# Alumni Newsletter

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In 2013-2014, 26 students graduated from the Spanish Department with a major in Spanish and 25 with a minor. Thirteen of them majored or minored in Spanish education.

Below are photos from our Senior Celebration event.
I live in Vancouver, BC, and went to Denia, Spain in 1995. I use my Spanish to chat with immigrants from Central and South America that live in my neighborhood and go to my church.

Carmen de Haan (’96)

I work for Farmers Insurance in the claim department. I am a licensed insurance adjuster and assist callers in both English and Spanish in filing their insurance claims. I take inbound calls from around the country and speak to Spanish-speaking policy holders about their insurance policy and claim.

When I was at Calvin, I decided to major in Spanish for two reasons. One reason was to travel. The study aboard programs Calvin has to offer, especially in Spanish-speaking countries, are fantastic opportunities to see the world and engage others with what you have learned in the classroom. The other reason I chose Spanish as one of my majors is that I thought it would give me an edge in the job search. Being bilingual has opened up many different doors and opportunities.

Calvin prepares its students for the world. Critical thinking skills are a large part of my day-to-day life, both in and out of the work place. Calvin gives its graduates the tools to think, making those difficult decisions and feeling confident that you made the right choice.

The Spanish Department is a family. The professors engage with their students both in the classroom and over lunch on the weekend. Everyone cares for one another. During my years at Calvin I had the opportunity to participate in two off-campus programs with the department, and they were amazing. The trips themselves were great, but the people that planned and led them were so dedicated. The Spanish Department is committed to the success of their students.

Academically, choosing Spanish as one of my majors at Calvin was a great decision. Having another language, especially one as large as Spanish, gives you so many more opportunities. From higher paying positions, to jobs that require someone who speaks Spanish, to the basic skill of communicating, knowing another language and the different cultures associated with it gives you such a large advantage.

Adam Bowen (’13)

I live in Vancouver, BC, and went to Denia, Spain in 1995. I use my Spanish to chat with immigrants from Central and South America that live in my neighborhood and go to my church.

Carmen de Haan (’96)
I work for a Catholic healthcare system in St. Louis, Missouri, as a computer software trainer. I mainly teach classes each week to new hires who need to learn how to use our electronic medical record software program, but frequently I visit clinics and hospital departments when they first start using the system to provide assistance. I work at hospitals across a number of states, and in many areas we serve a large Spanish-speaking population. While I don't conduct my classes in Spanish, I've had the opportunity to utilize Spanish with our patients and co-workers. A few years ago I was helping at an Ob/Gyn clinic in Arkansas. The Spanish translator left to get her flu shot, and in the ten minutes she was gone, a Spanish-speaking patient arrived and explained that she was in labor. No one else at the front desk understood what she was saying, but thankfully I understood exactly what was happening! As far as I know, she delivered a healthy baby later that day.

Our healthcare system has an outreach ministry in Laredo, Texas, which is a primarily Spanish-speaking part of the country. I helped our department raise some money for the ministry in Laredo, which includes a health care clinic, vocational training program, and domestic violence shelter. Leaders in Laredo invited me to visit them a few years ago to say thanks for our fundraising efforts. They lined up a tour guide to take me around to the various areas where they serves, but lo and behold, a scheduling mix-up occurred and the only people available to take me around that day spoke Spanish! The receptionist was fit to be tied, but of course it was no problem at all. I learned a lot that day about ministry opportunities in Laredo, Texas and had fun speaking Spanish the whole time.

I graduated in 2010 with a major in Speech Pathology and a minor in Spanish. I'm so thankful for the off-campus experience I had through the Spanish department. I spent a semester in Merida, Mexico, and it gave me the confidence to start putting my Spanish into practice in a real way. After graduation I moved to Austin, Texas, to attend the University of Texas at Austin for the Speech Pathology Master’s program which also had a bilingual emphasis. I now am working for a group called Bilinguistics in Austin, TX, which is made up of all bilingual speech pathologists. I’m using my Spanish daily as I work with children in an out-patient clinic setting, home setting, and school settings.
Rachel Van Dyken ('12)

I speak Spanish every day as a medical assistant at Lawndale Christian Health Center in Chicago, IL. Seeing patients light up when I can converse with them is awesome and so rewarding. I am so thankful I took Spanish at Calvin and that I see practical applications of my classroom learning every single day. Thank you to all who pushed me to excel and master the language. I am very grateful!

