WELLS HALL GRAND OPENING

The new addition to Michigan State University’s Wells Hall is open for business – 88,000 square feet of space that serve as the university’s language hub.

A grand opening ceremony for the building was held on September 7th. MSU officials participating in the event included Trustee Faylene Owen, President Lou Anna K. Simon, Provost Kim Wilcox, and Dean of the College of Arts and Letters Karin Wurst. Senior Chinese major Madison Boden served as the student speaker.

The new facility provides office, instructional and research space. It includes a three-story atrium, four new classrooms and language laboratories, as well as private and open office environments that will help promote faculty and student interactions.

“As all sectors internationalize, language proficiency and cultural competency will be integral parts of nearly every job and career,” Dean Wurst said. “The new Wells Hall addition—and all that it allows us to do—will play a critical role in making sure our students are prepared to meet the ever-changing challenges of the world around them.”

The new addition is LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified, with features ranging from green roofs to daylight-controlled window shades and a comprehensive recycling program.

The new addition of Wells Hall also houses:
- African American and African Studies Program
- Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR)
- Center for Language Teaching Advancement (CeLTA) and its Community Language School
- English Language Center (ELC)
- Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities
- Jewish Studies Program
- Romance and Classical Studies
- Second Language Studies

Adapted from an article originally written by Tom Oswald, MSU Department of Communications and Brand Strategy.

The Ling Lang Letter is now available online! To receive future newsletters electronically, update your email address at lingnews@msu.edu
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends of Linguistics and Languages at MSU,

We have a wonderful new home in Wells Hall! Linguistics & Languages shares this beautiful new space with the Department of Romance and Classical Studies, the English Language Center and the Center for Language Teaching Advancement. It’s exciting to have new colleagues and to share in education and research related to linguistics, language study and literary and cultural studies. The view of Spartan Stadium is pretty fantastic, too, as is the view of the Red Cedar River. Come see for yourself!

As the newsletter was being finalized, we learned that the German Program had been recognized by the American Association of Teachers of German as a Center of Excellence in the U.S. In their notification to us, the jury noted that MSU was deemed excellent in every category, especially citing the faculty, the curriculum and the strong attention to students. We are extremely proud of the hard work and success of the German Program.

Please take a moment to read about the CAL Summer Study Trip to Germany on page 6 of this newsletter.

Finally, this will be the last year that we will be producing two issues annually; in the future, the Fall issue will serve as the annual issue for the Department. I hope you enjoy reading about the department happenings.

Best wishes!

Tom Lovik

GERMAN PHD STUDENTS EXPERIENCE NEWLY DESIGNED PROGRAM

Facing an evolving student population and job market, the MSU German graduate program can neither assume that students come to German graduate study with German BAs and excellent German skills nor that they aim to become tenure-track professors. Realizing this, the German program welcomed the program’s first cohort, to experience the newly revised program.

As part of his study abroad, Adam interned in the children’s section of Freiburg’s city library, where he gained insight into the library’s programs and its efforts toward improving literacy and learning. Adam joined library workers on the Fahrbibliothek (book bus), which brought reading materials to city neighborhoods and schools. In his free time, Adam explored the city’s bookstores, hunting down materials appropriate for his Kade fellowship-supported research project on using youth literature and lasting authentic materials for use in the German classroom.

Mark extended his research of digital art and installation culture in Germany by interning at the Kunstverein Freiburg translating the Kunstverein’s website into English. Mark also worked intensively on his German language abilities, examined U.S. artist Rob Pruitt’s exhibition on the culture of hoarding in the U.S., and interviewed the director of the Kunstverein, Dr. Caroline Käding. The latter experience offered him a chance to observe contemporary art in Germany from an active member of the larger artistic community.

