AREA STUDIES ANNUAL REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR 2014-2015

Prepared by:
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AAAS Coordinator, Louis Moore
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LAS Interim Coordinator, Andrew Schleowitz
MES Coordinator, Coeli Fitzpatrick

INDEX

PAGE 3 | Area Studies Overview: Why we do what we do.
        -Message from Director, Steeve Buckridge
PAGE 9 | African/African American Studies Overview
PAGE 15 | Chinese Studies Overview
PAGE 19 | East Asian Studies Overview
PAGE 25 | Latin American Studies Overview
PAGE 34 | Middle East Studies Overview

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Leslye Allen, Area Studies Office Coordinator
AREA STUDIES OVERVIEW

05/15/2015

Area Studies Annual Report:

*Why we do what we do.*

**Background:**

Area Studies currently consists of five academic programs: African/African-American Studies, East Asian Studies, Chinese Studies, Latin American Studies, and Middle East Studies. Russian Studies was removed from the curriculum due to low enrollment and lack of resources. Each program within the unit has a service component with a long history of community engagement and outreach to civic groups, religious organizations and institutions, schools, and community centers. This past year, Area Studies programs organized seminars and conducted workshops; organized cultural activities on music and poetry; collaborated with community leaders to advance the welfare of local citizens; enlightened the community on regional and international issues through public lectures, conferences and film festivals. Area Studies continues to be a vital resource unit for GVSU and a key player in the internationalization of the Grand Valley campus through courses, programming, study abroad and community outreach.

As a unit, we are ever mindful of the guiding principles of Brooks College strategic plan, and we strive to fulfill our unit’s mission to provide information and educate students to be well informed global citizens who are knowledgeable, and creative in their thinking about cultures, problems, and perspectives of specific geographic regions, diverse groups of people and ethnicities. We are guided by our vision to be recognized nationally and internationally as a leader in Interdisciplinary global and regional teaching, and learning, academic excellence, faculty and undergraduate research, and community engagement. We plan to continue to model inclusion and foster a nurturing and creative environment that supports faculty, staff and students.

Area Studies has a diverse and vibrant faculty and staff that is passionate about their role as administrators, educators and scholars who disseminate information on global and regional issues. Our faculty is hard working and care deeply about the community they live in and serve. This past year we have had some notable accomplishments. Several of our faculty were honored for their publications- Coeli Fitzpatrick, Patrick Shan, Mambo Mupepi, and Zulema Moret; and program coordinators staged a record number of events totaling approximately 44. We also had one successful sabbatical review proposal- Gamal Gasim and two successful personnel reviews- Gamal Gasim and Tracy Flemming. In addition, Zulema Moret received an external grant from the Holland Arts Council for the Film festival. Apart from this, we also had some challenges and made some difficult decisions. Despite high enrollment in Area Studies courses, the numbers in the individual minors has declined since previous years. Conversations about the implementation of a proposed Japanese minor and the impact of a language requirement for individual programs will continue. EAS has created a task force to explore these issues related to curriculum development and propose changes to strengthen the EAS program. Meanwhile, Russian Studies was removed from the curriculum due to low enrollment and lack of resources.
Regarding faculty, we hosted a visiting scholar, Professor Yao from China and we hired a part-time faculty, Muaz Redzic for MES next year. Two faculty members, Pavlov Svetoslav and Mambo Mupepi will no longer be with Area Studies. I wish to thank them for their years of service to Area Studies. There were no new tenure track hires; however, we have two new coordinators starting their positions this year- Louis Moore assumed his role in winter as coordinator of AAAS; and David Stark who will be coordinating LAS beginning in the fall of 2015. Andrew Schlewitz has been serving as Interim Coordinator of LAS during David’s absence.

We have identified several goals for next year. They are as follows:

1. Revision of the unit’s Strategic Plan  
2. Revision of all program bylaws to make them current  
3. Implementation of the new Personnel Guidelines for Area Studies  
4. Recruitment of new faculty to our programs and formalize advisory councils for the respective AS programs  
5. Continue to fulfill the dean’s strategies for the recruitment of students to the major and minors. Although our classes are full, there is room for improvement in the minors.  
6. Work closely with the Global Studies Committee on the implementation of the proposed GS major  
7. Collection of data for the Area Studies Self-Study and assessment due in May 2016  
8. Increase attendance and participation among Area Studies faculty in college wide initiatives and programs  
9. Work on building a vibrant unit culture  
10. Increase collaboration across programs within the unit

As the program director, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues and staff in Area Studies for their hard work and service to the unit and Brooks College this past year. I look forward to further collaborative and effective team work in strengthening the Area Studies programs. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted by  
Steeve Buckridge, Director of Area Studies
AREA STUDIES FACULTY AND STAFF

Faculty
- New hires: Muaz Redzic – MES Part-time Professor
- Louis Moore (History) is now the AAAS Coordinator
- David Stark (History) is now the LAS Coordinator
- Resignations: Veta Tucker retired
- Lost Assignment: AAAS Part-time Professor, Governor Mambo Mupepi will be teaching in Seidman College of Business

Staff and Student Workers
- Leslye Allen – Full-time Professional Support Staff | 40 hours per week
- Jessica Faleni – Part-time Student Worker | 15 hours per week Fall 2014
- Bianka Dudas – Part-time Student Worker | 9 hours per week Fall 2014/Winter 2015
- Julianne Argesta – Part-time Student Worker | 20 hours per week Winter 2015
- Caitlin Ford – Part-time Student Worker | 2 hours per week (shared with Gen Ed)

AREA STUDIES OVERALL ENROLLMENT

![Area Studies Enrollment Data](image-url)
AREA STUDIES PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

❖ Overall Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

❖ This event increased my awareness of cultural diversity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yes 98%
No 2%
- **I would recommend this event to a friend:**
  - Yes 96%
  - No 4%

- **Area Studies should sponsor more events like this:**
  - Yes 99%
  - No 1%

- **How attendees heard about event and how they prefer to be notified:**

![](image)
AREA STUDIES COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND CO-SPONSORSHIPS

Community Partnerships

- Area Studies has a community partnership with the West Michigan Bengali Cultural Association (WMBCA).

  - October 2014- Area Studies co-sponsored the WMBCA cultural event titled, “Music on the Rocks.”

Co-sponsorships

- Area Studies has co-sponsored many campus-wide events, including:

  - October 2014- In collaboration with Rays of Hope, Area Studies co-sponsored with MLL, Students for Haiti, and the French Club, a celebration of visiting Haitian artists at the Allendale campus during their visit to ArtPrize.

