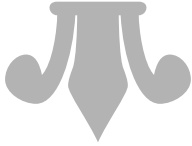


# The French Connection

Summer 2005

Department of French • College of Liberal Arts and Sciences • University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



## Alumni organize international conference for Evelyne Accad

Attendees at the conference for Evelyne Accad—from left to right: Ruth Hottell (University of Toledo), Evelyne Accad, Liz Zahnd (Francis Marion University), Deirdre Bucher Heistad (University of Northern Iowa), and Cheryl Toman (Case Western Reserve).

**L**a Maison du Liban in the Cité Universitaire de Paris was the venue for the international conference held in honor of Evelyne Accad, titled “The Critical and Creative Writings of Evelyne Accad: An International Colloquium” (June 16-18, 2004). The three-day conference was sponsored by the alumni of the French Department of the University of Illinois with the additional support of the French Department and the Program in Middle Eastern Studies.

The participants included not only alumni, but a host of scholars, professors, writers, activists, and artists from around the world. It was an occasion to analyze and discuss Accad’s writings, while celebrating her retirement from a highly successful career spanning 30 years at the University of Illinois. In addition, the conference marked 10 years to the day that Accad underwent surgery for breast cancer, an ordeal she discusses in an innovative way in her books *Voyages en cancer* (L’Harmattan, 2000) and *The Wounded Breast* (Spinifex, 2001).

The opening remarks were made by acclaimed Lebanese author Etel Adnan (*Sitt Marie Rose, Paris When it’s Naked*). Adnan spoke of her admiration of Accad as a scholar, professor, and musician, pointing out Accad’s valuable contribution to scholarship of the Arab World. In addition to Adnan’s remarks, there were two other roundtables featuring prominent authors and scholars of the Arab and Francophone worlds including Miriam Cooke (Duke University), Françoise Collin (philosopher), Lebanese writer Ezza Agha Malak, French poet Astrid Gateau, and anthropologist Paul Vieille.

### Panels and alumni presentations

In addition to the roundtables, six panel sessions addressed topics such as “Debates in a Postmodern World,” “Extending the Circle: Accad, Chédid, Adnan, Djebar, and Saadawi,” “Feminisms,” “Language and Musicality,” “Alternative (Auto)Biographies,” and “Accad’s Critical and Creative Works.”

Among the alumni who presented papers were Ruth Hottell, Samira El Atia, Cynthia Hahn, Elizabeth Zahnd, Deirdre Boucher Heistad, and Cheryl Toman. A special reading of Accad’s works featured alums Youenn Karvennic, Lezlie Stivale, and current University of Illinois professor Andrea Goulet. The idea for the conference came from another graduate of the department, Julia DiLiberti. In all, there were



about 85 persons in attendance, including professors and graduate students from the United States, Canada, France, Portugal, Morocco, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Algeria. The Attaché Culturel of the Lebanese Embassy also made remarks and the event was covered by the Lebanese newspaper, *L’Orient-le-jour*.

Two publications have resulted from the conference. *Evelyne Accad: Explorations* appeared in January 2005 in French with L’Harmattan (Paris) edited by Deirdre Boucher Heistad. Cheryl Toman is currently editing the volume in English titled, *On Evelyne Accad: Essays on Literature, Feminism, and Cultural Studies*. Nawal El Saadawi will author the preface for this book and a publisher is being sought. Both volumes include article versions of the papers presented at the conference as well as invited essays from various scholars.

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### A WORD FROM THE HEAD

*Armine Kotin Mortimer, Head*

## Stay in touch!

If you have any alumni information that you would like to share, please drop us a line! Please include your degree(s) and year(s) of graduation.

Write to:  
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Your “Word from the Head” comes from your former editor: I succeeded Jean-Philippe Mathy as Head of the Department of French on August 16, and I have been, in the words of a Chinese fortune cookie I ate soon after, “busy but happy” ever since. What a busy, happy, active, and energetic faculty we have here in French! Your former teachers are involved in innovative teaching and research across the board. Our two new assistant professors, Marcus Keller and Margaret Flinn, have brilliantly adjusted to the full-time professorate with graduate and undergraduate courses in their specialties. Undergraduates are being awarded as I write for their academic excellence, and graduate students looking for jobs have been quite successful this year.

