

BYU COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
SPRING 2007

humanities at **BYU**



Dean John R. Rosenberg

COUNTERWEIGHTS

Ibn Rushd, known in the West as Averroes, was born in Islamic Córdoba in 1126—just a few streets and a decade away from Moses Maimonides. Like Maimonides, Ibn Rushd became one of the great philosophers of his age—and like

Maimonides he fled the religiously fanatic court of the Almohads and lived out his adult life in exile. He filled his days composing extensive commentaries on Aristotle and attempting to make room for both reason and revealed religion. He was more influential among the Christian scholastics that studied his work in Latin than among those who could read it as he wrote it, in Arabic. Dante puts Rushd—“who made the great commentary”—in Limbo with other virtuous pagans, and Rushd peeks over the shoulder of Pythagoras in Raphael’s iconic *The School of Athens*. Rushd died in Marrakech and was buried in his native Córdoba. Legend, which may not be true but nevertheless is beautiful and exemplary, tells us that the casket bearing his body hung on one side of a donkey, and balancing on the other side, as a counterweight, were the books he authored. A nice image this: the burden-bearing donkey as existential scale, on which are balanced a life and a life’s work.

How much do the humanities weigh? Is a humanities degree sufficiently weighty to support the body of obligations from the world of contingency? If by “degree” we mean a culminating certificate and a series of requirements, the scales might not tip in our favor. But a degree is also “A step in an ascent [...]; one of a flight of steps” (OED). That in turn reminds me of a

passage from *Inferno*. Hell’s pilgrim is tired and sits down to rest for a moment, at which point the guide Vergil chides him, “Now must thou thus cast off all sloth,” said the Master [...] ‘Rise, therefore, conquer thy panting with the soul, which conquers in every battle if it sink not with its body’s weight. There is a longer stair which must be climbed.’”

A humanities education should help us distinguish what is merely heavy from “the weightier matters.” Yes, it should provide skills that prepare us to contribute in the world of contingency—skills such as reasoning, strong reading, and graceful expression. It should also lead to a way of knowing and of being in that world. A humanities education should be a counterweight to increasing coarseness and incivility by enabling us to define, seek, and restlessly cultivate what is good, true, and beautiful. A humanities education should be a counterweight to provincialism in that it opens to us the complexity of human experience, suggests that difference is more likely to be enriching than threatening, and claims that “pure knowledge,” whatever its source or form, “greatly enlarge[s] the soul” (D&C 121:42). A humanities education can be a counterweight to impulsive action and thinking; it helps us decode spin, constrain unconsidered remarks, and determine when “blinking” must give way to thinking inside history. It should be a counterweight to the tendency to think, in Tobin Sieber’s words, that freedom of choice can be freedom from choice.

A humanities education is a counterweight when it initiates us and engages us in the human conversation. It never isolates; it always connects. It equips us with stories like that of Ibn Rushd’s funeral procession, which demand we measure ourselves against an exacting standard of

John Rosenberg

humble competence.

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Mormon Scholars in the *humanities*



Richard Bushman, Mormon scholar and author, gave the keynote address at the inaugural "Mormon Belief, Scholarship, and the Humanities" Symposium.

About two years ago, faculty and graduate students at BYU began to discuss the need for a stronger network and more collaboration between LDS scholars in the humanities across the world. Many felt that greater contact was needed with scholars at our sister institutions as well as elsewhere. Several organizational meetings were held to elect officers and adopt objectives, and Mormon Scholars in the Humanities (MSH) was born. Membership is open to current MA or PhD students, independent or university-affiliated scholars, and senior-level or retired scholars.

The objectives of MSH include working to promote intellectual and collegial exchange among LDS humanities scholars in the United States and abroad; fostering support and mentoring for the production of superior scholarship in all humanistic disciplines; providing a forum for exchange that explores and strengthens LDS values, especially

as they relate to humanistic inquiry; and assisting members in the successful integration of the intellectual and spiritual aspects of their lives.

