

## Fulbright Statement

### **Relevant Experience**

My interest in comparative perspectives began in earnest in 2013. That year, I collaborated with a colleague from Griffith University in Australia. Since that time, my scholarly interests have grown to include the relationship between education and transitional justice. I credit my colleagues in the Holocaust and Genocide Studies department and the Cohen Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Keene State College for guiding my development. And, at the start of the Fall 2019 term, I began a split faculty appointment with the departments of Education and Holocaust and Genocide Studies. My scholarly interests provided many opportunities and relevant experiences.

- In 2013 and 2014, I researched teacher thinking in Australia and the United States in collaboration with a colleague from Griffith University in Brisbane. We examined how history teachers made decisions regarding curriculum and instruction.
- In 2015, I traveled to Argentina to explore how that nation grapples with truth, justice, and memory. I worked with numerous museums, academics, archives, and memorial sites throughout Argentina to better understand how they are working to educate their communities.
- In May 2017, I traveled to Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of a community study tour associated with the Cohen Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Keene State College.
- In June 2017, I traveled to Oxford University to participate in a workshop associated with the Oxford Transitional Justice Research group. I attended sessions that discussed the relationship between education and transitional justice.
- In July 2017, I traveled to Braunschweig Germany to attend the Georg Ahnold summer school organized by the Georg Eckert Institute. The summer school examined the emerging field of education in emergencies and included work with colleagues from around the world, some of whom are currently working in conflict zones.
- In September 2017 and 2018, I traveled to Bosnia and Herzegovina to participate in the Center for Peacebuilding's Peace Week programming. During that week, I worked with Bosnian students and teachers to better understand their perspectives and impressions regarding education. The Center for Peacebuilding has invited me to the 2019 Peace week program where I will be working with teachers.
- In addition, from August 2017 to December 2018, my institution hosted a Bosnian scholar. He became a dear colleague who taught me about Bosnian culture, history, and contemporary issues.
- In 2016, I was a participant in the Summer Institute on Genocide Studies and Prevention, hosted by the Department of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Keene State College and lead by Dr. James E. Waller. In 2018, I was invited to be an instructor at the Summer Institute on Genocide Studies and Prevention.
- In 2019, I presented at the Justice for Transnational Human Rights Violations – At the Crossroads of Litigation, Policy and Scholarship Conference organized by the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights & Oxford Transitional Justice Research & Latin American Centre at Oxford University.

The experiences listed above have prepared me with skills necessary to be an engaged cultural ambassador and scholar. I have learned how to adjust to and navigate a wide range of cultures and perspectives. I have learned the importance of listening to people and trying to understand their point of view. Listening is important when discussing education issues because education is a cross-section of society and reflects each community's values and beliefs. It is vitally important to meet communities where they are, build trust, and work with them to achieve their goals.

Over the course of my nearly two-decade career in education, I have taught a variety of courses across multiple educational levels, including elementary, secondary, higher education. The intense and rigorous experiences serving as a teacher and scholar have honed my professional practice and decision making. I have extensive involvement in curriculum development, instruction, and administration at the secondary and in higher education. I currently teach six to seven different sections of various education courses per year and serve as the chair of the Secondary Education Committee at Keene State College.

I recognize the opportunities that occur when students, through hands-on, interactive experiences, begin to construct their own ideas and concepts. My teaching is framed by the ideas from Social Learning Theory and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model. For example, in the courses that I teach, I try to empower the students to explore their own perspectives before engaging in deeper examinations of the micro and macro systems. I also use a wide variety of teaching strategies such as lectures, discussions, simulations, problem-based learning, and projects. The variety in my instruction helps differentiate instruction and meet the needs of all of my students. I particularly appreciate and enjoy Socratic discussions and hands-on, community-based, project-based learning opportunities. I like to engage and promote my students' critical and creative thinking by moving them from knowing something to doing something with that knowledge. Moreover, I work to make the lessons my students learn both meaningful and authentic.

### **Course Proposals**

Student-center research will be a fundamental component to any course that I may teach at the host institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Embedded in this student-centered, problem-based environment will be the space and encouragement for my students to engage in self-directed class projects and pursuits that take us beyond Sarajevo and connect with other cantons. I want, and my students deserve, the opportunity to explore and understand the problem-solving and reform efforts related to the teaching of tolerance in multicultural settings around Bosnia and Herzegovina. I plan to work with the connections that I have made in the country to engage in work and scholarly interests beyond the city.

### **Education and Transitional Justice**

There are over sixty-five million displaced people in the world and nearly half of them are children. In addition, one in six of all children worldwide live in a conflict zone. We know that increased educational access represents an opportunity to decrease the risk of violent conflicts. How can the international community ensure access to quality education for children in conflict-affected or post-conflict settings? In addition, how can stakeholders leverage education to help prevent future atrocities and episodes of mass violence or armed conflict? This course will be an interdisciplinary examination of the intersections of education and transitional justice and

atrocities prevention. It will provide a comprehensive introduction to the role education can play in peacebuilding and atrocities prevention. Specifically, the course will utilize a comparative perspective to explore historical, economic, social, political, ethnic and religious themes as they relate to education.

