

international
alumni reunion 2012



old friends.
new beginnings.

September 21-22, 2012

For more than 50 years, Eastern has hosted international students on its campus with the assistance of dedicated staff and the vision of its leaders. Today we commend those pioneers for the establishment of programs and structures to facilitate the opportunity for citizens of other countries to enroll at EIU. We applaud those daring and brave students for their courage in leaving home to live and study in a new land and culture. And today we honor those alumni who exemplify Eastern Illinois University's definition of global citizen. Once courageous students, they now share a common history, enjoy excellent reputations in their careers and lives, and project bright futures as EIU alumni.

We are proud and honored to name them
EIU Global Ambassadors





Krupa Praneeth Kandavalli, '06 India

Krupa Praneeth Kandavalli currently works as a senior business analyst for Merck & Co., Inc. in Hunt Valley, Maryland. Merck & Co., Inc. is a global research-driven pharmaceutical working to discover, develop, manufacture, and market vaccines and medicines to address unmet medical needs.

In his duties with Merck he has gained expertise in project management and an in-depth knowledge of all phases of Software Development Life Cycle. Praneeth earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Bapatla Engineering College, Nagarjuna University in India in 2003. He earned a master's degree in technology at EIU in 2006. He writes, "I arrived at EIU in August 2004 on the university provided shuttle from Chicago O'Hare Airport with about 8 other international students whom I just met at the airport. As a guy in his early 20's who has never been to a foreign country, I experienced what its like to step into a different culture, to stay with people whom you have just met, figuring out where to live, studying in a new education system, trying to find something to do in your spare time. I was a benefactor of all the support extended to me by the international programs office, starting with the shuttle service to the day I graduated and left EIU. I know for a fact it is not the same in every university, and I am an advocate of how EIU is different and how we understand and cater to the needs of different students coming from different parts of the world." Praneeth and his wife, Swarna Bangaru, were acquaintances before they both arrived at EIU to study, they were married in 2010.



Antonis Ladopoulos, '92

Greece

Antonis Ladopoulos is one of the most prominent saxophonists in Greece. His work as a performer and educator has earned him national acclaim. For the past twenty years, Antonis has appeared in concert halls and festivals all over Greece performing as a leader with his own group and has recorded seven albums with original material. His compositions for large ensembles have been performed by the National Radio Orchestra and the Athens saxophone quartet. His work has also been prominently featured on radio and TV shows. Antonis earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the Athens University of Economics and Business in 1985, a bachelor's degree in music from the William Paterson University in New Jersey in 1990, and a master of arts in music from EIU in 1992. While at EIU he won an Exceptional Performance award at the Notre Dame Jazz Festival and the University of Iowa Jazz Festival. He is the founder of Muse.gr music institute, which has represented the contemporary perspective of music education



in Greece and has promoted musical creativity through the Muse.gr independent record label. He is also the creator and director of the Muse Festival, one of the most prestigious yearly Jazz festivals to take place in Greece. From 2008 to 2011, Antonis taught Jazz Theory, Improvisation & Jazz Ensembles at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki. His personal jazz discography consists of; *East Vision* (1994), *Page One* (1994), *Beyond the Blue* (1995), *Little Flowers* (2007), *3G* (2008),

Aegean World Jazz (2011), and just released September 2012 *Pho*.



Claudia Niessing, '94
Germany

Claudia Niessing has extensive experience working in the school system and in private practice as a teacher and speech-language-pathologist. She earned a master's degree in special education from the University of Cologne/Germany in 1992. She attended EIU as a Fulbright Scholar and earned a master of science degree in communication disorders and sciences in 1994. Claudia has spent her career working with children with special needs in Germany and the U.S. She is a certified speech-language pathologist in both countries. Claudia recently moved from Bonn, Germany to Sydney, Australia with her husband and two children.

