

# Chào Fulbright

**The Fulbright Program was proposed to the U.S. Congress in 1945 by Senator J. William Fulbright. The program was signed into law by President Truman in 1946 and is now active in over 150 countries worldwide. The Fulbright Program in Vietnam began in 1992, with the establishment of the Vietnamese Student program. The program now has the following components:**

- Vietnamese Scholar Program
- Vietnamese Student Program
- U.S. Scholar Program
- U.S. Student Program
- U.S. Senior Specialist Program
- Fulbright Economics Teaching Program in Ho Chi Minh City

Each year, 25-30 Vietnamese citizens are granted scholarships to pursue a Master's degree or post-doctoral research in the U.S. Likewise, 20-25 Americans receive grants to lecture or pursue research in Vietnam.

*The Fulbright Program in Vietnam  
Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy  
Rose Garden Tower, 6 Ngoc Khanh  
Ha Noi, Viet Nam*

## From the Director

Warm greetings from the Fulbright office! The final edition of our newsletter for 2007 is full of news from Fulbright events and programs.

Our largest alumni event of 2007 was the 15th anniversary of the Fulbright Program in Vietnam. In August, over 100 alumni and friends joined new arrivals Ambassador Michael Michalak and Consul General Kenneth Fairfax for a symposium in Hue to celebrate the Program's history and discuss its future. We were proud to have such high attendance for this event and look forward to

meeting alumni at upcoming programs.

In addition to the new leadership at the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam, the Program is also pleased to welcome our first batch of U.S. scholars and students for the 2007-08 academic year (page 3) as well as welcome *back* our group of 2006-07 Vietnamese scholars (page 2) and students (page 10) to Vietnam. It's always exciting to hear about our grantees' experiences in the U.S. and hear their plans for the future.

As a final welcome, I would like to introduce the Fulbright com-



munity to our new staff member, Ms. Nguyen Thi Hanh, who joined the U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Section in October. Hanh will be responsible for the administration of the Vietnamese Student and Scholar programs. Please join us in making her feel at home with the Fulbright Program.

Best wishes,  
Dr. Tran Xuan Thao

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## Welcoming Ambassador Michael Michalak and Consul General Ken Fairfax



Michael W. Michalak, a career Foreign Service Officer with extensive knowledge and experience in Asia, was sworn in as Ambassador to Vietnam on August 10, 2007. Prior to this position, Ambassador Michalak served as the U.S. Senior Official to APEC. In his over 30 years of service with the Department of State, Mr. Michalak has worked in Tokyo, Sydney, Islamabad, and Beijing, as well as Washington, D.C. Born in Detroit, Michigan, Mr. Michalak received his Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Physics from Oakland University and Catholic University, respectively. He received a second Master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University. Mr. Michalak speaks Chinese, Japanese, and French, and is married with three daughters.



Kenneth Fairfax arrived in Vietnam in July 2007 to serve as Consul General at the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City. Mr. Fairfax has worked for the U.S. State Department for 20 years, and his last assignment was as Consul General in Krakow, Poland. Since joining the State Department in 1987, he has served at posts in the Ukraine, Oman, Russia, Canada, Poland and Korea, as well as with the U.S. National Security Council in Washington, D.C. Prior to his career in the Foreign Service, Mr. Fairfax was the president of a computer firm in California's "Silicon Valley." Originally from Kentucky, Mr. Fairfax studied Government at Oberlin College. He is married to Nyetta Yarkin, and his hobbies include history, cooking, and the study of cultures.

## Ms. Nguyen Thi Hanh joins the Fulbright Program Staff



*Ms. Nguyen Thi Hanh is the new Fulbright Program Assistant for Vietnamese Programs. From October 1, she has been responsible for the administration of the Vietnamese Scholar and Student programs.*

Originally from Thai Binh province, Ms. Nguyen Thi Hanh moved to Hanoi in 1993. She attended Hanoi University of Technology from 2000-2005, where she received a B.A. in English for Science and Technology. When asked why she chose this major, Hanh says, "Apart from the regular English language curriculum, we can gain knowledge about science and technology, which most English majors are not able to do. We also received training in critical thinking and logic."

In 2006, after enrolling in a Master's course for Educational Administration and Leadership at RMIT in Hanoi, she began work as a United Nations Volunteer. During her UNV term, she managed the project "IT and English Training for Employment," which supports training for female residents at the Ba Vi Rehabilitation Center No. 2. "Most people look at the women in the center with a negative perspective because they are sex workers and drug users, and some even have HIV," Hanh says. "When I took that job, I wanted to make a small change to the way people look at them and do something so they can be better re-integrated into the community after they leave the center. By this work, our volunteer group wanted to contribute to reducing the stigma and discrimination that the women face in society."

