Abu Dhabi Rising
Conservative Growth Strategies Starting to Pay Off

By Rashelle Roos

Dubai: situated in the middle of the desert in the Arabian Peninsula, this emirate is known for constructing high-rises, shopping malls, theme parks, mini-cities and even islands at an unbelievable pace. When I first visited in July 2007, Dubai boasted the operation of more cranes per square inch than anywhere else in the world. I found myself in a sea of swinging cranes erecting buildings up through the cloud line. Similar to the Boston Dig, Dubai street maps were outdated monthly as bigger and newer streets carved through town.

Every international architect and architectural firm that has made a name for itself was planning or constructing one of their signature buildings in Dubai. The steel came from China, and the technology from Germany. Interiors demanded marble from Italy, Zebrano wood from the Congo region, art glass from Venice, fabric from Madras, India, and hand-printed wallpaper from France. Theme parks featuring characters such as Spiderman, Shrek and King Kong were in the works. A Las Vegas-simulacrum (without gambling), Dubai was a bizarre Mecca of cultural importation.

In January 2009, however, I found a different Dubai. Due in part to the global economic downturn and in part to Dubai’s over-spending, cranes had come to a halt. Now, entering Dubai is an eerie experience. The outskirts of town are filled with half-finished, abandoned high-rises.

Continued on page 4

Labor and Employment Relations Launches Minor in Global Labor Studies with CGS Course Support

In spring 2008, the School of Labor and Employment Relations (LER) at Illinois launched a new online Global Labor Studies (GLS) program to analyze issues facing workers and labor, looking at the interplay of class, gender, race, and labor organizations in the workplace, the economy, and the political arena from a multi-disciplinary and global perspective. Courses in the Global Labor Studies program synthesize current research in

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What’s New at CGS

Professional Development Workshops

For advance registration information about teacher training workshops, subscribe to the K-12 Global Education listserv: http://cgs.illinois.edu/about/signup

Teaching the Science & History of Global Warming

February 20, 2010, University of Illinois

This workshop for K-12 science and social sciences educators will review the probable impacts of climate change for U.S. communities, the importance of taking on the challenge of teaching about global climate change, and practical approaches to presenting the subject in K-12 classrooms. CPDUs available.

Talks include: “Confronting Human-Driven Global Climate Change,” by Donald Wuebbles (Atmospheric Science), and “Is It Getting Hot in Here?: The History of Global Warming,” by Lillian Hoddeson (History).

To register, please complete the online registration form: https://illinois.edu/fb/sec/4418041.

Understanding & Teaching about World Religions

2010 International Summer Institute

June 13 - 18, 2010, University of Illinois

This workshop offers multi-disciplinary approaches to understanding and teaching major world religions as well as indigenous and diasporic religious practices of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Topics include history, theology and ethics; language; rituals, celebrations, and cultural practices; gender; science and nature; and food. All K-16 educators are welcome.

For more information and to register, please visit the website: http://i2i.illinois.edu/2010_institute.php

Pedagogical Approaches to Teaching Genocide

Online Graduate Course for Spring 2010

In spring of 2010, the Center for Global Studies will offer a new online graduate course for in-service teachers that will focus upon teaching genocide in the high school classroom. This 10 week course will be offered for one hour of graduate credit.

The major emphasis of the course is on content—providing access to leading subject-area expertise in order to build teacher competency. Teachers in the course will deepen their understanding of genocide and how this challenging subject matter relates to current educational issues and is situated within pedagogical practice. Using the Understanding by Design approach, teachers will be guided in rendering course content into classroom curriculum.

Understanding by Design (UbD) is not a program but is a way of thinking intentionally about designing student learning with big ideas in mind. Contrary to typical pedagogical practice where teachers often focus first on instruction, UbD advocates using a “backward design” when planning learning experiences for students. In this course, teachers will first clarify essential understandings, then design ways of collecting evidence of student understanding before differentiating learning for students.

A multi-disciplinary team will lead the course. Professor Fritzsche, Department of History, University of Illinois, specializes in modern German and European history and is a former Guggenheim and Humboldt Fellow. Professor Fritzsche’s current research focuses on comparative questions of memory and identity and vernacular uses of the past in modern Europe. His most recent book is Life and Death in the Third Reich (2008).

Phillip Wilder, Secondary Teacher Collaborator at the Center for Education in Small Urban Communities, has ten years experience teaching high school students at Joliet West High School and Champaign’s Central High School. Wilder specializes in content area literacy, meta-cognitive strategies, and multiliteracies.

