UK International Center Hosts Pakistani Fulbright Scholars

By Abigail Shipp

The University of Kentucky International Center hosted 142 Pakistani graduate students who are studying in the U.S. through the Fulbright scholarship program for the Fulbright Pakistan Enrichment Seminar on Social Movements from November 5 to 9.

The seminar, which was sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Education Foundation in Pakistan, focused on the U.S. civil rights movement and its impact on today’s culture. Pakistani students were also mentored by other Fulbright scholars on tactics for success in U.S. graduate schools.

“The original reason that Sen. Fulbright of Arkansas created this program after WWII was to promote peace. One of the goals of the Seminar was to promote mutual understanding between Pakistanis and Americans,” said Shipp.

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UK professor receives prestigious collaborative research grant from China

By Abigail Shipp

Xuguo “Joe” Zhou’s entomology research has bolstered the University of Kentucky’s international reputation after he and his collaborator, Yongjun Zhang, received a prestigious research grant from China.

Zhou, an associate professor of insect integrative genomics at UK, is one of only 20 international researchers in the world to receive the Major International (Regional) Joint Research Award from the National Natural Science Foundation of China, which awarded three million Chinese Yuan, or about $500,000, to further his research goals.

According to Gary Gaffield, assistant provost for international partnerships, Zhou’s success illustrates the abundant opportunities for American researchers to obtain funding in China.

“I don’t know why, but this year has been really good for entomology,” Zhou said, as four of the 20 Chinese grants were awarded to insect researchers like himself.

In collaboration with Zhang, a professor at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Zhou received the grant for research that includes developing techniques that can identify diseases in insects to help farmers identify disease-resistant crops.

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USAID Senior Advisor shares insight on improving education in developing countries

By Abigail Shipp

Christie Vilsack, Senior Advisor for International Education at the U.S. Agency for International Development, visited the University of Kentucky on Thursday, November 20 to share the growing progress of USAID’s “Let Girls Learn” program.

USAID recently announced more than $230 million for “Let Girls Learn,” which hopes to provide quality education for girls in developing countries like Nigeria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Jordan, Pakistan and Guatemala.

“If we invest in girls, then we invest in communities,” Vilsack said. More than 62
Global Issues Faculty Seminar: Year of the Middle East
By Abigail Shipp

UK Education Abroad is partnering with the College of Arts & Sciences for the Education Abroad Faculty Seminar in support of the Passport to the World “Year of the Middle East” initiative.

“The goal of the seminar is to help UK faculty members learn first-hand about key issues and to help them be better prepared to teach UK students about this region,” said Anthony Ogden, executive director of UK Education Abroad & Exchanges.

Faculty participants of the seminar will fly to Jordan and Morocco, attend educational lectures and experience guided culture site visits.

UK Education Abroad and the College of Arts & Sciences will cover the cost of local arrangements for five faculty members. These faculty members will be responsible for paying international airfare to Jordan and out of Morocco (the Jordan to Morocco flight is included), and for meals that are not included in the itinerary.

The seminar begins on June 5 and ends on June 15. Participants may choose to attend a portion of the trip.

The seminar will begin in Jordan, where faculty members will experience the personal and political dynamics of gender in Islam. Participants will visit Amman, Ghor al Mazra’a, and Petra, and attend a variety of guest lectures and discussions.

The seminar in Morocco will focus on encounters, conflicts and transculturation. Participants will visit Casablanca, Rabat, Meknes and Azrou for guided walking tours, guest lectures and discussions.

All UK faculty members are eligible to apply for participation in the seminar, but priority will be given to faculty members in the College of Arts & Sciences.

Faculty members interested in the seminar should first submit an online interest inquiry by February 2, 2015. To read more about the seminar or to submit an online interest inquiry, visit: www.uky.edu/international/faculty-advisors.