The students came back with a solid introduction to the field, various employment opportunities, and practical experiences to be implemented in research and teaching—a great start to our revised Ph.D. program!
**VOLGOGRAD, RUSSIA**

In May 2012, fifteen students from MSU arrived in St. Petersburg, Russia for six weeks of study. They spent four days in St. Petersburg and two days in Moscow before traveling to Volgograd for five weeks of intensive Russian language classes at the Volgograd Polytechnical University. Program highlights included being in St. Petersburg for Victory Day (May 9), overnight train rides between cities, a visit to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, living with Russian families for five weeks in Volgograd, and important connections and friendships that, thanks to the internet, continue today.

Associate Professor Jason Merrill directs the Volgograd program with assistance from Assistant Professor Zarema Kumakhova.

**MAYEN, GERMANY**

This past summer, Associate Professor Liz Mittman guided seventeen students on the six-week study abroad program to picturesque Mayen, Germany. The program focuses on German language and culture via classroom study and homestays with locals.

During the sixth week, the group traveled across Germany visiting sites of cultural and historical significance. One highlight was a visit to the historic Reichstag parliament building in Berlin, where the group bumped into students from Okemos High School!

Associate TESOL Professor Debra Hardison conducted a CLEAR-supported study examining the effects of short-term study abroad on the students’ development of German speaking skills and changes in their socio-affective profiles. Results indicated significant, positive changes in oral skills, cross-cultural interest and adaptability, communication affect, and perceived competence. All reported very positive homestay experiences, and interactions engaged in while abroad correlated with self-assessments of greater confidence in their speaking skills afterwards.

**TIANJIN, CHINA**

Twenty MSU students participated in the Summer 2012 study abroad program in Chinese Language and Culture at Nankai University, Tianjin, China. Led by Dr. Chunhong Teng, this program provides eight weeks of intensive language instruction and guided excursions every other weekend. Participants are provided additional opportunities to experience various aspects of Chinese culture, such as Taiji, Peking opera, Chinese cooking, traditional medicine, acupuncture, martial arts, paper cut, and calligraphy. Since its inception in 2002, the program has continuously attracted an increasing number of students.

Four hours of classroom instruction each morning maximized student exposure to Chinese language and culture, and one-on-one tutorials in the afternoon involved discussion of cross-cultural communication issues with the Chinese tutors. Required journal writing helped students process language and cultural differences encountered during the program.
“MSU CHINA CONNECT” STUDENT ORGANIZATION

With the rapid growth of the Chinese undergraduate program at MSU, it is no surprise that an active student organization has developed. After a few years of informal gatherings, MSU China Connect (formerly known as “China Club”) became an official group in 2010, the same year MSU first offered the Chinese major and minor.

According to the current president, Connor Corcoran (Chinese minor), the purpose of the group is to provide a friendly environment for students interested in Chinese language and culture to meet one another and develop relationships with Chinese students studying at MSU. They especially try to attract students in first- and second-year Chinese language classes.

The group meets regularly each month and often goes on fieldtrips. This fall, they held a study abroad information night, which included a presentation by two students who participated in the Tianjin program last summer. Fieldtrips this year included attending the National Circus of the People’s Republic of China at the Wharton Center and organizing a tea tasting at the Wanderer’s Teahouse and Café in East Lansing.

MSU China Connect also recruits native Chinese-speaking “tutors” from MSU’s large Chinese student population to volunteer in a homework help room twice a month. These tutors often participate in the group’s cultural activities including outings to local Chinese restaurants, where they provide informative commentary about the food.

The group is advised by Dr. Chunhong Teng. More information about the group’s activities can be found on Facebook under “MSU China Connect.”

INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS GAIN IN POPULARITY

Increasingly, undergraduate students in Linguistics and Languages are opting for internships to earn academic credit abroad as an alternative, or in addition to, the traditional study abroad program. “International internships offer students an experience in their career interest area which allows them a language immersion experience as well,” says Beth Judge, Director of Undergraduate Affairs & Study Abroad in the College of Arts & Letters. Students usually have a homestay and abundant interaction with native speakers.