Hanh has known about the Fulbright program's reputation as prestigious, challenging scholarship since her student days. In her new position, she is looking forward to maintaining and developing the program as well as meeting Fulbright's many excellent candidates and alumni.

## Vietnamese Scholar De-Briefing Session

The Fulbright program held its sixth annual scholar debriefing session on October 5, 2007 at the Daewoo Hotel in Hanoi. Ten Vietnamese scholars from the 2005-06 and 2006-07 academic years presented the results of their research to a group of over 50 people from different institutions from throughout Vietnam. Each scholar was given 30 minutes to share their research results and their experiences in the U.S. Scholars and presentations are listed below:



Name	Host in U.S.	Affiliation in Vietnam	Project
Dr. Nguyen Thi Hoang Yen	New York University	Hanoi University of Education	Special Education in the U.S. and Vietnam
Dr. Le Khuong Ninh	Washington State University	Can Tho University	Sequencing Banking Reforms
Dr. Ha Van Sinh	University of Pennsylvania	Nha Trang Teacher Training College	Teacher Preparation for TESOL
Dr. Vu Ngoc Tuoc	Arizona State University	Hanoi University of Technology	Designing a Computational Electronics Course
Dr. Nguyen Trung Chi	University of Illinois at Chicago	VNU Hanoi, College of Sciences	Petrogenesis of Alkaline Igneous Rocks in North Vietnam
Dr. Duong Thi Hoang Oanh	Yale University	Hue University, College of Foreign Languages	Vietnamese Learner Autonomy
Dr. Dinh Van Dung	Polytechnic University, Brooklyn	Research Institute of Posts & Telecommunication	Next Generation Networks
Dr. Tran Thu Ha	Ohio University	Institute of Mechanics	Hydrological model for the Red River System
Dr. Nguyen Phuc Thuy Hien	Pace University	HCMC Law University	Legal Protection of World Heritage Sites
Dr. Pham Chi Vinh	University of California at Berkeley	VNU Hanoi, College of Sciences	Explicit Formulas for Rayleigh Wave Speed

## U.S. Grantee Fall Orientation

The Fulbright Program provided an orientation for newly-arrived U.S. students and scholars in Hanoi from August 27-28. The first day of orientation, held at the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi, provided new grantees with information. Embassy officers from the political, economic, health and security sections briefed grantees on current issues in Vietnam-U.S. relations, and U.S. Program alumni provided a personal perspective to living and working in Vietnam. Grantees also enjoyed a boat trip along the Red River, which stopped at several famous pagodas in the region.



At left, Dr. Thao discusses issues with new grantees and program alumni, and right, Joshua Glasser, Lucas Thornblade, James Cobbe, Jamie Maxtone-Graham, and Cary Trexler visit a pagoda in the Red River Delta.

Name and U.S. Affiliation	Discipline	Host Institution in Viet Nam	Project Title
Dr. James Cobbe Florida State University	Economics	Da Nang University-College of Economics and Business	Development Economics & the Economics of Education
Mr. Joshua Glasser Common Cause North Carolina	Economic Development	Hanoi College of Social Sciences & Humanities	Micro credit, Migration and Social Stability in Vietnam
Mr. James Maxtone-Graham Freelance artist	Sociology	Hanoi Academy of Theater and Cinematography	Hip-Hop Culture: Home-Grown on Foreign Soil—4000 Years of Vietnamese Culture meets Grandmaster Flash
Mr. Lucas Thornblade Hamilton College	Public Health	Hue College of Medicine and Pharmacy	Family Medicine Development in Rural Vietnam
Dr. Cary Trexler University of California, Davis	Agriculture	Ho Chi Minh City Agriculture & Forestry University	Agricultural Education Reform in Vietnam: Building on Existing Relationships
Dr. Carol Wilder New School University	Communications	Hanoi University	Digital Détente: An Online Curriculum Project

## U.S. Scholars participate in conference on Higher Education in Vinh Phuc

The Fulbright Program in Vietnam and Hanoi University of Education No. 2 in Vinh Phuc province co-hosted a conference on Higher Education on November 2. Fulbright scholars Cary Trexler and Carol Wilder gave presentations at the conference. Dr. Trexler’s presentation was titled “Higher Education Teaching and Learning Activities in the U.S.” and Dr. Wilder discussed “Opportunities and Challenges of Higher Education in the World.”

Up to ten U.S. scholars are recruited and placed at Vietnamese institutions as lecturers and/or researchers on an annual basis. Their grants range from three months to one academic year. While they are based at one location, they can travel to other institutions throughout Vietnam to lecture at seminars or do consultations upon request.

