

Director's Column Fall 2022

by Marc Zimmer

RANDOM MUSINGS ON BEING THE IN-BETWEEN CISLA DIRECTOR:

I have been at Connecticut College for more than half my life; to a squirrel that must seem like an eternity, after all, it translates to at least fifteen squirrel lives. But, I suspect a squirrel would be very content spending its life and that of its next fourteen generations within the grounds of Connecticut College, and wouldn't consider it confining. To me, 33 years in the chemistry department is a long time, and sometimes I just need to break out. I have come to know the College well; I know where all the treasures are buried and where the squirrels hide out. CISLA is one of my favorite spots on campus. The students are passionate, engaged and always willing to talk; it is an intellectual, cultural and social gem of the College.

When I was asked whether I wanted to be the acting (in-between) director of the CISLA program, I could not resist. For CISLA, the fall of 2022 was a time of transition as we were tentatively reentering the world. COVID-19 did a number on all of us, but it was particularly harsh on CISLA – a program centered on international internships as well as close personal interactions between students, faculty and staff. All of which make it particularly vulnerable to a global pandemic. As acting CISLA director, I was bridging the gap between Prof. Lanoux (the previous director) and Prof. Knott (the future director of CISLA); guiding the seniors returning from their internships in a smaller world, destabilized by Putin's invasion of the Ukraine and limited by China's strict COVID restrictions; and interacting with the newly selected second year students who will intern in a reexpanding world that has seemingly come to terms with the Omicron variant.

Although my semester in CISLA was just a small move in space, it was a refreshing, invigorating CISLA global internship for me, for which I have all the students and staff to thank.

PROCTOR SCHOLARSHIP

Robert Proctor was the founding director of CISLA, and in 2015 we established a scholarship in his name. Each year CISLA awards scholarships to students for the continuation of their choice of language study during the summer. The original contribution to this fund was \$5,000 but this year, given the large applicant pool, we increased the amount to \$11,000. Eight scholarships were awarded (five of whom were CISLA scholars) for language study in Arabic, Hebrew, Japanese (3), Spanish (2) and Russian.

Director's Column Spring 2023

by Suzuko Knott



WHEN I FIRST CAME TO CONNECTICUT COLLEGE IN 2012

(a mere six squirrel lives ago), what drew me to the institution was the students. During my on-campus visit I noted that every single conversation I had was compelling, rigorous, and enthusiastically engaged. I found the natural extension of this enthusiasm and commitment in the Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts, first as a guest lecturer in IS 201, later as a selection committee member, and then eventually as associate faculty director, acting faculty director, and now as faculty director. Over time I have witnessed the evolution of the conversations on campus. They are no less enthusiastic and no less committed or rigorous, and I would argue that the discourse has become increasingly self-aware and rightfully critical of the systemic issues of inequality and accessibility that we, as an institution, must face together.

CISLA is not outside of this discourse. CISLA scholars have been deeply engaged in this year's campus-wide reckoning with the legacy of inequities in the US system of Higher Education at every level of our own college, including within CISLA. Dialogue is an integral part of this process, just as listening to learn from each other, and learning to sit with discomfort as we move through the practice of calling each other out to calling each other in to engage in deeper conversation and understanding. We are learning to hold space for each other's experiences and humanity across cultures. I am particularly grateful to our Student Advisory Board, who has worked to create productive spaces for sharing and supporting each other during this time of change, and to future collaboration with students to improve the CISLA experience for everyone. Our work has just begun, and I am honored to be a part of it.

Change is hard, and there has been a lot of change in CISLA. Our rising seniors have had three different faculty directors during their tenure. And now, our constant beating heart of the program, Staff Director Mary Devins, has just retired. We will miss her deep institutional knowledge, her astonishingly vast network of alumni connections, and that famously telling glint in her eye when she's up to something – a great idea for the center, a thoughtful surprise for a student or CISLA team member, or sharing the perfect pearl of wisdom or witty remark. My plants and I will miss her special gardener's touch, and the CISLA office will simply never be as lively or as green without her. But as Mary so often says, "Onwards!"



