

Globe-trotting professors 'Explain Idaho to the World, and the World to Idaho'



JOHN KELLY

History professor Todd Shallat delivered a lecture in Europe on the New Orleans levees.

BY KATHLEEN CRAVEN

Got a burning question about human resource management issues in Latvia, French-speaking writers in Mexico or Irish dramatists? Ever wonder about early burial practices in Guyana or how Eurasian cheatgrass made its way into your back yard?

For answers to these questions, check, respectively, with Boise State professors Gundars Kaupins, business management, Jason Herbeck, modern languages and literatures, Helen Lojek, English, Mark Plew, anthropology, and



CARRIE QUINNEY

Honors College director Greg Raymond travels the globe lecturing on world politics.

Steve Novak, biology. They are among the university's researchers who regularly travel to all corners of the globe in search of answers to these and other questions.

Outside of academic circles, such travel and culturally specific areas of research may seem trivial. But global travel opportunities not only provide faculty with a chance to advance their own research, they also allow them to act as ambassadors for the university and for Idaho.

"Abroad we explain Idaho to the world. At home, we explain the world to Idaho," says Todd Shallat, a history professor and director of the Center for Idaho History and Politics, who last fall delivered a lecture on the New Orleans levees at The Hague in the Netherlands. "Universities, our embassies, disseminate cultures and customs in a language that prepares our students for the global marketplaces. As a faculty, we pride ourselves in the university's ability to touch the remotest corners on Earth."

Honors College Director Greg Raymond agrees. His research in the fields of foreign policy and world politics has taken him throughout Europe, Asia and Latin America.

"Whenever I lecture abroad or consult with foreign officials, I enthusiastically tell the story of Boise State University and its Honors College," he says. "In an age of accelerating globalization, I have the opportunity to make connections that can serve Boise State students as well as the larger community."

Students also benefit when professors from outside the United States bring their cultures to Boise. Xabier Irujo, a specialist from the Basque country who grew up in Venezuela, shares his culture with Idaho students enrolled in the Basque studies program. "It is important to open our minds to other cultures, societies, economies and ways of living," he says. "I think that we can give all that to our students so they understand how important it is to travel in order to know ourselves."

Following is a brief sampling of Boise State faculty whose travels enrich their research and teaching.

- Music Department chairman and pianist Jim Cook has been to China three times to teach at the Shanghai Conservatory. In addition, he is a specialist on performance practice



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Music Department chair Jim Cook has toured Europe and taught at the Shanghai Conservatory.

styles and has toured Europe, performing chamber music and solo concerts in Paris, Munich and Vienna. He was also a featured artist at the International Haydn Festival in Fertod, Hungary.

Studying and teaching abroad, Cook says, helps us view our world as one diverse culture and allows us to appreciate the art and culture of other civilizations. "It makes for better understanding and



Ed McLuskie, a communication professor, recently taught in the Republic of Georgia as a Fulbright Scholar.

closer relations between people," he says. The downside is that broadening one's horizons can lead to impatience with those who view the world in a smaller compartment. "Perhaps individuals have to demonstrate a natural curiosity before they are able to expand their thinking and realm of experience," he says.

- Communication professor Ed McLuskie ("Prof's photos help apprehend would-be presidential assassin," *FOCUS*, Fall 2005) is a two-time Fulbright Scholar — to the Republic of Georgia and to Austria — who has also lectured at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. His expertise is in critical theory and the social philosophy of communication.

International experience, he said, is essential for the university, its faculty and its students to understand the big picture. "Our faculty and students aim also to connect with the world, as

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a cosmopolitan university whose own locale must become increasingly fluent in the give and take of international experience," he says. "Experience with other cultures on their turf is indispensable to that fluency."

- Nancy Napier, executive director of the Global Business Consortium ("The business of creativity," *FOCUS*,

Summer 2005), has taught or conducted research in Vietnam, Japan, Myanmar, Sweden, Germany, Austria and Mexico. She has also traveled to England, China, Ireland, Slovenia and the United Kingdom.

When teaching abroad, Napier says, it's important to try to

integrate local views with North American perspectives in order to increase understanding and further partnerships. In addition, her work in Vietnam reminded her that as Westerners, we often forget that others have valuable knowledge and experiences to share.

"I realized how often the 'learners' can teach the 'experts,'" she says. "The Vietnamese have knowledge and skills that were useful to those of us who worked with them — from negotiation skills to entrepreneurial attitudes to knowing how to deal gracefully with turmoil and change."

- Anthropologist John Ziker studies land and resource use, demography, and cosmology among the Dolgan and Nganasan in the western Taimyr region of Siberia. Specifically, his research examines the dynamics of indigenous households and their relationship with the environment.

"Boise State is promoting internationalization, meant to educate competent and culturally sensitive citizens as active participants in society," he says. "My travel to Siberia provides students an international and cross-cultural perspective when pursuing degrees at Boise State. [In addition] my research adds to understandings of cooperation, global interdependence, human rights, and diverse cultural, social, political and economic systems in the Arctic."

BOISE STATE RECEIVES \$500,000 FOR WIND ENERGY RESEARCH

Boise State is the recipient of a \$500,000 appropriation from the U.S. Department of Energy to fund wind energy research in Idaho. The funds will enable the university to develop new technologies aimed at reducing the costs of producing electricity on wind farms and at distributed locations.

Boise State will partner with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and other public and private agencies on the Wind Energy Research Laboratory.

The focal point will be the development of wind turbines that would harness the area's low-velocity winds for distributed power systems.

TWO NEW DOCTORAL PROGRAMS, EXECUTIVE MBA APPROVED

At its February meeting, the State Board of Education unanimously approved Boise State's new doctoral program in geosciences and a new Executive MBA program.

The new Ph.D. is the fourth doctoral program to be offered at Boise State, and the second to be approved by the State Board this academic year. In December, the State Board approved a Ph.D. in electrical and computer engineering.

Students in the electrical and computer engineering Ph.D. program were admitted this semester. The university will admit the first students to the geosciences Ph.D. program in fall 2006 while the new Executive MBA program is now accepting applications from potential students.

BOISE STATE JOINS FAA PROJECT

Boise State recently dedicated a new FAA Center of Excellence for Airliner Cabin Environment Research.

BSU joins Harvard, Auburn, Purdue, UC Berkeley and two other universities and a national lab on the center to study cabin air quality and conduct an assessment of chemical and biological threats in airliners.

The U.S. Department of Transportation established the center last year, with Auburn University as the lead institution.

BSU's part of the project involves the development of sensors and instrumentation to monitor air quality and detect contaminants.