

THE
News

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FULBRIGHT FINLAND

Joint Icebreaking
Research and
Development

Climate Change and
Extreme Arctic Weather

A New Award for
Electric Mobility
Research

Ambassadors'
Circle



**Fulbright Engages
with Parliament**

Discussing Finnish-U.S. Shared Interests

Shaping the Next 75



Seventy-five years ago, the Fulbright Finland Foundation programs were established with a mission to create global citizens – those who dare to address universal challenges with innovative solutions and drive meaningful change. Today, through collaborative efforts, our grantees are tackling some of the most urgent issues facing the global community, including climate change and the Arctic (pp. 8-10), and peace, mediation, and conflict research (p. 20).

As our visiting columnist Ambassador Leena-Kaisa Mikkola reminds us, these exchanges have also prepared the ground for collaborations between national science agencies in areas such as wireless technology, health, quantum information science, and the bioeconomy, and the successes encourage us to expand into even more fields (p. 3). Recently, the Finnish and U.S. governments signed a memorandum of understanding on joint icebreaking research and development. This can be supported by the professional and expert grants unique to Fulbright Finland (p. 7).

We are excited to announce a new partnership with LUT University to advance electric mobility

research (p. 6), as well as a new research grant in information and communications technologies in collaboration with the Nokia Foundation (p. 6). It is precisely partnerships like these that will open doors for new Finnish-U.S. collaboration for the future.

In 2024, partnership awards included, the Foundation awarded nearly USD 1,9 million (EUR 1,8 million) in grants to 114 Finnish and U.S. grantees, and served over 5100 individuals (p. 22). None of this would be possible without the steadfast support of our alumni, partners, and donors. Going forward, their role is even more critical (pp. 18-19). With your continued help we can not only sustain the current exchanges but create new opportunities for collaboration between Finland and the United States.

The best way to honor the 75th anniversary of Finnish-U.S. exchanges is by expanding them for the next 75! We look forward to continuing this important work together with you in 2025.

Terhi Mölsä
Chief Executive Officer
Fulbright Finland Foundation

In this issue

- 4** 75 Years of Finnish-U.S. Exchanges
- 10** Mapping Nutritional Landscapes of Reindeer
Peter Ungar returned to Finland with the FoFF Alumni Enrichment Award to expand the collaboration.
- 15** Advancing Research and Building Collaboration: Short-Term Grants Respond to a Growing Need
- 16** Alumni in Focus: Peter Miller
- 18** Donors Make a Difference

Cover photo: Maija Kettunen



3

The Role of Fulbright Grantees

Ambassador to the United States Leena-Kaisa Mikkola met with Fulbright Finland alumni to hear about their continuing collaboration across the Atlantic.

Fulbright Finland at 75: Expanding Horizons, Tackling Global Challenges



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

“From environmental sustainability to health, from quantum technologies to Arctic innovations, our countries can deliver solutions, often through advanced science and critical technologies.”

I began my tenure as Finland’s Ambassador to the United States this September, at a time when Finland enjoys heightened visibility and positivity. It became clear to me even before I moved – in a meeting in Helsinki with Fulbright Finland Foundation’s Terhi Mölsä and Nelson Totah – how crucial a role Americans who have spent time in Finland as Fulbright grantees play in fostering goodwill and a spirit of cooperation between our two nations.

After settling in Washington D.C., I soon encountered the Friends of Fulbright Finland alumni network, a prime example of international collaboration comprising nearly 1000 Americans who have participated in Fulbright programs in Finland. I have already had the pleasure of meeting several dedicated members of this community; their passion and commitment are truly inspiring.

We will work closely with the Fulbright Finland Foundation to explore ways to further develop the Finnish-American academic, cultural, and professional networks in the U.S. While Fulbrighters excel at staying connected, there is a need for a more comprehensive and organized Finnish-American diaspora community. Such a platform would bring together Fulbrighters, Finnish academics, and professionals in the U.S., and their wider networks, enabling them to share information, convene regularly, and advance mutual goals.

Reflecting on the program’s impact, it is always worth considering how the Finnish-American Fulbright partnership can evolve. This August, U.S. Ambassador to Finland Douglas T. Hickey announced the creation of the Ambassadors’ Circle Scholarship in Helsinki, bringing together companies and private philanthropists to support science and strengthen interpersonal networks. This is a wonderful example of working together and I hope to see the circle enlarge in the future.

OVER THE PAST 75 YEARS, the Fulbright exchanges have laid the groundwork for an outstanding partnership between Finland and the United States in science, technology, education, and culture. Beyond

facilitating the mobility of students and professionals, the exchanges have prepared the ground for collaborations between national science agencies in areas such as wireless technology, health, quantum information science, and the bioeconomy. These successes encourage us to expand into even more fields.

When the ASLA-Fulbright exchange program between Finland and the United States began 75 years ago in 1949, the world was undergoing a profound transformation. Finland, on the doorstep of the Soviet Union, was striving to strengthen its ties with the West, while the United States was navigating how best to engage with a Northern European country rebuilding itself after World War II.

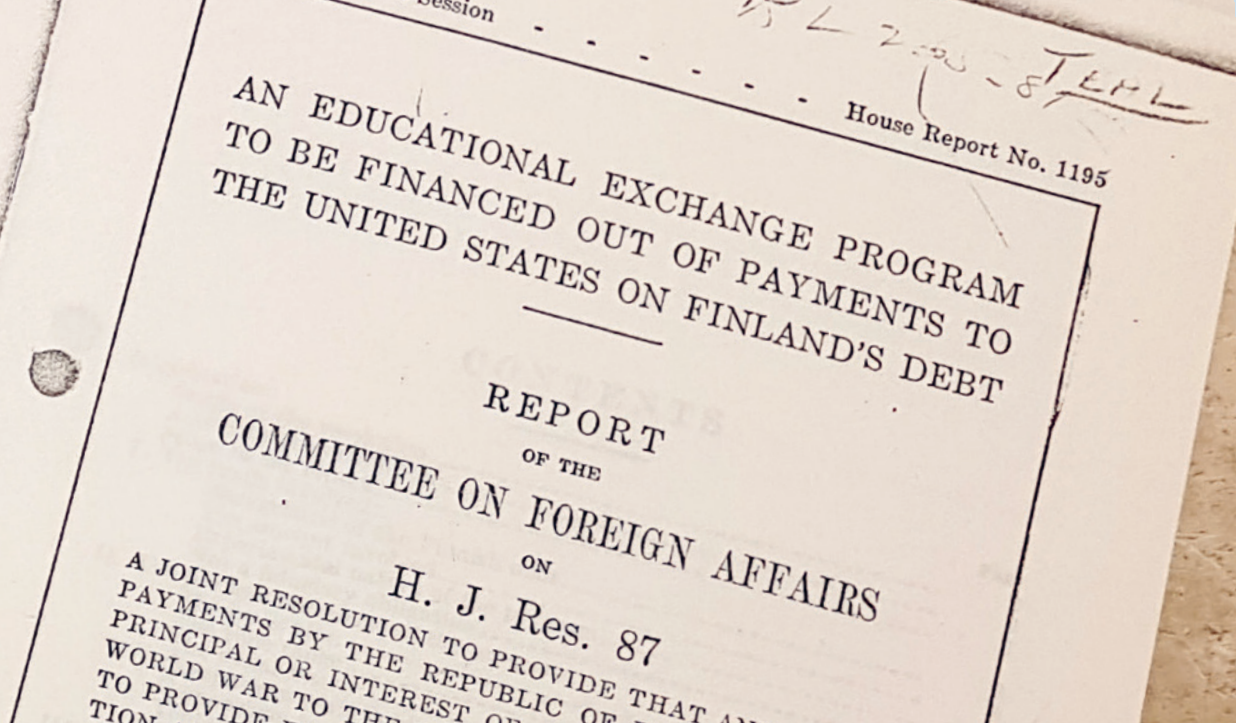
The creation of the ASLA-Fulbright program was a testament to bureaucratic ingenuity. Unlike many other nations, Finland had consistently honored its financial obligations to the U.S., including the post-World War I debt repayments. Recognizing this reliability, the U.S. allocated a portion of Finland’s repayment as a “scholarship fund.” In hindsight, this decision proved visionary, yielding remarkable long-term benefits.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER? After decades of fruitful collaboration, Finland and the United States are uniquely well-equipped to deal together with global challenges. From environmental sustainability to health, from quantum technologies to Arctic innovations, our countries can deliver solutions, often through advanced science and critical technologies. These exchanges contribute to a safer, healthier, and more sustainable world.

