

FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR PROGRAM: IMPACT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fulbright Program is one of the most widely recognized and prestigious international exchange programs in the world. At Ohio State, the Office of International Affairs (OIA) facilitates the Fulbright Scholar Program, which offers professional exchange awards for faculty, staff and administrators. According to The Chronicle of Higher Education, Ohio State was ranked second in the nation as a top producer of Fulbright U.S. scholars for the 2016-2017 academic year. The program directly contributes to Ohio State's Strategic Internationalization Goals.

In 2016, OIA partnered with the Office of Institutional Research and Planning to assess the Fulbright Scholar Program. The university-wide impact study focused on professional exchanges; **the study did not focus on student awards**. The objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the impact and outcomes of the Fulbright Scholar Program on recipients' teaching, research and service
2. Document the impact of the Fulbright Scholar Program on building international partnerships and professional development of program alumni
3. Examine campus climate toward the Fulbright Scholar Program
4. Identify future directions for supporting and increasing the impact of the program

The responses of Fulbright awardees suggest that the program is a transformative experience resulting in significant impact on teaching, research and service. Awardees apply their experiences to integrate global and cultural content into new courses and to enrich existing ones. They capitalize on opportunities gained through the program to publish new research, develop new research topics, and seek grant funding. Fulbright scholars also maintain strong collaborative relationships with colleagues from their host countries.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive impacts reported, respondents indicate a suboptimal campus climate toward the program. Specific shortcomings include but are not limited to: disparities in how the Fulbright is valued across units, a lack of positive recognition and support within departments, and roadblocks to taking leave. Based on a thematic review of findings, the following strategies are recommended:

1. Continue to promote Fulbright Scholar Program opportunities across the university
2. Hold Q&A sessions within departments/units to assist in clarifying to unit heads as well as to faculty/staff the opportunities and benefits of participation in the program
3. Articulate a process by which Fulbright scholars have grant award and project outcomes incorporated into faculty annual reports and reviews for Tenure and Promotion
4. Develop a university-wide policy that details consistent approaches across departments in terms of Fulbright awards, faculty leave, sabbatical and/or special assignment appointments

The Office of International Affairs is now sharing impact study findings and implementing these recommendations with the goal of greater awareness of the value the Fulbright Scholar Program, and of establishment of uniform knowledge, policies and practices across the university that are supportive to applicants and recipients of this highly prestigious award.



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RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Results of our study captured many of the ways in which the Fulbright Scholar Program positively impacts individual grantees as well as contributes to positive institution-wide culture surrounding Ohio State's internationalization goals and their intended benefits. However, there are clear challenges that have been indicated as well. Based on these challenges, we offer the following recommendations:

Continue to promote the Fulbright Scholar Program opportunities campus wide

- Share report details to contribute to and support a positive climate for Fulbright awards
- Target gaps of knowledge across the university and emphasize how Fulbright benefits and strategically fits into individual colleges' internationalization goals
- Continue to offer Fulbright application development support for applicants
- Share resources on Fulbright application process, assistance and programs broadly including the regional campuses

Hold Q&A sessions within departments/units to assist in clarifying to unit heads as well as to faculty/staff the opportunities and benefits of participation in the Fulbright Scholar Program

- Clarify the competitive nature of the program and the application process
- Attend college-wide or departmental meetings, which may reach a broader audience than an optional Q&A session, perhaps targeting those units with historically less representation
- Attend Council of Deans meeting (university-wide) and/or school/college leadership meetings to share information on Fulbright impact, programs and processes

Articulate a process through which Fulbright scholars may have their grant award and project outcomes incorporated into faculty annual reports and reviews for Tenure and Promotion

- Ensure that departments recognize how Fulbright experiences fit into departmental goals for teaching, research and service
- Provide examples to department heads and P&T committees as to how Fulbright experiences contribute to individual long-term career goals and accomplishments, productive research partnerships and opportunities that increase likelihood of achieving Ohio State's goal of a strengthened and broader global reach

Develop a university-wide policy statement that details consistent approaches across departments in terms of Fulbright awards, faculty leave, sabbatical, and/or special assignment appointments

- Convene campus-wide stakeholder/administrators meeting to begin discussions on mechanisms to financially support departments when faculty have been awarded Fulbright
- Office of International Affairs (OIA) should document and clarify how Fulbright awards have been handled across different departments within one or two calendar years
- Continue to encourage Fulbright applicants to work with OIA prior to submission in order to track how leave is handled across departments
- Recommend that colleges or departments cover financial costs associated with adjunct hires to offset instructional gaps for Fulbright leaves
- Consider Ohio State Office of Research support for adjunct support to departments