CISLA EVENTS *by Mary Devins*

Suzuko Knott
Faculty Director

Marc Zimmer
Acting Director, Fall 2022

Laura Little
Associate Faculty Director

Mary S. Devins
Staff Director

Cara Masullo Ekwuabu
Associate Staff Director

Jordan Rottger
International Programs Support
Specialist

Betsy Lebel
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Yeseri Rosa Vizcaino '23
Jess Rush '23
Olha Vasylyv '23
Ichiro Kubozono '24
Eric Lu '24
Izzy Sala '24

Student Advisory Board
Isa Amaro Varas '23 (co-chair)
Sam Boehm '24
Abdullah Khan '25
Bilis Kalolella '23
Ilan Listgarten '25
Eric Lu '24
Annie Morgan '23 (co-chair)
Alejandra Romero Sanchez '25
Ava Yassari '24

Steering Committee
Rachel Black
Mary Devins
Ruth Grahn
Suzuko Knott (Spring '23)
Cara Masullo Ekwuabu
Chris Steiner
Marc Zimmer (Fall '22)

Selection Committee
Joe Alchermes
Mary Devins
Laura Little
Cara Masullo Ekwuabu
Sadia Priyanka
Marc Stelzner
Marc Zimmer

IS 201

Teaching Team
Denis Ferhatović
Eric Fleury
Suzuko Knott
Ariella Rotramel
Marc Zimmer

All College Symposium

ON NOVEMBER 3, 2022, the 24 CISLA seniors participated, alongside 200 of their peers, in the fourth annual All College Symposium. They discussed their journeys through CISLA, including the evolution of their research interests, and the connections among their coursework, research questions, international internships, and study away experiences.



TOP: **BEATRICE VOORHEES '23**, "OUT OF ODESA: YEFIM LADYZHENSKY AND THE 'ODESA TEXT' OF JEWISH-SOVIET CULTURE"
BOTTOM: **OLHA VASYLIV '23**, "UKRAINE IN FRANCE: CULTURAL XENOPHILIA IN THE CONTEXT OF WAR"

United Nations Trip

ON MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2023, CISLA enjoyed its annual trip to the United Nations. The day began with a visit to the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United States.



The group enjoyed an engaging tour of the UN after lunch, followed by an inspiring visit with a non-profit organization, Razom for Ukraine. Razom for Ukraine was founded by the Ukrainian diaspora in New York in 2014, after the Revolution of Dignity that aimed to restore democracy in the country. Since February 2022, Razom has been fundraising for and supporting the needs of Ukrainians who heroically defend their values during the full-scale invasion. We ended the day with a delicious dinner at Ukrainian East Village Restaurant.

Senior Research Symposium

ON SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023, a group of five CISLA seniors presented their Senior Integrative Project research.



PHOTO L TO R: **NOUMAN AHMED**, "THE ROLE OF RELIGION AND CULTURE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF PAKISTAN"; **EMILY HACKETT**, "FOSTERING COMMUNIST ELITES: COLD WAR CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S FOREIGN STUDENT PROGRAM"; **ISA AMARO VARAS**, "BRIDGING POLICY & PRACTICE: ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES IN FRANCE"; **OLHA VASYLIV**, "UKRAINE IN FRANCE: CULTURAL XENOPHILIA IN THE CONTEXT OF WAR"; **JESS RUSH**, "FIGURES" (A TRANSGENRE STUDY OF THE CONSTRUCTION AND NEGOTIATION OF BODIES THROUGH LANGUAGE AND IMAGE).

All-CISLA Dinner and Distinguished Alumni Award

JENNIFER DE LEON '01 was the recipient of this year's CISLA Distinguished Alumni Award.



We recognized Jenn because of the important work she has done as a writer, teacher and editor by examining difficult and important real-life issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the lives of young adults of all backgrounds. In her writing, she encourages them to celebrate their cultures and to bravely move forward as accomplished members of society. As a proud daughter of Guatemalan immigrants, Jenn's lived experiences have given her a wise and honest voice with which to examine these profound issues facing teens.

Jenn graduated from Connecticut College with a major in IR and a minor in French. Jenn then earned an MFA in creative writing from UMass Boston. She is currently on leave from her position as associate professor of English at Framingham State University because she is the visiting writer in the MFA in Creative Writing Program at UMass Boston. Her awards and accomplishments are myriad. Some of her notable publications include, *Wise Latinas: Writers on Higher Education* (winner of the International Latino Book Award); *Don't Ask Me Where I'm From*; *White Space: Essays on Culture, Race, and Writing*, and most recently, *Borderless*. Her important and timely messages will resonate with generations to come.



