

## Pathways

Casablanca, Morocco, airport, October 2011.

I was wheeling my suitcase to the check-in counter when a voice shouted out, “Mary Devins, is that you?” The usual exchange ensued. “Lindsey Meyer, what are you doing here?” “It all started with CISLA,” she said. Lindsey went on to explain that she was just leaving Morocco after spending a year researching architecture and artisans in Fez under a Fulbright scholarship.

Lindsey graduated in '03 with a major in architectural studies. She spent her CISLA internship in Dakar, Senegal, as an intern at the Bureau d'Etudes d'Architecture et Decoration, a small residential architecture firm. She went on to get her master's in architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design, after

which she worked for several small firms in her native Seattle. — Mary Devins

### Architecture is about People

by Lindsey Meyer '03

**“ARCHITECTURE** is about people.”

This was the mantra of one of my professors in architecture school, who used it to encourage his students to design livable spaces for humans rather than merely pretty buildings. I was reminded of this saying when a friend recently sent me an article, titled “Haute Moroccan Style,” featuring dazzling photos of a house in California with a pared-down

Moroccan aesthetic. The house was filled with beautiful hand-made objects from Morocco — jewel-toned floor cushions, glass lanterns, rich leather ottomans and elaborately patterned tile. But what I noticed most about the interiors was their striking absence of people.

The Morocco I know is any place but lonely. After a year of research under a Fulbright scholarship in Fez, the country's third largest and capital of arts and culture, I learned that Morocco's people are what bring the country to life. Fez is one of the densest cities in the world, its car-less *medina* teeming with markets, vendors and donkeys, all competing for space in its narrow alleys. Physically, you are never more than a few feet away from your neighbor. Moroccans are notoriously social people; they treat everyone as part of the community, and are not afraid to speak to strangers. Spending time alone is considered unhealthy and even somewhat taboo in Moroccan culture.

So, I realized I would have a difficult time accomplishing any of my research — about the architecture and artisans of Fez — when it took me half the day to run a few small errands. While picking up a loaf of bread, a casual conversation with the baker would lead to a cup of mint tea and meeting his family. Fetching milk turned into couscous at a neighbor's house, followed by the inevitable showing of a wedding video. Let's just say my to-do lists became shorter and shorter.

Rather than avoiding these invitations to tea, lunch or even an overnight stay, however, I came to realize that this social interaction was my best research. By



LINDSEY MEYER '03, RIGHT, ENJOYS A COUSCOUS LUNCH WITH THE FAMILY OF A METAL ARTISAN.



#### ADVISORY COUNCIL

Robert E. Armstrong  
*Former Director,  
The Henry Luce Foundation*

Grace Mirabella  
*Founder, Mirabella  
New York, N.Y.*

John C. Whitehead  
*Chairman, World Trade Center  
Memorial Foundation  
New York, N.Y.*

#### PROGRAM COUNCIL

George W. Coombe, Jr., P'73 '77  
*Graham & James  
San Francisco, Calif.*

Michael J. Dubilier '77  
*Dubilier & Co.  
New York, N.Y.*

Ann Gulliver Flinn '66 P'94  
*Greenwich, Conn.*

H. P. Goldfield '73  
*Washington, D.C.*

Phyllis Smith Gotschall '44  
*Naples, Fla.*

Shannon Stock Herzfeld '74  
*Archer Daniels Midland Company  
Washington, D.C.*

Douglas C. Renfield-Miller '75  
*Ambac Assurance Corporation  
New York, N.Y.*

PRISM is published by the Toor  
Cummings Center for International  
Studies and the Liberal Arts (CISLA)

Marc R. Forster, *Director*  
Mary S. Devins, *Associate Director*  
Jennifer Bemis Stevens, *Internship  
and Publications Specialist*  
Linda Camelio, *Assistant to the  
Director and Associate Director*

Design: Susan Lindberg

PRISM  
The Toor Cummings Center for  
International Studies and the Liberal Arts  
Connecticut College  
270 Mohegan Avenue  
New London, CT 06320-4196  
USA

We welcome your comments!

Phone: 860.439.2440  
Fax: 860.439.5362  
Email: [cisla@conncoll.edu](mailto:cisla@conncoll.edu)  
Web: <http://cisla.conncoll.edu>

## director's column

**AS I FINISH** my first year as director of CISLA, I have been impressed above all with the enthusiasm, energy, engagement and academic talent of the CISLA students. CISLA scholars have always been a special group, for they are self-selected students who share a deep interest in the world. Those of us who engage with them in CISLA, teach them in our courses, and advise them on their Senior Integrative Projects should take a minute from our busy lives to appreciate how special it is to work with these students.



MARC FORSTER, CISLA DIRECTOR

It is perhaps also worth reminding ourselves what CISLA is. The center is first and foremost an academic program, based in the liberal arts, that asks students to develop an interdisciplinary understanding of the origins of modern global society while internationalizing their major. As an academic program, CISLA provides courses, advises students as they develop a curriculum to provide an individualized interdisciplinary component to their program, and requires a Senior Integrative Project as a capstone to our certificate program.

