

## DR. ANN ACKERMAN PARTICIPATES IN FULBRIGHT-HAYS SEMINAR ABROAD

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Dr. Ann Ackerman, Rivier College Associate Professor of Education, was one of 16 educators from across the country selected for the 2008 Fulbright–Hays Seminar Abroad in Greece and Bulgaria.



To begin her Fulbright experience, Dr. Ackerman traveled to Chicago for orientation at the end of May then spent five weeks in Greece and Bulgaria, learning about each country’s history and culture. The group met with educators, artists, historians, government officials, and residents during their stay.

Dr. Ackerman says she was surprised at the magnitude of the number and size of the buildings on the Athens Acropolis. Following the visit to the Acropolis, Archeologist Molly Richardson led the group on a walking lecture of the Ancient Agora Way.

Visits to many other historic and archeological sites affirmed that there are so many antiquities that the “financial and human resource demands are so great that it would be an impossible responsibility for Greece alone,” says Dr. Ackerman. Numerous multinational archeologists are working to find and identify the many artifacts, with support from international foundations.

In Athens the group visited the Alexander E. Onassis Foundation, which provides grants for teachers and scholars researching Greece and promoting Greek – American relations. “We were privileged to hear and meet with writer, historian, and photographer Pedro Olalla who co-authored with Aranzazu Priego

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Mythological Atlas of Greece: an original approach to Greek mythology through geography and ancient literary sources,” Dr. Ackerman says.

The Fulbright-Hays group also visited Thessaloniki, Delphi, Olympia, the original Olympic Stadium, the Jewish Museum of Greece, the Folklife Museum of Napflion, Pella, Vergina, and the Royal Tombs.

In Greece, the travelers concentrated on antiquities; the second part of the trip focused on modern and contemporary Bulgaria. Dr. Ackerman says she found Bulgaria to be warm and friendly as well as a nation of contrasts.



The first week the Fulbrighters met with leading educators and scholars for a series of lectures about Bulgaria and Bulgarian history. The opening lecture, Dr. Maya Vassileva’s “Ancient Civilization in Southeast Europe,” linked Greek and Bulgarian histories. The group visited the National Museum of History after the lecture to see its collection of artifacts from antiquities to more recent times. The museum included a glass menorah and plaque from the American Jewish Committee recognizing Bulgaria’s role in protecting its Jewish population during the Nazi Era.

“In one workshop we learned the steps to several Bulgarian folk dances and the meanings for many of the steps and music with Daniela Ivanova. That evening, we attended a dinner party where there was an opportunity to practice what we learned,” Dr. Ackerman says.

A reception with prominent Bulgarian citizens, scholars and teachers from various European countries preparing for a year’s teacher exchange in the U.S. provided an opportunity to learn about education and customs in other parts of Europe as well as answer questions about the U.S. and our education systems.

The Bulgarian Minister of Culture hosted a private concert for the Fulbright group at the National Art Gallery. The program included a vocal a capella ensemble, a folk quartet, violinist Joseph Radionor, pianist Zorniza Radionova and soloist Viktoria Vassilenko. Dr. Ackerman also enjoyed an afternoon of lectures and literary readings. Literary critic Angel Igov provided insight into the contemporary literary scene and said that Bulgaria was still trying to find its literary place in society. Bulgarian writers Alek Popov and Kristin Dimitrova read selections from their work.

Dr. Ackerman says that she was pleased to be part of this Fulbright–Hays opportunity and that she plans to share many of her experiences and photos at upcoming educational conferences, workshops and community functions. ■



\* **JENNIFER LISKOW** is Rivier’s Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications and teaches in the College’s Professional Communications program. Jennifer earned her bachelor’s in English and communications from Notre Dame College in Manchester, N.H. in 1996. In 2002, she completed her master’s in writing and literature at Rivier. She began writing in junior high school; since then, she has had poems, short stories, features and essays published. She serves on the Board of Directors for NH Roller Derby, the state’s first competitive flat-track roller derby league.