James Dykstra ('11)

My name is James Dykstra and I graduated in 2011 with a Spanish minor. I am currently serving in the Peace Corps in Central Mexico. Training has been in Querétaro, which ends this week. I will be serving for 2 years in the Sierra Gorda de Querétaro en un pueblecito que se llama Río Verdito. He aquí más información en el siguiente enlace: http://midwestpcvs.wordpress.com/2013/08/02/portage-mich-resident begins-peace-corps-service-in-mexico/.

Rachel TenHaaf ('05)

I am now a Ph.D., defended on Saturday, May 3. It's been a long, long road, but I was not only approved (with minor revisions) but they also supported my trajectory as a scholar in general. My dissertation is entitled "Visualizing an Aesthetics of Resistance: The Role of Sight in 19th and 20th Century (Neo) Realism on the Iberian Peninsula." My basic point is to do a comparative analysis of the Iberian Peninsula in order to explore the way the realist aesthetic, because of its conceptual basis in visuality, became a site of interrogation and resistance to the visually controlled dictatorial contexts of the 20th century. My new position at Kalamazoo College is as an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow.
2013-2014 was a fruitful year for exciting encounters with Spanish, Latin American, and Hispanic cultures here on campus and in the Grand Rapids community. In the fall, students and faculty convened together to celebrate Día de la Hispanidad (October 15) and Día de los Muertos (November 5) as well as to sing villancicos at the Spanish Christmas Caroling event (December 5). The enjoyment and celebration of cultures continued in the spring with Noche Sudamericana (March 10), César Chávez March (March 20), and Taco Tasting Tour (April 12).

Enjoy photos from all of our events this year!
department events

Día de los Muertos
department events

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Villancicos
Just before spring break, a couple dozen Calvin students participated as flag-bearers in the annual César E. Chávez March for social justice in the Roosevelt Park neighborhood of Grand Rapids. The march commemorates and honors the late social activist and labor leader César Chávez and promotes unity in the greater Grand Rapids community. Calvin students carried flags representing the United States, the United Farmer Workers Union (founded by César Chávez), and the Spanish-speaking countries of Central and South America. Although the day was cold and blustery, students commented on how much they enjoyed engaging with the local Hispanic community. Calvin’s participation in this and other events helps build relationships with the Latino community in West Michigan. The march was followed by a community gathering at Roosevelt Park CRC, where speakers addressed the audience on the life and legacy of Chávez as well as this year’s topic, “Immigration Reform.”
This year, students learned many new praise songs and had ample opportunities to memorize and practice them throughout the semester. Among our special guests this year were students from Rockford Christian, who blessed us with their singing and prayers.
Cynthia Cortez, a junior from Ecuador majoring in biochemistry, was our native assistant this year and will remain in the same role next year. During 2013-2014, Cynthia took charge of the Spanish Table and conducted various activities for the department’s Spanish students as well as for Spanish House students with whom she lived during the year. The following are some of the highlights of her experiences in her own words:

Amistades y relaciones, esas son las definiciones de un año exitoso como asistente de español. Cuarenta empanadas, cuarenta arepas, una olla gigante de lomo saltado, una olla de ceviche, y música para bailar, esta lista fue lo que nos llevó a pasar todo un domingo en la cocina, la casa llena de humo, la música de Selena a todo volumen, y las cuatro aprendiendo a cocinar la comida colombiana, ecuatoriana, peruana y, bueno, las empanadas son de todos lados. La Casa de Español fue parte de algunos eventos, incluyendo una Noche Sudamericana, la cual fue el resultado de ese día en la cocina. Estos eventos unieron a todos los miembros de la Casa de Español durante el año, y a pesar de que ninguna de las chicas se conocían al comienzo de este viaje, al terminar, todas hemos cultivado amistades que durarán la vida entera. Pero también había otro tipo de eventos, conversaciones sobre la cultura, la política, el machismo, y las vistas de Perú y de Ecuador. Todas las semanas, los estudiantes apasionados por el idioma y por la cultura de Latinoamérica, hablaban conmigo sobre lo que sea, resultando en amistades únicas. Este año entrante tenemos una visión para la Casa de Español y las actividades que, Dios permita, resultará en una expansión del conocimiento de la cultura latinoamericana y en el comienzo de una relación con los latinoamericanos de Grand Rapids.

