FROM THE COORDINATOR

We’re very excited to announce new receiving sites for the COST program. New sites to student teach include the Netherlands, Philippines, and Hong Kong. This brings the total number of countries to 15 with 32 sites to choose from.

This Fall (2011) we have nine students going to various countries, including Ireland, New Zealand, Philippines, Ecuador, and Costa Rica. We are looking forward to learning more about the Philippines site from our first UWRF students to teach there this Fall.

In this issue of COASTLINES you will find beautiful photographs and a wonderful narrative that Nikki Zeleny, a Music Education major has been willing to share. This is probably one of my favorite things to do, read about and see what the student teachers learn while being immersed in a culture quite different from their own. It’s quite a learning experience for all of us!

Here’s hoping you are having a great summer!

COST Coordinator
Teacher Education Department Chair

NOTES FROM ABROAD

Nikki Jo Zeleney in South Africa

The COST program is amazing. It definitely impacted me as a teacher and a person. Going to South Africa was a completely new experience for me. I had never really thought of going to Africa and to be honest, knew very little about it besides what I’ve seen in the Lion King. But that’s probably why fate brought me to South Africa, to open my eyes to a beautiful place with beautiful people.

Out of all the cool things I got to do in SA, my favorite part was honestly working with the students. I was placed in an all girl school and these ladies were just great. They all want to learn! I was so impressed by how polite and responsible they were. The Victoria Girl’s Public High School has a one hundred percent Matric (senior year) pass rate, which is so impressive for a public school there, and the girls are proud of that. The girls there want to be something; and I’m not completely sure, but they probably inspired me a lot more than I did them.

As far as teaching goes, I learned a lot. There were times when I was a fish out of water, dancing to a different beat on the djembe drum (traditional Xhosa moves are hard!). But the students and staff were always supportive and ready to answer and ask questions right along with me. I feel lucky that I got to teach a subject as cool and universally celebrated as music, especially in Africa! Even though they call their rhythms by different names, it was great to work with a subject that at it’s base is universal.

I definitely experienced some things I wouldn’t be able to while teaching in the States. For example, I have never been without electricity for more than an hour or two in my life. So it was crazy (only for me though), when their power went out for over a day and school and life continued on without it. Teaching there really made me realize...
my skills as an educator. My enthusiasm and energy carried me through that ‘dark’ day. And I gained confidence as a teacher, especially in classroom management. When you’re leading 100 girls through a 2 hour choir rehearsal while they’re clicking away in Xhosa, you’ve got to be on top of your classroom game.

It was also life changing to travel and get to know the other COST members placed in Grahamstown. They were all amazing people who have great potential and want to change the world! It was really inspiring to teach and do all the cool things we did, like bungee jump and pet baby tigers, with such great people from all over America. My roommate was a girl from Tennessee, so even in our bunks we had some fun cultural sharing. And even though she still likes to make fun of my ‘Minnesotan’ accent, I know I’ve made a friend for life. Well, lots of friends for life. And memories, lots and lots of memories to last forever.

— Nikki Jo Zeleney

HELP!

Q How and when do I get the FBI background check?

A Get your fingerprints taken and sent in about 5 months before you are to leave. Do not get it done too early, it must still be pertinent for the time you travel. You can pick up the COST background check form by stopping in WEB 257, or ask to have one sent to you. This is the only card accepted for COST background checks. You must take the card to a jail to have your finger prints recorded and send it along with a check and a letter explaining why you need the background check. Get instructions and the address to which the form should be sent from the UW-RF COST office.

Q How do I get credit for my COST experience?

A We have two different evaluation forms:

1. UWRF Student Teaching Observation form
2. COST Participant Survey form

These forms will be given to you physically, as well as sent to you electronically as back up copies. You must take them with you to your COST placement site. The UWRF Teaching Observation form and COST Evaluation of Student Teaching Experience form are used to generate your grade for the semester. In order to receive credit for the overseas experience you must evaluate your COST experience using the COST Participant Survey.

