Building educational bridges with Ethiopian universities

In late April, Dean Tlahuan Adera led a team of New Mexico State University researchers to his native country, Ethiopia. Joining Adera were Ricardo Jacquez, dean of the College of Engineering; Kathleen Hales, professor in the Southern New Mexico Residency Program; Sam Fernald, professor of animal and range sciences; and Frank Ward, professor of agricultural economics and agricultural business.

Sam Fernald, Ricardo Jacquez, Tlahuan Adera, Kathleen Hales and Frank Ward.

The purpose of the trip was to form educational partnerships inside and outside of Ethiopia; form research partnerships in water resources, water management and water and health issues; and network with Ethiopian university leaders and other dignitaries to build educational relationships between NMSU and Ethiopia. Adera said the visit helped meet one of NMSU’s strategic success goals in its “Building the Vision” blueprint for the future, which is to “focus our international reach to prepare students for a global society and expand our land-grant teaching and research missions.”

World Congress of Public Health

Adera presented at the 13th World Congress of Public Health in Addis Ababa and the NMSU team networked with many of the 2,500 to 3,000 international health researchers who attended. His topic covered the importance of building-survey research centers in developing countries and how these centers benefit researchers and communities. For example, a country that wants to evaluate the effectiveness of its diabetes prevention program could use survey research to gather data and find what works or does not work. Changes could then be instituted to help improve the program. Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi gave the keynote address and Minister of Health Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus also attended.

Needs of Ethiopian universities

The NMSU team then visited Debre Birhan University, Addis Ababa University, Bahir Dar University and Metal Engineering Corp., a major government entity through which nearly half of Ethiopia’s GDP passes. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) were signed at each juncture in an effort to initiate faculty and student exchanges and research collaborations between the Ethiopian universities and NMSU. The shortage of faculty, especially in the science, technology, engineering, health and math (STEHM) fields, was glaring in Ethiopia. The government is pushing the universities to take in more students and research collaborations between the Ethiopian universities and NMSU. The shortage of faculty, especially in the science, technology, engineering, health and math (STEHM) fields, was glaring in Ethiopia. The government is pushing the universities to take in more students and incorporate more programs,” Adera said. The Ethiopian government knows an educated workforce is critical to economic development and without one there can be no foreign investment. The country may be landlocked, but that’s not preventing it from successful commerce. Furthermore, by International Monetary Fund and World Bank estimates, Adera said the gross domestic product is growing in Ethiopia. Africa has six of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world and Ethiopia is one of them.

Dams, Ethiopia has quadrupled the amount of energy it is producing and could sell this power to Kenya, the Sudan and Djibouti. Adera said dams will be a boon to Ethiopia’s economy as long as the dams are constructed correctly, the effects of the dams on the population and environment are considered and possible adverse consequences are addressed.

Even though Ethiopia still has its poor and its hungry, the nation’s economy continues to grow,” Adera said. “So it’s mutually beneficial for NMSU to enter the African market and say, ‘We’re here, we can help you and we can share a mutually beneficial relationship.’ The opportunities are there and Americans are welcomed with outstretched arms.”
Donor Spotlight: GFWC Progress Club

The GFWC Progress Club of Las Cruces recently endowed its scholarship in the College of Health and Social Services’ School of Nursing. GFWC President Mary Tucker said the establishment of the fund helps to guarantee that Progress Club “will establish a permanent memorial to the educational promise we have made to the community.

“I truly believe education is the only way we can truly affect the future,” she said.

Progress Club officer, Treasurer Jo Banks, said when the Club realized it would have the finances to support a second scholarship, someone suggested the scholarship be in nursing.

“Everyone felt this would help answer the ever-growing need of students entering the nursing profession,” Banks said.

“Without a doubt, I cannot believe what this group of women can accomplish,” she said.

The fellowship I have found in the Club gives others an outlet for contribution and they will hopefully establish of a GFWC Progress Club in the future. Mary would not want a memorial service or obituaries and panchos for needy children or stitching blankets or quilts for the Children’s Crisis Center,” Higbie said.

The fellowship I have found in the Club has been an unexpected bonus as I count each of the members among my friends.”

Nursing program receives $810,000 grant, scholarships to support students

The Health Resources and Services Administration is the “Enhancing Capacity for Aging on the Border” project, through this project the School of Nursing will receive $110,000 for geriatric education.

NMSU was also selected as a grant recipient of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program. During the 2012-2013 academic year, NMSU will receive $50,000 to support students in the accelerated “Roadrunner” program who are pursuing a second career in nursing. These students are traditionally underrepresented.

Achievements, acknowledgements and honors

Dean Adera has accepted an appointment to the Paso del Norte Health Foundation Board of Directors.

Donna Wagner, associate dean for academic affairs and a veteran gerontologist, conducted the 2012 study, “Best Practices in Workplace ElderCare,” for the National Alliance for Caregiving. The study reviews the past 25 years since employer support programs for elder caregivers were begun, and identifies current trends and innovations in workplace practices and policies. The study includes a diverse sample of 17 employers representing.

A gift of art from the heart

“Tough but fair.”

That’s how former CHSS Dean Virginia Higbie described her former associate dean for academics, longtime nursing instructor and friend Mary Simmons, who died on March 8, 2012.

“Mary would not accept anything less than the very best from her students or others.”

“They did things quietly and from a very deep commitment to service and she wanted her students to follow that example.”

Simmons joined the NMSU nursing faculty in 1978 and served as a nursing professor until her retirement in 2002.

When she retired, she continued her travels throughout the world, which took her to Europe, Asia and the Caribbean.

In 2008, when Higbie was asked to come out of retirement and serve as interim dean of the college for the second half of the year, she immediately knew who she wanted as her interim associate dean for academics.

“Serving in an upper echelon position requires making tough decisions and you’re not always going to please people with your decisions, but I wanted Mary in that position,” Higbie said.

And then there was the gentleman side of Simmons who was often seen knitting mittens and ranches for needy children or stitching blankets or quilts for the Children’s Crisis Center.

In October 2011, Simmons learned that her skin cancer was spreading. As her condition worsened, she told Higbie she did not want a memorial service or obituary.

Mary would not accept anything less than the very best from her students or others.”

Higbie said Simmons “in her typical organized fashion” documented her final wishes, donating her collection of art from around the world to the College of Health and Social Services.

“she did not want to be recognized for her donation but simply wanted others to find the same peace and joy in the paintings that she had enjoyed,” Higbie said.

Simmons leaves behind a legacy and fond memories for everyone who knew her.

New faculty join CHSS

Three new professors have joined our college and we are excited to have them here!

Leedy earned her doctorate in psychology at Tulane University in 1980. She has taught graduate level courses in many different areas, including human behavior and the social environment, psychopharmacology for clinical social work practice, community and organizational practice, differential diagnosis, clinical assessment and diagnosis, biological bases of mental disorders, and the biology of behavior for social workers.

Gurrola was awarded her doctorate in education in 2009 from Arizona State University. Some of her teaching interests include social policy and social justice, human behavior in the social environment, community practice and asset building and economic environment in minority populations.

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Joining the Department of Public Health Sciences is Joseph Gladstone, who has a doctorate in business administration from the NMSU and a Master of Public Health degree in health education and promotion from the University of Arizona. His research integrates management theory with Native American philosophy to inquire into understanding tribal and federal relationships and how their relationships influence organization efficiency. Gladstone said his Native American heritage and experience managing tribal health promotion programs inspired him to explore the little-studied nature of management values and practices within American Indian organizations.

We welcome Leedy, Gurrola and Gladstone to the College of Health and Social Services and look forward to their contributions!"