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Winterfest at UNC Charlotte

Cross-language Collaboration Brings Mirth to Campus

The holidays tend to have a dual effect on people. On the one hand they bring us together and remind us of our commonality and better natures. Simultaneously, however, with all the social events, gift shopping, etc., the holidays can be a stressful time of year—and doubly so for students studying for exams and turning in end of term projects! It was with this in mind that faculty members Susana Cisneros, Lecturer in Spanish, and Angela Jakeway, Lecturer in German, organized a light-hearted event centered

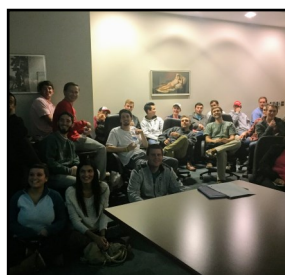
on bringing students together to celebrate the holiday season and let off some steam.

The event, called *Winterfest*, took place in College of Education Building room 402 on Dec. 5th and was a musical treat for those in attendance.

Cisneros and Jakeway, accompanied by a quartet of volunteer musicians, led the audience in the singing of popular holiday songs from Eng-

lish, German and Spanish. Singing 20 songs in all, the event opened with

“White Christmas” in English, “Alle Jahre



Wieder” in German and “Campana sobre campana” in Spanish and ended with “Stille

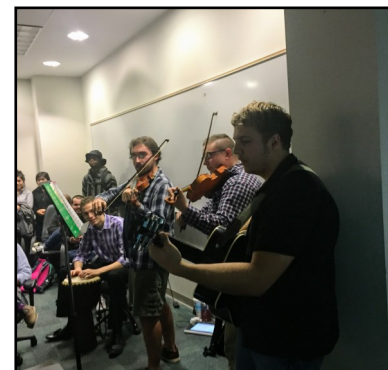
nacht, Heilige Nacht” in German, “Rodolfo el Reno” in Spanish and “We wish you a merry Christmas” in English. The words to each song were displayed on screen, the musicians played the tune and Cisneros and Jakeway sang loudly; all of which made it easy for students to join in even when they were not familiar with the song or the language. Approximately 80 students were in attend-

ance along with a handful of merry faculty members, including Dr. Robert Reimer, Professor of German, and Maria Mahaffey, Lecturer in Spanish. Most of the students in attendance studied either Spanish or German at UNC Charlotte, but there were many students from other languages as well.

By all accounts the event was a tremendous success. In addition to singing, the event was full of music, laughter, holiday snacks and, as is the case with any worthwhile holiday event, good cheer. Due to high turnout and the positive feedback received, organizers Cisneros and Jakeway, plan to make *Winterfest* an annual event, to be held on the first Monday of December each

“It was nice to meet with students outside the classroom and do something fun like singing. This was perfect to start us moving slowly into the Christmas season.”

— Angela Jakeway,
Lecturer in German



A Great Honor

Stedman Receives Prestigious NEH Fellowship for Book Project

Allison Stedman, associate professor of French at UNC Charlotte, has received a prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship to complete a book project with relevance for understanding mind-body connections, the history of medicine, miracles, mysticism, holism, and metaphysical theology.

The year-long fellowship will support the outcome of in-depth research to be conducted at the Arsenal Library and the French National Library in Paris, France for Stedman's book, *The Mind-Body Connection in Early Modern France, 1580-1735: Metaphysics, Mysticism, Miracles, Medicine*.

"Receiving the fellowship confirmed to me that the two areas of my life that have caused me the most anxiety and struggle were actually coming together complementarily and for a common purpose," Stedman says.

At first, she struggled to find funding to continue her research because it was so groundbreaking. A Franklin Grant from the American Philosophical Society and a UNC Charlotte Faculty Research Grant allowed her to acquire enough primary source material to build a stronger case for the project.

"To have the NEH agree to fund my project as a full-year faculty fellowship is an honor beyond an honor and a blessing beyond a blessing," Stedman said. "Without this fellowship the project would have taken many more years to complete."

"This NEH Fellowship is a distinct honor, and we are so proud of Dr. Stedman," said Nancy A. Gutierrez, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at UNC Charlotte. "The award will support her research and will generate knowledge that can be shared with our students and the broader community. Learning from the past is critical as we confront the challenges of today." Stedman's project is expected to



hold implications for an array of disciplines and interests.

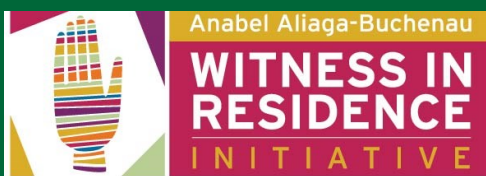
Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy and other areas of the humanities. "NEH provides support for projects across America that preserve our heritage, promote scholarly discoveries and make the best of America's humanities ideas available to all Americans," said William D. Adams, NEH chairman.