The inaugural conference of MSH was held on BYU campus on March 23–24, 2007, with Richard Bushman, Gouverneur Morris Professor of History emeritus at Columbia University, as the keynote speaker. Nearly eighty people assembled to hear twenty-two participants—half of whom came from off campus—present papers on a wide range of topics. Plans are now underway to publish selected proceedings of the conference, and a second conference is in the works for next year. A report on the conference will be posted shortly on the organization's website (www.mormonscholars.org).

In his keynote address, Dr. Bushman addressed the religious foundations of learning, both historically and within the context of LDS revelations. He argued that a religious pursuit of wisdom should be characterized by an openness to new knowledge found in texts and spoken by our own students, and by a striving for truth, as opposed to a declaration of arrival. He struck this tone when he admitted that the conference had introduced him to many excellent insights shared

by conference scholars who have perhaps remained largely unknown inside and outside of our college community for too long.

The most valuable aspect of the conference was the chance to see scholars reflecting on their areas of specialty in ways that were both intellectually and spiritually insightful for them and for their audience. In their professional lives, these scholars are not often given the opportunity to combine the intellectual and the spiritual, especially when their areas of specialization have little or nothing to do with Mormonism. A humorous and helpful panel of scholars provided anecdotal advice for current students about how a faithful Latter-day Saint can survive graduate school in the humanities. One graduate student remarked, "Being a part of this organization just might save my soul."

For more information, please visit www.mormonscholars.org



George Handley, PhD, is the first president of Mormon Scholars in the Humanities.

of NOTE

☞ The BYU Papyrological Imaging team, a campus-wide collaboration housed in the College of Humanities, continues to pursue its work with the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus collection at Oxford University. This year will find the team beginning initiatives in Israel, as well as following up with the Derveni Papyrus at Thessaloniki, Greece. The Herculaneum Papyrus Project continues, with two students using BYU Mentoring Environments grants to finalize the digitalization of the Neapolitan Facsimiles archived at the Italian National Library.

☞ English Professor Lance Larsen has been awarded a \$20,000 Literature Fellowship in Poetry for the 2007–2008 academic year. The award is given by the National Endowment for the Arts. Dr. Larsen plans to use the fellowship to complete his third collection of poems and to begin work on a fourth collection.



Lance Larsen



Anna Khmelenko



Kristie Di Lascio



Cole Carrigan

☞ The Chinese embassy recently selected three BYU students in the Chinese Flagship Program to participate in the “Chinese Bridge,” an annual language and performance competition in Washington, D.C. They are Anna Khmelenko, Kristie Di Lascio, and Cole Carrigan. Anna and Kristie were awarded second and third place. Anna also qualified for the international level of the competition to be held in Beijing this August.

☞ Joyce Nelson, Professor of English, was one of three recipients of the newly established Distinguished Teacher Educator award. The award is made possible by the Cluff family in honor of Benjamin Cluff, Jr., the first president of BYU. Joyce started teaching at BYU in 1990 after years of high school teaching. She will retire this summer.

☞ Aaron Olson, a graduate student in Comparative Studies, has been awarded a Fulbright Graduate Fellowship for the coming academic year. He will study the Herculaneum Papyri at the Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli.

☞ Stephen Grover, a senior majoring in English, was one of three



Stephen Grover

national winners of the Association and Writing Program’s Intro Journals Award in creative nonfiction. Stephen’s

essay was originally written in a creative writing class taught by English Professor Patrick Madden and competed against 97 other entries in the national competition.



Alan Melby

☞ “Improving Your Global Reach” was the theme for the second annual Translation Summit, which was held in Salt Lake City in March, 2007, under the auspices of the BYU Center for Language Studies, the Utah Governor’s Office, and various businesses. The Summit is the only event that brings together leading players from three sectors of society, academia, government, and industry, to discuss translation. The conference coordinator was Alan Melby, Professor of Linguistics at BYU.

theater FESTIVAL



JESSICA WISE as DOÑA MENCÍA and CHRIS LARSON as DON GONZALO in *El Narciso en su opinión*.