Allison Witt, a doctoral candidate in Education Policy Studies, has fifteen years of experience in higher education as an instructor and administrator. Witt specializes in the globalization of education with an emphasis on both K-12 and higher education programming.

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You don’t need an account to visit our Facebook page: Become a CGS fan!
Summer Institute for Languages of the Muslim World (SILMW)

By Abdulkafi Albirini
Department of Linguistics

The first Summer Institute for the Languages of the Muslim World (SILMW) was organized this past summer (June 15-August 6, 2009) by the Department of Linguistics at the University of Illinois. The Institute received funding support from the U.S. Department of Education Title VI grant program of the National Resource Centers for Area Studies at Illinois: Center for African Studies, Center for Global Studies, Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, European Union Center, and Center for International Business Education and Research.

SILMW offered intensive courses in a variety of Muslim World languages, including Turkish, Persian, Arabic and Swahili. Classes were held four hours per day over a period of eight weeks, for a total of 132 hours. Students received language instruction equivalent to one full academic year of language instruction.

In addition to classroom instruction, SILMW offered over 25 extracurricular activities, including a research forum, conversation tables, brown bag series, cooking classes, movies, music and dance classes, field trips, and library visits. These popular activities attracted as many as 75 participants, including students, instructors, administrative staff, university personnel, representatives from Area Studies Centers, and the public.

Fifty-nine students from the University of Illinois and a number of other higher-education institutions in the United States enrolled in the summer institute, including several students who had received FLAS funding.

In their evaluations, students reported very positive attitudes overall about their summer learning experience in SILMW, and responded very positively to questions about the instructors, extracurricular activities, and administrative oversight. Among the greatest strengths of the program were the extracurricular activities, the small classes, immersion format, highly motivated instructors, showcase, and cultural activities. Based on this positive feedback, we expect to continue this summer language institute in the future.

FLAS FELLOWS, 2009 - 2010

Azad Amir-Ghassemi
Urban & Regional Planning
Swahili – 1st year

Julianne Barbieri (Laut)
History
Hindi – 1st year

Alina Haidri
Anthropology
Arabic – 1st year

Regina Pritchett
Urban & Regional Planning
Portuguese - 1st year

Evangeline Reynolds
Political Science
Portuguese – 2nd year

Pradeep Shenoy
Engineering
Chinese – 3rd year

Matthew Smith
Library & Information Science
Arabic – 1st year

Nathaniel Uchtmann
Medicine
Swahili – 2nd year

Not pictured: Harry Fishcher (Hindi). Summer FLAS Fellows: Dinah Armstead (Arabic), Tage Biswalu (Swahili), Edisa Denic (Turkish), Brendan McElmeel (Turkish), Imelda Moise (Swahili), Archana Prakash (Arabic).
Machinery is parked, and there are no workers to be seen on many job sites. A highway once saturated by billboards advertising new developments is now lined by strips of brown papered or blank signs. Developments such as the Trump Tower and Paris Hilton Experience were cancelled before breaking ground. Boats filled with steel remain docked because developers cannot afford their contractual commitments and fabricators cannot afford to send the materials back. Migrant workers suffer the same predicament: Now out of work, they can’t afford a ticket home.

Meanwhile, laid off white-collar workers are fleeing town and leaving their debts behind. If one defaults on debt in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the consequence is being arrested and held until somebody pays off the debt. To avoid jail time and repayment, scores of people are abandoning their cars at Dubai’s new airport. They flee town, leaving keys in the ignition and credit cards on the dashboard. Other people choose to stay and look for new jobs. With visitor visas good for only 30 days in the UAE, I made monthly border runs to Oman to renew my visa while looking for work. Each month, the lines at the borders got longer, filling up with people recently laid off or holding expired work visas who hoped to land another opportunity.

In contrast to Dubai, where rents are dropping, in Abu Dhabi rents continue to rise. Long in Dubai’s shadow, the capital of the UAE took a more cautious approach to development, which now is starting to pay off. Abu Dhabi, after first bailing out Dubai with gifts of funds, is now buying buildings and transportation systems in Dubai. Although Abu Dhabi is slowing down a bit, most of their large planned developments are still in the works: The Louvre, Guggenheim, Sheik Zayed and Maritime museums are still planned to open in 2012 on Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi. Developments on Raha Beach, Abu Dhabi, are currently slow because Aldar, the developer owned largely by the Abu Dhabi government, is focusing on Yas Island, a multi-billion-dollar desert island, which they are transforming into a Formula One racetrack. Their first Grand Prix race took place 30 October – 1 November 2009. Yas Island will also be home to the world’s first Ferrari theme park. Dubai, on the other hand, halted construction of the World Island project, a group of man-made islands shaped like a globe.

