

# Enlaces Culturales

## 2016 - 2017



## In honor of Elena Gascón-Vera 44 Years of Teaching and Service at Wellesley College

*A Tribute to Elena Gascón-Vera by Carlos Alberto Vega  
on the occasion of her retirement from the College*

Elena Gascón-Vera. Rarely has a colleague made such a difference in terms our intellectual life and our calling to educate women.

Elena was born and raised in Madrid, Spain, where she knew first-hand the after effects of the Spanish Civil War. As a free thinker, she needed to escape Franco's repressive society at the time. She came to teach Spanish in Dubuque, Iowa. There, she confirmed her passion for studying literature and culture, as well as teaching. She went on to complete a Ph.D. at Yale. This was her second Ph.D. The first is from the Universidad Complutense in Madrid. Then she came to Wellesley over forty years ago and the rest is history.

During that history she enriched the College not only through her own teaching and research, but also by inviting some of the most prominent emerging figures in the Hispanic world as visiting instructors. She did so both to enrich our own intellectual life and to make sure that the long-standing prominence of Wellesley among Spanish-speaking countries was secured. The College impacted these visiting scholars as well, as witnessed to by the latest book by one of Spain's leading philosophers and writers, Javier Marías, *El Quijote de Wellesley* (Alfaguara 2016), a compilation of the notes he took in preparation for the class he taught on Cervantes' masterpiece back in the fall of 1984. As he noted in his introduction, Marías found the students at Wellesley so rigorous in their intellectual inquiry that he had to read the classic more carefully than he had ever done before—an undertaking that reached fruition in his 2016 study.

Part of Elena's ability to identify rising talent was due to her own pivotal role in cultivating the arts in Spain after the restoration of democracy. Elena and her identical twin Paloma are famous for their artistic salons. Pedro Almodóvar, the Oscar winning filmmaker, made some of his first movies in their home on a Super8 camera while he was still working as a telephone operator. Their annual



birthday party on December 21 was de-rigueur for the artistic world of Spain: from Almodóvar, to Rafael Moneo (architect of the Davis Museum), to the trail blazing queer author and dramatist Agustín Gómez-Arcos, to one of Spain's fundamental feminist novelists and journalists, Rosa Montero, to countless others. And at these gatherings in Madrid they always served two American Butterball Tom turkeys, which Elena carried in her suitcase and carry-on when she flew home at the end of the fall semester. The turkeys in Spain (tough and scrawny at the time) were just not good enough.

Thanks to Elena, Rosa Montero herself came here twice to teach. Google Rosa Montero and you will get just an inkling of her importance in the Hispanic world. The first time, Rosa went back to Spain and didn't say nice things about us. Instead of being offended, Elena retorted, "Well, she obviously did not learn enough; bring her back." And so Rosa did come back about five years later and taught again. The second time accomplished the task: Rosa went back to Spain and wrote article after article in praise of Wellesley and the importance of women's colleges. I point out the Rosa case because it speaks much of Elena: When confronted with an opposing view she does not respond with offence or rancor, but attempts to seek out dialogue and deeper exploration.

Elena has authored books and over ninety articles on the Spanish Middle Ages, as well as on contemporary film and feminism. What marks her works is the depth of insight and the sheer freedom afforded by a brilliant mind whose only real fear is not taking risks. She has been ever devoted to the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program and has always been one to build community. For, other than a brilliant mind, Elena has an equally high-voltage heart.

In the future, Elena will be based primarily in Madrid surrounded by her loving family, more loving friends than most of us would incur in two lifetimes, three dogs, and a cat. And she will of course continue to travel, for, as Elena explained to me decades ago: there are three periods in which you live life most intensely: 1. When you are very young; 2. When you are in love; and 3. When you travel. Elena especially enjoys places that others may shun, and her recent destinations include Iran, Ethiopia, Senegal, Bora Bora, and Nepal.

