

Western Worldwide

Your Gateway to Global Engagement

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NEWSLETTER OF THE GLOBAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES PROGRAM WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY - WINTER 2016-17



From L-R: Dr. Thomas Kostrzewa, Dr. Laura Hastings, Michael Riedel, Dean Carla Koretsky

Alumni Spotlight: Michael Riedel - *By Kenneth Okoli*

This year we presented our Alumni Achievement Award to Michael Riedel. Riedel is a Foreign Service Officer with the United States Department of Agriculture. He has been posted in Vietnam, Iraq, India, and China and is currently based in Washington, D.C. On the occasion of the WMU award ceremony in October, our staff writer got the opportunity to talk to him about working in the international field.

OKOLI: What advice would you have for students looking to study abroad?

RIEDEL: I'd say, go, it is a must. That is true for any major. Go and see how other people live. Go and see what other people value. Go and see how they think because, no matter what job you are in, it is going to be connected in some way to the outside world.

OKOLI: Do you have any tips for our students on how to make themselves more marketable after graduation?

RIEDEL: In my opinion, the purpose of getting a bachelor's [degree] is to build your foundation, to build the box within which you will think, live, and understand things. It builds a frame for you, so math and biology classes are just as important as history or anthropology. It all kind of fits together in your mind in the end. It's also important for the international trade field to be in [Washington] DC. It's key to furthering relationships. But what is really important is to make sure you get practical experience.

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From The Director

Welcome to our growing global and international studies program at Western. Over the summer, more than 50 faculty members from across the campus joined our program as "allied" faculty, enriching programming and enhancing communications for students.

Our two student-led initiatives, the Model UN Club and the Sigma Iota Rho honors society, have a full plate of activities underway, and our program-sponsored internships provide great opportunities for students to prepare for their professional career.

Visits with recent alumni are a great way for current students to envision this transition, and we welcome alumni participation.

Please keep in touch with us by liking us on Facebook, connecting with us on LinkedIn, and visiting us at www.wmich.edu/globalstudies

Laura Hastings, Ph.D.

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Refugees in Crisis

By Kenneth Okoli, Graduate Student Assistant

The ongoing Syrian Civil War has led to one the largest refugee crises since WW II. The large influx of Syrians fleeing their country's civil war has pushed the issue of migration to the forefront of many countries' political landscapes.

Whenever there are large migrations of people from one country to another, dislocations occur. Some countries are hesitant or unwilling to accept refugees. Communities may lack the infrastructure to support the influx of immigrants, or they are uncertain regarding the impact of cultural dynamics on their countries. Gulf States such as Qatar and UAE have more foreign than national residents, so countries such as these may feel that accepting refugees may tip an already fragile balance.

According to the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugee and Migration Refugee Processing Center, almost 85,000 refugees have come to the United States in 2016 alone. Since the Syrian Civil War started, Michigan has been the number one resettlement state for Syrian refugees and has accepted the fourth highest number of refugees.

In the past year, 4,257 refugees have settled in Michigan, and Syrian refugees make up 32 percent. Through the efforts of aid organizations like Samartias and Bethany Christian Services, twelve families have been relocated to Kalamazoo this fall. Of the twelve families in Kalamazoo, nine are from Syria, two from the Congo, and one from Iraq.

This dramatic movement of people is a humanitarian issue. Countries should do well to honor the spirit and the language of the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention signed in support of displaced persons and their human rights. Though countries like the United States have responded to the crisis, we can do a lot more than we are doing now. Here in Kalamazoo there are many ways to become involved. One way is through joining on campus RSOs such as Refugee Outreach Kalamazoo or other organizations that focus on helping refugees such as Bethany Christian services, Kalamazoo Refugee Council, or Jewish Family Services.



New Program Advisor

We welcome Kala Willette as the new academic advisor for the global and international studies program! Kala graduated from Grand Valley State University with a major in French and spent a semester abroad in Ireland at the Án

Díseart Centre for Irish Spirituality and Culture, where she studied Irish history, mythology, music, and the Gaelic language. In 2014 she joined the Peace Corps. Willette commented, "I embarked on a journey to Ethiopia where I expanded my linguistic knowledge with Ethiopian Tigrinya and cultural knowledge as an environmental development volunteer". She is currently pursuing an M.A. in Comparative Religion.

Refugee Outreach Kalamazoo



Refugee Outreach Kalamazoo (ROK) is a nonprofit organization based in southwest Michigan that seeks to raise awareness of the global migration crisis, and connect volunteers with the opportunities to empower

displaced persons. ROK is currently in three campuses: Michigan State University, Western Michigan University, and Kalamazoo College. The WMU chapter of ROK (previously known as ARC) began in the summer of 2016. In November the WMU chapter hosted an event "The Refugee Dialogues," highlighting some of the stories of past refugees and helping to raise awareness of the challenges that refugees here in Kalamazoo face.

