A Message from the Chair

This has already been a busy year for the department. During the fall semester we completed work on the courses that will be available to students through Pathways and also developed several new courses in the process.

Our proposals for certificates in translation and interpretation were approved by John Jay College and by CUNY and are now in Albany awaiting approval by the State Education Department. In the meantime, some of the new courses were offered in the fall semester with good enrollments. A photograph of some of the students, along with program coordinator Prof. Aída Martínez-Gómez Gómez, appears on page 5.

The department co-sponsored a conference on “Mexican Itineraries for the Twenty-First Century: (Re)locating Literature, Culture and the Nation” at the CUNY Graduate Center (see page 3) and also co-sponsored two “Legacies of Mass Atrocities” programs sponsored by the Historical Memory Project and the National Endowment for the Humanities for which Prof. Aída Martínez-Gómez Gómez acted as interpreter (see page 4).

In December the chair attended a program in Spain sponsored by Eduspaña where she explored potential partnership opportunities with universities in Madrid, Málaga, Salamanca, and Valladolid.

In addition, the department is in the exploratory planning stages for possibly co-sponsoring an international scholarly congress for 2015 in conjunction with the Instituto Internacional de Literature Iberoamericana. Founded in Mexico City in 1938, it publishes Revista Iberoamericana and is the largest association of its kind in North America.

Randy Sosa
Awarded Soto Scholarship

The department is pleased to announce that Randy Sosa has been awarded The Juan A. Soto Scholarship. The scholarship was established in 2004 by Prof. Liliana Soto-Fernández of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures in honor of her father. It is given each year to a student who excels in Spanish. Mr. Sosa received the award in May.

Mr. Sosa lives in Astoria. He majored in Public Administration at John Jay College and completed a minor in Spanish. He graduated at the spring 2012 commencement.

John Jay College president Jeremy Travis (left), award recipient Randy Sosa (center), and Prof. Liliana Soto-Fernández (right).
Students Study Calligraphy

Students in Prof. Yen-ling Yeh’s Chinese 101, 102, and 290 classes attended a calligraphy exhibition and workshop at the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office on 42nd Street in Manhattan. Arranged by Prof. Yeh, the students toured the exhibition on October 4, learned about Chinese culture and calligraphy as an art form, and also had a hands-on experience creating Chinese calligraphy.

Prof. Yeh explains some of the finer points of the exhibition to the students.

Students exhibit their writing skills.

Students practice their own calligraphy.

Exhibiting creative calligraphy.

Language Lab Organizing “Conversation Tables”

During Spring 2013 Ms. Caroline O’Donnell, director of the Language Lab, plans to begin organizing “Conversation Tables” to offer students an opportunity to practice the language they are studying in an informal setting among peers. The tables would be student-focused on what participants found most helpful. Short films or other media could be used to stimulate discussions, as could current news or other topics of interest to students. The pilot program is planned to be offered along with Prof. Marlenys Villamar’s Spanish course. The tables would meet for an hour every week or two and, if successful, will be expanded to other classes and languages in succeeding semesters.
Silvia G. Dapía has been appointed to the doctoral faculty of The CUNY Graduate School and University Center’s Ph.D. Program in Hispanic & Luso-Brazilian Literatures & Languages. In December she attended a program in Spain sponsored by Eduespaña where she explored potential partnership opportunities with universities in Madrid, Málaga, Salamanca, and Valladolid. In January she attended the annual conference of the American Historical Association in New Orleans, Louisiana, which featured a large number of Latin American-oriented presentations and book exhibits.

Aída Martínez-Gómez served as interpreter for “Legacies of Mass Atrocities: Sexual Violence Against Women in Guatemala,” a live webcast on November 7, and also for “Legacies of Mass Atrocities: The Quest for Justice for the Disappeared in Argentina” on December 5. Both of these activities were sponsored by The Historical Memory Project and Queensboro Community College-CUNY and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Liliana Soto-Fernández was honored by the Hispanic Heritage Student Achievement Awards Committee at Rockland Community College-SUNY for her “Outstanding Leadership and Community Service” to the Hispanic community.

Marlenys de la C. Villamar, a John Jay instructor of Spanish, read a paper at the First Course for Teachers of Spanish as a foreign language organized by the Instituto Cervantes in New York.

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures co-sponsored “Mexican Itineraries for the Twenty-First Century: (Re)locating Literature, Culture and the Nation.” This was a conference organized by the Program in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages at the CUNY Graduate Center.
The Department co-sponsored the “Legacies of Mass Atrocities: The Quest for Justice for the Disappeared in Argentina,” at John Jay College. The event was sponsored by the Historical Memory Project and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Presenters were Judge Carlos Rozanski, who presided over the Argentine genocide trials, and Nora Morales de Cortiñas, a founding member of the Association of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, a group dedicated to obtaining information about and justice for the disappeared during the military dictatorship in Argentina in the 1970s.

From left, Nina Schneider, Visiting Scholar at Columbia University; Aída Martínez-Gómez Gómez, interpreter; Nora Morales de Cortiñas; Judge Carlos Rozanski.

The Department co-sponsored “Legacies of Mass Atrocities: Sexual Violence Against Women in Guatemala” on November 7. The photo at the right shows Ms. Sonja Perkic-Kremp who received the 2003 Human Rights Prize from Austria for her work in the area of Human Rights in Guatemala, Dr. Marcia Esparza who founded the Historical Memory Project for documenting state violence in Latin America and has worked with the United Nations-sponsored Truth Commission in Guatemala, Dr. Kyoo Lee, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at John Jay, and Dr. Aída Martínez-Gómez Gómez, Assistant Professor of Spanish at John Jay, who served as the official interpreter.

From left, Nina Schneider, Visiting Scholar at Columbia University; Aída Martínez-Gómez Gómez, interpreter; Nora Morales de Cortiñas; Judge Carlos Rozanski.

Sexual Violence Against Women in Guatemala
As the proposals for the new Certificates in Legal Translation and/or Legal Interpretation wind their way through the formal approval process, some students are taking their first steps in their translator training. After a lot of hard work and quite some fun, students in SPA 230: Translating I built the foundations for what we all expect to be very successful careers. Congratulations! Coordinator of the program is Prof. Aída Martínez-Gómez Gómez.

**Modern Languages and Literatures Club**

Students interested in joining the new department Languages and Literatures Club should contact Prof. Liliana Soto-Fernández, the faculty advisor, at lsfernandez@jjay.cuny.edu. The club will sponsor foreign films, experiencing ethnic foods, and other cultural events to be determined by the students.

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