History professor presents as Fulbright lecturer in Japan

For many Fulbright fellowship grantees, the extensive application process can be a daunting task. But for Robert J. McMahon, it all took one phone call.

McMahon, Ralph D. Mershon Professor of History at Ohio State, was contacted directly by the Director of the American Studies Summer Seminar at Nanyang University in Singapore and extended an invitation to be a Fulbright lecturer and keynote speaker at the event titled “Toward a Common Memory of World War II.”

In July McMahon traveled to Japan to speak in front of an audience of faculty members and students from Nanyang University and around Asia. McMahon was one of three keynote speakers, and gave an address titled “The Pearl Harbor Attack and the Origins of the Pacific War: Contested Memories in the United States and Japan.”

During his time in Japan, he also lectured at Kyoto, Hokkaido and Osaka universities, speaking about the Cold War and U.S. foreign relations.

The Fulbright experience has had a very positive impact in the intellectual stimulation that came out of it,” says McMahon. “I made contacts with Japanese faculty members and students, as well as faculty and graduate students from other Asian countries.”

McMahon says he met at least one Japanese graduate student who has since applied to a PhD program at Ohio State.

McMahon has been at Ohio State since 2005. He previously taught at the University of Florida (1982-2005) and has held visiting positions at the University of Virginia and University College Dublin. He completed his graduate work at the University of Connecticut.

Ohio State receives $1.1 million grant to support research, outreach in Senegal

The Ohio State University’s College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences will partner with Senegal’s Universite Gaston Berger (UGB) to build up the African nation’s agricultural research and outreach capacities, thanks to a $1.1 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development and Higher Education for Development.

Last year, Ohio State successfully competed for a $50,000 Africa-U.S. Higher Education Initiative planning grant. The award provides support for two years, with the possibility of an additional three-year renewal. According to the grantee agencies, the projects seek to “maximize the resources of U.S. institutions while placing African universities in the lead to capitalize on their on-ground knowledge, proximity to the challenges, and build their own capacity to better address these challenges.”

Ohio State will work with the newly created agricultural science program at UGB in training its 17-member faculty on research and outreach activities based on the college’s land-grant model. Ultimately, UGB will establish an experiment station and outreach networks similar to the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) and OSU Extension, respectively.

“We’ve had a relationship with UGB for the past few years, traveling there to deliver courses and helping them set up their agricultural programs,” said principal investigator and project co-director Richard Dick, Ohio Eminent Scholar in Soil Microbial Ecology and professor in the School of Environment and Natural Resources. “This grant will allow us to formalize and actively collaborate with UGB in the formation of new degree programs and a new agricultural research and extension center.”

Specifically, the Ohio State-UGB-project calls for the creation of an agro-ecology program at the college’s world-class best places to live. The alpine city’s pristine environment, its abundant outdoor activities and scenic beauty, but it wasn’t just the mountain views, artistic history and negligible crime rate that drew Leah Batstone across the Atlantic last November. The current president of the Ohio State Civic Leadership Council went to Zürich for a close look at some of Europe’s foremost forward-thinking social policy — specifically housing and immigration policies and how they relate to the political balance of power.

“One of their social policies is so progressive,” she concluded. “But it makes some sense.”

Batstone landed in Switzerland with a policy survey and several contacts at the University of Zurich. Some of the initial responses to her questions about housing and immigration surprised her.

“If you ask people who are in housing policy and local government, they’ll tell you there’s not enough housing,” she said.

The crux is particularly noticeable in the city center, where highly skilled, highly paid German immigrants are moving into some of the nicest homes.

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But Batstone had something else in mind.

“In a country poised to ban minutes from the alpine timeline — a law that passed shortly after Batstone returned to Ohio — how does the Swiss government integrate immigrants make their voices heard?”

She found that perspective at the “refugee café,” a gathering spot she described as “a hole-in-the-wall restaurant in this kind of urban hole in the city center, where highly skilled, highly paid German immigrants are moving into some of the nicest homes.”