Q Who do I contact in case of emergency?

A The Global Connections Office emergency number is: 715-425-4891, after hours: 715-425-3133

BULLETIN BOARD

A must for your COST experience

If you maintain a blog or any other Internet site in the public domain about your COST experience it is unwise to write about your teaching experience and make personal comments about teachers and students in the schools where you are placed.
Writing unfavorable comments about the school and your placement teacher[s] on a blog site may result in unfortunate and perhaps detrimental consequence for you as well as the entire COST program:

1. Defamatory comments can result in legal action.
2. The school administration could refuse to take future COST students.

Please be discrete and tactful.

A message from the Director of Student Teaching

Your Cooperating Teacher completes the Student Teaching evaluation form as a midterm and final evaluation. The University Supervisor may use any form from his/her home institution or simply write a narrative of the observation.

When you return from overseas, make an appointment with Mike Martin regarding certification requirements from the Student Teaching office. Student teaching grades are not submitted without completed and submitted end of student teaching forms.

Money Tips for Safe Travel

As you plan your trip overseas review these financial safety travel tips to keep your money safe and secure.

- Limit the amount of plastic you take with you. No more than two credit cards or one credit card and one debit card (for cash withdrawals) are recommended.
- Notify your financial institution that issued your debit and credit card that you are traveling.
- Carry traveler’s checks. These are great for back up if your credit and debit cards are lost or stolen.
- Get foreign currency. Get $100 in the currency of the country you are visiting. This will cover expenses before you have the chance to change money.
- Safely carry your money. If you don’t have a hotel safe, keep your money, credit/debit cards, passport and airline tickets on you at all times. Don’t carry everything in a purse or backpack, use a money belt.
- Leave behind valuables. Leave valuable jewelry, family keepsakes & Social Security Card at home. Leave behind store membership cards that you won’t need.

Clarification about the COST application process

Until fall semester 2011 COST applications were completed and turned in on a CD to the UWRF COST Office, 257 Wyman Education Building (WEB). Students now complete applications using the UWRF Study Abroad Application through the Global Connections website. However, Global Connections does not administer the COST program, the COST Office, 257 WEB does. Only students who are approved to student teach through the Student Teaching Office, 203 WEB and who attend the required COST meeting are given access to begin their COST application through the UWRF Study Abroad application.

The UWRF Study Abroad Application process, required as part of the COST application process, has set deadlines, which, if not met, prevent one from being admitted to the COST program. It does not guarantee acceptance into the COST program. Applications, begun with the UWRF Study Abroad Application, are completed by the UWRF COST Office and sent to the national COST office.

When students have been accepted they receive a placement letter from the national COST office informing them of their placement site. At that time they are given contact information for a person at the overseas placement site. This takes from two to four months from the date the COST application was submitted to the national COST office.

Lines of Communication

Contact the COST Office for everything about overseas student teaching and the COST program. If we cannot help you, we will direct you elsewhere for answers.

COST students work with their in-country contact person to determine visa requirements. Each country’s requirements are different. Visa requirements must be addressed immediately upon receiving a placement letter.

Contact the Global Connections office with insurance, passport, and visa questions or questions about the UWRF Study Abroad Application.

Communication between the student and the placement site contact is the responsibility of the student and should take place immediately upon receiving the placement letter. Travel arrangements are the responsibility of the student. Ask the receiving site contact about housing opportunities, the school in which you are placed, clothing requirements, travel in the placement site country (such as which airport to fly into, if you will be met at the airport or need to take public transportation to the site), etc.

Be sure to let us know when you plan to leave for your destination, when you arrive overseas, and when you return from overseas. Use the address from which you receive e-mails to contact us. Stay in touch and be sure to send us digital photographs of you with your students.

Meetings

COST Meeting for Fall 2012: 3:00 p.m. 9, 22, 2011 Lounge area on second floor WEB