THIS IS THE HOUSE THAT DR. STEVENS BUILT

Remembering his 40 year legacy
November 1987

Dear ELI Friend:

We couldn’t wait to write you this holiday season because we have wonderful news. By Fall of 1988, we hope to move into a new building for the ELI. That’s right, no more classes in churches, basements, and attics! An end to five classes of tutoring in the same noisy room! Finally, we will have space to hold international gatherings and create a better environment for learning. We hope to send you soon more information on the project.

This year was best characterized as a time of sharing talents. An experimental ELI drama class led to a special theatrical production for the university community. We’ll long remember the masterful performances of Yoko Watabe, Kahtan Kannan, Sumi Nonoguchi, and Hae Jin Chang. Another group of ELI students, Maato Yokoyama, Sachiko Mori, and Atsushi Yamakazi joined Ruth Jackson, their ELI teacher, in a professional production of the musical “Pink ‘n Fancy” at Longwood Gardens, receiving wonderful reviews. Our student body has included a famous author, a fine dancer, and several talented singers.

New faces at the ELI include faculty members Judy McKelvey, Jo Ellen Hayyan, Saerbel Schumacher and Chris Wolfe, as well as staff members Diane Baker, Andy Sparks and Elizabeth Webster.

Finally, the University has a new President, Dr. Russell C. Jones, formerly Vice-President of academic affairs at Boston University. Under new leadership there exists exciting opportunities for strengthening of international programs at the University of Delaware.

As is our tradition, we conclude our UDEL news with holiday messages from our teachers and staff.

Greetings to all! I’ve had a wonderful year teaching drama... Polly, who is too modest to tell you, has been promoted to Office Coordinator. My son David, 3, has begun preschool—“tempus fugit!” May the New Year bring you the blessings of health and peace.

Scott G. Stevens

Hello All! I’ve had an exciting (?) and exhausting(!) year learning to be Associate Director and teaching. My children are now 12 and 8 (I find THAT unbelievable). They are very independent and very interesting. Best wishes for the new year.

Kathy Schneider

It’s been another busy year finding housing for new students. We are lucky to have recently found a new apartment building so ELI students can rent an apartment for 2 months at a time! Yeah! Merry Christmas everyone!

Jan Lovehurk

I am so proud of the latest addition to my family. My son Stuart, and his wife, Tracy, presented me with my first grandchild—a precious boy born 7/24/87. His name is Robert (“Bobby”) Louis. Happy Holiday and a Prosperous, Healthy New Year.

Polly Vaughn
Dear ELI Friend,

This year’s edition of ELI Interactions focuses on “transitions,” marking a period of change from one state to another. The lead article will delve more deeply into the nature of changes at the ELI, but most noteworthy is the unprecedented number of retirements—seven in all. In November we celebrated the careers of six beloved and exceptional faculty members: Nonie Bell, Kate Copeland, Ken Cranker, Leslie Criston, Lisa Grimsley, and Sarah Petersen—remarkable teachers who imparted the gifts of language and wisdom to thousands of alumni. I, too, will join the ranks of retirees, after concluding my 42nd year.

As sad as we are to bid goodbye to so many of ELI’s stalwarts, we welcome with much excitement two new full-time teachers – Chad Davidson and Patricia Miele – each bringing extensive experience, incredible talent, and unbridled enthusiasm to their new posts. A national search for the Institute’s next director led to a most fortuitous outcome with the selection of Dr. Cheryl Ernst, former director at the University of Oregon’s intensive English program. A proven leader and an accomplished professional, Cheryl takes the helm and charts a new course for the good ship UDELI beginning in January. Chad, Patricia, and Cheryl, together with all of the current faculty and staff, will build strength upon strength, continuing ELI’s legacy of preeminence among English language programs.

You see, what makes the ELI special is not dependent on any single individual. Rather, baked into our DNA is a culture that embraces caring and community, excellence and innovation. We are guided by a timeless mission (see p.5) to exceed our students’ expectations for developing their linguistic, academic, and professional skills; contribute to international understanding by engaging students in meaningful intercultural exploration; and recruit only the most talented and experienced English language specialists and staff—and promote their continued professional growth. It is our collective and unrelenting effort to fulfill that mission every day that has made UD ELI a national leader among intensive English programs and earned us the faithful loyalty of 20,000 alumni like you.

I close out my career knowing the ELI is in great hands and its future bright. It has been my profound privilege to work with the best, brightest, and, equally important, the kindest and most compassionate colleagues I could ever hope to meet. It has been my blessing and joy to meet and befriend students and alumni from around the world. You have taught me so much. You have enriched my life. Most of all, you have made me a better person for having known you. As the great Louis Armstrong sang, you make me “think to myself: what a wonderful world!”

In deepest gratitude,

Scott Stevens
Director

I want to thank the leadership of the Newsletter Committee, Monica Farling, Editor in Chief, as well as her entire team of editors and writers for their labor of love in crafting this year’s excellent publication.

GLOSSARY

delve into: to explore something in careful detail
precedent: never happened before
stalwart: someone very loyal in supporting a team or organization
unbridled: not restrained or limited; passionate
fortuitous: happening by chance, with a good result

take the helm: to officially take charge of an organization, the way a captain guides a ship
chart a course: [a metaphor borrowed from the language of sailing] to set important goals and make a plan for what direction to take
the good ship: something strong and reliable that one can trust to do well
preeminence: having a higher quality or standard than others
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

When the Interactions staff met in April to begin planning this year’s issue, it was immediately clear that the focus would be on transitions. A number of long-time faculty members planned to retire at the end of 2023, as did the ELI’s director of nearly 40 years.

Dr. Stevens insisted, “Don’t make it all about me!” but at the time, we wondered, “How can it not be?” He has contributed so much to building this place, and affected so many people, it was hard to imagine a concise way to recognize that impact.

The title, “This Is The House That Dr. Stevens Built,” is based on an English nursery rhyme from the 1700s called “This is the house that Jack built.” The poem is written in a style called a cumulative tale. It uses adjective clauses (remember those from levels 4 and 5?) to add more and more information to each verse. As it does, the focus shifts away from the house and the person who built it, and onto other stories that emerge about the people connected with the house.

As the stories in the magazine took shape, we saw a similar pattern:

This is the house that Dr. Stevens built.
These are the teachers
that taught in the house that Dr. Stevens built.

These are the students
that learned from the teachers
that taught in the house that Dr. Stevens built.

These are the moments
loved by the students
that learned from the teachers
that taught in the house that Dr. Stevens built.

And, as we looked at the profiles and read the words of newly hired faculty and staff, who will carry the ELI forward:

This is the future
that will create new moments
to be loved by the students
that will learn from the teachers
that teach in the house that Dr. Stevens built.

The front cover depicts the iconic house at 189 W. Main St., one of several homes the ELI has had over the years. However, the ELI, this “house that Dr. Stevens built,” is more than just a building. He himself has always said that people are more important than buildings. Rather, the “house” is the institution: its values, its traditions, and most of all, the people who will pass the legacy of excellence on from one generation to the next.

In the pages that follow, we hope that you will enjoy a fond look back on decades of ELI memories – and also join us in looking ahead in hope to stories yet to be written.

Sincerely,

Monica Farling
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.
In May 2023, I was asked if I would write an article about Dr. Scott Stevens, ELI’s esteemed director, marking his retirement. I was both honored and horrified. How does one capture the last 40 years of his professional career? What if there were glaring omissions? How could I fit everything I wanted to say within a few short pages? Could I deliver something that would be deserving enough to be Interactions’ feature article? As I pondered these questions, it finally occurred to me that I knew someone that could best describe Dr. Stevens, who could decide better than I could what to include from his tome-like CV, and who was certainly a wittier, wiser, more word-smithy writer than me: Dr. Stevens, the man, the myth, the legend himself! I sent him a list of questions and allowed him to write the “article” in his own words as he responded.

"Your B.A. from Bucknell was in English Literature. How did you decide on a career in ESL? Did you always envision yourself as an educator?"

No, not really. I entered college wanting to study psychology, but the focus of Bucknell’s department was, at the time, on behaviorism, which did not appeal to me, so I pursued literature. However, I was active in BU’s adopt-a-grandmother program with a local nursing home. I used to visit several residents who had essentially been abandoned by their families. I thought America’s nursing home system had failed the elderly and believed there had to be a better way to support those whose health and circumstances required constant care. And so I had planned to study gerontology in graduate school after graduating from Bucknell. However, I had written an honors thesis on the British novelist Arnold Bennett that garnered the attention of Professor Zack Bowen, a famous James Joyce scholar, who was then Chair of the University of Delaware’s English Department. Dr. Bowen offered me a fellowship to come to UD to pursue a master’s degree in English Literature. During my last semester, I took a course in Teaching English as a Second Language from Professor Louis Arena. Within a few weeks, I knew for certain, this was the profession I was called to pursue."
In 1984, only a few short years after Dr. Louis Arena founded the ELI, you became director. What was the ELI like at the time you took the reins? Would we have recognized it?

I think so. Private tutoring, Dr. Arena’s idea, was there from the beginning—as were cultural activities and picnics with our students. The two dimensions brought a sense of community and intimacy to the ELI that have always been the hallmark of the program.

Professional growth is nurtured by many along one’s path. Was there anyone who mentored you or someone you tried to emulate in your role as an educator and/or a leader? What was one valuable lesson that you learned from him/her?

I've had many role models: Dr. Arena, who inspired me to pursue TESL; Dr. Hans Breuer, who taught me how to read and write critically; my own father, who taught me the importance of working hard, working smart, and thinking entrepreneurially; my Uncle Jack, who taught me the importance of living out my faith with integrity. But I think I learned the most about leadership from former UD president David Roselle. Dr. Roselle was a soft-spoken man with big ideas who had a gift for creating excitement around those ideas. He also was a supporter of the ELI. Once, the ELI was hosting TEFL educators from Francophone and Lusophone African countries. One of the visiting teachers asked Dr. Roselle what his philosophy of leadership was, to which the president replied, *“HIRE GREAT PEOPLE; GIVE THEM GOOD PLACES IN WHICH TO WORK; AND BE NICE TO EACH OTHER.”*

Some skeptics scoff at that last point, believing it’s best to challenge each other and create a climate of fierce competition. But I have come to believe that fostering kindness, encouraging colleagues to be nice to each other, is the most important role for a leader. People work best when they like and feel supported by the colleagues with whom they work.

Finish this sentence: “If I had never gone into education, I would have most likely pursued…”

...a career in counseling because I tend to be a good listener, have empathy for others, and like helping others become the best version of themselves.

**GLOSSARY**

*tome:* a book, usually a large heavy one

*wordsmith:* skillful at using words, especially in writing

*behaviorism:* the theory that human actions are the result of training people to respond to certain conditions in particular ways out of habit, rather than based on thoughts and feelings

*garners:* to collect something, usually after working hard or achieving something difficult

*scoff:* to laugh at something in a way that shows you think it is silly or dumb
You have been the recipient of many prestigious awards. In 2015, NAFSA presented you with the Cassandra Pyle Award, which read: for “lengthy commitment to the field through Leadership positions in and significant contributions to organizations that foster international education.” What contributions to the field are you most proud of?

In 1981, when I became an ELI teacher, ESL was a field that garnered little respect and where ESL teachers were terribly exploited–poorly paid in mostly adjunct positions with few benefits. Intensive English programs (IEPs) were housed in basements or attics and considered irrelevant to their university’s missions. In my four decades in the field, I have had the opportunity to work alongside wonderful colleagues advocating for liveable salaries and career ladders for faculty; campaigning for first rate teaching facilities and cultural centers; fighting for greater respect for the field through accreditation and impactful research; globalizing campuses and thereby rendering IEPs central to their college missions. Mine was just a voice in the choir, but we made beautiful music together.

On a lighter note, many who have worked with you know what a quirky and quick wit you possess. Can you share a quote that captures the essence of the ELI?

Forty years ago, my wife and I hosted an ELI student from Colombia named Victor. The movie Victor/Victoria, starring Walter Preston and Julie Andrews, had just come out, and we thought it great fun to take Victor to see it. At one point in the film, Preston finishes performing in front of a colorful crowd that showers him with applause. Preston responds with, “Thank you! You’re too kind. In fact, you’re every kind!” In the movie, Preston’s comment sparks a brawl. But I think it describes the ELI wonderfully: our ELI faculty, staff and students are every kind, and that diversity of talent, ideas, perspectives, and lifestyles is our secret sauce.

Many might not know that you have gone before Congress to affect change on critical issues that impact education for international students. Can you summarize that experience?

At the turn of the century, the field of IEPs was marked by a wide range: excellent university programs, some very good corporately owned programs, and some truly awful for-profit programs taking advantage of international students. I was on the advocacy team of our professional organization, and we were lobbying Congress to pass a law requiring IEPs to meet quality standards through an accreditation process. It’s not easy getting laws passed in Washington. We tried for seven years without success, until we were able, with the help of Delaware Senator Tom Carper, to get a bill supported by both Republicans and Democrats. We got word that it might just pass.
However, the government agency that would be charged with enforcing accreditation, SEVP, wrote to the Senate Judiciary committee to oppose the bill. I was charged by our professional association with writing a rebuttal of the SEVP challenge to the Judiciary Committee. Some colleagues helped with the editing, and, in the end, it worked! The bill passed, and President Obama signed it into law. The framed legislation hangs in my office today. The requirement that IEPs be accredited has meant a lot of work for programs, so not everyone was happy with us. But in the end, it strengthened programs and protected students.