Witness in Residence Program hosts Syrian Refugees

As part of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences' Anabel Aliaga-Buchenau Witness in Residence Initiative, UNC Charlotte Center City played host to Syrian refugees Zubair Rushk and Amira Elamri on Tuesday, April 18. Rushk and Elamri shared their stories of life in Syria and of a refugee's long road to building a life in the United States.

Zubair Rushk was selected in 2010 for the U.S. refugee resettlement program and has since made his home in Cary, NC with his wife. He revealed to the audience that even before the current civil war began, Syria was deeply divided by regional alliances and differences in culture, history and language. Because he defied authorities by opening an illegal school in his home to teach the Kurdish language and history to Kurdish children, Rushk was incarcerated in Syria. Upon release from prison, he sought asylum in Lebanon in 2005 before finally being accepted into the United States.

Amira Elamri, her husband and their two children escaped the Syrian civil war in 2013. After nine moves within Syria and one to Lebanon to escape violence, they arrived in the U.S. with tourist visas. They left behind friends and extended family, many



Stories of Syrian Refugees | Tuesday, April 18

of whom have since been killed by bombings. The couple now have work visas and live in the Boston, MA, area, waiting for their Asylum applications to be approved. Elamri currently teaches in a Muslim preschool. She joined the conversation via videoconference.

Charles Kurzman, professor of sociology and co-director of the Carolina Center

for the Study of Middle East and Muslim Civilizations at UNC Chapel Hill, provided historical context and facilitated discussion. Additionally, Poet Susan Shaw Sailer, English professor emerita of the English Department at West Virginia University in Morgantown, read a new poem about Syrian refugees.

The Witness in Residence program at UNC Charlotte is part of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences' Anabel Aliaga-Buchenau Witness in Residence Initiative. Thanks to generous donors from the community, the initiative provides Study Abroad Scholarships which fund students' study-abroad experiences related to human rights and social justice in addition to supporting the annual Witness in Residence program at UNC Charlotte, which brings to campus individuals who have personally witnessed an important world event from within that event. Witnesses present a series of lectures to students, faculty, staff, and the greater Charlotte community.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

The happenings in the department this semester

New Graduate Certificate in Translation

The Department of Languages and Culture Studies at UNC Charlotte now offers a Graduate Certificate in Translation in French, German, Japanese and Russian in addition to the existing offering in Spanish. The addition of these new language areas expands the opportunities for students and global citizens alike. Additionally, the Early Entry program provides a pathway to existing UNC Charlotte undergraduate students to bolster their credentials by earning the Graduate Certificate in Translation while completing their undergraduate degrees.

New Concentration for Double Majors in Spanish

The Spanish staff has added a new option for students interested in Spanish but majoring in another subject. In addition to the option currently available to minor in Spanish, students now have the option to choose to major in Spanish via the new Concentration in Hispanic Studies designed for double majors. The new major requires 31 credit hours of study in Spanish with the option to double count one course from their current major as long as it is related in some way to Spanish or to Hispanic culture.

UNC Charlotte Hosts Pop-Up Film Festival

The Film Studies Program at UNC Charlotte, together with Joedance Film Festival, the UNCC Film



Club and the production company, Small Creatures, held its inaugural *Pop-Up Film Festival* at UNC Charlotte on Thursday, April 27. The event featured music video and documentary work by Joshua Yates, Adjunct Lecturer in Film Studies, followed by a 45-minute visual score produced by Will Davis, Adjunct Lecturer in Film Studies, and Andy Zipf, director for the Washington D.C. band The Cowards Choir, which performed live alongside the visuals. Following the screenings and musical performance, the participants

discussed their respective work and the process of creating art for other art forms (music videos, film scoring, etc.). The event provided refreshments and was a great opportunity to view work produced by faculty members in the Department of Languages and Culture Studies, in the spirit of community connection.

Japanese Coming of Age Ceremony



The Nihon Club at UNC Charlotte hosted *The Coming of Age Ceremony* (Seijinsiki) on Friday, January 20th, 2017 to celebrate exchange students who are attending UNC Charlotte this year and, therefore, will not be able to attend a Seijinsiki in Japan. Seijinsiki is a very important part of Japanese culture and also a rite of passage for Japanese youth on their journey to adulthood. The ceremony has been conducted for more than 1,200 years in Japan. The Nihon Club adapted the ceremony to make it fun and meaningful for everyone, while also honoring its long tradition. The event included a short presentation about Seijinsiki. Global Gateways Residence and the International Student and Scholars' Office in International Programs were also co-sponsors of this event.

