

English Language Institute

Interactions

2022 ANNUAL HOLIDAY MAGAZINE FOR OUR FRIENDS IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY



CONNECTIONS

Dear ELI Friend,

In September, I **embarked** on my first international flight since the onset of the pandemic in early 2020. After nearly three years of being grounded, I could not have been more excited, for what awaited our little **delegation** was the pleasure of hosting three UD alumni reunions in Oman (Muscat) and Saudi Arabia (Khobar and Riyadh). Collectively some 100 alumni turned out for the celebrations. Many had earned UD degrees, but nearly all of them had attended the ELI. Each one **beamed** with Blue Hen pride.

During my visit to Saudi Arabia, I attended a fourth, more private reunion.

In the fall of 1981, the year I first joined the ELI faculty, I welcomed one of the first cohorts of scholarship students from that country. They were barely eighteen, and I was only six years **their senior**. We quickly bonded and several of us grew close during the **intervening** years, even sharing a reunion in 1998. Now, four decades after their having graduated from the ELI, this gathering took on special significance.

ELI alumnus and dear friend Ibrahim Al Thwakeb ('82) drove me to his family's ranch outside of Dhahran, where he had prepared for me a night to remember. Awaiting me was a feast fit for a king, a horse show featuring 50 of the finest Arabian **stallions**, and the presentation of an award marking our four decades of friendship. Soon, I was greeted by Ibrahim's extended family and neighbors, along with fellow ELI alumnus Hasan Al Yami (82).

Over the years, Ibrahim, the **revered elder statesman** of his class of 1982, had personally enrolled in ELI, along with his own son Ahmed ('10) and daughter Miriam ('11), some 40 sons and daughters of co-workers and friends.

One of these was Mohammed Al Rowaished ('07), a second generation ELI student whose parents, Bader ('82, KSA) and Mitzilla ('82, Panama) had actually met in my class 40 years earlier and fallen in love, marking the first of many **transnational** marriages whose matches began in the ELI classroom. Years later, Mohammed lived with and became part of my family during his time at the ELI. Now, at this reunion, I was congratulating him on *his* upcoming marriage.

During the evening, Ibrahim Alkhaldi ('82) telephoned his greeting. A bold and visionary entrepreneur, Alkhaldi is also a generous man, having previously **interceded** to pay the UD tuition for Bosnian student and ELI alumnus Nerman Zubaca ('15), who went on to earn his master degree from UD.

As you can see, ELI reunions are really family reunions. The multi-generational ELI family tree includes members known for loyalty to the learning community.

Their experience of immersive diversity over the passing weeks conveyed them from bias to tolerance and broader understanding and, ultimately, to

friendship and even love for classmates whose stories, though woven of different cloth, **resonated** with the shared truth of humanity. So it was on this **ark** carrying students of seemingly every country, race, language, and faith that connections soon formed. Nearly everything about the ELI fosters relational encounters: its small classes, its committed faculty forming close student rapport in and out of the classroom, the intimacy of tutoring, caring advisors, and its bond-building traditions and cultural programs. At their best, our graduates emerge as global citizens, more generous, compassionate, thoughtful, and understanding.

Sometimes they arrive already possessing those qualities and leave their **indelible** mark on everyone whose lives they touch. Just a few weeks ago, I bid a tearful farewell to one such alumna, Carolina Correa ('95), who after completing her ELI studies (graduating with honors and as valedictorian), went on to earn her BA, MA, and Ph.D.--all at UD--before coming full circle in 2013 to join the ELI

faculty, where for nine years she inspired thousands of future ELI alumni and current colleagues through her courage, passion, and overflowing love of life and for people from every background. Now, she will pay forward what she feels she has gained from the ELI by **imparting** the gift of language to U.S. Foreign Service employees seeking to master Portuguese. For Carolina, her ties to the ELI live on: "You are my forever family!"

As Carolina reminds us, family isn't just about blood and genes; it's about who you care about, the human connections which the passing of time only deepens. For many of our 20,000 alumni, their connection to ELI classmates, teachers, and staff is a family

bond born of a shared journey **traversing** the barriers of language and culture to discover a deeper kinship of understanding and respect. And so from our ELI family to yours, we wish you a joy-filled 2023.

Sincerely,



Scott Stevens,
ELI Director

I want to thank the leadership of the Newsletter Committee, Kate Copeland and Scott Duarte, as well as their entire team of editors and writers for their labor of love in crafting this year's excellent publication.



Scott Stevens was treated to a traditional meal at the home of Ibrahim Al Thwakeb (left of Stevens) during ELI Alumni Association events in Saudi Arabia in September.

GLOSSARY

embark: to start to do something new or difficult

delegation: a group of people who represent the views of an organization

to beam: to have a big, happy smile

their senior: a person who is older

intervening: coming or existing between two events

stallions: a type of horse

revered: to feel great respect or admiration

elder statesman: any experienced and respected person whose advice or work is valued

transnational: involving many different countries

intercede: to act or interpose in behalf of someone in difficulty or trouble

resonate: to be similar to what someone thinks or believes

ark: a large vessel that carries people or animals

indelible: impossible to forget or remove

impart: to pass information, knowledge, etc. to other people

traverse: to cross

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œAn Evolving ELI

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SABIC in NOLA

Glossary definitions originate from Oxford Learner's Dictionaries at https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english or dictionary.com.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE MISSION STATEMENT

The ELI's mission statement, drafted in 1999, has withstood the test of time. It has provided a solid foundation for the ELI's resilience in the face of challenges and remains a guiding beacon during the current period of profound change.

Through an unwavering commitment to excellence and renewal, the ELI faculty and staff endeavor each day to enhance our reputation as a leader among intensive English programs. Our leadership is based on a clear understanding of our goals and the means to achieve them.

As teachers, tutors, administrators and staff, we strive to:

- *Meet or exceed our students' expectations for developing their linguistic, academic, and professional skills.*
- *Contribute to international understanding by engaging students in meaningful inter-cultural exploration.*
- *Provide our students with the support and services they require to make the transition from their own countries to life in the United States.*
- *Meet the ordinary and extraordinary needs of our students, ensuring that their experience at ELI is productive and fulfilling.*
- *Recruit only the most talented and experienced English language specialists and staff and promote their continued professional growth.*
- *Assume personal responsibility for solving problems, value each other as highly as we do our clients, and support each other in our work.*
- *Manage our resources, attaining financial viability without compromising the outstanding value of an ELI education.*
- *Enrich the University of Delaware and the local community, fostering cross-cultural communication and interaction.*

Building Connections Within and Beyond

by Kate Copeland and Sarah Petersen; Contributors: Denise Davis, Tobias Lemke, Kate Zincone

“Every success is the result of collaboration.”

This was ELI Director of Admissions Kirsten Brown’s conclusion at the ELI’s annual retreat in May, at the end of a day of reviewing the many connections the ELI has made in service of its two-fold mission: language and academic skill development, and fostering cross-cultural interaction within the Institute, across UD and around the world.

RE-CONNECTING THE ELI

Over 40 years, scores of talented people have worked in different areas at the ELI to build innovative English programs, courses and services for English learners **of every stripe**. Although the ELI has always enjoyed a culture of collaboration, the proliferation of these in-demand offerings meant that sometimes faculty and staff were not always fully aware of the great things happening outside their own teams.

While the pandemic might have had an isolating effect in many circumstances, it provided, **paradoxically**, an opportunity to organizationally connect across the ELI’s internal teams.

“It has allowed us to break out of our **silos** to work together, share resources, maximize productivity, and align our work groups toward common goals, sometimes in previously untried ways,” said academic development specialist (ADS) Robbie Bushong, who now serves as the Institute’s IEP program manager.

Teacher-to-teacher relationships have also strengthened. “Because we’ve all shared a challenging professional experience over recent years, we’ve become even more flexible as teachers and more intentionally mutually supportive of each other,” observed ADS Ruwida Al Krekshi.

“As a teacher, I have always liked being part of a team,” Nonie Bell added. “I have learned so much about teaching just by being a member of the ELI.”

Nonie Bell recalled, “In my early years, the 189 West Main Street house (now primarily an administrative building) was the hub of staff and faculty, a busy place with a **camaraderie** that was full of fun and creative energy, and a desire to help that characterized all of the faculty and staff.”

Now that the ELI has migrated back to more in-person instruction, the reinvigorated “hub” of creative energy has migrated to 108 East Main Street, where most classes and activities are currently held.

These days, Bell often joins other ELI teachers for a weekly online chat in the Online Pedagogy Reading Group (OPRG). Colleagues meet on Zoom to discuss and connect a selected short reading to their teaching experience. Any ELI instructor can pop in.

Facilitated by Associate Professor Nigel Caplan, the OPRG initially formed out of a collective desire to discuss the challenges of online language instruction. The group has since broadened its scope to explore other current **pedagogical** issues, virtual or otherwise; any topic relevant to those participating is **fair game**.

GLOSSARY

of every stripe: of all types

paradoxically: a person, thing, or situation that has two opposite features and therefore seems strange

silo: places of isolation

camaraderie: a feeling of friendship and trust among people who work or spend a lot of time together



ELI faculty discussing teaching practice during the Online Pedagogy Reading Group’s weekly meeting. Top: Nigel Caplan, Kate Copeland, Wakako Pennington; Middle: Ana Kim, Nonie Bell, Ross Fenske; Bottom: Ken Hyde, Adil Bentahar, Sarah Petersen

ADS and academic advisor Ross Fenske commented, “The free-flowing discussions have helped to generate creative ideas of our own and transform challenges into possibilities.”

ADS Wakako Pennington shared that, with its **low-key** informal format, many colleagues have come to look forward to the weekly Zoom meetings; “It’s a comfortable space to **decompress**, rejuvenate, and reinvigorate our inspiration for the teaching profession.”

Staff member Ken Hyde, who coordinates the International Teaching Assistant Training Program (ITA) (he’s also the ELI registrar and tutoring center manager), reported that another group has come into being from similar needs. Hyde began meeting on Zoom initially with colleagues from a few other university ITA programs, such as Missouri State, Harvard, and the University of California, Riverside.

“Now, the ITA working group has at least 30 members from universities all over the United States,” said Hyde, adding that the group has been **invaluable** for problem solving and discussing new policies in a new university landscape.

“It’s very much like the OPRG meetings,” observed Hyde, who also participates in that group.

“Connection is important,” Hyde continued. “It’s hard to develop new solutions in a vacuum. The **silver lining** is that technology fell into place in order to meet emergency needs, and that was quickly followed by the revelation that we really need to be connected in order to succeed.”

“I am a great appreciator of silver linings,” Hyde concluded with a grin.

Thus, lessons from the pandemic have shined a light on the resilience, agility and **esprit de corps** that ELI faculty and staff have long been known for.

pedagogical: concerning teaching methods

fair game: considered acceptable to play jokes on or criticize

low-key: not intended to attract a lot of attention

decompress: calm down and relax

invaluable: extremely useful

silver lining: the positive side of something bad

esprit de corps: feelings of pride, care, and support for each other, etc. that are shared by the members of a group

CONNECTING ACROSS UD

The ELI has long partnered across campus to support UD-bound international students. Guided by UD's recently adopted strategic plan to expand both **interdisciplinary** and global opportunities and to foster a diverse, inclusive and intercultural community, the ELI has continued to strengthen these partnerships.

"There are very few offices that we are not cooperating with," remarked ELI Director Scott Stevens.

Karen Asenavage, director of academic programs, noted "colleagues across UD are interested in being involved because they have heard about the excellent teaching and program culture we have built. The ELI, UD departments and, most importantly, our students benefit from this collaboration."

International and linguistically diverse learners are indeed benefitting from the fruits of these and other cross-departmental connections with expanding options for learning opportunities.

In partnership with UD's international admissions representatives, ELI admissions staff Kirsten Brown, Jeanine Feltner, and ELI Special Academic Programs Manager MariaJosé Riera frequently participate in key joint events and campus tours and share resources, insights and student data to welcome degree-seeking international students through a range of admissions options.

One of the first jointly coordinated programs, **Academic Transitions (AT)** has been a major pathway toward matriculation to UD for undergraduate international students since its inception in 2016. In addition to English instruction, students select from an array of credit courses in leadership, personal health management, art history, anthropology, Chinese calligraphy, computer science, math, physics, and chemistry, and benefit from smaller class sizes and a dedicated instructional assistant (IA). [See profile of IA Elizabeth O'Connor, p. 20]

Tobias Lemke, AT Coordinator for Program Assessment and Faculty Development, pointed out that AT faculty, drawn from across the university, often collaborate with ELI instructors in creative ways. Anthropology instructor



ELI Special Academic Programs Manager MariaJosé Riera and UD Assistant Director of International Admission Erin Bastien co-hosted Dr. Zaid Zabanoot, Cultural Attaché, and Moayed Al-Hawazi, Head Academic Advisor for the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman during a visit to the UD campus.

GLOSSARY

interdisciplinary: involving different areas of knowledge or study

Brian Peasnall and Assistant Professor R. Scott Partridge recently collaborated to integrate specific content to the program's English 110 course.

"It made the English reading and writing skills more relevant and meaningful to students taking those courses together," Lemke noted.

Feltner and Caplan, newly appointed Manager of Graduate Programs, also work closely with the UD Graduate College to support the **Graduate Conditional Admissions** and new **Graduate Pathways** programs. "We also advise graduate departments on their marketing materials and development of new grad programs," said Caplan.

Graduate Communication Workshop (GRCO 620), a credit course taught by Caplan, is one of those new ideas. Initially developed to comply with visa regulations during the pandemic, it is now regularly offered in spring and fall. Primarily for matriculated multilingual and international grad students, the course is open to any UD graduate student seeking support in learning the **genres**, language and conventions of their field of study.

Yet another **fledgling** program coordinated by the ELI, **University Semester-USA** mirrors UD's 100-year tradition of study abroad programs to other countries. US-USA welcomed several undergraduate students from South Korea and Japan this year for a semester at UD.

BEGIN AT HOME, CONTINUE ON CAMPUS

"Many of our programs are now designed so that students can begin their studies with courses online and join us at the UD campus later," Asenavage explained.

With the adoption of new technologies and increased capacity with digital tools worldwide, it is now common for ELI faculty to teach hybrid classes with a mix of students, some online, some in person, depending on their circumstances and where they are in their course of study.

Masoumeh Sadeghinejad, a doctoral candidate in UD's department of physiology, first took ELI English courses from her home in Iran before arriving on campus in February. Sadeghinejad said that taking courses online was an efficient way to **brush up** her English and "allowed me to start my Ph.D. program on schedule, even during the Covid-19 pandemic. This opportunity opened new doors for me."