You have navigated the ELI safely through some very difficult times, most recently the COVID-19 pandemic. How have you so gracefully dealt with the pressure and responsibility of such times that resulted in keeping the ELI afloat?

I pray a lot! But I also have unflagging confidence in the entrepreneurial spirit among the faculty and staff of the ELI. Whatever we have faced, I have always believed that, as a program of excellence, we would come out of it because cream always rises to the top. Time and time again, we have risen to the occasion with new ideas for courses, programs, and ways to serve our students and sponsors. It’s believing in this amazing team of colleagues and a kind of destiny for the program that buoy my spirits when we encounter challenges.

You are an avid history buff. Upon your retirement, you will become part of ELI’s celebrated history. How do you hope your colleagues and students will remember their time with you?

I have worked with so many wonderful colleagues and students over my 40+ years at the ELI. That they remember me at all and would be willing to have the occasional cup of coffee with me would be my fondest hope.

Since 2002, you have coordinated UD’s MA TESL program with the School of Education. For many years you have taught a methods course in the program. If there were only one kernel of wisdom – a critical takeaway – that you’d want your grad students to remember about being an effective teacher, what would it be?

Each year I tell the wonderful students in my graduate class that passion and character are what matter most. Passion because the passion for learning can be so contagious. Character because you, the teacher, are the book your students will read, study, and emulate most carefully.

A signed copy of the final legislation hanging proudly in the Director’s office at 189 W. Main St.

The full text of Public Law 111-306 can also be read on the U.S. Congress website.

GLOSSARY

rebuttal: a statement in response to something already spoken or written, arguing against it
unflagging: never becoming tired of or running out of interest in doing something
buoy one’s spirits: to encourage someone or make them feel more positive about a situation

LINKS

You manage such a tremendous amount of work that it’s difficult to imagine that you have any downtime. What do you do in your time away from your professional life?

I am very active in my church, as an elder and in leading a small growth group with several members of the congregation. To relax, I love to read, do a very simple form of Tai Chi, and spend time swimming and kayaking at a lake in northeastern Pennsylvania.

What are some traditions that you hope live on at the ELI?

I hope graduations continue to be special, joyful occasions, with the honors ceremony living on, performances being a part of every ceremony, etc. I hope we continue to have our annual events: the summer picnic, the Halloween party, Festival of Nations, the holiday celebration. I hope faculty continue to engage students outside of class: painting parties, guitar club, hikes, team sports…

What do you look forward to most as you plan for life after retirement?

I am looking forward to traveling for pleasure and, where possible, visiting the homes of ELI alumni with whom I have remained close these many years. But I am also looking forward to being intellectually and creatively challenged by trying and studying new things. Just what those things are has not yet been fully decided, but I am looking forward to the adventure.

The ELI and the UD community will be welcoming our next ELI director. What advice can you offer as we ready ourselves for this transition?

The new director will be working with the finest ESL faculty and administrators in the country, as I have these many years. Giving the new director the kind of support and dedication to the ELI’s mission and staying committed to caring for our students and for each other, as you have during my tenure as director – that’s the best possible preparation and gift for my successor.

What parting words of wisdom, humor, or other would you like to leave us with?

I think Dr. Seuss said it best:

“DON’T CRY BECAUSE IT’S OVER. SMILE BECAUSE IT HAPPENED.”
GRADUATIONS

Although the ELI holds a graduation ceremony at the end of every 7-8 week session, Dr. Stevens has never tired of celebrating students’ accomplishments. Throughout his career, he has written a new, unique speech for every graduation. He makes a point to shake each student’s hand, and is never in too much of a hurry to include their family members in the celebration or to join in their fun. He is genuinely proud of their accomplishments.

HALLOWEEN PARTIES

One of Dr. Stevens’ favorite traditions is a live-action performance of the classic carol “The Twelve Days of Christmas” at the holiday party each December. “One of our traditions at the ELI is that all the faculty, staff, and administrators get to make fools of ourselves in front of our students!” The faculty and staff even found a way to re-create all of the motions the year they were on Zoom during the pandemic!

SUMMER PICNICS

A sense of humor helps in this job! Dr. Stevens cools off in the dunk tank at the 2013 summer picnic.

"THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS"

Watch the 2009 “Twelve Days of Christmas” here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zL-k38AKXfU
I was our ELI’s founding Director in 1978, and have been proud of Dr. Stevens’ leadership of the ELI over the past 40 years. The UD ELI first began in 1978 at Wesley College in Dover, DE. That first year in Dover was so successful that it was decided to bring the newly founded ELI to the Newark campus. It was shortly after 1980 that I began to have the pleasure of knowing Scott. At that time, I was teaching two important courses: Methods of Teaching English as a Foreign Language and Second Language Testing. Scott was one of the first students taking such courses on his academic path to achieving his masters, and later, his doctoral degrees.

When Scott took over leadership as director, the ELI was a “stepchild” at the University in many ways: locations, funding, academic status of the ELI faculty, and full acceptance by the Newark community. Prior to its current location, I recall that the ELI was housed in at least five different locations, including the fourth floor of the Morris Library, within the University Writing Center. Under Scott’s leadership, the ELI found its current permanent locations on Main Street. Among other accomplishments, Scott also managed to finally obtain academic faculty status and benefits for his teachers; significant funding for the ELI’s operations and capital expenses; gradual acceptance of the ELI by the University’s 50+ academic departments, and a genuine welcome of our ELI students from Newark’s local residents.

None of this came easily or quickly. But once situated both academically and socially, Scott’s ELI became well known and really highly respected not only by our University and its leaders, but also by the Newark community; nationally through professional organizations and publications, colleges and universities in the USA; and literally, throughout the world, as a first class, truly student-centered, top ranked ELI in the USA.

How did this all transpire? Through Dr. Scott Stevens’ visions for the ELI, his extraordinary competence in the fields of ELI teaching and testing; years of successful interactive dealings with several UD administrations and many academic departments; and in recruiting and retaining the populations of students necessary for the amazing success of our ELI. I believe he has been an administrator for the longest period of time, 40 years, out of anyone at UD to date. What Scott has done in four decades at the UD ELI has typically taken other intensive English programs at least 60-70 years, over the tenure of several directors, to even come close to matching in terms of achievements and professional prestige.

As a person, throughout his tenure as director of the ELI, Scott has always welcomed anyone he met with a genuine smile and a handshake, and has served his staff and students with a consistent, professional compassion that ensured success for the ELI. I served at UD for 56 years, and it is my professional opinion that Dr. Scott Stevens has been the best director that our UD ELI could ever have hoped for. I wish Scott all and only the best of health and continued happiness in his exciting new life.

**Glossary**

- **stepchild**: a person, project, or organization that is not appreciated in the way that it deserves
- **situated**: established in a place, position, or condition
- **transpire**: to happen, to take place, to occur
- **tenure**: the time during which someone holds a position or office

Dr. Stevens has always prioritized students’ language learning experiences. Awarding a scholarship, 2019

Ribbon cutting: the ELI moved to its flagship location at 189 W. Main St. in 1992

One last visit: Dr. Stevens at Rodney in 2015 before the residence hall complex was closed by the University.

China partners, 2014
The shirts have been around even longer than Dr. Stevens has been the director of the ELI. According to lore, when he was the orientation coordinator in the early days of the Institute, he conceived of a shirt as a way for students to bond during their time in Newark and as a memento they could take home with them. The first ELI t-shirts featured a logo designed by the winner of a student contest, and they were sold for just $3.

Soon, however, the shirts were not available for sale at any price. Instead, they became sought-after prizes, awarded to graduates who had maintained high attendance and academic performance during their time at the ELI. The ceremony at which they were awarded became as highly anticipated as the receiving of certificates. At every session graduation, Dr. Stevens would explain to the assembled guests that the students whose names he was about to read had so excelled as language learning heroes that what they had earned was “no ordinary piece of cotton-polyester cloth, but the highly esteemed, one-of-a-kind, often-coveted, but-never-emulated, ELI Honors T-Shirt.”

“T-Shirt... T-Shirt... T-Shirt...”

The echo became as symbolic as the shirts themselves, and when the A/V failed to deliver, faculty and students would supply it themselves, murmuring “T-Shirt... T-Shirt... T-Shirt...” in unison every time Dr. Stevens spoke the word.

As he called each honors recipient to the stage, faculty members would be waiting in the wings to hand the student his or her shirt. After all the names had been read, Dr. Stevens would turn to the line of scholars standing on the stage, and with great gravitas, begin to expound on the significance of the garment they now held in their hands:

“From this day forward, you are not just ELI graduates, you are language learning champions. Everywhere you go, if you are wearing this shirt, everyone will know that you are this incredible, Olympian language learner. You will receive praise and accolades. People will come up to you on the street and want to know the secret of language learning success that you have discovered. Mothers will name their children after you!”

“So you have to be prepared for fame the world over. You will need to become accustomed to the attention of the masses! To prepare you for this kind of stardom, we have a kind of dress rehearsal here at the ELI,” he would continue. “This is the famous ELI podium!” he would proclaim, holding aloft a rather comically small stepstool as he walked towards the center of the stage. “So one at a time, please come up to the front, plant your feet firmly…” he would demonstrate, both feet squarely underneath him on the stool.

“You have to be prepared for fame the world over. You will need to become accustomed to the attention of the masses! To prepare you for this kind of stardom, we have a kind of dress rehearsal here at the ELI,” he would continue. “This is the famous ELI podium!” he would proclaim, holding aloft a rather comically small stepstool as he walked towards the center of the stage. “So one at a time, please come up to the front, plant your feet firmly…” he would demonstrate, both feet squarely underneath him on the stool.

“Proudly hold up your t-shirt!” he would instruct, demonstrating the confidence with which he wanted the students to display their accomplishments, “drink in the adulation of your adoring fans… and then…” with a dramatic flourish, he would indicate, “Exit stage left!”

“Ready, maestro?” he would ask, and the familiar music of “We Are the Champions” would fill the room as students, some self-consciously, some boldly, but all smiling, stood up to receive their due as the room exploded in thunderous applause.

Reflecting on the ceremony as we know it, Dr. Stevens recalls that while the t-shirts have always been around, “We Are the Champions” has “only” been part of the experience for around 15 years. He tells the story of MaryBeth Worrilow’s son Eddie, a student worker at the time, arranging for the music—much more an accomplishment in the days before everything was available digitally. The whole auditorium erupted; it was just the full package. Ken Cranker leaned over to Scott and said, “You have to do this every time.”

And a tradition began. ⚡
Reflections on Dr. Scott Stevens’ influence over the years

In addition to the interview questions that Leslie Criston asked Dr. Stevens himself about his time at the ELI, she also reached out to past and present generations of faculty, tutors, staff, homestay families, and students. Responses also poured in from many professionals who have interacted with Dr. Stevens at UD and in the wider sphere of international education. We could fill an entire family album with their words, and there would still be so many more stories and memories than we could possibly print, the legacy of a career that has impacted countless lives.

Due to space limitations, the comments below represent just a selection of those responses. More have been posted on an online Kudoboard for Dr. Stevens to read.

- Monica Farling

We invite anyone who wants to share recollections of their experiences with Dr. Stevens, including photos, to submit them at bit.ly/drstevens.

KUDOBORD LINK: bit.ly/drstevens

How has Dr. Stevens impacted the ELI and/or the University?

Plainly stated, without Dr. Stevens there would not be an ELI.

I met Dr. Stevens in the summer of 1987 when I came aboard to teach in the AFS program that the ELI/UD was hosting and continued to work with him until my retirement in 2020. I admired him then and I admire him today.

Just as a caring and devoted father, he was part of the ELI’s birth in 1979 and continued to love and nurture its growth, unwaveringly, during all stages of its “upbringing” - from the formative years through some quite difficult and unpredictable years as the world experienced unbelievable challenges. Through it all, the father of the ELI family always demonstrated the role of dependable provider, knowledgeable teacher, empathetic counselor, humble leader and sage, constantly putting his family before himself.

- MaryBeth Worrilow, retired faculty

Tremendously! Created a challenging but positive environment where we can be creative and put our strengths to work.

- Ken Cranker, faculty

Superman: At graduation in May 2013, Professors MaryBeth Worrilow and Leslie Criston presented Dr. Stevens with a shirt of his own, saying that he “does it all!”
While Dr. Louis Arena is credited as the architect of the ELI, Scott can be said to be the interior designer! Its world-renowned reputation in the field of ESL is directly attributed to his leadership. Time and again, he has set the bar high and the ELI team responds—sometimes enthusiastically, other times less so. We trust he has our collective best interests in mind. And he trusts us—not to simply follow, but to challenge him or his ideas in areas that require it. There’s mutual respect there that he has cultivated.

– Leslie Criston, faculty

The ELI stands because of Scott’s heart, his wisdom, his intellect, and his ability to navigate world-changing events globally and within academia.

