Dear Members and Friends of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL), Greetings from Macau! It is a great honor to serve as your president in these interesting and challenging times. Now more than ever, I am deeply impressed by NCOLCTL’s close interaction among members and shared sense of mission and solidarity for teaching less commonly taught languages (LCTLS). I am especially inspired by this organization’s strong commitment to “shared solutions to common problems” and to bringing together organizations and teachers of LCTLS across the country. I would like to take a moment to express my sincere thanks to NCOLCTL members, the Executive Board, Secretariat, and member organizations for making this an extraordinary year to explore new opportunities and meet new challenges. During the past two years as vice president and now as president of the Council, I have been fortunate to work with a group of extremely talented and dedicated individuals who have been most helpful to me in understanding the history and growth of the Council while achieving its objectives. I am deeply indebted to every one of them for their guidance and support, and I look forward to another fruitful year ahead.

Since its inception in 1988, the Council has set a clear goal to build long-lasting national capacity for the study of LCTLS. The Council’s objectives then included: a. the creation of an LCTL field to develop solutions to common problems; b. the creation of the CouncilNet website for sharing information among LCTL professionals; and c. the convening of a national annual NCOLCTL conference to present new information and continue the process of gaining insights from members.

Eighteen years later, all of these objectives have come to fruition. Due to the hard work and dedication of all my predecessors, current board members, and numerous council members, many of the original objectives have expanded into directions that significantly contribute to the field of LCTL. Additionally, these contributions have also presented new ideas and developments in other fields. Within a relatively short period of time, LCTL has become an established field recognized by the fields of foreign language education and second language acquisition. With its own publications and presence, the field of LCTL offers unique perspectives on second language learning, research methodology, and teaching practices. As the LCTL field has grown over the years, the Council has also grown into a thriving professional organization with an Executive Board, Secretariat, over 18 member organizations, and close to 200 individual memberships.
To meet the challenges brought about by an expanding field, NCOLCTL has expanded development and networking opportunities to teachers through CouncilNet. Through years of hard work and dedication, the Secretariat established this medium for Council members to communicate on critical issues and share information about the field of LCTL. With support from a United States Department of Education (DOE) grant, NCOLCTL will soon be able to offer through CouncilNet online professional development courses to NCOLCTL members free of charge. This new service will help many LCTL teachers further develop their professional skills and possibly use the courses for obtaining teaching certifications.

As NCOLCTL continues to grow, the Council has been successful in attracting high-level LCTL professionals to participate in its annual NCOLCTL conference in Madison, Wisconsin. Each year since 2004, the conference invites numerous distinguished speakers who are renowned national leaders and policy makers in language education. Each year, the Council also sponsors 120-160 panel presentations, colloquia and poster sessions. As NCOLCTL’s Executive Director Antonia Schleicher wrote in her recent conference report, “The NCOLCTL conference remains a substantial forum for the sharing of successes and challenges in the field of LCTLS. Many attendees expressed gratitude for the chance to share information about professional issues in LCTLS, especially matters of standards and assessment, the STARTALK program, and others.” For this year’s annual NCOLCTL conference, we have received another record high number of quality proposals. As a result, we were able to put together a very strong conference program for our members.

As these developments at NCOLCTL show, the field of LCTL today is more established, more mature, and more sustainable than ever before. In a speech delivered at the plenary session of the California Language Teachers’ Association Conference in 2007, educator Nicole Naditz narrated an exemplary tale about the current state of LCTLS. She talked about how one day she visited monster.com and searched for jobs in the U.S. that required LCTLS skills such as Chinese, Japanese, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Ukrainian, Thai, Tagalog or Russian. Her search resulted in 2,400 job openings that required skills in LCTLS. Her story shows that while other jobs are being reduced or even erased, jobs that require foreign language skills are still on the rise. This is just another indication of the opportunities for growth and expansion in our field. We must take advantage of these opportunities to further advocate the importance of the field of LCTL and its presence on the national map. Languages really do “make a difference,” especially an LCTL language.

On the other hand, our economy is experiencing an unprecedented downturn. Economic uncertainty has impacted educators at all levels. Judging from what has happened in the past, less commonly taught languages are likely to be affected first by economic difficulties. NCOLCTL can also be affected by a loss of funding and reduction in supporting budgets. We need to recognize these challenges and work together to strategize the most effective measures to help our field sustain and thrive. For this reason, I believe that we must actively engage ourselves to do the following in the next year and over the next few years:

1. Continue to attract more LCTL organizations and individuals to join NCOLCTL, and encourage more LCTL educators to attend the annual NCOLCTL conference to share common concerns and find common solutions. We hope to implement membership campaigns in the coming year to further expand our membership base and strengthen our networks and alliances.
2. Continue to find innovative ways to voice LCTL needs and heighten the LCTL presence at the national level. We must use our current contacts and resources to push for more representation at the national level. This includes impacting national policy issues for LCTLS. We also need to use every opportunity to share our products, teaching materials and research results with other fields. We must also reach out to other fields and organizations for support and help.
3. Continue to search for creative ways to become financially self-sufficient. Currently we rely on several funding sources to cover the Council’s expenses. This year, the Executive Board formed a committee to look into other possible sources of funding and income.
4. Continue to develop and offer professional development opportunities in the area of LCTL research and pedagogy. For the convenience of our members and member organizations, these opportunities can be online courses or face-to-face workshop offered before the conference. It is our goal to contribute to the field by offering professional training opportunities for all LCTL teachers. In this way, LCTL teachers can be more competitive and sustainable. For example, this year a proposal was sent to STARTALK to offer teacher development opportunities for teachers of Swahili language.
5. Continue to encourage LCTL-related research such as LCTL acquisition, professional standards, LCTL-related pedagogical materials, and assessment tools. Only when a field generates its own research will the field survive and advance.

Finally, I would like to conclude by encouraging us all to unite in the goal of building an ever-stronger NCOLCTL over this next year and for many years to come. I look forward to working with you in the years ahead and seeing you in Madison this April!

With best wishes,

Hong Gang Jin, President, NCOLCTL

hjin@hamilton.edu
2008: A Big Year for Japanese

The past year has seen several milestones for the Japanese language field in the United States. The first Advanced Placement (AP) Japanese Language and Culture Tests were administered nationwide in May 2007 and May 2008; despite problems encountered at many schools with the web-administered exam (the first in the College Board’s history), almost 1,500 high school students of Japanese sat for the 2007 exam, and the results were very encouraging for the field. The curve of scores on the exam followed the pattern that is considered standard for such exams, and a comparative analysis of the results for students who have some family background in the language as against students who began learning Japanese as a foreign language show that there is no skewing of the test in favor of or against either of the two groups. Even more encouraging was the comparability of the results for the AP test-takers with the performance of second-year college students.

The AP Japanese Language and Culture AP Test has been substantially revised for the second and third years of administration in May 2008 and May 2009, and the field is looking forward to seeing how colleges and universities evaluate the students who took AP courses and sat for the exam. A new era in collaboration between the pre-college and post-secondary level may be on the way!

The results of the Modern Language Association’s 2006 survey of foreign language enrollments at the college level (a survey conducted every four years) were electrifying for all the LCTLs. The latest data showed that Japanese enrollments are still strong. While not showing the dramatic increases of Arabic and Chinese, like other Asian languages, Japanese continues to attract strong student interest: enrollments were up 27.5% over those in the MLA’s 2002 survey. Even more striking was the finding that a much larger percentage of students who begin the study of Japanese are continuing beyond the elementary level, enrolling in third- and four-year courses and beyond. Pre-college enrollments, which are tracked by the Japan Foundation in a triennial survey, declined somewhat in the most recent data (also from 2006), but interest in Japanese popular culture, trends in contemporary society, the arts, and history continues to motivate large numbers of students in American high schools and colleges.

The Alliance of Associations of Teachers of Japanese and its two constituent organizations, ATJ (Association of Teachers of Japanese, with 900 members who teach mostly at the college level) and NCJLT (National Council of Japanese Language Teachers, with 700 members who teach mostly at the K-12 level) plan and conduct a number of activities to serve teachers in the field. Both ATJ and NCJLT hold national-level annual meetings with opportunities for teachers and researchers to present their findings on a national stage. The ATJ’s annual Seminar was held in Atlanta in April 2008; and NCJLT sponsored several dozen sessions at the ACTFL (American Council on the teaching of Foreign Languages) conference in Orlando in November. NCJLT made its presence at the ACTFL conference felt with a special section of the exhibit hall and a series of demonstrations and performances by member teachers and their students.

ATJ continues to administer the Bridging Scholarship program, which offers one hundred scholarships annually to American undergraduates who study abroad in Japan for a semester or a year. Since 1999 this program has supported almost 900 students in their study abroad in Japan.

ATJ and NCJLT have begun to move toward a restructuring of the field-wide organizations, looking toward merging their memberships and administrations in the interest of efficiency and efficacy. The process will take time and care to complete, but the leaders of both groups have expressed the desire to proceed toward a single national organization for Japanese language educators by 2010.