AREA STUDIES FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

November 2014- Area Studies held an author’s reception to acknowledge and celebrate the scholarly achievements of four faculty members who have recently published the following titles:

- AAAS Adjunct Professor, Mambo Mupepi titled, “British Imperialism in Zimbabwe: Narrating the Organizational Development of the First Chimurenga (1883-1904)”
- EAS Coordinator, Patrick Shan titled, “Taming China’s Wilderness: Immigration, Settlement and the Shaping of the Heilongjiang Frontier, 1900-1931”
- Previous LAS Coordinator, Professor Zulema Moret titled, “La Mujer De La Piedra”
- MES Coordinator, Coeli Fitzpatrick titled, “Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God”
AFRICAN/AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES (AAAS) MINOR

AAAS FACULTY AND STAFF | Louis Moore, Coordinator

Faculty
- New hires: none
- Gains: Louis Moore (history department) is now the coordinator. He was on sabbatical during the Fall Semester.
- Resignations: Veta Tucker retired
- Lost assignment: Governor Mambo Mupepi, who was scheduled to teach for AAAS in the Fall Semester will be teaching in Seidman College of Business.

Staff and Student Workers
- Note: we share the same staff and student workers with the Area Studies office.

AAAS ENROLLMENT AND MINORS
### AAAS Programs and Events

#### November 2014 -
- AAAS sponsored a public lecture by the Honorable John Ehsa, Governor of Pohnpei titled, “A Sustainable Future for Micronesia: The World Park Project.”

#### Attendance: 66

#### January 2015 -
- Along with the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA,) and the student NAACP, AAAS sponsored students, faculty, and staff to see the movie, *Selma*.
- AAAS co-sponsored OMA’s Black History Month Celebration.
- AAAS co-sponsored scholar Janelle Hobson’s visit to campus with Women and Gender Studies. She presented about the image of black women in popular culture and gave a talk to faculty and staff about digital studies.

#### April 2015 -
- AAAS brought in guest speaker Maavi Norman (Northwestern Graduate Student) to discuss politics in Africa with a public lecture titled, “The Leadership Factor in Africa’s Development: Constraints and Opportunities.”

#### Attendance: 33

#### Student Events March 2015 -
- AAAS sponsored the student organization *Les Francophiles* for their annual programming.
- AAAS sponsored the African Student Council (ASC) organization ASC (Faculty member Tracy Flemming is their advisor).
March 2015 -


Comments:
- “Very interesting and informative”
- “Helped me gain awareness - amazing to hear from an ambassador”
- “I was previously oblivious, but cannot say that anymore”
- “I would like to see more events on the happenings in Nigeria”
- “I learned a lot; very enlightening”
- “I will definitely attend more lectures in the future”
- “Very helpful in my studies”
- “Insightful; answered questions I have been having; awesome!”

Attendance: 60+

April 2015 -

AAAS brought in professional Blues artist Donald Kinsey to discuss the movement and origins of black music. Kinsey, who used to play with Bob Marley and the Wailers, also played for the audience to demonstrate the common sound between the blues, black Baptist church music, and Reggae.

Comments:
- “Interesting and eye-opening”
- "Soul empowering”
- “Positive wealth of knowledge”
- “Enlightening about a foreign subject”
- “It was very moving”
- “We need more cultural events like this”

AAAS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Grand Rapids Urban League- service organization that will accept our students for their Service learning (490) practicum
- The Mizizi Maji Mentoring Program (Baxter Community Center) - service organization that will accept our students for their Service Learning (490) Practicum
AAAS NEW INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS

- Coming into my first term as coordinator, I wanted to make an effort to reach out to student organizations, especially those groups that our minors have joined. I believe this is an excellent way to establish a great relationship with students, potentially draw in more minors, and allow AAAS to establish itself as a go-to organization for leadership. The latter point is especially important as cities across America are experiencing uprisings and dealing with issues like police brutality. Thus, it is important that students feel comfortable looking to AAAS for leadership on these and many other topics.
- This year, I invited the student NAACP chapter to our meeting and had their reps update the meeting on their events. During our meeting, several faculty members made suggestions about future collaborative programming.
- In addition, I also invited the Student Diversity Coalition (SDC) to our meeting. This was important, because this newly formed group called an emergency meeting in February for black students, faculty, and staff to discuss the racial climate on campus with leading administrators, including President Haas and Provost Davis. I wanted our faculty to get a sense of the SDC and offer assistance.
- Social Media: Coming into this term, I thought it would be great to establish an AAAS twitter account. At our meeting, I got the go ahead to create the account, however, I am still deciding the best way to operate the account. I think a twitter account will be a great way for us to connect with students and facilitate important information, articles, and updates related to the African/African American experience.

AAAS FACULTY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Students
- Sultan Hubbard: Is a McNair scholar this summer and also presented in student scholar day. On another note, Sultan is one of the leading students on campus (I love his energy and passion for learning), and we need to figure out a way to highlight his success.
- LaTasha Brown, Winter 2015 Graduate
- Te’Asia Martin, Winter 2015 Graduate

Faculty
- Tracy Flemming: Contract renewal, February 2015

AAAS - LOOKING FORWARD

- I am excited about the next two years. This year, as you know, I started my position as coordinator in the Winter Semester after sabbatical. The transition from sabbatical to teaching and coordinating was a little harder than I thought it would be. On top of my normal 3/3 load, I had weekly History Department meetings, seven renewals/tenure meetings, monthly coordinating meetings, and my normal service agenda. To say the least, this
semester caught me by surprise. Plus, it took me some time to learn the nuances of the position. As I continue to learn, I continue to grow.

- For the upcoming Fall Semester, we have agreed to work with LAS and co-sponsor a program in September. This is also a collaborative effort with Calvin College. The new coordinator for LAS, David Stark, and I have had several conversations about the importance of collaboration, and we will continue to work together to engage our students.

- Moving forward, the most important thing for our program is to “amp” up our efforts to sell ourselves as a supplemental minor. While our current minors don’t see it that way—I have had several meetings with students to discuss their futures—our prospective minors need to understand they can minor in AAAS and get a job. It is clear that GVSU and other universities across the nation, want to sell STEM to their perspective students. That is fine, but AAAS needs to figure out a way to tap into that. How do we sell our students that their minor will be marketable? During the rest of my tenure as coordinator, I will spend time focusing on marketing. I think we can do this in three ways:

  1. We need to invest in marketing. This includes revamping our website, posters for our classes during registration, bringing in alumni to talk to our students, and showing that our minor develops valuable skills for potential employment. We might want to consider creating a “job graph” (for lack of better term) that tells our students what classes develop important skill sets and what jobs those skill sets would utilize.