Shoulder to Shoulder Global Team Helps Child Take First Steps
By Melanie Sparks

This scenario was reality for Telmo and Rita Aquavil, parents of Arlyn. The family lives in Congama, a rural Tsáchilas village, near Santo Domingo, Ecuador. Arlyn developed medical problems 15 days after his birth, and doctors told his parents that he would not live. The Aquavils took their baby home, and, against all odds, Arlyn survived. He did not receive any further medical assessment or care during his first six years of life.

In May 2014, a health brigade from Shoulder to Shoulder Global (STSG) visited Santo Domingo. Through STSG, interprofessional teams of University of Kentucky students, faculty, staff and community members provide care in impoverished communities in areas such as medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, physical therapy, communication disorders and public health.

In May 2014, a health brigade from Shoulder to Shoulder Global (STSG) visited Santo Domingo. Through STSG, interprofessional teams of University of Kentucky students, faculty, staff and community members provide care in impoverished communities in areas such as medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, physical therapy, communication disorders and public health.

It was on this trip that Audrey Johnson, UK College of Health Sciences Physical Therapy alumna, met Arlyn, who at six-years old was unable to walk.

“From a physical therapy perspective, he had low tone and developmental delays,” said Johnson, who has been traveling with international medical brigades since 2008 and is currently a doctoral student in the Health Sciences Rehabilitation Sciences Ph.D. Program. “He was unable to walk or crawl, and had poor trunk and head control. He also had contractures (tightening or shortening of a body part) in his feet that impaired his movement and mobility.”

During the physical therapy assessment, Johnson showed Arlyn’s father how to stretch his son’s feet, and how to help him crawl and stand. The family was given a yoga mat, so that Arlyn could practice the prescribed exercises and movements on their home’s uneven dirt floor. He was also given a modified walker to use as a standing frame.

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UK’s First International Faculty Member Celebrates History

By Sibel Solagan

As UK celebrates its sesquicentennial this year, one faculty member in particular has plenty to remember about his history with the university.

“Out of 150 years, I’ve experienced 58 years of UK’s history. Technically, I’m in my 116th semester,” said Dr. Pradyumna (Paul) Karan, who is originally from India.

In August of 1956, the Dean of Arts & Sciences, Martin M. White, hired Karan to teach geography – making Karan the first international faculty member in UK’s history.

“[Dr. White] couldn’t say my name – that’s when he asked if he could just call me Paul. It’s been my name ever since,” said Karan.

At the time, Karan had just received his PhD in geography from Indiana University, which was something that few Indian natives chose to do with their graduate experience. Rather, many Indian nationals opted to go to London due to the colonial ties with the United Kingdom. However, through connections he had made at a conference for American geographers, Karan chose to come the U.S. to pursue his studies and explore the American ‘wild west.’

“When I left India, I hitchhiked all across the US to the West. It was nothing like the old Western movies that I watched in India,” said Karan. “However, education was always a top priority. Education was important to my family; it’s the same in most Indian families.”

At UK, Karan would experience many important changes happening within the campus.

“1956 was a wake-up year for UK – a critical year as I see it,” said Karan.

That very year, UK’s Chandler Hospital was being built. The university had less than 9,000 students and about 200 faculty members, according to Karan. In addition, numerous businesses were coming into Lexington that same year, such as Lexmark and IBM. These big changes to Lexington’s landscape also influenced the growth of the population and diversity within the city and within UK.

“A lot of people were coming from the east coast to work with IBM and the new medical center was also bringing in many people from around the country. Many Lexingtonians didn’t want outside influences in their community,” said Karan. “The old, strictly Southern character of Lexington was definitely changing.”

When Karan was hired, there was little international activity on UK’s campus.

“UK had no department or area that focused on international matters like we have now. There was only one foreign student advisor who would sign student visas, etc.,” said Karan. “UK’s 6th president, John Oswald, really fostered internationalization at UK. Coming from California, Oswald created a sense of community at the university. He knew the importance of research and diversity within an academic atmosphere; he brought many PhD programs and got all kinds of funding from the government. He was a very open and transparent president with boundless energy.”