All the college was a stage in late March, when seventeen groups of students and faculty members staged twenty-four shows in ten different languages. Inspired by the performance spaces and stages available in the new Joseph F. Smith Building, Professors Claudia Harris (English), Dale Pratt (Spanish and Portuguese), and Valerie Hegstrom (Spanish and Portuguese) organized a theater festival, eventually involving hundreds of students, professors, and community members.

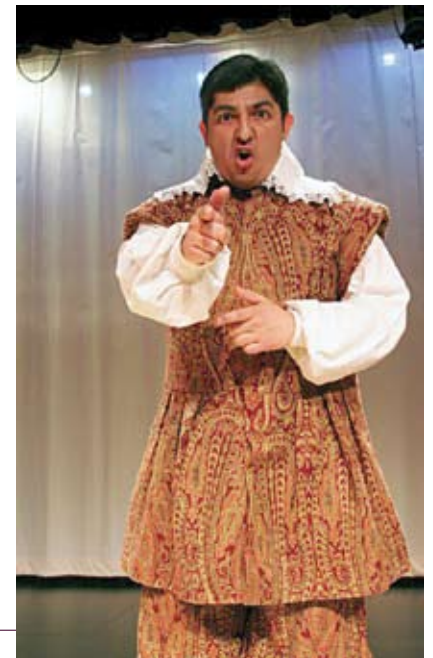
The goals of the project were four-fold: to celebrate the words, ideas, and cultures manifested in theater; to have students, actors, and audience members appreciate the rich diversity of theatrical tradition in the various languages and

fields taught in the college; to showcase language and literature programs; and to foster community within the college. Some groups presented full-length plays, including Guillén de Castro's *El Narciso en su opinión*, Gil Vicente's *The Trilogy of the Boats*, Carlos Solórzano's *The Puppets*, and John Milton's *Comus*. Other groups chose significant scenes to study and compare. For example, students of Norwegian staged three different versions of the final scene of Ibsen's *A Doll House*. Some turned other genres into plays: L'Onesta Brigata mounted two novellas from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, and Professor Deryle Lonsdale and Emily Burnworth put on "Only a Change of Worlds," originally a speech by Chief Seattle. Students also presented original plays that had been crafted in class, including one entitled *Recycling Drama*.

Most groups presented the shows in their original languages, which included Arabic, French,

Italian, Lushootseed, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish. Others performed in translation; for example, Calderón de la Barca's *Loa to The Divine Orpheus* was presented in English. Since not all audience members were speakers of the language in the productions, plot summaries, consecutive translation, comic books, and supertitles were often provided.

Some student actors had strong theater backgrounds while others performed for the first time. More than 600 spectators attended and enjoyed the festival.



JORGETORRES as DON PEDRO in *El Narciso en su opinión*

moving on

The College will miss six fine faculty members who have chosen to retire this year. We thank them for their years of devoted service to thousands of students. Readers who would like to wish them well should e-mail karmen_smith@byu.edu for contact information.

Linda Hunter Adams (Linguistics and English Language) served as a teacher and editor at BYU for over three decades, following almost ten years in Salt Lake high schools. Linda influenced countless students by teaching the skills of editing in a demanding, hands-on publication environment with real clients, real deadlines, and missed sleep, and more importantly, she showed students that she cared for them and their futures. Linda herself never thought that missing out on sleep or free time was a sacrifice; she just wanted to do perfect work. In retirement, she will miss working with students, but she will stay busy with freelance work.



Roger Baker (English) spent the last decade at BYU after 25 years at Snow College. He enjoyed teaching, especially the Bible as Literature course. In retirement, he will finish up a book on Alexander Cruden, the Scotsman who created the first Bible concordance, just before going mad (Cruden, not Baker!). Other retirement plans include restoring a rock house in



Ephraim, continuing his weekly newspaper column, turning wood flutes, taking long motorcycle rides, and enjoying his grandchildren with his wife, Pamela.

Ray Johstoneaux (English) came to BYU in 1986 with the task of preparing teachers of English for the high schools. He had spent over two decades in the public schools in Salt Lake City and in Charleston, South Carolina. Ray's soft-spoken nature belies his lively and engaging teaching style, whether he was teaching English or religion (where he served as an adjunct faculty member). In retirement, Ray hopes to continue the wonderful assignment of temple sealer.