While Japanese is no longer considered a “critical language” by most sectors of the U.S. government, and therefore is not eligible for the levels of funding support that were available in the 1980s and 1990s, the field continues to develop programs for teachers and students and to seek resources for those programs.

The Alliance, which sponsors professional development workshops and institutes for teachers, has launched a program of online courses for Japanese language teachers, collectively called JOINT (Japanese Online Instruction Network for Teachers). The first course, which was offered in September 2008 and again in January 2009, was “Content-Based Instruction for Teaching Advanced Japanese.” The enrollees were both native-speaking and non-native-speaking teachers, and both K-12 and college-level teachers. The course used interactive Web 2.0 technologies for interaction and collaborative work among the participants and virtual classroom technology for online discussions; this hybrid model for distance learning was highly successful in involving and retaining the interest of the teachers who enrolled. Four new courses are being developed for delivery in 2009: Assessment, Basic Methods for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Lan.
guage, Teaching Culture and Language, and Advanced Reading for Non-Native-Speaking Teachers. The Alliance also hopes to collaborate with NCOLCTL and the University of Wisconsin to adapt and use with Japanese teachers the courses developed for the National Online LCTL Teacher Training Initiative.

For information on the above-described programs in the Japanese field, as well as links to many other resources, please visit http://www.colorado.edu/ealc/atj/ this website is the gateway to the Japanese language education field.

Susan Schmidt
Executive Director, AATJ

LSU SUMMER SWAAHILIL SAFARI:
GETTING AN “EMIC” GLIMPSE OF “AFRICA”

Foreign language teaching and learning, and/or acquisition, linguists and language education experts generally agree, is ideally best conducted in situ, by total immersion in the language and culture of the new language. Swahili language teaching and learning is no exception to this ideal. This is why I personally am quite passionate about the Swahili Safari to Tanzania. Moreover, as social learning theory stipulates, that people learn from observing (and, I would add, emulating) other people. By definition, such observations and emulation, take place in a social setting. Indeed, in this regard, Lave and Wenger (1991) maintain that “learning involves participation in communities of practitioners.” Yet, university curricula and/or course programs, be that in the USA or anywhere else, are normally so organized and conducted as to render this ideal of situated, and, indeed, experiential learning, by and large, just that, an ideal. For, various course programs, foreign language programs included, do normally have to be offered, i.e. taught and learned, at the respective campuses of the universities that offer them. It should be noted, however, that open universities and other long distance teaching and learning institutions, such as correspondence institutions, may be an exception to this norm.

Now, in order to attain the ideal of situated learning, whereby learning becomes, so to speak, a process of social participation in communities of practitioners, many universities in the world, in general, and in the USA, in particular, including Louisiana State University (LSU) have devised and operate study abroad programs, usually, in the Summer Semester or Quarter. The LSU Summer Swahili Safari to East Africa, specifically, to Tanzania, is one such program. Organized and operated under the aegis of LSU Office of International Studies, Academic Programs Abroad, it is designed, in particular, to provide the participants an intensive course in Swahili language and culture, while, in general, also giving them the rare, if much-needed, “emic,” that is an insider’s glimpse of ‘Africa.’ It is a chance to see Africa, or a part of Africa, to be exact, from an African perspective, that is, of seeing Africa “through African eyes,” as Clarke (1988, 1991, 2000) would aptly put it. The program is bifurcated: one part, dubbed Eco-Tourism is meant mainly for LSU Faculty, Senior Administrative Staff, and members of the community. This part is designed to traverse, Tanzania’s Northern tourist circuit and Zanzibar. It is a two-week program. During which, Faculty, Senior Administrative Staff, community members, and, possibly, even parents, can learn alongside their children and/or protégés. The other part is the LSU Summer Swahili Safari proper. It is specifically, and exclusively, for students. It provides them six weeks of intensive, total immersion, study of Swahili language and culture. A purposely inbuilt major component of this part is home-stay, whereby students get to live in the homes of carefully selected University of Dar-Es-Salaam Faculty and Senior Administrative Staff, who have acknowledged experience in hosting foreign students. In that way, our students get to learn Kiswahili, as they live and experience Swahili culture and way of life from an insider’s, or ‘emic’ perspective. In this mode of experiential learning, it is hoped, experience itself becomes the source of learning and development, a` la Kolb (1984), en route to acquiring proficiency in Swahili language and culture.

All considered, however, study abroad programs do have plenty of possibilities and challenges. The challenges include culture shock, possibility of attracting tropical diseases, “where there is no doctor!” or medical facilities are not up to ‘normal’ standard; the possibility of sexual harassment, maybe not so viewed or interpreted over there, and so on, and so forth. Yet, the possibilities, which far outweigh the challenges, are vast, innumerable and incalculable, e.g. a highly enhanced speed of language acquisition and culture learning, and/or appreciation of foreign culture, and attendant reciprocity, mutual respect and mutual understanding between peoples. Needless to say, mutual understanding and appreciation affirm that sense of community which is a must in the global village that we live in today.

Mwalimu Deogratias Tungaraza
A STANDARD REPORTING SYSTEM FOR EAST ASIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

NATIONAL EAST ASIAN LANGUAGES RESOURCE CENTER AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

This web-based resource is the product of a joint project by the National East Asian Languages Resource Center, the East Asian Studies Center at The Ohio State University, the East Asian Studies Program at Cornell University, the Asian/Pacific Studies Institute at Duke University, and East Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii, with the sponsorship of a U.S. Department of Education Title VI grant. Its aim is to develop and make available user-friendly reporting procedures for institutions supporting extensive programs in East Asian languages, so that the features (levels, types of instruction, outcomes, etc.) of programs can be clearly stated in a set of common terms and categories. A task force from the above institutions was formed and has been working on this project in videoconference, as well as at our respective institutions.

The website so far: We have worked up a standard terminology for reporting program resources such as hours of instruction, categories of instructors, levels of instruction, identifying assessment instruments for each language, and reporting the language gains at different stages of the programs.

Then we designed templates for each of these categories and designed a website for entering and archiving data. The data in the system are most broadly classified in terms of their level of accessibility and security: (1) public, (2) member institutions only, and (3) reporting institution only. The categories and criteria used in the reporting system to describe a course, sequence of courses, or programs are institution-neutral. This makes it simple to compare different schools and see, for example, at what point a student might want to transfer, how far s/he could continue to study the language after transferring, or when and how study abroad might fit into that plan. So far, data describing the East Asian language programs at Cornell University, Duke University and The Ohio State University have been collected. Different kinds of reports can be produced according to the level of accessibility and security that is used. The report-generating parts of the website are still under development.

We expect that once established, this system will serve its users’ needs by enhancing program research, facilitating course exchanges and student transfers, increasing inter-institution communication on East Asian languages as second languages, and develop a national profile for East Asian language instructional capacity. The reporting system will be useful to department chairpersons, program center directors, and program coordinators or teachers seeking data to help justify innovations in their programs. When writing a grant proposal, conducting a program review, or bringing administrators up to date on East Asian language instruction around the country, data from programs at peer institutions can help clarify differences and similarities across programs, in little or considerable detail, as needed. Requests for new faculty lines or proposed curriculum expansions, for example, can be backed up by citing a range of information collected by this reporting system. Individuals applying for grant funding should also be able to find, quickly and easily, data to suit their needs. Administrators, educators and advisors are by no means the only likely users of this system. News organizations, the general public, students looking to learn an East Asian language, school administrators, education researchers, market analysts, grant proposal writers and reviewers, and policy makers alike should find it a ready source of the information that they need.

The website is also intended to become a site where East Asian language programs can report annually, by updating their own profile, to all other participating institutions. When an institution posts a report that describes a program or even part of it, it contributes to establishing a national profile for East Asian language instructional capacity.

Joining the EAL2share reporting system allows an institution to contribute and gain maximum benefit from the system’s features. Each member institution can build and archive a profile of its own language programs, while also gaining maximum access to similar profiles of other programs, posted by other members. To check out the site and its features (some of which remain under construction), please visit: http://eal2share.com

To become a member institution, please contact the webmaster at eastasia@osu.edu by email or at 614-688-3080 by phone. After creating an account, the user will have access to the data of other institutions in this system.
A large group of Iranian immigrants, spread around the world, on a daily basis, face the great challenge of preserving their mother tongue and native culture in the host society.

It is an undeniable fact that these families, while trying to make sense of the confused cultural boundaries they experience, find themselves in the urgent need to communicate and negotiate their way in the new society. To fulfill this need, learning the dominant language becomes vital and by so doing, transmitting their knowledge of their mother tongue can easily become secondary. In societies where the term “different” is used to politely express distances and/or dislike, even older immigrants find “assimilation” a much more convenient solution than “coexistence”. In such situations the language is the first to be gone in the many tumultuous cyclones of immigration. Although the difficulties we face as immigrants are nothing but facts, preservation of our mother tongue and native culture lies between our own hands.

