



NEWLY ARRIVED US GRANTEES ON THEIR WAY TO THE FALL ORIENTATION DINNER

Newsletter Iceland-US Fulbright Commission



JANUARY 2018

A good end to 2017 – looking forward to 2018

Message from Executive Director Belinda Theriault

Dear Fulbrighters and friends of Fulbright,

We certainly ended 2017 on a positive note, with the new Icelandic coalition government announcing a cabinet which has two Fulbright alumni on board, Minister of Education and Culture Lilja Alfreðsdóttir (Fulbright 1999, Columbia University) and Minister of Environment Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson (Fulbright 2004, Yale University). Both have been valued members of the alumni community since their return to Iceland. Guðmundur Ingi has been on the Fulbright Alumni Association Board for the past 5 years and Chairman for the past year. Lilja was the driving force in cementing Ministry-Fulbright cooperation in Arctic science when she was Minister for Foreign Affairs from 2016-2017. We wish both success in their important work ahead.

And we have more positive news from late 2017. Let me first note that all of us at Fulbright continuously strive to ensure that the work we do is meeting current needs in our societies. While Fulbright is and should be a broad program supporting important work in a wide variety of disciplines, we must also identify the pressing issues of our time and

allocate resources specifically towards making a contribution in targeted areas. Iceland has sought to do this over the past few years with grants focused on the Arctic and on refugee issues. Now we have added a new focus to meet new needs.

In the fall of 2017, during our 60th anniversary year, the Commission was happy to announce a new grant program in cyber-security. The program is an exciting addition to the Commission's cooperation with the National Science Foundation, a valued and increasingly important partner.

Specialist grants in cyber-security were first advertised in the fall of 2017, with the first grantees expected in Iceland in 2018. Core scholar grants will follow. At least one such grant is expected to be specifically advertised in the Fulbright Catalog of Awards in early 2018 for the academic year 2019-2020. These grants are being offered in a wide variety of relevant fields, such as computer science, engineering, law, international relations and more. See www.fulbright.is for more info.

We wish all our friends a happy New Year and look forward to connecting with you in 2018.



Belinda Theriault

WELCOME TO NEW COMMISSION BOARD MEMBERS



Oddur, Oscar and Jessica

Three new members joined the Fulbright Board of Directors on October 1st 2017 and one new member joined the Board in December:

- Oscar Avila is the Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Reykjavik. He holds a degree in International Relations from George Washington University.
- Professor Oddur Þór Vilhelmsson, (alternate) University of Akureyri Faculty of Natural Resource Science, has a Ph.D. in Food Science from Pennsylvania State University, where he was a Fulbright fellow.
- Dr. Jessica Till (alternate) has a Ph.D. in Geophysics from the University of Minnesota. She is currently a post-doctoral researcher and lecturer at the Institute of Earth Sciences at the University of Iceland.
- Professor Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir, Reykjavik University, holds a Ph.D. in sociology from Pennsylvania State University. She is a Fulbright alumna and Founder and CEO of the Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis.

Be a Fulbright buddy!

Every U.S. grantee in Iceland gets an Icelandic „buddy“, a Fulbright alumnus who can be a source of support and information during the grantee’s stay in Iceland. Being a buddy can also be a great opportunity for the Icelander – an opportunity to make a new friend, strengthen ties with the U.S. and see Iceland from a fresh perspective. Sometimes the



Buddies: Dr. Gretar Ivarsson and Dr. Robert Wheelersburg

Icelandic buddy comes from the same or a related

field, has lived in the same area or shares a hobby, but regardless, most buddies find the buddy experience rewarding and get as much out of it as the grantee. The Fulbright Commission strongly urges Icelandic alumni members to volunteer as a Fulbright buddy. It is a great way to give back. **We really need more volunteers, so if you would like to be a buddy, send an e-mail to fulbright@fulbright.is with the subject „buddy“.**

TWO FULBRIGHT ALUMNI IN ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT

Fulbright alumna Lilja Alfreðsdóttir (Columbia



University, International Economics, Fulbright 1999) was named Minister of Education, Science and Culture, and fellow Fulbright Foreign Student alumnus

Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson (Yale University, Environmental Science, Fulbright 2004) was named Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources in the new cabinet that took office on November 30th 2017.



