MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE VICE PROVOST FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

It feels like 2015 went by too fast! But like the saying goes “time flies when you are having fun!” It has been a fun and busy semester since the publication of our last International Tiger. LSU searched for a new provost, the International Research Fair was very successful, we initiated a number of international partnerships, visited existing partners, and had some great conversations with alumni.

First and foremost, I want to inform you that we have a new Executive Vice President and Provost: Dr. Richard Koubek. He served in this position as interim since Dr. Stuart Bell departed LSU in July. Previously, Koubek served as the Dean of the College of Engineering. As Dean of the College of Engineering, he worked closely with International Programs in signing an agreement for the development of an undergraduate engineering program in Jakarta, Indonesia. We welcome Provost Koubek into this new leadership position and look forward to his guidance and support in continuing internationalization efforts at LSU.

The second International Research Fair was held on the LSU campus in mid-November and brought together the LSU community to recognize the work of international scholars at LSU. The fair was followed by an Intercultural Dialogue to discuss culture and food. Approximately 140 people attended the two events, held during International Education Week.

International Programs continues to make significant global connections, from the tropical islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe to the vast landscapes of China. I encourage you to browse our feature in this edition that highlights some of the many ways in which we at International Programs serve to strengthen ties between LSU and the world.

My enthusiasm in international work grows exponentially when our work is strongly supported by others. In late November, we announced to all current international students that we are accepting applications for the 2016 LSU Alumni Association International Student Scholarship. The merit based scholarship is open to current LSU international students who demonstrate leadership skills, diversity, and global engagement. It is awarded to four exceptional students: two undergraduate and two graduate. My hope for this scholarship is that it will serve as a motivator not only for the students already here at LSU, but also for future international students and their parents, who are just now considering options for higher education in the U.S. You want to send your children to an institution that makes the whole student experience a priority and rewards their scholarship, right? The scholarship was awarded for the first time last spring, and I am truly pleased to say that we offer this scholarship opportunity that recognizes and rewards exceptional international students. I am most appreciative of the LSU Alumni Association and their support for this opportunity. Please click here to access the scholarship announcement, and click here to watch the LSU Alumni Association video.

Happy Holidays Tiger Friends!

Hector O. Zapata, Ph.D.
Associate Vice Provost for International Programs
Past Presidents of the LSU Alumni Association Alumni Professor
LSU College of Art and Design Dean Alkis Tsolakis met with International Programs to discuss the importance of internationalization, not only in the College of Art and Design, but also at LSU as a whole. He told us that internationalization is fueled by “…the presence of a mentality that seeks to understand the world in a broader sense…you do that through knowledge”. Tsolakis, who is originally from Greece and is proficient in multiple languages, told us “language, to me, is an opening to cultures and different ways of thinking about things. Seeking this type of knowledge has allowed me to be more empathetic towards other people, no matter where they come from”.

Dean Tsolakis told us that his college has capacity for increased international student enrollment in all programs, and he believes that diversity and internationalization go hand in hand. He said that art students tend to embrace uniqueness, and are not afraid to be different; this makes integration into the College of Art and Design a little less challenging for international students. “Art is a universal language”, he states. He also mentioned that many of the faculty members from his college are either international or highly internationally engaged.

Recently, Dean Tsolakis traveled with the Louisiana delegation to Martinique and Guadeloupe, and he sees the Caribbean Basin as an area of great opportunity for collaboration with LSU, noting that LSU representatives comprised the majority of the delegation members. He mentioned other opportunities in the region, including Mexico and Central America. He noted that the thing he enjoyed most about Martinique and Guadeloupe was the people; he told us that the mix of cultures there has resulted in people who seem to be very accepting of each other’s differences.

Dean Tsolakis said, of studying abroad, “…when you live abroad and study abroad, and you go back, you’re not like the people who just stayed home”. He emphasized the impact of living abroad, and how important it is for Americans to learn to be global citizens. The College of Art and Design provides many programs, including summer programs and class excursions, that afford its students opportunities to study abroad. He hopes to see more integration between domestic and international students at LSU as internationalization permeates the university. “Internationalization is understanding each other, and working together to survive in this world,” he said.

