

BY KATHLEEN CRAVEN

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Innovative faculty set the pace for change at Boise State



hen Boise Junior College alumni visit their old stomping grounds, they find much that is familiar — strong academic programs, knowledgeable and caring professors, a vibrant arts scene and an administration dedicated to creating the best possible learning environ-

ment. But in place of the intimate junior college setting they once knew, they find a growing university replete with award-winning students and faculty, cutting-edge technology, groundbreaking research and innovative community partnerships.

In short, today's Boise State
University is building on past success
and setting the pace in a changing
academic world. Leading that charge
is a diverse array of faculty members
from longtime professors to those
fresh out of doctoral programs. They
are researchers, writers, performers,
lecturers and philosophers — more

than 950 full- and part-time teachers dedicated to keeping Boise State on the leading edge of higher education. One way they are pursuing excellence is by following university President Bob Kustra's mandate to become a "metropolitan research university of distinction." To do this he says, "we must be collaborative,

entrepreneurial and competitive." For many, this has served as a rallying cry to step away from the norm and approach education from a new angle.

"This is a different university now," says Pennie Seibert (below), psychology department chair, longtime professor and brain researcher. "I think it's

really exciting that we have a president who is offering the leadership we need to be a metropolitan research university. I think we need that to be more in touch with today's society."



Seibert's department has transformed the former Applied Cognition Research Institute into the Center for Applied Psychological Science, a name that better encompasses the many domains involved. One piece of this will be the Family Studies Research Initiative, which incorporates research in several departments including communication, health studies, kinesiology, nursing, psychology, counseling and social work.

This emphasis on applied research, Seibert says, allows for a more hands-on teaching approach and gives students a chance to see how the theories they are learning are actually used in the community. "What we're doing is trying to make what we teach so much more relevant to our students," she says.

This real-world approach to teaching is a cornerstone for many disciplines on campus. To help steer students in that direction, fourth-year choral music professor Giselle Wyers is part of a team that put together a questionnaire for students around the country. The purpose was to more clearly define who today's music students are and what issues they face.

"This helps us stay on the cutting edge in terms of how things are changing," Wyers says. At Boise State, that's especially important in light of the constant challenge of providing a

Teachers flock to weekends-only grad program

t's challenging enough to pursue a graduate degree when that's your sole focus. But when you're holding down a full-time job and evenings are crowded with home and work responsibilities, going back to school can seem an impossible dream.

Boise State University is addressing that issue with an innovative new approach aimed at educators — a weekends-only program launched last January by the Department of Literacy in the College of Education.

The program, originally offered entirely at the Canyon County Center in Nampa, enables students, most of whom are public school teachers, to earn a master of arts degree in

education with a reading emphasis in just two years.

The weekends-only program has been so successful that the College of Education has now expanded it to the university's main campus in Boise. In addition, the university is laying plans to offer the program to any community in the region that can guarantee a cohort of 20 gradu-

ate students, says Stan Steiner, chair of the Literacy Department.

"This new program makes it a lot easier for busy teachers to work toward a master's degree," says Steiner (below). "The weekends-only format is intensive, but it also has many advantages. Our students have been very enthusiastic."

Students in the program attend class on Friday evenings and Saturdays. Each course is taught a total of three weekends spread over two months, and the course content is identical or equivalent to that offered in traditional semester-long classes. While most students are pursuing master's degrees, the courses are open to all educators.

For teachers like Cathy Strough (BA, Education, '76), the weekends-only program has made working on a master's degree both doable and enjoyable. After spending a weekend engaged in coursework, Strough says she returned to her classroom at Fruitland Middle School with fresh ideas and renewed energy for her job.

"It's an excellent concept, and every professor I've had has been great," says Strough. "I've learned an amazing amount, and it's revolutionized my teaching."

For more information on the weekends-only program, contact Steiner at 208 426-3962 or ssteine@boisestate.edu.

- Janelle Brown

somewhat traditional choral experience to a fairly nontraditional student population.

