"International Opportunities for Scholars in Communication and Related Disciplines"

Report of a mini-conference held as part of the National Communication Association Conference, November 2010, San Francisco, United States

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Introduction

Over recent years, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of universities outside the US offering Communication and Journalism courses. This growth has taken place, for instance, in the Middle East, South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand, South America and Canada. Such internationalization presents opportunities for US Communication scholars to seek funding to teach and conduct research in other countries and for foreign Communication scholars to do likewise in the US.

A mini-conference on this topic was held on November 14-16, 2010, as part of the National Communication Association conference in San Francisco. The mini-conference invited contributions from scholars who had worked in foreign countries—including the benefits they derived from the experience, any pitfalls to avoid, and what advice they would offer others. The mini-conference also invited contributions from those who fund such travel.

The mini-conference was convened by Grant Hannis, the head of journalism as Massey University in Wellington, New Zealand. Dr Hannis spent the second half of 2010 as a Fulbright Senior Scholar, teaching and conducting research at San Francisco State University.

Six presenters spoke at the mini-conference and answered questions from the floor. This report summarizes the presentations, incorporating the presenters' responses to questions. All the presenters are happy to be contacted, should you have further questions.

Sunday, November 14

A profile of the Fulbright program as it relates to US academics wishing to work in other countries

Andy Riess (ariess@iie.org)

Dr Riess is the Assistant Director for Outreach and Communications, at the International Exchange of Scholars, which administers the Fulbright Scholar Program. He has worked for the US Army Security Agency, in academia, and in the for-profit and not-for-profit business world.

Dr Riess noted that Fulbright is funded by both the US government and a great many of the host countries and institutions. These host countries differ in what they contribute to the scheme, which can impact on the money available to travel to different countries. The Fulbright Scholar Program awards 1100-1200 grants to Americans alone every year. He noted that Fulbright runs many programs, including those for bringing scholars to the US. However, for the mini-conference he concentrated on the two main programs available to US Communication and Journalism scholars interested in travelling to other countries.

The first program is the core program, available to academics, administrators and professionals. The program sends scholars to more than 125 countries each year. The grants run from two to 12 months. Many of the awards

are for teaching, for pure research, and a combination of both. The application process opens on 1 February and closes on 1 August, running 1 to 1.5 years in advance of scholars' travel plans.

The other program is the Fulbright Specialist Program. This is for making educational linkages in other countries, not for pure research. These are not for specific awards; instead, you apply to be added to a roster of available scholars for five years. During that five years Fulbright fields queries for those in other countries seeking experts for two to six weeks for conferences, curriculum development, etc. Fulbright then matches requests with those on the roster. You can arrange for an institution in another country to request you by name. There is no deadline for applications. One drawback of the specialist program is that timing can be difficult. You may receive a request for travel in a month's time, but cannot drop everything to go at that time. You do not have to accept a request, of course.

Turning to some general points, Dr Riess said the money available through Fulbright varies by country. In some instances, assistance is available to take your family with you. Fulbright staff specialize on specific programs and countries so you can contact the program staff for a country or award you are particularly interested in, to obtain more details.

In a great many cases you do not need to know a foreign language to work as a scholar in another country. This is because scholarship internationally is typically conducted in American English. This is usually not the case in Latin and South America, however.

Some countries' programs require you to have been accepted at a host institution prior to applying, others do not. The Netherlands and France require such letters of interest from host institutions, Russia does not (Fulbright can place you at a host institution in Russia). If a country does not require a letter, it can be a good idea to get one anyway, as it shows how enthusiastic you are. China, however, strictly forbids scholars obtaining such letters – the Chinese government will find you a host. As to what you should do in an individual case, this is a good question to ask the Fulbright program staff.