I am honored to work with Fulbright Finland in the years ahead to build on this momentum, strengthening networks and capabilities that not only reinforce Finland’s reputation but also advance our shared global objectives and create lasting impact.

Leena-Kaisa Mikkola

Ambassador of Finland to the United States



75 Years of Finnish-U.S. Exchanges

Text TERHI MÖLSÄ

Message from the President of the Republic of Finland on the 75th Anniversary of the Fulbright Finland Foundation

www.fulbright.fi/about-us/news-releases/message-president-republic-finland-75th-anniversary-fulbright-finland

The history of the Fulbright Finland Foundation is unlike any other. Finland was one of the first nations to be offered the opportunity to join the international Fulbright Program in 1947. However, the exchanges were begun with what is known as the ASLA Program (*Amerikan Suomen Lainan Apurahat*, Finnish for “Grants from the American Loan to Finland”). ASLA was created by the U.S. Congress in 1949 and funded by the repayments of a loan that Finland had received from the United States after the first World War. Finland was the only country that paid back its debt to the United

States, which won Finland enormous goodwill. The Fulbright agreement was signed in 1952, and the exchanges later became known as ASLA-Fulbright.

Today, the Fulbright Finland Foundation serves as the primary interface for the Finnish and U.S. governments’ bilateral work in education, science, and culture. The Foundation is funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, the U.S. Department of State, the Finland-America Educational Trust Fund, private Finnish foundations, universities and research institutions, alumni, and increasingly by companies and private



Over the decades, the Fulbright programme has enabled numerous Finnish students and scientists to study and work in the United States. In addition to studying and conducting research, they have built up their understanding of multicultural interaction. Personal contacts and networks established while studying increase in value over the years, serving the interests of our countries.

Alexander Stubb

President of Finland
Patron of the 75 Anniversary Year





Olin ASLA-Fulbright-stipendiaattina Stanfordin yliopistossa luku-
vuonna 1974-75. Se oli käänteentekevä kokemus, josta olen syvästi
kiitollinen säätiölle. Onnittelut 75-vuotiaalle.”

Bengt Holmström

Professor of Economics, Emeritus, MIT; Nobel Prize in Economics 2016;
ASLA-Fulbright Graduate Grant 1974-75



donors. Finnish-U.S. exchanges are genuinely a joint effort.

The 75th anniversary celebrated the immense contribution of the programs' alumni for both societies, and for the world. True to the spirit of a quintessentially Finnish saying, the Fulbright Finland community marked this milestone “*työn merkeissä*” — through hard work, passionately advancing Finnish-U.S. cooperation in science, education, and innovation. This included, among others, creating the Ambassadors' Circle Scholarship, funded entirely by contributions from Finnish and U.S. companies and private philanthropists. The Foundation recognized its partners in the

Finnish higher education sector with the Top Producer Awards for their fundamental role in funding Fulbright awards. Several new partnerships were established with Finnish and U.S. foundations and universities. And throughout the anniversary year, the Foundation worked with hundreds of alumni volunteers to create opportunities and forge new connections, including the two-day 75th Anniversary Celebration of Finnish-U.S. exchanges at Mystic, CT, organized by the Friends of Fulbright Finland Alumni Council.

The best way to honor the anniversary and the legacy of the exchanges is to work together to secure their future.

Read more about the History Unlike Any Other
www.fulbright.fi/about-us/history-unlike-any-other

The Ambassadors' Circle Scholarship Honors the 75th Anniversary

The Fulbright Finland Foundation is proud to announce the creation of the Ambassadors' Circle Scholarship to support the exchange of knowledge and professional talent between Finland and the United States.

Finnish and U.S. companies, as well as private philanthropists, donated funds to support research and study in the United States for Finnish scholars, students, and experts in fields critical for the development of science, economy, and innovation in Finland. The scholarship honors the 75th anniversary of the Fulbright Finland Foundation and it was initiated by the Foundation's Honorary Chair, the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Finland, **Douglas T. Hickey**.

“As the U.S. Ambassador to Finland, I am a strong advocate for deepening the cooperation between the United States and Finland and increasing our mutual understanding. It is my wish to leave a permanent legacy in U.S.-Finnish relations. There is no better way to do that than to support people-to-people programs that propel innovation and long-term collaboration between our two countries, empowering the next genera-

tion of leaders and change-makers. The binational Fulbright Finland Foundation serves as the platform for this investment in our joint future,” Ambassador Hickey says.

Ambassador Hickey is joined by several former U.S. Ambassadors to Finland, as well as Bluefors, Excelerate Energy, Fortum, the Nokia Foundation, and other companies and private philanthropists.

“The Ambassadors' Circle Scholarship is a critical initiative boosting our ability to sustain and expand programs that foster education, science, and innovation. The Fulbright Finland Foundation operates award programs in all fields and constantly seeks additional opportunities in areas that are strategically important to both countries, such as emerging technologies, global security, climate change, the Arctic, and public health,” says the Foundation CEO **Terhi Mölsä**.



Read more
www.fulbright.fi/about-us/news-releases/ambassadors-circle-scholarship-honors-75th-anniversary-finnish-us-exchanges

A New U.S. Scholar Award for Electric Mobility Research

The Fulbright Finland Foundation and LUT University are jointly offering a new scholar award that enables researchers from the United States to come to Finland and join the Kempower Electric Mobility Research Center (EMRC) at LUT University.

“We want to offer top U.S. scholars an opportunity to work with the EMRC and LUT University to help address multidisciplinary challenges of electric mobility now and in the future. These problems can stem from technical, economic, or societal bottlenecks – or all of them,” says **Ville Naumanen**, Research Director, and Head of the EMRC.

The EMRC offers a research platform that represents an entirely new way for academics to collaborate with companies in cross-disciplinary research on electric transportation. The EMRC is the heart of e-mobility-related research on LUT University’s Lahti campus.

Since 2011, the Fulbright Finland Foundation has collaborated with LUT University to co-fund U.S. students to study at LUT University. In 2023, the Foundation and LUT University signed a more comprehensive cooperation agreement with the

purpose of expanding their collaboration and exploring new ways of working together.

“We have made significant progress in our cooperation with the Fulbright Finland Foundation since we signed a cooperation agreement last fall. The agreement has provided an important avenue for strengthening LUT’s collaboration with U.S. universities and attracting the best talents,” says **Petri Ajo**, chief growth officer at LUT.

“Fulbright Finland provides a comprehensive platform, expertise, and networks for Finnish–U.S. academic collaboration. The Fulbright–LUT–EMRC award is a solid step forward in our close cooperation with LUT University,” says Foundation CEO **Terhi Mölsä**.

The Fulbright–LUT–EMRC award is the newest addition to the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Awards to Finland that offer U.S. scholars opportunities to teach and conduct research at Finnish higher education and research institutions. The application round for visits during the academic year 2026–27 will open in early February 2025.

