Slama

cent graduates, graduate students and young professionals the opportunity to conduct research, study or teach in one of the 155 countries that the program operates.

About 8,000 grants are awarded annually, and about 1,600 of those grants are awarded to U.S. students. Slama is the fifth Fulbright student announced at UNL this spring.

Slama is learning more about her Fulbright assignment in the Czech Republic. Besides receiving valuable teaching experience, she expressed excitement at immersing herself in the Czech language and culture for an entire year.

'(My previous travel) has really helped with my understanding of different cultures," she said. "My focus has shifted toward really being involved with multi-cultural efforts and diversity — really grasping how all of it works."

EXPLORING HER ROOTS

The Fulbright year marks the third trip to the Czech Republic for Slama, the daughter of Mike and Sandy Slama of Tabor. Her first trip, taken with family members, came the summer after her 2008 graduation from Bon Homme High School.

That initial trip became a tribute to Mallory's ancestors.

"My older sister originally decided to take my grandma and grandpa over (to the Czech Republic), but he passed away before the summer came," she said. "My grandma made it a mission to take every grandchild over there to visit.'

Slama's family received an instant tour guide, as American music scholar Mike Cwach — a rural Yankton native — was living in the Czech Republic. Also of Czech heritage, Cwach took Slama to her grandfather's ancestral village. There, they met some of the last remaining Koupals, whose descendants now reside in the Yankton area.

'It was surreal," she said. "When I was over there, it felt like

Slama returned to the Czech Republic in July 2011, this time for academic reasons. She participated in a study-abroad program for three weeks and received her Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certification.

Before leaving for the Czech Republic, Slama took a five-week summer course, "Writing and Communities." She squeezed the course into her summer schedule and found it very influential for her trip abroad.

I actually missed the last day of class because I was on my plane trip over to the Czech Republic," she said.

Once she arrived overseas, Slama encountered a much different experience than her first trip as a teenager.

"The first time I was in the Czech Republic, it was more tourism type of stuff, more of the family and history," she said. "The second time was more involved with Czech culture, finding out the way that youth see things. It was

found a casual, personal interaction between teachers and stu-

"Here in the United States, going over to have a beer with one of your students is one of the last things that you would think about doing," she said.

'Over there (in the Czech Republic), drinking is something they do with every meal. Having a beer with your students is a common thing.'

Slama noted the three-week experience also cemented her professional calling.

"Besides teaching me culture, it really made more even more passionate about teaching," she said. "I knew that I wanted to go back for a year-long experience."

At that point, Slama began seriously thinking about making a Fulbright application.

The Fulbright never even entered my head until last year, during my study-abroad orientations when they gave me information," she said. "I knew that, even if I didn't get a Fulbright, I wanted some type of year-long teaching opportunity.'

THE THIRD TIME'S A CHARM

As she looks ahead to her Fulbright experience, Slama admits it will be challenging for a math education major to teach English particularly to foreign students in their own land. However, she will be able to draw upon last year's experiences.

"Last year, the classes I taught were high school and college ages. The youngest student was 16 and the oldest was 26," she said. "I know a few of my classmates (on the faculty) had students ranging in age from 14 and 15 to people in their 40s and

To Slama's surprise, even Czech students who spoke English wanted to take her class.

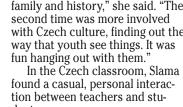
"They were excited because they learned British English, and most of them wanted to learn the differences between American and British," she said. "My students were interested in the American way of speaking. We use more slang.'

Slama's students also wanted to know more about the United

"It was a pretty fun experience," she said. "My classes were all Czech students. The other (classes) were part of an international summer school with students from all over the world. They were all interested in democracy and American cultural values."

The international students also showed interest in the Husker State where Slama attends college. "They know about

Nebraska," she said. However, the Czech students were stunned when Slama showed them a documentary about her hometown, directed by Tabor native Aesli Grandi. The production looked at life in the



and dancing. "When I showed them Aesli's documentary, they were shocked that we have this celebration of old-style Czech costumes and polka music," she said. "It's all the stuff that the young Czechs steer away from over there, but

small town of 400 and included

footage from Czech Days with its

traditional costumes, food, music

we love it here." In a similar way, Slama is fascinated at the rapid change in the Czech Republic.

When I first went there in 2008, it was a new experience for me," she said. "Then, when I returned (in 2011), I was shocked at how much had changed during that three-year period.

Slama credits it as part of the whirlwind change since the Czech Republic's birth Jan. 1, 1993. She looks forward to even great change when she returns later this year.

The way it was described by a (Czech) teenager, it's their 20th birthday as a country," she said. "They are still so very young (as a new nation) and trying to figure things out."

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf

U.S., China To Cooperate More On Cyber Threat

WASHINGTON (AP) — Asserting that cyberattacks against the U.S. don't come only from China, the U.S. and Chinese defense ministers said they agreed Monday to work together on cyber issues to avoid miscalculations that could lead to future crises.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said that since China and the United States have advanced cyber capabilities, it is important to de-

velop better cooperation.

"It's true, as the general pointed

out, that obviously there are other countries, actors, others involved in some of the attacks that both of our countries receive," Panetta told reporters after an afternoon meeting in the Pentagon marking the first visit by a Chinese defense minister to the U.S. since 2003. "But because the United States and

China have developed technological capabilities in this arena it's extremely important that we work together to develop ways to avoid any miscalculation or misperception that could lead to crisis in this area."

Gen. Liang Guanglie, China's minister of national defense, offered a vigorous defense of his country, saying through an interpreter that, "I can hardly agree with the proposition that the cy-berattacks directed to the United States are directly coming from China, ... We cannot attribute all of the cyberattacks (against the) United States to China.'





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