Also helping to broaden UK’s horizons, Toyota opened up a facility in Georgetown in 1984, not only transforming the economic growth of central Kentucky, but also generating interest in Japanese studies at UK.

“That year, Japanese was first taught at UK. Then UK received the Japanese Foundation grant, which was basically seed money to grow UK’s Japan Studies Program. It started with humble beginnings, but in the past 25 years, Japan Studies has grown into a good program,” said Karan, who also took an interest in Japan after meeting with Japanese researchers in the Himalayas.

Taking a leave of absence from UK during 1957 – 1959, Karan worked for the United Nations to develop an economic plan for Nepal, where he made an inventory of general land use patterns to help grow Nepal’s economy.

Although Karan is passionate about documenting geographical matters worldwide (specifically within southeastern Asia), he has developed a love for his home in the Bluegrass state.

“It wasn’t hard for me to consider going back to Kentucky; there was good climate

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The University of Kentucky Global Health Initiative is pleased to announce its first-annual Global Health Case Competition.

This innovative student competition will rally graduate students from various UK colleges to form interdisciplinary teams that will develop strategies to address a critical global health challenge.

These strategies will be presented to a panel of judges on January 24, and the top team will be chosen to advance to the 2015 International Emory Global Health Case Competition on March 28 at Emory University. They will face teams from 24 other universities, and the first-place team at the Emory competition will win $6,000.

Each team will be comprised of six randomly-grouped students that represent at least three different UK colleges. Medical residents, post-doctorates and post-graduates are not eligible. Students who wish to participate may come from any UK college, but experience or interest in global health is crucial.

During the competition, each team will have 15 minutes to showcase a visual presentation, followed by a ten-minute question-and-answer portion with the judges.

Teams will be informed of the global health case the week of the case competition and will be provided a scheduled work day to collaborate with each other before the presentation day.

Although the case topic is different every year, the topic will be centered around a pressing global health issue. For example, the 2009 EGHCC case focused on Aamina, a one-year-old, malnourished Ethiopian girl. The teams were asked to act as consultants to a foundation that developed strategies to reduce the burden of malnutrition in that region of Ethiopia.

About a week prior to releasing the case topic, UK will host a Team Meet and Greet, where team members can officially meet and get to know each other, discuss strategies and participate in team-building activities. A team captain will be chosen among each group, and all team members will sign an honor code to ensure their full participation.

This competition is hosted by the Global Health Initiative, whose mission is to advance research and educational programs for students to improve the health of people throughout the world.

To learn more about UK’s Global Health Case Competition, please visit www.uky.edu/international/ghcc.

UK’s First International Faculty Member Celebrates History (continued from pg. 3)

By Sibel Solagan

– not too hot, not too cold – plus there were nice people,” said Karan. “I knew, though, that I wanted to do work eventually with Japan. I thought Japanese landscape was amazing and I appreciated everything about Japanese society and industry.”

In 1980, Karan would be a visiting professor in Japan for one year – by 2000, Karan would be a visiting professor three more times.

From experiencing different geographies as he worked abroad to seeing the landscape of UK grow, Karan has also seen changes within his students.

“In my early years at UK, my overall impression was that it was a party school. There were serious students, but UK had many students who didn’t really care about their academics. Now the quality of students has improved; they are overall more responsible and care about their classes,” said Karan.

Karan is still passionate about teaching at UK; 1956 may have been a critical year for the development of the university, however that year was also instrumental because UK was able to obtain a faculty member who has helped educate thousands of students on geography and international matters.

“I look at college as a time in life to build character and personality. I try to teach my students to be good members of the community. I plan to continue teaching and traveling as long as my health is good,” said Karan. “I could have retired 20 years ago, but I like listening to students. I still get excited about going into class.”
USAID Senior Advisor shares insight on improving education (continued from pg. 1)

By Abigail Shipp

million girls worldwide are not in school, and millions more are fighting to stay there.