  2. We also need to foster relations with local businesses. I want to work with Area Studies to coordinate meetings/talks with local business leaders. West Michigan businesses need to, and are always looking to, retain diverse talent that is also culturally competent. Meeting with local business would let businesses know that we are developing students, and would also allow businesses to sell themselves to our students.

  3. Programming: AAAS needs to focus on programming that is intellectually stimulating where teachers can bring their students to the events, but we also need to create programs that our practical. This past year I think all of our programs were intellectually stimulating. What do I mean by practical? I want to offer programs that are designed to teach students about how to use their skill sets they receive from AAAS. As previously mentioned, this means bringing in local business leaders, but also bringing in people who can talk about working in a nontraditional field. For example, we have a lot of English majors, and although many of them have told me they want to attend graduate school, it is also important to show them that with their major and AAAS minor, they have a marketable talent, and they could start writing and engaging in public discourse based on the skills they have gained in our classes. It would be wise to bring in a speaker with a similar background that is working as a freelance writer, blogging, or using their degree to fight for social justice.

AAAS FACULTY MEETINGS

We only had one meeting in the Winter Semester. This was the first meeting for AAAS in more than a year. I think we had a fruitful and spirited meeting about the future of the department.
Next year, we will meet early in the semester and focus on programming. I wanted to hold off on a second meeting in winter to discuss programming, because I didn’t/don’t know what our budget will look like.

**AAAS FACULTY PARTICIPATION**

At our meeting Tracy Flemming, Steeve Buckridge, Jack Mangala, and Olivia Fitzpatrick attended. Six other faculty members reached out to me and noted they had a scheduling conflict. Of those six, three of those members seemed committed to the program.

**AAAS PROGRAM AND FACULTY RECRUITMENT**

- During my office hours, or in casual conversations with students, I am always talking to prospective students about their minor. “What is your minor?” is a common question I ask students. If they don’t have a minor, I try to sell them on an AAAS.
- Whenever I give an on-campus talk, I tell the audience about the potential of an AAAS minor and tell those interested in a minor or coordinating with future projects, to contact me.
- Moving forward, I think it is important to set up meetings with all my minors, and graduates, to get a sense of what they feel about our programs and what we could do better for them.
- In regard to faculty, I have had several fruitful conversations trying to get people to commit or recommit to AAAS. I have also had conversations where it is clear that the faculty member is on the fence. One faculty member, however, has mentioned their excitement in teaching for us. Sense these are personal conversations, I will not divulge names in an official document, but I will continue to foster these relationships. I hope you can understand this.

**CHINESE STUDIES (CHS) MAJOR**

**CHS OVERVIEW**

The Chinese Studies Program (CHS) has been operating quite effectively as an important component of the Area Studies Program housed in Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies at Grand Valley State University.

**CHS FACULTY AND STAFF | Patrick Shan, Coordinator**

*Faculty*
- Meghan Cai (Chinese language)
- Kirsten Strom (Asian Arts)
- Hui Lan Yen (Chinese Diasporas in Latin America)
- Kimberly McKee (East Asian adoptees in the United States)

*Staff and Student Workers*
- Note: we share the same staff and student workers with the Area Studies office.
CHS ENROLLMENT AND MAJORS

- The CHS program offers the BA in Chinese Studies, which is a major. In the 2014-2015 academic year, the program has about a dozen students. Because the banner has a technical problem, some CHS majors’ names are not displayed in the system. For example, Michelle Bouwkamp and Kevin Chau’s names did not appear in the banner, although they have graduated during this academic year. This means that the actual number of our majors might be a little higher. This technical problem was reported, but it was not solved.
- In terms of our course offerings, the CHS offers CHS 495 which is a capstone course, and elective courses such as EAS 201 and EAS 301 on the regular basis. Because this program is interdisciplinary, our faculty of various departments offer many different courses to the CHS program every semester, including courses on Chinese languages, Asian arts, Asian geography, Chines history, Chinese philosophy, Chinese sociology, Chinese politics, East Asian history, Chinese mythology, East Asian religions, Chinese literature, and many others.

CHS PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- CHS (in conjunction with East Asian Studies) sponsored or co-sponsored many campus-wide activities. For example, the CHS assisted the Asian Pacific Heritage Month (January-March 2015) and RICE Conference (March 2015). During the Asian Pacific Heritage Month, we helped organize many China related activities which attracted a large number of audience.
- In the past year, the CHS has invited a number of scholars from other institutions to offer scholarly presentations, including Professor Guo-Ming Chen (University of Rhode Island) to offer a public lecture on the Chinese classic Yijing, Professor Luming Mao (Miami University Ohio) to offer a public lecture on Chinese culture and communications, and Professor Ligang Zhang (Brandeis University and Henan University) to offer a public lecture titled The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Community in Kaifeng, China.
- Also, we invited Mr. Xiping Yao, who is a visiting scholar in Winter 2015 at Grand Valley State University, to present a talk on Chinese culture by a particular focus on Mount Wutai. Each of those talks attracted a large number of audience and their effective presentations have enriched our campus life.

CHS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- In particular, the CHS program helped some student organizations to sponsor or co-sponsor cultural activities, such as those organized by the Chinese Cultural Club.
- The CHS faculty are active servants to the program, the university, and the local community. Many CHS faculty serve university committees, special task forces, and local organizations. Their participation has enriched our campus life and has contributed to the colorful local social life in Western Michigan.

CHS NEW INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS

- The Chinese Studies program (CHS) is a unique program which was created almost a decade ago at GVSU. It is, first of all, an interdisciplinary program with faculty members coming from a number of disciplines across the entire university community. With the efforts of all
the faculty members, the CHS now has become one of the well-known Chinese Studies programs in the United States, in particular, in the Midwest.

- The CHS faculty now offer courses from multiple disciplines, including political sciences, history, literature, language, philosophy, arts, geography, sociology, religion, and others. Our students are enriched by our faculty’s scholarly expertise.
- Our faculty organize study abroad programs to mainland China this year, which allow students to visit historical sites, modern urban facilities, colleges and university, beautiful scenes, and other cultural places. Indeed, students are enormously benefited.
- The CHS faculty members are good scholars as they published books, articles, review essays, and other forms of literature in the past year. More importantly, they bring their scholarship to their classroom teaching to shape students’ pursuit of a future career.
- The CHS faculty present their scholarly findings at national and international conferences every semester and contribute to the cultural and educational advancement of the United States. Their scholarship straightforwardly benefits our students through class teaching, out-of-class discussions, and casual individual meetings.
- The CHS faculty actively participate in their services to our university, local community, and many academic societies. They help the library at GVSU enlarge the Chinese studies collection, in both Chinese and English, by using the limited library budget to purchase new publications on China. In terms of budget, the CHS budget is fundamentally neutral, as it is attached to the East Asian Studies program without a single additional dollar added to the CHS program.

