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Albert L. Harris

Appalachian State University, harrisal@appstate.edu

J.P. Allen

University of San Francisco

Mary Granger

The George Washington University

Kate Kaiser

Marquette University

Sidne Ward

University of Missouri—Kansas City

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Communications of the Association for Information Systems

CAIS 

Be a Fulbright Scholar—Lessons and Experiences of AIS Fulbright Scholars

Albert L. Harris
Appalachian State University
harrisal@Appstate.Edu

J.P. Allen
University of San Francisco

Mary Granger
The George Washington University

Kate Kaiser
Marquette University

Sidne Ward
University of Missouri—Kansas City

Abstract:

To achieve a truly global perspective in information systems (IS) that enhances education and research, IS academics can do more than study and teach global IS topics. We encourage IS academics to engage in an international immersion experience themselves. The article describes experiences of Fulbright Scholars, and argues for the need of more global education for IS academics. These views were presented during a panel session at the Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS) 2012. The panelists touched on logistical issues such as grant application, living conditions, working with a host institution's faculty and students, and receiving support from their home university. Participants shared their experiences in India, Poland, Portugal, the Azores, Mongolia, and Nepal. The article concludes with lessons learned.

Keywords: Fulbright Scholars; IS education; education; globalization; IS curriculum

Editor's Note: The article is based on a panel presentation at the Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS), held in Seattle Washington, August 2012.

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I. INTRODUCTION

It is generally agreed that higher education needs a global perspective, especially in the business disciplines [Clinebell and Kvedaraviciene, 2011]. The business environment has expanded to a point that many companies compete on a global level. Faculty need to be globally aware, especially in terms of information systems/information technology (IS/IT). The labor market for IS/IT employees has become globalized, with workers shifting readily to countries with higher salaries. Viewers are able to access many websites in various languages, and inept translations may have a significant negative impact on their effectiveness. The technologies are the same the world over, but the conditions and the manner in which we use them may differ. Supply chains connect companies across countries and continents. Offshore outsourcing is commonplace in most large companies. It is vitally important that all business students [AACSB, 2011], and especially IS/IT students, understand the global environment in which they will work, including both the similarities and differences between countries, cultures, languages, and work practices. Indeed, our accrediting agencies often prescribe related student outcomes such as the “ability to analyze the ... global impact of computing on individuals, organizations, and society” [ABET, 2011, p. 3]. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) describes globalization and information systems as areas of learning to include for curricula to “be considered current and relevant” [AACSB, 2012, p. 70].

One way for business faculty to help prepare students for the global business environment is to take part in a global experience. Supporting international experiences for faculty can be an important strategy in a business school’s globalization efforts [AACSB, 2011]. The Fulbright Scholar program is one outstanding way to reach out to other cultures and gain experience that will last a lifetime. Fulbright Scholars experience the culture, language, and, many times, the work practices of the country visited. There are a variety of programs for teaching, research, and administration that vary from six weeks to many months.

The Fulbright Scholar program is the U.S. government’s premier international educational exchange program. As a U.S. business school faculty member, there is no better avenue to gaining significant international experience. Today’s global environment expects faculty to bring a variety of perspectives into the classroom, and to apply a diversity of viewpoints to research questions.

Many U.S.-based business school faculty attend international conferences or teach short courses abroad. Many others travel overseas for pleasure. A few faculty may have prior industry experience traveling or living abroad or perhaps they studied abroad. Unfortunately, a small number of business school faculty have never owned a passport. Any international experience can be enlightening, informing and transforming opinions and broadening horizons. Nevertheless, the Fulbright program is a unique opportunity that may be underused by business school faculty. In 2003, business scholars comprised only 5 percent of all U.S. Fulbright Scholars [Borgia, Hobbs and Weeks, 2007]. Business faculty appear relatively underrepresented in the core Fulbright program.

The Fulbright program provides funding and an infrastructure to introduce scholars to another country in both a work and living setting. As participants experience culture through the lens of a university setting, the lessons have a greater potential impact than if they were tourists or working in a different capacity. As faculty, we know what universities in our home countries look like, how they work, and what activities take place at them. Experiencing universities abroad allows us to examine our own institutions and question assumptions as well as learn about higher education in other cultures.

Fulbright Scholar experiences can be challenging. This article summarizes the views of the panelists on the experiences and lessons learned from being a Fulbright Scholar. It is aimed at faculty who want to gain a better understanding of the Fulbright Scholar experience. The purposes of this article, therefore, are to present information regarding Fulbright Scholars and to encourage AIS members to apply for Fulbright Scholar openings. This article is based on a panel discussion at the 2012 Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS) held in Seattle, Washington. The article’s organization follows: first, we present the experiences of five Fulbright Scholars. We then discuss the lessons learned from being a Fulbright Scholar. The conclusion incorporates comments and suggestions that emerged in the discussions between panelists and the audience, and closes with a brief synthesis of our views on this topic.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE PANEL

The panel, organized and moderated by Al Harris in 2012, consisted of former Fulbright Scholars. The five panelists (in order of their presentations) — J.P. Allen, Mary Granger, Sidne Ward, Al Harris, and Kate Kaiser — had a variety of Fulbright experiences in a variety of countries, including India, Poland, Portugal, the Azores, Mongolia, and Nepal.

