As Chair of the Department of Modern Languages I would like to announce that we have a new faculty member on board this year. Dr. Evelyn Meyer, Ph.D. University of Minnesota, has joined our faculty and will be teaching in our German Program. Dr. Meyer is a Medievalist and will add to the expertise in this area in terms of our department. Dr. Meyer was raised in Karlsruhe, Germany and she infuses her courses with German culture as well as language. She has great expertise in the area of technology and teaching with technology. Her students will have first-hand experience with exciting new opportunities in the Global Learning Lab and with web-based activities that she creates. We are delighted she has joined the faculty! Dr. Meyer has agreed to serve as Editor of the Polyglot newsletter, so you will be hearing from her regularly. Please greet her when you see her on campus.

As students of Modern Languages or as friends and alumni of our department you will be delighted to know that foreign language study is becoming much more fashionable. According to a Modern Language Association study (2003) there are more students studying a foreign language than any other year since 1972. This is news around the country and the world. About half of all students study Spanish. French and German are still in the top five languages studied. To read more about why more people are studying languages check out this fun news story on the internet. (http://www.idsnwes.com/story.php?id=19994). If you are wondering why you (or your children) should study a second language, visit the following website to get some ideas (http://mum.neric.org/~jnotarni/parent~1.htm). You will learn that children who study languages have a tremendous advantage. If you have had enough of Minnesota winters and you are planning to seek out a language career in a different part of the U.S., you might want to visit the Modern Language Association homepage where you can see where the 30 most commonly spoken languages are located in the U.S. (http://www.mla.org/).
Message from the Chair, continued

There is no doubt that understanding and speaking other languages brings us new opportunities. We have additional study abroad opportunities associated with our department and interest in study abroad is also on the rise here and around the country. For additional ideas about what types of opportunities there are for language students, or for foreign language resources, take a look at “Knowing Other Languages Brings Opportunities” (www.mla.org/resources/kol_brochure). For more information on study abroad and our department, visit our Main Office in 227 Armstrong Hall.

This is going to be an exciting academic year for students in Modern Languages. We have an International Poetry Recital scheduled for this semester and the Department is making plans for an exciting conference called “Don Quixote Across the Disciplines: Unraveling Myth(s)” for October 2005. Our language clubs are already busy putting together fundraisers, activities and opportunities for conversation. We have conversation table opportunities and tutoring available through our department. Our department, along with the Arts and Humanities Dean’s Office, English and Speech Departments, won the Homecoming decorating contest. There is a lot of excitement in the air. So, drop in, get involved in a club and help us make this a great year for Modern Languages and a wonderful year for you!

International Poetry Recital

The Modern Language Department is organizing an International Poetry Recital to be held on Thursday, November 18, at 2:00 in ML 45 & ML 47 (The Global Learning Lab and the Casual Computer Lab). The event will form part of International Education Week and Cultural Diversity Week. Everybody (faculty, TAs, and undergraduate students) is invited to attend and participate. If you are interested in reciting a poem in any language (by memory or reading it), please e-mail it (in the original language) to Dr. Enrique Torner at enrique.torner@mnsu.edu by October 29. If the language chosen is not French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, or Italian, please e-mail also an English translation. We are looking forward to your participation. Thank you for contributing to making this event a great success!

Club News

French Club:
People interested in receiving notices about French Club activities should contact Marcus Hudson at marcus.hudson@mnsu.edu. He will put you on the list and send you announcements about club activities. We have already had a first “soirée” during which students shared their pictures of last summer’s program in France. A film night is planned for Wednesday, October 20.
Adrian Schnobrich—Gießen, Germany

My year abroad was the best year of my life, thanks to a partnership of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the University in Gießen, Germany. Financial Aid allowed me to study abroad and all by credits transferred back to the US, so it was really worth it. I seized the opportunity and toured much of Europe during the 6-week break between semesters. I visited cities I had only seen on TV and discovered things I hadn’t ever known about. I enjoyed living in Germany so much that I stayed during the Christmas break. I spent Christmas with a friend whom I had met while he was studying in America. After the break others noticed how much my German had improved. I lived in a dormitory and there were always parties on weekends. It was fun being around people from all over the world. I didn’t miss my car at all. I bought a bicycle for 12 € and fixed it up. You wouldn’t believe how easy it is to get around a town of 75,000 in Germany with a bicycle. The university was only about 7 minutes away and in between was a grocery store. The bus line that came to the dormitories was the best of all because it went right downtown and continued to the train station that was all the way across town. Frankfurt is only 45 minutes away, and from there you can go to almost any destination. My best trips were after the academic year was over and I went north to Berlin for 2 weeks and then all the way down to the Black Forest from which my ancestor’s emigrated.
Study Abroad Experiences Continued

