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AREA STUDIES ANNUAL REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR 2015-2016

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AREA STUDIES OVERVIEW

Area Studies Annual Report for the period 2015-2016

May 23, 2016

Why we do what we do.

Introduction:

Over the years, Area Studies (AS) has maintained excellence and academic rigor in its programming and curricular activities and the past year was no different. In fact, the unit continued to build on its strengths, produced outstanding scholarly achievements, and expanded our curriculum to include new and exciting programs such as the Latino/a certificate. The number of academic programs in the unit increased from five to six and includes African/African-American Studies, East Asian Studies, Chinese Studies, Latin American and Latino/a Studies, Middle East Studies, and recently added Global Studies and Social Impact. Most programs within the unit has a service component and in several cases 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.

Unit Accomplishments and Highlights:

As a unit, we are ever mindful of the guiding principles of both the GVSU and Brooks College strategic plans, 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.

That said, the unit accomplished several major tasks. We completed and implemented our first unit personnel guidelines for faculty review and promotion, and we adopted new budget guidelines for programming activities to facilitate more efficiency and align program funding with university and college policies. In addition, the unit completed its Strategic Planning for 2016-2021, and we implemented new recruitment strategies outlined by the dean of the college. This has been successful especially when combined with faculty ‘one on one’ recruitment or ‘spot recruitment’ when faculty reach out to individual students and taking them for coffee or lunch for conversation about the value of minoring (or majoring) in an AS program. Apart from updating our websites and the Area Studies video, we participated in campus wide recruitment.
events such as Laker Day, Majors Fair, and Padnos International Fairs. We also utilized social media to engage and recruit students. For instance, we created a Facebook page for MES and LAS while AAA established a twitter account. As a unit, we re-examined scheduling habits and adopted more effective scheduling methods based on greater collaboration with faculty, relevant units with AS joint appointees and with the dean’s office. Consequently, we offered more sections of our 200 level or foundation courses at peak times and increased the number of online and hybrid courses available to students. These strategies proved very successful as reflected in the course enrollment numbers which has greatly increased (see data on proceeding pages).

Major achievements were made in the area of curriculum development. After more than nine years of discussion and several failed attempts, a bachelor’s degree in Global Studies and Social Impact (GSI) was approved by the University Curriculum Committee and the Board of Trustees. The new major and program will anchor, support and complement the existing minors in AS. The expenses for the new major will be absorbed into the current AS budget. Additionally, the unit crafted a TT joint appointment job description (with Liberal Studies) for a potential new hire to teach in GSI. There were numerous enquiries about the major and several students expressed a desire to sign up for the program. Plans to launch the new major are in progress and promotional flyers and brochures were designed for the new major. The launch of the new major will take place in the Fall of 2016. Due to the development of the GSI major, the faculty voted unanimously to change the unit’s name to Area and Global Studies (AGS).

Besides the new major, a new Latino/a Certificate was introduced in LAS and several new courses across disciplines in the unit were added to the curriculum. These courses will be taught in the coming academic year and include LAS 325- Human Rights in Latin America and AAA/HST 357- The Black Diaspora and the meaning of sports, 1800 to the present. Meanwhile, several introductory courses in GSI were added to the curriculum for the first time such as GSI 201- (Dis)Order and (In)Justice: An Introduction to Global Studies, and GSI 202- History of Global Change and Social Transformation.

Throughout the year, the EAS Curriculum Taskforce met regularly to discuss expanding the EAS curriculum to include a broader focus on Asia and the Asian Diaspora. The taskforce was chaired by the director of AS and a proposal for expanding the current EAS curriculum into an Asian Studies program was submitted to the dean of the Brooks College for her review and feedback. It was agreed that more work was needed on the proposal and perhaps more emphasis should be placed on incorporating existing courses rather than creating too many new courses. Likewise, it was agreed that further development of the EAS curriculum and revitalization of the CHS major should continue under the next coordinator of EAS/CHS beginning in the Fall of 2016. Meanwhile, Professor Patrick Shan, current coordinator of EAS completed the Self-Study for the CHS major. The document was later revised and resubmitted on May 20, 2016 to the University Assessment Committee. Professor Shan will we stepping down at the end of the year and Professor Jeremy Robinson will be the next coordinator of EAS beginning in the Fall of 2016. We thank Professor Shan for his outstanding service and commitment to EAS/CHS and the unit.

Beyond curriculum development, the unit participated successfully in the Fall 2015 Laker Impressions of Faculty Teaching (LIFT) Pilot for the new online faculty student evaluation. Furthermore, on February 25, 2016, AS hosted a dinner meeting with representatives from local
partner institutions in West Michigan to thank them for their support over the years and to reaffirm AS and the Brooks College’s commitment to continued collaboration and support for the Grand Rapids Latin American Film Festival which has become a popular annual event in the community. The meeting was facilitated by the director of AS and guests were invited to share their vision for the festival and how we can sustain this event.

**Faculty Accomplishments and Highlights:**

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 students they serve and the community they live in. This past year we have had some notable accomplishments evident in this report. For instance, Professor Jack Mangala (AAA) was awarded the Endowed Professorship in Civil Discourse in the Brooks College, Professor Sebastian Maisel (MES) published his book *Speed up Your Arabic* and was featured on CBS 60 Minutes television program, and Professor Jim Goode (MES) received the GVSU Faculty Internationalization Award. Apart from the awards and accolades received by several professors in the unit, many faculty participated in panels and workshops while others took part in local, national and international conferences. Multiple faculty in AS produced outstanding scholarship in various peer reviewed print and online journals, news blogs, edited books and other media. It should also be noted that several students who were taught and mentored by our faculty in AS did well in their studies and were the recipients of a number of awards including the Boren scholarship.

