College Updates

1 GOOGLE'S GLOBAL DIRECTOR (AND COLLEGE ALUMNUS) SPEAKS ON CAMPUS

Brent Dance, Google's Global Director for Apps and Games, gave the Honored Alumni Lecture for the Department of German & Russian on January 19, 2023. He highlighted how studying Russian shaped his journey toward optimism, increased critical thinking, and authentic love. Through his lecture, "How Learning Russian Changed My Life," Dance detailed experiences he had learning the language on his mission and at BYU. Additionally, he spoke about how his Russian major helped him serve others at Google through creating phone air raid alerts for those suffering in the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

2 BRETT HASHIMOTO RECEIVES INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ORIGINATION AWARD

Assistant Professor Brett Hashimoto (Corpus Linguistics) recently received an Interdisciplinary Research Origination Award from BYU's Research Development Office to participate in a corpus linguistics study investigating how the term *sustainability* is used in various spheres, from academia to popular media. The team working on this project includes linguists, engineers, and experts on public service and ethics. The culminating project will produce papers on sustainability, course curricula, real-life experiments, and community-facing initiatives such as policy publications and workshops.

3 BYU SPEECHES TRANSLATION INITIATIVE

The College of Humanities is helping translate BYU devotionals and forums into Japanese and Spanish—with more languages to come. Computer science professors and language students undertaking this project utilize machine translation, with student translators providing an initial review. This helps student translators develop a repertoire of useful skills to prepare them for translation opportunities after college. Faculty and native speakers conduct reviews of the student translations to ensure the translation is as accurate as possible. After final edits, students upload the text and text-to-audio recordings to the BYU Speeches website (speeches.byu.edu), making these uplifting speeches more accessible to people around the world.

4 STUDENT PIONEERS S'GAW KAREN LANGUAGE COURSE

When undergraduate student Laesgaw K'Chawtee (International Relations '25) came to BYU, the university did not offer any courses teaching his native language of S'gaw Karen. K'Chawtee approached the Center for Language Studies and, after some discussion, was invited to become the official teacher of S'gaw Karen, a language spoken in Myanmar and Thailand. Since Myanmar's independence in 1948, the Burmese military has propagated genocidal campaigns against the Karen people, leaving a dwindling number of speakers. K'Chawtee says, "Everything I'm teaching is . . . based on what I observed from my own language and my understanding of the English language and training. There's not a guidebook like other languages." For now, S'gaw Karen is only open to returned missionaries who learned the language on their missions, but K'Chawtee hopes to offer the class to all students in the future.

Laesgaw K'Chawtee (right) stands with an elephant. Photo courtesy of Laesgaw K'Chawtee

Matt Baker
Photo by Colby St. Gelais

5 MATT BAKER WINS OUTSTANDING MANUSCRIPT AWARD

Associate Professor Matt Baker (Editing, Business Communication) won the 2023 Outstanding State Manuscript Award from the Central States Communication Association for his paper "The Working World is a Minefield: Counterstories of Job Loss." He worked with professors Rachel Collier Murdock (Des Moines Area Community College) and Stacy Tye-Williams (Iowa State University) to interview people experiencing job loss. The team discovered that people who lost their jobs spun "counternarratives" where they framed themselves in different ways. Sometimes they described themselves as liberated from undesirable jobs and sometimes as victims of unfortunate circumstances. Baker also found that people repudiated the employers that terminated them.

Taowen Le at BYU China Conference.
Photo by BYU Photo

6 STUDIES PROGRAMS FIND NEW HOME IN KENNEDY CENTER

In fall 2023, two studies programs transitioned from the College of Humanities to the Kennedy Center: Scandinavian Studies and American Studies. As faculty coordinator of American Studies, Associate Professor Jamin Rowan (English, American Studies) explains, "The College of Humanities has been an incredibly generous and supportive host to the American Studies program for the past 20 years, but the Kennedy Center has increasingly become the center of gravity on campus for interdisciplinary programs like ours." This is because the Kennedy Center can help these programs expand their focus to include areas such as social science, political science, and anthropology. Associate Professor Nate Kramer (Danish and Norwegian 19th- and 20th-Century Literature), director of the Scandinavian Studies program, explains that student experience prompted the decision to move. He says, "They come from all over the university, and we want to provide an academic experience for our students that is more in line with their own backgrounds and academic interests."

7 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE–WINNING JOURNALIST VISITS BYU

Russian journalist and winner of the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize, Dmitry Muratov, visited BYU campus on February 24, 2023, to share his insights as a journalist amid the Ukraine-Russia conflict. Muratov made a career as editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, winning the Nobel Prize "for his efforts to safeguard freedom of expression," according to the prize judges. Muratov's lecture, "The Role of Free Media in Building a Civil Society: The Case of Russia," which was given in Russian and interpreted live for non-Russian speakers, discussed the devastating effects of the war and offered insights for identifying and overcoming state propaganda. He ended his speech with an additional call to action. "We need to bring back free election and free media," he said. "Otherwise, we will pay with death."

The Nobel peace prize winners, Dmitry Muratov, (right), and Maria Ressa, (left).
Photo by AP Photo / Alexander Zemlianichenko

8 BYU CHINA CONFERENCE

The Chinese Flagship Center and Center for Language Studies sponsored the annual BYU China Conference on March 11, 2023, which seeks to foster understanding and make connections between the US and China through discussions with students. The conference gathered academic and diplomatic speakers from across the university and China to participate in a question-and-answer session, and the conference also included a networking luncheon. In addition to strengthening international relations, the program seeks to improve education in both countries, particularly on creating a more well-rounded and accessible approach to education for students in China. H

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Across
1. hind, 5. sushi, 10. TAs, 13. irae, 14. sneak, 15. bit, 16. double entendre, 19. Insta, 20. Bay, 21. née, 22. Draco, 26. Thor, 30. Grand Prix, 32. sum, 33. beget, 34. mints, 36. vicar, 39. trail, 41. Ira, 42. coup d'état, 46. meld, 48. hosta, 49. ale, 50. USA, 52. Inuit, 54. pardon my French, 60. ivy, 61. femur, 62. a tie, 63. gee, 64. Alamo, 65. Tsar

Down
1. *Hiding*, 2. ironer, 3. nausea, 4. debt, 5. SSE, 6. *une*, 7. Sen., 8. hatbox, 9. IKEA, 10. TBD, 11. Air, 12. Ste, 17. ladder, 18. NYT, 23. RPG, 24. Are too, 25. citrus, 27. HSN, 28. out, 29. RMs, 31. NBA, 34. midair, 35. Ile, 36. vim, 37. ire, 38. Cal, 40. apt, 42. Chanel, 43. taunts, 44. Alicia, 45. tether, 47. dud, 51. sofa, 53. neat, 54. pig, 55. Ave, 56. Rye, 57. MMA, 58. yum, 59. fro