In addition to stunting the growth of cultural “villages” in and around Zürich, Batstone said the housing situation seemed to prevent immigrants from creating a solidified identity that could attract the attention of lawmakers. It also appeared to solidify an attitude of indifference among the Swiss to the struggles of people who take refuge in their land and of the Swiss population.

“There’s an idea that, it doesn’t matter what the issues are in Iran, that doesn’t make me responsible,” she said.

“I don’t think that’s right. I think we have a responsibility to follow human beings, to serve and protect.”

“I have to say, I felt prouder to be an American when I came back than when I left,” she said.

As the next step in her research, Batstone plans to gather similar information about housing policy and immigration in Chicago, a city with similar population density holding a similar geographical footprint to Zurich. In Chicago, she expects to find more opportunity for "Swiss" immigrant communities with a greater voice in local politics and culture.

Her research currently is part of an independent study with political science professor emeritus William McMahon, and it could become the basis for a senior thesis next year.

A music and political science double major, Batstone is interested in the areas where public life and culture intersect.

John Glenn Civic Leadership Council president studies housing policy and immigration in Switzerland

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Students learning across the globe

Emily Craycraft

I went abroad with a group of Honors & Scholars students who had an interest in fair trade and development. We took an international studies class on campus to learn about the history of Nicaragua, its economy, and politics, and we worked with Global Gallery in Columbus to help spread the word about fair trade awareness. The class spent 10 days in Nicaragua talking with cooperatives, NGOs and other community groups that were working to make better lives for those around them. My study abroad experience was something that I will never forget. This program really opened my eyes to some of the issues that are at play within developing countries. Seeing the shanty town I was in for 10 days every day was truly inspiring and my worldview will never be the same.

Emily is a junior majoring in Spanish and English.

Brian Rinz

My summer quarter experience in Russia was nothing like I could have expected. I knew I would be practicing Russian and learning the culture, but I could never have truly prepared for how much I would learn. I knew that I needed to study abroad because Russia is a language that you need to experience first hand, due to its difficulty. I truly wanted to study in Moscow, a city that topped my most wanted travel destinations list for years. As time went by, I left assimilated into the culture, even though I hadn’t been there very long. This study abroad program was certainly a challenge, but one that is certainly worth accepting. I am far from fluent, but my study abroad experience has me already planning the next time I will return.

Brian is a junior majoring in international studies and Russian.

Global Strategies (continued from page 1)

Global Scholar Profile: Baleshka Brenes Mayorga

Home city and country: Managua, Nicaragua

Undergraduate degree: I have a bachelor degree in Socioeconomic Development and Management from the Agroecosystem Management Program. I have a master degree in Entomology and Nematology.

What are your research/specialty interests? I work on a project with entomopathogenic nematodes and also part of my time working on nematodes and also part of my time working on nematodes and nematode parasites. I also work on a project with entomopathogenic nematodes and also part of my time working on nematodes and nematode parasites.

What have you been doing at Ohio State as part of your exchange visit? I have worked on a project with entomopathogenic nematodes and also part of my time working on nematodes and nematode parasites.

What has most surprised you about your experience in Wooster? The warmth of the people in Wooster, and how welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been.

What has been the hardest thing to adapt to since you came to Wooster? The warmth of the people in Wooster, and how welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been. The simple living and welcoming everyone has been.

What is the most fun/exciting thing you’ve done since you’ve arrived at Ohio State? The most exciting thing has been to play in the snow. Before coming to Wooster I had never seen snow! Shoveling was very fun and I just think to myself that my Christmas gift was snow. I hope I don’t change my mind as a couple of months.

Baleshka Brenes Mayorga

How has the Office of International Affairs helped you adapt to campus life? The Office of International Affairs has been very supportive and tries to involve the international community in different events. I participated in the 5th annual International Scholar Research Exposition and I got the chance to share with others the work I have done during this time.