



UConn Wins U.S. Dept. of State Grant for Sports Exchange Program with South Africa

Oct. 2, 2013

For More Information:

Roy Pietro, UConn Office of Global Affairs
(860) 486-4252 or Roy.Pietro@uconn.edu

STORRS, Conn. – For the second year in a row, the University of Connecticut has been awarded \$225,000 for an International Sports Programming Initiative exchange grant by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) SportsUnited Division.

The grant will fund the *Sports for Social Change* two-way exchange program, aimed at promoting collaboration, knowledge sharing and mutual understanding between the U.S. and South Africa. The program increases the professional capacity of individuals who design and manage community or school youth sport programs that function as tools for fostering positive social change.

The University of Connecticut’s Global Training and Development Institute (GTDI), located in the UConn Office of Global Affairs, developed and piloted the *Sports for Social Change* program in Hong Kong in 2012. The success of the pilot program led to the development of a similar program for South Africa.

Roy Pietro, Principal Investigator for the program and Director of the GTDI, explains that what makes this program unique is its focus on the “role of youth sports as a significant factor in promoting educational success, psychosocial development, tolerance, cross-cultural understanding and conflict resolution.”

The program serves as both an educational and cultural exchange, which will enable American and South African youth sport administrators to share their experiences, challenges and successes in managing and organizing youth sport programs.

In the Hong Kong pilot program, job shadowing was one of the favorite aspects for participants. Participants noted it provided an opportunity to interact with their American peers and share the sports culture of their home country. It also allowed them to observe new methods and applications, which could be adapted for their communities back home.

Acknowledging the importance of these interactions, the GTDI, working closely with UConn's Husky Sport program, led by Sport Management faculty Dr. Jennifer Bruening, has incorporated a significant amount of job shadowing into the South Africa *Sports for Social Change* program.

UConn is also partnering with the University of Western Cape (UWC), in Capetown, South Africa to deliver this program. Professor Marion Keim leads the UWC's award winning Centre of Excellence for Sports Science and Development (ICESSD), which is internationally renowned for its work in the sport for peace and community development arena.

The ICESSD, in coordination with UConn and the U.S. Embassy in South Africa, will select 10 youth sport administrators in an open, merit-based competitive process. The South African participants will work as youth sport program administrators in communities and schools with predetermined host organizations.

They will spend two weeks in the U.S. job shadowing and participating in workshops on the emerging practice of sport-based youth development in the U.S. As the exchange program is reciprocal in nature, 10 American youth sport administrators from the host organizations will travel to South Africa to participate in a two-week program concerning sport for peace and community development.

The American participants will then collaborate with their South African counterparts to develop and launch sport-based youth development projects for hundreds of youth throughout South Africa, funded by the grant.

This two-way educational and cultural exchange program is sponsored by and funded through the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) SportsUnited Division.

Online:

UConn Global Training and Development Institute: <http://global.uconn.edu/about/gtdi/>

ECA SportsUnited programs: <http://exchanges.state.gov/sports>

####