We are thankful for Cynthia’s enthusiasm and faithful work and are looking forward to her collaboration with the department next year!
scholarships and awards

We are proud of the students who received departmental distinctions in the past year: Grace Liao (Edna Greenway Scholarship), Alicia Davids (Elsa Cortina Award), and Alexis Reid (Elsa Cortina Scholarship).

Visit page 25 to see how you can be a part of financially aiding Spanish students like Alexis at Calvin College.

Grace Liao, a junior majoring in Spanish and Chinese, has spent a semester in Spain and a summer in Taiwan, where she continued her language studies. She is a valuable and beloved member of her Grand Rapids Chinese Christian Church where she is actively involved in Young Adult Fellowship, youth group teaching and mentoring, and mission trips. Grace has felt a calling to be a teacher since she was 10 years old. This is how she views her role as a future teacher in her own words:

As an aspiring Christian educator, I believe that the purpose of education is to equip our students to be agents of renewal for God’s kingdom. Therefore, I would like to develop and nourish each student, who is created in the image of God, with their strengths and weaknesses so that they may use their education for whichever paths he calls them to lead. Based on my understanding of the purpose of education, my hope is that God would use me, as a Spanish and/or Chinese teacher, to equip my students to be agents of renewal for his kingdom by demonstrating, teaching, and sharing with them the values of learning, languages, and cultures.

For me, learning is a blessing and a privilege, which God gives to prepare us for his callings. And learning languages is part of our calling as Christians, because it is a way of loving, respecting, and valuing our neighbors for who they are. It opens doors to learn about, from, and with people from different cultures that God has created and with people whom we may not be able to engage with otherwise if we did not learn their language and culture. Specifically with teaching Spanish then, I hope to challenge my students to not just learn the language but to use the language to engage, serve, and learn with the Spanish-speaking population in the United States or in other countries.”

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Jessica Koranda, majoring in Spanish and English, received a McGregor Summer Fellowship this year. Her work with Professor Miller will form part of a larger publication which will include all the newspapers published in Argentina and Uruguay in the 19th century.

My name is Jessica, and this summer I am working as a research assistant for Professor Edward Miller, funded by the McGregor Fellowship Program. Together, Professor Miller and I are anthologizing nineteenth-century Afro-Argentinian newspapers written and published by Afro-Argentinian writers, a group that has been largely ignored and marginalized throughout the country’s history. Beyond broadening my knowledge of the Spanish language, working on this project is also introducing me to the plight of a people of which I previously knew little. As an English and Spanish major, I value the ability language gives me to communicate with and learn from people across spatial and temporal divides; similarly, this project allows me to learn what was important to the Afro-Argentine people, to learn of the problems they faced, and to begin to see the connections between their lives and mine. It has been interesting to see that the problems they faced during the late nineteenth century are some of the same problems that have yet to be solved today in our world.

Regarding the scholarship, Grace shared:

Estoy muy agradecida por esta beca que va a ayudar a mi familia y yo a pagar mi matrícula. No sólo va a ayudarnos financieramente sino que también va a ser usada para el Reino del Señor. Como aspiro a ser una maestra de español, espero enseñar a mis estudiantes el amor del Señor, el amor de la lengua castellana, y el amor de la gente de culturas diferentes. Con esta beca, seré capaz de aprender más sobre cómo enseñar a mis estudiantes en las clases de educación y todo esto sirve para el plan que el Señor tenga. Entonces, ¡muchísimas gracias a todos por su apoyo!
The honors program in the Spanish Department has grown in the last years, due in no small part to the excellent work done by our students and their promotion of the experience to others. Jessica Koranda’s piece in this same newsletter shows one such testimony. Our program, as Jessica shares, gives students a chance to engage with course material more deeply and to participate in additional experiences and with fresh materials according to the students’ main interests.

This year, students have done honors work in different areas. Students doing honors in linguistics have analyzed the use of Spanish and other languages indigenous to Latin America, and others have touched on religious themes or analyzed literary texts. Four students completed their thesis work in honors this year, and the titles of their work speak to the varied interests that were developed or furthered through honors study. Julie Busscher wrote on “It’s Not Nada: Carmen Laforet and Feminism Under Franco,” and Greg Bylsma produced “Theological Symbiosis: Effects of the Catholic Institution on Liberation Theology.” Sarah Hubbel’s topic was in education: “The Honduran Educational System: The Challenge of Poverty,” and Marlena May spoke of “The Identity Crisis of Hispanic Youth.” The Calvin community enjoyed presentations by these students in April.