Abu Dhabi is finishing up construction on the largest mosque in the UAE, the Sheik Zayed Mosque, but don’t expect the Burj Dubai to be surpassed anytime soon. After all, it is the first time since the pyramids that the Middle East has the world’s tallest structure. However, with careful planning, Abu Dhabi has positioned itself to move into the future with a stable economy. Where Dubai seemed to purposely veil the local Islamic, Arabic and Bedouin traditions, allowing western branding and business to flourish, Abu Dhabi upholds and celebrates both international developments and local heritage. The Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage hosts aggressive programs throughout the emirate. It is my hope that Abu Dhabi continues its path to prosperity, learning from Dubai’s choices while still maintaining and building upon local cultural heritage.

Editor’s note: In the time since this article was submitted earlier this fall, the financial situation in Dubai worsened. In mid-December 2009, Abu Dhabi gave $10bn to Dubai to pay off debts. In particular, $4.1bn will be used to bail out the government-owned investment company Dubai World.
Global Biosecurity Seminar Offered by ACDIS

The Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security (ACDIS) offered a seminar-based course designed to provide students with broad coverage of key areas of scientific, legal, social, ethical, and political aspects of biosecurity, emphasizing current problems and research in the areas of biodefense, emerging infectious diseases, synthetic biology, and other topics. The course was directed and led by Brenda Wilson, with weekly guest lectures speaking on special topics. Seminar participants integrated information on modern biomedical research, advances in biotechnology, and natural and manmade biological threats with analysis of public policies and strategies for enhancing global biosecurity. CGS provided support for the seminar series through the Title VI program for International Studies of the US Department of Education.

ACDIS maintains a list of resources about biosecurity: http://acdis.illinois.edu/students/courses-current/global-biosecurity-seminar/links.html.

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In early September, I joined over 1,300 United Nations (UN) delegates, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) workers, and policy-makers from around the world in Mexico City to attend the 62nd annual UN/Department of Public Information (DPI) NGO Conference (9-11 September 2009). I had been selected through an international competition to serve as a student journalist for the conference. The Center for Global Studies, which is a NGO affiliate to the UN/DPI, provided funding support for my travel. The theme for this year’s conference, “Desarme ahora!” conveyed the sense of urgency that UN/DPI NGO affiliates feel in promoting peace and development around the world in connection with the UN Millennium Development Goals.

The day before the opening ceremonies, I met my fellow international student journalists in the lobby of the Sheraton Hotel in the heart of downtown Mexico City. Students from all over the world, from New York to Bangalore, warily sat on the leather couches in the extravagant hotel entrance. We were still getting accustomed to our surroundings and many of us were noticeably overwhelmed by the third largest city in the world. Feeling very out of place, we waited anxiously for someone to retrieve us.

Dr. Judy Kuriansky, a well-known radio and television psychologist and head of the International Student Journalist Program for the UN, eventually made her way to the lobby for a brief orientation before we set out on a tour of the Distrito Federal. After the orientation with international and Mexican student journalists it was astonishing how easily bonds formed between us. We were a diverse group, and while not all of us had academic backgrounds in journalism, there was a shared recognition of the opportunity presented to us and a feeling of collective determination as we were introduced to the city that would become our office for the next three days.

Having flown in the prior morning, I had already seen a fair amount of the city. My host, a Mexican student journalist named Roberto, picked me up at the airport with his uncle. The two were waiting for me outside the gate; their small white sign scribbled with my name offered much needed comfort after a two-hour wait in customs. Roberto’s uncle, a cab driver whose pride in Mexico was apparent, expertly navigated the windy roads on our way to their home, all the while speaking to me in rapid-fire Spanish about the city’s culture, politics, and history. I picked up what I could, still recovering from the long journey from Chicago and a bit distracted by the hundreds of bumper to bumper automobiles sharing the road.

Before long, such scenes became familiar. Any preconceived notions I had regarding Mexico City as a place of disease, violence, and drugs quickly vanished. I soon found myself casually navigating the busy streets as if it were routine to dodge traffic, speak above honking horns, and eat street food on my way to work. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headquarters for the conference and location of our media office, became like a home fort in the center of the city.