The **SWUFE-UD Institute of Data Science** is a new joint collaboration that also leverages online learning to open doors to UD degree programs. A partnership between the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in Chengdu, China and UD's Lerner College of Business and Economics, students spend their first three years at the SWUFE campus and will complete their fourth year at the UD campus, majoring in management information systems, finance or operations management.



Students at Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in Chengdu, China attend online ELI English classes as part of their degree program in UD's Lerner College of Business.

genres: a particular type or style of something that you can recognize because of its special features

fledgling: a person, an organization, or a system that is new and without experience

brush up: to quickly improve a skill, especially when you have not used it for a time

A-UD STUDENT SPOTLIGHT CASPER NERPIN, SWEDEN

Casper Nerpin is an international student athlete at the University of Delaware, taking courses through the Accelerate U-Delaware Program (A-UD). Nerpin arrived from Sweden in August to begin the fall semester as a member of the Blue Hen golf team.

Originally from Stockholm, Nerpin lived most recently in Gothenburg, Sweden, the global headquarters of Volvo Group where his father was employed. He spent his early childhood playing soccer and was first introduced to the game of golf at the age of ten in Norway, where his family had relocated for a few years.

“Golf is different in the U.S.,” Nerpin explained. “In Scandinavia, it’s a small sports circle, so everyone knows each other. Here there is a larger playing field. Also, my experience is mostly with individual international tournaments. Playing golf on a team is a lot different.”

During a visit and tour of the UD campus last March, Nerpin had the opportunity to meet the golf coaches and liked the way they thought about the game. He also enjoyed meeting his future team mates.

Now, as a freshman and starting member of the team, Nerpin has already begun **making his mark**. He was the Blue Hens’ top finisher, with a “two under par” in the season-opening Tiger Intercollegiate Tournament at the Turning Stone Resort in Verona, New York -- his **debut** tournament in the U.S. In golf **jargon**, “under par” means the opposite of what one might guess; the fewer **strokes** of the club used to land the ball into the hole, the better. In fact, following his impressive performance helping to lead the Blue Hens to third place in the September match, Nerpin was named the Colonial Athletic Association Men’s Golfer of the Week.

Nerpin has an interest in communications and is currently taking A-UD courses in leadership, anthropology, and political science.

Nerpin said he appreciates his instructors’ understanding of the needs of first year international students; “They are very kind, and always check on understanding of the content.”

Nerpin’s days begin quite early at the gym with team workouts before heading to his first class. With a full schedule of tournaments, team practices and classes, Nerpin said finding time to study can sometimes be a challenge.

“I really have to organize my free time, especially when an exam is coming, because weekends are usually filled with tournaments.”

He enjoys spending time with his teammates and has even found time to attend his first UD football game. A favorite time in his busy week is the team’s yoga class every Friday.

“Even though it may not be my teammates’ favorite thing,” he remarked with a grin, “It calms me and I feel pretty good. It’s probably when I am the happiest.”



Caspar Nerpin, Blue Hen Golf athlete & A-UD student

Thanks to the ELI’s now well recognized **agility** with online instruction, ELI faculty stepped in to meet this program’s need for customized online freshman English courses for more than 60 students currently “Zooming in” from China.

Partridge, who teaches and coordinates several of the courses, said, “These capable and talented students have very full schedules within their own university system, yet they readily respond whenever required to do so in my online classes.”

One of the more significant newly developed programs with capacity for “blended learning” is **Accelerate-U Delaware (A-UD)**. A-UD increasingly supports departments with directly admitted international students, that is, students who did not first complete a program at the ELI.

“Like the AT program,” Lemke pointed out, “it offers specialized academic and linguistic support during their first semester on campus to build a strong foundation for success.”

A-UD program coordinator Julie Lopez commented, “Students really appreciate the personalized attention and community of other international students going through the same cultural adjustments they are.”

Former A-UD student Yehee Hwang said that the computer science class she took through the program really helped prepare her to begin in that major.

“Because of that I am now a teaching assistant in that class (CISC106) this semester,” Hwang reported.

International athletes in UD’s sports programs, including golf, tennis, soccer, field hockey and swimming, have also gone through the A-UD program, added Asenavage. “They often begin the program online in the summer so that they can be on campus for pre-season team practice.”

Leveraging Riera’s specialized insight on education in the Gulf region, the ELI/UD partnership has welcomed several students from Oman in both the AT and A-UD programs. This fall, 44 undergraduate Omani scholars began a customized blended program coordinated by Riera, completing online coursework from their home country while waiting for their US visas. They are now **stateside** embarking on a foundational year of studies in STEM

(science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and ESAM (education, social sciences, arts and management).

International teaching assistants (ITAs) are a vital part of the UD academic community. The **ITA Training Program**, coordinated by Ken Hyde, prepares international graduate students for teaching assistantships in nearly every department at UD. As online training has now made it more accessible to grad students making their way to the US, the program has grown **exponentially**, having trained its largest cohort of ITAs from 42 different countries this summer.



Asila Al Maskari, from Oman, and Shahad Futayni, from Saudi Arabia exchanged information during their orientation to the UD campus this fall.

Photo Credits: Mark Campbell

GLOSSARY

make a mark: to do something that makes one famous or successful

debut: the first public appearance of a performer or sports player

jargon: words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group of people

stroke: an act of hitting a ball

agility: able to think quickly and in an intelligent way

leverage: the ability to influence what people do

stateside: connected with the U.S.; in or toward the U.S.

exponentially: (of a rate of increase) becoming faster and faster

FROM SEEDS TO TREES

“**Kernels** of collaboration have germinated into flourishing, well rooted trees,” remarked Associate Director for Special Programs Baerbel Schumacher. One such collaboration established a partnership in 2017 between the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) and Bernardo O’Higgins University in Chile for four agricultural students to travel to Newark for a month of study.

While at UD, the students enjoyed a day of conversational English instruction facilitated by the ELI. Their positive response led to a full four-week integrated English program for subsequent visiting groups, supported by funding from the U.S. Embassy in Chile.

This summer, a dozen O’Higgins students came to UD to take formal UD classes, refine their English language skills, and interact with other international students while immersing themselves in American culture.

Many O’Higgins students, who are from diverse backgrounds, receive scholarships that afford them opportunities for travel and education that they might not otherwise have.

“Since I was a child, I knew that I wanted to discover the world,” noted Tomas Moreno, an O’Higgins student studying to become an English teacher. “I feel proud of what I’ve done here and I think that this has been the beginning of a life-changing experience.”

“These opportunities always start small and develop organically into bigger opportunities,” said Schumacher. “This tiny little kernel has developed into a robust annual program and promises to continue to grow.”



Students from Bernardo O’Higgins University in Chile relaxing at the ELI summer picnic

CONNECTING UD TO THE WORLD

The rapid uptake of technology has also served to connect new constituents of international students to educational opportunities that had not been readily available before.

As the global education market sees greater demand for high caliber online and blended programs, Schumacher observed, “ELI offerings have been praised for the high quality instruction. Institutional partners are now sponsoring groups of students for online and blended programs on a regular basis.”

GLOSSARY

kernels: seeds



Special program students from Japan enjoyed some fresh-made ice cream at the UDairy Creamery, run by UD agriculture students.

The ELI welcomed more than 225 students this year from several sponsoring universities in Japan and South Korea in programs that were either wholly online or a blend of online courses paired with a stay at the UD campus.

Schumacher also pointed to ELI’s online communication courses **tailored** for business professionals or municipal office workers who join classes from their homes or workplaces.

Online learning is also bringing the ELI to “next generation” students. Alumna Zhanna Alsar (Kazakhstan, ’09) recently expressed her gratitude for being able to connect her young daughter to the same quality of instruction she enjoyed, this time through online tutoring;

“The teachers immediately won her over with their friendly attitude. She loved that they were interested in life in her country, asking about our customs, culture, and her own interests. I am so glad that we discovered this format for practicing the language.”

Nowhere has the online meeting proven so transformative than in the area of recruiting and marketing. ADS Wakako Pennington, who coordinates the Japanese special programs, explained that prior to the pandemic, visits to schools and travel to international education fairs were considered the most effective way to meet potential clients. Now, individuals and institutions reach out digitally. Within the space of two years, online fairs have come to be recognized as the new **gold standard** in recruitment.



Zhanna Alsar with daughter Malika; ELI students past and present

SEE **BUILDING CONNECTIONS** ON PAGE 16

tailored: to make or adapt something for a particular purpose, a particular person
gold standard: a high level of quality that others try to copy

An Evolving ELI for an Evolving World

by Kate Copeland and Sarah Petersen



Director Scott Stevens sharing a thought with newly arrived students during orientation at the ELI's central location at 108 East Main Street

"We're getting our **vibe** back," observed Jennifer Rippon.

The pandemic was a **catalyzing** force that led to many sweeping changes at UD and within the ELI. Rippon and a cross section of other ELI personnel were asked by *Interactions* reporters to reflect on the ways the Institute has evolved to meet changing needs and **leverage** new opportunities.

A SMALLER ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

When, as adjunct faculty, Rippon came back in 2022 after a three-year **hiatus**, she returned to more centralized ELI facilities. A move to concentrate instructional operations at 108 East Main Street had reduced the number of physical locations across campus, not only reducing **overhead** and energy consumption but also reconnecting faculty and staff who had previously worked and taught in five separate campus locations—a win-win for the environment and the Institute.

SAME FACES, NEW HATS

Along with spatial restructuring, faculty and staff have assumed new combinations of roles to form more streamlined teams.

Director Scott Stevens remarked, "As we have all stretched to take on new challenges, we have discovered all kinds of talent. In my 40 odd years at ELI, I find that is what **reinvigorates** me."

Associate Professor Nigel Caplan, having **spearheaded** the ELI's transition to online operations in 2020, is now the online program manager and heads up the Instructional Technology Committee, which works to support expanding technology needs for face-to-face, online and hybrid classes.

GLOSSARY

vibe: a mood or an atmosphere produced by a particular person, thing, or place

catalyzing: something that causes reactions to happen faster

leverage: the ability to influence what people do

hiatus: a pause in activity when nothing happens

overhead: regular costs that you have when you are running an organization

reinvigorate: to give new energy or strength to something or someone

Matt Matterer, previously a listening lab assistant, now creates advertising graphics for ELI events and provides technology support along with Caplan, while also manning the front desk at 108 East Main Street.

Academic development specialist (ADS) Robbie Bushong took on many of the tasks previously performed by Associate Director Joe Matterer after his retirement in 2020. ADS Brandon Jackson's teaching and listening lab **gigs** have expanded to include advising special academic program students.

Former AT course and cohort instructor Laura White is now the Institute's financial coordinator. Having **worn several hats** since joining the ELI, White said, "I am sure that I could not do this job as effectively if I had not worked in other **capacities** and on other teams at the ELI. That organizational knowledge has been key to being able to do the work I do now."

Ana Kim and Wakako Pennington, both ADS instructors, added new roles in marketing and recruitment in the South Korean and Japanese

markets, respectively. Maria José Riera, long involved with students under SABIC sponsorship [see "SABIC goes to NOLA" on Page 10], is now special academic programs manager. All three work closely with Assistant Director for International Projects Baerbel Schumacher, with ELI admissions and recruitment and marketing teams, and with other ELI faculty to highlight more of what potential students want.

A CROSS-CAMPUS TALENT EXCHANGE

Several ELI staff have moved into new positions at UD that honor the skill sets they developed through working for the ELI. This personnel **reconfiguration** has served to strengthen partnerships with other UD departments.

Through a shared services agreement with the College of Arts and Science's Communications Office to increase staffing capacity and efficiency, ELI registrar staff Sue Walton moved to the College's registrar office, where she continues to **liaise** with the ELI to support its unique course schedule. Tutoring Center manager Ken Hyde now wears the main "ELI registrar" hat, with course scheduling duties added to his schedule.

Some ELI faculty proficient in other languages have been teaching courses in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures and for UD's Associate in Arts program (AAP).

Assistant Professor Carolina Correa, originally from Brazil, has taught Portuguese, and ADS Ruwida Al Krekshi teaches both Arabic and Spanish in the AA program.

Many members of the AA program faculty have also taught courses in the ELI's Academic Transitions (AT) program. Now the two departments are sharing instructors even more.

spearhead (v): to lead an activity or action

gig: a job, usually a temporary one

wear several hats: to perform many different jobs

capacity: the official position or function that someone has

reconfiguration: changes made to the way that something is arranged to work

liaise: to work closely with someone and exchange information with them

Al Krekshi noted that her experience teaching English to international students transfers well to her Spanish and Arabic classes. “Students in the AA program are linguistically and culturally diverse,” she said, “as many are the second generation of immigrant families in Delaware.” Al Krekshi enjoys inviting students from her AA classes to participate in activities with ELI students, providing a new avenue to **cross-fertilize** ideas and learning.

THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM TRANSFORMED

Initial challenges because of the pandemic have transformed into new innovations in instruction, **upending** a once widely held perception that language instruction could not be done online.

“We now know that you can do a lot of the same things you do in the physical classroom just as effectively remotely,” asserted online program manager Nigel Caplan. “Now that we are back on campus, we can incorporate the best of both worlds into English instruction.”

Technology has, for example, significantly improved course materials management. Most teaching materials, previously tucked into teachers’ file drawers or scattered across multiple platforms, are now centralized in the Canvas course management system—which had become essential to teaching during the pandemic—and are easily accessible to teachers and students alike.

Instructor Lisa Grimsley noted that digitized documents had the **serendipitous** side effect of drastically decreasing paper use—another plus for the planet.

“With technology, teachers have more options and students have more autonomy,” added Instructor Nonie Bell. “Being able to review recorded classes on their own is empowering for students, and means less time spent in class going over previous instructional content and more time extending ideas.”

Technology has also improved students’ access to their instructors and tutors. “I am able to have more office hour meetings than before because they are so easy to schedule,” says Caplan. “I’ve even held office hours while in the waiting room at my son’s doctor appointment.”

Delivering effective instruction online included developing strategies to encourage student interaction. Associate Director Karen Asenavage observed that, as **the tide has turned back** towards in-person instruction, those online strategies have transferred to the physical classroom.

Assistant Professor Phil Rice, known for his use of technology in teaching, agreed: “Engagement strategies I learned while teaching on Zoom are something I’ll take with me.” Rice is nonetheless thrilled to have returned to in-person teaching, observing that many students are ready to “de-technologize.”

IN PRAISE OF ZOOM MEETINGS

While teachers, staff and administrators are pleased to be filling three-dimensional space again, all agree that one online space is here to stay: administrative meetings.

“Nobody realized how convenient online meetings could be,” said Academic Transitions math instructor Paul Canepa.

Hyde added, “In the ‘old days’ I would spend 20 or 30 minutes trying to find a parking spot for a one-hour meeting. That is now a thing of the past.”

