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## MCC STUDY ABROAD COORDINATOR SELECTED AS GILMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP ADVISOR AMBASSADOR

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DAWN ZIMMER | MESA COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE



Yvonne Schmidt, MCC study abroad coordinator, is selected by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs as one of only 20 to serve as an inaugural Gilman International Scholarship Advisor Ambassador.

The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship is a U.S. cultural exchange awarding up to \$5,000 to American undergraduates with financial need and from diverse backgrounds for study abroad. The scholarship is administered by the U.S. Department of State and Affairs Committee and its implementation is supported by the Institute of International Education. Since its inception in 2001, more than 34,000 scholarship recipients from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and all U.S. territories have studied or interned in more than 155 countries..

“I am very honored and excited to be representing MCC at the national level as a voice for community colleges for the next two years,” said Schmidt. “It’s very rewarding to be working with colleagues from across the nation to provide insight and more access for Pell Grant (need-based grants for low-income students) recipients to participate in life transforming study abroad experiences.”

The goal of the new advisor ambassador program is “to strengthen the partnership between the Gilman Scholarship Program and the higher education community, elevate the profile of the Gilman Scholarship among critical external audiences, offer higher education perspectives to the program, and provide guidance to faculty, advisors and administrators who seek to increase Gilman participation on their campuses,” Schmidt explains that advisors will also participate in national-level outreach efforts.

Since 2014, 22 Maricopa County Community College District students have been awarded Gilman scholarships to participate in MCC’s study abroad programs, of those, 11 were MCC students.

The other 19 new advisor ambassadors, comprised of professionals from study abroad offices, financial services, honors colleges and other student service positions, are from Georgetown University, University of Iowa, Boise State University, University of Alaska-Fairbanks, University of Hawaii-Hilo and other schools across the country. They are receiving training from the Department of State’s Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs and Gilman Program staff.

A Gilman International Scholarship Advisor for more than a decade, Schmidt has been involved in program promotion, assisting students with application essays and providing Gilman administrative support for awardees. She also served as a national Gilman Selection Panelist scoring scholarship applications from across the country in 2021 and assisted MCC to achieve Top Producer for Students with Disabilities status in

2018-2019. An International Tour Management Institute Certified Tour Guide/Tour Director, Schmidt is currently working toward becoming a certified Gallup Global Strengths Coach for international and study abroad students.

At Gilman’s invitation, Schmidt is collaborating with the organization on a proposal she will co-present at the Community College International Development Conference in New Orleans in March 2022.

“All Americans need to be equipped with global and cultural competencies to navigate the ever-changing landscapes of education, international business, scientific discovery and innovation, and the global economy.

Learn more about the MCC Study Abroad program at [mesacc.edu/study-abroad](http://mesacc.edu/study-abroad).

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