In the south of Spain we sing and dance what are called "Sevillanas," an iconic genre that is instantly recognized throughout the world for its thin slinky men in tight pants and women in bolts and bolts of polka-dotted, ruffled dresses who create a collision of passion and respectability through foot stomping and dramatic poses. Right now, one of my favorite Sevillanas comes to mind. It is called "El Adiós," literally "The Goodbye." The refrain claims that *Algo se muere en el alma cuando un amigo se va. Something dies in the soul when a friend goes away.*





# Faculty/Staff Updates

**Marjorie Agosín** published two books of poetry: *Las islas blancas/The White Islands*, translated by Jaqueline Nanfito and published by Swan Isle Press, and *Puertos de luz/Harbors of Light*, translated by her Spanish Department colleague Eileen O'Connor and published by White Pine Press, which "World Literature Today" listed among its "75 notable translations of 2016." She also wrote a book for young readers, *Anne: An Imagining of the Life of Anne Frank*, translated by Jacqueline Nanfito and illustrated by Francisca Yanez, and two essay collections: *Translating the Soul*, published by Sherman Asher Press and *Home*, published by Solis Press. Marjorie was the keynote speaker for Northeast Modern Language Association and the Wisconsin Reading Association, and recorded her poetry at the Library of Congress.

**Verónica Darer** worked on several assessment projects for the Blended Learning Initiative. In May, together with Professor Heather Bryant from the writing program, she will present their research at Bryn Mawr College's Blended Learning in the Liberal Arts Conference on the use of blended learning in English writing courses. This year, Verónica especially enjoyed teaching the course for Heritage Learners. It is very rewarding to see how students expand and deepen their knowledge of their native language and culture. She was very honored to have Jael Matos among her students in the course. Verónica is looking forward to hearing from former students who would like to share their adventures and achievements!



Continuing to serve as the inaugural faculty director of the Andrew W. Mellon Blended Learning Initiative, **Evelina Guzauskyte** brought four scholars of blended learning and the digital humanities to the College. In collaboration with Library and Technology Services and the Provost's Office, and building on the base of 50 projects led by faculty in the humanities, media arts and sciences, and computer science, Evelina has launched the Digital Hu-

manities Pilot Program at the College, with five courses being offered next year (<http://www.wellesley.edu/lts/bli>). She participated in several digital humanities conferences at Swarthmore College, Bard College, and the International Cartographic Association's conference hosted by the University IUAV in Venice, Italy, where she presented her own digital humanities project, "Spatio-temporal dimensions of Christopher Columbus's naming discourse through visualization." Evelina also published a review of a collaborative scholarly website: *The Recipes Project: Food, Magic, Art, Science, and Medicine* (<http://recipes.hypotheses.org/>) in *The Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. Evelina's book *Christopher Columbus's Naming in the diaries of the Four Voyages (1492-1504): A Discourse of Negotiation* (University of Toronto Press, 2014), is being translated into Lithuanian, thanks to generous funding from the Huntington Fund and the Cultural Ministry of Lithuania. Last summer, Evelina was interviewed by the national TV station LRT in her native Vilnius about her book and her work at the College. This summer, Evelina will be developing a digital humanities project on Latin American and East Central European cultural, literary, and artistic exchanges.



**Koichi Hagimoto** had an exciting year. For his research, he was invited to give talks at various institutions (Trinity, Yale and BU) about his new project on the influence of Japan in Argentine literature and culture. He also published an article in *Asia/América Latina*, a peer-reviewed journal based in Argentina. In addition, he is co-editing a special number for *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*, which will be published in 2018. In his teaching, Koichi incorporated "service learning" for the first time this year. Students in his SPAN 275 organized a cultural fair for the kids in the Mission Hill After School Program in Boston. The activities included musical chairs, photo sessions, cookie decorating, various games and crafts, and the heritage station collecting stories about cultural identities. It was a truly rewarding experience to go beyond the academic setting to serve the local community, especially Latino youth. Next year he will be leading a Winter-session program in Cuba.

Finally, Koichi is very happy to share that his son, Taishi, is doing really well after having a difficult first year. He speaks more words in Japanese than in English/Spanish!



**Nancy Hall** came back from her research leave to teach the Modern Mexico seminar, Elementary Spanish and a section of Intermediate Spanish this year. She also delivered a guest lecture on Octavio Paz's "Piedra de sol", completed two new chapters for her book-length study of Carmen Boullosa's novels, and read her favorite contemporary writers in Spanish--Jufesa, Villalobos, Neumann and Vásquez--more deeply. Recently electrified by George Saunders' fiction in English (*Tenth of December*, *Lincoln in the Bardo*), she is looking forward to offering the Latin American Short Story next fall. Outside of Wellesley, Nancy took on a volunteer leadership role around the important issue of affordable housing, co-directing a broad network of citizens who collaborated with town and state officials to make significant progress in that arena.

