Some of the most important centers of learning in international and area studies are located here in the II—we have extraordinary depth and breadth in expertise covering the world. Our area centers, such as those focused on Chinese, Japanese, Russian and East European, and South East Asian studies, are ranked among the best in the country for half a century. The II has in recent years enhanced or created centers or programs in African, Korean, Armenian, Islamic, World Performance, and International and Comparative studies. We have been recognized for excellence across the board, including for Latin American and South Asian studies.

Like the U-M itself, the II is committed to providing exceptional educational experiences to students, and outstanding research. We like to say that the II is “your global crossroads” because the II is a place where people studying different regions of the world from different disciplinary perspectives can cross paths and connect, leading to fruitful collaborations. It is also where the U-M connects to the rest of the world—our centers and programs maintain close connections to institutions and governments across the globe, and provide exchanges of people and ideas with every region of the world.

As the II approaches its 20th anniversary (2013), we renew our commitment to providing funding and a space for excellent international and area studies research and work. We support less commonly taught languages, and host many visitors who bring specialized international expertise to campus. Recently the II has increasingly become the academic home for undergraduates—the international studies major is now in its fourth year and has over 600 students declared. Last year we graduated 165 students, our first large class, whose members are using their knowledge of languages, cultures, economics, politics, and history of world regions to become “Leaders and Best,” by which we mean thinkers, doers, and people with integrity in their careers.

In this issue, in Hallyu 2.0: The New Korean Wave in the Creative Industry Era, Dal Yong Jin (associate professor of communications Antigua, Guatemala. Photo by chensiyuan via Wikimedia Commons.
at Simon Fraser University) describes the recent surge in Korean cultural industries, and the rapid proliferation of online gaming and K-Pop across Asia and the world. He explores the role of advanced digital technologies and widespread use of social media in expanding this phenomenon, and the importance of intellectual property (IP) rights in the future of the industry. His article is based on a paper he presented at a conference sponsored by the Nam Center for Korean Studies entitled Hallyu 2.0: The Korean Wave in the Age of Social Media in April 2012.

Recent Anti-Putin protests in Russia have attracted worldwide media attention and the support of celebrities and prominent political figures due to the arrest of three young women in a feminist punk band, Pussy Riot. Jessica Zychowicz, a PhD candidate in Slavic Languages and Literatures at Michigan, traces the origins of the protests and the incident that led to the arrests. She investigates the intersection of art and feminist activism that has emerged in the context of postcommunist tensions in the region. The Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies and Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (CREES) sponsored a panel on this topic in September 2012.

Finally, Dr. Masahito Jimbo, associate professor of family medicine and urology at U-M, in his article Japanese Manga and Smoking: Puffing Away, analyzes the content of comics in Japan and the U.S. to measure the prevalence of depictions of smoking and the possible influence of smoking patterns among teens in both countries. He received a grant from the Center for Japanese Studies (CJS) to conduct this research.

Read on. I hope you find these articles as interesting as I do. By all means, let us know what you think.

—Ken Kollman
Director of the International Institute, and Frederick G.L. Huetwell Professor and Professor of Political Science

The International Institute is where the U-M connects to the rest of the world—our centers and programs maintain close connections to institutions and governments across the globe, and provide exchanges of people and ideas with every region of the world.