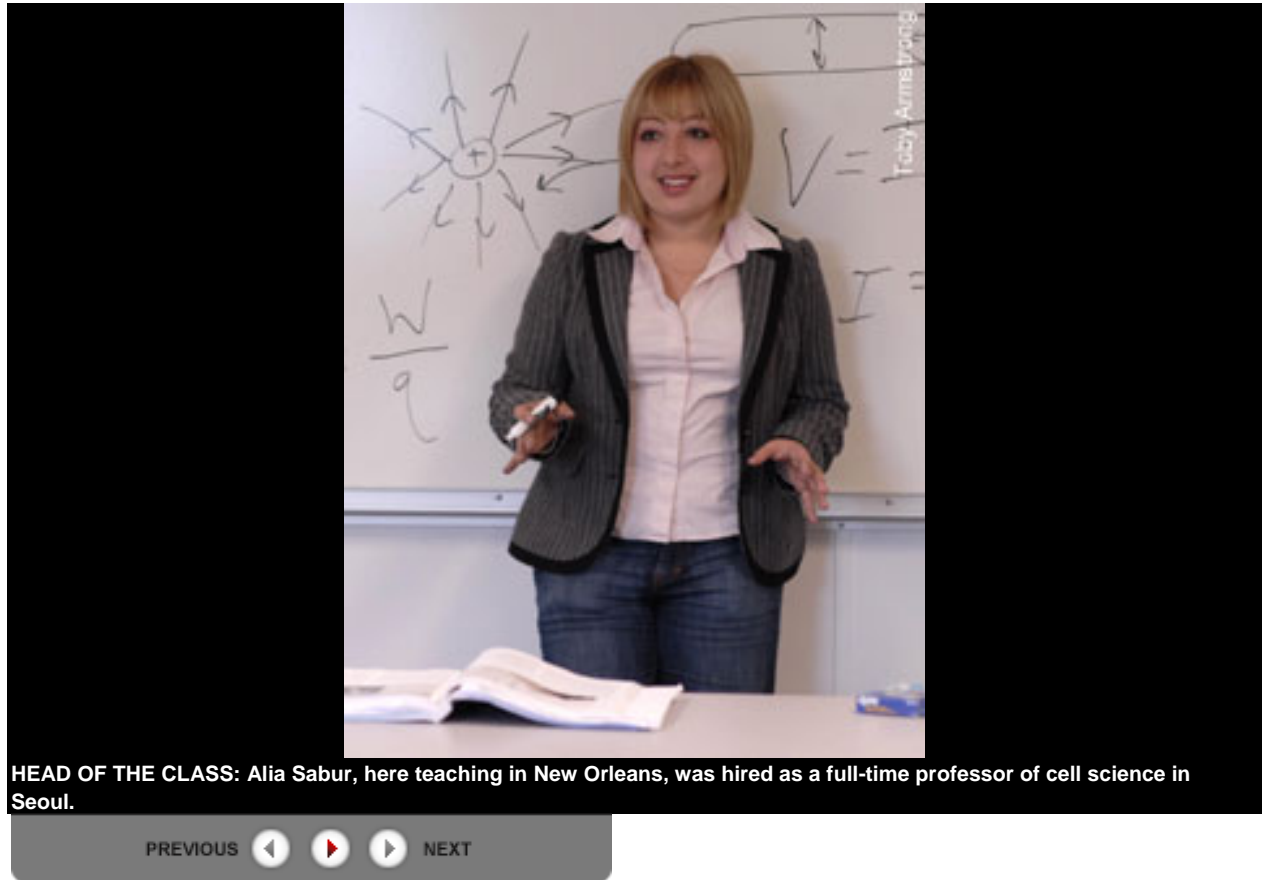


WE KID YOU NOT: SHE'S 18 & A PROF

LIER'S RECORD-SETTING FEAT

By KIERAN CROWLEY
NEW YORK POST



April 21, 2008

A Long Island whiz kid who left fourth grade to start college at SUNY Stony Brook has become the youngest college professor in history - at 18.

The Guinness Book of World Records is officially recognizing Alia Sabur, who on Feb. 19 was appointed a full-time faculty professor of cell science in the Department of Advanced Technology Fusion at Konkuk University in Seoul, South Korea.

Sabur "just became the youngest professor in the history of the world, breaking a 300-year-old record," a Guinness spokesman said. He said Alia broke the record set in the year 1717 by 19-year-old professor Colin Maclaurin, a protégé of Isaac Newton.

"It's really a great honor to be in the company of such great scientists," Sabur, who has since turned 19, told The Post by phone from Louisiana, where she is helping with relief efforts by teaching at the Katrina-ravaged Southern University at New Orleans.

"It's really exciting and it's also a challenge because, obviously, when you get awards and recognition for being so young - you have to live up to the expectations, and I do hope I can do that," Sabur said.

Konkuk University spokesman Choon Ho Kim said, "We are all very excited to welcome Alia Sabur. Alia is quite a unique individual and we are looking forward to her making great contributions at our university."

Sabur, a clarinetist who for good measure is a musical prodigy, will begin her physics research and teaching at Konkuk next month.

Sabur added that "there were some ruffled feathers" on the first day of classes in New Orleans but that the students her age were often more accepting of her than the older adult students - all of whom were surprised to see that their physics professor was a cute teenager.

"Oh, my God," said one adult female student. "I have kids your age and you're teaching my class."

Sabur replied, "Well, you know, this is how old I am. I can't help that."

"I can't believe you're our age," laughed one student. "That's so cool."

Sabur encouraged those with problems to give her a chance - and told them they could drop her course later, if her age still bothered them. "Nobody left my class," Sabur said. "We have a good rapport."

Sabur, who got her BA at 14, would be a freshman in college this year if she hadn't jumped ahead eight grades when she was 10.

Professor Sabur cringed when asked the inevitable question: Does she have a boyfriend?

"I'm accepting applications," Sabur quipped, with a smile. She said she does have friends from New York and from Philadelphia, where she studied at Drexel University - but her travel and killer schedule leave less time for a complete social life at the moment.

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