

Grant to link SCSU, Moldova

ST. CLOUD Times | 1B

By Michelle Tan
Times staff writer

A \$250,000 grant to St. Cloud State University's college of education will help the school form a relationship with a university in Moldova.



Gary Schnellert

Program will help establish technology link

The United States Information Agency grant comes from the State Department's

Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs and is the first the university has received from the organization.

It will help link St. Cloud State with Balts Alecu Russo State University in Moldova. The school has about 20,000 students.

"This is a faculty exchange program," said Gary Schnellert, associate professor and chairman of leader-



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ship and educational administration at St. Cloud State.

Joane McKay, dean of the college of education, said the program supports the college's goals.

"Ultimately, we want to target certain areas of the world where we can have this kind of relationship," McKay said. "I've always said the world is big enough for all of us, we just

See GRANT, 8B ▶

From Page 1B

Grant

need to learn how to work together; and this is a beginning." The program will focus on curriculum revitalization, graduate faculty development and distance education.

"Their curriculum is predominantly Sovietlike, and they're interested in other styles," Schnellert said. "They don't have post-graduate courses in specific areas. We also want to establish a technology link with them."

Making the trip

This three-year project took effect Sept. 5, and the first trip to Moldova will be Oct. 19 by four St. Cloud State faculty members. The members will determine the needs and areas of interest for the project.

"These are four outstanding professors, all who have previous experience in international programs," McKay said.

Pamm Minden, director of research for the college of education, Paula Bradfield-Kreider, associate professor of middle and high school education, Maxine Bauermeister, assistant professor of child and family studies, and Schnellert form the initial team.

"I think we were drawn to each other because of our international travel experiences," Bradfield-Kreider said. "They are flexible folks, with a good sense of humor and good heart for people. And they're pretty savvy about traveling so I feel good about traveling with them."

Plamen Miltenoff, an assistant professor and special projects librarian at St. Cloud State who

is from Bulgaria, will assist the team in its preparations for the four-day trip.

During spring semester, a group of faculty members will go to the Moldovan university for the first exchange. They are scheduled to stay for two months.

"We don't know who's going to go yet, but different people have

Moldova will come to St. Cloud State, and will stay for two months to a semester. Simultaneous exchanges could take place in the future.

A big part of the money from the grant will go toward technology.

"We'll provide them with technology, like computers, software, Internet access, slide projectors," Schnellert said. "And of course, the money will go to travel expenses, too."

Student exchange

Student involvement is a future possibility.

"It's still very early to tell, but we may have some of their top students come here and work with our people, then they can go back and help their professors set up a graduate program," Schnellert said.

If there are classes taught in English, St. Cloud State students could potentially study in Moldova in an exchange program.

"Overall, this program will give us a model for the way we want to do international programming in the college (of education)," McKay said. "We want to establish tangible goals that fit the mission of global education, and what better way to start than in a country that is asking for our help. We know we will learn from them."

Apart from preparing on a professional level, personal preparation also needs to take place.

"I'm trying to figure out layers and how to look professional but still stay warm," Bradfield-Kreider said.

The group is also looking for small gifts for the Moldovans

Moldova at a glance

Where: Between Romania and Ukraine
Size: 33,700 square kilometers
Population: About 4.33 million in 1996
Capital: Chisinau
Language: Moldovan, which

is a Romanian dialect, and Russian
Currency: Leu
Government: Parliamentary republic
Background: Declared independence from the Soviet Union in August 1991

they'll meet. Exchanging gifts is a big part of the culture.

"My research base is immersing in a culture not your own," Bradfield-Kreider said. "I think when you do this kind of work so much of the culture depends on the language, and we don't have that. So many misunderstandings could happen without the language. I know we'll make a lot of mistakes, but we'll have the best of intentions."

The project is an opportunity for St. Cloud to be an ambassador to a sister city in Moldova, she said.

"I've had international experience in the past and it's always been beneficial," Schnellert said. "The one thing I really enjoy is I always feel like a child, so to speak. Everything is new; I look at things in a different light, meet new people, develop new friendships."



Pamm Minden



Paula Bradfield-Kreider



Maxine Bauermeister



Plamen Miltenoff