Proud graduate: Coordinator Claudia Beebe to walk with last SEED class

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For the past several years, Claudia Beebe watched proudly as students in the Scholarships for Education and Economic Development program – known as SEED – walked down the aisle in their caps and gowns.

As SUNY Broome's SEED coordinator, Beebe knows that these students – from economically disadvantaged countries in Central America and the Caribbean – will go on to change lives in their home communities. She's proud of their efforts, which have included participation in the Clinton Global Initiative University earlier this semester and the creation of community action plans to alleviate hunger and poverty.

This year, she will join them – as a fellow graduate, with her degree in International Business.

"I'm very proud," said Beebe, who will graduate with honors and had studied business administration in her home country, Colombia.

The achievement, however, is a tad bittersweet: this is the last year for the SEED program. The U.S. Agency for International Development, which had paid for the program, is no longer funding it.

Like any SUNY Broome student, Beebe knows that achieving her Associate's degree will help her chances of finding a new career.

"It's an opportunity to continue upgrading my skills," she said.

After meeting her husband, Claudia made the leap to Upstate New York. The rural Southern Tier represented a vast change from Bogotá, which has a population of nearly 7 million people. But Claudia, who had worked a high-stress job at Bayer Cropscience in her home country, appreciated the change.

"We are one of those online dating success stories," she said with a smile. "We will have our five-year anniversary in December."

She brushed up on her English with classes at the American Civic Association, where she later went on to volunteer as a translator, aiding Spanish-speaking immigrants. In October 2011, she came to SUNY Broome as the SEED Coordinator.

"I love to study; I like the environment of the school," she said of her journey toward a degree.

She appreciated the opportunity to learn new languages and about new cultures, she said.

"One of the subjects I had to take was French," she added.



SEED coordinator Claudia Beebe, surrounded by members of this year's SEED class, the program's last.

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