Alumni Profile

UWM alumnus Luis Arreaga, U.S. Ambassador to Iceland, earned his MS in management in 1976 and his PhD in economics in 1981. Nominated to his ambassadorship in April 2010, he was confirmed by the Senate on August 5, 2010. Arreaga spoke with us by phone on March 31, from his office in Iceland.

Q. You have led a well-traveled life. What influenced you to choose Milwaukee and UWM for graduate school?

A. I am from Guatemala and knew I wanted to come to the United States for my studies. I was looking for a place with a supportive network, and we had a family friend in Milwaukee. I visited, looked around and really liked it. The economics department had a family-feel and very supportive professors.

Q. How did your UWM education prepare you for your career path?

A. UWM has been very, very good to me, and I am proud of my degrees. Right out of UWM, I joined the Foreign Service as an economist focused in the area of economic development. My economics training provided excellent preparation for the work, especially the courses in econometrics and economic development. Being bilingual was also an asset.

Q. Are there any specific classes, professors or moments from your time at UWM that particularly stand out in your memory?

A. Markos Mamalakis helped me see the world and global issues from a new perspective. Swarnjit Arora was always generous with his time and made a difficult subject very accessible and interesting. I also recall great classes by Professors Boris Pesek and John Walter Elliott. [Professor Emeritus Mamalakis is retired from the Department of Economics; Professor Arora continues to research and teach in the Department of Economics; and Economics Professor Pesek and Economics/Business Professor Elliott are deceased.]

Q. How did you get nominated to be an ambassador and why Iceland?

A. My first Foreign Service job as an economist was very technical in nature, and I was there for 10 years. I wanted to get into diplomacy so I joined the State Department where I’ve held various diplomatic positions in Panama, Canada, Washington DC, Switzerland, Spain, Peru, El

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Publications


Important Dates

June 2-24, Art History Gallery (Mitchell 154) Picasso exhibit curated by Daniela Martínez. This graduate student thesis exhibition features all of Picasso’s works in the UWM Art Collection. Opening reception on June 2 from 5 to 7 pm. Regular gallery hours are Monday through Thursday from 10 am to 4 pm.

June 30
Department and programs strongly encouraged to submit scholarship recipient information to the College for fall disbursements.

Department & Program

Spring Newsletters

Department of History: http://bit.ly/jRRDxL
Cultures & Communities: http://bit.ly/k0eL3Q – includes three embedded video clips created by students!
Salvador and Honduras. Immediately before becoming Ambassador to Iceland, I was working in a recruiting role for the Foreign Service. The process for ambassadorship begins when the State Department announces open positions. Those who are interested send in a self-nomination, and the review process begins. In my case, my economics training helped match me with Iceland because they needed someone with that background given Iceland’s economic crisis.

Q. What is the day-to-day life of an ambassador like and what do you hope to accomplish professionally while in Iceland?

A. I was sent to Reykjavik to forge relationships between Iceland and the United States in the broadest sense. My days include everything from working with U.S. companies who want to do business in Iceland to providing help to U.S. citizens living in Iceland who are experiencing some type of problem. For example, I might meet with a business owner to brief him or her on the realities of conducting business in Iceland. Our countries share many similar values, but the cultural approach may be different. I might also help coordinate the process of getting an airplane carrying a sick U.S. citizen onto the ground and getting that person medical assistance. When Eyjafjallajökull erupted, air traffic was severely impacted around the world. Our Embassy organized a conference for representatives from airlines, aircraft manufacturers, the FAA, and US and European government agencies to discuss the lessons learned. My job changes from day to day, but ultimately it is all about building relationships and building ties between people. It is my job to facilitate and enable contact between people and organizations. I need to be a generalist and a problem solver. Having a broad background, an open mind and a willingness to learn are the most important criteria for this job because everything under the sun may come your way.

Q. Iceland has some of the cleanest water and air in the world. What can the U.S. learn from Iceland regarding environmental protection and geothermal projects?

