

## GLOBAL INITIATIVES



*Betsy Zeller is director of the Office of Global Initiatives.*

To ensure that Metro State goes beyond study-abroad programs for students to developing international partnerships and exchanges with universities around the world, President Stephen Jordan launched the Office of Global Initiatives in April. Its goal is to encourage "not only educational travel abroad but also an increased focus on acquiring the full range of skills workers and citizens need in today's interconnected world," Jordan says.

Building upon the substantial number of existing international programs at the College and the connections many professors already have with other countries, the Office of Global Initiatives will provide a central clearinghouse for international exchange opportunities.

### FOUR CHINA TRIPS IN TWO MONTHS

Within weeks of opening the global initiatives office, Director Betsy Zeller was literally off and running to China twice in the early summer to develop collaborative projects with Chinese universities.

The first trip, with a seven-faculty-member group led by President Jordan, yielded a formalized sister-school relationship with a university in Yunnan and a plan to develop cooperative language programs with universities in Chengdu.

"Chinese is the native language of 1.3 billion people," Zeller says. "While 200 million Chinese schoolchildren are studying English, it's estimated that no more than 50,000 U.S. students are studying Chinese."

So Zeller is working with the university in Yunnan to develop a "Confucius Institute" at Metro State to teach Chinese language courses, train instructors, promote research on contemporary China and offer cross-cultural opportunities. The College offered its first Chinese language course this fall; 20 current Metro State students and community members enrolled.

Other Metro State groups that visited China this summer include students and professors with Brand Spankin New, the student-run e-commerce Web site ([www.brandspankinnew.org](http://www.brandspankinnew.org)), and two professors who were invited to attend an international nursing conference.

Beyond China, Metro State is also looking toward partnerships in Russia, the Middle East and North Africa. This summer found Economics Professor Mohammed Akacem pursuing opportunities for international exchange with faculty from universities in southern Algeria. Known for his expertise on Middle East politics and economics, Akacem says, "In an increasingly global economy, it's absolutely important to share our expertise and to consider outside perspectives."



*(l to r) Professors Marilyn Hetzel and LiYing Li, President Stephen and Mrs. Ruth Jordan, a tour guide, Professor Rudi Garcia, Director Betsy Zeller, Professor Lisa Ortiz, a tour guide and Professor Donald Chang.*



*A giant panda at Cheng Du's Giant Panda Research and Breeding Base.*



*President Stephen Jordan received a special banner from a university official.*



*Dujiang National Park.*



*Professors LiYing Li and Marilyn Hetzel light ceremonial incense.*

BSN mentioned