Regarding other faculty news and job lines, AS did not receive a tenure track line for Global Studies as requested, however we successfully collaborated with the Department of Modern Languages to hire a tenure track faculty with a joint appointment in MLL and EAS/CHS. Professor Meghan Cai was hired in this position and she will be starting in Fall 2016. We are delighted to have her on board and welcome her to the faculty. We also collaborated with the Department of History to hire a Visiting Professor, Steven Morgan to teach courses in AAA. Professor Morgan will not be teaching in AS next year so a search is on the way for an adjunct to teach several courses in AAA. Meanwhile, Professors David Eaton, and Craig Benjamin (EAS) were recruited to teach introductory courses in GSI. The unit also hosted a visiting scholar in residence, Professor Yanzhi Zhao from China for one semester. In addition, the AS faculty voted in support of bestowing on Professor Veta Tucker (AAA), recent retiree from Grand Valley, the title of Professor Emerita of English and African/African American Studies.

The unit continued the tradition of hosting a colloquium for AS faculty to share their research with students and colleagues. Our first colloquium began with Professor Gamal Gasim in Winter 2015. There were two presenters this year, Professors Rik Stevenson (December 3, 2015) and Tracy Flemming (March 22, 2016); and the AAA program hosted its annual graduation reception for those students graduating with a minor in African/African American Studies.

**Programming Activities**

Much of what we do in AS would not be possible without the commitment and hard work of the coordinators in AS. Program coordinators staged a record number of events. Broadly speaking, we had a total of 45 programming events; however each event incorporated numerous activities
such as lectures, films, panels and workshops. We had an estimate of more than 4,000 attendees at all our events combined including students, faculty and community members. Of this number, 93% were students (data based on head counts and survey). Our major high impact and experiential learning activities such as Model Arab League and Model Organization of American States among others were all successful and continued to shape students’ lives in a meaningful way.

**Goals for next year**

We have identified several broad goals for next year (in no particular order). They are as follows:

1. Begin implementation of the unit’s Strategic Plan
2. Draft a set of bylaws for the unit
3. Promote, launch, and recruit students for the GSI major
4. Recruit 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 majors and minors.
6. Change the name of the unit to reflect the new GSI major
7. Complete the curriculum development in EAS and CHS
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
11. Work on becoming a department
12. Engage with our Alumni Association

It is my hope that we will be able to accomplish these goals and continue to work hard on building a vibrant unit.

As the program director, I would like to take this opportunity congratulate our graduates who successfully completed their degrees. I would also like to thank my colleagues and the staff in Area Studies for their hard work and service to the unit this past year. I look forward to further collaboration with colleagues and effective team work in strengthening the existing Area Studies disciplines, building the new certificate and GSI programs and taking the unit to new heights of excellence.

Respectfully submitted by

Steeve Buckridge, Ph.D.
Director of Area Studies
AREA STUDIES FACULTY AND STAFF

Faculty
• Gamal Gasim was promoted to Associate Professor
• Tracy Flemming contract was renewed
• Resignations: Patrick Shan has stepped down as EAS Coordinator and will be replaced by Jeremy Robinson

Staff and Student Workers
• Leslye Allen – Full-time Professional Support Staff | 40 hours per week
• Julianne Agresta – Part-time Student Worker | 20 hours per week Fall 2015 and Winter 2016
• Caitlin Ford – Part-time Student Worker | 2 hours per week Fall 2016 (shared with Gen Ed)
• Kelsey Walhout – Part-time Student Worker | 6 hours per week Winter 2016

AREA STUDIES OVERALL MAJORS/MINORS
Area Studies programming included over 45 events, not including multiple student visits by guest speakers and extra-curricular activities and film screenings associated with our programs. Note: Based on surveys and headcounts, an estimate of actual attendance exceeds 4,000 at all Area Studies programming activities.

Who attended?
(based in part on surveys turned in)
- This event increased my awareness of cultural diversity:
- I would recommend this event to a friend:
- Area Studies should sponsor more events like this:
- How attendees heard about event and how they prefer to be notified:
AREA STUDIES COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND CO-SPONSORSHIPS

Community Partnerships

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

Co-sponsorships

- Area Studies has co-sponsored many Student Group campus-wide events.

AREA STUDIES COLLABORATION

In conjunction with the Fall Arts Celebration, and funded in part by the Michigan Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities and co-sponsored by GVSU College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, East Asian Studies, Department of History, Honors College, Modern Languages and Literatures, and Religious Studies, Area Studies hosted, Rati Saxena, poet from India and director of International Poetry Festival, Kryitia to share her field of language and Veda traditions, sacred books and their importance to world religions. **Attendance: 60+**
The first Area Studies Colloquium was introduced in Winter 2015 when Professor Gamal Gasim presented his research to students, faculty and staff.

In December 2015, Professor Rik Stevenson presented his research to students, faculty and staff.

In March 2016, Professor Tracy Flemming presented his research to students, faculty and staff.
AFRICAN/AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES (AAA) MINOR

AAA continues to develop in its role as a hub for intellectual engagement and also a supplemental minor for students looking to increase their chances at employment by minoring in a subject that promotes critical thinking and civic engagement. We achieve this through our dynamic courses, excellent faculty, programming, outreach, collaboration, and marketing.