A. Iceland and the U.S. make great partners on environmental issues, especially in the area of geothermal energy because Iceland has depth of expertise while the U.S. is the largest producer of geothermal energy. We signed a bilateral agreement for research and development to leverage both countries’ strengths – Icelandic know-how plus the U.S.’ ability to provide capital and infrastructure – in order to develop new technologies and share that information with the world. For example, we have brought in African officials so that they could see geothermal power generation in action and understand how it might be used in the eastern valley area of Africa where there is tremendous potential to implement this technology. Iceland is fortunate to sit on a hot spot for magma but what is needed worldwide is the ability to transport this type of energy and technology to other parts of the world.

Q. In August 2010, a group of our undergraduate and graduate Geosciences students and faculty traveled to Iceland to study glaciers and volcanoes for two weeks. Why is Iceland a great place to visit as a study abroad or fieldwork destination?

A. Iceland grows an inch a year because it straddles separating tectonic plates over the mid-Atlantic ridge, and its volcanic activity is caused by its unusual proximity to the magma beneath, which is called a geological “hot spot.” Iceland is literally a living laboratory for students to study energy and more. Icelanders are extremely entrepreneurial and technologically-savvy. Internet penetration is almost 100 percent, and there are many high tech companies based here. Genetics research is another large industry in Iceland. So there are diverse and high-quality opportunities for student learning related to the sciences, business and technology. There is a rich educational tradition of exchange, and Icelandic students are encouraged to study abroad. Experiencing the world is a value that is ingrained in the Icelandic culture. Most important for any U.S. student coming to Iceland is to make sure to get out and meet the local people. They will find a very open and welcoming society where hard work, independence, endurance and success are valued. After all, Icelanders literally carved their history out of a rock in the middle of the ocean.

Q. Now that you have been living in Iceland for a little while, which parts of Icelandic culture have surprised or fascinated you?

A. Iceland is one of the best places in the world to live. It is both highly traditional and very modern at the same time, and people are proud of their history and origins. They will be the first to tell you about Leif Ericsson! The family unit is very powerful and greatly valued, as are the arts and culture. I find it interesting how direct Icelanders are. There are no double entendres, and they will say exactly what they think in a very polite and non-confrontational manner. Every place in the world has its uniqueness and extremes, and I believe they are all worth trying and experiencing. Every day is another opportunity to learn something new and that is exactly what I am doing here in Iceland.
Awards & Honors

Dr. Diana Ahmad (‘74 BA and ‘79 MA, History), associate professor of history and political science at Missouri University of Science and Technology, was named the 2011 Woman of the Year by Missouri S&T. The award recognizes efforts to improve the campus environment for women and minorities. Diana specializes in the history of the American West, and her current research projects include the relationship between animals, both wild and domestic, and their human companions on the overland trails to the Pacific, and the role of the U.S. Navy in the Pacific at the turn of the 20th century.

Two L&S alumni received awards at the Alumni Association Annual Awards Ceremony held on May 21. Dr. Brian Bear (‘80, Medical Science) received the Alumni Citizenship Award for his community service related to women’s health, in particular breast cancer, and for his service to Global Medical Brigade during medical mission trips to Honduras. Dr. Jacqueline Graham (‘99, Biological Sciences) received a Graduate of the Last Decade Award for her professional accomplishments in the field of anesthesiology. She is one of a small number of female African-American anesthesiologists in the nation and provides medical service in an underserved area of Appalachia. The program with complete biographies can be accessed at: http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/events/upload/AlumniAwards_2011.pdf

Psychology graduate student Katie Ports’ dissertation proposal on barriers and facilitators to HPV vaccination in Malawi will be honored by the American Psychological Association at its annual meeting for methodological rigor and potential contribution to the psychology of women’s health in underdeveloped countries.

Dilano Saldin (Physics) is the lead author of “New light on disordered ensembles: Ab initio structure determination of one particle from scattering fluctuations of many copies,” an article that was featured in the Viewpoint section of the journal, Physics. This prestigious placement includes commentary by a qualified specialist and is given to only about 100 articles each year out of the 18,000 that are published. http://bit.ly/[IFJ1Mp

Jonathan Hanes (Geography), Mark Mantyh (Sociology), and Sueyon Seo (Japanese) all received excellence awards from the Student Accessibility Center. These awards are given for demonstrated ongoing awareness and sensitivity to students with unique needs.