VISIT FROM CALIFORNIA STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

In September, Tom Torlaksson, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction visited the Fulbright Commission to discuss cooperation. Tom is of Icelandic descent, which made his visit even more enjoyable.



Here he is with his wife Mae, Belinda Theriault, Fulbright Commission Executive Director, and Ásgerður Kjartansdóttir, specialist at the Ministry for Education, Science and Culture.

FULBRIGHT AT ARCTIC CIRCLE

Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Scholars

For the fourth year running Fulbright had a strong presence at the Arctic Circle conference that took place in October. The Fulbright breakout session attracted much attention and was well attended by conference guests. The format of the session was changed this year, with scholars giving short pitches followed by roundtable discussions, which allowed guests to engage more effectively with individual Fulbright scholars.

Pictured below are this year’s panelists with the Executive Directors of the Icelandic and Canadian Fulbright Commissions. From the left: Michael Hayes, ED Fulbright Commission, Canada, Belinda Theriault, ED Fulbright Commission, Iceland, Dr. Bradley Barr, Christina Anaya, Dr. Jay Nelson, David Prieto, Dr. John Bodinger and Dr. Virginia Vitzthum.



Getting off to a good start

Icelandic Fulbright grantee Júlía Arnardóttir attended a Gateway seminar in Reno, Nevada in August before she started her graduate studies in engineering at Stanford. There she met over 50 other Fulbrighters from all over the world and learned about study in the U.S., American culture, politics and more.



Fulbright Alumni Thanksgiving

The annual Thanksgiving dinner event organized by the Icelandic Fulbright Alumni Association was held on November 18.



Jill Esposito, U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affaires, was the main speaker of the evening.



As usual, a large group of Icelandic Fulbright Alumni attended the Thanksgiving event.



Above: Guests were happy with the prizes in the fundraising raffle.
Left: Icelanders & Americans enjoy Thanksgiving.

Fulbright Specialists summer/fall 2017

Seven Fulbright Specialists arrived in the summer and fall of 2017. Four of them were hosted by the University of Iceland: Dr. Larry Anderson, Professor in Chemistry at the University of Colorado, Denver. His project was focused on air quality in Reykjavik. Dr. Barbara Laster from Towson University, made her first of two visits to the School of Education to design and conduct literacy programs. She will complete her grant with a second visit this January. Dr. Mariana Souto-Manning, Associate Professor at Columbia University's Teachers College, also visited the School of Education at the University of Iceland and lent her expertise in multi-cultural education. She will make a second visit in March. Dr. Richard Gaskins, Proskauer Chair in Law and Social Welfare at Brandeis University, was hosted by the Departments of History and Philosophy at the



University of Iceland and taught a course on Economic Philosophies. Hólar University College hosted Dr. Kathleen Andereck from Arizona State University to assist with the development of the Rural Tourism program at Hólar. Dr. Barry Costa-Pierce from the Marine Science Center of the University of New England was hosted by the University of Akureyri to build partnerships and collaboration in fisheries sciences.

Dr. Angelea Panos was hosted by the Ministry of Welfare to work with government agencies, local municipalities, universities and other stakeholders involved in the resettling of refugees in Iceland. Here she is pictured (middle) with Belinda Theriault, Fulbright Commission, and Linda Rós Alfreðsdóttir, Ministry of Welfare.

U.S. FULBRIGHT GRANTEE PRESENTATIONS

This summer and fall three grantee presentation events have taken place, where U.S. Fulbright grantees presented their projects and discussed their experiences in Iceland:



In August, Fulbright-NSF scholar, Dr. Janelle Knox-Hayes presented her research project on sustainable development in the Arctic.



In November, Fulbright-NSF scholar Dr. Jay Nelson presented his project: How will Icelandic fish deal with Future Climate Change, and Fulbright visiting scholar Dr. Merrie Kaas talked about her teaching in Mental Health Education at the University of Akureyri.



In December, Demian Schane talked about his experience of teaching Arctic Law at the University of Akureyri. Fulbright NSF scholar Dr. John Bodinger presented his project on Icelandic Museums and Fulbright-NSF scholar Dr. Virginia Vitzthum presented her research on the effect of variation in photoperiod on Icelandic women.

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