Some of the areas that the panel addressed included:

- Why apply to be a Fulbright Scholar?
- What is the application process and timetable?
- What are the living conditions?
- How is it working with a “host” institution’s faculty and students?
- What exists as far as home university support?
- What was brought back from the experience?

Not every panel member covered every topic in the previous list. Presentations included many pictures about the Fulbright Scholar experiences.

III. FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR EXPERIENCES

J.P. Allen—University of San Francisco—Fulbright Scholar to the Azores Islands

My Fulbright experience was a shorter, three-month exchange from April to June 2010 in the Azores Islands. The Azores are an autonomous region of Portugal, located in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. I was based in the School of Economics and Business, at the University of the Azores. The University of the Azores was founded in 1975 and is the only university on the islands.

My Fulbright exchange focused on teaching and curriculum design in their graduate programs. I designed and taught a new course in Technology and Innovation Management, with an emphasis on Information Technology and digitally mediated business. The MBA students were mostly working professionals, predominantly in the public sector.

Despite being located within the European Union, the EU officially considers the Azores Islands an “Outermost Region” and, in relative terms, underdeveloped economically. Until a generation ago, the Azores had an impoverished agricultural economy, and much of the population left for better economic opportunities overseas. The islands’ population is around 250,000 today, but as many as 150,000 Azoreans immigrated to the United States between 1961 and 1977 [Santos, 1995]. Even today, fish, dairy, and other agricultural products are main exports. So it is not surprising that Azorean officials and educators are hoping to use innovation and technology to find higher value-added activities in scientific research, eco-tourism, offshore services, and more complex food products.

Living conditions in the Azores were good, as you would expect from an area located in the EU. We lived in an apartment in the main city, within walking distance of the university. A rental apartment was not easy to find, because few short-term rentals are available on the islands for stays longer than a vacation. Finding and renting an apartment was difficult to arrange from a distance, and the host institution provided little assistance. We finally found a place to live through a friend whose family lived in the Azores.

The interaction with students was fairly good, both inside and occasionally outside the classroom, but interaction with faculty and staff was minimal. When I arrived in the Azores, perhaps because of the long build-up period and the prestige of the Fulbright program, I had some unrealistic expectations about the level of “VIP treatment” I would receive. Fulbright or not, I was visiting a university, and the faculty and staff had their own lives and projects that were more important than throwing me a cocktail party! The culture at the university was not one where people were on campus very often. Once I recovered from the shock of not being the center of the universe, I organized site visits and other activities with the students. I was reminded of the importance of being flexible, and of taking matters into my own hands rather than waiting for my hosts to provide me with every opportunity.

My home university encouraged my application, but did not give me any particular incentive or support for doing so. The Fulbright application featured prominently in my sabbatical application that year. Once Fulbright announced my successful application, my university celebrated it in press releases as part of our “national ranking” for Fulbright Scholars in 2009–2010. There has not been any follow-up at my university since.

The main take-away of the Fulbright experience for me was a renewed focus on technology and innovation as a provider of economic and social development. Going on a Fulbright soon after receiving tenure was the right timing for me. I needed a re-boot, a new perspective on where my research and teaching work needed to go. The world of technology entrepreneurship can obsess over the latest gadget or mobile app, so it was important for me to be outside of that world for long enough to see things differently. The Azores reminded me that people need economic opportunities to lead fulfilling lives, and to have their culture thrive. It was good to focus on the big picture again—how technology innovation can help make a better world.

My main piece of advice for Fulbright applicants is to plan ahead of time. The application deadline for the regular Fulbright program is usually the beginning of August for the subsequent academic year. I was applying in August 2008 for an opportunity in Spring of 2010, which meant searching for opportunities and lining up invitation and recommendation letters months before that. The application itself is not particularly difficult: it includes a CV, five-page project statement, three recommendation letters, a letter of invitation (if required), and either a research bibliography or course syllabus. I had very little understanding of the process when I started—having a mentor or colleague who had been through the process before would have been helpful.

Mary Granger—George Washington University—Fulbright Scholar to Poland and Mongolia

I received a Fulbright Scholar grant to teach in Warsaw, Poland, at the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH) and a Fulbright Specialist grant to assist in establishing an Information Systems Curriculum in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, at the Institute of Finance and Economics (IFE). I applied for the Polish position because I wanted to experience Eastern Europe before it became part of the European Union and Westernized. There was little support from my home university; in fact, I was asked “Why do you want to do that?”

In Warsaw, I taught two courses—Management Information Systems and e-Commerce—at the undergraduate level. This was a semester-long grant, from September to January (their semester ended in January after a long holiday interval). The courses were taught in English; the students were fluent in both speaking and writing English. The course syllabi echoed those in the United States, with many active learning techniques and requirements. This was a new experience for the students, however. They were accustomed to the German method of not attending class, not having homework assigned, and reading the book at the end of the semester before taking the exam. The students did not buy the required textbooks, as they were too expensive. We all needed to be flexible.

There were about twenty other Fulbright-sponsored Americans in Poland that fall. Some were teaching, some were researching. The Polish Fulbright center organized a week-long orientation that included Polish language lessons, Polish history seminars, and some sightseeing in Poznan, in Western Poland.

