

G L O B A L E N G A G E M E N T
NEWSLETTER

THINK GLOBAL : LEARN GLOBAL

Welcome back to the UVU Global Engagement Newsletter!

As the semester winds down, we want to take a moment to wish you all the best in wrapping up your classes, projects, and finals. We're already looking forward to another semester filled with incredible global engagement opportunities.

Having a Global Mindset is all about being open to learning new things, exploring different perspectives, and engaging in meaningful conversations about the things you're passionate about. In this issue, we're excited to bring you a diverse lineup of Global Spotlights! Dive into the world of Francophone Asian authors, pick up some entrepreneurial wisdom from Gilbert Lee, Co-Founder of Torus, and explore the international presence of AI. We're also highlighting the breathtaking Finnish Sibelius concert featuring world-renowned violinist Aubree Oliverson, plus a look back at how UVU celebrated International Women's Day.

At the Office for Global Engagement, our goal is to create meaningful experiences that help all of us grow as global citizens. Thank you for being part of this journey—we're excited for what's ahead and can't wait to engage with you next semester!

Wishing you all a strong finish,

-Kaisë McLane and the Office for Global Engagement

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 2025



APRIL 9

**GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT:
LANGUAGE SERVICE INDUSTRY DAY/
CAREER FAIR**

CB 101 C, 12-3PM

*In collaboration with Languages
and Cultures*



APRIL 15

**INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL
WORKSHOP**

LA 210B • 11AM-12 PM



APRIL 16

**GLOBAL FACULTY/ STAFF
NETWORKING**
LA 210B • 1-2PM (TENTATIVE)



APRIL 17

**PRESENTATION WITH MS. ELSIE
NGOWO EFFANGE-MBELLA**
ET 112 • 1-2:15PM



APRIL 18

**GSLC, GLOBAL FELLOWS, AND GLOBAL
SCHOLARS RECOGNITION CEREMONY**
SC 213AB, 12-1:30PM



APRIL TBD

FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR INFO SESSION
TBD

REWRITING THE CANON

GLOBAL
SPOTLIGHT

TRANSLINGUAL
AND
STORYTELLING
IN
FRANCOPHONIE
ASIAN
TRANS MEDIA



Dr. Xinyi Tan- Coastal Carolina University

March 20, 2025

On Francophone Day, UVU welcomed Dr. Xinyi Tan as a Global Spotlight guest speaker. The event explored the evolving role of language and identity in French literature, particularly through the lens of Asian Francophone writers. Dr. Tan highlighted how these authors are reshaping the traditional literary hierarchy, embracing multilingual and trans-media storytelling to challenge conventional norms and foster cross-cultural dialogue.

THE DIVISION BETWEEN FRENCH AND FRANCOPHONE AUTHORS

Dr. Tan opened her presentation by addressing a longstanding issue within French literary tradition: the division between French and Francophone authors. Historically, French literature has been dominated by authors from

France, often relegating Francophone writers from diverse backgrounds to a secondary status. She argued that this hierarchical structure is being challenged by contemporary authors, particularly those from Asian Francophone communities, who bring new perspectives and linguistic innovations to the canon.

“At the age of eighteen, studying French opened on me some sort of third eye. I told myself that if I managed to think in another language, there must be more than one reality in me, I was hence forth no longer just Chinese.”

-Ying Chen, (Quatre Mille, 68)

ASIAN FRANCOPHONIE AND THE EVOLUTION OF FRENCH LITERARY IDENTITY

A significant part of Dr. Tan’s talk explored the emergence and success of Asian Francophone writers, who are redefining French literary identity in several ways:

RECONFIGURATION OF IDENTITY:

These writers demonstrate that French literature is no longer

monolithic but rather pluralistic, transnational, and deeply multilingual.

TRANS-LINGUAL AND TRANS-MEDIA

STORYTELLING: By weaving together multiple languages and media forms, they enrich French literature beyond conventional linguistic boundaries. Their works often blend French with their native languages, introducing new ways of thinking about expression and identity.