Thanks to all honors students for sharing their fascinating work with all of us, and congratulations to our honors graduates in 2014!

read student testimonies on the following page >>
Hispanic youth are the largest growing group in the United States today and have an incredibly large amount of talent and experiences to offer. However, young Hispanics struggle to choose between the expectations of their parents, their friends, and the American culture. This battle between expectations explains the greatest problem Hispanic youth face today: the problem of identity. To help solve this problem, it is necessary for us Christians to boldly partner with other church, school, and community programs to spread the gospel to these youth and help them find their true identity in Christ.

*Marlena May (’15)*

This past spring I took a class called Hispanic Immigration to the US, in which we tackled the topic of immigration in stages, working our way south through the areas most predominantly represented among our immigrant population, starting in Mexico and moving through Central America, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. We read books written by immigrants from each area, detailing their experiences. We had the amazing opportunity to hear first-hand accounts from several immigrants in and around the Calvin community, and we also got to talk with people in the community working to help our immigrant brothers and sisters. We talked and read a great deal about how we as Christians should be working to solve the problems faced by undocumented immigrants, and we worked hard to understand the current immigration laws, along with their strengths and weaknesses. I took this class for honors credit, which meant that I needed to somehow stretch beyond the material covered in class. Using the book *Hija de la fortuna* (Daughter of Fortune) by Isabel Allende, I looked at the history of Chilean immigrants that came to the US during the California Gold Rush in 1849. I learned a lot about how the Chileans influenced the formation of San Francisco and about the poor treatment the Chileans received upon arriving in the US. It was interesting and sad to see how little has changed.

*Jessica Koranda (’15)*
During this past January, Professor Lamanna took a group of ten Calvin students to Yucatán, Mexico, for a fun and educational Spanish-language immersion experience. The students lived with Mexican families and attended lectures on various aspects of Mexican culture, including religion, family life, health care, and education. Although they spent the majority of their time in the city of Mérida, they also took a weekend trip to a local pueblo and visited Mayan ruins at Dzibilchaltún, Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, and Tulum. Professor Lamanna was impressed by the strength of the group’s commitment to speaking only Spanish at all times (even with each other), and this paid off as the students made notable gains in their oral Spanish language proficiency over the 3-week period. They also increased their skills in cross-cultural communication through interactions with their families, friends, and other Mexicans. Finally, the group learned to trust God more as they were stretched beyond their comfort zones and had to consciously rely on him to a greater degree than they often do at home.
Calvin’s third semester in Arequipa, led by Professor Marilyn Bierling, was as eventful and exciting as the previous two. One of the unique highlights for many students was a climb to Mt. Misti, an active volcano close to Arequipa (last erupted in 1985), measuring 19,101 feet above sea level.

Mt. Misti: we came, we climbed, we conquered, we collapsed.

This past weekend, me, 11 other classmates, and Neal (profe Bierling’s husband) climbed Mt. Misti. This volcano is unavoidable from the city of Arequipa. If I walk to the university, the city center, a friend’s house, or just down the road, Mt. Misti is in the background. From constant sightings, I have gotten quite an appreciation for Misti and its beauty, but my appreciation for its immense size was amplified after climbing to the very top. At 8:30 am on Saturday we embarked for our journey. 4 by 4’s brought us to our starting point at 14,000 ft. From there, we hiked for about 2.5 hrs. till 16,000 ft. Upon arriving, we bundled up against the cold and camped for the “night”. I put night in quotes, because we woke up at 1 am to summit Misti, so a night of rest wasn’t completely enjoyed. We climbed in the dark until about 5 am when the sun started to rise. As we stopped breathlessly for a rest, we turned around and were stunned by a sunrise above the far off mountains. Needless to say, it was a sight worthy of National Geographic.

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Our climb continued for six hours. During this time we took the guide’s advice and thought about nothing but our next step. Looking up towards the peak was prohibited, because to see the extensive and steep path was disheartening. Also, thinking about the time till the summit was discouraged, because usually the answer was in hours. So we trudged on and only let our minds wander as far as “breathe, breathe, step, breathe, breathe, step”. When we finally summited at 19,339 ft., we collapsed. The climb had exhausted us so thoroughly that we needed to recover before taking in the beautiful scenery and relishing the fact that we had, in fact, conquered Misti. The view at the top was stunning. We could see the smoking crater, blue mountains in the distance, Volcano Chichani to the side, and Arequipa below. It was an incredible experience to be on top of the Mountain Misti that always towers over the city of Arequipa. I proudly state that our entire group summited. Some suffered from the altitude more than others, fighting nausea and pounding headaches, but each and every one reached the summit.

