

Stockton Student Wins Fulbright Award

Barbara Fisher Wins Prestigious Award; Will Work in Czech Republic

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Galloway Township, NJ – Barbara Fisher, an Honors Physics student at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, has won a J. William Fulbright U.S. Student scholarship, one of the academic world's most prestigious awards.

Fisher, who graduates from Stockton in May, will be an English teaching assistant in the Czech Republic in the 2013-14 academic year.

"The Stockton College community is very pleased that Barbara Fisher's hard work has been recognized by the Fulbright program," said President Herman J. Saatkamp. "We congratulate her and extend our thanks to her faculty advisors, who helped Ms. Fisher achieve her ambitious goal."

"This is extremely exciting news, and I am not aware of any previous Stockton student who has received a Fulbright," said Dr. Harvey Kesselman, provost and executive vice president of the college.

"From the moment I learned about the Fulbright Commission, I knew this was an opportunity I could not let pass me by," said Fisher, a 22-year-old Westville, NJ resident. "I would not be a scholar without the incredible support of my Fulbright Campus Advisor, Honors Program, Physics Department, Service Learning Department, Grants Office and the amazing people I call my friends and family."

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“This opportunity will help me to reach my ultimate dream of becoming an international citizen, researcher and most importantly, a teacher,” Fisher added. “I could not be happier.”

“I really want to also thank all of my teachers who have inspired me as well, because it really has been everyone who made me who I am today,” she said.

History Professor Robert Nichols, the Fulbright Program advisor for Stockton, “guided me through the process,” Fisher said, while Professor Lisa Rosner, director of the Honors program, “has always seen my potential, even when I could not.” She also credited Associate Professor Fang Liu, the head of the Physics Department, as her mentor and advisor, and Professor Yitzhak Sharon, senior Physics professor, with encouraging her not to give up.

Beth Olsen, director of Grants, helped with the interview process and applying for funding, Fisher said.

Fisher said she wants to teach in the Czech Republic to try to determine why its students are now out-performing American students in subjects such as Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics.

“Is it the school structure? The culture? Or something deeper?” she asked. She said this is a change from how Czech students scored under Communist regimes.

Fisher already knows she’ll like living there. The Czech Republic “was the only place that could cure my homesickness, when I was studying abroad,” she said. “I love the people, the scenery and the culture. There are no words that could possibly describe the way the country has changed my view of the world.” She said she does not yet know where in the Czech Republic she will be working.

Sponsored by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Fulbright Program was founded by the late U.S. Sen. J. William Fulbright in 1946 and now operates in 155 countries. The program provides funding for students, scholars, teachers, and professionals for graduate study, advanced research, university teaching, and teaching in elementary and secondary schools.

Fisher said her scholarship “will cover travel and living expenses, with a small stipend that will allow me to afford day-to-day life.”

“Barb’s a wonderful student, and her previous awards include a Presidential Fellowship and an REU at Duke University,” said Dr. Rosner, a History professor and director of the college’s Honors program. The Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program supports active research participation by

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undergraduate students in any of the areas of research funded by the National Science Foundation.

Fisher has been accepted into two graduate programs but said she expects to defer admission to grad school until after her Fulbright teaching experience.

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