He also applauded the efforts of the staff at International Programs. “I am very impressed with the services your office provides, and the speed in which it is provided,” he said. Dean Tsolakis acknowledged that maintaining international student and faculty records, paperwork, and protocol is complex work, and that the IP office does a wonderful job assisting the international population at LSU. He also noted that the promotion of programs abroad and efforts to pursue collaborations will continue to increase the internationalization of LSU.
LSU WOMEN’S BASKETBALL VIDEO INTERVIEW: ANNE PEDERSON & RINA HILL

LSU International Programs met with two international student athletes from the LSU Women’s Basketball team. Anne Pedersen (left) from Copenhagen, Denmark and Rina Hill (right) from Nagoya-Shi, Japan spoke about their experiences as international students and athletes, and what they have learned during their time abroad. Ms. Pedersen, who plays the position of guard and forward on the court, majored in sports administration commerce and is getting her masters in kinesiology. Ms. Hill, who plays point guard, is a junior majoring in business administration. She is the first Japanese native to play in SEC women’s basketball, as well as the first Japanese player in LSU history. Watch the video here to see what they have to say about their experiences at LSU and what their plans are for the future.

LSU HONORS IN CUBA

With the recent news of U.S.-Cuban relations being reestablished, the LSU Honors in Cuba program has become an even more attractive option for students. “This is our third year doing it,” said program coordinator Jeremy Joiner at the September study abroad fair. “We’ve seen growth every year since it began, but this is our first opportunity to recruit this year, so we’ll see if its popularity increases,” Joiner said. The program takes students to Cuba’s capital of Havana, and gives them the opportunity to learn about history, politics, and culture. Joiner said many students sign up for the trip because they have family ties to Cuba. He said a past student was even able to meet up with relatives during one of the excursions. Since the 1960s, Americans have been forbidden to travel to Cuba, but travel has been possible for educational purposes. “People are still trying to get the facts straight about the embargo, but I think the programs could see more participants due to the new regulations between us and Cuba,” Joiner said.

For more information about LSU/Honors in Cuba, please click here to visit the Academic Programs Abroad page.

Pictures of Cuba taken by students on the LSU Honors in Cuba program
Manuel Moreira is an international LSU alumnus who attended LSU in the late 1970s. He was born and raised in El Salvador, but knew since his high school days that he wanted to study abroad. “I came from a family that was in the agriculture and fertilizer business, so it seemed natural to choose an agricultural college,” Moreira said. He said that he preferred the business side to agriculture, and chose to major in agricultural economics. “I applied to several colleges, but decided on LSU because they responded to me in a week. It was very quick,” Moreira recalled. And so began his time abroad.

Moreira said LSU was a great experience. “I was always thirsty to learn, and I was always involved,” he said. As part of the LSU International Student Association, Moreira was exposed to many types of cultures and students from every background. “LSU has a cosmopolitan environment, and my experience as a student was very enriching and gratifying,” he said. “It greatly contributed to my knowledge of the world and others.”

During his time at LSU, Latin America was immersed in political and social turmoil. Moreira had no desire to return to El Salvador after his studies, but after visiting his family and seeing what was happening to his country, he decided to help. “New laws in El Salvador prohibited people, including my own family, from owning more than 300 acres of land. This was not economically efficient, and of course the demand for fertilizer and other agricultural products went down. I saw it as a challenge for me. I was a young professional with fresh ideas and I believed this could benefit my country,” he said.

Moreira worked in El Salvador for 27 years and formed the largest fertilizer company in the country. He attributes his ability to help farmers in the region become more efficient to his studies at LSU. In 2008, he relocated his family to California and began working in the insurance field. “I wanted greater opportunities for my kids,” Moreira said of his move to the U.S. “America has a rule of order that is wonderful, because you’re accountable for yourself and to society. There are many opportunities and the only thing that limits you is you.”

One way that Moreira suggested keeping LSU alumni engaged is through social media like Facebook and LinkedIn. He also said that publications, such as The International Tiger, are great ways to demonstrate how LSU is becoming more internationalized. Moreira has fond memories of his time in Louisiana and he said that it is great to see how LSU is trying to expand opportunities for students to interact with others. “Knowledge of other cultures is very important these days, and LSU provides opportunities abroad that are excellent.”

What do you think are some ways LSU can engage with alumni internationally?
Click here to offer your suggestions!

