

# Modern Languages

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## Bienvenue, Willkommen, Bienvenido

### Welcome to the Chair's Corner!

In this third issue of the Department of Modern Languages' newsletter here at Washburn University of Topeka, and after dodging my responsibility in the two previous issues, I am "forced" to write all of you, readers of these pages, a few welcoming words.

Our department is small, but highly dynamic and growing, with high quality students! As an example, one of our recent graduates, Josh King, is the recent Sibberson Award winner (this prestigious award distinguishes the best graduate in his class).

Another example of our dynamism is our faculty led study abroad programs: our students have been to France, Peru, the Dominican Republic, and most recently, Costa Rica (ecotourism paradise) as you will see in this issue.

Obviously, besides these programs led by a faculty member, we also offer a variety of exchange programs for those students who would love to go for a semester and fully embrace the linguistic and cultural experience.

In order to support our students, we help them financially with scholarships, so the students can concentrate on learning and living the cultural experience more in depth.

If you are a recent (or not so recent) graduate, make sure you remember us and your experience with us, and whenever you become rich, keep us in your thoughts to help us support the education and the study abroad experience you had!

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Go ahead, read this issue, and enjoy! And if you are not at Washburn anymore, but you are still in the area, remember you can always stop by my office and chat for a little bit.

Best regards,

*Miguel*



*Read the Spanish Version on page 6*

## Clermont-Ferrand: A Washburn Tradition

For over 20 years, students majoring in French have been able to study at the Université Blaise Pascal in Clermont-Ferrand, France. Two recent returnees, Rebecca Radziejewski and Kasie Kidney, share their personal experiences, and provide useful tips for future participants.

*Bonjour Rebecca, Salut Kasie!*

**Newsletter Editor:** *Could you please give us a short description of your study abroad program?*

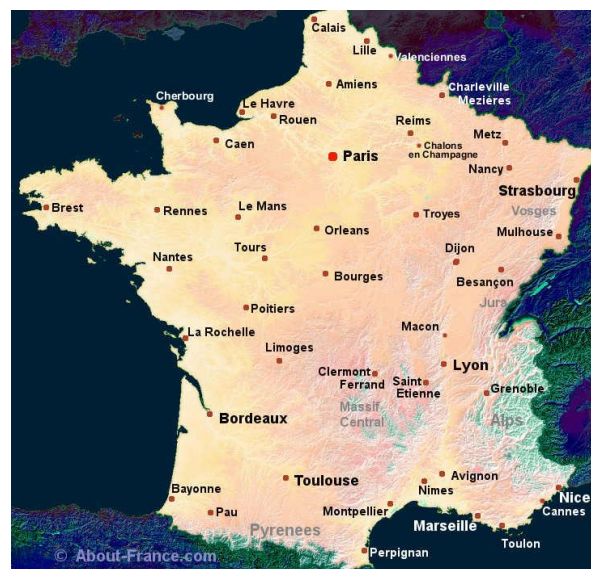
**Kasie:** I arrived in France in late August and arrived back home in mid January of 2011. I learned of the program through Washburn University and Dr. Courtney Sullivan was my advisor. Clermont-Ferrand, France has about the same population as Topeka, KS. I lived in a university residence hall called Phillipe Lebon, in a single bedroom and shared a kitchen with the floor, which consisted of 12 people. I took 12 credit hours through WU, and I followed an intensive French course through September in France. Starting in October I started following 5 different classes one day a week, each class being two and half hours long.

**Rebecca:** I lived in Clermont-Ferrand, France from August 2010 to February 2011 on a university exchange program between Washburn University and Université Blaise Pascal. I lived in a private room in university housing which was perfectly sized to my needs. I took the equivalent of 12 US course hours for credit in French, and followed an additional 11 hours of other languages simply for my own edification.

**N.E.:** *What were the highlights or strengths of your life abroad?*

**Rebecca:** Everything in the city within walking distance, effective and abundant public transit, prepackaged tiramisu at the grocery store, color-coded money for easy identification, small but efficient spaces, healthy and reasonable food portion sizes, being constantly surrounded by history, inexpensive but good quality wine, opportunities to meet interesting people from all over the world, etc, etc. The list is extensive.

**Kasie:** There were many highlights of my life abroad. The biggest accomplishment was that I was able to build my own life so far away from home. I was able to make a home with friends who became like family.



*Clermont-Ferrand, in the Auvergne region*

**N.E.:** *Did you find ways to adjust rapidly to your host culture, or did you have some difficulties you did not quite expect?*

**Kasie:** There are definitely difficulties that I ran into, that I could not have prepared myself for if I made a list of everything I could possibly think of before I made my trip, an example being, how to buy an apple through the checkout line! You may laugh, but I was very proud of myself, when I figured out how to accomplish this task, it was like I blended right in with the crowd.

