Happy New Academic Year to One and All!

What a momentous year! Replacing Katrina Thompson as Chair of the African Studies IDP left me with large shoes to fill. It was a most rewarding year packed with loads of activities, starting with the internal review. As a community of students and supporting faculty and staff, the program has continued to blossom. Together with the Faculty Advisory Committee (Andrew Apter, Ned Alpers, Al Roberts, Ruby Bell-Gam, Judith Carney, Charlotte Newmann, Jacqueline DjeDje, Al Roberts, Katrina Thompson and Robert Hill) and the terrific assistance of Magda Yamamoto and Gaby Solomon, the Director of Students Affairs of the International Institute, we have achieved the following:

1. Continued excellence in the achievements of our students and graduates
2. Creation of a space for graduate students to congregate
3. Creation of new courses
4. Changes made to the requirements for the undergraduate Minor in African Studies
5. Successful Internal Review of our Program by the Academic Senate

Program’s Internal Review
In fall 2009, the AS IDP underwent an internal review by the UCLA Academic Senate. This was a routine middle-of-the-road review of the program’s eight-year cycle. Thanks to the experienced assistance of Magda Yamamoto and Gaby Solomon, and the overwhelming support of both the students and faculty, the review was successful and generated a positive report. I was also very grateful for Deborah Dauda’s assistance as our graduate student assistant. Without all of your assistance this would have been a difficult task indeed!
The Academic Senate’s Internal Review of the African Studies IDP began with an onsite visit on November 5, 2009. Eight affiliated faculty, the two former chairs of the program (Katrina Thompson and Andrew Apter), and six students, including one undergraduate, met with the review team. The review report, approved by both the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils, was sent to me in April 2010. It was overwhelmingly positive, and included the following statements:

- “the Review Team’s unanimous conclusion is that the IDP in African Studies is an excellent program and should continue;”
- “important program in an areas of crucial national and international interest;”
- “has a strong participation of the faculty, attracts academically strong students and prepares them well.”

The only concern the review expressed was UCLA’s reduced offerings of African languages due to faculty losses. This question is one that Andrew Apter, the Director of the African Studies Center, and Katrina Thompson, African Language Coordinator, are working on diligently to resolve.

Curricular Changes and Innovations
With the help of the Faculty Advisory Committee we created several new courses and made significant changes to the requirements for the African Studies Minor.

A. African Studies 296, African Studies Working Group (1 unit). During the 2009-10 academic year, the graduate students in African students organized a colloquium, with the help of the former chair of the AS-IDP, Professor Thompson. To receive credit for participating in this colloquium, students enrolled with Professor Thompson in African Languages 596. In winter 2010, Thompson, Gaby Solomon and I worked on a proposal to create a new course that would serve the same purpose.

This year-long course is a Graduate Student Colloquium coordinated by Katrina Thompson and run by graduate students. This course brings together a working group of graduate students (and interested faculty and undergraduates) who will meet bi-weekly for two hours during fall, winter and spring quarters. The group welcomes the participation of all students at UCLA who are interested in African studies scholarship. Participants need not enroll to attend the meetings, but those enrolled must actively participate and volunteer to make a presentation. This course will offered in the forthcoming academic year under the new course number.

B. African Studies 191A, Action Research in Sustainable Community Development: Senegal (4 units). The second new course was proposed by Professor Apter, Gaby Solomon and myself. This seminar was approved by UCLA’s Travel Abroad program. It combines theory and field research on sustainable community development in rural Senegal, West Africa. Students will write field reports relating indigenous knowledge practices to sustainable eco-village projects. (Weeks 1-4). This course was successfully taught in summer, with about 17 students enrolled.
C. Changes to the African Studies Undergraduate Minor

At our fall meeting, the Faculty Advisory Committee considered the very low enrollment (9 students) in our African Studies Minor. We decided that the requirements for the minor were too onerous and difficult for students, especially transfer students, to complete. We therefore agreed that reducing the total of number of required courses, expanding the list of preparation courses for the minor and making African language courses count as electives will make completing the minor more feasible to students, especially for those who join the program after their second year. At the next meeting, held in January 2010, the AS-IDP FAC approved the following proposed changes to the minor requirements.

