This is a story about literature, summarized in the language of math: the two Koreas’ global importance + BU’s burgeoning Korean student and alumni bodies = a new professorship at the College of Arts & Sciences.

The college will hire a scholar in Korean literature and comparative literature to complement its existing four-year instruction in Korean language. (There are also courses in Korean cinema and media.)

“I’m proud of the role CAS plays in providing a firm foundation to our profile as a global university,” says Virginia Sapiro, dean of Arts & Sciences. “Research and teaching in a carefully selected and well-supported set of languages and cultures is essential to any serious claim to global excellence, and I am delighted that we can elevate the presence of Korean language and culture as part of our outstanding offerings in Asian studies.”

The Korea Foundation, established by South Korea to create overseas professorships in Korean language and studies, will pay “a large portion” of the professor’s salary for the first three years, after which the University will take over, according to Sarah Frederick, a CAS associate professor of Japanese and acting chair of the modern languages and comparative literature department. The new literature instruction also will permit BU to offer a minor in Korean language and literature, she says.

The expansion of Korean instruction acknowledges several trends: South Korea’s ascent to a major world economy; recent tensions with North Korea, from the collapse of defense talks with South Korea, from the collapse of defense talks with North Korea, from the collapse of defense talks with South Korea, from the collapse of defense talks with South Korea, from the collapse of defense talks with South Korea, from the collapse of defense talks, the nuclear drive; and rising interest in Korean studies in the American academy. According to the Modern Language Association, course enrollments in Korean language study nationally hit 8,511 in 2009, a 19 percent increase from three years earlier and the largest increase, after Arabic, in foreign language enrollment during the three-year period.

With BU’s reputation for East Asian scholarship rising on the back of a critical mass of faculty experts, the new position “will fill a gap and enrich this discussion,” Frederick says. A specialist on Japanese women writers between the world wars, Frederick also cites BU’s South Korean undergraduate and graduate student population (at 655, second only to Chinese as the largest foreign contingent) and the fact that Korean is the ninth most commonly spoken language in the United States.

“It is noteworthy that the number of students enrolled in Korean studies and language continues to grow and that over half of them are not descendants of Koreans,” says Yongmaan Park (GSM’82), chair of the BU Alumni Association of Korea. “As more BU graduates, who will become the future leaders in many parts of the world, continue to have better understanding of the Korean culture, Korea will have more opportunities to receive its well-deserved status with a fair recognition in the world.”

LAW Professors Are Number One
Princeton Review: school in top 10 in other quality measures

THE SCHOOL OF LAW has the nation’s best professors and ranks in the top 10 law schools in other quality measures, according to the latest Princeton Review ratings.

The school-rating and test-prep company placed LAW 8th among the 172 law schools surveyed for “best classroom experience” and 10th in line for “best career prospects.”

The survey is published in the Review’s 2011 edition of The Best 172 Law Schools. The rankings are based on data supplied by the schools and, crucially, on comments from more than 18,000 students who were interviewed at
**Tackling Tooth Decay South of the Border**

*BU students, profs offer free dental care in Mexico*

“Ciérres la boca,” says Alexandra Antonescu, instructing a pediatric patient to close his mouth around a suction tube.

That’s one of the frequently used Spanish phrases that Antonescu (SDM’11) learned from a cheat-sheet taped to a wall in the St. Pierre dental clinic in Teacapan, Mexico, where in February a team of students and faculty from BU’s Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine provided free dental exams, sealants, and fillings to children ages 3 to 17.

“Coming here was a culture shock,” says fourth-year dental student Antonescu, who works mainly with adults back in Boston. “I didn’t know much Spanish, and you need to talk them through procedures. It was hard, but toward the end of the week I got a lot more comfortable.”

Venezuela native Jennifer Soncini, an SDM clinical assistant professor, steps in for Antonescu when necessary. “Even if she uses a wrong word, the kids still understand,” says Soncini (SDM’02), who has practiced pediat-ric dentistry for more than 25 years. “Language is not a barrier. If you smile, kids know you’re happy.”

For this mission, SDM partnered with Project Stretch, a Natick, Mass.-based nonprofit that since 1988 has provided free care for more than 20,000 children worldwide. The group visits Teacapan, on Mexico’s west coast, for three weeks each spring.

“They don’t get dental care until we arrive,” says Kathleen Held, an SDM assistant professor and the school’s assistant director of extramural programs. “When children have abscesses, doctors place them on antibiotics. They learn to live in pain.”

Daily wages for the farmers and fishermen of the town run from $5 to $40 a day, and a single tooth extraction can cost as much as a week’s pay. Even if care were affordable, it’s rarely available: the closest real dental clinic is 25 miles away. Project Stretch volunteer Brenda Irvin says many families can’t afford even the bus fare, let alone the cost of dental care.

Project Stretch partners with Amigos de Teacapan, a group of Mexicans and Canadian and U.S. expatriates who host dental teams in their homes and run the clinic. They transport kids from schools, teach them how to brush and floss, and manage medical files.

“We need more young dentists excited about these missions,” says Frank Schiano (CAS’01, SDM’06,’07), an SDM clinical assistant professor. “It inspires them to get involved in community health abroad and back here in Boston.”

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**WEB EXTRA**

Watch a video about BU dental students and faculty in Teacapan, Mexico, at bu.edu/bostonia.

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The Princeton Review ranking shows that our students also recognize and appreciate the superb ability of our faculty.

In its two-page profile of LAW, the book praises the school’s “breadth of curricula that is matched by few other schools anywhere in the country.” The write-up quotes one student who calls the faculty “shockingly good”; another says, “Several of my professors rank as the best teachers I have had at any level.” It notes that most LAW students give the school high marks for classroom discussions that accept diverse opinions. The book also reports that 93 percent of LAW students pass the bar exam on their first try, and that the average starting salary for an alum is $135,000.

“BU Law is one of the most prestigious law schools in the country, and admission is extraordinarily competitive,” reports *The Best 172 Law Schools*. The Review ranks the law schools in 11 categories, giving each school a score in each category. It does not compile a single list of the best overall schools. But Paul L. Caron (LAW’88), a visiting professor at Pepperdine Law School, came up with his own ranking, based on the Review’s data, by excluding some categories the Review used and combining scores from the remaining categories. Caron placed BU fifth among law schools nationally.

**RICH BARLOW**

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