

ESL GO! NEWSLETTER

Happy New Year, ESLers! Welcome to the first edition of the ESL GO! Newsletter for 2010. Now that we're all finally catching our stride this semester, it's time to make some important announcements.

First, congratulations go out to Elena Lawrick for receiving the Albert H. Marckwardt Travel Grant to attend the TESOL Convention in Boston, March 24-27. The award money and waiver of registration fee will certainly help offset the cost of a long weekend in Beantown.

While there, Elena will be presenting a paper with Fatima Esseili entitled: "Students' Perception of an Efficient ESL Composition Course." She and Fatima will also be on a panel with Cindy Torres to discuss the topic: "In Response to Globalization: ELT in China, Russia, and Lebanon."

The week before, Kyle McIntosh will be giving up part of his Spring Break (and let's face it, as grad students, we never really get a break anyway) to present a paper at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), March 17-20. He will be discussing the similarities between L2 writing practices and certain articulations of "post-process" pedagogy in composition studies to show how the two disciplines can benefit from more sustained interaction.

Professor Dwight Atkinson will also be attending CCCC to act as a respondent for the panel discussion: "Remixing Language and Culture in Transnational Contexts." Among the speakers will be Purdue graduate and current Penn State English professor Xiaoye You.

Professor Margie Berns will be attending the American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL) Conference on March 6-9, 2010. She will be contributing to a panel discussion entitled: "Theoretical Perspectives on English Language Variation: Where WE Stands."

In other news... for the past month, The ESL Program has hosted Visiting Scholar, Carmen Lujan Garcia. Carmen is from Gran Canaria, Spain and teaches English at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. In addition to working further on her research in World Englishes (specifically the use of English in the domain of cinema), she fully participated in four courses and gave a talk for the ESL Speaker Series. Carmen wants everyone to know that she thoroughly enjoyed her time here and was most impressed by everyone's willingness to help her and their kindness in including her in many activities.

Here is an account of her time at Purdue that Carmen wishes to share with us and with future visiting scholars:

MY EXPERIENCE AS A VISITING SCHOLAR AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY

By Carmen Lujan Garcia

My personal experience has been positive in every sense. First of all, from the academic point of view, staying here has been more than valuable. I have been able to attend seminars of other colleagues, which provides you with a broader vision of specific aspects related to your field of research. Instructors have been very kind and have made me feel like part of the University community from the very beginning of my stay. As an instructor of English in my country, Spain, the attendance to these seminars provides you ideas about to teach, how to transmit knowledge, and how other colleagues give their classes. Some of these ideas may be useful to apply in your own teaching context.

I chose Purdue, because at this university there is a very well-known scholar in my field of research, Margie Berns. She encouraged me to come, and I have been able to work and share with her, which makes my stay here worthwhile. Secondly, the students at Purdue University are very friendly, and they are willing to help you with anything that you need. There is an international warm atmosphere that enriches you as a person and as a scholar.

The weather is something to take into consideration. I come from a warm country, and spending part of winter here has been a new experience for me. It may be hard, but if you wear the right clothes (warm coat, gloves, hat, scarf), it should not be so bad. In terms of leisure and entertainment, there are some activities that you might enjoy. The University offers weekly convocations (operas, concerts, plays, and so on). There are also trips organized by the International office of the University (I enjoyed a fantastic day trip to Chicago), and the prices are very reasonable. There is also a skating park in West Lafayette that may be another option to have a good time. Different clubs (usually for students) offer different kinds of activities such as dance lessons or yoga. If you like sports, there is also a big sports centre on campus, and they offer aerobics, swimming lessons, etc.

With regards to public transportation, free buses run all the time during weekdays around campus. At weekends, there is not a great bus service, so it might make a bit difficult to go somewhere. If you need to buy food, a Wal-Mart superstore is not far from campus, and there are buses that will take you there. For clothes, there is also a big mall, and you can also take the bus to get there.

One final piece of advice: I would recommend getting a Purdue University ID card. In order to get it, you need to have a B1 Visa. If you do not get it, you are going to have many limitations, from using the library and computing labs to having free access to all buses, and so on.

For all the reasons described above, I would highly recommend Purdue University to stay as a visiting scholar.

And with that glowing endorsement of our ESL program, I bid you all adieu. Until next time...