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UM Graduate Student Receives Fulbright Award

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UM Graduate Student Receives Fulbright Award

Higher education major Maria Mulrooney to teach in South Africa

MAY 15, 2018 BY KATHLEEN MURPHY



Maria Mulrooney

OXFORD, Miss. – Maria Mulrooney, a **University of Mississippi** graduate student in higher education, has been selected for the prestigious Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program to serve as an English teaching assistant in South Africa next year.

Mulrooney is among more than 800 students chosen for the program nationwide. The Palm City, Florida, native was selected based on her essay and academic achievements, as well as a record of service and leadership in education.

"I will teach English to either high school or college students for 25 hours a week and help the teachers with instruction and supplemental materials," she said. "I can also meet with students after class and help them with language development.

"Then, in my spare time I can volunteer through other organizations."

Mulrooney will learn exactly where she will teach in during a weeklong orientation in June in Washington, D.C. She plans to move to South Africa in January 2019 to begin the yearlong program.

"I've worked with Maria in two classes," said John Holleman, director of graduate studies at the **UM School of Education**. "I think the class that created her awareness of the Fulbright program was Cultural Context in Education. She contributed a lot to the class. She's a wonderful student."

Mulrooney has a lifelong interest in teaching. As an undergraduate at the University of Central Florida, where she earned a bachelor's degree in secondary education, she taught English as a second language to international students at a local community college.

"It was fun to work with people who were learning English and help them develop language skills," she said. "So, that made me interested in going abroad, but I knew I wanted to go into higher education, too, so I wanted to get my master's first.

"The whole time I've been attending Ole Miss, I've been looking at different teaching abroad programs."

The Fulbright program was established in 1946 by the U.S. State Department with the intentions of building lasting connections between the people of the United States and other countries. The Fulbright Program has given more than 380,000 students, scholars, teachers, artists and scientists opportunities to study, teach and conduct research, exchange ideas and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

Mulrooney plans to teach in K-12 schools in Florida when she returns from South Africa.

"Learning about different cultures and people's lives is something I love to do," Mulrooney said. "It's only a year, so I think it's just the perfect time to learn about a whole new culture that I have never experienced."

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