– Chris Pinkerton, retired faculty

It has become a product of his vision: the ambiance of an extended family, the holiday and annual traditions for employees and students—parties, retreats, picnics, trips, professional development opportunities, etc; the academic intensity as well as the playful spirit; the community service focus (making 1,000 origami birds for a statement of solidarity with Japanese tsunami victims; food bank visits and donations; WISE program; SABIC service component, etc). Many of the distinctives echo his values, whether he created them personally or welcomed their creation by personnel of the ELI.

I’ve seen him dive into line dancing at holiday parties, writing and acting in silly skits at retirement parties, wearing crazy costumes for Halloween parties, hauling boxes of books to help a change of offices, and rearranging furniture in classrooms to accommodate incoming students. I’ve sat through many meetings in which his acumen in dealing with difficult bureaucracy and complex requirements has been essential. His humility and drive are both remarkable. The ELI’s thriving and surviving thus far has been a direct result of Dr Stevens’ leadership.

– Nonie Bell, faculty

Scott’s vision for the way the English learners are to be taught has profoundly changed the practices, policies, culture, and quality of UD ELI and worldwide ESL institutes. Without a doubt, Dr. Stevens leads the highest-quality ELI in the country, with exceptional standards applied inside and outside of the classroom. And while academic standards are something all ESL programs are striving for, it is the supporting programs that I am truly amazed by. To me, that is something that will be a long-lasting legacy of Dr. Stevens. Dr. Stevens ensured that the ELI pays attention to the holistic campus experience just as much as they pay attention to academic courses, and this, in my opinion, is what separates Scott and UD ELI from any other institute of the sort. It is amazing how Scott was able to project the importance of service, support, counseling, excellence, and love for the students to all of his staff and faculty. Scott truly created a template for everyone to follow to ensure that the students have a fantastic in- and out-of-classroom experience.

– Nermin (Zuba) Zubaca, ELI alumni & former staff

He has always been forward thinking, open to new ideas, and adaptable, which has made the ELI one of the most successful IEPs in the country.

– Amy Vazquez, faculty

“Every school needs a leader, Hogwarts has Albus Dumbledore as the school Headmaster. Dumbledore wasn’t typical headmaster. He was the oldest person at Hogwarts, and he had many years of experiences. He was known as the greatest wizard in the world. He isn’t only a headmaster but also one of the best teachers for wizards. He has many qualities which are thoughtful, understanding, honest and fair.
By Nancy Turner

I met Scott Stevens in 1993 while I was renting rooms in my home to ELI students. I loved creating a safe haven for young people who were far from home, and, of course, we especially enjoyed cooking together and sharing family recipes.

Life has a way of taking unexpected twists and turns. In 2008, I walked across the street to Dr. Stevens’ office and pitched an idea of tutoring through a recreational cooking class. His casual response to me, “I think you could try a little cooking class as long as it doesn’t get in the way of language studies,” proved to be good fortune beyond any paycheck that I have ever earned and marked the beginning of what would become in his words, “a wildly popular addition to our ELI tutoring program.”

It was not uncommon for 10% of the ELI student population to sign up for weekly tutoring in The Kitchen Class™, which was located in my home kitchen at 176 West Main Street. Our colorful photographs of smiling faces and tempting dishes spread like internet wildfire around the world and even enticed a few parents abroad to observe our class remotely via video calls and catch a whiff through the screen. On a few occasions, we had the opportunity to invite parents who visited Newark to join us in the kitchen. It soon became apparent that, outside the formal channels of recruitment, international parents and students had a word-of-mouth network that was all their own, and it was upon this grapevine that The Kitchen Class™ proudly bore fruit. Some administrators avoid new approaches in ESL education, perhaps because the status quo is comfortable and because change takes time and extra energy and sometimes money. Ideas for innovation can even be professionally risky if they are unsuccessful. I am thankful to have had Dr. Stevens on my side: someone who was willing to take a chance on a new idea.

The Kitchen Class™ tutoring cluster for me was all about teaching and sharing beautiful elements of our American culture, holidays, and family hospitality with ELI students. I have never been more exhausted after a long day of work, nor happier with how I chose to spend my hours, than I was during this charmed chapter of my life. I will be forever grateful to Scott for giving me the opportunity and joy.

Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>safe haven</td>
<td>a place of refuge or security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pitch</td>
<td>to propose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entice</td>
<td>to entice someone to do something by offering them something they will enjoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>catch a whiff</td>
<td>to notice a slight smell of something</td>
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Links

The REVIEW story: https://udreview.com/turners-kitchen-eli-students-learn-more-than-apple-pie-recipes/
One of them is that he is a very perceptive. He always observes his students and encourages them to show their potential. Another quality which he has is trustworthiness. Everyone always believed him, but he always wants to rely on his students. Therefore, sometimes Dumbledore tests his students to learn whether they are honest or not. Similar to Hogwarts, the ELI has Dr. Stevens, who is the headmaster, or in other words, the director of ELI. Dr. Stevens is an English instructor who has taught all skills levels.

Also, he has many experiences; for example, he has conducted teacher training both here and abroad. He has the same qualities which Dumbledore has. He is understanding and whenever you visit him listens to your problems. If you have a problem, you can share it with him comfortably because he is trustworthy.”

– Amirah Almousah & Eda Kilic, Reading/Writing IV (excerpt from an essay submitted to Voices from the ELI: An Anthology of Student Writing, which was not published in 2020 due to the pandemic)

Scott Stevens has defined the ELI for the College of Arts and Sciences and the University of Delaware. His ability to demonstrate unparalleled care and concerns for each and every ELI student combined with his innovative, entrepreneurial approach to all things makes him unique as a leader. Scott has carried this work and this approach well beyond UD, helping to define the modern English Language Institute for the nation and to show us all how to continue to move forward, even in the face of extreme adversity. A leader like Scott is extraordinarily rare and we will not see his like again.

– John Pelesko, former dean, College of Arts & Sciences; provost, New Jersey Institute of Technology

Scott Stevens has always been a driven man: driven to do the best that he could to develop the ELI into one of the top 10 institutes in the country. And he has! In my 27 years teaching at the ELI, Scott has specialized in delivering supportive and dynamic graduation speeches, continuing to give inspiration to the graduates. Never once have I heard a duplicate speech to any of the groups!

– Janet Louise, retired faculty

It’s hard to imagine the ELI without Dr. Stevens and his input and influence. He has been shaping the course of the Institute almost since its inception. Aside from the managerial and academic excellence that he brings to the ELI, his efforts to create a “welcoming family atmosphere” and a “home away from home” for international students contributed much to the outstanding character of the program.

– Russ Mason, retired faculty

His optimistic vision and tireless work ethic have touched multiple generations of students, faculty, and staff. His advocacy for the ELI has advanced the reputation of our program across campus and the profession. Because of this, the ELI is held as a model among peer institutions.

– Robbie Bushong, assistant director

He liked to set up challenging programs and then expect the faculty and staff to execute them - and somehow we always did!

– Susan Coakley, retired faculty

Hogwarts Express Will Stop at the ELI: painting by Amirah Almousa to accompany her collaborative essay with Eda Kilic by the same title

The ELI honors t-shirts became so iconic that when beloved Professor Russ Mason retired after teaching a course on the 1960s for many years, there was no more fitting gift for Dr. Stevens to present him with than a tie-dyed Honors T-Shirt.
He successfully guided the ELI through times of true turbulence and existential crises in the language learning industry over his decades-long tenure as director. He put so much time, effort, dedication and love into the ELI that we couldn’t help but do the same in our work there. He brought a lot of humour and wit to the office, bringing levity to the office even if we were working on stressful projects. He created a culture of true caring and empathy for the students.

– Nadia Redman, former staff

Under his leadership the ELI has not only survived but thrived, through many challenges that destroyed other language institutions. We have a well-deserved excellent reputation internationally, and Scott Stevens has had a large part in that.

– Jill McCracken, tutor

Although the pandemic has taken an arduous toll on the ELI’s recent enrollment, it did not take away the enormous amount of learning and goodwill that took place over the course of Dr. Steven’s 40 years of leadership. Beyond teaching ESL, Scott was always the heart of the ELI, setting the course and tone for knowledge and life lessons that thousands of students have carried with them throughout the world.

– Nancy Turner, former tutor

Dr. Stevens is a visionary who has guided the ELI through the highest heights and the deepest depths for over four decades. His guiding hand and eternal optimism have elevated the ELI to the top of intensive English language programs. His endless efforts to ensure that the ELI remains a force in IEPs have allowed the department to thrive and weather the most intense circumstances over the years. His unrivaled leadership and unwavering resolve are to be admired by all who know him.

– Terri Goode, faculty

I witnessed his past students of 25 years, sending their children to the ELI to learn English. That is trust, when a parent sends their child 4,000 miles across the globe to study.

– Saundra Moore Chapman, former staff

I admire Scott’s commitment to help students worldwide achieve their professional and personal goals and, in doing so, advance greater cultural understanding. I had the privilege to work closely with Scott for the first time while serving as the vice provost for graduate and professional education more than 15 years ago. I was immediately inspired – almost transfixed - by his innate kindness, generosity of spirit, honesty, and deep commitment to the well-being and success of all UD international students, within and beyond the English Language Institute (ELI). Working with Scott has been a joy! I have happily collaborated with him on many occasions, from the development of campus-wide strategic plans to the deployment of new academic programming. Scott’s respect for the ELI faculty and staff, a team of colleagues he treasures and will miss deeply, and his deep admiration for his students and their potential, remains an exemplar for leaders within and beyond our university.

– Debra Hess Norris, Interim Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

Dr. Stevens celebrates with Associate Director Karen Asenavage and CAS Dean George Watson at an event in 2011 when the ELI joined the College of Arts & Sciences
How has Dr. Stevens impacted you personally?

I am forever inspired by his vibrant spirit, his unconditional and sincere love for language, audacity of style and his wise, ardent graduation speeches that I used to jot down.

– Inna Fenina, Russia

His remarkable leadership has made the ELI an indispensable part of UD. Without Dr. Stevens and the ELI, Newark, Delaware would be incalculably vanilla.

– Brett Tomashek, former faculty

I truly feel very fortunate to be doing work I love as a part of a place in which I can feel great pride. The high quality of the ELI is, of course, not at all due solely to Dr. Steven’s leadership - we undeniably have a super crew of dedicated folks here - but it easily might not have come together so beautifully without him.

– Jill McCracken, tutor

It would be difficult to imagine my life without the influence of Scott Stevens. I entered this profession more than 30 years ago, cheerfully ignoring the advice of my professors who pointed out that TESOL was a rather marginal career, offering little opportunity for job security, professional respect or advancement. Dr. Stevens proved them all wrong, carving out a unique, collaborative space where dedicated ESL educators could be both challenged and rewarded. Dr. Stevens frequently challenged me to leave my comfort zone and take on responsibilities which I had never considered for myself, thus helping me to make a greater contribution and develop a more rewarding career. He has done this not only for me, but for many colleagues, seeing potential in us that we may not have realized we had.

– Grant Wolf, retired faculty

I first met Dr. Stevens when I was only eighteen years of age. Besides my own parents and immediate family, he was the first person who not only acknowledged my potential, but also believed in it. His support had such a great impact on me that my entire career and decision to make the United States my permanent home was shaped by it. How can I EVER thank him enough?

– Carolina Correa, former faculty

I had a privilege to not only attend the ELI, but also work there and see first hand the process behind this amazing institute and the “x” factor that drives the ELI, Dr. Stevens. Although I was far away from home, and only 19 years old at the time I attended ELI, the staff and faculty made me feel at home. This made learning easy. This made going to classes with a smile on my face, knowing that I will be met with not only outstanding staff and faculty, but more importantly, I will be greeted by friends who genuinely care about your success and campus experience. For me, attending tutoring, university classes, picnics, potluck parties, international festivals, day trips to major cities and landmarks, and even flags at the ELI made these some of the best years of my life. Dr. Stevens accomplished to create a safe, nurturing, inclusive, friendly, supportive, and loving environment conducive to learning and succeeding in life.

– Jill McCracken, tutor

Dr. Stevens with Language Adventure students from Russia and their program coordinator, Inna Fenina, at an ELI summer picnic, 2017

Dr. Stevens with Zuba, January 2014
When I was a CAP student and wanted to matriculate and attend UD as fast as I could, the 6 months that I spent at the ELI were some of the most formative years of my life. I learned so much about other cultures, customs, art, and am happy to say that I made many life-long friends who worked and studied at the ELI. Dr. Stevens taught me to keep an open mind about the world and the people, to keep trying new things, and to always keep giving back. I can go on and on about Scott and how amazing of a director, husband, father, employer, friend, and mentor he is, but you all already know this – Scott always made himself available to everyone, regardless of how big or small the issue was. His ability to empathize with everyone’s situation and always try to find the best solution is one of a kind. I am eternally grateful to Scott for all he has done for me personally, as I would not be where I am today without his help, support, guidance, friendship, and love.

– Nermin (Zuba) Zubaca, alumni & former staff

Scott’s seemingly limitless vocabulary was always stretching my lexicon!

