Announcer: The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Yeap: There are many reasons to learn a foreign language, such as facilitating international travel, expanding your job skills, making friends from other countries and increasing global understanding. While learning a new language is a lot of work, it is no doubt beneficial and rewarding. If you want to learn a foreign language for personal or professional development, look no further than the Foreign Language Institute, FLI, at Missouri State University. Established in 2012, the institute offers a variety of languages to a diverse group of learners, from college students to business professionals to children and more. I’m Emily Yeap.

Joining me today to talk about the FLI and its offerings is FLI Coordinator Kelly Schlinder.

Kelly Schlinder: The Foreign Language Institute is a partnership between Missouri State University, Baptist Bible College, Southwest Baptist University, Evangel University and Ozarks Technical Community College. We joined together so that we could offer different languages to students in the Springfield area. We offer not just for-credit classes, but also non-credit courses for travelers and summer camps for children.

Emily Yeap: The languages offered in the institute include Arabic, Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

Kelly Schlinder: We just added two new languages; Hindi and Swahili. They're going to be offered in fall 2019 for the first time. Faculty and students on campus made requests for these languages, and the Foreign Language Institute has a goal to expand and to meet the needs of the community, so we began the process of adding them about a year ago.

Emily Yeap: Hindi is one of the official languages of India. It’s also spoken in several other countries, such as Fiji, Mauritius and Nepal. More than 400 million people worldwide speak Hindi as a first language. As for Swahili, it’s an east African language primarily spoken in countries, such as Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. It’s estimated that there are 50 to 100 million Swahili speakers around the world.

Schlinder explains about the types of for-credit classes offered in the fall and spring semesters at the institute.

Kelly Schlinder: All of our courses are three credit hour courses, and the tuition information is available on the Missouri State website. In fall, we always offer the first and third level of every language, and in spring we always offer the second and fourth level of every language. But we started offering the first level of every language in spring as well to accommodate the needs of people right before they graduate, or before they go on a trip or a study away program.

Emily Yeap: For individuals interested in learning language basics for overseas travel, the Languages for Travelers courses take place every spring. They may also be offered by demand in the fall. The cost is $150.

Kelly Schlinder: Every spring semester, we offer 16 hours of instruction in different courses that will aid travelers while they’re spending time abroad. The courses that we typically offer include Spanish, Chinese, French, Italian and sometimes even German. The courses meet one night per week for eight weeks, and travelers learn words and phrases that help them cross over from being tourists to building relationships abroad and navigating other countries successfully.

Emily Yeap: Schlinder believes picking up a different language is worth the investment of time, money and energy.

Kelly Schlinder: Learning a new language offers the opportunity to meet new people, to possibly find new careers or places to visit. You never know where a language will take you.

Emily Yeap: Most FLI courses are held in the Jim D. Morris Center in downtown Springfield. To get more details, visit fli.missouristate.edu or call 417-836-5497. I’m Emily Yeap for the Missouri State Journal.

Announcer: For more information, contact the Office of University Communications at 417-836-6397. The Missouri State Journal is available online at ksmu.org.