AAA FACULTY AND STAFF | Louis Moore, Coordinator

Faculty
- New hires: none

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

AAA MINORS

As the numbers demonstrate, despite a public emphasis on STEM, our classes remain healthy. Part of this is because we have started to offer online options (AAA 200), we work with Freshman Academy for our AAA 201 course, and a number of our courses are strategically positioned in GE courses. Additionally, I see our class numbers continue to grow, because we have a healthy offering of classes in the new Global Studies major. The next step is to clearly and conveniently outline a path for students to get a minor in AAA and a major in Global Studies.
Additionally, Professor Louis Moore created a new course, AAA/HST 357 The Black Diaspora and the meaning of sports, 1800 to the present (the Black Athlete), which will be part of the globalization category in the Issues courses. In the past, we have offered a AAA 380 class for the African American Athlete that did quite well. Expanding the content and making the class officially part of the GVSU catalogue is part of the strategy to broaden the appeal of the minor and give students more options to pursue.

**AAA PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS**

As the numbers show, our programs had a broad impact across campus. During the fall semester, we teamed up with LAS twice to provide educational programs on the black diaspora in the Caribbean. The collaboration with LAS and the emphasis on the Caribbean and Latin America is part of the growth of our program to expand and reach and teach more students about the black diaspora.

We also hosted Dr. Wilson Yayoh, from the University of Cape Coast Ghana, who gave a lecture entitled, “Transatlantic Slave Trade in Ghana.” Dr. Yayoh, also used the time to talk to students about study abroad at his university.

In October, we invited our minors and students in our AAA classes to see the PBS documentary, Black Panthers, which played at the Urban Institute for Art. This gave us an opportunity to have an educational outing and also introduce our students to local culture and leisure options in Grand Rapids. It is important to retain our talented students locally, and this is just one way we can show them that Grand Rapids has something to offer.

In the Winter 2016 semester, to kick-off black history month, we hosted Dr. Pero Dagbovie, of Michigan State University, who presented on popular culture and its influence on Black History Month. We did not host a guest in January, because of the short month—school started the second week of the month—and OMA had their weeklong Martin Luther King event. Also, in February, Olivia A. Williams, Chasity Bailey-Faukery, and Louis Moore presented a roundtable talk on the campus wide community read, *Citizen*.

For Women’s History Month in March, we hosted, Dr. Kidada Williams, of Wayne State University, who presented her research entitled, “They Left Their Marks on Me,” about white terrorism during Reconstruction. Both Dr. Dagbovie and Dr. Williams met with our students to talk about grad school.

Also in March, Professor Moore, along with Dr. Todd Robinson (UNLV), author of *City Within a City*, discussed racism in Grand Rapids and the community read, *Citizen*. 
September 2015 –


- Co-sponsored by LAS and MLL

Attendance: 60

October 2015 –

Dr. Wilson Yayoh, from the University of Cape Coast Ghana for a lecture entitled, “Transatlantic Slave Trade in Ghana.”

Comments:
- “Exciting to have a passionate guest speaker”
- “It was an eye-opener”
- “More Africa-specific events are needed; the turnout indicates interest in African Studies at GVSU”

Attendance: 80+

November 2015 -

Josh Dunigan was welcomed for an interactive performance entitled, “Tumbao! Rumba Guaguancó! Bembe! Cumbia!” with traditional Cuban, Brazilian, and Andean rhythms. Students learned to play Latin and Afro-Caribbean rhythms using bongos, bells, and claves.

- Organized and Co-sponsored by LAS

“I loved it.” “It was so exciting and informational.” “Very unique!”

Attendance: 90 +

February 2016 -

Dr. Pero G. Dagbovie, Professor, Department of History, Associate Dean of The Graduate School, Michigan State University, presented a lecture entitled, “African American History and Popular U.S. Culture.”

- Dr. Dagbovie met with students for discussion and pizza prior to the lecture.

Attendance: 75
Kidada E. Williams (Wayne State University) presented a lecture entitled, “They Left Marks on Me: Communicating the Costs of White Terror.”

“It was a shock to what African Americans had to endure. The presentation was very educational.” Attendance: 30+

AAA Graduation

AAA continued the tradition of hosting the African and African American Studies minors graduating in the Fall and Winter semesters. Students were presented with a stole and were able to celebrate with their families.

AAA FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Students who took our classes this year were pleased with our dynamic faculty. As one outgoing graduate noted, “The AAA Department and faculty did not only assist my in learning more about myself as a member of the African Diaspora, but also stimulated my ability to critically think about race, culture, history, gender, religion, and other aspects of identity. This is intersectionality bluntly!” Moreover, at the Black Graduation Ceremony, a student heaped praises on professors Tracy Flemming, Rik Stevenson, Sherry Johnson, and Louis Moore in a poem she read to the audience. These testimonials speak to the fact that our faculty or creating a comfortable learning atmosphere and challenging our students.

Because of their dedication to their craft, our faculty members have been recognized for their contributions to the classroom.

- Rik Stevenson, received the "Outstanding Faculty Member Award" from The Omicron Alpha Chapter of Sigma Lambda Gamma National Sorority, at GVSU.

- Jack Mangala, was awarded an endowed professorship in Civil Discourse in Brooks College.

- Sherry Johnson, who was the previous coordinator, earned tenure in the English Department.
In addition, our professors fulfilled the teacher-scholar model and have a visible presence on and off campus.

- In June 2015, Tracy Flemming presented at the Global Studies Association Conference: "From One Colonial Situation to Another: Politics, Universalism, and the Crisis of the African Intellectual."

- In September 2015, Louis Moore and Rik Stevenson presented at the Association for the Study of African America Life and History conference in Atlanta.

- In February 2016, Olivia A. Williams, Chasity Bailey-Faukery, and Louis Moore presented a roundtable talk on the campus wide community read, Citizen.