James Lyon (German and Slavic Languages) came to BYU in 1994 following a career at Harvard, the University of Florida, and UC-San Diego, where he served as department chair, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, and Provost of Fifth College. The recipient of numerous grants and fellowships, Jamie has published widely; his



most recent book is *Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger: An Unresolved Conversation, 1951-1970*. "In leaving BYU," he says, "I will miss my congenial colleagues and my excellent students, all of whom have brought me unusual pleasure."

Joyce Nelson (English) came to BYU in 1990 to be the director of English Education. Prior to her arrival here she taught at Provo High School for many years, and she still thinks that teaching high school English is one of the most rewarding things she has ever done. She received the 2007 Benjamin Cluff Jr. Award as Distinguished Teacher Educator. In retirement she hopes to enjoy her new home in Centerville and her cabin in Hobbler Creek Canyon. She says, "I want to continue my research interests, to pursue volunteer projects, and never to grade another paper."



John Robertson (Linguistics and English Language) came to BYU in 1977, after teaching for a year at Cornell following his graduation from Harvard. He served as department chair and published widely, in recent years publishing with colleagues who specialize in decoding the Mayan hieroglyphs. He says, "I am grateful for my wonderful colleagues in the department, past and present. Working at BYU is like being paid for your hobby."



Loving THE WORLD



Trenton Hickman
Assistant Professor of English

As a child, I would sometimes spend time listening to Elvis Presley sing on my mother's well-worn copy of a 1974 RCA classic LP, *Elvis: Recorded Live on Stage in Memphis*. In my mind's eye, clouded by nostalgia that makes those lazy afternoons seem almost universally sunny, I would place the record on the turntable, start the RCA dog spinning into a blur, and stretch out on the floor in front of the speakers and listen to Elvis's rendition of the Christian hymn "How Great Thou Art." Backed by J. D. Sumner and the Stamps Quartet

and Sumner's Guinness Book-record double low-C voice, Elvis's live-in-Memphis exultations were a truly religious experience to hear. As the muted verses gave way to the bold "Then sings my soul, my Savior, God, to thee," I could feel the glory of God in the ecstatic arcs and low rumbles of the voices. For those few moments before I would tuck the record back into its Graceland-bedecked sleeve, the young Mormon me and the sometimes drug-addled but seemingly genuine King together worshipped, however ironically, the King.

You can probably imagine how surprised I was several years later, in 1985, to see that our new LDS hymn book included Elvis's majestic hymn in its pages. You can likewise imagine my dismay the first time that I heard an LDS congregation sing "How Great Thou Art." To be sure, the hymn was very reverently and appropriately sung, but gone were my chills, the exultation of hearing Elvis' voice swell from a whisper to something that shook the heavens. My ward's version of the hymn assumed an eminently practical character: you could sing their version of "How Great Thou Art" for the opening song, the sacrament hymn, or the closing song in a sacrament meeting held any time of year; you could sing it at a missionary farewell or a funeral. Once converted to Mormonism, the hymn's newly-acquired slow tempo, its sensible absence of dips and swells in dynamics, and its generally agreeable torpor meant that we could worship God and all of His creations without disturbing a single one of them. The hymn had been "rescued" from the world and rendered safe for our LDS consumption.

Might it be possible, though, that the elements of the all-shook-up Elvis version so carefully extracted from our LDS-style "How Great Thou Art" have something to offer that might augment that which we have in our own tradition as Latter-day Saints? At football games around the country, we're admonished by huge, inelegantly-scrawled butcher-paper signs to read John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The sweaty end-zone banner bearers usually exclude the next verse, which seems to me equally important: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the

world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). Through the lens of the restored gospel, we understand that Jesus' mission to redeem Heavenly Father's children is the center of the Plan of Salvation, and that it is Heavenly Father's "work and glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life" of all humankind (Moses 1:39). But were we to collapse time and space and sit down with some of the serious folks you might read in an American literary history survey—William Bradford, say, or John Winthrop—and lay out our notions of God's universal, saving love for them to consider, they might ask us, "But why on earth would God want to save *all* of them? Surely they're not *all* worth saving?"