By educating girls in developing countries, Vilsack said they are also more likely to marry later, to raise healthier families and to have more opportunities for generating income. This opportunity can help lift an educated girl’s family and community out of poverty.

Vilsack said that $100 million of USAID’s “Let Girls Learn” fund will go toward improving literacy. This project will soon begin in Nigeria.

Building libraries in developing countries is one of the goals of USAID, because many children do not have reading material outside of textbooks. Vilsack said they hope to collect millions of books and to translate them into different languages so that girls around the world can read in their free time.

Vilsack said that most teachers in developing countries teach in one-room schools and have only a piece of chalk—no other teaching materials. Along with training, USAID also provides textbooks for these schools.

In addition to improving literacy, “Let Girls Learn” also works to grant access to education for children in conflict-ridden areas and to improve the workforce.

“One of the things we’re very proud of at USAID is the work we do training women educators,” Vilsack said. Many female teachers in developing countries lack formal training, so USAID works with these women to improve the workforce and to enhance the quality of education.

USAID is a U.S. Government agency that works to improve education, to diminish poverty and to enable democratic societies to realize their potential. “Let Girls Learn” is just one of many proactive programs of this agency.

To learn more about USAID or “Let Girls Learn,” visit www.usaid.gov.
UK International Center Hosts Pakistani Fulbright Scholars (continued from pg. 1)
By Abigail Shipp

Americans,” said Rita Akhtar, executive director of the U.S. Educational Foundation in Pakistan.

Various sessions about slavery, the Civil Rights Movement and women’s rights helped the Pakistani students understand some of the major social issues in the U.S. and how they have shaped this country.

“When you come to a country that is more developed than yours, you’re often inclined to compare the two countries. But these sessions highlight that even developed countries like the U.S. have their own problems,” said Meenah Tariq, Pakistani Fulbright mentor and business student at Boston College. “But this is a lesson of hope, because things got better. And that’s what we came here to learn.”

Learning and discussing these sensitive topics was a “confidence-booster” for many of the Pakistani students, said Menaal Ebrahim, environmental management student at Yale University and Seminar attendee.

“Participating in the sessions and learning about important pieces of U.S. history helped us Pakistanis feel more at home. We, as outsiders, did not know this history,” said Ebrahim. “There’s so much to learn from this Seminar about ethnic and gender discrimination to bring back home to Pakistan.”

Another goal of the session was to prepare the Pakistani students for life in a U.S. graduate school, which has a much different approach to professor-student relationships.

“In Pakistan, the professor is not at the same level as his students. They’re not considered peers at all. But in the U.S., students experience more peerism,” Tariq said. This closer relationship between professors and students allows for more open discussion and contribution from students.

Tariq noted that U.S. professors are less likely to suppress out-of-the-box thinking, which encourages students to speak up both in and out of class. The seminar helped prepare the Pakistani students for this new dynamic to get the most out of their U.S. education.

The Fulbright Commission in Pakistan hopes that its scholars who return to Pakistan will contribute to the economic and developmental improvement of the country, said Akhtar.

“We need to help make Pakistan a better place,” said Akhtar. “I believe that’s what we’re trying to do with the Fulbright program, and that’s why students came to this seminar—partly to get adjusted to studying in the U.S. But they are also networking with each other so that when they return to Pakistan, they can work together to bring the kind of change we’re hoping for.”

This change also includes diversifying the workforce in Pakistan to include more women. About half of the Pakistani Fulbright grantees are women, Akhtar said. She hopes that these women will return to Pakistan with their degrees to make a difference in the work culture of the country, which is largely dominated by men.

“The reason many Pakistan women do not work is because the work culture is so unwelcoming to females,” Akhtar said. “So I think these Fulbright women will be real trailblazers who will change the nature of the workforce in Pakistan.”