For more on Fulbright programs, visit www.cies.org**.** The site has the catalogue of available awards and is searchable by discipline, country, region, etc. Communications and Journalism is a listed discipline in the catalogue. The catalogue of awards is updated online, so it is worthwhile checking it over time to see if countries have recently joined the scheme, withdrawn from the scheme, and such like. The website also gives the contact details for the people at Fulbright who work with specific countries' institutions, and Fulbright urges you to contact them with any questions you have. Some awards are discipline-specific, others are multi-disciplinary. There are currently about 200 awards available for Communications, including discipline-specific and multi-disciplinary awards.

Fulbright's website includes stories from scholars who have worked in other countries. Working in another country gives you new ideas for research and teaching, enhances your career, and can change your point of view. For many people, it changed their lives.

Advice from a Swiss researcher studying in the US

Lea Hellmueller (hellmuellerl@missouri.edu)

Ms Hellmueller is a doctoral student from Switzerland currently working as a Fulbright Visiting Researcher at the University of Missouri's School of Journalism. She has also studied at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, and California State University.

Ms Hellmueller began by pointing out that, although the numbers of international students coming the US continues to rise, the main disciplines students are studying are, first, business and management (21% of students), and, second, engineering (18%). Communications and Journalism is far down the list, at 2%. As a discipline, we should be doing all we can to lift this number.

Scholars can derive numerous benefits from working in another country. It can help you understand the world through different eyes and from different perspectives. It contributes to greater tolerance and openness to the world. It also reduces ethnocentrism—that is, putting your own culture at the top and judging others by it. It also makes you better able to meet strangers. It terms of your career, working in another country helps you generate

new research ideas, international research teams and it provides teaching opportunities. It also allows you to contribute to the growth and development of your discipline.

There can be some negatives. The process is time consuming—completing the applications, obtaining visas, finding accommodation—so you must plan far in advance. You must be able to deal with uncertainties on a daily basis—travel, culture, language. Homesickness can also be a problem, particularly after the honeymoon stage has worn off and you become just another person in your host institution. There is also re-entry shock—when Ms Hellmueller went back to Switzerland she noticed how narrow the streets were compared to the US and discovered her friends were not interested in seeing all her photos! Such downsides of working internationally are always outweighed by the positives, however.

Her advice to would-be travelling scholars is to learn about the country and its culture beforehand. Speak to people who have travelled to the country and take the opportunity at international conferences to meet people from the country. Send emails off to target institutions and do not be discouraged if some fail to reply—it will all work out in the end.

Monday, November 15

Advice from a US academic who spent a semester in New Zealand

Mary Beth Oliver (mbo@psu.edu)

Professor Oliver is a distinguished professor and co-director of the Media Effects Research Laboratory at Penn State. In the spring of 2006 she spent a semester at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand, as a Fulbright Scholar researching media and race/ethnicity.

Professor Oliver began by discussing the Fulbright application process. She emphasized that you need to make it clear in your application how your research will benefit from working in another country—in her case, she was broadening the scope of her work, which was originally US oriented. Professor Oliver spoke of a friend of hers who applied for a Fulbright to work in France. French placements are very competitive and her friend had to complete courses in French as part of the process. Having a contact in the country also helps. You should think about such considerations early, as the application process is lengthy.

As well as making your research objectives clear, you should also emphasize to Fulbright that you would be a good traveller. A Fulbrighter is an ambassador for the program and for their home country, so Fulbright wants to know that you are enthused about travelling and want to go to another country.

She applied for partial support, as she was going on sabbatical so did have some funds of her own. She only sought funding to cover living expenses, and understands this helped her win a scholarship. She was not sure if that situation is unique to New Zealand. This is an issue you may wish to bring up with the Fulbright program staff. Professor Oliver was initially put on a waiting list, but did eventually receive funding, so don't give up hope if your application is not initially successful!

There was a lot to organize before the travel commenced. She had to arrange a work visa and medical clearance. She had to obtain ethics approval for her research in both the US and New Zealand, as it used human subjects. She was glad she had six months to do all this. Professor Oliver said it was strange contacting people in another country to organize accommodation and felt nervous signing a lease with a stranger. However, the person who let the house to Professor Oliver and her husband became her best friend in New Zealand.

