

VISITING COLUMNIST: AMBASSADOR OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED STATES

THE

News

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FULBRIGHT FINLAND

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Announced

Increasing
Cooperation
in the Arctic

Diplomacy and
International Exchanges

BIANNUAL MAGAZINE PUBLISHED BY THE FULBRIGHT FINLAND FOUNDATION

Diplomacy and International Exchanges



Dynamic, transformative, unforgettable. These are words used by our Foundation’s grantees to describe their exchange experience (p. 5). With the capacity to change lives – personally and professionally – the exchanges are intertwined with the many forms of diplomacy and yield a broad impact on societies at large.

Discussing citizen diplomacy is an integral part of the orientation training for all Foundation grantees (p. 4-5). **Michael West** talks about communicating science across cultures, and serving as a cultural ambassador (p. 8.), and **Jude Tunyi** shares his personal experiences as an alumni ambassador advocating for increased support for international exchanges and collaboration (p. 19).

Partnering with our Foundation, the Finnish universities’ FARIA network operates in the intersection of research, development, and innovation (RDI) collaboration and diplomacy (p. 7). And **Jukka Välimaa**, a Finnish diplomat currently working on

UN Security Council issues, describes how for him the connection of exchanges and diplomacy is both direct and concrete; the ASLA-Fulbright grant was fundamental for his career in foreign service (p. 16-17).

We are honored to have the Ambassador of Finland to the United States **Mikko Hautala** as our visiting columnist (p. 3). He assesses the Finnish-American Fulbright program from his perspective as the chief of Finland’s diplomatic mission in the U.S., and concludes with a powerful testimony of the program and its impact and importance: it is “a bedrock in the relations between Finland and the United States.”

Terhi Mölsä
Chief Executive Officer
Fulbright Finland Foundation

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Cover photo: Maria Mölsä

Celebrating a Bedrock of Finnish-American Relations



The achievements of science and education carry over generations, not just over the next economic turmoil.

The history of the ASLA-Fulbright exchanges between Finland and the United States is quite exceptional. First, there was the reputation Finland gained as “the country that pays its debts” in the early 1930s. While other countries indebted to the U.S. took the 1932 Hoover Moratorium on loan payments as a pardon instead of postponement, Finland continued the payments of its 1919 food loan, in full, on time.

Setting aside a part of those installments in a “scholarship fund” for educating Finnish students in American universities was first discussed in the U.S. State Department in 1935 already. Finland paid regularly even when the U.S. was an ally in WWII with the USSR, Finland’s then enemy.

Scholarships to the U.S. financed by loan repayments became a reality in 1949 with the ASLA program. In 1952, Finland also joined the international exchange program founded by the Senator of Arkansas, J. William Fulbright. That dual footing of the ASLA-Fulbright exchange made its basis particularly strong.

The start of the Fulbright exchanges coincided with feelings of recovery and general optimism in Finland. From June to September 1952, Armi Kuusela became the very first Miss Universe in Long Beach, California, Helsinki hosted the Summer Olympics, and the last war reparations train loaded with Finnish-made machinery crossed the border to the USSR – Finland again being the only country to fully pay its war reparations.

Politically speaking, the ASLA-Fulbright exchanges were a prudent move. In 1947, Finland had rejected the desperately needed financial aid offered by the U.S. through the Marshall Plan, in order to not provoke the USSR. The Fulbright agreement was fully negotiated in 1948, but Finland waited four years before moving to its implementation.

By the early 1950s, the United States had become the global leader in science, also utilizing the brainpower of scientists and intellectuals who had fled from Central Europe during the 1930s and 40s. In the early Cold War years, ASLA-Fulbright exchanges played a big role in keeping Finnish scholars up to date with world-class research.

Many Fulbright scholars became professors and leading academic and cultural figures. In hindsight, the investment was probably the wisest possible choice. The achievements of science and education carry over generations, not just over the next economic turmoil.

Sometimes the rewards of long-term scientific collaboration become very tangible also for us diplomats. Such an occasion took place on April 5 this year in Washington D.C., when Finland signed the bilateral statement on cooperation in quantum science and technology with the United States as the first European Union member country.

Decades of close contact have produced a lively community of over 6 000 Finnish and American Fulbright alumni. They ensure that the program’s impact is visible not only in higher education and research, but also more broadly in cooperation between citizens, institutions, and businesses, and in the relations between our countries in general.

In today’s world, science and politics intertwine closely, for better or worse. Democracies cannot cooperate in fields of high expertise without close connections between real people. This is why Fulbright Finland is so important. For decades, it has been a bedrock in the relations between Finland and the United States. With the program’s excellent shape on its 70th anniversary, I have every reason to believe that this will be the case also for the decades to come.

Mikko Hautala

Ambassador of Finland to the United States



2022-23 Awards to the United States Announced

Text TERHI MÖLSÄ
Photos STUDIO TERHO PHOTOGRAPHY

A new cohort of students, scholars, and professionals from Finland joined the ranks of the Fulbright Finland Foundation grantees in the annual Award Ceremony at the Helsinki City Hall in May. At the event, the Foundation announced the 2022-23 recipients of its awards for study, research, and professional projects in the U.S. The event was hosted jointly by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and the City of Helsinki, and this year it also celebrated the 70th anniversary year of the signing of the Fulbright agreement between the governments of Finland and the U.S.

The grantees represent a wide range of disciplines and research topics from music data science to corporate social responsibility, multicultural education, and sustainable technology policy. Several grants were also awarded specifically for the purpose of initiating and developing sustainable institutional partnership agreements between Finnish and U.S. higher education institutions as well as long-term research collaboration. The awards are made possible by support from the Finnish and U.S. governments, the Finland-America Educational Trust Fund, the Foundation's partners from the higher education and private sectors, as well as individual donors.

Before the Award Ceremony and Reception the new grantees attended a full-day seminar



Miquel Torrents-Ticó from the University of Helsinki received a Fulbright Finland Travel Grant for his research collaboration with the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance in San Diego, CA.

"I am very excited about this opportunity. It is a great honor to become part of the Fulbright Finland community and start this journey together. The grant will help me to develop a long-term collaborative project between the institutions. Working together to enhance human-wildlife coexistence," Miquel says.

Fulbright Finland Foundation Grantees 2022-23

www.fulbright.fi/grantees

as a part of an extensive training program that all Foundation grantees go through as a part of their grant. The curriculum is organized into modules and includes guided self-study, virtual group sessions, and a full-day pre-departure seminar in Helsinki. The topics of the content modules range from practical information and advice



regarding the grant term and moving to the U.S. to intercultural communication, citizen diplomacy and country brand, and other key themes. The modules are timed over a period of several months, and some are completed when the grantee is already in the U.S. to help in areas that are especially current at that stage. The final module is timed after the grant term is over and its purpose is to introduce the alumni opportunities and concrete ways to engage actively as alumni.

Over 70 Finnish and American grantees have so far been selected to participate in the Fulbright

Finland Foundation exchange programs for the academic year 2022–23. Additional selections will be made later in the year, primarily for the short-term programs, likely bringing the total number of next year's grantees to over 100.

Since 1949, over 6 000 students, scholars, teachers, artists, and professionals have participated in the Foundation's exchange programs – nearly 4 000 from Finland and over 2 000 from the U.S., representing all fields in the arts, sciences, and the society at large.

Award Ceremony speakers
Mikko Koivumaa,
Johanna Sumuvuori,
Douglas T. Hickey,
Juhana Vartiainen, and
Terhi Mölsä.

The Ceremony concluded with 2021-22 U.S. Fulbright Fellow **Alyssa Rodriguez** performing her original piece "uncertain times" with nyckelharpa.