MSU international internships of interest to the department majors are currently in China, Germany, Japan, and Singapore; MSU offers the majority of these each summer with the exception of the Japan internship, which the Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU) coordinates. The internships are administered through a collaboration of the colleges of Arts and Letters, James Madison, and Social Science. According to Judge, MSU is a leader in the internship collaboration model, which allows the university to expand its offerings to students with the work shared across the colleges.

All international internships begin with a 2-3 week language course to prepare students with the vocabulary and proper language usage for their respective placements, as well as workplace etiquette for each country.

Notable internships placed Japanese majors at Uagi Tsusho Company, Shiga Perfectural Government, and various K-12 schools; a Chinese major at a marketing company in Singapore; and a German major in Berlin worked with mainly Turkish immigrant women at the Meeting and Information Center for Women.

Students in the Arabic Flagship program are also given an internship opportunity with the academic year program in Egypt.

Department alumni with knowledge of internship opportunities for our majors are encouraged to contact Cindy Walter at walterc2@msu.edu.
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

German Virtual Exchanges

To allow German students an opportunity to benefit from intercultural exchanges, the German program has introduced virtual exchanges into the curriculum. Last year, second-year German students engaged in email exchanges with Swiss high school students who were learning about US geography. The MSU students created multimedia presentations that introduced their Swiss counterparts to different places in Michigan.

In third-year German, students participated in semester-long tandem email exchanges and two video conferences with students in an advanced English high school class in Germany. The exchange enabled students from both countries to practice their language skills while simultaneously learning more about the two cultures.

Several of the students who participated in these virtual intercultural exchanges subsequently studied abroad this past summer and were able to meet their German friends in person.

NWAV 41 Conference

About ten MSU Sociolinguistics Lab students -- both graduate and undergraduate -- again organized a collective road trip to NWAV 41 (New Ways of Analyzing Variation), the premier conference on language variation and change, this fall. This year’s conference took place in Bloomington, Indiana. Norma Mendoza-Denton (University of Arizona) invited Ashley Hesson (LIN PhD, MD) to join her in giving a keynote speech. Mendoza-Denton is a well-known sociolinguist and linguistic anthropologist who studies language and race. Ashley is researching physicians’ use of directives to patients, exploring subtle linguistic variability in the way doctors give treatment recommendations to white versus non-white patients.
DEPARTMENT OUTREACH

Consulate General of Japan (CGJ) Educators Forum

On July 6, the Consulate General of Japan (CGJ) Educators Forum was held at Michigan State University. The forum aimed to bring schools, businesses, and government closer and promoted career opportunities for Japanese language students in Michigan. Representatives from universities around the state attended the forum.

Mr. Kuninori Matsuda, the Consul General of Japan, underscored the fact that Japan is Michigan’s largest foreign investor. Mr. Benjamin McCracken, JD, Resident Director of the Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU), talked about the success of the center’s new Summer Internship program in Japan. Representatives from two Michigan-based recruiting companies were also present and emphasized career advising for students, in addition to providing them with quality language education.

Community Language School and LLT students offer ESL component at area elementary school

In conjunction with its expansion into English as a Second Language (ESL), the Community Language School, under the direction of Angelika Kraemer, has teamed up with the instructors of LLT 307 (Methods of Second and Foreign Language Teaching) to offer undergraduates the opportunity to work with ESL learners at Red Cedar Elementary School. This semester, several LLT 307 students are engaging in a co-curricular service learning project where they plan ESL modules as part of their LLT coursework and implement the modules at the local school.

The project provides MSU students an excellent opportunity to gain hands-on experience in lesson planning, classroom management, and language teaching. The enrichment program meets once a week for six weeks. “I am so excited to have the opportunity to gain real world practice for being an ESL teacher,” says Melissa Hutchinson, one of the LLT 307 participants.