Most of you are familiar with the elements of the CISLA academic program. After they are admitted to CISLA, sophomores take International Studies 201, Perspectives on Modern Global Society. In this course, five faculty members from different disciplines teach two-week sections that ask students to examine the historical basis of modernity, while also critiquing the dynamics of globalization. The intellectual scope of this course in the Spring 2012 semester was a challenge for the students. It ranged from Fred Paxton's explanation of planetary history, to Bob Proctor's discussion of the origins of the liberal arts (a staple of this course since its inception), to Alex Hybel's analysis of the origins of the modern global political system, to Afshan Jafar's presentation of Middle Eastern women, culture and tradition, to Takeshi Watanabe's demonstration of western "orientalism" in relation to East Asia. My job, as lead teacher of IS 201, is to help the students bring together this diverse information and tie it to the three CISLA questions: What are the origins and dynamics of contemporary society? What is the relevance of the past in understanding the present and the possibilities of the future? What are the material, spiritual and ethical challenges of modernity?

One of the most impressive aspects of IS 201 this year was the way the students interacted with each other, particularly in the review sections I taught. Students brought their own expertise to each discussion, reflecting on their disciplines, while broadening their own perspectives and helping their colleagues understand new concepts. I joked with them that they should continue their discussions in the dining hall after class; they assured me that had already taken place.

CISLA is best known for the international internships we organize and fund for our students, undertaken during the summer after their junior year. These are fantastic experiences that give students international work experience and require them to use their language expertise. Yet these internships are not just life experiences; they are also research trips, opportunities to gather information, ideas and perspectives relevant to the students' Senior Integrative Projects. The SIP is the heart of the CISLA program, the culminating academic achievement. It is a senior thesis or independent study in the major and a substantive piece of scholarly work.

IS 401, the senior seminar, provides students with an opportunity to bring together what they learned in their study-away programs and internships with their majors, courses and research interests as they prepare their Senior Integrative Project. This is not always an easy task, as ideas and perspectives change rapidly over the course of a student's college career. One of my goals in this course is to reinforce the academic and research character of the internships. After all, one of the goals of a liberal arts education is to foster intellectual engagement with the world, to bring analysis and knowledge to all our life experiences, in college and after. I

*continued on page 3*

## director's column

continued from page 2

believe we do this well in CISLA.

Students have many experiences in college. They participate in organizations, varsity athletics, internships and volunteer work. In CISLA we ask them to bring those experiences together with their academics in ways that will benefit them throughout the rest of their lives.

Marc R. Forster

*Henry B. Plant Professor of History  
Director of Toor Cummings Center for  
International Studies and the Liberal Arts*

## Thank You



JIM WITH NAYAN POKHREL '10 AND LAKSHMI KANNAN '10.

**THANK YOU** to Jim MacDonald, library mentor to CISLA students and unofficial chronicler of CISLA. He's posted seven years of CISLA photos on his Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/jimmacdonald.3950](http://www.facebook.com/jimmacdonald.3950)), including photos from CISLA's 20th Reunion in June 2012. If you don't have a conncoll.edu email address associated with your Facebook account, you can "friend" Jim to see the photos.

## Funding news

**CISLA'S ENDOWMENT** enables us to fully fund program and internship expenses, offer generous support for a variety of faculty and student initiatives, and continue to fund faculty and student travel grants. As the stock market goes, so goes our endowment. We continue to look for ways to creatively fund and support CISLA-based initiatives.

## Pathways

continued from page 1

asking how many generations a family had lived in their house, when the tile work was done, and what the inscriptions said on the engraved plaster walls, I gained an understanding of the history of Fez, its architecture and artisans better than anything I could have read in book. I spent the year collecting these conversations in Arabic and French, observing the work of traditional artisans and even doing some tile work, or *zellij*, myself.

I first grasped the importance of cross-cultural communication during

and stay in his family's earthen, thatched-roof home with no electricity or running water. I saw how modern materials and conveniences were making their impact on the lives of villagers, from corrugated metal and concrete cinderblocks replacing



thatched roofs and mud brick, to the single television set up in the main square where a crowd gathered daily to watch World Cup soccer.

The globalized world had made it to rural Senegal, and what we had discussed the previous year in the CISLA seminar, "Perspectives on Modern Global Society," was happening right before my eyes. My CISLA internship laid the foundation for my ongoing interest in architecture, and even more so in the people and cultural knowledge behind traditional structures and what they can offer to modern building.



LINDSEY LEARNS HOW TO MAKE A ZELIG, OR TRADITIONAL MOROCCAN TILE.

my CISLA internship in Senegal nearly 10 years ago. While interning for a small residential architecture firm, I saw firsthand the vast difference in building methods and lifestyles between urban Dakar and the mostly rural countryside. Each week I accompanied the principal architect to the job site where many of the workers were barefoot. These young men were among a growing population of youth who travel from their rural homes to the city to find work. I began to wonder if the younger generation was not the only thing leaving rural Senegal; what was happening to the traditional way of building houses? If the younger generation was adopting a modern way of life, who would pass down the knowledge of traditional building to the next generation?

I had the opportunity to visit the village of one of these urban migrants

When I ran into Mary Devins in the Casablanca airport on my way home from my year in Morocco last spring, she asked me, "What's next?" At the time, all I could tell her was that I was following my then-fiancé, now husband, to Salt Lake City where he'd transferred for his job. I am now a product engineer for a lighting company that designs and fabricates decorative chandeliers, pendants and sconces in-house. I work with a team of fabricators who forge steel by hand, using age-old techniques of craftsmanship. I am often taken back to the *medina* of Fez, and the conversations I had with artisans over cups of mint tea. I didn't know what would become of my research in Morocco or my experiences abroad starting with CISLA, but it turns out, I am where I am and who I am now, because of them.