GLOSSARY

cross-fertilize: to help something develop by mixing ideas from a different area

upend: to turn someone or something upside down

serendipitous: something interesting or pleasant happening by chance

the tide has turned back: things have changed back to how they were

Staff reflected that the Zoom option has also led to a new level of collaboration between offices.

“I’ve had more contact with colleagues and administrators than before the pandemic,” said Caplan.

COMING BACK TOGETHER

Meanwhile, as the ELI settles back into physical space, the activities and events, or “A&E,” that enrich students’ extracurricular experience have regained their pre-pandemic **vigor**.

“A&E activities are back better than ever,” Bushong said. Basketball, volleyball, guitar club and painting are “some of the most popular activities I’ve ever seen at the ELI, probably due to the fact that they have arisen out of the personal interests and passions of the teachers who host them and invite students into their world.”

Co-coordinated by Assistant Professor Adil Bentahar and student life coordinator Rebecca Boyle, these new offerings evolved from Zoom activities that faculty and staff hosted at the height of the pandemic, inviting students literally into their homes for virtual recreation such as cooking demonstrations or yoga sessions.

Schumacher said, “I’ve gotten really excited just reading the weekly activities bulletin. I send it to potential clients to brag, ‘Look what we do on a weekly basis to engage the whole student!’”

SEE **EVOLVING** ON PAGE 11



ADS Ross Fenske offering tips during a weekly guitar club session at the ELI's central location at 108 East Main Street

SABIC Goes to New Orleans

by Scott Duarte and Sarah Petersen



SABIC Scholars gathered around New Orleans's Tree of Life to share their aspirations for their service-learning experience.

The service learning component of the 2021-2022 program for Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) scholars at the ELI included a number of firsts: first service trip since the pandemic and first project in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The group, which arrived in October 2021, was also the first SABIC cohort to be **co-ed**, consisting of six men and four women. [See Special Programs on Page 22.]

This was the seventh **iteration** of the SABIC program at the ELI and the fourth to benefit from a service trip. Previous trips took cohorts to Puerto

Rico, accompanied by Assistant Professor Scott Duarte and former SABIC Coordinator MariaJosé Riera.

However, at the beginning of 2022, despite decreasing Covid-19 numbers, travel beyond the continental United States remained questionable. Duarte and Riera **pivoted** to New Orleans—a city rich in history that was making a slow comeback from the **devastation** of Hurricane Ida five months before.

While service-learning **logistics** were handled by Global Works Travel, the curriculum of the trip was delivered through a course

designed by Duarte specifically for the occasion entitled, Leadership in a Polylingual World. The course merged English language skills development with culture and leadership training.

The course began prior to departure with an upbeat overview of the history and cultural trademarks of the city, balanced with **sobering** documentaries portraying the devastation **wrought** by Hurricane Katrina in 2004, as well as the personal narrative of Duarte's sister, who had lost her home during Katrina when the Mississippi River **levees** had broken nearby and flooded

her home as well as the entire neighborhood.

Duarte said that his sister's experience "gave the students a face to put to the tragedy" and helped them understand the significance of their service project, which would include helping to repair a home damaged by Hurricane Ida.

Once on the ground in New Orleans, the students had impactful experiences **from the get-go**. As they stood in a parking lot waiting for their travel van, a car pulled up beside them, and a woman

emerged holding two king cakes, a New Orleans specialty at Mardi Gras time. She had just gotten off work at a local bakery, had seen the group of young people **milling about**, and was moved to stop and give them the two cakes. The students were **awestruck** by the kindness displayed by this stranger.

Then work began **in earnest**. In Houma, La., the group joined with SBP New Orleans, an organization that helps to rebuild homes damaged by natural disasters. The students learned the techniques required to properly measure, cut and hang **drywall**, and then paint it.

GLOSSARY

co-ed: co-educational, including both boys and girls

iteration: repetition or different version of something

pivot: to change and go in another direction

devastation: nothing but waste due to some form of a disaster

logistics: the planning and coordination of details

sobering: causing serious thoughts

wrought: produced

levees: man-made riverbank designed to prevent flooding

from the get-go: at the very beginning
milling about: moving around slowly with no special purpose

awestruck: amazed

in earnest: seriously

drywall: material used to make an interior wall

"Everyone was truly working together as a team," said Duarte. "They were laughing, taking pictures of each other and acting as one."

Duarte observed that leadership is **inseparable** from team building. "When on the service-learning job, students reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, and where in the team structure they best fit. This is a challenge for SABIC students. Every one of them was selected for the program because they had excelled in high school over their peers. When most members of a group are **alpha types**, you get power struggles and disagreements. The leadership qualities emerge as they learn how to best help the team succeed as a whole."

The owner of the house, who was temporarily living in a trailer in the backyard of the premises, was moved by the generosity of the SABIC students and other volunteers working to restore her home.

At a second worksite, students planted **saplings** under the supervision of Common Ground, a nonprofit organization that fosters wetlands restoration.

"For most of the students, this was the first time they had ever held a shovel, let alone use one," said Duarte.

Later, at the Common Grounds nursery, the students cut and potted new saplings for future digs. They decided to organize themselves into three groups, assigning different tasks to each other to make the work highly efficient.

"This was the final breakthrough for cohort team-building," said Duarte. "What was even better was that they naturally did this without any guidance. The happiness they **exuded** at the end of the morning—even covered as they were in mud and dirt from the waist down—was real."

Reenad Al Alawi preparing a doorway to be drywalled in Houma, Louisiana

Outside of the service projects, enrichment activities included a ropes course, a visit to the Louisiana State Museum, and exploration of the region's troubling history of slavery at the Whitney Plantation in Wallace, La. A trip to Louisiana would not be complete without a tour of the **bayou**, where the students sighted raccoons and an alligator. Finally, the team went to Rock-n-Bowl, a famous bowling alley where live Zydeco, a traditional music of the region, accompanied the bowling.

On the last night of the trip, the students held a "bayou brothers and swamp sisters" gift exchange.

"What was amazing was the amount of thought that went into the gifts," Duarte said. "The fact that the items were very specific to the **recipient** showed that students had really listened to and learned about each other throughout the week."

Duarte concluded, "The students, Maria and I all agree that this experience was incredibly rewarding, with life lessons that will be cherished forever."



GLOSSARY

inseparable: incapable of being separated

alpha types: people who want to be the leader

saplings: young trees

exuded: to show clearly

bayou: a marshy, slow-moving or still body of water

recipient: someone who receives something

EVOLVING *CONT. FROM PAGE 9*

Stevens reflected that the return to in-person experiences—whether sports, music and art, summer picnics, autumn festivities, homestay experiences or bus excursions—feels like a return to the tradition of the ELI community itself.

"Bringing international students together is part of what makes the magic that is the ELI," he commented.

REIMAGINING TRADITION

The graduation celebration, perhaps the most **iconic** of ELI traditions, has in fact evolved into something new.

During the first ELI Zoom graduation in April 2020, it was a pleasant **revelation** to discover family members joining to celebrate from the far corners of the globe. In later online ceremonies, alumni and sponsors also attended.

After two years of Zoom graduations, however, faculty and students longed to shake hands, give high-fives and cheer together for the shared achievements that mark this educational milestone, to be lifted by the natural energy in the air from just being together.

But how could the newly connected global ELI family be excluded from the party?

"Zoom is now **baked into** our traditions," said Stevens.

And so technology was once again called upon to provide an elegant solution: a hybrid graduation. Now some parts may be live and in person while speeches by meritorious students are generally pre-recorded. These deserving students can now relax and celebrate with their friends during the graduation "watch party," all of which can be viewed by invited Zoom attendees.

Hyde, who produces the online portion of the event, remarked, "While it adds technological demands for staff, the graduation event has evolved for the better and really has value."

However students engage in the ELI community, in person or virtually, many options for cross-cultural exploration are accessible, as well as academic support in the form of advising, tutoring, and peer mentoring.

EVOLVING FORWARD

Confronted with new global realities catalyzed by a pandemic, the ELI re-examined its use of space both physical and virtual, its **deployment** of human resources, its teaching strategies, marketing approaches and community-building efforts. Throughout this evolutionary process, the aim of the ELI has been to continue to meet the goals of learners from around an ever-evolving world.

"The pandemic **spurred** transformation, of course," said instructor Kate Copeland, "but once launched, I like to think the evolution has had its own, **self-propelling** energy."

The vibe is back.



ELI students performed at a recent graduation. The graduation watch party is a new ELI tradition, a blend of in-person and virtual presentations for attendees around the world to enjoy.

iconic: symbolic, emblematic, or representative

revelation: a surprising fact that people are made aware of

baked into: to become a core aspect of something

deployment: to put (forces or material) into action.

spurred: to make something happen faster or sooner

self-propelling: moved forward by its own force or energy

Afghan Women Make a WISE Move

by Diane Stopyra

In the summer of 2021, 148 female students in Afghanistan were **gearing up** for either their first year of study or their return, after a Covid-19-related break from classes, to the Asian University for Women (AUW) in Bangladesh, an institution dedicated to service and empowerment through liberal arts education.

Then the Taliban descended. The Afghan republic **dissolved** like snow on the base of Noshaq Mountain. The young women faced an **imminent** future of losing their dignity, their access to education, and even their ability to leave home without a male **chaperone**, on penalty of death.

The AUW students engineered their own escape out of the country, **evading** bullets and bombs on their way to the airport before boarding a Spartan military transport without seats and eventually arriving at Fort McCoy in Wisconsin, where they would spend the next four months.

After reading about their **harrowing** escape, ELI director Scott Stevens, with the full support of UD's administration, **spearheaded** an effort to help the women, establishing a **collaborative** of new academic homes around the country for those among them with the greatest need for English skill development.

Now, 14 of these students are reclaiming their lives as Blue Hens. Since arriving at UD in December 2021, they've participated in a year-long program to prepare for undergraduate **matriculation**.

While the ELI has **facilitated** language and cultural education of students from 150 countries over the course of 40-plus years, this effort marks the first intentional focus on displaced war victims.

Known as the Women's Initiative in Service and Education (WISE), the WISE program includes intensive English-language coursework, individual tutoring and specialized workshops on financial literacy, time management and more.

For everything else, there is Rebecca Boyle, WISE program coordinator and the ELI's student life coordinator. On call 24/7, she liaises with Jewish Family Services, Delaware's resettlement agency, and counsels students, providing companionship, rides to the doctor, even personalized shampoo recommendations.



Four of the 14 WISE women, pictured from behind to protect their identity.

Kathy Atkinson

"My role is to guide them through this adjustment period, to listen when they are having a hard time, to cheerlead their accomplishments and to help them put down roots in Newark," Boyle said. "We want to provide a message of: You are safe here, you are welcome here."

"This is not just a place to study," said Nigel Caplan, WISE program advisor and an associate professor at the ELI. "It is their home, at least for now, so that is what we are striving to create."

This mission—creating a new home—is set to benefit not just the Afghan students but the broader UD community.

"The more perspectives there are in a classroom, the deeper and richer the learning can be," Caplan said. "This is an opportunity for all students to meet people with very different experiences—not as **exotic**

tokens, but as friends, colleagues and classmates. This is the purpose of an internationalized campus like the one we are building at UD. Everyone comes out stronger."

Since arriving a year ago, the WISE women have gone ice skating at UD's Fred Rust Ice Arena, visited Longwood Gardens and explored the major cities of the Mid Atlantic as well as the shops and restaurants of Newark's Main Street. They have visited Delaware Governor John Carney and female leaders of his administration. And they've participated in the ELI guitar club, which means, if you happen to be strolling the halls of the ELI certain afternoons, you might be accompanied by the gentle **refrain** of traditional Afghan music.

"The willingness of the ELI faculty and staff to completely rewrite the rule book in response to this situation has been inspiring," UD Vice Provost Kinservik said. "They are among the most caring, mission-driven people at the University."

"I find UD to be a quiet place with peace and good people," said WISE student Ferwadin Serat (a **pseudonym**), whose laptop now bears a Blue Hen sticker. "Sometimes, I feel like I'm 80 years old because of everything I've experienced. With friends at home, we would talk only about our problems. But here, I see the students discussing their futures and their hopes. I see that I can be happy here."

Abridged and edited for Interactions from Diane Stopyra's UDaily article of March 24, 2022, and University of Delaware Magazine, vol. 30, no. 2, 2022, pp. 19-27

GLOSSARY

gearing up: preparing

dissolved: fell apart

imminent: likely to happen at any moment

chaperone: a man accompanying a woman in public to protect her honor

evading: avoiding

harrowing: extremely disturbing

spearheaded: to lead an activity

collaborative: a group working together to achieve a goal

matriculation: enrollment at a university

facilitated: assisted the progress of

exotic: unusual and strange

tokens: representatives

refrain: a repeated line in a song

pseudonym: a fake name used to hide a person's identity

WISE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: TAMANNA SALEHI, AFGHANISTAN

by Diane Stopyra

Tamanna Salehi (a pseudonym) arrived at the English Language Institute in December 2021 to participate in the WISE academic preparation program.

One mild evening in the **gritty** neighborhood where she grew up, 16-year-old Salehi did something unthinkable for a young woman: She rode a bicycle.

As Salehi pedaled, a neighborhood woman scolded her for **careening** down a path of certain moral **decay** and social **ignominy**.

"So I rode even farther," giggled Salehi, now 21. "I wanted to prove to this woman that I can do this—I am doing this."

Following high school, she dreamed of something even more shocking: higher education. Neighbors once again whispered about the dangerous independence of this young girl.

"Do not think about those people," Salehi urged her worried mother. "Think about how bright my future will be: I won't have to be a servant for a man; I can earn for myself. Think about that moment." Her mother **reluctantly** replied, "You are right."

In Afghanistan's capital city, Salehi lived in a hostel with 10 girls to a room and **sporadic** access to water.. Yet she felt invigorated by the **vibrancy** of her Kabul University campus and by her computer science courses.

As part of her own mission toward empowerment, Salehi pursued hobbies, like skateboarding and dancing to hip hop music. And she took her favorite, formerly **taboo** pastime to a new level: She joined a club for young people interested in learning bicycle tricks.

"When I'm riding, I feel free," she says. "I feel like myself."

In August 2021, **insurgents** entered Kabul and took control of the city, a reality Salehi had never imagined possible.

But she had one glimmer of hope.

Salehi had applied for a scholarship to the Asian University for Women in Bangladesh, which was working on a plan to get their Afghan students safely out of the country. After much back-and-forth, she was finally allowed to be one of 148 AUW students flown to Fort McCoy in Wisconsin, where she stayed until her transfer four months later to the University of Delaware and the ELI's WISE program.