Geosciences graduate student Ashley Dineen has been selected as a participant in the National Science Foundation Office of International Science and Engineering East Asia and Pacific Summer Institutes Program. She will spend eight weeks doing field and laboratory work in Guizhou and Hubei Provinces, China studying the timing of biotic recovery following the end-Permian mass extinction.

Lindsay Timmerman (Communication) received a 2011 Kindness Award from the Wisconsin Humane Society for her work as a companion animal volunteer.

Margaret Fraiser (Geosciences) received the 2010 Alumni Association Teaching Excellence Award.

On April 15th, the Office of Undergraduate Research held its annual research symposium. The list of award-winning projects can be viewed at http://bit.ly/[ih16li.

Jeffrey Karron (Biological Sciences) has been appointed North American Editor for Annals of Botany, the leading international journal for research on plant reproductive biology.

The Department of Philosophy awarded the 2011 Richard Peltz prizes to graduate student Meica Magnani and senior Crystal Plahuta. The award is based on philosophical essays; Meica and Crystal each received a Certificate of Recognition and $100. Crystal was also selected by the University to give a speech to the graduating class of 2011 as part of commencement.

Christopher C. Quinn (Biological Sciences) was awarded the prestigious Shaw Scientist Award from the Greater Milwaukee James D. and Dorothy Shaw Fund. The fund is used to advance research in biochemistry, biological science and cancer research at UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee. The award is designed to help young scientists at the start of their careers.

The March On Milwaukee Civil Rights History Project began as a Cultures and Communities grant project and has won two prestigious national awards: the American Association of State and Local History’s 2011 Award of Merit; and the Philip M. Hamer and Elizabeth Hamer-Kegan Award from The Society of American Archivists (SAA). The awards recognize initiatives that increase public awareness of archival sources and local history. The digital collection provides online access to primary sources telling the story of Milwaukee’s civil rights movement, including over 2,200 documents, 22 photographs, 33 hours of oral histories and nearly 2 hours of television news film. Many faculty, staff and students worked on this project led by Jasmine Alinder (History) http://marchonmilwaukee.uwm.edu.

Graduate students Kelly Tenzek and Emily Cramer and faculty member Mike Allen (Communication) were awarded the Federation Prize from the Central States Communication Association.

MORE AWARDS! Page 4
UWM Research Foundation Senior Faculty Award recipients (all from Letters & Science!): Dennis Bennett (Chemistry and Biochemistry); Patrick Brady (Physics); Sandra Braman (Communications); and John Isbell (Geosciences).

Graduate School Research Award recipients from Letters & Science: Margaret Fraiser (Geosciences); Andrea Westlund (Philosophy); Marius Schmidt (Physics); and Peter Geissinger (Chemistry and Biochemistry).

Rachel McGraw (Ctr. for International Education) has been awarded the 2010-11 Advisor Recognition Award from the UWM Advisors and Counselors Network. Rachel substantially contributed to assisting students in preparing successful applications for nationally competitive Gilman and Boren scholarships. Between these two scholarships, twenty students were awarded over $100,000 in scholarships.

Senior Jessica Lindner (Architecture) and Junior Laura Stevens (Anthropology and German) both received scholarships to study in Germany from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD - Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst).

John Koethe (Philosophy) received an Arts and Letters Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters at the Academy’s annual awards ceremony in New York in May 2011. The literature prize honors both established and emerging writers of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. The Academy’s 250 members nominate candidates, and a rotating committee of writers selects the winners.

Sandra Braman (Communication) has been named editor of the new Information Policy book series published by MIT Press, with Paul T. Jaeger. She also received the Top 1 Paper Award from the Communication and Technology Division of the International Communication Association in May.

Kathryn Fonner (Communication) received a Top 4 Paper Award from the Organizational Communication Division of the International Communication Association in May.