SQUARE WORD CALLIGRAPHY AND THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

The role of language in questioning the status quo and fostering cross-cultural dialogue through an activity with students participating in Square Word Calligraphy, an art form created by artist Xu Bing in the early 1990s. Dr. Tan highlighted Square Word Calligraphy, as an artistic and linguistic practice that visually merges Chinese characters with the English alphabet. This innovation serves as a metaphor for how language itself can challenge existing norms and create new avenues for storytelling.



in its diversity. Asian Francophone writers are not only expanding the literary canon but also redefining what it means to be a French author. Through trans-lingual and trans-media storytelling, they challenge traditional hierarchies and offer a more inclusive vision of literary expression. As UVU celebrated Francophone Day, Dr. Xinyi Tan’s insightful lecture served as a powerful reminder that language is a living, evolving entity—one that carries the potential to break barriers, challenge norms, and create new cultural dialogues, as well as preserve cultural identity.

A MULTILINGUAL FUTURE FOR FRENCH LITERATURE

Dr. Tan’s presentation emphasized that the future of French literature lies

THE FOUNDER MINDSET

Gilbert Lee

CMO, Co-founder, Torus

March 26, 2025



In a recent Global Spotlight Presentation, Gilbert Lee, Co-Founder of Torus, shared valuable insights on launching a startup driven by real-world problems. Drawing from his personal background in the Philippines, Lee highlighted how energy poverty shaped his vision for Torus. Families in the Philippines often pay high electricity rates and lack consistent power access, affecting education and economic mobility. His co-founder, Nate Walkingshaw, also brought a deep-rooted

passion for sustainable energy, inspired by the challenges of managing energy storage on his tree farm. Their shared commitment to solving these problems led them to experiment with early energy storage solutions, starting with simple tools like car batteries and water turbines. Through trial, iteration, and an eventual pivot from residential to commercial energy storage, Torus found product-market fit, proving that passion-driven startups can evolve into impactful businesses.

For students interested in entrepreneurship, Lee provided practical advice on finding and validating startup ideas. He encouraged aspiring founders to attend startup events, connect with local entrepreneurial communities, and leverage university resources to build knowledge and networks. Lee also highlighted the realities of early-stage startups—working with limited resources, making difficult financial decisions, and the necessity of co-founders with complementary skills and shared commitment.

A key part of the discussion was inspired by Paul Graham's perspective on generating startup ideas. Graham argues that the best ideas come not from actively searching for them but from cultivating a mind that naturally generates them. He advises students to focus on learning powerful things, exploring topics that genuinely interest them, and working with people they respect. By prioritizing curiosity and knowledge for its own sake, rather than immediate financial gain, aspiring entrepreneurs can develop the expertise needed to act on meaningful opportunities. Lee echoed this sentiment, encouraging students to embrace intellectual curiosity as a foundation for future innovation.

“ Here is the ultimate advice for young would-be startup Founders reduced to two words: JUST LEARN ”
- Paul Graham -

Ultimately, adopting a founder's mindset is about more than just building a business—it's about fostering a global mindset that empowers individuals to see challenges as opportunities for change. By thinking critically, learning deeply, and solving real-world problems, entrepreneurs can contribute to global progress in meaningful ways. Lee's journey demonstrates that when we combine intellectual curiosity with a sense of social responsibility, we not only create innovative solutions but also become responsible global citizens. Whether addressing energy poverty, environmental sustainability, or other pressing issues, a mindset of continuous learning and purpose-driven action can drive impactful change on a worldwide scale.

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GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT

MARCH 27, 2025

A PRESENTATION BY
GSLC MEMBER ALYSSA
GROVER

IN CONJUNCTION WITH
BRUCE EMBRY'S CLASS



As part of her class with Bruce Embry, lecturer on Computer Science, Global Student Leadership Council Member Alyssa Grover led the presentation on The International Presence of Artificial Intelligence. The discussion examined AI's transformative influence on various fields including law, journalism, and politics, highlighting its ability to enhance data analysis, streamline negotiations, and simplify compliance monitoring. However, concerns were raised about AI's impact on younger legal professionals, who may face challenges in gaining foundational experience as automation reshapes the field.

