FROM THE COORDINATOR

The COST program provides opportunities for student teachers to explore their interests, perform real teaching tasks, refine their practice with an international mentor, and demonstrate global competencies. Each semester I am impressed with the superb performances of our student teachers. The photographs in this issue are truly just a snapshot of all that these UWRF students experience. Our students’ curiosity and imagination fuel their initiative to undertake these life changing journeys. Their knowledge gains in diverse cultures and the natural world contribute greatly to a better society for all of us.

This issue of Coastlines begins with one of our students taking a job immediately following her student teaching in Costa Rica, and ends with two of our student teachers narrowly escaping the horrible floods in the Philippines. To all the students who are ready and willing to take this leap of faith, I say Bravo! You make us all very proud.

COST Coordinator
Teacher Education Department Chair

NOTES FROM ABROAD

Fall 2011 found the UWRF COST program with more students overseas than ever before in a variety of countries on four continents: Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and the Philippines. Each country had its unique beauty and challenges. No two students’ experiences, even in the same country were the same. Following are excerpts from several of our COST students’ blogs and emails.

Georgia Wagner – Costa Rica
A field trip (to Guayabo, a national monument of over 4000 year old Pre-Colombian ruins), was a very powerful experience for the students. At the park, with the ruins as their backdrop, the students presented their research only to be congratulated by the expert tour guides that were with us all day. They all felt so proud of themselves by the end of the day. It was a LONG day, 12 hours, but every minute was worth it. I was given the opportunity to gain insight into something that the locals haven’t even seen. I feel very fortunate to have been given that experience. . . .

. . . I had a great week with our 4th graders. They started a project where they were assigned a classmate and they are to predict their future. The objective for this project is for students to practice using the future tense in English. . . . We finished the project today and the students began to present. They had so much fun with it! I love when students get enthusiastic about their learning. . . .

. . . Last week on Friday, the principal came into my classroom and observed me teaching a lesson on persuasive writing. It went AWESOME! The students did great, my classroom management methods worked incredibly, and she loved it! On Monday morning, she pulled me aside, told me how nice it was to see a young teacher with so much passion and to see someone who “gets it.” This is a testament to the program at River Falls. I say this because the school in Costa Rica has had students from
several other universities but never from RF. She said she’s shocked that student teachers can seem so comfortable and prepared, and teach such effective lessons. She offered me a 2-year contract on the spot.

Rachel Schlossin, also teaching in Costa Rica was offered a position; she accepted it and January 2012 moved to Costa Rica to begin her new position. Congratulations, Rachel!

Megan Church – Dublin, Ireland
Today I had my first day of school at Holy Family National School (HFNS). It is a disadvantaged school, bringing in students that have an unstable home life. With only 12 staff members and approximately 100 pupils, everyone seems to know one another. The school begins at 9:54 a.m. and ends at 2:40 p.m. The teachers arrive around 8:40 and have coffee/breakfast together in the teacher’s lounge, socializing before the school day begins. The lounge consists of a large rectangular table with a coffee cup, small dish plate with spoon and knife at each place. Most of the teachers partake in hot tea and coffee with milk and sugar. Today when the students arrived in Ms. Duffy’s classroom, we had a variation of a morning meeting in which the children shared their Halloween events.

I was surprised to find technology in the room similar to a Smart Board. I don’t think you can manipulate the screen like you could on a Smart Board, but you can connect to the internet and type and manipulate in any other way that you could on your average computer. I was also surprised to find that there are few paper copies for the students. Although they have workbooks and notebooks, I have yet to see them use any other supplemental worksheets or activities that would normally come out of the copy machine. When other schools (especially the school I was placed at in Stillwater, MN) would hand out copies of poems, maps, etc., these students had to record them in their notebooks. I was astounded at their (HFNS student’s) ability to copy a map of Greece. I think if you applied this scenario to students from an “advantaged” school (in America or otherwise), you would find that this would be a long and painful process for both the students and teacher. However, these children at HFNS complied with precision and without complaint.