Would you like to share your story?
Please contact Jill Fisse jfisse@lsu.edu or Ashley Hermes ahermes@lsu.edu

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countryreports.org
ALUMNI FOCUS: GARY AVERY IN GERMANY

Curiosity. This is the word that Gary Avery uses to describe his desire to study abroad when he was a junior at LSU. He believes that curiosity is the main quality required for those who want to travel and for anyone wanting to learn about anything. “I was always curious about the world beyond the borders of Louisiana or the US, and about Germany in particular,” Avery said. This prompted his study abroad journey to Tübingen, Germany, where Avery studied mechanical engineering. After finishing his schooling abroad and at LSU, he landed a job at Porsche in Germany, where he still lives and works today. “I had a pretty direct route from studying mechanical engineering in Germany, to working in the automotive industry here,” Avery said. He says that getting a German degree directly influenced his ability to get a job in that country because of his knowledge of their engineering system.

“It’s important to stress that very few people who study abroad remain abroad,” Avery stated. “The vast majority come back home and bring a wealth of experience with them.” But Avery said his choice to stay in Germany was due to a personal attraction to the culture. “I intuitively understand and get along with Germans, and I feel extremely comfortable here,” Avery explained. He also says that making the move to finalize his stay in Germany wasn’t a straightforward process. Avery spent several years going back and forth from Germany to Louisiana with his studies until finally being in a position to pursue graduate school in Germany and look for jobs there.

Avery says working for Porsche has been very exciting and a dream for someone in his field. He is responsible for creating concepts for future transmissions, which allows him to combine analytical and creative thinking. Avery says LSU gave him a good foundation for basic engineering and general exposure to other academic subjects, like history, which he says helped prepared him for life in Europe. He says interaction with LSU’s international population also fueled his curiosity of other cultures.

“A student abroad has to be ready to be a real curiosity for the first time in their lives, the object of constant attention and a hot commodity socially. They will make a lot of friends very fast. It turned me into Superman!” Avery claims, explaining that it allowed him to discover what his strengths and weakness were in a way remaining at home could have never done. He says the experience greatly boosted his self-confidence and increased his understanding of others. “The most valuable thing about living abroad is there is no better way to understand the world and humanity than by seeing as much of it as possible,” Avery said. He gave examples of cultural experiences he had living abroad, “France: nothing bonds like spending 3-4 hours eating together. Through that experience, I learned just how French south Louisiana still is. Ireland: a good story is more about the art than the substance. England: we are all very, very wrong about “bland” English food and very right about English humor. Being abroad helps you understand the world and this wonderful web of connections like nothing else.” Avery says his piece of advice to students is to know enough of the language of the country to order a meal. He says not only are languages easier to learn than we suspect, but learning languages will give students a new perspective. “You’ll find that the rude French waiter does not exist once you learn “Je voudrais (I would like),” you’ll find that Italian is one long aria, and that we are separated from our English cousins by a common language. Languages are a wonderful thing, and they are the key to penetrating and understanding any culture.”
On November 17th, LSU International Programs, along with the LSU Cultural Planning Committee and the Office of Research and Economic Development, hosted the second annual International Research Fair in the LSU Union. There were ten exchange visitor participants from all over the world, presenting posters describing the impactful research they are conducting while at LSU. The purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program is to provide foreign nationals with opportunities to participate in educational and cultural programs in the United States and return home to share their experiences, and to encourage Americans to participate in educational and cultural programs in other countries.

Participants at the International Research Fair were encouraged to not only describe their research, but also to tell their own international stories; how they got here, where they are from, and why their research is globally relevant. Presentation topics included computer science, petroleum engineering, pathobiological sciences, biomedical sciences, food science, chemistry, physics, mathematics, and radiation safety.

Opening remarks for the research fair were given by Dr. Matt Lee, Vice Provost for Academic and Support Services. With an introduction by Dr. Randy Duran, Gordon A. Cain Chair for STEM Literacy and Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research at LSU, Dr. Anne-Catherine Ohlmann, Director General of the Foundation of the University Rhone-Alpes, spoke about educational exchange opportunities in Grenoble, France for students, faculty, and staff.