# notes from the field

## THE INTERNSHIP COMPONENT

of CISLA is vital to our students' global education and to the research projects they will conduct as seniors. For most of our students, it is not just an academic journey, but also a very personal one. We always look forward to hearing their observations through the Interim Internship Reports that they send a month into their internships. Their experiences are as individual and varied as the countries in which they've chosen to travel (this year, 31 CISLA students are conducting internships in 19 countries, working in fields ranging from botany to finance). Yet at the same time, they experience many of the same joys and challenges: the language barrier, life on one's own, cultural adjustment, loneliness, and ultimately, the development of a powerful sense of self-reliance and pride as they overcome these challenges and embrace the nuances of life in a foreign land. We know that when they return in the fall, they will not be quite the same people we sent off in May. They will be a little wiser, a little more confident and a lot more prepared for the global society that awaits them upon graduation. Below are some observations from the Class of 2013. — *Jenny Stevens*

### Meredith Byrne

#### RESPECT Cameroun Yaounde, Cameroon

The most challenging aspect of being here has been constantly being a spectacle. I can't go outside without someone yelling, "White girl!" I often attract a lot of atten-

tion doing mundane things like grocery shopping or riding in a taxi. That said, every day is rewarding. It is a great feeling at the end of the day to know that I navigated my way around a totally foreign place entirely on my own and in a language I am only now starting to master. I feel incredibly self-sufficient. It has also been rewarding to develop real friends and "family" here. In a culture that is based on the phrase *on est ensemble* (we're all in it together), I almost never find myself alone.

### Mackenzie Lilly

#### Compassion for Migrant Children Beijing, China

Aside from becoming more proficient in Chinese, I have learned a great deal about how to make good first impressions, even when you cannot fully communicate. A smile goes a long way. I have learned how to enter a community and build trust and ultimately a relationship with those around me. The first week felt eternal. Some of the kids would cry when I said "ni hao" to them. All I could think was, "What did I get myself into?" However, after the first few weeks of helping out, smiling, laughing and slowly beginning to talk with people, I have seen a complete transformation in my role in the community.

### Michael Corenthal

#### Center for Regional Development Potosi, Bolivia

Living and working on my own in another language and culture has been a tremendous experience for me. I've had

the opportunity to learn a lot about how the world functions and about myself. The most challenging thing has been seeing the devastating poverty of the kids from the mining community with which my organization works. When I first arrived, a group of boys could not believe that I arrived in an airplane and they wanted to know what it was like. One asked me if I had ridden in a rocket ship. They love to play soccer and we play with a popped, kids'-size basketball because none of them owns a real ball. My internship funding might be more than some miners make in a year. I have never met people so strong. I realize that I have been very lucky in my life, and the question I have been trying to deal with is, what is the role of someone like me who has opportunities and choices?

## Life at Work

"All of my coworkers have been more than welcoming and accepted me into the 'family.' ... They have made sure that all of my questions are answered, helped correct my lab techniques, and gotten to know me on a personal level."

"Last week, we met with an architecture firm that does single-family housing in the Munich area. I told them about my research on that subject, so they decided to spend an entire day driving me around to show me all of their past projects and give me short explanations of all of them."

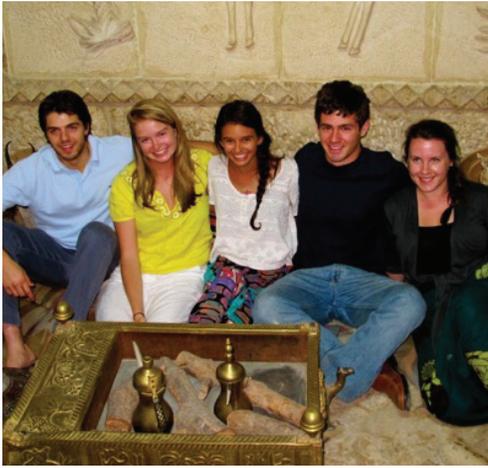
4



MICHAEL CORENTAL AMIDST AN ANDEAN NEW YEAR CELEBRATION.



AMANDA KLAY IN PERU WITH A CHILD FROM HER PROGRAM.



CISLA SCHOLARS MEET UP IN AMMAN, JORDAN (RYAN DILLON '13, CLAIRE BRENNAN '13, NICOLE MOOMJY '12, BRIAN GOOCH '13 AND LAUREL WOLF '14).



MUNIB KHAN '13 AND YAMA NOORI '12 IN FRONT OF BIG BEN IN LONDON.



EDIS KEKIC '13 AND FRIENDS AT OLYMPIAPARK IN MUNICH, GERMANY.

“As time has passed, I have noticed that [my supervisor] has trusted me with more responsibility, and has also encouraged me to spread my wings a bit and not be afraid to take initiative on a project myself or to talk with the various speakers who are invited to the museum.”

“It’s hard to sit in one place all day long — I am definitely not used to that.”

“[Writing for the company’s blog] has been an incredible experience for me, as I get to see places I might not have thought to visit, and the research relates directly to my SIP.”

“I found it hard to switch from a state of mind where one is constantly worrying about essay deadlines and upcoming exams to a state of mind where you stop thinking about work at 6 p.m. and then you’re free — it’s a good change, though.”

“I have learned to anticipate the tasks I will be assigned and proactively accomplish them without a supervisor having to ask me to do it.”

