NWACC Instructor Chosen For Study Abroad Program

Hamm Plans To Develop Course Meshing Slow Food, Ecotourism Concepts

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (Nov. 16, 2011) — A NorthWest Arkansas Community College instructor has been chosen for a study abroad program that will help her establish a sustainable culinary/ecotourism course at NWACC.

Dede Hamm, a hospitality instructor in Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management, was chosen to be a part of the Madison (Wisc.) College Capacity Building for Study Abroad program. The initiative is designed to build collaborative relationships among a group of eight 2012 program participants.

Hamm will participate with her colleagues in telephone conference calls, email discussions, a Jan. 3-11 program in Costa Rica and a three-day program development training session in March.

The slots were filled in a competitive process that drew more than 20 applications, said Dr. Geoff Bradshaw, director of international education at Madison Area Technical College.

“The proposal from Dede Hamm at NorthWest Arkansas Community College was selected based on a number of factors, including a clear commitment and passion for the subject of sustainable food production,” Bradshaw said. “This emphasis will complement and expand the fields included in the Capacity Building for Study Abroad Network.”

Hamm said she was honored to be chosen. “This opportunity allows me to combine several passions: my love of teaching, my deep appreciation for cultural diversity, and my commitment to sustainable culinary and agricultural processes,” she said.

She plans to focus her studies on establishing a course that meshes principles of slow food and ecotourism. The course will introduce students to the benefits of small-scale, sustainable, and local agricultural and culinary practices that can be used in their future restaurant and culinary tourism businesses. Hamm said that through course work and study abroad, students will gain increased commitment to the preservation of biological and cultural diversity.

Hamm plans to develop a study abroad program for students to visit Tuscany, Italy, and Costa Rica. Depending on the season and region selected, students may be introduced to culturally traditional
culinary and agricultural practices such as organic beekeeping, natural fabric dye crops, organic cheese making, sustainable coffee production, cooperative group markets, restaurant operation and more.

In addition to Hamm, Chef Rebecca Liles of the NWACC staff will participate in course development and teaching.

Hamm earned her Bachelor of Science in hospitality management from the University of Central Florida in Orlando while working for Walt Disney Co. She also earned her Master of Science in tourism and travel administration from New York University while working on the NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. She worked in the hospitality industry for 13 years before becoming a full-time instructor in 2007.

Dr. Becky Paneitz, NWACC president, said Hamm’s selection represents a great opportunity for the faculty member and the community college’s students.

“We see the service learning program experience in Costa Rica as a major opportunity for NWACC to expand its international mission,” Paneitz said. “We are committed to developing more study abroad courses as part of our growing number of programs with international focus. In addition, we are committed to making international education an integral part of our students’ general education experience.”

The Capacity Building for Study Abroad Network is made possible through funding from the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. This three-year award is administered by Madison Area Technical College and will establish a network of 24 community and technical colleges working together on sustainable development study abroad programs by the award's completion in 2013.

**NorthWest Arkansas Community College is a comprehensive, public two-year college that serves and strengthens the community through learning for living.** NWACC’s service area is defined by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education as Benton and Washington counties in extreme northwest Arkansas. The commitment of NWACC to life-long learning can be seen in the quality of instruction it offers, and the variety of programs it has designed to move students into the job market in a minimum amount of time, enrich people's lives, and prepare them to further their education. For more information, visit [www.nwacc.edu](http://www.nwacc.edu).