MSU HOSTS EDUCATORS FROM THAILAND UNIVERSITY

The Department of Education and the Office of International Programs recently hosted representatives of Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University (NSRU) in Thailand. The NSRU administrators came to MSU to discuss strategies to strengthen and extend a partnership in research and educational activities. Over the past 20 years, more than 50 NSRU faculty have trained in action research, teaching, learning and assessment with the MSU Department of Education. MSU has sent cross-disciplinary faculty, staff, and students to work at NSRU and other Rajabhat universities and public schools throughout Thailand.

During the recent visit, administrators from NSRU and representatives from MSU signed a memorandum of understanding. Michael Brody, associate professor of education, said the two institutions are very similar and share a similar mission.

W hen technology education students returned to campus this fall, they found a new piece of equipment to enhance their skills for future careers. This past summer, Scott Davis, associate professor of technology education, secured a Dimension 3D printer through funding from the MSU Equipment Fee Allocation Committee. The printer allows students to create three dimensional prototypes from a hard plastic (ABS+).

3D printers are used in the automotive, drafting, medical, and architectural industry for product designs and allows engineers and designers to easily test product design. 3D designs from any number of CAD software programs can be used to create a model. A model can contain multiple parts, which when printed with a 3D printer, can create a working prototype complete with moving parts.

“In the next 50 years, you’ll see 3D printers everywhere,” said Troy Smith, a senior in technology education from Whitefish, Mont., “so we need to know how to use them. It’s the future.”

Many secondary schools already use the technology in career and technical education classes to give students hands-on experience with 3D modeling. Since many area high schools already have 3D printers that they obtained from Perkins Grants, Davis felt it was essential for his students to know how to use them, as well.

Simone Scafide, a senior in technology education, said a lot of public schools in the U.S. already have 3D printers, including her high school in New Jersey. Her experience included being able to go from a design concept to an actual 3D model.
Not many professors would trek for five days on rocky foot trails to a remote village at 10,000 feet in Nepal to do research. But that is exactly what Betsy Palmer, associate professor in adult and higher education, did in 2011-2012. On sabbatical for the year, Palmer’s main purpose in going to Nepal was to conduct an ethnographic study of community attitudes toward the intersection of education and technology in a remote rural area.

Palmer is no stranger to Nepal. In 2005, she traveled there to climb Imja Tse (Island Peak) and met her future husband, who was born and raised in the village of Pandok. They later married in the village in a traditional ceremony and now have five-year-old twins.

When Palmer and family decided to return to Nepal for her sabbatical, getting to the village of Pandok was no easy task. First, they flew from Bozeman to Katmandu on a 36-hour collection of fights. While waiting for the end of the monsoon season, they spent six weeks visiting family and traveling through India. Then, an earthquake hit the country. When it was finally time to travel to Pandok, they flew by prop plane to a small regional airport. After journeying by jeep for a day-and-a-half, the family then trekked for five days, paying people to carry everything for them, including the twins. Once they arrived in the village, they lived in a single room stone house with no electricity, no running water, and a fireplace to cook their food.

In Pandok Palmer discovered there were a number of challenges when it came to conducting her research, with one of the biggest challenges being a mother and a researcher.

“I spent hours on daily living—cooking, washing clothes and childcare,” said Palmer. “I might end up with about an hour a day for research.”

Another challenge was a conflicting researcher identity. Even though she was married to a villager and dressed in a Baku (a native dress), she was still considered an outsider. Children in the village were very curious and would follow her everywhere. Observing children while they were in school also did not work out as expected.

“While I was in the back observing, it totally disrupted the class,” said Palmer, who tried inconspicuously to collect data in a journal. “I was too unique and the kids wanted to see what I was doing. The observer was also the observed.”

She found she was able to observe more easily when her children were in the classroom.

In October, Palmer gave a presentation to university faculty and students on the complexities of qualitative research and the lessons she learned in doing an ethnographic study. After two months observing life in the village, Palmer found that for poor rural families, the long-term investment in educational programs designed by urban bureaucrats may not be as attractive as short-term investments in agriculture or black market trading.

“Children who are successful in education often leave the community and may not return,” Palmer said. “While most families are proud of their children’s educational achievements, they are also cognizant of the potential downsides to that success.”

Palmer will be returning to Nepal in a new role May 2013. She will be leading a group of MSU honors students on a study abroad trip to Pandok where she hopes to spur students’ interest in the complexities of economic development in remote regions.
In early October, 55 human resources personnel from Montana and Idaho attended the Intermountain West College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) conference at Bozeman’s Holiday Inn. The day-and-a-half conference focused on many aspects of human resources, including characteristics of higher education and how they differ from the rest of the world of work, recent case law and legislative developments, and effective compensation practices – all with a focus on the higher education setting. Speakers were Jackie McClain, J.D., Michael Dahlem, Attorney at Law, and Carol L. Mercer, CCP. Additionally, an evening networking social was held at the Museum of the Rockies.

Sara King, HR Operations Manager for the College of EHHD, was invited by the Intermountain West chapter to lead the conference organizational team. Rosalie Lynch, a student HR assistant for EHHD, also served on the team.

“CUPA-HR is the association specifically for HR professionals in higher education, and this was the first Intermountain West chapter conference in three years,” said King. “It was an exciting and dynamic professional development opportunity, drawing members from many institutional settings (public, private, and religious universities). Delegates were able to make and renew connections and engage in meaningful discussion on topics critical to higher education.”

For the last two years, Augustine Rosing has been working in outreach for the Inuulluataarneq grant, a $954,000 grant from the National Science Foundation that is working with the people of Greenland to develop, implement, and evaluate intervention strategies for sexually transmitted infections, using community based participatory research. Beth Rink, associate professor in community health, is the principal investigator for the project. Rosing, a native of Greenland and a student at the University of Greenland, was in the United States presenting at a conference on reproductive health in Washington, D.C. After arriving in Bozeman, she traveled to Fort Peck to visit where Rink is conducting research on a similar grant.

“It’s amazing to meet the people here (Fort Peck) and hear about their life,” said Rosing.

Inuulluataarneq means “having the good life” and Rosing hopes to help young people ages 15 to 19 in her community of Paamiut with intervention strategies to a healthier life, better self-esteem, and improved communication.
On October 25, Henrietta Mann, president of the Cheyenne Arapaho Tribal College in Oklahoma, Brandi Foster, from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, and Wayne Stein, MSU professor of Native American Studies, were the featured speakers for the annual fall Indian Education for All workshop held in MSU’s Procrastinator Theater. The workshop focused on Indian Education for All in higher education and in Indian country. Dr. Mann presented a “long round-about history” of Indian education and said that “Indian education did not come to this country on the Niña, Pinta, and Santa Maria.”

“It was already here,” said Mann. “Ours was the first educational system…and prepared students for life.”

An additional workshop, “The First Thanksgiving: Dispelling the Myths and Misconception,” was held at Christus Collegium on October 26. Sponsored by the Provost’ Office, the Department of Native American Studies, the Teaching and Learning Committee, and the Diversity Awareness Office, this afternoon event featured speakers Mann, gkisedtanamoogh, a spiritual leader of the Wamponoag/Wabanaki Nations, and Mike Jetty, Indian education specialist from Montana’s Office of Public Instruction.

HD honorary student organization Phi Omicron Upsilon held a bake sale in Reid Hall in October to raise funds for several causes. Family and Consumer Science student and president Lauren Ortega said the group would use the proceeds for community charities and also to help send members to the national Phi U conference in Idaho. Plans for another bake sale are in the works for spring semester.

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