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University Nobel nominee explains her vision

By Catherine Hawley
Emerald Associate Editor

Peace studies students need to weave together history, geography and culture to imagine a different future, said Nobel Peace Prize nominee Elise Boulding Saturday.

Boulding, giving the keynote address at the national peace studies conference held on campus this weekend, said although the 20th century has been a great age for world exploration and interaction of different cultures, a "phony universalism" has resulted from the West's lopsided influence on the rest of the world.

"We have this inability to take back from other cultures," Boulding said. "So many voices are not listened to. This premature universalism does not take into account diversity."

Boulding outlined a curricu-

lum for peace studies encompassing history, geography, culture and imagination to bring the world closer to true universalism.

Boulding said she includes imagination in the field of peace studies because the ability to fantasize helps people know when to break from conventional patterns of thought.

"We need to create in our minds a world that is peaceable, adventurous, challenging, complex and fun," Boulding said. "Sometimes I get uneasy about talk of the future because it sounds so dull."

In addition to including imagination, the scope of the three traditional fields of scholarship — history, geography and culture — needs to be reinterpreted to suit the changing world, she said.

For instance, in their study of history, peace studies students should redefine their understanding of the present moment to include 100 years in the past and 100 years in the future, Boulding said.

"We would react differently to events in Europe if we had enough sense of the present moment," Boulding said.

Recent events in the Soviet Union are not surprising to someone who sees the last 50 years of their history as a detour, similar to the detour

French society took in the first 100 years after their revolution, Boulding said. "Russia is emerging into the place it was headed to all along," she said.

Likewise, Boulding said the study of geography should incorporate not only an intellectual understanding of the world's political map, its inter-governmental structure and the earth's physical properties, but should also include a "bodily, kinesthetic" sense of the globe.

"We need to experience by extension the whole planet," she said.

The study of world cultures should entail more than learning songs and dances from many different countries, she said. Although art, poetry, music and dance are important to cultural understanding, they are often treated only superficially.

To understand cultures better, peace scholars should examine the politics of ethnicity — how different ethnic groups deal with conflict and how they negotiate resolutions to conflict, she said.

Scholars can also benefit from studying the traditional methods different cultures use to deal with the environment, a subject that will be especially important to the field of peace studies in coming years, Boulding said.

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