“I am forging fantastic relationships with companies I hope to work for in the future and people who will undoubtedly be lifelong friends.”

## Language

“The first week was very scary and tiring, because not being around any other English speakers and having to constantly think in another language is exhausting!”

“While it has been great being able to practice my Chinese, it has been difficult making close relationships in a foreign language. As my Chinese is improving, this

is getting better, but it is still something I need to work on.”

“I think one of the biggest challenges was speaking on the phone in French. I can easily understand what people are saying when I can see their mouths moving, but was really nervous that I wouldn’t understand what people were saying over the phone. ... You can try as hard as you want to write a script of what you will say, but conversations always require improvisation. Luckily it came much more easily than I expected!”

“The other day one visitor to the gardens asked me what a certain plant was called and why I was cutting it back. When I answered her in Chinese and she didn’t seem surprised, but continued speaking to me, it felt great! It is those moments that keep me excited and learning.”

“My biggest challenge on a day-to-day basis has been transitioning from classroom Arabic to real-life Arabic.”

“My language skills have improved immensely. Living with a host family and speaking French at the office has forced me to improve. In addition, I also review all my reports with another intern who then helps make corrections to my grammar.”

“The most rewarding part of the experience so far is the fact that I have to speak German all the time. I was never really sure how good my German was, but now I have become very confident in my language skills.”

## Adjustment/Challenges

“Living alone, working full time and operating completely in a foreign language

every day took some getting used to. It was really terrifying and pretty lonely the first week, but I think I have settled in pretty well.”

“At restaurants and when interacting with lower management, my coworkers interact with their underlings in a very short, abrasive manner. This is a cultural difference that has been hard to get used to.”

“I stick out physically here like nowhere else I have been, which has been challenging to get used to.”

“I have had to overcome my fear of walking through the meat market here, which makes me feel like becoming a vegetarian.”

“It is really difficult to relate to people. I find that most of my conversations go in the exact same direction, because it is a culture where it may be impolite to ask certain things to really get to know someone. However, I am making progress!”

“The most challenging aspect for me has been cutting myself some slack if I am struggling with the language or with a project that is completely new for me. Being patient with myself at these moments has been difficult for my perfectionist side.”

## Living/Life Skills

“I’ve been learning to explore the city on my own and am finding myself more responsible now that I’m living on my own. I’ve also been learning more recipes because I have to cook for myself almost every day, and spaghetti is getting really boring.”

“I’ve learned that I don’t necessarily mind not always having someone checking up on me. I like being able to set my

*continued on page 6*

## notes from the field

continued from page 5

own schedule and make my own decisions about what I will accomplish in a day.”

“Going to work every day and being on a schedule has made me really appreciate what my parents do.”

“I am learning how to cook and how to budget well. I am also developing my ability to argue in Spanish with cab drivers who try to overcharge me.”

“I am learning how to live in a city. Since I am from a small town in Maine, it is quite an adjustment!”

“One of the best feelings I have had since being here is finding a place to visit, or a restaurant I want to try, and then successfully navigating there all on my own. It gives me such a feeling of accomplishment.”

“I have been refining my ‘talents’ in the kitchen, learning how to strike up conversations with complete strangers and build relationships from there, learning how to go grocery shopping on a budget, learning how to budget in general, learning how to maintain a home, and most importantly, experiencing my own growth into the ‘real world.’ ... Life after Conn doesn’t seem as scary as it once did.”

6

## Personal Growth

“This experience has given me a new sense of confidence. After figuring out how to find housing, get to work and meet people all in a foreign language, I feel as though I could pick up and move anywhere without the slightest problem.”

“I have learned the importance of

knowing how to be alone. When I studied abroad in the fall, I was constantly fighting the feeling of being alone and was sad all the time. Now I have learned to love the freedom I have when I am alone and I take advantage of it.”

“The most rewarding part of my experience here has been the opportunity to learn different ways to interpret the world.”

“I am learning how to brush things off when they don’t go my way. Often when I make plans here, they don’t end up the way I originally envisioned them. Previously, this would have bothered me immensely, but I have learned to be more relaxed.”

“I think I have gained so much personal confidence and am getting better at speaking up and taking risks when it comes to expressing my opinion, which is something that has always been difficult for me as I can be very shy and reserved. I also believe that living alone has taught me a lot about myself and how to navigate stress and difficulties more independently than I am used to doing.”

“After this, I feel like I can do anything!”

## Praise and Awe

“I am so grateful to have had this opportunity. It is so completely different from the comfort of a study abroad program, and I feel more brave than I ever have.”

“This experience has been nothing short of awesome. I’ve learned (and am still learning) so many things about the world and myself, and could not have imagined it to be all that it has unfolded to be. I am looking forward to the next few weeks here and already feeling sad about leaving.”

*\*\*For a full list of the internships and projects being conducted by the Class of 2013, visit [www.conncoll.edu/centers/cisla/current-cisla-scholars.htm](http://www.conncoll.edu/centers/cisla/current-cisla-scholars.htm).*

CISLA students weren’t alone in expressing their praise and awe for the CISLA experience. Many of their supervisors wrote to us throughout the summer to tell us how thrilled they were to have them as interns! Here is just a smattering of the reports and comments we received:

“Cameron has been a real addition to the Modern Sky team. Very hardworking and trustworthy with a great ability to get things done.”

“Ivan has been wonderful. He is really dedicated and I am happy he came to work with my team when he did. Thank you for sending him to us!!”

