

*“Perhaps the greatest power of such intellectual exchange is to convert nations into peoples and to translate ideologies into human aspirations”*  
-- J. William Fulbright

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## From the Director

Dear Fulbrighters and Fulbright friends,

The Academic year 2019-2020 has begun with the departure and arrival of more than 50 Fulbrighters to start their Fulbright journey in Vietnam and the United States.

As usual, we had a busy fall with a month long in-country orientation for English Teaching Assistants (ETA) with a lot of different activities including a homestay weekend with Vietnamese families. Thank you to all Fulbrighters and friends for welcoming our ETAs to your home and giving them the very first cul-

tural immersion activity! The fall went fast as we spent a quality amount of time to select candidates for Vietnamese Student Program, and Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program of the Academic Year 2020, met with newly returned Vietnamese, then the visits to 19 ETAs in their provinces. In this newsletter, we feature our Fulbrighters who share their stories about life and work in the U.S and in Vietnam. Last but not least, we are still calling for applications of the U.S – ASEAN Visiting Scholar Program, so please help us refer your colleagues, friends who you believe that they would be a

great candidate for the program.

As always, we would like to welcome your feed-back, comments as well as stories, articles, photos so that we can include them in future issues and make the newsletters better. Stay tuned for an announcement of a Fulbright gathering in Hanoi in December that will come out soon!

Enjoy your reading!

Vu Quynh Nga

## APPLY NOW: The Fulbright U.S.–ASEAN Visiting Scholar Program 2020

The Fulbright U.S.–ASEAN Visiting Scholar Program is open to university faculty, foreign ministry or other government officials, and professional staff of the private sector, think tanks, and other NGOs in the ASEAN Member States. Selected Fulbright U.S. - ASEAN Visiting Scholars will travel to the U.S. for 3—4 months during the **spring of 2021**, where they will carry out scholarly and professional research on priority issues to the U.S.-ASEAN relationship and ASEAN. Projects should be selected that are regional in scope and/or have clear implications for the entire ASEAN region.

While it is expected that the majority of time will be spent in research, grantees are also encouraged to expand and develop their network of professional contacts so that professional relationships established during the grantee’s time in the U.S. can be sustained after the formal grant period has ended. In addition, grantees will be expected to seek opportunities to provide an ASEAN perspective through guest lectures, seminars, or participation in academic or professional conferences.

**Deadline: Monday, December 2, 2019 at 17:00 by Vietnam time zone**

For details and to apply: <https://vn.usembassy.gov/education-culture/fulbright-program-vietnam/us-asean-fulbright-visiting-scholar/>

## Fulbright key events beginning the Fall semester AY 2019-2020

### Fall Orientation for U.S. Scholars and students

The group of U.S. scholars and research students have arrived in the country to start their Fulbright grants in Vietnam. Scholars and students are diversified in term of academic fields including Social Work, Anthropology, Journalism, Botany and Environmental Studies. Scholars and students spread out to the different institutions in Vietnam to do teaching and research work.



Institutions which are interested to invite these U.S. scholars to do seminars/workshops may visit the website for details: <https://vn.usembassy.gov/education-culture/fulbright-program-vietnam/us-scholar-program/>

*In the photo: U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Mr. Daniel J. Kritenbrink with the group of U.S. scholars and research students.*



Before starting assignment at gifted high schools, colleges and universities around the country, 19 Fulbright English Teaching Assistants (ETAs) AY 2019-2020 started the **Fall In-country orientation** organized by the Fulbright Program in Vietnam in Hanoi on August 5, 2019 for 4 weeks.

During the orientation, Embassy officers briefed the ETAs on medical, political, economic and security issues in Vietnam. Outside speakers delivered lectures on Vietnamese culture, history, economic and education on the first week of the orientation. As a highlight of the orientation, ETAs had opportunity to have discussion on U.S. – Vietnam Relations with the Deputy Chief of Mission, **Caryn McClelland**. ETAs are also being equipped with basic Vietnamese language and English teaching methodology.

In order for the ETAs to practice what they have learned on English teaching methodology and to help them prepared for their assignment, the Fulbright arranged for them to do

teaching practice with American Center students, students at a gifted high school, a college and a university.



After the orientation, ETAs are confident enough to embark on their 9-month journey as teaching assistants and Fulbright cultural ambassadors at the host institutions.

### Orientation Meeting for The Host Institutions of ETAs

The Fulbright Program in Vietnam organized an Orientation Meeting for 19 representatives from 19 Vietnamese host institutions of Fulbright English Teaching Assistants on August 16, 2019 in Hanoi.

The meeting was organized for the Fulbright and the host representatives to discuss on the list of things host institution should do to host Fulbright ETAs. The participants also had chance to discuss on “Gender

issues and sexual harassment at the workplace” with an expert from CSAGA. Among 19 of host institutions, some institutions who have been hosting ETAs for 3 years and 2 years shared their ETA hosting experience to the new host institutions. As a highlight of the meeting, ETAs and their host representatives had a meet and talk session among one another so ETAs could ask about their accommodation and working schedule arrangement in order to prepare for their assignment at the host institutions.