Text: Emmi Jelekäinen



Fulbright–LUT–EMRC Scholar Award

www.fulbright.fi/fulbright-lut-emrc-scholar-award

Kempower Electric Mobility Research Center

www.lut.fi/en/research/partnerships-and-cooperation/kempower-electric-mobility-research-center-emrc

Nokia Säätiö ja Fulbright Suomi –säätiö laajentavat yhteistyötään

Nokia Säätiö ja Fulbright Suomi –säätiö ovat tehneet yhteistyötä jo vuodesta 1999 tarjoamalla yhteisrahoitettuja stipendejä yhdysvaltalaisille tieto- ja tietoliikennetekniikan tutkijoille tutkimusvierailuihin suomalaisissa yliopistoissa. Säätiöt laajentavat nyt yhteistyötään pilotoimalla yhteisrahoitteisia stipendejä myös suomalaisille tutkijoille tarkoituksenaan tukea suomalaisten post doc –tutkijoiden kansainvälistymistä. Apurahat on tarkoitettu tieto- ja tietoliikennetekniikan sekä niihin liittyvien tieteenalojen tutkijoille.

“On erittäin tärkeää edistää ja tukea suomalaisten post doc –tutkijoiden kansainvälistymistä. Olemme todella iloisia tästä Nokia Säätiön erinomaisesta aloitteesta”, Fulbright Suomi –säätiön toimitusjohtaja **Terhi Mölsä** sanoo.

“Nokia Säätiö on erittäin mielissään voidessaan laajentaa yhteistyötään Fulbright Suomi –säätiön kanssa. Panostus suomalaisten uransa alussa

olevien post doc –tutkijoiden vierailuihin arvostetuissa yhdysvaltalaisissa yliopistoissa ja tutkimuslaitoksissa on tärkeää suomalaisen korkeakoulutuksen ja tutkimuksen menestykselle tulevana vuosikymmeninä”, toteaa Nokia Säätiön puheenjohtaja **Hannu Kauppinen**.

Säätiöt pilotoivat uutta stipendiohjelmaa lukuvuosia 2025–26 ja 2026–27 koskevilla hakukierroksilla. Tavoitteena on pitkäaikainen yhteistyö. Ensimmäinen hakukierros päättyi lokakuussa ja seuraava haku aukeaa keväällä 2025.

Keväällä hakuun aukeaa myös jo pidempään toiminut yhdysvaltalaisille tutkijoille suunnattu Fulbright–Nokia Distinguished Chair in Information and Communications Technologies –ohjelma, jonka kautta suomalaiset korkeakoulut voivat kutsua yhdysvaltaisia ICT-alan tutkijoita ja asiantuntijoita Suomeen 3–6 kuukauden tutkimusvierailuille.

Text: Emmi Jelekäinen



Fulbright Research Grant for a Junior Scholar in Partnership with the Nokia Foundation

www.fulbright.fi/fulbright-research-grant-junior-scholar-partnership-with-nokia-foundation

Fulbright–Nokia Distinguished Chair in Information and Communications Technologies

www.fulbright.fi/nokia-distinguished-chair



EMBASSY OF FINLAND IN WASHINGTON DC

Joint Icebreaking Research and Development

In November 2024, Finland, the United States, and Canada signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding for the Icebreaker Collaboration Effort Pact, or ICE Pact, to begin working together to develop world-class, Arctic and polar icebreakers through the exchange of knowledge, information, and resources in each of the three countries. The ICE Pact includes enhanced information exchange, workforce development collaboration, engagement with allies and partners, and joint icebreaking research and development.

Unique to the Fulbright Finland Foundation are its expert and professional grants. These special awards contribute in significant ways to transatlantic collaboration in a vast number of critical expertise areas – including icebreaking.

Fulbright Supporting Exchange of Knowledge in Icebreaking

“Finland’s incredible depth and concentration of experience and knowledge in icebreaker design and operations” was the reason Captain **William Woityra** applied for a professional Fulbright award to Finland. “Having devoted my career to icebreaking, I could think of no better place in the world to study icebreakers and icebreaking than Finland. Helsinki, after all, is the world’s capital for all things icebreaking,” he says.

A career Coast Guard officer, William Woityra came to Finland on a grant that is unique to Fulbright Finland, the Fulbright Mid-Career Professional Development grant. He spent the spring of 2018 in Helsinki studying the Finnish icebreaking value chain: design, construction, operations, and

management. As part of his Fulbright, he also spent seven weeks at sea breaking Baltic ice aboard the Finnish icebreakers *Polaris* and *Turva*.

In 2020-22, William Woityra commanded the only U.S. heavy icebreaker, *Polar Star*, and led the ship on two record breaking missions to the Arctic and Antarctic. He currently serves as Oceania Policy Division Chief at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

Text: Terhi Mölsä



PATRIK BARCK

The ICE Pact MoU was signed by the United States Secretary of Homeland Security **Alejandro Mayorkas**, Minister of Public Services and Procurement of Canada **Jean-Yves Duclos**, and Minister of Economic Affairs of Finland **Wille Rydman**.

Read more about the ICE Pact MoU: <https://bit.ly/4ibAmVf>

Read William Woityra’s article, where he reflects on his Fulbright in Finland: www.fulbright.fi/news-magazine/us-coast-guard-to-worlds-capital-icebreaking

Sauna on the Polar Star: <https://issuu.com/fulbright-center-finland/docs/ff-news-122/20>

Mid-Career Professional Development Grant www.fulbright.fi/us-mcpd



Assessing Climate Change Tipping Points in a Rapidly Warming Arctic

At first glance, Northern Finland might appear to have very little in common with my home in Virginia. However, the two places have one unfortunate thing in common: both are experiencing some of the fastest local climatic changes on the planet.

Virginia has one of the highest rates of local sea level rise in the U.S. Meanwhile, the Arctic region is warming four times more quickly than the rest of the world. This means that both are already experiencing a degree of climate change that other places may not see for several decades. We urgently need to minimize the harm resulting from these changes. At the same time, we can use this as an opportunity to understand how climate change can impact communities in unexpected ways.

For my Fulbright project, I am working with colleagues at the University of Oulu to understand whether rapid warming could contribute to “tipping points” that significantly impact local communities. These tipping points can happen because climate change doesn’t occur in a vacuum, but interacts with other social, economic, and environmental pressures.

I am partnering with the Frontiers of Arctic and Global Resilience research initiative, which has an innovative emphasis on cross-cutting research methods to solve complex problems related to climate change. Additionally, my colleagues in the Water, Energy, and Environmental Engineering Research Unit have worked extensively on climate change impacts to water resources in northern environments.

We’ll be assessing the potential for climate change tipping points in the Kiiminkijoki river basin. The land around the Kiiminkijoki has already been heavily shaped by human actions, with 60% of the basin’s peatlands drained over the past century to support forestry, farming, and energy pro-

duction. This has led to water pollution and loss of salmon in the river; these problems may worsen as temperatures rise and rainfall patterns change.

Meeting Finland’s goals for carbon neutrality, water quality, and nature restoration will rely on sustainably restoring landscapes like the Kiiminkijoki in a way that aligns with the values of local community members.

In our project, we will analyze these complex challenges by treating the Kiiminkijoki basin as a socio-environmental system where people interact

Julie Shortridge

Associate Professor

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

2024–25 Fulbright-University of Oulu Scholar Award

www.fulbright.fi/fulbright-university-oulu-scholar-award

Ultimately, this can help us develop adaptation and resilience efforts that better account for interactions between people and their environment to reduce climate change risks.



with the natural and engineered parts of their environment. We will host a workshop where researchers across multiple fields work together to assess whether these interactions could lead to tipping points. The workshop outcomes will then be incorporated into a computational model that simulates social and environmental processes to understand how these tipping points could unfold in the future.

By comparing our outcomes in Finland with similar work that I’ve conducted in Virginia, we’ll be able to refine the methodologies we use to identify and understand climatic tipping points in other socio-environmental systems.

Ultimately, this can help us develop adaptation and resilience efforts that better account for interactions between people and their environment to reduce climate change risks.



BRUCE FORBES

Studying the Impacts of Extreme Arctic Weather

Text MARKKU HEIKKILÄ, Arctic Centre



Eugenie Euskirchen
Associate Professor

Institute of Arctic Biology,
University of Alaska
Fairbanks

2024–25 Seeking Solutions
for Global Challenges
Award

Seeking Solutions for Global Challenges Award

is a grant program unique to the Fulbright Finland Foundation. Created to support the Foundation's vision, it is awarded to scholars and professionals striving to find solutions to current and global challenges through their research, teaching, or professional projects.

