Gathering material for this edition of the newsletter has reminded me of the many different ways that we in the Intensive English Language Institute strive to connect to wider communities: local, national and global.

This semester, for instance, IELI professor Ekaterina Arshavskaya forged relationships with the Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art. We kick off the newsletter with her snapshot of classes conducted in the museum, followed by a weekend community event sponsored by the Office of Global Engagement.

Next, we highlight the social activities of the IELI Student Association (IELISA) both on campus and off, and we hear from the IELISA faculty advisor and newest IELI faculty member, Kim Andrus.

IELI is also a place where students in the Masters of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program can gain experience and where the spouses of international graduate students and visiting scholars can take a non-credit English class and be part of a community of learning. MSLT student, Sharon Lyman’s, Conversation Class illustrates this facet of IELI.

We are further reminded that IELI is often a bridge to professional success in other communities when we follow graduates, like Aline Allen and Fatih Ortakci, or international teaching assistants, like PhD candidate Leandro Do Nascimento. Find out why we are proud of them.

Finally, we travel with four IELI faculty members to the International TESOL Convention in Atlanta and with one other faculty member to the International Applied Linguistic & Language Teaching Conference in Dubai.

Check back later this month for an update on IELI Students of the Semester.

In closing, I want to express a special thanks to Angie McDonald for her hard work producing this newsletter.

Nolan Weil, Interim Director
Students in two of my classes this semester learned the technique of “slow-looking” during an interactive tour with Dr. Donna Brown at the Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art. Slow-looking involves noticing and describing, in detail, elements of a work of art.

After an introduction to the idea of slow-looking, participants put the technique to work. They studied various works on display in the museum, then shared their observations with one another. After that, they were challenged to interpret the work. Students often discover that their responses to art are deeply rooted in personal experience and cultural background.

Some students returned on March 2 for International Day at the NEHMU, an event sponsored by the Office of Global Engagement to encourage U.S. and international students, faculty, and family members to share their responses to art in a cross-cultural venue.
In January, IELISA sponsored a “Hawaiian Icebreaker” activity to usher in the spring semester. Students came together with two goals: meet fellow IELI students and enjoy a Mo’ Bettahs Hawaiian dinner. The activity was the brainchild of IELISA president, Jennifer Bryant from Brazil. She said about the event, “Every semester is a new beginning. Sometimes it’s hard to get to know your new classmates, so we had the Hawaiian party to break the ice. It was fun and IELISA was very glad to welcome our students.”

The second IELISA activity of the semester was held in February at the Eccles Ice Center in North Logan. Several of the IELI students in attendance had never ice-skated before. Despite a few bumps and bruises, everyone had a great time!

Ya Han (“Grace”) Chang from Taiwan said about the activity: “It’s not my first time ice-skating, but I really had fun there. Although there were many people in the skating rink, I didn’t feel crowded and still enjoyed the night.”
I’m originally from Hagerman, a small town near Twin Falls, Idaho. I grew up on a family farm along the rim of the Snake River Canyon. In library books I discovered the wider world beyond the bean fields, cattle and hogs, and I developed a passion for reading. While experiencing another way of life in Guatemala on an LDS mission, I became fascinated by language and culture. Teaching English to international students has been a rewarding way to explore those interests.

I received degrees in English at BYU-Idaho and Idaho State University, and in 1996 completed a Master's degree in TESOL at Bowling Green State University, Ohio. Since then, I have taught English language learners at three other universities: Southern Illinois University, the University of Alabama, and Kansai Gaidai University (Japan).

The sojourn at Alabama lasted nearly two decades. I enjoyed taking students on field trips to New Orleans, Atlanta, Memphis, and other areas rich in American history and culture. Some aspects of Southern culture have stuck with me. You may catch me saying "y'all", drinking sweet tea or listening to bluegrass music. However, I’m excited to be back in the West and at Utah State! Coming to USU is like coming home, in many ways. My parents met as students at USU, and I was married in Logan 25 years ago.

