Alumni and Staff Bid a Fond Farewell to ISP Director Timothy Lang

On Sunday, September 24 a group of International Scholars Program (ISP) alumni, current students, and UMass faculty and staff gathered in the CHC events hall west to congratulate Timothy Lang, Director of the International Scholars Program on his retirement. Lang’s commitment to his students, dedication to international education, and many contributions to the UMass and CHC communities were celebrated.

Commonwealth Honors College Dean Gretchen H. Gerzina recalled, “We are so fortunate that he came UMass Amherst for a temporary appointment that turned into a 12-year stay on our campus.” Lang arrived at UMass Amherst for the 2004-2005 academic year, with a temporary appointment in the history department. His association with Commonwealth Honors College began in 2007 and included teaching Honors courses, such as the Dean’s Book, Ideas that Change the World, and Front Page, advising Honors students, directing the International Scholars Program, and serving on a variety of committees in both Commonwealth Honors College and at the university.

Stacy Lutsch, Director of Academic Initiatives for the International Programs Office, spoke on behalf of Associate Provost of International Programs, Kalpen Trivedi. Over the years, Lang worked closely with the staff in the International Programs Office, especially the Committee on Overseas Programs and Exchanges. “Tim as he has been a fantastic partner in everything from his work as Chair of the Committee on Overseas Programs and Exchanges to his leadership of the International Scholars Program. As you all know, Tim is a committed internationalist who understands the value of cross cultural experiences,” said Lutsch.

Finally, student Tenzin Thargay ’18 shared his experiences with Lang, both as a student seeking information on applying to Commonwealth Honors College as a first-year student, and later as a member of the International Scholars Program. “ISP equipped us with the tools to have a meaningful study abroad experience. Our group presentations with other cohort members going to different parts of the world helped to expand my perspectives on the various disciplines, peoples, and cultures that not only our cohort represented, but would soon immerse themselves in,” recalled Thargay. “I am very lucky to call [Lang] a mentor, friend, and teacher. If it were not for [him] I would not have applied for the
Boren Scholarship and had an amazing time in Taiwan.”

Alumni of the International Scholars Program were in attendance to wish their former teacher and mentor well on his next great journey, which will include travel to research a book on European history. The event had truly a global reach as one alumna pulled out her smartphone and called a former classmate now living in Jordan to congratulate Lang via video chat.

Since 2000, the International Scholars Program has provided Commonwealth Honors College students planning to study abroad with an opportunity to integrate international coursework and study into their academics. Co-sponsored with the International Programs Office, ISP is highly competitive, admitting 15 to 20 students each year. Participants commit to three consecutive years of the program, which includes coursework to examine international issues, prepare for the study abroad experience, and cross-cultural re-entry. Many students choose to incorporate their ISP coursework and study abroad experience into their Honors Thesis or Project.