USU-Southwest Professor Awarded Fulbright Grant

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- USU Southwest

Dr. Shireen Keyl, assistant professor at Utah State University-Ephraim (USU), was awarded a Fulbright grant to teach and perform research in Jordan for one year at the University of Jordan in Amman.

Keyl will be teaching education and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses at the University of Jordan. A major focus of her research will be to examine the educational experiences of students who take EFL classes in higher education. She hopes to learn more about the cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge Jordanian students bring to EFL courses specifically and to institutions of higher education broadly. Keyl will learn what works for them, hoping to return and apply what she has learned.

At USU, Keyl teaches undergraduate and graduate level education courses, training current and future teachers, especially those within Utah. Her experience in Jordan will be critical for what she hopes to pass on to her students at USU. “By immersing myself in the educational practices within other cultures, I can take my experiences and pass them on to my students here, who will undoubtedly encounter students of their own who are from different cultures, and are many times refugees or migrants from the very cultures and countries I have had the opportunity to visit and learn from,” said Keyl.

With an extensive background in anthropology and education, Keyl has pursued the goal of ensuring all students can achieve success through education. Her education and research has taken her outside of the country before, spending a significant amount of time in Iran and Lebanon. While in Iran, Keyl’s research focused on non-governmental organizations that provided educational opportunities for marginalized groups, such as Afghan refugees. In Lebanon, Keyl discovered the greatest need for marginalized groups isn’t the basics, like food and shelter, but receiving quality education to improve their lives long term.

Vice Provost Rich Etchberger believes Keyl will have great success in Jordan, and hopes more USU regional campus faculty pursue these types of opportunities. “Shireen is a passionate educator with a strong background advocating for students, especially those who have been disenfranchised in some way,” said Etchberger. “She is an example of the great faculty we have throughout our regional campuses, and we are always looking for more ways to empower them through these types of experiences.”

Keyl departs for Jordan in August. Upon her return in June 2019, she will continue as a faculty member of USU’s School of Teacher and Education Leadership, where she is on track for tenure.

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