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Dear Fulbrighters,

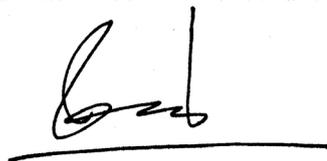
I hope you all enjoyed the receptions we held the last week in December. It had been a while since we had held a get-together for all Fulbrighters. For those of you who missed the receptions in Hanoi and HCMC, I hope you can make it for our next events.

I would like to thank the peer review panelists including Drs. Ngo Vinh Long, Le Nhan Phuong, Pham Thanh Nghi, Bach Tan Sinh, Joe Peters and Seth Singleton who deliberated and assessed this year's applications for the Fulbright Vietnam Scholar Program. Their expert advice and assessment helped the Fulbright Program make our recommendations for next year's candidates.

Many of you may have been caught up in the activities surrounding U.S. President Bill Clinton's recent visit to Vietnam. One of the topics he addressed during his visit was the importance of educational exchange between Vietnam and the United States. President Clinton commented on the role of educational exchange and the Fulbright Program in his national address on November 17 at Vietnam National University-Hanoi. We have included excerpts from his speech in this newsletter.

Finally, I would like to thank and bid farewell to two people who have given their time and energy to building the Fulbright Program in Vietnam over the last year. Thao Thi Nguyen and Long T. Nguyen are heading back to the United States to pursue other career opportunities. On behalf of the Fulbright Program in Vietnam and the Fulbright community, I would like to extend our best wishes to them.

Sincerely,



Tran Xuan Thao, Ph.D.
Director
Fulbright Program in Vietnam

FULBRIGHT NEWS:**Peer review panel recommends new Vietnamese scholars for 2001-2002**

A panel of six Vietnamese and American scholars including Drs. Ngo Vinh Long, Le Nhan Phuong, Pham Thanh Nghi, Bach Tan Sinh, Joe Peters and Seth Singleton met on November 25-26, to begin the selection process for the Vietnam Fulbright Scholar Program. The Fulbright Program selected the peer review panelists on the bases of their expertise and knowledge of the research fields represented in the applicant pool including education administration, environmental studies, public health, medicine and economic development. The recommendations of the peer review panel will form the basis for the final selection of candidates for next year's program.

The panel is convened to assess and recommend candidates who are distinguished by their academic prominence, are involved in research vital to national priorities and possess potential for becoming key figures in their fields. The peer review panel deliberated the merits of all applications and arrived at a consensus to recommend six candidates and four alternates.

The decision to recommend a candidate was especially difficult this year because of the high quality of the applications and the increase in the number of applicants. "This year was the second year in a row in which the number of applications increased dramatically. What was different this year was the marked improvements in the quality of the applicant's research/lecturing proposal. Not only did we receive twice as many applications as last year, we also received research proposals that were well-thought out and met the high standards of the Fulbright Scholar Program," said Dr. Tran Xuan Thao.

The improvements came about partly from the comments and suggestions made by peer review panelists last year who recommended the Fulbright Program in Vietnam take a more active role in clarifying the standards of a successful application to prospective applicants. The Fulbright Program heeded that advice and this year's recruitment efforts included information sessions in which the Fulbright Program director discussed the requirements for successful research/lecturing proposals, letters of recommendations, and resume writing.

To promote more and better applications from the central region--disproportionate numbers of applicants this year were from northern and southern Vietnam--the peer review panel recommended the Fulbright Program to redouble its recruitment efforts in the central region by offering more information sessions and offer advice to prospective applicants on their applications. "The Fulbright Program in Vietnam is a national program and should have strong representation from all parts of Vietnam. We encourage qualified applicants from the central region to apply to the program," said one panelist.

This year's peer review panel also recommended the continued use of former Fulbrighters as resources for information and advice about the program and the application process. "The increase in the numbers of applicants can definitely be attributed to the referrals of applicants by the Fulbright community in Vietnam. Former and current Fulbrighters played an important role in the increase in the applicant pool this year," said Dr. Thao.

The recommended applicants will be interviewed to assess their English abilities. Then, the peer review panel's recommendations and comments will be forwarded to the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) for further review. Once the candidates' records are assessed, CIES will forward its selection of candidates to the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, which makes a final selection of candidates. The Fulbright Program will announce the scholars for next year's Vietnam Fulbright Scholar Program by early next year.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

What	Who	Where	When
Fulbright Social	Fulbrighters	Hanoi	January 2001
Fulbright Social	Fulbrighters	HCMC	January 2001

Fulbright receptions held in HCMC and Hanoi

After a long hiatus without many Fulbright events, Fulbrighters were glad to have the opportunity to meet and reconnect with their friends and classmates. In Hanoi, about fifty Fulbrighters met to enjoy an evening reception at the Rose Garden Tower on December 1. This time, there was no speeches, just good times to be had. Vietnamese and U.S. Fulbrighters mingled and tasted the Thai food dishes. For this year's group of U.S. Fulbrighters, this was the first event in which they had the opportunity to meet with the Fulbright community in Vietnam. "I did not realize Fulbrighters come from such diverse backgrounds and experiences. I really enjoyed the chance to meet everyone in a social environment," said one U.S. Fulbrighter.

