



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

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QuickTakes!

Ramapo College Senior Selected for Fulbright U.S. Student Teaching Award to South Korea

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Senior Christina Dwyer '19, a literature major from Denville, NJ, received an English Teaching Assistant grant from the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, the second-ever Fulbright scholarship to be awarded to a Ramapo college student. Christina will spend 13 months in South Korea teaching English and serving as a “cultural ambassador for the United States” beginning in July 2019.

“I am absolutely thrilled to receive this honor,” said Christina. “It’s going to be very intense, but I am so excited for such an opportunity. I’m ready for this journey.”

Established in 1946 and sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, the Fulbright Program is the largest U.S. international exchange program that offers opportunities to students, scholars, and professionals for graduate study, advanced research, and elementary, secondary, and university teaching across the globe.

“The immensely competitive nature of a Fulbright Award cannot be overstated,” said Ramapo President Peter P. Mercer. “With guidance from a dedicated Ramapo College faculty mentor, Christina has already achieved, as an undergraduate, something that many learned people only hope to accomplish at some point in their lifetime.”

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Professor Naseem Choudhury, director of the Office of Fellowships and Scholarships and Faculty Program Advisor for the Fulbright Program for U.S. Students at Ramapo College, said Christina is deserving of the Fulbright, considered one of the most prestigious awards given to an undergraduate student.

“Christina is one of the most driven individuals I have met,” said Professor Choudhury. “She is clear in her desire to develop such bridges between the USA and South Korea. She is candid and honest, qualities that people gravitate toward and yet she is clearly aware that she is the image of America that people will take away when they leave her classroom. Her self-reflective and inclusive nature makes her an ideal representative of American culture and values in their totality. As a Fulbright recipient I have no doubt that she will be the ideal ambassador to the world (She) was absolutely determined to go back to the country that had captured her imagination and do what she so loves to do.”

Christina participated in a study abroad program in South Korea in spring 2018 for what she called a life-changing experience. “That was an incredible trip for me,” she said. “In addition to my studies, I visited some rural areas of the country, hiked through the mountains and spent a weekend in a Buddhist temple. It was amazing.”

Upon arrival in South Korea in July, Christina will participate in a six-week orientation that will include taking an intense Korean language course and other courses about Korean culture and history. After completion, she will meet her host family. While teaching English to Korean students, she also plans to introduce them to American folklore that represent various cultural groups within the United States.

“This topic has always interested me and I’m very excited to have the chance to focus on this particular type of literature,” Christina said. “I am even more excited to create a conversation with my students as to how these works contrast with Korea’s traditional literature.”

The Fulbright experience also will not be the first foray into teaching for Christina, who hopes to pursue a career as an ESL teacher for middle or high school students when she returns. Following her high school graduation, she spent several weeks during the summer in Austria teaching English to young students. “I’m far from fluent in German [Austria’s official language] but I managed pretty well,” she said. “I knew then that teaching is what I wanted to do.”

Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The College is ranked #1 among New Jersey public institutions by College Choice, and is recognized as a top college by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kiplinger's*, Princeton Review and *Money* magazine, among others. Ramapo College is also distinguished as a Career Development College of Distinction by *CollegesofDistinction.com*, boasts the best campus housing in New Jersey on Niche.com, and is designated a "Military Friendly College" in Victoria Media's *Guide to Military Friendly Schools*.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to master's degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, Educational Technology, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education.