**Antônio M.A. Igrejas** taught Intensive Elementary and Intermediate Portuguese courses, "Introduction to Lusophone Studies" and developed and taught independent studies on the Portuguese and Brazilian novel as well as Brazilian Cinema. Additionally, he taught a language course for Spanish-speakers and "Crossing the Portuguese-Speaking World through Film, Music, and Fiction" at MIT. He was the invited speaker at the Belmont World Film Festival for the film, "Where I Grow Old." Antônio also attend the "Symposium on Gender, Social Justice and the Empowerment of Women" in Cabo Verde. He was awarded funds for a Library Summer Technological Project: The Land at the End of World (Novel) Text Analysis. This award provides support for a Student Assistant to help with the project.

**Jael Matos** had the privilege of making a site visit to the Middlebury in Chile Program in November. She visited the cities of Santiago and Valparaiso, where she met with administration and host families as well as enrolled Wellesley students to discuss their experiences in the program. The summer season was just beginning and the weather was perfect. She spent time in Viña del Mar on her off days and enjoyed dinners and long walks on the beach.

Back on campus, Jael had the opportunity to visit the Wellesley College Archives. She researched the history of the Spanish Department, going through pictures and documents from as far back as the late 1800s! This Spring, Jael attended Professor Verónica Darer's SPAN 243 Spanish for Heritage Learners. She wanted to improve her Spanish writing skills and decided to take this course as an auditor. She learned many things about her Puerto Rican culture, as well as the Mexican, Cuban, Colombian, and Nicaraguan cultures. Although she still has much to learn, she feels that her written Spanish and cultural knowledge has improved. In Verónica's class, Jael saw how dedicated Wellesley students are in their studies and the immense knowledge they contribute in the classroom, which made the course more and more interesting every week. During Spring Break, Jael visited family in Puerto Rico with her nephew Daniel. Activities included a few days in Rincon at the Villa Cofresi Hotel, where the sunsets are amazing, hiking with her parents in El Yunque and a fun-filled day at the Museo del Niño with Daniel. Jael is looking forward to the end of semester activities for our graduating seniors as well as welcoming back Spanish Alums during Alumnae Weekend.



*Above: Jael's parents, Benjamin and Eugenia with their grandson, Daniel*

This year, **Eileen O'Connor** taught Elementary and Intermediate Spanish, as well as a First Year Writing course, "Bestsellers after the Boom: Contemporary Latin American Literature in Translation." She has enjoyed serving as a major advisor to two of her former Spanish students and welcoming new students to Wellesley as a first year advisor. This summer, Eileen will volunteer with Narrative 4, an international nonprofit that facilitates the exchange of personal stories among culturally, politically and economically diverse people, and continue her work translating interviews between author Nathalie Handal and various Latin American and Spanish authors for the Words Without Borders series, "The City and the Writer." Eileen also was a guest blogger for Solstice: A Magazine of Diverse Voices and recently was shortlisted for the 2017 Fourth Genre Steinberg Essay Prize sponsored by Michigan State University.



**Carlos Ramos** started the academic year finishing conversations in Madrid with the leadership of Universia. Based in Spain, and under the patronage of Banco Santander, Universia is the largest Spanish and Portuguese speaking network of universities. In September, our new President Paula A. Johnson signed her first international agreement at Wellesley with them. In the Fall, Carlos taught a Graduate Seminar on “Poetry of the Dawn” at Boston University. Among his students was Laura Mayron ’16, who is currently pursuing a PhD there. In January, he had public conversations with two distinguished writers: with Milena Busquets (*This Too Shall Pass*, 2016) in Barcelona as part of his 7th “Wintersession in Barcelona,” and at Wellesley with Jhumpa Lahiri, who discussed her new writings in Italian (*In altre parole/In Other Words*, 2016). In November, he and Professor Verónica Darer presented new research on the use of cultural diaries while studying abroad at the 2016 American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Conference in Boston. Carlos also gave talks on Federico García Lorca’s brief stay in Vermont in the summer of 1929 at Dartmouth College in February, and at the Wellesley College Alumnae Club in Vermont in April (a truly lovely occasion!). He has one last talk on contemporary Spain scheduled for May at MIT’s International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI).



