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Dear Alums:

America is internationalizing, and more students than ever are becoming aware of the need to include foreign language in their education. The new Global Miami Plan will help us to make it happen!

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Chair, GREAL

Internationalization at Miami got a shot in the arm this spring with the approval of the “Global Miami Plan,” which gives students credit (6 hours) for study abroad and provides a suite of courses (9 hours) with a world-wide foundation for those who do not study abroad.

The Miami Plan, Miami’s liberal education based university course requirements, hasn’t undergone a change of this magnitude since its inception nearly twenty years ago. Both University Senate and the Student Government supported the new plan; implementation will begin in 2009-2010.

The changes to the liberal education requirement offer an incentive for study abroad (a three-hour reduction in required credit hours) and provides flexible options for students who do not study abroad. What the two options have in common is providing an international viewpoint in subject areas throughout the university.

The international courses, called the G-cluster, will fulfill a nine-hour sequence, allowing students to follow a subject area in depth.

Students who study abroad will fulfill the G-cluster requirement with only six hours. The G-Cluster is three courses focusing on a global theme or issue. The G-Cluster requirement may be fulfilled through current courses, and new courses will be developed especially for it. Foreign language acquisition courses are particularly appropriate for the G-Cluster, said Dr. Jerry Stonewater, Director of Liberal Education.

GREAL, which now offers language acquisition courses for eight languages, expects to see continued increased enrollment as a result.
Teaching and administrative staff of Miami’s Confucius Center, cultural office for Chinese, at the grand opening of their new quarters in McGuffey Hall. From left, Zhenghong Zhou, Liang Fu, Carolyn DeWitt (Program Associate), Dr. Quanyu Huang (Director), Lihong Wang, Yamei Liu (Associate Director). The Confucius Center is one of forty-two in the U.S. Its mission is to support the teaching of Chinese language, literature and culture in the U.S. at all levels from elementary through university.

Dr. Paul Mitchell To Retire
After a stint in the U.S. Army spent in Lübeck, Germany, transcribing Russian military transmissions, Paul Mitchell, B.A., Earlham College, earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in Russian from Indiana University. He shared some memories of his early years at Miami:

“The old technology! Purple ditto copies; no Web, no e-mail, but two typewriters—one Russian and one American. For class handouts I switched the paper back and forth, until the IBM Selectric, with a metal ball to change for each language…. “We had multiple sections of Russian language courses, but only one lit course. I taught the first Russian film course at the beginning of the 1990s.”

Dr. Mitchell and wife Heike, who met in Lübeck, will use Oxford as home base as they explore the U.S. in their VW Eurovan. Daughter Judith lives in Oxford; Stephanie in Arlington, VA.

Hans Pleschinski Bids us Farewell
Our Writer in Residence for spring 2008 sent us this letter from Munich:

“My experience at Miami was enriching and invigorating. I was able to perceive anew life in the U.S. The politeness, friendliness and curiosity of my hosts were exemplary. For myself, I hope that I provided a fresh picture of Germany through my readings and teaching, and helped my students find joy in German and the varied faces of my country. May German-American relations remain stamped by trust and creativity. A small contribution to that may have been achieved at Miami University.”

Rebecca Cornett (89) teaches German at Cincinnati’s Colerain High School and uses the student-to-student exchange Friendship Connection. She was recently selected to represent Cincinnati in the 2008 Munich Sister City Exchange. She lives in Fairfield with her son, Cy.

Jasmin Raetzer (07) is studying English and education at Xavier University in Cincinnati, preparing to become a teacher, watches German films on her computer.

Meredith Leland (00) is now living in Utrecht, Holland, and working as a microbiologist with JohnsonDiversey, an American firm based in Wisconsin. She will marry Bart Theelen in May. She reports that her German studies help her in learning Dutch, but that spelling it (very different from German) is a challenge!

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Alumni News from All Over
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