Amber Janssen, Spanish Teaching Major—Guadalajara, Mexico

Participating in a study abroad program is quite a unique and rewarding experience. Not only can we learn about the language and culture we are studying, we can learn many pieces of information about ourselves. I had the great experience of studying in Guadalajara, Mexico last spring semester for 12 weeks. This was the first time in my life that I had actually gone completely away, for an extended period of time. Therefore, I was very reluctant or anxious about leaving. It turned out to be the most wonderful experience in my life, and the time flew by. In all the years that I had been studying Spanish, I had never really been forced to use the language, and therefore felt as though I still didn’t completely understand the language. The feeling of not being able to use the language I was supposed to know was very unsettling. Being in Mexico forced me to actually learn to communicate in Spanish and connect with a world around me that isn’t in my comfort zone. I built a sense of confidence in using my skills to survive in this foreign culture. Being able to put the books aside and speak with someone was a difficult task that I learned to deal with and enjoy. In my opinion, the most important part of knowing a foreign language is to communicate in it. After 5 years of studying Spanish, I felt like I still couldn’t carry on a conversation with someone. After studying in Mexico, I now feel that I can. It opened up the door to a new part of the world that I had never seen, set straight any misconceptions I previously held, and answered any questions I had about Mexican culture. It is a growing experience that teaches independence, and it helped me find out what values are important in my life. Study abroad is a great opportunity that all language learners should take advantage of to gain many life experiences. I encourage all of you to participate in a study abroad program so you may gain the speechless experiences that I did.

Stephanie Anderson, German Major—München, Germany

The study abroad program I participated in is called Junior Year in Munich, which took place in Munich, Germany. The program lasted ten months, covering two semesters of school. Getting used to living in another country is easier than one would think. After the initial culture shock, it took me about three weeks to adjust. Before I knew it I was living like the locals. I could even spot an American tourists in crowds, without hearing English. I lived in an international student housing complex, which gave me the chance to talk to people from all over the world on a daily basis. I also met people while traveling. I was able to go to many places in Europe, and this, along with exposure to European media, helped me to understand so much more about the world. Saying that living there was eye-opening would be an understatement. Of course not every moment you’re there or person you meet will be wonderful. In fact, there might even be some really bad times. You will be forced to learn how to deal with different situations while being away from home (your comfort zone), which makes studying abroad definitely a learning experience that shouldn’t be passed up. Having been back two months now, and being finished with the readjusting process, I realize that I am still the same person, but a little changed. I feel that I became more confident, independent and mature. Americans really need to get out and not just see the world, but live it. Coming back to America after an extended period of time will give you a completely different perspective of the country and the world. I recommend studying abroad to everyone and wholeheartedly support anyone who wants to give it a try.
News from Students Past and Present

Lisa Staves, one of our TAs, is taking advantage of a new course offering in Spanish, the FLES internship, to gain additional experience in the elementary classroom by teaching children at Jefferson Elementary School. As part of this internship, Lisa prepares and delivers lessons to 1st and 2nd graders as well as members of Jefferson’s Spanish Club. Jefferson faculty have been very excited to work with us. Their teachers provide invaluable input on lesson plans, age-appropriate activities, sequencing, classroom management and the like. MSU provides Jefferson kids with wonderful exposure to the Spanish language. The opportunity to teach world languages in the elementary school is one of the elements that separates MSU teacher-prep from other institutions in the state!

James Livermont, who graduated from MSU in December, 2002, and was a teaching assistant in the French Program spring semester, 2003, spent last year teaching English in France. He has decided to stay another year. Chad Kuyper, who also taught in France at the same time, is a teaching assistant in the English Department this year. The two of them had an article published in the summer issue of the Minnesota Language Review. It was entitled “Life in France as an ‘assistant d’anglais.’” Jeanne Campe, a 2004 graduate, left for France at the end of the month of September to teach English in Rochefort.

Last summer, eleven students, nine of whom stayed for the full six weeks, participated in the Summer Study in France Program. They visited Paris and Normandy and spent the month of July in La Rochelle where they lived with French families, took courses in the morning and often enjoyed the local beaches and sites in the afternoon and on weekends.

Jamey Strand writes:
“Guten Tag!

Just a quick note to let you know that I finally found a job where I will get to use both my German and my History degrees. I no longer am a manager at Wal-Mart. I now work for Ed-Ventures, Inc. in Rochester and I am a tour coordinator. We deal with large group tours to Europe, Scandinavia, and Latin America. My job in a nutshell is to make hotel, meal, and tour guide arrangements for all the groups that travel through us to the German speaking countries. It is the job that I wanted when I graduated and I’m extremely happy now that I have it. I just thought that you might be interested to know what people are up to after graduation.

Auf Wiedersehen,
Jamey Strand"
**Faculty News**

**Dr. Kimberly Contag** and **Dr. Jim Grabowska** co-authored the book *Where the Clouds Meet the Water* that was published by Inkwater Press this summer.

**Dr. Jim Grabowska** gave a half-day workshop on incorporating multi-sensory activities in the language classroom at the annual meeting of the AATSP in Acapulco, MX in July 2004.

He also gave a presentation to a visiting delegation of Thai educators on the use of TPR in the language classroom in October 2004.

Furthermore, he gave a presentation called “Latino 101” to the staff of FCI Waseca during their Multi-cultural Day staff recall.

**Dr. Karl Heise** will be a presenter at the Fall 2004 conference of the North Central Council of Latin Americanists, which is meeting Oct. 21-23 at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. The theme of the conference is "Latin America: Visions of Social Justice in a Global World." His presentation is "The Creation of a Latin American Studies Minor at a Regional State University."

**Birgitta Hendrickson** took part in a seminar for German faculty in Wien and Freistadt, Austria, hosted by the Austrian Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur. This was held in July 2004.

**Dr. John J. Janc** was listed in *Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers* for 2004.

Alumni Stories welcome!