The HCMC Fulbright Reception was held at the Cach Mang Thang Tam Restaurant on December 8. Fulbrighters organized the event themselves and decided on an evening of relaxation, games and good friendship.

USEFUL INFORMATION:**HANOI:**

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Hanoi, Vietnam
Tel: (04) 843-1500
Fax: (04) 843-1510

Public Affairs Section - Hanoi
6 Ngoc Khanh
Hanoi, Vietnam
Tel: (04) 831-4580
Fax: (04) 831-4601
Email: fulbrightvn@fpt.vn

HO CHI MINH CITY:

U.S. Consulate
4 Le Duan, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Tel: (08) 822-9433
Fax: (08) 822-9434

Public Affairs Section - HCMC
9/F, Saigon Centre
65 Le Loi, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Tel: (08) 821-6400
Fax: (08) 821-6405

Fulbright Program Website:

<http://www.usembassy.state.gov/vietnam/wwwfhfp.html>

FULBRIGHT IN THE NEWS:

U.S. President Clinton stresses importance of educational exchange during Vietnam visit

During U.S. President Bill Clinton's visit to Vietnam, he had the opportunity to deliver a nationally-televised address to Vietnamese from the campus of Vietnam National University-Hanoi on November 17, 2000. In his address, President Clinton spoke about the importance of educational exchange and mentioned the Fulbright Program in Vietnam. Below is an excerpt from the transcripts of his speech.

. . . I can think of no more fitting place to begin my visit at this hopeful moment in our common history than here at Hanoi National University [sic]. . . . So much of the promise of this youthful nation is embodied with you. I learned that you have exchanges here with students from nearly 100 universities, from Canada to France to Korea -- and that you are now hosting more than a dozen full-time students from your partner school in the United States, the University of California. I salute your vigorous efforts to engage the world.

This new openness is a great opportunity for you. But it does not guarantee success. What else should be done? Vietnam is such a young country, with 60 percent of your population under the age of 30, and 1.4 million new people entering your work force every year. Your leaders realize that government and state-owned businesses cannot generate 1.4 million new jobs every year. They know that the industries driving the global economy today -- computers, telecommunications, biotechnology -- these are all based on knowledge. That is why economies all over the world grow faster when young people stay in school longer, when women have the same educational opportunities that men have, when young people like you have every opportunity to explore new ideas and then to turn those ideas into your own business opportunities.

You can be -- indeed, those of you in this hall today must be -- the engine of Vietnam's future prosperity. As President Tran Duc Luong has said, the internal strength of the country is the intellect and capacity of its people.

The United States has great respect for your intellect and capacity. One of our government's largest educational exchange programs is with Vietnam. And we want to do more. Senator Kerry . . . is leading an effort in our United States Congress, along with Senator John McCain and other veterans of the conflict here, to establish a new Vietnam Education Foundation. Once enacted, the foundation would support 100 fellowships every year, either here or in the United States, for people to study or teach science, math, technology and medicine.

We're ready to put more funding in our exchange programs now so this effort can get underway immediately. I hope some of you in this room will have a chance to take part.

As your opportunities grow to live, to learn, to express your creativity, there will be no stopping the people of Vietnam. And you will find, I am certain, that the American people will be by your side. For in this interdependent world, we truly do have a stake in your success.

FROM YOU:

Have you moved recently? Please write your new contact details here and fax or email to PAS - Hanoi: (04) 831-4601 or fulbrightvn@fpt.vn.

New Address: _____

New telephone: _____

New fax: _____

New E-mail: _____

FULBRIGHT STORY:**Nguyen Nam Tran mixes Fulbright research with practice work**

Nguyen Nam Tran came back to Vietnam as a U.S. Fulbright Student this past August fresh from a career in investment banking on Wall Street. She did not fit into the mold of the typical U.S. Fulbright Student who come to Vietnam to complete their doctoral research. She came to Vietnam to do independent research on Vietnam's banking sector and new securities market.

Nam Tran hit the ground running. She went to Ho Chi Minh City and talked to investors, brokers and the Vietnam State Securities Commission (SSC), the governing body for Vietnam's new bourse. "I would describe the Vietnamese securities market as nascent. There are really only four companies traded on the local stock market--the rest of the traded shares are government-issued bonds. For the time being, local enterprises are looking at other, maybe more traditional, methods of financing investment," Nam Tran observed. "I met some great people who had very interesting ideas and plans for the securities market. One person was even planning an initial public offering on the bourse. Soon, though, I realize that their plans and ideas were long term ones since many things in Vietnam happen over a longer period of time," she added. When Nam Tran left the second city for Hanoi, she realized how true her statement was.