I wonder if we as Latter-day Saints, living in these the last days, don't sometimes entertain our own versions of the same question, something like, "What *is* it that God sees in some of these people around us?" As English majors, we might be willing, as Elvis's hymn suggests, to survey "in awesome wonder" all "the worlds that [God's] hands have made," but we may simultaneously desire to disown the "human" in "humanities," seeing humanity as a potential synonym for corruptibility, inferiority, or depravity. If only God's creations weren't spoiled by all these imperfect people running around in them! Even if God wants to save all the humans in the messed-up world around us, we reason, perhaps our part in helping with this process could be limited to handing out pass-along cards, or to some other activity that would afford us the latitude to worry about fixing our own shortcomings but not have to see those of others too up close and personal. Perhaps we even look at that pesky sign at BYU's entrance with some chagrin, understanding that yes, the "world is our campus," but go easy on the campus part, and give it to me without the world, if you please.

For the LDS reader, there are practical concerns, of course, in approaching the texts of the world with such courage. I see these concerns manifest themselves not infrequently in the literature classes that I teach. In one way or another, these concerns always ask, "How 'worldly' will the material be that we read in class?" It's a valid question, and I understand why smart, well-intentioned students ask it. I usually reply, in all ear-

nestness, “Well, none of the authors we’re reading this semester is LDS,” and the students laugh and then say, “No, really.” The answer is usually that really, we aren’t reading anyone who is LDS, and sometimes these non-LDS writers approach the weighty issues of a fallen world differently than we, as readers, might wish them to. On the other hand, precisely *because* they are not LDS, I would suggest that they have something to show us about our world that we might not be able to see, maybe even something that glorifies God and all his wonders in a manner that reaches us in ways that enliven the Holy Ghost within us. For we do believe, don’t we, “that God will yet reveal many great and important

you knew by how much you loved them, so if the device of the person in the ambulance detected the device of the person he loved the most, or the person who loved him the most, and the person in the ambulance was really badly hurt, and might even die, the ambulance could flash, “GOODBYE! I LOVE YOU! GOODBYE! I LOVE YOU!” One thing that’s nice to think about is someone who was the first person on lots of people’s lists, so that when he was dying, and his ambulance went down the streets to the hospital, the whole time it would flash, “GOODBYE! I LOVE YOU! GOODBYE! I LOVE YOU!” (72–73)

My sense is that we should rely on the gift of the Holy Ghost to give us the discernment we need to draw the best out of the literature that we read.

things” to us (Articles of Faith, v. 9)? Couldn’t at least a few of those things come to us through our reading, if we’re willing to give some of these writers a chance?

So how can we love the world and what it has to teach us while still being “in the world, but not of the world”? In his novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Jonathan Safran Foer details the life of a precocious nine-year-old named Oskar Schell, a New Yorker who lost his father in the World Trade Center collapse on 9/11. Oskar is, among other things, a brainstormer of inventions, and his ideas strike the reader as at once hilarious and poignant. One of Oskar’s inventions deals with his version of what an ambulance should be:

What about a device that knew everyone you knew? So when an ambulance went down the street, a big sign on the roof could flash, “DON’T WORRY! DON’T WORRY!” if the sick person’s device didn’t detect the device of someone he knew nearby. And if the device *did* detect the device of someone he knew, the ambulance could flash the name of the person in the ambulance, and either, “IT’S NOTHING MAJOR! IT’S NOTHING MAJOR!” or, if it was something major, “IT’S MAJOR! IT’S MAJOR!” And maybe you could rate the people