Professionally, I've always been interested in educational technology. The first class I designed was an "English on the Internet" course at Southern Illinois University in the late 90s, where I introduced students to cutting-edge technologies such as email and the World Wide Web. I still enjoy finding ways to enhance instruction and engage students with technology. I am also interested in applying insights from corpus linguistics and exploring the use of hypothetical questions to creatively engage students.

I have four children, who range in age from 14 to 23. We have settled in nearby Preston, Idaho. In my free time, when I’m not busy annoying my teenagers, I enjoy reading, playing musical instruments, and tabletop gaming.
Amble past Main 343 just after 2:30 any Monday, Wednesday, or Friday and you might be curious about the ruckus going on inside. That will be IELI’s English Conversation class for spouses of international students and visiting scholars and maybe even some visiting scholars themselves.

IELI hosts this multilevel course each semester as a service to the university community. The course is always taught by a graduate instructor from the Master of Second Language Teaching program (MSLT) under the supervision of IELI faculty. Graduate instructors are encouraged to design each course based on what they are learning in the MSLT program.

This is the second semester I have had the pleasure of teaching the course, mentored by Marta Halaczkiewicz, IELI’s Senior Lecturer. Emma Duncan, a colleague in the MSLT program, is in on the act as well and will be taking over the class in the fall.

The course is anything but conventional. Noticing the room full of people huddled in groups, throwing dice, and chattering excitedly, passersby may be forgiven for believing they have stumbled across a gaming parlor.

While the course is not all games, we try to keep it fun. Themes of family, work, education, culture, art, science, and travel spark lively discussions. There is much to explore with students coming from far flung corners of the globe: Brazil, China, Colombia, Egypt, India, Korea, Palestine, Russia, Togo, and Uzbekistan.

Throughout the semester, students also give oral presentations. This year, students have presented on their city or country of origin.

In addition to helping students improve their English, the class raises awareness of places and events on campus and around Logan. Last semester, the class took a fieldtrip to the grand opening of the new Aggie Chocolate Factory. This semester students will visit the Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art (NEHMA).
Aline Allen recently joined the ranks of IELI alumni who have gone on to pursue master’s degrees in second language teaching. Aline is one of the newest graduate instructors in the Department of Languages, Philosophy and Communication Studies. Now in her second semester in the MSLT program, Aline has a graduate assistantship and teaches Portuguese. In Fall 2018, she taught PORT 1010. This semester she is teaching the next course in the sequence, PORT 1020.

Originally from Rio de Janeiro, Aline moved to Logan in 2011 after marrying Shane Allen, a former Study Abroad student and USU graduate. In the Fall of 2012, Aline undertook the first of three semesters of study in IELI. Her motivation—simply to improve her English. However, she enjoyed the experience so much that after she completed IELI, she decided to pursue a bachelor’s degree.

Like many undergraduates, Aline was not sure, at first, what major to pursue. She considered Interior Design but eventually settled on International Studies and finished her B.A last summer. Now she is in the Masters of Second Language Teaching program (MSLT).

When I asked Aline how she decided on an MSLT, she acknowledged several influences. For one thing, she said, she was inspired by a course she had taken with Professor Marcus Brasileiro—PORT 3400: Popular Music in the Portuguese Speaking World.

She was also encouraged by some of the Portuguese speaking faculty she knows at Hillcrest Elementary School, which hosts a dual-language immersion program in English and Portuguese.

Although Aline says she is not one to plan too far ahead, she is already musing about pursuing a doctorate. “Maybe,” she says. “I don’t want to think about it too much.”

“If you pursued a doctorate,” I ask, “in what field would it be?” ... “Portuguese, of course,” she says.

Fatih Ortakci, who won a College of Agriculture Graduate Student Researcher of the Year Award in Fall 2014, is back in the news! He visited USU in February as a finalist in the search to fill a vacancy in USU’s Department of Dietetics, Nutrition and Food Science.