"I am going to find myself here," she said, a hint of a smile playing across her face. "I am going to improve what is already inside of me."

Salehi hopes to work **diligently** at UD, potentially in a public health program. To arrive at her classes, naturally, she will ride a bicycle—potentially pulling a trick or two along the way.

Abridged and edited for Interactions from Diane Stopyra's article "Against All Odds" in University of Delaware Magazine, vol. 30, no. 2, 2022, pp. 19-27

illustration by Kailey Whitman



HOMESTAY HOSTS WELCOME WISE WOMEN

by Diane Stopyra

Nine days after the fall of their country—packing only their cell phones, travel papers, and some apples and bread—14 female college students in Afghanistan said goodbye to their families and, seven months later, found their way into the homes and hearts of families in Delaware.

One of the **vett**ed Newark residents in the ELI network to have opened their homes to these women is Barbara Cullis, program director for UD's Professional and Continuing Studies program.

While Cullis has observed the **distress** the four women under her roof feel about their families back home, she has also shared in moments that manage to be both **mundane** and meaningful—like infusing pizza with Afghan spices, navigating the challenges of group laundry sessions on Saturday mornings and singing along to Justin Bieber, a sensation even in Afghanistan.

"I've been inspired by their bravery, their fearlessness and their work ethic," Cullis said. "I also see things from a whole new perspective in terms of what life is like in Afghanistan. They are very **contemporary**."

While Cullis has done her best to guide the young women—teaching them how to cook using the American system of measurement and explaining that no, actually, in the United States you cannot buy gold jewelry to take to a bank for cash later on—she believes she has gained just as much from the experience.

The Afghan women, who are already enriching the UD campus, are not refugees. Rather, they came to the United States on **humanitarian parole** status. Because this status does not guarantee residency, the women, with the help of **pro-bono** legal guidance and tireless case



Barbara Cullis

workers at Delaware's resettlement agency, Jewish Family Services, are seeking **asylum**—a process that will require countless hours, hundreds of pages of paperwork and yet another show of **resilience**.

While they navigate this bureaucratic **labyrinth**, the students video chat with family members back home, between frequent internet outages. At the same time, as ELI director Scott Stevens pointed out, "they are trying to **merge in traffic** to a new community and culture, and that is a great challenge."

A challenge, he added, the students are meeting—with support from the University community they have **galvanized**.

"It's been humbling to witness this journey," Cullis said. "These women are going to change the world."

Edited extracts from Diane Stopyra's UDaily article of March 24, 2022, "Beginning New Lives at UD"

GLOSSARY

gritty: sandy

careening: tipping to one side while in motion

decay: decline in standards

ignominy: shameful, dishonorable conduct

reluctantly: without really wanting to

sporadic: happening at irregular times

vibrancy: lively quality

taboo: considered unacceptable

insurgents: rebels

diligently: with careful effort and attention

vetted: checked for suitability

distress: great emotional suffering

mundane: happening every day

contemporary: modern

humanitarian parole: permission to stay in the United States for a temporary period for urgent reasons

pro-bono: free of charge to the client

asylum: protection in a country granted to a non-citizen by the government

resilience: the ability of a person to recover from major life changes

labyrinth: a complicated and confusing arrangement

galvanized: to stimulate into activity as if by electricity

FESTIVAL OF NATIONS 2022

Photos by Scott Boyle,
Jason Wang and Umida Ruzybayeva





The 16th annual Festival of Nations on October 13, hosted by the ELI with support from the Center for Global Programs & Services, featured a talent show, fashion show and displays from countries around the world. In addition to more than a dozen countries represented by ELI students, the event included dance performances by the K-pop Dance Club, Isodynamic Hip Hop Dance Crew, Delaware Kamaal, and Evolution Dance; and singing by UD Gospel Choir, Golden Blues A Cappella, Vocal Point, and YChromes.

EXPANDING CONNECTIONS IN TEACHER EDUCATION



Students from Hunan Normal University in the UD MATESL degree program engage in a hybrid round table discussion with fellow online classmates.

UD's Masters Degree in Teaching English as a Second Language has enjoyed a marked increase in enrollment thanks to a three way partnership between the ELI, the School of Education and Hunan Normal University (HNU) in Changsha, China. Students in China complete their first and last semester of courses online, all taught by ELI and UD instructors, and,

in between, spend a year on the UD campus to complete their second and third semesters of study. Administered by Director Scott Stevens, the program is now hosting its third cohort at the UD campus and just welcomed its fourth cohort online. Students simultaneously enroll in an Education masters program strictly through HNU and graduate two years later with two advanced degrees.

Stevens commented, "This model opens new doors for international teacher education. Trained in current methodology and applied second language acquisition theory, these talented graduates will revolutionize the way English is taught in Chinese public schools."

Closer to home, UD's partnership with the Delaware Department of Education is also strengthening, thanks in part to a recently awarded \$2.6 million research grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The new project, Delaware English Learners' Impact on Teacher Education (DELITE), will enable 60 educators and 15 **paraprofessionals** to earn an additional certification as an ESL or bilingual teacher at no cost in order to better support Delaware's rapidly growing population of multilingual learners.

Associate Professor Nigel Caplan, a co-principal investigator on the project, noted that online course availability has also afforded increased accessibility and convenience for busy local teachers pursuing this goal.

"In the future," added Caplan, "blended teacher education programs, that is, with "pre-" and "post-" segments online and an onsite segment in between, will effectively increase contact with trainers without increasing travel time and cost." Thus, through innovations in technology and program design, the ELI continues to foster a UD learning community that is increasingly global in scale and committed to intellectual and cultural connections in Delaware and the world over.

CONNECTING STUDENTS, CONNECTING WORLDS

Meanwhile, students are **bustling** through the corridors at 108 E. Main, making casual, yet exuberant connections with faculty and staff and with each other.

ELI tutor Aura Draper's desk in the ELI HUB [See "The HUB," p. 19] has become a magnet for **spontaneous** informal gatherings of students sharing their cultures and impressions of the United States—while also getting some free tips on pronunciation and grammar from Draper.

From his office opposite the student lounge, IEP Manager Bushong can hear the lively banter of many accents in cross-cultural conversation.

GLOSSARY

paraprofessional: a teaching assistant with professional training who works with a lead teacher to support class instruction

bustling: full of people moving about in a busy way

spontaneous: not planned but done because you suddenly want to do it

palpable: that is easily noticed by the mind or the senses

The jubilant energy is even more **palpable** at any of the weekly activities and events that ELI faculty and staff coordinate for students to meet each other and explore the local culture. [See "An evolving ELI," p. 8]

"There is a post-isolation excitement, almost a craving, to connect," said Bushong.

Within this reinvigorated environment, the ELI collaborates extensively with the **Center for Global Programs & Services (CGPS)** and the **World Scholars Program** to connect UD's domestic students to the ELI's international students, in service to the university's commitment to international exchange.

The World Scholars Program integrates global study into all four years of college study, which usually includes two semesters abroad. In addition to these excursions—and sometimes in place of them, as in recent semesters—the ELI coordinates on-campus and virtual cross-cultural interactions such as basketball games, social hours, e-gaming events, and conversation partners.

Associate Director Karen Asenavage explained that domestic graduate students and undergraduate World Scholars have been integrally involved as peer mentors, lab instructors, and instructional assistants in the full range of the Institute's many programs, adding that "this experience has often led scholars go on to win Fulbright and international service awards and even get jobs in related fields later on."

In **AT First Year Experience** classes, AT students engage with the UD Common Reader together with domestic students. The common reader is an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversation with fellow students to begin to share in the intellectual life of the UD community. This year's common reader, entitled "While the Earth Sleeps, We Travel" speaks of the experiences of displaced young people who are the students' **contemporaries**. Twenty-three year old author Ahmed M. Badr came to UD this fall to discuss his own experiences growing up in Iraq and Syria and his mission to center the voices of displaced youth.

ADS and AT Cohort Coordinator Leslie Connery commented, "The common reader class fosters more opportunities to connect with the UD community and with important national and global issues."



ELI students connected with UD undergraduate World Scholars for cross-cultural exchange.

CONNECTING WOMEN TO EACH OTHER

"I really love to create connections," said ELI student Frohar Sarwari.

Sarwari, who hails from Afghanistan, co-facilitates the **ELI Women's Group** with ADS Ruwida Al Krekshi. The group provides a safe space to build cross-cultural friendships among ELI and UD women students of diverse cultural backgrounds in support of their transition to American culture.

Al Krekshi and Sarwari organize casual weekly gatherings to bring women together to share conversations about cultural identity and challenges of daily life—and to have fun.

contemporary: a person who lives or lived at the same time as someone else, especially someone who is about the same age

accolades: praise or an award for an achievement that people admire



ADS Ruwida Al Krekshi (left) and student leader Frohar Sarwari (second to left) and enjoying a relaxing picnic with students participating in the ELI Women's Group

"We connect women students newly arrived to UD to those who have been around campus for a while," said Al Krekshi. "They co-mentor each other through their sometimes challenging journeys, not only as international students but as women."

"I have made many friends from different countries," said Sarwari. "These activities give us the feeling that we are not alone, that we are here for each other. I am also grateful for this great opportunity for me to learn from Ruwida's experience and practice leadership skills for the future."

The group has won **accolades** over the years for championing the agency of culturally diverse women at UD. Among its recent campus collaborations was an online panel discussion co-hosted with UD's Center for Global Programs and Services entitled "Women's Voices: Stories of Challenge and Triumph From Around the World."

"Being part of the ELI Women's Group has added value, meaning and quality to my personal and professional life," said Al Krekshi. "Witnessing our women students grow academically and socially through our meetings, events and panels has increased my motivation to work harder to support them. It has been a very rewarding mission."

A BROADENING DIVERSITY

An expanding diversity of students is now participating in "the ELI experience", either online or in person, from Europe, Central and South-East Asia, and Central and South America.

The Institute is also serving increasing numbers of individuals immigrating to the U.S. from regions in conflict such as Ukraine and Afghanistan.

Bushong observed, "Our evening English program is seeing more individuals and families who have recently **resettled** in the area. We are always adapting our services to meet the unique needs of new clients."

Stevens added, "New initiatives like **WISE** remind us all over again that caring people in our community can and do step up to be part of the solution." [See "Afghan women make a WISE move," p. 12]

"We anticipate seeing an even more diverse mix of students hailing from more regions of the world in the coming months and years," noted Bushong.

GLOSSARY

resettle: praise or an award for an achievement that people admire

IEP STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: DILARA RUZBYBAYEVA, KAZAKHSTAN

Dilara Ruzybayeva emigrated to Kazakhstan from China as a young child. Growing up there in a large family, she had always nurtured a dream to study abroad.

"Circumstances never allowed that to happen," she said, "so I passed that dream along to my children."

Ruzybayeva's **melodious** voice danced as she described, half in English, half in her native Russian, how she strived to prepare her family for when such an opportunity might arise.

"Now I have a son and a daughter who graduated from university in the United States. and who live here," she said, smiling with pride at her daughter, who was translating here and there as she spoke. Daughter Umida, who recently received a Master of Business Administration from UD, is an ELI alumna and now one of the Institute's key marketing specialists.

Ruzybayeva herself arrived in Delaware a year ago to help care for her new grandson. When asked about how she spends her free time, she laughed **heartily**.

"No free time for me!" she said.

Her days are mainly spent tending to the needs of her young **charge**. At this stage of her life, she considers being "бабушка," or "grandma," to all six of her grandchildren her most important role.

Ruzybayeva nevertheless did find time to attend a class with instructor Lisa Grimsley in the Intensive English Program (IEP) to work on her **nascent** English skills. Since two of her grandchildren speak only English, she said, "I want to be able to communicate with them and help raise them."

Although Ruzybayeva is proficient in four other languages, as a beginner in English, she didn't feel confident enough to talk to anyone when she first arrived.

"But Lisa always took the time to understand me," she said, adding that the signs, gestures and non-verbal cues that Grimsley employed in the class were a big help.

"Everything at the ELI supports you to study and motivates and inspires you," she declared. "Now I can go shopping and even talk and socialize with my new neighbors."

Ruzybayeva, who is proud of her 62 years, said the welcoming atmosphere of Grimsley's class made her feel like a young student again. Her eyes twinkled as she continued, "Riding the UD bus with other students and walking around this beautiful campus. It has made me feel as though my dream has at last come true!"



ELI IEP student Dilara Ruzybayeva with grandson Jasur

melodious: pleasant to listen to, like music

heartily: with obvious enjoyment and enthusiasm

charge: a person that you have responsibility for and care for

nascent: beginning to exist; not yet fully developed



UD Admissions Asst. Director Erin Bastien (middle row, second from left) ELI Manager of Special Academic Programs Maria José Riera (back row, center) and ELI Assoc. Director Karen Asenavage (back row, right end) met SABIC alumni in Saudi Arabia.

CONNECTING FORMER AND FUTURE STUDENTS

There are thousands of ELI alumni all over the world. Many of them went on to become UD alumni. Now, thanks to expanding connections between the ELI and UD's Office of Development and Alumni Relations, all ELI alumni are considered members of the larger UD alumni community.

Riera commented, "Students and families don't always recognize the UD name back home, but once they get to Newark, they understand the value of a UD education and that the ELI is an integral part of that."

Riera, Stevens, Asenavage and UD Admissions Assistant Director Erin Bastien visited Oman and Saudi Arabia to host alumni gatherings and to establish the first official UD regional alumni associations in those two countries, where hundreds of former ELI students reside.

Connecting alumni within local and regional associations, Riera said, "will create **momentum** to spread the word to degree-seeking students in those countries that UD and the ELI is the place to be."

WHAT IT ALL COMES DOWN TO

The ELI, with its many programs and initiatives, is connecting diverse learners from across campus classrooms and every corner of the world to ever expanding opportunities. With the increasing integration of the Institute within the larger UD community, it could be said the whole of the ELI is truly greater than the sum of its parts. At the close of what some might consider yet another challenging year for the world, there is cause to celebrate both the acts and the outcomes of these collaborations.

In the end, ELI faculty and staff have always understood that at the core of their work as language educators, it is all about the people. The interactions with students and colleagues—which each and every member of the ELI community has strived to nourish in unique and innovative ways over the past few years—are flourishing again within traditional environments and evolving within new ones. From the bustle of the corridors to **cascades** of Zoom emojis, one can sense a kind of reanimated delight in how much we treasure these connections.

GLOSSARY

momentum: the ability to keep increasing or developing

cascades: a large number of things falling or coming quickly at the same time

SPECIAL PROGRAMS STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: GIHOON BANG, SOUTH KOREA

Gihoon Bang, of Seoul, South Korea, studies statistics and **actuarial science** at Dankook University. Like university students across the globe **navigating** the pandemic, Bang had been facing many challenges.

