

e n g a g i n g i n t e r n a t i o n a l e x c h a n g e



Above: America's ambassador to France, Craig R. Stapleton, center, opened his home to teacher-interns.



Right: French scholars pose with Uncle Sam while here in America.

French-American Teacher Exchange

Susan Colville-Hall, professor (CIS), and Suzanne MacDonald and Sandra Spickard Prettyman, associate professors (EFL), received a grant from the U.S. Department of State to develop a program that provides teacher interns in France and preservice teachers in America with the opportunity to travel and teach in another culture. In collaboration with the Franco-American Commission for Educational Exchange (Fulbright Commission) and the French Ministry of Education, the program promotes exchanges that allow participants to learn linguistically, culturally and educationally about pedagogy from a different perspective.

During the first three weeks of the three-month exchange, participants take part in both seminar and practicum components. During the seminar, participants attend a daily lecture and discussion series examining history, language, culture, politics and educational topics. In the practicum, participants work with mentor teachers and take on the responsibility of instructing and managing two classes per day. French participants in the U.S. are encouraged to engage in school activities and experience the overall community aspect inherent in our schools. They also are invited to exchange ideas about best practices in a colloquium with University faculty and area educational professionals.

In January 2008, the second group of visiting teacher interns arrived in Akron from such cities as Versailles, Paris, Bordeaux and Reims. They were immediately housed in the University's new Quaker Square Inn while they attended the on-campus portion of the program. The scholars were subsequently placed with American host families in the school districts where they would teach classes in social studies, physics-chemistry or physical education. Participating districts included Revere, Wadsworth, Springfield, Hoban, Beachwood, Kent, Green, Tallmadge, Cuyahoga Falls, Nardonina, Stow-Munroe Falls and Akron.

Through this exchange, the Franco-American Teachers-in-Training Institute (FATITI) is able to provide preservice candidates at the University with the opportunity to teach in France for a three-month period. Candidates interact with

teachers and other school personnel, work with students and live in a new culture.

The second group of Americans will travel to France in fall 2008.

"The opportunity to help coordinate this exchange has been a wonderful experience, especially the opportunities to collaborate internationally and locally," says **Tim Sisson**, grant coordinator.

"The success of the program would not have been possible without the significant efforts of Akron International Friendship (AIF), and its director, **Michelle Wilson**, adds Sisson. "AIF has been instrumental in securing and communicating with host families, arranging meetings with local and state officials such as Akron Mayor **Donald Plusquellic**, and planning numerous cultural events showcasing the city of Akron and the surrounding area of Northeast Ohio."

Learn more: <http://www.uakron.edu/colleges/educ/fatiti/index.php>

Building Cultural Bridges Between Japan and the U.S.

Michiko Pence, senior lecturer in Curricular and Instructional Studies, and **Huey-li Li**, professor in Educational Foundations and Leadership, co-hosted "Building Cultural Bridges" in November 2007. The interactive one-day workshop was designed to raise educators' awareness of Japanese Americans' experiences of internment and their commitment to building cultural bridges between Japan and the U.S.

Sponsored by the Japan Foundation, the program featured instructors **Ed Ezaki**, **Sadie Yamane**, **Beverly Haru Kerecman** and **Roy Ebihara**, all members of the Japanese American Citizen League Cleveland Chapter. Nineteen educators from regional K-12 schools and community colleges attended the workshop to develop lesson plans concerning Japanese Americans' wartime experiences and their current efforts to preserve their cultural heritage and build cultural bridges between Japan and the U.S.

Based on the success of the workshop, the college has applied and has received a grant from the Ohio Humanities Council to help fund the five-day "Ohio's Japanese Americans: Immigration, Internment and Reconciliation" Summer Institute 2008 for a cohort of 20 teachers in Ohio. The institute is designed to create a learning community for promoting democratic multicultural civic and citizenship education.



A Japanese dance is demonstrated in traditional attire.

UA National Board Certified Teacher Invited to Study Egyptian Education System

Barbara Cockroft was one of 30 National Board Certified Teachers from across America invited to participate in a forum with Egyptian educators in Cairo. The forum, sponsored by People-to-People International, was held in late 2007 to promote understanding of Egypt's educational system and its full-scale renovation, including the strong emphasis on science and technology.

Cockroft participated in UA's National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Support cohort, which provides mentoring to candidates pursuing the rigorous and prestigious board certification, and was certified in 2006.

A language arts teacher at Lake Middle School for her entire career, Cockroft describes her experience as life changing.

"The Egyptian people were absolutely so hospitable and accommodating. The children were so loving. They wanted to just hang out with us and touch us. It was eye-opening and humbling to be a part of a society that holds its teachers in the highest regard.

"They work for modest pay, but they are revered and respected to the highest degree, Cockroft continues. "There are no discipline problems. The students are there to learn, even though there may be as many as 50 students in one class. I came away having a new appreciation for our community and our excellent schools, its teachers, administration and support staff.

"I am appreciative for the opportunity to have represented Ohio and Lake Middle School on the other side of the world," adds Cockroft.

Cockroft is currently supervising UA student teacher, **Matt Stanley**.



Lake Middle School teacher Barb Cockroft.