



PARTICIPANTS AT FULBRIGHT CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP, APRIL 2016

Newsletter Iceland-US Fulbright Commission



JUNE 2016

Promoting important policy discussions

Message from Executive Director Belinda Theriault



Dear Fulbrighters and friends of Fulbright,

The Commission was pleased to organize a Capacity-Building Workshop last April on attracting US students to Iceland. Among the speakers were three US experts – Aaron Basko from Salisbury University, Lisa Chieffo from the University of Delaware, and Rebecca Bellingher from the University of Maryland – who gave excellent talks and dispensed advice on a variety of issues. There was great interest in the event among Icelandic higher education institutions, with participants from all universities and university centers in Iceland.

Icelandic universities have seen a sharp rise in foreign students over the past years. The workshop was an important forum for

discussion of strategies on internationalization, including how to attract the right types of students and the issue of fees and tuition. The Commission is committed to taking part in these important policy discussions with all interested parties.

The workshop was made possible through support from the U.S. Study Abroad Branch of the U.S. Department of State. The Commission would also like to thank the U.S. Embassy and the Icelandic Ministry of Education and Culture for their support, as well as all those who participated and made the event such a success.

SPRING 2016 SCHOLAR VISITS

- Two Fulbright Specialists were hosted by the University of Iceland: Dr. Charlotte Witt, Professor of Philosophy, was hosted by the Department of Philosophy, and Dr. Tod Sloan, Professor of Counselling Psychology, was hosted by the Department of Education Studies.
- Two Inter-country travel grant recipients also visited Iceland this spring. Dr. Jennifer Forbey from Boise State University was hosted by the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, and Dr. Benjamin Gregg from the University of Texas, Austin, was hosted by the University of Iceland Human Rights Institute and DeCode Genetics.
- In May, Fulbright Arctic Initiative Scholar Gwen Holdmann arrived in Iceland for a two-month research visit hosted by the National Energy Authority.

ICELANDIC FULBRIGHT GRANTEES

2016-2017

2016-2017 Fulbright Scholars

- Dr. Guðrún Nordal, Professor and Executive Director of the Arni Magnusson Institute, Medieval Literature, UC Berkeley
- Dr. Helga Rut Guðmundsdóttir, Associate Professor and Chair at the University of Iceland, School of Education, Early Childhood Music Education, Columbia University and USC.

2016-2017 Fulbright Fellows

- Anna Marsibil Clausen, MA, Journalism, University of California, Berkeley
- Helga Guðmundsdóttir, LL.M., International Law, Harvard University, who also receives the Frank Boas Award
- Hildur Oddsdóttir, MSc., Industrial Engineering, University of Miami, who also receives the Cobb Family Fellowship
- Sólveig Ásta Sigurðardóttir, PhD, Literature, Rice University
- Viðir Thor Rúnarsson, MSc., Engineering Management, Columbia University
- Viðja Karen Júlíusdóttir, MSc., Biomedical Engineering, USC

Summer Institute 2016

- Vigdís Bergsdóttir, US Institute for European Student Leaders on Environmental Issues at the University of Oregon

A young Icelandic teacher gets hands-on experience in New York

Fulbright Fellow Thorleifur Örn Gunnarsson is currently pursuing a master's degree in education at Columbia University. We asked him to share some of his experiences with our readers.

In my program, Master of Arts in Social Studies with Initial Teacher Certification, there is a stringent requirement of student teaching. In the fall semester I taught 12th grade economics in a small public school called Harvest Collegiate High School in Manhattan. During my spring semester, I was placed in Bronx Collegiate Academy High School (BCA) in South Bronx. I taught 9th grade US History, and it was a full time job for four months. It was a lot of work to make it all come together: teach, attend classes, plan my lessons, and do my homework – all in the same day – and then repeat.

What has been the biggest challenge for you teaching in an American school?

My teaching style is very much linked to my personality and my ability to connect the topic of my lesson to something that my students can relate to. I obviously had to work twice as hard to achieve this since I am not a native New Yorker. All of my students in the Bronx came from low-income families

and were members of a minority group. I had to face up to my own privileges and ask myself questions about injustice, racism, and the economy. This was a humbling and eye-opening experience.

How does this experience differ from the teaching you have done in Iceland?

It is so easy to find material here to use in the classroom, since the availability of resources in English is endless. I will definitely miss this when I start teaching in Iceland ... or maybe just start teaching English alongside my social studies?



What have you learned from your students?

I learned that if you are honest and approach your students with respect, if you laugh and smile with them and enjoy yourself, your background doesn't matter at all. I thoroughly enjoyed this experience and the unique opportunity it gave me to get to know this country.

We recommend: Borðið

Friðrik Ársælsson (Fulbright 2013 and Boas award recipient) and his wife, Rakel Eva Sævarsdóttir, brought back more than just an LLM degree from Harvard – they also brought back a business idea. As busy students and parents in Cambridge, they loved having access to freshly made restaurant-style takeaway food for those who have limited time but do not want to compromise on quality and freshness. Finding a lack of comparable options in Reykjavik, they have now opened Borðið, a new takeout restaurant, along with another couple.



Borðið, Ægissíða 123 – Check it out!

US FULBRIGHT GRANTEES 2016-2017

Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Scholars

- [Dr. Scott Erickson](#), Chair and Professor of Marketing, Ithaca College, hosted by the University of Akureyri
- [Dr. Jay Nelson](#), Professor of Physiology, Towson University, hosted by Holar University College
- [Dr. Robert Zierenberg](#), Professor of Geology, UC Davis, hosted by the University of Iceland
- [Dr. Erica Hill](#), Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Alaska Southeast, hosted by the University of Iceland
- [Dr. Stephanie Grocke](#), Postdoctoral Researcher, Smithsonian Institution, hosted by the University of Iceland

Fulbright-Ministry for Foreign Affairs Arctic Scholar

- [Ms. Anita Parlow](#), Research Affiliate, Law, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Fulbright-MFA Arctic Scholar, hosted by the University of Akureyri and the National Energy Authority

Fulbright scholars

- [Dr. Tracey Boisseau](#), Associate Professor of Gender Studies, Purdue University, hosted by the University of Iceland
- [Dr. Sherry Robinson](#), Associate Professor of Business, Pennsylvania State University – Hazleton, hosted by Bifrost University

Additional scholars are expected through the Fulbright Specialist Program and Inter-Country Travel Grant Program

Fulbright Fellows

- [Kathryn Catlin](#), PhD research: Archaeology, University of Iceland & Skagafjörður Heritage Museum, Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Grant
- [Megan Matich](#), Icelandic as a Second Language, University of Iceland, Fulbright/Icelandic Ministry of Education and Culture Joint Grant
- [Alexandra Yingst](#), MS, Coastal and Marine Management, University Centre of the West Fjords

This newsletter is published by the Fulbright Commission in Iceland and is available online at www.fulbright.is

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