

## MSU Sponsors First Annual World Languages Day

More than 200 students, teachers, and parents from more than two dozen Michigan high schools and community colleges participated in the first annual World Languages Day at MSU on April 2, 2005. The free-of-charge event celebrated the benefits of learning foreign languages and highlighted the opportunities available for language study at MSU.

Participants attended their choices of nearly 40 sessions taught by MSU faculty and guest speakers on topics ranging from Spanish terms of endearment to Swahili greetings, French music, and Tagalog games. Other topics included:

- Bollywood Dreams: Discover India through Hindi Cinema
- Israeli Folk Dancing
- Chinese Numbers and Culture
- Parlez-Vous Michigan? Our State's French Connection
- The Sword and Zen: An Introduction to Iaijutsu
- Banane! Or, How to Speak French Using Food Vocabulary
- What's It Really Like in the Peace Corps?
- Arabic in a Nutshell
- Walk Like an Egyptian: Modern Middle Eastern Dance
- A Taste of Vietnamese Language and Culture

Parents had a chance to learn about admissions, financial aid, student life, language education, and international study. Teachers attended sessions on how to incorporate languages and cultures into their classrooms, shared lesson ideas, and toured MSU's language teaching facilities.

"We're hoping that World Languages Day will become an annual tradition at MSU," said Joy Campbell, associate director of the Center for Language Education And Research (CLEAR) and chairperson of the event's organizing committee. "It's a



Among the many sessions at MSU's first World Languages Day in April 2005 was this demonstration, "The Sword and Zen: An Introduction to Iaijutsu." More than 200 people came to campus on a Saturday to learn more about the importance of learning other languages and MSU's language learning resources.

great way to help students from all over the state learn why foreign languages are so important, and to meet other students who have similar interests. Parents and teachers also have a chance to network and learn more about MSU and its programs."

In addition to CLEAR, sponsors included the Center for Advanced Study of International Development; the Center for International Business Education and Research; the College of Arts and Letters; the Department of French, Classics and Italian; the Department of Linguistics and Germanic, Slavic, Asian and African Languages; the Department of Spanish and Portuguese; the English Language Center; the Honors College; International Studies and Programs; James Madison College; the Language Learning Center; the Office of Admissions and Scholarships; the Office of Student Affairs and Services; Phi Beta Delta; and the Women and International Development Program.

For more information or to sign up for the World Languages Day 2006 mailing list, visit <http://clear.msu.edu/worldlanguagesday/>

—Joy Campbell, CLEAR, and Kris Tetens, University Relations

# MSU's e-LCTL Initiative Documents Foreign Language Capacity and Priorities

According to a recently released study from the MSU-based e-LCTL Initiative, U.S. universities are rising to the challenge of offering instruction in less commonly taught languages, or LCTLs. This is particularly true at universities such as MSU that are receiving Title VI federal funding for National Resource Centers and Language Resource Centers. (The term LCTL refers to a language other than Spanish, French, and German.)

MSU's e-LCTL Initiative is a project that addresses college-level language availability issues in this country and strategies for coordination among universities and agencies for expanding LCTL offerings, paying particular attention to possibilities for distance-learning options. MSU's language and area studies centers have coordinated the project under the leadership of David Wiley, professor of sociology and director of the African Studies Center.

Data released by the e-LCTL Initiative is contained in the new e-LCTL website, which inventories the nation's LCTL-teaching capacity in both universities and government training institutes. The website is available at [www.elctl.msu.edu](http://www.elctl.msu.edu)

The website includes tables with data on LCTL course offerings and enrollments in the U.S. by language and institution.

According to Wiley, "The federal government provides excellent training in a number of the major LCTLs through the Defense Language Institute and Foreign Service Institute, but they do not have the capacity or the demand to teach most of the LCTLs. In contrast, the universities do have the capacity, due to the presence of native speakers and regional or country experts."

The need for the e-LCTL Initiative was accentuated by the post-9/11 realization that the country was seriously lacking in people trained in a number of LCTLs. To begin addressing this problem, MSU sponsored a national conference in 2002 that drew more than 150 participants from institutions of higher education and government agencies. (See related spring 2002 article at [http://www.isp.msu.edu/international/2\\_02/lctl/ms.html](http://www.isp.msu.edu/international/2_02/lctl/ms.html))

Following the conference, representatives of NRCs and LRCs throughout the country agreed to

## Study Findings

- As of 2003, the nation's research universities had developed capacity to offer 226 LCTLs through the Title VI National Resource Centers (NRCs); federal agencies such as the Defense Language Institute and Foreign Service Institute offered only 74.
- More than 80 percent of all instruction in LCTLs was at universities with NRCs.
- Universities that host NRCs are enrolling more than 60 percent of the students enrolled in the ten languages deemed to be "critical" by the National Security Education Program, U.S. Department of Defense.

work together through the e-LCTL Initiative in evaluating the nation's language training resources, set priorities for emerging needs, and strategize on how best to fill those needs.

In addition to producing the study, the participants in the e-LCTL Initiative have developed and made available through the website a series of papers on national priorities for teaching LCTLs and a database of online materials available to LCTL instructors, learners, and developers of new distance-learning courses. Soon to be added are links to additional language resources, organized by world region.