– Sarah Petersen, retired faculty

Dr. Scott Stevens was, by far, the best supervisor that I have ever had the pleasure of working with. He inspired me to strive for ever increasing levels of excellence. He was always meticulously prepared for annual evaluations and struck a great balance between affirmation and constructive criticism. Because of his encouragement and advocacy, I was able to be promoted to assistant professor at the University of Delaware and was one of the first ELI non-tenure track faculty to be so honored.

– Russ Mason, retired faculty

He has allowed me to contribute my interest in video-making both by creating promotional videos for the ELI and by both allowing me to create the Film Class and equipping it with cameras, microphones, lights and a dedicated room for filmmaking. I have also greatly benefited from the professional development opportunities to attend and present multiple times at conferences like TESOL.

– Julie Lopez, faculty

I learned that I could do things I had never imagined, such as lead groups of English teachers from other countries, such as driving a 15 passenger van through the streets of Washington, DC.

– Susan Coakley, retired faculty

He’s encouraged me to do things I didn’t think I could do like coordinate programs or develop courses. He’s always been positive, seeing the good in every situation.

– Lisa Grimsley, faculty

I started my career in ESL at the ELI due to the influence and encouragement of Dr. Stevens. He’s also encouraged me to reach for greatness in my career, offering support for conferences, presentations, and other important career milestones… Scott has encouraged me to embrace creativity in teaching, which has allowed me to spread my proverbial wings in classes like film, drama, history, music, business and more.

– Phil Rice, faculty
His optimism has helped shape me both personally and professionally.

– Robbie Bushong, assistant director

Dr. Stevens kept the ELI going through some very tough times. Enrollment dropped off drastically after 9/11, and many IEPs closed at that time. Dr. Stevens managed to keep the ELI alive through then, and more recently, through the pandemic.

– Walton Babich, retired faculty

During the pandemic, he said at a meeting that employees were more important than buildings and that he would get rid of ELI’s buildings first and seek to protect our jobs at all costs. That really taught me a lot about priorities and integrity.

– Kristin Grant, tutor

Professional growth requires an environment where we can take risks and try out as yet unproven skills. Dr. Stevens gave me the chance to “stretch” far beyond what I ever thought I could accomplish.

– Kate Copeland, faculty

His kindness and personal concern for my well-being as well as ELI faculty, staff and students have been a great model for me.

– Dru Arban, staff

He always encouraged me to be myself and never change for anything.

– Dorothy Desiderio, retired staff

More than anything, Scott’s attitude and demeanor have always impressed me and I consider Scott a role model. To have watched Scott handle the pandemic with both the utmost in empathy and an unflagging sense of innovation was a thing to behold. To have then watched Scott coordinate a national response to the collapse of the government of Afghanistan and to create something truly important and impactful from that incident is something that I’ll always carry with me. While Scott may be retiring, I know that his legacy will live on in me and in all of those whose lives he touched over his tremendous career.

– John Pelesko, former dean, College of Arts & Sciences; provost, New Jersey Institute of Technology

Dr. Stevens’ humility, support, and fairness are among his qualities that I try to emulate on the personal level. He is a man of character. I feel proud mentioning at conferences and professional development events that I work with him. He is also a leader who supports the personal growth of those around him. Despite existing regulations, he can be flexible because he supports those around him. I remember a stark example during COVID when he tried hard to avoid laying off colleagues. He has always made me feel family is important, and he has also invested in my personal growth. Finally, Dr. Stevens has been invested in his work, a level of dedication that I haven’t seen elsewhere.

– Adil Bentahar, faculty

I was Scott’s secretary when I first began at the ELI. I learned how patient and kind he truly is. He is an amazing role model of how to handle yourself in stressful situations. He is a manager, a colleague, and a friend. He always made time to listen when he could tell you needed to talk.

– Wendy Clark, staff
Scott has been my friend and colleague for 30+ years. He has served as a mentor to me in all aspects of program administration since I became director of the University of Alabama ELI in 1989. We have roomed together at NAFSA Conferences since 1993 and at UCIEP Director Conferences since 1997. Scott has become one of my best friends, professionally as well as personally. During our many years of friendship and interaction, I have always admired him and have often sought his advice and frequently have tried to emulate his work ethic and implement many of his ideas and practices.

– Bill Wallace, University of Alabama

He raised me as his daughter in a community of international students and educators. I met people from all over the world from a young age, experienced the joy of the ELI, and now I have a career in international education. He has always been a role model to me, from how much compassion he shows students and colleagues, to his ability to have built and managed an incredibly successful program.

– Amanda Stevens, Scott’s daughter, UD MATESL alumni & former ELI staff

He happens to be the most caring, compassionate, and thoughtful organizational leader with whom I have had the pleasure to work.

– Avery Miller, staff

Dr. Stevens showed me understanding, compassion, empathy and genuine concern during my times of personal difficulty. I will always appreciate him and never forget this.

– Terri Goode, faculty

He fully supported my need to help my family when my granddaughter was born in 2015.

– Mikki Washburn, retired faculty

If Scott knows of a need, he shows up. In the early days, he helped multiple employees—including me—move if they bought a house. He’d just show up with his van, roll up his sleeves and get to work! Years later, he showed up at the Christiana hospital after my mother’s emergency surgery; more recently, he drove up to West Chester to visit me after I had major surgery. I know of many others that he supported in such times. He is the first to set up large-scale relief for those fleeing war or others suffering natural disasters, etc. On a smaller scale, he volunteers with the Salvation Army as a bell ringer to collect donations every year. He is a principled man of faith, humble and compassionate. I respect him and admire him enormously and am honored to call him my friend.

– Leslie Criston, faculty

Philanthropy and community service are baked into Dr. Steven’s DNA. Many of us have benefitted from his compassion. If you would like to help the ELI support future generations of English language learners, you are welcome to contribute to the Scott Stevens ELI Student Support Fund following this link.

https://ud.alumniq.com/giving/to/ELIScottStevensFund
At my wedding in 2009, SS was the first person to stand up at the “open mic” and tell folks a nice/funny story about me. He was also the first person I told (outside of my husband and my immediate family) that I was pregnant, back in 2014. Whenever I have big decisions to make, worries, funny stories, or big/exciting events happening in my life, I always talk to him about them. When my dad, with whom I was super close, died in 2021, SS was only a kind word/phone call away; afterward, when I drove back from Florida to Québec in my dad’s old SUV, SS was one of 2 friends with whom I visited during my brief stop in Delaware. All of this, even though I left ELI over 3 years ago. I suppose it means that our friendship has had an important and meaningful impact on my life... or it could simply mean that he simply hasn’t been able to get rid of me after all this time!
– Nadia Redman, former staff

How would you sum up the most significant ways that Scott has impacted ESL and/or international education?

Every Saturday morning, I listen to NPR’s Weekend Edition host Scott Simon. Listening to his voice gives me a feeling of security and hope in an uncertain world. Scott Stevens is the Scott Simon of the IEP world – a seasoned, responsible experience voice in the turbulent world of International Education and Intensive English Programs. When Scott talks, I listen. After I listen, I feel better. Throughout his time at the ELI at UD, Scott has contributed to our professional associations (NAFSA, UCIEP, English USA) in myriad ways: providing guidance on government regulations, suggesting ways to effectively recruit students, recommending ways to advocate for your IEP on campus, etc. Whenever I needed advice about our IEP, my first phone call was to Scott. I knew he would be objective and understanding. He even visited our campus to conduct a review at my request in spite of a very busy schedule that he had at UD. His suggestions were implemented at our school. We will miss Scott greatly as a colleague but we still have him as a friend. I wish him nothing but the best as he goes forward in retirement. Imagine – he will even get to have a summer vacation from now on!
– Gerry Krzic, Director, Ohio Program of Intensive English (OPIE)

Over the decades of his leadership of the English Language Institute at the University of Delaware, Scott has advocated not only for English programs but for international education. He has given generously of his time and talent in support of our professional associations: NAFSA, TESOL, UCIEP and EnglishUSA. He has always been a good listener first, and then given freely of his time to answer colleagues’ questions. Scott’s greatest legacy is, I believe, President Obama’s signing into law the Accreditation of English Language Training Programs Act in 2010. Scott worked tirelessly with colleagues in the field and with members of Congress to realize this landmark piece of legislation which has had a significant impact on heightening the professionalism of the field. While this is a single event, I believe it is Scott’s generosity of time, intellect, knowledge, wisdom and spirit that is his greatest gift to us all, resulting in signature accomplishments like the Accreditation Act as well as untold acts of individual kindness and support.
– Mark Algren, Director (ret.), Applied English Center, University of Kansas

Dr. Stevens leads by example, instills confidence and motivates those with whom he interacts. He has long been a builder of bridges and coalitions in international education, a promoter of the highest standards, and a supporter of students and educators from the broadest spectrum of backgrounds, ages and interests. Dr. Stevens has earned deep respect in our field and in the general public;
What words would you use to capture the “essence” of Dr. Stevens?

Furthermore, he has instilled energy and motivation in those who have witnessed his stamina and unending perseverance. He has proven to us all that he is a leader with far-reaching vision who can bring a concept to life and then be found in the trenches contributing to the work at hand. He has been our north star for forty years!

– Joann Geddes, Lewis & Clark College

Scott has been the ultimate ambassador for ESL within the field of international education. He is known far and wide as a gentleman, scholar, and a spokesperson for ESL and the larger field of international education. I cannot think of any individual who is more highly respected and beloved by his colleagues and peers.

– Bill Wallace, University of Alabama (ret.)

Two words come to mind when I think about how to sum up Scott’s impact on both the ESL realm and the world of international education: Humility and Humanity. Scott carries a CV that is miles and miles long, yet he is the most humble person I know. He was already an extremely accomplished ESL leader when I first met him through UCIEP as a (then) new ESL director, and yet he always wants to learn and actively shares what he learns with others. Scott wears a crown of many accolades and yet, always in his heart he approaches everyone, whether new incoming ESL students, feisty faculty or overly mature IE leaders, with humanity in his heart. He is there to support locally and across the globe and always with humility and humanity.

– Suzanne Panferov Reese, University of Arizona

Scott and I started out together in the new field of ITA education in the 1980s—he has been my colleague and friend for more than forty years. Over these decades, his generous sharing of expertise has furthered my own program and those I know closely, our regional Philadelphia Region Intensive English Programs (PRIEP) and the national University & College Intensive English Programs (UCIEP). Scott has taught us so much and worked so tirelessly on behalf of all of us—students, teachers, administrators, colleagues— in a field where international students, language teaching, and intercultural understanding have too often been mined for profit rather than valued for their worth. Writing a book together gave me the priceless chance to further my understanding of this work. Scott, you are without equal in our profession! I’m deeply grateful to have shared the journey with you. Congratulations and best wishes on your retirement!

– Barbara Hoekje, Director, English Language Center of Drexel University (2001-2015)
Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

My first time really seeing him was at my first ELI X-mas party, where he led everyone in “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” and then every following time after that. I was truly amazed, not only at how he was able to get everyone on stage, but then lead everyone in the song!
– Ross Fenske, faculty

I count Scott Stevens not only as a tremendous professional mentor, but also as an inspiration to grow in character, and a personal friend.
– Russ Mason, retired faculty

Dr. Stevens has touched so many lives in his years of tenure as Director of ELI. A visionary to unite global cultures, and humanity through education... Although his vision of a beautiful new building to serve as a unified location for the ELI never came to fruition, he nevertheless made the community of ELI work. The main location at 189 W. Main St. was truly the hallmark HOME for his students: a place to hang out, and feel welcome. Although securing space for housing, classes, tutoring, orientations, and graduations was often a challenge, and the ELI was scattered in various locations across campus, he made it work. That requires patience, negotiation skills, long work days, kindness, and grace to finesse this battle for an entire career. He armored up, and he persevered!
– Saundra Moore Chapman, former staff

During my 43-year career as an ESL professional, including 39 years at The University of Alabama and 32 years as an IEP director, no single individual has had as much positive influence on me as has Scott Stevens. His impact not only at the University of Delaware ELI but also in the fields of IEP administration and international education will be felt and remembered for years to come.
– Bill Wallace, University of Alabama (ret.)

On a comical note - his “bad dad jokes” always made me laugh.
– MaryBeth Worriow, retired faculty

Dr. Stevens’ expression of his sense of humor was often unexpected, especially when he would begin quoting Monty Python movies verbatim! It always lightened my day!
– Lin McDowell, former staff

It's hard to capture Scott and every time I talk with him, I feel like I learn something new. Recently, I was amazed to learn he writes and acts in short plays held in honor of people retiring from the ELI. I have a feeling that I barely know the depth of Scott's complexities and only wish we had more time together.
– John Pelesko, former dean, College of Arts & Sciences; provost, New Jersey Institute of Technology

Scott, thank you for your guidance, support, and laughter! You are a gem of a human!
– Leslie Criston, faculty

Leslie Criston with Dr. Stevens, Halloween 2017
By Nonie Bell

KEN CRANKER began his ESL career teaching graduate students at Cornell University, followed by 14 years in Japan and nearly 20 years at ELI. Ken’s stated objective has been to inspire, to present life wisdom, and to teach content through the vehicle of ESL instruction. Reflecting his Christian faith, Ken’s consistent desire has been to help students accomplish their goals while focusing on excellence, helpfulness, and joy in his work. Ken’s students have noticed his personal warmth. One, grieving the loss of a friend, found Ken’s compassion so helpful that he asked Ken to always teach in such a way. Ken peppers his lessons with pun–filled humor. One student spoke of a Korean custom to not eat a certain soup during exam week. Ken quipped “Oh, a ‘soup-erstition!’” Ken has enjoyed coordinating special groups of scholars and teachers from far-flung corners of the world, viewing their personal growth as to be just as important as their linguistic gains. Ken himself models this desire to grow, having created many new courses, mentored newer instructors, and inspired several students to become ESL teachers like him. Ken has also shared his passion for volleyball by coaching, playing, and refereeing—which he anticipates continuing to do in his retirement, along with part-time teaching.

