

# Expanding Global Outreach and Impact

## Student teaching expands to Uganda

Early childhood education major Staci Cordery always dreamed of going to Africa, but she didn't know how she would get there. The former teacher's assistant once saw a movie about teaching at an international school, which planted the idea in her head, but when a Bagwell College of Education recruiter came around with the opportunity to student teach in Uganda, Cordery balked.

"I was scared," she admitted. "Originally I talked myself out of going because it was completely out of my comfort zone."

Fast forward to spring 2013, and Cordery was one of three student teachers returning from Uganda – the college's first student teachers in that country.

"When the recruiters came back around, I decided to go," Cordery said. "It was so worth it!"

Teaching in the International School of Uganda, Cordery was joined by fellow teacher candidates Natalie Coley and Pat Jackson. Coley and Jackson were both offered teaching jobs in Uganda following their study abroad program, and Coley returned to

Uganda in August to teach at another international school.

"It was an overwhelming experience," Coley said. "As far as diversity goes, I have never seen anything like that before."

Attended by the children of government employees, diplomats, business leaders and missionaries, the international school gave the student teachers an opportunity to work with children from 50 countries, including students with limited English language skills.

"One thing I will take from this experience into my classroom is the desire to create a dominant culture-free classroom," Cordery said. "This school

had such a sense of community among all the students. In that kind of environment, students can focus more on learning skills than cultural skills because you take away the need to assimilate into the dominant culture, which can limit students' academic success."

As part of a re-entry seminar in April, Cordery, Jackson and Coley met with soon-to-be student teachers T. Brittney Hampton and Amanda Low.

The first piece of advice Hampton and Low received about traveling to Uganda: bring a mirror.

"I spent four months without a mirror to see what my outfit looked like," Coley joked. "On a more serious note, be open-minded. Try everything."

Cordery and Coley are two of about 200 student teachers who have studied abroad in China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Uganda and Belize. The Bagwell College also has a summer program for teaching English in Seoul, South Korea, where the college has sent 40 teacher candidates since 2008.

"It is important to give teacher candidates choices about host countries around the world where they will spend a semester student teaching," said Dr. Sandra Bryan, the Bagwell College's director of global engagement. "Uganda



is the first country in Africa where we are student teaching. Student interest in Africa led to the partnership between KSU and the International School of Uganda, with support from long-time KSU partner, Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda."

In addition to the experience and knowledge gained by their time overseas, teacher candidates are also eligible for global engagement certification, a recognition program that began in 2009. To date, 135 student teachers have received global certification.



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