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International Appreciation

A Mizzou doctoral student helps Mizzou pursue its international mission.



Photo courtesy of John Criswell.

Story by Marcus Wilkins

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As a young boy, John Criswell flipped through his *Lands and People* illustrated encyclopedias and dreamed of traveling to faraway places. By age 17, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy to realize that dream.

“I made a blunder — I joined the submarine service,” says Criswell, an education leadership and policy analysis doctoral candidate in the College of Education from Valparaiso, Ind. “Even though I did get to see various parts of the world, it was more limited than if you were on, say, a fast frigate.”

He made enough friends worldwide, however, to gain an appreciation for international brotherhood. In May 2013, Criswell received an MU International Engagement Award for his efforts to internationalize the campus and his research that seeks to better measure the international dimensions of campus climate.

“Institutions usually have in their mission statements something along the lines of, ‘We want to engage internationally,’ ” Criswell says. “The question is, do the faculty members hear it?”

Criswell has designed a faculty survey to test this question. He hopes to gather knowledge to be used by global institutions to understand if and how faculty members engage in internationalization and what can be done at the institutional level to support it. In the

long run he hopes to help universities become better hosts and educators.

Criswell does his part by opening his home for holiday meals. He's even studying Mandarin to stimulate conversation with his Chinese friends.

“A lot of older international graduate students come here with children,” Criswell says. “If a family wants to engage with another family, that’s a great opportunity, especially for my kids. I want my kids to go into the world seeing diversity as this *amazing* thing.”

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