- In March 2016, Tracy Flemming, who also serves on the editorial board of the Pan African Journal, presented his research “Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912): Explorations of Islam in Africa and the Middle East” for the Area Studies Colloquium.

- Also in March 2016, as part of our collaboration with the Kutche Center, Professor Moore, with Dr. Todd Robinson, historian at UNLV and author of City Within a City, presented on his book—this is a locally award winning book about racism in Grand Rapids—and the community read, Citizen.

- During the course of the year, Dr. Dwayne Tunstall (Philosophy) stayed active too. He presented and gave talks in Portland, Washington D.C., Arkansas, and Germany.

- Louis Moore, in addition to publishing formal scholarship in academics texts, published a number of online essays, and participated in interviews with reporters from Vice Sports, Yahoo Sports, and the Grand Rapids Press.

AAA LOOKING FORWARD

For future planning, students and faculty have suggested more course offerings. There are also some courses that will no longer be under the GE course offerings, and we might need to reexamine those courses in the future if they don’t make. Over the next few years, we should adhere to these requests and offer more dynamic choices for students interested in AAA.

One complaint, however, that has been brought to my attention is that AAA 302, a required course, is only offered in the Fall. A number of students have decided not to minor in AAA, because of the lack of the availability of this course.

AAA FACULTY MEETINGS

During the year, we had three meetings in September, December, and April where we discussed potential programming, the future of the program, and selling the minor. One main issue that reoccurred was the need to focus more on Africa, especially with programming. This will be addressed next year. Also, we brainstormed on ways to connect with students outside of class, and it was suggested to have “food for thought” programs, to meet and greet the students and potential recruits, over food. All in all, we had productive meetings.
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 (Modern Language and Literature)
- Kirsten Strom (Arts)
- Hui Lan Yen (Modern Language and Literature)
- Kimberly McKee (Liberal Studies)
- Craig Benjamin (Honors College)
- Wei Gu (Education)
- Sufen Lai (English)
- Yan Liang (Modern Language and Literature)
- Kin Ma (Geography)
- Peimin Ni (Philosophy)
- Jeremy Robinson (Modern Language and Literature)
- Patrick Fuliang Shan (History)
- Geling Shang (Philosophy)
- Wanxiao Sun (Geography)
- Yosay Wangdi (History)
- Shinian Wu (English)
- Gang Xu (Geography)
- Huei Lan Yen (Modern Language and Literature)
- Yan Yu (Sociology)
- Peter Zhang (Communications)
- Yi Zhao (Political Science)

Staff and Student Workers

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

CHS ENROLLMENT

- The CHS program offers the BA in Chinese Studies, which is a major. In the 2015-2016 academic year, the program has thirteen students. Because the banner has a technical problem, some CHS majors’ names are not displayed in the system. Some students graduated in April 2016, including Hillary Rentfrow who earned her BA in CHS. The CHS faculty tried hard to attract more students to enroll in the CHS and indeed some new students were welcome into our program.

- 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, Chinese history, Chinese philosophy, Chinese sociology, Chinese politics, East Asian history, Chinese mythology, East Asian religions, Chinese literature, and many others.

CHS PROGRAMMING 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 2016) and RICE Conference (March 2016). During the Asian Pacific Heritage Month, we helped organize many China related activities which attracted a large number of audience, including the Chinese Cultural Performances.

- 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.

- In 2015-16 year, we invited Professor Lucy Lu from DePaul University to come over for a talk on Mao Zedong; we invited Professor Rossabi from Columbia University to present on Marco Polo and the Mongol Empire; we invited Professor Vassil to present on Japanese
culture; we co-sponsored Jinyu Wang’s talk on Daoism with the department of philosophy; we invited Professor Lynn to present to present on Zhuangzi.

- We hosted 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.

- We hosted Professor Yanzhi Zhao from South China Agricultural University to be a visiting scholar in Winter 2016. She befriended our CHS majors and EAS minors and would like to have our faculty and staff to visit her university in the future.

- In Winter 2016, we offered to host Professor Dayu Liu to come over to the CHS/EAS as a visiting scholar, who plans to come in July 2016 for a one year period during which he will do research, interact with our faculty and students.

**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 and Japanese Language and 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.

- The CHS faculty came to celebrate the collaboration between the university and the Chinese Language School at the end of Winter 2016. Dean Hiskes and Director Buckridge also attended.

**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. Professor Ni and Professor Shang have organized a program to Shanghai in Spring 2015. They have organized another one in Spring 2016 to Shanghai. 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,
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.

The CHS/EAS faculty met (Fall 2015) on September 11, 2016 from 3:15pm-5:00pm in PAD 308. The following attended: Jason Herlands, Yan Liang, Kin Ma, Peimin Ni, Jeremy Robinson, Patrick Shan, Kirsten Strom, Wanxiao Sun, Shinian Wu, Gang Xu, Yi Zhao and Yanzhi Zhao (visiting scholar).

The CHS/EAS faculty met (Winter 2017) on January 29, 2016 from 1:00 to 2:50pm in MAK D2-168. The following attended: Steeve Buckridge, Yan Liang, Kin Ma, Kim McKee, Peimin Ni, Jeremy Robinson, Ellen Schendel, Patrick Shan, Geling Shang, Kirsten Strom, Shinian Wu, Yi Zhao.

The Task Force of the CHS/EAS met a few times in Winter 2016.

