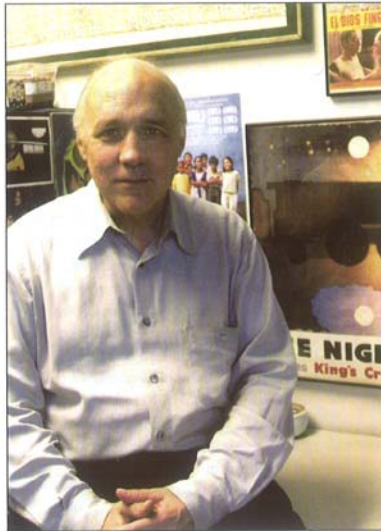


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In 1946, Sen. J. William Fulbright, who had been greatly affected by the tragedy of World War II, introduced legislation to establish the Fulbright Scholar Program. His bill easily passed and later Fulbright said, "International education exchange is the most significant current project designed to continue the process of humanizing mankind to the point, we would hope, that nations can learn to live in peace." Since then, more than 250,000 Fulbright Scholarships have been awarded to United States professors and institutions and to visiting scholars from other countries.



English Professor Jim Aubrey spent time in India as a Fulbright Scholar teaching English to first-generation college students at a rural university short on modern technology.

Off the beaten path

Jim Aubrey, a professor of English at Metro State for 16 years, grew interested in Indian culture after reading the powerful novel

laptop and were soon enjoying its ability to function as a small theatre. "I ran a little film festival on Saturdays from the DVDs I brought with me."

Immersion in Indian culture provided interesting extremes. "I was in the middle of a rural state. It's either rice fields or jungle," Aubrey says. He had to shower with a bucket and had a few visitors like frogs and geckos.

The assigned readings in English Aubrey taught in his Advanced Critical Theory class were a struggle for some students. "The students were first-generation college students. Our university catered to the tribals, formerly called 'the Untouchables,'" Aubrey explains. "They're taking English to improve their English, not because they are already fluent."

Now more conscious than before of the

value of cultural exploration, Aubrey would like to give Metro State freshmen—even if they're not English majors—exposure to other literatures. "You are doing

armchair traveling and a novel will take you to a different reality."

Contrasts and curiosity

Robin Quizar, an English professor with Metro State since 1991, found the teaching equation at Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic quite different from what she was accustomed to here: they had no exams and few course papers, but students gave general oral presentations at the end of each semester. These contrasts in expectations made Quizar aware of Metro State's stringency and student accountability. "We are much more demanding at our university level than the Czech Republic," she says.

A common thread Fulbright Scholars bring back a wider world

By Laura Grolla

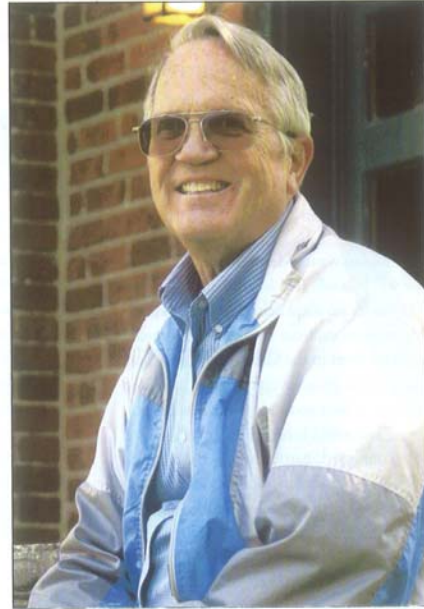
Last year, three Metro State professors were awarded the much-coveted Fulbright to lecture and do research at foreign universities. While their experiences in India, the Czech Republic and Swaziland differed greatly, the common thread is the insight they brought back to share with their students.

"The God of Small Things." He started learning Hindi and in 2006 was on his way to teach at Guru Ghasidas University in the town of Bilaspur in the state of Chhattisgarh, India on a Fulbright Scholarship.

Aubrey was a test case for the Fulbright Scholar Program: a professor sent to a rural college rather than a larger urban university. "I thought it would be interesting to go off the tourist path," he said.

Modern technology was rare. The English department had no computers, no copy machines and no books. Students had to duplicate class texts at a local copy center. "My laptop was a godsend. I had to print out my syllabus and handouts," he says. Students had not seen a

As a Fulbright Scholar, Computer Information Systems Professor Stuart Monroe was able to help get three local businesses started despite a tribal system in Swaziland that is resistant to change.



What the Czech educational system excels in is teaching English—a fact that Quizar initiated her Fulbright Scholarship to study. Quizar's purpose in learning about Czech teaching methods was to help her Metro State students who plan to be teachers. Quizar sees in children's natural curiosity a way to help them learn. "Students find other countries and languages fascinating."

Quizar returned with an appreciation for Metro State's philosophy of "new blood" and diversity after experiencing the enclosed university system in the Czech Republic, where "good students expect to stay teaching in the university they go to. It's good for me to find out how other people do things and what's good about our systems. That makes the Fulbright more important."



English Professor Robin Quizar became more intimately aware of the "stringency and student accountability" at American colleges as a Fulbright Scholar assigned to study and teach in the Czech Republic.

Metro State's globalization initiative is "where the future lies," says Quizar. "Even if you stay in Denver you are more and more impacted by other countries...because our leaders are interested in bringing in international business."

Honoring the culture

Sharing business expertise was Stuart Monroe's intent when he applied for a Fulbright award. A professor of computer information systems, Monroe "wanted to go to Africa. And they were looking for someone to do entrepreneurship," he says. "I assumed they were ready to take the leap."

But Monroe came up against the reality of a completely different value system, a culture at odds with the entrepreneurial principles of innovation and independence he'd been recruited by the University of Swaziland to teach.

"The country is very poor. No middle class. Either they're very rich and politically connected or very poor," he says. "If you want to start a small business the only source of funding is the government."

This meant appealing to a tribal system resistant to change. After several months of getting "yeses" in staff meetings, then impossible delays, Monroe learned to work through a few key allies behind the scenes. "That was the only way to get things done."

Monroe was able to get three local businesses started. In the process he

unearthed an underlying value system that kept the tribal people entrenched, leaving them unable to recognize—let alone act upon—small business opportunities.

"The families are extended families. They all support each other," Monroe explains. One working couple can support a wide network of relatives, creating a safety net of sorts. This—combined with governmental hurdles—results in little reward for taking initiative.

"Now I can bring experiences into the classroom and emphasize the differences in culture and how critical that is," says Monroe. "If you don't honor the culture, you are not going to do business. Period."

As Monroe considers Metro State's globalization initiative he says, "If we're going to move Metro into really doing this, we must not just teach the business part. We have to address the hard part, which is the cultural difference. We must spend as much time on the cultural issues as the business issues."