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5-3-2013

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## **Barbara Burke Receives Fulbright Award**

*Summary: Barbara Burke, associate professor of communication, media, and rhetoric, has been awarded a Fulbright Scholar grant for the 2013-14 academic year.*

(May 3, 2013)-Barbara Burke, associate professor of communication, media, and rhetoric, has been awarded a Fulbright Scholar grant to lecture and conduct research at [Vidzemes Augstskola](#) (VIA) in Latvia during the 2013-14 academic year. During this time she will teach courses in media literacy and visual journalism and will speak at guest and community lectures. Burke is one of approximately 1,100 United States faculty and professionals who will travel abroad through the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program in 2013-14.

As a Fulbright Scholar and Media Specialist, Burke will spend more than six months in Latvia, teaching courses from late January until mid-July 2014. She was initially attracted to this placement site because of its complex political history. Referring to the Baltic nation as “an intellectually interesting place to go and a puzzle [she] want[s] to solve,” Burke notes how eager she is not only to visit the country, but also to expand her international teaching and research agenda.

Burke is interested in addressing two primary research questions during her tenure abroad. She believes “entertainment and news media work together to tell stories about the people who live [in a region],” so she will explore ways in which 21st century Latvian media stories contribute to the creation of a national identity. She will also examine media consumed by the country’s Russian-speaking population and the ways in which it parallels Spanish-language media in the United States.

The notion of cultural identity is a current focus of VIA, the institution where Burke will be teaching and studying. A higher education and scientific research center whose mission is to foster the development of the Vidzeme Region, VIA works with these northern provinces to respond to regional needs. According to Burke, as a small, focused, and forward-thinking college with a growing interest in sustainability, “it has a story similar to Morris’s story, which makes it a good fit for [her.]”

The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the United States government and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Recipients of Fulbright grants are selected on the basis of academic or professional achievement as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields. The program operates in over 155 countries worldwide.

“I feel like I have an opportunity to become a better scholar,” says Burke. “Not many people get to be a part of this program. It’s hard to describe how special this is.”

The primary source of funding for the Fulbright Program is an annual appropriation made by the U.S. Congress to the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Participating governments and host institutions, corporations and foundations in foreign countries and in the United States also provide direct and indirect support.

Additional information is available [online](#).

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