Raised in a multicultural family, Bang has always been interested in other countries and cultures, and in other people in general.

"I am normally very **extroverted** and I believe that college is not just for study," said Bang. He'd hoped to get to know students in other majors at his university. However, because of the pandemic, there had been little chance to do this. Bang said, "When I looked back on my college life as a senior, there were only memories of Covid-19 and exams."

Bang continued, "I have always wanted to learn the English that native speakers use." He had been hoping to participate in a one-month program at the ELI, which is popular with students at several South Korean universities offering competitive scholarships to attend.

Nevertheless, when Covid **disruptions** were compounded with his Korean military service requirements (Bang paused his education for two years to serve his country), it seemed this opportunity might not be in the cards.

Then, he and 10 Dankook students were awarded scholarships to attend the ELI this summer, his last summer before graduating.

"It was the happiest and most unforgettable month of my life" said Bang, known as "Bread" while he was at the ELI.

Bang enjoyed exchanging points of view with students from different countries in his Advanced Listening and Communication Skills class with William Wherry. "Our conversation was not just about the textbook. We improved our English by speaking about our cultures."

"If you want to learn English, there is no better environment than UD ELI," said Bang.

This environment, Bang explained, allowed him to reveal his true personality as an extrovert, which helped grow his confidence leading to more connections.

"It's really easy to become friends here at the ELI. Everyone is welcoming and shares their stories, and I share my stories."

Tutor Kristin Grant witnessed the remarkable connections Bang made in the ELI community and beyond.

"On the first day he arrived, he set out to make friends with everyone with whom he came into contact. In just moments, total strangers shared their lives with him. Students quickly got attached to him and they became like family."

Students whom Bang met from around the world also left an impression on him. "They were serious about what they wanted to do in their lives and had specific reasons for why they were studying at the ELI. They motivated me a lot," he said.

Bang will graduate from Dankook in February 2023. Like many of his new ELI friends, he now has a more specific dream: to work as an actuary in the U.S. In fact, he recently took and passed the American actuarial exam. "So, you see why I say that one month in Delaware changed my life," he said.

"Never give up," he concluded, "because everything happens for a reason!"



Gihoon Bang (lower right) with friends in the ELI Hub

actuary/actuarial science: a person whose job involves calculating insurance risks

navigating: to find the right way to deal with a difficult or complicated situation

extrovert: an out-going person

disruptions: something that makes it difficult to continue in the normal way



THE HUB: A RE-IMAGINED SPACE FOR STUDENTS by R. Scott Partridge

The Hub, formerly known as the Self Access Learning Center, has been redesigned. Still the resource center that ELI students depend on, it is now so much more.

Located in room 210 at 108 East Main Street, the Hub's new design removed the rows of self-access laptops, which most students no longer need, in order to better serve as a large-**occupancy** multi-purpose room for student in-take, meetings, or other social events and activities.

The new design has also reorganized the space to allow easier access to videos, books and drop-in tutoring, with the writing table as a central area for compositional needs. The online Listening Lab, now relocated in the Hub, offers students access to a variety of content to develop their listening skills.

The Hub is more than a place for study and self-improvement; it is also a place for fun and relaxation. Students can make reading into a social activity in the Book Club, or simply enjoy practicing casual conversation with tutors or with friends at the Conversation Couch.

Tutor Aura Draper, who coordinates and facilitates many of the Hub's activities, says, "Almost every day, group conversations **spontaneously** occur. Sometimes as many as eight or nine students gather to discuss language or cultural questions, and we talk and laugh and enjoy each other's company. I don't know who enjoys these gatherings more, me or them!"

The new space features several other student-centered activities, including an e-sports practice "dojo", and a Podcast design club, where students can learn how to create their own Podcasts. Students can also play board games or video games in the e-gaming center.

"Hence the reason for its new name", said Academic Development Specialist Brandon Jackson, who stepped into his new role as Hub coordinator in February. "This reimagined space is literally the 'hub', or the center of activity, at the ELI."

It is all happening at the Hub!

NEW WORLD BANK TEACHER TRAINING VENTURE

With partners in the UD College of Education and Human Development, an ELI instructor co-wrote and won a World Bank grant to design and pilot a training program for kindergarten teachers in Palestine.

The initiative, dubbed "**Enhancing** the Quality of Kindergarten Services" and operated in collaboration with Palestine's Ministry of Education, aims at training 380 of the more than 4,000 kindergarten teachers across the West Bank and Gaza who have limited background in early childhood education. This professional development grant, which continues through June 2023, is a central component of the World Bank's multi-million dollar bid to improve early childhood education in Palestine.

To write the grant, senior instructor Kate Copeland and Dean Emerita Carol Vukelich of the College of Education, along with former ELI instructor Ahlam Musa and College of Education researcher Hilary Mead, leveraged their past experience **shepherding** 90 K-12 educators through two year-long intensive teacher training programs for Saudi Arabia's Khbrat Program.

The curriculum, a distinguishing feature of the collaborative project, is grounded in early childhood scientific research by the team's kindergarten education experts, including Vukelich, Susan Neuman of New York University, and Kathleen Roskos of John Carroll University.

As manager of the project, Copeland supports the team as they co-develop a curriculum focused on child-centered, play-based pedagogy, early literacy

and **numeracy**, and social-emotional learning, with faculty from six universities in Palestine. Musa and Mead serve as cultural and language consultant and program evaluator, **respectively**.

Copeland traveled to Ramallah in March to co-facilitate the launch of the partnership with Mead and World Bank Technical Coordinator Duha Al Masri.

"Until then, I was like most Americans who have a fairly limited understanding of this part of the world," Copeland said. "It's been enlightening to learn about the rich history and **nuanced** complexities of the region's cultural and political landscape."

Working closely with various **stakeholders** based in Ramallah, Copeland manages the development, training, and implementation logistics of this expansive program in partnership with 30 faculty from six local Palestinian universities and more than 50 supervisors from the Ministry of Education's kindergarten sector.

Copeland reflected that she and her colleagues "are humbled by the potential for a far-reaching impact on early childhood education in Palestine."

Roskos commented that "this work is providing new learning opportunities for all involved."

Copeland has been able to do most of her work from Newark, using recently **honed** technology skills to build an array of websites, Moodle course templates, and other digital tools for the weekly workshops now being conducted in university training centers across the region, such as at Al Azhar University in Gaza.



Kindergarten teachers in Palestine participating in a Saturday workshop on child-centered education

Copeland, who began her ELI career as a kindergarten ESL specialist, sees strong connections between this seemingly "non-ESL" work and her experience teaching English to young children from the Middle East.

"Palestinian children arrive at kindergarten speaking different Arabic dialects, none of which is Modern Standard Arabic, the language of instruction," Copeland explained "Thus, language development goals in early Arabic literacy instruction in this **diglossic** linguistic context are somewhat similar to those of early elementary ESL."

"I got my start in the ESL profession through my interest in other languages," said Copeland. "It's invigorating to be learning a new language again."

GLOSSARY

occupancy: the amount of people who can use a space at the same time

spontaneously: without pre-planning

enhance: to increase or improve the quality

shepherd (v): to guide a group of people somewhere

K-12: Kindergarten through Grade 12

numeracy: a good basic knowledge of mathematics

respectively: in the same order as the things mentioned

nuanced: a very slight difference in meaning that is not usually very obvious

stakeholders: people involved in a particular project

hone: to develop and improve something, such as a skill

diglossic: a situation in which two languages or two forms of a language are used under different conditions in a community

EDUCATOR PROFILES

ELI FACULTY: PHIL RICE

by Carolina Correa



Phil Rice

Assistant Professor Phil Rice has been teaching at the English Language Institute for over a decade. An accomplished language teacher known for his keen ability to use instructional technology in unique ways, Rice has also designed courses which allow international students to explore American culture while improving language skills.

Like his students, Rice enjoys learning about new languages and cultures. He has been to Africa, Iceland, China, South America and Mexico. One of his many strengths as a language teacher is to “think of different ways to keep the students engaged during instructional time” as he makes use of “humor, dramatic style and energy”, in addition to **innovative** technology, to

provide students with memorable learning experiences that are highly interactive and engaging.

Prior to joining the ELI in 2010, Rice honed his craft as a graduate teaching assistant at Salisbury University in Maryland, where he completed a master degree in Teaching English as a Second Language. His past experience also includes teaching in New York State public schools and as a youth group leader.

Rice lives in nearby Maryland with his wife and three children, “all of whom inspire me to be a better person every day,” he said. He grows a large garden every year and enjoys planting unique and unusual plants, and playing drums and guitar at his church, adding that “my faith is very important to me.”

Rice often encourages his students to express their own creativity and love for language learning beyond the classroom. He fondly remembers his experience instructing the film class, showing his students’ amazing **culminating** film projects at the Trabant theater. For him, “It was a lot of fun to hear students laughing and enjoying the films that their peers had created.”

One of Rice’s most remarkable experiences as a teacher was to see one of the students he knew who began at the basic level not only work all the way up to the higher levels but also create her own film **showcasing** her hobbies. “It was both amazing and rewarding,” Rice stated, “to witness her progress first hand.”

Rice has recently started pursuing a new hobby of his own: painting. He has shared his experience integrating art into language teaching not only through student activities in the Hub [See “The Hub” on page 19] but also at the recent Washington TESOL professional conference. He often compares his painting experience to what students need to do in order to improve their language skills: become more comfortable with making mistakes. “By picking up the brush,” Rice explains, “whether I’m confident or not, I become better through the process of putting the paint on the **canvas**.”

Rice explained that the fear of making mistakes may cause discomfort when speaking a second language, but, in Rice’s view, “language is like a muscle that must be exercised again and again in order to become strong.” With this always in mind, he explains that in his class, “I want students to feel okay when they make mistakes because that means they are learning and improving.”

GLOSSARY

innovative: introducing or using new ideas, ways of doing something
culminate: to end with a particular result, or at a particular point
showcase: an event that presents someone’s abilities
canvas: a strong, heavy, rough material used by artists for painting on

ACADEMIC TRANSITIONS: ELIZABETH O’CONNOR

by Kate Copeland



Elizabeth O’Connor

Instructional Assistant Elizabeth O’Connor has been involved in the Academic Transitions (AT) program for the past four years.

The AT program is a pathway toward undergraduate matriculation at UD for international students that offers credit-bearing courses in a variety of content areas taught by UD faculty. Class sizes tend to be small, with the added benefit of weekly discussion classes facilitated by dedicated instructional assistants (IAs) like O’Connor. As an IA, she plays an integral role in the success of AT students, as she mentors them in the development of study skills and scholarly mindsets for success as undergraduates at UD.

Originally from Andover, Massachusetts, O’Connor completed a degree in English from West Chester University in Pennsylvania. She began her career in the banking industry immediately after college.

She excelled in her position as a customer **retention** representative and was soon asked to teach other people how to do the job. Not long after, she became the lead for staff education in her department. About her work, she said, “We did not call it ‘training.’ Dogs you train, but people you educate.”

O’Connor worked at MBNA for many years before leaving to devote time to raising three children. When she was ready to return to the “**nine-to-five**” world, she knew she would be very **selective**.

She said, “I knew that whatever I chose to do would have to be meaningful. I knew I would give a lot, but I also wanted feel like my work adds value to my life.”

“And guess what?” she added. “After four years, I can still say that what I really want to do is exactly what I’m doing now.”

In the AT program, O’Connor has enjoyed working **in tandem** with expert faculty from departments all across the UD campus. She has led discussion groups for courses in anthropology, communication, and behavioral health and nutrition. As a discussion group facilitator, she likes being able to focus primarily on the needs of her students, while the task of grading falls to the professors with whom she works.

“I have the privilege to get to know these young people while also working with great instructors to support courses with fascinating topics,” she said.

O’Connor stated her mission plainly: “Their success is my job.”

She explained, “They are our future leaders. I feel a great sense of gratification to possibly have made a difference for even one of these students.”

Not long after joining the ELI in 2018, O’Connor was stepping into additional roles.

She supported a leadership course taught by ELI faculty member Scott Duarte, who commented, “Elizabeth is the teaching equivalent of **yin** to my **yang**. She provides incredible support and understanding to both the students’ academic and emotional needs.”

O’Connor has also taught in the International Teaching Assistant preparation program as well as in the Cohort International First-Year Seminar.

“I’m sort of a **Jack of all trades**, doing different things. I’m working more than I thought I would be, but I’m enjoying it.”

This fall, O’Connor provided guidance to newly arrived Omani students through the class “Applying to U.S. Universities” about the university admissions and the college selection process.

“How lucky am I?” she concluded, “I leave at the end of each day feeling fortunate to have a window into this multicultural world at the ELI.”

retention: the action of keeping something rather than losing it
nine-to-five: the normal working hours in an office
selective: tending to be careful about what or who you choose
in tandem: together and usually at the same time
gratification: something that gives you pleasure
yin/yang: two sides of the same idea that balance each other out
Jack of all trades: a person who can do many different types of work

EVENING PROGRAM STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

by Kate Copeland

JUAN DUEÑAS, COLOMBIA

Entrepreneur Juan Dueñas, originally from Bogota, Colombia, came to Delaware by way of New York City. After honing his craft at restaurants in Manhattan, in particular the Jewish **delicatessens** for which New York City is famous, he was **on a mission** to start his own business. Since arriving in Newark more than 17 years ago, he has been busy making **bagels** to perfection as the owner of the Original Hot Bagels shops. His customers make themselves at home in each of three locations in the Newark area, including on East Main Street.



Juan Dueñas at his Original Hot Bagels shop

While Dueñas gets along just fine in English, he said he enjoys taking classes at the ELI to improve his English grammar and writing. He steps away from work every Monday and Wednesday to attend evening classes with instructor Jeremy Penna. As it happens, Penna had been a regular customer for years at Dueñas's bagel shop and was delighted when he appeared in class this past Spring. Dueñas commented, "It's an excellent opportunity for anyone to improve themselves, no matter their pay, their culture or their color. It's a very good idea."

Dueñas also had a message for the Hispanic community in Delaware; "If we have the chance to prepare ourselves for better opportunities, nothing is impossible in life."

HAMEED SHUJA, AFGHANISTAN

Hameed Shuja arrived one year ago from Kabul to a military base in New Mexico, where he waited for several weeks to learn from U.S. immigration services what his next destination would be. He had hoped to eventually make



Hameed Shuja

his way to California. When he learned he would be going to Delaware, he wasn't quite sure where that was. "When I got here, I discovered I liked it. JFS has helped me a lot as well as volunteer families here in Newark," Shuja said. Jewish Family Services (JFS) is a Delaware nonprofit organization which helps to resettle **displaced** persons coming to Delaware from many regions around the world.