Overall, it was a very hard and long journey, but I think that the majority of us would agree that it was worth the suffering. I quote from my dear friend Megan Rozeveld who stated it perfectly, “The best miserable thing I’ve ever done.” I conclude this blog post with two questions:

- Would any of us do it again? NO.
- Was it worth it? Yes!

Written by Carmen DeBoer.

To appreciate stories about other adventures and experiences in Peru, please see the blog at http://www.adventure-in-peru.blogspot.com/.
This past semester (Spring 2014) a group of fourteen students led by Professor María Rodríguez arrived at Toncontín International Airport in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on January 3, 2014. Immediately after their arrival, a bus took them to Santa Lucía where Calvin students have been hosted by Honduran families for the last three years.

Santa Lucía is a municipality of Francisco Morazán, located 13.5 km to the east of Tegucigalpa, the capital city of the Republic of Honduras. It is a beautiful town surrounded by pine trees and mountains. It has narrow stone streets and colonial architecture. Seven villages and 37 neighborhoods comprise the town. Santa Lucía is considered a touristic town and is a welcoming community where our students feel safe and are protected by their host families.

Right from the beginning students were motivated to speak Spanish at all times and they built wonderful relationships among them. The host families were amazing. They treated our students with respect and cared for them like for their own children.

The group had two service learning trips. The first was to the village of La Florida de Opatoro (called La Perla de la Sierra), in the municipality of La Paz. We worked on a school mural and also on the village’s playground. Students stayed in four different houses and spent time with local people. They were impressed by the parties the community organized to welcome them and to say farewell. While in the village, students observed a small Lenca community which is struggling to make a living. Last year coffee farmers lost their harvest due to a disease which killed their coffee trees. Students walked through the coffee farms and saw the damage firsthand.

The second service learning project was completed during Easter week. On this trip, we went to Cedros, a municipality in Francisco Morazán located 77 km from Tegucigalpa. It is beautiful place surrounded by tropical pine forests and rolling hills. We worked in El Guante, a small village close to Cedros. Our role was to help put the roof on a multi-grade school. We worked from 8:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. From 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. students played with community kids who arrived in the school for this purpose. Other students decided to spend time with a group of mothers who in many cases were younger than our students.
Another highlight of the program was the ethnographic study course. As part of the course, four students worked for Teleton, a rehabilitation program for children with special needs. Students had a unique opportunity to work in their fields such as Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Special Education for autistic children, and Social Work. One student worked for the Ministry of Finances of Honduras. She was very happy and motivated by the fact that she was the only foreign student to have such an opportunity. Other students were placed at Jubilee International School, the Centro de Investigación e Innovación Educativa (CIIE), the Media Center of the Universidad Pedagógica, and Hospital San Felipe (a public hospital in Tegucigalpa). The emphasis in the ethnographic study was to observe and appreciate the work setting from a Honduran perspective through direct participation, interviews, and extensive journaling. Some students were sad about what they had learned and even though they did not agree with the events they observed, they were thankful for the opportunity they had to experience firsthand the type of work they would like to do after they graduate. Some of the things they observed were negative but they admitted that without this experience they would have not been able to understand what they had read about the culture and the professionals they had the opportunity to observe and to interview.

On the fun side, we took trips to Nicaragua where we visited the city of Leon, Rubén Darío’s birthplace, which boasts the largest cathedral in Central America in addition to a Rubén Darío Museum. We also took a trip to Guatemala. There students were impressed by a mass in Maya-Chorti and Spanish in Chichicastenago. We also went to Pascual Abaj, a Mayan museum which holds a large collection of Mayan shaman masks. Surely, students also enjoyed an opportunity to purchase handmade crafts and beautiful jewelry. We also made a trip to Copán in order to visit the Copán Ruins. In Honduras, we also visited various museums, sweat shops, the Pulhapanzak Falls, and a banana company.

