

## Alumni News: What's New?

**Sara Hanson (Eldridge) ('11 GIEP/CHE)** is currently a Manufacturing Engineer for Zimmer Biomet, a medical device company. She is happy to announce that she got married in 2014 and had a baby boy summer 2017.

**Alexandra Bruneault ('09 FIEP/ELE)** and her husband, Corey, welcomed their son, Nolan Dempsey Bruneault into the world on June 17, 2018.



Welcome Baby Nolan!

**Yldania Carrasco ('03 SIEP/ISE)** has been promoted to Engineering Manager. She became staff Industrial Engineer at Joseph Abboud Manufacturing shortly after graduating from URI in 2003 and has since assumed many essential job functions over the years. She will now further expand her responsibilities to include all engineering, costing and manufacturing incentive functions which includes managing a growing staff of engineers.

**Arielle De Souza (16 FIEP/OCE)** received her Master's Degree in Offshore Energies Engineering at ENSTA ParisTech in December of 2017. She is currently working as an offshore engineer in Paris, France for the offshore construction company Saipem.

**Graeme O'Connell ('09 CIEP/BME)** changed jobs in 2016 to another startup company called SonoVol that deals in designing and manufacturing ultrasonic imaging devices intended for research in small animals. His company has recently been awarded a Phase 1 NIH grant to explore the potential of its imaging system in tracking the growth of regenerated organs, and a Phase 2 NIH grant to study the progression of liver disease.

**Christian Coughlan ('98 GIBP)** moved from New York City at the end of 2014 to Portland, OR, is now married and has a 19-month-old son.



Kevin in Peru

**Kevin Drumm ('15 SIEP/MCE)** is currently helping to plant trees in northern Peru as part of an campaign to promote environmental education and conservation.

**Jeffrey Borden ('09 FIEP/CMP)** married Karla Barreto Stein of Peru in August 2018. "Time to learn Spanish!"

**Zackary Karas ('08 GIEP/MCE)** left BMW of North America in New Jersey to take a position in Product Marketing for Automotive RADAR and Autonomous Driving at Analog Devices outside of Boston. Since moving to Medford, MA in 2016, he has traveled to 17 cities in five countries to represent Analog Devices. His wife Anna is currently working at Harvard Business School in Alumni Relations and their daughter Leyla just turned two years old.

**Meghan Soens (Collins) ('05 SIEP/ELE/BME)** was recently promoted to Director of Marketing, Europe, Middle East & Africa at Boston Scientific. She continues to be based in Paris, France with her husband Pete and daughter AJ. One of the things that excites her most is to see her daughter learning a language at such a young age and how well she speaks - as Meghan "never quite was able to speak Spanish without a Boston accent!"



Their civil service marriage ceremony

**Brendan Grealish ('13 GIEP/ISE)** writes: "The IEP opened many doors and offered me some great opportunities but the best thing that came out of my time abroad was meeting my wife, Tiffany. We met at the TU in Braunschweig, then she also spent a semester at URI doing an internship in the German department. We currently live in Osnabrück, where we landed after I finished my trainee program with ZF in 2015."

**Colleen Grinham ('12 GIEP/CVE)** was recently named Senior Production Engineer for The Dow Chemical Company. In this new role, she supports one of the largest wastewater treatment plants in the Western Hemisphere as well as all landfill assets located in Freeport, TX. On a global level, Colleen leads teams to implement Dow Nature Goals in Texas Operations, is a corporate Sustainability Academy student, and is the Communications Focal Point for the Dow Environmental Operations Business.

**Rachael Browning ('11 CIEP/CHE)** recently received a promotion to Engineering Section Leader with Nestlé Purina in Amiens, France.

**Chris Andraka ('13 CIEP/CHE)** was promoted to Engineering Manager for the Mixing Division at Continental Tire at the start of this year.