My grant did not involve any research: the focus was teaching. The grant paid for airfare, a monthly stipend, and a housing allowance. I found a very nice apartment, a short bus-ride away from the university, through a friend of a friend. The Fulbright office in Warsaw did not assist in finding housing. In fact, I had very little interaction with the faculty at SGH: many did not speak any English including my designated mentor. I was on my own with regards to any classroom questions or requirements; the staff also had limited English. As mentioned, my students were fluent and volunteered to help with both everyday living and school activities. Since we lived just outside of the center of the city, the local population did not speak much English, either; however, they recognized us and we were able to communicate fairly well. While a lack of communication can be frustrating, it was not a critical issue. Warsaw was very easy to get around, with good bus, tram, and subway systems.

I found it very convenient to travel to other parts of Poland and Eastern Europe. I presented a paper at a conference in Gdansk and was invited as a guest speaker at the Krakow School of Economics and the International Education Week 2003 U.S. Consulate General. Both of these opportunities were possible because I was living in Warsaw. The United States Embassy sponsored a monthly speaker series.

I went to Ulaanbaatar as a Fulbright Specialist. The Institute of Finance and Economics applied to the Fulbright International Exchange Program with a proposal for a curriculum development professional; both the school and Fulbright funded the endeavor and forwarded the proposal to qualified Fulbright Specialists. The university provided a per-diem for living expense while Fulbright paid for travel and an additional per-diem. The school provided an apartment across the street from the office; it was adequate for six weeks and very convenient. I worked with the faculty in the computer information systems area in the Institute of Economics and Finance, which is the equivalent of a business school. The faculty had degrees in Computer Science and wanted to develop courses, syllabi, and examples suitable for a business environment. The outcome of the grant was a set of courses, syllabi for the courses, textbook recommendations, in-class exercises, and homework assignments and solutions. The main focus was “business examples” versus “computer science examples.” Previously, there were computer science programs but no information systems programs in Mongolia.

Although only two of the six faculty members spoke much English, I worked closely with the faculty and did not interact with students. Most of the students at the university did not speak English; they were taking first level courses in English. I worked on the IS curriculum from eight a.m. until five p.m. each weekday. On the weekends, faculty members, even the Rector (President), spent time showing off different aspects of Mongolia. We were treated like honored guests.

Several times during the six weeks, electricity was scheduled to cut-off. Although it did not directly affect me, I wondered how they taught computer classes without electricity. Similar to Poland, heating of buildings is centrally regulated. In Poland, there was an algorithm for providing heat after a certain number of days were below a designated temperature. In Mongolia, heat was turned off in office buildings, including school buildings, on May 1st. Eight inches of snow fell on May 8th. When the heat was turned off in residences on May 15th, it also affected the regulation of the hot/cold water; half the city only had very hot water while the other half only had cold. I was on the cold side, with occasional warm water.

One does not need to have a previous Fulbright grant in order to register for the Fulbright Specialist program. It is an ideal program for short-term experiences and for those unable to spend a semester or a year abroad. "The Fulbright Specialist Program differs from the core Fulbright Scholar competition in that the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) builds a Roster of Specialists in a variety of disciplines through an open application process. Roster applicants recommended by specialist and peer review committees and approved by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board become Roster candidates for Fulbright Specialist projects" (http://www.cies.org/specialists/Joining_The_Roster/). Unlike the other programs, the Specialist Program has a rolling deadline. After five years, application to be on the roster must be submitted again.

The Fulbright experiences were major highlights of my academic career. I learned that I could meet unknown and unexpected hurdles in both the classroom and everyday living. I am able to enrich my classroom at my home university with the knowledge gained internationally, and I am able to relate to and understand the international students in the United States. My best advice to anyone with a Fulbright: be flexible, flexible in everyday living and flexible in the academic side.

After I returned from Poland, the Fulbright Commission asked me to be on the review committee for applications for Fulbright grants for Eastern Europe. It was a terrific way to, in a very small way, give back to Fulbright for the opportunity it provided for me. It was also another learning experience. The commitment for reviewing is for three cycles, which is three years. We reviewed over 100 applications each year. The applications were mainly evaluated on the contribution the candidates were making to the countries they were visiting, the impact of the grant on the home university, and the impact of the grant on the individual. Applications covered both teaching and research endeavors. Fluency in the host country's language was not mandatory, except for archival research proposals. The evaluation committee looked for realistic contributions, not necessarily something ground-breaking, but something that they could accomplish within the designated time period.

Sidne Ward—University of Missouri, Kansas City—Fulbright Scholar to Nepal

My Fulbright grant was a combined Teaching/Research award to spend seven months at the Kathmandu University School of Management (KUSOM) in Nepal. Over the course of two terms I taught three sections of the core MIS course required of all MBA students in the program.

My home institution provided little support for the Fulbright application process. There is an office on campus charged with shepherding student Fulbright applicants through the process, but no similar support for faculty. In fact, among my business school colleagues, there was an attempt to deny me the opportunity. A faculty committee that reviews all applications for sabbaticals recommended against giving me leave for the Fulbright experience. As only the recommendation, not the justification, is communicated to the applicant, I can only speculate as to the reason. I met all requirements related to sabbatical eligibility. I believe that committee members likely had a fundamental misunderstanding of the Fulbright program. Despite the committee's recommendation, the Dean and Provost made the final decision and I am glad they supported my leave. My relationship with my colleagues was damaged by these events. Nevertheless, as time has passed the experience troubles me less.