Obviously, the world would be very different if Oskar’s ambulances sped down our streets. Sometimes, I suspect that a few readers in our community want books to operate in much the same way, advertising, “OK FOR YOU TO READ! OK FOR YOU TO READ!” or “ONLY MINOR UNCOMFORTABLE DIALOGUE AND SCENES WITH RICH TRUTHS TAUGHT ABOUT PEOPLE AND THEIR ETERNAL POTENTIAL BY SOMEONE NOT OF OUR FAITH!” Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, books don’t work that way. My sense is that, better even than these huge flashing signs, we should rely on the gift of the Holy Ghost to give us the discernment we need to draw the best out of the literature that we read. Moroni tells us that “by the Holy Ghost” we can “know the truth of all things” (Moro. 10:5), not just of things related to the Book of Mormon’s veracity or to the truth of the Church. Understanding the broad utility of the gift of the Holy Ghost helps us see it as something more than one of those radiation badges that shines green when everything’s A-OK but turns a gruesome red when radiation hits it—telling its wearer, in short, with its crimson face, “Sorry, buddy, you’re already toast.” Instead, if we see the Holy Ghost as that which

can enlighten our minds all the time and not just in perilous situations, we can become people who, armed with an increased measure of the Spirit and sensitized to its capacity to give us knowledge wherever we seek it, find that many of the “best books” mentioned in the Doctrine and Covenants are not scriptural but are secular, or “worldly” in the best sense of the word.

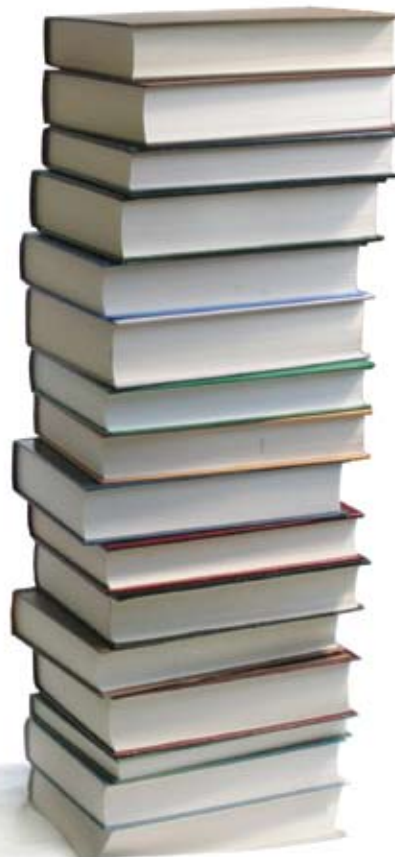
In making these arguments, I am not oblivious to the fact that the world can often be a dark and ugly place. Every day, our world finds itself filled to the brim with suffering, torture, injury, sin, and hardness, and there is at some very important level nothing that poems or plays or songs can do to right these wrongs. Clearly, though, we have a choice as readers—we can either despair, seeing that history seems to illustrate the futility of hope, and cut our losses, washing our hands of the world, or we can take the knowledge we gain of the world and, as poet Seamus Heaney has written, help “hope and history” to “rhyme” by loving the world. We can see, against all odds, the continued capacity of the world for beauty, for truth meaningful beyond the grave, for emanating something that would inspire the Son of God to take up His cross on behalf of not just the covenant people but *the entire* world’s people. We might consider the spirit of this excerpt from Martín Espada’s poem “Alabanza,” which commemorates the many anonymous victims of the September 11 World Trade Center collapse. The Spanish word *alabanza* means “praise,” and perhaps if can do nothing else for the world then we can at least praise that which is praiseworthy in it:

Praise Manhattan from a hundred and seven
flights up,
like Atlantis glimpsed through the windows of
an ancient aquarium.
Praise the great windows where immigrants
from the kitchen
could squint and see their world, hear the chant
of nations:
Ecuador, México, Republica Dominicana,
Haiti, Yemen, Ghana, Bangladesh,
Alabanza.

