Modern Foreign Languages & Literatures

Annual Newsletter – Spring 2013

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IN APPRECIATION — DR. JEFF MELLOR

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A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT

Greetings from MFLL, where the spring semester is well underway. I am very glad to be here at UT! Please allow me to say a few words about my administrative background and philosophy, before I introduce our new colleagues and report on some of our activities since fall 2012.

I started out in 1979, in German, and have served as department head or chair at Colorado, Mississippi State, Alberta, Purdue and now UT. LSU is where I went through the ranks in the 1980s, and where I met my wife Lyn. We and our son Anthony (12, grade seven) are delighted to be here – being back in the SEC is like coming home.

My administrative philosophy is simple: faculty at great research universities need to share the responsibility of governing, teaching, and creating, and each of us needs to work as hard as possible on delivering to the citizens of Tennessee and the world our unique blend of teaching and research. My biggest concerns today are providing access to a world-class education, and ensuring that our graduates leave here with knowledge and skills. MFLL is a venue unlike any other for exploring the synergies between theory and practice, because all our graduates finish with a traditional liberal arts degree (critical thinking, analysis, communication, in-depth knowledge of peoples and cultures) and a level of language proficiency that makes them globally competitive. As a rule we language professors do not sufficiently emphasize the market value of our degrees–if we acknowledge that today we are all participating in a global market place, we should follow through and acknowledge the precious value of a degree that includes advanced language proficiency and cultural literacy.

We are joined this year by Sarah Eldridge, Assistant Professor, German (PhD Princeton); Djurdja Trakovic, Post Doctoral Teaching Associate, Spanish (PhD Wisconsin); Katherine Bevins, Lecturer, French (MA UT), Francesca Follone-Montgomery, Italian (MA Catholic Univ. of America); Jill Haynes, Lecturer, Spanish (MA UT); Thorsten Huth, Lecturer, German (PhD Kansas); Erin Smith, Lecturer, French (MA Northeastern Univ.);

Pedro Tomas, Lecturer, Spanish (MA UT). On a sadder note, Katherine Kong, Associate Professor, French, has resigned from the University. We thank Professor Kong for her contributions to MFLL and wish her all the best. We have two new staff members in MFLL: Mark Hipshire , IT Administrator II, and Rhonda Easterly, Administrative Specialist III. A hearty welcome to all new faculty and staff! We re delighted to have you in MFLL, and we wish you a long and fulfilling career.

Our faculty also added to their long records of achievement in teaching and research. Flavia Brizo-Skov, Professor of Italian, has been awarded a University of Tennessee Center for the Humanities resident fellowship. Sal DiMaria, Professor of Italian, received the Ready for the World Award at the 2012 Chancellor s Honors Banquet. Since August 2012, several colleagues have received highly competitive awards: the Chancellor s Faculty Development Award has been granted to Millie Gimmel, Greg Kaplan, Douja Mamelouk, and Maria Stehle, each of whom will receive up to $5,000 for research in progress. Also receiving funding from the Chancellor s office are Profs. Greg Kaplan and Noriko Horiguchi, in the form of the Chancellor s Grant for Faculty Research (one course release to advance research and grant-writing). And MFLL is equally proud that Professor Luis Cano was chosen as the Quest Scholar of the Week for October 19, 2012 this campus-wide recognition was announced in *Tennessee Today.* As fortune would have it, during the same week that Prof. Cano reigned as Scholar of the Week, our colleagues in Spanish hosted the annual Hispanic Studies Symposium. Participants in the conference hailed from universities and colleges in South Carolina, Indiana, Ohio, Massachusetts, Tennessee, and Ecuador. Michael Handelsman, Distinguished Professor of Humanities, was inducted as a Corresponding Member to Ecuador's National Academy of Language on November 12 in Quito; this is the second oldest National Academy in Latin America (founded in 1874) and a corresponding chapter of Spain's Royal Academy of Language. Currently, Michael is the only non-Ecuadorian who is an active corresponding member. Harriet Bowden was the Quest Scholar of the Week for November 9, 2012. Our congratulations to Daniel Magilow, who was promoted to Associate Professor in 2012, and to Susan Edmundson, Renee D Elia Zunino, and Laura Trujillo, who were promoted to Senior Lecturer. Finally congratulations are due for Bryant Creel, who retired in December 2012. I should point out that Professor Creel s service, teaching, and research have contributed to the high ranking bestowed on UT s doctoral program in Spanish by the latest NRC survey (2010), in which UT ranks in the top third of Spanish programs nationally (and tied with Purdue University). Bryant has been granted the status of Professor Emeritus our thanks and our congratulations!

Our students distinguished themselves in 2011/12 in a variety of ways. Our Outstanding Graduate in *French* was Katherine Abercrombie, and Jerrica Goodson was recognized for Excellence in French Studies. In *German* our Outstanding Graduate was Eric Gedenk, and the following

scholarships, honors and awards were earned: John L. and Elisabeth V. Kind Scholarship: Natalie Brundige, Brian Conlon, Desiree Hunter, Patrick Fifer, Haley Papel, Victoria Mitkusevich, Rachel Radford, Stefanie Weir, D.J. Young, Alexander Vandenberg; Gerti Wunderlich Scholarship: Brian Martindale, Sam Messamore, Alexander Vandenberg; Reinhold and Katherine Nordsieck Scholarship: Gaige Bolden, Lindsay Clark, Eric Gedenk, Stephen Jones, Tony Sax. Maria Haan Harris Scholarship: Elizabeth Schonagen, Ulrike Sczesni, Anja Seiler, Jennifer Rushing; John C. Osborne Memorial Fellowship: Hannah Long, Jarod Mowery; Dennis Randall Shockley Award: Jennifer Rushing; ﬁDo Deutschﬂ National Winner, Video Competion: Bernadette Kolp; UT ﬁQUESTﬂ Scholar of the Week (April 2012): William Hembree. The Outstanding Graduate in *Italian* was Justin Jornd. In *Language and World Business* the Outstanding Graduates were Hadil Senno (Spanish), and Lourienne Fedon (Italian). Julie Carter was recognized for Excellence in the Study of *Portuguese*. The Outstanding Graduate in *Russian* was Christian Alexander Peyton. In *Spanish* the outstanding Graduate was Layla Husain, while Hannah Parks and Bailey Gilbert were awarded the Kirkland Family Scholarship. Please join me in congratulating these 2012 graduates for their superior achievements!

Here briefly are some of the initiatives and activities that will occupy our energies this year. We would like very much to establish an advisory board, consisting mainly of our alumni, to assist with the increasingly important work of development and outreach. There are two searches underway for assistant professor positions, in Arabic and in Chinese, which we plan to fill beginning in 2013. MFLL is also searching this year at the associate rank for the Shumway Chair of Excellence in Romance Languages. Finally, my colleagues and I will be deliberating on how to raise private funding for a variety of important initiatives designed to support undergraduate study abroad, support our doctoral candidates with dissertation-year fellowships, and provide research-excellence awards to help retain our world-class faculty. As the new Head of MFLL, I would like our alumni to know that we need and value your support in many ways, and we are interested in hearing from you. We especially welcome feedback regarding your experience here in MFLL (or previously in the separate departments that now form MFLL), comments about how your degree has contributed to your career path, and updates regarding your careers. It is important for me as Head to establish a sense of MFLLﬁs alumni, and to open lines of communication with youﬁplease send me your comments and suggestions.

All the best,

Adrian Del Caro
Distinguished Professor of Humanities and Head

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