Fulbright Scholars may be invited to a pre-departure orientation during the summer months prior to the start of their award. At this orientation, my fellow Fulbrighters and I learned about various logistical issues related to living conditions, healthcare, and the university environment in our host country. I had been thrilled to receive the award, but my excitement turned to trepidation when I learned that Kathmandu was often without electricity for up to twelve hours per day in the winter. I based all of the research I had done before applying on data from a few years earlier when there were occasional outages of a few hours per week. I thought going without electricity occasionally would be difficult, but doable. But twelve hours per day without power? Unthinkable! Everyone else seemed to take the

news in stride, so I did not voice my concerns. I did worry about the situation over the next few months, however, before I left for Nepal. Once in Nepal, I learned that other scholars were also concerned, but kept quiet for reasons similar to my own.

While the severe power shortage Nepal has experienced for the last few years is a tremendous burden to the country, its people, and its economy, the shortages provided a valuable lesson for me. I developed a self-confidence that I could manage in a variety of situations beyond any level of confidence I had previously exhibited. It was not nearly as difficult to manage as I imagined. They generally scheduled the outages, so I planned my activities such as cooking or charging my laptop battery around them. When they issued a new schedule, it was typically available in Nepali before being translated into English, and so I was motivated very early on to learn the numbers in Nepali!

I learned that I would rather have Internet access than electricity. Many evenings I used candles on my desk next to my laptop to conserve battery power for the router that kept me connected to family and friends on the other side of the world. The Internet speeds were slow, but fairly reliable. Internet availability and speeds have increased significantly in the past three years.

Other challenges to living in Nepal include water shortages. I almost always had water when I turned on the tap in the apartment, but I did learn to conserve water during the end of the dry season. Other colleagues were not as lucky. Many Nepali households have water delivered in large trucks; the waiting list for this delivery may be weeks long. I have since learned to be a little more careful with water usage even at home.

Nepal has a Fulbright Commission; not all countries have an office devoted to the Fulbright program. This proved of tremendous assistance in settling in and learning my way around. The Commission rented and furnished an apartment for me. It was a nice, sunny one-bedroom apartment with a kitchen, dining room, and living room. I learned over time where to purchase various furnishings such as additional sheets and towels.

There are public buses in Kathmandu and I often rode one to campus. Nevertheless, running errands, shopping, and traveling off the main bus routes can be challenging. The Commission does not allow Fulbright Scholars to drive in Nepal. But they do have a car and driver available for hire. I took advantage of this for a very modest price for four days per week and enjoyed the resulting freedom. I also hired a cook suggested by the commission to come in three times per week to make breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Employing staff is an unusual situation for Americans and I was no exception. Although I was uncomfortable at the beginning, I later became friendly with the staff, all of whom had worked for previous Fulbright Scholars, and enjoyed visiting with them.

Beginning work at a new university is always a little daunting. Doing so in another country is even more so. At the beginning I had little interaction with other faculty or administrators at my host institution, KUSOM. I did, of course, enjoy getting to know my students in the classroom. Many of them were quite pleased to meet a professor from the United States and I was very happy to get to know them. One of my strongest impressions of Nepal was the way that students in the MBA program really seemed to appreciate my efforts as a professor as well as the opportunity to study in the program at all. There is a respect for educators and learning in Nepal that I feel, at times, is lacking in many students in the United States. When the students at my home institution heard I would be taking a leave during the Fulbright, they clearly took it for granted that an adequate replacement would be available the next semester and studies would not be negatively impacted. In contrast, when the students in Nepal heard I was leaving, they immediately begged me to come back. They did not appear convinced a suitable replacement would teach the next batch of MBA students.

Each of the three sections I taught had thirty-five to forty students. The methods of instruction, including lectures, discussions, and group presentations, would appear familiar to faculty from the United States. There is, in general, a greater emphasis on final exams as a major component of the course grade. They provided a list of required topics I needed to cover. Within these constraints, however, I was able to select suitable textbooks, prepare lectures, and design assignments as I wished. Very few students purchased textbooks for the course. The school library had copies of the textbook on reserve and students generally shared them. Due to the number of students in the class and the relative lack of access to the textbook, most students spent the majority of their efforts on the lecture notes rather than the textbook.

In general, I was able to meet the challenges of teaching in a different environment well. Higher education in Nepal is conducted in English. Most of the students had studied English for many years through primary and secondary school as well as their bachelor's programs. I have taught non-native English speakers in the past, so this was not particularly challenging. The school provided an online content management system (Moodle) to distribute course materials, grades, and assignments. Nevertheless, it was common for students not to have access at home. At times I found it difficult to add materials to the site from off-campus due to infrastructure issues. Although annoying

at times, I also learned to deal with power outages during class. When using a projector with a connected laptop, an outage would necessitate restarting the projector. I would continue the lecture by switching to the whiteboard and markers or spark a discussion among the students to fill the time.

Over time I discovered who to ask for assistance with various tasks. The students themselves were quite helpful in contacting school staff with questions and requests related to the course. The faculty member who served as Director of the MBA program has become a friend and was a great resource.