On arriving in New Zealand, Professor Oliver wanted to make a good impression, so worked hard on her research. But at an orientation session for Fulbrighters, the Fulbright people reminded her to take time meeting people and travelling the country, as that is part of Fulbright's mission—to help academics learn about other cultures and peoples. She bought a car to travel around the country. She realized New Zealand was one of the most beautiful places she had ever seen. Her scholarship required her to give public lectures, which were another great opportunity to meet people.

Working in another country was undoubtedly one of the best experiences she has ever had. Her advice: If you are thinking about doing it, do it!

Advice from a US academic who spent time in the People's Republic of China

Glynis Fitzgerald (FitzgeraldG@mail.ccsu.edu)

Dr Fitzgerald is an Associate Professor of Communication at Central Connecticut State University. In 2009 she spent her sabbatical leave at Fudan University in Shanghai, China, lecturing and working on a new edition of a textbook she co-wrote. Fudan funded her stay.

Dr Fitzgerald said she had two main messages regarding working in China. First, research can come from anywhere and, second, if you plan to conduct research in China you must go with the flow, rather than expecting to plan everything.

On the first point, Dr Fitzgerald recalled being at a Christmas cocktail party at General Electric headquarters in Fairfield, Connecticut, in 2000. She was talking with some people about their experiences working in multinational environments. They were beginning to hire recent graduates in Shanghai and other Chinese cities, and found the students were ill-prepared for the interview process. Chinese students did not know the Western way of writing a resume, presenting themselves effectively at interviews, and generally promoting themselves. This was because in the past Chinese graduates had simply been placed into jobs after university.

Dr Fitzgerald mentioned this to a colleague in her department, Yanan Ju. He had been born and raised in China, and continued to do work and research there. He spoke to some friends at Fudan University, who expressed interest in producing a textbook on professional communication for Chinese students. Dr Fitzgerald and Dr Ju decided to co-write the book, as a primer to help Chinese students through the job-hunting process. They wrote the book during most of 2000, and it was published by Fudan University Press.

But, as they wrote the book without any feedback from the Chinese, it was written in a very Western perspective—here is what a resume looks like, here is what a cover letter looks like. The lack of Chinese input was detrimental to the book. When they went it to sell it Chinese schools, not only did the students not know the process outlined in the book, the faculty said they did not know about it either. Fudan University Press encouraged Dr Fitzgerald to travel to China to obtain a better understanding of the book's intended audience. Eventually in 2009 Dr Fitzgerald travelled to China to write a new edition of the book.

As for going with the flow, Dr Fitzgerald travelled during the height of the H1N1 scare, so the trip was postponed several times. She did not know when she would be travelling until two days before the departure day. Being married with a child, she was anxious about what things would be like in China. She need not have bothered—her hosts were capable, gracious, and wonderful people.

Dr Fitzgerald stayed with a family when she first arrived in China. The family did not speak English and she does not speak Chinese; nevertheless, the stay with them was wonderful. She then spent the rest of her time in Fudan's guest house, which was a top-class hotel experience.

Dr Fitzgerald gave some specific advice about travelling in China. Make sure you have a multi-entry visa if, for instance, you plan to travel to Hong Kong. Driving in China is chaotic, so do not drive yourself. Make sure you understand cultural expectations—for instance, you must be punctual and you must treat business cards with great respect. Expect to be given cash—she was discreetly given yuan when she spoke at gatherings and people gave her money in return for taking her photograph. Chinese also appreciated the fact she did not ask what was in the food she was served, a common question asked by Americans. As you can expect to be focus of attention at many meals, it is a good idea to be proficient with chopsticks!

During her stay she learnt a considerable amount about her book's audience. The students she met were very similar to students in the US. They have the same fears, concerns, and needs when it comes to searching for jobs. It was also beneficial to explain to the faculty about the new notions of professional communication—why it is valuable and why it should be part of their curriculum. She treasures the experience of working in China.

