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English Major Wins Winthrop's First Student Fulbright Scholarship

Winthrop University

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English Major Wins Winthrop's First Student Fulbright Scholarship

Quick Facts

- Rachel Burns is a senior from Colorado Springs majoring in English.
- She is Winthrop's first student Fulbright Scholarship winner.
- She'll spend part of 2017 teaching English to students in South Africa.



Rachel Burns in Pompeii

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA — For six months, **Rachel Burns** had no idea what to say when people asked her, “So what are you doing after graduation?”

Now, the English major from Colorado Springs, Colorado, has that question locked down: she will spend January-September 2017 in **South Africa**, teaching English to local students.

She is the **first student Fulbright Scholarship winner** for Winthrop University, applying for the prestigious honor through the **Office of Nationally Competitive Awards (ONCA)** on campus. Of the

97 people who have applied for Fulbrights to South Africa this year, only 14 have been awarded the scholarship thus far.

“When I finally saw that email in my inbox marked ‘Fulbright Application Status’ and I opened it to see the words ‘Congratulations!’ I couldn’t stop smiling,” Burns said. “I still can’t. Yes, the Fulbright is an absolute honor, but more than that, it affirms the work I have pushed myself towards over the past four years.”

Going abroad is nothing new for Burns—she previously spent a semester in London at Kingston University—but South Africa represents new terrain for her. She intentionally chose to apply to complete her Fulbright there because “it represents a conflict she has had within herself.”

“I come from a biracial background, and it has become more important to me over the years to examine my relationship to my personal history,” Burns said. “My family is not South African, but the country’s struggles to accept diversity and work towards acceptance resonate with me.”

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