In a global sense, Alyssa addressed AI's potential to widen the development gap of Global South. While advanced economies integrate AI at a rapid pace, less developed regions may struggle with adoption due to limited resources and infrastructure. Additionally, the class discussed the risks of AI-driven misinformation, which could complicate political discourse and journalistic integrity. As AI continues to evolve, the conversation underscored the need for responsible and equitable implementation to bridge—rather than deepen—global disparities.

A TRIBUTE TO FINLAND



Jean Sibelius, Finland's most celebrated composer, played a crucial role in shaping his country's national identity during the late 19th century, when Finland faced repeated attempts at Russification. His music, blending late Romantic and early modern styles, remains a symbol of Finnish resilience and pride. This week, Utah Valley University's Symphony Orchestra honored his legacy with a remarkable performance under the direction of Dr. Cheung Chau.

Sibelius Concert

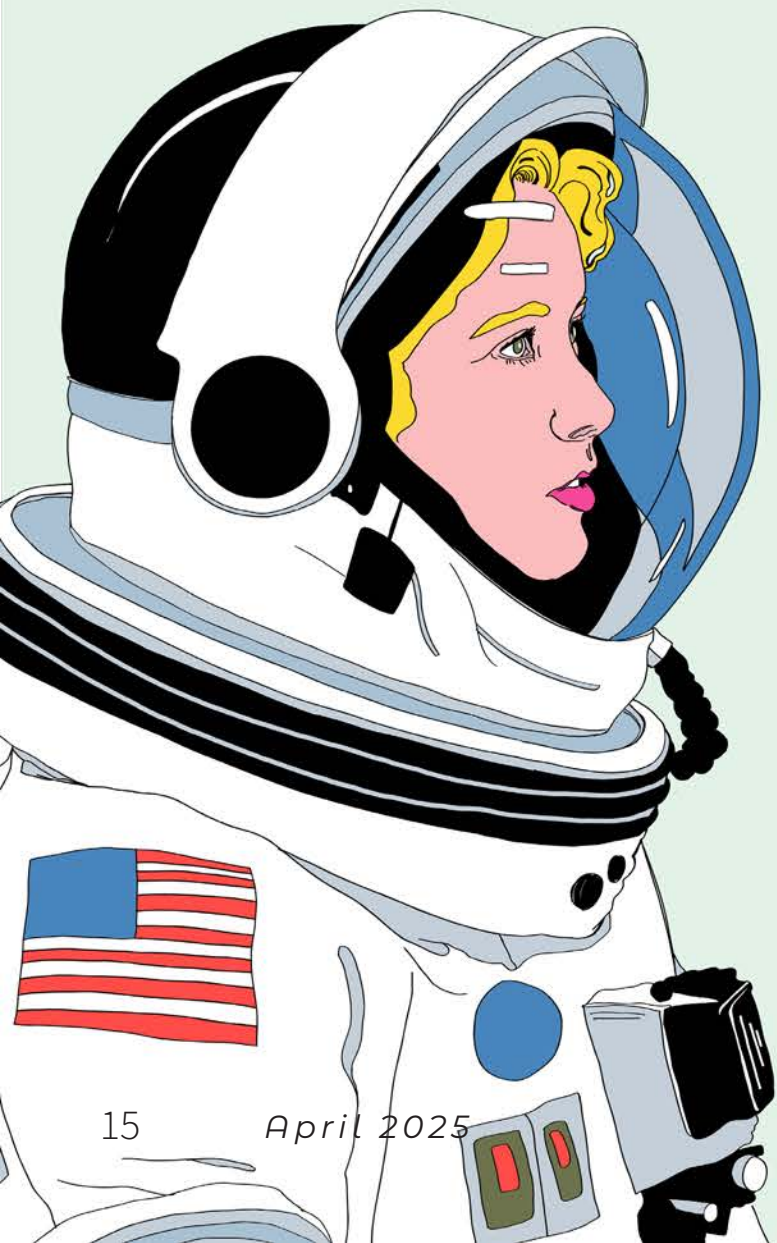
The program featured Sibelius's Violin Concerto, brought to life by world-renowned violinist and Orem native Aubree Oliverson, whose virtuosic performance captivated the audience. The orchestra also performed Finlandia, a stirring composition

that embodies Finland's defiance and hope during times of war. Adding to the event's significance, Okko-Pekka Salmimies, the Consul General of Finland in Los Angeles, was in attendance.

