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Introduction: Partnerships and New Alliances

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INTRODUCTION

As we go to press, Greece is poised on the brink, yet again it seems, of defaulting on its massive debt, with predictions and fears of local, regional, and perhaps ultimately global dire consequences. The interconnectedness of economies around the globe has come into sharp focus as the prospects of financial crisis, perhaps even collapse, in the eurozone threatens to drag down the weak economic recovery in the United States, and adversely affect Asian economic stability. The past few years have shown all too clearly that globalization has a very real downside. Yet we hope to avoid a major crisis, maintain our struggling economies, and grow to greater prosperity through globalization as well. Isolationism is not an option. International financial soundness and increased global trade are a large part of the solution. Business partners need to understand each other's business practices, and also the indigenous languages and cultures of the business community around the world. That is simply good business, and the stakes have never been so high.

Again this year we are pleased to present articles that examine a great variety of topics and cultures, reflecting the global connections of business and the business languages that support international commerce. The first article in this year's collection is also the first article we have published on Arabic business, an area we have sought to cover for several years. In "Teaching Arabic to Business Students," Amel Mili examines the program premises and design of a two-year sequence of Arabic language courses that covers 20 linguistic and culture topics important for a student to understand the business culture in Arabic-speaking countries.

Two articles relate to Business Chinese, beginning with Lan Zhang's "How Business Professionals Perceive Intercultural Differences: A Survey." The purpose of the survey is to determine the needs of students of business Chinese as identified by ten American business professionals who have worked in China. One major result, consistent with previous research, is the need to incorporate items of culture into the curriculum. The article "Chinese for Business Professionals: The Workplace Needs and Business Chinese Textbooks" also explores the needs of the student of Chinese business, especially the communicative use of the language in a business environment. Haidan Wang then reviews a number of textbooks in the field to determine which best meet the needs identified. Mary Vigier and Nancy Smoller Le Floch examine a module entitled *Understanding the American Mind* that they use in the ESC

Clermont Graduate School of Management in France. The article "Promoting Cultural Awareness in an International Business Program through Foreign Language Communication" provides many insights into the importance of teaching both language and culture simultaneously.

"Retaining Engineering Students through a January Term German Immersion Study Tour" by Sigrid Berka describes a successful study abroad program at the University of Rhode Island. The details provided indicate how it prepares and motivates engineering students to learn from, and possibly consider working for, several German companies that are world leaders. Sandra L. Summers's article "*Heinzelmännchen oder Schoko-Kuchen?* Practicing the (Nearly) Lost Art of Translation in the Business German Classroom" urges language professionals to use translation training as part of the curriculum. Students of business can benefit by a greater awareness of precise meanings of terms and the context of their use which accurate translations require. Norbert Hedderich's article is the third devoted to a German topic, and it explores best practices for using current events and business news in the classroom. In "The Challenge of Transcultural Competence" he provides useful advice and lesson plans on how to effectively supplement a traditional textbook with the latest in current events. The final article is Orlando R. Kelm's "Breath Pure Chile: Teaching about the Cultural Differences in International Business." It presents a case study based on actual interviews the author conducted in Chile, and guides students through various cultural issues and models of business communication for a greater understanding of cross-cultural issues. We hope you find the articles useful.

This year, 2011, marks the second year that *Global Business Languages* has been an electronic publication. The results have been extremely pleasing. We have truly gone global in our circulation, reaching a far wider audience than our previous print publications allowed (300-400 copies/year). The Bepress system that supports the electronic format provides information on article downloads, and I am very pleased to report that in the year since the 15 volumes (1996–2010) of *GBL* have been online, with their 155 articles plus book reviews and introductions, we have had a total of 23,902 full-load article downloads (as of September 2, 2011). Readers' preferences have been as varied as the articles we present, with no clear trend for language or topic. We take this as a sign of approval on your part, and will try to continue providing you with a wide range of articles on business language topics.

We can be reached at our email address: wooda@purdue.edu. For more information you can visit us also at our website <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/

gbl/>. We hope that this will help facilitate your access to our journal, provide information on subscriptions, and disseminate the call for new articles.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the US Department of Education and Dr. Susanna Easton for support of our Center for International Business Education and Research here at Purdue University. This publication would not be possible without financial support provided by the Purdue CIBER and the School of Languages and Cultures at Purdue University.

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