In order to keep her students motivated, Wyers offers them a number of leadership and peer-to-peer teaching opportunities. Both of these approaches give students a taste of what awaits them as future music educators as well as providing a sense of ownership in their educations.

In the Master of Fine Arts writing program, which brings in accomplished poets and novelists from around the country to speak to students, an added bonus is that the literary guests spend time with students and get a feel for their work. When they leave, they take the good word back to their colleagues in other regions.

"It's another way the program is getting a reputation," says Martin Corless-Smith, an English professor who works with MFA students.

For dance and theater majors, this type of interaction with the professional community is old hat — although the recent growth in Boise's performing arts community has provided more and better opportunities for involvement than ever before.

"Theater has never been about operating in our own little cocoon. It's about operating in the center of a very active performing-arts environment," says theatre arts department chairman Richard Klautsch. "It's essential to keep that relationship going. Everyone is working off campus performing, doing research or working on publications."

Klautsch notes that these off-campus learning opportunities also promote President Kustra's call to strengthen and increase community partnerships. "We already have a close relationship with local professional arts groups," Klautsch says, "and the work of these professional companies would diminish as well without our participation."

Mirroring the growth of these com-

First residential college to open in fall

S tudents who want to move in on a business career can do so — literally — at Boise State. The university will open its first residential college this fall to 32 business students, giving them the chance to live and work with other business students and a resident faculty member.

The COBE (College of Business and Economics) Community will be located on the fourth floor of the new Keiser Hall just north of Taco Bell Arena.

Rob Anson, a professor of networking, operations and information systems who has been with Boise State for 14 years, will be the COBE Community's first faculty in residence. He and his wife Cindy (both at right), who works in the academic affairs office at Boise State, will move into a two-bedroom apartment in Keiser Hall in July.

Anson has taught semesters in Norway and in Vietnam and sees his move into the residence hall as a sabbatical of sorts, but close to home. He also views it as an opportunity to deepen relationships with students to help them grow intellectually and socially.

Bill Lathen, COBE dean, says that's the goal of the residential college — to enhance business

students' experiences in all areas.

Students will get involved with on- and off-campus recreation and cultural outings and community service opportunities, share ideas informally with regional business leaders and faculty, develop a supportive network of friends and future colleagues and plan and lead activities with other students and faculty.



The residential college adds a new dimension to student life at Boise State, says housing director Craig Thompson. The program was modeled after successful residential colleges at various universities around the country, including Northwestern, Western Washington and Yale. Plans are in the works for more residential colleges at Boise State.

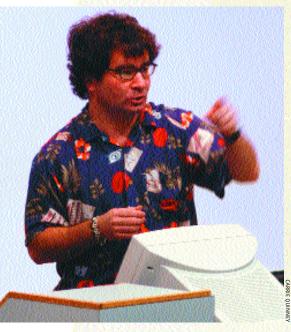
- Sherry Squires

munity partnerships is the growth of Boise State itself. The university's student body has morphed from the small, mostly traditional group of learners who studied at BJC 40 to 50 years ago to an 18,000-plus student body from across the Northwest and beyond, including more than 50 for-

eign countries. These students come with a new set of expectations, from high-tech teaching tools to a wide range of internship opportunities. And as the "MTV Generation," they won't settle for a lecture-only teaching style. Instead, they expect to be engaged in active learning.

Criminal Justice: A growing field of study

reated in 1968 in combination with the Sociology and Anthropology departments, the Department of Criminal Justice Administration has seen many



changes over the last 36 years in both its focus and its student body.

"Through the 1970s, criminal justice was seen as a 'cop shop," says criminal justice chair Craig Hemmens (above). "That may still be true at some small schools, but it's not really that accurate here since the 1980s. Today we have criminal justice professionals who have earned Ph.D.s."

Many agencies now require police officers to have at least two years of college, if not a degree, in addition to police academy training. Hemmens says a lot of majors view their study as part of a career path — either to a criminal justice job such as a police, corrections or parole officer — or to law school.

Due in part to the popularity of television shows like CSI, the department has evolved into one of the most popular on campus, with 500 declared majors.

