From the Department Head

With the 2020-2021 school year done there is a general sense of relief for having survived our third pandemic semester. With the wide availability of vaccines, the recent easing of social distancing restrictions on campus, and plans for a normal fall semester, we are also starting to guardedly hope that the worst might be behind us. While it was not an easy year, I believe it has been a successful one. Faculty are generally happy with student performance in socially distanced and online classes, our programs do not seem to have suffered drops in enrollment, and, most importantly, everyone has finished the year alive and well. Interest in study abroad remains high and hopefully students will be able to travel again soon.

Despite the difficulties this year has brought, we have also made some progress. We have received word that the American Sign Language Bachelor of Arts Degree has been fully approved. We are now able to advertise it, enroll students, and plan for more program growth. We have added several sections of elementary classes and have hired a new instructor to teach them. We hope to make an additional tenure-track hire in the coming year, which will allow the program to really develop. Most recently, members of the ASL section met with their counterparts from OSU-OKC and Tulsa Community College to discuss articulation agreements between the institutions.

As we prepare for the fall, one of the larger projects will be turning Gundersen 104 from a classroom to the Language Resource Center it was intended to be. Most of the renovations planned for it had been completed by the time OSU shut down in March 2020, so work will be limited to repositioning furniture that has been in storage for the past year. We envision that this space will serve as a study area for students with several small group study rooms, as well as a multi-purpose site for departmental events. The recruitment and retention committee has already begun plans for events to take place there. It will be interesting to see how this space develops.

We have hired a new Assistant Professor of German, Jessica Resvick, who will be joining us in August and comes to us from Dartmouth College. Stephanie Rohner (Spanish) has resigned to take a job at Cambridge University, and Julie Bills, a lecturer in Spanish, has retired. She plans to spend time with her animals, including several donkeys, and hopes to travel when the pandemic is better. Collin Brown (German) has also decided to pursue other opportunities. We have hired two new people in Spanish, Claudia Cavallin and David Reher. Rachel Hollis will be joining us in ASL, and William Mahan in German. Next year promises to be one of change and renewal.
2021 Scholarship Recipients

Frances and Charles Dutreau Scholarship

Shamara Arias is from Tulsa, OK, majoring in Spanish and Economics. She plans to study abroad at the University of Valencia in Spain.

Cody Ross was born in Colorado but has lived in both Australia and Mexico before coming to study at OSU, where he is a Biology and Spanish student. He intends to travel to Guadalajara in the future.

John Sadler Award

Gino Fornaro is from Highlands Ranch, CO. He is double majoring in Marketing and Sports Management, with a double minor in Spanish and International Business.

Olivia Lane is from Pocola, OK. She is majoring in Psychology, with a minor in American Sign Language. She plans to go on to graduate school with the hopes of getting her Master’s in Psychology.

Kati McCrary is from Bixby, OK. She is majoring in German with a minor in History. She plans to study in Germany or Austria in Fall 2021.

William J. Ray Memorial Scholarship

Abbey Billman is from Stillwater, OK. She is majoring in Secondary Education and Spanish. She plans to study abroad in Valencia, Spain in the Fall of 2021.
The Golconda Award

Renole Ceesay is from Tulsa, OK. He is pursuing majors in Spanish and Psychology. In addition to studying Spanish for more than six years, she has studied two years of French and Portuguese. He has already traveled in Colombia and Costa Rica and plans to travel to Cuba this summer as part of a volunteer program. He intends to graduate in December 2021.

Hailey Crawford is from Tulsa, OK. She is majoring in International Business, with a minor in Spanish and American Sign Language. If given the opportunity to study abroad, she wishes to travel to Spain for her Spanish minor, or to London for her business major.

Lindsey Colpitts is from Tulsa, OK. She is majoring in Nutritional Sciences, Pre-Med with a minor in Spanish. She hopes to study abroad in Argentina next summer.

Rachel Dolan is from Edmond, OK. She is majoring in Biochemistry and minoring in Spanish and Neuroscience. She plans to become a neurologist or neurosurgeon. She hopes to use her Spanish professionally to better serve the Spanish-speaking community. She plans to graduate in May 2022.

Lauren Green is from Keller, TX. She is majoring in Human Development and Family Sciences, with a minor in Spanish and Non-Profit Management. She hopes to study abroad in Madrid.