We have had two retirements this year: Professor Herbert De Ley in December 2004 after long years of service and Professor Alice Omaggio Hadley in May 2005 (see page 7). Hadley has represented second-language acquisition and teacher education in our department for so many years that her name is synonymous with Illinois for specialists in the field all around this country and abroad. In addition to mentoring many successful graduate students, Professor Hadley also oversaw, with the help of Professor Peter Golato, the entire complex of basic language instruction taught in the department. The department has hired a visiting lecturer, Joseph Price, from Indiana University, to carry on these tasks and attempt to fill Alice Hadley’s shoes.

The annual French Means Business day on October 28 brought unprecedented numbers of attendees not only from campus but also from area high schools. Professors Douglas Kibbee and Karen Fresco carried on from Liz Martin’s preparatory efforts, to give Professor Martin a break from this intensive service activity, which continues to be one of the most vital single days in the department’s

annual activities. During the fall term we also hosted a five-day visit by Ross Chambers of the University of Michigan as well as other lecturers brought with the continued support of the French Embassy for the France@Illinois pluridisciplinary center. The spring lecture calendar was launched by a talk about French rap music by UIUC Ph.D. Charles Batson of Union College and continued with visits from Philippe Willems, Elspeth Probyn, and Christine Reno among others. Reno spoke about a beautiful manuscript of a work by Christine de Pizan that the library had just acquired.

The several alumni who contributed support to the Department of French this year brought to this new department head the wonderful surprise of knowing our alumni care about French and remember their years at the University with fondness and care. Graduate and undergraduate students are the direct beneficiaries of your continued support, for which I thank you.

## La Bourse de l’Amitié

Armine Kotin Mortimer, Head of the French Department, announced that the French Department is the recipient of a generous donation to establish a scholarship fund. The AGNES PORTER BEAUDRY AND JAMES GEORGE BEAUDRY “BOURSE DE L’AMITIE” shall be used to provide support to undergraduate or graduate students in French. Both Agnes Porter Beaudry and James George Beaudry earned their doctorate degrees at the University of Illinois, which they recognize with this generous and much-appreciated scholarship fund. The French department thanks them warmly.



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The French Connection is published annually by the Department of French at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Suggestions and correspondence may be sent to the Department of French, University of Illinois, 2090 Foreign Languages Building, 707 South Mathews Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801.

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Jessica Miller, Cheryl Toman

## UNDERGRADUATE PROFILE

## Frank Radosevich

## French in the Family

As the fifth of seven children in a Peoria, Ill., family, Frank Radosevich didn't have far to look for an "adoptive" second language: all of his older siblings and many of his cousins had studied French in a Catholic elementary school, starting in 4th grade.

"We began by singing traditional songs like 'Frère Jacques' and 'Alouette,'" Frank remembers, "and moved on by high school to the whole scope of French history: 'Who was Charlemagne?' 'François Premier?' 'François Mitterrand?'"

Frank credits a dynamic and demanding high-school teacher, Cathy Curtis, with creating a community of students who enjoyed learning the French language in a broader political context. It seemed a natural choice for him to major in International Studies and French when he arrived at the University of Illinois, where he is currently a fourth-year student.

Frank's interests in current events and global francophone issues have helped determine both the courses he's enjoyed (he mentions in particular Professor Adlai Murdoch's Francophone culture discovery course) and his decision to spend a junior year abroad at the Ecole des Sciences Politiques in Paris.

As Frank explains, "Sciences Po" is an "incubator for France's future leaders—government ministers and heads of state." He relished the opportunity to study alongside these driven and broad-minded students. "You never know," he adds, "in 10 to 15 years, I may see my Sciences Po classmates on the front page of *Le Monde*."

The year in Paris also allowed Frank to explore the city, make connections with the Franco-Italian community, and discover French rap.

He clearly made the best of his international experience, returning to Champaign-Urbana with near-native French fluency and a continued drive to excel in his studies.

French Professor Lawrence Schehr praises Frank's intellectual curiosity, which extends beyond the curricular parameters of his classes. Adds Schehr, "Frank's good humor, his quick wit, his sophisticated analytical powers, and his interest all add to his excellence as a student and predict a career—in whatever field he chooses—in which he will contribute to an understanding of and a progress for the human condition."