CISLA EVENTS, cont'd

Fellows Initiatives

by Jess Rush, Olha Vasylyv and Yeseri Rosa Vizcaino

IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE to work within CISLA and contribute to the center's development through the transformation of our roles, programming, critical discussions, bridging the student body with faculty and staff, and reflecting on the vision for the future development of CISLA.

It is heartwarming to look back at the events we organized this past academic year, including a cricket tasting following a lecture by Professor Lizarralde on global sustainable practices in food and medicine; a restorative yoga session guided by the creative Marya Ursin; the White Lies Party co-organized with the CISLA SAB to celebrate the graduating class of 2023; and many other occasions to benefit from being in the company of students with breathtaking adventures from all over the world.

Sharing those tremendous moments with our community was a fascinating task as we aimed to recruit leaders from our campus to join CISLA in the future. We couldn't be prouder to be part of such a transformative program, particularly while watching our fellow students contribute to the mission of the center and join together in improving our community. We are excited to see how our time as CISLA Fellows will impact the experiences of the upcoming cohorts of international scholars.

Student Advisory Board

THE STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD (SAB) is comprised of sophomores, juniors and seniors who are asked to write a brief statement as to why they wish to serve on the Board. This year, under the leadership of senior co-chairs **Isa Amaro Varas** and **Annie Morgan**, the SAB met regularly, planned events, and considered new ways to improve the program. They organized an open forum of CISLA scholars to discuss issues relating to the CISLA program, which resulted in a document of suggestions and ideas that the CISLA faculty and staff will discuss.

On the fun side, they organized a CISLA bowling event at the Coast Guard. SAB members reported that they would like to see more opportunities to connect as a cohort across classes.

Reunion

ON JUNE 3, 2023, CISLA hosted a luncheon for alumni from the classes of '03 and '08. Over forty alumni, with partners and babies, joined us for a wonderful reunion of lively conversation, memories and laughter.



Many students said that CISLA was the best thing that they had done at CC, and in many cases their experience in CISLA dictated their professional career paths.

TRAVEL RESEARCH GRANT

*Through the generosity of two donors, **Barbara Delaney '44** and **Joyce O'Conner '68**, CISLA has endowed funds that are specifically to be used for CISLA students, usually seniors, to continue their research for the senior integrative project (SIP). The requests differ, including attending an SIP related conference, accessing primary materials, or returning to the location of the internship for further research or interviews. This year, we were fortunate to award seven seniors the travel research grant to continue work on the SIP.*

Isa Amaro Varas returned to Paris, France over fall break to continue her research for her senior integrative project titled, "Bridging Policy and Practice: Access to Higher Education for Refugees in France." She conducted interviews and was able to attend a conference, "European Migrations," which helped her gather data and network with others on the topic of European policy in France regarding refugees. Additionally, Isa visited an art exhibit about artists who had been exiled from their home countries.

Olha Vasylyv returned to Paris, France over spring break to extend her research for her honors thesis, "Ukraine in France: Cultural Xenophilia in the Context of War." She was able to conduct in-person interviews and attend meetings with Ukrainian refugees.

Melissa Avilez Lopez went to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil over winter break to present the preliminary findings of her honors thesis to economic professors at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. She was thrilled

to get feedback to revise her honors thesis, "Economic Growth and Income Distribution in Brazil."

Emily Hackett went to Bratislava, Slovakia, Prague and the Czech Republic to do research in their archives. She was able to access important archival documents for her honors thesis entitled, "Fostering Communist Elites: Cold War Czechoslovakia's Foreign Student Program."

Sbidag Demerjian went to Beirut, Lebanon over winter break to conduct further research and collect data on the current economic crisis in Lebanon. She said, "The experience and first-hand knowledge I acquired while interacting with people in the markets opened my eyes to new and interesting possibilities to add to my senior integrative project, 'Creating a Leviathan in Lebanon'."