**Mike Bessette ('08 GIEP/MCE)** writes: "We just had baby numero dos! Our first daughter Elizabeth (Ellie) Nora now has a little sister named Charlotte Julia as of 5/18/18." Mike is currently working at Pratt and Whitney as an Assembly Process Engineer for PW1100G aircraft engines and his wife Andrea is teaching fifth grade in North Stonington.



Hello Charlotte!

**Amanda Junkins ('16 FIEP/BME)** writes, "I am so happy with where my degrees have taken me since graduating from this terrific program... This is really living the dream post-IEP! I have learned so much in the field of interventional radiology, along with cardiology, neurology, and other specialties. The importance of simulation in surgery and medicine has become very evident, while this reduces risk, increases safety, and promotes skills practice without intervening on animals or real patients. I truly look forward to my developing career in this field of medicine, and continuing to enjoy my move to beautiful Sweden on both a personal and professional level." After one year of traveling between Europe and the U.S., and working some temporary jobs, Amanda found a position as a Customer Support Engineer at Mentice, a medical technology company headquartered in Gothenburg, Sweden. Her role includes various parts of production, installation, maintenance, and training with our endovascular surgical simulators. She travels often in this position all over Europe, including frequent trips to France. As the francophone of the support team, she is using her language background and building her medical knowledge through trips to hospitals and congresses throughout France.

**Jun Yan ('17 Ph.D. ELE)** was the recipient of the URI Graduate School's Excellence Award in Doctoral Research for the Class of 2017. He was the first student from Zhejiang University recruited by the IEP to participate in the 3+x URI/ZJU dual degree program, earning his Master's in ELE in 2013 and Ph.D. in ELE in 2017. He has recently accepted an Assistant Professor position in the Concordia Institute for Information Systems Engineering at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada.



Jun with his award

## THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING PROGRAM

# Global Update

Summer 2018 Volume 20 Issue 3 [uri.edu/uriep](http://uri.edu/uriep)

### Director's Notes



Dr. Sigrid Berka, Executive Director

Boasting 30 % female student enrollment, the IEP is significantly ahead of the curve when compared with the national average, which hovers around 20 %. With hopes of increasing this already impressive number, we look to some selected female leaders who have either contributed immensely to the IEP, are shaping the IEP along with us or have grown out of the IEP.

#### Heidi Kirk Duffy

In July, a celebration was held for Dr. Heidi Kirk Duffy, who recently retired from her position as IEP Advisory Board Chair. Forging a relationship with the program's founder, John Grandin, she helped lay the foundation for what the IEP is today. During her thirty-year tenure on the board, Kirk Duffy established valuable connections between URI and a variety of corporate partners in Germany while also leading the board in its giving efforts. If it weren't for her many philanthropic initiatives, this unique dual degree model would likely not have achieved the internationally-recognized success that it currently possesses. The donation of her yacht *Liberty* played a crucial role in building the International Living & Learning Community, as it afforded the program the ability to purchase a second residence in which students could build strong social connections while also honing their language skills.

Throughout the years, the IEP has benefited greatly from Kirk Duffy's steadfast devotion to and enthusiastic support of the program, as well as her sage advice, keen judgment and positive personality. Heidi, thank you!

#### Karen de Bruin

A current innovator whose vision for languages at URI aligns with, impacts and further develops the IEP is Dr. Karen de Bruin. De Bruin, whom we interviewed for this update, is Chair of the

### Celebration in Honor of Dr. Heidi Kirk Duffy

House of President Dooley, July 24th, 2018



"More important than the buildings, of course, are the IEP Students. ...More than [thirty] years later, the IEP has grown to include six language programs, tons of involved companies worldwide, has garnered numerous awards, and achieved international fame. ...[We] have built a real jewel for URI and its students."

---Dr. Heidi Kirk Duffy

From left to right

Carol Grandin, Dave Duffy, Ray Wright, Heidi Kirk Duffy, John Grandin, Sigrid Berka, Winnie Brownell, and Angela Graney

Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures and Associate Professor of French.