The UIUC Department of French has awarded this James Scholar and Dean's List student the Senior French Undergraduate Excellence Award—a sign that learning "Frère Jacques" at age 9 can take you far!



The year in Paris also allowed Frank to explore the city, make connections with the Franco-Italian community, and discover French rap.





## GRADUATE PROFILE

## Christopher Stewart



“What software like PRAAT allows us to do is to factor out variations such as word choice in order to focus on the effect of different pronunciations of these speakers.”

## A linguist in the making

Why is Christopher Stewart described by Professor Suzanna Fagyal as “an ideal candidate for an international career”?

It may be his command of three European languages (French, Spanish, and German). Or perhaps it's his academic background: a B.A. from Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, in French literature and political science, followed by an M.A. and Ph.D. studies in French linguistics at the University of Illinois. Is it the fact that he has avidly pursued his soccer hobby on at least two continents?

Maybe all of these qualities, combined with his active collaboration with departmental faculty, situate Christopher at the cusp of a promising career in the field of socio-linguistics.

Christopher proudly hails from the state of Alabama, but says that his interest in linguistics was sparked by a post-college year in Lyons, where he worked as an English teacher (an *assistant*), read the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure—and of course, played soccer.

Though he maintains an enduring love of literature, Christopher has found in linguistics a fruitful and fascinating combination of “subjective” and “scientific” approaches. “As I study mostly phonetics on the tangible side and sociolinguistics on the more ethereal end of the scale,” he writes, “I am especially interested in how theories such as Bourdieu’s conceptualization of habitus and linguistic market could work in concert with theoretical phonology and Labovian variationist linguistics.”

## Practical applications of academic interests

Already, Christopher has put these interests to practical use. He has worked with Professor Douglas Kibbee on the true origins of “h-aspiré” and “h-muet” in the French language and has co-written an article with Professor Fagyal titled “Engueulade ou énumération? Attitudes envers quelques énoncés enregistrés dans les *banlieues*.”

This soon-to-be-published piece derives from a current research project with Professor Fagyal on the development of speech synthesis software (PRATT) that allows for perceptual studies on standard and non-standard French speech. Christopher is especially excited about the possible uses of this speech synthesis software for sociolinguistic testing.

He explains: “In spoken language, one’s ‘accent’ (the rate of speech, pronunciation of vowels and consonants, melody of speech) combines with the actual words pronounced to present certain aspects of the speaker.

“What software like PRAAT allows us to do is to factor out variations such as word choice in order to focus on the effect of different pronunciations of these speakers. By doing perceptual experiments on these samples, we are able to see exactly what part each phonetic dimension plays.

“Understanding the nature of these dialects, sociolects, etc., is what will eventually lead to the possibility of linguistic tolerance, as people begin to understand that linguistic variation only indexes (and recreates to some extent) social variation.”

Such far-reaching implications explain Christopher’s enthusiasm for his planned dissertation research.

The only drawback to working at UIUC with a team of talented faculty on a topic that he finds compelling? Christopher notes, “The weather’s a little rough for a Southerner!”

## POINT OF VIEW

## Setting Sail

By Jessica Miller

One would think that the life of a doctoral student is complicated enough: taking classes, doing research, writing papers, completing a dissertation, while at the same time teaching courses. Finishing a Ph.D. in a timely manner is a challenge in itself. Add to that the grueling and time-consuming task of searching for a job at the busiest time of one's studies, and you have a complex portrait of the doctoral student.

This year, I have witnessed six of my fellow students throw themselves into the particular realm that is the job search: E-Jung Choi, Frédérique Grim, Samira Hassa, Geneviève Maheux-Pelletier, Mylène Priam, and Viviane Ruellot. As I listened to their various experiences, I was relieved that I did not yet have to be involved in that process. But I also felt grateful to them for sharing their tips with me so that the terrain would look somewhat familiar when it comes my turn. This is what I learned.

The word that seems to apply best for the job-search process and that I have heard recurrently around the office is "rollercoaster." From what I gather, ups and downs are part of the daily endeavors of academic job seekers. Many applications are mailed, and with them goes as much hope and optimism as the hard work that was put into preparing them.

