



FROM THE SIGNING OF THE COMMISSION-NSF AGREEMENT IN WASHINGTON, DC.

Newsletter Iceland-US Fulbright Commission



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FULBRIGHT TIDBITS

A groundbreaking partnership

Message from Executive Director Belinda Theriault



Dear Fulbrighters and friends of Fulbright,

In the last newsletter, I told you about a new Arctic grant, offered in cooperation with the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Now I have some more good news regarding the Commission's Arctic focus. For the first time ever, NSF is partnering with Fulbright.

We are set to offer Fulbright-National Science Foundation grants to US scholars and students to conduct research in Iceland on a wide range of Arctic-related topics in the social and natural sciences

This is truly a groundbreaking partnership. The NSF Division of Polar Programs and the Commission have been working on this idea for a couple of years. It has taken lots of input from both NSF and State Department officials, an inter-agency agreement between ECA and NSF, and now an agreement between NSF and the Commission, to launch this pilot project.

This is a true win-win situation. The Commission has an opportunity to strengthen its grants program, while selected US researchers get all the rights and privileges that come with being Fulbright grantees. It is auspicious that the first grants will be

awarded during the US Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

I am proud that this new and innovative cooperation is being launched in Iceland. I am also grateful to the US Embassy in Iceland for facilitating an introduction between the Commission and NSF, to Program Director Anna Kerttula for being my partner in developing this idea and to the State Department, and especially Linda Duncan and Richard Mei, for everything they've done to turn bring this idea to fruition. A big thank-you also goes to Assistant Secretary Evan Ryan for her support throughout the process and to newly arrived Icelandic Ambassador Geir H. Haarde for hosting the signing ceremony in Washington, DC.

Information will soon be available on the Commission, IIE and CIES websites, so please get the word out about this exciting grant opportunity.

And if this wasn't enough good news for one day, read about the exciting US-led Fulbright Arctic Initiative on page 2. Fulbright is committed to making a difference in the Arctic.

Belinda Theriault

- Dr. Thomas Brewer, Professor and Coordinator of Art Education at the University of Central Florida (Fulbright scholar Iceland 2013) will be presenting the results of his grant research at the March 2015 National Art Education Association conference in New Orleans.
- Rutgers University Law Professor Mark S. Wiener (Fulbright scholar 2009) has won the 2015 University of Louisville Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order for his 2013 book "The Rule of the Clan: What an Ancient Form of Social Organization Reveals About the Future of Individual Freedom." He started work on the book during his Fulbright grant in Akureyri.
- The Fulbright Alumni Thanksgiving was held for the 5th time this year. A big "thank-you" to all the companies that donated fabulous prizes for the fundraising raffle, including Icelandair, Kostur, 66° North, SS, Blue Lagoon, Hilton Nordica Hotel, Björskólinn, Ölgerðin, Sirkus Íslands, Icewhale, Vakandi/Kí/Landvernd and Heilsuskóli Tanyu. We encourage Fulbrighters to do business with companies that support Fulbright!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Fulbright Summer Institute - An Amazing Experience

When people think of Fulbright, they generally think of opportunities for scholars and graduate students. While this constitutes the largest part of Fulbright's work, there are some additional exciting opportunities out there. For example, Fulbright focuses on young leaders, age 18-22, through summer institutes, bringing them to the US for an intensive 5-week theme-based program. The summer institutes also provide an excellent introduction to American culture and society.

The Fulbright Commission in Iceland has sent one participant per year for the last two years to the Summer Institute on Environmental Stewardship.

This past summer our representative was Katrín Hulda Gunnarsdóttir, a young woman who grew up in Neskaupstaður in East Iceland, a small town with a population of under 1500 people.

As a top student with plans to study biology at university, a strong sense of civic mindedness and a keen interest in the environment, Katrín was chosen from a strong pool of applicants to represent Iceland. In early July she travelled to the Kansas State University for an all-expenses-paid adventure with a group of 20 European student leaders. For the last week of the program, the group travelled to Washington, D.C.

For information on the 2015 Summer Institute and application procedure, see our website, www.fulbright.is. Interested Icelandic students are encouraged to apply.

Katrín, how did you get interested in environmental issues?

I have travelled extensively with my family around Iceland ever since I was a small child, taking part in outdoor activities and getting to know the magnificent nature that Iceland has to offer. This has given me a respect for nature, and I have also seen how fragile it is. Thoughtless acts can have an impact for years and decades.



Tell us something that you learned at the summer institute and how you will put that knowledge to use back in Iceland?

Mostly, the summer institute made me more aware of the responsibility of each individual in protecting the environment. Small decisions can have a great impact. The way we use water and dispose of garbage, the food that we eat, all of these things make a difference. I am even more conscious now of the importance of recycling, buying locally grown produce and environmentally friendly products and generally not being wasteful.

What was most challenging for you?

The program was challenging. There was a lot to think about and lots of information to



absorb. But at the same time it was such a great program that I really enjoyed the challenge. Working all day in English was much easier than I expected.

What was your most memorable experience?

I must say, the people I met were great. Our hosts were very hospitable and generous. They invited us into their homes and did everything to make our visit to the US a unique experience. All of us who took part in the summer institute became friends and we will stay in contact.

The surprise birthday party that was thrown for me at the home of one of our student mentors was very memorable. My hosts and fellow students bought a cake and presents and it was so thoughtful of them all. Other memorable events were a Royals baseball game and the 4th of July barbeque. I also very much enjoyed all the free museums in Washington, D.C. The Smithsonian is unbelievable. I can honestly say that I know a lot more about the US and its people after this wonderful opportunity. All in all, the summer institute was an amazing experience.

Fulbright Arctic Initiative



Arctic Initiative prep meeting in Reykjavik

The US State Department has set up an important grant in the field of Arctic research, the Fulbright Arctic Initiative. This initiative, which is part of the US Chairmanship Program for the Arctic Council, aims to bring together 16 scholars from all Arctic Council States to work together on Arctic research. The project focuses on four main areas: energy, water, health and infrastructure. The initiative is led by two US scholars, Dr. Mike Sfraga of the University of Alaska-Fairbanks and Dr. Ross Virginia of Dartmouth. Applications are currently being accepted for additional scholars from all Arctic Council states. Successful candidates will receive a stipend to cover research and travel costs. Scholars interested in applying will find all information on www.cies.org and www.fulbright.is. The Fulbright Commission Board looks forward to Iceland's participation in this important initiative. All interested Icelandic scholars are urged to apply! **The application deadline for Icelandic scholars is 2 February 2015.**

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