Jess Rush returned to Paris, France during Paris Fashion Week where she collected additional photographic and video footage to complete her CISLA honors thesis, "Figures."

Wonjune Kim went to Paris, France for almost a month over winter break. He was able to narrow down and solidify his project titled, "Science Fiction Art from the Perspective of Neoclassicism and Romanticism." He said this was extremely useful as he had not done enough previous research on science fiction art and book formats. He was able to research aspects of technological and social advancements in relation to the development of science fiction aesthetics and themes.

IS 401 - Visiting Alumni *by Mary S. Devins*

MARC ZIMMER, PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY, served as the acting director of CISLA during the fall semester 2022. In this role he was responsible for teaching IS 401, the CISLA senior seminar, New Perspectives on Modern Global Society. Marc thought it would be a good idea to bring back CISLA alumni from different career fields and ask them to talk about their post-graduation experiences. He asked them to be honest about what was difficult, challenging, unexpected, good, etc. The alumni stories calmed the students and made them feel positive about life and about their careers after graduation. Needless to say, the students had many questions.

Alexis Cheney '16 majored in English. She interned for an NGO in Paris that addressed the rights of prostitutes. After graduation, Cheney lived and worked in France. She recently completed an MA from SIPA Columbia in IR and is now a consultant on the Women, Business and the Law project at the World Bank. The project researches the impact of laws on women's economic empowerment in 190 countries.

Elizabeth (Lizzie) Lewis '18 majored in Hispanic studies and gender and women's studies. She interned in Chile for an NGO addressing violence against women. Lizzie just completed her final year of law school at NYU.

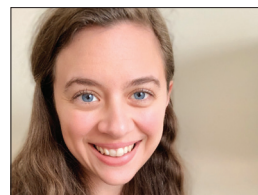
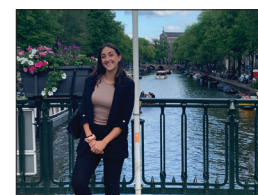
Vanessa Correia '16 is a pediatric nurse practitioner and pediatric mental health specialist with a master's of science in nursing from Yale University. At CC Vanessa majored in biology and Arabic studies. For her CISLA internship she worked for Save the Children in a refugee

camp in Jordan.

Cheike Gaye '19 majored in government and global Islamic studies. Gaye interned in Beirut, Lebanon at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. He currently works for FM Global in Rhode Island, a multinational insurance company. He is able to work remotely from Senegal where he spends long periods of time with family.

They all suggested networking with friends, family members, alumni, and generally people of similar career interests. They urged the seniors to be confident and not to settle.

The CISLA alumni cautioned that post-college work demands can be demanding, with long hours and difficult supervisors. Vanessa told the students that she no longer enjoyed her work and despite a prestigious career she was going to make a change, so not to be afraid of change.



FROM TOP: ALEXIS CHENEY, ELIZABETH (LIZZIE) LEWIS, VANESSA CORREIA, CHEIKE GAYE

IS 301 & IS 302, CISLA Junior Seminar

by Cara Masullo Ekwuabu

IN THE FALL OF 2022, CISLA introduced a new course to the CISLA curriculum. Associate Staff Director Cara Masullo Ekwuabu, and Associate Faculty Director Laura Little, designed and co-taught the CISLA Junior Seminar, a two-semester sequence (IS 301 and IS 302) consisting of one credit per semester.

The junior seminar was designed to prepare and support students for the most exciting and demanding components of the certificate program: the international internship and the senior integrative project. The junior year has historically presented challenges in cohort cohesion and has lacked the structure necessary to best support students in securing and preparing for the internship and SIP.

Through a combination of synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid instruction to accommodate both students on campus and on study away, the junior seminar addresses these challenges and bridges the gap between the sophomore gateway course (IS 201) and senior seminar (IS 401).

STAFFING UPDATE *by Mary S. Devins*

ANDREA LANOUX stepped down as director of CISLA in June 2022 after five years in which she brought great energy and devotion to the CISLA program and, most importantly, to the students. Lanoux had creative visions for innovative changes and ways to face the challenges of the pandemic.

Suzuko Knott, associate professor of German, took over the mantle as the seventh faculty director in August of 2022.