"Hanoi isn't New York City," Nam Tran commented laughingly. "It has been a challenge for me to adjust to the slower pace of Hanoi because I am more accustomed to the speed and excitement of a big metropolis. After being here for awhile though, I'm beginning to appreciate and enjoy the charms of Hanoi more," she added.

Aside from her research activities, Nam Tran has found opportunities to talk to Vietnamese professionals on a number of business-related issues. She recently led two panel discussions with project and team leaders at FPT. The first panel discussion was on Vietnam's economic outlook from a foreign perspective and the second was on views of the U.S. President Clinton's visit from the Vietnamese and American perspectives. "I began the discussions with brief presentations and then we opened the floor for open discussions. My conversations with the FPT staff was lively and engaging. It was interesting and refreshing for me to hear the views of Vietnamese professionals," said Nam Tran.

Nam Tran has also been able to put her investment banking experience to good use. She has developed a dialogue with officials at SSC on the misperceptions among many local enterprises that going public is not good for their businesses. "The people at SSC are trying very hard to clarify to local business people that offering shares of their companies to the public can create many investment opportunities that they would otherwise not have. I am discussing with SSC on ways to dispel the misunderstanding," she said.

Hearing of her initiative in this area, professors at her host institution, the Hanoi School of Business, have asked Nam Tran to hold an introductory seminar on investment banking. If the seminar goes well, she may work on a similar one for businesspeople in Vietnam. "I feel my career background has allowed me to do more practical work outside of my current research. The work has complemented my research nicely," she observed.

Nam Tran now looks forward to finishing her research. She will be looking at the banking sector reforms in Vietnam and what they are suppose to do for the sector. Afterwards, she hopes to return to the workforce in America with a new perspective about her work and profession. "I wanted to come to Vietnam on the Fulbright grant because I felt it would help me gain a different understanding of myself and what I was working on in the United States. I feel I have done that and it feels good," she concluded.

FULBRIGHT FEATURE:**Dealing with culture shock: Sanh reflects on experience**

I began my Fulbright fellowship in 1999 and endeavored to study public policy, specializing in agricultural policy. I am still completing that study and hopefully will receive my degree by the middle of 2002. I am presently conducting my dissertation on forest resource management based on community capacity building at Can Tho University. I think back to my Fulbright days fondly and would like to share with you some of the lessons I've learned and the moments I've experienced.

Although my experience is different and unique to me, I had to deal with what I believe to be the three basic stresses that most foreign students encounter while studying in the United States. First, when I arrived in the United States, I like many other newcomers went through a bout of culture shock. Because I came from a different culture than that in the United States, I handled the small daily activities in my life differently from Americans. Initially, the language, culture and food were the greatest obstacles I faced. At times, I entertained thoughts of returning to Vietnam. However, I began making American friends to learn their about culture and language. I also regularly contacted my family, friends and teachers in Vietnam to keep me from being homesick. This helped me suppress my longing for home during the first six months of my stay in the United States.

Personal management was the second source of my stress as a Fulbright fellow. In America, everything is very routinized and structured and it was hard for me at times to understand the system. However, the Fulbright office in the United States helped me and countless others to arrange and resolve matters concerning academic study, health insurance, visa status, monthly payments and other issues that a Fulbright student might require. My experience taught me to share my problems with the Fulbright office in the United States so that we can solve the problems together. The people at the Fulbright office were a great help to me in getting over my worries.

The new academic environment was another major source of stress for me. In the United States, graduate students are expected to study independently, but many foreign students like me had problems adapting to these ways. To adjust to the new studying methods, I had to overcome my shyness and asked for help from my professors, advisers and classmates when I needed help in my research and course work. I found the people I met and studied with to be so kind and willing to help out newcomers like me. Fortunately, their assistance helped me avoid the pitfalls of academic life.

Now that I have returned to Vietnam, I am applying the skills and knowledge I learned on the Fulbright Program in my current work to improve the conditions in rural areas. I think the most important issue for socio-economic development in Vietnam is how to maintain socio-economic development and at the same time reduce poverty in rural areas. This can only be done by creating linkages between government policies and stakeholders' concerns in rural development programs. At Can Tho University, I teach and research these topics and try to create linkages between the university's research and the socio-economic development needs of the region. I was able to learn about these university linkages in the United States and am now trying to implement this model at my university. I believe my work will one day improve the lives of poor farmers.

Besides my work, I am continuing my research on a natural resource management project based on community development network that my director and my colleagues have built among 10 agricultural institutions throughout Vietnam since 1992. In my teaching, I am focusing on courses relating to agricultural and rural development to help my students understand how to make intervention for better agricultural and rural development. Finally, I am assisting my rector and staff to establish a center for rural research and development at my university because this plays a very important role in coordinating the region's R&D efforts.

- Sanh , Vietnam Fulbright Student