This semester our program was visited by Calvin’s Off Campus Program Director Dr. Don De Graaf and President Dr. Michael LeRoy, who were able to visit students and families, observe classes, meet professors and work on an exchange program with our host university. As a result, we are hoping to have the first visiting professors from the Universidad Pedagógica at Calvin next year (2015). Both visitors were also able to see our students practice folklore dances which were part of our semester experience. These dances were also presented at the end of the semester as a farewell token of appreciation for our host families in Santa Lucía.

Spring 2014 was a great semester for our students, who expressed appreciation for their host families, their Pedagógica professors, friends, and the institutions which gave them the opportunity to do their ethnographic internships.
This past year the department continued its programs in Oviedo, Spain, for the core (Fall) and advanced (Spring) students. Professor Dwight TenHuisen directed both programs. The advanced group was asked to write at the end of the semester about personal examples of when and/or how they learned from Spaniards (thinking about ideas raised by David I. Smith in his Learning from the Stranger). Here is a shorter version of the essay turned in by Lauren Clark.

Esta primavera en Oviedo tuve la oportunidad y el placer de llevar una asignatura de Arte Iberoamericano en la Facultad de Letras con estudiantes universitarios españoles y una profesora muy agradable. Desde el primer día los estudiantes me aceptaron como una compañera, facilitando así mi éxito en esta clase. Una compañera con quien pasé tiempo se llama Olaya, y de ella aprendí mucho sobre las diferencias entre la cultura española y la cultura estadounidense a partir del primer día cuando me senté al lado de ella y le dije “Hola, soy Lauren”.

En nuestro último día juntas, anduvimos de la universidad a la estación de autobuses para que ella pudiese coger su autobús a Gijón, donde vive. Hablamos mucho de su hermana que iba a dar a luz a un bebé en julio. Ella estaba tan emocionada ante la posibilidad de convertirse en tía por primera vez, y empezamos a hablar sobre las fiestas que se celebran antes de que nazcan los bebés. Ella me dijo que no son comunes en España ahora, pero ya hay un fenómeno de la llegada de las tradiciones y costumbres norteamericanas, que incluye este tipo de fiesta. Después de más preguntas sobre los detalles, describí los registros de bebés, y ella me miró con una cara muy rara. Cuando le pregunté porque me miraba así, me respondió que en España parece maleducado pedir regalos específicos de amigos y parientes. Según ella, si alguien da un regalo, debe ser algo especial que piense que el recipiente va a apreciar. Si no lo aprecia, es el problema del recipiente. Para mí, esta costumbre no parece rara de ninguna manera, pero para ella sí. Algo tan normal como una fiesta puede destacar las diferencias entre dos culturas, y no lo habría descubierto yo si no hubiera hablado con Olaya. Ella no quería decir que mi manera de hacer la fiesta o dar regalos era mala, simplemente que quizás no todos las costumbres nuestras quepan perfectamente en España.
Olaya me mostró algunos aspectos de la cultura española que quisiera llevar conmigo a los Estados Unidos. Ella siempre fue muy generosa con su tiempo y con sus recursos. Me invitó a pasar el día con ella después de conocerme por solo un mes. Ella me dio sus apuntes de nuestra clase de arte porque en mis apuntes faltaba mucha información. Me dio un regalo bonito después de la última reunión de clase. Quiero mantener esta generosidad con la gente en mi vida en Grand Rapids. También es una persona agraciada, entendiendo mis intentos de hablar en español de una manera casual. Ella quería escuchar el contenido de lo que quería decir, y no la gramática. Esto invita más conversación sin miedo de juicio, algo muy necesario cuando una persona trata de aprender otro idioma.

Pasamos un día en Gijón para que ella pudiera mostrarme las partes más bonitas de la ciudad y para que pudiéramos comer juntas. Después de la comida, anduvimos al lado del océano cerca de las termas romanas. Empezamos a hablar sobre el matrimonio y si sería mejor tener una ceremonia en una iglesia, afuera (una idea que la chocó un poco), o en el ayuntamiento. Después de que dije que quiero una ceremonia en una iglesia, la conversación se enfocó en la religión. Ella me dijo que sus padres son religiosos, pero que ella no se siente parte de ningún tipo de religión. Ella solo podía pensar en los aspectos no tan positivos de la religión católica, especialmente los cultos como el Opus Dei. Yo había oído y aprendido en mi clase de cultura del fenómeno de los jóvenes saliendo de la iglesia y de la religión, pero era diferente conocer a una de estas “estadísticas”. En Grand Rapids, casi todos mis amigos son cristianos, y con los que no son cristianos, hablo de mi fe, pero muchas veces ellos escuchan en silencio. No hay un diálogo sobre este tema. Esta interacción sensitiva con Olaya me ha enseñado que soy capaz de tener estas conversaciones con mis amigos, que la mejor manera de hablar de estos temas difíciles es a veces no hablar sino escuchar.

