Language Schools to Open Second Site in California

In response to increasing demand for admission to the Middlebury Language Schools, President Ronald D. Liebowitz announced that the College will open a second site on the campus of Mills College in Oakland, California, beginning in 2009. Middlebury at Mills will provide instruction in Arabic, French, Italian, and Spanish.

Mills is located minutes from downtown San Francisco, in the heart of one of America’s most diverse metropolitan areas and within easy reach of Berkeley, Napa, and Silicon Valley.

“Over the past several years, we have seen a steady increase in both the number of applications we receive and our total enrollment,” says Michael Geisler, vice president for Language Schools, Schools Abroad, and Graduate Programs. “Expanding beyond our Vermont campus seemed to be an efficient response to a growing demand for our immersion language programs.” The Language Schools have seen a rise in applications from students residing in the western states, so the addition of a second site at Mills College creates an opportunity to broaden the current student base and allow the program to build on the College’s affiliation with the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

Kathryn W. Davis Fellowships Thriving

For the second consecutive year, Middlebury received a generous donation from Kathryn Wasserman Davis that fully funds 100 Language School students across six languages. Conceived as a one-time scholarship, the donation has been extended for several years as the Kathryn Davis Fellowships for Peace: Investing in the Study of Critical Languages. This dramatically increases the potential for working professionals and exceptional students, both undergraduate and graduate, to benefit from the Middlebury Language Schools programs in Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, Portuguese, and Russian.

Allan Goodman Receives Honorary Degree

Allan E. Goodman, president of the Institute of International Education, delivered the Language Schools commencement address and was awarded an honorary doctor of letters degree. Discussing the importance of language learning, Goodman told the students that graduates of American colleges and universities should be required to have a passport, which they must prove they have used at least once, as well as know another language.

“I am humbled and also inspired by the degree you have given me. Through it, your trustees have recognized the importance of all who work to promote international education and mutual understanding.”

At the conclusion of the 94th summer session, President Liebowitz and Vice President Michael Geisler awarded degrees to 151 master of arts candidates in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish. Six candidates received doctorates in modern languages. Awards for distinguished study were also given to select students in the schools of Arabic, Hebrew, Japanese, and Portuguese.

The commencement ceremony was also notable for several beginnings and a farewell. Susan Carvalho, who retired as the director of the Spanish School, was recognized for her years of service. An MA in Chinese was awarded at commencement to Naichi Shih, of Taiwan, as the College’s first recipient of a master of arts in Chinese.

Students may choose to complete the degree over four summers on the Vermont campus, or in two summers at Middlebury with an academic year in between at the Monterey Institute of International Studies—which is how Naichi Shih completed her MA.
The Brandeis University-Middlebury College School of Hebrew held its inaugural session and Vardit Ringvald, the school’s director, served as one of the faculty marshals in the commencement ceremony. The School of Hebrew in 2008 enrolled 27 students from the U.S. and abroad, hosted eight guest lecturers, screened 30 films, and mounted a Hebrew version of the story Aladdin, written entirely by students.

Language Schools Alumni Return
Dozens of alumni from all the Language Schools returned to campus for a weekend in early August. The weekend featured films, sports, and concerts and was bookended by a symposium on the topic of national identities expressed through film and literature, with speakers from Iraq, Uruguay, Italy, and France focusing on their experiences as filmmakers, professors, and writers; and the annual alumni career panel, featuring John Riggs (French) of the American Hospital of Paris; Anthony Jewett (Chinese), founder of Bardoli Global, Inc.; Carolyn Gengo Di Domenico (Italian), founder of La Piazza di Carolina for children; James Feldkamp (Japanese) of BBK Ltd., Shanghai; and Elisabeth Wheeler (Italian), senior international analyst, NC4.

The Schools will host another open house weekend next summer; watch the Web site for further information: www.middlebury.edu/academics/ls/alumni/.

Middlebury-Monterey Language Academy Launched
The Middlebury-Monterey Language Academy (MMLA), a summer language immersion program for pre-college students, launched its inaugural session last June. Four-week residential camps offering Arabic, Chinese, French, and Spanish were held at three locations: St. Michael’s College in Colchester, Vermont; Menlo College in Atherton, California; and Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. The Hampshire College program was offered jointly by the Middlebury-Monterey Language Academy and the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth.

More than 600 students—24 percent of whom received financial assistance—participated in the program under the guidance of 140 faculty and staff members, including experienced language teachers from public, private, and international schools in North America, Central America, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Students returning home to their middle and high schools found that language levels had been raised significantly in the MMLA programs, which utilized a modified version of Middlebury’s renowned Language Pledge.

Madrid Government, Monterey Institute, and Middlebury Collaborate on “Global Action” Project
Last summer Middlebury began a partnership with its Schools Abroad program in Spain and the Monterey Institute of International Studies for a month-long immersion program for Spanish teachers of English. Forty teachers from Spain were in Vermont under the aegis of the government of Madrid to develop bilingual teaching methodologies to enhance their teaching of the English language in subject areas such as science and art.

The cadre of teachers came to two sites in the U.S. for a month of formalized immersion in English. Half were based at Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont, while the other half were located at California State University at Monterey Bay.

Reflecting on the significance of the program, Dean Renée Jourdenais of the Graduate School of Language and Educational Linguistics at Monterey Institute said: “Middlebury and MIIS are well situated and well suited to collaborate in order to meet the world’s growing need for quality language education and trained language educators. Our shared educational missions and global perspectives really make collaboration easy. Independently, we’re both excellent institutions; combined, we’re a formidable powerhouse of expertise in language education.”