Children, who left Iran at a very young age and the second generation born in host societies, can be divided in many groups: The ones who do not know any Persian. They speak in English with their parents. Another group do know Persian however speak colloquial language and often reproduce what they have heard and not always correctly. The Pranglish (Persian-English) speakers who mix Persian and English or Persian with the language of their host society.

Groups, who are exposed only to Persian, as their parents, on the one hand are not familiar with the host society language and on the other hand their knowledge of Persian language is intuitive. The Persian used by this group serves the daily and practical uses. I have come in contact with many from this group among my university students who speak Persian but do not know the writing system.

The ones who left Iran at an older age find themselves better equipped to face this challenge, in particular if they continue to read and write in this beautiful and rich language following progressively challenging texts. The difficulties emerge when younger Iranians or the second generation find themselves caught between the family means of communications and those of the host society. I am using the term “means of communication” in lieu of the language as people use language only as one of these means. A larger picture offers many cultural means as music, painting, literature, customs etc.

In preserving the mother tongue and the cultural heritage, a different approach is in order to address the needs of each of the above groups. Taking into consideration that the language acquisition ability of children heightens in early ages, our responsibility begins very early. Instances of four year olds speaking two or more languages, although not very common, prove the possibility of learning many languages at the same time at an early age. Nevertheless, the mother tongue plays a major role in unifying the family and strengthening emotional stability of its members, by providing them with that essential feeling of continuity: from mother land to here, from past to present, from parents to children a same familiar tread needs to be remembered by the immigrant, young or old.

As parents and concerned immigrants what can we do? It is essential to incorporate the systematic learning of the mother tongue in our children’s educational environment as early as they start socializing with their peers in the educational system of the host society: i.e. from the day care phase. Providing exposure to your native tongue while volunteering at your children’s day care center and later at kindergarten is a fun start. How many of us still find ourselves humming the lullabies we had been sung to as toddlers? Making a communal effort to start after/before school language programs, creating and supporting community native language Sunday schools, making an effort to have these community schools courses recognized by the public school system of the states of residence are other efforts leading to the recognition of our heritage. These efforts in the new land also will open the road to the offering of our mother tongue in the public middle and high schools system. The benefits of such courses are endless, namely students feeling of belonging to a community of their own heritage, feeling the fruitfulness of their effort in learning their mother tongue as it can translate into school credits. To these apparent benefits, we should add those of unifying the families and most of all equipping the children with a strong sense of self and clear identity. Hopefully they will fly away from the nest with strong wings.

As educators, numerous are the possibilities at our reach: Educators can help interested parents to take part in their children’s systematic education of their mother tongues, by encouraging them to volunteer. However they can play a more extensive role by creating and offering new courses through acquisition
of available grants. Many such grants are available through the department of education and National Foreign language center. For example recently, NFLC launched the Startalk program aiming at middle school and high school students’ language courses and their teachers’ pedagogical training. For more information one may check: http://www.nflc.org/projects/current_projects/startalk/

This summer, through the generosity of the STARTALK program, administered by The National Foreign Language Center, Language acquisition resource Center at San Diego State University is able to offer a unique language experience for middle and high school students. This free, non-residential language and culture program is open to interested and qualified students, grades 7-12. The unique features of the program were the low teacher to student ratio and the opportunity to meet nearby Persian communities for cultural enrichment. The program was designed to teach three levels of learners, and non-heritage and heritage speakers were encouraged to apply. Regular field trips exposed students to the rich cultural mosaic of the Persian communities of San Diego. Classroom activities also included dancing, music, movies, cooking, and other culturally appropriate events. Each classroom had a lead teacher and assistants highly experienced in teaching the age groups. Students had also access to the state-of-the-art lab facilities at LARC.

For information on our Persia Startalk in the summer of 2008, please check: http://larcmaterials.sdsu.edu/Persian/

Atefeh Oliai, Persian/Pashtu and Startalk Director at SDSU
http://oliai.sdsu.edu
aoliai@mail.sdsu.edu

Table 1: Languages Spoken in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total U.S. population</td>
<td>280,950,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak only English</td>
<td>225,505,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish or Spanish Creole</td>
<td>34,547,077</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages other than English and Spanish</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>2,464,572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>1,480,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French (incl. Patois, Cajun)</td>
<td>1,355,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>1,207,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>1,104,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>1,062,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>851,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>798,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>767,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African languages</td>
<td>699,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese or Portuguese Creole</td>
<td>687,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>638,059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>532,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>458,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native North American languages</td>
<td>371,277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Heritage Languages as Less Commonly Taught Languages

The past ten years have seen a growing interest in heritage languages, accompanied by spirited discussions on the difficulties of teaching heritage language learners.

The National Heritage Language Resource Center (NHLRC), one of fifteen Title VI NLRCs supported by the U.S. Department of Education, was funded in 2006 in direct response to this on-going discussion. The Center’s mission is to conduct research, develop materials, and provide professional development for teachers of heritage languages. The term “heritage” is mostly used in the United States. Other countries use terms including “community” languages “home-background” languages, and immigrant languages.

NHLRC uses these working definitions:

In the United States, a heritage language speaker is an individual who is exposed to a language other than English at home but educated primarily in English.

A Heritage Language LEARNER is a student who takes a K-16 or a community school language class in the home language. The language spoken at home can be referred to as a Heritage Language.

The demographics of the United States are such that approximately 20% of the U.S. population speak a language other than English at home. Consequently a large number of students in K-16 come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. Many people outside the foreign language teaching profession who hear such a statement think that the language other than English is Spanish. While it is true that over 34 million Americans speak Spanish or Spanish Creole at home, another 20 million speak other languages. The table below allows us a glimpse at this country’s linguistic landscape, according to the U.S. Census’ 2007 American Community Survey. The table includes languages and language groups with over 200,000 speakers.
In conclusion, I want to bring to your attention the NHLRC’s Third Heritage Summer Research Institute, scheduled for June, 2009 at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. The Institute, directed by Maria Polinsky of Harvard University, is a week-long symposium where scholars present their research findings and lead discussions on aspects of heritage language acquisition, knowledge, and language loss. The Institute’s goal is to use research findings as a basis for formulating curricular guidelines and course design, i.e. to translate theory into instructional practice. A call for applications is posted on the Center’s website. To get a better idea of why you may want to apply, please visit http://www.nhlrc.ucla.edu/2008summer/ and review the schedule and materials from the previous two institutes.

When you visit the NHLRC website, you will also find a host of other resources, including demographic, data collection, and assessment tools for use in your research and the classroom, guidelines and curricula for heritage language students, readings and power point presentations from past institutes and workshops, and the Heritage Language Journal http://www.heritagelanguages.org, which publishes research papers on heritage language education. On our website you will also find information about a new ACTFL Special Interest Group, which is dedicated to heritage language research and professional development.

Please come and visit our website at www.nhlrc.ucla.edu and let us know if we can be of help.

Olga Kagan, Director, National Heritage Language Resource Center, okagan@ucla.edu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Groups</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian languages</td>
<td>625,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Indic</td>
<td>616,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Indo-European</td>
<td>420,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Pacific Island</td>
<td>358,644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, excluding Spanish</td>
<td>17,935,595</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey (www.census.gov)

Of the languages in the table, Spanish, French and German are considered commonly taught in K-16. The remaining languages and language groups are not. This leads to a predominance of heritage language learners in many foreign language classes and it makes the needs of heritage language learners central to teacher preparation and materials development in less commonly taught languages. It is therefore of great importance to educators who are members of NCOLCTL.

NHLRC is conducting an on-line survey of heritage language learners currently enrolled in post-secondary language courses. Our aim is to better understand students’ backgrounds, attitudes, and goals in studying their heritage language, and to incorporate these findings into the design of curricular materials and the preparation of instructors. To date we have collected 1,700 responses from learners of 21 languages. You can find a report on the survey data collected so far on the NHLRC website http://www.nhlrc.ucla.edu/surveyreport/

We would like to ask those of you who teach classes for heritage learners to help us gather more information by giving the survey to your students. Completing the survey takes at most 20 minutes, and students find it interesting, because they are asked to think about their linguistic biography, including their abilities in the home language, attitudes, and motivations. If you are willing to give the survey to your students, please e-mail to okagan@ucla.edu for instructions and the password. Your students’ responses will make the results more comprehensive. In addition, there may be an immediate benefit to your program: after your students have completed the survey, we can send you their results.

