

FULBRIGHT
STUDENT
CONFERENCE
PAPERS

Hungarian - American Commission for Educational Exchange, Budapest 2004

The Mutual Educational Exchange Program or the **Fulbright Program**, named in honor of Senator J. William Fulbright, was established by the U.S. Congress on August 1, 1946. It is now administered under the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended by Public Law 87256. This Act provides the legislative authority for the Program. The main objective of this Act is “to enable the government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries ... and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations, between the United States and other countries of the world.”

The program operates in more than 140 countries. Binational commissions were established by executive agreements in 51 countries. The J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (BFS) in Washington, DC, comprises 12 educational and public leaders appointed by the President of the United States. It has statutory responsibility for the selection of all academic exchange grantees, the establishment of policies and procedures, and the supervision of the Fulbright Program worldwide. Motivated by the need to change the U.S.’s traditional isolationist policy, the Fulbright Program developed into an indispensable resource for scholars and institutions all over the world. Today, international expertise is even more vital than ever as the realities of the postCold war era become far more complex and the emerging international system increases political and economic linkages throughout the world.

Since its inception, the Fulbright Program has welcomed more than 260,000 researchers, lecturers and students from the United States and the rest of the world. Many have assumed leadership roles, including Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners, heads of state and prime ministers, artists and ambassadors, governors and senators, professors and physicians, supreme court justices and CEOs. These Fulbrighters, past and present, have enabled the Fulbright Program to become the world’s largest and most prestigious scholarly exchange program.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, the Fulbright **U.S. Student Program** offers opportunities for recent graduates, postgraduate candidates, and developing professionals and artists to conduct career-launching study and research abroad. Since the establishment of the Program, 42,000 students from the United States and 147,000 students from other countries have benefited from the Fulbright experience. The U.S. Student Program awards approximately 1,000 grants annually and currently operates in over 140 countries worldwide.

The **Fulbright Commission in Hungary** was established in January 1992, after a binational agreement was signed between the governments of Hungary and the United States in December 1990. The Hungarian government has acknowledged the importance of the Fulbright Program and also helps financially. The **Ministry of Education** provides the office space for the Commission and significantly contributes toward the program costs.

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2002/2003
and
2003/2004**

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Edited by:
Ildikó Huszár

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Dr. Huba Brückner
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hungarian - American Commission for Educational Exchange

1146 Budapest, Ajtósi Dürer sor 19-21. HUNGARY

Tel.: (36-1) 462-8040, Fax: (36-1) 252-0266

E-mail: info@fulbright.ph.hu

Website address: www.fulbright.hu

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Foreword

U.S. students compose a vital part of the Fulbright Educational Exchange Program between the United States of America and the Republic of Hungary. Members of the student group are typically for one year in Hungary. Like the Program in general, its student component covers a very wide variety of subject fields and types of activities. There are many who take part in different university programs, others concentrate on their individual research project.

According to the tradition of the Fulbright Program in Hungary each year close to the end of the grant period students are invited to present a paper on their professional activities in their host country e.g. in Hungary.

The **Student Conference** gives an opportunity to grantees to summarize the results of their grant period presented to the audience of the conference. This audience is composed of the fellow US grantees (including scholars, distinguished chairs, teachers, fellow students) as well as members of the Board of Directors, of the Alumni Association, the mentors and other invited guests, (in many cases among them visiting family members) too.

As the director of the program, I'm always impressed by the professional progress of our U.S. students, by the wide variety of subject fields covered, by the students' deep interest toward and knowledge of their topic. The event gives the student grantees an opportunity to speak about their projects in a real conference setting, which is a chance to gain experience in presenting the results of their work in a professional environment.

The papers of the student conference in AY 2002/2003 and AY 2003/2004 can be found in this volume. (The papers are arranged in a certain thematic order, which does not necessarily follows the original program of the conference). I do hope that the readers will like and value them as much as I do and will join me to help as many young U.S. student grantees as we can to be productive and proud bridge builders among the nations.

We need them!

June 15, 2004

Dr. Huba Brückner
executive director

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