

# HORIZONS

Information from  
International Programs

Spring 2014



## KU Forms Partnership to Recruit Students

A new program providing a first-year experience for international students with strong English skills will help increase the international student population at the University of Kansas, which currently has more than 2,200 students from 99 countries.

The KU Academic Accelerator Program (KUAAP) will welcome around 50 students in the fall semester. That number should increase each year.

"This is a freshman year program for students who already test at a high level but need a boost with their language skills," said Charlie Bankart, assistant vice provost for International Programs and KUAAP implementation coordinator.

KU is partnering with Shorelight Education on the KUAAP. The partnership will combine Shorelight's resources, including its international presence and experience recruiting international students, with KU's strong academic and student service programs. KU and Shorelight expect the program to expand over the coming years possibly doubling the number of international students on campus over time.

Students who enroll in the KUAAP will participate in a 12-month, three-semester program consisting of 30 hours of freshman-level academic courses in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, as well as specialized courses through KU's Applied English Center. Upon successful completion of the KUAAP, students will continue their coursework at KU as sophomores.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences created the academic curriculum for the KUAAP with courses in math, American studies, communication studies, social and natural sciences, environmental studies, humanities and western civilization and English. In addition, students will

participate in supplemental academic, cultural, and community activities. Students will also complete a learning or research project over the course of the year, culminating with a capstone experience or project.

Univ 101, formerly PRE 101, is a new course developed to acclimate the students to all aspects of university life. From cultural programs from the AEC to information about how to choose a major, the class will prepare a foundation for the students' success. The goal is to bridge the gap that many international students encounter when they arrive at KU, Bankart said.

Three senior administrators will be hired this summer to lead the program.

The KUAAP will be a third option for international students enrolling as undergraduates, who may also be admitted as freshmen or may enroll in the Applied English Center.

--From the Office of Public Affairs

**Graduation season is a good time to look in the KU archives for the history of international students on campus. According to the commencement programs, Canadian Gordon Nugent was KU's first international graduate in 1909. Boris Patchedjieff, Bulgaria, followed in 1910.**

# STEM Program Developer Receives Attention

Developing youth education programs in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) has been a long-term goal for Amr AlMadani. Since he graduated from the Department of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering (EECS), the KU alumnus has cofounded an organization in Saudi Arabia that focuses on exposing students to the STEM fields through specialized programs.

the work of AlMadani and his colleagues. He and Saeed were ranked #22 on a list of “Leaders Inspiring a Kingdom in the Business World.”

TalentS Company designs and operates educational STEM programs, activities and science centers, including the Mishkat Interactive Center for Atomic & Renewable

Energy, an initiative by King Abdullah City for Atomic & Renewable Energy. Mishkat’s mission is to “support Saudi Arabia’s on-going central role in the energy economy by inspiring the Saudi youth of today to be the energy innovators of tomorrow. With engaging and interactive exhibitions and events, Mishkat brings to life past and future innovations in the way we generate and use atomic and renewable energies, celebrating and inspiring Saudi and worldwide achievements. For a country reliant on oil, a transition to a sustainable energy mix that includes renewable and atomic energy sources calls for a new way of thinking for the Saudi people,” states a Mishkat publication.



Amr AlMadani at Mishkat

Photo courtesy Amr AlMadani

He completed his bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering in 2003 as part of a scholarship program in conjunction with Saudi Aramco and joined the company as an engineer after graduation. At Saudi Aramco, AlMadani established various youth robotics and science initiatives. Wanting to concentrate on their educational projects, AlMadani and his cofounder, Saeed Saeed, developed competitions and decided in 2007 to launch TalentS.

AlMadani was recently featured on the cover of *Forbes Middle East*, signifying that people are paying attention to

“Certainly, my experience at KU was all about self-discovery. I was always passionate about people’s learning and development. Being part of KU gave me a chance to work as a tutor,

lab administrator and library assistant. . . . As a student of the EECS department, I was given the opportunity to be part of various technical projects teams. This enhanced my abilities to plan and execute projects. I’m grateful to have been challenged and supported by a great faculty and staff members in the EECS department,” AlMadani wrote in an email.

# Fulbright Experience Enables Vietnamese Students

Kellie Smith Herrod had never taught a Vietnamese student in her 20 years of teaching English as a Second Language. That changed when she received a Fulbright to teach at Vietnam National University. Herrod, a language specialist at the Applied English Center, is teaching

future English language faculty. To fulfill her research interests, she is also teaching a workshop at Hanoi Medical University and has set up a volunteer program that oversees language training for blind massage therapists.