Audience members were able to walk around to the different participants’ posters to ask questions and learn about their work. A panel of judges selected winners, who were given prizes graciously donated by Manship Theatre, LSU Rural Life Museum, the LSU Department of Theatre, and Cultural Programming Committee member Jeannie Williamson. First place went to Dr. Ma. Del Rocio Baños-Lara, second place was a tie between Dr. Alexandra Noel and Ms. Valentina Rosasco, and third place went to Dr. Pushpendra Singh. All are doing research in the field of pathobiological sciences, with the exception of Ms. Rosasco, whose specialization is food science.
On Thursday, November 19, 2015, as part of International Education Week, LSU International Programs, along with the LSU Cultural Programming Committee, hosted the Intercultural Dialogue Event in the LSU Union Atchafalaya Room. The event was open to the public. Loveness Schafer, Associate Director for International Programs/International Services and LSU Cultural Programming Committee Chair, planned the event and gave opening remarks. The purpose of the dialogue was to provide an opportunity for visiting scholars, visiting students, faculty, researchers, and other members of the LSU community, to have cross cultural conversations and discussions. The topic for the discussion was food. Selected faculty, graduate students, and food service professionals served as moderators for several roundtable discussions on subjects such as food security, food deserts/access to food, food and nutrition, food production and the environment, food preparation, food safety, food supplements, and fast/slow food.

Dr. John Westra (LSU Department of Agricultural Economics), discussing Food Production and the Environment with visiting scholars

Judith Myhand (LSU), Alvin Hymel (Owner, Our Daily Bread), and Susan Karimiha (LSU AgCenter) tell the group of their discussion on food and nutrition, food supplements, and fast/slow food

Noah Lessard (Sous Chef, P.F. Chang’s) and Bennett Dzandu (LSU) discuss food preparation, food quality, and food safety with participants

Professor Bruce Sharky moderates a discussion on Food Access & Security
INTERNATIONAL GRADUATES: 2014 - 2015 FACTS

International Programs would like to congratulate LSU’s international students who graduated during the 2014 – 2015 academic year! There were 392 international graduate and undergraduate students who completed their studies at LSU. They came from 62 countries and represented 109 majors, including bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees. The graphs below highlight the countries with the highest number of students who graduated this past year as well as the top majors. These countries account for 74% of the graduates from the 2014 - 2015 academic year, and 50% of these students majored in the concentrations shown in the bottom graph. The graph in the middle highlights China as Louisiana’s top export partner. China also happens to be the top country of origin for students who graduated in 2014 - 2015. Canada and Colombia are Louisiana’s third and sixth highest export partners, respectively, and LSU had seven Colombian and six Canadian students graduate last year.
International students pose by their float, with some dressed in traditional garments from their country.

A view of the crowd from the ICC float.

Homecoming decoration at an LSU sorority as seen from the ICC float.

Michael Panther and Bianca Webb were the 2015 Homecoming King and Queen. Panther is the first international student to be named Homecoming King in LSU history.

Floats pass by spectators at LSU.

The International float drives through Sorority Row.
FOSTERING GLOBAL CONNECTIONS
Louisiana Delegation Visits Université des Antilles

International Programs continues to make significant global connections. As a follow up to the visit in July to LSU by French Consul General Gregor Trumel, the Consulate of France in New Orleans organized a Louisiana delegation to visit Martinique and Guadeloupe in September to explore collaboration possibilities with Université des Antilles. Delegation members included: Mr. Raymond Hinz (Attaché, Consulate General of France in New Orleans), Dr. David Rowe (President, Centenary College of Louisiana), Mr. Charles Larroque (Executive Director, CODOFIL), Dr. Hector Zapata (Associate Vice Provost for International Programs, LSU), Dr. Kenya LeNoir Messer (Associate Vice Provost for Diversity, LSU), Mr. Alkis Tsolakis (Dean, College of Art and Design, LSU), Dr. Alexandre Leupin (Professor, Department of French Studies, LSU), Dr. Kenneth Fasching-Varner (Associate Professor, School of Education, LSU), Dr. Richard Speaker (Interim Chairperson, Associate Professor, College of Education & Human Development, University of New Orleans), Dr. Susan Spillman (William Arceneaux Endowed Professor of French, Xavier University of Louisiana), and Dr. Juliana Starr (Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Foreign Languages, University of New Orleans).

The primary purpose of the visit was to interact with stakeholders at the Martinique and Guadeloupe campuses and identify collaboration opportunities that have traditionally linked Louisiana to the French culture of the Islands. These potential opportunities include French education, French culture, history, music and arts, agriculture, student and faculty exchanges, and more. Click here to watch videos highlighting the significance of the partnership.
Dr. Hector Zapata, Associate Vice Provost for International Programs, has mentored Chinese scientists in econometrics for the past two years at LSU, and was invited to visit two universities in China on November 3-11, 2015 to give presentations on his work. He was hosted by Dr. Ying Tan, Associate Professor in the College of Economics and Management at South China Agricultural University, and by Dr. Rong Chen, Associate Professor in the Department of Economics, Sichuan Agricultural University. Both Dr. Tan and Dr. Chen spent a year at LSU as exchange visitors conducting research. The visit will pave the way for further collaboration between LSU and the two universities.
FOSTERING GLOBAL CONNECTIONS
Dr. Hector Zapata Serves as Commencement Speaker
For UNITEC-La Ceiba