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Many departments held year-end awards ceremonies in April and May where graduating students were recognized, research was presented, scholarships were awarded and/or honors were bestowed. Full programs or lists of recipients can be viewed at:

Department of Communication: http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/events/upload/Communication_Spring_2011_Awards.pdf

Department of Mathematical Sciences: http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/events/upload/Mathematical_Sciences_Spring_2011_Awards.pdf

Phi Beta Kappa: http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/events/upload/PhiBetaKappa_Spring_2011.pdf

Urban Studies: http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/urbanstudies/studentforum/index.cfm. The Scott Greer awards were given to: George Papakis for Outstanding Research in Urban Studies, Michael Bonds for Postgraduate Contribution to Urban Affairs and Eric Gass for Postgraduate Achievement in Advancing Understanding of Urban Social Institutions. George Papakis was also awarded the Urban Studies Dissertation Research Grant.


Department of Geosciences: Scholarships totaling $5,000 were awarded: http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/events/upload/Geosciences_Spring_2011_Awards.pdf

Development News

L&S has $704,605 in booked gifts and pledges through April 30. We are still working on closing several more gifts before the fiscal year ends. Major gifts from May that will add to our total include:

- $315,000 from the John M. Kohler Foundation for a Sustainability and Peacebuilding program.
- $29,500 from Eugene and Inez Gilbert provided as in-kind artwork for the UWM Art Collection.
- $13,000 from Dr. Alfred Bader for scholarships for the Herstmonceux overseas program.


Keith Bender (Economics) was interviewed by the *Journal Sentinel* for a story on Milwaukee County benefits payout to Renee Booker. [http://bit.ly/j6r3rR](http://bit.ly/j6r3rR)

Four graduate students (Sami Cheong, Michelle Nordrum, Andrew Hancock and Raymond Mess) and three undergraduates (Audrey Bechette, Maxx Tessmer and Tom Stojisavljevic) from the Undergraduate Research in Biology and Mathematics (UBM) program participated in the Mathematical Association of America, Wisconsin section meeting, at UW-Stout.

Stefan Schnitzer’s (Biological Sciences) research on lianas in tropical forests was featured in the *New York Times* on May 23, 2011. [http://nyti.ms/imvGkY](http://nyti.ms/imvGkY)

Patrick Bellegarde-Smith (Africology) will speak at the University of the West Indies on June 9 on the topic of “Philosophical and Identity Constructions of an Elite: Haiti in the 19th and Early 20th Century.” In July, he will speak in the Dominican Republic at the invitation of an organization created by the President of the Dominican Republic.

Senior Chris Biwer (Applied Math and Physics) and graduate student Tim Smart-Dumouchel (Mathematical Sciences) represented UWM at the 8th Annual Green Energy Summit held in Milwaukee.

Barbara Ley (Journalism, Advertising and Media Studies) provided commentary on 620 WTMJ on May 25 regarding the use of Facebook and Twitter in relation to the “Where’s Bernie Brewer?” promotion and its aftermath.

Derek Counts (Art History) presented at the annual meeting of the Archeological Institute of America in January on “Myth Into Art: The Reception and Translation of Greek Myth in Archaic Cyprus.”

Ellen Amster (History) conducted a session at CIE’s Model UN entitled “From Cairo to Wisconsin: Social Revolution and the Modern Middle East” and continued her outreach to secondary schools through the creation of educational materials for the high school classroom.

L&S was well-represented at the 11th annual UW System Symposium for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity held at UW-Parkside in April:

- **Senior Tracy Stuetzgen** (Communication): “Who Designed the Internet? Stakeholders in the Internet Design.” Faculty Sponsor: Sandra Braman.
- **Senior Nathan Bares** (Communication): “Ethics in the Internet design process: The fair queuing case” (Sandra Braman and senior Nathan Bares)
- **“Testing the Connectivity Paradox: Linking Teleworkers’ Communication Media Use to Social Presence, Stress from Interruptions, and Organizational Identification”** (Kathryn Fonner)
- **“The Visual Politics of the Black Panther Party”** (graduate student Lindsey Harness)
- **“An Agonistic Rhetorical Criticism: Marriage and Conflict in American Public Culture”** (Leslie Harris)
- **“But you looked smart: A qualitative study of HIV testing and counseling for low risk groups”** (graduate student Malynda Johnson)
- **“Young adults’ internet porn use and its effects on adopting high risk sexual practices”** (Hayeon Song and graduate student Amy May)

A full list of speakers and their programs can be found at: [http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/events/upload/Communication_Spring_Presentations.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/events/upload/Communication_Spring_Presentations.pdf)
In The Media and Community  continued

- Seniors Mark Pappas and Joshua Paul and Junior Alanna Stank Stankiewicz (all Psychology): “Can Do vs. Willing to Try: A Measurement of Self-efficacy Psychology.” Faculty Sponsor: Shawn P. Cahill.