In the summer of 2008 the long-standing relationship between LARC at SDSU and the Naval Special Warfare Group-1 was renewed for the purpose of conducting several 6-8 week intensive language training courses for Navy Special Forces personnel. Through a subcontract with the MiLanguages corporation, the support of the Critical Language Immersion Program, and the outstanding efforts of LARC staff, four separate “rounds” of these 6-8 courses have been conducted to date, beginning on May 5th and coming to a close, most recently, on December 19th, 2008. 86 Navy Spe
CIAO Forces personnel have completed the 6 – 8 week programs in six different languages: Arabic (Beginning and Intermediate), Persian, North African French, Filipino, Indonesian, and Russian. In every case, except that of the Russian class, the courses carried 6 – 8 units of university-level credit thanks to LARC’s collaboration with SDSU’s College of Extended Studies. The curriculum is a robust two semesters of the existing university curriculum (Indonesian being the exception here as it is not currently offered at SDSU), supplemented with relevant military vocabulary and scenario practice. A two-teacher, master and apprentice, model is employed in several of the courses, and a very low student-to-teacher ratio has been the norm throughout. This allows the students to receive the needed amount of individual attention, while also creating the opportunity for those instructors with little or no prior formal teaching experience to work with and learn from colleagues, who, in some cases, had decades of classroom practice and success. In this type of environment, it is possible for students and instructors to communicate openly and frequently, assuming little and taking nothing for granted, as everyone in attendance has accountability to – and something to learn from – the rest.

The most outstanding facet of these courses, and the aspect of which we here at LARC are most proud, is that many of the SEALs – who are accustomed to taking numerous and disparate types of intensive trainings were taken out of their more familiar military training context and placed squarely in the midst of the educationally unfamiliar. As some of the following comments, culled from course evaluations filled out prior to the classes ending, reflect, this played a clear and significant role in the programs’ impact and success:

“Just stepping into the classroom, I felt the atmosphere shift from American to Filipino. The classroom was decorated with abundant pictures, articles, and teaching aids from the Philippines; excellent job with dressing up the room.”

“The best part of (the) class, was the fact that (it) gave us a direct insight of Arab culture and life.”

“One of the most valuable aspects of the class was the cultural discussion. Although (the instructor) is very clear in her views, which were occasionally very different from the students, the fact that she was even willing to discuss some of the topics with us was very helpful and impressive. Before this class I had never had a real conversation with a Muslim person (emphasis added).”

In addition to any language proficiency the students gained from these courses, the above comments reflect that something of equal, if not greater, importance is being achieved: the seeds of cultural understanding and, perhaps one day, fluency were planted. To quote LARC’s director, Dr. Mary Ann Lyman-Hager, “We know that lack of cultural understanding is often at the heart of conflict among individuals and groups: the ability to transcend differences and negotiate conflict in human exchanges is therefore critical to a truly global citizenry.” In the context of these courses, the stakes, and the hopes we have for the current and future outcomes, could not be higher.

LARC is proud of, and humbled by, the apparent success that both students and instructors have, thus far, enjoyed. It must be noted that these are not the only courses that LARC puts on for military personnel. Two to three times per year LARC’s Arabic program offers specialized courses in Iraqi Arabic and Pashto to the Marines, and we currently conduct one of the more robust and successful ROTC programs in the nation. LARC is hopeful to continue to offer these courses to Navy Special Forces personnel. The outstanding work carried out by our Arabic and Persian Program Directors, Drs. Taha-Thomure and Oliai, as well as the individual language instructors, is worthy of recognition and continuation. In any case, however, the important lessons learned by all involved in these programs will continue to impact LARC’s curriculum creation, teacher training, and program execution for the foreseeable future.

About the AATA

Founded in 1968, the American Association of Teachers of Arabic (AATA) aims to facilitate communication and cooperation between teachers of Arabic and to promote study, criticism, research and instruction in the field of Arabic language pedagogy, Arabic linguistics and Arabic literature. In spite of its official name, AATA membership is not limited to Arabic language teachers or to residents of the United States. The membership list includes Arabic language professionals in the academic world from colleges and universities as well as K - 12 institutions, and from the government and the private sector. Via email and regular mail, AATA stays in touch with members in the US and Canada, and also in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.
AATA maintains an active publication schedule that keep members current with developments in the profession. *Al-Arabiyya*, the journal of the American Association of Teachers of Arabic, is a annual peer reviewed journal. *Al-‘Arabiyya* publishes scholarly and pedagogical articles and reviews which contribute to the advancement of study, criticism, research and teaching in the fields of Arabic language, literature and linguistics.

Occasionally, translations of important Arabic texts are published.

Articles are submitted both by AATA members and others. The *AATA Newsletter* goes out monthly via email to AATA members. Its focus is professional rather than academic. The *AATA Newsletter* includes information about calls for papers and upcoming conferences, employment announcements, information about professional development and Arabic language study opportunities, and a variety of other resources.

The Annual Meeting of AATA takes place in conjunction with the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting. During the Annual Meeting, AATA members attend a panel session. Recent panels have focused on trends and developments in our rapidly-changing field. The 2008 AATA Panel, organized by Professor Mahmoud Abdalla of Michigan State University, examined “Arabic Heritage Programs in the US: Problems and Solutions”.

The AATA Business Meeting follows the panel session. The highlight of the AATA Business Meeting is the presentation of the AATA Lifetime Achievement Award, which honors the contributions of our distinguished colleagues.

Recipients of the AATA Lifetime Achievement Award are Professor Peter Abboud of the University of Texas at Austin (2006), Professor Ernest N. McCarus of the University of Michigan (2007), and Professor Karin C. Ryding of Georgetown University (2008).

To respond to the growing demand for Arabic language teaching in K - 12 institutions, AATA has partnered with ACTFL. An Arabic Special Interest Group (SIG) was approved by the ACTFL Board in November 2008. The Arabic SIG was formed to serve as a network for and information sharing among Arabic language and culture instructors. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration between AATA and the Arabic SIG in the future.

For further information about AATA, see the webpage at http://aataweb.org/. AATA membership information is available at http://aataweb.org/Default.aspx?pageID=11. A subscription to *Al-Arabiyya* is one of the benefits of AATA membership. To purchase back issues of *Al-‘Arabiyya*, go to http://aataweb.org/shopping/Default.aspx. Further information about the Arabic SIG is located on the ACTFL website http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3428. For further information or other questions, please write the AATA Executive Director at admin@aataweb.org.

Elizabeth M. Bergman, Ph.D.
AATA Executive Director

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**NCOLCTL Affiliate Profile:**

**National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs (NASILP)**

**NASILP**

“Tomorrow’s Languages Today!”

If you wish to offer an LCTL with modest resources, NASILP will help you get started at your institution.

The National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs (NASILP) is North America’s oldest professional organization specifically devoted to fostering study of less commonly taught languages through self-instructional principles utilizing a “prochievement” modality developed for an academic setting.

NASILP provides channels through which the Association’s members share their concerns and expertise. NASILP is member of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). It is an organizational affiliate of the Joint National Committee for Languages and the National Center for Languages and International Studies (JNCL/NCLIS) and a founding member of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL) headquartered at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

NASILP has institutional members throughout the United States and Canada providing self-managed programs in more than fifty languages to thousands of students. Most institutional members are 4-year colleges and universities although 2-year colleges and secondary schools are increasing in membership.

NASILP is also a co-participant in a Critical Languages Series CD-ROM language courseware project along with...
with the University of Arizona’s Critical Languages Program (UA/CLP), Computer Aided Languages Instruction Group (UA/CALI), and UA Press. This series consists of CD-ROM language courseware in Beginning Brazilian-Portuguese, Cantonese, Chinese, Kazakh, Korean, and Turkish and DVD-ROM courseware in Beginning Ukrainian, Intermediate Cantonese, Kazakh, and Turkish and Advanced Kazakh; it is distributed by the UA Press.

At present DVD-ROMs for Beginning Kurdish, Intermediate Ukrainian, and Advanced Turkish are scheduled for release in the summer of 2009. All courseware has been developed with support from the National Security Education Program (NSEP), the U.S. Department of Education, International Research and Studies (IRS) Program, and the UA Office of the Vice President for Research.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA’S CARLA LCTL PROJECT

The fifteen Language Resource Centers (LRCs) and 129 National Resource Centers (NRCs), funded by the US Department of Education’s Title VI International Education Programs, encourage a significant focus on the teaching and learning needs of the less commonly taught languages (LCTLS). Many of them highlight the LCTLS of a particular region. Since 1993, when the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota was funded as an LRC, it has promoted the learning of LCTLS. The LCTL project is one of its most prominent activities, actively engaged in supporting all LCTLS, their teachers and students throughout the nation.

The stated goals of the LCTL project at CARLA are: encouraging people to study LCTLS, assisting LCTL teachers in developing high-quality teaching material, and helping LCTL teachers cooperate and communicate.

At the LCTL Summit Meeting at CARLA in September 1996, sixty-two teachers and administrators, representing more than sixty-five less commonly taught languages gathered to discuss crucial issues facing the LCTL field, in the broad categories of “Promoting and Protecting LCTLS,” “Pedagogy and Materials,” and “Delivery Systems.” This meeting strengthened the resolve of the participants to share their ideas and to work together to increase national awareness of the crucial nature of less commonly taught languages. A free report of this seminal meeting is available in PDF format at http://carla.umn.edu/lctl/resources/summit/summitReport.pdf.