I also have been honored to serve on a peer review committee for the program. The best advice I can give prospective applicants is to read the description for the specific award of which you are applying carefully. Seeking advice from previous recipients is highly recommended. Different programs in different countries can have very different requirements, though. For example, the applications in some countries require that the applicant include a letter of invitation from a prospective host institution while others specifically prohibit pre-arranged affiliations. If an award description mentions eight different fields of interest, but none of them are related to information systems or business, the IS scholar is probably better served applying for a different award. Develop a project proposal that is realistic and flexible. Have a backup plan in case it is not possible to carry out all of the planned activities.

The Fulbright application process can appear daunting at first. My own application was due August 1 and I did not leave for Nepal until January, seventeen months later! Even final notification of acceptance of my application took more than eight months. Nevertheless, long waiting periods aside, the application process itself, while a significant undertaking, is quite manageable. From my conversations with colleagues, I believe the most significant mistake applicants make is to put off beginning the process. Most awards adhere to the annual August 1 deadline. Scholars should plan on approximately two months to develop the proposal, contact potential host institutions for letters of invitation (applicable for some awards), gather letters of recommendation, and perform other activities.

Additional opportunities that have been available to me since my Fulbright include returning to Nepal and the KUSOM multiple times to teach entire courses during the summer break and to guest lecture during shorter visits. This past summer, my MBA students at KUSOM threw me a surprise party on the last day of class, complete with cake and gifts. I cried. Today, the clock they presented to me holds a place of honor in my office and serves as a conversation starter with my U.S. students.

At my university in the United States, there are few students from Nepal. When there are, I usually get the opportunity to meet them. Generally, they are quite happy to meet a professor who has lived and worked in their home country as it is somewhat unusual. One current student is in the early stages of developing a project in collaboration with a student at my university in Nepal. The two students did not know each other, but discovered they have mutual friends and interests through my connections with both institutions. Although I am not directly involved in the project, I am hopeful that my continuing connection with KUSOM can facilitate the sharing of knowledge between the groups of students.

My Fulbright experience has also helped my teaching in the United States in less direct ways. Business school students often think of China or India when Asia is mentioned. Most business students in the United States know little of Nepal or other less developed countries. Sharing my experiences can lead them to a broader understanding and awareness of the global economy.

The impacts have spread outside Nepal and the United States as well. Due to my status as a “Fulbrighter,” I became acquainted with a Fulbright Scholar from India visiting my home institution in the United States. The next summer, after visiting Nepal, I visited her university, met with administrators and faculty, and guest lectured to the incoming MBA class. The University is located in a region of India seldom visited by U.S. scholars, Manipur. The administration, faculty, and students welcomed my visit and the exchange opportunities warmly. Without the Fulbright, my colleague and I would never have met and we would have missed out on this significant exchange.

I plan to continue my affiliation with the faculty and students at KUSOM. The relationships I have developed at the school and elsewhere in Kathmandu are extremely precious to me. The Fulbright experience is a highlight of my career.

Al Harris—Appalachian State University—Fulbright Scholar to Portugal

I had the pleasure of being a Fulbright Scholar to Portugal and spending three months (April to July, 2008) teaching at the University of Évora, the second oldest university in Portugal. Évora is a lovely walled town about ninety miles east of Lisbon. The university’s main building was a former Jesuit monastery and school. My wife accompanied me. The experience for both of us was wonderful.

Getting a Fulbright award is not easy. I applied the year before for a 2006-07 award, but I was not selected. I tried to learn from that experience and focus my application for a similar award for 2007-08 and was successful. At the time I received my Fulbright award, my university provided little assistance in the application process, although they were supportive of the effort. The University of Évora wanted me to start about April 1 and my university wanted me to teach Spring semester classes. This meant I had to make arrangements for the Spring semester. My Dean and Department Chair allowed me to accelerate my classes so that the semester would end on March 30. My wife also teaches at Appalachian State University, and her Dean and Department Chair also let her accelerate her classes to finish at the same time. We were able to leave the United States on March 31 and arrive in Lisbon on April 1. We rented our car and drove to the University of Évora that same day. Upon arrival, we called my university contact and he met us in the afternoon and showed us to our apartment.

I had a teaching award. Originally, I was to teach a course in the Information Systems Master's program, but the IS program for that year did not have enough students. When I arrived, I was told that I would be teaching to students in a variety of graduate programs. I was asked what I would like to teach. I gave them several potential topics and we agreed on two: e-commerce and IS ethics. I did not know what topics I would be teaching before arriving, so I had to prepare all of my materials after I arrived. I brought materials from all of the classes I had taught at Appalachian State University, then used the Internet to supplement the materials that I had brought on my laptop computer. Since most students in the graduate programs were working, most of my teaching was at night and during the weekend (Friday nights and Saturdays). All teaching was presented in English, as all business graduate students were expected to be proficient in English. As it turns out, most were already fairly proficient in English, but some students did have minor problems with the language. The graduate students took their studies seriously. They wanted insight into all facets of business and technology and constantly asked questions.

Administratively, my university contact was one of the IS faculty at the university, and I worked closely with him. I communicated with him for several months prior to leaving the United States. I shared an office with him and another professor who was originally from England. I had an Ethernet connection to the university's local area network, so I had email daily. The custom was for faculty to come to the university every day, so I spent a lot of time at the office. Every Portuguese professor I met knew at least three languages, which is a stark contrast to what you will find in universities in the United States.

