



NEWLY ARRIVED US GRANTEES ATTEND ORIENTATION AT THE COMMISSION IN SEPTEMBER

Newsletter Fulbright Commission Iceland



OCTOBER 2013

Staying connected

Message from Executive Director Belinda Theriault



Dear Fulbrighters and friends of Fulbright,

Another fall has rolled around and grantees on both sides of the Atlantic have settled in and embarked on their Fulbright adventures. We have an exciting mix this year, including scholars and students in a variety of disciplines, such as art, international relations, social documentation and energy studies to name but a few.

Fulbright offers a variety of opportunities to grantees. To name one example, many of our Icelandic students have in the last years accepted invitations to attend a Gateway seminar, which offer grantees a few days of preparation before they start their studies in the US. These seminars are held all over the US and offer not only academic preparation, but also insight into American culture and norms. This issue contains a short description by one of our current grantees of the Gateway experience.

I must admit, I love to brag about our fabulous grantees – and they give us plenty of reason to do so. We would love to showcase every single grantee in the newsletter, but since we simply do not have the room to do so, we pick someone for each

issue to represent the group. In our last newsletter we highlighted one of our US grantees, so this time we spoke to one of our Icelandic grantees from last year, who excelled beyond expectations in a highly competitive environment.

When we started this newsletter a year ago, we did not know what the response would be. We have received much positive feedback in the last year, not least from grantees who had lost touch with the Commission over the years. In order to ensure that this is a collaborative effort, I urge you all to share with us news of your life and professional career. We want to stay close as a community. In order to do this, we want to keep up with current and former grantees and share in your important events and accomplishments - and allow other members of our community to do so, whether through the newsletter or our Facebook page. By the way, have you connected with us through Facebook yet?

Have a great fall and winter.

Belinda Theriault

FULBRIGHT TIDBITS

- Alums Cat Chambers, Jennifer Lail and Ragnhildur Sigurðardóttir are invited to take part in a Fulbright Arctic Seminar in Sweden in the end of October. They were nominated by the Fulbright Commission.
- Alum Terry G. Lacy generously donated a number of copies of her book, Raven Gunnar, to the Commission. Thanks, Terry!
- The Alumni Association will host its annual Thanksgiving event on November 23rd at the Nordica Hilton. Further info to follow.
- Fulbright scholar Dr. Kristin Van Gaasbeck gave a talk at the Icelandic Central Bank earlier this month on monetary economics.
- Fulbright scholar Dr. Thomas Brewer will be making a presentation at the conference "Learning Creatively through Life" in Reykjavik this month.
- Fulbrighter Friðrik Ársælsson will be speaking at the Inter-American Development Bank in November on Investigating and prosecuting complex fraud in post- financial crisis Iceland.
- Fulbrighter Elliott Brandsma is a writer for the student newspaper at HÍ.

Partner of Fulbright Iceland

Vesturgarður ehf.

One to watch

Arnaldur Hjartarson returned to Iceland last summer, after completing an LLM at Yale Law School. It is a gross understatement to say that Arnaldur did the Fulbright Program proud. He received the highest possible grade in every class he took, distinguishing himself in a program that is known for excellence. He's going to be someone to watch in the legal community. We decided to talk to Arnaldur now that he has returned to Iceland.

Why did you choose the US for furthering your law studies?

I had for quite some time been curious about the US, particularly its legal and political system. Adding to that, the country is also known for being home to some of the world's most influential law schools. I was therefore very grateful to have the opportunity to pursue my post-graduate studies at Yale Law School.

What did it mean to you to be chosen for a Fulbright grant?

It meant a great deal to me to be chosen for a Fulbright grant. First and foremost, it was an honorable recognition of my work so far. The grant also made a significant difference when it came to financing my studies. Finally, I am certain that it also helped in the admission-process as Fulbright grants are considered highly prestigious.

Can you describe briefly your studies at Yale?

At Yale Law School I tried to make good use of faculty members' strengths in many different fields within the law and studied several subjects. What I focused mainly on was financial regulation and corporate law, along with international law, EU law and human rights law. I was also fortunate enough to have the opportunity to work closely with four faculty members as a research assistant.

Fulbright is all about making a contribution to society and enriching your community upon return. What are you doing now that you have returned to Iceland?

Currently, I work as an adjunct professor of law at the University of Iceland, along with serving temporarily as a judge at the Reykjavik District Court. While I have only recently returned to Iceland, I hope that my future academic contributions will be of some value in my fields of research.

Do you see yourself maintaining ties with people you met in the US? How might those ties benefit relations between Iceland and the US in your field?

Absolutely, I intend to stay in touch with the many good friends that I made in the US, along with my other colleagues and teachers. During my time in the US, I tried to establish



Arnaldur with the Dean of Yale Law School, Robert C. Post

particularly good connections with people who share my research interests, particularly in the field of financial regulation. At Yale, I lead a reading group on that subject and many of its participants may end up working in that field. I hope that this will result in some fruitful collaborative projects in the future.

Is there something that stands out from your stay in the US that you can share?

I must admit that many things stand out from my time in the US, but if I had to mention one thing I would mention my teachers. I found all of them to be extraordinarily talented people, each in their own way. They are all individuals who are considered at the forefront of their specific fields. They not only introduced me to exciting ideas, but also exposed me to different perspectives and approaches to law and reasoning in general, which is something that I believe I will carry with me for the future.



Starting off on the right foot through Gateway

Fulbright grantees Friðrik Ársælsson (Harvard Law), Friðrik Friðriksson Hirst (Harvard Law) and Guðmundur Stefánsson (Penn State, Astrophysics PhD Program) attended a Gateway seminar in Reno Nevada last September, before starting their studies. Friðrik Ársælsson gave us his impressions of the seminar:

"The lectures were all very professional and informative, on a wide variety of subjects from US politics and university culture to goal setting and dealing with culture shock. In between sessions, we took interesting excursions to places like Lake Tahoe and an Indian reservation in Nevada.

The highlight of the trip was, however, the opportunity to meet fascinating and delightful Fulbrighters from all over the world. Over one hundred participants representing approximately fifty countries, including amongst others Myanmar, Mauritius, Afghanistan and the Palestinian territories, took part in the Reno Gateway. Many of our newfound friends found it amusing that the small island in the North Atlantic had three representatives at the seminar, two of whom shared the same first name and were also headed to the same program at the same university! We were the objects of many good-natured jokes. The accompanying photo shows the three of us on board the Ms. Dixie II, enjoying an evening of sailing on Lake Tahoe during our last evening in Nevada. The Gateway seminar was a great way to embark upon our American adventure and our memorable evening on Lake Tahoe was a perfect ending to the program. I urge prospective Fulbrighters to take advantage of the Gateway opportunity."

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