*Above: Carlos Ramos with his SPAN 268 Wintersession Class*

This year, King Felipe VI of Spain conferred the medal of “La Orden de la Cruz de Isabel la Católica” (Order of the Cross of Isabel the Catholic) upon **Joy Renjilian-Burgy** (“Alegría”). This medal is one of the highest civil honors that Spain gives for distinguished service which benefits the country. She has served in key leadership roles in regional, national and international organizations dedicated to fostering the study of diverse languages and cultures of Hispanic nations. Alegria also received a Chair from Harvard University Extension School for 25 years of teaching in the Spanish and English programs. She participated in a Harvard seminar on the teaching of language and culture to Heritage Speakers of Spanish in colleges and universities and gave presentations at state, regional and national conferences on the theme of immigration in literature and film in Spanish. In addition, Alegria and her co-editors published a third book on the Armenian Feminist writer, Zabel Yessayan, *In the Ruins: The Massacre of Armenians at Adana*, with funding from the Gulbenkian and Liebman Foundations. She also enjoyed a productive year of teaching advanced Spanish language, Chicana Literature & Culture and Latin American Film during her 38th year at Wellesley College. The highlight of her year has been the birth of her and Don’s grandchild, Jove Jupiter Mountain Heart, now 8 months old.



*Above: Joy Renjilian-Burgy in front of King Felipe VI’s portrait, with the former and current Consul Generals of Spain in Boston, Julio Montesinos and Fernando Alvar-gonzález San Martín, representing the King in awarding Renjilian-Burgy this prestigious medal.*



This academic year continues to be rewardingly dynamic for **Inela Selimovic**. During the spring semester of 2017 she offered a new seminar (New Argentine Cinema) and revamped an existing course (Contemporary Spanish Cinema). Inela's teaching efforts continue to feed into and proceed from her research. This spring Inela will present "Lucía Puenzo's *El niño pez* (2009): Nomadic Minors and Homemaking" and co-chair "Epistemologies of Childhood in Argentine Cinema and Literature" at the 2017 Latin American Studies Association (LASA) in Lima, Peru. To reward her Intermediate Spanish students' academic enthusiasm, she organized a tango workshop/performance in the fall semester of 2016. Inela was equally delighted to introduce the screening of Argentine filmmaker Lucrecia Martel's *La ciénaga/The Swamp* (2001) during this year's Cinéphile Sundays at Wellesley College.



Now in her third year of service on the Medical Professions Advisory Committee, **Jill Syverson-Stork** reports that she loves re-connecting with Wellesley alums and students of the Spanish Department in the process of applying to medical school. Jill finds it gratifying to see so many former students from the Department engaged in clinical work and research throughout the world where their knowledge of Spanish language and cultures has proved indispensable. Working with Kristina Stark, '17, R.A of Casa Cervantes, Angela Jurado Ruiz, Language Assistant from the Universidad de Córdoba, and the students of Casa Cervantes, Jill collaborated with Mared Alicea-Westort, Advisor to Latinx Students, and Jael Matos to host the 14th Annual Latino Appreciation Dinner, inaugurated by Jill and current Associate Professor of Law at UC Hastings, Alina Ball '03. (The legacy continues, Alina!) Finally, Jill is grateful to her admired colleague and friend, Elena Gascón-Vera, for bequeathing *Span 302: Cervantes y el "Quijote,"* to her at Wellesley many years ago, and thanks her students of Spring '17 for yet another marvelous semester of reading the perennially current, and ever inspiring, first of all modern novels.