**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.

The Task Force has discussed over reform plans and curricular changes.
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)

- Meghan Cai (Modern Language and Literature)
- Kirsten Strom (Arts)
- Hui Lan Yen (Modern Language and Literature)
- Kimberly McKee (Liberal Studies)
- Craig Benjamin (Honors College)
- Wei Gu (Education)
- Sufen Lai (English)
- Yan Liang (Modern Language and Literature)
- Kin Ma (Geography)
- Peimin Ni (Philosophy)
- Jeremy Robinson (Modern Language and Literature)
- Patrick Fuliang Shan (History)
- Geling Shang (Philosophy)
- Wanxiao Sun (Geography)
- Yosay Wangdi (History)
- Shinian Wu (English)
- Gang Xu (Geography)
- Huei Lan Yen (Modern Language and Literature)
- Yan Yu (Sociology)
- Peter Zhang (Communications)
- Yi Zhao (Political Science)

Staff and Student Workers

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

In 2015-2016 academic year, over thirty students enrolled as EAS minors, besides some who have graduated, including Madison Tefo.

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 PROGRAMMING 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 2015 –

Dr. Morris Rossabi from the City University of New York and Columbia University to speak about Marco Polo. The lecture sorted out the facts from fiction and described the colorful adventure the boy started at age 18. This event was titled, “Marco Polo: Fact or Fiction?” Attendance: 80+

October 2015 –


November 2015 –

Dr. Xing (Lucy) Lu (DePaul University) presented a lecture entitled, “Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Its impact on Chinese Thought and Culture.”

“I have a better understanding of eastern mindset and reveling of culturally significant events.” “Informational!” Attendance: 114

April 2016 –

Dr. Richard Johnson Lynn (British Columbia, Canada) presented a lecture entitled, “Reception of Zhuangzi in the West: the Early Years.” Attendance: 70

January-April 2016

- The EAS/CHS helped organize the Asian-Pacific Islander American Heritage Month along with the Office of Multicultural Affairs in January-March with many activities. During this 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.

- The EAS/CHS co-sponsored the RICE conference organized by the Asian Student Union.

- The EAS/CHS co-sponsored the students’ visit to Chicago in March organized by the Chinese Language Club.

- The EAS/CHS co-sponsored the Asian New Year celebration in January.
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. And they organized another one in Spring 2016. 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]).


‘‘But from this time forth history becomes a connected whole”: State Expansion and the Origins of Universal History’, in W.G. Clarence-Smith, B.W. Andaya, and M. Weisner-


**EAS LOOKING FORWARD**

- 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. The EAS faculty held meeting in Fall 2015 and Winter 2016. A task force held regular meetings in Winter 2016 to discuss curricular reform and program reforms. In the past years, 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 CHS/EAS faculty met (Fall 2015) on September 11, 2016 from 3:15pm-5:00pm in PAD 308. The following attended: Jason Herlands, Yan Liang, Kin Ma, Peimin Ni, Jeremy Robinson, Patrick Shan, Kirsten Strom, Wanxiao Sun, Shinian Wu, Gang Xu, Yi Zhao and Yanzhi Zhao (visiting scholar).
- The CHS/EAS faculty met (Winter 2017) on January 29, 2016 from 1:00 to 2:50pm in MAK D2-168. The following attended: Steeve Buckridge, Yan Liang, Kin Ma, Kimberly McKee, Peimin Ni, Jeremy Robinson, Ellen Schendel, Patrick Shan, Geling Shang, Kirsten Strom, Shinian Wu, Yi Zhao.
- The Task Force of the CHS/EAS met a few times in Winter 2016.
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 into 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.
LATIN AMERICAN AND LATINO/A STUDIES (LAS) MINOR

LAS MINORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>LAS 210-1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 2016</td>
<td>LAS 210-1</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Winter 2016</td>
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<td>Winter 2016</td>
<td>LAS 320-1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 2016</td>
<td>LAS 373-1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

We had 16 minors enrolled in Fall 2015. In Winter 2016, the number of LAS minors grew from 16 at the start of the semester to 34 (as of May 13, 2016). Eleven of the minors were Spanish or Spanish/Education majors, 23 were BA students, and 13 were seniors.

Although the Spanish program continues to be the biggest feeder into the LAS minor, there are a wider variety of majors than in previous years. LAS is attracting students from science and business – something the minor was unable to do in the past. This is the result of a new recruitment strategy that emphasizes one-on-one contact with the students in LAS 210 and classes cross-listed with LAS. In the past, students were bombarded with e-mails and encouraged to pick up promotional materials at LAS programming events (students are still encouraged to do so, but these aren’t the only recruitment strategies). Faculty personally recruit students who show an aptitude or interest in Latin American studies, inviting them to lunch with guest speakers or...
with LAS faculty. Reaching out to students on a one-on-one basis has proven to be an effective strategy, with nine students recruited from the two LAS 210 sections offered in the winter, and three more recruited from the HNR 280 Latin American Civilization and Culture class. In addition, the creation of the Latino Studies Certificate has generated interest in the minor. Students who want to do the certificate register for the minor, since the university has no way of tracking students pursuing any of the certificate programs.

Three LAS courses were cancelled over the summer due to low enrollment and only one LAS course was offered in the fall. Nevertheless, the number of minors doubled in Winter 2016, growing from 16 to 34. This is nothing short of remarkable and reflects the hard work among a small, albeit dedicated, cohort of LAS faculty!

**LAS ADMINISTRATION**

The LAS structure consists of a Coordinator, an Executive Committee (EC), and Advisory Committee (AC). 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. However, in recent years, the Coordinator filled these slots. The program’s previous by-laws are no longer in effect because a set of uniform by-laws will be drafted for all of the Area Studies programs. A desire for increased transparency in the selection of EC members prompted the Coordinator to issue a call for nominations; faculty and staff wanting to serving on the EC submitted a statement of interest. At the first meeting of the fall semester, the AC reviewed nominations and approved the appointment of faculty and staff interested in serving on the EC, with the membership consisting of the Coordinator, the full-time LAS appointment, and no more than two members from any one academic unit. There is no limit on the number of EC members; all that is required is a willingness to serve.