ALUMNI STUDY TRIP TO GERMANY

Join Dean Karin A. Wurst and CAL faculty in July 2013 on an arts and culture tour of Germany honoring the 40th anniversary of the Mayen study abroad program. The 9-day trip will explore the history, culture and art of Germany, a hub of business, culture and technological innovation.

Tentatively set for July 9 – 17, 2013, the trip includes an official welcome in Mayen; a cruise on the Rhine River; and visits to Heidelberg, Munich, Dresden and Berlin. Participants will visit museums, castles and the Meissen porcelain factory. CAL faculty members leading this trip are German natives and experts in German literature, culture and language.

Estimated cost is $2,000/person (depending upon double or single occupancy). All breakfasts, dinners, lodging, local transportation and admission fees are included, as well as access to an online, pre-departure, German language and culture course. Airfare is not included. Current airfare into Frankfurt and out of Berlin (recommended for those not traveling elsewhere before or afterward) is currently estimated at $1,800.

Due to limited capacity, we encourage those potentially interested to contact Bridget Paff in the CAL Development and Alumni Relations Office at paff@msu.edu or by phone at (517) 353-4725. Info can also be found at http://mayen.cal.msu.edu.
NEW FACULTY AND STAFF

New Faculty

Camelia Suleiman - Director of the Arabic Flagship. Camelia comes from Bryn Mawr College and received her Ph.D. in Linguistics from Georgetown University.

Russell Lucas - Arabic Studies Program, Co-Director of the Global Studies in the Arts & Humanities Program. Russell comes to MSU as an Associate Professor from Florida International University. He received his Ph.D. from Georgetown University in Comparative Politics with a focus on the Middle East. He will also be teaching in James Madison College.

Tze-Lan Sang - Chinese Program, Professor. Tze-Lan comes from the University of Oregon and will join the department in the Spring 2013 semester to teach Chinese culture and literature. She received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of California, Berkeley.

New Staff


Shawn McBee - Staff Supervisor and Assistant to both chairs.

The department also welcomes graduate and undergraduate secretaries Pete Havlatka, Victoria Reynaga and Estrella Starn. Milo Woodward also works part-time for the department as an administrative assistant.

FACULTY NOTES

Mutsuko Endo Hudson (Professor of Japanese and Linguistics) co-organized & co-presented at the Workshop for Teachers of Japanese which was sponsored by the MSU Asian Studies Center. The theme of the workshop was “Helping students gain proficiency with authentic materials.” She also taught a two-week course and gave two lectures in Japan last summer.

Yen-Hwei Lin (Professor of Linguistics) gave a keynote speech entitled “Variation in Standard Mandarin Loanword Adaptation” at IACL-20: The 20th Annual Conference of the International Association of Chinese Linguistics in Hong Kong in August 2012.

Patrick McConeghy and Patricia Pausell, both Professors of German, are currently on a reduced teaching load as part of their consultantship year before retiring in May 2013. They have devoted 37 and 34 years, respectively, to the department.

Suzanne Wagner (Assistant Professor of Linguistics) was awarded two College of Arts and Letters Undergraduate Research Initiative (CAL-URI) grants, which will fund four undergraduate research assistants. Two (Shelby O’Brien, Spanish; Abigail Diedrich, LIN) are working on an experiment to test listener sensitivity to sociolinguistic variation. The other two (Heidi Little, LIN; James Shaouni, Spanish) are developing classroom materials for an 8th grade language arts course module on variation in contemporary English as an outreach collaboration with a Detroit-area school.
Stay in touch!
Let us know what you’ve been up to. Send your news to:
The Ling Lang Letter
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or lingnews@msu.edu

A) Art piece by Alice Aycock hanging in the new Wells Hall atrium.
B) Professor Alan Beretta (Linguistics) hosting demonstrations in the new EEG lab.
C) FLTA Wafa Alkrenawi displaying cultural artifacts from Israel.
D) Senior Chinese major and Grand Opening student speaker, Madison Boden.