(photo at right) Dr. Trexler and Dr. Wilder join Dr. Nguyen Van Ma, the rector of Hanoi University of Education No. 2, in the “Vuon Tien Si (Ph.D. Garden)”



## Fulbright celebrates 15 years in Vietnam



On August 23, the Fulbright Program held a 15th anniversary celebration in Hue, Vietnam. Over 100 Vietnamese and U.S. alumni of the program attended the event, along with key staff from the U.S. Embassy. The celebration consisted of an afternoon symposium and a gala dinner, as well as a presentation of Fulbright certificates to alumni who have recently returned to Vietnam. During the symposium, three panels discussed the impact of the Fulbright Program and the future of the Program in Vietnam. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Michael W. Michalak praised the program for “giving foreign scholars a broader understanding of the United States and enabling American scholars to expand their appreciation of other cultures and peoples.”



Ambassador Michael W. Michalak delivers opening remarks at the symposium



Consul General Kenneth Fairfax presents a certificate of completion to a Fulbright grantee



(left) A packed room listens to the panel on the future of the Fulbright Program and (right) alumni enjoy traditional Hue music at the gala



(From left to right): Attendees admire the 15th anniversary poster show; Truong Nu Minh Ngoc shares her memories of life in the U.S., and Chu Manh Trinh offers a comment during the afternoon symposium

## 15th Anniversary Photo Contest

In conjunction with the 15th anniversary of the Fulbright Program in Vietnam, the Program held a photo contest to celebrate the variety of academic and cultural exchange experiences enjoyed by both Vietnamese and American participants. Thank you to the more than 25 alumni who submitted photos! We selected 8 photos as prizewinners, but we were able to use many more for a special 10-panel photo exhibit. Below are the prize-winning photographs.

1



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5



1) Dr. Bui Lan Huong ('04-'05) cooks Vietnamese food for friends in D.C.

2) Dr. Mark Alter ('04-'05) eating pho in Hanoi

3) Dr. Ha Van Sinh ('06-'07) eating lobster in Boston

4) Luong Hoang Luong ('04-'05) and his host mother at Thanksgiving

5) Tu Thu Hien ('03-'05) with a friend in Texas

6) Maile Ornellas and her daughter Maia in Hue ('06-07)

7) France Nguyen ('06-'07) and her husband enjoy Hoi An

8) Dr. Tran Thi Bich Lieu and friends in Texas ('05-'06)

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## New Views of Vietnam: U.S. scholars during their first months of Fulbright

Professor James Cobbe, Florida State University, is spending one academic year at Da Nang University, College of Economics and Business Administration, in central Vietnam.

I was in Da Nang briefly in 1997, working on a TA project, and only have vague memories of it. I recall the magnificent Provincial offices on the beautiful boulevard by the river, but otherwise my memories are of a rather sleepy town and a nice beach the other side of the river with a few wooden restaurants and old villas. In ten years, Da Nang has changed enormously, and doubled in population. On the other side of the river, where my college is, there are now both a large built-up area and a broad dual carriageway road along the beachfront for kilometres and kilometres. There are two new bridges over the river, some magnificent new public buildings, lots of wide new roads, and construction going on everywhere. Da Nang is certainly moving in a way it was not ten years ago.

I am teaching two courses, both first year introductory economics. One course, with the smallest enrolment of undergraduates I've taught I think ever, is in English for one of the College's two English-medium collaborative programs. The other, co-taught with a young Vietnamese lecturer, is in the standard undergraduate business administration program, and has over 100 students on the roll, crowded four to six in double desks. My eleven English-medium students have some trouble with my English if I forget to speak slowly, but impressively write better and more willingly than my US Principles students. Surprisingly, material seems to go over quicker and better with the co-taught course, although I speak first and do the board work. The English-medium students are getting about double the class time US students would, the Vietnamese medium students not much over half once allowance is made for interpretation; but we really do seem to be moving faster in the Vietnamese medium class. No doubt this is partly because I essentially have to write out exactly what we are going to do in advance, for the benefit of my colleague, and then stick fairly closely to it, whereas in

the English medium class I am my usual less-disciplined self.

First year students are usually eager and attentive at first, but these students seem unusually so compared to either US or African students, particularly given the conditions they attend class under – the Vietnamese medium class meets for over three hours in the heat of the afternoon in an overcrowded classroom where not all the fans work. My colleagues work ridiculous hours on pedagogically unsound schedules, but this is a rational response to the remuneration and incentive mechanisms, and I am very positively struck by their morale, conscientiousness, and attitudes. The institution is clearly progressive in ways – widespread use of web support for classes, for example – but seems reluctant to face up to the structural challenges and difficulties it faces, although that may be a false initial impression.

I am in the classroom more hours per week than I have been for, I think, 33 years, but that is why I am here, and I am looking forward to the rest of the year, and just hope I manage to learn more Vietnamese language – and not only Da Nang dialect!



Dr. Shawn McHale, Associate Professor of History and International Affairs at George Washington University, is a Fulbright-Hays fellow at Vietnam National University, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, in Ho Chi Minh City.