WMU Model UN Club



Morgan McCullough, Emmanuel Machena,
Katlin Viar

Our Model UN Club has been very active in club recruitment and training its members, who come from many different colleges and departments at Western. The RSO, started in August 2015 and now boasts 50 members. This fall the club held several simulation exercises honing members' negotiating, resolution writing and moderating skills. An all day workshop in October addressed the nuclear crisis in the Ukraine, preparing new members for college competition. Eight members participated in the American Model UN (AMUN) Conference in Chicago in November, where they represented Sweden on a variety of UN committees. Next semester the club will attend the North American Model UN (NAMUN) Conference in Toronto and will help to run the second annual Western Michigan University High School Model UN Conference being held March 25 and 26, 2017.

A Student Perspective: Local Internship

Corinna Parish, global & international studies major

My internship at Colleagues International counts as one of my most interesting academic experiences at Western. Colleagues International (CI) is a non-profit organization in Kalamazoo and part of the National Council for International Visitors. I remember being told that, as an intern, I would to meet and mingle with international visitors throughout their stay. Indeed this rang true. As a program officer, my job was to develop proposals in order to recruit international visitor programs to Kalamazoo for professional development. I would also help visitors get to know Kalamazoo, accompany them to their appointments, and a few times had the pleasure of hosting a hospitality dinner.

CI supports international diplomacy at a local level, highlighted by their slogan, "Bringing the World to

Kalamazoo." While international diplomacy often refers to professional diplomats and government officials, CI supports "citizen diplomacy."

The grounding exchanges that took place between Kalamazoo residents and international visitors were irreplaceable. We engaged in personal conversations, from sharing perspectives on life, to discussing local and global issues. These organic and essentially informal exchanges that took place in varying physical surroundings resulted in connections that may not otherwise be accessible for people due to geographic, cultural, religious, or linguistic barriers.

People coming from these exchanges return home having their own understanding of a particular "foreign" culture that is now less influenced by media or government interests. These meaningful interactions are the true, "bottom-up" means to international understandings. International citizen diplomacy creates new definitions for the term "national interest."

Sigma Iota Rho: A Premier Honor Society

The Zeta Phi Chapter of Sigma Iota Rho at Western Michigan University was founded in April 2016. Twice a year the chapter sends out letters of invitation to potential new members who meet the membership requirements for the international studies honors society. In November, Dr. Kenneth Steuer conducted a workshop on applying to graduate school, open to all undergraduates. Members also enjoyed an international movie night, which featured popcorn and post-film discussion, and a night out for a global dinner at a local restaurant.



Weslee Tweedale (President), and Paige Barton
(Vice President)

Research News: Hastings to China

This past semester, Dr. Laura Hastings, director of the GIST program and Master Faculty Specialist in Political Science, traveled to China on a grant to carry out preliminary research on a project on tourism and ethnic identity. In Beijing, Hastings delivered lectures at Beijing Language and Cultural University, assessing US university interdisciplinary programs like Global Studies and explaining how policy issues like human trafficking and the Zika virus can be better understood using a variety of disciplinary lenses. Hastings then traveled to Yunnan Province in the south of China. She looks forward to carrying out comparative work in Peru and Ireland.



Research News: Steuer to Germany



Dr. Kenneth Steuer, faculty coordinator at GIST and Adjunct Associate Professor in History, participated in the WMU-University of Passau Faculty Exchange Program in June, 2016. The University of Passau is Germany's newest institution of higher education, located in Bavaria on the border with Austria, with a 30 year history of exchanges with WMU. Steuer spent his time meeting with Passau faculty, working in the university library. He conducted research on his forthcoming book on German prisoners of war in the British Isles and social welfare services for these POWs during the First World War. He delivered a public lecture, entitled "Unofficial Diplomacy": The YMCA and Welfare Service for Prisoners of War during World War I, 1914-1923." The lecture was held in conjunction with a DAAD Exchange Program that brought together German, Russian, and Ukrainian graduate students who were studying the role of international law on human rights issues. In addition, Steuer met with members of the University of Passau Model UN Club and attended one of their simulations. Their club hosts an annual Model UN Conference, and members of the WMU Model UN Club have expressed a great interest in participating in this conference, scheduled for May 2017. Steuer is developing a Study Abroad course to provide Western students with the opportunity to obtain academic credit for their model UN work.

New Faculty Advisory Committee Member

The global and international studies program would like to welcome a new member to its faculty advisory committee, Dr. Angela Moe. Moe is a professor of sociology at Western Michigan University, and serves on the advisory board for the Department of Gender and Women's Studies. Her research interest includes: violence against women and child mistreatment, pregnancy, perinatal health and motherhood, and holistic health, and trauma recovery. Given her expertise, Moe will be a great addition to our advisory committee.