However, not all of them lead to interviews, and not all interviews turn into a job offer, which can be disheartening and make the applicant question his/her qualifications. Another thing I learned, though, was that the ups always take over the downs. Even if an interview does not materialize into a position, the experience one gets from making contact with new people is priceless and always positive. This is certainly an aspect of that whole process to which I am looking forward.

Despite the hardships of the process, the opinions of the job seekers remained, much to my surprise, very positive. An essential part of it, I found, comes from the help of the professors in the department, as attested to by the following comments:

*"This job search has been really a positive experience. Even though I was very nervous about it all, I was able to see how wonderful people in the department can be through their preparation and encouragements. One thing I have also realized is that it is not how well a job pays or how big the school is that matter, but it is about the people you will work with and the type of work you will do. Ask yourself if this is where you will feel fulfilled and happy. Happiness is my keyword! And I want to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart!"*

—Frédérique Grim

*"What I enjoyed the most about this process is learning about myself. I realized how good an education I was getting at the U of I, how much my experience here was valued by potential employers, and, in all modesty, how well I could talk about my research and my ideas about teaching and overall about myself as a professional teacher/researcher. I told myself: Wow...what I have learned during my training at the U of I is really something! I realized that we are well-prepared and surrounded by faculty members who care, who will give us teaching, coordinating, and research opportunities, who are happy to help us prepare CV and letters, and interviews...."*

—Geneviève Maheux-Pelletier

Of course, I cannot learn everything from only observing, and many subtleties of the art of the job search will have to be acquired from my own experience. But seeing others going through that process successfully before me is reassuring. If they can do it, I will be able to survive as well.

(To be continued next year...)

## Graduate Student News

The Graduate Students of French (GSF), with Errol O'Neil as president, have had a successful and active year. They organized various social events, including the well-attended Cinéclub, the ever-popular weekly Pause Café, a fun skating party, and a department-wide holiday party.

They also started a DVD library, participated in the French Forum speaker series, and raised money through bake sales and a T-shirt sale. Pictured are the winners from the GSF Halloween Party: Brandon Sturm (Grim Reaper), Renaud Verdier (femme d'enfer), and Juliette Dade (Gulliver).



## Congratulations!

In April, E-Jung Choi successfully defended her dissertation on "La Grammaticalité de l'accord du participe passé conjugué avec 'avoir'."

## Tenure-track job placements 2005

Congratulations to our new PhDs!

Frédérique Grim: Assistant Professor of French at Colorado State University

Samira Hassa: Assistant Professor of French at Rockford College

Geneviève Maheux-Pelletier: Assistant Professor of French Applied Linguistics at the University of Alberta

Mylène Priam: Assistant Professor of Francophone Literature at Harvard University

Viviane Ruellot: Assistant Professor of French at Western Michigan University



## FACULTY PROFILE

# Marcus Keller



“First I thought that I should enroll in a German program because I am German. But all the American professors I consulted encouraged me to study what I’m really enthusiastic about, and so I applied to French departments. Nobody thought it was absurd or even awkward for a German to study French in America, except some French and German academics back in Europe.

**W**hat constitutes a nation? How do we develop a national identity? Since when and why do people think of themselves as belonging to nations?

Marcus Keller, assistant professor of French at UIUC since Fall 2004, decided to devote his doctoral dissertation to these thorny questions for quite personal reasons. Ever since he moved to the United States in 1998, the issue of nationhood has been on his mind: “Even though I feel less like a foreigner the more time I spend in the U.S.” he says, “my German and European origin and upbringing still lead to many, often productive, tensions with American culture and values. This is why I’ve always enjoyed living abroad and why I came to the U.S.”

Professor Keller’s dissertation research allowed him to combine his personal concern with nationhood, his passion for France and early modern history, and his interest in philosophy and critical theory as he explored how French authors of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century represented France as a national community.

Although France was a culturally diverse and politically fragile kingdom before the advent of Louis XIV, authors like Du Bellay, d’Aubigné, and Corneille envisioned the French as a collective despite their cultural, religious, and social differences. The idea of the nation, which has its origins in the Middle Ages, gained momentum and complexity during the early modern period before it culminated in the creation of the modern nation-state in the aftermath of the French Revolution.