“Mariam has been doing a wonderful job. Her knowledge of macroeconomics and international relations has helped us buffer key arguments regarding the attractiveness of investing in the Greater Paris region.”

“Meredith is a fantastic student who brings a lot to our organization. I am afraid to know her internship will end soon, because we really wish to work with her lots and lots!”

“Hosting a CISLA intern was truly a positive experience. We all learned a lot from Christina and felt she was a positive and motivating role model in many ways, especially in how she handled obstacles and challenges.”



CISLA MEET-UP IN PARIS: PAULINA HERNANDEZ '13 WITH CLASS OF '13 CISLA STUDENTS MEREDITH BOYLE, MIRIAM TABATADZE, MEGAN MAFFUCCI AND EMMA LAFOUNTAIN.



CLAIRE BRENNAN '13 ON A MOUNTAIN CLEAN-UP IN MOROCCO.

# CISLA-Sponsored Events 2011-2012

## A Day with John Sayles

*Oscar-nominated independent writer-director, novelist, MacArthur Fellow*

April 13, 2012

11:50 a.m.  
COMMON HOUR  
*Lives, Places, Stories: Cinema as Public History*  
Blaustein 210

1:15 p.m.  
DISCUSSION  
*The creative process of filmmaking and screenwriting*  
Blaustein 210

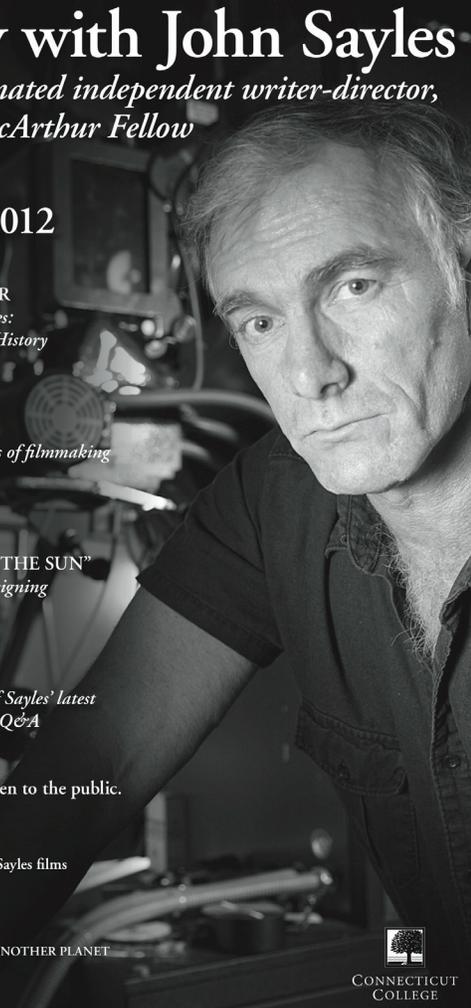
6 p.m.  
"A MOMENT IN THE SUN"  
*Reading and book signing*  
Olin 014

7 p.m.  
"AMIGO"  
*Special screening of Sayles' latest film, followed by a Q&A*  
Olin 014

All events free and open to the public.  
Sponsored by CISLA

SCREENINGS of earlier Sayles films  
April 3 - Blaustein 201  
7 pm - MEN WITH GUNS  
9 pm - MATEWAN  
April 10 - Blaustein 201  
7 pm - BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET  
9 pm - LONE STAR

Photo by Ric Kallisher




# BE THERE.

## RETHINKING PROGRESS

4/14/12  
Evans Hall

10:00 AM  
Full day event

TEDx  
Connecticut College  
an independently organized TED event



# Swing & Salsa!

Saturday, March 3  
9 pm - 1 am  
Cro 1962 Room

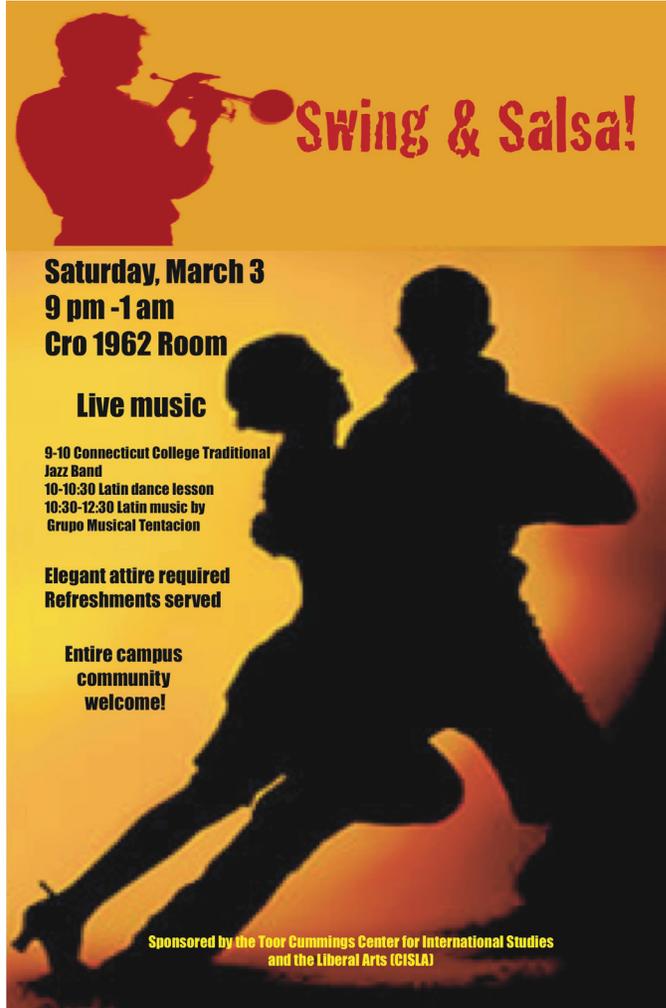
Live music

9-10 Connecticut College Traditional Jazz Band  
10-10:30 Latin dance lesson  
10:30-12:30 Latin music by Grupo Musical Tentacion

Elegant attire required  
Refreshments served

Entire campus community welcome!