Living conditions can be a problem for a Fulbright Scholar in Portugal. The university provided no living quarters. My university contact and I talked about possible housing during the initial exchange of emails. He was able to secure a sparsely furnished apartment within walking distance of the university just outside the walls of the city. However, the apartment was expensive (700 Euros a month). I did not have email access or television at my apartment because of the cost. My university contact went with me every time I paid the rent because the landlord did not speak any English. Although the Fulbright award did not reimburse me for it, I did rent a car for the time I was in Portugal. That turned out to be a wise decision, as there was little public transportation in Évora. The car allowed us to shop at any of the stores in the town and the surrounding area and travel when it was possible. Very few people outside of the university spoke English. Although I speak decent French and some German, Portuguese proved to be a difficult language to learn. Nonetheless, my wife and I did learn some simple Portuguese phrases. None of the menus at restaurants were in English, so we cooked most of our meals while in Évora. Shopping was an adventure; we were always sure to have our Portuguese-English dictionary with us. Although it was frustrating at times, we still treasure our adventure and enjoy remembering our times in Évora.

I had wonderful relationships and interchanges with the two professors that I shared the office with and with the students I taught. I still communicate regularly with my university contact. I was able to enjoy the culture of Portugal and its people. On two occasions the university had a week off and my wife and I traveled. One week we flew to Morocco and toured that country. The second week off, we spent the time in Spain. On weekends when I was not teaching, we traveled to parts of Portugal — the Algarve, Lisbon and its surrounding area, and to Porto and northern Portugal. The ability to see other parts of Portugal and Spain deepened the experience.

I brought back an appreciation of the Portuguese people and their way of life. The Portuguese economy is not as robust as that of the United States, but they are eager to learn how to create new goods and markets. For example, they grow a lot of cork trees, so cork was a leading export of Portugal. However, wineries are shifting to synthetic corks, so the Portuguese were learning how to use cork for hats, purses, and clothing.

I treasure my experience as a Fulbright Scholar to Portugal. It was as informative to me as I hope it was to my students and faculty contacts. I constantly tell stories of experiences I had in Portugal in my classes. Being a Fulbright Scholar has been one of the highlights of my academic career.

Kate Kaiser — Marquette University — Fulbright Scholar to India

My Fulbright as a Senior Research Scholar took me to six Indian cities to learn about the retention practices of software development firms, indigenous, North American and European with development centers in India. The Indian experience is best described as weird and wonderful.

Applying for a Fulbright gives you the opportunity to open your mind and yourself to another culture and to different ways of thinking. It is a definite door opener and gives you more credibility in earning other funding. Depending on your career development status, it can enhance your chances for promotion and/or mobility in the job market. The personal rewards to you and your family for making new relationships and having wonderful experiences are immeasurable.

I traveled to Bangalore, Mysore, Trivandrum, Hyderabad, and Kolkata (for a Fulbright conference) although I was based at the Management Development Institute (MDI) in Gurgaon in 2009 and Jaypee Institute of Technology in NOIDA in 2007. The Fulbright House in New Delhi (United States – India Education Foundation — USIEF) had made arrangements for my stay with MDI but on the first interaction, no one responded. The staff at USIEF were wonderful resources and held a number of programs with the over ninety Fulbrighters in the country at that time. I did not have an office because most of my activities were to interview software developers and their managers at corporate sites. I had no teaching responsibilities, although I gave presentations at both educational institutions to faculty and MBA students. I also presented at the Fulbright House in Delhi as a teleconference to students and faculty at the University of Kashmir because the State Department would not allow travel there. Activities consisted of searching for companies, arranging appointments with software developers and their managers, and interviewing them about retention practices. Although most Fulbright Scholars have one extended stay, I requested to be home for Thanksgiving and Christmas and was granted permission to conduct the research in two visits. Unfortunately, I had a knee injury so I had to rearrange my second portion for the next year. Because this involved changes in my teaching schedule at home and funding through Fulbright, it was a long process to receive permission; however, it all worked out.

During the week my driver and I spent many hours in congested traffic traveling to small and large companies. On the weekend I joined others going to the market as the natives do and enjoying tourist spots with some American friends. The trip to Trivandrum turned out to be a getaway to an ayurvedic spa, even though only a development center visit was planned. The interaction with faculty was minimal due to not having an office and traveling around cities for appointments. At MDI, I lived at the Executive MBA housing and had dining privileges with faculty during the week and with Executive MBAs on the weekend. This afforded me with most of my professional and social interaction. My living quarters at Jaypee and MDI were very spacious and included meals. Hot water was pretty consistent but brief power outages several times a day were the norm. The people I saw most frequently were my driver and my houseboy (who spoke no English).

I spent many hours at corporate sites, often having two to three interviews in a day. Occasionally, managers would invite me for lunch. In a couple of cities I lived in company guest houses. In those cases, I met with their clients who were also staying in the guest houses. Although they were not targeted interviewees, they gave me some very interesting insight for my research. It was also interesting to hear other Westerners' (mostly European and North American) perspectives about the Indian culture.