Dr. McHale and his daughter Kate, in Ho Chi Minh City

The writer Vu Ngoc Phan, writing in 1942 about the transformation of Vietnamese literature, wrote that “for us, one year is like thirty years from a different time.” My reaction, on stepping back on to Vietnamese soil for the first time since 1998, is similar to Phan's: the pace of change is breathtaking in Ho Chi Minh City.

I first visited Vietnam in 1989, when Vietnam was

still heavily dependent on Soviet aid, and again in 1992. At that time, Vietnam was relatively cut off from the world: no Internet, of course, and few foreign newspapers. Americans were a rare sight.

In those early years, Vietnam looked run down and grimy. Books were printed on a poor quality paper. A sad but not

uncommon sight in some rural areas was children whose hair was streaked with brown – a telltale sign of malnutrition. But I should not dwell on the negatives. What also struck me then was how Vietnamese carried themselves with great dignity.

And today? If in 1989 or 1992, Vietnam was roughly at Burma's level of economic development, today it has jumped far ahead. My old apartment on Le Thanh Ton Street in downtown Saigon? I've tried to find it, but I think it was torn down and replaced by a new building. The street is unrecognizable. And the people? I've been fascinated to note the flood of northerners who have come south over the past ten years to make a living in this city.

Some of these changes have a direct impact on my historical research. It is difficult to buy Vietnamese books from before 1980, for example, and virtually impossible to find ones printed before 1960. Other changes I wish wouldn't happen: in the mad rush to modernize, Ho Chi Minh City is consigning some beautiful old French buildings and historic sites to the wrecking ball, to be replaced by high-rise buildings.

Today, Vietnamese can buy *The gioi phang* – a translation of Thomas Friedman's *The Flat Earth* – in local bookstores. This is emblematic of the way that the globalized world, and a better future, beckons. All for the good – but the historian in me is still wistful, as some of Vietnam's heritage is (unnecessarily) disappearing.

## First Impressions: Vietnamese Students in the U.S.

Nguyen Xuan Hung (2nd from right), from Thanh Hoa, with his “Fulbrighter family”: the group of 8 Fulbrighters who are studying for their MA in TESOL at Saint Michael’s College in Colchester, Vermont. The students are from Iraq, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Mozambique, Niger, Afghanistan and Vietnam, of course!



Dr. Bui Huu Minh Tri writes: “Here’s a photo from one of my favorite historic sites: the Mayflower II ship Mayflower (a replica) that brought the first settlers from England to Massachusetts Bay in 1620. In the breeze of Plymouth that afternoon, I read a sentence from a guidebook that thrilled me so much: “You can not change the history but history can change you.” After trips to many historical places in the U.S., I think I’ve learned valuable lessons that do not exist in textbooks.” Dr. Minh Tri, from An Giang, is studying Public Health at San Diego State University.



Tran Ba Tien, a lecturer at Vinh University in Nghe An Province, is studying TESOL at San Francisco State University in California. In this photo, he visits the famous Golden Gate Bridge.



Nguyen Minh Chau visited Hannibal, Missouri—the hometown of author Mark Twain—during Labor Day Weekend in September. “Behind me is the famous Mississippi river,” she writes. Originally from Hanoi, Chau is studying Journalism at the University of Missouri at Columbia.



Nguyen Hoang Giang (center, in blue), writes, “This photo was taken during the pre-academic program in Mississippi, when we visited the Mississippi river. The pre-ac was fabulous. The most exciting was over thirty people from over 30 countries getting together in the States. Such a diverse meeting could only be in the United Nations. That helped me learn more about other cultures.” Giang, from Hanoi, is studying International Relations at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York.



Hanoian Nguyen Than Thuong, photographed here outside the University of Arkansas football stadium, spent 3 weeks at a pre-academic program at the university, and writes, “I am among very few Fulbrighters who had chance to put my feet on the hometown of Senator J. William Fulbright, the founder of the Program. I really enjoyed the time in Arkansas. That’s a wonderful Pre-Academic program.” Thuong is pursuing her Master’s in Public Administration at the University of Missouri at Columbia.

## Vietnamese Scholars Dive into Life in the U.S.



Top left: Dr. Nguyen Thi Vinh, pictured here in her lab at the University of Missouri, is studying agricultural genetics in soybean cultivation.

Bottom left: Dr. Dao Trong Hung participates in a group discussion with graduate students at an East-West Center seminar on Global Markets and Local Livelihoods in Asia, held at the University of Hawaii.



Top right: Dr. Tran Thi Hoa visits Curtis Orchard in Illinois to pick pumpkins with friends from the U.S. and Mexico. Dr. Hoa is studying biology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Bottom right: Dr. Nguyen An Ha brings his two sons to watch the homecoming parade at the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Ha is researching economics at the School of International and Area Studies.