Tuesday, November 16

Advice from a US researcher working in the United Kingdom

Casey Brienza (www.caseybrienza.com)

Ms Brienza is a doctoral student at the University of Cambridge, England. She completed her master's degree at New York University and is receiving financial support for her doctoral study from Trinity College, Cambridge.

Ms Brienza noted that those thinking about studying or working in the UK must first understand some of the differences between the academies of the two countries. For instance, in the UK doctoral programs are typically three to four years in length and are dissertation only. Terminology is different too. For example, a "postgraduate" student in the UK would be a graduate student in the US, a "lecturer" is a professor, a "professor" is a full professor, a "supervisor" is an advisor, and a "studentship" can mean a scholarship or a fellowship. "Academic staff" means faculty.

Looking at doctoral study, it is probably easier in the UK to receive an offer to do a PhD than it is here, but it is not standard to be funded in the UK. It is getting the funding that is tough. International funding opportunities are out there—you just need to do a lot of web searching!

Focusing on Cambridge, the university she is most familiar with, Ms Brienza described several of the scholarships available in the UK. Typical is the full scholarship available through St John's College, one of the Cambridge colleges. This scholarship can be offered in any discipline. There is no separate application form for these scholarships. Instead, you must first apply to Cambridge and tick a box that says you want to be a member of St John's College. Once you are accepted by the university, your application form will be sent to the college and they will decide separately if they want you. If they do, they will consider fully funding you. None of this is under your control—once you submit your application it is all automatic—and it can take a long time to learn if you will receive funding.

Another type of scholarship is where you apply for funding before you approach a UK university. One example is the PhD Studentship offered by CRESC (the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change), which does a lot of Communication and Media Studies research. The CRESC studentship is funded by the ESRC (Economic and Research Council), one of the UK government's research councils. There are numerous research council grants available. These are advertised as if they were job applications, and should be approached as such.

Finally, there are the hybrid opportunities, such as the Trinity College External Research Studentship Ms Brienza has. This studentship can be offered in any discipline. You apply to the university to be accepted into its doctoral program and then you apply to the university separately for the studentship. Each has separate deadlines and requirements.

You need to read the information on scholarship websites carefully. For instance, with Trinity's External Research Studentship, the website notes that the college draws up a short reserve list of those who narrowly missed out on a studentship and will in turn give studentships to those on the list, should any successful candidates withdraw. The website adds that Trinity usually arranges financial support for *all* those on the reserve list—so even if you are declined a studentship you may still receive near to full funding. The university does not advertise this very well, but it is there in the fine print.

Turning to opportunities for those with doctorates, the UK recently changed the rules for post-doctoral scholarships. The effect has been to make it more difficult for Americans to take advantage of such opportunities. The UK universities are not happy with these stricter rules, Ms Brienza said, and are trying to work around them. So, for instance, the British Academy is offering a Visiting Scholars scheme. In conjunction with a UK host (who arranges the practical side of things), the academy funds scholars to spend two to six months in the UK conducting research (for details, see www.britac.ac.uk/funding/guide/intl/visfells.cfm). In Ms Brienza's view, more such opportunities will become available following the changes to the rules.

If you are a senior scholar, things tend not to be so institutionalized. You could be the co-investigator on someone's research grant or be collaborating with a colleague at a British university, for instance. Many of the

Cambridge colleges offer visiting fellowship for such academics. The Visiting Fellowship is a non-stipendiary fellowship that allows you to join a college, thereby giving you access to all of the college's facilities (for details, see www.wolfson.cam.ac.uk/membership/visitfellow/).

Incidentally, make sure you understand the rules surrounding the academic visitor's visa issued by the UK government to scholars coming to the UK. For instance, the visa allows you to stay in the UK for up to 12 months, compared to only six months on the standard visa.

