



# ACCENT!

NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES, LITERATURES, AND CULTURES AT UNCG

## LLC Hands-On Culture Jam

Organized by **Molly Reininger** and our wonderful LLC Department faculty and staff, the culture jam brought sunshine to the EUC Cone Ballroom on Monday, March 31st. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., over 500 students gathered to celebrate language, and creativity across different cultures!

This event featured many hands-on workshops and interactive presentations by students, faculty and staff.

These workshops included ASL hand-sign cutouts, Flamenco dance tutorials, German-language art collage, French vocabulary pictiary, Sakura bookmarks making, papel picado and more!

A huge thank you to our LLC department and all the participants this year for this event to showcase our rich diversity with our UNCG community.



## J-Day

On April 4th, 2024, faculty of LLC hosted J-Day gathering together students, faculty and other guests filling the room with culture and community. J-Day had various activities including delicious snacks, student performances, inspiring guest speakers, and a chance to engage with members of the Japanese Club and the faculty. Participants enjoyed an inspiring



speech by Mr. **Stephen Summer**, the director of the NC Japan Center, along with other students' presentations and various games.

J-Day was a wonderful opportunity for students to learn about the Japanese Program at UNCG, learning more about the vibrant culture and passion behind the program.



## Greetings From the Head of the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

As the academic year draws to a close, I write to you with deep pride and great joy to share news and celebrations from our department. It has been a year marked by exceptional accomplishments, new opportunities, and continued momentum in our mission to engage students with the richness of global cultures and languages.

First and foremost, we are thrilled to announce that several of our students will be traveling to Spain next academic year through the NALCAP (North American Language and Culture Assistants Program). These students will serve as language and culture ambassadors while gaining invaluable international experience. Their participation in NALCAP reflects both their dedication and the high-quality education they have received in our programs.

In recognition of student achievement and to support their academic journeys, our department awarded a remarkable \$84,000 in scholarships this year. This investment in our students is a testament to our enduring commitment to accessibility, equity, and academic excellence.

We are also proud to share some updates about our department's structure. While many departments across the country are experiencing transitions, we are pleased to report that no one in our department is retiring or leaving this summer. As a result, we will not be hiring new faculty—a rare and positive bit of news that speaks to the stability and cohesion of our team. Additionally, Dr. **Kevin Reese** will be moving to the Department of Liberal and Professional Studies, where he will assume the directorship of International and Global Studies. We wish him all the best in this new chapter and remain grateful for his contributions to our department.

Thanks to careful planning and advocacy, we have also successfully maintained our full-time faculty status across the board. In an era of precarious academic employment, this achievement underscores our collective efforts to uphold the integrity and continuity of our academic programs.

Our faculty have continued to excel across all areas of scholarship, teaching, and service, and I and I could not be prouder of the work our faculty and students have done to enrich our academic community.

Lastly, we joyfully celebrate the graduation of several students from our diverse programs. **Wendy Morrow** is graduating with a Master's Degree in LLC with a Concentration in French and Francophone Studies. **Irma Delgado**, **Nathanielle Fanbissi**, and **Sofie Muska** are getting a BA in LLC French and Francophone Studies. **Taliyah Brown**, **Rebekah Lambert**, **Jacquelyn Layton-Brown**, **Kaitlyn Loyd**, **Rebecca McEvoy**, **Halei Sorrell**, **Sabrina Thompson** and **Megan Wilson** are graduating with a BA in LLC Global Languages and Communities. And finally, **Samantha Aguilar-Martinez**, **Alison Brake**, **Daniela Campbell**, **Gabrielle Espada**, **Yesenia Garcia-Licea**, **Karen Hernandez**, **Miguel Linares-Martinez**, **Ethan Lora**, **Alexis Mendoza**, **Brooke Moody**, **Leslie Mosqueda-Cortes**, **Andrea Sanchez Amaya**, **Emanuel Smith**, **Gabriela Suarez-Arellano**, and **Charles Thomas** are graduating with a BA in Spanish. Their hard work, perseverance, and intellectual curiosity have brought them to this milestone, and we look forward to seeing the many ways they will shape the world with the knowledge and skills they've gained here.

Let us take a moment to celebrate these achievements together.

The reason why our department is successful is solely because of our students, faculty and staff, and it is all thanks to the dedication, resilience, and passion of our students, staff, and faculty. Here's to another inspiring year ahead!

-Mariche Bayonas







## FOCUS ON STUDENT AND FACULTY ENGAGEMENT



In honor of Deaf Awareness Month, the **ASL Program** organized ASL Trivia Night where about 75 students participated in a game of jeopardy and had meaningful discussions.

In April, the **ASL Program** hosted **Joel Barish**, Deaf CEO of DeafNation, in the EUC Auditorium. At the event, “Education Around the World: You are the Ambassadors with Joel Barish, World Explorer,” Joel shared inspiring stories about their global travels and encounters with Deaf individuals from different cultures. A few days later, 10 ASL students volunteered at the registration booth for DeafNation Expo at the Greensboro Coliseum where around 2,000 deaf people across North Carolina and neighboring states, attended.

In the summer of 2024, Dr. **Ignacio Lopez** and Dr. **Alexander Hortal** led over 20 students on an unforgettable 5-week Study Abroad Program to Cadiz, Spain. Students would immerse themselves in Spanish culture



by living with host families, studying Spanish history and enjoying the Spanish lifestyle in Cadiz. The program included visits to different places in Spain including Sevilla and Granada. The program also provided cultural activities that helped students engage such as flamenco dance lessons, cooking class, surfing and more.