## Vietnamese Students featured in local media

From the moment they arrive in the U.S., Vietnamese Fulbrighters start making their mark in their communities, as evidenced by the two students highlighted in the local media below.



From The Southern Illinoisan newspaper, August 19, 2007



Vien Cao, an international graduate student from Vietnam studying English, shows two fellow students the pecan pie she purchased from a vendor at the Carbondale Farmer's Market. Several groups of international exchange students toured the Farmer's Market and various shops in the Murdale Shopping Center as part of a welcome from Saluki Pride.

CHRISTOPHER PARR / FOR THE SOUTHERN

Mr. Duong Trong Hue, from Quang Tri in central Vietnam, is pursuing a Master's degree in Communications at the University of Northern Iowa. He was featured as a "Student of the month" in the September 2007 edition of the UNI International Student Organization newsletter. In his interview, Hue said some of the things he liked best about the U.S. included the traffic system, which has "clear instructions," "the little squirrels running in the small forest not far from my backyard," and commented that "The most exciting thing is that there are so many things and places to see in America that are still lying down the road for me. As for UNI, I like the people here, they are friendly, peace-loving, and helpful. I like the professors who are very friendly and enthusiastic. I like the peaceful environment and clean atmosphere of the University, and I like the library very much." During his first month in Cedar Falls, Hue has explored both shopping malls and the great outdoors, and is enjoying biking along the Cedar River.



## “Confidence, Directness, Honesty, Humility”

On the occasion of the Program’s 15th anniversary in Hue, Dr. Thao sat down with reporter Cam Van Hai of Tuoi Tre (Youth Newspaper) to discuss the program and its future. An English translation of the article is below.

“I believe besides our abilities, many things we do are under the effect of destiny, meaning fortune and misfortune. I would never believe it if someone says his abilities were the only factor in his success. However, I believe that quite a few people do not sit still and accept misfortune. These people do all they could to get themselves out of the situation and attain success.”

**VCH:** Upon return, quite a number of grantees have left either their jobs or fields. Does this refer to what you just said? They don’t accept their misfortunes and seek success?

TXT: I think changing jobs and work places reflects the mobility of individuals – an essential factor for the society to develop. I would be very disappointed if someone stays on at a job where his new ideas and contributions are not highly valued.

**VCH:** Every year the Program selects only 20 out of around a thousand applicants. Do you think they represent the “cream of the crop” in Vietnam?

TXT: I think there are many talented people in Vietnam. We believe our grantees are among that group. I hope that more and more talented people in Vietnam have the opportunities to use their talents. The Fulbright Program aims at selecting able individuals who can use their abilities and experience or who can manage their path in time of crises – a leader that leads either others or him out of crises, however big or small. We also want to see that the individual has a strategic plan for himself so that he will join others to make this world a better place for everyone.

**VCH:** Many able applicants find the score of 550 on the TOEFL a barrier. Don’t you see it as a barrier that bars these talented candidates from the Program?

TXT: The TOEFL score is a requirement that most universities in the U.S. require from international students, whether the person is a private student or on a scholarship. We ask that applicants get 550 on the test because we want to get them admitted to the prestigious colleges and universities. We put it up front so as to send out the message that we want the applicants to invest in themselves first, before they apply for our investment in them. We do not have a plan to allocate funds to in-country English language training programs since we want to devote the entire budget to the grants, so that more grantees can participate. However, if a college requires a score higher than 550, we do send the selected candidate to a pre-academic program in the U.S. for him to improve the score for admission. We will not send him to a less prestigious program. By the way, we would be very disappointed to hear someone say that the score of 550 is too high and he has no plan to prepare his language skills for the scholarship.

**VCH:** When you do the interviews with your fellow citizens, do you ever have or feel any pressures or difficulties for you and for your colleagues?

TXT: First of all, perhaps it’s not known to many people that neither I nor my colleagues are involved in the selection process. I don’t see any conflict between being a Vietnamese and a director of a foreign program. I actually can see the advantage. One time, someone gave me a very interesting question that for whose interest I would defend given the situation. My response was “I defend the truth!”

**VCH:** How should “Truth” in this situation be understood?

TXT: One example is, in my position, I will make sure all the policies of the Program are observed to ensure everyone, be it an American or a Vietnamese, can enjoy the open competition on the basis of merits and transparency. Back to your previous question, to tell you the truth, I have never found myself in the situation. One year after I started work at the Program, while screening the applications I found a letter of reference for an applicants from the Ambassador. I came to see the Counselor for Public Affairs and asked her how I was expected to handle the reference. I had no sooner finished my question than she posed the question back to me “I want to know how you would handle it.” I answered her without any hesitation “I want the selection committee to treat it in the same way with all other letters.” She gave me a very pleasant surprise “Dr. Thao, please go ahead with it!” That year the applicant was not selected because we had better applicants.