In 1999, the LCTL project undertook a survey of LCTL teachers which addressed a range of issues relating to four key areas: the teaching context; the teacher’s professional background and qualifications; the teacher’s current job situation; and perceived professional development needs. Responses were received from 234 teachers who collectively taught 84 languages at 154 institutions. A summary report and analysis of the results is available at http://www.carla.umn.edu/lctl/resources/survey/surveyReport.pdf.

Teachers often mention the need for support in creating new materials. To meet this need, since 1999 the LCTL project has offered annual summer institutes on developing LCTL classroom materials. LCTL teachers can apply for stipends or tuition waivers to attend. Over 160 LCTL teachers have participated, representing languages as diverse as American Sign Language, Inupiaq and Setswana, and all levels of instruction from preschool to graduate school. An outgrowth of the institutes is a book that prepares LCTL teachers to create their own materials, Developing Classroom Materials for Less Commonly Taught Languages by Bill Johnston, with Louis Janus, available at http://www.carla.umn.edu/lctl. Related to the book and the summer institute is the Virtual LCTL Teacher Center, a website currently under development that will allow LCTL teachers around the world to share methods and insights into both general LCTL teaching and specific languages.

In order to offer assistance to LCTL teachers in creating their own materials, the project offers royalty-free photos (the Virtual Picture Album) and sound clips (the Virtual Audio-Video Archive) for a number of languages. A collection of lessons is also available on the LCTL website, developed by LCTL teachers who either received mini-grants from the project or attended the summer institute and submitted their lessons. They include lessons in Croatian, Khmer, Tibetan, Turkish, Urdu, and Vietnamese among others.

The LCTL project maintains 13 listservs for LCTL teachers. Most of the lists are language-specific (e.g., hindi-t), while the list with the most subscribers is for all LCTL teachers (lctl-t). These lists help teachers enlarge their community of colleagues, share information about their activities, request help, and read about ongoing funding and conference possibilities. In all, these teacher mailing lists have almost 1,200 subscribers.

The project’s most visible resource is the searchable database of LCTL programs in North America, ac
The teaching and learning of Hindi in the United States is gaining momentum and the numbers are on the rise in weekend community schools, public schools, colleges and universities. The teaching and learning of Hindi in the United States started in 1947 at the University of Pennsylvania and is now offered under the tutelage of skilled linguists and pedagogues in about eighty institutions of higher learning. The number of community schools has also grown since 1965 when many professionals of Indian origin started immigrating to the United States. Thanks to federal support, Hindi is also beginning to become a part of the public school system. The national objective states that Hindi be gradually introduced from the kindergarten level to the post-graduate level. Hindi has been taught in Bellaire High School in Houston for many years. During 2008, Hindi was introduced formally at the high school level in the Edison school district in New Jersey and Adam High School in New York City. The University of Texas at Austin (http://www.hindiurduflagship.org/) has a federally funded flagship program in Hindi since 2006 and is leading the national efforts in significant ways. American Institute of Indian Studies (www.Indiastudies.org), a consortium of sixty American institutions of higher learning, organizes in India immersion programs in Hindi and many other Indic languages during summer and during the academic year. Its language programs in India also include Critical Language Scholarship grantees (https://clscholarship.org/program_details.php?pid=20) funded by the federal government.

Indo-American community organizations in the United States are active in imparting their heritage languages and culture to the next generation. Their efforts fit in well with the national goals that envision the cultural tapestry of the United States enriched with new ideas, more languages and fresh cultural perspectives. While the immigrant communities gradually melt into American ways they also want to ensure that important facets of their cultural identity, especially the ones that do not come in conflict with the broad cultural framework of their new homeland, are preserved. This helps the continuation of the familial values on one hand and enriches the cultural mosaic of the new homeland. There is increasing realization that language is the most powerful instrument of human thinking for understanding the world around us and for verbalizing our ideas in culturally appropriate ways. In addition, learning a language preserves tangible and intangible aspects of the culture in which it is embedded. In the globalized world of today multilingual competency is becoming an increasing necessity and is an important ladder to success.

Community Schools
There are hundreds of community schools all around the United States. These are organized in basements, temples or cultural centers where youngsters learn and strengthen their literacy and oral-aural communicative skills and imbibe through the language and sometimes along with the language their cultural values. Many parents devote a lot of their time in preparing for and organizing school activities. Parents have produced pedagogic materials and technology-oriented programs...
to help the children of their communities. In spite of many success stories, unfortunately very few people know what is happening a few miles away and there are no avenues to exchange experiences or resources with each other. One of the finest community programs around is HindiUSA (www.HindiUSA.org). They have 26 schools in eight different states and are steadily spreading to other geographical areas. They have developed their curricula for different levels; have published pedagogic materials for their students and hold regular activities in a very disciplined way. They emphasise on integrating cultural values through the learning of Hindi. Here is one picture of their 2008 annual convention that speak volumes about their work.

**Community Schools Database Project**

Currently, a national effort is under way to create a database of all community and other schools teaching Hindi. This project is in the process of collecting profiles from all formal and informal institutions. It will allow appropriate information about funding, teacher training workshops and pedagogic materials, etc. to be distributed on a regular basis. A national website will publish activities of various programs and disseminate professionally relevant information. This project is a part of the Alliance project of Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington DC (http://www.cal.org/heritage/profiles/index.html). The new project will help those who want to start a new program and will strengthen those that will need help. This will also provide data to researchers thus aiding in the production of further knowledge in this area. There is growing literature about evolving perspectives on the teaching and learning of heritage languages. Also, anyone can sign up for a monthly electronic newsletter focusing on issues of interest to the heritage language field by visiting the above website.

**National Standards for Hindi**

Integration of National Standards in the language curriculum is a requirement in all public schools and Startalk programs. This brings Hindi at par with other mainstream languages in the educational system of this nation. Students studying in community schools utilizing Standards-based curricula can apply to their public schools for credit if otherwise eligible. A copy of the National Standards for Hindi will be available from ACTFL at the end of April 2009.

**STARTALK Program**

Under a federal initiative, Startalk program (www.startalk.umd.edu) is providing funding as well as professional help to organize summer courses for teacher training and for teaching Hindi to interested young learners. During 2008, there were nine federally funded Hindi programs in eight different areas - Edison New Jersey, New York City, Los Angeles California, Seattle Washington, Dallas/Fort Worth Texas, Euless Texas, Bloomington Indiana, Kent Ohio and Washington D.C. As a result, Hindi has already become a part of the regular curriculum in Edison N.J., New York City and the Dallas school districts. Next summer, we are expecting more programs for Hindi in other states. Startalk administration ensures well-designed Standards-based programs in many languages including Hindi. This national effort is destined to jumpstart the revitalization of heritage languages in this country.

This is certainly the most favorable time in American history for enterprising new heritage language programs in the U.S.

Surendra Gambhir
University of Pennsylvania

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**White Paper on the U.S. World Language Teacher Shortage Soon to Be Published**

In our interrelated world, to meet the demands of economic competitiveness, national security, and international positioning, U.S. students need to develop global competence that includes the ability to converse in a language other than English, as well as an understanding of other cultures. Yet, an alarming shortage of world language teachers, demands for programs in languages less commonly taught in American schools, and an inadequate and outmoded K-12 certification system to license these teachers, all combine to create challenges that American education is currently not prepared to meet. To address this situation, the National Foreign Language Center in collaboration with the Asia Society and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is developing a White Pa
er to address the current shortage of world language teachers in the United States. The White Paper is the result of a meeting of national experts convened in December of 2008 who met to discuss the issues and barriers to supplying our classrooms with well-trained teachers, and to put forth recommendations for solving this acute shortage. While discussing the world language teacher shortage across languages, the White Paper addresses the future with a special eye to developing teachers in less commonly taught languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Urdu, and Persian. This White Paper is also significant in that it features data from a recent survey that compiled information from all the states on a variety of important topics such as world language certification procedures, licensure requirements, teacher development and mentoring requirements, and world language graduation requirements. Written to inform members of federal and state government and education agencies, teacher education institutions, prospective teachers, as well as the general public, the intent of the White Paper is to give decision makers and world language stakeholders new perspectives not only on the urgency of the world language teacher shortage, but recommendations to streamline a woefully inefficient system of teacher certification. In so doing, the paper will advocate for a more transparent and long-term professional development system that will begin by attracting prospective teachers, preparing pre-service teachers and sustaining world language teachers already in the classroom. Among the topics discussed in the White Paper will be: Certification of World Language and LCTL teachers and the unique problems experienced by native and non-native speakers; Teacher certification in elementary, secondary, and immersion settings; the content and delivery of teacher preparation and professional development; teacher recruitment, retention, and mentoring strategies; and the barriers and issues impacting teacher development in the university setting.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO ESTABLISH A NEW LCTL PROGRAM AT A LARGE UNIVERSITY?