According to Professor Keller, the still-fluid early modern conceptions of nationhood are particularly relevant and instructive for our own age in which national identities become increasingly problematic and which some have even qualified as a post-national era. “As far and strange as the six-

teenth and seventeenth centuries seem to us, early modern literature and thought prove eerily modern. That is why I am so fascinated by this period,” he says.

“I try to share this fascination with my students who are usually quite reluctant to touch the ‘old stuff.’ But once they discover how vibrant and forceful many early modern texts are, they often change their mind,” he observes.

## A life-long relationship

Keller considers being a professor in early modern French studies as the culmination of a life-long relationship with France. After learning English and Latin, he chose French as his third foreign language in high school; during his first year he participated in an exchange program with a *lycée* in the Marseille region. He felt immediately attracted to French culture, so different from his German environment, and began to spend as much time in France as he could.

An undergraduate at Münster University, he enrolled as a double-major in law and French. It took him exactly six weeks to figure out where his heart belonged. After receiving a B.A. in French and German and completing two years of civil service in Brussels (“francophone Belgians, who take great care of their language, taught me how to speak French well,” he says), Keller pursued his graduate studies in Romance and German philology at the Freie Universität Berlin and earned an M.A. Still more of a modernist, he wrote his M.A. thesis on the form and function of cultural memory in the work of one of the few truly European intellectuals, the Franco-Spanish author Jorge Semprun.

At that time, the humanities in Germany were importing many innovative ideas from U.S.-American scholars and Keller decided to spend some time as an intern in the United States to learn more about the American academy and society.

What he saw convinced him to pursue a degree in an American Ph.D. program. “First I thought that I should enroll in a German program because I am German,” Keller says. “But all the American professors I consulted encouraged me to study what I’m really

enthusiastic about, and so I applied to French departments. Nobody thought it was absurd or even awkward for a German to study French in America, except some French and German academics back in Europe. It is this open-mindedness and encouragement that I love about the American university and I'm proud to be part of it."

### A return to the States

After a year at the *Ecole normale supérieure* in Paris, Keller returned to the States and in June 2004 he earned a Ph.D. in French with an emphasis in Critical Theory from the University of California at Irvine.

When he is not busy teaching or learning his new duties as a faculty member, Keller prepares his doctoral thesis, "The Literary Imagination of Early Modern France: Figuring the Nation," for publication and even spends some time on a new research project. While his interest in the nation was rooted in his biography, his current project on early modern orientalism is motivated by contemporary political and cultural debates about the West's relationship with Islam. For the genealogy of this relationship, the sixteenth century proves to be a key period because France and other European countries felt threatened by an expanding Ottoman Empire, and their confrontation with a Muslim enemy contributed significantly to the formation of a Western, essentially Christian, identity. Professor Keller is particularly interested in the fusion of cultural criticism and religious bias that permeates early modern French texts.

Asked how he likes his new life in the Midwest so far, Professor Keller gave a surprising answer: "In many ways, moving to Urbana feels like coming home. Given the German heritage in this region, I blend right in. Nobody has trouble understanding my name or pronouncing it. Originally I'm from Westphalia where the landscape is as flat as in Illinois. Even the weather is quite similar. No wonder German immigrants have been drawn to the Midwest, and now I'm part of this tradition."

## A fond goodbye to Alice Omaggio Hadley



For more than 20 years, Professor Alice Omaggio Hadley has all but defined the field of foreign-language teaching methodology. She has published numerous articles and books on language learning, and is co-author of *Rendez-vous* and *Vis-à-vis*, two highly successful textbooks for beginning students of French. Her book, *Teaching Language in Context*, now in its third edition, has served as the definitive guide for thousands of students in teaching methods courses at universities and colleges the world over. A past president of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), Professor Omaggio Hadley greatly advanced awareness and understanding of the learning and teaching of foreign languages beyond those working in the profession.

Throughout her career at the U of I, Professor Hadley has worked tirelessly to shape and maintain the Department of French's Basic Language Education curriculum, widely acknowledged as being one of the top undergraduate French programs in the country. Her close collaboration with graduate teaching assistants has served to train an entire generation of language program directors, many of whom now hold tenure track or tenured positions.