### Civics Education and Citizenship

This course will examine the role of civics education and citizenship in society. Students will explore the concepts of civics and citizenship. In addition, the course will examine the theories and research-based best practices for civics education. The course will also examine how a curriculum embedded with the foundations of human rights can contribute to justice and stability. Through a comparative lens, students will be able to consider the implications of civics education and citizenship in their own country and in other countries. Because civics education and citizenship are an interrelated and often interdependent confluence of various social and political mechanisms, this course will help students understand the implications of those interrelated and interdependent relationships.

### Contemporary Education Issues and Reform

This course, through a comparative perspective, will focus on contemporary educational issues in various parts of the world. The course will focus primarily on the United States and Bosnia, but it will also include insights from other nations. Education, in many nations, has become increasingly politicized. Major issues including curriculum, funding, and control have deep cultural, historical, and political causes and consequences. Often the relationship between citizens, communities, and government sits at the core of most contemporary education issues. The course will also introduce students to theories which help to explain and provide practical approaches to dealing with these issues in the school context. Furthermore, the course will examine the political, social, and culture aspects involved with education reform efforts in various states.

### **Material Adaption**

My application illustrates my wide range of education-related experiences. I have sat in more social studies classes than I can count. My experiences include many others from Japanese language classes to Chemistry classes. I have traveled to classrooms in Harlem and Brooklyn, New York, rural Southside Virginia, New England, Australia, Argentina, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through these opportunities, I have developed the skills and dispositions needed to adapt materials for various student needs. My adaptations are guided by some principles. First, pay respect and attention to the people and the context. Second, listen to what people have to say. Third, scaffold new or unfamiliar material and ideas to build on what is familiar for individuals. Fourth, develop materials that are meaningful and authentic. Fifth, challenging individual's thinking should be a slow, kind, and deliberate process that is reciprocal and mutually beneficial to everyone. Sixth, learning is even more powerful when the instructor and students develop a community.

### **Pedagogical Adaptation**

I am familiar with working in different contexts, including different languages and pedagogical experiences. I find, that for many people, patience, a positive attitude, a sense of humor, and kindness can go a long way in bridging perspectives and understandings. Moreover, I also find

that many people are willing to reciprocate these sentiments. I will work with my students and contacts to try to provide classroom materials in both languages where appropriate. Furthermore, my widespread use of cooperative learning experiences and student-centered classroom strategies will allow students to help one another when language might be an issue. Students will be able to choose from a variety of activities and strategies to help identify the learning experiences that meet their skills and abilities. I have worked with students for whom English is not their first language, and the students and I always found a way to learn together. We built rapport, communicated, and continuously worked together. Finally, the issue of language is reciprocal because working with Bosnian students will help my Bosnia/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) language skills. I am currently trying to find and enroll in a Bosnia/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) language course. I know how important it is to have some command of the local language and, out of respect, for the host country, I want to come to the country speaking some of the language and continue to learn more while I am in Bosnia. Knowing some of the language opens so many doors and provides more authentic experiences as a cultural ambassador.

### **Professional Impact**

I have demonstrated a deep and genuine commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina as evident by my previous work in the country. I have self-funded all of my trips. I have learned a lot, but I need a long-term experience in the country. Relationships take time to develop and the Fulbright program would give me the time and resources to develop those connections and build trust. An immersive experience, accessible through the support of the Fulbright program, would be the ultimate demonstration of my long-term commitment to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and allow me to establish relationships with peers, colleagues and communities. My impact and connection will extend beyond a term as a Fulbright scholar because I care deeply about Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people. I plan to continue my work in Bosnia and Herzegovina for many years to come. I will continue to work with colleagues and communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina through future projects, workshops, and research. In the future, I plan to conduct research and publish those findings in the form of journal articles, presentations, and book chapters.

### **Expected Outcomes**

The Fulbright program strives to enhance mutual understanding and develop relationships. I plan to use the Fulbright opportunity to develop new relationships. The learning will be reciprocal while I am in the country. The students will teach me as much as I teach them. They will take those lessons with them. Upon my return home, I expect to be able to immediately share the lessons I learn in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the students I work with at Keene State College. This is especially important considering that I am now a faculty member in both the Education department and Keene State College's renowned Holocaust and Genocide Studies department. The lessons I learn in Bosnia and Herzegovina will become part of my Social Studies methods courses and Comparative Education course. Many of my students will go on to become secondary social studies teachers. I will teach my students about Bosnia and Herzegovina and in turn, they will carry that information into their classrooms and share it with their students. The potential exponential magnitude of this endeavor is significant and well worth the effort.