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Grant Helps Broaden Perspectives

Alexis Lien '05
Linfield College

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Grant helps broaden perspectives

Fulbright winner Alexis Lien '05 is spending the 2005-2006 academic year teaching, studying and conducting research in Austria.

Schöne Grüsse aus Wien! Greetings from Vienna, Austria – the land of Mozart, Freud, Wienerschnitzel and *The Sound of Music!* The weather outside has dropped below freezing (yet again), and I have retreated to one of the countless coffee houses to warm myself with a signature Viennese latte, the Wiener Mélange. This activity has proven to be a favorite pastime of mine since arriving in Austria.

Although there is some truth to the long-held stereotypes about Austria, there is definitely more to this small country, situated in the heart of Europe, than coffee and classical music. Vienna is not only a metropolis that maintains a small-town feel, but also a diverse cultural capital with an amazing emphasis on music and art.

My grant consists of three parts: 1) teaching English part-time in an Austrian high school, 2) studying at the University of Vienna and 3) pursuing an independent research project. Through small-scale diplomatic efforts, I have been able to see the impact of establishing personal relationships in broadening people's perspectives about other nations and cultures.

I have enjoyed the teaching aspect of my grant immensely. Through teaching my students about America, I have come to more critically understand, and also appreciate, my own country. In a lesson covering the recent citywide election in Vienna, I was forced to examine and explain fundamental theoretical aspects of the American political system, and offer this as a

contrast to the Austrian system. In turn, my students began to more critically examine the system to which they are accustomed.

Between attending and teaching classes, I am also conducting an independent research project on the political representation of Turkish immigrant women in Vienna. In addition to utilizing the enormous collection at the Austrian National Library, I have been discussing my research with Sieglinde Rosenberger, a political science professor at the University of Vienna who has agreed to serve as my mentor for this project. I am also building contacts with women's groups in Vienna that will be invaluable to my research.

My experiences at Linfield were essential in preparing me for this experience. First, the emphasis

Linfield places on studying abroad helped me to be confident about spending an entire year abroad.

During my four years at Linfield, I spent a semester in Vienna, a semester in Washington, D.C., and a January Term in Russia. All of these experiences helped spark my interest in exploring new cultures and spurred me on to apply for post-graduate opportunities abroad. Also, the research opportunities I had with Dawn Nowacki, Linfield associate professor of political science, prepared me to undertake a large-scale independent research project.

I am thankful for everyone at Linfield who assisted me with the Fulbright application process. All of the support and encouragement I received from the Linfield community was invaluable, and very much appreciated!



Alexis Lien '05, shown here at Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, is spending the academic year in Austria. In addition to teaching at a high school and studying at the University of Vienna, Lien is researching the political and social position of Turkish immigrant women. She honed her focus while studying in Vienna as a sophomore through Linfield's study abroad program.