



# College of Education



## ELEMENTARY EDUCATION MAJOR AWARDED INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP



Emily Harris, an elementary education major with a concentration in social studies, is gearing up for her final semester at Southeast. In spring 2012, she will complete her capstone requirement, two 8-week student teaching experiences.

What makes

her different from most of her peers is that she will be completing her second eight-week experience in an elementary school in Galway, Ireland. She will also be aided by a scholarship, which has turned her dream of study abroad into a reality.

Harris has been awarded a *Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship* by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Institute of International Education, which offers grants for U.S. citizen undergraduate students of limited financial means to pursue academic studies abroad. Such international study is intended to better prepare U.S. students to assume significant roles in an increasingly global economy and interdependent world.

The Gilman Program believes international experience is critically important in the educational and career development of American students, but it can also require a substantial financial investment. The scholarship broadens the student population that studies abroad by supporting undergraduates who might not otherwise participate due to financial constraints. Award recipients are chosen by a competitive selection process and must use the award to defray eligible study abroad costs. These costs include program tuition, room and board, books, local transportation, insurance and

international airfare. Selected from an applicant pool of 2,700, Harris is one of 900 students who were awarded this scholarship.

This is a trip of a lifetime for Harris, who upon learning of her scholarship award was astounded at the news. She said, "I have always wanted to study abroad. I love to travel and experience new cultures. I have been fascinated with the Irish culture for a long time. I feel that if I didn't take this opportunity now, then I would never have the chance again."

In early March, Harris will leave for Galway, Ireland, where she will stay during her student teaching. She said she is really looking forward to "the thrill of adapting to something that is completely foreign or unusual, which will make it one of the most exhilarating and fulfilling moments in my life, as well as experiencing the sheer beauty of Ireland, their green pastures and breath taking moors, and participating with the Irish as they celebrate one of their national holidays, St. Patrick's Day."

Harris' love for teaching began when she worked for six years as a full-time pre-K teacher between her community college studies and her last two years at Southeast. Upon reflecting about what student teaching abroad offers, she said, "I feel basically, that by completing my student teaching abroad, it is going to open my eyes to new ways of teaching. Right now, I understand and utilize the American ways of teaching, but by having this experience abroad, I am going to be a part of and experience the Irish ways of teaching. I understand that there are going to be similarities between the two, but what really intrigues me are the differences that I will encounter. By being a part of their school system, I will be able to grasp a better understanding on why they may use certain curriculum and methods of teaching. In turn, I can then bring back and utilize them in my future classroom."

After Harris finishes her experience in Galway, she plans to travel around Ireland and parts of Europe before returning to the U.S. to begin her career as a teacher. She is very

open to what those career possibilities might be, listing Teach for America as a fantastic program she would love to be part of, as well as searching for a teaching position abroad. She also feels she would be an asset to schools in the region, having grown up in rural Cadet, Mo., and therefore, does not rule out the possibility of returning to this area to pursue her career.

When she learned only a handful of Southeast students have taken advantage of this program to student teach abroad, she expressed these thoughts. "I feel that a few of the reasons why students are hesitant to take the plunge and student teach abroad is because of the fear of the unknown and finances. Trust me, this semester I have felt the pressure of both. I sent my application to study abroad off in September, and I received confirmation of placement in December. It is basically a waiting game. When you decide to sign up to student teach abroad, you do not just pick your destination and then wait for your departure date. There is so much more that goes into it. Dr. (Jean) Benton thoroughly prepares you for your time abroad. Every week in her class, you talk about a new aspect of the country that you will be a part of. For instance, I learned about the Irish government, their economy, and of course, their education, all to help prepare me and to become more knowledgeable about the county that I will be living in. She also prepares you for packing, traveling and situations that may arise during your time abroad. After taking her class, I feel completely prepared for my time abroad. With finances, there is a way. Not only can one use student loans to fund this once in a lifetime experience, there are scholarships out there as well. When I decided to take this adventure of student teaching in Ireland, I immediately started applying for scholarships. I knew they were out there, and if someone was going to receive one, why not me? My advice for you is, if you have the tiniest inkling of desire to study abroad, do it. This is the time to do. You are living in the time of your life where you have so many avenues to choose from."