Dynamic, Transformative, Unforgettable

Text MAIJA KETTUNEN

Grantees and alumni talk about the impact of the Fulbright Finland Foundation and its grant programs in a new video that premiered at the 2022 Award Ceremony. The authentic voices underline the importance of international exchanges and their deep impact both personally and more broadly for societies and the global community. "We're all on this planet together. And by collaborating with each other and learning from each other, we can help develop better solutions to solve some of the challenges we face, and it also makes our lives much richer for it," **Fred Markowitz** summarizes.



PHOTOS: MARIA MÖLSÄ

Transformative, unique, and futuristic are just some of the adjectives that the grantees and alumni use to describe their personal Fulbright Finland experience. "Everyone's experience will be different and impact them in different ways," **Jordan Banks** says, as she conveys her strong encouragement for others to apply for the programs, "it might turn out to be one of the best decisions of your life!"

15 current grantees and alumni were interviewed during the project. Individual interviews will be published later – stay tuned!

Watch the video on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3aOGMeU>

Walk of Privilege

Draw a vertical line on a piece of paper. Next you'll hear different claims. Every time the claim concerns you/your lived reality, draw an X as a sign of a "step".

Starting point

X
X
X

"Finish line"



PHOTO: FULBRIGHT FINLAND FOUNDATION

Championing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Trainers and workshop participants discussed diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to create welcoming spaces for international visitors.

Text LEASA WEIMER,
KAROLIINA KOKKO

Kristopher Jackson and **Jasmin Assulin** from the *deidei* organization guided the workshop participants through the “Walk of Privilege”. The activity allowed the workshop participants to reflect on the privilege they have in different areas of their lives.

See the workshop program, materials, and key takeaways www.fulbright.fi/about-us/events/capacity-building-workshop-championing-diversity-equity-and-inclusion

As Finnish higher education institutions identify, create, and invest in DEI goals, the Fulbright Finland Foundation designed a workshop to support institutions in their efforts to develop inclusive communities. Representatives from nine Finnish higher education institutions joined the Capacity Building Workshop to discuss experiences and best practices, and to deepen their knowledge of DEI for the support of their work in this area.

Trainers from the *deidei* organization, **Jasmin Assulin** and **Kristopher Jackson** focused on the foundations of DEI – helping the participants to develop a shared understanding of DEI terminology and inspiring a more inclusive approach to building community. The participants then proceeded to roundtable discussions moderated by two 2021–22 U.S. Fulbright Fellows, **Meg Jones** and **Jessica Stargardter**. Through interactive activities, Meg and Jessica facilitated discussions focused on practical and concrete ways to apply DEI to attract and welcome international visitors to Finland. The conversation topics included identity, privilege, and tokenization, among others.

“At an internationally oriented university where inclusion is constantly on the agenda and where we are strongly committed to act for equality

and diversity whether it concerns gender identity, ethnic background, religion or other beliefs, any disabilities or age, the sessions and discussions at the Fulbright Finland Foundation event were not only interesting but also very important to support our awareness and dialogue about inclusion,” says **Johanna Julin Lilius**, Head of International Relations at Hanken School of Economics.

Meg Jones reminded the participants to share what they had learned after the workshop, and reminded about the importance of balancing the focus. “When discussing diversity, equity, and inclusion we often find ourselves focusing on the negative experiences of people with marginalized identities, but there is a lot of joy in marginalized communities and we should remember to celebrate this joy as well,” she concluded.

The event was hosted by Hanken School of Economics and received funding support from the USA Study Abroad office of the U.S. State Department.

The Fulbright Finland Foundation supports the internationalization of Finnish higher education institutions. The Foundation organizes workshops and training seminars that address different themes relevant to the internationalization of Finnish higher education and research.

Shaping Future Frameworks for RDI Collaboration

Text JÉRÔME RICKMANN, MELISSA
PLATH, TERHI MÖLSÄ



PHOTO: AALTO UNIVERSITY

Together shaping the future - Fulbright Finland Foundation's maxim succinctly expresses the imperative for collaboration and agency. We want to live in a sustainable, wellbeing-centered world. This requires holistic big picture thinking, global engagement and collaboration, and local actions. As current world events demonstrate, this is far from being the case, but all of us in Finland and the U.S. have shared responsibilities rooted in our common democratic values to work towards that goal. In this spirit, it is no surprise that immediately after last year's launch of the Finnish-American Research & Innovation Accelerator (FARIA), the interest sparked to explore collaboration opportunities between the Fulbright Finland Foundation and FARIA.

The Fulbright Finland Foundation is the premium bridge-builder and facilitator of Finnish-U.S. collaboration through the exchange of talent and knowledge. And FARIA members represent 92% of Finnish research universities, and 89% of the higher education sector's RDI-power when measured in terms of RDI-funding.

In recent years, Finland's diplomacy in the United States has become more state-focused and is underpinned by a systematic, integrated, multi-stakeholder, and multi-level approach. The new approach increasingly coordinates the nation's diplomatic efforts, key ministries, business organizations, the higher education sector, and even single research groups to work together with a large set of U.S. stakeholders in selected states. The states of Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Washington, and most recently Colorado have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Finland to increase collaboration in various areas of business, research, and innovation.

Finland seeks to promote its globally recognized strengths in education and technological know-how; nature and sustainable development; and functionality and wellbeing. Key actors under the "Team Finland" umbrella such as the Finnish Embassy in Washington, D.C., and Business Finland's offices in the U.S., collaborate for new Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) and business opportunities by connecting Finnish innovation ecosystems with state ecosystems and developing jointly long-term partnerships for a sustainable world.

While concerted efforts in the U.S. create new connections, the Finnish higher education sector, key funding bodies, and stakeholder organizations, such as the Fulbright Finland Foundation, increasingly align to create synergies. A key initiative was the inclusion of the U.S. MoU-states as target regions in the "Global Program" launched by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. Aalto University and the University of Helsinki have subsequently been mandated by the Ministry to develop FARIA as a large-scale Finnish RDI network to increase the visibility of the excellence of the Finnish RDI sector in the U.S. with special emphasis on Artificial Intelligence, 5G/6G wireless technologies, the new bioeconomy, and research and interventions in the area of inequalities, education, governance, and broad citizen wellbeing.

Ultimately, the vision and mission of FARIA and the Fulbright Finland Foundation are strongly aligned: strengthening transatlantic ties in research and education between both countries based on shared values and interests. Many of the Foundation's activities and services aim to support the internationalization of the very higher education institutions

Minnesota higher education delegation's recent visit to Aalto University, from left to right: **Jussi Impiö, Steven Massey, Terhi Mölsä, Amy Lindgren, Rachel Limón, Aaron Budge, Ilkka Niemelä, Don Weinkauf, Meredith McQuaid, Ossi Naukkarinen, Jeff Standish, and Jérôme Rickmann.**

www.faria.network

organized in FARIA. Thus, the collaboration offers new venues to strengthen inter-institutional ties and broaden the scope of stakeholder engagement. From FARIA's perspective, the core idea is to serve as a platform for synergy creation and as a potential "back office" to utilize opportunities created by Team Finland activities transparently and efficiently. We do not compete with existing structures and organizations. We seek to even further accelerate their impact: together better, and better together. By creating loosely coupled ties between stakeholder organizations, we contribute to nourishing existing and emerging innovation ecosystems. Finnish Academics serve on the Fulbright Finland Foundation's Board of Directors, while the Foundation's CEO volunteers her expertise and experience on FARIA's External Advisory Board.

The Finnish and U.S. alumni of the Fulbright Finland Foundation stand collectively for the very best that our countries have to offer each other. FARIA is still a young initiative but together with the Fulbright Finland Foundation we see the potential to have a real influence in shaping future frameworks for Finnish-U.S. RDI-collaboration.

The authors, Jérôme Rickmann (Aalto University) and Melissa Plath (University of Helsinki) serve as the FARIA Coordinators, and Terhi Mölsä is CEO of the Fulbright Finland Foundation.



PHOTO: MICHAEL WEST

In an age of widespread misinformation, citizens and decision-makers need access to credible scientific sources.