Also the school system was quite a shock to me. It was surprisingly unorganized, but I still managed to make it through, this was quite an accomplishment within itself.

**Rebecca:** The primary difficulty I encountered was cultivating the ability to let things go and just relax. Upon my arrival, I was very stressed and felt overwhelmed by trying to establish myself in a new country – finish my visa process, set up bank accounts, procure insurance, enroll in classes, etc. The French are a fairly laid-back people, and they were just not as interested in processing my paperwork as I was. Once I adjusted to a less urgent mindset and just let things be, I'd overcome the biggest hurdle. And lowered my blood pressure.

Continued on pg. 4 >>

## Very Generous Benefactors

**Fifteen recipients** who have been awarded scholarships benefit from the generosity of benefactors who contribute to the Modern Language Study Abroad scholarship fund.

Thanks to the contributions made by Thelma Cox, Vernon French, Karen Gregg-Neilinger, William Guild, Jolee Houx, Robert & Simon Johnson, Paul Noble, Herbert Ragsdale, Jim & Carol Vogel, and Thomas & Carol Wright, in 2011 fifteen Washburn students received scholarships toward their study abroad experience.

This year, scholarship amounts range from \$500 dollars to \$6,000. The scholarship committee ranks applications based on criteria of merit and need. Merit includes for instance a student's GPA and quality of his letter of intent. Need considers the length and cost of the program selected, as well as the student's financial situation.

The faculty and staff at the department of Modern Languages are proud to advise and assist students in selecting, and preparing for study abroad opportunities, so they can fully benefit from them.

Dr. Gabi Lunte is currently mentoring two students who have chosen to better their knowledge of German, Kathryn Jackson and Shane Kennedy in Klagenfurt, Austria.

Cecilia Gonzáles-Rebeck, Jessica Kopp, Jennie Loucks, Brent Matile and Bridget Walter, all leaving in June 2011 for Costa Rica, through a program especially designed and directed by Georgina Tenny, also received scholarships.

Two students majoring in Spanish, Mary Deseck and Darrin Simmons, who will respectively study in Argentina and Spain, are grateful as well for the financial support they obtained.

Finally, four students in French will each discover interesting and diverse Francophone cultures as they travel and live in France and Canada. Tim Forster will study in Québec, while Bridget Bowers enrolled in a summer program at Lyon, and Jordan Ward, music major, will study French in Paris<sup>1</sup>.

Again, thank you to our wonderful benefactors and their generous financial support. And for those who would like to make a donation to the scholarship fund, please see the form on page 8.

<sup>1</sup> Read Ward's interview in the *Washburn Review*:  
<http://www.washburnreview.org/news/a-french-connection-1.2566600>



*Eleven smiling faces! Thanks to the generosity and thoughtfulness of our benefactors, fifteen students from Modern Languages can study and live abroad.*



## Clermont–Ferrand: A Washburn Tradition

continued from pg. 2



*Kasie Kidney, third from left and Rebecca Radziejewski, third from right.*

**N.E.:** *Could you share with us a funny or surprising moment from your stay abroad?*

**Rebecca:** It's small, but it made me laugh for days; part of the medical examination required for the visa called for a pulmonary radiograph. So a friend and I located the radiology office, and as we walked into the vacant waiting room, a man standing on the reception desk was painting the ceiling with white-out correctional fluid. Why? We'll never know.

**Kasie:** There were funny, scary, and surprising moments everyday when I was living abroad. Whenever I traveled with my friends we would always say to ourselves, "Would it be the worst thing if we got lost in Italy?... Nah!" However, we did make it to and from all of our destinations. I lived in the moment and tried to enjoy every bit of my stay in France.

**N.E.:** *Upon returning home, have you experienced a reverse culture shock?*

**Kasie:** I did experience a reverse culture shock, or at least some kind of shock. I'm not sure if I can describe what I went through, but it's hard to go back to your "normal" life once you've been through something so enormous. Or I may just be realizing life in general is really enormous, I have to take full advantage of it. I coped with my situation, because I really did not have another choice, but to keep moving forward.

### **Kasie, Rebecca, and Friends at a Game of Rugby!**

"This picture is near the beginning of my time in Clermont–Ferrand," explains Kasie, "and is taken with my newly made friends at a Rugby match in the city. ASM is the name of the team, and they were champions the previous year, and very important to the people of Auvergne (the region of France where Clermont is located). They also won the day this picture was taken."

<<I chose this picture, because it shows what was important to me on the trip, I'm stepping out into the French culture and exploring, I'm also making as many friends as I can, with as many people around the world as possible. Friends, are of course, very important to me. Another observation that could be made, is how similar people all over the world really are. Everyone likes to get together and watch really cute, buff, and toothless men beat the bejesus out of each other over a ball and for a winning score, while cheering at the top of their lungs."