Courtney Harris is from Tulsa, OK. She is majoring in Communication Sciences and Disorders, with a minor in American Sign Language. After graduation, she plans to apply to Audiology schools so she can help the Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities.

Kayla Hoelscher is from Bartlesville, OK. She is majoring in Global Studies, with the focus on Geopolitics, minoring in both French and Spanish.

Breann Loeber is from Alvarado, TX. She is majoring in Chemical Engineering, with a minor in Spanish. She hopes to travel to Spain or Peru in the future.

Emma McCabe is from Edmond, OK. She is majoring in English with a German minor. She studied four years of German in high school before coming to OSU. She has earned a place on the President’s Honor Roll after only one semester of college. She plans to start a master’s degree in English after graduating early in Spring 2023 and hopes to study in Germany as part of her graduate studies.

Riley McIntosh is from Tulsa, OK. She is majoring in Chemical Engineering, with a minor in Spanish. She plans to study abroad with the CEAT Scholars Program.

Isabella Reynolds is from Stillwater, OK. She is majoring in Psychology with minors in Spanish and Biology. She has been studying Spanish since the sixth
grade and intends to study abroad in the Spring 2022 semester. After graduating in Spring 2023 she plans to become a Physician’s Assistant and hopes to work in an underserved community.

Zoe Siebert is from Edmond, OK. She is majoring in Plant Biology with a Pre-Pharmacy focus and minoring in Spanish. Among her academic honors she has been on the President’s Honor Roll three times. She plans to continue her studies to become a pharmacist after graduating from OSU in May 2022. She believes her Spanish will help her serve the growing Spanish-speaking population in the US.

Kathryn Turner is from Glencoe, OK. She is majoring in Spanish and pursuing Pre-Nursing Certification. She has been studying Spanish for four years and would like to travel to Spain in the future. She plans to graduate in May 2023 and hopes to use Spanish in her nursing career.

The John Schweitzer Memorial Scholarship

Alyssa Brown is from Stillwater, OK. She is majoring in Elementary Education, with a minor in French. She hopes to get a master’s degree in Library Science after she graduates.

The Susan Waid Childs Endowed Scholarship

Kassandra Gaona is from Tulsa, OK. She is majoring in Spanish and Psychology. She plans to intern abroad in Barcelona, Spain.

The Hilde Wohlert Memorial Endowed Scholarship

Shamara Arias is from Tulsa, OK, majoring in Spanish and Economics. She plans to study abroad at the University of Valencia in Spain.
The Buck and C.A. Aldrich End Scholarship

Carly Noone is from Allen, TX. She is majoring in Civil Engineering, with a minor in Spanish. She hopes to study abroad in Central or South America in the summer of 2022.

Cody Ross was born in Colorado but has lived in both Australia and Mexico before coming to study at OSU, where he is a Biology and Spanish student. He intends to travel to Guadalajara in the future.

New Faculty

Dr. Carol Ready joined the faculty at Oklahoma State as an Assistant Professor of Spanish and Linguistics in Fall 2020. She came to us from the University of Minnesota, where she did her Ph.D. She teaches Spanish 3463, Spanish Phonetics and Phonology, as well as other classes in Spanish Linguistics and language. She has proposed a course entitled “Language and Migration,” which she will teach in English for general education credit in Spring 2022. Her research interests include sociolinguistics, bi- and multilingualism, language contact and language policy of Spanish and Arabic in Spain as well as Spanish language acquisition and language pedagogy. Her current work focuses on agency and constraint in linguistic identity construction among marginalized populations.

Dr. Carolina Sitya Nin joined OSU in 2020 as an Assistant Professor of Spanish. Previously she had been at Eastern New Mexico University. She did her Ph. D. at the University of Oklahoma and her MA at Michigan State University. She also holds an MBA from the University of North Carolina. She is a specialist in fictions of the XX and XXI centuries in Latin America with an emphasis on the Southern Cone. She teaches a full range of Spanish classes, including Business Spanish, as well as French. In the Fall 2021 semester she will be introducing a seminar on Argentinian detective literature. Her research is on identity innovations in fictions with a particular focus on national and gender identity. Her current research explores genre innovations in early female Latin American writers, and she is working on a book comparing foundational identities of the XIX century with the innovations in national identity in XX and XXI century Argentinean fictions. Dr. Sitya Nin is originally from Argentina. In her free time, she enjoys good friends, gravel biking, and travelling.
Alumni Profile: Kayleigh Karinen

Kayleigh Karinen graduate from OSU with a degree in Spanish in 2017 after studying abroad in five countries. While at OSU she had been a member of the cheerleading squad and since graduating she has been a coach for Funky Team Finland cheerleading squad while pursuing a master’s in Linguistics. We caught up with Kayleigh to see what led her down this interesting and unusual path, and what she plans to do in the future.