Communicating Science Across Cultures

When I was in high school, I read a book that changed my life. It was astronomer **Carl Sagan's** marvelous collection of essays, *The Cosmic Connection*. Sagan's lyrical prose and insights into how the universe works sparked a curiosity I'd never felt before. I went on to get a Ph.D. in astronomy and have been a professional astronomer and educator for nearly four decades. I'm proof that science communication matters.

Many scientists are eager to share their research with the public. But most have had little or no communication training and, consequently, write or speak in ways that are often difficult for non-scientists to understand.

Yet the need for scientists to be effective communicators has never been greater. In an age of widespread misinformation, citizens and decision-makers need access to credible scientific sources. Moreover, as the public face of research, scientist communicators can help inspire the next generation of explorers. A child fascinated by science might grow up to discover a cure for Alzheimer's disease or be the first human to walk on Mars.

Culture as a Bridge to Diverse Audiences

Today, scientists have more ways than ever to get their message out. Twitter. Instagram. YouTube. Facebook. TikTok. Podcasts. Blogs. Newspapers. Magazines. Television. Radio. And more.

But competition for the public's attention is fierce, and attention spans have gotten measurably shorter. Scientists must communicate in a way that's engaging, understandable, and relevant to people's lives if we want them to pay attention.

Good communicators know that the best way to connect with an audience is to tell a story, and

the surest way to reach someone's mind is through their heart. As biologist-turned-filmmaker **Randy Olson** says in his book *Don't Be Such a Scientist*, "you have to have a story."

There's a rich synergy between science and culture. Both try to explain the world through stories, whether we call them theories, novels, paintings, or prayers. Weaving these stories together provides a powerful way to reach diverse audiences. For example, creation stories from around the world can give context to scientific theories about the origin of Earth's oceans. Or a comparison of different cultures' views of constellations in the night sky could lead into a discussion of how the constellations change over time as stars move through space.

Learning from Finnish Colleagues

I had the pleasure of spending two months as a U.S. Fulbright Scholar at the University of Turku, where I taught an eight-week course on *Communicating Science with the Public*. Thanks to the flex option of my grant, I'll do the same in 2023.

I also learned a lot from Finnish colleagues. I'm especially grateful for the kind hospitality of scientific and cultural centers that I visited throughout Finland to see firsthand how they communicate with the public. Highlights included visits to the Heureka, the Finnish Science Centre in Vantaa, the Arktikum Science Centre in Rovaniemi, the Sámi Museum Siida in Inari, and the University of Turku's Botanical Garden on the island of Ruissalo.

It has been a delight to learn more about Finnish culture and to serve as an ambassador for American culture, embracing the Fulbright spirit of promoting cross-cultural interactions and mutual understanding.

Michael West

2021-23 U.S. Fulbright Scholar
University of Turku

Michael West (pictured in Rovaniemi, Finland) is an astronomer and science communicator at Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona. He received his Ph.D. in astronomy from Yale University and has held research, teaching, and leadership positions on four continents.

www.fulbright.fi/flex

De-mystifying Finnish Language

In my time at the Sibelius Academy Global Music department, transcultural collaboration and cultural exchange have been everyday topics of discussion. As someone committed to making meaningful transcultural and interdisciplinary collaborations and conveying stories and emotions through music, these experiences significantly changed my perspective on the music industry and my relationship to personal craft.

However, there has been another transcultural aspect to my year in Finland that has been equally enriching and rewarding: learning the Finnish language. I started studying Finnish one and a half years before I moved to Helsinki in August 2021, and continued my studies upon arriving. More than discovering my passion for languages, learning Finnish has been one of the key windows for me into understanding Finnish music, culture, and people on a deeper level. Although English is spoken fluently by most Finns, it brings a new level of meaning to speak the first language of the country. Even basic Finnish phrases can go a long way in connecting with the Finns.

With my knowledge of the Finnish language, I was able to co-teach children in Tampere through a Global Music Department's Community Engagement project, take an *aloittelija* 2-row accordion course in the folk department, and simply communicate in Finnish in everyday life situations.

More than just language skills, I also gained a rich community of friends. I have now practiced Finnish with immigrants to Finland from Australia, the Basque Country, Germany, Estonia, the UK, and other states in the U.S. Some had Finnish heritage and others did not, but all of us bonded through a passion for the language.

One of the most rewarding gifts I have received as a fruit of my language learning has been the ability to communicate in Finnish with my *pikku-serkkujä*, my "little cousins" in Finland. This connection has brought me a lot of joy and connection with my own heritage roots. As Finnish is not as widely spoken in Astoria, Oregon, where my great grandparents settled in the early 20th century as it once was, maybe this can inspire other Finnish Americans as well to take up the language again. I would deeply encourage more people to embark on a Finnish language learning journey. *Hyvää matkaa!*

PHOTO: DARINA RODIONOVA



Learning Finnish has been one of the key windows for me into understanding Finnish music, culture, and people on a deeper level.”

Devina Boughton

2021-22 U.S. Fulbright Fellow, Global Music Department, Sibelius Academy

Blog post for SibA: blogit.uniarts.fi/post/kylmat-kissat-our-tampere-community-outreach-project

Youtube channel: www.youtube.com/user/ventriiloquest14

Increasing Cooperation in the Arctic

Text MIRKA MCINTIRE

The Fulbright Specialist Program enables Finnish host institutions to customize projects to address diverse needs of Arctic communities, and to develop sustainable U.S.-Finnish collaboration in the Arctic. These short-term exchange projects have concrete objectives that can be achieved over the course of the Specialist's visit.

The multiplier effect and impact of the programs are high, as the projects are required to have an education or training focus, and the U.S. Specialists support the capacity-building of students as well as scholars, and share their expertise with a wider audience beyond a single host institution.

Fulbright Specialist **John Donnellan** spent four weeks in Finland focusing on *Arctic Sustainability*

Lecturing & Community Involvement. The visit paved the way for future collaboration and the development of possible joint programs between New Jersey City University and Lapland University of Applied Sciences. "The Fulbright Specialist program allowed us to have more long term and meaningful cooperation that is hard to get in any other way," says Donnellan's host, Lecturer **Marko Korkeakoski**.

During his visit, Donnellan also shared his expertise in the capital area with the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and Helsinki School of Business. His specialist project also received funding support from the U.S. Embassy Helsinki and the Lapland UAS.



John Donnellan

Read about Donnellan's visit in his blog post at: www.fulbright.fi/about-us/blog/arctic-sustainability-lecturing-and-community-involvement

Next application round for the Fulbright Specialist program will be launched in the fall 2022. www.fulbright.fi/specialist

Education, Innovation, Science, and Art

Text MAIJA KETTUNEN



Throughout the spring 2022, over 300 participants joined the Fulbright Forum series to discuss themes varying from smart grid solutions and sustainable architecture to climate anxiety, Finnish folk music, and best practices in education. In the annual series, the Foundation's current U.S. grantees present on their research and projects. The sessions are moderated by the Foundation's alumni and Board members.

Smart Grid Solutions in Finland

Salena Bantz presented on smart grid reliability, the focus of her master's thesis: "The smart grid provides a path forward to a more efficient, reliable, secure, and greener electricity system. My passion for electrical engineering and environmental responsibility intersects in the topic of smart grid technology."

"Smart grid technology is considered one of the most important tools for mitigating climate change. Significant investments and research are needed to

realize these solutions globally, and I look forward to being a part of the generation that works to re-invent the largest and most important machine in the world," Salena concludes.

Implementing Competence-Based Learning

Kathryn Picardo is researching how Finland's competence-based national curriculum is actualized in the schools. "Finnish classrooms have shown me it is possible to connect business, non-profits, parents, social services, and government agencies to actualize the notion of lifelong learning," Kathryn says.