**VCH:** During the interviews, what makes you feel most pleased and what makes you feel displeased? What’s your expectation??

TXT: I never feel good when I see a candidate who lacks confidence and is not honest. I’m particularly interested and impressed to see a candidate who walks into the interview room full of confidence and participates in the interview with all honesty and in a humble manner.

**VCH:** Confidence and directness together with humble manner is obviously individual characteristics. Do you also think it should also be the basics for a system of education that seeks to develop further?

TXT: Absolutely. In general, there’s a relationship between individual characteristics and social values. It’s difficult for a system that does not highly value honesty and straightforwardness to require individuals to possess these values.

**VCH:** What kind of Impressions of Vietnam do U.S. scholars and students bring back to the U.S. after their stay in Vietnam?

TXT: Although we need to do a thorough research, I can say with total confidence that individual grantees from both countries do benefit from their work and stay in the U.S. and in Vietnam. These experiences help supplement the information we find in mass media of each country.

**VCH:** For many Vietnamese students and scholars, participation in the Fulbright Program is a dream. As the director of the Program, what’s your advice for their dream to come true?

TXT: Perhaps the only thing I can do is advise them to prepare themselves for the opportunities. For their preparation, first thing first is to develop a strategic plan for the next 5 years. As I mentioned earlier, their goals have to go hand in hand with the goals of society. Next, they have to develop a plan so that they can satisfy the requirements of the Fulbright Program. They must develop a preparation schedule so that the application is complete well before the deadline. One more thing I want to convey to all candidates: Since the competition is open to all on basis of merit, besides their preparation for eligibility, candidates have to make their application competitive. In other words, they have to answer the question: “Why should the Program pick him/her and not another? What makes him /her stand out from the other candidates?”

**VCH:** And you, what makes you stand out from the other directors?

TXT: A very interesting question! I don’t think I have ever posed the question to myself or found myself in front of the question. My interest and focus had always been on how the Program can fulfill its goal of being a bridge that connects the two countries and peoples by ways of academic exchanges. I’m particularly interested and inspired when I see talented candidates apply to the program and they show evidence that they will be among the bricks that reinforce and develop the bridge.

**VCH:** One last question: what is on your priority list now for the Program after 15 years of development?

TXT: I’m doing all I can to move the Program one step forward: that the Program will be brought up to a higher level of cooperation of the two countries.

### gặp gỡ & đối thoại

Phỏng vấn tiến sĩ Trần Xuân Thảo, giám đốc chương trình Fulbright tại VN, về nhân sinh của một nhà giáo dục muốn phát triển:

## “Tự tin, thẳng thắn, trung thực, khiêm tốn”



Ông Trần Xuân Thảo

TỪ NĂM 1948, CHƯƠNG TRÌNH FULBRIGHT, DO NGHỊ SĨ HOA KỲ J.W. FULBRIGHT KHỞI XƯƠNG, XÁC ĐỊNH VIỆC THAO ĐỐI GIÁO DỤC, GIAO LƯU VĂN HÓA GIỮA HOA KỲ VÀ THẾ GIỚI, VỚI HƠN 150 QUỐC GIA THAM DỰ TẠI VN, CHƯƠNG TRÌNH NÀY ĐƯỢC ĐIỀU HÀNH VÀ PHỐI HỢP THÔNG QUA PHÒNG VĂN HÓA THÔNG TIN THUỘC ĐẠI SỨ QUÁN HOA KỲ. MỞ RA NHỮNG CƠ HỘI HỌC TẬP, NGHIÊN CỨU TRÊN CÁC LĨNH VỰC KHOA HỌC XÃ HỘI & NHÂN VĂN. KỶ NIỆM 15 NĂM NGÀY THIẾT LẬP CHƯƠNG TRÌNH FULBRIGHT VN (1999-2007) ĐƯỢC TỔ CHỨC TẠI THÀNH PHỐ HUẾ. (TTXVN) CÓ QUỐC TRƯ CHUYỂN THÂN MẶT VỚI TIẾN SĨ TRẦN XUÂN THẢO (NGUYỄN) GIÁNG VIÊN ĐẠI HỌC SƯ PHẠM HUẾ, GIÁM ĐỐC CHƯƠNG TRÌNH FULBRIGHT TẠI VN.

