



A LAFAYETTE NEWSLETTER FOR FLL STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND ALUMNI

Brave New eWorld: The Lafayette College World Languages Portfolio Initiative

The exploration of world literatures, civilizations, and cultures and the languages that represent them are a vital component of the College's evolving core curriculum and its central mission to foster "the free exchange of ideas" and "nurture the inquiring mind." However, in a discipline involving the development of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills as well as knowledge of and familiarity with the myriad aspects of cultures related to the language of study, it can be challenging to determine from class to class the level to which students have acquired communicative competence. Precisely what does it mean to be "fluent" in a language? Our department is exploring the answers to this question through an exciting project: The "La-Folio," a student-centered electronic portfolio.

The language e-Portfolio is a cutting

edge concept that seeks to measure students' communicative competence and cultural literacy by providing an electronic folder of evidence of language acquisition. In increasing use in United States and European academic institutions, the e-Portfolio is a personalized and responsive/reflective record of development and progress that each student can take from class to class and level to level of language study.

The La-Folio provides students with the opportunity and electronic space to collect creative and analytical works in language and literature classes, select the best samples of these works, and reflect on how together they demonstrate their developing communicative skills and cultural acumen or, in other words, "what students know and what they can do." Hence, it serves the dual purpose of informing instruction and motivating

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Bridging the Millennia – Classics in the 21st Century

Studying classics is like traveling," says **Markus Dubischar**, associate professor. "When we travel, we return home with a deeper understanding not only of the places that we have visited, but also of our own culture and our normal lives that we have left behind temporarily. Classics students experience the same thing." Consequently, both in his teaching and his research, Dubischar stresses how relevant many aspects of the ancient world are today. "Many things that we may believe to be timeless human are in reality novel features highly characteristic of our own times; and, vice versa, what we sometimes like to regard as our modern intellectual or cultural achievements may have been around for more than 2,000 years," he says.

The Foreign Languages and Literatures Resource Center now shows an exhibition titled *Mythology and the Stars*. It is the result of a collective effort by the students of Dubischar's mythology course from fall 2009. The exhibit highlights aspects of modern astronomy that were and continue to be profoundly shaped by classical mythology. For instance, when in early modern times it was discovered that the planet Jupiter was orbited by moons, they did not receive arbitrary names. Instead, they commemorate Jupiter's most famous extramarital escapades, namely Callisto, Europa, Ganymede, and Io. And to this day, NASA continues to name

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Foreign language professors and students participate in La-Folio workshop.



Dear Alumni, Students, Parents, and Colleagues,

The teaching and learning of foreign languages, cultures, and literatures are, by their very nature, interdisciplinary endeavors and bring together teachers and students from various fields across the campus. Our language and literature programs support a number of area studies that offer major and minor B.A. degrees: Russian and East European studies (Russian); Asian studies (Chinese and Japanese); Jewish studies (Hebrew); Latin American and Caribbean studies (Spanish); classical civilization studies (Latin and Greek); medieval, Renaissance, and early

modern studies (French, German, and Spanish); Africana studies (French); and international economics and commerce (French, German, and Spanish). The international affairs program and the international studies and engineering program are supported by all six modern languages offered in our department. The Max Kade Center for German Studies—created in 2002 with a generous grant from the Max Kade Foundation—also adopts an interdisciplinary approach and secures the annual participation of German-speaking writers-in-residence and distinguished professors in the multidisciplinary academic program. In addition to valuable interdisciplinary perspectives, our students are engaged in the creation of their e-Portfolios, which document their personal journey of language-learning. La-Folio, our department's world languages electronic portfolio initiative, has captivated the imagination of faculty members and students alike. For our teachers, it is an inspiring teaching tool and an effective instrument for assessment. For our students, it is an exciting and comprehensive documentation of their communicative competence and transcultural literacy, which are crucial for success in today's globalized world.

This newsletter highlights the exciting activities of teachers and students in the our classrooms and beyond. You will also read about faculty scholarship and achievements. Enjoy!

Cordially,

Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger
Professor and Head of Foreign Languages and Literatures

LAFAYETTE *Foreign Languages & Literatures* is produced by the Division of Communications for the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department and is distributed to FLL alumni and students. The department welcomes your comments and letters. Send them to: Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger, Head, Foreign Languages and Literatures, 433 Pardee Hall, Lafayette College, Easton, PA 18042; (610) 330-5255; lambfafm@lafayette.edu

FACULTY

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|---|--|
| Bonnie BUTLER – instructor, Spanish | Edward R. MCDONALD – professor, German |
| Ioanna CHATZIDIMITRIOU – instructor, French | Jean-Francois ORSZAG – instructor, French |
| Osvaldo CLEGER – assistant professor, Spanish | Rado PRIBIC – Edwin Oliver Williams Professor of Foreign Languages and Literatures, German, and chair of international affairs program |
| Markus DUBISCHAR – associate professor, classics | Camille QUALTERE – instructor, Spanish |
| Olga Anna DUHL – professor, French | Mian QIN – Fulbright Chinese language teaching assistant |
| Sidney DONNELL – associate professor, Spanish | Leticia ROBLES – instructor, Spanish |
| Denise GALARZA SEPULVEDA – assistant professor, Spanish | Juan ROJO – assistant professor, Spanish |
| Michelle GEOFFRION-VINCI – associate professor, Spanish | George ROSA – professor, French |
| Naoko IKEGAMI – instructor, Japanese | Valeria SAJEZ – lecturer, Russian |
| Roxanne LALANDE – professor, French | Richard SHUPP – instructor, Spanish |
| Margarete LAMB-FAFFELBERGER – professor, German | Mary TOULOUSE – director of the resource center and instructor, French |
| Ilana LEVY – instructor, Hebrew | Sufeng XU – visiting assistant professor, Chinese |

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students. Ultimately, this computerized archive serves as a valuable record of achievement for the Lafayette graduate to share with future employers or graduate schools, both nationally and abroad.

With the support of a grant from the provost's Fund for Faculty Innovation, the department completed a series of faculty development workshops with the aim of training our faculty in the construction of e-Portfolio-friendly projects contoured to the Lafayette student population. Keynote speakers were Barbara Cambridge, president of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning; Gary Brown, director of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology at Washington State University; and Cindy Evans, director of the Foreign Language Resource Center at Skidmore College.

Katherine McFadden '10, an international affairs major, says, "The e-Portfolio helped me think about the many aspects of knowing a language. I now focus more on developing skills needed for fluid conversation. I think more about the different types of conversations (emotional, entertaining, formal) and what I need to be comfortable in different situations."

Joey Haymaker '09, who graduated with an A.B. with majors in Spanish and economics & business, says, "I now have a 3D example of my undergraduate work. This is important because while I may demonstrate in an essay or cover letter how much I have learned, it is completely different to present my e-Portfolio that shows what I am capable of accomplishing."

Michael Bellantoni '10, a double major in Spanish and economics & business who served an externship in Peru, says, "The e-Portfolio has helped me understand that I have the confidence and tools necessary to participate in international trade. As an econ major, I know the theory of how to make an intelligent business decision."

Michelle Geoffrion-Vinci, associate professor and one of the co-authors of the language e-Portfolio initiative, will share La-Folio as well as our preliminary research results regarding its effectiveness as a teaching and learning strategy at the Patriot League Academic Conference ("Exploring Alternative Pedagogies: What the Best Patriot League Teachers Do") at Bucknell University in October.

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