Alumni Needed: We are looking for global and international studies alumni to speak to current students about how to transition from student to professional. If you are interested in sharing your journey, please contact us at coas-global-intl-info@wmich.edu

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OKOLI: What advice would you give a student thinking about a career with the Foreign Service Office?

RIEDEL: I would tell folks who are looking to come into the Foreign Service office to first and foremost realize that there is more than just the State Department. There are four official US foreign affairs agencies that, by law, have an overseas U.S presence: the State Department, Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture and the US Agency for International Development. You may be a better fit for one department than another. Each has a different kind of work. The second piece of advice is to stay flexible. If a door closes, another will open. The third piece of advice is that for every job you have, you can build on for the next one. Everything you do gives you something to write down on your resume showing that you are a well-rounded, responsible, loyal person who has drive. Finally, when you have to start at the bottom, well, you are going to spend time doing grunt work. It's humbling.

OKOLI: When you arrived at Western, were you immediately interested in international fields?

RIEDEL: My freshman year was spent at University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign where I was a Genetic Engineering major. I did work study in an animal sciences lab...[and] it was very valuable because I saw through that what the life of a scientist truly is...and I knew that wasn't right for me. I left Illinois, but missed classes, so enrolled at Western. Along came Dr. [Jim] Butterfield, a leading figure in the political science department's international and comparative politics field, and I said, that's mine, that's exactly what I want to do, so I went for it.

OKOLI: New Delhi was your first post; how was that experience?

RIEDEL: I was in New Delhi from Christmas of 2002 to August of 2006, so almost four years. I was one of two FSOs for the USDA in New Delhi [covering] all of India, all of Bangladesh and all of Sri Lanka. Professionally it gave me my "own post," my own staffing, my own human resources challenges, and it gave me my own budget. I went to Dhaka monthly and to meet with the ambassador and USAID folks to talk about issues where we intersected. I grew a lot during that time.

A Broken Throne

Written by Brenda Martinez during her study abroad program to Peru



Civilization

What is it?

*I sit on my throne high above,
The Snow cone mountains,
That I forget what civilization is.
Is it wifi, Starbucks, hot water
Or is civilization,
Sharing a meal,
Giving the best potatoes to the visitors
While they just eat one or two.*

*I sit in my throne high above,
The cold mountains,
My heart is numb,
Does not want to feel
The warmth of those who knitted their
clothes, sell their products
To make a living
Civilization
Because in the end, I will
Sit on this golden, cold
Throne
Their smiles become memories.*

Vietnamese Language at Western

In keeping with Western's global vision, the Department of World Languages and Literatures is expanding the number of languages being taught. In addition to the existing nine languages, Western will offer Vietnamese for the spring semester. This course is designed for students with minimal or zero exposure to the Vietnamese language. Instructor Tran Nguyen commented, "The goal of this course is to introduce students not only the beauty of Vietnamese language, but also its people and culture."



2016-17 Work Study Students

The GIST program would like to welcome its new work study students for the 2016/2017 academic school year. Lord Beverly-El, Yadira Rodriguez and Cole Ughetti will be helping the GIST program with its various events throughout the academic year. Stop by the GIST lounge to say hi.

New Graduate Student Assistant

The GIST program would like to welcome Kenneth Okoli, our new graduate student assistant for the 2016-2017 academic year. Okoli, a third year doctoral student in the department of economics, will be helping us with our various programs throughout the year. He served as editor for this newsletter.



Congratulations to Our Recent Graduates!

Summer 2016 Graduates

Michelle Elise Schmitt
Language: French

Isabelle C Sanhou
Language: French

Casey Mitchell Cochrane
Language: German

Depeila Lynna Hill
Language: Chinese

Jacob Ryan Smith
Language: Spanish

Fall 2016 Graduates

Giulia C. Koch
Language: German

Paige Nicole Barton
Language: Spanish

Morgan Murphy Rote
Language: Chinese

Holden I. Wesley
Language: Japanese

Lauren E. Poll
Language: Spanish

Arisa Yamanaka
Language: Chinese

Hannah M. Pohlman
Language: Spanish

Haley Marie Phelan
Language: Spanish

Alexandra Marie Zacks
Language: Arabic

Chelsea Anne White
Language: French

Matthieu Carr
Language: French

Troy Charles Robertson
Language: German

Khaneesha Cherokee Lockridge
Language: Spanish

Kathryn Deanna Pickett
Language: Japanese

Minors: Leigha Janai Taylor, and Elizabeth Joyce McClintock

Earlier issues of the Western Worldwide Newsletter are available on our website at www.wmich.edu/globalstudies/about/newsletter.