In thinking about the future of the Language Department and its students, De Bruin and the department's faculty have identified a few main focus areas that also intersect with the IEP's strategic planning. A major priority is to adjust the program's focus to teach for language proficiency, following a national shift in pedagogical research on the topic. Students will take proficiency tests at both the 200 and 400 levels, demonstrating concretely their gains in the language and the level at which they can operate in that language by the end of the program. "This will enhance students' success because students will be able to say they have a certain level of language proficiency and then can go into their professions or future life with that credential," de Bruin explained.

Another priority of the department is to better build cultural competency into language courses that are offered at URI. In today's world, the ability to comfortably navigate a variety of cultural contexts and establish positive relationships with people from different backgrounds through mutual understanding is essential. As indicated by de Bruin, the department will also begin to address how to assess cultural competence in the classroom setting during the upcoming year. To implement the proficiency and cultural competence initiatives, she secured four new tenure-track positions for

the department in the last two years. Her plan is also to transform the Language Lab into the Languages and International Networking Center. There, students will be able to take their proficiency tests, bond with international students while practicing in the language with them, exchange cultural information, and attend events.

A final area is in recruitment and retention. Building upon the momentum and success of previous dual degree initiatives like URI's IEP or IBP, the department, in conjunction with Political Science and Economics, is launching a new International Studies and Diplomacy Program (ISD) this fall. According to de Bruin, the new program will be "an interdependent one where students are expected to hit an Advanced Low or B2 proficiency benchmark before moving on to pursue a career in international organizations or diplomacy", thereby setting students apart from their monolingual peers.

Building on Heidi Kirk Duffy's legacy and aligning the IEP's strategic plan with Karen de Bruin's vision for the Language Department, we in the IEP have a lot of exciting work ahead of us. Success stories of IEP alums such as the ones you will read about inside will continue to inspire us going into the '18-'19 academic year!

Best wishes, - Sigrid Berka

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## Leading the Way: Profiles of Female Leaders with Ties to the IEP

### Sareh Rajaei



For Sareh Rajaei, who is as of last year a practicing vascular surgeon in Brooklyn, NY, the IEP was a catalyst in her career and life in many ways. While this '06 GIEP/BME grad has an international background from having been born in Iran, Sareh had spent most of her life in Rhode Island prior to her year abroad in Germany. According to Sareh, studying in Braunschweig and completing her internship with Aviso, a small German biotechnical company, got her out of her shell, but the process of being fully immersed in another culture and language was not always easy for her. "It definitely made me grow a lot. Before I went to Germany I was more of a child, but especially after the internship... I grew to become a more independent and open-minded person who could better relate to others from different backgrounds. In doing so, I also learned more about myself, [becoming] more comfortable about my own independence, ...comfortable in my own skin."

The rewards were well worth the challenges, as Sareh reports gaining a courage to take on the unknown and push herself to take on new challenges, which was a key factor in her decision to begin medical school at Brown following her time at URI. There, she found that she enjoyed vascular surgery, where she was able to draw upon her engineering background for problem-solving skills and knowledge of flow dynamics while working with her hands.

Sareh found that her internship had also ignited a passion for research and a desire to help others, aiding her in her pursuit of a Master's in Public Health and later with medical research performed at Harvard.

Finally, the IEP left her with a thirst for knowledge of other cultures and languages which continues to this day. Regarding this, Sareh proudly shared the following news: "Last summer I signed up for an intensive medical Spanish course in Mexico in order to better communicate with Spanish-speaking patients. I do not think I would have had the courage to do something like that without the experiences that the IEP gave me."

### Meghan Peterson

After completing her GIEP/CHE undergraduate program in 2006, Meghan Peterson quickly learned that having the IEP on her resumé gave her an edge over her competition when applying for grad school and employment. She now possesses a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Princeton University and is employed as a Principal Member of the Technical Staff at National Security Laboratories. Meghan is currently the project lead of a multi-million dollar project funded jointly by the Departments of Energy and Defense, where she works directly with customers across a variety of government

agencies and departments to understand and implement technological solutions to pressing national security needs. Meghan is of the belief that leading a team requires "sensitivity and flexibility in adapting to other cultures and communication styles", a fact which she learned through her IEP experiences in Germany and working with her graduate advisor from Greece. "It took me a while to realize that some of the problems I encountered [in communicating] weren't actual problems. There was just a cultural difference that I didn't recognize right away. Once that clicked in my head, it really helped me in building that relationship with my advisor... and in everyday interactions as well."

