

## Stockton Student Exchange with European University Cyprus Earns Funding from Fulbright

Alumna Ciara Barrick Setting Up Program; Naijasia Thomas Will Tutor English as Exchange Student on Mediterranean Island Nation

***For Immediate Release with photos attached, captions below***

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**Galloway, N.J.** - Moving from South Jersey's Pinelands to an island nation of pines, cedars and cypresses may require some translation, but a new cultural exchange program with European University Cyprus (EUC) will enable Stockton students to be immersed in another culture while teaching English.

Ciara Barrick, who was awarded a Fulbright to teach English at EUC after graduating from Stockton in 2015, teamed with David Roessel, professor of Greek Language and Literature, to apply for a Fulbright Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund award to set up the exchange.

The Ocean City, N.J. resident's application was one of only 51 funded by the State Department, out of the more than 800 submitted by Fulbright alumni. It's also a first for the Republic of Cyprus, the third largest island in the Mediterranean.

Barrick will be working in Cyprus this spring to set up the program, in which one Stockton English tutor will work with EUC students, who come from variety of countries. A student from there will help set up a translation initiative at Stockton.

Naijasia Thomas, a junior majoring in Literature and minoring in Global Studies, will be the first exchange student next fall. Thomas had never traveled outside the United States before she went to Cyprus with other students last March, and it inspired her. She says she now plans to pursue a graduate degree in international relations after her tutoring stint.

"I'm from Newark, N.J., where it's not common for people go to college," Thomas said. "Being from a rough neighborhood and being able to see the world and do well in school makes me distinctive."

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Thomas is very active on campus, serving as vice president of the Stockton chapter of the NAACP and an Admissions student ambassador. She writes for Her Campus Stockton and also works in the School of Arts and Humanities (ARHU).

"I'd just like to say that I came to Stockton through the Educational Opportunity Fund program and they really helped me become the person I am today," Thomas said. She is the secretary of the Alliance of EOF Students of N.J.

She met Barrick last spring in Cyprus. "Right away I knew she was going to be someone I looked up to," she said. "She's incredibly knowledgeable and makes me want to work harder."

"It is a wonderful story of what happens when one successful former Stockton student gets to play mentor for a current successful Stockton student," said Roessel.

Barrick said Thomas and future exchange students will enroll in EUC classes and also be responsible for tutoring student assignments, much as Stockton Writing Center tutors do now. Thomas has already taken a practicum for English tutors through the Writing Center to prepare.

"On the other side of the exchange, an EUC student will travel to the states to work in ARHU's developing translation workshop under Dr. David Roessel and Dean Lisa Honaker," Barrick explained. "We hope that one possible result from this work would be student-submitted translations to 'Stockpot,' Stockton's student-run literary publication. EUC has a vibrant community of translators and emphasizes linguistic study in their program; we are hoping to bring that to Stockton."

"My Fulbright gave me the opportunity to teach, write, travel, and experience an extremely multifaceted culture very different from my own," Barrick said. "The experience could not have been possible without the opportunities I was afforded at Stockton University. The work I did under Dean Honaker, Dr. David Roessel and Dr. Tom Papademetriou (director of the Pappas Center for Hellenic Studies and professor of History), as well as the tutoring experience I gained from Pam Cross at the Writing Center, contributed to what made me a competitive applicant for the Fulbright. Without the various projects, travel opportunities and funding support I received from ARHU and the Friends of Hellenic Studies Program, I would not have been able to compete, nor would I have been prepared for the challenges I met once I arrived in Cyprus."

The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. It was founded by the late U.S. Sen. J. William Fulbright in 1946 and now operates in over 150 countries.

"In this day and age, it is critical that our Stockton students experience global education and expand their own horizons and understanding of the world. This is emphasized by the president's initiative for 2020 Global Engagement, as well as our Hellenic Studies Center. We are pleased the 'lines' are being drawn between Cyprus and New Jersey," said Papademetriou.

Barrick's interactions with EUC began in 2013, when she and Honaker, Roessel and Dean Robert Gregg of the School of General Studies traveled to Cyprus to begin planning what would become the June 2015 conference, "Between Lines: Culture and Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean."

Now 23, Barrick has just applied to graduate school, where she plans to get a Ph.D. in English Literature with a focus on modernism and postcolonial studies. ***-more-***

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“Our students are great ambassadors for Stockton and the School of Arts and Humanities,” said Honaker. “They have really helped us foster good relationships with international partners and the travel and educational opportunities these relationships create change our students’ lives. So it’s wins all around.”

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CAPTIONS FOR SUBMITTED PHOTOS:

Naijasia Thomas in northern Cyprus on a visit in March 2016.

Ciara Barrick – 2016 headshot

Stockton students at the Abbey of Bellapais in Kyrenia, left to right: Julie Eller, Phoebe Gruetter and Naijasia Thomas.

During her 2015 Fulbright year in Cyprus, Ciara Barrick and her friend, Hayden Pendergrass , met with the priest of The Church of the Holy Cross of Ayiasmati.