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FACULTY TRAVEL

Craig Cowles

Craig Cowles of the Management Science Department has responded to President Kennedy's call to "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." While on sabbatical last year Professor Cowles entered the Peace Corps and traveled to the Russian Far East to teach management courses and consult with local businesspeople. With his wife Irene, Professor Cowles was stationed in and around Khabarovsk, a city of some 600,000 residents about 500 miles north of Vladivostok on the Sea of Japan.

Cowles joined other Peace Corps staffers for six weeks of intensive Russian language study at the University of West Virginia and six weeks further at the Ussurisk Pedagogical Institute, then began his assignment at the Khabarovsk Railroad University, the Russian equivalent of a teacher's college. His major task was to conduct six week seminars on how to start up small businesses and to consult with local entrepreneurs. As a seminar leader and consultant he interacted with a number of Russian business people such as the executive team at the Sputnik Candy Company, which employs five thousand residents in the area. Professor Cowles' assignment was a daunting one not only because of challenges with language and living conditions, but also because of the huge expanse of the region. He logged over 20,000 miles of air travel as he brought his expertise to Russians anxious to learn the latest management techniques.

Professor Cowles was most impressed with his Russian students. He found them intensively interested in western business

models and anxious to refashion their local economies. In particular Russians are focusing on existing tax laws which are onerous and make start-up companies think twice about entering into the private sector. While he was there Professor Cowles witnessed the repeal of 150 separate tax laws, a change which should further spur the economy.

One of the more rewarding aspects of Professor Cowles' time in the Russian Far East was his development of a grant which if funded will help foster an exchange program that is certain to benefit Bridgewater State College. By the fall of 1998 a Russian lecturer from the Pedagogical Institute of Komsomolsk - Na-Amure is scheduled to visit the College. The exchange is part of a United States Agency for International Development grant program designed to expand contacts between the United States and Russia.

Also while in Russia Professor Cowles began taking steps to form a link with the Vladivostok area from Bridgewater

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Olga & Ludmilla - Russian Language Teachers in Khabarovsk

State College. Using the technology of a Seattle based oil company working in the Russian Far East, Professor Cowles hopes to initiate a series of trial run distance learning classes that will lead to a permanent satellite education program. Because of the great interest in the Russian Far East for learning management tech-