Support from the University was mixed. The Director of the Office of Research and Special Programs encouraged me, and my Department Chair and MBA Director arranged class schedules so I could do the Fulbright even though I did not have a sabbatical. On the negative side, when I went up for promotion, the department and college promotion committees did not consider the Fulbright experience as an asset.

The Fulbright experience reinforced my belief that people are the same everywhere. Particular elements, good and bad, about the Indian culture are about family, kindness, celebrities, and scandal. The strength of the Indian family is very impressive, although in the cities with the younger generation changes are occurring. This is probably due to the mobility of women. Indians are extremely polite. Once I had three men opening a door for me. Bollywood permeates the television and tabloids. Much of the news and advertising revolves around the movie stars. Government corruption is common. I was there as the Satyam scandal broke. It was on the front page almost every day for months. This was not only a business scandal but a family scandal that could happen anywhere.

The Fulbright experience makes you a Fulbrighter for life. You feel an obligation to be an ambassador of the United States. It opens many doors and has transformed me globally and as a person.



IV. LESSONS LEARNED FROM BEING A FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

Each member of this panel considers the Fulbright experience a major highlight of his or her academic career. The program provides many challenges and learning opportunities. Fulbright Scholars must meet unknown and unexpected hurdles in both the classroom and everyday living.

Many times Fulbright Scholars will not know what they will be teaching until after they arrive in a country. Even if they do know the subject matter, they may need to rapidly adjust their curriculum to the background of the students. The universities may not only have a different prerequisite structure but a different intent for course content and delivery. All of the panel members taught in English, but the big challenge many times was to get the students to learn in English, although most of the students were often more fluent in English than faculty members. They had to learn to deliver their message more clearly and talk more slowly. They also had to modify their curriculum, or in some cases their teaching approach. One of the intentions of the Fulbright grant is to introduce American culture abroad. The members of our panel tried to bring the American classroom to their international university. The students were eager to learn new approaches to courses and to hear their experiences with American students and living. It was a sharing of cultures on both sides [Hall, 2007].

Everyday living in a foreign country can be a challenge. Moving to a new university and/or city has tremendous start-up costs. Add a new country/culture/language to that mix and those costs grow quickly. As mentioned, there may be power outages, lack of heat, and lack of water (cold or hot). All the complaining in the world is not going to change the situation; as Fulbright Scholars, they had to cope with the situation gracefully and appreciate it as a frequent occurrence in the host country.

Most of the Fulbright Scholars did not have automobiles, which created a different environment than one experiences in the United States for shopping. Even so, they adapted. They learned to use local markets. They purchased groceries and other necessities in smaller quantities and more often, sometimes every day, in miniature grocery stores for miniature refrigerators. Not only did these stores have limited selections but the labels and prices were in different languages and currencies, making for some interesting purchases. Directions for appliances were not in English, and operation was not always intuitive. Many Fulbrighters learned to live without a clothes dryer, dishwasher, and television.

The Fulbright Scholars all learned how to travel within their neighborhoods and cities, and to different areas within and outside the host countries. As simple as it sounds, one definite lesson learned is the difference in the representation of "date" and working on the 24-hour-clock. Misreading the "local" date could mean missing trains and planes, or making incorrect reservations. People were friendly and helpful. Americans are welcomed, even if sometimes their government is not.

The need to be flexible is critical and cannot be overemphasized. Many situations that may never be encountered in the United States may be an everyday occurrence in the host country or university. Something as basic as copying notes for class may require a week turnaround time. The panel members had to conform to their hosts' processes, which were often quite different and may have taken place at the university or required the use of public transportation. Hofstede [2009] stated that everyone has the same issues; how they are solved is "culture." As visitors, Fulbright Scholars learned to respect the culture and become part of it, even if they did not always agree or understand it. As Professor Allen states, we had to be more self-reliant and take matters into our own hands rather than waiting for our hosts to save us. It is certainly a confidence-builder: I can do this! We were pushed outside our comfort zones and the Fulbright experience became a self-growth adventure.

While being a Fulbright Scholar brings many challenges, it is important to realize that some apparent barriers did not prevent the panelists from having an extremely positive experience. Almost none of the panelists received support from their home university, and some actually experienced resistance. Don't let a lack of support from your university stop you. The resources provided by the foreign host institution were sometimes lacking, but these resource issues only affect satisfaction with the Fulbright experience when a scholar's expectations for support are unrealistically high [Borgia et al., 2007]. You will survive, and perhaps even learn to enjoy, the inevitable resource restrictions you will find along the way.

Once you return, the Fulbright experience enriches the classroom at your home university [Hall, 2007]. You bring back experiences you cannot get by just visiting a country as a tourist. You cannot replicate the everyday interaction with students, neighbors, and sometimes faculty even in a week-long visit. Living in the economy for a period of time provides insights into other cultures and customs that cannot be obtained in short visits. A Fulbrighter is able to better relate to and understand the international students in their home university in the United States.

V. CONCLUSION

The need for business school students and faculty to cultivate a global perspective has never been greater. Fulbright Scholar experiences can be one method for faculty and their home institutions to develop the necessary expertise to meet these challenges.

The panel unanimously agreed that the experience was a highlight of their academic careers. Fulbright Scholars in business are very satisfied with their experience in general [Borgia et al., 2007] and the panelists were no exception. Each Fulbrighter experienced a variety of professional and personal challenges during the award period. In each case, the scholar was able to overcome these challenges and learn the advantages of flexibility and self-reliance.