CHS FACULTY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

- The CHS program faculty are productive scholars, as they have published articles, books, collections, and other kinds of scholarship. Some of them were elected to hold scholarly and official positions in national or international scholarly organizations, which enhanced the reputation of Grand Valley State University in the national and even international academia.
- The CHS faculty continue to organize the study abroad program to mainland China in the past year. Professor Ni and Professor Shang have organized a program to Shanghai in Spring 2015. Their hard work helps our students experience Chinese culture and learn the Chinese language.

CHS - LOOKING FORWARD

- Overall, the Chinese Studies Program at Grand Valley State University offers a comprehensive study of the one-fifth of the global population and its long and uninterrupted civilization.
- The Chinese Studies major allows students to not only build a solid knowledge of China and Chinese culture, but also develop new perspectives on American culture and enrich students’ self-understanding of their own values.
- The Chinese Studies major provides students who are interested in China with a cross-disciplinary basis for understanding its rich cultural resources, its role in the contemporary world, and the importance and complexities of U.S.-China relations.
• At the core of the program is a strong emphasis on the language, culture, history, philosophy, geography, society, and politics. Elective courses from different departments and disciplines are combined with regular CHS courses to reach a profound understanding of China.

• A study-abroad component assures students a firsthand experience with the Chinese people and their culture, which enables students to adopt a broad vision and to have an open mind as educated individuals and responsible citizens of the global village.

**CHS FACULTY MEETINGS**

CHS holds a regular faculty meeting at the beginning of each semester to make plans for the whole semester (jointly held with the EAS faculty meeting). For each meeting, an agenda was sent out and a call for items was requested.

**CHS FACULTY PARTICIPATION**

• The CHS faculty meeting in Fall 2014 was held on September 19, 2014 at 5:30pm-8:10pm and the attendees were: Professors Craig Benjamin, Wei Gu, Sufen Lai, Yan Liang, Kin Ma, Peimin Ni, Jeremy Robinson, Patrick Shan, Geling Shang, Shinian Wu, Yan Yu, and Yi Zhao.

• The CHS faculty meeting in Winter 2015 was held at 1:00-2:45pm on January 16, 2015 and the attendees were Professors Meghan Cai, Lourdes Hui Lan Yen, Yan Liang, Kin Ma, Kimberly McKee, Peimin Ni, Patrick Shan, Geling Shang, Kirsten Strom, Wanxiao Sun, Gang Xu, Yan Yu, and Yi Zhao.

**CHS PROGRAM AND FACULTY RECRUITMENT**

• At each meeting, a special call was announced to recruit new faculty members into the CHS programs, as long as the faculty’s expertise is on China.

• In the past year, we have recruited more faculty to be members of our program. For every meeting, about a dozen faculty members attended. Of course, the minutes were written, sent out to faculty for correction, and then emailed to the director and the Area Studies Office.

• In Winter 2015, we recruited four new members in to our program, including Meghan Cai (Chinese language), Kirsten Strom (Asian Arts), Hui Lan Yen (Chinese diasporas in Latin America), and Kimberly McKee (East Asian adoptees in the United States). Each of these new faculty agrees to offer their expertise to our program and to actively participate in CHS related activities.

• In addition, the coordinator always asks all faculty members to recommend any other GVSU professors whose expertise on China to be a part of the CHS program.
EAST ASIAN STUDIES (EAS) MINOR

EAS OVERVIEW

The East Asian Studies Program (EAS) has been operating soundly and effectively as a significant component of the Area Studies Program.

EAS FACULTY AND STAFF | Patrick Shan, Coordinator

Faculty (see also Chinese Studies)

- Kimberly McKee (East Asian adoptees in the United States)

Staff and Student Workers

- Note: we share the same staff and student workers with the Area Studies office.

EAS ENROLLMENT AND MINORS

- EAS has offered East Asian Studies minor (EAS minor) and Chinese Studies major (CHS). In the 2014-2015 academic year, the program has about forty students, including minors and majors. Because the banner has a technical problem, some CHS majors’ names are not included in the system. For example, Michelle Bouwkamp and Kevin Chau’s names did not appear in the banner, although they have graduated during this academic year. This means that the actual number of our students might be a little higher. This problem was reported, but it was not solved.

- In terms of our course offerings, the EAS program offers EAS 201, EAS 301, and CHS 495 on the regular basis. Because this program is interdisciplinary in nature, our faculty of various departments offer many different courses every semester, including courses on Chinese and Japanese languages, Asian arts, Asian geography, Chinese history, Chinese philosophy, Chinese sociology, Chinese politics, East Asian history, Chinese mythology, Chinese literature, Japanese culture, and many others.

EAS PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

EAS sponsored or co-sponsored many campus-wide activities and invited a number of scholars from other institutions to offer scholarly presentations, including:

September 2014 -

- EAS co-sponsored Poetess, Ito Hiromi from Japan to do a poetry reading.
October 2014 -

- EAS invited Professor Guo-Ming Chen from University of Rhode Island to do a public lecture titled, “In Search of Stability: Lessons from I CHING.”

Comments:
- “At first it was confusing, but I understand more about the ideas of I Ching...it is fascinating!”
- “WOW! So interesting and applicable to life.”
- “I learned a lot about how to evolve with the evolving world”
- “This presentation gave me an excellent base for intercultural communication; it definitely expanded my knowledge of the Chinese culture”
- “Opened my mind to a broader way of thinking of global/multicultural communication”
- “It provided a measured approach to interpersonal structures”
- “I loved it and am more interested and inspired to learn more!”

Attendance: 94

January-March 2015 -

- EAS assisted the Asian Pacific Heritage Month (January-March 2015) and RICE Conference.

- During the Asian Pacific Heritage Month, we helped organize many EAS related activities which attracted a large number of audience. In particular, the EAS program helped some student organizations to sponsor or co-sponsor cultural activities, such as those organized by the Chinese Cultural Club and Japanese Cultural Association.

March 2015 -

EAS invited Professor Luming Mao from Miami University Ohio to give a public lecture titled, “From Images of Hybridity to a Rhetoric of Becoming: Engaging China in the Twenty-First Century.”

Comments:
- “Introduced the ideas of rhetoric as a catalyst for culture of hybridity”
- “Increased my cultural awareness”
- “Super and enlightening!”

