As of January 1, 2013, Ilaria Juon is the new collaborator at the International Relations Office. Ilaria has taken on the duties of Ms. Susanne Stigen Pescia, who joined the International Relations office in 2006. Due to the fast growing number of international students interested in the Italian language courses, she will solely be responsible for the coordination of these activities.

“I feel very happy and thankful to USI for this opportunity. This is giving me the chance to operate in a very different area within the same organization, further develop my knowledge in the international relations field and at the same time to enjoy a very international environment, where I hope I can contribute with my past experience.”

Ilaria joined USI Università della Svizzera italiana in 2002, as Program Manager at the Executive Master of Science in Communications Management, where she still works part time. We welcome her warmly.

SPRING TERM 2013: QUICK FACTS

In February 2013 USI welcomed 50 students from 35 partner universities from all over the world, coming to Lugano (Faculty of Communication Sciences, Economics and Informatics) and Mendrisio (Academy of Architecture) for the Spring Term.

In order to help exchange students in adapting and setting in, the service hired an intern, Silvia Canova, with the aim of developing a buddy system. Several USI students volunteered to act as mentors and helped one or more guest student/s to settle in. During the first weeks, a number of social
activities has been organized, allowing them to get to know each other as well as the city and its surroundings. Among all the events, three are worth mentioning: the masked night at Rabadan, the most famous Carnival of Ticino; the projection of the Italian film “Habemus Papam” (N. Moretti, 2011); the sledging night in Splügen (a ski resort about 1 hour drive from Lugano) followed by the original Swiss cheese fondue.

Personal experiences and feedbacks of exchange students at USI are collected and published on our website: http://www.relint.usi.ch/en/rapporti-soggiorno-ospiti.htm.

Numbers concerning outgoing students are lower (24 USI students profited from our exchange agreements) because the majority spends the semester abroad during the Autumn Term. The most selected countries are Spain, Germany, France and Switzerland.

TESTIMONIAL

Thank you Antti-Matti for accepting our request of a short interview to share with our community. Please, tell us something about yourself.

“My name is Antti-Matti Olkoniemi and I am 24 years old. I come from Finland, the land of long winters and bright summers. My hometown is Jyväskylä which is located in the middle of the country. I study Organizational Communication & Public Relations at the University of Jyväskylä. I started with my studies in Autumn 2010 and finished with my bachelor studies in Winter 2012. After that I came to USI for the Spring semester to start my master studies. I also study economics, intercultural communication and German language and culture.”

Why did you choose USI as a destination for your semester abroad?

“USI is a partner university of University of Jyväskylä, so getting information about the university and enrolling at USI was relatively simple. But I had two criteria for choosing USI. The first one was the interesting selection of courses. The master of Corporate Communications offers a great variety of courses which in my opinion are practical. The courses at USI differ a bit from the course table in my own university, so during my study exchange I can gain diverse knowledge than in my home country. My second criterion was the location: because of my study background in intercultural communications and German language studies, I wanted to do my exchange where I can really see intercultural communication in action. I knew that USI is an international university and many of the students come from abroad. Moreover, Switzerland is an excellent place to witness diversity of communication with its four official languages. In conclusion the reasons for coming to USI were combination of tempting courses and character of the university.”
What was your first impression about USI and the courses?
“My first impression was pleasing. As a university USI is quite small but it has personality. It is active and offers recreational activities. The International Relations office provides experiences and activities for exchange students. Facilities are new and in good condition. Level of education is good with top lecturers from all over the world. Courses are pleasing and as an exchange student on the Faculty of Communication Sciences, I’m also allowed to choose courses from the Faculty of Economics. The course selection is wide and flexible.”

How is the relationship with your fellow students, both Erasmus and locals?
“The student community at USI is really nice. During my two weeks of Italian language courses I learned to know most of the people who just arrived in Lugano. The exchange students from previous semester took good care of us and helped us through the first days and weeks. USIHOME (the student’s house, Ed.) seems to be one of the hearts of foreign students. People come along well together and organize activities together. In a short period of time I also met some locals. They are friendly and some of them are interested in joining in for the activities of exchange students.”

Why would you recommend the University of Jyväskylä for a mobility programme?
“Exchange time in Finland would be a real experience for USI student. If you can spend whole year in Jyväskylä you can experience all the four seasons of Finland. University of Jyväskylä offers a nice variation courses, there are lots of options because of the seven faculties. Our professors are international and we have lecturers from all over the world. Education is high quality. The city is about the same size as Lugano but the student population is over 15,000. Student life is more active because of the larger number of students and there will be no boring time. The city of Jyväskylä is surrounded by lakes and, for example, skiing resorts are within a walking range. No matter if you are more interested in sports or culture: the university will offer activities you will enjoy. Coming to Jyväskylä would definitely be something different!”

Before closing the interview, 3 tips for future Erasmus students coming to Lugano...

“Join all activities you can! By joining activities offered by USI you can easily get to know the people, not only exchange students but locals too.

Enjoy the lake and the mountains. In my mind those are the real heart of Lugano.

Travel and see Switzerland. Have fun!”
VIRGINIA TECH VISITS USI

Last February 28th a representative of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VT) officially visited USI Università della Svizzera italiana.

Mrs. Jennifer Quijano Sax (Interim Director for Education Abroad at VT) paid a visit at USI in order to meet the members involved in the bilateral programmes jointly run by the two universities. USI and VT have a long-standing collaboration and both highly value this partnership.