Presenting on her project helped Kathryn to reflect on the observations from her conversations with teachers and students. "In putting together my Fulbright Forum presentation, I gained some clarity – finally able to discern takeaways that I know will make me a better teacher, researcher, and advocate for change back home," Kathryn says.

Salena Bantz

2021-22 Fulbright-Tampere University Graduate Award

Kathryn Picardo

2021-22 Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching Research Program, University of Helsinki

Read more about Salena's and Kathryn's projects and experiences in Finland:

www.fulbright.fi/about-us/blog/smart-grid-solutions-finland

www.fulbright.fi/about-us/blog/series-small-realizations



Internationalizing Learning Environments

Fulbright teachers **Abigail Harkey** and **Carolyn Streets** had impactful Fulbright Speaker Program visits to schools and universities in Rovaniemi and Vantaa.

During her visit to Rovaniemi, Abigail Harkey discussed ideation, material use, and how to visually communicate complex ideas about social issues with high school students. She also participated in a consortium called *Living in the Landscape*, exploring ways that place and culture impact arts practices.

"Since my inquiry project on ecosocial art relates to their work, they invited me to join, and I continued participating in this international group of artists and researchers from five countries," Abigail says.

Carolyn Streets was invited to a comprehensive school in Vantaa to facilitate a roundtable discussion with staff and engage in a cultural exchange with students. "65% of the school's student population are of multiethnic-cultural backgrounds and teachers were interested in my expertise as they were considering new ways to improve the curriculum," Carolyn says.

The discussions explored introducing more multicultural-ethnic content within the curriculum to help students to construct their cultural identities and confirm them as valued members of society.

Invite a U.S. Fulbrighter to your institution

Fulbright Speaker Program is an easy opportunity for Finnish schools and other institutions to internationalize their learning environment.

Read more about the program and funding opportunities: www.fulbright.fi/speaker-program

Text: Maija Kettunen



Finding that Special Blend of Finnish and U.S. Education Systems

Text KRISTEN RICKEY

After sharing a life-changing experience with a group of colleagues from the United States as we immersed ourselves in the Finnish education system and culture, we were asked to draft an article about our experience. That seems like a small request compared to the amazing gift we have been given, yet it is exceedingly difficult.

How can we put into words what this experience has meant to us? It would require so much more than a description. Instead, it requires us to share an ethos, a feeling, and a mindset. Challenging to do for sure, but if I had to choose a place to begin, I would start with trust.

We heard and read before we arrived that the Finnish system is based on trust, but I am not sure we quite understood what that meant. When we had the opportunity to visit schools, every individual we spoke to not only used the word, but exuded its essence. Trust in the system, trust in the educators, trust in the families, trust in the children. The sense that everyone was working toward the same goal, and that they believed in each other's shared intentions focused on learning and the wellbeing of children was palpable.

That trust in the entire system translated into a larger philosophy that guided all of their actions. We learned that the focus on the child instead of on meeting time-based outcomes meant that they could create "slow school", an unhurried approach to learning that enables the child to take as long as they need while focusing on individual interests. Learning is flexible and responsive to student development, and this is facilitated by grade-independent grouping. There is a sense that there is time: time to learn, time to play, time for family, time for nature, time for pursuing individual passions and interests. The result is a much more peaceful environment which appears to be free of

the intense competition and time pressure that result in high stress levels and mental health concerns experienced by many American students. It isn't that we don't have any of these positive aspects in our system, but there seems to be a much better balance in the Finnish system.

Further evidence for the focus on the child as an individual is the concept we heard several times that there are "no dead ends". Students are able to choose the type of work they would like to pursue, and there doesn't seem to be a stigma attached to the choice. It is truly a choice between equally valued work, and because there are no dead ends, learners can always pursue something different in the future should they choose to do so. The freedom embodied in this system is so refreshing and energizing!

So, now how to apply the lessons learned to my own system at home? Ojanperä school principal **Raija Johnson** gave such a powerful perspective when she said, "The school functions within a national culture based on history. You can't force practices elsewhere because we don't share the same history." I believe this is key for me to remember. I don't need to figure out how to adopt all the magic we experienced in Finland, nor do I need to redesign our entire American educational tradition. Instead, I need to consider how to blend the best aspects of both to better serve my students and community while acknowledging our own history and context.

As CEO **Terhi Mölsä** stated, "We do whatever we can in our sphere of influence, no matter how big or how small." That is exactly what I intend to do. This experience has given me much hope for the future of education in my sphere, hope for the future of global friendship, and hope for continued learning and growth for all of us. Hope is a much needed and beautiful thing, and I am forever grateful to my colleagues for sharing that with me.

Kristen Rickey (pictured in the middle of the front row) is the Superintendent and Director of Special Education in the West Delaware County Community School District in Iowa.

Fulbright Leaders for Global Schools program has brought two cohorts of K-12 school and district administrators to participate in an intensive 10-day program to learn about educational practices in Finland with the goal of improving outcomes for all students.
www.fulbright.fi/us-flgs

The FLGS Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and Finnish public sector partners. It is supported in its implementation by IREX in the U.S. and the Fulbright Finland Foundation in Finland.

Researching Water Quality in the Baltic Sea and Chesapeake Bay



I've always been motivated by the power of science to provide information that can fuel solutions, especially around challenges facing our coastal waters. The Fulbright Finland Foundation's Seeking Solutions for Global Challenges Award created the opportunity for me to explore comparisons between the Baltic Sea and Chesapeake Bay, two ecosystems at similar inflection points in efforts to restore water quality impaired as a consequence of land-based nutrient pollution.

These two systems have also been the focus of large-scale restoration efforts for decades. Shifts in agricultural practices in the last century, especially those encouraged by technological advances to synthesize N_2 gas from the atmosphere into biologically available anhydrous ammonia used as fertilizer, have dramatically increased nutrient inputs to coastal waters. Combined with urbanization that concentrated populations in a few locations and increased wastewater inputs, the Baltic and Chesapeake Bay have both experienced declines in water quality. This decline is brought about by the process of eutrophication: the production of excess organic matter. In many coastal waters, eutrophication is a consequence of excess nutrient pollution that fuels water column phytoplankton blooms, decreasing light availability to the sediments, and depleting dissolved oxygen when the blooms die causing large-scale "dead zones".

Today, both the Baltic and Chesapeake Bay have achieved a ~50% reduction in nutrient inputs, largely by implementing advanced wastewater treatment technologies. Now the work begins on the more diffuse forms of pollution, those not coming from the end of a pipe but instead traveling as runoff from the land, largely from agriculture. It is also a complication that in the same time period between the early 1980s and now, we have documented shifts in climate that have increased water temperatures, changed precipitation and freshwater inputs, and even altered wind conditions that can affect coastal water movement. This shifted baseline means that simply reducing nutrient inputs to historic levels may not result in desired restoration targets. These are the challenges I am working to understand as part of a

I've always been motivated by the power of science to provide information that can fuel solutions.



comparative research effort between the Baltic and Chesapeake Bay.

I am joined in this effort by colleagues here at the University of Helsinki's Tvärminne Zoological Station; the Baltic Sea Centre in Stockholm, Sweden; the Norwegian Institute for Water Resources; Aarhus University in Denmark; and colleagues at my home institution. We are writing a paper together, and have assembled a special session at the upcoming Chesapeake Research Symposium. I have also been working with my host, Dr. **Aleksandra Lewandowska**, to begin pilot experiments we hope will provide data to support a larger investigation into the complex interactions among nutrient reductions, climate, and biodiversity shifts in the plankton community. All of this work I am investing in with the hope and expectation that my career will continue to be enriched by research in the Baltic and Finland in the coming years.

As an awardee taking advantage of the flex option, I also want to emphasize how valuable this format has been for me to participate in the Fulbright Program. My partner has an architecture business I could not have taken him away from on a full, year-long sabbatical. I have an extensive research program in Maryland that would also have made stepping away for an extended period difficult. The four month program split into two visits was ideal. My family has still been able to experience Finland; my four-year-old daughter is enrolled in the local daycare and has settled in well for this second visit! I know giving them this taste of the culture and people has also set the stage for return visits and a relationship with Finland I hope will continue long into the future.