Attendance: 55
### March 2015 -

- EAS invited Professor Ligang Zhang from Brandeis University and Henan University to give a public lecture titled, *The Rise and Decline of the Jewish Community in Kaifeng China."

**Attendance: 38**

### Winter Semester 2015 -

- EAS invited Mr. Xiping Yao, who is a visiting scholar at Grand Valley State University, to present a talk on Chinese culture by a particular focus on Mount Wutai. Each of those talks attracted a large number of audience and those effective presentations greatly enriched our campus life.

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**EAS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

The EAS faculty are active servants to the program, the university, and the local community. Many EAS faculty serve university committees, special task forces, and local organizations. Their participation has enriched our campus life and has contributed to the colorful local social life in Western Michigan.

**EAS NEW INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS**

- The EAS program was established in 1997 and has been an important program at Grand Valley State University. Our graduates now working in the United States, Japan, Mainland China, Taiwan, or other regions. Some of our graduates are pursuing higher degrees in those regions.
- The EAS faculty continue to organize different study abroad programs to mainland China and Japan in the past year. Professor Ni and Professor Shang organize a program to Shanghai in Spring 2015. Professor Robinson organizes a program to Japan in Spring 2015. Their hard work helps our students experience East Asian culture and learn East Asian languages.
- The EAS faculty will continue to work hard to carry on our long tradition in order to make the EAS an effective teaching team, a prolific circle of scholars, and a group of excellent servants to our university and our local community.
EAS FACULTY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The EAS program faculty are productive scholars, as they have published articles, books, collections, and other kinds of scholarship. Some of them were elected to hold scholarly and official positions in national or international organizations, which significantly enhanced the reputation of Grand Valley State University in the national and even international academia.

Students
- Kevin Chau (CHS major) received the Outstanding Officer Award at the 2015 GVSU Student Life Awards for his work in the Chinese Language and Culture Club.
- Two students were accepted to participate in the highly selective Wooden fish program this summer (Samantha Sharar and Meghan Vance). Another received the Boren scholarship to study in Taiwan next year (Paige Matusiak).

Faculty (Peimin Ni also won an award)
- Journal Article, "Rectify the Heart-Mind for the Art of Living -- A Confucian Approach to Desire". Philosophy East and West (April 2014).
- Award: 2014 Dao, A Journal of Comparative Philosophy Annual Best Essay Award, for P. Ni, “Seek and You Will Find It; Let Go and You Will Lose It: Exploring a Confucian Approach to Human Dignity” (Dao 13 [2014]).
- Journal Article, Academic Journal (Published) (Refereed)
- Journal Article, Academic Journal (Published) (Refereed)
Overall, the EAS program is a distinctive scholarly program. It offers enriching educational experience to our students, it provides valuable services to the university and the local community, and it contributes treasured scholarship to America’s scholarly advancements. The program operates well, thanks to the dedication of active faculty as volunteers, enthusiastic students as learners, and diligent staff as assistants, hard-working student workers as helpers, and our respected superiors (both director and dean) as leaders.
EAS FACULTY MEETINGS

EAS holds a regular faculty meeting at the beginning of each semester to make plans for the whole semester. For each meeting, an agenda was sent out and a call for items was requested. In Fall 2014, a special faculty meeting was held in late 2014 to discuss EAS related issues. In the past year, we have recruited more faculty to be members of our program. For every meeting, about a dozen faculty members attended. Of course, the minutes were written, sent out to faculty for correction, and then emailed to the director and the Area Studies Office. In other words, the program was operated transparently, democratically, and lawfully.

EAS FACULTY PARTICIPATION

- The EAS faculty meeting in Fall 2014 was held on September 19, 2014 at 5:30pm-8:10pm and the attendees were: Professors Craig Benjamin, Wei Gu, Sufen Lai, Yan Liang, Kin Ma, Peimin Ni, Jeremy Robinson, Patrick Shan, Geling Shang, Shinian Wu, Yan Yu, and Yi Zhao.
- During the Fall 2014, a special faculty meeting was held on November 14, 2014 at 1:00pm-2:30pm and the following faculty attended the meeting: Professors Jason Herlands, Sufen Lai, Yan Liang, Kin Ma, Peimin Ni, Jeremy Robinson, Patrick Shan, Geling Shang, Gang Xu, Yan Yu, and Yi Zhao (Dean Hiskes and Director Buckridge also attended).
- The EAS faculty meeting in Winter 2015 was held at 1:00-2:45pm on January 16, 2015 and the attendees were Professors Meghan Cai, Lourdes Hui Lan Yen, Yan Liang, Kin Ma, Kimberly McKee, Peimin Ni, Patrick Shan, Geling Shang, Kirsten Strom, Wanxiao Sun, Gang Xu, Yan Yu, and Yi Zhao.

EAS PROGRAM AND FACULTY RECRUITMENT

- At each meeting, a special call was announced to recruit new faculty members into the East Asian Studies Program, as long as the faculty’s expertise is on East Asia.
- In Winter 2015, we recruited four new members in to our program, including Meghan Cai (Chinese language), Kirsten Strom (Asian Arts), Hui Lan Yen (Chinese diasporas in Latin America), and Kimberly McKee (East Asian adoptees in the United States).
- Each of these new faculty agrees to offer their expertise to our program and to actively participate in EAS related activities.
- The coordinator always asks all faculty members to recommend any GVSU professors whose expertise on East Asia to be a part of the EAS program.

March 2015 -

- EAS held a student reception with food to recruit students and share in the East Asian culture.
LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES (LAS) MINOR

LAS FACULTY AND STAFF | Andrew Schlewitz, Interim Coordinator

Faculty
• None

Staff and Student Workers
• Note: we share the same staff and student workers with the Area Studies office.

LAS ENROLLMENT AND MINORS

LAS offered the following courses over 2014-15 (Note: LAS 210 and 374 are required):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER</th>
<th>COURSE</th>
<th>ENROLLMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>LAS 210-1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>LAS 210-2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 2015</td>
<td>LAS 210-1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 2015</td>
<td>LAS 210-2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 2015</td>
<td>HST/LAS 374</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 2015</td>
<td>LAS 399 (Schlewitz)</td>
<td>3*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: LAS 399 - 2 addressed the topic of Latinos/as in West Michigan, the other Guatemalan history.

As usual, the great majority of students in the LAS 210 courses were non-LAS minors, seeking to fulfill a Gen Ed requirement.

• LAS had 20 minors enrolled in Fall 2014, 12 of them majoring in Spanish or Spanish/Education. 16 were BA students, 10 were seniors. The average grade point was 3.28 (median 3.34). In Winter 2015, we had 18 minors, 12 of them Spanish or Spanish/Education majors. 16 were BA students, and 13 were seniors. The average grade point was 3.51 (median 3.59).