As a top high school student in Afghanistan, Shuja had plans to attend college. However, after he graduated in 2019, life in his country became more challenging and university seemed out of reach. "My family is counting on me to continue my studies," he explained. "It's a big reason why I am here."

Shuja said despite the challenges in his young life, he is grateful for his ability to remain self-confident about his **prospects**. He said his strength comes from his experience of overcoming difficulties, and also from the support of his family "who raised me to be strong."

For Shuja, English classes in the evening program have not only been helpful for daily life but also to prepare for future university studies. "I studied English in high school in Afghanistan and learned about grammar and writing, but here, the listening and speaking are so different from what I was used to and I am learning a lot," he said.

Shuja's English is already quite good. Now he hopes to develop his skills further to enroll at a university where he would like to study computer science and software engineering.

LAURA MARÍA LÓPEZ ROVIRA, COLOMBIA

Laura Rovira came to Delaware to work for one year as an "au pair," that is, a family child-care worker.

The ELI evening program partners with several au pair agencies in the area to provide a certain number of hours of English instruction to students from other countries who are matched with local families to provide childcare services. In exchange for this work, students' living expenses are covered and they receive a small **stipend**. While the work of an au pair can be demanding, the benefit of a free stay in the United States and the chance to improve English skills through an **immersive** cross-cultural experience is very attractive to many students. Many au pairs establish lifelong bonds with their host families.

Rovira is improving her English skills in the same class which Dueñas attends. "The grammar practice is very useful," she said.

Rovira is passionate about two disciplines which one might think of as complete opposites: biology and English. As



Laura Rovira

a top-ranking student of biology at **Pontificia Universidad Javeriana** in Bogotá, Rovira has used her developing English skills to enlighten her classmates during presentations on such topics as "plant strategies to avoid **predation**."

But Rovira said she also loves to dance and **aspires** to become a great dancer one day. We have no doubt that she will succeed any endeavor she chooses!

GLOSSARY

entrepreneur: a person who opens their own business
delicatessen: a store or part of one that sells cooked meats and cheeses
on a mission: undertaking a task considered to be very important
bagel: a hard bread roll shaped like a ring

displaced: to force people to move away from their home to another place
prospects: possibilities of things that could happen

stipend: an amount of money that is paid regularly to someone as wages or money to live on
immersive: used to describe a computer system or image that seems to surround the user
predation: the act of being eaten by animals
aspires: to have a strong desire to achieve or to become something

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

South Korea

The ELI continues its collaboration with several universities and sponsoring governments around the world to provide rich customized learning programs to meet specific skill development and training needs, both on campus and online.

From South Korea, the ELI welcomed 86 students from **Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Dankook University, Kyonggi University, and Incheon National University** for special programs coordinated by Ana Kim. While



Students from Kyonggi University participating in a peer mentor activity in January

participating in the Intensive English Program (IEP) and personal tutoring sessions, they had an opportunity to engage in mentor circles, a topic-based activity-focused program led by UD students serving as peer mentors. Participants also joined fellow ELI students in weekly activities to build cross-cultural friendships through online and in-

person small-group meetings. From **Sungkonghoe University and Dongduk Women's University**, an additional 57 students immersed themselves in the customized English for Global Success online course.

University Semester-USA, a new program this year, welcomed three students in August 2022. Students took academic content courses and discussion classes, joined student clubs, participated in campus events and activities and explored New York and Washington.



Students from Dankook and Kyonggi universities enjoy 4th-of-July festivities on the UD campus.

Japan

From Japan, the ELI hosted more than 80 students in a wide variety of programs throughout the year, both short-term and long-term, online and at the UD campus. Thirty-four students arrived on the UD campus from seven universities across Japan for semester-



Students from Japan volunteer at the local food bank.

and year-long programs, including **Seinan Gakuin University, Nakamura Gakuen University, Kobe Shoin Women's University, Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, Teikyo University, Chukyo University, and Bunkyo Gakuin University**. Additionally, from **Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Miyagi University and Bunkyo University**, 20 students joined the ELI for a one-month

on-campus experience in the spring and fall of 2022. Finally, 30 students from **Chiba University** participated in a short-term online program in the spring. Thanks to the meticulous planning of special program



University Semester USA students from Japan at the Festival of Nations in October coordinator Wakako Pennington, students enjoyed interacting with instructors, program assistants and classmates across the globe as they participated in a range of classes and ELI/UD activities.

Saudi Arabian Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC)



SABIC scholars helped to plant trees in New Orleans.

The ELI welcomed 10 highly qualified high school graduates in the seventh cohort of scholars sponsored by the **Saudi Arabian Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC)**, including the first four women. The scholars arrived in October 2021 to begin their Foundation Year in the United States. Coordinated by MariaJosé Riera, the program included English language study as well as university-level STEM courses, SAT and TOEFL preparation classes, leadership and entrepreneurship studies, and a capstone community service experience in New Orleans, Louisiana. (See "SABIC goes to NOLA" on page 10.) Students in this cohort plan to major in chemical, mechanical and electrical engineering, as well as cybersecurity and accounting. In August, they transitioned to undergraduate programs at top U.S. universities, including the University of Delaware, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Pennsylvania State University, and Rose-Hulman University.

In October, the ELI welcomed its eighth cohort of SABIC scholars: 15 young men and women who will spend 14 months at the Institute honing their language, leadership, and academic skills as they apply and prepare for their undergraduate studies at top U.S. universities.



Forty-four scholars from Oman began their studies at UD in October.

Oman Ministry of Higher Education

Five scholars from Oman, sponsored by the **Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation**, completed the ELI's flagship Academic Transitions program (AT) between August 2021 and December 2022 and have started their undergraduate programs at UD in materials science and engineering or economics. The ELI welcomed 44 additional Omani scholars in September for eight months of study in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) as well as ESAM (Education, Social Sciences, Arts and Management). These scholars, also sponsored by the Omani Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, started online and arrived on campus in late October. During their stay, students will learn and explore STEM and ESAM career communities. While they gain advanced academic English and foundational math skills, they will also be guided through the application process to enroll in top undergraduate programs around the United States and Canada, including the University of Delaware, beginning in the fall of 2023.

International Teaching Assistants (ITA) Training Program

The ELI's **ITA training program**, coordinated by Ken Hyde, successfully completed its largest ever summer program, delivering training online to a total of 181 international graduate students. This year's international teaching assistants hail from 42 countries around the world, including China, India, Iran and Nigeria, and have joined 21 different graduate programs at UD. The instructional team included Mary Beth WorriLOW, Leslie Criston, Elizabeth O'Connnor, Brady Smith, Monica Farling, Elisabeth Mercante, CarolAnn Buzzard, Christienne Woods, Toni McLaughlin, Brandon Jackson and Jennifer Rippon. During the intensive five-week curriculum, international TAs received instruction in pedagogy, American culture, oral intelligibility and UD academic life, culminating in a formal poster presentation to Mary Martin, vice provost for graduate and professional education. By completing the program, international TAs become qualified for instructional duties in their fields. The program is instrumental in preparing international graduate students, some of whom start the summer with little or no teaching experience, to step confidently into an American classroom.

O'Higgins Global Experience

In a collaborative project with the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR), the ELI hosted 12 students representing majors across colleges from the **Universidad O'Higgins** in Rancagua, Chile. The ELI community was thrilled to be able to welcome them in July and August this year, after Covid delayed their originally scheduled program in February. This is the fourth cohort of the Global Experience program that brings O'Higgins scholars to the University of Delaware to improve their English language skills, shadow classes on campus, and immerse themselves in American culture. Students learn about the unique relationship between the University of Delaware, the Port of Wilmington and Rancagua, Chile, in supplying the U.S. East coast with winter fruit from this agricultural region of Chile. These scholars are preparing to lead future agricultural growth and globalization efforts of this rich region of the South American Pacific coast. During their month stay, they also visited New York City, Washington and Philadelphia and engaged in cross-cultural programming on UD's campus.

Students from the Universidad O'Higgins in the UD CANR Global Experience program enjoyed fellowship at the ELI summer picnic.



ALUMNI NEWS 2022

Omar Abdullah
moom@udel.edu

(Saudi Arabia, '17) a SABIC scholar, graduated from UD in May 2022 with a degree in environmental engineering and a minor in environmental sustainability. During his senior year, he was awarded the REEF@UD award (Ratcliffe Eco-Entrepreneurship Fellows) for his startup, THMAR Farms, which applies sustainable agriculture technologies to address food security in Saudi Arabia. He is currently employed as an environmental engineer at Saudi Kayan Petrochemical Company.



Omar Abdullah

Amirah Almousa ameerah.nasser@gmail.com (Saudi Arabia, '20) published a book entitled "Reflections," about her year in the Khbrat teacher training program. She chose the title "Reflections" because "the UD team had asked us to write reflections on our immersion experiences in the schools in Delaware." Almousa expanded on this task to include thoughts and perspectives about her entire experience at the ELI, at UD and in the United States. "These 400 days built experiences that affected me in a positive way, and was the journey to my next brighter chapters." Currently, Almousa teaches first grade

and enjoys writing stories with her students in her virtual story club, the fruit of her Khbrat Capstone Action plan. "My young writers, as they love to call themselves, want to publish their stories in the future."



Amirah Almousa published a book about her experience at UD

Asmaa Taha Ibrahim Abo Alouk
aboalouk@udel.edu (Iraq, '15) was awarded a doctorate in structural engineering from UD's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Her dissertation is entitled: "An investigation of the Performance of a Skewed Steel Bridge with and without Cross Frames."



Asmaa Abo Alouk received her doctorate from UD in May.

Abdullah Alsinaidi
sinaidi@udel.edu (Oman, '17) is a professional airline pilot for Oman Air and recently opened a children's salon named "Peekaboo."



Airline Pilot Abdullah Alsinaidi

Silvia Andrade sn2141@columbia.edu (Colombia, '19) was awarded a Master of Science in Sustainability Management from Columbia University in New York City.



Silvia Andrade at her graduation from Columbia University in NYC

Fatih Gezer fgezer@udel.edu (Turkey, '15) was awarded a doctoral degree in statistics at the University of Leeds, now seeking a postdoctoral position. Gezer also became a member of the ELI Alumni Advisory Board this year

Mesut Karakoc
karakoc@udel.edu (Turkey, '15) was awarded a doctoral degree from UD's Biden School of Public Administration. His dissertation is entitled "An Analysis of U.S. State Level Cybersecurity Plans and Policies."



Mesut Karakoc on graduation day at the Biden School of Public Administration

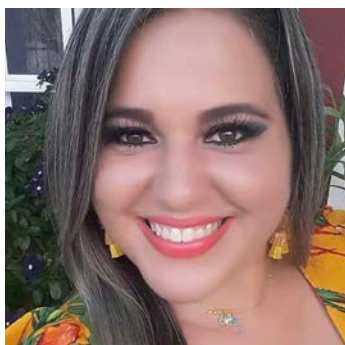
Haocheng Li lhc@udel.edu (China, '17) opened a karaoke bar called Hsiang K in Newark with former UD classmates to bring to the Newark community a karaoke experience similar to the one in China.

Merve Ozdemir mkozdemi@uncg.edu (Turkey, '15) is a doctoral scholar specializing in autism and early intervention research at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and recently completed a research internship at American Institutes of Research (AIR).



Merve Ozdemir

The ELI was grieved to learn of the untimely passing in August of **Marlina Pinilla** (Panama, '18). Pinilla, a participant in the ELI's Delaware English as a Foreign Language Teacher Training (DEFT) program in the winter of 2018, was a compassionate and optimistic agent of change in the school where she taught and at the university where she had become an instructor.



Marlina Pinilla, 1982-2022

Yijun "Shirley" Qian Shirley.Qiany@gmail.com (China, '19) completed a Master of Human-Computer Interaction at Drexel University and has begun her doctoral studies in human movement and rehabilitation science at Northeastern University this fall.

Jimin "Jenni" Kim Smirnova
daisy.blue102@gmail.com (South Korea, '15) completed a Master Degree in Biostatistics at the University of Michigan and now has a new position as a biostatistician at Precision for Medicine, focusing on clinical trials in rare diseases and oncology. Jenni also got married in April 2021.



Jenni Kim Smirnova with husband David Smirnov

Onur Yuruker onuryuruker@gmail.com (Turkey, '12) is happy to announce that he got married in August 2021.



Onur Yuruker and his lovely bride

Jiekun Zheng jiekunz@udel.edu (China, '18) graduated from UD Alfred Lerner College of Business and Economics with a triple major in global enterprises management, operations management and marketing and is continuing his studies at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education in statistics, measurement, assessment, and research technology (SMART). See April 2022 UDaily article: <https://www.udel.edu/udaily/2022/april/jiekun-zheng-graduate-lerner-college>

ELI APPOINTS ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD

by Kate Copeland

For the first time in its 44 year history, the English Language Institute has an **Alumni Advisory Board**.

The new board is composed of 11 members, representing diverse nationalities, professions and backgrounds, all of whom have been the beneficiaries of the ELI learning experience.

It had long been a goal of Director Scott Stevens to gather alumni who've gone on to be successful in their respective fields in their home countries, in order to gain insights into educational trends and changing student needs and to **generate** new program ideas.

Stevens convened the **inaugural** virtual meeting in January 2022, at which the following distinguished members were in attendance:

Ibrahim Al Thwakeb (Saudi Arabia, '82) studied computer science at UD and now manages the technical/engineering department of Saudi Aramco. His son, daughter and **innumerable** family members and friends have attended ELI over the years.

Maikel Sitepu (Indonesia, '84) continued his studies at UD in computer science, going on to work in the oil industry. He is now head of Asia Oil Origination at Noble Global Oil in Singapore.

Shingo Kimata (Japan, '88) is currently senior vice president for Nippon Telegraph & Telephone, engaged in Enterprise Sales.

Nermin Zubaca (Bosnia-Herzegovina, '08) worked for the ELI while completing his undergraduate studies at UD and went on to complete his master's in nonprofit and community leadership. He now works as a data

scientist for the UD-based Collaborative for Data Driven Action, which aims to meet racial, education, health, and economic challenges in Delaware.

Fatih Gezer (Turkey, '15) obtained his master's in statistics at UD. Having recently completed his doctorate at the University of Leeds, he now has a postdoctoral position at Clemson University in South Carolina.

Gokberk Durmaz (Turkey, '16) studied at UD and later completed his master's and doctorate in Japan in Japanese international relations. He is a faculty member at the University of Ankara.

Other board members include **Masato Yokoyama (Japan, '87)**, **Erico Duarte (Brazil, '08)**, **Jongin Lee (South Korea, '12)**, **Gildardo Cuauhtemoc Cano Gonzalez (Mexico, '18)** and **Katherin Patricia Tairo-Quisp (Peru, '19)**.