Making connections with people in Vietnam as she put together her Fulbright application was a challenge for Herrod.

"This process made it even more evident to me that we/KU needs to build a bridge with Vietnam. Vietnam is an up and coming nation economically and academically. They bring a lot to the table as do we for them," she wrote.

In addition to teaching Speaking and Listening to 80 students, she is helping medical students work with English scholarly resource materials and improve their writing skills.

"At Hanoi Medical University I am able to try out strate-

gies in an English as a Foreign Language setting, English for Public Health. The goal for the students is twofold: assist the students in developing strategies to work with scholarly materials published in English and improve writing skills for proposal submission and publishing

in English. So far the students have been highly responsive to the strategies and reported feeling more confident in working with English language textbook materials, journal articles and other scholarly resource materials," Herrod wrote in an email.

Herrod connected with the nongovernment organization Blind Link, which is developing a chain of mini spas

where highly trained massage therapists who are blind and visually impaired become business owners. She is overseeing the development of a volunteer online program for the VNU English language faculty students who will organize, operate and participate in English language workshops for the massage therapists as well as continue the development of materials and assessment and maintain the program when she returns to KU.

Herrod is enjoying life in Vietnam—such as riding on the back of a motorbike, eating "phenomenal" produce and going to art and business openings.



Kellie Smith Herrod with one of her classes at Vietnam National University's University of Languages and International Studies

Photo courtesy Kellie Smith Herrod

# KU at Forefront of Chinese Exchange Partnerships

The University of Kansas' partnerships with three Chinese universities began in 1980 when a delegation visited China at the request of Nankai University in Tianjin, China. Chae-Jin Lee, former director of the Center for East Asian Studies, had laid the groundwork for the exchanges when he visited China as part of then Governor John Carlin's Kansas Trade Mission.

During the KU delegation's trip, exchange agreements were signed among KU, Nanjing and Nankai universities to create a direct scholar exchange program. Former Chancellor Del Shankel led the group that traveled to China.



From left: Chu-Tsing Li, Sally Hoffman, Marilyn Stokstad, Carol Shankel, June 1982  
Photo courtesy Carol Shankel



A stone figure guards the third Song Emperor's tomb in the cultivated fields of Gongxian County, June 1982

"We were very excited to be in the opening up of China. It was a coup to get [Nanjing and Nankai]. Our strong East Asian studies program made those universities open to that kind of exchange," Shankel said.

The third member of the exchange was Zhengzhou University in Henan Province, which has a sister state relationship with the state of Kansas. In December 1980 the university president visited KU and signed an exchange agreement.

Through the terms of the exchanges, one to two KU students have gone to each university each year, while one scholar has usually come to KU. The Zhengzhou exchange has not been active since 2001. As of 2013-2014, 75 KU students and 64 Chinese scholars have participated in the exchanges.

The Zhengzhou relationship led to the Henan Archaeological Study Tours in 1982, 1984, 1986 and 1988. The first trip, 33 people including Del and Carol Shankel, KU faculty and faculty from other universities, resulted in *China Omnibus*, a journal full of travelers' tales.

# Students and Scholars Share Exchange Experiences

Xiaobiing “David” Lu’s interest in the internationalization of higher education began several years ago. His work at the International Programs office at Nanjing University led to his research in how Chinese students adjust when they are studying abroad.

Lu, a doctoral student in higher education, has been at KU for a year as a China Direct Exchange scholar. This is his first long-term stay in a Western country. KU faculty and staff supported him when he had a “hard time” adjusting. He wants to develop ways to help students prepare for their international experience before leaving China.

Through his surveys of 100 Chinese students studying at KU, Lu discovered that many students reported that they are burned out and that they only interact with other Chinese students. In his interviews with more than 30 Chinese students, Lu encouraged the students to interact with others and to take advantage of opportunities.

He is making observations that he hopes lead to educational reform and more social support for students at Nanjing University. Lu wants to “build a bridge” between China and international universities by teaching a course on internationalization of higher education. Comparing Chinese university administration to its American counterparts, Lu thinks that American offices “work more effectively” and wants to find ways to eliminate bureaucracy.

“The university is practically an independent village inside this large city, with a beautiful old wall around it and a post office, sundries store, bookstore, etc. The staff and students all live on campus in a variety of housing. The two foreigners’ dorms are connected by a courtyard gate and staff on duty 24 hours a day.”