Sponsored by the Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts (CISLA)



## THE OSLO ATTACKS: RIGHT-WING TERRORISM IN EUROPE

A Panel Discussion With:  
Marc R. Forster, Professor of History, Panel Chair  
David Patton, Professor of Government and International Relations  
William Rose, Professor of Government and International Relations  
Edward Fisher, CISLA Class of 2012

Are the Oslo attacks in July evidence that transnational right-wing terrorism is on the rise in Europe? And if so, how much is it related to anti-Muslim or anti-immigrant sentiments? In light of the 10th anniversary of 9/11, the panel will discuss what right-wing extremism means for Europe.

Common Hour  
Blaustein 210  
September 16, 2011  
11:50 am

Sponsored by the Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts (CISLA)





CONNECTICUT COLLEGE



## The CISLA Experience or How We Learned to Love Nicaragua

by Steve and Lisa Owen P'12

8

**WE MUST ADMIT** that when our son Alex Owen '12 told us that he wanted to spend his CISLA internship in Nicaragua, we had our reservations. We loved the CISLA program — we were impressed by the show of multilingual fluency at the sophomore dinner, saw how the CISLA staff really knew the participants and encouraged them to be their best selves, and respected the thought and intellectual framework that the program built around this summer experience. But Nicaragua!!! Why not some place pleasant and comfortable, like Spain?

But Alex was determined to work in an area of human rights that he felt would be best served in a developing nation. So, with CISLA's help, he found an amazing NGO, Puntos de Encuentro, which tackled difficult subjects, like AIDS, human trafficking, violence against women and the downside of “machismo” through music events, radio broadcasts and producing telenovellas.

The CISLA staff vetted the organization and provided Alex with support every step of the way. With their help, he found a guesthouse in Managua that hosted international visitors, and he befriended many other houseguests who

came and went during his summer. He was the only intern (and non-national) at his NGO but he worked on great projects. He networked his way to meet other volunteers and students in the country, and traveled with new friends.

We went to visit him in the middle of the summer, and were lucky enough to spend a week traveling a land with spectacular scenery: seven volcanoes, lush fields and beautiful beaches. Unfortunately, summer is the rainy season there, so we also saw plenty of rain, mud and power outages. It was really amazing to see our son navigate this difficult landscape with confidence, experience and fluent Spanish.

Finally, technology helped raise our comfort level. Alex Skyped frequently with us from the courtyard of his guesthouse. One of the highlights of the summer experience for him (and for us) was when he was interviewed by his NGO on their national radio broadcast (in Spanish, of course). We listened to Alex's broadcast at home live via computer. We couldn't understand a word of what he said, but it sounded just like him anyway.

When Alex returned to Connecticut College in the fall of his senior year, his

CISLA experience was far from over. He was mentored along the way by several professors to produce his final project. Attending the senior banquet was also an amazing experience for us. All of the seniors were incredibly articulate in their presentations about their summer internships and the academic projects that they developed based upon these experiences. It was clear at that event that the CISLA staff and faculty really knew these students, and were genuinely proud and excited about their accomplishments.

In the end, CISLA really represented the best that Conn has to offer. The program offered a rigorous academic framework to guide each student to have a deeply personal growth experience. Alex was mentored closely by several of the faculty and the staff as part of his CISLA experience. He was nurtured and inspired to take chances, both personally and academically. In so doing, CISLA provided our son with the skills and confidence to be a true global citizen. We are deeply grateful.

ALEX OWEN '12 AT AN EVENT FOR HIS INTERNSHIP LAST SUMMER, “QUE TUANI NO SER MACHISMO” (“IT'S COOL TO NOT BE SEXIST”).

# Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose

by Mary Devins

**MUCH HAS CHANGED** in 22 years.

In June 1990 I received a call from the Connecticut College human resources office, probably called the personnel office back then, saying they had my resume on file and would like to interview me for a job at the Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts. Robert Proctor, the founding director of CISLA, hired me, and I began what has turned out to be a wonderful, 22-year journey.

Immediately after I was hired, Proctor showed me to my office on the fourth floor of Fanning, and then left for Italy. There were no people on the fourth floor in the summer, the phone never rang, I knew no one, there was no air conditioning, and sometimes I fell asleep. In the office were a computer and a file cabinet with the folders of 13 students, the first class of CISLA scholars, all of whom I was meant to find internships for. The job I had left took me to Italy on a regular basis, where I had been a sales representative for a lumber company. I had lived and studied in Italy, had a master's in Italian, and was certified to teach French and Italian. But how was I supposed to find an internship in Russia dealing with property law? The expression "to learn on the job" now had real meaning for me.