Eugenie Euskirchen is the sixth recipient of the Seeking Solutions for Global Challenges Award to Finland.

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

In mid-November, the window of **Eugenie Euskirchen's** office in Rovaniemi showed molten, black soil on the ground outside. Everyone in town was talking about the miserable weather, but biogeochemist Euskirchen had her own reasons for watching what was happening.

As a Fulbright Finland awardee, she had come from Alaska to Rovaniemi to continue research which included extreme events in Arctic climate, and if exceptionally warm weather in Lapland continued even longer than this, one would begin to be at hand.

"This is my sabbatical year," says Euskirchen, who is an Associate Professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. There she studies ecosystem dynamics of carbon, vegetation, water, and energy in taiga and tundra ecosystems. Now her office is in the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland in the Arktikum house.

"Fulbright is really a good vehicle," says Euskirchen. She had made various plans for the sabbatical year. They didn't include Fulbright, but she knew Arctic Centre's Research Professor **Bruce Forbes** from years ago, whose fields of research are close to her own. After talking to Forbes, she sought this opportunity and succeeded.

Forbes came to Rovaniemi as a U.S. Fulbright Scholar in the 1990s and stayed on that path in Finland. Euskirchen arrived at the Arctic Centre in August and plans to be there until May, although the actual Fulbright term ends earlier.

"It is a great pleasure to host Eugenie as a Fulbright awardee. She has already seen quite a bit of Lapland and along the way gotten to meet several Finnish and Sami reindeer herders involved in my

ongoing research projects dealing with extreme weather, like rain-on-snow. She is also significantly adding to her already broad and deep network of Arctic colleagues in the natural and social sciences," says Professor Forbes.

Euskirchen is working with the carbon cycle in terrestrial Arctic ecosystems: how carbon uptake by plants and release from the soils will change when climate warms.

She has research sites in Alaska and she can use a comprehensive database put together by a colleague, Dr. **Anna Virkkala**, from the University of Helsinki and Woodwell Climate Research Center in Massachusetts. She will work also with unpublished carbon flux data from both Virkkala and Professor **Timo Kumpula**, from the University of Eastern Finland in Joensuu. This work also includes a component that has to do with extreme weather events.

Adjusting to Rovaniemi has been easy. "The Arctic Centre is great. It has a really nice environment here," she says.

There are many similarities between Rovaniemi and Fairbanks, and also between the Arctic Centre at the University of Lapland and the Institute of Arctic Biology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Not only are both research institutions found at roughly the same latitude, but they are about the same size and the main universities have many common features including an Arctic museum or science center.

"Eugenie's expertise brings vital, added value to the Arctic Centre's research on climate and environmental change. She has immediately become a full member of our work community," adds **Johanna Ikävalko**, the Director of the Arctic Centre.

Mapping Nutritional Landscapes of Reindeer



Peter Ungar returned to Finland with the Friends of Fulbright Finland Alumni Enrichment Award to expand the collaboration with the University of Lapland and local reindeer herders.

According to a traditional Lappish myth, the world was created from a reindeer – its veins became rivers, its fur became forests, its stomach became oceans, and its horns became mountains.

Reindeer are important to Finland – to its culture, tourism, and industry. But the impacts of climate change are affecting these iconic animals and threatening the livelihoods of herders as natural foods become scarce. This was the starting point of my 2021 Fulbright Specialist Program project at the University of Lapland with Professor **Bruce Forbes**. But I learned during my Fulbright assignment in Lapland that there is more to the story. Increased human activity is also having an impact, changing habitats and constraining foraging movements. Understanding these impacts requires partnerships with academics from a range of fields and with the herders impacted.

With the help of a Friends of Fulbright Finland Alumni Enrichment Award, I headed back to Lapland in the summer of 2024 to expand the collaboration to include Professor **Florian Stammler** of the University of Lapland, and **Iida Melamies** and **Viola Ukkola**, reindeer herders from the Sattasniemi reindeer herding cooperative, who also are students at the University of Lapland.

My postdoc, **Gerardo Celis** and nutritional ecologists **Matt Sponheimer** from the University of Colorado and **Oliver Paine** from San Diego State University, and anthropologist **John Ziker** of Boise State rounded out the team with help from a grant from the U.S. National Science Foundation. We met in Sodankylä.

During our stay, Iida and Viola took us all around the Sattasniemi *paliskunta*: preferred feeding areas, those the reindeer avoid, active forestry zones, a wind farm, a gold mine, and a site slated for mining development.

We collected hundreds of plant samples for nutrient analysis so we can begin to map nutrient landscapes to understand impacts of human development in addition to climate change. We also left instructions for the herding community to collect more samples throughout the year so that, with our new partners from the Sattasniemi cooperative, we can monitor changes over space and time.

The Friends of Fulbright Finland Alumni Enrichment Award helped me to establish a collaboration to map nutritional properties of reindeer plant foods onto Finnish herding districts over space and time. This work is becoming increasingly important as climate change and human development continue to impact natural reindeer foods and movement patterns and affect the herders that rely on these majestic and important animals for their livelihoods.

Peter Ungar

Distinguished Professor and Program Director

University of Arkansas
2021 Fulbright Specialist Program

2023–24 Friends of Fulbright Finland Alumni Enrichment Award

www.fulbright.fi/specialist

www.fulbright.fi/foff-award

Award Funded by Philanthropy

The award is funded by the FoFF Alumni Enrichment Endowment, for which all funds have been received as 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. You can support the alumni program and help grow the endowment by donating.

www.fulbright.fi/work-with-us/donate



Strengthening Scientific Business and Engineering Research

The Fulbright Finland Foundation collaborates with a broad range of universities, research agencies, non-profit organizations, and private foundations to foster opportunities for study and research exchanges between Finland and the U.S.

The agreements are always tailored to align with the specific goals and priorities of the Foundation's partners, ensuring that the solutions are created to meet each partner's unique needs.

Since 2017, KAUTE Foundation and the Fulbright Finland Foundation have been collaborating to support Finnish doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers from the fields of Economics, Business, and Technology to carry out research projects in the U.S.

So far, 12 grantees have received the Fulbright-KAUTE Foundation Award for their projects aiming to promote sustainable renewal of Finnish business and society.

Doctoral student **Larry Abdullahi** from LUT University and Postdoctoral Researcher **Emmanuel Abu-Danso** from the University of Eastern Finland in Kuopio are the Fulbright-KAUTE Foundation awardees for the academic year 2024-25.

Their projects focus on the sustainability of emerging technologies and innovative methods to extract critical metals from wastewater streams.

Larry Abdullahi is a visiting student researcher at the University of Michigan. "My research examines how IT companies in Europe and U.S. adopt sustainability practices through collective stakeholder engagement, addressing pressing global challenges such as social inequality, ethical business development, inclusive software innovations, and employee wellbeing," Larry explains.

"The research provides a fresh perspective on the critical yet often overlooked aspects of human-centric and ecosystem approach to IT and sustainability. It offers valuable insights for policymakers and industry leaders, potentially reshaping how tech companies approach sustainability," he adds.

Emmanuel Abu-Danso is hosted by Ames National Laboratory in Iowa. "Critical metals are strategic feedstock for almost all industries. They have been assigned a criticality matrix in the near future due to their economic importance, increased demand, and potential supply risk since they are non-renewable," Emmanuel says. "Governments have therefore issued directives to ensure sustainable and continues supply of critical metals. One sustainable strategy is 'mining' of critical metals from wastewaters of extraction industries and industries that use critical metals using smart alternatives."

"My Fulbright project, which is in the field of materials development and environmental technology, is a study on the development of geo-inspired composite materials where materials that mimic nature's geological minerals are used to capture and recover critical metals from wastewater streams," Emmanuel says.