In early spring 2008, the University of Miami invited me to set up a new language program to begin in the fall 08 semester, for students at UM who need to study languages the University does not offer in its standard curriculum. I was asked to model the program on the Directed Independent Language Study (DILS) program I had established at Yale in 2001 and directed until my departure from Yale. The Modern Languages and Literatures Department at UM is offering mainstream languages such as Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and German through the advanced levels, and first and second year of LCTLs such as Arabic and Hebrew, and has recently added Japanese and Chinese. (Do we still consider these LCTLs?). Apparently there has been considerably persistent student demand for additional languages and the Administration decided to explore language offerings in a format that would be pedagogically effective yet remain within reasonable budgetary parameters.

UM has a large international student population. In addition, the Institution is looking increasingly to internationalize its academic programs many of which are interdisciplinary, a substantial number collaborative with external institutions. As we know, the concepts of ‘internationalization’ or ‘globalization’ do not necessarily translate into enhanced language education, however. Fortunately, the open-minded, forward-looking Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences took the initiative to implement some of the mandates included in the CAS’ strategic plan and moved forward to put into effect an expanded flexible language program that would be open to undergraduate, M.A., M.F.A., and Ph.D. students.

Although the decision was made to establish a new language program, no decision was made which languages should be offered. I had numerous conversations with the Dean on the subject. The Dean would have liked to have seen advanced levels of MSA, Japanese and Hebrew but that became a delicate issue since all three languages are offered in the MLL Department: DILS can only offer languages that are not part of the standard curriculum. However, although MSA cannot be offered in DILS, we hoped that there would be interest in Colloquial Arabic. Hindi, Haitian Creole and Quechua were discussed as realistic possibilities: UM has a relatively large undergraduate population who come from Indian families with a prior exposure to Hindi and several years ago pressure was put on the Administration to include Hindi in its regular language curriculum. Hindi therefore seemed like a sensible language to offer in DILS; Haitian Creole and Quechua seemed ‘natural’ choices given UM’s strong Latin American Studies program and an Anthropology Department with substantial interest in the indigenous languages of Central and Latin America. In addition to the above languages, we had cursory discussions about Czech: UM recently started an interesting joint program with St Charles University in Prague, and it seemed to make good sense for students to have at least a basic introduction to the language and culture be
before leaving. Czech was tabled for the first semester of DILS, but we expect to have it on the list for fall 09.

I assumed that DILS would be announced prior to my arrival on campus in order to inform the University community of the program and the ‘announcement’ would list the languages we had discussed. Eventually I was informed that no announcements would be made ahead of time but that it would be for me to identify the most pressing language needs.

The question was therefore when I arrived in late August of last year: how and where was I to begin; what would be the necessary steps to take and what were the most critical factors that would have to go into establishing a new language program on campus? The process, as I found out, is challenging but it is also exhilarating, often unpredictable, even a little quirky, but ultimately galvanizing and extremely satisfying when it all begins to come together.

The fall 2008 semester was a busy one. I spent most of my time getting acquainted with the University -- the College of Arts and Sciences alone has twenty-six departments and 12 interdisciplinary programs in addition to the Graduate School and the University’s 10 Professional Schools -- in order to begin gaining a sense of what languages would the most likely be in demand. I systematically approached Faculty, Administrators and heads of programs, meeting with Department Chairs and Directors of Graduate and of special and interdisciplinary programs; in the Graduate School and the Professional Schools I met with the appropriate Deans of Students. I was able to arrange meetings with the Academic Affairs Committee of the undergraduate Student Government and with the Graduate Student Association Senate. I established contact with the Office of Communications and Marketing, which is the central publications office for the University and the Office of Media Relations responsible for communicating information regarding faculty research, programs, and various events. Articles about DILS appeared in ‘The Miami Hurricane’, the campus student newspaper published semi-weekly, and in ‘e-Veritas’, a University-wide twice-a-week electronic newsletter that provides a rundown of campus information, news announcements, and events. A description of DILS has been on the front page of the College of Arts & Sciences web site since last November, under ‘Latest News’, entitled ‘Innovative language program called DILS’.

None of the above would have been possible had it not been for the truly exceptional support of the Office of the Dean of the College of the Arts and Sciences. I was officially introduced at Faculty meetings and in general, the way was cleared for me to be able to establish contact with the various University constituencies. I was told that ‘I was my own agent’, a somewhat daunting concept since according to the underlying assumption it would be all up to me if and how the program would develop. But the central Administrative support in the ‘background’ made it possible for me to forge ahead.

Members of the Faculty and Administrators with whom I met were for the most part extremely receptive to having a program that would allow their students to study languages they would not be able to do otherwise. Certain departments in particular -- International Studies, Geography and Regional Studies, Epidemiology & Public Health, Political Science, Judaic Studies, the graduate departments of English and History, just to name a few -- seemed elated at the idea that their students would be able to support their academic interests by acquiring skills in certain LCTLS.

The most noteworthy reaction came from students, however. The undergraduates I met seemed anxious to expand their language study experience beyond the study of standard language offerings. What struck me as particularly interesting was that they were clearly looking for different modes of language learning, preferably outside the traditional classroom setting that would be tailored to their specific learning abilities, their needs and their interests. Members of the Academic Affairs Council told me that many students were ready to invest in Rosetta Stone ‘big time’, until they learned that DILS was coming on board. Graduate student interest had a slightly different bent; their primary motive to acquire language skills is to assist them in their research -- reading and writing skills are therefore important for them: this will be an interesting challenge for me since DILS, as it was run at Yale, is primarily an oral/aural communicative program.

Having experienced such positive reactions from both faculty and students, I expected applications to pore in. However, despite all the effort and the remarkably broad based good will I encountered, I learned that it takes a while for a new program to truly gain the kind of awareness that would be effective on a wide scale. I am also learning that ‘enthusiasm’ or even genuine interest do not necessarily nor immediately translate into easy implementation.

The challenge is to break through certain barriers -- there is, however limited, a certain amount of faculty resistance in some areas; and students are surrounded
by overwhelming quantities of distractions, some of their own making; some are inherent in the nature of a campus where much activity takes place outside classrooms and dorms; and some come from faculty and constantly evolving new academic programs that solicit student attention. ‘Marketing’ DILS and maintaining high visibility remain an ongoing, indeed relentless task.

I have found that once students were in the program, the challenge was to work effectively with both students and Language Partners. Despite the strong student desire to pursue language study in new modalities, once they are in their practice sessions (I am purposefully staying away from the traditional nomenclature of ‘classroom’ and ‘teaching’) there is a tendency to automatically revert to the more traditional modes of behavior: students want to be ‘taught’ and Language Partners, contrary to explicit instruction, assume that they are expected to ‘teach’. Students were told at the outset that they were responsible for their own language acquisition process and that they were expected to study on their own; Language Partners were directed to provide correction for student pronunciation and grammar, elicit conversation, create dialogical situations and in general press students to use the target language in the session. These directives are not always followed, however; the training of, and work with Languages Partners in particular is a continuous process throughout the semester.

I observe the practice sessions regularly and meet with students and Language Partners outside the sessions. I require weekly reports from both students and Language partners. For students, self-reflection is a key component of the language study experience in DILS. Students are coached to become aware of the various factors that affect their language learning. They must work out their own study methods and ways to evaluate their progress. In their weekly reports they are expected to state their study goals for the week, the strategies they intend to use, describe the nature of their study experience, and specify the reasons for the outcomes. The habit of self-evaluation is a fundamental dimension of DILS.

As to the most immediate language needs of students, our assumptions were largely born out, with some surprises notwithstanding. I indeed received a significant number of applications for the study of Haitian Creole and of Hindi, in both cases mostly from heritage but also from a few non-heritage students. The large number of applications we received for Russian was unexpected. Levantine Arabic proved to be high on the list; requests for Moroccan Arabic and for Swedish were unexpected but pleasant surprises.

Diversity particularly within the Hindi learner group is fairly significant – not all students come from entirely Hindi speaking backgrounds, some come from backgrounds from diverse areas of India where, although Hindi is not unfamiliar, it is not the primary language. The challenges of how to accommodate the varying needs and proficiency levels of heritage and non-heritage learners are familiar to institutions where Hindi is formally taught. This is a new experience for me -- Hindi is taught at Yale – and it became a serious challenge to know how to accommodate the Hindi learners’ needs. This is certainly an area where one of the advantages of DILS, namely that of working in small groups, plays a significant role: I do not accept more than 5 students in a language group; I might be willing to bend the rules and accept a 6th person when the situation is ‘desperate’ -- this is the case with the Hindi program where I have two groups of 6 learners each. I finally enlisted the assistance of our Hindi examiner who helps me negotiate this challenging path.