- The total number of courses to complete the minor was reduced from 10 to 7 (2 lower division preparation courses and 5 upper division courses).
- The number of courses students can use to fulfill the lower division preparation requirement was increased. The list of electives now includes African language courses.
- The list of upper division courses was revised and expanded to reflect our current offerings.

These changes were approved by administration and are being implemented starting this fall quarter.

African Studies Seminar (201A) Africa and the Disciplines

This was my first time teaching the seminar, the only required course in the MA program. Because it had not been taught since 2008 the seminar was packed with first and second year MA students. The seminar, which was 16 students strong, also included two doctoral students from Art History, two students from the graduate program in Islamic Studies, one Ph.D. candidate from Political Science, and one BA/MA UC scholars program student.

The seminar was designed to introduce students to multidisciplinary approaches to the study of Africa. The following faculty graced us with their presence in the course of the quarter:

**The Study of Languages:** Katrina Thompson  
**The Art of Africa:** Steven Nelson  
**Religion and Visual Cultures:** Allen Roberts  
**Economics and Development:** Deepak Lal  
**Environmental History and Geography in and out of Africa:** Judith Carney  
**Anthropology and Culture:** Andrew Apter  
**Political Science of Africa:** Edward Keller  
**Health and Epidemiology in Africa:** Paula Tavrow  
**Education and Institutions in Africa:** Edith Omwami

Although the seminar was very large, the atmosphere was dynamic, entertaining and collegial. The most rewarding aspect of this seminar was the seriousness and determination with which the students took on the final written assignment. More than half of the students wrote book reviews that were published in 2010 or are about to get published in the months ahead.
No less than four graduate students (Kathleen Louw, Shanique Street, Nick Smith, and Goleen Samari (of the Islamic Studies MA program)) were published in just one issue of the *African Studies Quarterly* 11:1-2 (2010) (http://www.africa.ufl.edu/africa/asq/v11/v11i2-3.pdf). Other book reviews were published in journals such as the *African Studies Review, North African Studies Journal and Matatu: A Journal of African Culture and Society*.

**Congratulations to our Graduates!!!**
There were altogether 6 students who graduated and/or attended graduation. Here are their profiles, advisors and MA thesis titles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Advisor(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amber Keyes</td>
<td>De Paul University</td>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>Urban Studies and Political Economy</td>
<td>Michael Lofchie and Steve Commins</td>
<td>Shifting Capitals: Senegalese immigration to New York City Thriving between Informal and Formal Spheres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanique Streete</td>
<td>Tufts University</td>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>Political History</td>
<td>Ghislaine Lydon</td>
<td>The “Woman Question” in the Struggle for Independence in Anglophone West Africa: Through the Lives of Two Women Nationalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob Hurtekant</td>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>Political Economy</td>
<td>Michael Lofchie</td>
<td>Political Economy of Physical Disability in Post-Apartheid South Africa</td>
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Among our graduates, Karleen Giannitrapani has joined the doctoral program in Public Health at UCLA, Rob Hurtekant passed the State Department exam and is awaiting to be assigned to a position in one of the US embassies in Africa, and Sean Fairchild returned to work in a political development consulting firm in Washington DC with a focus on African affairs.

**Student Summer Trips**
This past summer, some of our students went to Africa to pursue their research, others were busy drafting their theses, and still others did language training.

