

Friday, March 14, 2008

Education student studies abroad in New Zealand

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

Katie Prawdzik has always wanted to study internationally, and now she'll have her chance. An education senior, Prawdzik will spend five weeks in New Zealand and immerse herself in the teaching culture in an effort to learn more about the country's educational system. During her time in New Zealand, Prawdzik will be keeping a **blog** of her experience, which she is sharing with the university community.

Prawdzik said the New Zealand program interested her because it was the only international study program where education majors can earn course credit. Prawdzik said the application process was long and thorough. She had to submit an application, letters of recommendation, an essay and a video tape of herself teaching a lesson. Prawdzik was excited to learn she was approved to go and began studying the New Zealand education system.

During the five weeks, Prawdzik will work in a kindergarten classroom at the Tirimoana Primary School in Auckland. For the first two weeks, she'll be observing. She will then teach in the classroom for a week and then transition back to the regular teacher for a week.

"New Zealand has a totally different way of teaching. They use a lot of small groups and one-on-one sessions. I'm hoping to learn more ways of teaching that will give me an edge when I go out into the job market," Prawdzik said.

During her stay in New Zealand, Prawdzik will be staying in the home of the teacher she is working with. Prawdzik said she doesn't know much about the teacher, but they have exchanged e-mails and she is looking forward to their meeting.

While Prawdzik is still a student, she feels Oakland University has prepared her for the experience.

"I think Oakland University has the greatest education program. Oakland requires extra field placements and practical experience. We spent a lot of time with the kids and the teachers in the classroom environment," Prawdzik said.

Most of Prawdzik's time will be spent in the classroom, but she will have a few days off and plans to explore some of the New Zealand culture. This is her first experience outside of North America and she said she is open to seeing as much of New Zealand as possible.

"The idea of being that far away from home is kind of scary, but I'm more excited than anything," Prawdzik said.

Prawdzik leaves for New Zealand on March 14 and returns April 20.

To follow Prawdzik's experience in New Zealand, visit her **New Zealand blog**. For more information on Oakland University's study abroad programs, visit the **International Education** Web site.

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