

Thursday, July 26th, 2012 - 11:55 am

Content status: **Outdated**

Globally respected

By effectively and positively communicating greater understanding and respect, Professor Yahya Kamalipour is known worldwide

By **SUE ELLEN ROSS**

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As respected as Yahya Kamalipour is at Purdue University Calumet, he may be even more revered across the world.

The well-traveled communication professor and head of the university's Department of Communication and Creative Arts is also an internationally-regarded figure who is called upon regularly to provide insights about communication and mass media-related matters.

As a United States emissary and diplomat of sorts, his approach toward positive global communication has earned him numerous honors, awards and other accolades.

Born and raised in the small village of Ravar/Kerman, Iran, Kamalipour didn't have the opportunity to read more than a few books during his early childhood. Yet, as an adult, he has compiled and edited 14 books and has written numerous articles for various publications in the United States and abroad. He also travels back to his homeland and other global destinations, promoting his optimistic vision of increased understanding by all people through the interaction of effective communication.

He learned English while attending classes at Dr. Eghbal High School, establishing a foundation for his future plans. After high school, Kamalipour served in Iran's Literacy Corps. His responsibility included teaching elementary grade children in a small, mountainous Isfahan province village for two years.

Committed to education

Hearing that expanded education beyond high school would best be found at a United States university or college, Kamalipour began developing plans to travel to America. In preparation, he attended the Iran-American Society in Tehran to further his study of English. His move to America came in 1972, when he enrolled in an intensive English program, Orientation USA, at St. Louis University.

Introduction to formal United States education came in 1973 when he enrolled at Iowa's Marshalltown Community College and began his study of communication. Working his way up the higher educational ladder, he then traveled to Minnesota State University in Mankato, Minn. to earn a baccalaureate degree in Mass Communications: Public Relations. He went on to gain a master's degree in Mass Media: Radio/TV/Film at the University of Wisconsin-Superior and a Ph.D. in Communication: Radio/TV/Film at the University of Missouri.

Professionally, he gained teaching experience at Steubenville College (now Franciscan University) in Ohio and then Quincy College (now, Quincy University) in Illinois before coming to Northwest Indiana and Purdue Calumet in 1986 as an assistant professor of mass communication. He, his wife and two of their three daughters live in Munster, with the oldest daughter in St. Louis.

Since 1999, he has served as professor and department head, working with 17 full-time faculty and staff colleagues, whom he refers to as "highly productive and diverse." Working collaboratively, Kamalipour



His contributions abroad have helped make the world a little more accessible.

said, they have reorganized and expanded departmental undergraduate and graduate degree programs, doubling student enrollment.

Additionally, the department's Radio and TV studios have been updated and enlarged; a weekly television program (*Calumet Perspectives*), produced by a class of students and broadcast on Northwest Indiana PBS and Chicago stations, was initiated; student internship opportunities have been expanded; interdisciplinary programs have been established; and the department has been revitalized, according to Kamalipour, in "a highly collegial manner."

Administratively, he said he has focused on "promotion of the common good, student success, excellence in teaching and learning, cultural inclusion and open communication." He also founded and directs the university's Center for Global Studies, which seeks to promote international and intercultural understanding. Additionally, he has blazed new departmental trails by recruiting international students to Purdue Calumet from Brazil, China, Egypt, Holland, Iran, the Philippines and Russia.

Finding fulfillment by following his passion

Always one to believe that a person following his passion will find fulfillment, Kamalipour spurned his parents' expectations that he pursue a career in engineering.

"In many ways, I am blessed," he said. "I knew in elementary school I would work in education, because I used to gather my neighborhood friends and play the teacher's role. My first college admission was for engineering, but I'd always been interested in communication, so I switched to communication during my first semester at Marshalltown Community College and, interestingly enough, during my sophomore year, started writing my own weekly column, *Viewpoint*, for the college newspaper."

During his post-college years, especially after the 1979 Iranian revolution that toppled the Pahlavi Monarchy and replaced it with an Islamic Republic, attitudes about Kamalipour's native nation fueled a tense atmosphere in the United States. While he admitted it was a tough time for all Iranians, including young students in America, being aware of issues affecting other parts of the world and understanding the interconnectedness of global commerce and politics motivated him to research and learn, he said, by focusing on international media, constructive communication and building bridges of understanding among all cultures.

Whether about religion, politics, culture or other topics, Kamalipour believes that education plays a key role in advancing knowledge and developing realistic world views, while proper communication can nurture mutual respect and understanding.

"Tolerance is an important virtue, not easily acquired, but it must be promoted," he said. "We need to accept one another as we are, based on mutual respect, not selfish reasons or unrealistic expectations. I really don't want to live in a world devoid of diversity and differences."

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Throughout his college years and beyond, Kamalipour lived out one of his favorite adages: do what you enjoy and the rewards will come naturally. Whether it was writing for his school newspaper, working at a radio station, engaging in research, initiating global projects, or preparing for class



On campus, as an advocate for student success, he helped advance updated and expanded TV production facilities.

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presentations, his experiences, he said, “spurred rewards...often intangible rewards that cannot be measured by monetary or tangible means.”