Members at the January meeting reconnected with their longstanding love of the ELI, recalling favorite memories of their time as students: trips to nearby areas of interest, learning the ropes of American culture from experienced tutors, and fun holiday party traditions that have continued for decades. Zubaca **evoked** the emotion he often felt at the sight of the international flags which have draped the ELI's main office building since 1989.

As the ELI looks to plot a course for the future, navigating both challenges and opportunities in international education, the expertise and professional positions of this select group of ELI alumni make them uniquely qualified to **discern** market trends in language education around the globe. The first meeting captured some international student mobility trends from their unique perspectives. One interesting idea that came from the first discussion was

short-term travel-study programs for senior citizens, which the ELI is now exploring.

At future meetings, board members will be invited to review the ELI's program offerings, initiatives and enrollment, and offer insights into opportunities within each member's country or region. Members are also involved with alumni reunions and new UD-ELI alumni associations.

With the benefit of knowledge and advice from the ELI Alumni Advisory Board, administration and faculty will be well positioned to continue shaping the ELI's vision to meet the 21st century goals of linguistically diverse students from all walks of life, both in Delaware and around the world.



Scott Stevens met with new ELI alumni board members in January. (top: Stevens, ELI marketing associate Denise Davis, Shingo Kimata middle: Ibrahim Al Thwakeb, Fatih Gezer, Nermin Zubaca, bottom: ELI marketing associate Emily Liu, Maikel Sitepu.) (not pictured: Gokberk Durmaz)

GLOSSARY

generate: to produce or create something
inaugural: marking the beginning of something important, for example the time when a new leader starts work, when a new organization is formed
innumerable: too many to be counted; very many

evoke: to bring a feeling, a memory, or an image into your mind
discern: to know, recognize, or understand something, especially something that is not obvious

STAFF PROFILE: LYNN ROBINSON

by R. Scott Partridge



Lynn Robinson

Lynn Robinson is currently the administrative assistant to Scott Stevens, however, that job title doesn't quite capture the **linchpin** role she occupies in the ELI community.

In addition to her role as Stevens's executive secretary, Robinson takes care of building upkeep, serves as key and room warden, and interacts with students, ELI faculty and staff, and University support alike; and they can all attest to the fact that she is a veritable fountain of information about University logistics and processes. All while **moonlighting** as a real estate agent on the side.

Robinson's enthusiasm, tireless efforts, and Delaware County charm have become a fixture at the 108 E. Main building, the academic hub of the ELI, since the re-opening of campus facilities this year. She has been an invaluable resource to students –and keeps the faculty and staff in line–with her **dynamo**-like energy. Is there anything this fabulous woman cannot do?

Before initially joining the ELI in 2018, Robinson's first position at the university was as an advisor in the College of Arts and Sciences, after her kids all left the nest to attend college. Her first position at the ELI was as administrative assistant to now-retired ELI Associate Director Joe Matterer, in the 318 South College building. Robinson has fond memories of the community at "318," which housed a large portion of the ELI courses and staff at the time. "Working for Joe was so calming," said Robinson, who also enjoyed the fast-paced environment of the bustling language institute.

But all too quickly, Robinson was "poached" by the College of Arts and Sciences for a two-year stint before she decided to come back to the ELI. "Honestly, I missed the crazy high energy of the session schedule, every eight weeks."

In her current position, Robinson rotates between Stevens's office and the 108 E. Main building, which, she says, is not dissimilar to those "crazy on steroids" days at "318;" the numerous programs, varied faculty, and special groups made up of curious, adventurous individuals, all of whose needs, both small and large, she supports.

On her days at "108," Robinson can be found sitting at the center of all the hustle, usually on the phone while fixing and straightening, fielding student, staff and faculty questions, directing traffic, or squeezing another meeting into Stevens's tight schedule, always quick with her signature friendly chatter. It is hard to not feel livelier and more energetic after an interaction with Robinson, and given her perch at 108, it is hard to miss her.

Robinson was born in West Philadelphia and moved to Delaware County in the 8th grade. Thus, she views herself as an accurate representation of a "DelCo" personality – though she is not the only representative at the ELI.

But what is this "DelCo" thing? Delaware County borders Philadelphia to the west, and thus sits atop Delaware, the "First State." It is one of the smallest counties in Pennsylvania but also one of the most famous, perhaps for being the loudest, "DelCo" is often used as a marker of identity for people from this area who have a distinct dialect, mannerism and personality.

Asked to describe what "DelCo" means, Robinson became thoughtful as she searched for the appropriate adjectives. "**Brazen**. Forward. Truthful. A person from DelCo will tell you how it is and really isn't concerned if it isn't what you want to hear."

To say she has a passing institutional knowledge of the university as a whole, and the ELI specifically, is an understatement. When Robinson reflected on the ELI's future, she said, "This is a time of transition and change, and the ELI has made such strong connections with the University and with its unique programs. The future looks very promising." With Robinson helping to manage and direct the **hustle and bustle** that promise is indeed bright.

GLOSSARY

linchpin: the most important part of an organization or a plan because everything else depends on it

moonlighting: having a second job

dynamo: a person with a lot of energy

brazen: bold and shameless, usually about something that is shocking

hustle and bustle: a large amount of activity and work, usually in a noisy surrounding

TUTOR PROFILE: MYRNA ZAETTA

by Susan Foy

Myrna Zaetta wears a few different hats at the ELI; teaching classes where needed, proctoring intake assessments, and mentoring teachers from other countries, among other things.

Usually, though, you can find her in the tutoring center, now known as the Hub where she has been lending her personal touch to the ELI learning experience for more than 10 years.

The tutoring staff counts many veteran education professionals among them, a hidden **treasure trove** of experience. Zaetta is no exception. For many years, she taught Spanish and Japanese to high school students in Delaware. She even got to study in Japan on a Fulbright scholarship, exploring all phases of Japanese life. When she returned to the United States, she was the only teacher of Japanese in the school district where she worked.

Zaetta has loved traveling all her life; she recently visited Egypt for the first time. She also loves cooking, reading, and art. After she retired from teaching, she wanted to continue meeting students from all over the world. "Teaching languages is another way to learn about other cultures and ways of life, and tutoring lets me explore all my favorite things with my students," Zaetta said. "I've made a lot of good friends and enjoy the camaraderie at the ELI."

Zaetta often finds herself supporting students not only in their English skills, but also in their life skills. What some may not know is that Zaetta has a Master's in clinical psychology. "Throughout our lives, we have many different coaches," reflected Zaetta. "Students seek out different tutors for different reasons: for expertise, to be challenged, to gain fluency, or for **a sympathetic ear**. They have a million reasons, and no two tutoring sessions are exactly alike."

Consequently, students who sometimes appear at the tutoring center with seemingly overwhelming challenges quite often leave feeling more self-empowered and with a clearer sense of the possibilities, the unwitting beneficiaries of Zaetta's kind and supportive wisdom.

Zaetta truly enjoys working with ELI students. "Tutoring feels worthwhile, for them and for me. I learn about their culture and I get to see them succeed. I'm not sure who learns more, them or me!"



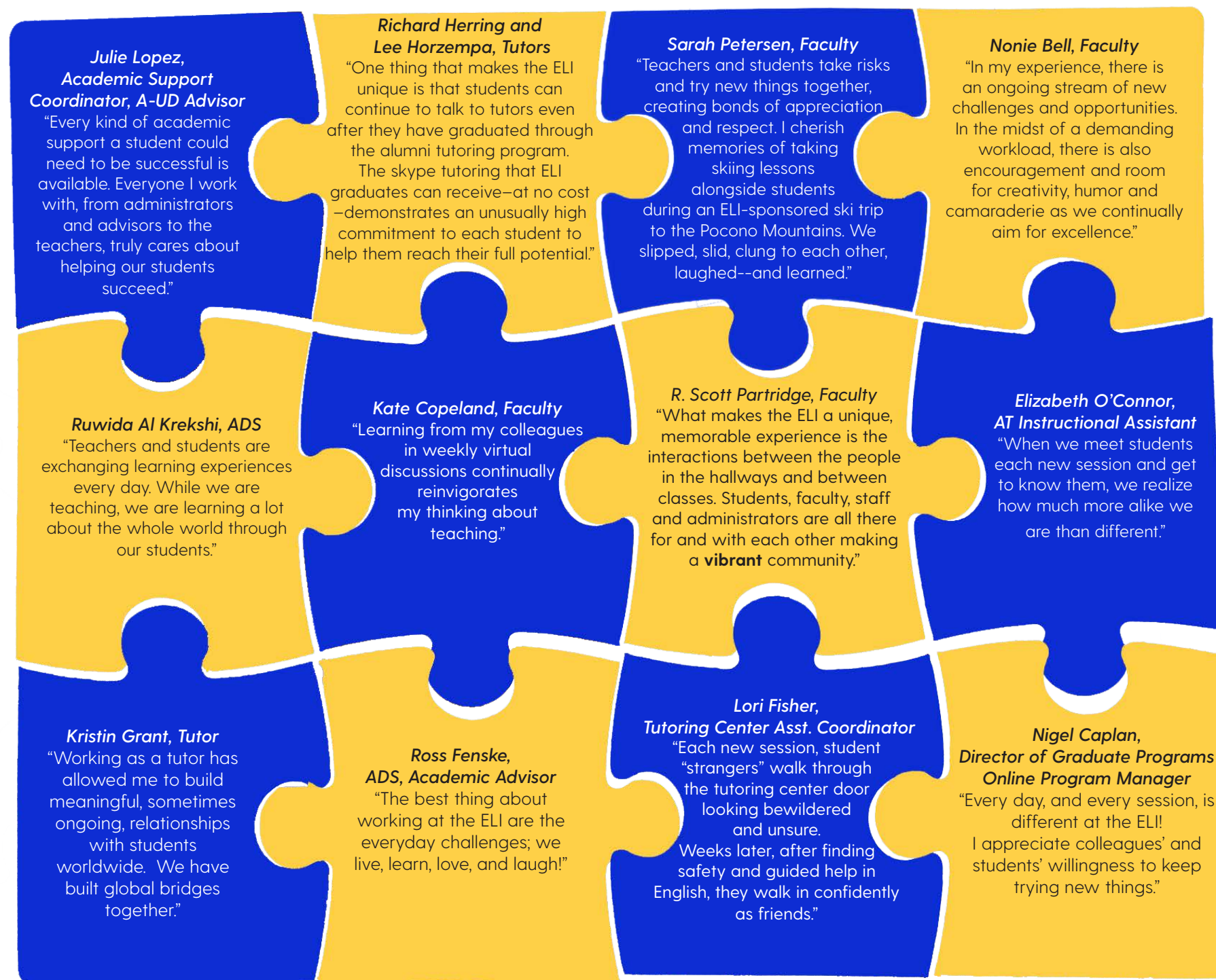
Myrna Zaetta sharing a laugh with English teachers from Saudi Arabia whom she mentored in 2020

treasure trove: someone or something containing many useful or beautiful ideas or things

a sympathetic ear: someone who is willing to listen to someone else's problems

Celebrating the ELI Community:

ELI FACULTY AND STAFF REFLECT ON THEIR EXPERIENCES OF THE INSTITUTE AS A LEARNING COMMUNITY.



GLOSSARY

reinvigorate: to give new energy or strength

vibrant: full of life and energy

bewildered: confused

KENDRA BRADECICH RETIRES

Kendra Bradecich concluded her teaching career in September after 12 ½ years of service to the ELI. An **anchor** to the advanced ESL writing program, Bradecich supported and inspired hundreds of students on their journey from ESL to successful matriculation.

A native of Pennsylvania, Bradecich worked for many years as a speech and language therapist in K-12 public schools. During several years at home with her two children, Bradecich hosted Japanese students learning English here in the States. Her fascination with the language and cultural exchange drew her to the field of TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language). She then completed her master's degree in TESL at West Chester University and was off to a new chapter in her life.

Bradecich held positions teaching ESL and first-year composition at several institutions of higher education in the Lancaster area before accepting an **adjunct** position at the ELI in 2010 and becoming a full-time faculty member in 2012.

A superb course and materials designer, Bradecich developed two courses which are **staple** offerings each session. Prep VI Reading/Writing served as a bridge to the first level of what eventually became the Academic Transitions course sequence, allowing students to continue on their way to credit-bearing courses at UD.

Music Listening: The Basics, the other course, introduces students to the world of classical music while also providing opportunities to improve their language skills. Some of Bradecich's students learned that they actually liked classical music.

Bradecich says she has always loved the "aha" moments when students suddenly

realized they understood something. "Spending time chatting with students in my office and then seeing them come back to catch up after they graduate are some of my greatest memories," Bradecich said, adding that she wants her former students to remember that "as long as you are alive, there is always more for you to learn."

Volunteering is high on the list of Bradecich's many plans for retirement. She now volunteers at Blessings of Hope, an organization that feeds the hungry in the United States. With her church, she also runs a weekly after-school kids' club at a low-income housing apartment complex and

mentors young moms at a mothers-and-toddlers program. In January, she will co-lead a team in welcoming newly displaced families in the Lancaster area. Bradecich says, "I believe giving back to my community, which I didn't have much time to do when I was working, should be a **vital** part of retirement life."

Travel and beach time is also on the list, now that there are no school calendar restrictions. Part of the past summer was spent with family, including three grandchildren, on the Florida coast.