Walking several miles a day to and from his home, Ken demonstrates his “tireless” approach to work and life. His legacy for both the instructors he leaves behind in classrooms and the players he leaves behind on volleyball courts is one of wholeheartedly doing one’s best.

By Scott Stevens

An ELI legend joined the ranks of retirees in September. For three decades, Assistant Professor LESLIE CRISTON has been a leader among her colleagues, a mentor to new and aspiring faculty, and an inspiration to more than 3,000 students. Hired in 1993 as a business ESL specialist, Leslie collaborated with June Quigley to create ELI’s business track for professionals and MBA-bound students. Notably, Leslie created Oral Business Case Studies, a course that ingeniously contextualized oral and aural fluency around adapted Harvard Business case studies to cultivate critical reading, analysis, and strategic use of discourse. Many ELI alumni cite Leslie’s course as a critical factor in their MBA program success.
Of the more than 20 unique courses Leslie taught over her three decades at ELI, her signature creation is Read It! Watch It!, a course in which students read popular American fiction and then analyze the film versions of the stories. This innovative approach has been credited with strengthening literacy, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills. Many students have found the experience transformative and commented frequently on how it increased their interest in reading.

For the past 25 years, Leslie has been an integral part of our International Teaching Assistant Training (ITA) Program, helping newly admitted multilingual graduate students navigate the U.S. higher education system. Participating ITAs have been effusive in their praise, not only for the knowledge Leslie imparted but also for how effectively she modeled best teaching practices, describing her as “a fantastic teacher—enthusiastic, passionate, and genuine.” Leslie’s lengthy service to the University and ELI included her role as Senator to the College of Arts and Sciences and contributions to many committees, including her long tenure as chair of the Promotion and Peer Review Committee. Finally, Leslie has been devoted to creating a sense of community for our student body through experiential, interactive cultural events.

Leslie plans to continue making a difference in retirement, possibly through volunteer work such as caring for the elderly, animals, and/or refugees. She will exchange scholarship for story and songwriting. And she will continue her love of language by perfecting her skills in Spanish and American Sign Language. That she most looks forward to spending more time with extended family and friends is hardly surprising, since exceptional teaching like hers always springs from the heart, selflessly loving others and helping them grow and flourish.

GLOSSARY

integral: a necessary and important part of something larger
effusive: expressing approval with a lot of emotion
tenure: the period of time someone holds a position
bid adieu: to say goodbye
prolific: writing or creating a lot of something
advocate: someone who publicly supports an idea or plan
enrichment: improving the quality of something (often by adding something else to it)
inception: beginning
pepper with: to include a large number of something throughout
brown bag: taking place at lunchtime (named for the brown paper bags that many Americans use to carry their lunches to work or school)
ad hoc: happening when necessary but not planned in advance
grounded: having a sensible, reasonable outlook on life

While Nonie taught a variety of proficiency levels, she was prized as a champion of Level 3, low intermediate. She developed a wealth of engaging materials for both the listening/speaking and reading/writing courses, regularly adding to and revising them in order to adapt to updated textbooks and changing times—and adapting yet again to meet the remote instruction challenges of the pandemic era.

A prolific workshop presenter, Nonie has shared her teaching expertise with educators both domestic and international. She presented writing instruction methods to several groups of international educators in the ELI’s DEFT professional development program. Further afield, at regional and international conferences, she gave workshops on topics from A to V—from “assessment” to “video use in the classroom”—and many in between.

An advocate for professional development, Nonie was devoted to ensuring enrichment opportunities for ELI faculty. She joined the ELI’s Professional Development Task Force at its inception in 2007, helping the task force craft a five-year plan, and ultimately served on this team for seven years. The ELI calendar was peppered with in-house workshops and brown bag “What Works” sessions as well as yearly retreats featuring authorities in the English language teaching field.

Starting in 2017, Nonie represented the ELI on the Faculty Senate of the College of Arts and Sciences. Among her contributions, she sat on an ad hoc committee to deliberate on the formation of a Graduate College Council, which was ultimately approved by the University Faculty Senate in 2019. No matter what the task, Nonie carried it out with thoroughness—and with wit.

“Humor is really important in the classroom—and everywhere,” said Nonie, “because it creates a sense of common humanity and can keep you grounded.”
By Ken Cranker

What do you call a person who starts a full-time teaching position at the ELI on April 1?

Answer: An April fool.

It was SARAH PETERSEN who coined the nickname “April Fool” when she, Anne, Owen and I were hired on April 1, 2007. Sarah had already been working as an ELI adjunct – whether in the Tutoring Center, the intensive English program, the International Teaching Assistants program, or the English Language Learners program in a local school district – since 2002, but she became a full-time continuing instructor on that fateful April Fool’s Day. Since then, she has taught an array of courses and coordinated a range of projects, including teacher development programs for groups from Brazil, Panama, Japan and Korea, invariably with dedication and excellence.

I always picture Sarah with a pleasant smile. Glancing into her office, I would see her absorbed at the computer, always juggling preparing her lessons, coordinating program details, or editing the ELI Interactions magazine, for which she served as the editor-in-chief for nine years. Propped near her was a sign bearing the words “Love is a verb,” which typified Sarah. Her philosophy doesn’t see love as a feeling but instead as an action. It’s what she does to prioritize others above herself, gently guiding students and building their skills. It’s meeting all the anticipated and unanticipated needs of those within her programs. From folk dancing to building gingerbread houses with students at social events, from teaching to committee and research projects, she always works with diligence and excellence – and always with humor and cheer.

As ELI graduation coordinator, Sarah blessed numerous ceremonies with her outstanding organizational skills, not to mention her sweet singing voice. Now we wish her well as she “graduates” to settle into her well-deserved retirement.

By Kate Copeland

LISA GRIMSLEY has been teaching at the ELI since 1992. Hailing from Atlanta, Georgia, Lisa earned a degree in and taught elementary education before going abroad to teach English, led by her interest in other cultures. This set her on a path toward ESL instruction as a profession. After completing a teaching stint in South Korea, a master’s degree in international communications and TESOL, and another stint in Indonesia, she found her way to Delaware and the ELI. For many years she taught the American Culture class, which now has several iterations for different student groups.

Lisa also designed and facilitated the Community Outreach class in the 1990s, helping students integrate into many aspects of the UD community and understand the American tradition of volunteerism. This course was an early prototype of what is now a key part of the Academic Transitions and Graduate CAP Cohort Programs.

Lisa’s impact on English learners extends beyond the ELI. Leveraging her experience in elementary schools, she worked for many years as an ESL specialist on the “K-12 team” – the ELI’s partnership in the Christina School District – helping immigrant children build English skills and integrate into their new schools.

GLOSSARY

coin: to create a new word or phrase
array: a large group of things or people, usually impressive or attractive
juggle: to keep track of several activities or responsibilities at the same time
typify: to be characteristic of
gingerbread house: a model house made of spiced cookies and decorated with candy (a Christmas tradition)
diligence: working carefully and with great effort
hail from: to come from or to have been born in a particular place

stint: a limited period of time that you spend working or doing an activity
iteration: the process of doing something again and again, improving it each time
facilitate: to help people deal with a process or discussion without getting directly involved yourself
integrate: to become part of a society or group
volunteerism: the tradition of doing work for good causes or community service without being paid
prototype: the first design of something, which later versions are modeled after
leverage: to use something you have in order to achieve something new
In 2010, she began organizing evening ESL classes at her church in North Wilmington and still coordinates this flourishing volunteer program, which serves around 40 adult English learners at any given time.

When not in the classroom, Lisa is often involved with music, which she describes as a great counterbalancing outlet. She sings in a band called the June Bugs, charming local audiences with renditions of traditional folk, bluegrass and gospel tunes. After retirement, in addition to continuing with her church’s ESL program, Lisa plans to keep developing her musical repertoire:

“I’m learning to play the mandolin and I want to learn the clawhammer banjo.”

What advice does Lisa have for newer members of the ELI community?

“Whether you are faculty, a new administrator, or a student, don’t be afraid to ask questions. I’ve learned a lot from others that way.”

We will miss Lisa’s signature gentleness, warmth, and patience -- and her endearing Southern drawl.

By Lisa Grimsley

KATE COPELAND’s life and teaching exemplify the expression, “Bloom where you’re planted.”

Pursuing a life-long interest in music and languages, Kate received a B.A. from UD in the 1980s with a double major and went on to become a professionally trained classical singer, even winning a grant to study opera in Salzburg. Many years later, her life path moved in a new direction when she began teaching ESL in local adult education programs. After completing a master’s degree in TESL, she joined the ELI as a K-12 ESL Specialist in a partnership program with the school district where she taught English to international children and was affectionately known as “Mrs. C”.

After the partnership’s conclusion, Kate taught in the ELI’s Intensive English Program. She also managed the ELI Community Garden and was often seen sharing her love of gardening with ELI students and others in the UD community.

In recent years, Kate took on a new role as project manager, providing leadership in program development as well as logistics and technology support for two important international teacher training initiatives. The first was the Khbrat K-12 teacher leadership program, sponsored by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education. The next was a World Bank funded training program to improve the quality of kindergarten education in the West Bank and Gaza.

“Being ready and willing to take on something completely new and different,” Kate reflects about her time at the ELI, “that’s what has kept me interested, learning and growing.”

Kate was promoted to the rank of assistant professor in September.

And what about retirement?

“Life is short,” she says, “and I have a long bucket list! It includes more music, more traveling, more gardening, and a lot more family!”

Glossary

flourish: to grow or develop successfully; to thrive
counterbalance: to have an equal but opposite effect from something else
rendition: a particular way of performing something, such as a song
repertoire: all of the things someone is able to do
drawl: a slow way of speaking, with vowels that are longer than usual
exemplify: to be an example of something

logistics: organizing the practical details necessary for a complicated plan to be successful
initiative: a new plan to address a problem
bucket list: a list of things someone wants to do before he/she dies

By Lisa Grimsley

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The Festival of Nations was a resounding success, drawing in more than 600 attendees of different ages and backgrounds.

This article was written by ELI student Bashar Taha Altemeemy and published in Morocco World News.

Newark, Delaware—On October 6, 2023, the University of Delaware (UD) was transformed into a colorful tapestry of cultures as international students came together to celebrate the annual Festival of Nations. This vibrant event, sponsored by UD’s own English Language Institute (ELI), showcased a rich mosaic of traditions, music, talent, and clothing from around the world.

The festival kicked off with opening remarks by the College of Arts and Sciences dean and ELI director followed by beautiful performances by UD students, including Acapella and Indian dance, and a Tai Chi performance. Included in the program was a dazzling performance by Middle Eastern students who mesmerized the audience with a rhythmic dance that smoothly transitioned into an exciting Arabic hit. The crowd couldn’t help feeling moved by the music, and the room quickly filled with cheers of approval as the dancers shifted to an energetic pop beat.

The energy was contagious, setting the tone for a night of cultural exploration and celebration.
The Japanese pop segment caught the spotlight as ELI’s own students danced on the stage, captivating the audience with their dynamic performance. The festival also featured a captivating fashion showcase, where members of the UD community proudly modeled costumes from their home countries, including Chinese cheongsams and Middle Eastern garments. Each step down the runway was a step closer to bridging the gap among cultures and fostering understanding.

The Festival of Nations was a resounding success, drawing in more than 600 attendees of different ages and backgrounds. Abdulrahman Alajmi, an ELI student from Kuwait who oversaw the Kuwaiti table in the culture fair, shared his excitement about the festival because “I get to meet new people and learn about new cultures.” Abdulrahman encouraged attendees to embrace the exchange of cultures and enjoy the diverse performances of both international and domestic students. “Visiting tables is like visiting countries,” he remarked, highlighting the wealth of cultural diversity on display.

At the Japanese table, Yuto Tanaka, a 19-year-old student majoring in Finance at the University of Tokyo, engaged visitors by writing their names in Japanese. Tanaka, who began his studies at ELI in August and will complete his course in December, emphasized how Newark’s life and diversity have enriched his cultural experience. He shared his love for local cuisine, particularly Oishii Ocean Japanese & Cajun Seafood Restaurant.

Wen Qi, an international student who started her ELI journey a year ago and is now pursuing a master’s degree at UD’s College of Education and Human Development, shared her pride in representing China in the culture fair. Qi and her classmates showcased their traditional Chinese heritage, displaying the flag and elegant traditional clothing. For her, the Festival of Nations embodied the spirit of cultural exchange and mutual respect.
“There were countries I didn’t even know about until today,” Qi exclaimed. “The expressions and spirits were truly immense this evening, with everyone warmly welcoming us.” She added that interacting with local and international people had made her transition to this new environment seamless.

