



Verbyla

Matt Verbyla awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship

TAMPA, Fla. (April 4, 2012) – Matthew E. Verbyla has been awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship to pursue a PhD in Environmental Engineering at the University of South Florida.

This fellowship recognizes and supports up to 2,000 students in NSF-supported science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines, who are pursuing research-based master's and doctoral degrees at accredited United States institutions. The fellowship provides a three-year annual stipend along with a cost of education allowance for tuition and fees, opportunities for international research and professional development, and the freedom to conduct the student's own research.

Currently, Matthew is enrolled in the Master's of Science in Environmental Engineering program and he plans to finish this degree in August 2012. For his master's research, he is studying the removal of parasitic helminth eggs and bacterial pathogen indicators from two community-managed lagoon systems treating domestic wastewater in Bolivia, to evaluate the water reuse potential of the treated effluent for irrigation.

This summer, Matthew will return to Bolivia, where he will partner with USF doctoral students from Marine Sciences and Anthropology to study the removal of viruses from pond systems using real-time quantitative PCR, and the impact of social perception and community power dynamics on the sustainability of community-managed wastewater treatment systems. For his doctoral dissertation, he plans to study the fate and transport of emerging pathogens and contaminants in integrated wastewater treatment and agricultural production systems. His research will examine the effects of natural wastewater treatment processes and anaerobic digestion on the fate of these contaminants in wastewater and biosolids used in agriculture.

Matthew graduated in 2006 from Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, with a BS in Civil Engineering and a minor in Spanish. He was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in 2007 to study the

sustainability of community-managed rural water systems in Honduras, in the context of recently-approved decentralization policies. Matthew subsequently worked as Engineering Project Director for a start-up non-governmental organization in Honduras called Global Community Development, where he helped coordinate designs for water, sanitation, and small bridge projects for low-income rural and peri-urban communities in flood-prone areas of Honduras.

Prior to starting his graduate studies at the University of South Florida, Matthew worked as a Project Engineer for HRP Associates, Inc. in his hometown of Farmington, CT. He has obtained his EIT, is a registered LEED Green Associate, and plans to acquire his Professional Engineering license in 2013. He currently lives in Tampa with his wife, Wendy Antunez, whom he met while working with Global Community Development.

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The University of South Florida is a high-impact, global research university dedicated to student success. USF is classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in the top tier of research universities, a distinction attained by only 2.2 percent of all universities. The Carnegie Foundation also classifies USF as a community engaged university. It is ranked 44th in total research expenditures and 34th in federal research expenditures for public universities by the National Science Foundation. The USF System has an annual budget of \$1.5 billion, an annual economic impact of \$3.7 billion, and serves 47,000 students in Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota-Manatee and Lakeland.