Featured Alumna Autumn Witt

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-- Autumn Witt, Director of International Studies, Northwest University
Dr. Linda Waugh Retires

Dr. Linda Waugh retired from her position at the University of Arizona in May of this year. To show their appreciation for Dr. Waugh, current and former SLAT students, SLAT and UA faculty members, SLAT staff and Tucson community members donated money to purchase two commemorative pavers to honor her in the Women’s Plaza of Honor on the UA campus. The pavers were inscribed with the following:

PROF. LINDA R. WAUGH.
SLAT CHAIR. CERCLL
FOUNDER. VISIONARY.
INSPIRING MENTOR.

The donations were so generous that they exceeded the amount needed to purchase the two pavers. The extra funds will be used to provide grants to SLAT students. Dr. Waugh and her husband, Dr. Ronald Breiger, announced that they have contributed a donation of their own to SLAT. This will allow more generous grants to be provided to students in 2015-2016. They will contribute to SLAT again in the coming academic year and in future years to provide further grants.

Dr. Waugh assured both students and faculty that her retirement does not mean that she is going away. She will maintain an office on campus and will continue to serve on numerous student dissertation committees in SLAT and other doctoral programs. For her, retirement is not the end of her professional life, but it will provide her with the extra time she needs to finish academic research and writing projects that have been on hold because of her numerous responsibilities. The SLAT community is extremely grateful to Dr. Waugh for her many years of service and wishes her a joyful and productive retirement.

SLAT Transitions to A New Chair

After five years of dedicated service Dr. Robert Ariew is stepping down as SLAT Chair in December of this year. During his tenure as SLAT Chair Dr. Ariew grew the program by expanding the total number of students to 90. He was also instrumental in increasing the academic opportunities of students by implementing the three article option for doctoral dissertations, instituting a new SLAT minor in technology, and beginning a new MA in Second Language Learning and Educational Technology. He has done much for SLAT and we appreciate the legacy he has left for future students.

Dr. Beatrice Dupuy will be taking over as SLAT Chair at the end of the year. She is a professor of French and Applied Linguistics and has been associated with SLAT for a number of years. Dr. Dupuy is currently the co-director of CERCLL, the Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language, and Literacy. Her research has focused on the professional development of language teachers, literacy based approaches to teaching and learning, and experiential learning in domestic programs as well as in study abroad contexts. She is excited to begin her service as SLAT Chair and the SLAT community is looking forward to her contributions.
SLAT alumna Autumn Witt sends us the following update:

Hello! My name is Autumn Witt, I am a 2010 SLAT and 2007 ELL grad. Studying in SLAT was one of my most formative and enjoyable experiences and I’m happy to share with you where I am now. I am the director of International Studies, which includes an IEP and Study Abroad, at Northwest University. NU is a small, private, liberal arts university in Kirkland, an adorable suburb of Seattle.

I was hired by NU in 2010 to launch and direct a new IEP, named the Center for English Language Education, CELE. I have an unusual position for an IEP in that I’m a tenure-track faculty member, with faculty and administrative duties. Right now I’m primarily administrative, though I also teach a few classes for our MATESOL. My connection to this program began in 2008, when I met my future colleague after presenting a paper at TESOL (Seattle). I learned that her/this IEP was being shut down for a redesign for 2 years and I volunteered to assist, observe, and participate in the redesign process. I learned so much about administration through this process and was very fortunate that the re-launch coincided with my dissertation completion.

When I started here, I wore every hat in the program: director, recruiter, admissions counselor, curriculum designer, and teacher for the THREE students my first year. To be honest, it felt like a huge gamble to begin my post-doctoral career at something totally new, which could easily fail. But, I also valued the flexibility that it gave me to be creative, study what worked elsewhere, experiment with classes, and look for new partnership models than what my university had used before. Five years later, we have 50 full time students and a thriving language camp series that had 500 students last year.

I think that the success of this program comes back to the trust that I have from my university administration. When I was getting started, I looked to the Program Administration textbooks recommended by Dr. Suzanne Panferov (Center for English as a Second Language, The University of Arizona), and used many of her suggestions to raise the campus awareness of CELE, position it as a service organization for the whole university, and establish strategic review and development cycles. I volunteered all over campus for every culture/language/diversity oriented committee or event to make myself aware of programmatic opportunities for CELE and to become more engrained in this university community.