Faculty Recognized

Department of Languages and Culture Studies Faculty were honored at the annual College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Celebration of Faculty Achievement held in December of 2016. The event recognizes faculty who have published a book, received external funding for research, or received an award from a professional society or organization during the past year. At the event, Dr. Carlos Coria-Sanchez, Associate Professor of Spanish, Dr. Fumie Kato, Associate Professor of Japanese, Dr. Dale Grote, Associate Professor of Classics, Dr. Bobby Hobgood, Director of the Language Resource Center, and Dr. Anton Pujol, Associate Professor of Spanish were all honored for

their achievements this year by Dr. Nancy Gutierrez, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

UNC Charlotte participates in Live Marathon Reading of *Cien años de soledad*

The Department of Languages and Culture Studies at UNC Charlotte served as one of the host sites for a marathon reading of *Cien años de Soledad* (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*) by Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez. This event was organized by the Artist Studio Project, a collaborative of artists based in Durham, N.C., whose focus is to promote each other's talents and arts through various media forms. The reading of this work was streamed live through the project's website and had a run time from April 17 through 21, 2017. Students and faculty at UNC Charlotte read passages from the work from a lecture hall on campus. Readings were performed in nine different languages.

Community Cultural Coffeehouse: Latino/Dreamer Immigrant community in Charlotte



Students from UNC Charlotte and Queens University of Charlotte explored what it is like to grow up as a member of the Latino/Dreamer Immigrant community in Charlotte at a Community Cultural Coffeehouse event held on January 19 at 3rd Space at Caldwell Presbyterian Church in Charlotte. The event allowed students to talk about the challenges, achievements and dreams while growing up as "Dreamers... Undocumented Youth Raised in the U.S." Nhora Saxon, Lecturer in Spanish, along with students in her class, "Service Learning in The Hispanic Community," initiated the discussion and then all others in attendance were invited to share their thoughts and experiences. The event also featured live entertainment and snacks.

FilmFest at UNC Charlotte

The 2017 UNC Charlotte International Film Festival

The Department of Languages and Culture Studies hosted the 5th annual International Film Festival, beginning on March 15 and running through April 7. Festival goers were invited to experience the rich world of contemporary film, which this year included 30 screenings of 22 films from 15 countries and featured as many as 11 different languages. The Festival organizer and founder is Dr. Michèle Bissière, professor of French, but the event was a collaborative effort including faculty from all languages who were directly involved in the planning and introduction of films together with the Chinese, French, German, Iranian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish student organizations that supported and promoted film screening events. All events were free and open to the general public.



Each year the UNC Charlotte International Film Festival is a cross-cultural exchange that fosters knowledge and appreciation for other cultures. This year's event was no exception. Festival goers had the opportunity to experience international cinema with commentary from directors and film studies faculty. This year featured: a Q&A session with Dr. Elyem Atakav, maker of the documentary film *Growing Up Married* (Turkey, 2016); a Q&A session with Dr. Oleg Timofeyev, co-director of the documentary film *Richard Gölz: The Cantor of Swabia* (Germany-USA, 2016); a Q&A session with Kevin Kennedy, director of the documentary film *Germans in Jamaica: War, Spies and Camps* (Jamaica, 2016); and a Q&A videoconference with Rana Kazkaz and Anas Khalaf in Syria about their documentary film *Mare Nostrum* (Syria, 2016).

Chair's Note

Department Chair, Dr. Ann González, reflects on the 2017 Spring Semester

We have had a very productive semester in regard to our students, our faculty, and the many initiatives and activities that our department has promoted. We will graduate 73 majors this spring!

Many of our students have been awarded scholarships to study abroad, to do graduate work; they have received internship opportunities and job offers—far too many to list. Our outstanding student this year is Eileen Jakeway, who was awarded the Ertugun scholarship for graduate study in the humanities; she will be attending Oxford University in Comparative Literature: English, German, French. This scholarship is extremely prestigious and the first time a UNC Charlotte student has won one, and we claim her for two out of her three majors! Congratulations, Eileen.

The faculty have also won a number of awards and published 48 scholarly and creative articles, books, and reviews. To mention only one outstanding faculty member, Dr. Allison Stedman was awarded an extremely prestigious year-long NEH fellowship to finish a book project.

This spring the department organized and hosted another extremely successful International Film

Festival. We also took part in the first Anabel Aliaga-Buchenau Witness in Residence Initiative, named for one of our German faculty, and participated in a Marathon Reading of a famous Colombian novel. We read in nine different languages! The initiative that has garnered the most community attention, however, has been the signing of an agreement to host a Confucius Institute on our campus, to be housed within our department. The Opening Ceremonies were a delight to behold, and we look forward to planning and hosting more cultural events in the

future. This Institute will provide our students and faculty with a number of exchange opportunities for study and research, and will allow our community opportunities to learn Chinese and to participate in Chinese cultural activities. There is so much more we have done but I am out of space!

Our department is definitely growing and broadening its programs and influence. We will be welcoming new faculty members next fall in Japanese film, Spanish Interpretation, and Arabic language and culture. I hope everyone has a relaxing summer, and I look forward to another exciting and productive year!



Gonzalez participating in the marathon reading of *Cien años de Soledad* Years


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