

Alum Receives Fulbright to Teach English in Brazil

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Recent University of New Hampshire graduate Patricia Donahoe, '13, a dual political science/international affairs major from Henniker, N.H., has been awarded a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) in Brazil.

About 70 countries offer English Teaching Assistantships, each looking for something slightly different in a candidate. Brazil seeks ETAs who have experience teaching or tutoring and prefers candidates with a degree in English, applied linguistics, or foreign languages. Placements in Brazil are at English language training centers at each of the 59 federal universities throughout the country, where ETAs work closely with a team of faculty members and other teaching assistants, both American and Brazilian.

"I feel honored to have been selected as an ETA to Brazil, and I am humbled by the opportunity to help represent the United States abroad," Donahoe said. "This would not have been possible without support from my friends, family, and those who wrote letters and evaluations on my behalf. I am also very thankful to Jeanne Sokolowski in the UNH Office of National Fellowships, who answered all of my questions and provided constructive feedback on my application."

Chris Reardon, associate professor of political science, said he wasn't surprised she was selected. "There are some students who you know are destined for great things," Reardon said. "When Patricia began asking questions in a small honors course on U.S. foreign policy, I was extremely impressed with her enthusiasm to learn and her insightful questions. She was simply the best student I have taught at UNH in the past two decades. I suspect that the Fulbright award is just the first of many great accomplishments ahead for Patricia."

Donahoe originally applied for an ETA position in Colombia and was selected as an alternate. While waiting to see if a selected candidate would decline or if money for more teaching positions would become available, she was contacted about applying for an ETA position in Brazil after the program in that country was expanded to add 90 new grants.

With just 12 days to put together a new statement of interest, Donahoe emphasized her near native fluency in Spanish (her mother is Spanish-Cuban), interest in Portuguese, experience tutoring Spanish, and collaborative work as a teaching assistant for a logic course. She also proposed using her musical talents in the context of teaching English: to build and apply vocabulary, identify idioms, and have students create lyrics. Aware of Brazilians' love of sports and the fact that the country is gearing up to host the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics, she also talked about using Brazilian football anthems in her teaching.

While at UNH she was involved in Student Senate as a student senator, parliamentarian, and speaker of the Senate. She also participated in the university's Undergraduate Research Conference three years and completed the University Honors program as well as a Washington Center internship working for the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies.

Donahoe is one of 11 undergraduate students from UNH who competed in the 2013-2014 Fulbright competition, with four advancing as finalists. Nicole Chartier was also awarded an ETA to Colombia. Meagan Wengrove, '10, just returned from her year abroad conducting research at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands on the topic of flood risk and damage, and Jason Gilmore, '11, extended his grant to teach English in Naju, South Korea, for a second year.

About Fulbright: The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government. It is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Recipients of Fulbright grants are selected on the basis of academic or professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields. The Program operates in over 155 countries worldwide.

About the Office of National Fellowships: Established in 2005, the UNH Office of National Fellowships provides information, counsel, and editorial support to high achieving students applying for national and international fellowships and scholarships like the Critical Language Scholarships. The services of the Fellowships Office are available to undergraduates, graduate students, and alumni. Contact the director, Jeanne Sokolowski, at Jeanne.sokolowski@unh.edu or (603) 862-0733 for more information.

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