Chinese rooms are smaller, so a great deal of business takes place in the cool of the open air. Families bring out stools to sit and have their suppers of steaming bowls of rice and noodles.... Quite a sense of community!

*--Excerpt from letters from Molly Kirk, China Direct Exchange scholar, Nanjing University, 1981-82*

In order to determine what classes I would take, a meeting was held soon after I arrived to discuss my academic plans. . . . As the process of selecting courses began, it immediately became clear to me that it would not in any way resemble the method used in the United States. There was no catalog or timetable, and I was told that I could not even be given a list of courses in the Chinese department (or any other department) that I could take. I was asked to make general requests regarding the areas I would like to study. . . . Several meetings were held and a few weeks passed before some conclusions were reached and I actually began attending classes in the Chinese department. . . . I learned later that this method of sending proposals and counter proposals through various levels of a hierarchy of authorities is typical of decisions making in China.

Although they would smile and sometimes exchanged a few words with me, if I tried to pursue a conversation with a Chinese student, he or she would act very uncomfortable. I sensed their friendliness and curiosity but also their fear of being seen associating with a foreigner. I complained to my advisor that I felt isolated and, a few weeks later, I was introduced by one of the teachers to three women students in each of my classes. I was told that these classmates would be my friends and help me correct my notes and keep up with the class. I soon discovered that all of these students were not only bright but also very warm. Since our relationship was officially sanctioned, they felt free to talk with me and even visit me occasionally.

*--Excerpts from Sheree Willis’ final report of her time as China Direct Scholar, Zhengzhou University, 1981-82*

# GTA Helps Team Canada at Sochi Paralympics

Speaking Russian earned Alex Fisher a trip to the Paralympics in Sochi, Russia. The graduate student in Slavic Language & Literature volunteered for the Canadian team as a translator.

Fisher got the opportunity through a connection in her hometown, Pittsburgh, Penn., who told the head of Team Canada Chief de Mission Ozzie Sawicki about her fluency. After several interviews, she became the only American on Team Canada.

The first few days after she arrived in Sochi were “crazy,” then things became more organized. “I was surprised the most by all the behind-the-scenes arrangements. There’s so much preparation,” she said.

Fisher spent the three weeks behind the scenes making sure the athletes got what they needed—getting their rooms ready, finding a tailor to alter uniforms and ordering pizza. She tested her language skills when one of the athletes got sick and she had to translate his symptoms for a facility doctor and then translate the treatment for the team doctor.

Most of the Canadian athletes, around 40 people, had not experienced Russian culture before. At the team orientation last fall in Calgary, Alberta, Fisher talked to the group about stereotypes, Russian culture and interpreting body language. In Sochi, some athletes were frustrated by the Russian brusque manner of speaking, Fisher said. She had to explain that people were not automatically being rude.

Fisher attended a few events including the United States beating Canada in sledge hockey and the opening ceremony. She and the other volunteers stayed outside the mountain village and rode a gondola to the site every day.

Comparing the Paralympics to the Olympics, Fisher thought the second games were more relaxed and fun. She was impressed by the athletes’ dedication and skills. “I have a newfound appreciation of parasports,” she said.



Alex Fisher in Sochi, Russia

Photo courtesy Alex Fisher

# Ong Follows the Numbers

Alyssa Ong values the power of data and numbers. The senior from Penang, Malaysia, has used her Undergraduate Research award and her experiences with the Alternative Break Program to demonstrate the program's impact on students.



Alyssa Ong, third from left, with President Bill Clinton and other Clinton Global Initiative University scholars  
Photo courtesy Alyssa Ong

Ong was the Alternative Break intern in her sophomore year and became the research and statistic analyst. The data she gathered about the programs' purposes, participants and procedures was used for grant applications and scholarship applications. Part of that included reading emails about the students' experiences in which they commented on how much more they became involved on campus because of their Alternative Break experiences. Ong wondered if this was true and how that level of engagement compared to students who had different spring break experiences. She emailed students with a link to a survey before and after spring break asking ques-

tions about what they did for spring break, career goals and the number of hours they volunteer, among other topics.

Her 2013 Undergraduate Research award is helping her with the data collection. She has 200 sets of complete data and asked for more students to complete surveys before and after spring break 2014.

Ong presented her research at the Kansas Statehouse in February at the Kansas Undergraduate Research Day. She answered questions and found that the people she spoke with, including members of the Board of Regents, were surprised that she was a business major.

Ong says she is not good at math, but she has a connection with numbers. "You can't make them up; they don't lie."