With only eight faculty members, half of all classes are taught by adjuncts — police officers, lawyers, corrections officers and others. Having experts in the classroom with hands-on experience has been a plus for students, Hemmens says, noting that it provides a good mix of theory and practice.

But Hemmens isn't worried about being overwhelmed by all this popularity.

On the contrary, he says the department's growth has been positive, leading to new opportunities to learn. "The content of what we teach has changed, but not our basic courses," he says. "There have been tremendous advances in the field as far as technology and theories of criminology. We just know so much more about how to affect public policy."

— Kathleen Craven

"I've said before that what we do is 50 percent theatrics, but now I think it's more than 50 percent," says Russell Centanni, a recently retired biology professor who was named the 2000 Idaho Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation. But finding the right blend of activity and lectur-

ing without crossing over into "entertaining" can be tough.

Keeping students engaged in learning is a huge challenge, agrees chemistry professor Susan Shadle.

"Students can sit through a brilliant lecture and not learn anything from it," she says. "Particularly in

chemistry, until I sit down and do handson activities with them, they don't really process the information."

Shadle is working on adopting a new approach to teaching known as Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL), a learning style that includes hands-on activities and mini-lectures to help students stay focused and on track. Under this system, students work in self-managed teams on guided activities. Even before incorporating this system into her classes, Shadle encouraged student group activities since peers, having just mastered a concept themselves, can often explain things in a different light than can a professor.

But all this is not enough. Boise State students also need to learn to recognize and appreciate diversity — especially if they plan to pursue a career beyond Idaho.

"To prepare students for the future, you need to expose them to more than just math and science," says engineering

professor Said Ahmed-Zaid (right), adviser to the Muslim Student Association and winner of Hewlett Packard's human rights award (page 11). "They need creativity." That, he says, comes from getting to



know people who broaden your horizons and open your mind to a new way of looking at the world.

To encourage that, the university has instituted a new "diversity class" requirement for graduation. It also actively recruits students from other states and countries, thus diversifying the university's pool of students.

"The university has the potential to bring diversity to Boise," says Ahmed-Zaid. "But Boise is not going to change overnight."

Today's students also face pressures not commonly seen in earlier generations. "Students live warp-speed lives," says Tom Trusky, a poetry and book arts professor who in his 34 years at Boise State has three times been named Idaho Professor of the Year (page 10). "They have more demands on their time for pleasure, profit and education. They just have more opportunities available to them."

All these factors combine to create a different kind of learning environment. As Trusky puts it, "There is a corporate attitude where students feel they are the customer. My professors were like gods to me and I wouldn't approach them because I was just a worm. Students today want their professors to be more accessible than that. It's not bad for professors to be reminded that students are human and have rights and that we need to meet their expectations."

Trusky has learned to rely heavily on the Internet to both keep up on the latest in his field and to communicate with his students. Through e-mail, Trusky is accessible at all hours of the day, and students can not only pose questions, but also send scans and other attachments to clarify their concerns. The result, says Trusky, is a better relationship with students.

"This is still a commuter school. Before, students had to phone in or drive in to talk to a professor. Now they can do it all electronically," he says. "I spend a lot more time teaching with computers, and students are definitely getting a better deal."

And technology is opening other doors as well. A program called Vector Works will allow theatre design students to create and plot out intricate scenic and lighting designs for productions and may be useful in printing out musical compositions as well. For MFA students, new Web-based journals greatly increase publishing opportunities. Some even allow for user interaction, creating new venues for writers that go beyond the colddrill undergraduate literary magazine or even the critically acclaimed Ahsahta Press, Boise State's not-forprofit literary publisher.

But as important as all these elements are, it's really the ability to pro-

vide students with cutting-edge programs and information that keeps Boise State at the forefront of higher education.

"My content is what has changed the most over my 31 years as a professor here," says Centanni, a recognized expert on immunology issues, especially HIV (page 8). "My research has been to keep on the cutting edge of my subject." That means accessing current research and constantly reworking lecture notes and assignments to keep classes fresh and up-

Service-Learning expands students' horizons

once a seldom used path into the community, the Service-Learning program at Boise State has become a superhighway, affording students growing opportunities to link their coursework with their communities.