### Sarah Koenig



Sarah Koenig, an '07 FIEP/MCE alum, took a slightly different path than some of her IEP peers. Though she only was in France for the internship semester of her cohort's year abroad, she has since gained additional work experience collaborating with people from all over the globe, including places like Italy, Brazil, Singapore, Korea and Canada. Currently, she is working with Pratt and Whitney in its Industrial Management Group, helping to fine-tune technology

used in producing more fuel-efficient jet engines. In her role, she works directly with French-speaking Canada, putting her IEP training to good use in more ways than one. In Sarah's opinion, working with individuals from other companies or even other departments in one's own company is not much different than working with people from foreign countries. "Everyone has their own goals and what is important to them. Someone in Engineering thinks different from someone in Procurement, Quality is different from Manufacturing... Figure out what drives them, seek to understand their thought process, tailor your message accordingly to get others' buy in on your ideas." This strategy has worked wonders for her in her leadership roles, earning her the following compliment from a global partner, "You work with us, you don't work 'at' us."

### Ana Franco

Ana Franco, an '06 GIEP/MCE alum originally from Colombia, believes that her internship with Daimler-Chrysler in Germany was a good starting point for her career. In her words, this culturally-immersive, hands-on experience gave her the ability to place herself "within the intersection of technology and business on a global stage." Her cultural and linguistic background when paired with her technical skills, has proved helpful to her following graduation since two of the three companies Ana has worked for after completing her degree are German-American companies, the Chrysler Group in Auburn Hills, MI and Siemens Industry and Siemens Energy Management in the Atlanta area. Starting off as a Development Engineer, Ana later secured a leading role as International Product Manager at the Harris Corporation, which she credits at least in part to participating in the IEP: "When you combine the four-year curriculum with the year abroad... I just think it has a heavier weight and gives you an advantage in today's world. The positions you are able to land also might set you up for a global role, as it did for me."

### Maria Briones



Maria helping out in Panama

Having worked for two years with the Peace Corps, Maria Briones is a '14 SIEP/CVE alum who has been interning and working on her Master's degree. Regarding her experience with the IEP, Maria states, "It challenges you to think with the two parts of your brain at once because by [the time of the internship] we have the math and science down but your motors are also running on high power with the languages." She believes that through the program, she acquired a sense of fearlessness and a curiosity for other languages and cultures. The year abroad in Spain provided her with the courage to sign up for the Peace Corps. "Because I had spent a year away and became comfortable immersing myself in a different place where I didn't know people initially, [where] people thought and spoke differently than I did, it made the transition easier being in ... the Peace Corps and helped with the culture shock because the conditions and the culture were just so different from the Western world in general. IEP was a stepping stone for getting to a comfortable place in the Peace Corps."

According to Maria, language skills and having a "mindset for communication" are more important than people would think in engineering. She cited examples of how being able to communicate on a technical level with a variety of audiences helped her while she was a Peace Corps volunteer and how possessing the ability to write concisely yet clearly on technical topics has helped her at the consulting firm where she is currently employed.

## Leading the Way: Some Advice to Future Female Engineers

**Maria:** "My advice would be to try to have confidence in yourself, that you can do anything just as well as your male peers. You are just as capable. A lot of times it may be "fake it 'til you make it", but if you think you can, you will. Try to have that mentality because it can be hard and intimidating."

**Meghan:** "The people in IEP are just an amazing supportive group of individuals that overlap with one or both of your majors... and go abroad together with you, which gives you a much tighter community. Having this support group during those stressful times... makes everything easier. You are not doing it alone because there are people who know exactly what you are going through."

