

# Eastern Helps Pakistani Educators Prepare for

Eastern has been preparing individuals to become educators since it was first founded as the Benjamin P. Cheney Academy in 1882. That mission continues today — only Eastern's reach as a teacher of teachers has just become broader.

Along with two other American universities, Eastern is helping the nation of Pakistan prepare for educational reform by providing training for Pakistani educators who will be directing that reform.

Pakistan is in the news every day, largely for its role as a partner with America in anti-terrorism efforts. But unseen in the headlines is the large effort Pakistan is making toward improvement of education in its country — a country where more than half the school-age children have never attended school, teachers are poorly trained, absenteeism is high, education of women is still a political and cultural issue and the national literacy rate is just 34 percent for girls and 54 percent for boys.

When the first delegation of educators from Pakistan arrived in March, they said they expected to find a well-managed educational system and schools rich in resources. And, they did, but what surprised and inspired them was the way American teachers go about educating their students.

"The teacher's behavior toward students is very friendly and committed. I like this. It lets students gain confidence and know they are a good person," explained Noor Jahan, a physician and chair of the Welfare Association for the New Generation in Lasbela. "In Pakistan, we have a hardness in schools. It is all lecture with no interaction between students and teachers."

Jahan is one of the 10 Pakistani leaders who recently completed an intensive



Pakistani educators Rafia Gul (left) and Dr. Noor Jahan

eight-week training program at Eastern, designed by the EWU College of Education and Human Development and Division of Educational Outreach — along with faculty from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and the University of Northern Colorado (both of those institutions are also training groups from Pakistan).

Eastern's group (which was made up of eight men and two women) was the first of several who will come to the Cheney campus to work on educational reform efforts for their country. (*The next contingent is expected to arrive in the fall.*)

Eastern is training the Pakistani educators under a contract with Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International, a non-profit corporation serving as project coordinator for a multi-faceted, \$60 million U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) initiative to implement the Education Sector Reform Action (ESRA) Program in Pakistan.

"I now have different ideas for how we can teach our teachers to involve students in the subject," Jahan continued. "Children learn by activities and involvement. American teachers understand this and watch to make sure their students are interested."

"New for me was the teacher's behavior," explained Rafia Gul, president of the Social Democratic Women's Organization in Shahdadpur. "I saw no stress in their faces. They are very loving."

The training program focused on leadership issues organized in modules dealing with such subjects as education of women, the politics of education, reading and literacy, managing educational change, technology and more. The group visited dozens of schools in urban, suburban, rural and Native American settings and received more than 40 topic-specific lectures from Eastern faculty and invited guests.

# Preparation for Educational Reform

By Melanie Rose

Each of the Pakistani educators worked closely with an individual EWU faculty mentor.

"It was a real reciprocal experience," explained Harvey Alvy, associate professor of education at Eastern and curriculum advisor for the project. "As much as the Pakistani group was here to gain an understanding of the American system of education, it was also beneficial to all of us — mentors and faculty — who were involved. We were very impressed with the range of experience, expertise and commitment the group had to improve their system in the face of incredible challenges."

During the eight-week program, the delegation visited the Kent School District in western Washington, where they learned about the Teacher Certification and Master Degree Program Eastern offers there. Initiated in 2000, the program has graduated more than 100 teachers and features a strong emphasis on teaching as a career change.

The visit to Kent took on special significance when the group was greeted by Sukhjeet "Sue" Pannu, a 4th grade teacher at

Kent's East Hill Elementary School, a graduate of EWU's Teacher Certification program and a native of East India.

"I was a student in India and understand the challenges they are facing," Pannu said. "I like the things I was able to tell them about the American educational system and encouraged them to get parents involved back home."

"It will be difficult, but we can change our educational system," Jahan said. "When we go back, I will start by telling our government that we must first teach our teachers to be honest, sincere and loving toward their students. We must also stress English as a language for teachers to use with students."

Gul intends to take a different approach, focusing first on legislation, policy and community engagement. "We need to change policy and then put it into practice," she explained. "We must make an environment where people will want an education and understand the importance."

Jahan, Gul and the other eight educators are now back home in Pakistan — and already sharing what they learned at Eastern.

## Strategic Plan Sets Academic Goals for EWU

By Mary Jane Brukart

It took years of hard work for the Eagles to get to the NCAA Tournament, but we did it. Our sights have long been set on another lofty goal, this one academic — to be the preeminent university of opportunity in the Northwest.

What does that mean and how do we get there?

Those are some of the questions that more than 50 faculty and students spent the last six months asking themselves — and asking the entire University community, as part of an academic strategic planning process. Headed by Provost Brian Levin-Stankevich and Faculty Organization President Anthony Flinn, the academic plan continued the University's strategic planning process begun in 2003 by focusing on the academic experience at Eastern.

"Our strategic plan will set the path for creating a more integrated academic experience," said the Provost. "By strengthening the connections between the liberal arts and professional studies, between students and faculty and between our campus and our community, we can distinguish ourselves as the leading, student-centered university in the region."

In January, seven work groups were formed and tasked with finding ways to integrate the academic experience, improve student success and create a learning environment that supports faculty and



### ACADEMIC AFFAIRS STRATEGIC PLAN 04

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serves the community. In April, the groups were ready to present their ideas to campus at four interactive forums.

As *Perspective* goes to press, the strategic plan is in its final stages. Highlights of the plan include:

- changes to the general education requirements to encourage diversity and integrated perspectives
- additional support for more faculty and student engagement in research and service learning
- investment in faculty development and learning technologies
- support for student and faculty collaboration with community partnerships

"Our strategic plan will help Eastern strengthen our mission of preparing students both for a career and for life," said Levin-Stankevich. "Moving forward, we want students to be as proud of their Eastern degree as we are of Eagle athletics."

*If you'd like to read more about the strategic plan for Eastern's future, start here: [www.ewu.edu/strategicplan04](http://www.ewu.edu/strategicplan04).*