**Carlos Vega** completes his third year as Chair of the Department (and his third round of serving in that role!). He's very much looking forward to more time for teaching and research. During the past year, the accomplishment of which he is most proud was the course he designed and taught on "Masculinities in Medieval and Renaissance Spanish Literature" (Fall 2016). The course was informed by the very reason he came to Wellesley in the first place: a conviction that educating and empowering women can lead to a reexamination of all (especially men's) roles. He believes it is difficult to be a feminist without deconstructing what "manhood" and "masculinity" mean. One must reveal the false "naturalness" of the male in order to understand misogyny and other phenomena that haunt both women *and* men. Male hegemony may exist—but only when we do not ask a sufficient number of questions about its construction. He continues to serve widely at the College as part of numerous committees and as a speaker at Wellesley Alumnae Clubs throughout the country.



# Portuguese @ Wellesley

The Portuguese program completed four years at Wellesley this year. Our curriculum continues to grow and next Fall a new cross-listed course with Africana Studies: “Cultures of the Portuguese-Speaking World, Through Film, Music and Fiction” will be offered. The Music department will teach a new cross-listed course with Portuguese entitled “Brazilian Music and the Politics of Culture” in Spring 2018. For the first time, the Portuguese Program had three students studying abroad, one in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and two in Lisbon, Portugal. António M.A. Igrejas also travelled with a Wellesley Centers for Women group to Cabo Verde this Spring and visited the University of Cabo Verde to discuss future institutional collaborations, potential internships and study abroad opportunities for Wellesley Students.

The **Portuguese Lecture Series @ Wellesley** remains popular and this year hosted the Mozambican inspired music group Kina Zoré. The performance and conversation took place in the Cow Chair room and was a success with the Wellesley College community. In another Lecture Series initiative, students in Intensive Intermediate Portuguese explored blended learning initiatives and conversed, via Skype, with Brazilian Army Colonel Carlos Cinelli. The topics discussed varied from life in the military to current socio-political issues in Brazil.



Você fala  
português?

*Desculpe  
my  
portuguese*



# Eventos Culturales













# Sigma Delta Pi Ceremony

Congratulations to our Spanish Majors, Class of 2017





# Charlando con Ángela Jurado Ruiz

*Our Language Assistant from the University of Córdoba, Spain, shares her thoughts and experiences during her year at Wellesley College*

## **Was this your first time in the U.S.?**

Yes, I've never been in the States before and I was really excited about the opportunity to live here long enough to get to know the culture and travel around as well.

## **Was it hard to get used to life in the U.S. and at Wellesley College?**

The first weeks were a bit confusing because Wellesley has so many traditions and also the campus is huge, but thanks to the Spanish department and the Slater International orientation, the transition was smooth and I got used to life on campus pretty quickly.

## **What will you miss most about life here at Wellesley College?**

I'll definitely miss the community. People here get a feeling of belonging and sisterhood, which is amazing. Everything feels safe on campus and everyone is really welcoming.

