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DSU's Dr. Kevina Vulinec Named as Fulbright Scholar

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Dr. Kevina Vulinec, a DSU associate professors in natural resources, has been awarded a competitive Fulbright Scholar grant to lecture and do research in the South American country of Brazil as part of her ongoing work on bat species.

Specifically Dr. Vulinec will work with Dr. Paulo Estefano Dineli Bobrowiec from the Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas de Amazonia in Brazil. She will teach and conduct research on seed-dispersing bats in Brazil?s fragmented tropical rainforest.

A large amount of Brazil?s rainforests have been lost to human activities such as logging, reducing it to one-eighth of the size it was 1½ centuries ago. Because it is home to an impressive number of endangered plants and animal species, the rainforest is considered to be a threatened biodiversity area.

Dr. Vulinec?s research will focus on the impact of rainforest fragmentation on the seed-dispersing bats ? a species that disperse the seeds from fruits it eats, and thereby replenishing the rainforest with seeds that grow into new plants and fruits.

In addition, Dr. Vulinec will conduct a workshop for the Instituto Nacional?s students on nocturnal wildlife audio-video technology.

Dr. Vulinec will arrive in Brazil to begin her work on Feb. 21. The Fulbright research and teaching experience will continue until late May.

?It is an incredible opportunity,? Dr. Vulinec said. ?It is the best award for getting people out for scholarship purposes.?

Dr. Vulinec?s findings will be accessed by the Biological Fragmentation Project, the world largest-scale and longest-running study of habitat fragmentation, operated cooperatively by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute and Brazil?s National Institute for Amazonian Research.

The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.

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