A second consensus was the need for administrators in the home institutions to value the receipt of a Fulbright Scholar award more in performance evaluations and the promotion process. The AACSB [AACSB, 2011] recommends redesigning faculty evaluation and incentives to promote globalization of management education. Development opportunities for faculty that include significant international experiences are difficult for many business schools to provide without assistance. Business schools, as well as individual faculty, can benefit from the Fulbright program. Deans, department chairs, and tenure committees should provide support and encouragement for business school faculty Fulbright applications and experiences. Business school faculty have been traditionally underrepresented in the Fulbright program; therefore, the opportunity to increase participation is significant.

Although the panelists all served as U.S. Fulbright Scholars, a corresponding program exists for non-U.S. scholars seeking to visit a U.S. institution. Business schools in the United States can increase their globalization efforts by serving as a host institution for a foreign scholar. Non-U.S. scholars can increase their own international experience by seeking awards to the United States. The Fulbright program is a two-way exchange program. U.S. Fulbrighters are in a unique position to assist in identifying and serving as hosts for foreign scholars at their home institutions. These exchanges should also receive support and encouragement from administrators and other faculty.

Some members of the panel traveled to countries they were interested in and knew a great deal about. Others were exposed to new areas. Fulbright Scholars continue to be interested in the places where they lived and worked. These areas are no longer just some other country or culture, but one that they were part of, even for a brief time. They read books and articles that would not have been of interest before the Fulbright experience. They seek out students at their universities from their "other" culture and have dialogues. Their horizons have expanded and they are more global in their teaching and their overall outlook on the world. Fulbright Scholars try to become citizens of the world.

There are few teaching and international experiences that can match those of being a Fulbright Scholar. In the viewpoint of the five panelists, the words that sum up the Fulbright Scholar experience best are: "It changed my life and global perspective."

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Albert L. Harris is Professor of Information Systems at the Walker College of Business, Appalachian State University, and Editor Emeritus of the *Journal of Information Systems Education*. He received the AIS Award for Outstanding Contribution to IS Education at the 2012 ICIS Conference. He is Secretary of the AIS SIG-ED, International Academy of Information Management (IAIM), and an AITP Education Special Interest Group (EDSIG) Fellow. He was a 2006 Fulbright Scholar to Portugal, a 2008–2009 exchange Professor to the University of Angers in France, and has taught in Poland, Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Dr. Harris is a Certified Information Systems Auditor and a Certified Management Consultant. He has traveled and lectured extensively around the world and has used these experiences in his teaching and research. His research interests are in IS education and global IT ethics. He co-edited the book *Managing Global Information Technology: Strategies and Challenges* (2007) and has over ninety refereed publications as book chapters, journal articles, and in international and national conference proceedings.

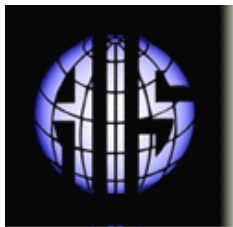
Jonathan P. (J.P.) Allen is an Associate Professor of Information Systems at the School of Management, University of San Francisco. His research interests include online and Internet business, business applications of open technology, and sociotechnical theory and analysis. He currently serves as an Editorial Board member for the *Journal of Information Technology*, a Senior Editor for *The DATA BASE for Advances in Information Systems*, and an Editorial Board member and Web Editor for the *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*.

Mary J. Granger is a Professor of Information Systems and Technology Management at George Washington University, Washington, DC. Professor Granger has received numerous faculty development grants and several teaching awards. Some of her research interests include IS curriculum development and design, system analysis and design, database design, international IS, human-computer interactions, and ethical issues in the computing environment. Her research is published in international journals and proceedings. In addition to her Fulbright awards, she taught at Corvinus University in Budapest and Dongbei University of Finance and Economics in Dalian, China. She was the editor of the *Journal of Informatics Education and Research* and was AIS VP of Education. Currently, she is director of the Masters of Science in Information Systems Technology.

Kate M. Kaiser is Emerita IT faculty at Marquette University. She has studied IT skill needs and the impact of offshore outsourcing from Ireland, Russia, and India through research grants from the Sloan Foundation, 3M Foundation, and the U.S. State Department as a Fulbright Scholar in India. Kate led the IT Workforce Research Team for seven years and was a member of the Association for Computing Machinery IS Model Curriculum 2010 Task Force and worked for Giga Information group on the Y2K team. She has published in a variety of practitioner and academic journals such as *MIS Quarterly*, *Communications of the ACM*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *MIS Quarterly Executive*, *Information Systems Management*, and *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, among others; she has also presented IT skills research in many countries. Her BA and MBA are from Kent State University and PhD is from the University of Pittsburgh.

Sidne G. Ward is Associate Professor of Information Systems as well as Director of Global Management Education Initiatives at the Henry W. Bloch School of Management, University of Missouri—Kansas City. She was a 2009 Fulbright Senior Scholar and Visiting Professor in 2010 and 2012 to the Kathmandu University School of Management in Nepal. Dr. Ward has lectured in Asia and Europe. Her research interests include cross-cultural comparisons of information systems adoption, use, and education.

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