• As has been the case in the past, the Spanish program continues to be the biggest feeder into the LAS minor, perhaps in part because Spanish majors and minors can double-dip, and more easily complete the LAS minor. Another reason is may be that the bulk of faculty teaching LAS electives are in the Spanish program, thus facilitating recruitment there. Despite recruitment efforts (informational tables, lunches with possible student candidates, along with the hope that LAS programming events might lure students into the minor), LAS has been unable to boost the number of minors, and it had to cancel LAS courses due to low enrollment.
LAS PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

September 2014 -

- LAS minor, Michelle Alderink presented her research on the surge of Central American refugee minors arriving in the US with a lecture titled, “A Lost Innocence: The Forgotten Children of Central America.”

  Attendance: 92

September 2014 -

- LAS showed the documentary film showing the factors that drive a Mexican mother and her children to risk migrating to the US, and the hardships of that migration followed by a Skype Q&A discussion with director, Sonia Fritz.

  Comments:
  - “Fantastic film!”
  - “Loved the Q & A with filmmaker”
  - “Very sad and eye-opening, but made me want to make a difference”
  - “Makes me remember what my parents had to go thorough crossing the border; we need to do something about immigration.”
  - “Pretty compelling to see the other side’s view and process it takes to cross the border.”
  - “Emotional and touching story; very powerful film; conveys what the public needs to know; a big thank you!”
  - “I can’t put it into words – it is shameful and heartbreaking, important to know and have others know.”

  Attendance: 88

October 2014 -

- LAS invited indigenous scholar, Dr. Flor Palmar from Venezuela to present a public lecture titled, “Indigenous Peoples, Education, and Climate Change” and host a viewing of the documentary film describing the pilgrimage of the Wayuu (indigenous group in northern Colombia and Northwest Venezuela) from the city to ancestral lands in the Guajira peninsula titled, “Shawantama’ana: Place of Waiting.”
Comments:
- “It was interesting to get a glimpse into the lives of people that are very different from me.”
- “I enjoyed learning about another culture and way of life.”
- “It was a great look into the lives of another culture.”
- “I never heard of this group of people and their story or their struggle. I think this gives me a better perspective on the grave diversity of Latin America, especially South America.”

Combined Attendance: 75+

October 2014 -

- Now an annual LAS event that brings a local artist to create an altar that describes the origins of the Day of the Dead and shows audience how to create a Day of the Dead altar.

Note: Written comments were likewise positive. The only negative one of note is that there were some complaints about the Pew Library venue for the Day of the Dead event—apparently a number of the audience had a hard time hearing and seeing

Attendance: 52
November 2014 - 10-Day Celebration of the Dominican Republic titled, “Spotlight on Santo Domingo”

- Poetry Reading by Dominican Poet, Frank Baez;
- In conjunction with the Writing Department- Discussion with Dominican Novelist, Angie Cruz;
- Feature film about a Dominican baseball player, Migel “Sugar” Santos, and his career in the US major leagues titled, “Sugar;”
- Documentary film titled, “Santo Domingo Blues;”
- Documentary film about a Dominican Bachata musician and his efforts to reak into the commercial music world titled, “The Duke of Bachata;”
- Musical performance by two rap artists, Hachet ST and Cambio entitled, “The Untold Story;”
- GVSU Study Abroad students held a panel sharing their experiences in the Dominican Republic; and
- GVSU students learned the elementary dance steps of Bachata and Merengue at a dance workshop.

Comments:
- “It was awesome!”
- “Loved it!”
- “Two thumbs up!”
- “We should have more events like this on campus.”
- “Muy fantastico!”

Total Combined Attendance: 170+

March 2015 -

- 35 Students took an excursion to the Detroit Institute of Arts, originally organized by Profs. Serrata and Huner for their HNR 280 course, Latin American Civilization and Culture, and joined by members of Los Hermanos/Laker Familias and students from Prof. Fortes’ SPA 313, Latino Culture and Civilization.
March 2015 -

- We invited Dominican scholar, Ginetta Candelario to give a public lecture titled, “One Hundred Years of Feminism.”

Comments:
- “Intriguing; opened my eyes to feminists.”
- “Very informative and influential.”
- “More professors should be encouraged to hold class periods at these events if the schedules overlap and the material is relevant.”
- “Gave me a new and different perspective.”
- “I would not have known about this topic without a lecture like this.”

Attendance: 44

March 20-21, 2015 -

- 13th Conference on the Americas: Borders and Contact Zones in the Americas

A day and half conference featuring two keynote speakers, an art exhibition, two musical performances, a Latin American history workshop, a documentary film, and 12 panels on range of topics touching on the issues of borders and contact zones. Participants and audience included GVSU and non-GVSU scholars, GVSU students, and local community members.

Comments:
- “Great community participation”
- “The information I learned was valuable – making the human connection is stronger than just reading about the topics.”
- “It was amazing; wonderful experience!”
- “Loved the personal thought and heart in the presentations; interesting”

Attendance: 200+

- Only 49 people turned in the Conference on the Americas survey, so it’s not clear if the sample is representative (one mistake is that we did not provide a place to leave the survey forms after the Saturday night keynote and musical performance). That said, large majorities marked “Very Much Agree” or “Agree” for the questions of “Do you feel the Conference was well organized?” and “Do you think GVSU should sponsor another Conference on the Americas in the future.” There were only 12 written comments—but all were positive. Schlewitz gave students in his two sections of LAS 210 the assignment of attending at least one COA event, and doing a short write-up. 38 students attended one or more events, and wrote 68 reflections—all of them evincing learning something about Latin America, Latinos/as, or the issue of Latin American immigration.
Andy Schlewitz worked primarily with three other LAS faculty on organizing and running the conference: Mike Huner (HST), Michael Wroblewski (ANT), and José Lara (MLL). Medar Serrata and Rebeca Castellanos also helped a great deal with setting up the Conference schedule.

Schlewitz met with David Stark after the Conference to assess what went well, and what did not. On the positive side, the two felt that attendance was fairly good, not just in terms of overall numbers, but in each panel (unlike past COAs, there were no panels this year with zero attendance—the lowest turnout was eight). The range of topics covered in the various panels were linked to the COA theme, but also represented a nice cross-disciplinary range (though, as usual, the hard sciences were missing). They agreed that there was good turnout of both GVSU faculty and students, and of Grand Rapids community members.

