

The Fulbright Scholar Program: Building International Connections for U.S. Universities

This executive summary is adapted from “Building International Connections for U.S. Universities: The Fulbright Scholar Program,” a report prepared by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, January 2009. For more detail, case studies and full citations, please consult the full report. For more information on the Fulbright Scholar Program, visit www.cies.org.

U.S. colleges and universities must prepare U.S. students to be competitive in an increasingly global marketplace. Fulbright scholars are tremendously effective in advancing this important goal. They serve as models of international collaboration to students, colleagues, and professional organizations, and bring their Fulbright experience to bear in many meaningful ways. Founded in 1946 and sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, the Fulbright Scholar Program has allowed nearly 50,000 faculty members and professionals from the U.S. to teach and conduct research abroad in more than 130 countries.

Sustain Your Internationalization Efforts

Returning Fulbright Scholars incorporate the global focus they gained during their Fulbright experience into their teaching. They develop new internationally-focused courses and programs and continue to collaborate with their colleagues abroad. Scholars also encourage colleagues and students to become involved in international collaborations.

Research shows that Fulbright Scholars return to the U.S. and ...	
<i>Share information about host country with colleagues</i>	99%
<i>Recommend that faculty colleagues apply for Fulbright</i>	91%
<i>Recommend international experiences for other faculty</i>	85%
<i>Become more aware of cultural diversity</i>	85%
<i>Encourage students to study abroad</i>	80%
<i>Incorporate Fulbright experience into curricula or teaching methods</i>	73%
<i>Share information about host country with community groups</i>	72%

Internationalize Your Curricula

Less than 10 percent of U.S. undergraduates engage in any form of study abroad (*Open Doors*, 2008). As a result of their experience abroad, returning Fulbright scholars can mitigate their students' lack of international experience by developing internationally focused courses and degree programs, incorporating international materials into existing courses, and adapting teaching methods to incorporate their overseas experience.

“My teaching and the experiences of my students here in the United States have been substantially enhanced because of my work abroad. Not only has my knowledge base in my subject areas ... been diversified and deepened, but my ability to broaden the narrow American perspective on the topics covered in my classes has expanded significantly. ... Students will not learn the cultural limitations of their knowledge, which they must if they are to develop effective global-communication skills, if faculty members themselves are parochial in their vision and awareness.”

Fulbright Scholar Donald Hall, “Why Professors Should Teach Abroad”
Chronicle of Higher Education, October 2007

Fulbright is often the only funding available for faculty to lecture or research abroad. According to the American Council on Education (2008), just 26 percent of U.S. campuses provide funding such as sabbatical pay for faculty members who lecture overseas.

Produce Globally Engaged Graduates: Promote Study Abroad Through Your Faculty

Faculty encouragement is critical to student participation in study abroad. This is confirmed both by the *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE 2007)*, and by application surveys from the Fulbright student program. Although just 43 percent of U.S. faculty in general believe that study abroad is important for students (*Faculty Survey of Student Engagement 2008*), more than 80 percent of returned Fulbright scholars say they have recommended that students or colleagues participate in an international exchange program. Since more than 90 percent of American students still graduate from college without having studied abroad, developing faculty that will create and encourage participation in study abroad programs is critical to producing globally engaged graduates.

Enhance Your Community's International Engagement

Nine out of 10 returned Fulbright Scholars recommended that colleagues apply for a Fulbright. Their encouragement appears to be effective: in the 2008 competition for Fulbright Scholar grants, nearly half of all applicants identified the recommendation of a former Fulbright grantee as a major motivating factor in their decision to apply. Fulbright Scholars also become a resource for their colleagues and the wider community. Almost all returned scholars report that they share information about their host country with their colleagues (99 percent), and more than half make presentations about their host country to schools, the media, and community and civic organizations. Many returned Fulbright scholars also become proponents of international education in the wider academic community.

Attract Foreign Students and Faculty

After they return to their U.S. campuses, almost all Fulbright Scholars continue to maintain their connections to their colleagues and host institutions abroad. Three-quarters of returned Fulbright Scholars continue collaborating on specific projects with colleagues from their host institution or country. Approximately one quarter of returned Fulbright scholars initiated at least one institution-to-institution exchange program between their home and host institutions. These exchanges typically include student and faculty, professional training, or even joint degree programs. This ongoing international collaboration also helps U.S. campuses attract scholars from overseas. Returned Fulbright scholars often invite faculty or other professionals from their host country to the United States. The presence of returned Fulbright Scholars on campus is also important in creating a welcoming atmosphere for foreign students. More than a quarter of Fulbright Scholars (27 percent) bring students from their host country to the United States, and nearly half report becoming more involved with foreign students in the United States.

Fulbright Scholars return to the United States and ...

- create new courses and certificate or degree programs with a global focus
- incorporate new international material into existing courses, including courses in the sciences and engineering
- develop sustainable study abroad programs some of which include a community development or service learning component
- develop programs that involve multiple institutions, distance learning components and online learning communities
- attract foreign students, scholars, artists and writers to campus
- involve their colleagues, their students, and their institutions in partnerships with NGOs, the United Nations, and universities abroad



The Fulbright Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, is the U.S. government's flagship international exchange program and is supported by the people of the United States and partner countries around the world. For more information, visit fulbright.state.gov. The Fulbright Scholar Program is administered by CIES, a division of the Institute of International Education.