LIFELONG LEARNERS
Faculty and Staff Participate in Independent Study of Arabic

This semester, 15 UMES faculty and staff members—including an instructor from the English department—signed up to learn Arabic through a unique opportunity offered by the university’s Foreign Language Instructional Center (FLIC).

Sandy Johnston, a member of the English faculty, welcomes the challenge.

“I think that it’s good for a teacher to every once in a while be in the students' shoes,” she said. “We have many ESL students at UMES, and taking the class helps me to understand what it’s like for them … I think it’s good for me to experience the frustration of learning a language.”

Ms. Johnston and her colleagues are participating in a 10-week independent study program. The group gathers at FLIC on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Part of their time is spent watching a prerecorded Arabic 101 course; the remainder of the session involves individualized use of Rosetta Stone Arabic, an interactive software program. Participants also practice what they’re learning by meeting with FLIC’s conversation partner, Hawari Abdalla. He is a native Arabic speaker from Sudan, who is available for informal conversations ten hours each week.

The independent study was organized by Tammy Gharbi, FLIC’s program coordinator. “With the access to the resources that the FLIC program has available, these independent learners can hope to advance their learning even further while still maintaining their individual pace and goals,” she said.

NASA: NOT JUST FOR SCIENTISTS
English Majors Attend UMES Career Day at Wallops Flight Facility

While NASA’s Wallops Island Flight Facility on Virginia’s Eastern Shore is eager to recruit the next generation of scientists, mathematicians, and computer programmers, those aren’t the only UMES students who may eventually find employment there.

Communicating the mission of the space agency is critically important, so a trio of English majors joined two busloads of science, technology, and math students for UMES Career Day at Wallops last month.

Tarcha Parker, Elizabeth Ranger, and Janai Valentine learned about internship opportunities, attended a workshop designed to polish their networking skills, and met with a group of professionals who are part of the team that interacts with the media and the general public. They also were briefed on how to find internships and employment options at USAJobs.gov.

The English majors were accompanied on the trip by the department’s internship coordinator, Marilyn Buerkle. (L to R) Ms. Parker and Ms. Valentine on the Wallops launch pad.
EXPERT ADVICE
Media Professionals Meet with Students

Members of the English department’s Telecommunications Advisory Board came to campus recently to offer suggestions to UMES students interested in media careers.

Those who attended the event heard about the importance of internships, the need to network, the value of a mentor, the signals body language can send, and the damage certain social media postings can cause.

Local radio, television, newspaper, and public relations professionals—including Joe Edwards, operations manager for Delmarva Broadcasting; Troy Hill, general manager of MTS Broadcasting; Craig Jahelka, general manager of WBOC and FOX21 TV; Tamara Lee-Brooks, Wicomico County’s public information officer; Ben Penserga from The Daily Times; and Stephen Williams, WESM FM’s general manager—offered a strategy for securing an entry level position in a highly competitive field.

The group plans to return to UMES in April for a “speed interviewing” session. They’ll conduct practice job interviews and critique the performance of the applicants.

Ancient Artifacts

A guest speaker offered students studying ancient mythology in the Special Topics in Literature class a peek at some unique historical objects recently.

Phil Jones of PBJI Ancient Coins and Antiquities showed students examples from his collections of Greek and Roman Republican coins, Roman Imperial intaglio gems, and classical antiquities. Using them as examples, he talked about images of gods in ancient coins, gems, and artifacts.

“This was a great opportunity for my students to observe in person unique ancient objects, most over 2,500 years old,” said Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones, the special topics instructor this semester.

One reason Mr. Jones may have accepted the invitation? He’s married to the instructor.

One Book Initiative

Two English faculty members have won a competitive grant from the Office of Academic Affairs. Amy Hagenrater-Gooding and Courtney Harned were awarded $2,000 to implement what they describe as the “One Book Initiative.” They proposed selecting a text for the student body and campus community to read, discuss, and integrate into classwork throughout the coming academic year.

The initiative would include an open academic convocation where scholars from on and off campus discuss issues related to the book and, ideally, culminates in an appearance by the author.

“The ‘Just One Book’ idea stems from the concept that certain books can bridge the academic gap creating a collective discussion across the disciplines,” Dr. Hagenrater-Gooding said. “For this initial project, we proposed “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks” by Rebecca Skloot.”

The award winning non-fiction book involves issues of medical health, privacy, communication, ethics, race, and gender.

Word Play: Measure Your Mental Flexibility and Creativity

The following questions are from a 26-question EQUATIONS ANALYSIS TEST that measures mental flexibility and creativity. According to test administrators, few people could solve more than half of the questions on their first try. Many people, however, reported getting answers long after the test was set aside, particularly at an unexpected moment when their minds were relaxed. Some reported being able to solve all the questions over a period of several days.

Each question contains the initials of words that will make the equation correct. Here’s an example:

26 = L. of the A.  (26 = letters of the alphabet)

Can you guess the missing words?
1.  1 = W. on a U.
2.  5 = D. in a Z. C.
3.  57 = H. V.
4.  11 = P. on a F. T.
5.  1000 = W. that a P. is W.