Ong came to KU as a Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U) scholar, one of two from Malaysia. She has been selected to attend annual conferences and serves as KU's campus representative. Her Alternative Break experience helping with an after-school program in West Virginia led to her interest in developing a math program for the school where she worked, as a CGI U initiative.

"People my age are doing so much [across the country.] A lot of people who want to do good can see like-minded people congregated together," she said.

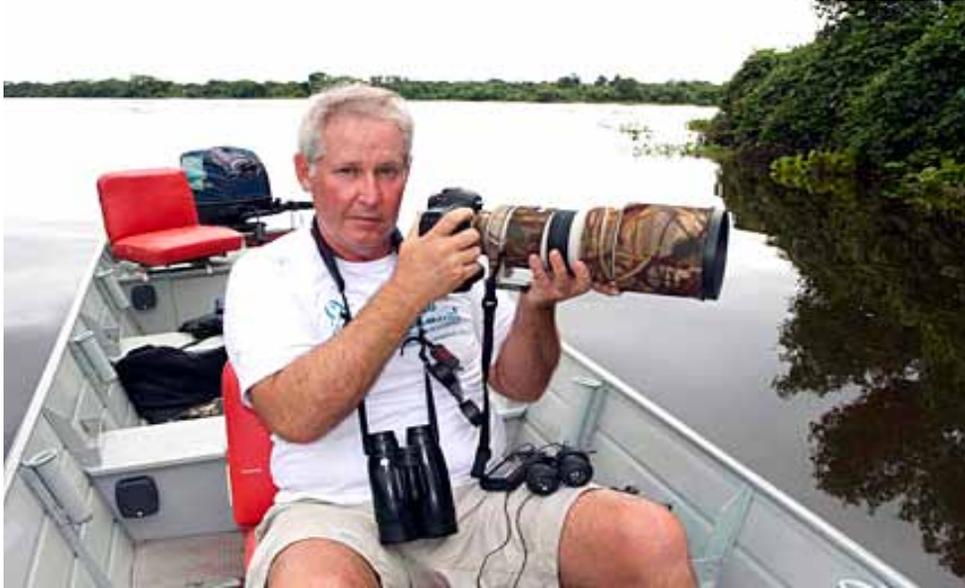
Horizons Editor: Alison Watkins

[www.international.ku.edu](http://www.international.ku.edu)

# Brazilian Partnership to Engage Students, Faculty

The campus presentation of KU alumnus Douglas Trent, cofounder of Sustentar, International Forum on Sustainable Development, led to a signed agreement of cooperation that will lead to KU investigators and students

ies Program, the Schools of Business and Journalism and the Department of Psychology to engage in economic development and fieldwork. J. Christopher Brown, director of the Environmental Studies Program, invited Trent to KU to make a presentation about his work.



After using recordings to call out birds and primates, Douglas Trent takes photos in the Brazil jungle.

Photo courtesy Douglas Trent

traveling, studying and conducting research in Brazil as soon as this summer.

After graduating with Honors in Environmental Studies & Interpersonal Communication, Trent decided to sell everything he had and try to hitch hike his way around the world.

"I realized that if I started a career in the USA I would not have many opportunities to know the world, which was what I was, and remain interested in," Trent wrote in a n email. His relationships with Brazil began in 1980 and he soon founded Focus Tours, a nature tour company, "to use tourism to alleviate poverty and preserve nature." As one of the founders of the rainforest conservation movement, Trent worked to preserve the culture of Brazil's Pantaneiro wetland and jaguars. He began researching jaguars in what became the Jaguar Ecological Reserve, which led to the development of Insituto Sustentar in 2008 with Jus-sara Utsch, now the largest sustainability conference in Latin America and where he bases his jaguar research.

The program will involve multiple departments and leading researchers at KU including the Environmental Stud-

"It's a general agreement that allows for a whole range of activities," said Brown in a KU press release. "For instance, we want to get students from the School of Business down there, to engage with economic development in the region, and to encourage micro-entrepreneurialism. With Environmental Studies students, we want to get involved in the connection-to-nature project."

Trent said that engagement with local residents would be a major component of the partnership.

In addition to engaging with entrepreneurialism, research and fieldwork, KU students will help area schoolchildren, many of who live in poverty, to engage with their natural surroundings--one of the planet's foremost tropical wetland regions.

"The project takes place on the Paraguay River and in the county of Caceres, Mato Grosso, Brazil," said Trent in the KU press release. "It will boost understanding of the wild-life of the river and wetland system and protected areas and engage the citizens of Cáceres to learn about and help protect the wildlife in and around the city."

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