In 1990 there was no email, no Internet. The computer was a "word processor," that is, a fancy typewriter where you could correct mistakes without carbon paper and do time-saving mail merges. What is carbon paper, you say? Google it. A Web browser was not a vocabulary word. It was time for me to learn my way around the library if I were to find these internships. Librarians ARE your friends.

All internships were solicited through "snail mail," a word that did not exist then, because there was no email to compare it with. Through reference books such as the Encyclopedia of International Organizations, I would pinpoint an organization and mail off my requests. In October letters would be sent around the world and then, the



MARY DEVINS WITH CISLA STUDENT PRINCE ILBOUDU '14.

waiting game: waiting for the mail delivery with letters of acceptance or denial. One year at the end of April, I got a letter that said, "Thank you for your letter of Oct. 3." Those were the days when young people had stamp collections. Each day as I came home my son would say, "Show me the stamps you got today." All of our answers came in the mail. Somehow it all got done.

## Hit and miss and faux pas

We have been miraculously blessed over 22 years of never having had a serious problem with an intern overseas. There were, however a few "unconventional" happenings. A young woman in Ecuador suffered from an acute case of conjunctivitis. She was living in a remote village and the women elders told her that the cure was for a lactating mother to squirt her mother's milk into her eyes. She claims it worked. In many countries there was not a word for internship. The fact that a young American would come to their country and work for free had no point of reference, but NGOs and organizations would simply say yes because it seemed like a good idea, maybe because they could practice some English.

Students who went to Russia in the '90s often had a unique experience waiting for them. One was told his job was to procure vodka in the morning and pick up contraband refrigerators at the airport in the evening. Another young lady called me to ask if she should be worried that there were men with machine guns outside the office. We now know how to set up an internship with learning contracts that set goals and expectations for both the student and the organization.

Mea culpa: I sent a young lady on an internship in Beijing in the early '90s. Everything to do with China at that time was difficult or almost impossible. There were no hostels, no craigslist, foreign students mostly were not welcome at Chinese universities, and a home stay was unheard of. I found what I thought was a women's residence and sent the student off. She called after she arrived to tell me that the place I had found was actually a brothel. Another young lady was interested in gender issues in France. We solicited and got an internship through an organization that she had found in the reference books. When she arrived, it was an organization that dealt with animal husbandry. Something had been lost in translation.

We were not so consumed with constant communication in those early days. Parents seemed less worried and accepted the fact that their child was gone for the summer, usually without any regular communication. Calling home was simply too expensive. Today a parent might easily call me if they haven't heard from their child on a daily basis. Today I can check Facebook in the morning and know and see what Merry had for dinner last night.

There is no doubt that technology has made profound positive changes in how we all operate. In an hour we can find 10 possible internships on the Internet and email the organization for further information, housing is easily found through craigslist, we can talk and keep in regular touch through email, Skype, instant mes-

*continued on page 12*

# CISLA alumni updates

**AS WE PLANNED** the CISLA 20th Reunion in June, we received many wonderful updates from CISLA alumni across the country and around the world! It is not surprising that our alumni tend to be in interesting places and doing interesting things. Here's what some of them are up to:

## 2012

*Meghan Ball* was selected for the 2012-13 Teaching Assistant Program in France, where she will teach English to elementary students in Grenoble. The highly competitive selection process favors those who are proficient in French and who possess the skills to promote cultural understanding between France and the U.S.

## 2011

*Candice Duncan* is working as an intern with a small consulting firm in Washington, D.C., run by former CIA, State Department and NSA employees. She works primarily on the Cote d'Ivoire account, translating press releases from the Office of the President and managing social media engagement.

*Tessa Engel* spent the past year teaching in New York City through AmeriCorps' City Year program. In late August, she plans to return abroad to work for an organization dealing with sexual and reproductive health for female immigrants and refugees in Oaxaca, Mexico, or Guatemala City, Guatemala.

*Alyssa Grabfield* has a job that she describes as "very CISLA-like": she works for Mercer in New York City, analyzing health risks for employees in countries where her clients have operations. Her biggest projects are Levi Strauss and ALCOA. She was also named the Latin America expert for her team! She and *Jane Thompson* are roommates.

*Rachael Hurwitz* has been teaching piano lessons and composing musical scores for independent films and recently won a competition to compose the musical score for a feature film, which she will begin



LEFT: KATIE MCCORMAK WITH SAM LINDO '08 AND ANDREA PACKARD '07.

RIGHT: GRANT HOGAN '07 WITH STEPHANIE WEISS '07 AND EMILY BARRY '07 AT THE CISLA REUNION.



working on soon. She is also volunteering as a Spanish translator at the AmeriCares Free Clinic in Bridgeport, Conn.

## 2010

*Johanna Gregory* is a program assistant to the vice president and director of programs at the American Council on Germany. She coordinates and programs various events, including talks and conferences, an annual multilateral young leaders conference in Europe, and two annual study tours to Berlin on immigration and climate/energy.

*Erin Osborn* entered the post-baccalaureate pre-health program at the University of Pennsylvania last September. She loves the program and living in Philadelphia!

## 2009

*Gili Ben-Josef* returned to New York City last September after two years living in Israel. She just finished her first year at Columbia University's social-organizational psychology program and is also interning at a human resources consulting firm.

*Erin Holstein* is pursuing her master's in human rights at the London School of Economics. She loves London and plans to work in the human rights or humanitarian sector after finishing her degree in August.

*Andras Molnar* spent the past year in Xi'an, China, studying Chinese and the Silk Road and also teaching English. He is enjoying the challenge and getting to spend more time in Asia!