The Fulbright Program is the U.S. government’s flagship program for international education exchange. Since 1946, more than 360,000 participants from more than 155 countries have had the opportunity to study in other countries and to contribute to finding solutions for international concerns.
UK professor receives collaborative research grant from China (continued from pg. 1)

By Abigail Shipp

Sciences, Zhou and a team of Chinese researchers are working to rid Chinese and American crops of the insidious whitefly.

“I’ve always wanted to do something with an agricultural pest that both the U.S. and China have problems with, but not an ‘established’ pest that has already been highly researched,” Zhou said. He chose to study the whitefly, an invasive species that originated from the Mediterranean region and is emerging as a global pest.

The whitefly attacks more than 600 plant species by using its sucker-mouth to extract the nutrients from the crops. In the U.S., this pest is still confined to greenhouses, but whiteflies have transitioned toward destroying open fields in China.

“If we don’t control the whiteflies, they’re going to have a devastating impact on crops,” Zhou said, because whiteflies also transmit over 200 different plant viruses.

The research team uses a technique called RNA interference (RNAi), in which certain whitefly genes will be “turned off” to inhibit gene expression. This impacts biological processes, physiological characteristics and even the fly’s behavior.

Before focusing on the whitefly, Zhou spent years using RNAi on termites in an agricultural setting. He found that by interfering with just one gene—the gene that allows termites to digest wood—the entire colony collapsed.

“If you want to kill a superorganism like termites, you have to disrupt the overall equilibrium in a colony instead of killing individuals,” Zhou said. “We want to manipulate their behavior at the genetic level to make them unable to maintain their social homeostasis. Disruption of homeostasis will cause colony collapse.”

Zhou said that this technique becomes even more complicated with the whitefly, because they have 24 different biotypes within one species. When one whitefly biotype becomes resistant to insecticides, a new biotype emerges and wipes out the previous one.

“It’s astonishing. I just don’t understand how,” Zhou said, but he hopes to use RNAi to discover why these different biotypes keep emerging and replacing one another.

The research will be done primarily in China, but Chinese researchers will be brought to the U.S. and funded by the grant money to complete research here.

Outside of the lab, Zhou also serves as a co-advisor for Chinese doctoral students from various institutions by assisting them with their research projects and advising them on how to get their research published in the U.S. Despite the 12-hour time difference, Zhou advises his Chinese students via Skype and also visits China several times throughout the year.

Zhou keeps himself busy with his collaborative research with China, but he hopes this effort will help establish UK as a top research facility in order to compete for federal research dollars from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Receiving research grants from the USDA is extremely difficult, Zhou said. The award rate for non-honeybee research proposals is only 6%.

“That’s why we’re trying to build on this American-Chinese relationship and to do this important research so that ultimately, we can bring our knowledge back from the research in China to benefit UK,” Zhou said. “We hope this will help UK compete nationally for those very few USDA research dollars.”

China’s International (Regional) Joint Research Program aims to enhance China’s international competitiveness and to achieve breakthroughs in the frontier research areas. By collaborating with foreign partners like the U.S., this program establishes mutual benefits and equal sharing of research results.

UK is hoping to promote more of this collaborative research through the International Center, one of whose goals is to assist UK faculty to find international research funding opportunities. Zhou established this connection through his research, making UK one step closer toward its goal of international success.
Barnes Helps Advance Health Care in South Africa
By Whitney Harder
Beth Barnes, professor and director of the School of Journalism and Telecommunications and interim assistant provost for internationalization, recently lent her expertise to rural health advocates in the Rainbow Nation, leading a workshop at the Rural Doctors Association of South Africa 2014 conference, “Building resilience in facing rural health realities.”

