



ALLA PAROIATNIKOVA

The SUU campus abounds with various ethnic and cultural groups, and a large part of the diversity on campus can be attributed to a diverse lady herself.

Alla Paroiatnikova (par-oh-YACHT-NIK-oh-vuh) founded the SUU International Program and has been its director for the past four years. Her work and commitment to the university have brought students to campus from all over the world, and have sent hundreds of students from Cedar City on Study Abroad excursions to other countries.

Paroiatnikova is not only the program's director but also the backbone of its development, said her husband, **Mikhail Bouniaev**, dean of the College of Computing, Integrated Engineering & Technology.

"She goes the extra mile that is sometimes not required or expected," he said. "(It) really makes people feel comfortable."

Born and raised in Moscow, Russia, Paroiatnikova was the oldest of two daughters, she said.

Her father, **Dmitriy Paroiatnikova**, was a two-star general in the Soviet Union Air Force and a distinguished WWII veteran. Her mother, **Ekaterina Paroiatnikova**, earned a doctorate in Russian literature and taught at various schools.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE INTERNATIONALLY

As a child, Paroiatnikova said she was a determined student.

"I have always been a bookworm, but my eyesight wasn't good," she said. "My mother tried to get me out of our house so I could spend more time outdoors instead of reading all the time."

Paroiatnikova recalls inventing tricks that allowed her to pursue her love of reading.

For example, at times she sat on the windowsill behind the curtains, where she couldn't be found, and read there.

Paroiatnikova began college at age 18 at Humboldt University in Berlin. A year later, she was accepted to the prestigious Moscow State University. There, she earned a master's degree and a doctorate in international journalism, after which she taught in the MSU School of Journalism.

"Teaching has always been my passion because I really believe good teachers make a difference," Paroiatnikova said.

Making a difference in students' lives is the only real reward teachers receive, Paroiatnikova said.

To earn extra money and to stay busy during summer breaks, Paroiatnikova worked as a translator for the United Nations in Vienna.

Later, as an English tutor at MSU, she met her husband, Bouniaev, who was one of her pupils.





"I had to be persistent with her," Bouniaev said of their courtship. "Love is worth the work. I love her as much as I did 27 years ago."

In 1994, the couple moved to Cedar City to work at SUU. She was director of a government-sponsored Russian program, and her husband was a mathematics professor.

In 2004, she was hired to become SUU's first Director of International Programs, which includes the Study Abroad Summer and Semester programs, Faculty Exchange Program, and the National Student Exchange Program.

As the director, she visits potential international partner universities throughout the world to see whether they fit SUU's criteria.

"The university must have academic excellence, and the values of personalized education and excellence in teaching must be shared," Paroiatnikova said. "I also consider the safety of the location, cost of living in the area and the quality of services provided to exchange students."

She meets with SUU students to see which programs best suit their needs and interests, and advises them on how to prepare and when would be the best time for them to leave, said her assistant, **Tessa McNeel ('05)**.

Paroiatnikova's commitment to students has been noteworthy, McNeel said.

Two years ago, a study abroad program planned for France, Germany and Switzerland lost its supervising faculty member when only five students signed up, McNeel said. The program required an enrollment of 10 students to pay the faculty member's expenses.

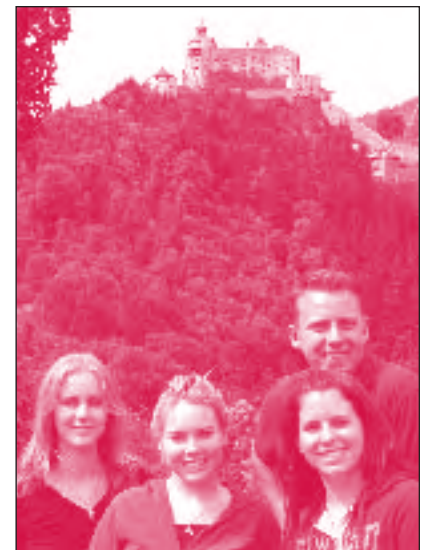
Rather than cancel, McNeel said, Paroiatnikova led the trip herself, and paid for much of it out of her own pocket.

Study Abroad has been active at SUU for three years. This summer, students traveled to England, Austria, France and Spain. What was once an unknown program with only 27 students has gradually become a well-known, highly esteemed curriculum with 50 students this year.

"Study Abroad was not only a learning opportunity, it was a life opportunity," said **Becky Zitting**, who attended the Spain Program in 2005. "It helped me learn how to live more fully and more freely."

As the program grows, so does the need for financial assistance.

"We encourage those who are financially able to help the students," she said. "Who knows, years later, in your own business, you may need international expertise that the students will be able to provide."



Paroiatnikova said she hopes the program will continue to flourish.

"Our goal is to develop quality summer programs in different majors, like arts, education and communication," she said. "Also, to develop partnerships with universities in Asia and to facilitate more faculty and staff exchanges. But, most of all, we want to get more SUU students to take advantage of the Study Abroad opportunities available to them."