The visit was split in two parts:
1. visit of the Academy of Architecture (Mendrisio Campus), welcome from the General Manager, Mr. Antoine Turner and Campus tour guided by Mr. Marco Della Torre, Dean’s Office Coordinator;
2. visit of the Lugano Campus, lunch with Prof. Peter Schulz (Director of the Institute of Communication and Health (ICH), Guest Professor at VT), Prof. Kent Nakamoto (Vice-Director for the research at Pamplin College of Business, Adjunct professor of the ICH at USI and initiator of the MoU), Prof. Peter Seele (International Relations Coordinator of the Faculty of Communication Sciences) and the International Relations and Study-abroad staff and Campus tour with Dr. Arianna Imberti Dosi (International Relations and Study-abroad office).

The culminating moment of the day was the meeting with USI President, Prof. Piero Martinoli, who officially welcomed Mrs. Sax and signed the renewed Memorandum of Understanding for the period 2013-2017.

THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE COURSES AT UNIVERSITÀ DELLA SVIZZERA ITALIANA

Switzerland has four national languages, French, German, Italian and Romansh. German is the most spoken language followed by French, whereas only 7% of the population speaks Italian. Being USI Università della Svizzera italiana the only Italian speaking university in Switzerland, the promotion of the learning of the Italian Language is a main goal for the Institution.

To help international students familiarize themselves with the Italian language and the Swiss culture, USI offers free of charge Preparatory Intensive Italian language courses at absolute beginner and intermediate level before the start of each semester. Furthermore, since 2011, the European Commission sustains USI in the promotion of the learning of the Italian language, by co-financing the “EILC Erasmus Intensive Italian Language Courses” reserved to all Erasmus students coming in exchange for one or two semesters to Canton Ticino. Last but not least, during the academic year, USI offers free of charge extensive courses at all levels, from the absolute beginner to the advanced one.
The intensive courses of 60 teaching hours are taking place during the two or three weeks preceding the start of each semester. The courses aim to give students a basic knowledge of reading, listening, speaking and writing in a dynamic and communicative way. The programmes do not only focus on language but also on Swiss and regional culture. A guided city tour, a guided visit of a significant museum, a cultural and historical lecture as well as an Italian film viewing are offered. At the end of the course a written evaluation test is scheduled.

The extensive courses are on the other hand taking place once a week during the semester for a total of 28 hours.

USI offers three types of Italian classes:

**USI Intensive Italian language courses**
(for non-Erasmus students)
Autumn Semester 2013: 26 August – 13 September
Spring Semester 2014: 3 – 14 February
Lugano Campus: online application at [http://www.usi.ch/italian_course.htm](http://www.usi.ch/italian_course.htm)
Mendrisio Campus: please contact Fabiana Bernasconi (fabiana.bernasconi@usi.ch)

**EILC Italian Language courses**
(for Erasmus students)
Autumn Semester 2013: 2 – 14 September
Spring Semester 2014: 3 – 14 February
Forms and instructions: [http://www.relint.usi.ch/corsi-eilc.htm](http://www.relint.usi.ch/corsi-eilc.htm)

**USI Italian language courses during the semesters**
(for all students)
Academic year 2013 – 2014
Lugano Campus: online application [http://www.usi.ch/italian_course.htm](http://www.usi.ch/italian_course.htm)
Mendrisio Campus: please contact Fabiana Bernasconi (fabiana.bernasconi@usi.ch)

**VISIT OF THE UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE VALÈNCIA**

In the week 11-15 February, the coordinator of the International Relations and Study-abroad office, Dr. Arianna Imberti Dosi spent some days in Valencia and visited the Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV).

UPV is a partner university in the framework of the Erasmus programme, for the field of Business Studies and Management Science since 2002. At the beginning of 2013 the agreement has been renewed and extended including not only the undergraduate level but also the graduate (Master) level.

The Facultat d’Administració y Dirección d’Empreses is located in the Vera Campus site in the city of Valencia. The International Programmes and Internships Manager, Ms. Gisel Sanahuja Vélez and the Vice-Dean for
Academic Exchange, Ms. Maria del Mar Marin Sánchez kindly offered a tour of the campus and, in particular, of the brand-new building that hosts the Faculty. In occasion of the visit the mutual interest in fruitful future cooperation has been reaffirmed.

“Discover Ticino”, the last column of the newsletter, is dedicated to the presentation of an event, a museum or a peculiar place of our region that we consider worth attending or visiting. Our first suggestion is the Museum of Fossils from Monte San Giorgio.

**DISCOVER TICINO**

**MUSEUM OF FOSSILS FROM MONTE SAN GIORGIO**

Meride is a small village located in the South of Canton Ticino. Its territory reaches to the panoramic region of Serpiano and the summit of Monte San Giorgio, a very pleasant location especially inviting to hikers.

The area of Monte San Giorgio is among the most important fossil deposits in the world and in 2003 it has been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

This important paleontological heritage is now presented to a wide audience in the new fossil museum designed by the Ticinese architect Mario Botta (director of the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio) and inaugurated in October 2012.

Fossils of animals and plants constitute the main part of the exhibition, complemented by brief explanations and by three-dimensional models.

Museo dei fossili del Monte San Giorgio
Via Bernardo Peyer 9 - 6866 Meride
T +41 91 640 00 80
info@montesangiorgio.org
www.montesangiorgio.org

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