Examiners are a very important component of the DILS triad (study materials, native speaker Language Partners and examiners) I rely on their council for the choice of study material and for their advice throughout the program. Finding native speakers is not a new challenge for me; the quest is always a demanding process but it is inherent to the nature of DILS.

Despite the significant challenges, the process of establishing a new DILS program on a campus where ‘independent language study’ is an unfamiliar concept, remains an exciting and intellectually satisfying experience. I am very pleased to be able to organize a language program which I know to be effective and brings positive outcomes. Although language learning in DILS exists in a relatively structured framework (it is ‘independent’ but it is also ‘directed’), the program is open-ended, entirely student-centered. DILS is an extremely versatile vehicle that fuses a loosely structured pedagogical process with flexible, individualized learning that remains consistently sensitive to the students’ personal capabilities; individual language learning takes place in a highly affirming environment that is always linguistically supportive and frequently culturally enlightening.

Despite all the challenges -- and there is no lack thereof-- I know from my experience with DILS at Yale that the benefits of the program go well beyond the immediate, primary goals for students to acquire
language and cultural skills they would otherwise not be able to achieve. Given the very flexible, personalized nature of language study in DILS, and given the strong likelihood that they can study nearly any language they need that is not offered in the curriculum, DILS provides students with exceptional opportunities to design their individual programs of study that respond to their international and intercultural academic interests and professional goals.

DILS also provides advantages beyond pragmatic benefits: it brings personal enrichment without a doubt, and it prepares students for life-long learning; but such a discussion is not within the scope of the present essay. It remains to be seen how all of the above will bear out -- this is only DILS’ first semester, the program is still in its infancy. But I believe, and the Administration seems to have the confidence, that DILS will contribute significantly to the students’ already rich academic experience at UM as well as to the University’s effort to further internationalize the campus. DILS also contributes to the broader conversation about innovative language education and language program development that is proving to be effective, one that can easily be widely implemented pedagogically and economically.

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Making a Case for Advocacy

Message from the Immediate Past President

Six years on the NCOLCTL Board have made me appreciate all the effort and hard work that goes not only into building a successful organization, but also in maintaining one. Through our annual conference, our journal JNCOLCTL, the joint Online Teacher Training project with UW-Madison, and the first ever LCTL national salary survey, we have made great strides in the areas of professional development and teacher training, and in empowering our membership in general. These have been major steps in professionalizing our field and in increasing NCOLCTL's visibility. Today NCOLCTL is recognized as the leading national organization for LCTLS amongst our peers. But I believe now is a very natural time to consider goals beyond the immediate needs of the academic community. It is on this topic that I would like to share some related thoughts, in particular on the need for NCOLCTL to get directly involved in local, national and international advocacy for LCTLS and in the setting of national policies that affect LCTLS.

Why is it important that someone take on this role? And why is it important that that someone be NCOLCTL?

Support mechanisms that exist for MCTLs are not yet in place for LCTLS, and will not be unless we as a group educate and advocate beyond the classroom. For example, most academic institutions have established academic interests and strengths to support the study & teaching of MCTLs. They have related academic degree programs and tenured faculty positions. There is a general recognition of the value of studying these languages along with related research and pedagogical interests. It is true that such programs do exist for some LCTLS, but they are far and few, and in general, much more fragile. They are often of a much less permanent nature. With the current economic downturn and ensuing budget cuts, the dangers of such weak structures become evident. LCTLS are more likely to be the victims of downsizing than MCTLs. It is therefore increasingly important today that we have strong advocacy for LCTLS.

Achieving the desired role of NCOLCTL in language advocacy is a long process. The abstract goal of advocacy can only be achieved with specific initiatives. This is where the rubber hits the road. To exemplify what I have in mind, a good starting point would be developing guidelines for establishing LCTL programs. These could range from including recommendations on the number of levels the program should have, to how to recruit faculty, choosing an academic home for a program, and the like. Other examples are involvement in the drafting of priorities and policies on national funding for LCTLS; accreditation of LCTL programs; endorsement of study-abroad programs.

In general, NCOLCTL as a society should raise its voice whenever LCTL related topics are discussed. Convenient mechanisms to do so include editorials, comments on program proposals, etc. The dialogue regarding a national policy for languages or language education has already begun. While there may be individual proponents of LCTLS included in these conversations, LCTLS as a group are conspicuously absent from the same. An important voice is painfully missing in this dialogue. Being the National Organization for Less Commonly Taught Languages, NCOLCTL is naturally well positioned to fill this void.

Having served on the Board for six years, I know that our organization can rise to these challenges and I am confident of our ever-increasing role in local, national & international advocacy for LCTLS.

Gautemi Shah
The 2009 A. Ronald Walton Award

The A. Ronald Walton Award was established in honor of the late Dr. Ron Walton, co-founder of NCOLCTL and founding Deputy Director of the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC). The Walton Award, presented by NCOLCTL in recognition of outstanding service in the field of Less Commonly Taught Languages, was first awarded in the year 2000 to James Alatis. Subsequent recipients of the award are Teresita Ramos (2001), Richard D. Brecht (2002), Laura Janda (2003), Laurel Rasplica Rodd (2004), Dora E. Johnson (2005), Ray T. Clifford and Leonard A. Polakiewicz (2006), Thomas J. Hinnebusch (2007) and Erika H. Gilson (2008). This year, NCOLCTL is proud to announce that Michael E. Everson, Associate Professor of Foreign Language Education at the University of Iowa, joins the list of distinguished recipients of the Walton Award.

Dr. Michael (“Mike”) Everson is a leading scholar in the fields of Chinese language education and the teaching and learning of the Less Commonly Taught Languages in general. Mike completed his doctorate in Foreign Language Education in 1986 from the Ohio State University, while he was still an active officer in the U.S. Air Force and an Associate Professor in Chinese at the Air Force Academy. Mike became one of the first LCTL scholars to emphasize the importance of empirical research to explore answers to how these languages are learned by speakers of other languages. His own many publications, especially in the area of reading Chinese as a second language, testify to the value of such research. Mike’s career also represents the importance to him of service to the profession of LCTL education. In addition to his service as President of NCOLCTL in 2004-2006, Mike has also edited the Journal of the Less Commonly Taught Languages for three years. He served four years on the Executive Board of the Chinese Language Teachers’ Association, is a member of the Editorial Board of the Modern Language Journal and serves on the Advisory Boards of the national STARTALK Project and the Confucius Institute at the University of Iowa. The following is an email interview with him.

1. I see that your B.A. from the University of Wisconsin in 1969 was in Chinese, as was your M.A. from the East-West Center in Hawaii two years later. Can you tell us what inspired you to study Chinese back then?

   I had been interested in the Far East ever since childhood. My father served in the Pacific theater during World War 2 and I was always fascinated by the items he brought back that contained Japanese writing. I was born and raised in the Chicago area, so loved as a kid going to Chinatown to look around. My defining moment came in high school, where we had a semester-long Far Eastern History course. I was hooked after that and knew then that I wanted to study this area. Even back then, the University of Wisconsin had a wonderful reputation for Asian studies. I started as an Asian Studies major, but I changed my major to Chinese during my first year of language study—I just loved studying Chinese. Chinese majors were pretty rare back then, so I was fortunate to be awarded an East-West Center Fellowship for my M.A. at Hawaii, so jumped at the chance to study in Honolulu.

2. You were an officer in the Air Force for many years. Were you able to combine your interest in Chinese language with your service in the military? In what way(s)?

   Yes, one of the main reasons I joined the Air Force was to use my Chinese. I worked in the intelligence field for a few years in the enlisted ranks, but when I was commissioned, I was taken out of the field and worked in air defense for many years. But I had always wanted to teach Chinese at the Air Force Academy and eventually got the chance. I ended up teaching there for about 10 years and it was a great experience.

3. You have been actively involved in NCOLCTL, CLTA and other organizations and academic journals in your career. Do you believe that such service to the profession is important for a career in the LCTLs? Has it also been rewarding to you personally?

   It has been important for me. Although as professionals we deal with issues involving less commonly taught languages, organizations are ultimately about people. And I cannot tell you how impressed and inspired I have been with the many people I’ve had the pleasure of meeting and working with in these organizations. And seeing organizations grow and thrive so that they
are ready to meet the challenges of changing world events is very satisfying to me. So yes, it has been very personally rewarding.

4. How have you seen the LCTL field change and evolve over the course of your career?

While LCTL’s have been typically viewed as important for national security reasons, I think they are now perceived to be important for a variety of reasons. We saw the growth of Japanese language learning in the ‘90’s associated with Japan as an economic powerhouse in Asia, and now we’re seeing the rise of China and India from an economic standpoint. We know that with the world being “flatter,” we have to work together with other nations in more productive ways, dealing with issues such as health, trade, and immigration, not to mention finding our way through the current global economic crisis. And of course, issues of national security will continue to be extremely important. Our LCTL colleagues have long understood that professionals in these fields will need to be proficient in world languages, and I think that more and more Americans are starting to understand it, too.

