

# Education pros seek global perspectives

By Julie Hahn

**R**obert Bahruth talked about humanism with students and teachers in Taiwan. Claudia Peralta-Nash worked with bilingual educators in Peru. Stan Steiner is spending five months in Korea as part of an exchange program. And Diane Boothe had her presentation stolen by a monkey in the Peruvian jungle (more on that later).

Professors from Boise State's College of Education have long been focused on providing the best education for their students in the Treasure Valley. But according to Boothe, the dean, the college is making every attempt to bring global perspectives to classrooms in Boise.

"We are asked to prepare students to enter an increasingly complex global society and it's crucial to consider perspectives beyond our boundaries and become familiar with cultures and teaching methods from around the world," Boothe says.

During the past year alone, educators from the college have traveled to places such as Ireland, Japan, Israel and beyond to establish connections with other universities, exchange ideas and experience other cultures.

Bahruth, a professor in the Department of Bilingual Education, has traveled to Taiwan several times since 1998 and often teaches courses on humanism at Sunyat-sen University. His visits to Taiwan also give him a chance to learn Chinese and enjoy good sashimi and sushi, he says. ("He never brings any food back for us," Peralta-Nash, the chair of the Bilingual Department, complains good-naturedly.)

Bahruth is consistently impressed with the emphasis on education in Taiwan, he says, noting that so many people in Taiwan wear glasses "because they study themselves to blindness." Bahruth would like the College of Education to develop a more formal relationship with Sunyat-sen University, and says that his colleagues in Taiwan want their students to experience a place like Boi-



Professors from the College of Education — including Dean Diane Boothe, shown here making new friends in Japan — are working to build relationships with other universities around the world.

se, which is easier and safer for students to navigate than locations such as Los Angeles. A partnership with the university would expand on similar relationships already in place with institutions such as Chonbuk National University in South Korea, where Steiner, a professor of literacy, will work until July.

Boothe says the college is looking to strengthen and expand its partnerships. "We look forward to partnering with international universities and welcoming students and providing global, quality educational experiences," she says.

Peralta-Nash traveled with Boothe to Peru last year. Peralta-Nash, who is from Uruguay, appreciates the global approach that educators and students in South America take to the classroom.

"There is no academic ivory tower," she says. "There are more connections between the political, social, and education worlds."

Those connections and high level of involvement permeate cultures such as Peru's, she says, where everyone — from waiters to

pizza deliverymen to street sweepers — are informed about the culture and politics. Peralta-Nash challenges her students in Boise to experience the world the way students in other countries do, by encouraging them to be informed about the world and to commit themselves to bettering the lives of other people, no matter their nationality.

"Part of my role is moving people to understand what role they play in the bigger picture in society," Peralta-Nash says.

And about that monkey ... While Peralta-Nash and Boothe were in Peru, Boothe gave a presentation outside, on a basketball court with a metal roof.

"While I was presenting, a monkey ran through and grabbed part of my presentation and CD case," Boothe says. Four or five people went after it, eventually tethering the little troublemaker to a chair.

Boothe managed to finish her presentation, casting a wary eye on her visitor.

"I could see it out of the corner of my eye, jumping up and down," she laughs, shaking her head.