Dr. Hector Zapata, Associate Vice Provost for International Programs, was invited to give a keynote speech at the commencement ceremony at UNITEC’s La Ceiba campus (CEUTEC de UNITEC) on October 23, 2015. While in Honduras, he had the opportunity to strengthen ties with education leaders in Honduras, including Minister of Education of Honduras, Dr. Marlon Escoto, and to reinforce the partnership that exists between LSU and UNITEC.

Dr. Harald Leder: Director of Academic Programs Abroad Speaks With German Students About LSU Exchange Opportunities

From October 31 to November 9, 2015, Dr. Harald Leder, Director of International Programs/Academic Programs Abroad traveled to Germany to conduct site visits at partner universities. However, the purpose of his visit to the University of Marburg was two-fold, as Dr. Leder was invited to give a presentation to commemorate the tenth anniversary of LSU and Marburg’s exchange relationship, which coincides with the tenth anniversary of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. As highlighted in the Fall 2015 edition of The International Tiger, the University of Marburg (Philipps-Universität Marburg) was one of several institutions in Germany that was attended by students impacted by the storms. These students received life changing scholarships offered by the German government. Dr. Leder’s presentation concerned LSU’s role during and after Hurricane Katrina, and he also presented letters of thanks from LSU President and Chancellor F. King Alexander. He spoke to potential exchange students from Marburg about opportunities to study at LSU, participating in Marburg’s Study Abroad Fair. While in Germany, Dr. Leder also visited the University of Applied Sciences Weihenstephan/Triesdorf and the RWTH Aachen University to explore study abroad opportunities for LSU students, and to promote LSU.

To read the article commemorating the Hurricane Katrina/Rita scholarships, click here.
Louisiana: A Leading State for Foreign Direct Investment

According to the 2015 Global FDI Trends report published by Business Facilities, greenfield FDI (foreign direct investment) showed signs of recovery in 2014 on a global basis, with capital investment increasing by an estimated 1 percent and job creation by 17 percent. However, the number of overall FDI projects decreased by 1 percent. The U.S. and China are the leading locations that received FDI in 2014, with China claiming No. 1 when ranked by capital investment and the U.S. claiming No. 1 when ranked by the number of announced FDI projects.

Within North America, the leading locations landing these projects (ranked by capital investment) were Ontario, California, Texas, South Carolina, Virginia, New York, Tennessee, Quebec, Louisiana and Illinois. Louisiana alone captured 3 percent of all North American locations in 2014 (ranked by capital investment). When these locations are ranked on a per capita basis, Louisiana is the leading U.S. state for the attraction of foreign direct investment (based upon capital investment).

The process of attracting international companies to expand or locate in a particular state is an extremely competitive process. Louisiana’s top competitors for foreign direct investment typically include our neighbor to the west, Texas; other Gulf Coast states; Mexico; and Eastern European locations.

Demonstrating the “Louisiana Advantage” to international companies is a primary role of Louisiana Economic Development’s Office of International Commerce (OIC); its board of directors, the Louisiana Board of International Commerce (LaBIC); and the state’s local and regional economic development partners. Attracting FDI to Louisiana is important because it creates competitive jobs for our citizens (58,300 in 2012) and improves our economy by contributing to productivity growth, by generating exports, and by increasing expenditures in innovative research and development.

OIC and LaBIC use a strategic approach to attract international companies to our state. This approach includes identifying global companies in growth patterns, establishing relationships with key decision-makers in these companies, listening to critical issues in a location decision, and providing Louisiana solutions. Establishing these relationships takes time and patience, as OIC frequently works with companies that are new to the U.S. market and can be cautious about their investment decisions.

The Office of International Commerce is constantly identifying new investment opportunities and following up with existing prospects. We welcome leads on quality companies around the world that should be contacted about the advantages of a Louisiana location. To learn more about Louisiana’s international economic development opportunities, please visit our website at OpportunityLouisiana.com/International-Commerce.

Kathe Falls
Executive Director, International Commerce
Louisiana Economic Development

If you would like to donate to the International Programs Development Fund to help establish scholarships for study abroad and for international students, please visit our LSU Foundation donations page:

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