The Festival of Nations not only celebrates cultural diversity but also acts as a bridge that connects international students with the local community. Adil Bentahar, an assistant professor at the English Language Institute and the chair of this year’s event, reiterated the importance of “UD departments and units connecting with the larger community,” and the festival is “evidence of such successful collaborations” that extend beyond campus. In his closing remarks, Adil, a former international student himself, expressed his “immense honor and responsibility to represent [his] Moroccan culture” before inviting fellow international students and scholars, whom he described as “moving cultures,” to “remain proud of their heritage and identities and continue to share your love and knowledge to make this world richer and more tolerant.”

As the UD community came together to learn, appreciate, and celebrate the world’s myriad cultures, it was a testament to the university’s commitment to fostering a global perspective and creating a welcoming environment for all. The festival’s success serves as a reminder that understanding and embracing different cultures can bring people closer together, transcending borders and boundaries.
SANG HYUN JIN is no ordinary ELI student. He is a professor in the field of government and public administration on sabbatical leave from his university in Korea. Even more unusual, 2023 was not his first time at the ELI. Jin first came here on sabbatical in 2016, bringing his wife and two preschool children. He studied academic English for a year, learned much, and thoroughly enjoyed his time. In Korea, professors receive sabbatical leaves every seven years. For his present sabbatical, he considered studying in England to experience a new culture and perspectives. However, confronted with visa challenges, as well as a family longing to visit the U.S. again, he returned in August 2022 to study at the ELI once more. This time, Jin’s strategy changed. He had noticed that his children knew simple English words he had not encountered in his academic studies, like “frown” and “giggle.” He is focusing on non-academic English, taking courses such as Stories and Songs That Say Something to improve his grasp of “ordinary” English. Jin remains a professor, however. He conducts deeper research on the stories and songs presented in his lessons, makes connections others don’t, and shares his discoveries in class. He also notices when classmates struggle and takes them under his wing, kindly explaining concepts.

“Jin is an exceptional classroom leader and a godsend to instructors,” his Songs that Say Something professor, Ken Cranker, said.

Jin shakes off compliments on his leadership. “It’s my job,” he says. “I’m a professor.”

We don’t know whether we will see Jin again on his next sabbatical. “My children will be much older,” he says.

One can hope, though, that like a comet, Jin will return in seven years, and new classes will enjoy the presence of this remarkable gentleman.

HECTOR BENEVIDES CABUYA, a mental health nurse and professor from Colombia, attended the ELI in the spring of 2023.

Growing up, Hector recalls collecting water at the river and carrying it home with the help of a slow-moving donkey.

The only non-horse-drawn vehicle Hector knew was an old bus. “The bus stopped every day near where I collected water,” he remembers. “I loved to watch the driver operate the controls. It was my dream to drive a bus.”

Hector’s family later moved from the countryside to Bogota, the capital, where he rode the bus regularly. “Then it stopped being exciting to drive a bus.”

After completing a nursing degree, Hector went on to serve indigenous communities in the Amazon jungles, as well as emergency departments of prestigious urban hospitals. He also served with Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF), a humanitarian organization providing medical support in areas of Colombia affected by armed conflict. His dedication won him community accolades.

At MSF, he learned the importance of mental health. He returned to university, completing a graduate degree and becoming a professor of nursing and mental health at Universidad de Los Llanos.

Another dream led Hector to the ELI: “If I have a high level of English, I could become a nurse in MSF projects anywhere in the world.”

He is always learning: talking to anyone he meets, poring over magazines and newspapers and looking up new words in the dictionary. He says, “Though learning English has not been as easy as I expected, I am convinced of the importance of speaking English to expand my future job possibilities and open other doors.”

Hector emphasizes that the evolution of his dreams, from driving a bus to earning a nursing degree, has all resulted from hard work, perseverance, and loving family support.

GLOSSARY

sabbatical: a period of time when a university professor stops his usual work in order to travel or study

indigenous: having always lived in a particular place, before others came

accolade: a prize or praise for work others admire
ELI students Maika Inoue and Jisa Ko were winners of the International Student Essay Contest, announced in December 2022. Hosted by UD’s Center for Global Programs and Services in collaboration with the Division of Student Life and the Graduate College, the annual contest supports the University’s mission to welcome international students from around the world, fostering international understanding both on campus and in the community.

Maika and Jisa both attended the ELI as part of a semester-long program in partnership with Bunkyo Gakuin University in Japan. In addition to attending ELI classes and participating in cultural programs, both students worked hard throughout the semester to apply what they were learning to the essays they were crafting.

Maika’s essay, “Be myself,” which earned first prize in the contest, describes the growth in self-confidence that she experienced as she reflected on her identity in the context of a new culture. She describes how she changed from being afraid to talk to strangers because she was worried about what they might think, to realizing that the kind words people said to her could have such power to make her feel good, and wanting to push herself to give those good feelings to others as well. Her body image underwent a similar transformation. She explains the effect that social media used to have on her, causing her to constantly compare herself to impossibly beautiful people she would see online, and how her fear of what other people would think of her clothing fed this self-doubt. In the U.S., she says she learned to be less afraid about making clothing choices that felt good to her. Maika concludes her essay by reflecting on the lesson she wants to take back to Japan with her:

“Have a good day,” such nice phrase isn’t used in Japan. I had never used this phrase before I came here, so I was confused how to respond to it. This phrase makes me feel good because it is a phrase that I’m happy to hear and happy to say it. I feel that there are many beautiful words in English. I also thought it was wonderful that people use them on daily life. When I go back to Japan, I will try to express my love more directly to my family and friends.”

Read Maika’s complete essay, “Be myself.”

In Jisa’s essay, “Being a Minority is Precious,” he describes his experience living as a minority in a nation with one predominant ethnicity. Even as a fourth-generation Korean living in Japan, he says, he still experiences the challenges of discrimination. He focuses, however, on the hidden blessings of difficult situations: the close bonds that form between those who face adversity together, and the opportunity he has to correct misinformation people sometimes have about his heritage by teaching them about his language and culture. He exhorts readers to “Be proud of yourself, and know that you are precious.”

Read Jisa’s complete essay, “Being a Minority is Precious.”
SPECIAL PROGRAMS

SWUFE Collaborates with Lerner School of Business and Economics and the ELI

This is the ELI's second year collaborating with the Lerner College of Business and Economics and their partner, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, in Chengdu, China. After the ELI initially provided courses to around 60 students in the first semester of 2022, the spring of 2023 saw a sizable increase in enrollment, with the program expanding to accommodate more than 300 students in a variety of writing-based courses for college credit in an online setting. Course instructors acknowledge some challenges in communication, but Professor Sarah Petersen praised her “super motivated students [who] made the best of it” and showed their active participation, “adding happy, shocked, or embarrassed emoticons to liven up the zoom chat.” Meanwhile, instructor Ana Kim commended her students for their “desire to learn and do well” and for their noteworthy effort to try and succeed despite the challenges. As we continue to provide these courses, faculty and students are learning together how to engage in the skill and craft of academic writing in English.

Oman ESAM/STEM scholars

The ELI welcomed 44 Omani scholars in September 2022 for a foundation year program that included 8-12 months of study in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) as well as Education, Social Sciences, Arts and Management (ESAM). Sponsored by the Omani Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, these students started online and then arrived on campus in late October. During their stay, students learned and explored STEM and ESAM career communities. While they gained advanced academic English and foundational math skills, they were also 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.

Programa de Desenvolvimento Profissional para Professores de Língua Inglesa nos EUA (PDPI)

“Wonderful” was the ubiquitous word uttered by faculty and staff to describe the 43 Brazilian teachers of English studying at the ELI in the winter of 2023. Under the auspices of the Brazilian PDPI program, the dynamic teachers participated in six weeks of professional development, coordinated by Sarah Petersen, which included teaching methodology, English language reinforcement, and an exploration of U.S. culture. One participant summed up the experience: “We are surely going back to Brazil with lots of new knowledge to make our teaching practice better and to share it with our fellow teachers in our schools.”
SABIC Volunteers Bridge the Language Gap through Picture Books

Three SABIC students from the ELI participated in a reading enrichment project for local Arabic-speaking children. The students, Abdullah Alhabdan, Abdullah Alharbi and Maryam Almutairi, translated well-known English language storybooks into Arabic for Oberle Elementary School, which recently welcomed a significant number of pupils from Syrian refugee families.

Alharbi decided to go a step further. He videotaped the book “The Very Hungry Caterpillar,” by Eric Carle, while reading it aloud in Arabic. Above the English words already printed in the book, Alharbi added the words of the Arabic translation as captions.

Alharbi’s videorecording of the story was featured in Oberle’s international festival on March 30.

The students’ project was accepted for a poster presentation at UD’s 4th Annual Provost’s Symposium on Engaged Scholarship on April 20.

On the poster, the SABIC volunteers wrote, “We hope that the students themselves will forever remember us taking the time and effort to invest in their learning.

SABIC

In October 2022, the ELI welcomed 14 highly qualified high school graduates in the eighth cohort of scholars from Saudi Arabia sponsored by SABIC, and the second mixed gender group from this program to come to the United States. Managed by MariaJosé Riera, the Foundation Year program included English language study as well as university-level science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses, SAT and TOEFL preparation classes, leadership and entrepreneurship studies, and a capstone community service experience in Puerto Rico. Students in this cohort planned to major in chemical, mechanical and environmental engineering, as well as software engineering, computer science and cybersecurity. In January 2024 they will transition to undergraduate programs at top U.S. universities, including the University of Delaware.

In October, the ELI welcomed its ninth cohort of SABIC scholars: 15 talented young men and women who will spend 10 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.
Japan

In 2023, the ELI had the pleasure of welcoming over 90 students from Japan who participated in a variety of programs including USUSA, IEP, and short-term programs.

Thirty students from seven Japanese universities embarked on semester- and year-long journeys. These institutions included Kansai University, Seinan Gakuin University, Nakamura Gakuen University, Kobe Shoin Women's University, Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, Teikyo University, Chukyo University, and Bunkyo Gakuin University. During the spring and fall of 2023, an additional sixty students from Hiroshima Institute of Technology, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Nakamura Gakuen University, Chiba University, and Bunkyo Gakuin University immersed themselves in a one-month on-campus experience. Through engaging with instructors, program assistants, and fellow classmates from around the world, these students not only enriched their academic journeys but also embraced cultural exchange through ELI/UD activities.

Language Adventure & Level Up Academic

In July, high school students from Europe, Asia, and the Middle East spent four exciting weeks on the University of Delaware campus as part of the ELI’s summer Language Adventure USA (beginner-intermediate levels) and Level Up Academics (intermediate-advanced levels) programs. They truly immersed themselves in the language and culture, attending ELI Listening/Speaking and Reading/Writing classes in the morning, participating in activities on and off campus during the afternoons, getting a first-hand look at American family life in their homestays, and spending their weekends with an American college mentor. Weekend trips to New York City, Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia were definite highlights.
International Teaching Assistants

The International Teaching Assistant (ITA) training program, coordinated by Ken Hyde with help from Assistant Coordinator Lori Fisher, welcomed over one hundred students this year to prepare for their roles at the University of Delaware. In the winter training program, held in January, 35 students honed their skills under the guidance of Mary Beth Worrilow, Amanda Brunson, and Kendra Bradecich. In July, ELI teachers Leslie Criston, Christienne Woods, Ross Fenske, and Ken Hyde were joined by visiting instructors Toni McLaughlan, Jennifer Rippon, Darrell Larsen, and Amanda Brunson to teach 70 students from 20 countries, representing 27 different graduate programs. ITAs this year hailed from all over the world, including Austria, Egypt, and Vietnam as well as countries more frequently represented in the program, such as India, China, Bangladesh, and Nigeria. The ITA program also brought together students of different fields, including Medical and Molecular Science, Quantum Science Engineering, and Geology, Chemistry, Mechanical Engineering, Economics, and many more.

South Korea

More than a hundred students from various Korean universities joined the ELI this year, coordinated by Ana Kim. Students from Chosun University, Dankook University, Hannam University, Hankook University of Foreign Studies, Incheon National Universities, Kyonggi University, and Sangmyung University participated in a four-week program in winter and summer of 2023. In addition, students from Incheon National University and Kyonggi University participated in semester-long and year-long programs, taking both IEP and academic content courses during the fall and spring. Students were engaged inside and outside of the classroom - partaking in membership at UD clubs, attending UD sports games, participating in school wide activities, and going on trips to different cities around the US, such as New York City and Washington, DC.
Afghan students try to put down roots on an American campus.

By Karin Fischer

Adapted from https://www.chronicle.com/article/seeking-a-new-home

Most mornings, as she makes her way to class, the tree greets Saieda. Tall and stately, its branches shade a walking path at the University of Delaware. It has become her habit to pause under its canopy. The tree was there yesterday, it is there today, and it will be there tomorrow and the day after that. Its permanence comforts Saieda. “It brings me hope,” she says, “that in many ways tomorrow can be better.”

Two years ago, Saieda had a plan. A top student excelling in science and math, she was going to the Asian University for Women (AUW), an institution in Bangladesh with a mission to educate women from across Asia, regardless of finances or background. Her life was upended by turmoil in her home country, Afghanistan. In August 2021, the Taliban seized control of the government and pledged a return to a conservative strain of Islam opposed to the education of women and girls.