5. Among your achievements, you have published numerous articles and made many professional presentations on your research into the acquisition of second language literacy and on the importance of research to the field. Can you tell us why you believe that conducting and publishing research is important?

It’s all about seeking new knowledge, trying to develop theories as to how things work. Without a vibrant research tradition, your field will be based on nothing but opinion. With publishing, the analogy I like is that you’re engaging in a conversation. You’ll publish the results of a research study, then someone else will do another study, and cite or discuss your original work and tell how the theory has changed with new data. As more studies are done, more participants are drawn into an ever widening conversation that’s interesting and fun. As more research is collected and theories are validated, the pedagogy that is based on it is therefore more principled and reliable.

6. Another of your professional interests that you’ve written about is teacher education and training. Is there anything special about preparing someone to teach a LCTL vs. teaching ESL or a more commonly taught language like Spanish or French? What advice would you offer someone interested a career as a LCTL teacher?

While there are language education principles that cut across all languages, each language has its own characteristics that require special pedagogy. For languages that have very unique characteristics such as tones, different writing systems, and very different cultural orientations, teachers require very special training to be effective in the classroom. NCOLCTL and the University of Wisconsin-Madison have collaborated on a grant to produce on-line LCTL teacher training modules that we’re very excited about that will talk about some of these issues. Besides advising a prospective LCTL teacher to find a strong teacher education program, I would advise them to stay professionally connected with groups like NCOLCTL as well as the organization that represents their language. We routinely receive very positive feedback about the NCOLCTL annual meeting which is held each April. It draws speakers on the cutting edge of all aspects of LCTL endeavors whether they be the most current U.S. government policy discussions from experts working in Washington, D.C. to the latest in LCTL teaching materials development. I would also recommend that they become active in serving on committees or take other leadership roles in their service organizations. In this way, they will remain both active and current with what’s going on with LCTL’s.

7. Do you have suggestions or recommendations on priorities for NCOLCTL in the short term and longer term?

Continue its mission of helping the member organizations grow and become stronger. As demand grows for teachers and other forms of expertise in certain languages, there will be a need for a strong organization to help manage projects and resources. Besides insuring that the annual meeting continues its tradition of excellence, it should seek out opportunities to strengthen its financial base through grants that fund projects which help the LCTL community. It should also continue to develop leaders who will move the organization forward, especially young members who are eager and energetic.

Thank you, Mike.

Frederick Jackson
I would like to welcome Susan Schmidt on Board while at the same time express my gratitude to Alex Dunkel who served the organization in the position of the Secretary Treasurer for over ten years. We are all going to miss Alex and his very funny jokes. I wish Alex the best in his future endeavors.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the Delegate Assembly for their participation in the e-election. These two elections have given a voice to individual members and we hope you will use that voice to make NCOLCTL truly yours.

This year, the Secretariat submitted a proposal on Startalk to train instructors of Swahili. We hope to look for more opportunities to apply for grants in order to provide other professional opportunities for our members. The NCOLCTL secretariat is here to work for you. All you need to do is contact us and ask.

The members of NCOLCTL Executive Board continue to lead with vision and persistent hard work. I would like to thank Gautami Shah (Immediate Past President), Hong Gang Jin (President), Catherine Ingold, (Vice President), Susan Schmidt (Secretary-Treasurer), Erlin Barnard (Member at Large), and Maria Kosinski (Member-at-Large) for their devotion and dedication to LCTL pedagogy and advocacy. I would also want to thank Michael Everson and Gerald Lampe who recently completed their services on the Board.

Based on the past two years, we are in for a very promising year ahead, as well as the following presidential term. I also want to thank Joseph Chikowero for helping to plan the NCOLCTL conference and Isaac Akere for providing technological support.

I wish you all of the best in 2009 and hope that NCOLCTL has been able to help you achieve your professional goals in the LCTLs. Please contact us any time you have questions about the organization or about our field. Let’s continue to work together towards being the preeminent LCTLs organization representing the reality of language teaching.

Antonia Folarin Schleicher
Executive Director, NCOLCTL
ayschlei@wisc.edu
CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, SYMPOSIA AND SUMMER INSTITUTES

Conferences:

April 23 - 26, 2009
National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages, 12th International Conference
  • Sheraton Madison Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin

May 20-24, 2009
The 2009 Conference of the North American Association of Celtic Language Teachers (NAACLT)
  • The New York City Irish Center
  • 10-40 Jackson Ave, Long Island City, New York
  • http://www.naaclt.org

May 28 - 30, 2009
Preparing Language Teachers for the 21st Century: Sixth International Language Teacher Educator Conference
  • The George Washington University
  • Washington, D.C.
  • http://www.carla.umn.edu

June 25 - 27, 2009
American Association Of Teachers Of Korean
  • 14th Annual Conference & Professional Development Workshop
  • University of Washington
  • http://www.aatk.org

July 7-9, 2009
2009 International conference on Hebrew language, literature and culture
  • University college London
  • London, Great Britian
  • http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu

October 10-11, 2009
CULTURA: Web-based Intercultural Exchanges
  • University of Hawai‘i at Manoa
  • Honolulu, Hawai‘i, USA
  • http://nflrc.hawaii.edu

October 11-13, 2009
Language Learning in Computer Mediated Communities (LLCMC) Conference
  • Hawai‘i Imin International Conference Center
  • University of Hawai‘i at Manoa
  • Honolulu, Hawai‘i, USA
  • http://nflrc.hawaii.edu

November 20-22, 2009
2009 CLTA Annual Meeting
  • San Diego, CA
  • http://clta.osu.edu

November 20-22, 2009
Annual Convention and World Languages Expo:
  • Pre-Convention Workshops: November 19, 2009
  • San Diego Convention Center and Marriott San Diego Hotel, San Diego, CA
  • http://www.actfl.org

December 27-30, 2009
The Annual AATSEEL Conference
  • Hyatt Regency Philadelphia at Penn’s Landing
  • http://www.aatseel.org

January 9-11, 2010
The Third World Universities Forum
  • Congress Centre, Davos, Switzerland
  • http://larcnet.sdsu.edu/conferences

Summer Institutes:

May 26 – June 5, 2009
A Second Language Acquisition Certificate
  • Program for African Language Instructors
  • http://lang.nalrc.wisc.edu/nalrc

June 15 - August 7, 2009
Summer Cooperative African Language Institute
  • http://africa.msu.edu/scali/index.php

June 22-July 3, 2009
2009 NFLRC Online Summer Institute For Non-Native Teachers Of Chinese & Japanese
  • http://nflrc.hawaii.edu
Summer Institutes:
Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR)
http://clear.msu.edu/clear/professionaldev/summerworkshops.php

July 9-11, 2009
• An Online Language Portfolio Approach to the Development of Speaking and Listening Proficiency

July 13-15, 2009
• Rich Internet Applications for Language Learning: Introductory Techniques

July 16-18, 2009
• Rich Internet Applications for Language Learning: Advanced Techniques

July 23-25, 2009
• Teaching Writing in the Foreign Language Classroom

July 20-22, 2009
• The Second “C”: Culture Teaching in the Language Classroom

July 27-29, 2009
• Revisiting, Reinventing, and Restarting a Language Program: A Step by Step Approach

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**THE 12TH NCOLCTL CONFERENCE**
_Towards a new paradigm in the LCTL’s_  
_April 23-26, 2009_  
_Sheraton Madison Hotel_

Plenary Sessions include:

“Creating a Unified Voice for the Roles of Critical Languages and Global Competitiveness”  
Dean Gilles Bosquet, Division of International Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

“Language Futures: A Framework For Determining Strategic Investments and Returns in Critical Languages”  
Richard Brecht, Executive Director, Center for the study of Language

“A systematic Approach to Expanding the Chinese Language Field in the US: Lessons Learned and Future Directions”  
Shuhan Wang, Asia Society & Chinese Language Initiatives

“LinguaFolio Online: Portraits of Proficiency”  
Carl Falsgraf, Director, Center for Applied Second Language Studies

“The Power of Many Voices...in Any Language”  
Janine Erickson, 2009 President of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

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**ILR-INTERAGENCY LANGUAGE ROUNDTABLE**

Webliography of Less Commonly Taught Languages

http://www.govtilr.org/Web_LCTL/index.htm
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Membership Form - NCOLCTL

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City, State:

Zip Code

Phone Number:

FAX Number:

Benefits of Membership
- A free annual pre-conference workshop (normally the cost of a workshop can be up to $150.)
- A free conference proceedings or journal and a bulletin
- Reduced registration fees at the conference
- Representation at the national level as "at-large" member of the board, elected by the individual members.
- Participation in the Council's projects.
- Membership in the Council ListServe.

Please complete and submit the following application form with your membership fee ($50 - for "regular" individual membership, $30 for students/seniors). Checks can be written to "NCOLCTL." Mail all materials to the following address.

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