It is true, as Elvis’s hymn still sings in my memory, that “when Christ shall come / with shout of acclama-

tion / And take me home,” the “joy” will indeed “fill my heart,” as it will likely fill the hearts of all members of His Church. But until then, I praise His creations here, in this world. I praise the publicans and sinners, not for the worst of what they’ve done, but for the moments of transcendent truth that we can see flash in their eyes and hear from their mouths despite all their shortcomings. I praise the world for reminding us that “the work and the glory” isn’t simply a set of serialized LDS novels but a sprawling, global effort that involves many more people than the Steed family and their “Who’s Who among Early Latter-day Saints” friends. I praise that which is human in us; I praise the humanities that speak of us and of all our successes and struggles. I praise BYU for having the vision to know that despite our occasional LDS qualms the world is indeed our campus, and that if we will rise to the full measure of our creation we will not only live in the world as begrudging citizens but will love the world, freely, even as God has loved us. *Alabanza.*

*From a talk given at the annual English Awards Banquet,
April 2007*



LANGUAGE *grants*

In February 2007, Kirk Belnap and Dana Bourgerie of the Asian and Near Eastern Language Department received prestigious STARTALK grants from the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland. Dr. Belnap is the Director of the National Middle East Language Resource Center, and Dr. Bourgerie is the Program Director for the BYU Chinese Flagship Program.

STARTALK 2007 will provide summer programs in the Arabic and Chinese languages for high school students, as well as professional development opportunities for prospective and current Arabic and Chinese language teachers for levels K-16. STARTALK has awarded 34 institutions from 22 states and the District of Columbia, including both public and private universities, high schools, and heritage schools,



with funds to host these programs. Over 600 teachers and 1184 students are expected to participate this summer.

The high school student programs will be held on the BYU campus this summer. Each group of twelve and fifteen students will live in foreign-language housing with a native-speaking resident facilitator; this will immerse them in their language of study during their on-

campus stay. Students participating in the program may earn high school credit and will participate in cultural activities during their stay.

Training in both Chinese and Arabic language curriculum will be offered to a variety of instructors from high schools and universities throughout the state and will be administered in a collaborative effort between the United States Office of Education and BYU. The teachers for the 2007–2008 year will be trained during this year's STARTALK conference. Specific dates and requirements to attend this conference will be announced throughout the Utah State School Districts and through the BYU Chinese Flagship Program.





Students Support Children

Rebecca Bennett, HCSC President 2006–2007

Students in the College of Humanities welcomed spring in an unusual way this year. On April 5th, the Humanities College Student Council (HCSC) set up project tables in front of the JFSB as part of a collaborative service effort with Deseret Industries. The tables were set up with project materials so that passing students could stop and provide service by coloring pages for alphabet books and stuffing toy footballs. Project materials completed during the day were shipped to caretakers of disadvantaged children abroad.

The HCSC is a new organization within the College of Humanities. It is designed as a means to help students gain leadership opportunities, promote the aims of a BYU education, and serve their peers.

The council promotes the inclusion of each individual within the College of Humanities in a powerful community working to positively impact the College, the campus, and the world.

It was through the commendable effort of many council members that the planning and execution of the April humanitarian aid project was carried out. Though

many of these council members graduated a few weeks after the project, service to students and the broader community will continue in Fall and Winter semesters with a new HCSC. Rachael Curley will begin her term as President of the HCSC this summer under the continued direction of Council Advisor Christi Burningham of the Humanities Advisement Center.

Thanks to the faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni who supported the council, helping make this academic year so memorable.



Announcement

Alumni, what are you doing with your Humanities degrees? Law? Medicine? Dentistry? Business? Law enforcement? Education?

Our current Humanities students want what you have: experience, knowledge, and wisdom.

Humanities students want to connect their liberal arts educations to the world of work they will soon enter. Here's how you can help: log on to <http://humalumni.byu.edu> and follow the instructions to register as an online "alumni friend" for one or more Humanities students considering following in your footsteps. You may cancel your registration at any time.

teamwork in EDUCATION

Michael Taylor received his BA in Linguistics from BYU and began graduate studies at New York University last fall. This is the story of his unlikely plunge into the field of linguistics as told by Michael and Dr. David Eddington of the BYU Linguistics and English Language Department.

Michael Taylor: After two semesters at BYU, I changed my major to linguistics. I didn't even know what it was, but it sounded a lot cooler than what I had been doing in my first semester. When I returned from my mission in Brazil, one of my first classes was Historical Linguistics with Dr. David Eddington. It was there that I first learned about language change, language variation, and sociolinguistics—and I thought, “yeah, I could do this for the rest of my life.”