The EC met once a month in the fall and twice in the winter. Fewer meetings were scheduled in the winter because of the weather and number of programming events. In lieu of meeting, the Coordinator sent out updates via e-mail. The EC received updates about LAS programming and the budget, discussed and approved programming initiatives and requests for co-sponsorships, and discussed ways to recruit students for LAS courses and the LAS minor.

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

**Fall 2015 and Winter 2016**

**LAS Coordinator**

David Stark

**LAS Executive Committee**

David Stark (HST)
Adriana Almanza (Admissions)
Rebeca Castellanos (MLL) Winter 2016
Mayra Fortes (MLL)
Michael Huner (HST)
Mirta (Paola) León (Social Work)
Faculty and staff participation in LAS has been inconsistent, especially in the AC. Of the twenty faculty formally listed as members of the AC, perhaps twelve are consistently active. Only six showed up for the last joint meeting of the AC and EC in April. Faculty have floated in and out of the Advisory and Executive Committees depending on duties and desires connected to their home departments. The faculty teaching LAS and cross-listed courses have also routinely shifted, and different mixes of faculty have been involved in LAS programming. As has been the case since my arrival to GVSU in Fall 1999, LAS faces a structural problem: it depends heavily on faculty who already have obligations to their home departments, and not of all of these departments have chairs who fully recognize work of their faculty in the LAS area program.

Several steps have been taken to address this situation. Formal appointment letters will be drawn up by the Dean of Brooks College for AC and EC members. These letters will detail the duties and responsibilities of AC and EC members for their respective department chairs and departments. The LAS Coordinator also wrote letters on behalf of EC members to their department chair that summarized the EC member’s contributions to the program. This letter became part of the EC member’s Faculty Activity Report and hopefully factored into their annual salary evaluation. It is gratifying to note that faculty (and staff) associated with LAS engaged in curriculum development, and put together a slate of programming events that contributed to the internationalization of co-curricular learning.
LAS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Andrew Schlewitz revised a special topics course LAS 380 Human Rights in Latin America, turning it into a Gen Ed course dealing with the issue of human rights. The course has been approved by the UCC and is now in the catalogue as LAS 325. It will be added to the list of electives offered as part of the LAS minor, the Area Studies electives in GSI, and the Human Rights (HRT) minor. Pending a discussion with Richard Hiskes (PLS), the course may be cross-listed with HRT as LAS/HRT 325.

Andrew Schlewitz also chaired a LAS subcommittee consisting of Mayra Fortes (MLL) and David Stark (HST) that met over the summer to finalize the creation of a Latino/a Studies 15-credit hour certificate program. A 200-level introductory course (LAS 220) for the certificate was created and the course proposal was approved by UCC. The course will be offered in Fall 2016. There is a lot of interest in the Latino Studies certificate. For example, David Stark was interviewed for WGVU’s Spotlight on the Brooks College (January 20) to discuss the new certificate as well as the LAS program. One wonders if anybody listens to these interviews, but I received a very nice note from a listener in Whitehall who appreciated learning more about LAS - she even sent along three dvds dealing with Latin America hoping I could put them to good use! There also was an article in the Lanthorn and the LAS website has been updated to reflect the new certificate. New promotional materials have been created and the Coordinator has fielded many questions about the certificate.

LAS PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

The Latin American and Latino/a Studies program sponsored many well-attended events including:

September 2015 –

The 6th Annual Grand Rapids Latin American Film Festival

- 18 films
- 4 film directors

Attendance: 700
**September 2015 –**

José Galvez (Pulitzer-Prize Winning Photographer) presented a lecture entitled, "Aqui Estamos: Here We Are." Co-sponsored with OMA as part of Hispanic Heritage Month.

- A month-long exhibit of his photographs was coordinated with Henry Matthews and the GVSU Art Gallery.
- Galvez met with Mayra Fortes’ SPA 313 Latino Culture and Civilization class and had lunch with prospective LAS minors.
- Padnos International Center held a reception for Galvez.

**Edward Paulino** presented a lecture entitled, *Bearing Witness to the 1937 Haitian Massacre and its Legacy: How a diplomatic letter, an activist’s death, and the internet sparked a social movement for reconciliation and equality.* Co-sponsored by AAA and MLL.

- Paulino met with Mayra Fortes’ SPA 313 Latino Culture and Civilization class, he had lunch with prospective LAS minors, and met with HST and SST majors as well as LAS and AAA minors.

**October 2015 -**

Claudia Elizabeth Castro (Rural Women’s Organizer) gave a lecture entitled, “The Current Reality of El Salvador...Immigration, Gangs, Water Rights and Food Sovereignty - Sister Cities, a Model of Solidarity.”

Attendance: 40
November 2015 -

Day of the Dead celebration with local artist Roli Mancera. Held in Honors College (first time, as part of effort to collaborate with Honors).

- Article in Lanthorn
  Attendance: 200+

Roger Kittleson (Williams College) presented a lecture entitled, "Race and Beauty in Brazilian Soccer: A Troubled History."

- Kittleson met with HST and SST majors as well as LAS minors.
  Attendance: 90+

Josh Dunigan was welcomed for an interactive performance entitled, “Tumbao! Rumba Guaguancó! Bembe! Cumbia!” with traditional Cuban, Brazilian, and Andean rhythms. Students learned to play Latin and Afro-Caribbean rhythms using bongos, bells, and claves.