Her decision to retire represents an irrevocable loss to the field of foreign-language teaching methodology. Her enthusiasm and dynamism will be greatly missed by her colleagues and friends.

*Having worked closely with Professor Hadley, I will always connect her with the word "suggestion." It took me a long time to realize what Professor Hadley's personal definition of this word is—namely, changes, improvement, organization, details, and*

*perfection. Yes, every detail is important to Professor Hadley as far as teaching and training teaching assistants is concerned. Time stops when we are working on tests, revising the "enième" version of it. For her, every test is a work of art! Most of all, I will always remember her as a generous person, generous with her time, her knowledge and her smile.*

*Thank you, Alice,*

—Samira Hassa

*Students who arrive in the UIUC SLATE program have already heard of Professor Hadley and her enormous influence on the field of foreign-language teaching education. Her impact in the Department of French goes far beyond just those specializing in L2 pedagogy. Since she came to UIUC, all French Department TAs have taken her courses as part of their training. Thanks to her innumerable publications, her reach extends nationwide and even farther. Now after 25 years of service to her profession and dedication to her students, Professor Hadley will be taking a well-deserved retirement at the end of this semester.*

*Despite the fame she has achieved throughout the years, the Professor Hadley we know is warm, kind, and humble, always willing to help with projects ranging from test creation to dissertations. She treats all graduate students in the department with respect and genuine interest. Her attention to detail is remarkable. Her enthusiasm and tireless work have helped make countless TAs into competent, knowledgeable professionals. She will be greatly missed. Merci du fond du cœur!*

—Errol O'Neil, Jessica Sturm, Frédérique Grim, and the Graduate Students of French



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## Alumni News

Marybeth (Mathison) Timmermann (MA '96) reports the completion of the first volume of a translation of essays and articles written by Simone de Beauvoir. Entitled *Philosophical Writings*, this collection is nearing publication and is listed in the fall/winter U of I press catalog ([www.pres.uillinois.edu](http://www.pres.uillinois.edu)). Marybeth Timmermann translated several of the essays and helped with editing the whole volume. She writes, "I have always been fascinated with translation so I thoroughly enjoy the work and am thrilled to be a part of this project." Timmermann is currently living in Greenville, IL, with her husband Michael (an engineer at Boeing whom she met at U. of I.) and their three children (Katie, 7, Matthew, 6, and George, 3). She works on the Beauvoir translation project part-time and is active in several French-speaking clubs/groups in St. Louis.

## Conferences

### **French Means Business Forum: October 28, 2005**

This annual event featured company executives and French and Canadian government officials from Chicago and beyond who volunteered their time to help promote French for careers in business and other non-academic professions, including international law and translation.

### **"Shame and Other Affects"**

In February, 2005, under the generosity of the Mellon Initiative for the Humanities at the University of Illinois, U. of I. hosted a series of seminars and course visits by Elspeth Probyn, Professor of Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Sydney. The visit and the subsequent conference on "Shame and Other Affects" were hosted

by Professor Lawrence R. Schehr of French and Liberal Arts and Sciences, along with many colleagues from other humanities departments. These exciting events were well-attended and led to much formal and informal discussion. The Mellon Initiative for the Humanities is an active, vital force in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences that sponsors post-doctoral appointments, faculty release time, Distinguished Mellon Fellows, and Mellon state-of-the-art conferences.

## Coming This Fall

### **Tenth International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences**

From Paris to São Paulo to Urbana: the Tenth International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences will take place September 1-5 in Urbana, organized by Douglas Kibbee. This triennial gathering of historians of linguistics has attracted scholars from 25 countries to our campus. A wide range of linguistic thought will be represented, from Aristotle to Descartes to Chomsky. A special session this year will be devoted to the history of language teaching, focusing on the history of teaching French as a foreign language. Another group will consider the role of grammarians in language reform throughout history. France's record of government intervention in language matters, from the founding of the Académie to the Loi Toubon will receive close scrutiny. About a third of the nearly 100 speakers will be from France or francophone countries. For those interested in further information please contact us at [dkibbee@uiuc.edu](mailto:dkibbee@uiuc.edu).