

## HOW CAN WE FOSTER A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE?



### MOLECULAR SECRETS HOLD HOPE FOR A HUNGRY WORLD IN A RICE PADDY SOMEWHERE IN ASIA, AFRICA OR SOUTH AMERICA, A FARMER PLANTS HIS CROPS, HOPING FOR A BOUNTIFUL

yield but knowing all or part may be lost to disease, floods and environmental stresses.

Each year, half of the world's potential rice crop is lost to diseases, and flash flooding causes more than \$1 billion in rice losses. For 70 million of the world's poorest people who depend on rice, it is a life or death issue.

UC Davis researchers Pamela Ronald and Eduardo Blumwald are working with colleagues internationally to unravel the molecular secrets of rice, hoping to identify genes that will lead to new varieties that can resist diseases, endure flash floods and thrive despite harsh environmental conditions.

Ronald recently helped identify a gene that enables rice to grow and produce grain even after being completely submerged by floodwaters. Meanwhile Blumwald is searching for genes that will help rice and other plants thrive despite salty soils and irrigation water. He hopes that, one day, salt-tolerant rice will flourish on millions of acres of once unproductive lands.

For a hungry world, time is of the essence. By 2015 the world will need to be producing an additional 50 million tons of rice annually. Researchers like Blumwald and Ronald are committed to meeting that goal.



PAMELA RONALD IS WORKING TO UNRAVEL THE MOLECULAR SECRETS OF RICE.



# LIFELINES OF UNDERSTANDING

## CAN PERSONAL COMMITMENT AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE HELP TO IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES?

### DEAN NICOLE WOOLSEY BIGGART OF UC DAVIS'

Graduate School of Management traveled to Iran this year to visit Sharif University of Technology in Tehran. Biggart joined alumnus Reza Abbaszadeh—a Sacramento dentist and business leader—to see what educational links they could develop between the Graduate School of Management and Iran's most prestigious university.

Together, they were furthering a relationship first forged by Chancellor Larry Vanderhoef, who in April 2004 led the first official U.S. university delegation allowed to visit Iran since the revolution in 1979.

Using scholarship funding donated by Abbaszadeh, Biggart and Abbaszadeh offered to bring M.B.A. students from Sharif University to the Graduate School of Management for a quarter this spring, believing that the interaction can

inspire an understanding between the nations that is unattainable on the international diplomatic stage.

While they hold no illusions about being able to solve international disputes, Biggart and Abbaszadeh are convinced that the student exchange will keep alive a lifeline of understanding between two countries in crisis.

"This exchange provides us with an opportunity to break through the stereotyping and posturing that occur between Iran and the United States," Biggart said. "I believe the personal commitment of Reza through his scholarships plus the institutional bonds between the universities can create relationships that will have positive, long-term resonance."



NICOLE BIGGART (RIGHT) LEARNED FROM IRANIAN STUDENTS ELHAM MOORE (MIDDLE) AND AZIN ARYA ON HER RECENT TRIP TO IRAN.



MUNIRA AL SHEHHI (LEFT) AND MARYAM IRAJ YASSIR ARE PROVIDING FIRST-TIME INSTRUCTION IN ARABIC AND HINDI/URDU.

# OLD LANGUAGES, NEW IDEAS

## MUNIRA AL SHEHHI OF OMAN AND MARYAM IRAJ YASSIR OF PAKISTAN HAVE ARRIVED AT UC DAVIS KNOWING THAT

they are here on a mission to help transform UC Davis students.

Hailing from two geopolitical hotspots, the Middle East and South Asia, Al Shehhi and Yassir are spending a year as Fulbright foreign language teaching assistants. Their job is to help provide first-time instruction in Arabic and Hindi/Urdu for the two-year-old Middle East/South Asia Studies Program.

But these two women will also be living at the Colleges at La Rue, an undergraduate community that emphasizes cross-cultural exchange and leadership. They will be sharing tea, ideas and friendship with students who may have never met a Muslim before.

"The objective of a teacher is to accustom the students with other cultures apart from his own," Yassir says.

The two graduate students' arrival is part of the campus internationalization initiative, which includes a new emphasis on Middle East and South Asia studies.

"It's absolutely essential, especially now, for universities to create deeper understanding about the role of the U.S. in the world, as well as knowledge of diverse perspectives, languages and religions," says Nicole Ranganath, director of international initiatives on campus.

"That is why we brought Munira and Maryam here—to help us build a stronger international bridge."