However, promoting the COA could have been better (more signage, and promotion in Spanish-language outlets). One keynote speaker had difficulties presenting in English. Turnout at the two keynote presentations and the musical performances was lower than we had hoped. The food provided was not very friendly to those observing the Christian season of Lent. The COA also went over its anticipated budget, in part due to one COA guest’s unanticipated demand for lodging, but also due to Eberhard Event Planning bills that were higher than expected (e.g., computers for Skype sessions, charges for the beer and wine bars that did not make a threshold of receipts). There was also the issue of Schlewitz taking care of several logistical matters at the last moment that he had expected other COA organizers to handle.

In the future, it is recommended that there be 1) a more thorough vetting of invited guests by conference organizers; 2) issuing the ‘call for papers’ earlier, as well as announcing the finalized schedule earlier; 3) a greater effort to draw in more, and a wider variety of, GVSU faculty; 4) crystal-clear expectations of the tasks of COA organizers; 5) a non-arbitrary designation of honoraria for invited COA guests; and 6) a decision about whether the COA should be a scholarly affair, or one inviting to the Grand Rapids community.

Note: Setting aside the Conference on the Americas for now (which used a different survey), audience reactions to these events were overwhelmingly positive. Large majorities of respondents agreed that the events increased their awareness of cultural diversity and want to see more events like these. LAS might consider a revision of its survey, which permits only a yes or no answer, and the question about cultural diversity is leading.

LAS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In the past, LAS has been an official sponsor of:

- Plaza Comunitaria
- Grand Rapids Latin American Film Festival

Note: It remains unclear what relationship LAS will have now and in the future with these two activities.
LAS NEW INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS

Curriculum Development

- Andy Schlewitz revised LAS 475 Latinos in West Michigan, turning it into a Gen Ed course that addresses the topic of US cultural diversity and the issue of identity. The course has been approved by the UCC and is now in the catalog as LAS 373.
- Andy Schlewitz revised a special topics course LAS 380 Human Rights in Latin America, turning it into a Gen Ed course dealing the issue of human rights. The UCC has requested amendments and Schlewitz will submit those over this summer. This course will become part of the curricular offerings in the new Human Rights minor.
- Andy Schlewitz has chaired a LAS subcommittee creating a Latino/a Studies 15-credit hour certificate program. The LAS EC approved the program and now is at the stage of creating a 200-level introductory course for the certificate. This summer Schlewitz will complete a program and course proposal and invite Mayra Fortes (MLL) and David Stark (HST) to co-edit the proposal.

LAS FACULTY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

- $500 Mini-Grant awarded to LAS Minor, Michelle Alderink in Winter 2015
- $500 Mini-Grant awarded LAS Minor, Chris Schertenlieb in Winter 2015
- Veronica Beltran, double major PLS/SPA, LAS Minor received the Thomas M. Seykora Award for Outstanding Contribution
- LAS minors Tim Hofmeister and Michelle Alderink were “I Am Grand Valley” nominees for 2014-15
- LAS minor Crisol Beliz, a 2014 McNair scholar (which runs into the 2014-15 academic year)

LAS - LOOKING FORWARD

Curriculum Development

- Complete process of turning LAS 380 Human Rights in Latin America into a Gen Ed course;
- Complete process of creating a Latino/a Studies Certificate program, including a new course LAS 220 Introduction to Latino/a Studies; and
- Complete overhaul of the LAS minor’s curricular requirements and offerings.

Programming

- **August 2015** - Advisory Committee mini-retreat. Estimated $250.
- **September 2015** - José Galvez exhibit, talk and classroom visits. Estimated $1,250. In collaboration with the Art Gallery and Office of Multicultural Affairs, bring a Pulitzer Prize winning photographer to show and discuss his work capturing the lives of Latinos/as in Southern California. Eduardo Paulino Talk. Estimated $500. A collaboration with AAAS and Calvin College to bring a scholar (John Jay College) to speak about the history of Haiti-Dominican Republic relations.
- **October 2015** - Tango Workshop: Estimated $300. Invite Jackie Davila (Davenport) to give GVSU students a Tango dance workshop, including a talk about this dance’s origins. *Day of the Dead:* Estimated $500. Now an annual affair, a talk about the origins of the *Day of the Dead* and a workshop in which participants help build a *Day of the Dead* altar.

- **November 2015** - The Caribbean in Global Context: Estimated $1,500. A short series of events highlighting the Caribbean region from a variety of perspectives, drawing primarily on GVSU faculty.

- **December 2015** - *Abrazos* film viewing with panel discussion: $100. After a viewing of this documentary about Guatemalan immigrant youth visiting their homeland and families, a panel discussion of immigration issues.

- **Late February or early March 2016** - Spotlight on MOAS country (Brazil, Paraguay, or Ecuador). LAS faculty and MOAS delegate panel presentation: $2000. A series of events spotlighting the country GVSU students will represent at the Washington Model of Organization of American States. The events include panel presentation by GVSU MOAS students; GVSU faculty presentations about their experiences in the country; a feature film or documentary about said country, as well as an outside keynote speaker.

**TOTAL** Estimated budget for 2015-2016 programming events: $6,400.

**LAS FACULTY MEETINGS**

**LAS Administration**

- The LAS structure consists of a Coordinator, an Executive Committee (EC), and an Advisory Committee (AC). In the past, the AC elected the Coordinator to a three-year term (with no term limits). The Dean of Brooks College now appoints the Coordinator, with advice from the Area Studies Director and AC members. Zulema Moret (MLL) served as Coordinator from Fall 2009 through Fall 2014. The Dean selected David Stark (HST) to replace her, though given his sabbatical, Andy Schlewitz (LAS) acted as interim Coordinator during Winter 2015.

- The EC is comprised of the Coordinator, the lone full-time LAS appointment, and three others. In the past, these three EC members were elected from the AC. In recent years, the Coordinator filled those slots. The EC typically has met once a month, and has received updates about LAS programming and the budget, discussed and approved programming initiatives and requests for co-sponsorships, and has discussed ways to recruit students for LAS courses and the LAS minor. The EC also oversees the work of taskforces or subcommittees working on specific projects related to LAS.

- The AC includes members of the EC and any other faculty or staff who are interested in LAS affairs. The AC usually meets once or twice a semester and its function has basically been the same as that of the EC—discuss, deliberate, and approve programming initiatives and recruitment.