Deborah Dauda received a summer travel award to research child abuse and family dynamics in Nigeria. About her experiences, she wrote:

This summer, I worked with an NGO-Media Concern Intuitive for women and children (MEDIACON). MEDIACON works with victims of child sexual abuse providing counseling, referrals, and they also have hotlines where people call in to report sexual abuse cases and seek support. I specifically shadowed the victims advocate. I collated data of abuses from 2009-August 2010. I did an analysis of these report on excel and Microsoft word. I also edited funding proposals for the Global Fund for Women (GFW) and Global Fund for Children (GFC). For GFC, I along with the director brainstormed and came up with a new project under MEDIACON called the Inform-Sensitize, Educate and Empower (I-SEE) project to further reach out to children and adolescents on the prevention and mitigation of child abuse of children. I also had the privilege to attend court proceeding on abuse cases and met with victims, policemen/women, perpetrators and social welfare workers. As part of my assignment, I interviewed different stakeholders on how they are upholding the Child Rights Law of Lagos State; which prohibits all forms of abuse of children.

Nick Smith was awarded a small summer travel grant to go to Africa to continue his study of micro-credit. About his experiences in the program, he wrote:

Enrolling in UCLA’s M.A. in African Studies Program has been one of the better decisions that I have made in my academic life. In terms of tangible benefits, I have been awarded $26,000 in academic scholarships to date. Secondly, I published my first academic article which I wrote for African Studies 201A; it was a book review of Jamie Monson’s Africa’s Freedom Railway. Furthermore, I have worked as a Teaching Assistant and a Reader for International Development Studies, which has provided me the opportunity to lecture on micro-credit on multiple occasions. With respect to the intangible benefits, I have been able to establish valuable relationships at UCLA and abroad. One relationship in particular has taken me to the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where I plan to launch a pilot project for a new microcredit project with former refugees. Another, has been a friend of Africanist scholar in Uganda who I meet with every time I am in country.
Outside of what the MAAS program I have continued to work sporadically in Africa on my micro-credit project in Buseesa, Uganda, which will serve as the basis for my M.A. thesis.

Kathleen Louw, who is focusing her research on the politics of cultural preservation and tourism in the Malian city of Djenné (Jenne), was awarded a Foreign Language Area Studies fellowship from UCLA’s Center for Near Eastern Studies to study Arabic in the summer term. Brian Smithson received a Fulbright-Hays Language Training Award from the University of Florida, Gainsville, to attend in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, a two-month intensive Yoruba program. He then traveled around eastern Benin on his own for a couple of weeks before spending his last few days in Lagos. Moreover, Lafayette Gaston obtained extra-mural funding to travel to Senegal during spring break to engage in preliminary research and Krista Barnes continues to work as a Public Relations representative for various African business interests.

**Graduate Student Lounge**

One of the program’s lingering problems reported by the two previous AS-IDP chairs, was the need for a common space for graduate students to congregate. At our first faculty advisory meeting in the Fall 2009, I made a strong pledge to resolving the issue. Thanks to the initiative of Gaby Solomon, a vacant room on the 10th floor of Bunche (10273) was approved by Susan McClary for the use of MA students of our program and those from the other IDPs. This lounge, inaugurated in November 2009, has already generating the development of a tight-knit community among our International Institute graduate students. It is a space for daily congregation, work meetings and study between classes and the development of community among our students.

**Other Activities**

One of the highlights of the year was the fifth annual graduate student African Activist Association conference. This two-day event held in mid-May was entitled “The Conflict of Re-Presentation: Re-Presenting Conflict in Africa.” Among the fifteen students (including one undergraduate in Global Studies), who presented papers five belong to the African Studies IDP. The conference had both an international and a national dimension since one of the presenters was affiliated with the University of Cape Town (South Africa), while other students traveled from Yale Divinity School, California Lutheran University and Syracuse University. Without a doubt the quality of the presentations was superior, and some student papers were simply brilliant. For more information go the African Activist Association page on Facebook and/or to [http://africanactivists.blogspot.com/](http://africanactivists.blogspot.com/).

In winter quarter, Magda and I organized a Tea Party for our students specifically geared to developing community among our undergraduate minors. At the end of spring quarter, the week-end after commencement, I organized a party for our students and the AS-IDP staff held in my home to celebrate graduation and the end of the year. Moreover, there were two movie outings organized this academic year, both movies incidentally focused on South Africa. The first was the very disturbing *Disgrace* and the second was the Hollywood-style *Invictus* (we all thought that Matt Damon did a convincing Afrikaaner’s English accent).
**Incoming Students**

We are very pleased to welcome seven new students to our program this year. We hope that faculty and students will join in welcoming them on orientation day at our luncheon on 09/22/10 from 12 noon – 2 pm in 10383 Bunche.

