

UMSL Global celebrates internationally engaged faculty members during Touhill reception

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Tareq Nabhan, an assistant professor of Optometry, talks about how advances in telemedicine are being used to improve eye care around the world during an UMSL Global Faculty Reception last Wednesday at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center. (Photos by Steve Walentik)

Internationally connected faculty members at the [University of Missouri–St. Louis](#) gathered last Wednesday in the Terrace Lobby at the [Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center](#) for a reception organized by [UMSL Global](#).

It was a chance to celebrate the many ways UMSL engages with the international community and also honor the faculty members who are the leading edge of that global outreach.



UMSL Global Executive Director Liane Constantine welcomes guests to the UMSL Global Faculty Reception.

“St. Louis launched the Mosaic Project a decade ago, which is the community’s joint effort to systematically attract and retain global talent,” said [Liane Constantine](#), the executive director of UMSL Global and the university’s chief international officer, during her welcoming remarks. “It ties in with the state’s mission to increase foreign direct investment into the region. The need for globally experienced or, at a minimum, globally minded people is huge in our region, so UMSL, as No. 1 workforce provider to our to our region, has a commitment to produce and to generate that talent that is needed in businesses of tomorrow – and actually already of today.

“What fills my team – the UMSL Global team and myself – with a lot of pride and joy is when we talk to our international alumni because the No. 1 reason to like and endorse UMSL is you, our faculty community.”

UMSL Global is committed to supporting faculty members as they work with and make an impact on the wider world. Over the past 20 years, it has awarded more than 430 [global fellowships to support international summer travel](#) for conferences, research and creative endeavors through one-time investments of up to \$5,000. It has presented 42 such awards in the past three years, all as part of a design to strengthen UMSL’s internationalization efforts.

Attendees of Wednesday's reception heard testimonials from past global fellows, including [Stephen Bagwell](#) and Todd Swanstrom from the [Department of Political Science](#); [Susan Brownell](#) from the [Department of History](#); [Haitao Li](#) and [Trilce Encarnacion](#) from the [Department of Supply Chain and Analytics](#); [Shea Kerkhoff](#) and [Alina Slapac](#) from the [College of Education](#); [Anne Fish](#) from the [College of Nursing](#); and [Tareq Nabhan](#) from the [College of Optometry](#).



More than 50 faculty members attended the reception in the Terrace Lobby at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center.

Brownell, a [leading expert on Chinese sport at the Olympic Games](#), believes strongly in global education – and the way UMSL Global supports it.

“In my experience, students in the Heartland tend to have less international experience than students on both coasts,” she said. “I think this is a disadvantage in the job market. It’s important for them to understand the region’s place in the larger global system, so that they can really, first of all, become well-informed citizens and then, second of all, get good jobs and develop successful careers. Since no sector of the economy today is untouched by globalization – and in that I include immigration – and there are ever more jobs requiring international and intercultural expertise. That includes every sector – corporations, banks, government, nonprofits, university, the arts, you name it. UMSL Global really contributes to the internationalization of education at UMSL.”

She pointed to study abroad programs, which now take students to more than 60 destinations around the world.

Brownell also credited UMSL Global with playing an important part in her own career during her 29 years at the university, providing her with a series of small travel grants that helped her visit China during the summers so she could maintain her connections there and keep in tune to the rapid changes occurring in that country.

“That fed back into my teaching as I taught my students also about what was happening in China,” she said.

UMSL faculty members have also used support from UMSL Global to conduct research and outreach with impact on the ground around the globe, whether it’s Kerkhoff helping [deliver professional development to K-12 teachers in Kenya](#), Li working to [develop climate-smart farm planning solutions in South Africa](#), or Fish focusing on cardiovascular nursing and diabetes [education in China](#).



Nursing Professor Anne Fish holds up a life-size portrait of herself made in cross stitch and given to her by people she worked with in China.

“One thing people often ask me is, ‘Do I speak Chinese?’” Fish said during her brief remarks. “‘Oh, no. Of course, I couldn’t possibly.’ And when I’m in China, whether I’m in Hunan Province, Henan Province or Hainan Province, I probably do not know. But I certainly think that the research team is making a significant difference in

China, and the overall impact of the research team has been to get more diabetes education and support to those who do need it in China.”

Last week’s event also was a chance to highlight the university’s five [UMSL Global-affiliated endowed professors](#) – [Michael Cosmopoulos](#), the Hellenic Government-Karakas Family Foundation Professor in Greek Studies; [Hung-Gay Fung](#), the Dr. Y.S. Tsiang Professor in Chinese Studies; [Miriam Jorge](#), the Allen B. and Helen S. Shopmaker Endowed Professor of Education and International Studies; [Laura Miller](#), the Ei’ichi Shibusawa-Seigo Ari Professor in Japanese Studies; and [Eamonn Wall](#), the Smurfit-Stone Endowed Professor in Irish Studies.

UMSL Global also presented awards for faculty-led study abroad programs to Cosmopoulos, for leading an [archaeological dig at Iklaina in Greece](#); [Christoph Schiessl](#) for leading a German study tour; Spanish faculty members for leading a trip to Costa Rica; [Michael Costello](#) for leading a business study tour to Oxford International Business, Honors and Pre-Law; [Joseph Rottman](#) for leading the Bremen Summer Business trip; and Japanese faculty members for leading a [Japan study tour](#).