"To achieve this, an interdisciplinary collaboration of experts from Finland and the U.S. have been combined to achieve this goal for a sustainable reuse of mine wastewater and protecting the environment. This Fulbright-KAUTE Foundation award has given me an enormous opportunity to undertake this critical project which will also help in advancing my research career."

Text: Maija Kettunen

"My journey from a small community in Ghana to the forefront of research in information technology and sustainability is a testament to the transformative power of providing equal opportunity to accessing quality education. This milestone could not have been possible without the Fulbright-KAUTE Foundation Award," says **Larry Abdullahi** (right).



**Fulbright-KAUTE
Foundation Award**
[www.fulbright.fi/
kaute-award](http://www.fulbright.fi/kaute-award)

EDUCATION

Fulbright-Hays fellows experienced the accessibility of Finnish nature by summiting Ukko-Koli. During the hike, they learned about tales and myth from Koli's past and the history and culture of the Karelian region.



Finland's Key Strengths Shape Curriculum in the U.S.

Text MIRKA MCINTIRE

With funding from the U.S. Department of Education, the Foundation organized a four-week Fulbright-Hays Seminar in Finland in summer 2024 for 16 highly motivated, U.S. K-8 educators with the theme *Demystifying the Infrastructure of Happiness*. The focus of the program was on Finland's key strengths – education and know-how, nature and sustainable development, as well as functionality and well-being – all elements that the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs had identified as contributing to the infrastructure of happiness in Finnish society.

The Foundation collaborates closely with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to support Finland's transatlantic priorities, so it was only natural that the participants gathered for their pre-departure orientation at the Consulate General of Finland in New York, together with alumni experts and partners from the U.S. Department of Education, prior to embarking on their journey.

Power of Transatlantic Alumni Network

While arranging an educational program after mid-summer initially sounded like a mission impossible, the Foundation joined forces with alumni around Finland to guide the Fulbright-Hays fellows from Helsinki to Joensuu, and from Lapland to the Åland Islands, sharing expertise and exploring Finland's strengths.

"Some of the most impactful experiences of our

journey have been engaging with Finnish educators and experts. While the memories of places visited and sights seen will stay with us, it's those connections that will continue to resonate," says **Sara Medalen**, Academic Interventionist and Family Engagement Coordinator.

Digital Literacy and Environmental Education for Classrooms and Beyond

Kari Kivinen led Faktabaari EDU workshop on digital literacy providing tangible strategies and educational activities to tackle information disorders, and the lessons have already translated into action.

Humanities teacher **David Chodakewitz** integrated Faktabaari's lessons into his curriculum project: "The resources, activities, and terminology that were shared felt like a great gift to bring back to my school. As an educator, improving the digital literacy of my students feels like something in my sphere of influence that I can do to both empower students and safeguard our democracy going forward."

Fulbright Finland School Leader alumna **Kirsi Peräjärvi**'s introduction to the Nature School concept and multi-disciplinary learning in nature also gave the fellows concrete activities to take home to their students.

"I hope that I can use what I've learned to foster mindfulness, deeper social connections, and

Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad: Demystifying the Infrastructure of Happiness in Finnish Society

www.fulbright.fi/fulbright-hays-seminars-abroad

“
The impact of our time in Finland will continue to ripple outward, like the waves we created when we dipped our toes in the Baltic Sea.
”



a life-long curiosity and respect for nature in my students,” **Emily Kobler**, Special Education teacher, noted. Through her curriculum project, Emily’s students will learn about the UN Sustainable Development Goals and target specific goals by planning and establishing an edible garden on the school campus.

Positive Impact on Our Society

Programs like these do not only benefit the participants themselves, but the thousands of students and educators they engage with throughout their careers. This brings a positive impact on the societies at large.

Fulbright-Hays fellow **Jens Jacobsen** designed a 2-credit graduate level course to be offered at University of Alaska Anchorage for educators who are interested in fostering well-being, sustainability, and global competence in their students, all while incorporating outdoor and inquiry-based learning.

Sitra’s Workshop on Combating Climate Change and thoughtful messaging about sustainability inspired the fellows for positive action: “The idea of inspiring and exciting others to live more sustainable lives rather than pointing out all the things people are doing wrong impacted me. I want to make immediate changes in my life to reduce my carbon footprint after Sitra’s presentation. I’m interested in learning more about the manuals Sitra has for teachers on how to use the lifestyle test with students to increase my impact!” says Sara Medalen.

Read blog posts from the Fulbright-Hays fellows:

Demystifying the Infrastructure of Happiness in Finnish Society – Reflections from the Fulbright-Hays Seminar

www.fulbright.fi/about-us/blog/demystifying-infrastructure-happiness-finnish-society-reflections-fulbright-hays

Running through the Infrastructure of Happiness

www.fulbright.fi/about-us/blog/running-through-infrastructure-happiness

Under the Midnight Sun: Transformative Lessons from the Finnish Wilderness of Lapland

www.fulbright.fi/about-us/blog/under-midnight-sun-transformative-lessons-finnish-wilderness-lapland



“STOP, THINK, CHECK with Future Voters” workshop equipped Fulbright-Hays educators with activities and strategies for tackling digital literacy with their students.

Fulbright Suomi -säätiö edistää Suomen maakuvatyötä

Fulbright Suomi -säätiö työskentelee tiiviisti yhteistyössä Suomen ulkoministeriön maakuvayksikön kanssa. Fulbright-Hays -opintomatka suunniteltiin tukemaan Suomen maakuvaa nostamalla esiin Suomen vahvuuksia ja ”onnellisuuden elementtejä”.

Maakuvayksikkö osallistuu myös Yhdysvaltoihin lähtevien stipendiaattien orientaatioon kertomalla Suomen maakuvatyöstä ja miten stipendiaatit voivat osallistua siihen stipendikautensa aikana.

Finland Toolbox: Infrastructure of Happiness:

<https://toolbox.finland.fi/strategy-research/theme-calendar-2024>



MAIJA KETTUNEN

Discussing Finnish-U.S. Relations and Sharing Fulbright Impact

The Parliament of Finland recently hosted 12 current U.S. Fulbright grantees for a private lunch and tour of the Parliament House. Hosts of the lunch, Members of Parliament **Mikko Savola** and **Mats Löfström**, gave an overview of current topics, followed by an engaging discussion on the Finnish political system, Finnish-U.S. relations, and current themes on the Finnish Parliament's agenda. Understanding Finland's political system and the Finnish Parliament is fundamentally important for the U.S. Fulbright grantees in their role as citizen diplomats.

Discussions and candid insights into how collaboration across different political parties in the Parliament works in practice was especially appreciated by the grantees. "Seeing how Finnish MPs work together despite ideological differences, showcases the Finnish resilience, something I'm grateful to have been able to see," says **Lauren Rod**, Fulbright-LUT University Graduate awardee. "This experience has deepened my appreciation for how Finland's Parliament balances representing voter interests as well as its productive collaboration among multiple parties," she adds.

For **Ava Asmus**, also a current Fulbright-LUT University Graduate awardee, the visit provided context to her previous discussions with her Finnish peers. "Discussing how the Finnish government operates, from the perspective of current parliament members, helped me better understand past conversations I've had with Finns about their government system and their views on it," she says.

While the grantees gain important insights into the Finnish political system, the annual visits to the Parliament are at the same time an opportunity to share the work and impact of the Foundation's grantees, both Finns and Americans. They also

Parliament visits provide an opportunity to discuss Finnish-U.S. priorities and the multiple ways in which the Fulbright Finland Foundation's programs advance these shared goals.

provide an opportunity to discuss Finnish-U.S. priorities, and the multiple ways in which the Fulbright Finland Foundation's programs advance these shared goals. The Foundation's leadership engages with the Parliament frequently. Recently, the Foundation CEO **Terhi Mölsä** and Vice-Chair **Nelson Totah** visited the Parliament together with Dr. **Mike Sfraga** (picture below, center), the United States' first-ever Ambassador-at-Large for Arctic Affairs, to discuss Arctic security, and Finnish-U.S. collaboration on Arctic research.