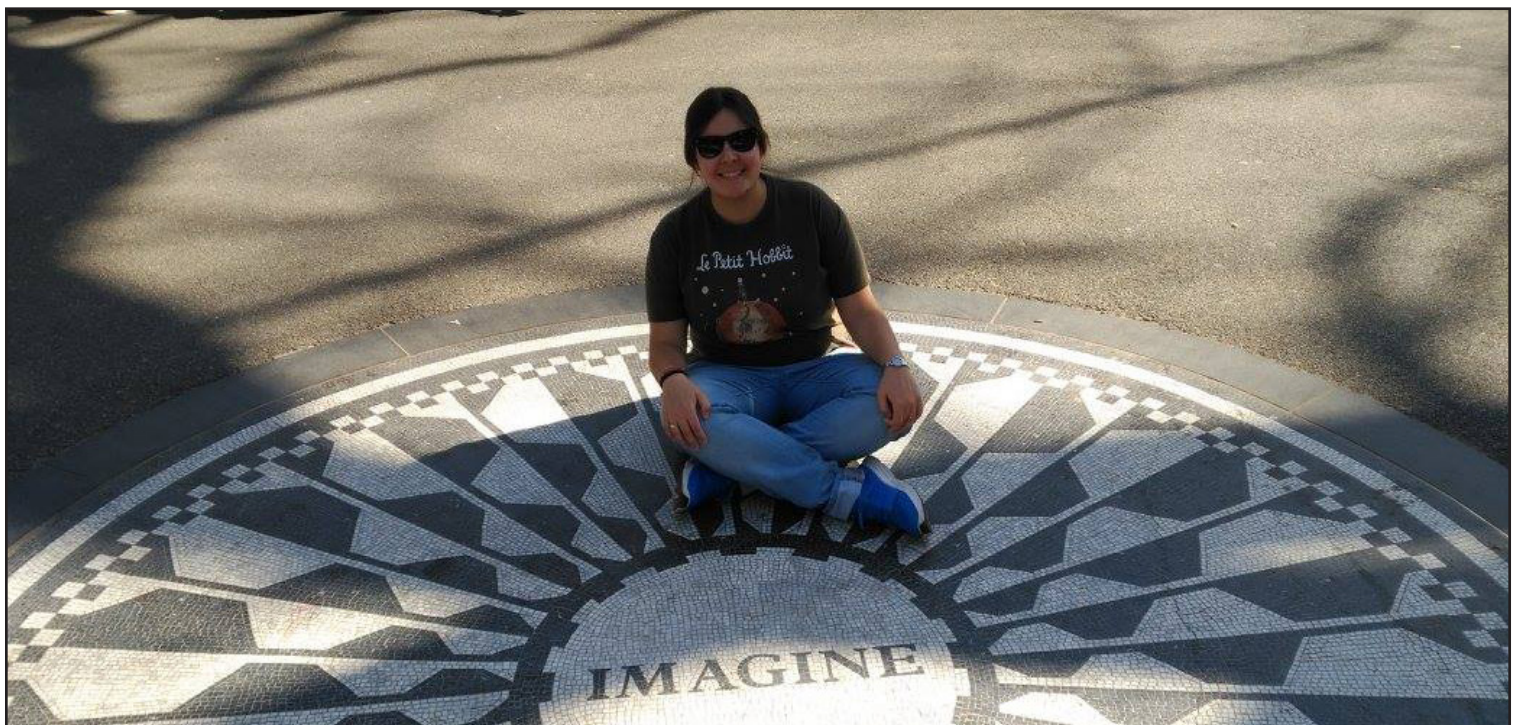
I'll also miss playing rugby (I started here last semester), the opportunity to learn new languages (I've been taking Portuguese here since September) and all the friendships I've made (the rest of the Language Teaching Assistants and my housemates from Casa Cervantes).



And one last thing: pumpkin flavor. I tried pumpkin pie, coffee, beer, pancakes, ice cream... That was a shocking and new flavor that I discovered here and that I now love.

## **Any advice for other Language Assistants?**

Make the most of it. Travel as much as you can. Try to make as many American friends as you can, and also international ones. Try new things (not only food but also sports, traditions, etc.). Get out of your comfort zone. It's an amazing opportunity to do so and you won't regret it!





# Alumnae Spotlight

## Nia Phillips '12

*Spanish major Nia Phillips '12 won her first Emmy Award on April 30, 2017. She is part of the team at Good Morning America, which was named Outstanding Morning Program. Read on to learn about Nia's journey: from taking classes in Green Hall to influencing what happens in the "greenroom" at ABC!*

### What did you do after graduation — namely, what led you to ABC?

After graduation, I moved to New York City to attend Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism where I earned my M.S. in May 2013. After that, I spent some time working as an Editorial Producer at Major League Baseball Advanced Media, mainly working on material for the Mets and Yankees before beginning my internship at Good Morning America in the fall of 2013. At GMA, I'm working my way up the ranks. After my internship as a Production Coordinator on the weekend show, I was promoted to Production Associate in the Field & Series department and now my current position is Associate Producer.

### How did your experiences as a Spanish major prepare you for work — and for life — after college?

I think that my experience as a Spanish major definitely helped me prepare for J-School and also life after college! The courses that I studied at Wellesley helped open my world to different cultures and topics in both Latin America and Spain and I was able to use what I learned in graduate school. For example, my master's project was about the first American kid recruited to play at FC Barcelona's training academy as well as the MLS' efforts to also build a similar system. In a class I took at Wellesley with Professor Ramos, I wrote a 20-page paper (!) about soccer in Spain in Spanish and was able to go back to sources I read for that to help give perspective on my research in grad school. In another graduate class, I drew upon what I learned in my class with Professor Hagimoto about Asians in Latin America, in which we discussed Chinese Cuban culture and went to one of New York's last Chinese Cuban restaurants. Lots of things that I learned at the Departamento have definitely helped me post Wellesley!