Barnes spoke about branding on behalf of the American International Health Alliance in her session, “Effective communication and media engagement as a rural health advocate,” sponsored by the Rural Health Advocacy Project. The American International Health Alliance, a nonprofit organization, funds the UK School of Journalism and Telecommunications’ work in Zambia. The school partners with the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication (ZAMCOM) to improve and enhance the training of journalists in southern Africa covering HIV/AIDS stories through a program funded by the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

Barnes’ session intended to help rural health care workers and associations better understand the importance of branding, and how having a clearly communicated identity can be helpful in working with other aspects of the health care sector, including patients.

In addition to educating South Africa’s rural doctors, Barnes also met with those working in a relatively new health care profession, the Professional Association of Clinical Associates of South Africa (PACASA). Clinical associates are similar to physicians assistants in the U.S., but were only recently implemented in South Africa’s health system in 2008, according to the PACASA website.

Barnes said that because the profession and the PACASA representation are fairly young, it’s important that other members of the health care team, such as doctors, nurses and pharmacists, understand the role of the clinical associate.

“Patients also need to have a sense of the kind of preparation a clinical associate has had and how the clinical associate can help in patient care,” said Barnes.

To achieve this level of understanding among health care workers and patients, Barnes will help PACASA develop branding and a strategic communication plan, contributing to the success of the profession as a whole.

“It’s really a privilege for me to be able to work with the leadership group for the Professional Association of Clinical Associates of South Africa as they work to help educate people on what their profession is about,” said Barnes. “Clinical associates can help to fill a gap in delivery of health care in rural areas in South Africa; a solid communication plan can help them to develop the credibility they need to be fully accepted by their patients and others involved in delivering health care.”

IHP Offers Opportunity for Community to Engage with International Students
By Sarah Geegan
The University of Kentucky International Hospitality Program (IHP) is seeking “host families” for the spring semester.

Approximately 200 new international students will enroll during the spring semester at the University of Kentucky. Of these, many will join IHP in hopes of being “matched” with a family or single person.

IHP “host families” participate in sponsored events that help integrate international students into the UK community. Families do not provide housing for international students. Students cover their own basic expenses of housing, food and insurance.

Though the host commitment lasts one year, lifelong bonds are often formed.
UK Grad Tracking Ebola in Liberian Slums Featured in The New York Times

By Elizabeth Adams

Tracking the spread of the deadly Ebola virus from person to person in Liberia’s crowded capital Monrovia has proved a difficult task for emergency officials who are working to contain the disease.

But despite the known risk of exposure to the virus, University of Kentucky graduate Mosoka Fallah is following the trail of Ebola, instructing neighborhood leaders to report cases of sick victims of the disease and urging cooperation with government officials. Fallah’s work in slum communities to help manage the Ebola virus was described in a New York Times article published Sept. 13.

Since March 2014, government officials in West Africa have confronted the largest outbreak of Ebola, a rare and deadly virus that was discovered in the 1970s in the Republic of Congo. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the disease has caused more than 3,700 deaths in West Africa up to Aug. 31, 2014.

A native of Liberia, Fallah received his bachelor’s degree in his home country and a master’s degree from Kent State University in the United States. He studied at the University of Kentucky from 2005 to 2011, obtaining his doctorate in microbiology, immunology and molecular genetics in 2011. He subsequently received a master’s in public health from Harvard University.

Members of the Department of Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics recall Fallah’s enthusiasm for learning. Department Chair Beth Garvy, who served on Fallah’s doctoral committee, said at the end of every year, Fallah asked members of the department for old textbooks to send home to Liberia.

“He read voraciously,” Garvy said. “He was known to stand in lines in the grocery store at check-out reading scientific papers.”

While at UK, Fallah expressed a desire to eventually return to his home country, which has been plagued by violence and civil war for the past two decades.

He keeps in touch with members of the UK department, including his colleague of five years Professor Subbarao Bondada. Bondada exchanges emails with Fallah, who often sends updates about a health clinic he operates for women and children in Liberia. Fallah sent money earned through his fellowship at UK to Liberia in order to improve the clinic. Fallah has also provided updates about the Ebola situation in Liberia.