Text: Terhi Mölsä and Maija Kettunen

MPs **Mikko Savola** (second from left) and **Mats Löfström** hosting U.S. Fulbright grantees. Chair of the Fulbright Finland Foundation Board **Timo Korkeamäki** on the right.



TEEMU VUOSIO



Advancing Research and Building Collaboration: Short-Term Grants Respond to a Growing Need

On her Travel Grant, **Katariina Sorvari** (middle) was hosted by Fulbright Finland alumna Dr. **Mujde Yuksel** (right). Pictured also **M. Berk Talay** (left), who was an Inter-Country Travel Grantee at the University of Vaasa in spring 2024.

www.fulbright.fi/grant-programs-to-us/short-term-travel-grants-to-us

www.fulbright.fi/inter-country

The Fulbright Finland Travel Grants for Research Collaboration received a record number of applications for the academic year 2024–25, marking a 60% increase compared to the previous year.

As Finnish citizenship is not required, the program attracted a diverse pool of applicants with representation from 25 nationalities, highlighting the demand for research grants in Finnish academia among Finnish and non-Finnish citizens alike.

Over the recent years, there have been significant changes in the application trends from Finland to the U.S. for both short-term and long-term grant programs. Short-term programs, lasting less than three months, have seen an increase of 33% in applications, compared to a more conservative 5% growth for long-term programs.

“Given the limited travel opportunities and grants available for early-career researchers in Finland, the Fulbright Finland Travel Grants provide invaluable opportunities for young scholars like me to gain essential international experience, fostering greater independence, enhancing collaboration skills, and facilitating the development of strong professional networks,” says **Lotta Leiwo** from the University of Helsinki, who traveled to the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, on a Fulbright Finland Travel Grant. In Minnesota, she gathered essential research materials and built collaborative ties with Finnish Americans, whose history she studies in her research.

“I believe this trip marks the beginning of what will be fruitful collaborations throughout my future career as a researcher,” Lotta adds.

Finnish universities and researchers often strategically combine the various Fulbright Finland

grant program opportunities to support different stages of research collaboration. **Katariina Sorvari** from the University of Vaasa visited Suffolk University on a Fulbright Finland Travel Grant in 2024. In Suffolk, she was hosted by Fulbright Finland alumna Dr. **Mujde Yuksel**, who had spent the previous year at the University of Vaasa as a Fulbright–University of Vaasa Scholar.

“Fulbright Finland Travel Grant program has had a significant impact on my doctoral research,” Katariina says. “Engaging with U.S.-based researchers also opened exciting possibilities for future collaborations, and the visit strengthened the ties between University of Vaasa and Suffolk University,” she adds. She has also benefitted from the fact that University of Vaasa takes advantage of the Fulbright Finland Inter-Country Travel Grant Program which supports visits of U.S. Fulbright scholars from other European countries to Finland. In spring 2024, the University of Vaasa received an Inter-Country Travel Grant to host **M. Berk Talay** from the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, who at the time was on a Fulbright at the ESSEC Business School, Cergy-Pontoise in France.

The Fulbright Finland Travel Grants for Research Collaboration program was launched in 2015. It was designed as a direct response to the feedback the Foundation had received from Finnish higher education institutions. Building on this initiative, in 2018 the Foundation introduced a second category in the travel grants: the Fulbright Finland Travel Grants for Institutional Partnership Building, with the purpose of supporting the development of long-term partnerships and collaboration agreements between Finnish and U.S. HEIs.

Text: Mihkel Vaim

U.S. elections expert Peter Miller reflects on his journey from graduate researcher cited by the U.S. Supreme Court, to an unexpectedly public role as a Fulbright scholar in Tampere, Finland, to his current role at the Brennan Center for Justice, working to ensure fair elections.



Ensuring Everyone Has a Voice in U.S. Democracy

Text LOUISA GAIRN

Peter Miller

Senior Research Fellow
Brennan Center for Justice

2016–17 Fulbright-Tampere
University Scholar Award

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

Read the whole interview

www.fulbright.fi/news-magazine/ensuring-everyone-has-voice-us-democracy

Born and raised in Montana, and with a doctoral degree from the University of California, Irvine, Peter’s trajectory into the world of election law and redistricting took a crucial – and, he says, surprising turn with the publication of his graduate dissertation, written as various states, including California, were establishing independent redistricting commissions. The dissertation made an impact well beyond his expectations, cited in a high-profile Supreme Court case over Arizona’s Independent Redistricting Commission.

“It was luck more than anything,” Peter smiles. “I went from being an unknown graduate student to being cited by the late Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsburg**. I would not have believed any of this could happen. The Supreme Court citation came out of nowhere. The Fulbright was a delightful surprise. And then if you had told me I was going to land in New York City, I wouldn’t have believed you at any point. I grew up in the West, and never imagined I would be living in the biggest city in the U.S.”

This unexpected recognition paved the way for the next steps in Peter’s career, firstly securing a Fulbright Scholarship to Finland’s Tampere University in 2016–17 and, on his return to the United States, joining the Brennan Center for Justice as a Senior Research Fellow in 2018, focusing on U.S. and comparative politics, voting behavior, political institutions, and public opinion.

From Scholar to Public Commentator in Finland

What attracted Peter to Finland? He explains that his research project at Tampere University focused on comparing early voting trends in the United States and Finland, two countries with high levels of early voting but with political and electoral systems that are “dramatically different in every other regard,” Peter explains. “I wanted to see if there are common motivators for when people decide to cast their ballot before the end of a campaign.”

But Peter’s scholarship year in Finland held another twist of fate in store: the polls-defying outcome of the 2016 U.S. elections.

“Here too, luck intervened,” he recalls. “Everything was going very well. I was well on my way, I was based at Tampere University, and the Finnish Social Science Survey Archive is there. I had a bunch of election surveys that I was looking through... and then the election happened, and suddenly the entire nation of Finland was concerned how the polls got the election wrong. What does this foretell for U.S. and Finland relations, or the United States’ role in the world?”

“And so suddenly I became the guy that everyone wanted to talk to about American politics,” he smiles.

While he settled into Finnish academic life, Peter found himself increasingly in demand as a com-

mentator on the U.S. elections and political system, interviewed by Finnish journalists, described in the Finnish media as an “election observer,” and called on to give public talks. “At one point, I was told 1500 people had attended my lectures throughout the year,” he says. His outreach work also gained the attention of the U.S. Embassy, who congratulated him on his work in helping Finns understand the complexities of the U.S. electoral system.

“Finland left a pretty indelible mark on my career trajectory, not just maturing as a scholar, but becoming someone who articulates ideas in public. I wasn’t just someone that sits in a library and produces articles. That turned out to be a delightful aspect of the Fulbright I hadn’t anticipated, but it’s a far more enduring one, I think.”

Transforming Research into Action at the Brennan Center

On his return to the U.S., Peter joined the Brennan Center for Justice in 2018. The Center, based at NYU School of Law, is renowned for its work in law and policy, specifically around issues of democracy and justice. Here, Peter’s expertise in redistricting and data analysis has been instrumental in addressing contentious issues such as partisan gerrymandering and redistricting.

“It’s mostly lawyers at the Center, but I’m one of eleven social scientists on staff, and my role is to conduct all the quantitative analysis related to redistricting across the United States,” he explains.

A recent example of his work is the Brennan Center’s involvement in litigation over redistricting in Ohio. The team successfully argued before the Ohio Supreme Court that legislative maps were unconstitutionally gerrymandered. Peter played a crucial role in this process, by analyzing the data and offering insights into the impact of these maps on fair representation.

“A lot of my work there involved assessing the maps, working with expert witnesses, talking to lawyers about social science concepts and trying to assist them with the arguments they were making before the Court,” he explains.

This analytical work, he says, is among his favorite aspects of the job. “Using social science to advocate for a better and more equitable American democracy is something I find incredibly rewarding.”