Aubree Oliverson also gave violin workshops to small groups of students. Imparting her knowledge and skills to students is a valuable addition to the event, making it not only culturally enriching for a large audience, but impactful to our students.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



March 5th, 2025

From groundbreaking scientific discoveries to transformative social movements, women have made lasting contributions across all fields. International Women's Day (IWD) is a time to highlight those achievements, celebrate progress, and look toward the future. On March 5, 2025, Utah Valley University (UVU) marked the occasion with an event focused on recognizing achievements, learning from history, and discussing the future. Through service, education, and discussion, participants explored the role of women in shaping society.

International Women's Day (IWD) has been

The History of IWD

observed for over a century, growing from a grassroots movement into a global celebration of women's achievements and a call to action for gender equality. It emerged in the early 1900s during a period of rapid industrialization and social change, as women worldwide fought for better working conditions, voting rights, and equal opportunities. The first National Woman's Day in the United States was observed on February 28, 1909, organized by the Socialist Party of America in honor of garment workers who had protested poor labor conditions.

The idea of an international observance gained momentum at the International Socialist Women's Conference in Copenhagen in 1910, where Clara Zetkin, a German feminist and activist, proposed the establishment of a global Women's Day to unify the fight for women's rights. This led to the first official International Women's Day in Austria,

Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland on March 19, 1911, with demonstrations advocating for women's suffrage and labor rights. By 1913, March 8 was formally established as the date for IWD, aligning with protests by Russian women seeking peace and equality amidst World War I.

The United Nations began officially recognizing IWD in 1977, and each year, it designates a theme reflecting contemporary struggles and progress. The United Nations theme for the year 2025 is: "For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment."





UVU Looking Forward

UVU's event celebrated women's achievements while fostering community engagement through service and discussion. Attendees participated in a blanket-making project, sponsored by The Refugee, a local nonprofit, providing support to displaced individuals while reinforcing the power of collective action.

A presentation, *The Status of Women Around the World: Successes, Challenges, and Local Spotlight*, explored progress in education, leadership, and innovation, highlighting both achievements and ongoing challenges in gender equality.

Sponsored by the Raices Student Club, a student-led panel provided a platform for young voices to discuss gender equality, cultural expectations, and leadership, encouraging meaningful dialogue and awareness.

As more women take leadership roles and drive innovation, society as a whole benefits. The future is shaped by those who step forward, and events like these help pave the way.



Honoring the Women Who Shape Our World

International Women's Day is a time to recognize both the trailblazing women who have changed history and the quiet, everyday heroes who shape our lives. Leaders like Jane Goodall, Dolores Huerta, and Malala Yousafzai have fought for justice, education, and environmental sustainability, proving that persistence and leadership drive progress. Yet, just as vital are the women whose names may never make headlines—mothers, caregivers, teachers, mentors, and friends—whose quiet strength, guidance, and support shape communities and futures in immeasurable ways. Maya Angelou once said

"Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women." - Maya Angelou

True recognition goes beyond a single day. We can honor women's contributions by supporting women-led businesses, amplifying female voices in discussions, and mentoring the next generation of women leaders. Take a moment to acknowledge the women who have influenced your life, from those who've stood on global stages to those who have offered steadfast encouragement in everyday moments. Advocacy begins with small, consistent actions, and by uplifting women in all spaces, we help build a more inclusive and equitable world.

"We as women should shine light on our accomplishments and not feel egotistical when we do. It's a way to let the world know that we as women can accomplish great things!" -Dolores Huerta



"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." -Jane Goodall



