2013-2014 has been a busy year for International and Global Studies at UMF! One of the most innovative new developments this year is this newsletter, hopefully the first of many to come.

The IGS research assistants, Zhanna Ivanova and Johanna Oxholm, have worked hard this year, not only as editors of the newsletter, but also on various other projects, including the organization of numerous IGS events and a major overhaul of our website to be completed this summer.

Other IGS majors and alumni have also made important contributions to our program, including; Audrey Morin who made an incredible prezi presentation about the IGS program that we can use for years to come at UMF Open House and other events; Mary Beth Moyer (class of 2012) who participated in our first annual Peace Corps panel; and Divin Gatera who organized two events this spring – the Mandela Memorial during Black History Month in February, and Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide in April. In addition, the IGS Council that governs our program now includes two student representatives, Danielle Newman and Amanda Barrows. And this is just the tip of the iceberg!

After the long but enriching program review IGS underwent this year, I feel we have a clearer vision of how we plan to strengthen the IGS program, the only such program, as we learned, at a public liberal arts college in all of New England!

With our newly approved minor, we will undoubtedly continue to grow in the years to come. I look forward to seeing how each of you will make your own contribution to the IGS program as students, faculty, or alumni. It was a daunting challenge last fall to assume the leadership of IGS from Prof. Sylvie Charon, to whom we are all deeply indebted. But with the assistance of so many of you, we are off to a great start!

Linda Beck, IGS Director

< Photo: Peace Corps Senegal 1986
IGS Events Spring 2014

UMF Celebrates the Life of Nelson Mandela

On February 11, the anniversary of Nelson Mandela’s release from prison, UMF celebrated the life and achievements of the former President of South Africa. The event was organized by two of UMF’s African students, Divin Gatera (2018) from Rwanda, and John Ochira (2014) from South Sudan. With John serving as the Masters of Ceremonies, several members of the UMF community offered eulogies, including President Kate Foster who spoke of her personal experiences and emotions upon learning about Mandela’s release, having served as a Peace Corps volunteer in neighboring Swaziland. To a standing-room-only crowd, Prof. Clyde Mitchell conveyed his impressions of Mandela having grown up in Apartheid South Africa, after which Prof. Linda Beck, who teaches African politics at UMF, described the evolution of Mandela’s leadership from activist to statesman and the incredible lessons of tolerance and forgiveness that he left us. The audience was also treated to delicious South African dishes prepared by IGS majors and the UMF Fooding Club, including President Mandela’s favorite dessert, strawberry trifle.

UMF’s First “Annual” Peace Corps Panel

The IGS program and UMF Career Center co-sponsored with a Peace Corps panel on February 28, timed to coincide with the nation-wide celebration of the contribution that Peace Corps volunteers make to International cooperation and development.

Three Returned Peace Corps volunteers (RPCVs) working at UMF spoke at the panel: Prof. Peter Hardy who served in Kenya (pictured left); Prof. Linda Beck who was a volunteer in Senegal; and President Kate Foster who served in Swaziland. Mary Beth Moyer (2012), one of two IGS alumni about to embark on Peace Corps service, also spoke about the application process she had just completed and her preparations to go to Cameroon this summer. The panel was timed to coincide with a visit by the Peace Corps regional director, Rob Orton, who held a follow-up session for those UMF students interested in joining the Peace Corps.
IGS Students Immersed in the North Korean Culture

This spring’s University Forum was a series of events around “Encounters,” including a North Korean dinner put on by Conflict Kitchen, a Pittsburgh-based restaurant that only serves cuisine from countries with which the United States is at conflict. The IGS program sponsored the participation of IGS majors who feasted on delicious dishes from North Korea (photo right). After the meal there was a presentation about North Korean culture, politics, and the impact of the prolonged simmering conflict with the United States on North Koreans.

IGS Co-Sponsors Film on US Role in Rise of Ugandan Homophobia

In April, IGS co-sponsored with the Justice & Witness Committee of Old South Church a public viewing of the recently released documentary “God Loves Uganda.” Premiered at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival, the film explores connections between American evangelicalism and Uganda’s controversial Anti-Homosexuality Bill that was just signed into law in January of this year. The filmmakers follow a group of young American missionaries from the International House of Prayer along with Ugandan evangelical leaders and legislators who proposed making homosexual acts a capital crime punishable by death before “reducing” it to life imprisonment. Following the film, members of the UMF and Farmington community discussed the origins of the growing homophobia in Africa and what is being done to combat resulting human rights abuses including efforts by the Amnesty International chapter on campus.

Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide

Twenty years ago the world watched while yet another genocide was perpetrated for one hundred days in the Central African country of Rwanda. Like so many communities across the country and around the globe, UMF could not let the anniversary of this tragedy go by without acknowledging the tremendous loss but also the significant lessons gained from this tragedy. IGS major and Rwandan national, Divin Gatera (photo above) worked diligently to put together a program that would both remind and educate the UMF community about the Rwandan genocide. In addition to Divin’s personal story of how the genocide impacted his family and nation, both Vice President Celeste Branham and Prof. Linda Beck spoke about amazing feats of reconstruction and forgiveness witnessed in Rwandan society. As is tradition on the anniversary of a death in Rwanda, the large group gathered for this event enjoyed a sumptuous meal of African food.
Review of Multicultural Play “Veils”
by Emmaline Waldron

This March, IGS majors had a wonderful opportunity to attend “Veils,” a multicultural play by Tom Coash performed at the Portland Stage. Sponsored by the IGS program, I watched this fascinating play set in pre-Arab Spring Cairo with two other UMF students (photo right) accompanied by IGS Director Linda Beck. Although there were only two actors, the play managed to keep the entire audience captivated. The two characters were both Muslim college students though they differed greatly in their practice of Islam. One character, Intisar, was an African-American exchange student, who was extremely devout, symbolized by her wearing of a veil. The other character, Samar, was an Egyptian student who wore Western-style clothes and remained defiantly unveiled throughout the play, questioning it as a religious requirement or expression of devotion. Samar’s rebellious nature extended to her involvement in the protests that led to Egypt’s recent revolution in 2011.

Not only was this play performed excellently but the research the writer did to insure the accuracy of the play was astounding. I have known about the Arab Spring for some time and have been somewhat confident in my knowledge about it. However, this play taught me about the complexity of the issue which could never have been fully captured in the classroom. To understand the impact that veiling had on the lives of the two characters was something I never understood from a first-hand perspective, but only from sources such as CNN or Al-Jazeera, which have their own biases on veiling.

I strongly hope that there be more opportunities like this for IGS majors in the future and encourage all those who can to participate! It is truly an excellent way for an IGS major to experience and learn about the world without paying the price of a airline ticket.

IGS Events 2013-2014: A Recap

September:
* International Pot Luck
* Capstone Proposal Presentations

October:
* Saudi Woman Rights Activist, Manal al-Sharif

December
* Capstone Presentation & Holiday Banquet

February:
* Nelson Mandela Memorial
* Peace Corps Panel

March:
* “Veils” at Portland Stage
* North Korean “Conflict Kitchen” Dinner
* Panel on Teaching Diversity thru IGS

April:
* 20th Anniversary of Rwandan Genocide
* “God Loves Uganda” Film

May:
* Capstone Presentations & End of Year Banquet
IGS Study Abroad Experiences

Audrey Morin (2014), China

After studying abroad on the UMF exchange program with the Beijing University of Technology in Spring 2013, I came back to the United States with a passion to tell other students to take advantage of the wonderful opportunity to experience a new culture during their time at UMF. Our University is lucky to have direct programs with Universities in China, France, Argentina, and England. I don’t think that my UMF experience would have been complete without this experience because it was a change for me to grow, look at the world from a different perspective, and find a born-leader within myself. The challenges of a new culture completely transformed me into someone who is not afraid to dive into a difficult situation and end up successful. In my opinion, Beijing was a great location because it was different from the western world, providing more learning experiences. Because the language is also very different from English, it is rewarding to be able to study Chinese and is impressive on a resume. I would love for others to take a chance and have their own experience. It’s worth it!