Lora Harris

2021-22 Seeking Solutions for Global Challenges Award, Tvärminne Zoological Station, University of Helsinki

Professor, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science

Seeking Solutions for Global Challenges

www.fulbright.fi/seeking-solutions-global-challenges-award

A Fulbright Inter-Country Travel Grant brought **Beili Liu** from Norway to Fiskars in Finland to create an art installation, *Still Winds*, for the HIDDEN exhibition, one of three key exhibitions of the 2022 Fiskars Art and Design Biennale.

“*Still Winds* recalls the moment when the wind ceases, when the leaves in trees turn silent and their shadows become still — a transient moment of peace before the uncertainty of future resumes,” Beili describes her work. “The installation speaks to the fragile balance between the imprints of human actions and our precious natural environment.”

Beili Liu is Leslie Waggener Professor in Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Austin. She spent the spring semester 2022 as Fulbright Arctic Chair in Norway. The Fulbright Finland Foundation’s Inter-Country Travel Grant program enabled her to come from Norway to Finland in May to collaborate with her Finnish peers and to create the art installation at Fiskars. She also attended the Foundation’s Award Ceremony and Reception at the Helsinki City Hall to get to know the Foundation’s other U.S. grantees and alumni – the community of which she is now a member.

STILL WINDS IN FISKARS



PHOTO: BLUE WAY

Apply for a Travel Grant

The Fulbright Finland Foundation’s Inter-Country Travel Grant program funds U.S. Fulbright scholars, teachers, and advanced graduate students from other European countries to visit Finland during their Fulbright term and to collaborate and create contacts and long-term cooperation with their Finnish peers and institutions in Finland.

The Foundation annually compiles a database of the U.S. Fulbright

scholars who are in Europe. Every year it contains a searchable list of well over 200 current scholars and experts from the U.S. with different fields and specializations. Finnish institutions can invite them for short-term visits to Finland and apply for the Inter-Country Travel Grants program for financial support for the visits. The database for the academic year 2022-23 will be available online in July 2022.

Apply for the Inter-Country Travel Grant Program:

www.fulbright.fi/grant-programs-to-finland/inter-country-travel-grant

Fiskars Village Art and Design Biennale

is open until September 4, 2022.
fiskarsvillage.fi/en/event/hidden-forms-of-the-senses-nayttely

Read Beili’s blog post about her artwork and visit to Finland

www.fulbright.fi/about-us/blog/still-winds-fiskars

Text: Terhi Mölsä and Maija Kettunen

Read more stories by grantees and alumni on our website. Recent blog posts discuss, e.g., encountering cultural differences, equity in education, and the impact of the Fulbright Finland experience.

www.fulbright.fi/about-us/blog

More *Blog*
Posts on Our
Website!



Data Visualization Helps Understanding Current Challenges

The year 2020 brought data visualization to the core of decision making worldwide. I witnessed a lot of charts and graphs I found hard to understand. Even though I can work my way through them, the feeling they leave me with is frustration.

The ones who are best equipped in reading and understanding different kinds of visuals are the ones with good education and a job where they work with them on a daily basis. It's not an innate skill.

Data visualization is much more than charts and graphs, but they are crucial to understand in the

world of today. When you are familiar with them you are prepared to behold more difficult ones. And perhaps better prepared to understand the wicked problems of the world of today and tomorrow. This is what motivated my Fulbright project.

Pirita Tolvanen is a Finnish Illustrator passionate about illustrating data and creating nonfiction picture books. Read more about her Fulbright project, *Data Visualization in Children's Nonfiction Picture Books*, in her blog post www.fulbright.fi/about-us/blog/why-we-need-data-visualization-childrens-picture-books-too

PHOTO: SHELLEY ISAACSON



Pirita Tolvanen
2021-22 ASLA-Fulbright
Mid-Career Professional
Development Grant

The Effects of Technology on the Environment

Last quarter I got the opportunity to join the TREE Lab at Northwestern University, which is focused on analyzing the sociopolitical effects of technology. Along with two other undergraduate students, I was interested in researching the effects of technology on the environment.

While climate change and environmental issues are gaining increased attention, we quickly noticed how little awareness many of us have regarding the environmental impact of the technologies we have come to rely on. Metaphors like “storing files in the cloud” insinuate something floating and clean, failing to mention the reality of endless warehouses of servers running day and night, consuming vast amounts of energy and water. Similarly, electric cars seem like a promising solution for moving towards

cleaner transportation methods, yet mining for the minerals needed to produce the car batteries and a lack of effective recycling methods causes significant environmental consequences and take a disproportionate toll on communities in low-income countries where most mining projects take place.

To share our findings in an easily digestible form, we created a podcast called *TECTalks: Tech, Ethics, and Climate*. In addition to sharing our discussions with experts on these topics, we aim to share stories from communities affected by the environmental impact of technologies. Through our research we hope to increase awareness of the true impacts of technology use and to highlight ways in which we can develop more sustainable relations with our environment.



Aino Alkio
2021-22 Fulbright Finland
Undergraduate Grant

www.fulbright.fi/undergraduate

Listen to the TECTalks podcast:
<https://spoti.fi/3QjnrCW>

Roth-Thomson Award to Kathlyn Elliott

Kathlyn Elliott receives the 2022 Roth-Thomson Award to support her project on Finnish Teachers' View of their Role in the Prevention of Violent Extremism. Her doctoral research focuses on how Finnish schools use pedagogy to prevent violent extremism through education. As part of her research, she wants to “amplify the voices of Finnish teachers, highlighting their hard work, and the challenges of their profession.”

Kathlyn plans to use the funds to extend her stay until August and make trips to Oulu, Turku, and

Joensuu to do classroom observation and in-person interviews as part of her research. She also plans to thank the teachers for their participation in the research project with small gifts. She believes that all teachers deserve more appreciation for their work.

The annual Roth-Thomson Award provides U.S. Fulbrighters the opportunity to enhance or expand their original Fulbright project. The Fulbright Finland Foundation has worked with the Lois Roth Endowment since 1991.

Text: Leasa Weimer



Kathlyn Elliott
2021-22 Fulbright-
EDUFI Fellow

Award for the Alumni, by the Alumni

Text MAIJA KETTUNEN

During his visit, **Ramón Barthelemy** consulted with the faculty of science at the University of Helsinki on how they can improve their program for students from diverse backgrounds.

Apply for the Friends of Fulbright Finland Alumni Enrichment Award

The call for applications for travel in 2023 opens in August with a deadline of October 3, 2022: www.fulbright.fi/foff-award

The grant is funded by the FoFF Alumni Enrichment Endowment, for which all funds have been received by personal donations from alumni and friends of the Fulbright Finland Foundation.

Each year there are more qualified applications submitted than the endowment is able to fund. Support the alumni program and help grow the endowment by donating! www.fulbright.fi/work-with-us/donate

Ramón Barthelemy, Emily Harville, Thea Lindquist, and Natalia Magnani are former Fulbright grantees who have recently returned to Finland to continue their collaboration on the Friends of Fulbright Finland Alumni Enrichment Award.

RAMÓN BARTHELEMY first came to Finland in 2014 to study the gendered experiences of undergraduate students in physics programs across Finland. “At this time I was a recently graduated PhD student just beginning my career. Now in 2022 I am returning as an assistant professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Utah to present my research on Finnish physics programs, as well as my work from across the intervening years,” Ramón says.

EMILY HARVILLE’S original grant term was cut short in March 2020 due to the pandemic. Emily is a perinatal epidemiologist, and studies poor outcomes in pregnancy, including gestational hypertension and diabetes, and low birthweight and preterm birth. “One of my goals is to understand how these complications may set the stage for adverse health now and in the future. Ideally, our studies follow people over time so we can be sure ‘causes’ predate ‘effects’. This is difficult to do for diseases that develop over decades or generations.”