Throughout the three-day conference, delegates attended workshops and roundtable discussions on disarmament and global security. Sessions were held in some of Mexico City’s most beautiful museums, churches, and lecture halls. Pairs of student journalists (one Mexican and one international) were assigned to attend each of the 6 to 10 daily sessions and write detailed articles for the daily conference newsletter. Among the goals of the annual UN/DPI NGO conference is to highlight the importance of a mobilized and informed civil society, and the ways in which NGOs can form bridges between the UN and the global community. “Global development,” a phrase we heard frequently, was used by panelists and UN delegates to refer to the limitless work toward progress.

Student journalists also offered social media coverage of the conference on Facebook, Twitter and Flickr, to highlight youth involvement in the conference. An educated and motivated youth is the strongest tool the global community has in building a more stable, secure world.

Brady Collins is an undergraduate student in Economics and International Studies and a Civic Leadership Fellow at Illinois.
room writing, editing, and posting reports felt as much like a social gathering as it did a work environment. That is not to imply we were not working hard: Having written eight articles in three days, I definitely experienced first-hand the stress of deadlines bearing down. Nevertheless, the long nights spent together (once until 5am), bouncing around ideas and different approaches to stories, quickly established professional and personal connections between us that we will not soon forget.

The Mexican student journalists were some of the most informed and motivated students I have ever met. In working with them I got the profound sense that their unwavering dedication to their city’s involvement in international affairs was going to make them future world leaders. Each student was fully aware of the challenges of our rapidly globalizing world. They have seen first-hand the problems that face our generation in the 21st century and are committed to solving them. In addition, they were great hosts and really showed us how fun, safe, and cosmopolitan Mexico City is.

One evening I took a short break with a Mexican student named Isaac. Isaac is in many ways the epitome of the new Mexican youth. He grew up there, yet studied in Tel Aviv on an extended exchange program, and is well traveled and well informed on global affairs. Isaac brought me to a cafè located on a top floor of a Sears building, which had an outdoor balcony. Below us, I noticed a protest had erupted at a large intersection. About a hundred men had gathered with large signs and flooded the streets during every red light, forcing cars and passersby to take notice. I asked Isaac what it was about and he said he wasn’t sure exactly, but this happens frequently. Apparently, government officials often will sponsor a group to protest an issue on their behalf, in order to promote their interests while remaining behind the scenes. Isaac told me he has learned to cope and live alongside such distractions.

Mexico City’s informal economy and social structure has taught people to persevere, regardless of political corruption or corporate greed. It seems people get by on their own terms, and while this is vastly different from my own perception of society and government, while looking out over the balcony it did not in any way seem chaotic or threatening. In the open square, couples sat kissing, tourists snapped pictures, and street vendors did business. All this less than one hundred yards away from the screams and shouts. It was like watching a collage of images representing a modern civilization and a global community. With Isaac’s help, I began to adopt a new perspective: outside forces will pull and push our lives in intangible ways, but what gives people resolve is their ability to proceed with a sense of confidence, self-reliance, and composure. “How do you describe this feeling?” I asked. He smiled and gazed out at the view, responding with palpable enthusiasm, “Viva la México.”

Global Labor Studies Minor
Continued from front page

sociology, history, economics, political science, business, international studies, and industrial relations.

CGS offered funding support through our Title VI National Resource Center grant from the US Department of Education to develop a new course in the program: “Comparative Labor Relations and Union Movements” (LER 330). This course offers a comparative overview of labor relation systems, including union formation and understanding how industrial relations systems developed in countries around the world. An emphasis is placed on each country’s interaction between unions and political organizations, national labor policies, the machinery for the resolution of workplace problems, the level of shop floor disturbances, bargaining coverage of employees, and issues of workers’ control.

The course also addresses how globalization has transformed the capacity of any nation’s labor relations’ system to respond to economic challenge and workplace conflict, and examines the possibility of developing transnational unions.

The School of Labor and Employment Relations (formerly the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations) offers a Minor and a Certificate in Global Labor Studies, and is in the process of applying for a bachelor’s degree. The majority of LER faculty teach human resources courses for graduate students pursuing a Master’s degree or a Ph.D. In addition, the program offers non-credit courses on the UIUC campus and in Chicago for unionists. More details can be found at the Labor Education Program website: www.illinoislabored.org.
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