Dr. Eddington: Michael Taylor came to me after my introductory course, asking about a possible research project based on some



Dr. David Eddington

interesting linguistic observations he had made in Brazil. I told him he would need a background in sociolinguistic methodology before he could even consider such a study. I suggested some literature by William Labov and assumed that would be the last I would see of him!

Michael: I wanted to get an ORCA grant for a research project, and Dr. Eddington agreed to be my mentor. I went on my way, spending much of the next few weeks in the library, reading everything I could on sociolinguistics and fieldwork methods.

Dr. Eddington: To my surprise, Michael returned a few weeks later, having read the literature and having already formulated a study of r-assibilation in Brazil. He contacted a number of linguists who study Brazilian Portuguese and found that no systematic study of his particular issue had been done.

Michael: I wrote a proposal for a \$1,200 ORCA grant, with Dr. Eddington's editing help, and we were awarded the grant in early 2005. After returning from data collection, I had a lot of work still to do. Dr. Eddington directed me to a statistical package, and insisted I do



Michael Taylor

all the coding work myself, under his direction, so I could gain the experience.

Dr. Eddington: Michael made the trip and analyzed the results. I edited his paper for stylistics and explained how to submit abstracts to professional conferences. His paper was accepted at all three conferences to which he submitted it, including the premier sociolinguistics conference in the United States. He presented in New York and at Penn State, and I presented the material in Texas. You can imagine the surprise of many he met when they found out Michael was still an undergraduate.

Michael: With the data analysis done, it was time to write something up. This was one of the coolest parts of the whole mentoring process, I think. At Dr. Eddington's suggestion, I wrote up the initial draft and we would go back and forth doing revisions, with the understanding that we could change anything the other person wrote, with justification. It was a com-

pletely new way of writing for me. It was a real collaboration.

In the end, this whole experience was so rewarding there was no question that I wanted to get a PhD in linguistics. I'm now at New York University as a Henry H. MacCracken fellow, with full funding and a stipend for five years.

I have no doubt in my mind that I wouldn't be here had I not undergone the mentoring process with Dr. Eddington and the ORCA grant program. Of the nine first-year students that entered with me, I am the only one straight out of an undergraduate program. Sometimes I feel like a fish out of water, with

much less academic experience than my peers, but I am confident in knowing that I have solid research and presentation experience. Working with Dr. Eddington was certainly a positive, life-changing experience. I know that sounds totally dramatic, but it's true.

why we **CHOOSE TO GIVE**

Conan and Cindy Grames
McLean, Virginia

Why would a couple who attended—dare we say—the University of Utah choose as their primary educational beneficiary the Center for Language Studies in the College of Humanities



The Conan and Cindy Grames family

at BYU? It is because we have had the chance to watch where the Center for Language Studies is going and we like what we see.

Not only does the study of language and culture enrich and balance our lives, but on a very practical level it also enhances careers, opens doors to new professional opportunities, serves as a tool for communicating the gospel, and raises respect for us as Americans, who are often viewed as insular. We have had opportunities we never could have dreamed of—most of them brought about because we know a foreign language.

The Center for Language Studies uses our money to give students the opportunity to study languages which will bless both their own and other peoples' lives and careers. Some of these are languages that they would not be able to learn anywhere else. We can't think of a better use for our money.

how I have been **BLESSED**

Nicholas Vernon



Thank you for your contribution towards my international

internship in Russia during Spring and Summer terms of 2007. I am extremely grateful for this internship, which will be an opportunity to learn and grow. I'm excited to be able to have a hands-on opportunity to combine my two majors—Russian and Business Management—into one great experience. This internship will give me a real-life opportunity to apply my classroom learning and to better prepare me for my hoped-for career in international business.

Your generous donation is a great blessing to me in funding this experience.

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feedback?

We'd be glad to hear from you with your views on our news, your memories of events or campus experiences, or an update on your life since leaving our college. Please e-mail ron_woods@byu.edu

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