According to Bondada, Fallah’s passion for seeing peace and stability in Liberia makes him the ideal representative to communicate important messages about the virus outbreak to communities.

“The local people trust him and he’s acted as an intermediary,” Bondada said. “When the local people didn’t listen to the government, he was able to help them understand and implement specific plans to inform and control the disease.”
The International Student Council (ISC) has revitalized its role on campus to creatively unite international students at UK. With its creation in 1988, the ISC was founded with the purpose of spreading diversity and acting as an umbrella organization for all international organizations within UK’s campus.

“Through our organization, we have been able to produce festivals and events for all audiences to help promote diversity. In the past, ISC was acting as an organization of its own and not incorporating other international student organizations, which was one aspect of our organization that we decided to change,” said ISC President Sarita Gustely, a sophomore majoring in vocal performance and international studies.

This year, ISC has brought together seven different international organizations: the African Student Association, Omani Student Association, Indian Student Association, Chinese International Fraternity Alliance, Brazil Without Borders, the Japanese Culture in Kentucky Society and an upcoming Indonesian Student Organization.

“We came up with the idea of having representatives of these organizations at our monthly meetings. If organizations want to promote something or we want to discuss a certain topic, representatives will stop by. It’s a great network,” said Omer Tariq, ISC Vice President and a junior studying finance and accounting.

The UK Indian Student Association (ISA) has benefited from ISC’s revitalization and continues to lend its support.

“The partnerships have helped our council tremendously. We’ve grown to a council of 40 members and have been able to establish our goals,” said Gustely. “In the coming months we have many events planned. In previous years, all of the events were more fun and social. However, this year we’ve had much more organization and decided to lean toward a more educational stance.”
UK Public Health Students Gain New Insights From Africa
By Sibel Solagan

Four University of Kentucky graduate students from the College of Public Health spent one month in Zimbabwe this past summer working with local nutritionists and teaching courses at Africa University.

Located near the city of Mutare, Africa University (AU) enrolls nearly 1,200 students, representing 22 African nations. The private university was established in 1988, and hosted the UK students for the duration of their stay.

For Stephanie Courtney, a second-year public health student, this experience was her first time traveling out of the United States.

“It was a big culture shock,” Courtney said. “It was funny because I had to reverse 24 years of looking left, right, left to cross a street because in Zimbabwe, they drive on the opposite side of the road.”

In addition to taking public health and leadership courses at AU, Courtney worked on a project that identified primary interests in chronic disease with district and provincial nutritionists. With local nutritionists, Courtney participated in a Vitamin A supplementation program, where she focused on controlling micronutrient deficiencies.

“It was really interesting to see how culture plays a role in healthcare delivery,” said Courtney. “Not everyone approaches the same problem in the same way.”

Kevin Schuer, a PhD candidate – and his family who joined him for the month – co-taught a course at AU to students pursuing their master’s degree in public health. The class consisted of 25 students, one-third of which were from Zimbabwe and the other two-thirds were from around the continent.

“One difference that I noticed was that most of my class was predominantly older male students unlike students in my classes at UK who are usually female and recent graduates,” Schuer said. “Many of the students at AU had careers in the medical field before coming back to continue their education. All of the students were not only very knowledgeable, but they were interested in improving the health of their country. It really meant something to them.”

During their time in Zimbabwe, the students also toured Victoria Falls and brushed up on their Shona (a native language) speaking skills. All of the students were fortunate to gain more insight into the health and cultural practices of Zimbabwe.

“I felt privileged that the UK College of Public Health and the College of Health Sciences allowed for this opportunity to happen,” said Schuer. “This experience was life-changing and I really look forward to going back and being a part of this relationship between UK and AU.”

