

HBU Hosts First Fulbright Scholar

Spain, Soccer, and a Scholar's Quest to Overcome a Language Barrier

CANARY ISLANDS NATIVE ADRIAN GARCIA is one of only nine people selected in all of Spain to participate in the prestigious Fulbright Program during the 2014-2015 academic year. The young scholar chose to use his grant to pursue a master's degree in bilingual education at HBU, making him the first Fulbright student the University has ever hosted. Program administrators selected Adrian for his strong academic background, leadership potential, and his ability to successfully pursue his project proposal.

Adrian hopes to use his Fulbright fellowship to help reverse high unemployment levels in his hometown of Galdar, Grand Canary Island, and eventually throughout the rest of Spain.

Because English-speaking tourists fuel a major part of the economy of the seven Canary Islands, native citizens are often passed over for jobs in favor of foreign nationals who speak English. Many non-tourism-related jobs across Spain also require English proficiency, making the problem even more acute.



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Part of Adrian's plan is to increase the number of bilingual camp programs across Spain. He has made a point to work at different camps, including one in New York, to see what works best. He is convinced language camps are important because he knows firsthand how effective language immersion for even just a week or two can be for kids ages 3-12.

"They are so much more comfortable with the language and are no longer afraid to try for fear of making mistakes," he said.

Working as a camp counselor also allowed Adrian to combine two of his favorite pastimes: teaching children and playing soccer. Having played with a professional soccer league in Spain for a time, he is a natural to teach campers the fundamentals of the game.

The primary strategy of Adrian's plan, however, is to use the knowledge he gains from his graduate studies to equip Spanish primary school teachers to teach English. The 25-year-old is no stranger to the classroom; he worked as a teacher's assistant in England, teaching Spanish and Spanish culture to kids in grades 1-6.

In due time Adrian will assist many, many more teachers in his home land of Spain, by creating curricula and training them to use effective teaching strategies for teaching English.



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Helping prepare the next generation of Spanish children to succeed in a global economy—that's a win even more fulfilling than shooting his most impressive soccer goal.