- Seniors Megan Key, Dagong Ran, and Nathan Boisen; Junior Samuel Klossner; and Graduate Student Cory J. Patrick (all Psychology): “Emotionally Expressive Writing Manipulation Check.” Faculty Sponsor: Shawn P. Cahill.

- Senior Tom Dembski (Film Studies): “Teaching Module of the Portrayal of Disability Through Assistive Technology use in Film.” Faculty Sponsor: Roger O. Smith.

- Seniors Michael Roesch (Biochemistry and Microbiology) and Aaron Herzog (Biochemistry): “Structural studies of Enduracidin biosynthesis.” Faculty Sponsor: Nicholas Silvaggi.

- Senior Adam Nikolaus (Chemistry): “The Effects of Carbon Nanotubes on Daphnia magna.” Faculty Sponsor: Rebecca Klapier.

- Seniors Banu Oztuncer and Elizabeth N. Schneidler and Graduate Student RaeAnn Anderson (all Psychology): “‘I’m out of here!’ Or not?: Threat Detection and Assertiveness in Women’s Responses to Date Rape.” Faculty Sponsor: Shawn P. Cahill

- Seniors Christopher Biwer (Mathematical Sciences) and David Day (Physics) along with engineering students Robin Karr and Matthew Rohr: “Searching For Pulsars To Detect Gravitational Waves.” Faculty Sponsor: Xavier Siemens.


- Senior Keir Wefferling (Biological Sciences): “Phylogeny and Fruit Morphology of the Moonseed Family (Menispermaceae).” Faculty Sponsor: Sara B. Hoot.

- Senior Eric Lund (Biochemistry): “Structural Studies of Eduracididine Biosynthesis.” Faculty Sponsor: Nicholas Silvaggi

- Junior Abbey Mattes and Senior Kim Zilavy (Biochemistry): “The Development of a New Experimental Protocol for the Investigation of Photoinduced Lipid Peroxidation in Biological Membranes.” Faculty Sponsor: Guilherme Indig

- Junior Daniel Monge (Biochemistry): “Observation of Zooplankton During a Rapid Pressure Drop.” Faculty Sponsor: J.R. Strickler.


George Blumenthal Receives Honorary Degree

George R. Blumenthal ('66 BSc Physics) received an Honorary Doctorate in Astrophysics and Leadership in Higher Education at the 2011 UWM Spring Commencement. On Monday, May 23rd, the Department of Physics welcomed Dr. Blumenthal to a luncheon at the Hefter Center to culminate a full weekend of events in celebration of his successful path from his BSc in Physics from UWM to his current role as Chancellor of UC-Santa Cruz.

Chancellor Blumenthal met with current and past faculty members, friends and supporters of the department, as well as graduate and undergraduate students. During the lunch, he enjoyed reminiscing with Professor Emeritus Robert Greenler, who was instrumental in his undergraduate work and early interests in physics. George expressed his appreciation for the teaching environment within the department - as a student, he felt free to openly ask any questions and, looking back, recognizes how the subsequent conversations and discussions helped him to progress in his studies. Having focused on optics in his undergraduate work, he later went on to receive his PhD in Physics in the areas of astronomy and astrophysics (from UC-San Diego), and since then, has established himself as a distinguished professor, researcher, and campus leader.

Chancellor Blumenthal was quite pleased to learn of the significant growth of the UWM Department of Physics since he was here in the late 1960’s and enjoyed meeting with everyone. He shared how his time and work here contributed to his professional and personal success and encouraged the students to stay focused on their goals and make use of the supportive culture within the department and university.