When you were a Spanish major, what study abroad opportunities did you pursue?

I will start by telling you that you may be surprised to hear that initially I did not plan to study abroad at all. During my four years at OSU, I studied abroad in five countries: Trinidad and Tobago, Spain, Chile, Finland, and England. I had a phenomenal advisor in the College of Arts and Sciences who suggested that I apply for the Bailey Memorial Scholarship to study abroad. I began to explore both the study abroad options available and the funding/scholarship provided through different organizations at OSU which led me to apply to study Spanish language in Salamanca, Spain. Before embarking on a semester abroad I thought a short summer course would be a good preparation and attended the summer program in Trinidad and Tobago through the office of Scholar Development and Undergraduate Research in 2015. I was a Bailey scholar in Salamanca, Spain in 2015 and in Valparaíso, Chile in 2016. After studying abroad and enhancing my Spanish I wanted to study a language outside of the realm of what I knew at the time (English- Germanic & Spanish-Romance). I thus decided to pursue a semester abroad at the University of Helsinki in Finland to study Finnish, a non-Indo-European language. Before graduating from OSU, I pursued my final OSU affiliated study abroad course, Cowboys in Cambridge. I want to emphasize that all this study abroad was made possible purely by the study abroad scholarships provided via the College of Arts & Science, Spanish program, and the OSU Study Abroad Office. I was able to receive funding that reduced the costs drastically in all my study abroad endeavors.

What made you decide to go to Finland?

I wanted to study a non-Indo-European language to enhance my linguistic repertoire. My choice was also influenced by my desire to connect with my Finnish heritage. I grew up surrounded by nuances of Finnish culture such as going to sauna and making Finnish pulla throughout my childhood. Little did I know at the time that I would go on study abroad from which I haven’t returned yet. To be honest, there were a lot of reasons that also drew me to Finland. I want to work as a professor in academia and the world-class education system that Finland is known for reeled me in. I wanted to learn from the best to understand what makes one of the best educational systems in the world so great. Additionally, Helsinki is unique as it has a vast offering of the languages spoken in the Iberian Peninsula. Since my study abroad in Spain I became interested in the situation of Basque, Catalan and Gallego. These co-officially recognized regional languages are all taught in Helsinki. I have had the privilege to complete the study modules in Basque, Finnish, and Catalan during my time here. Lastly, I looked into the opportunities available and was able to register as a free-mover student which allowed me to study for free in Helsinki.

Why did you decide to stay?

I was extremely fortunate to gain meaningful employment that allowed me to stay in Finland. In order to get a visa/residence permit abroad you have to typically have a specialization and a sponsoring employer that will apply
for you to stay. Most people who go abroad for studies and wish to stay are unable to do so if they do not quickly find employment. I was an athlete at OSU and had competed in this sport since I was 10. Finland happens to also be one of the best in the world and I just happened to be in the right place at the right time. I was able to get a full-time employment contract that has allowed me to stay for 3 additional years, and I will be applying for Finnish nationality in October of 2021. I took a year off from studies to get fluent in Finnish and was then accepted to the master’s degree in Linguistic Diversity and Digital Humanities in 2019. Apart from my academic involvement and work I am also a back-to-back world champion athlete on the Finnish National Team. We won in 2018 and 2019 beating the USA. Fun fact: I competed on the Finnish National Team against OSU athletes on the U.S. national team that were once teammates. I stayed for many reasons. I had no idea any of this would happen when I left for Finland, but I would not have changed anything looking back.

What has surprised you most about living in Finland?