Quite a portfolio

Presentations and projects at the onset of his career contributed to an impressive portfolio that would grow into a global network. To wit:

- Founder and managing editor of ***Global Media Journal***;
- Founder and co-editor of the ***Journal of Globalization for the Common Good***;
- founder and director of the ***Global Communication Association***;
- founder and director of Purdue Calumet’s ***Center for Global Studies***, which connects national and international researchers by advancing practices, strategies and trends in global culture, media, politics and economics.
- Editor of the ***Global Media Study Series***;
- co-organizer of two annual international conferences for the ***Global Communication Association*** and ***Globalization for the Common Good; and***
- editor and compiler of 14 global communication-related books.

The well-versed, professor also has been profiled in ***Contemporary Authors***, ***Who’s Who in the World*** and ***Who’s Who in America***.

Additionally, he has received many significant awards, including the James Hartung Award in International Awareness by the Northwest Indiana World Trade Council (USA), Distinguished Scholarship Award in International and Intercultural Communication from the National Communication Association (USA), a Certificate of Recognition by Tsinghua University (China), Dr. Notghi’s Award in Public Relations (Iran) and the Edgar Mills Award for Outstanding Service in Communication from The Communicators of Northwest Indiana (USA).

Reaching out to students

As he came up through the educational ranks, Kamalipour said he realized the importance of communication in all areas of life: personal, educational and professional.

As his portfolio grew, so did his appreciation for all it takes to achieve, prompting his decision, he said, to enhance a program initiated 25 years ago at Purdue Calumet: the annual “Celebration of Student Achievements” for Communication and Creative Arts students.

Last spring’s celebration recognized 47 nominees in nine award categories: Journalism, Advertising, Public Relations, Communications Studies, Organizational Communication, Visual Communication and Graphic Arts, Outstanding Senior, Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant and Outstanding Achievement by a Graduate Student.

Recent Purdue Calumet graduate Rey Perez was recognized as this year’s Outstanding Student in Public Relations. Although he never took a class taught by Kamalipour, Perez, enjoyed opportunities to interact with him. While attending district competition in Detroit for an Advertising Campaigns course, Perez praised Kamalipour for his support.

“He calmed my nerves, encouraged me greatly and really gave me confidence,” Perez said. “It meant the world to the rest of the team and me that he made the trip to see us.”

Perez added that he sees Kamalipour utilizing what he gathers on his travels to enlighten students. “I believe that what Professor Kamalipour has done for the Communication Department in general has been incredible.”

Respected colleague & student advocate

Twenty-five-year Kamalipour colleague and Professor of Communication Daniel Dunn agrees.

“I feel Yahya has earned a reputation as an international scholar,” he said. “His activities as a scholar

permeate his classroom and enhance the reputation of our campus. In addition, I believe Yahya is a person of the highest integrity, and I am honored to call him my colleague and friend."

Another colleague, Professor of Communication Lisa Goodnight, also a Purdue Calumet alumna, said she became acquainted with Kamalipour 18 years ago.

"Professor Kamalipour truly believes that our students should be our focus, and he generously provides opportunities for the faculty to work with, and mentor, both graduate and undergraduate students," she said. "For me personally, his support of the basic communication course, Com 114, has helped make it one of the best in the nation for graduate student teacher training. Many aspects of our basic course program have been presented at national conferences and workshops."

Goodnight added that Kamalipour's international associations benefit many people in many areas. "His engagement with scholars from around the world has created opportunities for students and faculty alike," she said. "His work enables international students to study here at Purdue Calumet, but also our faculty has opportunities to teach at partner universities in many countries."

Globe-trotting ambassador

The unofficial global ambassador of mass media and communication has traveled the world presenting and sharing his perspectives in Australia, Egypt, Canada, China, Iran, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey.



Kamalipour with a Kenyan family.

Numerous international radio and television stations have interviewed him. He has rated cover page, feature story status of an Iranian magazine and is the subject of the biographical book, "*Traveler of the Global Village: Biography of Yahya Kamalipour*."

"This book is not only about Dr. Kamalipour's personal life, but also a local history of communication and mass media," author Negin Hosseini of Munster said.

While progressing through the book, readers engage in a journey in time and space over six decades, she added.



Traveling the world, he has promoted greater cultural understanding to a Chinese delegation in Beijing and at a press conference in Malaysia.



Kamalipour's frequently sought-after expertise was evident again this spring when he was invited to speak at an international conference for the World Public Forum Dialogue of Civilizations (WPF) in Berlin, Germany—an event intended to promote protection of spiritual and cultural values of humankind and to further constructive dialogue among major civilizations of the modern world. He participated in a panel discussion titled, "Integration in the Age of the Digitalization of Electronic Communication."

In July, he addressed misconceptions about unprecedented poverty levels in Africa at the 6th Annual Global Association Conference in Zambia.

"What drives me is my passion for what I do," he said. "One of the reasons for creating an expansive global academic network is because I truly enjoy it. I feel I am making a lasting contribution to the field of communication and my fellow human beings."

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Kamalipour at a press conference in Zambia

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