Esta experiencia en España fue muy buena, en parte por lo que aprendí en mis clases de historia, literatura y cultura. No obstante, las mejores experiencias tuvieron lugar fuera de las aulas universitarias. Aprendí mucho de mis compañeras españolas, especialmente Olaya, quienes me presentaron una nueva manera de ver mi cultura y las culturas de otros. Espero poder traer esta nueva perspectiva a mi vida en Grand Rapids y emular sus características positivas en vez de regresar a mi vida anterior.
Scott Lamanna

presented a paper at the 7th International Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics in Madison, WI, entitled “The Effect of Participant and Interlocutor Gender on Colombian Pronominal Address”. He also participated in a learning community composed of Calvin faculty who read and met to discuss the book How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching. The group presented a poster at the Calvin Teaching and Learning Network’s Learning Community Open House during the spring semester.

Marilyn Bierling

directed the Semester in Peru program from August to December, with 22 Spanish majors and minors. During the spring semester she was able to teach a special themes (370) class on the topic of Hispanic Immigration to the U.S. She also gave a presentation at the NACFLA (North American Christian Foreign Language Association) conference in Chicago on “People Crossing Borders: Where We Stand on Undocumented Immigration.”

Sandra Clevenger

presented two papers this past year: Using literature of the 21st century in the Spanish classroom: La felicidad es un té contigo “at the 28th Annual Interdisciplinary Conference in the Humanities (University of West Georgia, Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 2013) and “Teaching Cross-Cultural Engagement through Participation” at the Annual NACFLA Conference (North American Christian Foreign Language Association, Wheaton College, March 20-22, 2014). The first paper stems from work on a new novel used in Spanish 370, exploring ways to increase cultural knowledge through literature. The second one was inspired by a Christian Enrichment workshop, 2012, and a Christian Enrichment project used for the program abroad in Oviedo Spain, 2013.
Marcie Pyper and Cynthia Slagter presented a paper at the Christian Educators Association Convention (South Bend, IN) in Fall 2013. The title of their presentation was “Oral Proficiency: Moving from Novice to Intermediate to Advanced.”

Olena Shkatulo presented a paper, “Gender, Nation, and Modernity in Coronado’s ‘Un paseo’”, at the 29th Biennial Louisiana Conference on Hispanic Languages and Literatures (Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, February 27-March 1, 2014).

Dianne Zandstra presented a paper on “Self and Other in Vargas Llosa’s *The Storyteller*” at the annual conference of the North American Christian Language Association at Wheaton College in March 2014.

Alisa Tigchelaar gave a 2014 Meeter Center Lecture co-sponsored by the Foreign Language Forum. Her presentation was titled “Teresa of Ávila’s ‘Reformed’ Convent through the Lens of Martin Luther and John Calvin.” She also published an article “Marcela de San Félix’s Mystic Theology through Drama: Platonic and Augustinian ‘Influences’” in the summer edition of *International Studies on Law and Education*.

In addition, Marcie Pyper was reappointed as the Chair of the department for the next three years; Cynthia Slagter was promoted to Full Professor; Scott Lamanna and Olena Shkatulo were reappointed for three years, and Pablo Villalta was reappointed for one more year.
Please consider making a donation to help fund the Elsa Cortina Scholarship. This scholarship aids students interested in studying Spanish during a semester abroad in Spain like Alexis Reid [see her story on page 12]. Visit the Spanish Department website for more information on the scholarship. Click here to learn how you can donate and make a difference in the life of a student at Calvin.

We love to hear from our alumni! There are many ways you can get reconnected with the Spanish Department at Calvin. Whether that is by sharing your story on the department website, joining us for Spanish chapel on Tuesdays at 10:00am, or organizing a night to give a presentation or talk with students about whatever you are passionate about—you are welcome!

If you are interested in getting involved in the department in any of these ways or would like to know more about how else you could get connected, please contact the department chair, Professor Marcie Pyper, or Professor Olena Shkatulo.