



# TRAFFIC FLOWS NICELY ON MCBRIDE FELLOWSHIP BRIDGE

by Barbara Elmore





**FOR EDWARD SIMIYU OF KENYA, THE OPPORTUNITY TO WRITE HIS DISSERTATION AT BAYLOR WAS ONLY A DISTANT DREAM. HE DID NOT HAVE MONEY TO TRAVEL OR LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES.**

His options included completing his graduate work at a university in Burundi, where he would have to divide his attention between teaching and writing, or working in seclusion on a farm with lots of time—but no electricity, internet access or computer.

During a visit to Baylor in 2009, he caught the attention of Steve Bradley, assistant professor of Management and Entrepreneurship, who helped him realize his dream. Now a McBride Fellow, Simiyu is collecting data in Kenya, speaking to classes at Baylor, writing the prized dissertation with Bradley as his supervisor, and transporting knowledge about microfinance back to his country.

Simiyu is one of a handful of people who have become McBride Fellows in the program's five-year history. Through the program, two international doctoral students visit Baylor each year to work with a professor at Baylor.

Payoff for the student is the opportunity to work on a dissertation with an expert. The advantage for Baylor is increased global exposure. The long-term benefit for both is relationships.

"One of them asked me to help her prepare for a journal," said Dorothy Leidner, director of the PhD program in Information Systems. "That's great, but that's not why I do it. I love seeing them develop in their careers and having these relationships."

When Baylor students form lasting connections with the Fellows, the contact is enriched even more, said Leidner, who has hosted four Fellows studying information systems. Three were from University of Mannheim and one came from Goethe University in Frankfurt. All came because of Leidner's annual summer teaching stints in Germany.

A French PhD student at Baylor provided the idea in August 2003. She initiated contact with the university through an e-mail to Marketing professor Jim Roberts. He did not know her, but she knew him because of his published research on socially responsible consumer behavior. She was a student at University-Pierre-Mendes-France in Grenoble, Roberts said.

"They are encouraged to study with someone who is an expert in the field," Roberts said. "She sent me an e-mail saying 'This is who I am and I am wondering if I can come study with you for a month.' A few months after our initial contact, she was here. We studied for a month together and ultimately published a paper based on her time here." The paper's title was "Socially responsible consumption for France," and she was the first author with Roberts as the second.

Although the student set up the visit, Baylor provided her with an office and computer and found her a place to live. Her husband and toddler daughter visited.

Meanwhile, Roberts and the student worked on structural equation modeling. At European universities, Roberts said, students generally are responsible for finding the research opportunity and doing the work on their own.

"We have more structure with classes, and then the students go out and do the dissertation," Roberts said. "They have less emphasis on classes. It was important for her to go someplace and do the research."



After a couple such visits, Jeff Tanner, associate dean of Research and Development, decided that bringing international students to Baylor in a more structured way could benefit the university and Baylor students as well as international students. "Our faculty could develop their own research and collaborate with scholars in other countries," he said.

Since the start of the program, the McBride Center for International Business, which is housed within the Hankamer School of Business, has funded Fellows from Thailand, Europe and Africa. "Last time I counted, we had 11 co-authorships between McBride Fellows and our faculty," Tanner added.

PhD students come into the program in different ways, and matching them with a professor is part of the selection process, said Steve Gardner, director of the McBride Center.

"Some come in without a prior connection to a faculty member," Gardner said. "Part of what we are looking at is who in the business school would be a good match for this person? Is someone doing related research?"

Gardner said faculty members are enthusiastic about the opportunity. "These are people who have active research agendas, so it's an opportunity for faculty to tie themselves to a moving project and to establish new connections," Gardner said.

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# WILL PROVIDE FOR THEIR FAMILIES."

Sometimes students apply because they already know a faculty member, as in the case of Leidner's relationships at German universities. "We've been fortunate because I go there in summers and know the students and their supervising professors," Leidner said.

International students who already know a faculty member arrive with the recommendation and support of that professor, Gardner said, although that is not a requirement.

"One of the purposes is to establish new relationships that nobody even thought about," Gardner said. "We support existing relationships and support establishing new ones."

**FOR SIMIYU, the connection with Bradley and Baylor means not only conducting research and writing his dissertation, but also taking what he has learned about microfinance BACK TO KENYA TO HELP PEOPLE ESTABLISH THEIR OWN BUSINESSES IN A COUNTRY WITH 46 PERCENT UNEMPLOYMENT.**

**"You have people who ideally should be able to find jobs," SIMIYU SAID. "We encourage such people to start small businesses. It would take capital of \$50 to \$300 or \$400. THEY CAN RUN THESE BUSINESSES BESIDE SIDEWALKS OR IN SHOPS."**

They sell vegetables, second-hand clothing, shoes or basic furniture. They tailor clothes or repair vehicles. "These kinds of businesses will provide for their families," Simiyu added.

With the knowledge he has gained about microfinance, Simiyu is able to help provide basic business training, teaching Kenyans how to start one, how to market, and basic financial skills such as calculating profit and pricing goods.

Although Fellows benefit in several ways, one of the major advantages of the Fellowship is focusing on their research, Leidner said.

"They work almost full-time in Germany for their supervising professor," Leidner said. "Here they get work done on their dissertations. They attend classes, which they don't do as much in Germany."

She keeps in touch with former Fellows she worked with at Baylor when she returns to Germany every summer. One of her PhD students planned a trip to Mannheim during the Christmas break to visit a former Fellow, she said. And Baylor professors strengthen the relationship by visiting the Fellows' universities as researchers.

Each visit by an international student gives Baylor an advantage, Gardner said: They leave with a more positive impression than they had when they arrived.

"Unfortunately, not everyone in the world knows everything about the university," Gardner said. "New visitors are surprised by the quality of the facilities, the students, the faculty. This creates new opportunities for people to come and learn about Baylor and then go back to their own institutions and spread the word. We are extending our reach to the rest of the world and the recognition that we have in other countries."

The students' mere presence on campus brings the world to Baylor, Gardner added, because they interact with professors and students and present their research.

"It's enhancing the environment of global diversity on campus, extends our reputation in other countries, and leads to other findings," Gardner said.