

AcademiCast Transcript
Texas Tech University
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Irlbeck: This is “AcademiCast”—Texas Tech University’s biweekly podcast series from the Office of the Provost. I’m Scott Irlbeck, and I’ll be covering the top academic stories on campus. Later in the program, Provost Bob Smith will spotlight student of integrated scholarship Jane Ann Watson.

First, the news...

Classes are back in session for the fall semester at Texas Tech. In addition to welcoming many new students, staff and faculty, TTU has named an interim president. Texas Tech officials have tapped College of Arts and Sciences Dean Lawrence Schovanec to lead the university.

Schovanec: It’s a privilege and honor to serve Texas Tech as interim president. I have enormous pride in this university, and I’m humbled by the opportunity to work with the board, the leadership, the faculty, the students and staff, and the alumni, helping us move toward our ultimate goal of being a Tier 1 university and a truly great public research university.

Irlbeck: Schovanec has spent three decades at Texas Tech. He is a professor of mathematics, and since 2009 he has led his college. Schovanec says he intends to keep Texas Tech on track with its Strategic Plan and business plan. He will lead the university until a search committee finds a permanent replacement for former president Guy Bailey.

Another Texas Tech math professor is making news, as well. Horn Professor Clyde Martin was appointed as a Jefferson Fellow in Washington, D.C. He will serve as a science adviser on foreign policy issues with the State Department through next year. Martin is the first mathematician and statistician to be accepted into the program.

Separately, Texas Tech has become educational partners with the University of New York in Prague. The two universities aim to pursue research and scholastic opportunities between their institutions. The agreement expands an alliance that TTU and the University of New York in Prague began in 2004.

Along with a commitment to academics, Students of Integrated Scholarship pursue a course of lifelong study through their involvement in active learning experiences. Modes of active learning include internships, service learning, undergraduate and graduate research, and opportunities to study abroad. In this edition of “AcademiCast,” Provost Bob Smith spotlights Student of Integrated Scholarship Jane Ann Watson.

Smith: Jane Ann Watson crystalized her admiration for the French language and culture during her senior year of high school. That year, she traveled to France for a study-abroad opportunity. Her visit was an enduring experience that strengthened her language skills and broadened her worldview.

Watson: I just fell in love with the dynamics of French culture as well as the language, and it’s just captivated me, and I think it’ll continue to do so in the future, as well. The language and

culture is just so different from what we're used to growing up. I studied at a French high school, a public French high school, and so I was really integrated. I stayed with three host families, so I got to see three different families and how they worked and functioned in everyday life with completely different jobs and everything, and I got to travel a little bit.

Smith: After graduating from high school, Watson came to Texas Tech to begin her undergraduate studies. She followed her interest in the sciences and declared geosciences as her major. Increasingly though, the study of French language and culture became more important to her. After reflecting upon her earlier experience in France, Watson changed her major to French. She re-immersed herself in the subject and then returned to France to study abroad once again.

Watson: I studied abroad in Montpellier this past summer for six weeks. I went back to visit my friends in Van (Texas) also, so kind of took that opportunity. It was a great program, seeing the divide in those two cultures to such an extreme, was just absolutely worthwhile to me. The program was fantastic. Our teacher really tried to get us to get out there and use our French, and to learn and observe the people that were surrounding us in everyday life and to go take the opportunities we could to go get ourselves involved within the community and everything for just a month, and it was just a really great experience.

Smith: In addition to her study-abroad experiences, Watson has served as president of the TTU French Club, which helps to strengthen interest in the University's French program. The club also promotes an appreciation for the language and culture through community events.

Watson: You don't get to talk about everything in class that you want to in French, and just French Club gives you the opportunity to actually be able to speak. I mean, I know in class that some of the classes get pretty big, because we don't have the opportunity to have separate, like two classes for one course. And so we don't all get the chance to speak a lot in class. We do get the chance to speak, but it's not, I feel enough to start to get comfortable with the language to speak it often, and that's what we offer, is the chance to talk about whatever you want and expand your vocabulary.

Smith: Watson says she was surprised at the opportunities available to her at Texas Tech. She adds that she was only able to pursue them by stepping out of her comfort zone and learning more about the subjects, activities, causes and organizations that seemed interesting. Watson says other students might also find their experiences enriched by seeking out opportunities connected to their personal and professional interests.

Watson: There are so many things you can get involved in here, but you have to make sure what you're getting involved in is something that you truly, truly want to be a part of, that you're passionate about or you love to do, because that has to coincide with your academics, and if you're thriving in your academics, but you don't like your organizations, you're not going to really get out there, because you're going to concentrate on academics, but if you love both, I think that you will just naturally balance them.

Smith: Akin to other students who have studied abroad, Jane Ann Watson has been able to discover much about herself through academic pursuits at Texas Tech, especially her study-abroad experiences in France. In a recent interview, fellow TTU student Seth Sartain, who

studied abroad in Spain, Egypt and Brazil, shared reflections on his set of experiences as follows: "I could show pictures of me with the Pyramids, or Eiffel Tower, but like the monuments and the things you see while you're abroad, that's really secondary to . . . the intellectual journey that you take while you're abroad. . . . I think it's an interesting idea that students go thousands of miles away from everything they know to actually learn more about themselves . . . that's an interesting idea, but it's true." Jane Watson's study-abroad experiences not only reinforced remarkably her formal studies of French language and culture but also allowed her to become more confident and independent, both as a young woman and as an undergraduate on the path of life-long integrated scholarship. So we say to her bon voyage e bon chance!

Thanks for listening! I'm Bob Smith.

Irlbeck: Thanks, Dr. Smith! If you would like to learn more about Texas Tech's Students of Integrated Scholarship, please visit our website at **academicast.ttu.edu**

Finally, "AcademiCast" would like to recognize the first graduates of the College of Education's Middle School Math and Science scholarship degree program. The first cohort was composed of 20 full-time middle school teachers seeking to integrate math and science into their classrooms. Everyone in the cohort completed the program and graduated with master's degrees earlier this month.

That concludes this edition of "AcademiCast." If you would like to learn more about the stories featured here, please visit our website at **academicast.ttu.edu**. Thanks for listening, and join us again in two more weeks for the latest academic news from Texas Tech University.