Shoulder to Shoulder Global Team Helps Child Take First Steps (continued from pg. 2)
By Melanie Sparks

In addition to receiving physical therapy, Arlyn was evaluated by a pediatric neurologist in Quito, the capital city of Ecuador. Arlyn was diagnosed with an intellectual disability and a seizure disorder. After receiving medication to control his seizures, Arlyn made miraculous progress. Within two weeks, Arlyn was walking.

“All the stars aligned for STSG to help this boy walk for the first time,” said Dr. Thomas Young, the Jim and Suzanne Elliott & Family Professor of Pediatrics at the UK College of Medicine, who led the first medical brigade to Ecuador in 2002 with a small group of six committed participants. “Our Brigade in his village, physical therapy, pediatrics, Peace Corps volunteer, linkage to a pediatric neurologist and follow-up at our STSG Health Center in Santo Domingo.”

Arlyn’s story is one example of the profound effect Shoulder to Shoulder Global has on the lives of those it serves. Since 2002, STSG has grown, serving more than 1,500 patients, with more than 100 volunteers participating in its three annual health brigades to Ecuador. For more information or to support STSG visit: www.uky.edu/international/shoulder_to_shoulder.
UK Confucius Institute Director Wins KWLA Award

By Whitney Hale

Huajing Maske, executive director of the Office of China Initiatives and director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Kentucky, received the Amici Linguarum (Friend of Languages) Award given by the Kentucky World Language Association (KWLA). The honor recognizes an individual or organization not directly involved in teaching world languages that has made a significant contribution to the profession.

Maske was presented with the Amici Linguarum Award at the annual KWLA Awards Luncheon on Sept. 20, at the Hilton Downtown Hotel, in Lexington.

Nominated by Jacqueline Van Houten, world language and international education consultant for Kentucky Department of Education, Maske was recognized for the work the Confucius Institute does in K-12 teaching and outreach programs as a central initiative of the institute. The association noted Maske’s work building language programs of substance and a sustaining nature within schools, specifically mentioning the placement of teachers in Woodford County and the regular professional development with national and local presenters provided to those educators. The awards committee also recognized the support Maske has given these programs by organizing trips for school administrators, university leaders and community members to understand the importance of the language programs.

In addition, KWLA praised Maske’s work with UK College of Education creating a rural school site in Xi’an, China, where student teachers can learn culture in an authentic placement while strengthening their language skills. The program has even created classes for mothers and babies to start interest in Chinese language skills early in communities.

“Huajing Maske has raised the bar and set the standard, going above and beyond the call of duty, telling people everywhere that world language education is important and a worthy investment,” said Benjamin Hawkins, KWLA awards committee chair. “In the end, people all over the Commonwealth will be the ultimate beneficiaries as they will be equipped with one more tool as they experience an ever-changing global job market, they will have a more informed, and hopefully open and positive, global outlook.”

KWLA is a network of individuals who support, promote and advocate the teaching and learning of a variety of world languages and cultures; a clearinghouse for data, information and research relevant to effective programs and practices in the learning and teaching of world languages and cultures; and a provider of professional development for P-16+ teachers of world languages and cultures.

The KWLA Amici Linguarum Award is just the most recent honor Maske has garnered for her work with the institute. Last December, she was one of only 15 leaders of institutes to receive the 2013 Confucius Institute Individual Performance Excellence Award. The year before that, the UK Confucius Institute won one of only 25 Confucius Institute of the Year awards.

The mission of the UK Confucius Institute is to serve as Kentucky’s gateway to China in the areas of education, arts, culture and business. Maske and her staff have been largely successful in fulfilling this mission at UK, local Kentucky schools and in the community at large.

Since its inauguration, the institute has positioned itself as a conduit of UK’s China initiatives, and created many successful partnerships between colleges at UK and Chinese Universities. As noted above, the UK Confucius Institute has also played a valuable role in K-12 Chinese language and cultural education.