The MULTIEPIGEN study coordinated by the University of Turku, with sites across Finland, including Emily’s host, Tampere University, is one of the few long-term, three-generation prospective studies in the world. “The FoFF Alumni Enrichment Award provided me with an opportunity to reconnect with my collaborators and discuss our plans for analyses and further proposals,” Emily says.

THEA LINDQUIST returned to launch an interdisciplinary and highly collaborative research project

with the Human Sciences – Computing Interaction group in the Department of Digital Humanities at the University of Helsinki. “As I wrap up this visit, I am reminded of my Fulbright experience in Finland 11 years ago. Arriving in Finland for the first time, I did not know what to expect. I knew I would be working with computer scientists in the Semantic Computing Research Group at Aalto University on a humanities linked open data project. I was excited by the opportunity to spend several months delving into the theoretical and practical aspects of this cutting-edge technology.”

“What began as a semester-long project would become a multi-year collaboration. Working with Finnish colleagues in an interdisciplinary and highly collaborative research environment in a sustained manner got the wheels turning in my mind about how I could help to enable similar opportunities for multi-disciplinary teams to leverage data and technology to undertake humanities-related research at my home institution,” Thea says.

NATALIA MAGNANI’S FoFF Award helped her to follow up with those who had contributed to her book project she had undertaken during her original Fulbright Finland grant period 2016–17.

“The book is based on work with Sámi craft artisans in northern Finland. On my return trip, I drove between the homes and craft workshops where I had spent time years earlier, this time discussing the draft text that had resulted from those visits. The artisans’ feedback is now being incorporated into the final draft for publication with University of Toronto Press,” Natalia says. “The FoFF Award thus allowed me to maintain connections with the people I had worked with during my Fulbright, and in so doing to carry the momentum of the original award toward future projects in Finland,” she concludes.





PHOTO: MAIJA KETTUNEN

Fulbright Finland alumnus Jukka Välimaa reflects on his work as a diplomat at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and the United Nations, his experiences as a Fulbright fellow at Georgetown University, and the role of international exchanges in developing a diplomatic career.

Diplomacy and International Exchanges Go Hand in Hand

Text LOUISA GAIN

Jukka Välimaa

2010-11 ASLA-Fulbright Graduate Grant
2011-12 Fulbright Finland Renewal Grant
Georgetown University

www.fulbright.fi/fin-graduate

www.fulbright.fi/grant-programs-to-us/fulbright-finland-renewal-grant

Jukka Välimaa has recently returned to Finland after several international postings with the Finnish Diplomatic Service, most recently as First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations in New York. In 2010 he left Finland for Washington, D.C. having secured an ASLA-Fulbright Graduate Grant to Georgetown University's prestigious Master of Science in Foreign Service program. A Fulbright Finland Renewal Grant enabled him to extend his studies at Georgetown, later interning at the UN and working as a consultant at the World Bank. Jukka was able to fulfil his long-term goal of becoming a diplomat by joining the Finnish Foreign Ministry and Diplomatic Service in 2013, with postings in Cairo, Egypt and the UN headquarters in New York. Since returning to the Foreign Ministry's Helsinki headquarters last summer, he continues to focus on UN affairs.

So what does the work of a Finnish diplomat involve? "When you work for a diplomatic service

of a small country, you get to do all kinds of things," Jukka explains. "In Cairo, in my portfolio, I had development affairs, trading relations, as well as cultural affairs and country brand promotion. Then as a delegate at the UN in New York, I was working in the UN Budget Committee. Now in Finland, I work primarily on UN Security Council issues and international candidatures. Finland is currently a member of the UN Human Rights Council, and several years from now, Finland is standing as the Nordic candidate for the UN Security Council for the term 2029-30. My work involves planning for that longer-term goal, and closely following the UN Security Council. I also follow the discussions at the UN General Assembly."

"It's hard not to mention that it's a tense international atmosphere at the moment. You can also notice this at the United Nations, which is supposed to be the forum where difficult topics can be discussed to maintain international peace and security. But obviously, lately it has been very polarized.

Even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the atmosphere has been quite tense. The international community has now strongly condemned Russia's aggression and violations of the United Nations Charter."

Fulbright Prepared for a Career in Diplomacy

Jukka reflects that his Fulbright experiences provided a strong foundation for his current work.

"Getting the Fulbright and going to Georgetown was extremely important as preparation for me to get into this career. Before studying in the United States, I knew I wanted to join the Finnish Foreign Service at some point. I did my first master's here in political history at the University of Helsinki, which looked at international relations from a historical point of view. I went to the U.S. primarily to look for a specialized master's degree in international affairs that builds practical, policy-oriented skills, which would prepare me well for this career."

"At Georgetown we were writing short papers all the time. This was different from my experience at university in Finland, where we had much longer research papers. Being able to produce short briefing papers is a skill that is very much appreciated in the policy world. You need to be able to analyze and summarize a complex topic in a couple of pages. I write briefing papers, if not daily, at least on a weekly basis. For example, if a Minister or a top official in the Finnish Foreign Ministry is meeting someone to discuss UN Security Council issues, I provide background and talking points. You have to be very brief and concise."

"Other highlights from my Georgetown days were the practical discussions on contemporary policy issues," Jukka explains, noting that the faculty included highly respected practitioners such as the former U.S. Secretary of State **Madeleine Albright** and former Secretary of Defense **Chuck Hagel**.

"At Georgetown we worked on a lot of case studies, including a simulation of the situation in Egypt. When I was posted to the Finnish Embassy in Cairo several years later, I felt like I understood the country a little bit already. There was also a strong emphasis on networking skills and other working life skills, which are very useful for my work now."

"The student cohort was diverse. I think there were around 90 people in my year, and of those at least a third were international. Even many of the U.S. students had international backgrounds." Jukka says his classmates often sought out his European and Nordic point of view on international topics, which helped hone his skills in representing his country abroad. "I still have many friends from the program at Georgetown, as well as from Fulbright events and associations in Washington. Many are employed in the same field of work, for example, in the U.S. diplomatic service. So, every now and then I bump into former classmates."

The Georgetown program also provided excellent support for Jukka to complete internships and gain crucial professional experience alongside his studies. "During my two years at Georgetown I worked first at the United Nations Secretariat, and then I traveled to West Africa to work for the Government of Liberia."

I think international exchanges are extremely valuable. The Fulbright program itself started as a peace program.



Peace and International Cooperation

The Fulbright Finland Foundation's brand promise is *Together Shaping the Future*, and the Foundation's strategy is broadly aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including peace and international cooperation. What encouragement would Jukka give to the future generation of Fulbright Finland Foundation grantees and future diplomats?

"I think international exchanges are extremely valuable. The Fulbright program itself started as a peace program, and it has decades of history of getting young Finns acquainted with the U.S. and the U.S. way of thinking. I think this has been very important. Now we have many generations of Finns who have experience of working and studying in the U.S."

"I would say that a career in diplomacy and international exchanges like Fulbright go hand in hand. The Foreign Ministry looks for people who already have some international experience, and that's usually the common denominator among those who get recruited. These types of exchanges build perfectly for a career like this. I would really like to encourage younger Finns to have courage when it comes to applying abroad. Finns are a little bit too shy sometimes, and for me at least it was important to realize that hey, I can do this. That doesn't come very naturally for Finns. I wasn't really expecting to get into those U.S. university programs, but I did eventually. Of course, I had a lot of help and support from the Fulbright Finland Foundation as well."

