



LOOKING FOR 'TRUTH' IN TANZANIA

DOCTORAL STUDENT EARNS FULBRIGHT-HAYS
FELLOWSHIP FOR RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL
SCHOLARLY COLLABORATION

>> Elizabeth Wharton and Nicole Geary

WHEN AMY JAMISON's aunt and uncle invited her on a trip to Tanzania in 2000, she agreed because she was studying Swahili, the country's official language, at the time. She had already established an interest in African studies after spending a semester in Senegal as an undergraduate. She earned a master's degree in the subject area and was sending other students to the continent as a study abroad advisor.

She could not have guessed Tanzania would chart her next career path. What started out as a two-week vacation soon turned into a fascination with the East African country, a place that tugged on her heart as she returned for more intensive language training and found herself helping her new Tanzanian "family" with dishes and children's school work.

Two additional visits spurred a curiosity about international scholarly exchange and, eventually, the core of her research interests. Jamison, a third-year doctoral student in MSU's Educational Policy program, now plans to devote

all of 2008 gathering data for her doctoral dissertation at a university in Tanzania's largest city, Dar es Salaam.

She was awarded the prestigious Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad fellowship to help fund her research. The yearlong project begins in January.

"I'm excited for the opportunity to spend quality time exploring this environment, gaining a better understanding of something I have just gotten a taste of," she said, noting the relatives who suggested her first Tanzania visit were College of Education Professor Janet Alleman and her husband, George Trumbull.

"Fulbright is a very prestigious award for those of us who are doing international research, and doing a dissertation abroad is quite expensive." Without the fellowship, "there was no way this would happen."

The Grimes, Iowa native already has fluent Swahili skills and ties to Tanzanian friends, however, to support her as she studies how the University of Dar es Salaam has changed over time in terms of its approach to international scholarly collaboration.

Her research will analyze what factors have affected the university's international relationships since its establishment in 1961, and what may come into play in the future.

She explained the importance of her location through the university's historical context.

"Tanzania is an interesting case because they had a very charismatic first president after they achieved independence, who was very much concerned with forging a national identity, and the university was a piece of forging this national identity," Jamison said. "This university was to build the nation, and now it's going to be interesting to see how it's changed with forces of globalization . . . how it's turning out to be global."

With a passion for and previous training in history, Jamison plans to gather a wealth of oral recollec-

tions from practicing faculty. Those personal case studies will provide essential information, she believes, as she explores how knowledge has been exchanged and valued over time and across international boundaries.

She knows the location will also be important within the broader dynamics of higher education in Africa.

"There's increasing demand, decreasing resources, and they are having to come up with some really strategic ways of maintaining quality (and) access," she said, "so (higher education) is in a tough position right now."

Jamison's findings will be the foundation of her dissertation, and she has worked extensively with MSU faculty in the College of Education and the African Studies Center to prepare.

She said that, although earning her master's degree in African Studies and African History at UCLA provided her with the academic background necessary for her research, "interacting with faculty here really changed my ideas."

MSU faculty and students have been working with African nations since 1960, and there are currently more than 60 projects involving MSU in Africa. Projects that focus on Tanzania deal with issues including health, agriculture, geology and social development.

Jamison, who is advised by associate professor of higher, adult and lifelong learning Reitumetse Mabokela,

THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH ABROAD PROGRAM

Applicants for the Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Program must:

- Be graduate students admitted to a doctoral program who plan on pursuing a teaching career
- Apply through their institution (MSU) and have full-time status
- Possess adequate skills in the relevant foreign language
- Create a thorough research proposal that includes: (1) how the research will be done in the 6- to 12-month time period spent overseas, (2) a hypothesis for the research, as well as issues to be addressed, and (3) justification for why the research should be done in another country
- Students interested in applying should visit the Office of International Studies and Programs at MSU (www.isp.msu.edu) for more information.
- The Institute for Research on Teaching & Learning, within the College of Education, also can be a resource for MSU students during the application process. Contact Casey Ozaki at ozakicar@msu.edu, call (517) 432-2804 or stop by 513 Erickson Hall.

said her research will look at scholarly exchange in the context of these issues and she sees great potential for her research, noting that scholarly exchange is "the core of what we do at a university."

She plans to leave for her longest excursion yet in Tanzania, the first place outside of the United States where she "really felt at home," sometime after Jan. 1 and will not return until late December.

"I'm hoping that (my research) brings to light the dynamics of scholarly exchange," she said. "There are people with knowledge there that can participate equally in this global dialogue."

TANZANIA >> FAST FACTS

- Officially known as the United Republic of Tanzania (in Swahili: *Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania*)
- Located in East Africa
- OFFICIAL LANGUAGE: Swahili
- OFFICIAL CAPITAL: Dodoma
- LARGEST CITY: Dar es Salaam
- AREA: Approximately 364,898 square miles, or slightly larger than twice the size of California
- POPULATION: 34,443,603 (2002 census)
- CURRENCY: Tanzanian shilling

