang, Jiwon Kim and Tyler Ruzicka took second place for their speeches.

Most of the first-place winners will travel to China this summer to represent the Midwest in the competition's finale.

Hongming Zhang, organizer of the event, said that the contest, as well as the other events of the weekend, "show the importance ... for the advocacy of Chinese language and cultural education in the U.S. and for the promotion of Chinese-American mutual understanding."

Hongming Zhang is a professor in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures.



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Please send your Alumni Updates to:
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News items may be featured in newsletters, or used for alumni activities, and student networking opportunities!
On Wisconsin!

SHARPLESS WINS FISHER AWARD

UW-Madison undergraduate Alison Sharpless received the Fisher Award this year from the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures.

Sharpless, a Chinese and Comparative Literature/Folklore Studies major from Elm Grove, Wisconsin, said she chose Chinese after a trip to the country where she became fascinated with the language.

She'll graduate in December 2018, after which she hopes to travel back to China or Taiwan to pursue a job where she'll use her Chinese for writing, translating or traveling.

Before receiving the award, Sharpless presented a project at the 2017 Undergraduate Symposium about the friendships and hardships of three women authors starting their careers during the May Fourth movement.

Her bit of advice for prospective Chinese majors? It's not as scary as it looks.

"I never would have gotten this far in Chinese if it wasn't for the professors and TAs in the Chinese department," she said. "I'm very thankful to have been nominated for the Fisher Award by the people who essentially made me qualified for it."

A NOTE FROM AN ALC GRADUATE

After seven years of hard work I have finally completed my Ph.D. in Japanese, thanks to the support, guidance, and encouragement I received from many people, especially my advisor Professor Junko Mori as well as her other advisees whom I met through the ALC at UW-Madison.

My dissertation provides moment-by-moment analyses of the use of sound symbolic words (SSWs), also known as mimetics and ideophones, in naturally occurring conversations in Japanese. In conversation, speakers may use conventional SSWs or freely create their own ones. Examples from my database include pitchiri, hyun, and tikan; when speakers use these words, they often change the pitch, speed, and/or volume of their voice, and may also use hand gestures.

I currently lecture Japanese at the University of California, Davis. I miss the snowy winter, but am coming to appreciate all the benefits that California offers.



-Yukimo Shibata