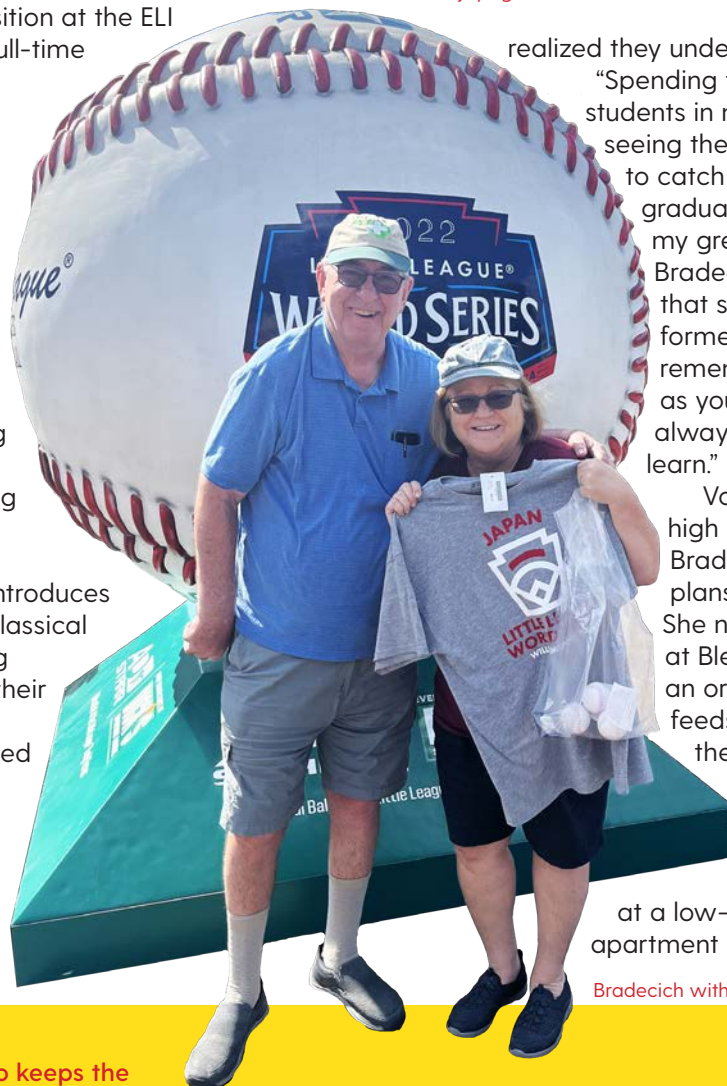
This fall, Bradecich and husband Eli traveled to Asheville, North Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia, and then found themselves in the midst of Hurricane Ian in Naples, Florida. Although a somewhat frightening experience, it gave her more **empathy** for those who go through disasters.

"My husband and I were able to go home afterwards, but we felt such sadness for those who had lost homes and belongings to the storm," Bradecich said.

Bradecich looks forward to more time spent with her grandchildren, more volunteering, and more travel—next year, a trip to Israel with a friend is planned—but don't be surprised if you see her return part time to the ELI some time in the future!



Bradecich enjoying retirement with her family



Bradecich with husband Eli at the Little League World Series in Williamsport, PA

GLOSSARY

anchor: a team leader who keeps the team on track

adjunct: a university instructor who works part time

staple: regularly available, essential

vital: necessary, very important

empathy: experiencing the emotions, thoughts, or attitudes others

PERSONNEL NOTES

CAREER MILESTONES

We congratulate the following ELI staff members who were appointed to new positions: **Brandon Jackson** was promoted to academic development specialist in February and serves as coordinator of the ELI Hub [see “The Hub” on page 19]. In April, **MariaJosé Riera** was promoted to ELI manager of special academic programs, and **Rebecca Boyle** was promoted to ELI manager of student life. In June, **Laura White** was promoted to ELI financial coordinator, and **Tamara Herring** was promoted to ELI academic support coordinator. Academic development specialist **Elisabeth Mercante Pearson** joined the ELI in November and will serve as coordinator for the UD SABIC Foundation Year Program.



Brandon Jackson



MariaJosé Riera



Rebecca Boyle



Laura White



Tamara Herring



Beth Mercante Pearson

TRANSITIONS

Alexis Carr moved to the College of Arts & Sciences as an operations administrator in November of 2021. **Tabitha Groh** became communications specialist for UD's Center for Disability Studies in March. **Callie Zimmerman** was transferred in June to a new position as the World Scholars Program Coordinator with UD's Center for Global Programs and Services. The ELI will continue to work with Callie through joint ELI and CGPS programming.

The ELI bade farewell to instructor **Nicole Servais** and AT Cohort coordinator **Sharon Mitchell**, who both moved on to pursue new opportunities in the fall of 2021. **Bridget Casterline** accepted a new position with Haverford College in July. ADS **James Weaver** departed the ELI in August to pursue a new career as an electrician. In September, ADS **Randy Pennington** accepted an ESL position in the Cecil County Public School System in Maryland.

After 28 glorious years of connections with the ELI and UD ever since she first arrived as an international student from Brazil in 1994, Assistant Professor **Carolina Correa** bade her fond adieus in October in order to join the Foreign Services Institute at the Department of State, where, as an instructor of Portuguese, she will train American diplomats for their posts in Brazil.

IN MEMORIAM

James Eliason, a tutor with ELI since 2013, passed away on January 11, 2022. Jim worked with Wycliffe Bible Translators for 12 years among the Omie people in Papua New Guinea. He also spent years at Delaware Technical and Community College in the English department before retiring. He enjoyed his family, cross-cultural experiences, and hosting and tutoring students. We will miss his passion and excellence at the ELI.



James Eliason

Lowell Riethmuller passed away on January 20, 2022. Lowell began his ELI career in 1982 and over the years served as a teacher, tutor, Listening Lab coordinator and technology coordinator. He was also the ELI's historian, curating photographs from the time of the ELI's founding. Although he retired in 2018, his greatest joy was in bearing witness to the ELI's 40th anniversary a year later. Lowell lives on in the hearts of so many ELI faculty, staff and students.



Lowell Riethmuller

CELEBRATION

Kendra Bradecich concluded her teaching career with the ELI in September and is now on her semester-long retirement sabbatical. Kendra has been a generous and congenial colleague. We wish her much joy on her well-deserved retirement.



Kendra Bradecich

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF FACULTY AND STAFF

Karen Asenavage, Associate Director

Leadership:

Chair, Doctoral Dissertation Committee, PhD in Organizational Leadership Program, College of Business and Leadership, Eastern University.

Eleanora S. (Nonie) Bell, Faculty

Presentations:

“Invigorating Continuing Professional Development in IEPs: Pedagogy Reading Discussion Groups” (with Kate Copeland, Nigel Caplan, Ross Fenske and Wakako Pennington). TESOL International Convention, March 2022.

Leadership:

Senator, College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate

Adil Bentahar, Faculty

Presentations:

“Supporting Lower-level EAP Students’ Reading and Writing Through Google Tools.” American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) National Convention, Boston, MA, November 2022.

“Strategy Use and Social-Collaborative Learning Platforms in EAP Reading.” Japanese Association of Language Teaching (JALT) Online Annual Conference, November 2022.

“Culturally-responsive Pedagogy: What Works in the Language Classroom.” Delaware Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages (DECTFL) Conference, Newark, DE, October 2022.

“Toward Finding the Missing Piece of Extensive Reading in IEPs.” Extensive Reading Around the World, August 2022.

“Hills and Valleys to Higher Education: Equity for Adult English Language Learners” (with Leigh Anne Shaw). TESOL-Social Responsibility Interest Section 2022 Webinar, June 2022.

“Supplementing IEP Reading Instruction Using Perusall.” In P. Smart-Smith and B. Teague (chairs), Effective Program Adaptations in a Post-pandemic World [Panel]. TESOL National Conference, March 2022.

“Back to the Future: Advancing Educational Quality in IEP Reading and Writing Instruction: Three Effective Practices.” Congress Spotlight Session, International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement Annual Conference, March 2022.

Publications:

“IEP Reading Instruction During the Covid-19 Emergency Remote Teaching” (with Ali Alalou). *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 34(2), 376–397. <https://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/item/562>

“Review of the Book Ambitious and Anxious: How Chinese College Students Succeed and Struggle in American Higher Education, by Y. Ma.” *Journal of Asia TEFL*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2022, pp.737–739. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2022.19.2.27.737>

“Back to the Future: Advancing Educational Quality in IEP Reading and Writing Instruction: Three Effective Practices. ICSEI Dialogic, vol. 1, no. 1, 2022, pp. 14–15. <https://www.icsei.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ICSEI-Dialogic-2022-1.pdf>

Adil Bentahar, Cont.

Leadership:

Co-leader, TESOL Social Responsibility English Learner Advocacy area
Board member, Delaware Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (DECTFL).
Reviewer, *Journal of Asia TEFL*

Nigel Caplan, Faculty

Publications:

Essential Actions for Academic Writing (with Anne Johns). University of Michigan Press, 2022.

“Changing the Default: From Emergency to Sustainable Online Teaching in a U.S. Intensive English Program.” *International Perspectives on Teaching Academic English in Higher Education in Times of the Pandemic*. Routledge, 2022.

“The Grammar Choices that Matter in Academic Writing.” *Handbook of Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Routledge, 2023.

“L2 Writing and Language Learning in Academic Settings.” *Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Writing*. Routledge, 2022.

Presentations:

“Just Eat the Marshmallow: Genre-based Writing vs. Preparation Culture in Intensive English Programs.” TESOL International Convention, March 2022.

“The Rhetorical Planning Wheel: Analyzing and Scaffolding Genre-based Writing” (with Anne Johns and Christine Tardy). TESOL International Convention, March 2022.

“Invigorating Continuing Professional Development in IEPs: Pedagogy Reading Discussion Groups” (with Kate Copeland, Nonie Bell, Ross Fenske and Wakako Pennington). TESOL International Convention, March 2022.

External Professional Development Workshops

The Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University
Grand Rapids Community College
Baylor College of Medicine

Leadership:

Treasurer, Delaware English Language Learner Teachers and Advocates

Kate Copeland, Faculty

Presentations:

“Cross-Fertilizing International EFL Professional Learning: Virtual PLNs” (with Ahlam Musa, Rawan Alruwaili and Abdulaziz Zanguty). TESOL International Convention, March 2022.

“Invigorating Continuing Professional Development in IEPs: Pedagogy Reading Discussion Groups.” (with Nonie Bell, Nigel Caplan, Ross Fenske, and Wakako Pennington). TESOL International Convention, March 2022.

Kenneth Cranker, Faculty

Presentations:

“Pouring Your Life into Your Students.” TESOL Narratives: Online Conversation Series. PennTESOL-East, May 2022.

Ross Fenske, Academic Development Specialist

Presentations:

"Invigorating Continuing Professional Development in IEPs: Pedagogy Reading Discussion Group" (with Kate Copeland, Nonie Bell, Nigel Caplan and Wakako Pennington). TESOL International Convention, March 2022.

Michael Fields, Faculty

Publication:

"Listening Final Exam Construction: An Exercise in Technical Expertise and Cooperation from Stakeholders." *Journal of Asia TEFL* vol. 19, no. 1, Spring 2022, pp. 216-226. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2022.19.1.13.216>

Presentations:

"Developing Institutional Listening Tests." IATEFL Conference, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK, May 2022 (and webinar, October 2022).

External Professional Development Workshops

Monthly ELTS webinar, English Language Testing Society.

Leadership:

ELI representative to American Association of University Professors, UD chapter

R. Scott Partridge, Faculty

Presentation:

"Collaborative Content in a Genre Analysis-focused Freshman Composition Course." TESOL International Convention, March 2022.

Leadership:

University of Delaware ELI Faculty Senator

Proposal reviewer, TESOL International Convention 2022.

Wakako Pennington, Academic Development Specialist

Presentation:

"Invigorating Continuing Professional Development in IEPs: Pedagogy Reading Discussion Groups" (with Kate Copeland, Nonie Bell, Nigel Caplan, and Ross Fenske). TESOL International Convention, March 2022.

Leadership:

Proposal reviewer: NAFSA 2022 Conference and Expo, TESOL International Convention 2022.

Phil Rice, Faculty

Presentations:

"Beyond Zoom: How Open Broadcasting Software Can Improve Instructional Content." Washington TESOL Conference, Washington, D.C., October 2022

"Get Down to the 'Art' of the Matter: Utilizing Art in English Instruction." Washington TESOL Conference, Washington, D.C., October 2022

Scott Stevens, Director

Presentation:

Panel presentation by UCIEP, EnglishUSA, TESOL, NAFSA, and AIRC (with Amber Kelleher, Joann Hartmann and Haviva Parnes). English USA Annual Stakeholders Conference, Alexandria, VA, October 2022.

Leadership:

Current president and past vice-president, Consortium of University and College Intensive English Programs (UCIEP)

Christienne Woods, Academic Development Specialist

Presentation:

"Speaking about the Real World: Documentary Films and Speaking Activities." TESOL International Convention, Pittsburgh, PA, March 2022

IN MEMORIAM: LOSS OF A RARE SOUL — JUNYI CHEN

by Karen Asenavage

The ELI community was deeply saddened by the sudden passing in October of Junyi "Kyla" Chen, a freshman at the University of Delaware from China who had recently completed the English Language Institute Academic Transitions (AT) Program on campus. She was 22.

"Kyla was well regarded for her inquisitive and caring nature," said Adam Cantley, dean of students. "This loss diminishes us all."

Born in Hefei in the Anhui province of China, Ms. Chen had traveled to many places around the world before coming to Delaware. She arrived in fall 2021 and excelled in the ELI's AT Pathways courses she took, and was also an active member of the ELI family and the UD community.

As many Chinese students do, she chose an English name, Kyla. Its meaning, beautiful, full of life, uplifting, and charming, coupled with the meaning of her Chinese name, even and uniform, describe her well.

Assistant Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry Lauren Genova recalled, "Her unbridled curiosity and zest for learning were equal parts inspiring and invigorating."

Her mother, pediatrician Dr. Jinlan Wu, recognized quite early her unique intelligence and inquisitiveness, as well as her kindness to people and animals and care for the environment, thinking she might select biology as her major at UD.

ELI tutor Jeremy Penna provided a glimpse of why that might have been. "She'd jump from topic to topic in a way that didn't immediately make sense but which I later saw as reflecting a quick-witted enthusiasm for connections and analogies," he said. "Anyone who has worked in education will recognize those two tendencies (an inquisitiveness which is not satisfied with superficial answers and an imagination which is capable of broadest synthesis) to reflect a mind of the highest quality."

She was also interested in what others thought about her novel ideas. ELI faculty member Scott Partridge remembered, "In class, she had a way of interacting with her fellow students that was memorable and endearing with her unconventional viewpoints," he said. "She made classroom discussions wondrously invigorating, repeatedly bringing a smile to our faces."

Ms. Chen fiercely loved her home country of China. ELI faculty member and academic adviser Ross Fenske, who worked with her during her time at the ELI, shared one of his fondest encounters that revealed not only her care and concern for others but also her unique way of conveying her sincerity, integrating both American and Chinese customs. "She had noticed a stack of chairs blocking the entrance of a classroom and brought this safety concern to my attention," Fesnke said. After asking for my assistance to move them, she put her bag down,

gave me a little bow and then looked me in the eyes and said, 'Thank you.' It was the smallest of gestures, but the impact was profound."

"I don't believe Junyi knew how wonderfully made she was, how absolutely splendidly and beautifully different. The world has lost a rare soul," mused ELI tutor Jill McCracken.

ELI Associate Director of Academic Programs Karen Asenavage concurred and added, "The world, her mother and family, the ELI and the University of Delaware have indeed lost not only a daughter and promising student but a rare soul who challenged us to be and do better."



Junyi "Kyla" Chen

2022 IN PICTURES

Photos by Umida Ruzybayeva







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apply.udel.edu/register/AlumniUpdate

