

## Spanish professor makes learning exciting

By CAROLINE BRYAN  
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received an Associate of Arts degree.

She spent eight years in Florida while obtaining a bachelor's degree in languages and linguistics and a master's degree in Spanish at Florida Atlantic University.

Arjona-Sisto said she prefers this area to Florida because of the atmosphere.

"I like the sense of community here," Arjona-Sisto said.

"In Florida, nobody was from Florida. Everyone was from some place else. There was no sense of belonging."

After teaching at a handful of junior colleges and universities around the United States, Arjona-Sisto settled

on a position at IU Southeast. She was working at Jefferson Community College, the University of Louisville and IU Southeast at the same time.

"I was going crazy, so I had to pick one," Arjona-Sisto said.

"This is the place I liked to work the best."

The class sizes and atmosphere are what led to her decision to work solely at IU Southeast.

Arjona-Sisto said she wants to make learning Spanish, which most students take as a requirement only, an enjoyable experience.

"I want my students to

learn and have fun at the same time," Arjona-Sisto said.

"I want them to use the language."

Some ways she recommends students use and learn the language are to volunteer places, such as hospitals or tutoring programs.

"Hospitals always need someone to interpret," Arjona-Sisto said.

Jennifer Freeman, criminal justice senior, has taken Arjona-Sisto's Spanish class.

"I think she's a really good professor," Freeman said.

"I really liked it when she shared her stories from Spain. Her little anecdotes cracked me up."



*'I want my students to learn and have fun at the same time.'*

Montserrat Arjona-Sisto  
adjunct Spanish professor

At first, Freeman said there were some difficulties. "Her accent made it hard, but I got used to it," Freeman

said. "If I had to take more Spanish, I would definitely take it with her."

## IUS student may become Fox in the Morning's Idol

By JACK MCCOY  
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Niza Phiri, nursing freshman, is one of the 12 semi-finalists in FOX 41's Morning Idol Competition.

Phiri is competing for the grand prize of a Suzuki Reno and a \$1,000 scholarship.

The competition started with 600 contestants.

She did not originally have plans to compete but ended up making a spur of the moment decision that paid off.

"I was sitting, watching 'Fox in the Morning' on television, and a few friends from IU Southeast told me they were going and I should come," she said.

"We left around 6:45 a.m. and we were there for seven hours."

Phiri said the large crowd was intimidating at first and she was a little nervous.

"I told myself 'I'm just singing in front of people and singing is what I love to do,'" she said.

She is no stranger to singing in front of crowds, though, as she sings the National Anthem for IUS men's and women's basketball teams.

Phiri chose the song "A Woman's Worth" by Alicia Keys to perform, but said she was unsure how well she sang.

After she performed she had to wait a week to find out if she made it as a semi-finalist.

"The whole week I was saying to myself 'I can't wait, I don't know if I made it or not,'" she said.

A week later, she was watching "Fox



*'I told myself 'I'm just singing in front of people and singing is what I love to do.'*

Niza Phiri  
nursing freshman

in the Morning" again.

To her surprise, she saw her name on the screen as a semi-finalist.

"I ran out and hugged my roommate," she said. "Later, Fox 41 called me to tell me the details."

Phiri said she has always enjoyed singing as a hobby, but it has been a long journey from her childhood to this competition.

She grew up in Zambia, Africa, but moved to Cleveland in the 6th grade.

"We moved here because the education system was better," she said.

Her family then relocated to Indianapolis, before she moved to New Albany to go to IU Southeast.

Phiri was actually recruited to come to IU Southeast by Kimberly Pelle, Coordinator of the Non-traditional Student Program.

"Niza calls me Momma Kim," Pelle said. "I played an important role in her enrolling in IU Southeast."

Pelle and Phiri have been in contact through e-mail since Niza was in high

school.

Pelle has helped her with many things, including finding an apartment and a roommate.

Pelle said she is very excited for Phiri and her chance to win the competition.

"I wish her so much luck," Pelle said. "She has a beautiful voice."

She will try to make it to the next round on Monday, Feb. 5.

The program will be broadcast live on "FOX in the Morning."

After the 12 semi-finalists perform, the field will be narrowed to three.

The next phase of the process is decided by only the viewers of the performances.

According to FOX 41's Web site, online voting for the three finalists will be on Thursday, Feb. 8.

Whether she makes it to the final cut or not, Phiri said she is proud of herself and thankful for a chance to compete.

"I hope I make it to the top three," she said, "but the top 12 is OK with me."

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