At work, my Spanish knowledge sometimes comes in handy! I've been able to read and listen to some sources for stories, which makes it much faster to find a sound bite or read different accounts about some of the pieces that we work on.

And personally, I am a huge soccer fan and am able to en-



joy watching Real Madrid games in Spanish. I even joined the NYC official supporter's club here as well. I wish I could go more than I do, but when I go it's always a bunch of fun! I really fell in love with La Liga soccer while studying abroad in Cordoba with Wellesley's PRESHCO program — and it's something that I still enjoy in my free time now. My semester in Spain was one of my favorite parts of college — and something I still talk about today! I sometimes go to a Spanish grocery store in SoHo for jamón serrano!

## NIA PHILLIPS

### FINDING A SPOTLIGHT BEHIND THE SCENES

BY CRISTINA ROJALUIS / PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY NIA PHILLIPS

'08

EVERY WEEKDAY, MILLIONS OF PEOPLE sit on their sofas watching the news. But the TV audience doesn't see people like Nia Phillips, who spent much of the night gathering and producing the news. In the daily administrative work that's TV newsroom, Phillips, an associate producer on the ABC show, has worked on stories ranging from the devastation of Hurricane Matthew to the trials and tribulations of the presidential campaign. She has shared her own story on *Madam Genius*, the news site on the reality show *Shady Side*, and the new *Let's Make a Man* by Beyoncé. Whether she's writing scripts or working with on-air correspondents, Phillips takes every opportunity to shine.

"All of the magic happens at night," she said. "During news hour, I'm in the control room, and I've been known to pull an all-nighter, the deadline process mounting as the clock ticks down. Even when it means coming home to her New York City apartment as her neighbors head to work, she's thrilled to be in the thick of the news gathering."

"Sometimes my research comes in handy," she said. "It can be stressful, but when you see what you worked on in TV, all of the stress goes away."

Left: Phillips on set at ABC News. Photo: Kristin Altmeyer. Right: Phillips on set at ABC News. Photo: Kristin Altmeyer.

**"NIA PHILLIPS IS AN AMAZING EXAMPLE OF HOW HARD WORK AND A CREATIVE MIND CAN TAKE YOU FAR. SHE HIT THE GROUND RUNNING AS AN INTERN — AND NOW, SHE'S AN ASSOCIATE PRODUCER. GMA IS LUCKY TO HAVE HER ON THE TEAM."**

— Seth Fitelson, *Good Morning America*

Throughout her Shady Side Academy education, her writing skills improved under the guidance of English teachers such as Marsha Bazzell, Elizabeth Guerin and Brent Halperin. "The school produced really strong writers and stressed the importance of research," Phillips said. She also spent time in the field, and completed on the cross-country, basketball and softball teams — a line of activities that carried over to her ability for sports writing.



# Wellesley College Abroad

**Ariana Carter '18**  
**Middlebury in Chile - Valparaiso, Chile**

I chose to study in Chile because I thought it might be my only chance to go to South America. Now I want to go back! Middlebury in Chile was a great program for me, with a perfect balance of leaving students free to have our own experiences and make our own mistakes while always being there to help us deal with bureaucratic universities and personal issues. Their language pledge was valuable, since it clarified our intention to truly learn Spanish; more than anything, it was a good excuse to pull out when Chileans wanted to practice their English with me. Speaking Spanish all the time, even with your English-speaking friends in the program, is challenging but definitely worth it. I know I became more confident during my five months abroad through the necessity of exploring on my own, asking for directions and successfully doing things I hardly thought were possible!



*Above: The Festival Mil Tambores in Valparaiso, with my host sister's musical group dancing through the streets.*

**Siena Harlin '18**  
**SiPN Spring 2017 Participant**  
**Lisbon, Portugal**

**Cozy in an unfamiliar place**

Walking around Lisbon, you'd be hard pressed not to be amazed by all it has to offer. I've been here for almost a month now and yet I continue to be fascinated by my new home. Lisbon has defied all my expectations: it manages to be both a beautiful and historically fascinating city and also a thriving, fun-loving place to be a student.