Fulbright Turns Countries into People

The Fulbright program’s emphasis on cultural exchange aligns closely with his own philosophy of democratic participation, he explains. “Fulbright’s initial vision was to turn countries into people,” he says. “It’s really an unparalleled opportunity that Fulbright provides, and speaks to the wisdom of the need for international and intercultural understanding.”

“You have this vague concept of another country, as you study it from your office, but actually going there and living amongst the people, talking to Finns, reading the news, discussing the newspaper



“
Finland left a pretty indelible mark on my career trajectory, not just maturing as a scholar, but becoming someone who articulates ideas in public.”

with colleagues.” Peter recalls various experiences – cross-country skiing in Lapland, celebrating Finnish traditions such as Vappu, and trying out the Finnish sauna.

“It’s those sorts of happenstance opportunities, but also just the ability to really devote yourself to living in a country for a while, getting to know the people there, through a really deep and focused residence in the country. I think it’s wildly successful – it absolutely changed my life”.

Peter says that the friendships and collaborations he has built through the program continue to influence his work, even as he tackles some of the most pressing issues in American democracy today. He has been back to Finland, as the external examiner, or “opponent” on a doctoral dissertation defense, and research collaboration continues with former colleagues from Tampere.

“One of the head-scratching elements of the Fulbright was the realization that Finland previously had an Electoral College but eliminated it in the early twentieth century,” he says, noting he is now working with one of his former students on a project to analyze this decision and the parliamentary debate that preceded the vote.

Peter also remains connected to the wider Fulbright community, through regular events organized by the Fulbright Finland Foundation in the United States. “It’s exciting to think, this was a great opportunity, so what can I do to make sure that the future also has that opportunity?”

While he settled into Finnish academic life, Peter found himself increasingly in demand as a commentator on the U.S. elections and political system, interviewed by Finnish journalists, described in the Finnish media as an “election observer,” and called on to give public talks. “At one point, I was told 1500 people had attended my lectures throughout the year,” he says. In the photo, Peter is talking to students at Metropolia University of Applied Sciences.

DONORS

Make a Difference

Thank you

Text TERHI MÖLSÄ

Donors' role is critical. Each year dozens of highly talented applicants do not receive a Fulbright Finland Foundation award due to lack of funds. Donors help secure the exchanges between Finland and the U.S. and bring together the best scientists, academics, artists, educators, and future leaders and change-makers.

Whether donating via dedicated endowments or directly to scholarships, establishing a new scholarship, providing a real estate gift, or making a legacy gift by adding the Foundation to one's will, all gifts send a clear message that the Fulbright Finland experience is transformational and like no other. Every gift, big or small, makes a difference. We are deeply grateful to all donors for their generosity, and for their active role in the Foundation's vision of empowering the minds that will find global solutions to tomorrow's challenges. A special thank you to all those who donate annually, leaving a permanent imprint in Finnish-U.S. exchanges.

Donations to the Foundation go either directly to grants or add to endowments that fund grants from their annual yields. Donations to the Foundation's *75th Anniversary Fund* go directly to funding grants for Finns and Americans. *The Fulbright Finland Centennial Fund*, on the other hand, is an endowment meant to last into perpetuity, and its annual yields are used to fund grants for Finnish and U.S. students, scholars, and professionals. The Centennial Fund was launched in 2016 to honor the 100th anniversary of Finland's independence. The first grant from this endowment was awarded in 2024 for a

Finnish graduate student for Master's studies in the United States.

Special Funds Support Selected Causes

Donors may also choose to support a specific cause within Finnish-U.S. exchanges that is close to their heart.

The Friends of Fulbright Finland Alumni Enrichment Fund is a special endowment supporting grants for the Foundation's U.S. alumni to return to Finland to continue and expand their original Fulbright projects and collaboration (see p. 10). Like the Centennial Fund, the Alumni Enrichment Fund is an endowment that uses its annual yields to fund grants. A major share of this endowment came from the legacy gift by the Foundation's alumna and volunteer team member, **Suzanne Louis**, who passed away in 2020.

A generous gift to the Foundation by Dr. **Bruce Fowler** created the *Bruce A. Fowler Fund for Fulbrighters with Disabilities*. Its purpose is to provide extra funding support for grantees with disabilities whether related to mobility, vision, hearing, or any other type, in order to help them get the most from their Fulbright experience. A long-term donor agreement with Dr. **E. Michael Loovis** created the *Fulbright Finland Foundation E. Michael Loovis Scholastic Award* for study or research at Cleveland State University.

Read more on the different ways to support and make a lasting difference in Finnish-U.S. exchanges: www.fulbright.fi/work-with-us/donate

75 FULBRIGHT
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Donor spotlight

"I have seen the importance of international research and educational collaboration as a Fulbright Board member, a Vice-Rector for LUT University internationalization, and a visiting scholar to the U.S. The Fulbright Finland Foundation has a unique role in the Finnish society. It has been invaluable and extremely successful in advancing the academic relationships with U.S. higher education."

Kirsimarja Blomqvist

Professor of Knowledge Management, LUT University
Member of the Board of Directors, Fulbright Finland Foundation

AMBASSADORS' CIRCLE

The Ambassadors' Circle is a special initiative honoring the 75th Anniversary of the Fulbright Finland Foundation. Initiated by U.S. Ambassador **Douglas T. Hickey** and joined by several former U.S. Ambassadors as well as Finnish and U.S.

companies, it supports research and study in the United States for Finnish scholars, students, and experts in fields critical for the development of science, economy, and innovation in Finland.

www.fulbright.fi/about-us/news-releases/ambassadors-circle-scholarship-honors-75th-anniversary-finnish-us-exchanges



"At Excelebrate, education is not just a focus area, it's a commitment we take seriously. As a U.S. company, we're excited to contribute to this new scholarship program, which supports research and study exchanges between U.S. and Finnish scholars."

Steven Kobos
President and Chief Executive Officer, Excelebrate Energy

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To date, altogether 180 individuals or companies have donated to the Fulbright Finland Foundation.



Donor spotlight

"Our donations to the Fulbright Finland Foundation guarantee the sustainability of the Fulbright experience and our efforts to promote the Foundation's mission will create a legacy lasting for generations to come."

Ed Sivak

U.S. Fulbright Scholar 2015-17; Clinical Professor, Case Western Reserve University, OH

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www.fulbright.fi/work-with-us/donate

Rahankeräyslupa RA/2022/61

Grantees in Action: Fostering Cultural Relations

From the very beginning of their grant terms, Fulbright Finland Foundation grantees dive headfirst into fostering cultural relations between Finland and the United States. Grantees are integrated into diverse initiatives and introduced to the Foundation’s key contacts already before arrival and during their orientation, to help them create connections that are important for their role as citizen diplomats.

An outstanding example of this is **Mia Filardi**. During her time as a Fulbright–Tampere University Graduate Award Grantee in the Peace, Mediation, and Conflict research program, Mia was actively involved with the Fulbright Finland Foundation. Recently, Mia also took on a part-time role as Executive Assistant with the Finlandia Foundation National, a partner of the Fulbright Finland Foundation. In this role she advances both foundations’ aims of bringing people together.



She also helped plan the first FFN-FFF virtual networking call in November 2024, which brought together current Fulbright Finland grantees and alumni in the United States with Finlandia Foundation’s local chapters.

“When the time came this year to look for a part time job, Finlandia Foundation National was an obvious first choice for me,” Mia says. “Matching Fulbright Finland’s excellent standards and small but extremely dedicated staff, FFN works to drive forward Finnish language, culture, and history within the U.S. and serves to unite Finns, Finnish Americans, and Friends of Finland for an invaluable network of likeminded individuals across continents.”