Katie Wendinger – Sneem, Ireland

In America it seems to be hard to fit art into the day and teach to the standards but in Ireland art and music are a focus to other subjects. Today, a volunteer came in to teach the older students how to Irish dance; this was a great opportunity for me to watch. The teaching styles may be a little different along with the subjects being taught but children are children no matter which country you are in! This past week was my last week in the school; it was marvelous. Following mass in the afternoon, the first class and infants performed the nativity and they were brilliant! On Monday, my supervisor came to observe me teach a thirty minute lesson to the 4th/5th/6th class. I taught a science lesson that involved raw and hard-boiled eggs. Students had to determine whether egg A or B was the raw egg through experimenting by shaking, holding up to the
light, smelling, and spinning the eggs. The students were able to identify the raw egg through inertia as it continued to spin after they placed their finger in the center and lifted it. There was only one raw egg that landed on the floor but it did happen at the right time when we were just about to crack one open to see if the students had correctly identified the raw egg.

I taught two full weeks of school where the students learned about Vikings and with the information gathered, dressed up as a character to present to the 1st/2nd/3rd class. The students enjoy drama so the students did Readers Theatre for the infants as they acted out nursery rhymes. After the plays were complete we discussed how stories change over time because people hear different parts of the story differently and then retell the story how they remember it.

Teaching in Sneem National School for seven weeks was a wonderful experience I truly enjoyed and would not trade for the world.

*Word Spoken in the States*  *Word Spoken in Ireland*

* Scold/reprimand  * Give out
* Behaving badly  * bold
* Talking back  * Back chat
* Being obnoxious/acting out  * Cheeky
* Use common sense  * Cop on
* Something/Someone funny  * Gas
* Jell-O  * Jelly
* Jelly  * Jam
* Cookie  * Biscuit
* Bacon  * Rashers
* Check out line  * Queue
* Dance  * Disco
* Dressing in Costume  * Fancy Dress
* Trash  * Rubbish
* Trash Can  * Bin
* Mail  * Post
* You  * Ye
* 6:30  * Half 6
* Police  * Garda
* Pharmacy  * Chemist
* Period  * Stop
* trunk of the car  * boot
* tennis shoes/sneakers  * runners
* hoodie/sweater  * jumper
* bike seat  * saddle
* fries  * crisps
* chips  * taytos
I left Wausau on Wednesday October 19th at 9 am and arrived in Auckland, New Zealand on Friday October 21st at 9:30 am. Four airports, three airplanes, and one new country later . . .

I have been in school almost two weeks now and I am learning a lot. School is similar and very different all at the same time. Students are very polite and respectful all of the time. At my school students have uniforms and for term one and four everyone has to wear sandals to and from school each day. The funny thing is that once students get to school in the morning they take off their sandals, put them under their desk neatly and that is where they stay for the rest of the day. Students don’t even wear anything on their feet for Sport or PE!!

Students keep their backpacks [outside of the classroom] during the day. What looks like a wall with a lot of windows looking into the street is actually a garage door. There is one identical to it on the far side of the room, these are opened when a bit of breeze is needed on hot days. One is a removable wall that can be moved to combine two classrooms.

Students sit in groups of four or six, good for collaboration and group work. The walls in my classroom have a lot of resources for the students as well as displaying their work. Teachers also string clotheslines across their rooms to hang additional work. Beyond the far door is a small deck and wraps around the back of the school. Students sit out there on breaks. Students take their snack outside and teachers have a break in the lounge. We are told of any new announcements at this time. The school is required to provide teachers with a hot beverage (tea, coffee, or hot chocolate) everyday . . .

The last day of school was a bittersweet day. On one hand I was about to go and travel for two weeks and I was very excited about that. On the other hand I will really really miss my students. They were so much fun to come to school and see everyday. Always up to something random, calling people Drangos, or having fun being themselves.