Service-Learning at its core takes

academic concepts outside of the classroom walls and into nonprofit agencies to help address community needs. From engineering to nursing, theater to psychology, any class can incorporate a Service-Learning component.

Several students in a history class this past year researched bullying and worked with the Idaho Human Rights Education Center to integrate the information into a cartoon poster to reach kids. The group then met with teachers, counselors and students at North Junior High in Boise to distribute the posters and share the message.

Nick Hopson, a social work student, partnered with Boise Parks and Recreation. Hopson mentored teens during Late Night Fridays, a weekend activity program at the Fort Boise Community Center. After he finished his formal commitment he chose to return as a volunteer.

More than 500 students completed their Service-Learning projects this past semester. After performing 15-40 hours of academically based community service, many students, like Hopson, became so engaged with their partner agencies that they stayed on.

Service-Learning's innovative teaching method also results in a greater interest in classroom discussion by



students, closer connections with their faculty and increased awareness of community issues. It also dovetails with Boise State's participation in The American Democracy Project, a commitment to encourage civic engagement and educate students to be tomorrow's citizens.

Boise State Service-Learning continues to evolve as the needs of its growing student population change, says program coordinator Kara Hartmann. She and other Service-Learning staff have gained national recognition for the use of technology in administering the program and for faculty development.

Boise State students amassed about 12,000 hours of community service this past semester.

— Sherry Squires

to-date.

"We need to make sure we're not just teaching to the test," Centanni says. "The real world is the test."

Another field that is benefiting from change is health sciences, where advances in the treatment of diseases and an expanded outlook on community-based care has created new opportunities for nurses and other health-care professionals. Providing clinical experiences outside the traditional hospital setting has been both challenging and rewarding for faculty members.

"We go where the people are, as long as there is a health issue," says nursing professor Vivian Schrader, who is charged with coordinating clinical experiences for students. "I look for places in the community like prisons, hospitals, care homes and places where we can do community assessments. We've had to think outside the box."

In the end, it's the faculty members themselves who keep Boise State moving ever forward. Their enthusiasm for their chosen profession allows students to achieve more than they could alone.

"My idea is that there should be a letter E in the grading system for energy, enthusiasm, excitement and expertise," says Centanni. "If the faculty can't convey enthusiasm, how will students achieve it?"



in nursing, engineering

BY PATRICIA PYKE

eff and Elizabeth Weese may seem like a typical professional couple balancing the responsibilities of two kids and two careers — one as a nurse and one as an electrical engineer.

However, says Jeff, "We kind of have a gender reversal. My wife is a female engineer and I am a male nurse. We like to joke about that." Both are minorities in their professions, with women representing about 10 percent of U.S. electrical engineers and men holding 5-7 percent of the nursing jobs.

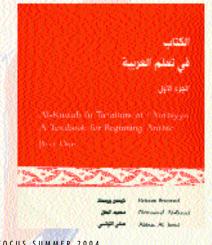
Boise State is working to boost those percentages so that more people, regardless of their gender, can practice professions that match their strengths and interests.

"Initially I didn't consider nursing as a career, particularly with the stigma of being a male nurse," says Weese, who earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from Boise State in 2003 and is now an ER nurse at St. Luke's Regional Medical Center in Meridian.

For him nursing was a second career. After he and Elizabeth earned degrees from Colorado State in 1993 — his in biology — they moved to Idaho when Elizabeth took a job with Hewlett Packard. Jeff worked for several years in emergency medical services. Seeking a health-care career with greater opportunities, he entered the BSU nursing program in 2000 with only a handful of other guys.

"I learned that nursing was much more dynamic than I thought," he says, citing the varied and extensive job opportunities in nursing — ER, critical care, pediatrics, anesthesia, teaching, neurotrauma, nurse practitioner, administration and more.