Answers on Page 4.

Word Play, provided by Dr. Barbara Seabrook, is an Insights monthly feature which explores the creative use of language.
Last semester, Lakishia Banister was a student completing her degree in the UMES Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program; this semester she’s an ESL/English instructor for the Accomack County Public Schools on Virginia’s Eastern Shore.

Part of her successful preparation included 12 credits of teaching internship at Bennett Middle School in Salisbury with mentor teacher Tonya Wilson and at Bennett High School in Marjorie McDonald’s classroom. During her internship, Ms. Banister completed two research projects. The first involved studying the impact of group work; the second focused on the effect of music and “free write” on other writing assignments. She presented those results, along with other MAT interns, at a campus event held in December. As a teacher, Ms. Banister will use the results of her research when planning instructional projects.

Anxious to begin her professional teaching career, Ms. Banister interviewed in Accomack County, Virginia, four days before graduation. She was offered a position before the interview was over. An Eastern Shore native, Ms. Banister graduated from Nandua High School in Onley, Virginia, and earned an associate’s degree at Eastern Shore Community College. She completed a bachelor’s degree in English with a literature concentration and a minor in communication arts from Salisbury University. She graduated cum laude from SU in December 2011. She began the UMES MAT program to earn a master’s degree and teaching credentials a month later.

“I have always wanted to be a teacher and have worked with my children and their cousins helping them with their school assignments,” she said. “I want my children to do well in school and take advantage of all the educational opportunities available to them. As a teacher, I want to help all my students experience academic success and achieve their career goals.”

Ms. Banister lives in Salisbury with her husband, Maurice, and their three children. She has some sage advice for students, especially MAT students, who are working full-time and raising a family. “Do not procrastinate because there are so many projects and papers that need to be completed … you just can’t wait until the last minute.”

The MAT Program is an alternate route to teacher certification for anyone whose undergraduate degree is not in education. More information can be obtained on the UMES website or from Mary Agnew, the MAT coordinator.

Composition instructor Courtney Harned was invited to Broadwater Academy, a private, PreK through 12th grade, college preparatory day school in Exmore, Virginia, to meet with writing instructors earlier this year.

Her presentation, “Developing a Writing Program that is Competitive with Current Initiatives in Education,” was designed to achieve two goals. She reviewed how current public education issues — particularly the Common Core initiative — might impact private education. She also led a discussion of how to further develop critical thinking skills through the integration of language arts objectives.

Her presentation included ideas for increasing student engagement.

Faculty member David Johnson presented a workshop last month at the university’s Center for Access and Academic Success.

The program, “The Art of Note Taking,” provided specific tips to assist students in successfully completing their classes. The discussion was part of a series of CAAS workshops designed to improve student retention.
Spanish language instructor Carole Champagne and the chair of the UMES Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Ernest Boger, attended a legislative reception hosted by Maryland’s Secretary of State, John McDonough, earlier this year in Annapolis.

The event recognized the important role the Maryland International Consortium, the Sister State Committee, and the Sister Cities Associations play in solidifying international governmental and cultural ties which, in turn, create opportunities for economic agreements.

Dr. Champagne is affiliated with the Wicomico County Sister Cities International Association, a member of the Maryland International Consortium, and also serves on the executive committee of the Maryland Estonia Exchange Council.

The annual event provides an opportunity for state legislators and other officials to develop relationships with people from Maryland and around the world who promote and value a global view.

Estonia, Nigeria, and Russia sponsored cultural displays at the event. A number of international guests also attended.

“I met new Consortium friends from Japan and the Ukraine as well as from Russia and Nigeria,” Dr. Champagne said. “I look forward to next year’s legislative reception to reunite with our friends from across the Bay and around the world.”

ALUMNI UPDATE

LaToya Fewell, Class of 2006, will marry John Rosser IV on May 24. Mr. Rosser is a third grade math and science teacher at Rose Valley Elementary School in Prince George’s County, Maryland. Ms. Fewell is an executive coordinator in the School of Nursing at George Washington University.

Ashley Garrett, who graduated in May of 2013, is working with third graders as a before and after school teacher in the Friendship Charter Schools-Friendship Cares Extended Learning Program in Washington, D.C. While on campus, Ms. Garrett was an active member of Hawk Radio, the student managed internet radio station.

Jasmine Roberts earned her degree in December 2013 after just three and a half years. She’s now employed as a traffic assistant at CBS Radio. As an undergraduate, Ms. Roberts was an officer in the UMES chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, an international honor society, and worked as a peer tutor in the university’s writing center.

DON’T MISS THE DEADLINE FOR PELL GRANT RECIPIENTS TO APPLY FOR A GILMAN SCHOLARSHIP TO STUDY ABROAD DURING THE SUMMER OR FALL OF 2014. IT’S MARCH 4!

WORD PLAY ANSWERS FROM PAGE TWO:

1. 1 = Wheels on a Unicycle
2. 5 = Digits in a Zipcode
3. 57 = Heinz Varieties
4. 11 = Players on a Football Team
5. 1000 = Words that a Picture is Worth

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