The Department of Scandinavian Studies begins an exciting new phase in 2018-19. The department has many new faces, with two new lecturers and four new graduate students. At the same time, our established faculty are innovating in their teaching and bringing out new publications. And we are renewing one of our core strengths: community partnership. We have teamed up with the Nordic Museum to organize the lecture series Scandinavian 30, we are undertaking an alumni stories project about what our alums are doing out there in the world, and we're bringing out a new podcast.

We are delighted to welcome two new faculty members this fall: Lecturer in Latvian Dr. Solvita Poseiko and Lecturer in Scandinavian Studies Lauren Poyer.

Dr. Poseiko says, "I think the most exciting thing is belonging to one of the most influential and impressive universities in the U.S. I am a small cell of it. Therefore, to be here is both a unique opportunity and a challenge. I believe that I will have a chance not only to teach the Latvian language and culture, but also to share my knowledge in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to join the Scandinavian Studies Department and to learn from more experienced colleagues -- academics and researchers -- in different ways and forms. It really inspires me."

Lauren Poyer will be teaching about modern and medieval Scandinavia. She comes to the UW from the other UW, the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "I'm excited about the opportunity to inspire in students an interest in Old Norse-Icelandic. When I think about what I am most excited to do outside of teaching ... I would say that I am already so impressed with the level of collaboration here--with other departments, with the Nordic museum, with the Swedish club. Together, everyone is bringing Scandinavia and the Baltics to life for the Seattle area. I'm excited to be a part of helping to grow those networks."

We are thrilled to be partnering with the Nordic Museum on the free lecture series Scandinavian 30 – a series of talks in which department faculty will share cutting-edge ideas in an informal setting at the Nordic Museum – in 30 minutes or less. The talks will be short, snappy, and fun! The opening lecture is "Vikings Were People Too" by Professor Emeritus Terje Leiren on Nov. 8th at 7:00 PM in the Museum's Osberg Room. There will be a reception after the talk, sponsored by advisory board member Ray Brandstrom, which will be an opportunity for faculty, students, advisory board members, alumni, and community members to gather. The lectures will
Our faculty continues to publish fascinating research. Professor Marianne Stecher’s work on Karen Blixen continues with her “Efterskrift,” which Professor Stecher describes as “a critical commentary written in Danish, about 60 print pages, for the Annotated Critical Edition of Blixen’s Collected Works,” Essays og Skygger på Græsset, Samlede Værker, vol. 7. She is also completing work on an edited collection of articles, Nordic War Stories - World War II as Fiction, Film and History. Assistant Professor Olivia Gunn is nearing completion of a study of reproduction, sexuality and gender in Henrik Ibsen’s plays titled Ibsen's Empty Nurseries. And Assistant Professor Amanda Doxtater is nearing completion of Untoward Intimacies: Carl Th. Dreyer’s Melodramatic Art Film, a book on the films of legendary Danish director. The book redraws the lines that have defined study of Dreyer by showing the strong melodramatic dimensions of his films.

Undergraduate and graduate students have begun the fall term with energy. Four new graduate studies are working in Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish studying and researching Swedish poetry, Danish literature, the culture of education, and politics. We are also happy to have a visiting Fulbright student from Finland, Meri Luoma. Our language courses saw an uptick in enrollment with first-year Norwegian reaching its enrollment limit, and first-year Danish increasing enrollment by more than 100 percent. The success of Lecturer Kristian Næsby and Professor Marianne Stecher’s summer study-abroad program Copenhagen Classroom, as well as the visit to the UW of Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mary, has helped enhance the profile of Danish. We are also streamlining the undergraduate curriculum to make sure our students can earn their degrees in four years, and go on to use Scandinavian studies in the diverse careers in which our alumni have succeed, including IT, medicine, the law, academia and publishing.

We are seeking to learn more about our alumni stories through a special project led by consultant Kimberly Earles, herself an expert in Swedish welfare state policy (with a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto). Dr. Earles will be reaching out to alumni to gather the stories of their careers, and to learn how Scandinavian Studies has helped them in their working lives. When you hear from Dr. Earles, please take the time to offer your experiences to her. (You can also reach out to her at alums@uw.edu.)

We are also producing a new podcast that will tell stories about the work of our faculty and students in Baltic and Scandinavian studies. The podcast producers are Collin Connors and Kristian Næsby. The purpose of the podcast is to tell prospective students and the public about Scandinavia and the Baltics, showing them all the great reasons to study in the department and to get involved with us. The UW has many resources to help in our production – for example a professional-level recording studio in the Language Learning Center. The first podcast should drop in late October. Keep your ears open!

Many of our activities have been made possible by the determination of the community to grow and build Scandinavian and Baltic studies. This fall we are proud to announce a new endowment, the Georg and Nina Pedersen Endowment for Danish Studies, which has already been built up to $100,000. In announcing the new endowment, Nina Pedersen cited Karen Blixen, “We must make our mark in life while it is in our power otherwise we leave it without a trace.” Nina and Georg’s endowment is inspiring, and will provide crucial support for the teaching and researching of Danish at the UW.

The Scandinavian Studies Department’s endowment support has leveraged support at the UW, by helping convince UW leaders to continue to invest in Scandinavian Studies. And it has given us the revenue to continue to offer some of the highest quality language and culture teaching in the United States. It also supports the exceptional scholarship of our graduate students and faculty. I want you to support the department so that we can continue to build the outstanding Scandinavian and Baltic Studies Programs in the country. Our new faculty and new graduate students, and the continued productivity and excellent of our current faculty, are proof of our continued growth.