The emphasis on taking time off, guaranteed 5 weeks of paid vacation, public health care, and free education. I knew about the public health care and free education prior to coming but there are still things that are surprising such as the fact that Finnish education is not free, they actually pay students to study. Students are provided a 250-euro payment per month during the academic year. You are not entitled to this if you are not a permanent resident, however. Also, there are very strict earning restrictions to be eligible for these funds. Regardless of this knowledge, it still surprises me just how much the government subsidies studies, student lunches, and living costs. Students are able to get living funds, study subsidy, and take out student loans that they do not even have to pay all of it back. If a student graduates on-time they only have to pay back 60% of their student loans (if they take them out, of course). As an American, in a situation where I will be paying loans for probably 10 more years, this blows my mind. I mentioned the taking time off and this is something that has changed me and my outlook on life-work balance. In Finland there is a huge emphasis on not over-working and doing overtime. I felt like this was always encouraged in the U.S., but in Finland it is discouraged. My employers have told me that I need to stop doing so much multiple times, and they mean it in the best way possible. They want me to work for them for as long as possible and realize if I continually overwork myself I will eventually burnout. In Finland we work smarter not harder. I have also been surprised on how flexible working hours are here. I could truly write a book on all my thoughts, but I will leave it with these.

What are your long-term goals?

My long-term goal is to pursue a Ph.D. and work to provide solutions to encourage people's linguistic well-being in our increasingly diverse global world. I am interested in the promotion of marginalized languages (Basque in Spain & Finland Swedish), multilingualism, and heritage languages in diaspora communities. I love learning about all kinds of studies through the field of sociolinguistics. To be honest, I have a myriad of interest and an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. I do not foresee this changing in the near future. Ultimately, I hope to get my doctoral degree that would allow me to teach and do research. At the current moment I see this Ph.D. being in linguistics. This year I will conduct sociolinguistic field research in on the role of sports in the promotion of Basque language for my master’s thesis. I plan to apply for a Fulbright scholarship in October to do research in the Basque Country for the 2022-2023 academic year alongside top scholars who specialize in sociolinguistics, multilingualism, and Basque language revitalization.
What are some differences between the Finnish and American educational systems?

At the university level what has surprised me is the amount of freedom in your studies and the ability to personalize your study plan to fit your interests and academic desires. In addition to this, I am impressed at how informal the communication is within the university. As a student we have a voice that is always heard. We have the power and right to impact the courses and the system at the university. It truly feels empowering. I am a member of the University of Helsinki Scholarship Committee as a master’s student that allows me to make important decisions regarding the students who will be provided funding in the upcoming academic year, for example. In the primary and secondary education, I am impressed by the high amount of playtime/free time and flexibility in studies, not to mention the fact that going to high school is not currently a requirement. The school day varies typically by the month, no two months are the same. In the U.S. typically it is a 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. school day for elementary and here Monday could be only four hours and Friday could be two. The schedule changes frequently and so do the study subjects. Children also get free meals at school; this is something I wish existed everywhere. The amount of value placed in educators here is also very high, and teachers are required to have a master’s degree.

Faculty News

Isabel Alvarez-Sancho (Spanish) presented “A Former Future: The End of a World and its Restart in After the Bomb and Typescript of the Second Origin.” at the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference in April.

Rachael Cullick (Classics) was co-organizer of a panel for CAMWS (Classical Association of the Middle West and South): The Uses of the Monstrous in Greek and Roman Epic. She also presented a paper as part of the panel: “Monstrous Crowns and the New Furies of Roman Epic” in April.


Jonathan Ludwig (Russian) published a policy paper “Making Russia Policy in the Biden administration” One of the co-authors, Reagan Page, is a Russian minor and Political Science major at OSU.

Susana Perea Fox (Spanish) was a keynote speaker for the Southwestern Association of Naturalists annual meeting. “Myths that Explain Animal Behavior in Mapuche Cosmogony,” Huntsville, Texas, in April. She published an article: Santoyo-Brito, E., S. Perea-Fox, H. Núñez, and S. F. Fox. “Maternal care and secretive behaviour of neonates in the highly social lizard Liolaemus leopardinus (Squamata: Liolaemidae) from the central Chilean Andes may relate to size-specific bird predation,” Behaviour 158:195–223. She also published a short story: “El tacón roto” in La mujer y sus problemáticas sociales. Revista Collhibrí, México. She was nominated for the Outstanding Achievement and Mentorship of Women Award.


**Donald Wood** (Spanish) published a pedagogical edition of the Aljamiado-Morisco *Leyenda de la doncella Carcaçiyona* (Madrid, CSIC, MS RESC/57) in Open Iberia/América Teaching Anthology with Jordan Rosen-Kaplan. He also presented a paper, "Morisco Magic? Approaching an Ecology of Practices in Transconfessional Contexts" at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in May.