IPFW Foreign Language Festival Draws Over 1,000 K-12 Students

On Saturday, March 25, Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne's Department of Modern Foreign Languages and the Academic Alliance of Allen County hosted the Eleventh Foreign Language Festival. Over 1,000 students from throughout Northeast Indiana in kindergarten through the 12th grade participated in events to test their foreign language proficiency in French, German, Latin, Russian, and Spanish. Coordinating the popular event were Jeanette Clausen, Associate Professor and Modern Foreign Languages Chair, with staff members Nancy Hasskarl and Sue Dirrim.

It was heartwarming to see fifteen children receive first-place ribbons in the Elementary (grades 3-5) Vocabulary Bee since no one missed a word! Elementary and Middle School students also presented outstanding skits and musical performances. The festival offered something for everyone, with the low-stress competitions of Pictionary, Scrabble, Scrambled Words, and Arts and Crafts exhibits for those not inclined to seek the spotlight. There were also challenging contests that require both skill and an intrepid spirit, such as Declamation—the recitation of a memorized piece in the foreign language; Essay and Poetry writing—in which students write an original essay or poem in the foreign language within half-hour on festival day; Non-stop Conversation—a timed, impromptu conversation between team members in the foreign language; and Knowledge Bowl—a team competition testing cultural knowledge.

IPFW's annual Foreign Language Festival provides both students and teachers with a unique experience. While students get an opportunity to see what their peers at other schools are capable of, teachers are able to come together for the exchange of ideas and to form new associations. This year's festival was a great success, and the 1996 festival has already been scheduled to take place Saturday, April 13.

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Forum Explores the Arts of the Black Atlantic

On March 23-24, the Department of Afro-American Studies hosted the multidisciplinary forum, Black Atlantic: The Arts. The event, organized by Afro-American Studies Chair John McCluskey, was also sponsored by IU’s African Studies Program, the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and the Multidisciplinary Ventures Fund. The forum featured the lecture, "Four Problems in Diasporan Art: A Study of Synthesis and Transformation in Black Visual Arts of the Americas," by Barry Gaither, Director of the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Arts and Special Consultant/Adjunct Curator of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. In the afternoon, Yvonne Daniel, professor of Dance and Anthropology at Smith College, presented a lecture/demonstration (left) on "Dances of the Spirit within the Black Atlantic: Cuban Dance Performance." The forum concluded with a panel discussion on the "Politics of Art" which featured the two speakers. Professor McCluskey hopes that the forum will become an annual event in which scholars of different disciplines may come together to address major issues and concerns of the Black Atlantic's diverse populations.