We are delighted to have a new staff position in CISLA. International Programs Support Specialist **Jordan Rottger, CISLA '21**, has been a wonderful addition to the CISLA team. Her position includes shared responsibilities with the Walter Commons. This has proven to be an excellent way to collaborate on projects and programming of international interest across campus.

Professor Laura Little has joined CISLA as the third associate faculty director. Little is a lecturer in Slavic Studies and also the director of the Global Learning Lab.

The CISLA fellows and student advisory board co-chairs have become an invaluable part of the CISLA program. **Jess Rush, Olha Vasylyv** and **Yeseri Rosa Vizcaino** were this year's senior fellows. **Ichiro Kubozono, Izzy Sala,** and **Eric Lu** are the rising senior fellows, and **Annie Morgan** and **Isa Amaro Varas** were the student advisory board co-chairs. Please read about the fellows and the student advisory board on page 3 to learn more about what they did and what they have accomplished.

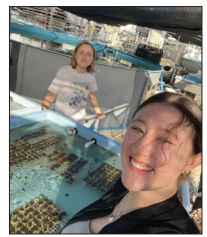
Alumni Updates

by Mary S. Devins

WE PERIODICALLY SEND OUT a survey to gather information for the alumni section of Prism. It is our hope to keep updated with the lives and careers of our many alums. The people listed in this section are those that responded to the survey.

We will send out another survey in the future, so please consider sending us your news! On occasion we can use the information to ask for help with an internship or to pair up a current student on study away or on an internship with an alum in another country.

It is terrific to have news of our alumni.



DIANA KIM '22

is participating in an internship in coral restoration at Mote Marine Laboratory's International Center for Coral Reef Restoration and Research in Sarasota, Florida.

PHOTO: WORKING IN THE TANKS, DOING GENERAL HUSBANDRY FOR CORAL FRAGMENTS, WITH FELLOW CONN ALUMN, AUBRY SHAW

JORDAN WESTLAKE '22

is living in Kenya and working as an Academy Fellow at the Aga Khan Academy Mombasa in a variety of roles. She serves as a dorm parent for 11th and 12th grade girls; a mentor for 8th graders; an advisor for service learning (essentially a more developmental, sustainable, and educational version of community service); and assisting in the college counseling dept (i.e., working with students on their essays).



She also joined the humanities department and helps out in 8th and 9th grade history classes and with humanities programming. Additionally, Jordan is piloting an ultimate frisbee enrichment program.

PHOTO: TOGETHER WITH A FELLOW CAMEL AT NYALI BEACH, MOMBASA, KENYA

ROY WALTON '21

In the fall he will be pursuing an M.A. at SUNY Binghamton in anthropology: public archaeology, with a focus on working in archaeological surveying and science communication.

PHOTO: DIGGING SHOVEL TESTS WHEN WORKING AS A FIELD ARCHAEOLOGIST IN NEW JERSEY



ANN MONK '21

is continuing her tenure as a Marshall Scholar, having completed a master's degree in migration studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in the UK. Ann is in the process of completing a second master's degree, in international

education and development: conflict, emergencies and peace, at University College London (UCL). She is building upon her previous research (a historical analysis of women's education in Afghanistan) with new research into education privatization in contexts of foreign occupation and post-conflict reconstruction. Recently she had the privilege of attending her first fully-funded international research conference in Iraq, where she presented her ongoing research on education privatization in Iraq and Afghanistan.

PHOTO: PRESENTING ONGOING RESEARCH AT AN ACADEMIC CONFERENCE IN IRAQ LAST NOVEMBER

FIONA NOONAN '21

recently graduated with a master's degree in international affairs from the George Washington University's Elliott School. She spent her second semester this year in Paris -- this time at Sciences Po. The first time was alongside her beloved CISLA friends.



PHOTO: IN FRANCE WITH CISLA ALUMNA CHRISTINA TOUGIAS '21

EMILY SANDALL '21

received her master's degree in linguistics from Boston University and started a new job as an English teacher working with Ukrainian and Russian expats.

JULIE BLAZAR '20

just completed her first year at Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law in Philadelphia, PA. She is doing an internship at Hebrew Immigration Aid Society Pennsylvania working in immigration law.