AUW began an urgent mission to evacuate its students and alumnae, rushing to expedite travel documents and arrange transportation. The women’s eventual escape was harrowing. They boarded buses and tried repeatedly to reach Kabul’s main airport, but were turned back by the chaos. One bus was hit by gunfire. A suicide bomber detonated his explosives close enough for students to see the flames, killing 200. Desperate families tried to break down the buses’ doors to board.

GLOSSARY

harrowing: extremely distressing or disturbing

LINKS

On the fifth day, they finally made it through the checkpoints. With commercial air traffic grounded, Saieda and 147 other female college students escaped the country sitting on the floor in the hold of an American military transport plane. When it took off, the students had no idea where they’d land.

Half a world away, Scott Stevens, longtime director of the University of Delaware’s English Language Institute, read the students’ story in The Chronicle of Higher Education and instinctively wanted to help. Within hours, University leaders had agreed to accept a group of students. Saieda and 14 others were going somewhere none of them had heard of: Delaware.

Stevens also spread the idea to other colleges with programs that offer English-language instruction. The language aspect was key. Few AUW students are fluent when they begin; most spend at least a year in pre-college courses, including English instruction.

Although the response from American colleges was swift, it would be months before most students set foot on campus. The evacuation of roughly 53,000 Afghans was the largest such airlift since the Vietnam War, and immigration processing and medical checks took time.

The plane carrying Saieda and her classmates had finally landed at Fort McCoy, a large military base in rural Wisconsin, where the women waited along with thousands of other Afghan refugees. They listened each night for officials to announce the groups that were being left. When were they going to Delaware?

Finally, in December it was their turn to leave.

Accompanying Saieda to Newark was an old friend, Zahra. They had met as schoolgirls and applied to AUW together. Now their relationship had deepened. “She is my family, and I am her family,” Zahra said.

Zahra had hugged tearful goodbyes to her own family as she boarded the bus for the Kabul airport. Her mother had pushed her to go, for her safety, her future. She fretted about those she had left behind. “Instead of thinking about what is going to happen to me, I am worried about my family,” she said.

For Stevens and his staff at the ELI, the most difficult challenge was figuring out how to meet the emotional and social needs of a group of students displaced by war. The academic side, they had down. But these students were not typical of the many who had attended the ELI over the past four decades.

The Afghan students had experienced a profound trauma, and now they were on their own in a strange country, uncertain when they would be reunited with family and friends. Each student processed that trauma in her own way. Sometimes the stress would keep Saieda awake and she’d take walks at night. Zahra tried not to dwell too much on the past and busied herself with schoolwork and activities. But occasionally that brought her up short. “Sometimes I think, how is it that I’m adjusting OK?” she said.

On many afternoons, music filled the halls of the ELI, courtesy of a guitar club organized by advisor Ross Fenske. Students plucked American standards like “You Are My Sunshine” and “Leaving on a Jet Plane” and played traditional Afghan melodies on guitars donated by the music department.

Saieda and Zahra joined the volleyball club, where their serves and volleys grew sharper under the guidance of Ken Cranker, an assistant professor who coaches on the side. The University police department offered the student a course in self-defense.

The activities were part of robust support services set up by the ELI, including individualized tutoring and workshops on issues like time management. Student life coordinator Rebecca Boyle helped with matters big and small, from setting up bank accounts and decoding bus schedules to waiting in the recovery room after one had an appendectomy.

On call 24/7, Boyle grew “fiercely protective” of the Afghan students. “I’m holding on to them like a mother with a toddler,” she said.

Campus groups and local leaders clamored to meet them. Boyle and Stevens were judicious with the invitations they accepted. Though cultivating public support was necessary to raise the funds needed for the women’s education, they didn’t want the students to feel on display. “I don’t want them to become the poster children for displaced students,” Stevens said.

At the end of the first summer, Zahra and Saieda were among four Afghan students who were ready to begin regular college courses. For both women, though, the prospect of starting undergraduate coursework was daunting. “You’re supposed to go into a class with 200 people,” Saieda said. “Where do you fit?”

Subjects that had come easily to Saieda in the past were now a struggle as she tried to keep up with the volume of new information, all in English. Zahra, too, was in trouble, especially after deciding to switch majors. Changing classes three weeks into the semester put her further behind.

Sometimes she’d study for hours, thinking she had mastered the material, only to take a test and see the questions swim before her eyes, incomprehensible.

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**GLOSSARY**

- **have something down**: to know how to do something so well that you can do it easily
- **trauma**: a mental state of severe, long-lasting emotional shock and pain caused by a very upsetting or frightening experience
- **bring someone up short**: to make someone stop doing something for a moment in order to think, usually because they are surprised
- **clamor**: to demand something loudly

**LINKS**

Zahra’s family had managed to leave Afghanistan, a relief. She kept in touch with high school friends. Some were scattered in countries around the world: the U.S., Bangladesh, Canada, China. But a handful remained in Afghanistan, their studies, and their lives, on hold. Zahra felt anguished about her friends at home. “I’m happy for myself,” she said, “but sad for the other students.”

Saieda also felt the weight of her good fortune. “It’s not just responsibility, it’s hope,” she said. “I am the hope for my family, my community.”

Not wanting to waste that opportunity, she asked for help. Both Saieda and Zahra became regulars at office hours, turning to professors, teaching assistants, tutors, and even classmates when they felt confused or fell behind. Their grades rebounded.

They also found that, counterintuitively, the answer wasn’t just studying more but putting their books down and taking part in activities on campus. Saieda joined Engineers Without Borders, working on a water pump to help Malawian villagers access groundwater. Zahra became treasurer of the Sky Club, which promotes well-being and mental health, hosting retreats and weekly guided-meditation sessions.

They gravitated most of all to the volleyball net. Each Friday, they spent hours running drills and playing. When Cranker went on vacation, Saieda and Zahra kept the ELI volleyball club going.

As the months progressed, ELI personnel could see the changes in the Afghan students. They carried themselves with greater confidence. “They’ve realized they can do it academically,” Stevens said.

Still, many saw the ELI as a sort of home base. Some, like Saieda, took jobs there, helping with paperwork and orientation. When one student was asked to speak at an important event, she turned to Cranker, who coached her to get her pronunciation just right.

By their second summer, the final student in the group was ready to move on to regular university courses. Stevens’ staff worked with advisors and staff throughout the University to ensure a smooth transition.

The University’s decision to take in the students “began with an emotional response,” he said. “That’s a good place to start, the heart, but it’s not enough. They need intricate levels of support.”

In many ways, the women were between worlds: No longer the shellshocked newcomers who arrived with only their cellphones and the clothes they wore, they also stood apart from other students at the University, where less than 4 percent of undergraduates come from outside the United States.

The sense of separateness was most acute during school breaks, when the campus was left empty and still. At times America could feel like a lonely place.

But after summer break, the campus was filling back up as students arrived for the start of the fall semester. Greeting the incoming students was Saieda, now a Welcome Ambassador, an upperclassman assisting with orientation. She’d applied for the position because she knew what it felt like to be a stranger, tentative and new — and the importance of being embraced by a community. She felt like she could pass on what she’d been given.

When she leaves the University’s leafy campus these days, even just for a brief trip, Saieda finds that she misses the place and the people there. Stopping at the tree has become a sort of daily meditation. Although others don’t linger, she likes to imagine how many more students have passed by its furrowed trunk. The thought gives her a sense of connection in a strange place. “I feel alive,” she says.
Project DELITE addresses Delaware’s critical need for English language teachers

Adapted from UDaily article by Ann Manser
UDaily article: https://www.udel.edu/udaily/2023/march/english-language-learners-federal-education-grant/
Contributor: Nigel Caplan

Delaware's public schools have seen faster growth in their population of multilingual learners (MLLs) than any state in the nation. However, there is a shortage of teachers who are specially trained to help them succeed.

Project DELITE (Delaware English Learners’ Impact on Teacher Education) addresses the ways that teaching and teacher education need to change in response to such a linguistically diverse student body.

Supported by a $2.6 million federal grant, the University of Delaware's English Language Institute and College of Education and Human Development will offer 60 teachers and 15 paraprofessionals the UD courses necessary to attain certification as MLL teachers over the next four years.

The professional development program has been offered to Delaware teachers for several years. However, the new funding from the U.S. Department of Education now enables more teachers to attain certification at no cost in Delaware.

Project DELITE also has a key research component, in which information will be regularly collected from participants to help determine what aspects of the coursework are most effective in improving their teaching and their students' learning.

“We see this project as an opportunity not only to provide training to an expanded group of educational professionals but also to assess how well all the aspects of it actually work,” said Nigel Caplan, professor at the ELI and director of Project DELITE.

Adrian Pasquarella, associate professor at the UD School of Education and co-principal investigator for Project DELITE, says that data collected from the program's participants is expected to show changes in their knowledge and improvements in their classroom practices when teaching English language learners. Right now, he said, multilingual students are taught differently in different schools and districts.

“Some children who are English language learners struggle with classroom work as they’re becoming multilingual, and there’s a gap that’s made worse by poverty,” he said.

“But some of them go through the educational system, do very well, and graduate at the top of their class. We're hoping that our research on the outcomes of the program will help us assess what works best, so that we can keep training teachers to make a difference in their students' lives.”

Delaware's students speak a wide variety of languages at home; the largest number speak Spanish, followed by those who speak Haitian Creole and almost 100 other languages.

“As a teacher, you could walk into a classroom and have kids who speak a dozen different languages,” Caplan said.

“Regardless of their language backgrounds, these children have the ability to become truly multilingual and multiliterate, and that’s an asset for them.”

“We need many more trained MLL teachers who know how to support students as they do this,” added Pasquarella.

The focus in teaching multilingual students is on building their vocabulary, literacy, and other English language skills while they retain and develop their home languages. Teachers don't need to be bilingual themselves, and many will find themselves working with children who have a wide variety of heritage languages.

Project DELITE delivers the UD certification courses online, providing access to participating teachers and paraprofessionals throughout Delaware. These five classes are taught by Caplan, ELI assistant professor Michael Fields, Dr. Barbara Prillaman (a nationally recognized teacher at Conrad School of the Sciences in Wilmington), and Dr. Marisa Hockman (an MLL leader in the Indian River School District).

After classes are completed, the project will offer participants an additional year of professional development in which they meet regularly and share experiences with one another. The first cohort of 25 educators started their coursework in Summer 2023 and will be prepared for certification by Fall 2024.

Members of Project DELITE participating in a class in-person and online at the UD Paradee Center in Dover, June 2023

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glossary

grant: an amount of money that an organization gives for a special purpose, such as research
paraprofessionals: trained workers who assist teachers
certification: official approval of someone who has reached a standard
component: one part that combines with other parts to make something bigger
aspect: a feature or way of considering a situation
investigator: researcher
district: a local area containing several schools that are managed together
gap: a space where something is missing or where there is an opportunity
mutiliterate: able to read and write in more than one language
heritage language: a language a child learns at home from their family that is different from the main language of the country where they live

Dr. Adrian Pasquarella (Co-Principal Investigator); Dr. Nigel A. Caplan (Project Director), and Jamie Janick (Project Manager)

2023 | The House That Dr. Stevens Built
These are the moments loved by the students

YEAR IN PHOTOS

Retal Jadaa, winner of the gingerbread house competition at the 2023 holiday party

Women's Group Guitar Club, Session 1 2023 - Shahad Futayni, Joud Al Qahtani, Yuna Sannohe, Hitomi Nakane, Natsuki Sakamoto, Sayaka Asano, Dinh Trong Nhan
Debra Hess Norris highlights the ELI at the State of the College (courtesy Cheryl Ernst)

Evening program students at Amstel Square (courtesy Umidé Rurybayeva)

Jisa Ko as Santa at the 2022 holiday party

Scott Stevens with Sojeong Noh at the Halloween party
Women's Group

Ocean City beach trip, June 17 2023

Evening program students at Amstel Square (courtesy Umida Ruzybayeva)

Toni MacLaughlan's ITA Culture & Pedagogy class

Ocean City

Session 4 Graduation

Dr. Stevens with MATESL students Wenjun, Liu Lu, Yufeng, and Yuxin (Hunan Normal University), 2023
Dr. Stevens demonstrates the ELI Honors T-Shirt ceremony at Session 5 graduation.

Ken Cranker’s weekly volleyball club at the Lil Bob (courtesy Matt Matterer)

Ross Fenske & Charlie the snake

SABIC service learning project in Puerto Rico

PDPI participants cheer the Blue Hens at a basketball game.

Korean short term program participants celebrate their certificates in Session 3.

2023
After an extensive international search, Dr. Cheryl Ernst was selected as the next director of the ELI. Dr. Ernst was previously the executive director of the University of Oregon American English Institute (AEI), which she led for eight years. Now, she is moving across the country and swapping her Oregon Ducks for Delaware Blue Hens. She is joined by her husband, Andy Edelen, an accomplished astronomer, their daughter Sinikka, who recently graduated from Western Oregon University, and the family’s two dogs, Aki and Zeek.