With rising demand in health-care professions, the lure of a good career is propelling men like Weese across the gender barrier and into a profession once considered feminine. In the class entering Boise State for the fall semester, 25 percent are men, up from 13



Boise State offers first Arabic language class

oise State University will offer its first Arabic language class (four credits) this fall through the U.S. Arabic Distance Learning Network, a consortium of regional universities committed to expanding opportunities for Arabic language and culture study and to promoting better relations with the Arab world.

Within two weeks of being announced, the class was full, says Teresa Boucher, chair of the Modern Languages and Literatures Department at Boise State.

"When you look beyond the needs of the local community and you look globally, this makes sense," Boucher says.

Students will receive instruction from a distinguished professor of Arabic at the University of Washington through interactive video technology. Abdul Mohamad, a native Arabic speaker originally from Iraq, will also teach portions of the class on the Boise State campus. Additionally, the class will provide students a segue to the rich cultural heritage

percent two years ago.

That's a remarkable number, considering some U.S. nursing programs have no men at all, says Eldon Walker, the only male faculty member in the Boise State nursing program and a critical care nurse at St. Luke's.

"I think the **Boise State** Department of Nursing is very open to men," says Walker (right). "There are a lot of men in the Treasure Valley community in the nursing field. I think there are good role models out there."

Walker believes men can do the job just as well as women, but in a different way.

For example, he says, male nurses express their caring more by "being competent with their skills and having a good knowledge base" than by openly showing emotion.

Having men in the classroom adds other viewpoints and ideas to class discussions, Walker says, which bene-

Cheryl Schrader, dean of Boise State's

College of Engineering, where the underrepresented gender is not men, but women.

"When you have a team working together to problem solve, the best solutions come from a diverse group of thinkers," says Schrader, an electrical

> engineer and one of only a handful of women engineering deans in the United States.

> To help foster diverse perspectives, the college is in the process of hiring three more women faculty, bringing the number of women professors to 10, out of 52 total. "We do have top-notch women faculty, leaders in their respective disciplines," says Schrader.

About 14 percent of Boise

State students major-

ing in traditional engineering fields and computer science are women. Certain programs seem to be enclaves for women, notably the materials science graduate program, which is approaching 50 percent women due in no small part to the mentoring efforts of department chair Amy Moll and her colof materials in all kinds of engineering, is particularly interesting to women, who tend to seek collaboration.

"It's not a trait that men don't have," says Moll, "but in general I think that women are more likely to be more collaborative, more likely to listen to other folks' ideas and pull in other disciplines, which is where a lot of engineering and research is going."

For example, says Moll, bioengineering applications of materials science are particularly appealing to young women.

"There are statistics, I think, that say that [women] are more driven by whether they are going to have an impact on society," she says.

Curriculum changes being implemented at Boise State are aimed at

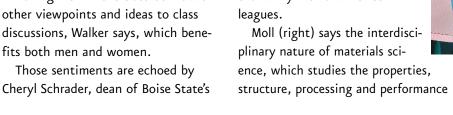
> helping students at all levels see the relevance of engineering and its vital contributions to the economy and society from manipulating biomolecules to fight disease, to creating

circuitry for better cell phones or designing alternative fuel-powered vehicles.

In an economy increasingly affected by globalization, creative and innovative contributions by engineers of both genders and all backgrounds is essential.

"The profession benefits because there is a great need for engineers to maintain national competitiveness," says Schrader. "This need will not be filled unless those traditionally underrepresented — women and ethnic minorities — enter the profession at a rate greater than ever before."





and history imbedded in the language.

Students who have completed a year at Boise State have the option to continue their Arabic studies through a semester or academic year of study abroad at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco.

Sabine Klahr, director for International Programs at Boise State, says Arabic language programs are rare nationally, largely because universities lack funding to hire an expert. "The network allows us to offer a quality program in a less expensive way," she says. "Our graduates need international experience, some knowledge of other cultures."

Boise State's participation in the network is coordinated by the International Programs office, Division of Extended Studies, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and Academic Technologies.

— Sherry Squires