SCOTT BRAUER '20

completed his first year of a PhD program in applied psychology, conducted consulting work for a non-profit company focused on gender-equity based research, and received a Connecticut College Phi Beta Kappa graduate scholarship. He also presented research at international and national conferences -- the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (ISSBD) and the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), and was awarded the SRCD Early Career Transdisciplinary Fellowship (funded by NSF).

ISIS TORRES NUÑEZ '20

started her first year of medical school at the Frank H. Netter, M.D. School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University.

PHOTO: FIRST HEADSHOT TAKEN AT MEDICAL SCHOOL



MARGIE GIACALONE '19

completed her third year of graduate school at UIUC and is preparing for preliminary exams prior to becoming a PhD candidate. She studies linguistic and sociocultural anthropology with a minor in GWS studies, Queer theory and American Indian Studies.

MARI GIAIMO '19

just completed her first year as a law student at Northeastern University School of Law.

GRACE BERMAN '18

After fulfilling a Fulbright ETA in Madrid, Spain, Grace continued to teach English in Madrid. She recently completed her master's degree in global higher education from the Universidad de Alcalá in Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, Spain.

**ASA WATERWORTH '18**

recently on business in Milwaukee, stopped by to visit Joan Robertson '38, her internship endowment donor.

SOPHIA LIEBMAN '16

completed a master's degree in public policy from Brandeis University in 2022.

JACOB SUMMERS '16

started a new position as a community engagement & education manager at Martha's Community Farm. Everything grown is donated to Martha's Choice Marketplace, the largest food pantry in Montgomery County, PA. He also recently helped install a native food forest and upland riparian buffer that is made up of over 350 trees and shrubs. *PHOTO: A NEWLY PLANTED FOOD FOREST AT MARTHA'S COMMUNITY FARM*

**JUAN PABLO PACHECO BEJARANO '14**

recently joined the 11-month art residency, in the Netherlands, at the Jan Van Eyck academy, in Maastricht, and will begin teaching a class at the Royal Academy of Art, in The Hague.

PHOTO: JUAN PABLO AT HIS STUDIO AT THE JAN VAN EYCK ACADEMY, WHERE HE IS DEVELOPING A RE-INTERPRETATION OF THE MYTH OF ATLANTIS

GRAHAM NELSON '14

became a licensed architect in 2022 and started working at KSS Architects in Philadelphia. They are the firm designing the current renovation of the College Center at Crozier-Williams.

YUE WU '14

is a PhD student in Management & Organizations at Boston University and commutes from her home in Shenzhen, China.

COURTNEY ANGEN WEILAND '13

and her husband had their first child, Kayden, at the beginning of April! She is launching an initiative at UMass designed for campus stores across the country to adopt and improve their own sustainable presence. <https://www.umassstore.com/trase-rating>

**KC PUKAR '12**

was promoted to Vice President, quantitative modeling at JPMorgan Chase in Columbus, Ohio.

AMANI ZAVERI '12

has launched her coaching business, Amani Rose Coaching, where she helps women close the gap between where they are now and where they want to be. Her own journey with coaching did a 180 on her life and led her to become a coach in order to share the tools and practices with others.

PHOTO: AMANI ROSE COACHING

**TESSA ENGEL '07**

moved back to Guatemala after pursuing her master's degree in social work and public health in NYC. She and her husband and their rescue pup Ziggy, live in Jocotenango, which is just outside of Antigua. Christian and Tessa met in 2014 in Guatemala City, and she credits her CISLA summer of 2010 interning there as instrumental in defining her personal and professional life. That experience revolutionized the way she thinks about and sees the world.

PHOTO: TESSA AND HER HUSBAND, CHRISTIAN FARFÁN BARRERA

**MICHAEL GRANT HOGAN '07**

is living in the northern KY suburbs of Cincinnati. Grant is a cybersecurity consultant and is helping lead his firm's LGBTQ initiatives. His husband and partner of fourteen years recently passed away. The celebration of life was attended by multiple Conn alums, including CISLA alums Emily (Honstein) Stanton, Christopher Bothur, and Elizabeth Bradley.

