



# SIUE's Holt receives U.S. State Department Grant

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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Marc Hohlt, a senior chemistry and international studies double major, will spend the spring 2019 semester in Heredia, Costa Rica thanks in part to a generous grant from the Benjamin Gilman Scholarship Fund through the U.S. State Department.

"As a Gilman recipient, I look forward to helping others realize their dreams of international studies," Hohlt said.

Hohlt, of Greenville, will be studying conservation biology and Spanish at Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica in Heredia as he prepares for a career in global development. "In Costa Rica, I found the perfect place to combine my study of the Spanish language and sustainable development practices," he said. "Costa Rica produces about 97 percent of its energy using solar, wind and hydro power. As a leader in green energy production, Costa Rica is a premier location to learn sustainable development methods."

To qualify for the Gilman Scholarship, students must submit two essays, one of which describes the service project they plan upon returning from the experience. Hohlt's service project detailed his plans to promote study abroad opportunities in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

"My goal is to be a global ambassador by sharing my insight, encouraging interaction between American students and their international counterparts, and promoting future students to participate in studying abroad," Hohlt said. "This will not only help to embrace multiculturalism at SIUE, but also provide a venue in which I will engage other members of the community interested in international education."

The key to his selection by the Gilman committee was the way he tied the Costa Rica sustainability experience directly to the promotional activities he plans, according to Kim Browning, SIUE study abroad advisor.

Hohlt will fully immerse himself in Costa Rica's culture by staying with a host family. "While the idea of a home stay is slightly intimidating, I believe it is the best way to truly immerse oneself in a new culture," he said. "With the guidance of my host family, I will further my understanding of the culture and increase my language skills on a daily basis."

As a non-traditional student, Hohlt was faced with the expense involved in studying abroad, but seized the opportunity of a once-in-a-lifetime experience. "I've wanted to study abroad since I began at SIUE," he acknowledged. "However, I had reached my student loan maximum and began paying for college out of my paychecks. So, it was a difficult decision to give up employment for an entire semester. The University Studies Abroad Consortium program has helped ease the burden by providing the homestay."

SIUE Study Abroad encourages every student receiving a Federal Pell Grant to apply for the Gilman Scholarship to help finance his or her study abroad experience.

"At SIUE, we value this scholarship support as our students who receive Pell Grants have the opportunity for an international educational experience that is otherwise out of reach," Browning said.

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River's rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 13,000.