- Co-sponsored by AAA
  Attendance: 90

January 2016 –

Abrazos film screening and panel discussion featuring local Guatemalan families and representatives from Bethany Christian Services.

- Article in Lanthorn
  Attendance: 145

February 2016 –

Kregg Hetherington (Concordia University) presented a lecture entitled, “Making Paraguay Real: How to Measure an Agrarian Transformation.”

- Hetherington met with ANT students
  Attendance: 115

Great Lakes Latin American History Workshop
Grand Valley faculty from Anthropology, History, Sociology, and Geography participated as well as faculty from Aquinas College, Hope College, and the University of Michigan-Dearborn.
February 2016 (con’t.)-

Ruben Martínez (Stanford University) presented a lecture entitled, “Browning Heartland: Transnational Communities and Imagination.”

- Co-sponsored with Grand Valley Writers Series
- Martínez had lunch with prospective LAS minors

Attendance: 150+

March 2016 –

Salsa Workshop with Byron Doss - as part of effort to collaborate more with Honors, the workshop was held in Niemeyer.

Attendance: 25

No mas bebes film screening and panel discussion held at Cook-DeWitt Auditorium

Attendance: 175

MOAS – Model Organization of American States – Andy Schlewitz took ten students to Washington, D.C. for the LAS annual experiential learning opportunity. Students participate in a simulation of the Organization of the American States with other schools.

April 2016 –

Chicago Visit | An excursion to the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture, Northern Triangle Borderland Collection, and the National Museum of Mexican Art, originally organized by David Stark and Mayra Fortes for their HNR 280 course, Latin American Civilization and Culture, and joined by members of Michael Huner’s LAS 210, David Stark’s LAS 210 and HST 375 History of Mexico, and Mayra Fortes’ Latino Culture and Civilization class. Attendance: 33

Cristina Pinto-Bailey (Washington and Lee University) presented a lecture entitled, “Subjectivity, History, and National Identity: Ana Maria Machado in the Context of Contemporary Brazilian Literature.”

- Pinto-Bailey also conducted a poetry reading

Attendance: 75
The number of students, faculty and staff, and community members attending LAS programming events was the most recorded in recent years. LAS continues to offer a variety of programs designed with students and faculty in mind. The Coordinator worked closely with faculty to invite speakers whose area of expertise would appeal to students and faculty alike. For example, Michael Huner (HST) had assigned Roger Kittleson’s *The Country of Football: Soccer and the Making of Modern Brazil* in his HST 200 class and we decided to invite Kittleson to present his research on soccer and Brazilian identity. Kittleson’s talk also fit nicely with discussions of Afro-Brazilian identity that are part of David Stark’s HST 372 *From Slavery to Freedom* course. Bringing Kittleson to campus was therefore a good fit for both Huner and Stark’s courses, and that his topic dealt with soccer resonated with students.

A large number of those who attended LAS programming events agreed that “This event increased my awareness of cultural diversity,” “I would recommend this event to a friend,” and “The Area Studies Center should sponsor more events like this.” Written comments were likewise overwhelmingly positive, especially for the screening and showing of *Abrazos* and *No mas bebes*. The Salsa Workshop and the Chicago visit also received very favorable feedback.

In the past LAS has been an official sponsor of the Grand Rapids Film Festival (GRLAFF). After careful deliberation by the LAS Executive Committee, it was decided that LAS will continue to sponsor the GRLAFF with Aquinas College, Calvin College, Davenport University, and Ferris State University serving as co-sponsors. Médar Serrata and Mayra Fortes (both from MLL) volunteered to serve as co-organizers of the film festival. The next GRLAFF is scheduled for March 31, April 1, and April 2, 2017, and will be held at the Wealthy Street Theatre.

Planning is underway for the Conference of the Americas (COA), which will be held in conjunction with the Great Lakes History Conference, on October 21-22, 2016. The theme is “Human Rights in the Atlantic World and Beyond” and the keynote speaker is Hector Tobar – author of the critically acclaimed, New York Times bestseller *Deep Down Dark: The Untold Stories of 33 Men Buried in a Chilean Mine and the Miracle that Set Them Free*.

**LAS OTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

LAS has a new name – it is now called Latin American and Latino/a Studies. The website has been updated and promotional literature created that reflects this change. Also, the website has a new photo gallery that includes pictures from this year’s events.
MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES (MES) MINOR

MES OVERVIEW
Over the course of the 2015-16 academic year, the Middle East Studies program hosted three lectures, the Michigan Model Arab League conference, trips to local and regional mosques and a trip to the Arab American Museum. The program was also co-host to a number of other film screenings, lectures and cultural events throughout the university and community. Additionally, Middle East Studies faculty gave lectures and presentations throughout the world, led a study abroad trip, and published in a number of venues.

MES MINORS

MES FACULTY AND STAFF | Coeli Fitzpatrick, Coordinator, Professor of Philosophy, Frederik Meijer Honors College

Faculty
- Majd Al-Mallah, Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures
- David Alvarez, Professor of English
- Sigrid Danielson, Associate Professor of Art
- Daniel Demuth, Associate Professor of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
- Gamal Gasim, Associate Professor of Middle East Studies and Political Science
- James Goode, Professor of History
- Chad Lingwood, Associate Professor of History
- Sebastian Maisel, Associate Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures
- Muaz Redzic, Adjunct Professor of Middle East Studies
- Mark Schwartz, Professor of Anthropology
Staff and Student Workers

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

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. This year we partnered with Healing Children of Conflict to sponsor the Palestinian author Susan Abulhawa’s talk at GVSU.