**Farah Abdi**

I recently graduated (in 2009) from UC San Diego with a B.S in General Biology. While at UC San Diego I participated as an undergraduate research assistant on a project in the field of molecular genetics as well as another which is still ongoing that is assessing the health needs/concerns of refugee women in San Diego County. I am originally from Somalia and speak Somali fluently. I hope to undertake the study of Arabic while a graduate student in the African Studies program. I am also in the Community Health Sciences masters program and some of my interests include the areas of conflict and instability, economic policies and globalization, as well as maternal and child health.

**Ridwa Abdi**

I will be matriculating into the Community Health Sciences MPH/African Studies MA program this fall and upon completion of this program I hope to progress onto earning a PhD in epidemiology. I graduated from UC San Diego in 2009 with a B.S in General Biology. As an Amgen Scholar at UCSD I gained hands-on laboratory research experience working on a project in the field of molecular biology. I am currently working on a research project aimed to assess the health needs/issues of refugee women in San Diego County. I am a native speaker of Somali and have lived in Somalia and Kenya for part of my childhood. My current research interests include infectious disease as well as maternal child health with a global focus.

**Lily Hambartsoumian**

My name is Lily Hambartsoumian, I am Armenian, I was an undergraduate UCLA student in Anthropology and Russian literature, I love to read long novels, but in my career I want to make documentary films about developing economies in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

**Alex Laverty**

I grew up in Europe as the son of a US Army officer and this time abroad has significantly contributed to my need to always be on the move, my love of soccer, and the desire to experience new cultures. As an undergraduate I had the opportunity to study abroad for six months at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa. The research I assisted with and the classes I took deepened my passion and desire to further study African history, politics and culture. I graduated from the University of California, San Diego in 2008 with a BA in International Relations with a focus on Africa. After graduation I interned for several months at Trans-Africa and Human Rights Watch in Washington DC where I gained valuable insight into the workings of two very different non-governmental organizations. I am currently in South Africa for the World Cup and to explore parts of Southern Africa that I wasn’t able to previously. I look forward to returning home to California in order to continue immersing myself in Africa.

**George Njoroge**

George, originally from Kenya, graduated from Florida State University with degree in International Affairs. He later received his M.A. in History from the University of Florida. His interests are
combination of public health and historical anthropology in the context of mental health care along East Africa.

Adaeze Nnamani
BA in Economics from Illinois State University, 2010
I am a Nigerian by nationality and I am really passionate about Africa and its development. I have a strong faith that a miracle will take place in my generation that will lift Africa up from the shackles of poverty and corruption to emerge as a continent contributing her own quota to the world. This is the reason I want to spend 2 years studying and laying my hands on every and anything I can on Africa.

Cynthia Ugwibe
Hello, my name is Cynthia Ugwuibe and I am excited to be a part of the African Studies Department. Although I spent my early childhood in Nigeria, I have lived in Dallas, Texas for the majority of my life. In 2009 I graduated from Duke University with a BA in Public Policy Studies. My time at Duke sparked my interest in African politics, policymaking, rule of law and globalization issues. I hope to study these subjects in greater detail at UCLA. Last fall as the Africa Policy & Advocacy Intern with TransAfrica Forum, an influential foreign policy organization in Washington D.C., I was able to gain hands-on experience into the formulation of U.S. foreign policy toward Africa. In my spare time, I enjoy running, reading, cooking and socializing with people. I look forward to meeting you in person!

On behalf of the African Studies IDP, we extend a warm welcome to our new students and wish you all, students, faculty and staff a successful academic year 2010-2011!!!

Ghislaine Lydon, Magda Yamamoto and Deborah Dauda