Teaching Troops Culture
Anthropology professor accepts new Army post

Ron Holt hopes to help the Army be all it can be in a newly created advisory position.

The WSU anthropology professor is one of eight people nationwide hired to spend the next two years working with military educators to help bridge cultural differences and misunderstandings between citizens and the military.

“Anthropology meets technology and is a great fit for the military,” Holt said. “We understand the military from a cultural perspective. We can help bridge cultural differences and misunderstandings.”

Holt said he received outstanding support from his department chair, department head, and the provost as he accepted the two-year assignment at Fort Benning which serves a key role in the war on terror. He plans to draw on his classroom experiences as a professor as well as his stint as the first director of the WSU Honors Program to guide him in his work.

His goal is to create a strategy to heighten language learning levels and have teaching materials, websites, guest lectures and library materials in place to support the Army’s commitment to cultural awareness as a tool to maintain peace.

Holt said HTTs are deployed now more than ever, and believes this latest endeavor will show how social scientists can be a powerful tool for peacekeeping.

“After two years, I would like young and senior officers to have a deeper appreciation of how culture works,” Holt said. “I would hope they could go anywhere in the world and relate to situations more empathetically.”

The Ogden School District has given WSU performing arts professor John Armstrong the Empowering Educational Partnerships award for donating hundreds of hours during the summer to repair district orchestra instruments. Because of his efforts, 100 elementary students will have the opportunity to learn an instrument this year.

Victoria Ramirez, professor of English and director of the creative writing emphasis program, performed with Stephanie Heath, recruiter for the Moyes College of Education, in a one-act play, Tristram Shandy, Gentleman. In the Stewart Library’s Hetzel-Hoellein room, the two also performed at the Ogden and in the Lake Superior Performance Festival X at Lake Superior State College. Ramirez adapted the work based on Lawrence Sterne’s 18th century novel. The play, “Tristram Shandy,” depicts the life and adventures of Tristram Shandy, a “character invented by a character.”

Erik Stern, Department of Performing Arts, performed and presented with colleagues at two European conferences this past summer. The first performance, the Secret Life of Spoons, was for Bridges 2010, an international conference dedicated to the connections between mathematics and the arts, held in Hungary. The second performance was in Paris for the workshop Constructionism 2010 devoted to educational methods that involve “making and doing.”

Physics professor John Armstrong and recent graduate Rhiett Zollinger published “Additional planets in the habitable zone of Gliese 876d” in April 2009 edition of the Astronomy and Astrophysics Journal. Their research conclusions were just confirmed by a National Science Foundation-funded project.

Performing arts professor Karen Brookins will make her solo debut with the Utah Symphony in December. Conductor Jerry Steinchen asked her to perform as part of Celebrating the Holidays with Jerry and the Polar Express. She will also perform in the Ogden and in the Lake Superior Performance Festival X at Lake Superior State College. Her baton is decorated with a new multimedia equipment for the Dee Events Center.

The 2010-11 vaccine will protect against three different types of viruses: A(H1N1), B, and H1N1. In cooperation with the public health department, the university has provided on-campus vaccinations for faculty, staff and students.

According to the CDC, the flu season won’t peak until January or February this year and could continue into May. At the university, it is encouraged for faculty and staff to set an example and stay home if they are sick.

The Sheraton Hotel in downtown Washington, D.C. is going to determine whether or not we are successful. As part of an advisory group, he said, “I hope to help the Army be all it can be in a newly created advisory position.”

“Often younger people are the target of viruses that become pandemic,” said Valerie Goodell, committee member and director of the master’s program in nursing. “These types of viruses also cause more severe illness among young people. When we have a large number of students who are thrown together in classrooms, activities and hallways, the proximity increases the risk that they will spread the disease.”

The best way to prevent illness in the first place is to get a flu shot. This year the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a shot for everyone over the age of 6 months, which is a new and expanded group. In February, 2010, CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted in favor of “universal” influenza vaccination in the United States to protect as many people as possible against the flu, according to the CDC website.

“Professors who allowed students to stay home played a key role in keeping the flu from getting out of hand last year.” — Mike Davies, University Police Lieutenant

“Now when fans are on the Kiss-Cam, everyone will see them instantly on the screen,” said Robb Alexander, development director. “That’s always a fan favorite; they love it.”

“Now when fans are on the Kiss-Cam, everyone will see them instantly on the screen” — Robb Alexander, Development Director

The men’s and women’s basketball seasons tipped off with the Purple and White game which also debuted new multimedia equipment for the Dee Events Center.

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“Lights, Camera, Action”

Center-court action, commencement and concerts will all look better on the new Dee Events Center integrated video and scoring system, which was installed just in time for the annual Purple and White game at the end of October.

“We have been in need of something that produces a much better fan environment,” said Jerry Graybeal, assistant vice president for administrative services. “It’s so much more specta- tor friendly; it’s going to blow people away.”

Four big screens, each 6 feet high and 8 feet wide and hung in the center of the arena, will capture all the action on the floor and in the stands for live viewing and instant replays.

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The H1N1 virus drew a great deal of attention last year, and even though talk of the flu has died down, the germs have not, so Weber State’s pandemic planning committee wants to make sure the campus can react effectively in the event of a flu outbreak.

