Sacramento State professor snags another Fulbright

Louis Downs is in demand.

The Sacramento State associate professor of Counselor Education just landed another Fulbright Scholarship and is bound May 18 for Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Java. He will remain there until the end of June, teaching his Asian counterparts for a six-week stint, building a trauma and crisis curriculum for the Counselor Education Department, and developing and training a national disaster mental health relief team.

“Crisis counseling is a big-demand field,” he says, “what with the number of natural disasters the last few years in the region.” Factor in Downs’ popularity in Asia, and his latest assignment comes as no surprise.

“I spent five weeks on a fellowship late last summer working with gifted students in Malaysia after completing my second Fulbright in Thailand,” Downs says. “The prime minister’s wife was looking for an expert in education and counseling with gifted children, so I was asked to work with counselors in the national school for the gifted.”

During a Malaysian national conference where he was the keynote speaker, Downs was recruited by the faculty and staff of the Indonesian university. They wanted him to share his 18 years of practical experience as a counselor and clinician dealing with traumatized children. The university specified him by name to the U.S. State Department, which dispenses Fulbright scholarships, and he was approved even though he had used up his eligibility for senior specialist assignments.

Downs has an impressive track record in the region. In 2007, he received a Fulbright Fellowship to consult and train counselors and counselor educators in Malaysia. He has spent time in Sichuan Province, China, teaching and clinically supervising counselors working with survivors of the May 2008 earthquake. He presented workshops across Malaysia in January 2009. He was a consultant for two years to the Qing-jian Counseling Center in Shanghai, China, and is currently the clinical adviser to the Turning Point Integrated Wellness Center in Puchong, Malaysia, and Project 512 in Deyang, China.
Downs relates to children in large part because of the problems he encountered during his formative years. “I came to my profession and teaching late because it took some time for me to sort out my life,” he says. He’s no less committed to making up for lost time. At a time when other professors are pondering retirement, he remains very engaged in helping others sort out their lives.

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