Fatih took IELI Level 4 classes and the ITA Workshop while working on his PhD, which he earned in 2015. Since graduating, Dr. Ortakci has been employed as a food scientist at Dupont Nutrition and Health in Madison, Wisconsin. We are currently awaiting news about the outcome of his campus visit.
Leandro Do Nascimento, a PhD student in the Department of Wildland Resources and an ITA Workshop alumnus, is the Quinney College of Natural Resources Graduate Student Teacher of the Year for 2019. Undergrads that have taken Introduction to Biology or Conservation Biology with him know the patience, clarity, dedication, passion, and humor that he brings to the classroom.

I met with Leandro recently in Luke’s Café in Ag Science to learn more about his research, which involves the study of soundscapes and animal communication in the Brazilian Amazon.

The term soundscape refers to all the sounds emanating from any given habitat. They include sounds produced because of an area’s geography and climate, but also the sounds produced by wildlife and by human activity.

To collect soundscapes data in the Amazon, Leandro tells me, researchers place recording devices in strategic locations, including the rainforest canopy. Continuous recording yields huge amounts of data without the need to send large research teams into an area, so sound recording is economical. Not only that, but it reveals the presence of wildlife that is difficult to spot by visual means.

Teams of specialists use the recordings to make inferences about biodiversity, animal population trends, and human impacts on wildlife, among other things. We need better ways to study biodiversity, Leandro told me, and acoustic tools and methods address that need.

Born in São Paulo, with rainforest nearby, Leandro, paradoxically, got his start studying the ecology of semi-arid regions. moving away from São Paulo to northeast Brazil to attend Brazil’s Universidade Federal Rural do Semiárido, thereby avoiding the disadvantage of having grown up in Brazil’s most populous city, where privilege often dictates opportunity.

As it turned out, his alma mater had connections with the University of Arizona, and his B.S. in ecology included a major Study Abroad experience in Arizona.

After earning his bachelor’s degree in ecology 2015, Leandro landed a prestigious fellowship from the Brazilian government and moved to Logan to work on his PhD under the guidance of Dr. Karen Beard.

In his spare time, Leandro plays classical guitar, bringing the theme of soundscapes back home. There would seem to be a certain symmetry in that.
Every year, the Annual International TESOL Convention attracts participants from all around the world. IELI faculty are always well represented. This year, the TESOL Convention was in Atlanta, and IELI faculty made a major showing in the Electronic Village (EV) and Technology Showcase.

**Faculty Presentations at TESOL in Atlanta**

“Domesticating Pokémons: Using Mobile Video Games with English Language Learners” **Marta Halaczkiewicz**

“Getting the Most from Poll Everywhere” **Kim Andrus**

“Interactive online reading tools for English Language Learners” **Ekaterina Arshavskaya**

“Let Them Fantasize: Publishing Student Extensive Writing on fanfiction.net” **Marta Halaczkiewicz**

“Tips for using e-portfolios in writing classes” **Ekaterina Arshavskaya**

“Using the Marco Polo App to Stimulate Student Conversations Outside of Class” **Taira Nieves**

**Ann Roemer Went to Dubai**

Ann Roemer traveled to Dubai to attend the 2019 International Applied Linguistic & Language Teaching Conference where she gave a talk entitled “Professional Development of English-language Teachers in Tanzania.”
Upcoming Important Dates

Summer 2019

Placement Exam (1st session) June 03
Orientation June 04
Classes begin (1st session) June 04
Classes end (1st session) July 05
Placement Exam (2nd session) July 08
Classes begin (2nd session) July 08
Classes end (2nd session) Aug 09

Fall 2019

Placement Exam August 23
Orientation August 26
Classes Begin August 27
Classes end December 06
Last Day of Finals December 13

Current and former IELI Students:
We would love to know what you are doing.

Please email updates and comments to:
ieli@aggiemail.usu.edu