

SIUE's Elford Awarded Fulbright Specialist for Second Time in Finland

by Kalli Collins

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EDWARDSVILLE – Marti Elford, PhD, instructor in Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's School of Education, Health and Human Behavior, has been named a Fulbright Specialist for the second time by Fulbright Finland for her contributions to special education teacher preparation.

“The competition is quite rigorous to be selected to join the Fulbright Specialist roster,” said Elford. “I am honored to be recognized for the contributions I have made to special education teacher preparation. Returning to Finland for a second time is a huge honor.”

During her first stint in Finland in 2018, Elford spent six weeks working alongside scholars, researchers and professors to integrate technology into teacher preparation programs. Her acceptance to return to Finland as a Fulbright Specialist will involve her being part of special education faculty on developing processes and protocol for distance supervision of teacher candidates.

“The two objectives of the project are to redesign the teaching practicum of our Special Education Teacher Diploma Program to incorporate elements of video-based instructor and peer-feedback and to redesign teaching practicum of the Special Education Teacher Diploma Program as a pilot for incorporating video-based instructor and peer-feedback to the teaching practicum of other teacher education programs at the University of Helsinki,” Elford explained.

In addition to working together with faculty members of the University of Helsinki Department of Education, she will also attend the Finnish Centre of Expertise in Education and Development, serve as an external expert to the Digitalization of Teacher Education Working Group, and attend meetings with individual faculty from the University of Helsinki and the University Teacher Training School.

“I am most excited about learning more about the teacher preparation program in Finnish Education,” said Elford. “As the landscape of education changes in the U.S., it is both important and wise to learn about successful programs around the world. We can discover so much about how to improve our system and our practices by learning from others.”

The School of Education, Health and Human Behavior prepares students in a wide range of fields, including public health, exercise science, nutrition, instructional technology, psychology, speech-language pathology and audiology, educational administration, and teaching and learning. Faculty members engage in leading-edge research, which enhances teaching and enriches the educational experience. The School supports the community through on-campus clinics, outreach to children and families, and a focused commitment to enhancing individual lives across the region.