#### VĂN CHÂM THẬT SỰ LÀ:

\* 15 năm qua, trong số 600 thành viên TĐ được gửi chương trình Fulbright, nhiều người sau khi học tập tại Mỹ trở về đã không chấp nhận những cơ hội.

chen những dịp việc, có năng lực và trong mọi tình huống đều có thể phát huy được tác dụng, hoặc trong những biến động của cuộc đời luôn sẵn sàng được hưởng đi là người khác đi - giúp những người khác học hỏi thêm nhiều qua được những kinh nghiệm của họ. (Chuyên

chính họ trình bày trước được chương trình đầu tư. Chúng tôi không gặp họ học tiếng Anh và muốn dành toàn bộ ngân sách cho học bổng để cho được nhiều người hơn đi học. Với những người có năng lực và điểm TOEFL trên 550, những người học về trường học thuộc loại khá khá điểm TOEFL cao hơn, ví dụ 580, thì chúng tôi có thể đưa vào các học bổng của một khóa học bổ sung tiếng Anh tại một trường đại học ở Hoa Kỳ, hoặc khi họ được nhận tuyển vào chính khóa để học đại học TOEFL, như trường yêu cầu chỉ không đi tìm một trường ở yêu cầu thấp hơn. Chúng tôi rất thất vọng với những ai làm là dân số TOEFL cao quá mà không muốn đến việc nó là học bổng cao nhất có tiếng Anh của mình cho đại diện.

\* Tôi phỏng vấn các ứng viên là những bậc anh, có thể không nào cho đáp về năm đầu tiên nhiều hơn là 100%

## Vietnamese Student Program Re-Entry Seminar 2007



From left to right: (standing) Nghiem Thi Xuan Le, Nguyen Quang Hiep, Nguyen Thi Hanh, Le Dinh Dung, Le Quang Binh, Do Tien Doan, Huynh Lan Phuong, Khuong Viet Thang, and Nguyen Thi Mai Linh (sitting) Le Huu Ly, Nguyen Thi Thu Thao, Tran Xuan Thao, and Nguyen Dang Quang.

12 recently-returned Vietnamese Student Program grantees gathered in Hoi An for a re-entry seminar during the weekend of October 26-28. Grantees were from the 2004, 2005 and 2006 cohorts, and represented a variety of fields of study, including International Relations, Economics and Economic Development, Law, Public Policy, Environmental Studies, Journalism, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. The grantees shared memories from their lives in the U.S., discussing cultural exchange, academic opportunities, travel, and culture shock. They also discussed their experience with returning to Vietnam and integrating their new skills and knowledge in their career. After the seminar, grantees spent time enjoying Cua Dai beach and Hoi An town, and several visited the nearby national heritage sight of My Son. The seminar was a wonderful opportunity to re-connect with old friends and share unique experiences from the Fulbright Vietnamese Student Program.



Join our Alumni website!

# STATE ALUMNI

<https://alumni.state.gov>

At our 15th anniversary event in Hue, many Fulbrighters expressed their desire for more opportunities to network with each other. We are happy to introduce a tool to assist in this goal: the State Alumni website! Registration is free and secure.

On the website, you'll find postings from Fulbright alumni worldwide about their activities, as well as job and grant opportunities.

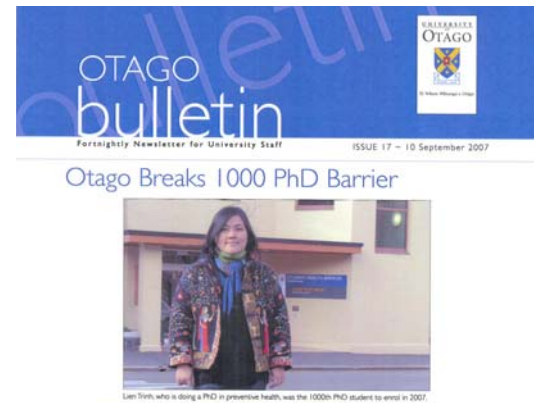
In the coming months, we will establish a separate "Vietnamese Community" on the website with a discussion forum and bulletin board to provide networking tools for our alumni. The website also includes [free](#) online access to thousands of journals and newspapers through ProQuest and Infotrac—wonderful resources for anyone doing research.

Don't miss out on this great opportunity to connect with your fellow Fulbrighters: sign up today!

## Alumni in the spotlight: Trinh Thi Lien, Vietnamese Student 2001-2003



At the Ph.D. 1000 Gala Ball in September 2007, University Vice-Chancellor Professor David Skegg presents Lien with the certificate for enrolling as the 1000th Ph.D. at the University of Otago.



Lien Trinh, who is doing a PhD in preventive health, was the 1000th PhD student to enroll in 2007.

For the first time in the 136-year history of the University, Otago has enrolled 1000 PhD students in an academic year. There are 6020 PhD students who have enrolled at the University so far this year.

To mark the 1000th enrollment in a year milestone, the University is throwing a formal ball at Larnach Castle on Friday night this week. The 1000th PhD student to sign up, Lien Trinh, will be presented with something special at the ball.