Johanna Oxholm (2014), Costa Rica

I had a difficult time deciding where to study abroad. There were so many places I wanted to travel to but I knew I needed more Spanish credits. I ended up studying in San Jose, Costa Rica through a CIS program. As cliché as it sounds, studying in Costa Rica was one of the most amazing experiences in my life. Costa Ricans (“Ticos”) were eager to share their culture and show me typical Tico life. I lived with a great host family who let me tag along on outings with my host siblings, including familiar activities like an impromptu trip to the mall or McDonalds, while I also ventured into the rainforest that led to my interest in ecotourism. I hope to keep some of the laid-back Costa Rican pura vida (“pure life”) in my day-to-day life now that I am back in the US. I only wish the IGS program required students to study abroad more than once!
Study Abroad (cont.): Amanda Barrows (2014) Argentina & Quebec

As an IGS Major with a dual focus on Francophone (French-Speaking) and Latin American Studies, I opted to study abroad for two semesters: first on the UMF program in Cordoba, Argentina in Spring 2013, and then through the “National Exchange” program to Quebec, Canada during Fall 2013. From these experiences, I found that I was able to explore geographic, cultural and linguistic perspectives different from my own. Study abroad for me was a truly life-changing experience that enabled me to cultivate my passions and engage in meaningful research. The life-long friends and memories will, without a doubt, impact me for the rest of my life and have pointed me in the direction of peace studies as future career path.

Senior Capstone Presentations at IGS Banquets

For the first time, IGS had two banquets to celebrate their graduating seniors: one in December when Reggie Clark presented his capstone paper on Muslim minorities in France; and another in May when three graduating seniors presented their capstone projects.

Drawing on her travels to Vietnam and recent marriage to a Vietnamese national, Audrey Morin wrote her capstone paper about the socio-cultural transformations experienced by Vietnamese immigrants and subsequent generations. Also exploring issues related to immigration, Amanda Barrows drew on her research among francophone immigrants to Quebec while studying at the Universite de Sherbrooke. Finally, Johanna Oxholm wrote on Guinea Bissau’s narco-state, a research topic sparked by her studies abroad in Costa Rica, which is also threatened by a rise in drug trafficking.

After each set of presentations, IGS majors, faculty, and staff were treated to a banquet of delicious dishes from around the world made by various members of our community. Sarah Gould and Emmaline Waldron, two first-year students who had cooked up a storm all for all IGS events this year, were recognized for their many contributions to the program.

I am currently a Masters student in the Russian and East European Institute at Indiana University focusing on the former Yugoslavia. This summer, I will be interning as a Political Foreign Service Officer at the US Embassy for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in Sarajevo where I will assist in writing Congressionally mandated reports (e.g., Human Rights Report and Report on Trafficking in Persons) and draft Daily Activity Reports to be sent to the State Department in Washington, D.C. I will also meet with various officials and travel throughout the country giving talks at local universities. I also plan to take this opportunity to improve my fluency in Bosnian and related languages including Serbian, Croatian, and Montenegrin.

Over the summer, I will be conducting research in order to produce a diplomatic cable for use by the Embassy and State Department. The focus of my research is the effect of NATO and EU conditionality on Bosnia’s political culture. I will attempt to explain why BiH has failed to make political progress despite the infusion of substantial international resources devoted to anchoring stability in this divided country. After my internship in Sarajevo, I will moving to Berlin where I received funding to conduct research for my Masters thesis. This internship and research scholarship are wonderful opportunities to work toward my ultimate career goal of becoming a Foreign Service Officer for the State Department.

Haley Callahan (2013), From Open Learning Exchange to SIT

At the beginning of 2014, I started a new position with Open Learning Exchange (OLE) as a Global Programs intern. OLE is a 501(C3) social benefit organization (US tax code reference to an apolitical group not involved in lobbying) that works towards improving the quality of universal education by providing hardware and an open resource library for those in need. We have programs all over the world from Mexico to Somali refugee camps in Kenya.

As an intern I am responsible for uploading sources onto our open source library system, updating social media, assisting with grant writing, and many other hats as I work with a small team of motivated individuals. Although the position is unpaid, I am learning more than I could ever ask about the field that I plan to enter after graduate school.

I have also recently been accepted into the Intercultural Services program at the School for International Training (SIT) in Brattleboro, VT. The program focuses on leadership and management skills. As it is self-designed, I have the ability to pick courses from other majors such as Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Development. It is a two-year program, the first of which is spent in Brattleboro; the second is a field practicum either in the US or abroad. I am excited to start this new chapter of my life and hope to use the experience to gain a position at a social benefit organization operating in Asia where I did a studied in Beijing while at UMF.
IGS Faculty Profiles:

Dr. Clint Bruce, Assistant Prof of French

Why did you choose to come to UMF?
“The proximity to Canada was extremely attractive to me since I have a lot of contacts there. I want to use those contacts to help improve the French experience at UMF. UMF’s welcoming colleagues, strong focus on teaching, and large percentage of first-generation college students made the difference.”