Eva Pfanzer Sausgruber, '94 Italy



Dr. Eva Pfanzer Sausgruber holds the position of assistant professor in the Institute of Contemporary History at the University of Innsbruck in Austria. She earned her master of arts degree in history at EIU in 1994, and won EIU's Outstanding Master's Thesis Award for her thesis titled, "The South Tyrol and the Principle of Self-Determination: An Analysis of a Minority Problem." Her writing at EIU also earned her the Lavern Hamand Writing Award. As a student at the University of Innsbruck she earned the *magistra der philosophie* (M.Phil.) in 1995 and the *dr.in der philosophie* (Ph.D) in 2006. Eva's Ph.D. thesis, a monograph on Americans in South Tyrol in 1945 (with accompanying historical documentary on DVD), was published in Bozen in 2005, the documentary shown twice in prime time on local television. She later organized a conference on commemoration of the end of WWII, "60 Years Ago: The End of the War in South Tyrol," at the University of Innsbruck. Currently her major research project is on "holocaust and genocide web sites between media discourse, politics of memory and politicking." She has also published on contemporary history on the internet and has been closely involved in the founding in 1995 of the "Zeitgeschichte Information System"



(Contemporary History Information System), one of the first moderated information and communications networks for professionally active historians, especially in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Eva is co-editor of the online journal *historia.scribere*. She is a founding member and project supervisor of the "Network time and place," an initiative of the faculty of history and philosophy and the faculty of geo- and atmospheric science at the University of Innsbruck researching the application of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) on historical developments.



Abdoulaye Traore, '07, '09
Burkina Faso

Abdoulaye Traore is a native of Burkina Faso in West Africa. He came to EIU in the spring of 2003 for the Intensive English Program. Active in many student organizations, Abdoulaye served as president of both the Association of International Students and the African Student Association, and was student senator in EIU's student government. He earned a bachelors in finance in 2007 and his MBA in 2009. He received several scholarship awards while studying at EIU, including the Thomas Elliott School of Business Scholarship, the School of Business MBA Foster Rinefort Scholarship Award, and the Outstanding International Student Award. Abdoulaye writes, "EIU is more than an alma matter to me, it is home. My Eastern experience remains priceless and undoubtedly has been a life changing experience. At EIU, I met some of the most important people of my life, developed life-long friendships, and remain connected to this day. EIU has given me a solid foundation to sustain a great career in the professional world. I was one of 80 people selected around the world after a rigorous slection process to compete for the *Zurich -The Global Associate Program*-a program that focuses on developing future leaders for the organization." Abdoulaye currently lives in Toronto Canada and works for Zurich Global Corporate as a Financial Analyst.



Sarah Zaman, '05

Pakistan

Sarah Zaman earned a bachelor's in communication studies with a concentration in electronic media production from EIU in 2005. She currently works as an international broadcaster for Voice of America in Washington, DC.

She offers her own words to describe her time on EIU's campus:

I arrived on Eastern's campus on Aug 16, 2002, a day before my birthday, and it proved to be the beginning of a new journey and a new life for me.

Looking back, I can honestly say that EIU gave me the strength, the knowledge and the comfortable environment I needed for a new beginning miles away from my home in Pakistan. Today, I am a television anchor, producer and reporter for Voice of America's Urdu TV service, working on a daily show that airs in Pakistan. I won a student Emmy and a Cine Golden Eagle award in 2008 for my graduate thesis film, and there is never a day when I don't feel especially grateful for all that I learned at EIU's TV station, WEIU-TV. I joined the Communication Studies Department in Fall '02. I wanted to learn TV production; I wanted to be a star! And my advisor, Mike Bradd, to whom I'll always be indebted, directed me to WEIU-TV. It was here that I learned the fundamentals of television news production that I carry with me to this day. Generous scholarships from the Office of International Students and Scholars and WEIU-TV helped me pay for my education without burdening my parents. Working at the university food-court was my first ever job, but working at Booth Library was my favorite job. I don't know how I managed course work, food court, Booth Library and WEIU-TV all in the same day, everyday, but I know it would not have been possible without the guidance of my professors and without the support of my friends and colleagues at Booth. I graduated summa cum laude and went on to graduate school at the University of Florida where I studied at The Documentary Institute. It was there that I produced my multi-award winning documentary film "Bismillah" which followed the struggles of an American-Muslim woman breaking into local politics in Minneapolis. The film later aired on Al-Jazeera English's program *Witness* as part of the channel's special US midterm election programming in 2010. Upon graduating from UF, I got a job at Voice of America as a television reporter and producer for a daily news magazine show Beyond the Headlines, targeted to Pakistan. For nearly three years now I have also been anchoring the show and producing news and feature reports for it. I have lived in the US for a decade now – I have achieved many of my goals, but the memory of me walking through several inches of midwestern snow to my class in Coleman Hall is still fresh in my mind. Becoming an EIU Global Ambassador is an honor that humbles me and motivates me to work harder and harder to make my alma mater as proud of me as I am grateful to it.