**ALEXANDRA FIORILLO '03**

In 2022, Alexandra's company, GRID Impact, expanded programs to several new countries, and she also had a baby. Tilly had visited three continents by the age of 4 months! They hope she'll continue to love the international world and be in the CISLA class of 2044. They'll be in Kenya, Canada, South Africa, and Indonesia this year for work and would love to connect with any CISLA alum. *PHOTO: ALEXANDRA & TILLY IN JANUARY IN DAKAR*

SARAH SCHOELLKOPF '97

left teaching and education after twenty-three years, and is now producing documentaries. A new way to teach!

MARIA COPPOLA '96

recently became Director for the Office of International Affairs at the Federal Trade Commission, where she covers the FTC's international work in antitrust (competition), privacy, and consumer protection. Work travel has included Berlin, Brussels, Paris, and London, and soon Sydney, Tokyo, Brussels, and London. CISLA was a great preparation for the international, multidisciplinary position she has now. *PHOTO: A LITTLE NON-WORK TRAVEL*

**AARON MAINES '96**

His son Michelangelo is attending Conn (class of 2026).

PHOTO L TO R: BOB PROCTOR, AARON MAINES, MARY S. DEVINS

Awards, Scholarships & Fellowships *by Mary S. Devins*

CISLA SCHOLARS, CLASS OF 2023, received numerous awards at the College's Honors and Awards Ceremony in April. This has been an extraordinary year as CISLA scholars also received some of the most prestigious awards given to Connecticut College students.

Isa Amaro Varas '23 has been awarded the highly competitive **THOMAS J. WATSON FELLOWSHIP** to embark on a year of international discovery. Isa will explore the role of language as a form of self-empowerment and cultural pride for refugees building a home in a new country. With a grant of \$40,000 she will travel to Spain, Morocco, Germany, Turkey, and Australia to conduct her research. Amaro Varas is an IR and French double major and economics minor. Her project, "Sounds of Home," stems from her experiences working with refugees, teaching ESL, and being an international student at Conn.

Olha Vasylyv '23 has been awarded the **2023 DAVIS PROJECT FOR PEACE PRIZE**. Vasylyv is a sociology and French double major. Projects for Peace awards \$10,000 for projects that encourages innovative, community-centered, and scalable responses to the world's most pressing issues. Vasylyv returned home to Ukraine in December and witnessed first-hand missile attacks and sirens indicating the need to head to shelter. For her Davis project, Vasylyv has returned to Ukraine to set up summer camps for refugee children at the European Collegium in Kiev, and then will do a similar project in Austria.

Beatrice Voorhees '23 was awarded the **GAUDIANI '66 PRIZE** given to a College certificate center student for excellence in the SIP. Her project entitled, "Out of Odesa: Yefim Ladyzhensky and the 'Odesa Text' of Jewish-Soviet Culture," is an original interdisciplinary study that contributes significantly to the understanding of Jewish history and creativity in twentieth-century Eastern Europe.

Beatrice also received a **FULBRIGHT ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC** where she will go in the fall. Voorhees is a history and Slavic studies major and a computer science minor.

Eric Lu '24 is embarking this summer on an exciting journey as part of his **MINOR MYERS RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP**. He will use documentary photography/videography and photojournalism to challenge the historical misconceptions, fear, and stigmas surrounding Africa and Latin America.



Emily Hackett '23 was awarded the **CRITICAL LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP** through the State Department. She will complete an intensive 10-week course in Russian in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Emily was also the recipient of the **BEINECKE SCHOLARSHIP FOR GRADUATE STUDY**. Established in 1971, the program provides scholarships for the "graduate education of students of exceptional promise." Emily will pursue an MA in Regional Studies: Russia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia at Harvard University in the fall. Emily was also a finalist for the prestigious Marshall Scholarship, which finances young Americans of high ability to study for a degree in the United Kingdom. To be a finalist is a distinct honor.

Class of 2023 CISLA Scholars **Sbidag Demerjian**, **Emily Hackett** and **Beatrice Voorhees** were inducted into **PHI BETA KAPPA**, America's most prestigious honors society that advocates for the value and benefits of a liberal arts and science education.

Jack Rider-McGovern '21 was awarded the **FULBRIGHT TEACHING ASSISTANT FELLOWSHIP**. He will spend a year as a teaching assistant in Paraguay. In 2021 Rider-McGovern was awarded the Thomas J. Watson Fellowship to study marginalized languages in locations around the world.