**Rebecca:** Yes. When I came back, I was (unpleasantly) surprised by how huge and spread out everything is here, how little public transit exists, how frequently things are bought in bulk for no reason, and how often restaurant waiters interrupt you during your meal. Coping came with time, getting used to the way things are done here, and holding onto the vestiges of French culture that I can. Just because Wal-Mart exists doesn't mean I can't buy fresh bread every day; it's just less convenient here.

**N.E.:** *Has studying abroad changed you or your future plans?*

**Kasie:** Yes. I never dreamed in a million years that I would have had an opportunity like that. Studying abroad has shown me the world and has made me hungry for traveling. I'm very interested in improving my French to the furthest of my ability and using it in my future career, what that maybe, I am not sure. The knowledge that it has brought me, is that it is possible to accomplish the impossible.

**Rebecca:** I think studying abroad inevitably changes people. Being removed from your familiar surroundings forces you to rebuild your social world based on the most integral parts of yourself, which brings to light the absolute truths about your personality and beliefs. I still have no idea what I "want to be when I grow up," but I now know for certain that moving to Europe is another open door in a hallway of viable and welcome options for the future.

## Costa Rica Contest

And the winner is... students participating in the Costa Rica Study Abroad Program directed by Georgina Tenny were invited, upon their return, to submit essays and photos for publication in this issue of the departmental newsletter.

After reviewing all submissions, the committee decided to select one essay and one photo to be included here. Both contestants will also be offered a \$25 gift card to celebrate their success!

Essay category: the winner is "The Traveling Itch" by Cecilia Gonzales-Rebeck.

Photo category: the winner is "Pura Vida" by Kaitlyn Werst.



### *Pura Vida* by Kaitlyn Werst

In the summer of 2011 the Spanish Club took a study abroad trip to Costa Rica. This is a picture of me and two friends posing on a beautiful beach in Costa Rica. We chose to write "pura vida" in the sand because of the phrase's cultural significance in Costa Rica. "Pura Vida" is not only a popular phrase but a way of life. "Pura Vida" translates to "pure life" in English. It is a very positive expression and the Costa Ricans use it frequently (possibly 20 times a day). The phrase reminds me of the English phrases "loving life" and "life is good."

Costa Ricans have quite a positive outlook on life and they are also rumored to be the happiest people on Earth. I only spent two weeks in Costa Rica but I can see why people say that. Every Costa Rican I met was friendly and smiling. Who wouldn't be happy in a country with beautiful beaches, lively rainforests, an abundance of flora and fauna, and other cheerful people to share this amazing country with?

Lastly, this picture reminds me of the good friends I made and the awesome adventures we had together on the study abroad trip. From conversing with locals in Spanish and experiencing a new culture to zip-lining through a rainforest and swimming in a beautiful waterfall, I have so many fond memories with my new friends.

### *The Traveling Itch* by Cecilia Gonzales-Rebeck

*This summer I had the privilege of going to Costa Rica.* I experienced an exciting culture and greatly improved my Spanish language skills, but before I set out on my adventure, Washburn offered classes and preparatory seminars that helped me plan for the differences I might have encountered while out of the country.

One of the information sessions was a consultation with the nurse practitioner at the Washburn student health clinic. She provided a few pamphlets that contained pertinent information for the novice traveler and then sat down and discussed what I needed to do in preparation of the trip

and what was important to remember while in Costa Rica. The advice I received was very helpful because I stayed healthy and safe while having the time of my life. The only complaint I have is that there the nurse gave me no fair warning of the side effects you may suffer upon return!

Not even a week after arriving home and getting settled back in I began to suffer from a traveling itch accompanied by flashbacks. The traveling itch is similar to the kind that starts in the middle of you back (you know that one spot you can't quite reach) and slowly moves to other parts of you body, but instead it's a tingle of thought in the back of your mind and slowly takes over till you are doing everything you can to satisfy the itch with the next plane ticket or road trip. Though the itch is uncomfortable, it can be ignored from time to time... then the flashbacks start!

The colors, smells, flavors and sounds take over the senses and suddenly my eyes are closed and I'm reliving my trip through the vibrant shades of green, yellow, blue and red accompanied by the smell of coffee, rain and plantains frying, I begin to taste the sweet fruit juices, salty gallo pinto, and bitter coffee, to truly bring the experience back to life I start to hear water flowing, my hips start moving to the beat of a salsa and I'm back in Costa Rica!!

Thanks to Washburn and Costa Rica I now have no choice but to do what I can to satisfy my newfound need to explore and experience; I wouldn't trade it for anything!



