

Fulbright Advisory Committee

Yearend Report 2023-2024 (or Spring 2024 Report)

Membership:

Chair(s): Leslie Pusey & Michelle Cude

Members: Ed Brantmeier, Bud Clarke, Jennifer Coffman, John Hulse, Sasha Kokhan (Oleksandr), Erika Metzler Sawin, Holly Yanacek, JY Zhou

Charge: Members of the Fulbright Advisory Board provide ongoing guidance regarding Fulbright initiatives on campus, co-facilitate programs if available, and coach faculty and students through the Fulbright process as needed.

Summary of Current Semester Activity:

Report on Current Fulbright Recipients and progress:

- Leslie reported on updates for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program 2024-2025 cycle (Fall 2023 deadline):
 - 22 applicants; 2 MA students
 - 12 applicants earned semi-finalist status
 - 6 received awards with 3 alternates
 - English Teaching Assistant to Taiwan (2)
 - English Teaching Assistant to Uzbekistan
 - English Teaching Assistant to Mexico
 - English Teaching Assistant to Germany
 - Study/Research Award to Kosovo
 - Study/Research Award (Master's award) to Belgium – Alternate
 - Study/Research Award (Master's award) to Spain – Alternate
 - English Teaching Assistant to Czech Republic – Alternate
 - JMU Colleges represented: CAL, COE, CHBS, CVPA (Alternate to Belgium)
 - Leslie shared that both successful and “unsuccessful” Fulbright candidates received other awards including JET (Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program) (2 offers), Boren Scholarship (2 offers), CBYX (Congress-Bundestag Youth Program – Young Professionals) (1 offer), CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange) Teach in Thailand (1 offer), CIEE Teach in Spain (2 offers), TAPIF (Teaching Assistant Program in France) (1 offer)
- Michelle reported on the faculty awards:
 - Currently there are 3 faculty awardees: Two scholar grants & One specialist grant

Report & Discussion on Fulbright-in-Residence

We have a Fulbrighter-in-Residence in the Music Department: Julian Knight. He has reported many positives about his time here, noting the hospitality of both college and community. He has taken initiative to make many contacts and get involved with faculty and community organizations who share his interests. He was here Jan. – June, 2024.

Discussion: Current Fulbrighter, Ken Rutherford, is asking for the committee's approval for proposing a colleague in Vietnam for a Faculty in Residence award to come to JMU. Given that we have no other departments who have stepped forward with any interest in other applicants, the committee supports this choice. Note that in future fall semesters, there should be an email to all departments alerting them of the opportunity and soliciting any applicants. This would presumably be a part of the duties of the suggested position. Committee returned again to highlighting the problem that there is no official faculty position which is responsible for Fulbright Scholar deadlines, decisions and processes.

Discussion included needing further details about what exactly JMU is being asked to do. The department support of Political Science is noted. Ken Rutherford had already sought department and dean pre-approval of the proposal.

Suggestion that there be a sub-committee formed in this committee to host the F-I-R professor, asking them to coffee or lunch and welcoming them.

Report on Fulbright Celebration

Leslie reported that despite last minute, unforeseen cancellations, the celebratory luncheon was successful. Thank you, especially, to John Hulseley who gave an inspiring and humorous speech, among others. Thank you to Provost Heather Coltman for attending the luncheon and also providing a warm, welcoming presence and inspirational speech. Additional thanks to STAIR (Student awards, Initiatives and Research) and REDI (Research, Economic Development and Innovation) staff – particularly Sandy Stump and Ashley May Maher who took care of logistics. Leslie also shared gratefulness to REDI for sponsoring the event and for attendee support. She received many kind words and compliments about the luncheon.

Members reported that both students and faculty who were invited to expose them to the Fulbright expressed positive encouraging interest. They mentioned that having the opportunity to discuss with awardees at their tables was incredibly helpful. Increasing visibility and interest in Fulbright was one of the goals for the event which seemed definitely successful.

Discussion centered around the most appropriate timing for this event. The committee proposed that this event be held in the fall so that all who apply for these awards can be celebrated, rather than waiting to the spring when many have already heard they have not been chosen and therefore do not want to attend and be recognized. Additionally, holding the event during International Education Week (IEW) in November would allow the opportunity for several State Department supporters to attend as speakers or attendees. Similarly, the event could be co-sponsored with the Center for Global Engagement who would also promote IEW.

We considered a smaller celebration in the spring to launch the opening of the new cycle of awards.

Moving Forward

It was reported that some departments do not support their faculty to apply for a Fulbright because they do not have the funds to cover their replacements. The committee notes regrettably that there is not an inclusive invitation supporting faculty to pursue these grants. Ed explained the Fulbright Enhancement Award of \$12,000 was available. We discussed the need to make that clearer to the faculty and the deans. Perhaps meeting with Vice Provost Elizabeth Oldmixon to propose solutions was suggested.

Michelle and JY will pursue discussions with either Vice Provost Elizabeth Oldmixon or Provost Heather Coltman about the faculty position needed for full faculty support of managing and increasing JMU faculty Fulbright awards.

Future Work Planned:

- Michelle Cude and JY Zhou will pursue discussions with either Vice Provost Elizabeth Oldmixon or Provost Heather Coltman about the faculty position needed for full faculty support of managing and increasing JMU faculty Fulbright awards.
- Leslie Pusey will be attending the Fulbright Institutional Training with Commission Directors in New Orleans, LA on May 30, 2024. This training focuses on the selection processes for the both the U.S. Student and U.S. Scholar programs (with emphasis on the student program) including insights from/about the National Screening Committee (NSC) and in-country selections. This training is designed for both FPAs (Fulbright Program Advisees) and Scholar Liaisons and will contain critical information to share back to the JMU community.
- Leslie Pusey will be attending a NAFA Germany and Austria Study Tour. The National Association of Fellowships Advisors (NAFA) hosts biennial (even years) study tours visiting country-specific Fulbright Commissions, universities, research institutes, and other fellowships-related institutions/partners. This is the first Study Tour offered since the pandemic and the second time since 2016 for a German tour. She will meet with representatives from Fulbright Germany, Fulbright Austria, Fulbright Slovakia, and several universities and research institutes (Potsdam, Jena, Bauhaus, Max Planck, Leibniz, etc.) and even the U.S. Embassy in Vienna. Information from this tour will inform Leslie's work with applicants to Fulbright and other internationally-related fellowships.