"What I enjoy most about my job is getting to work with extremely important and interesting topics. When I was a student, I was very interested in foreign policy and the United Nations. If I was a student, and I was told that I would be working on these issues, I think I would feel very excited about that. At the UN, there are 193 countries and 193 different ways of doing things, so it's good to be exposed to different cultures and points of view. The international aspect of this career is something unique. You need to be ready for a lifestyle where you relocate quite often and live in different countries. It's a great career choice, but you need a sense of adventure as well."



Alumni Meet at the Finnish Embassy

The Embassy of Finland in Washington, D.C., hosted a conversation over lunch for the Fulbright Finland Foundation's U.S. alumni in May.

In addition to networking, the event was an opportunity for the alumni to get to know the Embassy's new Science and Education Counselor, Dr. **Petri Koikkalainen**, and to talk about potential collaboration opportunities. In addition, the alumni met with Deputy Chief of Mission **Jani Raappana**, and Cultural Counselor **Suvi Järvelä-Hagström**. They were also taken on a tour of the Embassy building, including its famous diplomatic sauna.

The event featured a very unique art exhibition. **Ming Hu** and **Kai Hu** from Maryland spent spring 2021 in Finland due to Ming's term as a Fulbright-Tampere University Scholar awardee. During the six-month Fulbright period, Kai Hu created a unique collection of artwork reflecting moments and impressions of their time in Finland and about Finnish culture. A selection of the artwork was displayed at the Embassy during the event.

The event was jointly hosted by Petri Koikkalainen from the Finnish Embassy and CEO **Terhi Mölsä** from the Fulbright Finland Foundation.

The Friends of Fulbright Finland (FoFF), the Foundation's alumni network in the United States, meets periodically in different parts of the country. Events are initiated and organized by the FoFF alumni themselves or together with the Foundation and its partners.

More information on recent events here: www.fulbright.fi/foff-events-starting-2021

www.fulbright.fi/FoFF



PHOTOS: TERHI MÖLSÄ



PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON HSMSCP PROGRAM AND MCNAIR SCHOLARS

An Advocate and an Ambassador

Jude Tunyi
2019-20 Fulbright-Tampere
University Graduate Award

[www.fulbright.fi/
tuni-graduate](http://www.fulbright.fi/tuni-graduate)

[www.fulbright.fi/
work-with-us/fulbright-
finland-ambassadors](http://www.fulbright.fi/work-with-us/fulbright-finland-ambassadors)

My Fulbright experience at Tampere University in Finland was transformational. I pursued a master's degree in Biomedical Technology with specialization in Bioinformatics. In conjunction with academic coursework, I conducted research evaluating RNA sequencing data with the aim to identify differentially expressed genes in breast cancer patients. I also worked with an individualized genomics and biotechnology startup company and that introduced me to the business side of biotechnology. The Fulbright Program was instrumental in my ability to matriculate at my current MD-DPhil program, where I will complete my medical degree at the Ohio State College of Medicine and my doctorate degree at NIH-Oxford University as part of the NIH-Oxford-Cambridge program. I am using the techniques and tools I learned in my Fulbright coursework and research to study the neural circuitry that underlies reinforcement learning in the brain.

Life Outside of the Lab

Outside of the lab, I am passionate about increasing diversity in medical and graduate fields. I am a founding member of a volunteer-run, registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization known as the American Association of Black Physician Scientists (AABPS). It is an independent society founded to address the needs of the growing number of Black physician

scientists, trainees, and faculty. We aim to provide a resource-rich society that gives a voice to the Black physician scientist at all levels of training including a Prospective Student Scholarship for members applying to medical programs. We have grown to over 150 members in just a year and a half of existence.

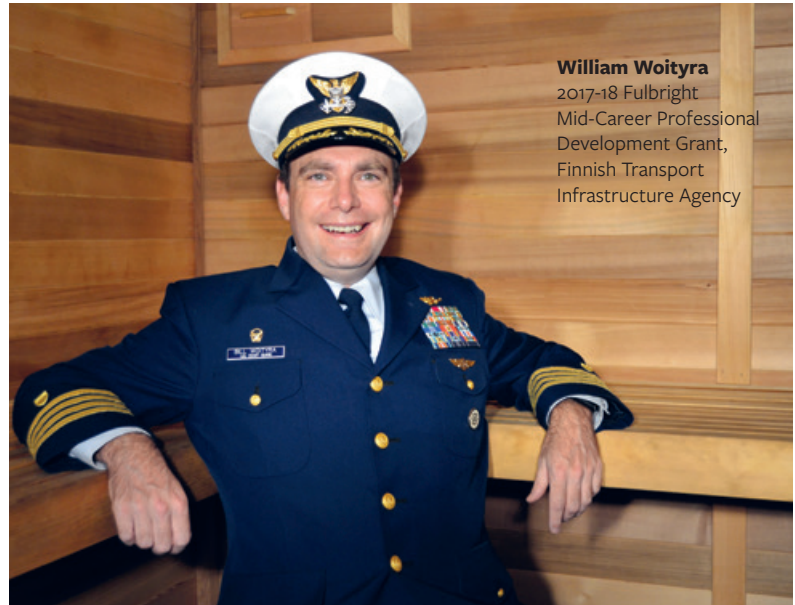
Need for International Exchange Programs

My participation in the Fulbright Program and continued involvement as an Alumni Ambassador, has given me a deeper appreciation for the importance of international exchange programs such as the Fulbright and Gilman programs. As an Alumni Ambassador, I advocate in person, at conferences, or on webinars for these programs. I had the opportunity to meet with elected representatives in the U.S. government to advocate for continued support for these programs. They help increase students' global perspectives and broaden their knowledge of the world that exists outside of their home country. It enabled me to immerse myself in another culture and enhanced my ability to communicate with people from different cultures and build cross-cultural partnerships. Without the Fulbright Program, I would not have had the life-changing experiences and be where I am today. If international exchanges can be truly life-changing for me, I believe others too can have similar experiences.

Sauna on an Icebreaker

Captain **William Woityra**, 2017-18 Fulbright Mid-Career Professional Development program grantee, is wrapping up two years in command of the only U.S. heavy icebreaker, *Polar Star*. A career Coast Guard officer, Bill spent the spring 2018 in Helsinki studying the Finnish ice-breaking value chain: design, construction, operations, and management.

As part of his program, he also had the opportunity to spend seven weeks at sea breaking Baltic ice aboard the Finnish icebreakers *Polaris* and *Turva*. Among his many key findings was the importance of a sauna to icebreaker culture. In his first act as Captain, he directed the installation of a 2.5m×2.5m sauna aboard *Polar Star* for the crew. It is now a very popular part of the ship's fitness facilities and gets frequent use, enjoyed by all hands, and even by



William Woityra
2017-18 Fulbright
Mid-Career Professional
Development Grant,
Finnish Transport
Infrastructure Agency

the occasional crewmember who had never used a sauna before.

During his two years in command of *Polar Star*, Bill led the ship on two record breaking missions to the Arctic and Antarctic. Under his leadership, the icebreaker set the world record for the southernmost navigation by a ship, reaching 78°44.0221'S on Feb 17, 2022, a mere 400 yards off the front edge of the Ross Ice Shelf in the Bay of Whales, Antarctica. In July, Captain Woityra will be transferred to a role at USINDOPACOM, as the division officer for Oceania.

www.fulbright.fi/us-mcpd

From U.S. Coast Guard to World's Capital of Ice-breaking article by William Woityra (Fulbright Finland News magazine 1/18)
www.fulbright.fi/news-magazine/us-coast-guard-to-worlds-capital-icebreaking

It All Started with *The Year*

I have taught hundreds of students, co-founded technology startups, lead my own research group in the university, and participated in dozens of research projects that have produced huge amounts of openly available scientific knowledge and tools. Through life's mysterious ways, I now lead bioinformatics technology teams in one of the biggest U.S. based diagnostics companies, helping hundreds of thousand of rare disease patients each year to get answers and better treatments. My teams are spread across Finland and USA, continuing the cross-Atlantic collaboration that is in the heart of the founding principles of the ASLA-Fulbright scholarships. I truly believe that none of this would have happened without *The Year*," says **Jussi Paananen**.

