

## Sacred Heart University

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From the Selected Works of Robert McCloud

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# SHU Prof Receives \$1.8M Grant From Albania

Robert McCloud, *Sacred Heart University*



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## SHU Prof Receives \$1.8M Grant From Albania



*Dr. Robert McCloud, right, with Kelly Leather '11 in Albania last May.*

News Story: September 1, 2012

Sacred Heart University Computer Science and Information Technology professor, Dr. Robert McCloud, is the recipient of a \$1.8 million grant from the Education Equity and Excellence Program (EEEP) program in Albania. The grant will be used to identify and nurture talented Albanian pre-university students. Albania Prime Minister Sali Berisha has set ICT study and training as an Albanian priority.

McCloud's initial efforts will be on developing teaching capacity for students to learn computer programming. The money will be used to identify talented youth (students in the 99 to 99.9 percentile) and train them in computer programming. McCloud expects the students to be as young as 8 years old up through juniors in high school. He will be principle investigator on the project and will report to the prime minister.

In 2010, McCloud received a World Bank Research Grant to study the role of technology for K-12 students in the Albanian school system. The idea to identify and nurture talented youth came out of that research.

McCloud said this will be a three-year project, adding that Albanians are typically good at math, and the prime minister's goal is to develop the best programmers in Europe. Potential participants for the program will be identified by their teachers, but the final selections will be made through testing. In fact, McCloud said the test will be open even to students who are not selected by their teachers. "It's a nonpolitical way to identify the brightest kids," he said.

The goal of the program will be to determine the best way that Albanian teachers can nurture gifted students. Once that is determined, McCloud said it can be shared with other countries. In fact, he already has had an inquiry from another European country that wants to take advantage of his research.

The students will be taught through online courses, summer courses in Albania and the United States and weekend enrichment programs. McCloud is excited because the grant provides an opportunity for other SHU professors to offer courses to the students and even for colleagues at other universities to become involved. “We have just barely scratched the surface,” he said.

McCloud was back in Albania in early May for further discussions about the program. While there, he also met with SHU Fulbright Scholar Kelly Leather '11 who will help him get the testing program off the ground.