My main priority coming to Portugal was to improve my Portuguese. SiPN has helped me set up my class schedule so that almost all my classes are taught in Portuguese and with Portuguese students. While this has been enormously helpful with understanding the language, perhaps my greatest learning experience here has been playing rugby with a local team, Benfica Rugby.

Playing with Benfica has been an amazing outlet for making Portuguese friends and immersing myself in the language. Benfica has shown me so much that I wouldn't have been able to learn about





in a classroom, from slang to where the best local haunts are.

The team has shown so much good humor with me at practice and outside of it, coaching me through both drills and sentences. I've found that the language of sports extends far past linguistic boundaries--my Portuguese may not be perfect, but we can all understand each other on the field.

***Silvia Pera '18***  
***SiPN Spring 2017 Participant***  
***Lisbon, Portugal***

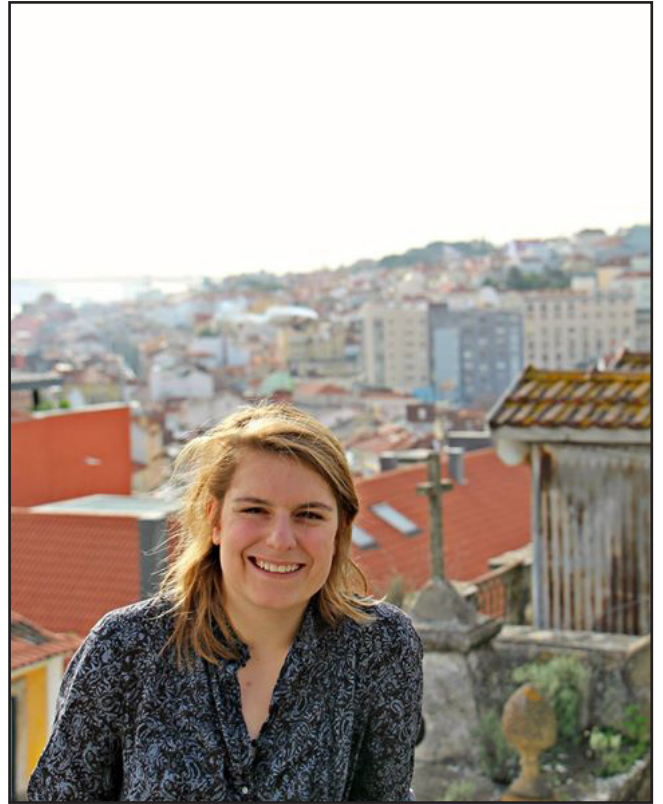
**Back For More**

This is my third time in Lisbon and I am absolutely in love with the city, its people, and the opportunities and experiences I have benefited from here.

I came for the first time, two summers ago, for an internship through SiPN. I really struggled the first few weeks because all of my friends were from the program and most of them were working full time, so I was alone most of the day and I really wanted to practice my Portuguese and fully integrate myself into Lisbon's social fabric.

My third week, I took matters into my own hands and reached out to local rugby clubs. One of the teams, an inclusive men's team, immediately answered and by the end of the week, I was going regularly to practices. The team forced me to love Lisbon, its residents and the diversity of nightlife scenes, but I am still learning to appreciate the city. Lisbon is an enormous walkable city that is constantly changing, with new hipster places opening up every day next to establishment churrasqueiras – making even my daily walk to school an adventure.

Living in Lisbon continues to be challenging and frustrating. I speak three languages here, often to the same people in a singular conversation, and the linguistic juggling and differences between U.S. and Portuguese universities leave me exhausted at the end of the day (as do my practices with Benfica, my new team). But the mental drainage is well worth it, as the friends and experiences I have made and continue to make are unforgettable.





# Upcoming End of the Year Events

Graduation Breakfast, May 26, 2017  
8:30am, Green Hall 438

Alumnae Weekend Reception  
June 3, 2017 - 3:30pm  
Green Hall 438

*If you are an Alum and would like to be featured in the  
“Alumnae Spotlight” for our 2017-2018 newsletter, please send your stories  
and experiences along with photos to: [jmatos@wellesley.edu](mailto:jmatos@wellesley.edu).*

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