Read Jussi's powerful story about what made him apply for an ASLA-Fulbright Grant and what followed from that decision: www.fulbright.fi/news-magazine/the-year

Jussi Paananen
2006-07 ASLA-Fulbright
Graduate Grant, Broad
Institute of MIT and
Harvard University

Fulbright Prism Finland

The Fulbright Finland community serves as a wonderful source of support for past, present, and future grantees. However, LGBTQ grantees arriving in Finland face an additional challenge of navigating new cultural, linguistic, and political factors related to aspects of their sexual orientation and gender identity. For this reason, the newly established chapter of Fulbright Prism Finland hopes to create community, connection, and resources related to living in Finland as someone in the LGBTQ community.

The Fulbright Prism is an independent, global affinity group. It supports past, present, and future

grantees (along with staff and administrators) who hold marginalized orientation, gender affiliation, or sex identities. In the coming years, the Finland chapter aims to become involved in Finnish and U.S. LGBTQ activism networks and continue collecting resources for LGBTQ Fulbright Finland grantees.

Be on the lookout for more information from the chapter and opportunities to engage in social, academic, and activism events and please contact me if you'd like to contribute resources, information, or to be a part of the team. The chapter is currently looking for someone to create and manage social media channels.



Meg Jones

Meg (she/they) is a 2021-22 U.S. Fulbright grantee in Finland who spearheaded the founding of the Finland Chapter for the Fulbright Prism organization.

<https://fulbrightprism.org/prism-finland>

Bruce Blair Joins the FoFF Alumni Council

The Friends of Fulbright Finland (FoFF) Alumni Council represents the Foundation alumni living in the U.S. by developing the FoFF alumni network and serving as an alumni advisory Council to the Foundation.

This year, the FoFF Council welcomes a new member, **Bruce Blair**, 2019-20 Fulbright-EDUFI Fellow. Bruce is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and Public Administration at Clayton State University near Atlanta, Georgia.

"I am excited to serve on the FoFF Alumni Council and to help pay forward all of the help and aid I have received," Bruce says.

This past year, the Council continued developing

the FoFF Alumni Enrichment Award and selected three grantees for the Award. This Award provides American alumni of the Foundation a travel grant to return to Finland to continue or renew collaborations with Finnish colleagues (see p. 15).

In June, the Council, along with the FoFF Welcome Network, will host a unique virtual event, the *FoFF Virtual Welcome Event*, bringing together the 2022-23 U.S. grantees with Foundation alumni. The alumni will share their tips and warmly welcome the next cohort of grantees to the Fulbright Finland community.

Text: Leasa Weimer



Bruce Blair

www.fulbright.fi/FoFF

ASLA-Fulbright Alumni Association Offers Networking, Mentorship, Events

The ASLA-Fulbright Alumni Association in Finland is preparing for a new year of activities and alumni engagement. This year, the Association is planning to explore further opportunities for international collaboration with alumni especially from the Nordic-Baltic region. In addition to organizing meaningful networking events for its members, the Association will continue to run and develop its pilot of the Mentorship Program as well as the popular Fulbright Buddy Program, which provides local "buddies" for the arriving U.S. Fulbright grantees.

Founded in 1953, the ASLA-Fulbright Alumni Association is one of the oldest Fulbright alumni associations in the world. It builds awareness of the Fulbright Finland Foundation programs in Finland, and creates networking and collaboration opportunities through events, meetings, visits, and lectures for the Association members and current U.S. Fulbright grantees in Finland.

The Association has recently selected their new Board of Directors www.fulbright.fi/asla-fulbright-alumni-association-board

Text: Karoliina Kokko

Join the Association!

Take an active role in the ASLA-Fulbright Alumni Association and become a member.

www.fulbright.fi/asla-fulbright-alumni-association/join-association

Welcomes and Transitions



Nelson Totah



David Yoken

Board of Directors

With deep gratitude, the Foundation recognizes **David Yoken**, who completed his two full four-year terms on the Foundation's Board of Directors in June. During his Board membership he also served as Vice-Chair and later Chair, and contributed in countless ways to the Foundation's mission. The Foundation is pleased to announce that after the conclusion of his Board service David continues in a volunteer capacity as a

Senior Advisor, supporting the Foundation's efforts especially in the area of advancement and development in the U.S.

David Yoken is succeeded on the Board by **Nelson Totah**, Assistant Professor at Helsinki Institute of Life Science HiLIFE at the University of Helsinki. Nelson is also the Foundation's alum: in 2020-21 he received the Fulbright Finland Travel Grant for Research Collaboration. The Foundation warmly welcomes Nelson to the Board!

The Board is comprised of 6-8 members: up to four Finns and up to four Americans. The Finnish Board members are appointed by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Chief of the U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Finland appoints the U.S. members.



Adriana O'Flanagan



Brian Norberg



Leasa Weimer

Foundation Team

Adriana O'Flanagan has joined the Foundation team in a volunteer capacity as Special Project Advisor for Program Development. She supports the further development of the Foundation's grant programs, orientation trainings, and enrichment programming, and helps with strategic initiatives. Adriana most recently served as the Academic Exchange Coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina where she implemented U.S. exchange programs from the undergraduate to the professional level. Adriana holds a Master of

Laws in Law and Government (LL.M.) degree from American University in Washington, D.C.

A graduate student participating in the MARIHE Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's program, **Brian Norberg** is currently interning at the Foundation. He works on tasks such as alumni survey projects and editing, with the goal of getting a broad understanding of the Foundation and how it operates. Originally from the Chicago area, Brian completed his undergraduate degree in global studies with a minor in classical civilization in 2013. After graduation, he moved

to China where he worked as a history and English teacher, before beginning the MARIHE program in 2021. After his internship, Brian will continue his studies in India.

Assistant Director of Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives **Leasa Weimer** is moving from Finland to the United States with her family, and transitioning from her position at the Foundation this summer. However, the Foundation is happy to continue to work with Leasa as she will assume an active volunteer role with the Friends of Fulbright Finland (FoFF) network.

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Its purpose is to promote a wider exchange of knowledge and professional talents through educational contacts between Finland and the United States.

The Foundation collaborates with a range of government, foundation, university, and corporate partners on both sides of the Atlantic to design and manage study and research scholarships, leadership development programs, and internationalization services.

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Calendar

June

- 14.6.**
Virtual Welcome Event
for U.S. Fulbrighters
- 20.6.**
Fulbright Finland Foundation
Board Meeting
- 21.6.**
Finland-America Educational Trust
Fund Board Meeting

July

- 11.-29.7.**
Fulbright Finland Foundation
Office Closed

August

- 22.-25.8.**
Arrival Orientation Seminar
for U.S. Fulbright Grantees
- 23.8.**
ASLA-Fulbright Alumni
Association Welcome Event

September

- 15.9.**
2023-24 Application Deadline:
Fulbright U.S. Scholar Awards
for Finland
- Fulbright Finland Foundation
Board Meeting

October

- 2023-24 Application Deadline:*
Fulbright Finnish Language and
Culture Teaching Assistant
- 4.10.**
2023-24 Application Deadline:
Friends of Fulbright Finland
Alumni Enrichment Award;
Visiting Scholar Program
- 7.-8.10.**
American Voices Seminar,
University of Turku
- 11.10.**
2023-24 Application Deadline:
Fulbright U.S. Student Program

November

- 24.-25.11.**
Thanksgiving and Enrichment
Program for U.S. Grantees,
Helsinki

American Voices

7.-8.10. University of Turku

Join us in Turku to learn about various aspects
of American society and culture through the
experiences of the 2022-23 U.S. Fulbrighters!

[www.fulbright.fi/about-us/
events/american-voices-seminar](http://www.fulbright.fi/about-us/events/american-voices-seminar)



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