If any SLAT students are interested in pursuing program administration, the skills I suggest you develop now are Curriculum Development and some elements of Business Management. As CELE has grown, I have needed to annually reevaluate and map curricular outcomes and design new courses. Also, every IEP needs to be run efficiently and that means you must be able to design and follow a budget, hire and develop faculty and staff, and build a marketing strategy. CESL is a great place to learn and hone your skills, get to know the rock stars over there!! I am so grateful for the time I spent teaching there and for the continued advice and mentoring from Suzanne.

On a broader note, my husband Jacob (also SLAT and ELL alum) teaches English Composition and coaches Debate at NU. We have a three delightful kids, ages 2, 4, and 6. It is a big lifestyle change to teach in a small university after studying at UA, but it makes it a little easier to balance work and personal time. Life is still incredibly busy, but we really enjoy the faculty community that we are a part of, and the time we can make for life outside of teaching.

If anyone has questions about teaching at a small university, or program development, or anything really, I’m happy to chat! My email is: autumn.witt@northwestu.edu
SLAT is pleased to announce the inaugural cohort of students in the MA in Second Language Learning and Educational Technology (SLL/ET). Designed with the working professional in mind, the MA in SLL/ET is a completely online program that students will complete over two summers and two semesters. The new cohort will acquire the skills and knowledge needed to navigate today’s technologically advanced language classroom. Both students and faculty are excited for the opportunities that this new online MA will offer.
SLAT students have been busy sharing their research and findings with colleagues across the country. During the previous academic year SLAT students presented at academic conferences in California, Iowa, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, New Mexico, and New York. Some students even presented in places as far away as Canada, Mexico, and Australia. SLAT students are also making their presence known close to home with a large presence at local conferences such as AZCALL 2015 where Merica McNeil was awarded Best Presentation.

In addition to conference presentation, SLAT students have also been publishing their work in important journals such as Joshua Tanner in Foreign Language Annals, Heather Smyser in the Journal of Language, Identity and Education, and Rachel Kraut in the Journal of Second and Multiple Language Acquisition. Please check the SLAT website for more information on recent student publications.
Dear SLAT Community,

I hope you are looking forward to a warm holiday season, and a wonderful 2016. Please help us in celebrating SLAT’s 25th anniversary! SLAT was approved by the Arizona Board of Regents in Fall 1990 and admitted its first student in Spring 1991. Twenty-five years later we have graduated 180 alumni and currently have ninety active doctoral students in the program. We will be celebrating our 25 years at the December 10 GIDP Showcase event and during the 2016 SLAT Interdisciplinary Roundtable, which will take place on February 26-27, 2016. We hope you will join us, whether in body or spirit, to help us commemorate this important anniversary.

As the saying goes, the only thing constant is change. We celebrated the retirement of some central SLAT faculty this year. Drs. Linda Waugh and Doug Adamson announced their retirements, leaving a dearth in the accumulated wisdom of past SLAT Chairs on campus. We also sadly said goodbye to two important members of the SLAT community: Dr. Caroline Grace, one of SLAT’s first PhD graduates, passed away in May 2015. SLAT received many homages in remembrance of Caroline’s friendship and support throughout the years. We also lost Dr. Richard Ruiz, SLAT faculty member, in February. His unexpected death affected many people on campus, in Tucson, and in the world of education. Richard’s smile never waned, yet he was immersed in the support of students, colleagues and programs all across campus. Both Caroline and Richard are deeply missed.

Finally, this is my last newsletter as SLAT Chair, as we welcome Beatrice Dupuy back from sabbatical and to the helm of our program in January. SLAT has grown immensely since I took the Chair position in 2010, and I know Beatrice will continue the tradition of making SLAT a premiere program in second language acquisition, teaching, and applied linguistics. Our interdisciplinary model continues to be unique among PhD program in SLA and, although there are challenges to working across so many departments, colleges and disciplines, the innovative approaches to research and the success of our graduates on the job market prove how valuable our approach is to institutions across the globe. I am proud to have served as SLAT chair, and look forward to seeing where Beatrice takes it from here.

Sincerely,

Robert Ariew
SLAT Chair