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“The Stewart Education Foundation trustees were very excited about the proposal,” Alexander said. “They are huge fans and come to all the games, and they want it to be the best experience possible.”

In addition to the screens, spectators will enjoy many other improvements. A digital LED ring will circle the top of the video screens to allow for sponsors and crowd animation messages.
New Spalding baskets, which are the same baskets used by the NBA, were installed with LED shot-clock lighting around the perimeter of the backboards, when the shot clock goes off, the whole backboard it illuminates. A score table with LED lighting that is 40 feet wide and 3 feet high will rotate the names of sponsors, display real-time statistics and promote upcoming events. The screen is so bright that when passageways close, so does the lighting around the area. Although spectators at major sporting events have come to expect colorful illumination, big screens and instant replays, the technology is new to arenas in the Big Sky Conference. WSU will have to determine what the conference will allow as far as lighting and replays. For example the new system has the ability to show instant replays from three different angles; however, in football the Big Sky dictates only one replay cannot be broadcast in slow motion.

“We’ve raised the bar in the Big Sky. I mean no other school is going to be able to compete,” said Alan Ferrin, media designer. “We’re the only ones doing this. We have some challenges, but they’re good challenges to have. We are blazing new trails.”

Under Ferrin’s direction, a team of 12 electronic media students from the Department of Communication will run the cameras and produce the video segments. “One of the voids in electronic media has been live-event production,” Ferrin said. “The market for that is growing and growing. Our ability to offer that opportunity for students is exciting.”

The director of inter-collegiate athletics, Jerry Bovee, said the new trails “will be eye-catching. high-definition system will attract top-notch recruits as well as advertisers.

“This is an exciting time for Weber State,” Bovee said. “The new equipment will allow Weber State not only to enhance the experience from an entertainment and recruiting standpoint, but it will also assist our efforts to raise funds with additional marketing opportunities.”

The new system has been a collaborative effort between administration, athletics, faculty in the communication department and staff from the Dee Events Center, development, facilities management and multimedia services. Graybeal said fans will be the real winners of this team effort. “The multimedia opportunities will create an unbelieveable game experience, there’s no doubt,” he said. “It is going to be mind boggling.”

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Chrissy Leavitt takes to the court during October’s Purple and White game.

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CAMPUS NEWS BRIEFS

Two Groups Bridging Gender Divide in Science

Only 20 percent of all medical school applicants from Utah are women — far below the national average.

Associate zoology professor Bard Taekesen joined with physicians at the Family Medicine residency program at McKay-Dee Hospital Center to sponsor the second annual “Girls Exploring Medicine” workshop to encourage women in medicine.

To make science less intimidating, the College of Science will offer eight free courses titled “Science Moms.” Created by Amyla Proctor, assistant director of the Office of the Ovit Planetarium, the program is a chance for moms to get together in a friendly environment and learn more about science. Participants will meet one Saturday per month from November to June. Each class will focus on a different area of science, from botany to zoology. By participating in activities such as growing microorganisms, looking at DNA and learning how home steep tests work, moms can then show their children the fun and importance of science.

Music Association Recognizes Outstanding Work

The Utah Music Teachers Association (UMTA) recently honored performing arts professor Yu-Jane Yang with its 2010 Legacy Award.

The annual award is the highest honor given by the organization and recognizes a member who has created a great legacy to the music community not only through exemplary teaching and mentoring but also with outstanding professional accomplishment and exceptional service to the profession. UMTA has more than 600 members, including music teachers in the public schools, studio teachers and university professors.

Dance TranscendingSound

The National Dance Education Organization selected dance professor Amanda Sorensen and dance adjunct Alyssia Woodruff to present at its national conference. The presentation, titled “Dance and the Deaf Culture,” covered information revealed during a yearlong investigation of dance in conjunction with WSU Moving Company dancers and the Utah School for the Deaf and Blind’s Deaf Education Program.

Conference participants learned about Moving Company as a model for community-based learning and how the integration of dance and American Sign Language can build bridges between deaf and hearing communities.

Goddard School Recognized Nationally

For the fourth consecutive year, Weber State University’s John B. Goddard School of Business & Economics was included in the Princeton Review’s “Best 300 Business Schools” publication.

The New York-based education services company has selected the Goddard School’s Master of Business Administration program for inclusion in the 2011 edition of its book, which is now available through booksellers throughout the United States.

The Goddard School debuted in the 2008 edition of the Princeton Review. According to the review, inclusion in the book is based on several criteria such as regard for the schools’ academic programs and other offerings, institutional data collected about the schools, and opinions of students attending the schools.

Welcome to WSU

On the Move/Promoted

Bradley Beyer, Boobooles; Thomas Bell, Continuing Education; Arnel Bedoya, Career Services; Leroy Ellis, Continuing Education; Morgan Finder, Student Success Center; Mark Geary, Office of Marketing and Communications; Rachel Karp, Child and Family Studies; Guy King, Facilities Management; Brian Nielsen, Facilities Management; Rachel Smith, Human Resources; Sue Thompson, Facilities Management; Randal Wilson, Veterans Upward Bound.

Retired

Linda Taylor, Browning Center.

Source: Board of Trustees reports, September-October 2010

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