**Sarah:** "Get comfortable with being uncomfortable. By that I mean don't let a situation or your environment intimidate you. Having done several things that on the surface are seemingly daunting, I have the confidence to stand up at work and tell someone that an idea is unrealistic and to give suggestions for what is more realistic."

## Summertime, Summertime: Summer News from the IEP

### Going Greener and Greener

**Jesse Schneider ('94 GIEP/MCE)** a veteran in the alternative powertrain research and development field, recently moved from BMW to Nikola Motors as Vice President of Technology, Hydrogen and Fuel Cells. In his new role, Jesse will be leading Nikola's Fuel Cell R&D division working with Bosch in Germany, the hydrogen refueling technology team with NEL Hydrogen in Norway, and the Nikola R&D center in Phoenix, Arizona. His collective goal for the teams is to bring the first-generation hydrogen-powered fuel cell truck to market, taking "the vehicle out of the carbon equation." Nikola's fuel cell team is tasked with improving the durability of the technology to withstand 1 million miles (1.6 million km) or 20,000 hours in a heavy-duty truck, while its hydrogen group is aiming to include a 600- to 800-mile (965- to 1,287-km) driving range as well as the ability to refuel the tanks in 10-15 minutes. According to Jesse, "Nikola has a real vision of taking the truck and converting it to electric using the fuel cell, while supporting it with a hydrogen infrastructure based on renewable resources. For me, it is the opportunity of a lifetime to really make a difference and bring a zero-emission vehicle to market to offset the well-to-wheels greenhouse gas emissions."

In his recent trip to RI, Jesse connected with current and former IEP directors to arrange interviews of GIEPers and to view the RI Hydrogen Fueling Station. As a result, two GIEP students going abroad in 2018 - 19, Ian Heino (shown above) and Cody Kwasniewski

('20 GIEP/MCE), will intern at the Bosch location in Stuttgart. The students are excited to be working with Jesse on the forefront of green engineering in the coming year! Future placements of IIEP interns are planned for OBM in Italy.



From left to right:

Thomas Kniesche (Brown U), Sigrid Berka, Ethan Grandin, John Grandin, Jesse Schneider, and Charles Mayers (Head of the MA Hydrogen Coalition)

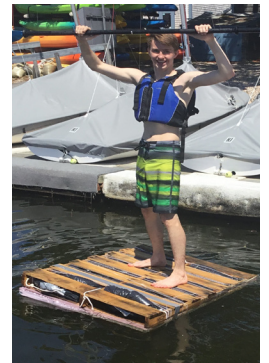
## New IEP Coordinator

The IEP would like to welcome its new Program Coordinator, Melissa Schenck, who started in July. As a URI alum ('09 B.A. Spanish/Secondary Education, '11 M.A. Hispanic Studies), Melissa is happy to be back at her alma mater assisting others while in her new role. Having been a high-school Spanish teacher for the last seven years, she is a champion of language learning and global thinking who also harbors a deep appreciation for the types of opportunities that STEM degrees provide students in today's economy. Through her own study abroad experience in Spain and Costa Rica as well as other trips that she has embarked on, she has cultivated a passion for travel that she hopes to pass on to current and future IEP students. If you see her in the office, feel free to practice your Spanish, German or Italian with her, as she has studied them in varying degrees, or to teach her something new in any of the languages offered by the IEP!



### German STEM Summer School

During the German STEM Summer School, students participated in a variety of activities to immerse them in technical German and German culture as well as develop as engineers. Participants bonded over activities such as pretzel-making and playing board games, all while conversing in German. For one project, students worked in teams to create rafts from upcycled materials. Once completed, the rafts were tested out on the water, determining once and for all if the students' designs were airtight or not! Although the weeks went by in *einem Augenblick*, the memories are sure to last a lifetime.



This Is Engineering. Float test proves that students' upcycled rafts really work. (Ian Heino, '20 GIEP/CHE)



Language learning is best shared with friends.