

Chapter Seminar Notes

The Chapter Seminar Session was held on Sunday, November 2, 2003. Participants were invited to visit five tables hosted by facilitators to discuss various chapter issues and themes. Topics and summaries of the discussions follow.

Chapters and Board Development Table, R. Fenton May

- Stress to all perspective and current members that Chapter Boards are working Boards and that each member is expected to give of his/her time, talent and/or treasure
- Develop diversity targets for Board membership to include representatives of all traditional diversity groups (ethnic background, gender), plus age (need young directors), a balance of academic and non-academic Fulbrighters, and Fulbright teacher exchange alumni/ae
- Use teleconferencing and videoconferencing to maximize participation in Board and Committee meetings of geographically spread chapters
- National office could develop a clause for standard Chapter by-laws to permit removal or leave-of-absence for non-participating Chapter directors *for example: Directors are expected to attend at least 80% of Board meetings. In the event that a director misses more than two Board meetings in a year, the situation shall be reviewed by the Chapter President and Officers of the Chapter. Where these officers deem that the excess absences were unexcused, they may, upon 30 days notice to the absent director, bring the matter to the Board to consider asking that Director to resign or take a leave of absence.*
- Develop a public relations capability on the Board to work on recognition of returning Fulbrighters to media and academic institutions, plus the necessary networks and contacts to ensure that this recognition happens
- Attract a Director who has good political contacts and can coach the Chapter Board to support the Fulbright Associations advocacy activities

Advocacy Table, Jane L. Anderson

- Link advocacy to international benefits for the state or district
- Establish Rapid Response Teams
- Conduct regional advocacy workshops
- Handbook with examples from successful chapters
- Co-sponsor with University or other organization
- When visiting member of congress, make strategic requests, deliver an audience, encourage talk on “hot button” issues
- Fulbright Association internships for recent US alumni on Capitol Hill
- National letter from Fulbright university presidents
- Show importance of the work
- Have university president bring together all new Fulbrighters and new alumni

Grants Table, David Levin

- Clear interest in the grants
- Value to thinking about all three functions – enrichment, mentoring, and outreach
- Diversity/Context
- Process/timing
- Contact the national office and/or DOS in advance for guidance and advice

How to Start a Chapter Table, Lisa Chapin

- Mechanics of starting a chapter
- Roles and Responsibilities of Chapters and the national office
- Importance of outreach not only in chapters but also for individuals (IETF)
- Everyone should sign up for both mentoring programs, national and chapter
- For international alumni – see other organizations for possible models (Humphrey Program)

Chapters and Public Relations Table, Linda H. Scanlan

- Fulbrighters are a tremendous pool of expertise on issues and international experience that can help the media "localize" a major national or international story.
- Try to locate a professional journalist or journalism/communications professor or teacher in your chapter area to be you media relations/publicity chairman.
- Seek connections in your community with individuals and groups with international interests to make the story more relevant to a broader audience.
- Work with university public information offices on such things as speakers bureau lists for international organizations and stories about out-going/in-coming/returning scholars and students.
- Some concern was expressed that advocacy/external relations efforts would take away from the perceived function of chapters to provide hospitality to visiting grantees. This was responded to by a reminder of the FA mission to advocate for continued and increased support for Fulbrights and to educate prospective applicants and the public about the Fulbright program.

Programs and Membership, Beverly Hawk

- Useful venues for programs are art museums, libraries, nature reserves, state capitols, and public museums. These institutions rarely ask a rental charge. Tours of newspapers and television stations also make great chapter activities. International visitors enjoy touring these sites and learning about the cultural history of their host states.
- Chapter representatives advised one another to co-sponsor activities with local organizations. Co-sponsorship of one or two activities per year saves energy, circulates information about the chapter to a wider audience, and contributes to the recruitment of new members.
- Participants also discussed the need for a fair recognition of those who are active in the chapter, acknowledging the person whose energies implement the idea as enthusiastically as the person who suggested the idea.
- Chapters are able to consider advocacy for the Fulbright Program in the design of their activities. International visitors may like to meet their U.S. Representatives or Senators and have a photo made with them, elected officials may like to give an international talk at a chapter event, and journalists may like to write a story about the explanation of their craft to international guests. Advocacy is an educational process that makes it possible for an elected representative to see the impact of the Fulbright Program in the local community.
- Local business leaders, academic administrators, and elected officials who understand the benefits of the Fulbright Program are likely to take an interest in the Fulbright Program, support attendance at the annual meeting of the Fulbright Association, and work for an increase the dollars that flow to the local region.
- Participants in the discussion left with practical ideas for Chapter activities that will bring Fulbright Alumni together, welcome international visitors, and expand the understanding of the Fulbright Program.

Web Site, Marshall Ellis

- A suggestion was made to create a single page in the Fulbright Association's online community that lists contact information of all current visiting Fulbrighters.
 - This would make it easier for visiting Fulbrighters to find each other.
- Include more events sponsored by Fulbright alumni organizations around the world in the Fulbright Association's online calendar at <http://www.fulbrightevents.org>.
- A suggestion was made to advertise the international alumni representatives listserv to the broader Fulbright community.
- A suggestion was made that the Fulbright Association compile a list of all the Fulbright-related listservs in existence and put the information on its web site with information on how to join.
- It was noted that a listserv for webmasters of all Fulbright alumni organizations could be helpful in promoting international cooperation and coordination in the realm of web sites and online offerings.
- All U.S. Fulbright Association chapter events should be posted in the online calendar.

- There was also a discussion of Chapter Web Pages, with the following topics arising:
 - In order to maximize effectiveness of chapter web site and minimize time spent on developing content, all text on web site should be written in a “time-generic” manner to keep content from going out of date too quickly.
 - Chapters can secure individual URL’s or domain names which can be directed to the chapter’s web page on the Fulbright Association’s servers. Doing so can make it easier for people to remember the chapter’s web site address.
 - Ex: Connecticut Chapter uses <http://www.fulbrightct.org> to direct users to their web site.
 - Currently, if a chapter wants to place a picture on its chapter web page, the image has to already be online somewhere else. This is not an ideal situation, as chapters either have to pay for web storage space, use pre-existing personal web space, or sign-up for free web space and upload pictures before including the image on the chapter’s web page. The Fulbright Association should work on ways to make the process easier.
 - In the meantime, chapters can send their pictures to Marshall Ellis (marshall.ellis@fulbright.org) and he will put them on the national office’s web space so that the images can be included on the chapter’s page.