Chiaroscuro International Film Festival: MES collaborates with Chiaroscuro when they screen on films with content from the Middle East.

MES PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

**November 2015 –**

**Dr. Kivanc Ulusoy,** Turkish Scholar from Istanbul University presented a public lecture entitled, “Turkey’s Foreign Policy under the AKP Governments: A Case for Democratic Peace?”

“Informative!”
“Interesting!”

**Attendance: 180+**

**February 2016 –**

**Dr. Imad Harb,** distinguished International Affairs Fellow at the National Council on U.S. Arab Relations and Adjunct Professor at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University gave two lectures - one entitled, “Syria and Iraq: Independent, Yet Prizes to be won.” In conjunction with the Michigan Model Arab League hosted by GVSU, 100+ students from across the region came to participate in the conference.

“Interesting! It definitely gave me a broader perspective on Syria and Iraq.”

**Attendance: 200+**

**February 2016 -**

**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 Qatar, and they toured the Qatari Embassy. Also, one of our students, Devin Rittenhouse, was selected to serve as chair of the Environmental Committee for next year’s model.
April 2016 –

**Dr. Ronald Stockton**, Professor of Political Science, University of Michigan Dearborn, gave a public lecture on blasphemy and Islam entitled, “Mohammed Cartoons and Religious Images”

**Attendance:** 50

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**MES FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS**

**Majd Al-Mallah:**
- Led a group of students to Georgetown University for the National Model Arab League Conference. Students had the opportunity to meet with diplomats at the Qatari embassy, to make connections with student delegations from a diverse range of universities, participate in debate on a range of current issues. One of the students was selected for the competitive position of Chair of the Environmental Affairs Committee at the 2017 conference.

**David Alvarez:**
- Signed a contract with Seagull Books to translate *Une année considerable* (*A Significant Year*), a book-length travelogue by Moroccan jurist, writer, and former Cabinet Minister, Abdallah Saaf
- Submitted an encyclopedia entry entitled "The Strait of Gibraltar as Gateway to Hope and as Waterway to Hell" for *L'Encyclopédie des Migrants* (Rennes: L’Âge de la Tortue. Forthcoming 2016)

**Coeli Fitzpatrick:**
- Published an article, *Malala in Context* in the *Literature Criticism* series (Columbia, SC, Layman Poupard Publishing, LLC forthcoming 2016)

**Gamal Gasim:**
- Published several blogs on Huffington Post and Al-Jazeera English, including “Sudan’s 60 Years of Bitter Harvest”; “The Love Hate Relationship Between Sudan and the United States;” “Analysis: Beyond the fragile peace in Aden” and “Analysis: The battle for Taiz”
- Published a journal article, Patterson, D., Gasim, G. A., & Choi, J. (2015). The Political, Social, and Religious Attitudes of Muslim Americans. *Journal of Islamic Perspective and Culture, 1*(1)
James Goode:
- Chaired a panel on ISIS at the Middle East Studies Conference, Denver, November 2015
- Organized a panel at the conference of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations on US-Turkey Relations, Washington, DC, and presented a paper, “"Carter Administration and Lifting of Turkish Arms Embargo" (June 25, 2015).
- Organized digitization of Syrian collection at the Grand Rapids Public Library, (September 15, 2015 - December 15, 2015). This entailed arranging and overseeing the digitization of taped Syrian interviews from the collection of GRPL.
- Received the GVSU Faculty Internationalization Award

Chad Lingwood:

Sebastian Maisel:
- Published a book, Speed Up Your Arabic (New York: Routledge, 2015)
- Received a grant from Georgetown University in Doha and finished the field work for it
- Was interviewed by 60 Minutes about the Yazidi minorities in Iraq and Syria

Mark Schwarz:
Published several journal articles, including:
- Schwartz, Mark and David Hollander 2016 “The Uruk Expansion as Dynamic Process: A Reconstruction of Middle to Late Uruk Exchange Patterns From Bulk Stable Isotope Analyses of Bitumen Artifacts.” Journal of Archaeological Science Reports
- Contributed to several documentary programs, including “The Trojan Horse Mystery” (Aired January 18, 2015, SBS ONE, Australia); “Trojan Horse: The New Evidence” (Aired February 14, 2015, Channel 4, U.K.) and “Secrets of the Dead: The Real Trojan Horse” (Aired October 13, 2015, PBS, U.S.A.)
MES MINOR STUDENT AWARDS

- Christy Bectel: Christy was the recipient of a Boren scholarship to study Arabic in Jordan.

- Gabrielle Patti: Gabri was the recipient of student study trip to Qatar from the National Council on US-Arab relations.

  Note: Gabri also exhibited her photography of Oman at the Blue Wall Gallery and hosted a reception sponsored by Middle East Studies.

MES FACULTY MEETINGS

During the 2015-2016 year MES held two meetings, which were well-attended by our core faculty. Three core MES faculty were unavailable for the Winter 2016 meeting because they were on sabbatical or phased-retirement.

MES LOOKING FORWARD

- We will have a major speaker for the Michigan Model Arab League, and will bring 10 more students to Washington DC in 2016.

- 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 Qatar student study trip in November 2016.

- At the request of the National Council on US-Arab Relations, MES faculty are exploring the idea of a student project involving high school Model Arab League simulations.

- MES faculty are working on a renewing the membership of GVSU with the group Scholars at Risk (SAR). This important organization supports scholars from around the world who are at risk in their home countries. The faculty in the Middle East Studies program hope to engage with SAR by raising awareness and bringing faculty for lectures to the university.

- We will continue to partner with student groups on campus in order to coordinate events. Our student partner groups include Peace Means, Arab Culture Club and the Muslim Student Association.