Ms Brienza then turned her attention to US institutions hosting scholars in this country. She is currently based at Rutgers undertaking field work for her doctorate. Rutgers is not charging her anything, but, nevertheless, the university has supplied her with an office, access to the library, etc. None of these benefits were advertised on Rutgers's website. If you wish to attract more scholars from other countries to your institution, Ms Brienza said, you should clearly say on your website that you welcome visiting scholars. Such attractions as library access, shared office space, opportunities for social interaction with academics and auditing classes, would all help attract both doctoral students and faculty.

Advice from a New Zealand academic working in the US

Grant Hannis (g.d.hannis@massey.ac.nz)

Dr Hannis heads the journalism program at Massey University in Wellington, New Zealand. He spent the second half of 2010 as a Fulbright Senior Scholar at San Francisco State University. He conducted research on the depiction of the Chinese gold miners in the 19th century US press and taught a business-journalism course.

Dr Hannis began by encouraging US scholars to work in other countries and also encouraged US institutions to host scholars. Such internationalization enhances the discipline, allowing scholars to meet and exchange ideas, conduct research, see issues confronting the discipline from different perspectives, see what is similar in both nations, find potential joint research funding opportunities, scope out new sources of research students, come up with new research ideas, etc.

It is for reasons like these that the National Communication Association has a strategy of promoting internationalization. It ran a conference on this in Turkey, July 2009. As a result of this conference, the Council of Communication Associations (of which NCA is a member) recently established the Center for Intercultural Dialogue. The objectives of the center are to encourage research on international cultural dialogue and to bring international researchers together. It will be offering funding grants to researchers and has a database of funders on its website (http://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org). The director of the center is Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz (intercult.dialogue@gmail.com).

Regarding Fulbright, Dr Hannis echoed the advice of other speakers in ensuring you give yourself plenty of time to work through the application process. Not only was there a considerable amount of paperwork involved, he also had to arrange to undergo a full medical and find a host institution. Dealing with the US Embassy was also time-consuming, with all the embassy's forms changing near the end of the process, adding to the stress. He and his wife found their apartment in the US on a website for international scholars seeking accommodation (www.sabbaticalhomes.com).

Be persistent when looking for a host institution. The first institution Dr Hannis approached simply ignored him, despite his sending several emails to several faculty members. The second institution he approached, San Francisco State, responded promptly and enthusiastically. He found working in the university a fascinating experience. Staff meetings, for instance, often brought up issues that paralleled concerns at home and the students were reminiscent of Kiwi students.

Dr Hannis took the opportunity to present at several conferences while he has been in the US, meeting numerous journalism academics. It is a very good idea to come with plenty of business cards to hand out to new contacts, and perhaps some gifts that reflect your homeland (such as calendars of scenes from home). He and his wife also managed to get in some sightseeing in the US. Time and again, the Americans they met were warm, friendly people.

Although the main focus of Dr Hannis's time in the US was on working in that country, his working life back home did not end entirely. He sometimes had to juggle commitments in the US with demands at home that could not be ignored. Email makes home perhaps just a little too close at times!

He advised scholars to ensure they have more than one source of funds while away from home, in case any problems arise. Also, be aware of any work or travel limitations on your scholarship (Dr Hannis must seek permission from Fulbright to travel outside the US, for instance).

San Francisco State University found the experience of hosting Dr Hannis of value. Asked by Dr Hannis for her comments on hosting a Fulbright, the Journalism Department Chair Venise Wagner said:

> Having a Fulbrighter in our midst has been both refreshing and informative. It's fascinating to learn that some of the challenges we have here at San Francisco State are similar to those that the Journalism program at Massey faces. We've enjoyed having Grant with us, particularly in faculty discussions around curriculum and students services. At the same time he has also given us new ways of looking at these very similar problems.

Ms Wagner "absolutely" encouraged US institutions to host overseas scholars. "It is important to learn how other people do things," she said.

Like the other speakers, Dr Hannis encouraged the attendees to travel and work in another country. You learn about the country you are living in and you will learn about yourself. It is fun and exciting, and builds bridges.