On my last day we had our final Spelling Dee (a spelling bee but they were syndicate D). In block one, students caught up on work and there was a Monkey’s Wedding outside. That is what they call it when it rains and is sunny. The kids came in early from lunch soaking wet and it was pouring. Block three we had an assembly and lots of talented students performed for the school. Some dances, a flash mob, singing and live music. We ended the assembly by singing Do I Make You Proud by Taylor Hicks and I am the World’s Greatest by R Kelly. At the end of the day the class gave me a really cute card, pineapple lumps (a New Zealand Lolly (candy)), L&P (a New Zealand soda) and a jar of vegemite; all things to remember my time in New Zealand. Then I handed out Clark Bars . . .
Megan Deutschman – Philippines

Some students were so shy they wouldn’t even look at me, let alone ask a question. One child went and hid in the corner when I asked him what his name was. Not every student was shy though, there were some brave ones in the group and they asked me some interesting questions like: “Will you sing for us?” “What is your life motto?” (Really?) “How old are you?” “Why are your eyes blue?” “Are you married?” “What is America like?” I tried my best to answer their questions and when my introduction was finished I sat in the back to observe . . . .

. . . The highlight of my time here was easily the time I spent teaching and working with children. The kids were so happy and excited to meet Jessi and I. They were probably the most enthusiastic students I’ll ever have; I doubt my American students will be as excited about my blue eyes and blonde hair. I was also very impressed with the language skills of my students. Everyone in the Philippines speaks English, as well as their local dialect and the national language, Tagalog. Their local dialect is their first language, but they are schooled in English. Can you imagine attending school in your second language? It’s pretty impressive. I feel like after teaching in the Philippines, with no physical materials and just the creativity of my brain, I can really teach just about anywhere. I think teaching here has shown me something very valuable: I’ve always wondered if I was the kind of teacher who could serve a high-need, impoverished area and now I’m thinking maybe I can. We’ll see…but I’m very thankful to all the cute little kids I got to meet and teach. They eased the confusion and frustration of the official stuff and reminded me of what I was here to do. . . .

[the night before departing for the US] . . . A tropical storm hit Cagayan de Oro and other areas of the Philippines. . . . Honestly, Jessi and I didn’t really notice the storm very much. We were at a Christmas party at our private school when it started to rain REALLY hard. . . .

unbeknownst to us, destruction and devastation was occurring in the city; we were safe in the mansion with the girls. . . . we were having a lot of fun last night while so many people were experiencing such terror.

[in the morning] . . . as reports came in from various people in the mansion, I realized how bad the storm had been. . . . the river had overflowed and washed away houses, roads and sadly many people. Over 200 are dead; 400 are missing. . . . All the shanty towns along the river are gone. I can’t explain how deeply saddened I am by this. I keep thinking of those children and praying that they are all safe. I don’t even have words for this kind of tragedy. . . .

. . . The ride to the airport and the initial take-off over Cagayan was difficult. Evidence of the flood and storm is everywhere. The streets are covered in filth and mud, the houses along the river are gone, people seem to be wandering without a purpose, and the ocean is stained brown from the mud that was washed out to sea. There are now over 650 dead, over 800 are missing, and 100,000 people have been displaced. 100,000 . . . that is a fifth of the city. It was a sight I never wanted to see and I hope I never see again. Had I not been leaving, I would have found a way to help. It would have been impossible to remain idle. That being said, I am so thankful to simply be alive.
**HELP!**

**FBI background check: How & when?**

Pick up the COST background check form (the only card accepted for COST background checks), instructions and the address to which the form should be sent in WEB 257, or ask to have one sent to you. 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 to the FBI. Do this about 5 months before you are to leave, or when you find out where you have been placed.

**How do I get credit for my COST experience?**

We have two different COST evaluation forms:

1. UWRF Student Teaching Observation form, used to generate your grade for the semester.
2. COST Participant Survey form
   In order to receive credit for the overseas experience you must evaluate your COST experience using the COST Participant Survey.

**Who do I contact in case of emergency?**

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

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**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.
- 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.

**Lines of Communication – Contact:**

COST Office for everything about overseas student teaching and the COST program.

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

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

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 your 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.

Let us know when you plan to leave, when you arrive overseas, and when you return. Stay in touch and be sure to send us digital photographs of you with your students.

**Meetings**

COST Meeting for Spring 2013: 3:00 p.m. February, 23, 2012, Lounge area on second floor WEB

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