## STUDENT & ALUMNI EXCELLENCE



Congratulations to JNS 204 student, **Dia Wisnewski** (*featured below*), who won first place in the Level I category at the prestigious Duke Speech Contest held on March 29! Dia impressed the judges with her speech titled "Asian Diva, Teresa Teng."

**Alison Brake** and **Megan Wilson** are recipients of the 2025 Provost Student Excellence Award, the highest academic honor for undergraduate students at UNCG. Congratulations to both of you on this well-deserved honor!

**Yesenia Garcia-Licea** is this year's winner of the Community Engagement Award. She says: "UNCG has been a surprising journey that has offered me various opportunities towards my career. Coming to UNCG I did not plan on Spanish and Psychology being my majors, but I got exposed to some of the greatest professors and courses that made me realize this is what I want to do with my life. I believe that UNCG helped me find myself and be surrounded by individuals who have done nothing but support me in my journey. I am proud to be a UNCG Spartan!"

**Daniela Campbell** is the recipient of the Outstanding Major Award in Spanish. "As a

transfer student from GTCC, coming to UNCG and majoring in Spanish was a life-changing decision. Not only was I taught by some of the kindest, brilliant, and engaging professors, but I was also able to find a community that accepted me in every way. My classmates feel like family, and the Spanish department faculty pushed me to think beyond what I knew and see the world in a new light. I am proud of my AfroLatinidad and proud to be a Spartan!" *¡Felicidades, Daniela!*

We are delighted to honor **Nathanielle Fanbissi, Bekah Lambert, and Megan Wilson**, who were inducted into Pi Delta Phi, the National French Honors Society. *Félicitations!*

**Ibrahima Dembele** received the Outstanding Major Award in French, and **Mariana Guzman-Gaytan** is the recipient of the Outstanding Major Award in LLC, Global Languages and Communities. Congratulations to both of you!

The following LLC, Global Languages and Communities and Spanish majors were elected for Phi Beta Kappa membership, the nation's highest undergraduate academic honor: **Ana Archilla Hernandez, Susan Cano Aguado, Sheza Khurram, Rebecca McEvoy, William Virost, and Megan Wilson!** Congratulations, everyone!







## FOCUS ON LLC FACULTY



Dr. **Kelly Lowther Pereira's** (*featured on the left*) chapter, "Revisiting reflection: The necessary work for more transformative and equitable community engagement," was published in the peer-edited volume, "Working *en Comunidad*: Service-Learning and Community Engagement with U.S. Latinas/os/es" in September 2024. The chapter explores the importance of critical reflection and emphasizes the need to reframe service-learning reflection practices to support deeper, more equitable learning experiences for Spanish heritage language learners and students of color.

Dr. **Faye Stewart** (*featured right*) received the College of Arts and Sciences Teaching Excellence Award, a distinguished honor recognizing innovative and impactful pedagogy. Faye is also the recipient of this year's WGSS Linda Arnold Carlisle Research Award and presented a Linda A. Carlisle lecture entitled, "A Queer Theory of Spectatorship: Viewing Socialest-Era Cinema Aslant." *Herzlichen Glückwunsch*, Faye!

**Jessica Bennett** (*featured center*) won the LLC Teaching Excellence Award which recognizes her excellence in teaching performance in the Spanish Modified and Spanish Heritage Language Programs, where she consistently goes above and beyond to accommodate students' needs and support their academic success. She has also demonstrated an admirable commitment to community engagement, teaching, and extracurricular activities within LLC and across campus. Congratulations, Jessica!

Dr. **Raoul Djimeli's** poetry has garnered international recognition, with his book now translated from the original French into both Spanish and English, expanding its reach to new audiences.

Dr. **Catherine Viano-Laughon** has been promoted to Senior Lecturer and both Dr. **Mei Sun** and **Wendy Jones-Worden** have been promoted to Principal Lecturer. Congratulations to all three of you for this well-deserved promotion!

In March, Dr. **Cybel McFadden** organized the 42nd Annual 20th and 21st Century French and



Francophone Studies International Colloquium, hosted by UNCG in downtown Greensboro. In April, she presented a paper, "Recentring Peripheries in Alice Diop's *Cliché pour exemple* (2006) and *Nous* (2021)," at Duke University's The Cinema of Alice Diop: (Re)formulating the Real conference, the very first international and transatlantic colloquium entirely dedicated to the filmmaker's work. Dr. McFadden will be on research assignment during the next academic year. *Félicitations*, Cybelle!

Dr. **Ana Hontanilla** has had an outstanding year filled with impressive scholarly achievements and community engagement. Her essay, "Pardo Soldiers' Historical Claims in Late Eighteenth-Century Cuba," was published in *Latin American Research Review* 59.4 (March Open Access, December Print 2024), and was later invited to feature her work on the Cambridge Core Blog and deliver a talk at Wake Forest University's Latin American and Latino Studies Program.

Another achievement includes her poetry publication of *International Poetry Review* themed "Fragments of Becoming: Poetry Beyond Duality." In addition, Dr. Hontanilla earned her Medical Interpreter Certification and has completed multiple interpreting assignments through the CNNC during February, March, and April 2025.

Dr. Hontanilla also won admission to the Folger Institute's May 2025 weekend seminar, "Empires, Law, and the Law of Nations," directed by Lauren Benton (Yale University) and Andrew Fitzmaurice (Queen Mary University of London) at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. Bravo, Ana!



UNC GREENSBORO

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