Ms Trinh says she is delighted to be the chosen PhD student. "I was very surprised, very honored to be associated with the remarkable achievement for the University. It was overwhelming news for me."

Ms Trinh is originally from Vietnam but she is now a permanent resident in New Zealand. After her first degree she worked as a Research Fellow at the University of Otago.

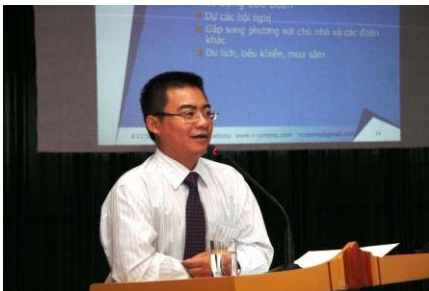
Director of Research Higher Degrees and Scholarships Dr Charles Taitte says research students make a major contribution to the University's research effort. "A PhD is a pure research degree. There are no courses included, but the thesis that results from the research is of a significant and original contribution to knowledge in the area of the study."

He says the research carried out for PhDs differs in nature across the disciplines, but the University benefits across the spectrum. "PhD students push the boundaries. They use the skill and knowledge of University staff and enhance the University's reputation. They are role models. They produce publications, help with teaching, tutoring and demonstrating and provide potential academic staff of the future. They bring huge benefits."

On the face of it, but some PhDs have a commitment to the

Ms. Trinh Thi Lien, originally from Hanoi, received the Fulbright scholarship in 2001 to study for a Master's in Communications at the University of Hawaii. Prior to her enrollment at the University of Hawaii, Lien worked as a Communications Manager and HIV/AIDS Project Manager with DKT International in Vietnam. In 2003, Lien was selected as one of the first U.N. Fulbright Fellows, and secured an internship with the U.N. in New York after her graduation. She then moved to Wellington, New Zealand to pursue an MBA at Victoria University and a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health at the University of Otago Wellington. Upon completion of this program, Lien decided to enroll in a Ph.D. program in preventative health at the University of Otago, where she received the university's Postgraduate Scholarship.. Lien writes, "At the moment I am working on a Sexual and Reproductive Health project with a focus on young Asians in New Zealand. I have become the 1000th Ph.D. student to be enrolled in 2007 at the University of Otago; the first time that the University broke the record of Ph.D. student enrollments. Otago University is New-Zealand's top-ranked university for research. "

## Where are they now? Vu Tu Thanh, Vietnamese Student 2003-2005



**Mr. Vu Tu Thanh** is a lecturer and researcher at Hanoi's Institute of International Relations. He received the Fulbright scholarship in 2003 to study for an M.A. in international relations at the Maxwell School, Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York.

### What I remember most about my FB experience in the U.S.

Congress's accessibility. During my 2004 summer internship in Washington, D.C., I had to go to various Congressional office buildings to take notes at hearings or deliver and pick up correspondence for the organization I was working at, the US-Asia Institute, which is located in the Capitol Hill area. I was struck by how easily accessible these buildings were to everyone. I just had to go through a normal screening gate, no questions asked, except a greeting from the security people. There were hundreds, if not thousands, of people inside the complex, many of whom tourists. This was quite different from Hanoi where all government office buildings, including those that house the National Assembly, are heavily gated and securely guarded with big signage that reads "authorized persons only", which means not the general public. And that was 2004, barely 3 years after 9/11 when "code orange" was still from time to time announced. I also recalled a shooting spree incident a few years earlier in the Capitol in which a couple of security guards were slain. Does that mean lax security? When I saw dozens of people in orange outfit with the words "Falun Gong" on their back walking freely up and down the long corridor of the Russell building, I came to understand what lobby truly meant, first linguistically, then the original idea of people's representatives.

### How my FB experience has contributed to my professional and personal development

Significantly, life-altering. What I learned from graduate school helps me do better research and be more critical of the work we had done in the past. The methodology, style and techniques that I apply to my lectures as a result of what I learned from my professors in Syracuse have been well received among my students. Even more importantly, the topics of study and discussion I select for them, which are quite a break from tradition, *inspire* them. I find immense energy and enthusiasm in those young people when they learn and discuss volunteerism, civil society, social entrepreneurship, abortion etc. And these are the people who many adults think are lazy, incapable and selfish. As for my personal development, I was exposed to smart people from all over the world in the U.S. and so many of them were doing things larger than themselves, larger than life that I have now come to realize more clearly than ever the true meaning of life and the determination to make a dent in this world.



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“The Fulbright Program aims to bring a little more knowledge, a little more reason and a little more compassion into world affairs and thereby to increase the chance that nations will learn at last to live in peace and friendship.”  
—Senator J. William Fulbright

## 15th Anniversary Celebration in Hue



*In August, the Fulbright Program traveled to Hue to celebrate 15 years in Vietnam...story inside!*