Spring has sprung, and we in Modern Languages & Cultures are celebrating another productive year. One of our major accomplishments in 2014–15 was creating a departmental mission statement and strategic plan entitled “Primo,” a shortened form of Priorities for Modern Languages and Cultures. Dr. Richard Durán chaired the steering committee for this effort; other committee members were Bill Dooley, Karol Hardin, Adrienne Harris, Theresa Kennedy, Michael Long, Marian Ortuño, and Yuko Prefume. The committee solicited feedback from all MLC faculty through email, informal discussions, and a series of “town hall” meetings. “Primo” was officially approved by the Department on February 20, 2015.

The 6 major priorities are: Enhancing the Experience within the Classroom, Connecting to a World beyond the Classroom, Fostering a Community of Scholars, Preparing for students and in the broader community, Dr. Harris is richly deserving of this honor. Congratulations, Dr. Harris!

In May 2015 we said a fond farewell to Senior Lecturer in German Rita Abercrombie, who is retiring from Baylor after 12 wonderful years of dedicated, tireless service. The Department held a reception in her honor on May 5, 2015. The icing on the cake is that Rita was named one of Baylor’s Outstanding Professors of the Year and was honored at Baylor’s Commencement exercises on May 16, 2015.
MLC enjoyed another year as the department with the most presentations in Baylor’s URSA (Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Activities) Scholars Week, held March 30 – 31, 2015. The topics of these presentations included Spanish literature, Chinese opera, religion and government in Iran, a comparative study of U.S. and French healthcare systems, and film.

But URSA was not the only place where MLC students let their light shine this year. At Baylor’s Academic Honors Convocation held April 17, 2015, the following MLC Majors were honored as the outstanding student in their area: Sarah Crockett (Arabic and Middle East Studies), Tiffany Auber (French), Zerek Dodson (German), Jeremy Young (Russian), Katherine Nick (Spanish). Sic ‘em, MLC Majors!

On a broader scale, Baylor student Miki Wang, a Senior Biology Major and Japanese Minor, won first place in the College Division of the Texas Japanese Speech Contest in early March. As the prizewinner, Miki was awarded a round-trip plane ticket to Japan. Congratulations, Miki!

And Miki is not the only Japanese student who received good news this year. Prof. Yuko Prefume, Senior Lecturer in Japanese, successfully applied for a Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) Short Term Study Abroad Scholarship from the Japanese government JASSO organization on behalf of all participants in the 2015 Baylor in Japan study abroad program. The total award is nearly $9,000.

The good news doesn’t stop there! Russian Major Bailey Green recently learned that she was awarded a Fulbright Grant to study in Russia during the 2015–16 academic year.

Not to be outdone by the undergraduates, two of our M.A. graduate students in Spanish also won an award this year. Both Kelsey Schlichting and Sarah Rabke earned the Emerging Scholars Award from NACFLA (North American Christian Foreign Language Association). This honor included a monetary prize and special recognition at the NACFLA conference in April 2015 held at Biola University.

Congratulations to all of these students as well as our graduating Seniors and graduate students completing their M.A. in Spanish this semester! And a warm thanks to the faculty mentors who tirelessly supported these students.
MLC Hosts Scholarly Events

Spring 2015 found MLC colleagues engaged in enhancing the intellectual and scholarly life of the Baylor campus by organizing and hosting a variety of events.

Cuban Visitors

Two scholars from Cuba, Linguistics professor Ana María González Marfud (U. of Havana) and celebrated poet Carlos Martí Brenes, visited the Department for several days at the invitation of Assistant Professor of Spanish Dr. Stephen Silverstein. Each of them gave a class presentation on March 31. Dr. Lilly Souza-Fuertes invited Prof. González Marfud to present on “Lenguaje y poesía en Nicolás Guillén” in her course, and Prof. Martí Brenes was invited to lead a discussion about several of his poems in Dr. Silverstein’s course. The scholars also gave a two-part public presentation on April 1, with Prof. Martí Brenes presenting on “La poesía cubana en un abrir y cerrar de siglo” and Prof. González Marfud on “La lengua en Cuba: identidad y mestizaje.” This lively event was followed by a reception in Old Main.

STEM & HU Symposium

On April 9, Baylor’s College of Arts & Sciences hosted the first annual Symposium on STEM & Humanities. This event, part of a larger initiative in the wake of the College’s Strategic Plan, A&SPIRE, aims to spark more interdisciplinary innovations in research, teaching, and outreach. MLC Chair Heidi Bostic chaired the Symposium planning committee, and Associate Professor of Spanish Dr. Karol Hardin served as a panelist during a discussion of current efforts.

Note from the Chair

continued from page 1

“Primo” is available on our departmental website at the following address: http://www.baylor.edu/mlc/index.php?id=871583.

We would love to hear your ideas about our new plan and the direction of the Department!

Please drop me a line at:

Heidi_Bostic@baylor.edu.

Students for Global Citizenship and Leadership, Enriching Academic Programs, and Communicating the MLC Message.
at Baylor that cross STEM & Humanities fields. In Dr. Hardin’s case, her work in Spanish Linguistics and Medical Spanish aims to improve doctor-patient communication in that language. The 2nd annual Symposium on STEM & Humanities, set for April 7, 2016, will focus on the Anthropocene, a term proposed by scholars to characterize our current geological epoch in which human activity has left an indelible imprint on the planet. The idea of the Anthropocene thus relates to many fields across STEM & Humanities, including anthropology, communication, engineering, environmental science, ethics, geology, health care, history, languages, and literature.

**Georgia Symposium**

On April 23–25, Professor of Russian Dr. Michael Long hosted a Symposium at Baylor about the Republic of Georgia called “Georgia at the Crossroads.” Two speakers from Georgia were in attendance, including Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili from the Baptist Peace Cathedral in Tbilisi. Other participants came from universities across the U.S., from the Library of Congress, and from Canada. Topics of the presentations included Georgian Identity, Past and Present; Geo-Politics, Civil Society, and Tourism; and Georgian Film, Literature, and Music. Dr. Long gave a presentation with Dr. Sara Alexander (Department of Anthropology) entitled “Protecting Economic and Cultural Diversity in the Context of Tourism Development in Georgia.”

**Spanish Graduate Students “Stepping out”**

Graduate students in the Division of Spanish and Portuguese participated in Baylor’s “Stepping Out,” a day that student organizations across campus dedicate to volunteerism in the Waco community.

Students Esther Hur, Katie Samples, Abbey Allison, Kelsey Schlichting, Sarah Burke, Paige Myers, Ben Moss, Camila Oppelt, and Hipatia Medina took part in the event in fall 2014. “We had to organize all types of clothing, from cute baby clothes, junior sized jeans, and women’s dresses,” Hipatia Medina related. The Department of MLC is grateful to these graduate students for serving the local community.