## Southeast Missouri State University

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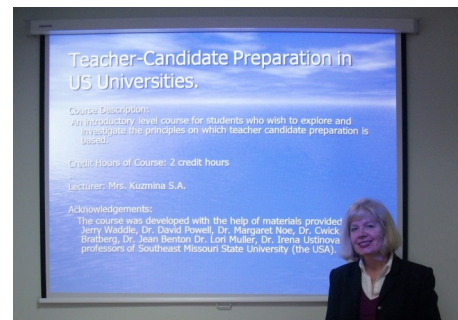
## FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR TAKES RESEARCH BACK HOME

As a result of her visits to the College of Education, Svitlana Kuzmina has developed a course called "Teacher Candidate Preparation in U.S. Universities" that she is delivering to students at Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University (VSPU) in Ukraine. Kuzmina advised that she developed the class to be accountable to Fulbright, but also because she "saw so much good work, such high professionalism, so much difference between our systems of teacher training, so many reasonable things in approaches to teacher candidate preparation" that she wanted to share them with her colleagues and students. Kuzmina said she also hopes the course will facilitate collaboration between Ukrainian and American professors, either through in-person visits or guest lecturing via Skype or other technologies. She said she also uses the course to "arouse our Ukrainian students' interest in studying at Southeast University."

Tamara Yamchynska, dean of foreign languages at VSPU, said, "This course is an outcome of [Kuzmina's] observations of the professors and teacher candidates in the classroom, field experiences, and community outreach activities, as well as lecturing the course 'Introduction to Teaching' under the supervision of Dr. Jerry Waddle. The reason for the course's introduction into the academic curriculum of the English Language Depart-

ment is our understanding of the importance of cross-cultural educational exchange, raising VSPU students' awareness of the main principles and objectives of teacher-training in the USA. The course aims to acquaint Ukrainian students with the philosophical, social and cultural backgrounds of U.S. education, help explore the challenges and realities of teaching in America, identify the skills and qualities of successful teacher in modern American society, and compare them with those of Ukrainian teacher."

Rector Oleksandr Shestopalyuk commented, "What interests us much is American educational institutions' immediate response on the needs of society in the era of globalization, how teacher-training institutions train prospective teachers to be leaders, to face increasing diversity with tolerance and appreciation, and how teacher candidates are prepared to address special needs kids. I'm still impressed by the Autism Center, which we visited in Cape Girardeau. People who contribute to such establishments have their hearts in the right place. Our students also need to learn to improve the quality of teaching with help of technology. We have already embarked on this journey, but there is still much to be done. We need the courses that will teach our students all these things. I assume the addition made to our curriculum also provides the professors of




Southeast University with an opportunity to verify the signed agreement and strengthen cooperation between our universities: they are welcome to contribute to the course by conducting lectures, workshops or giving a piece of advice."

Because of what Shestopalyuk observed in the College of Education during a visit, Kuzmina said he presented her department with the equipment for a "brand new computer class," modeled after those in the Scully building. Kuzmina says the new room "is absolutely beautiful" and equipped with everything but a SMART Board.

Plans are in progress to see if more students from Vinnytsia can study at Southeast this summer. We hope we can continue to expand this exciting partnership with Ukraine!

## FACULTY AND STAFF ACTIVITIES

 During the bi-annual meeting of the North American Chapter of the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction (NAC-WCCI), **Dr. Simin Cwick** was re-elected to the Board of Directors of this international organization for a second term. The purpose of this organization is to bring persons together from across disciplines, from all levels of education, and from the community to work on finding ways to effectively engage communities in the education of youth, and to create life-long learning processes that acknowledge the interrelatedness of all people across the world.

This year's conference had as its focus "Collaboration as a Function of Sustainability for Global Educators K-16." Among the presenters were Dr. Cwick and **Dr. Jean Benton**, who gave a paper on "Producing Global Curriculum Sustainability through Bi-Lateral Exchange of Educators."

**How you can help:** If you would like to help support the mission and vision of the College of Education, please feel free to contact Interim Dean Tamela Randolph (trandolph@semo.edu or (573) 651-2408) or Sam Duncan (sduncan@semo.edu or (573) 986-6815) to discuss how you can support scholarships for students or activities in the College of Education. Thank you!