Text: Maija Kettunen

During her grant term, **Mia Filardi** visited many schools in Finland through the Fulbright Speaker Program, providing intercultural interaction for students.

www.fulbright.fi/tuni-graduate

Natalie Schirmacher Selected for the Fulbright–John Lewis Civil Rights Fellowship

Fulbright–Tampere University Graduate Awardee **Natalie Schirmacher** has been selected for the inaugural Fulbright–John Lewis Civil Rights Fellowship. She is one of 29 individuals chosen from amongst the 2024–25 Fulbright U.S. Students around the globe for this fellowship.

Nathalie Schirmacher is in her first year of the Peace, Mediation, and Conflict Research Master’s program at Tampere University. She has previously focused on Latin America and the Arab world, specializing in military violence, and aims to further study the U.S. military’s role in global conflicts. Natalie’s grant is funded by Tampere University and the Fulbright Finland Foundation, and the Fulbright–John Lewis Civil Rights Fellowship will complement her studies at Tampere University by offering virtual activities, leadership training, and an in-person seminar on nonviolent civil rights movements.

“I am looking forward to connecting with my Fulbright–John Lewis peers to compare our research and activism. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere; working together across cultures and national borders is the only way to address our world’s biggest issues,” Natalie says.

The Fulbright–John Lewis Civil Rights Fellowship was created by the U.S. Department of State in 2024 and established through bi-partisan legislation in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. The Fellowship honors the legacy of John Lewis, a civil rights leader and former member of the U.S. House of Representatives who played a key role in organizing the central events in the Civil Rights movement, such as the Freedom Rides and the 1963 March on Washington.

Text: Karoliina Kokko



Natalie Schirmacher
2024–25 Fulbright–Tampere
University Graduate Award

www.fulbright.fi/tuni-graduate

American Voices

An Important Part of the University Curriculum

One by one, students make their way to the auditorium, eager to learn more about the vast kaleidoscope of American cultures. It's Friday afternoon at the University of Turku's main building, and the two-day American Voices Seminar is about to begin.

What is it about the American Voices Seminar that makes people fill the lecture room to the brim, even on a Saturday morning?

"The American Voices Seminar offers a friendly and collegial atmosphere for first-year university students, advanced researchers, and everyone in between to get together to discuss their views on the United States," says Senior Lecturer **Janne Korkka**, one of the organizing partners at the University of Turku.

Organized jointly by the Fulbright Finland Foundation and the Department of English at the University of Turku, and featuring current U.S. Fulbright grantees as speakers, the seminar is a vital part of the curriculum of the North American Studies Program. Students receive study credits by attending the seminar and writing a report on the presentations.

"The annual seminar series has been hosted by the North American Studies Program at the University of Turku for over thirty years, and for us it continues to be a strategically important event which



matches many of our goals from local collaboration between faculties to international collaboration, cultural exchange, and societal visibility," Janne Korkka says.

The seminar also serves an important role in emphasizing an open dialogue and cultural exchange.

"Collaboration based on respectful listening of different voices is exactly what we need today in academia and society at large," Janne concludes.

Text and photo: Maija Kettunen

One of this year's presentations explored the areas in the U.S. beyond the Northeast and Coastal California, or the "flyover country." **Joshua Wilson** (right) is talking about the Rocky Mountain West.

www.fulbright.fi/about-us/events/american-voices-seminar



ASLA-Fulbright Alumni Association Organizes Cultural Visits

ASLA-Fulbright Alumni Association organized an alumni event in conjunction with American Voices Seminar. As part of the event, alumni, current, and even future grantees had the opportunity to learn more about life in medieval Turku as well as explore contemporary art during a guided tour of the Museum of

Archaeology and Contemporary Art, *Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova*.

Fulbright Finland alumni organize multiple events throughout the year: a welcome event for the newly arrived U.S. grantees, lectures on current topics of interest, visits to various corporations, cultural visits, and networking opportunities.

www.fulbright.fi/alumni



Onnistunut integroituminen työmarkkinoille

Moni Fulbright-stipendillä Suomeen tullut amerikkalainen opiskelija jää maahan pidemmäksi aikaa tai pysyvästi. Fulbright-opiskelijat suorittavat Suomessa maisterin tutkinnon ja heidän tavoitteensa on löytää Suomesta opintojen aikainen harjoittelutai lopputyöpaikka. Monesti tavoitteena on myös työllistyä Suomeen valmistumisen jälkeen.

Fulbright Suomi -säätiö järjestää työnhakuun ja suomalaisiin työmarkkinoihin keskittyvää koulutusta, joka auttaa stipendiaatteja integroitumaan suomalaiseen työelämään. Marraskuun työnhakutapahtumassa oli asiantuntijoina aiempien vuosien amerikkalaisia stipendiaatteja, jotka nykyisin työskentelevät Suomessa muun muassa kestävän

kehityksen konsulttina, markkinoinnin ja viestinnän asiantuntijana, englannin opettajana, tutkimusavustajana sekä väitöskirjatutkijana.

Alumnit kertoivat tapahtumassa stipendiaateille omista poluistaan harjoittelupaikan ja pysyvän työsuhteen hankkimisessa sekä antoivat vinkkejä toimivista työnhakukanavista, työhaastatteluun valmistautumisesta sekä ammatillisesta verkostoitumisesta Suomessa.

Alumnit korostivat aktiivisuuden opiskelijajärjestöissä, kansainvälisten työntekijöiden haastattelemisen, suomalaisten suosittelijoiden ja sisukkaan asenteen merkitystä työnhauksussa. Myös Fulbright-status ja -yhteydet ovat hyödyllisiä. Alumnit kehottivat stipendiaatteja suhtautumaan avoimesti erilaisiin

työmahdollisuuksiin ja olemaan rajoittamatta itse itseään työnhauksussa.

Tilaisuudessa käsiteltiin myös suomalaisten ja amerikkalaisten työkuulttuurien eroja, kuten työn ja vapaa-ajan tasapainoa.

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114

grantees, 37 Finnish and 77 U.S. grantees

1,8 million

euros awarded as grants

93

events throughout Finland and online

5 100

client contacts and event participants

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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

December

13.12.
Trust Fund Board Meeting

18.12.
Fulbright Finland Foundation
Board Meeting

23.12.2024–6.1.2025
Foundation Office Closed

January

Fulbright Finland Foundation
Board of Directors Annual
General Meeting

20.–30.1.
Fulbright Leaders for Global
Schools Study Tour to Finland

21.–23.1.
Arrival Orientation for U.S.
Fulbright Grantees

28.1.
2025–26 Application Deadline:
Fulbright Finland Travel Grants

February

Trust Fund Annual General Meeting

4.2.
2025–26 Application Deadline:
Fulbright Specialist Program

7.2.
21st North American Studies
Roundtable

March

19.3.
Capacity Building Workshop:
Developing Sustainable
Partnerships with U.S. HEIs and
International Student Services to
Increase Student Mobility

20.3.
Mid-Term Meeting
for the U.S. Fulbrighters,
Workshop on Tackling
Climate Change

23.3.
2026–27 Application Deadline:
Fulbright Distinguished Awards
in Teaching Program

April

2.–4.4.
Nordic Youth Grantees at Arctic
Encounter Symposium, Alaska

Fulbright Forum on Education

2025–26 Application Deadline:
Fulbright Finland Undergraduate
Program

May

11.5.
2026–27 Application Deadline:
Fulbright Graduate Grants
for Finns

13.5.
Pre-Departure Orientation for
Fulbright Finland Foundation
Awardees to the U.S. and
Fulbright Finland Award
Ceremony

June

Fulbright Finland Foundation
Board Meeting

19.3.2025 – Paasitorni, Helsinki

CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP:

Developing Sustainable
Partnerships with U.S. HEIs
and International Student
Services to Increase Student
Mobility

The workshop supports Finnish
higher education institutions in
their efforts to develop sustainable
and successful partnerships with
U.S. institutions to increase student
mobility from the United States.

See the program on our website:
[www.fulbright.fi/about-us/events/
capacity-building-workshop-developing-
sustainable-partnerships-with-us-heis-and](http://www.fulbright.fi/about-us/events/capacity-building-workshop-developing-sustainable-partnerships-with-us-heis-and)