*Maddie Thomson* is returning to graduate school this fall to pursue a master of international business degree at Tufts University's Fletcher School of International Affairs after two years working at the Tahirih Justice Center, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting immigrant women and girls from gender-based violence. She plans to continue to focus on gender and forced migration, shifting from a legal perspective to a more business-focused approach.

*Caroline Trowbridge* is the AmeriCorps VISTA Leader at Generations Inc., where she recruits and supports a corps of 22 VISTAs serving at eight different organizations in the Boston area. It has been a rewarding experience, but her term ends in August and she hopes to find a new position at a college or university.

## 2005

*Leila Edwards Harris* moved to Austin, Texas, in 2010 after five years working for Fidelity Investments in Boston to be with her college sweetheart and fiancé. They were married in June 2011 at the historic Wayside Inn in Sudbury, Mass. They are house hunting and Leila is pursuing her love of photography.

## 2004

*Katie Coffin* lived in Boston for eight years, where she was marketing and coordinating foreign exchange programs for EF Education and then working as department manager of OB/GYN at Mount



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: FORMER CISLA DIRECTOR ROBERT GAY WITH HIS SON, JULIAN; FORMER CISLA DIRECTOR JULIA KUSHIGIAN WITH HER HUSBAND, CHARLES SECOR; FORMER INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR KATIE MCCORMACK WITH LIZ BRADLEY '07; CISLA ALUMS JEN GROSS '10 AND JOHANNA GREGORY '10 WITH FORMER INTERNSHIP COORDINATOR DOT WANG; MARY DEVINS WITH CANDICE DUNCAN '11; CADDIE PUTNAM RANKIN '02 WITH PRINCE ILBOUDO '14.



Auburn Hospital. She is relocating to Berkeley, Calif., in July and hopes to get back into the field of cultural exchange or international operations.

### 2003

*Alex Fiorillo* spent the past three years as COO of MicroFinance Transparency, a global consumer protection organization for the microfinance industry. However, she recently moved on to join ideas42 as a vice president, where she is managing the organization's international development work. ideas42 is an international non-profit design and research lab that uses behavioral economics to address complex social problems. She still lives in Brooklyn, but spends lots of time on planes and in hotels. She would love to see fellow CISLA alums in New York or elsewhere!

*Elli Nagai-Rothe* was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in 2010 to conduct research on institutional racism and promising strategies to address racial inequity in affiliation with the New Zealand Human Rights Commission. She lives in Washington, D.C., where she is hoping to find work with an NGO or nonprofit focusing on social justice. She is getting married in September!

*Maria Placht* works at the Army Corps of Engineers Conflict Resolution and Public Participation Center. She focuses on the equitable allocation of water between various users in the U.S. and occasionally overseas. When she's not at work,

she plays volleyball and hikes around the DC area. She lives and works in Alexandria, Va., and stays in touch with several CISLA alums.

### 1997

*Laure Carpentier Cousineau* has been working in business development for Baker & Mackenzie, the world's largest law firm, for 11 years. Last July, she took advantage of the firm's international nature to move her family (5-year-old Charlotte and 3-year-old twins Sophie and Sebastien) to Paris.

*Sarah Schoellkopf* finished her Ph.D. in Spanish and Portuguese at U.C. Berkeley and lives in San Francisco. While she continues to have her toes in the academic pool, she is now teaching Spanish at Saint Matthew's Episcopal Day School, a private school in San Mateo, Calif. She is enjoying teaching younger students and finds that her CISLA project continues to inform her professional life every single day!

### 1996

*Andrea Fisher Erda* has three children, Wills (age 6) and Cornelia and Henry (age 4). They live in Richmond, but big change is on the horizon as they will be moving to her family's large farm this fall! She works as a grant-writing consultant for the National Council for Research on Women, based out of New York



*continued on page 12*

## alumni updates

*continued from page 11*

City, and loves the constant exposure to amazing women doing amazing things.

### 1995

*Brigitte Beaudoin Kirk* lives in Hoboken, N.J., with her husband and four children, ages 1-7. She is also chief of staff, Office of the CFO, at Blue Cross Blue Shield.

### 1993

*Benjamin Lodmell* lives in Argentina, where he is an independent asset manager with the largest closely held private bank in Switzerland. He has five children (the youngest was born earlier this summer!).

*Laura Manzano* has been in the luxury resort business for 14 years and works for Auberger Resorts in New York City. She recently hired fellow CISLA alumna *Am-ani Zaveri '12*, who started working for her in June! Laura married Michael Leibert '92 last October and she is pregnant with their first child, due in September.



CISLA ALUMS GILI BEN-YOSEF '09 AND MADDIE THOMSON '09.

## change

*continued from page 9*

saging, Facebook and Twitter, and great travel deals are to be had on Orbitz or Kayak. But there are some things I don't want to see modernized. An internship in a foreign country, in a foreign language in the world of adults, is transformative and powerful. I want our students to know what it is like to be alone and how to fill their spare time creatively without being tethered to parents and friends. I want them to have the time to simply reflect. It is here where our students tell us they feel enormous growth and gain confidence in themselves. That has not changed in 22 years.

P.S. I still have a few more good years in me.

Return Service Requested

The Tor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts NEWSLETTER

# prism

270 Mohegan Avenue  
New London, CT 06320



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Non-profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
New London, CT  
Permit No. 35