Admirabilis (Bilis) Kalolella '23 received the prestigious **CELL PRESS AWARD FOR RISING BLACK SCIENTISTS**. He received a \$10,000 award plus \$500 in travel expenses. Cell Press states that "our goal is to support talented and motivated young Black scientists on their journey." Bilis wrote a beautiful essay, "[My Christmas Holiday](#)," as part of his application. [https://www.cell.com/cell/fulltext/S0092-8674\(23\)00060-0](https://www.cell.com/cell/fulltext/S0092-8674(23)00060-0)



PHOTO: MARC ZIMMER AND BILIS KALOELLELLA IN SOUTH AFRICA

Iyad Ait Hou CISLA '22 and **Sbidag Demerjian CISLA '23**, joined **Abubakr El Sobky '23**, and **Maged Hassan '25** in competing against nearly 600 students from 90 colleges and universities around the world in Qatar Debate's sixth annual **INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIP** in Istanbul, Turkey, in June.

The global event brings together students from different countries to debate, discuss, and exchange ideas in Arabic about the most pressing societal and global challenges and contemporary issues. Conn won three of five rounds to finish 23rd in the event.

PHOTO L TO R: IYAD AIT HOU CISLA '22, ABUBAKR EL SOBKY '23, SBIDAG DEMERJIAN CISLA '23, AND MAGED HASSAN '25

Isa Amaro Varas CISLA '23 and **Austin Robertson '23** were invited to attend the **PI SIGMA ALPHA HONOR SOCIETY CONFERENCE** in Washington, D.C. in February. Amaro Varas, an international relations and French double major, showcased her work, "Bridging Policy and Practice: Access to Higher Education for Refugees in France."

Olha Vasylyv '23 and **Jess Rush '23** were invited to present their Senior Integrative Projects at the **CTW UNDERGRADUATE SYMPOSIUM IN THE ARTS & HUMANITIES** at Wesleyan University in November 2022. This symposium is a space for collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to original scholarship and creative work.





MARY SPARROW DEVINS

Arrivederci

DEAR CISLA FAMILY, the time has come to say goodbye. I have had a long (33 years—41% of my life) and wonderful career being a part of CISLA. Often people say they can't wait for retirement, but I am not one of those people. It is hard to leave something that has been so rewarding and so joyful.

In 1990 Robert Proctor, the founding director of CISLA, hired me to help him get this new program up and running. He greeted me on my first day of work holding 13 manila folders containing the names of the first class of CISLA scholars who would need internships in seven countries the following summer. He led me to a room on the 4th floor of Fanning, which would be my office. Nobody was there, there was no air conditioning, and my office equipment consisted only of a word processor, which is just a fancy word for typewriter. There was no such thing as the Internet, email, or even a fax machine.

I had no idea what I was doing or how to do it. However, I quickly found that the key to this new job would be to get to the library and befriend the librarians who could guide me. Letters were written, brought to the post office for postage, and sent around the world asking for internships. Fast forward and there are over 800 CISLA

alumni scattered across the country and the globe—and I know every one of them. The CISLA program continues to be one of the crown jewels of the college.

In these 33 years, history held many changes and challenges for all of us: the Soviet Union collapsed, the wall came down in Germany, the European Union was created, women's issues gained attention, September 11th changed the world, climate change continues to pose existential threats to our planet, human rights are at the forefront across the globe, the plight of refugees and asylum seekers make us question the world order, COVID changed how we lived, and now the next generations must figure out how to navigate and use artificial intelligence and ChatGPT.

Our CISLA scholars examined these topics in their senior integrative projects, and I learned along with them. I also had to learn to revisit some of my entrenched opinions and see the world through different eyes, the eyes of the next generation of young leaders. My door was always open for students, and those many lovely conversations and relationships will be among my most cherished moments. I worked with extraordinary faculty and staff who were inspirational. I shall deeply miss being part of the CISLA family, but I have a trove of wonderful memories and friendships. It has been my privilege to work in CISLA, and I am grateful. And now the next chapter begins. It is up to me to create a new and different life of purpose, experiences, and happiness. Please continue to stay in touch.

Thank you all. Arrivederci.

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