## ¡Bienvenidos al rincón del director!:

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En este, nuestro tercer número del boletín del departamento de Lenguas Modernas de la Universidad Washburn de Topeka, y tras haber esquivado la responsabilidad en los dos primeros números, me veo "obligado" a ofrecerles unas palabras de bienvenida a vosotros, lectores y lectoras de esta página. Nuestro departamento es pequeño, pero altamente dinámico y está creciendo, con estudiantes de gran calidad. Como muestra, un botón: uno de nuestros graduados, Josh King, es el más reciente ganador del *Sibberson Award*, un premio que distingue al mejor graduado de su promoción.

Otra muestra de dinamismo son nuestros programas en el extranjero, guiados por alguno de mis colegas: nuestros estudiantes han ido a Francia, a Perú, a la República Dominicana, y más recientemente, como podréis comprobar en este número, a Costa Rica, paraíso de ecoturismo.

Obviamente, además de estos programas guiados por un profesor, también tenemos una gran variedad de programas de intercambio con otras universidades para estudiantes que quieren ir por un semestre y vivir a fondo la experiencia lingüística y cultural.

Para apoyar a todos estos estudiantes, ofrecemos una importante contribución financiera en forma de becas, de tal forma que el estudiante puede concentrarse mejor en los estudios y disfrutar más de la experiencia en sí sin preocuparse tanto por la parte económica.

Si te acabas de graduar (o ya lo hiciste hace un tiempito), no te olvides de nosotros y de tu experiencia en nuestro departamento, y cuando llegues a ser rico, acuérdate de nosotros y ayúdanos para que podamos ofrecerles a otros estudiantes la educación y las oportunidades de estudiar en el extranjero que tú has tenido.

¡Adelante, lee y disfruta de este boletín! Y si ya no eres un alumno de Washburn, pero estás por aquí, recuerda que siempre puedes pasar mi oficina de Miguel para charlar un poquito.

Un saludo,

*Miguel*

## Faculty News

**Two Sweet Sabbaticals...** during the summer 2011, Dr. Courtney Sullivan and Sophie Delahaye, who both received funding for their projects, spent time outside Kansas.

**Courtney Sullivan** travelled to Martinique and Guadeloupe, two overseas departments of France, in order to further her education and training as a professor of French language, literature, and culture.

She visited locations featured in novels that she teaches and filmed various locales with a Flip Video camera in order to complement her lectures on the history, culture and literature of the islands with brief video clips.

During her month-long stint, she scouted out two universities as potential study abroad possibilities for students majoring and minoring in French.

### *Sweet Sabbaticals:*

a program unique to Washburn University, offers faculty members summer grants to travel outside Kansas, and supports their teaching and research.

**Sophie Delahaye** enrolled in an intensive course on teaching French for Business taught by Jean-Luc Penfornis at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Paris (CCIP), France.

In addition, she attended the thirteenth International Congress for Eighteenth Century Studies (ISECS) held in Graz, Austria, where she presented her research paper on "Performing Knowledge in the Long 18<sup>th</sup> Century. How to Reconcile Past, Present and Future of the French Revolution on Stage."

### Modern Language Department Website:

<http://www.washburn.edu/cas/is/>

**Thank you to all of our contributors:** students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends of the Department of Modern Languages.

With special thanks to Randall Scott, WEA  
and Monique Robins, ML.

This newsletter will be published every summer.  
**We look forward to your comments.**

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*Dear Readers,*

*Many programs are offered and sponsored by the Department of Modern Languages: the Modern Languages Scholarship fund helps students who study abroad, and the Modern Languages Program fund provides support for many department priorities including: tutoring by and for students, language club activities, field trips, etc. All your gifts make a significant difference in the quality of education at Washburn.*

*Current and future students directly benefit from the services and opportunities to which you choose to contribute. In helping support our programs, you also shape our students' experience.*

*Your gift is appreciated at any level. Please help make a difference by designating your gift, and don't forget to fill out the information slip so we can better thank you for your support.*

*The Department of Modern Languages.*

Two simple ways to support students and programs in Modern Languages at Washburn:



**Online:** Gifts can be online made via the Washburn Endowment Association Website

Click on the following link: <https://www.wea.org/Giving/Give.asp?~=>

-In the **Donation Information** rubric, select **Donate to:** *College of Arts and Sciences*

-A drop down menu will appear, where you can select *Modern Languages*

-In the **Gift Detail** rubric, write whether you would like your gift to go to *Modern Languages Scholarship fund* or *Modern Languages Programs*.



**By Mail:** Please mail your gift to

Washburn Endowment Association  
1729 SW MacVicar Avenue  
Topeka, KS 66604

☐ **Enclosed is my gift of:** (please make check payable to Washburn Endowment Association)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$500    \_\_\_\_\_ \$100    \_\_\_\_\_ \$200    \_\_\_\_\_ \$50    \_\_\_\_\_ other

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