What are your interests in IGS?
“My international interests related to literature and broader cultural transfers involve what is known as the “Francophone Atlantic World” or the transatlantic space of contact resulting from colonization of the Americas, specifically, interactions between France, Haiti and Louisiana. I also study the Acadian culture of the Canadian Maritimes right next door to Maine in the context of French-speaking Canada.”

Why should students take advantage of UMF’s IGS program?
“IGS opens up a world of possibilities. For me, that means two things. First, students can shape their education by learning about other parts of the world and our relationship to them through coursework, language study, and international exchange. Second, since IGS involves combining disciplines, what you can do with an IGS major has no limits.”

Ms. Hiromi Hirata, Visiting Professor of Japanese

Why did you choose to come to UMF?
“I applied to the NPO group called “ALLEX” – Alliance for Language Learning and Educational Exchange. They proposed a match with UMF! I was really interested in cross-cultural exchange, so I thought it was a great opportunity to join the program so I could teach and study in the U.S. In general, universities require participants in the ALLEX program to teach only language classes, but UMF offered opportunities to teach not only Japanese language courses but also a Japanese culture course. I thought it would be a wonderful experience and I accepted the offer.”

What are your interests in International & Global Studies?
I am interested in cultural differences. Although the world is getting smaller, there is still a lot of misunderstanding between peoples and their cultures. I would love to help foster wide-ranging understanding of Japanese culture and society. I am also interested in learning about American culture. Compared to Japan, I feel people here are easy to talk to. When I walk down the street, people smile and say hi. Sometimes in cafes, people next to me start talking to me. We rarely talk to strangers in Japan. When we call someone, we use family names plus san (like the title Mr. or Ms.). However, people here tend to use their first names with each other, even professors. We usually call them “Family Name plus Sensee,” for teachers, professors, doctors etc. I still feel nervous when I call someone older than me by his or her first name. I would love to keep learning and teaching cultural differences.
IGS Creates a New Minor and Seeks to Expand IGS Double Majors

In order to encourage UMF students, particularly our future educators, to have a broader international perspective and deeper understanding of global issues, the IGS Council decided to create a new IGS Minor. The Committee on Academic Programs approved the new minor, which will appear in the 2014-15 catalogue as follows: Students minoring in IGS are required to take courses in at least two disciplines, and at least two courses in their minor must be above 100 level. IGS minors are encouraged to study overseas either through a travel course or semester abroad.

INS 100 Intro to IGS 4 Credits
3 IGS cross-listed courses 12 Credits
1 Foreign Language* 4 Credits
Total Courses Required: 20 Credits

* Students who have completed two years of foreign language study in high school may take another language course to fulfill the language requirement or alternatively opt for an IGS course in another discipline. Students cannot apply toward the minor any credits they receive due to their performance on a foreign language placement exam though they may be counted as electives toward graduation credit requirements.

In addition to the new minor, the IGS Council also intends to promote double-majoring in IGS, which can readily be combined with majors such as political science, business economics, or even environmental science to enhance their liberal arts background and career opportunities in fields as diverse as international finance and climate science.

IGS Faculty 2013-2014

Anthropology/Sociology:
Gaelyn Augillar, Nicole Kellett

Business/Economics:
John Messier, Shahrokh Waleck Dalpour

Community Health:
Alireza Geshnizjani

French:
Clint Bruce, Sylvie Charron

Geography:
Brad Dearden, Cathleen McAnney

History:
Alison Hepler, Anne Marie Wolf

Japanese:
Hiromi Hirata

Political Science:
Linda Beck, Scott Erb

Sound, Performance, Visual Arts:
Gustavo Augillar, Steve Pane

Spanish:
Linda Britt, Marisela Funes
ANT 275S: Gender, Development and Globalization
FRE 101: Elementary French I
FRE 102: Elementary French II
FRE 201: Intermediate French
FRE 202: Readings and Composition
GEO 214S: Asia - Peoples & Environments
HTY 212S: Renaissance and Reformation
HTY 261S: History of Mexico
HTY 262S Undeclared Wars
HTY 277S: Women in Pre-Modern Europe
INS 100: Intro to IGS
INS 400/POS440: IGS Capstone
POS 336S: Globalization and International Political Economy
SPA 101: Elementary Spanish I
SPA 102: Elementary Spanish II
SPA 201: Intermediate Spanish
SPA 206: Oral Communication & Culture