**LAS Coordinator**

- **Fall 2014** – Zulema Moret (MLL)
- **Winter 2015** – Andrew Schlewitz (LAS)
**LAS Executive Committee**

- **Fall 2014**
  - Zulema Moret (MLL)
  - Andy Schlewitz (LAS)
  - José Lara (MLL)
  - Mike Huner (HST)
  - Dennis Maleret (SOC)

- **Winter 2015**
  - Andy Schlewitz (LAS)
  - José Lara (MLL)
  - Mike Huner (HST)
  - Dennis Maleret (SOC)
  - Lourdes Yen (MLL)

**LAS Advisory Committee**

- Adriana Almanza (Admissions)
- Rebeca Castellanos (MLL)
- Mayra Fortes (MLL)
- Mike Huner (HST)
- José Lara (MLL)
- Mirta León (Social Work)
- Sal López (Admissions)
- Dennis Maleret (SOC)
- Henry Matthews (Art Gallery)
- Zulema Moret (MLL)
- Doris Penn (Records)
- Jim Penn (GPY)
- Andy Schlewitz (LAS)
- Medar Serrata (MLL)
- David Stark (HST)
- Keith Watts (MLL)
- Michael Wroblewski (ANT)
- Lourdes Yen (MLL)
- Raúl Ysasi (EDU)

- The EC met four times in both the Fall and Winter semesters, and David Stark attended all the Winter meetings in order to facilitate his incipient tenure as Coordinator. The AC met twice during the Fall, but had no meetings in the Winter.

**LAS Faculty Participation**

- Participation in these meetings has been inconsistent, particularly in the AC. Only three showed up for the last EC meeting in April. Of the nineteen formally listed as members of the AC, perhaps twelve are consistently active. As has been the case since my arrival to GVSU in Fall 2008, LAS faces a structural problem: it depends on faculty who already have obligations to their home departments, and not all of those departments have chairs who fully recognize work of their faculty in the LAS area program.
LAS PROGRAM AND FACULTY RECRUITMENT

Recruitment efforts have included:

- Informational advising tables at the downtown campus and Allendale campus twice a semester.
- Participation in Laker Days – Fall 2014.
- Organized lunches with possible student candidates.
- Faculty associated with LAS have engaged in curriculum development, and put together a slate of programming events that contribute to the internationalization of co-curricular learning, and engage in curriculum development.

MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES (MES) MINOR

MES OVERVIEW

Over the course of the 2014-15 academic year, the Middle East Studies program hosted three lectures and the Michigan Model Arab League conference. The program was also co-host to a number of other film screenings, lectures and cultural events throughout the university and community.

MES FACULTY AND STAFF | Coeli Fitzpatrick, Coordinator

Faculty
- None

Staff and Student Workers
- Note: we share the same staff and student workers with the Area Studies office.

MES PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

September 2014 –

### October 2014 -

- Thomas Uthup lecture on interfaith dialogue in the Middle East. This lecture was part of a week-long series with the Kaufman Institute on Oman and religion.

Comments:
- “Very informative and eye-opening to learn that different religions can work together to think as communities.”
- “I feel more educated on national religion; brings hope where it is needed!”
- “Better understanding of the interfaith and world problems, and awareness of issues around the world.”

Attendance: 50+

### February 2015 -

- Hosting of Model Arab League conference at GVSU (with co-sponsors from College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and Frederik Meijer Honors College). Speaker Juan Cole from the University of Michigan gave two different talks.

**Combined Total Attendance: 180+**

### February 2015 -

- National Model Arab League: A group of 10 students went with MES faculty member Majd Al-Mallah to the National Model Arab League simulation in Washington, DC. Our students represented the country of Djibouti during the simulation, and were hosted by the Embassy of Djibouti where they had a tour, country briefing and discussion. Students also heard a number of talks over the four-day conference from top academics and policy makers.

### March 2015 -

- Public lecture by Professor Gamal Gasim titled, “Yemini Uprisings: What Went Wrong?”

Comments:
- “We do not hear much about this on campus, so it was good to hear to expand my educational perspective.”
- “I love to hear natives speak about their country because they know it best.”
- “I feel more knowledgeable about the issues in Yemen.”

Attendance: 45+
The following events were put on by other organizations with MES co-sponsorship:

- Arabian Nights: Cultural night with food, dance and poetry.
- Screening of Omar (Peace MEans event)
- Fall trip to Dearborn mosque and Arab American Museum (with History and CLAS)
- Winter trip to Dearborn mosque and Arab American Museum (with Honors)

MES COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- **Healing Children of Conflict**: Non-profit organization in Grand Rapids. MES works with this organization by sharing events over the academic year.
- **Chiaroscuro International Film Festival**: MES collaborates with Chiaroscuro when they screen on films with content from the Middle East. This year MES provided a panelist (Prof. David Alvarez) for a discussion of an Israeli film.

MES FACULTY MEETINGS AND PARTICIPATION

Middle East Studies typically meets one time per semester, and more if needed. Regular faculty attending meetings include:

- Chad Lingwood (History)
- Jim Goode (History)
- Gamal Gasim (Area Studies)
- Majd Al-Mallah (MLL)
- Sebastian Maisel (MLL)
- Coeli Fitzpatrick (Honors)
- Sigrid Danielson (Art)
- David Alvarez (English)

This year, I introduced Visiting Professor Randa Elbih to MES and invited her to attend MES meetings.

MES FACULTY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

- **Leah Beaulac**: Leah was the recipient of both a Padnos scholarship and a Boren scholarship to study Arabic in Jordan during the 2015-2016 academic year.
- **David Leestma**: David was the recipient of Critical Language Scholarship to study Arabic.
- **Kyle Meppelink**: Kyle was the recipient of a Critical Language Scholarship to study Arabic.
- **Meagan Roche**: Meagan was a recipient of a Critical Language Scholarship to study Arabic.
MES – LOOKING FORWARD

Programming and Planning for 2015-16

- MES plans to bring in Prof. Ronald Stockton from the University of Michigan-Dearborn in the Fall for a talk on Blasphemy in Islam.
- We will have a major speaker for the Michigan Model Arab League, and will bring 10 more students to Washington DC in 2016.
- Additionally, MES will continue to host and co-host speakers, film screenings, discussions, trips to Dearborn and cultural events. We will also nominate a student for the Saudi Arabia student study trip in December.
- Coeli Fitzpatrick has gone through the Foundations online course training and may offer MES 201 online for Summer 2016 session.
- We are looking into the possibility of bringing an exhibit of Arab artists (in conjunction with the Gallery of GVSU).

MES PROGRAM AND FACULTY RECRUITMENT

We continue to try to recruit new students to the minor through advising, sending out letters to top students in our courses, and having our programming materials available at events.

I also developed a MES Facebook page for our students to see our presence online. MES faculty have participated in a number of events designed to get the MES name out to the public, including Laker Days and a table at the Global Cities Conference in March 2015.