Dr. Ernst holds an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language (Northern Arizona University) and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in ESL and reading from Southern Illinois University (SIU). She has extensive experience as an instructor and administrator, having held positions at the University of Alaska, the University of Findlay (Ohio), and Harvard University, as well as overseas in Japan and Finland. She even taught for one summer at the ELI back in 2003! After her doctoral studies, Dr. Ernst became the director of the Center for English as a Second Language at SIU, where she managed a large faculty and student body and expanded the intensive English program to include teacher training for grant-sponsored groups from Brazil and Panama. From there, she moved to Oregon to head up the AEI. In that role, Dr. Ernst took responsibility over a wide portfolio of programs: the intensive English program, the credit-bearing academic English program, and Innovative Programming, which included online and hybrid teacher training. Dr. Ernst built numerous partnerships across campus and around the world by focusing on building relationships and developing meaningful collaborations. Under her leadership, AEI received grants to create online courses and professional development for the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan, and the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education, as well as the prestigious Fulbright English language program.

Dr. Ernst is active in professional communities, having served as chair of TESOL’s International Teaching Assistants Interest Section, peer reviewer for the Commission on English Language Accreditation (CEA, the body which accredits UD’s ELI), representative to the University of Oregon’s faculty senate and senate executive committee, and most recently on the presidential stream of UCIEP (University and Colleges Intensive English Programs). She is also a regular presenter at national and international conferences and has led training workshops in Honduras, Japan, Taiwan, and Chile. In 2021, Dr. Ernst was appointed as the education representative to the Oregon District Council of the U.S. Commercial Services, where she highlighted the importance of international education at the federal level.

Dr. Ernst has an inspiring ability to tie big ideas to real world situations. In a presentation during her interview process, she described a memorable trip she had just taken, walking the length of Hadrian’s Wall across the historical border between England and Scotland. She reflected on the evolution of building technology from ancient settlements in the Orkney Islands off the west coast of Scotland to the 73-mile wall itself (constructed in the 2nd century CE) to the ultra-modern Glasshouse International Centre for Music in northeast England. She used these structures as a metaphor for her goals at the ELI:

“We can remember who we were, take the best of who we were, and move forward.”

Welcome, Dr. Ernst! We are excited to move forward with you at the helm.

GLOSSARY

swap: to exchange; to replace one thing with another
portfolio: a collection of varied work that one is responsible for
accredit: to officially state that an institution or program has met a required standard
faculty senate: in U.S. institutions of higher education, a group of faculty members elected to govern some academic aspects of the university
evolution: a gradual process of change
metaphor: a type of figurative language that describes a person or object by referring to something else with similar characteristics
Dear Friends of the ELI,

Deciding to come to the ELI was easy. The ELI is an aspirational program for directors of intensive English programs across the country. And moving into the house that Dr. Stevens built brought back warm and ultimately life-changing memories from a summer I spent in the ELI a generation ago, along with awe of returning to this family and community of global citizens. The ELI contributes to soft diplomacy, and everyone who engages with the ELI practices world peace every day.

This year, the ELI magazine highlights the retirement of Dr. Scott Stevens, the patriarch and architect of the ELI, and six long-time faculty members, a respected elder generation of teachers whose impact in and out of the classroom will be felt for years to come. Personnel Notes (see p. 54) reflects more changes to our family, including the loss of a dear friend of mine, Margaret Cassling, who is memorialized for her long commitment to ELI. We will all miss these familiar faces. What remains, however, is the broad scope of the ELI’s programming and a commitment to a rich educational experience.

The annual ELI magazine typically captures memories of the year, serving as a snapshot for future generations. This year’s issue of Interactions spans multiple generations, providing a look back at where the Institute came from and the firm foundation this gives us. I am excited about the future of the ELI and what lies ahead: laughter and joy, cross-cultural relationships, inbound study abroad, foundation-year programs, credit and non-credit programs, joint programs across campus, teacher training and dual degree programs, and programming across Delaware, and the world. ELI students will continue to experience the community activities, thriving culture and beautiful nature that Delaware and surrounding areas have to offer. The ELI’s exceptional reputation will continue to be celebrated worldwide. Enjoy this year-in-review,

Dr. Cheryl A. Ernst

Dr. Cheryl A. Ernst

GLOSSARY

aspirational: modeling what you hope to be like in the future; setting an example
soft diplomacy: influencing the way that people view your country by showing the appeal of your culture
patriarch: a leader who is like a father figure in an organization

LINKS

PATTI MIELE has been teaching English learners in the US and abroad in a variety of contexts for over 12 years. She started teaching adult English learners at a resettlement agency in Philadelphia while completing her bachelor’s degree in English at Temple University. After graduation, she taught English for two years in Pyeongtaek, South Korea and one year in Shanghai and Nanjing, China. She returned to her hometown of Philadelphia to pursue her master’s degree in TESOL at the University of Pennsylvania and looks forward to beginning her doctoral studies soon.

After the completion of her master’s degree, Patti taught English for Academic Purposes to matriculated cohorts of English learners at Temple University and La Salle University. She also enjoyed teaching non-credit English language classes for aspiring college students at the University of Pennsylvania’s English Language Program and the Community College of Philadelphia. Most recently, she worked as the ESL Program Coordinator at a nonprofit in Philadelphia, promoting access to English classes for the adult immigrant population in the city.

Her research interests include student engagement in multilingual classrooms and reflection-based teacher training. She remains active in the TESOL professional community, attending conferences, reading research, and hosting workshops for higher education professionals on best practices to support English learners. She is passionate about equity in higher education, advocacy, and implementing culturally-responsive pedagogy. In her free time, Patti enjoys traveling both domestically and internationally.

Born and raised in Kansas, Chad grew up working alongside his brother, mixing concrete for their father, a builder. It was probably there that he developed a strong work ethic and active lifestyle, two areas that would follow him throughout his career.

Chad applied that work ethic to his education, amassing a bachelor’s degree, two master’s degrees, and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Applied Linguistics. During and after those years of scholarly pursuit, Chad also taught ESL in California, South Korea, Russia, Georgia, Kansas, and Turkey. At Kansas State University, where the majority of his teaching occurred, he encouraged students’ outside interests alongside their language skills. For example, he created a STEM language curriculum for Brazilian students in a Science Without Borders program.

When hiring new language teachers, a qualification that the ELI looks at is for the potential candidate to have studied a foreign language themselves. This experience helps instructors relate to the journey that our students are undertaking. Chad, being Chad, applied his strong work ethic to this area as well: he is an advanced speaker in Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian, and speaks intermediate French. He has frequently traveled abroad to study a language in its country of origin; in fact, prior to coming to Newark, Chad was in Portugal for a month, brushing up on his Portuguese. Chad has also been a language student in Brazil, Mexico, Greece, Panama, Hungary, Romania, Russia, and South Korea.

When not at work, Chad can often be found at a gym. He especially likes CrossFit and seeks out this fitness community in whatever country he is in. When touring the Lil Bob gymnasium at the University of Delaware, a huge smile covered his face as he approved of what would become his new work-balance home.
RISING UP THROUGH THE RANKS

NIGEL CAPLAN PROMOTED TO PROFESSOR

In U.S. institutions of higher education, the ascending ranks of faculty are instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. Dr. Nigel A. Caplan was promoted in May to full Professor, the first faculty member at the ELI to achieve this rank. An experienced educator, Caplan teaches courses in the M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language (MA TESL) program as well as in the ELI’s Intensive English Program. He also collaborates extensively with Delaware’s public schools to train elementary and secondary teachers to work more effectively with multilingual learners. As Manager of Graduate Programs and Online Learning, Caplan’s leadership has positioned the ELI as a model of high-quality instruction in multiple modes to support students learning from near and far. Caplan’s impressive output of scholarly work is also widely recognized in the field of language instruction, and several of his textbooks have been adopted by universities across the United States and around the world. Hearty congratulations to Dr. Caplan on his remarkable accomplishments and well deserved promotion!

BUSHONG NAMED ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Former academic development specialist Robbie Bushong has stepped up to the position of ELI assistant director. Bushong’s contributions to the ELI since 2012 have tailored him for the new position. In addition to teaching, he has been actively involved with the ELI’s Student Support Services since 2016, assisting students in need of extra coaching, and in 2017, he became an ELI academic advisor. When Associate Director Joe Matterer retired in 2020, Bushong assumed a number of Matterer’s administrative tasks, and has taken to the role like a duck to water.

“My role is to help facilitate experiences for students, teachers and staff members,” Bushong said. “As Joe said, it’s about service.”

Professor Nigel A. Caplan with his family at the London Eye, summer 2023

Bushong named assistant director

Professor Nigel A. Caplan with his family at the London Eye, summer 2023
REBECCA BOYLE expanded her repertoire at the ELI, taking on the role of SABIC Coordinator. Assistant Director for Registration Avery Miller has been a welcome addition to the ELI offices since January, managing all the complexities of schedules and grades. Working with the College of Arts and Sciences communications team, Kaitlyn Diehl became ELI’s Communications Specialist in October. We are glad to have you in the family!

TRANSITIONS
Jeanine Feltner and Laura White accepted positions in the spring as Academic Program Coordinators, Jeanine for UD’s Department of Anthropology and Laura for the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences.

Lynn Robinson, ELI Office Coordinator, has transitioned to work with the central administration of the College of Arts and Sciences in support of facilities management. She is also a successful real estate agent. For years, Lynn was a “go-to” person, keeping many tasks at the ELI running smoothly and serving as a fount of answers and support for any question or need students might have—always reaching out with encouragement and kindness, wrapped in a wonderful sense of humor.

After 11 years of outstanding leadership at the ELI, Associate Director Karen Asenavage became the Director of UD’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, where she will bring her passion and sensitivity to one of largest lifelong learning programs in the country, with branches serving over 2,000 members throughout the State of Delaware. Jeanine, Laura, and Karen will be missed, but we are thankful they are still part of the UD family! We look forward to continuing connections—and, down the road, perhaps even possible partnerships.

GOODBYES
Academic Development Specialist/SABIC coordinator Beth Pearson and tutor Sue Peters both bade farewell to the ELI to move on to other phases of life.

IN MEMORIAM
Melora Davis, a long-time tutor with the ELI (October 2005 – March 2019), passed away on June 18, 2023. She worked with hundreds of ELI students over the years, sharing her expertise, encouragement, and kindness.

Margaret Cassling, a passionate teacher at the ELI (1996-2014), passed away on February 14, 2023. She thrived on the relationships she built with students. Over the years, she enriched their lives through unique language experiences such as songs illustrating American values, trips to explore Nanticoke Indian culture, and dramatic performances in the tradition begun by ELI director Scott Stevens. In addition to the IEP, Margaret taught in the ELI’s ESL classes in the Christina School District for children with limited English proficiency and served as student teaching supervisor for candidates in the MA TESL program’s certification track.
JANAINA ANDRADE (Brazil ’08) received a scholarship which allowed her to finish her masters degree in Applied Linguistics at Mary Immaculate College in Ireland. After she returned to Brazil, she received a promotion at work. She is now the principal of her school and is preparing continuing professional development (CPD) programs for English teachers.

LÍA CALDERÓN (Colombia ’14) still loves speaking English, watching English movies, and reading English books – something she couldn’t do before attending the ELI. She says that being bilingual “gives me access to more knowledge and information firsthand.” She is in the process of applying for a visa to work in the U.S.

DASHELM HERNANDEZ GUIRADO (Cuba, ’16) is currently pursuing a career as a freelance graphic designer in Miami Beach, Florida. He recently published a novel in Spanish entitled Herbario: 1978, a labor of love for many years, which he hopes will resonate with readers who share an interest in Cuban and/or Cold War studies.

AMJD RAHBI (Oman ’23), who studied at the ELI on a scholarship from the Omani government, is currently studying petroleum engineering at the Colorado School of Mines, which he describes as “an amazing school for engineering.”

SEHER YIRITCI (Turkey ’14) went on after the ELI to finish a master’s degree at Rutgers University and then returned to Turkey for her Ph.D. She now works as a veterinarian.

C.J. ZAMOTO (France ’09) is now a happy father of two and a performer at Disneyland Paris.

ALUMNI FROM JAPAN who attended the ELI in 1978-1988 visited Newark in November to celebrate Dr. Stevens’ retirement.
ADIL BENTAHAR, FACULTY

Publications:


Presentations:

Altalouli, M. & Bentahar, A. (2023, March) Supporting EAP undergraduate and graduate students' reading for writing [Conference session]. TESOL Annual Convention, Portland, OR.

Altalouli, M. & Bentahar, A. (2023, March). Teaching reading to critique and reading to synthesize in undergraduate and graduate EAP courses [Conference session]. American Association for Applied Linguists, Portland, OR.


NIGEL CAPLAN, FACULTY

Publication:


Presentations:

Caplan, N.A. (2023, November). Genre-based writing instruction [Invited presentation]. Brown University, Providence, RI.


KATE COPELAND, FACULTY

Presentation:

CHAD DAVIDSON, FACULTY

Publication:

CHERYL ERNST, INTERIM ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Publication:

Presentations:

MICHAEL FIELDS, FACULTY

Presentation:

CHRISTIENNE WOODS, FACULTY

Presentation:

WAKAKO YAMASAKI, FACULTY

Presentation:
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