**American Scholars and Research Students in Vietnam AY 2019 - 2020—Fall Semester**


**Dr. John Hatcher** is a lecturer in the Faculty of Journalism and Communication at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City where he will be teaching for the 2019-2020 academic year. In addition, Dr. Hatcher is making plans to be a guest lecturer at the Academy of Journalism and Communication in Hanoi; the Journalism Program at the University of Education, The University of Da Nang; and at Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry. He also plans to do regional training workshops for journalists working with the Vietnam Journalists Association. Dr. Hatcher has worked as a journalist and educator since 1992. His research focuses on journalism at the grassroots, community level. He has studied this niche of journalism in the United States, South Africa, Norway and Canada. He is excited to expand his research into Southeast Asia this year. Upon completion of his Fulbright, he will return to his position as an associate professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Minnesota Duluth.



For more than 40 years, **Susan McConaughy** has been intrigued and nourished by direct social work practice with individuals, families and communities. She has built relationships where shared understanding leads to the satisfactions of solving problems together. Susan has taught and trained the next generation of social workers at the graduate and undergraduate levels in the US. Her teaching interests as an Assoc. Professor at the SUNY Empire State College, are human development, clinical services, attachment theory, child welfare policy, and trauma studies. She balances her strong clinical focus by working with small community-based organizations to develop new services and advocacy strategies. In 2017, Susan won the top research award in her college for research on the parent's role in their child's recovery from trauma. She has lectured widely on this topic and hopes to spread the word about how parents can be empowered as their children's best hope for healing. A lifetime of practicing social work led Susan to apply to teach the Foundations of Social Work in Vietnam. She was hoping for a teaching and consulting experience that would serve as a "capstone" for her career, but instead, as a Fulbright Scholar, she has launched a new chapter in her practice. Susan has been delighted to work on new projects with kindred spirits in the social work faculty and students at Dalat University.



**Frank Proschan** is an anthropologist and folklorist specializing in highland ethnic minorities of Vietnam, Laos and Thailand, and an expert in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. He is currently a Fulbright Scholar and visiting lecturer at the Department of Anthropology of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University. His professional career has included long stints at the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage of the Smithsonian Institution (the United States National Museum), as a senior program officer at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and as a research professor at Indiana University, Bloomington. He has made more than fifty visits to Vietnam since 1987, collaborating with the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, Institute of Ethnology, Institute of Cultural Studies, Institute of Musicology, Vietnam Institute of Culture and Arts Studies, Department of Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Hanoi University of Culture, and Ho Chi Minh City University of Culture. In 2004 he received the Friendship Medal from the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for his contributions to relations between Vietnam and the United States.



**Lan Truong** is an ethnobotanist conducting her doctoral research on traditional Vietnamese medicine used for diabetes treatment in Kiên Giang province. Her project is titled, "Traditional Vietnamese Medicinal Plants for Diabetes Treatment." Lan completed her undergraduate studies in (ethno) botany at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, then moved to the Bronx for graduate school at Lehman College of the City University of New York (CUNY) where she received her MA in Plant Sciences. Then, she joined the PhD Plant Sciences joint program at the CUNY Graduate Center and the New York Botanical Garden in which she has obtained another MA in Plant Sciences as a doctoral candidate. Receiving the Fulbright U.S. Student award will support the completion of her doctoral research for ten months, in which she will be in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) and Kiên Giang. Ethnobotanical fieldwork will be conducted in Kiên Giang and phytochemical analyses will be completed in a laboratory in HCMC. Her host institutions in HCMC include: The Southern Institute of Ecology and the Institute of Chemical Technology/the Center for Research and Technology Transfer.

As a "*Việt Kiều*" or diasporic Vietnamese, Lan has long been curious about her cultural heritage as she moved to the United States at age five. Plants are an integral part of Vietnamese's lives. Lan's love for plants is likely influenced by her family's traditions of plant use, especially her grandfather's love for cultivating prized orchids. She is grateful for the Fulbright program for this exceptional opportunity to cultivate her professional and personal knowledge and skillsets.



**Emi Koch** loves fish. She likes looking at them, swimming with them, counting them, and even sometimes eating them. But mostly, as a social-ecologist, Emi loves the critical ways fish contribute to the wellbeing of small-scale and artisanal fishing communities across the world. As a Fulbright-National Geographic Digital Storytelling Fellow 2019-20, Koch is facilitating participatory photography workshops known as Photovoice for fish-dependent communities in Vietnam to share how fishery scarcity in concert with environmental stresses such as growing populations, pollution, extreme weather events, and coastal development critically undermine social-ecological wellbeing. Koch will create an interactive map featuring both stakeholders' multimedia stories and her own while analyzing qualitative data on human insecurity in fisheries. As a professional surfer, Koch used her sponsorship to start Beyond the Surface International, a nonprofit working at the local level in partnership with artisanal fishing villages to build social-ecological resilience. For the past 10 years, Koch has worked at the local level with remote and marginalized small-scale fishing communities from India to Peru, using surfing, mindfulness, and participatory media as tools to engage youth and their fishing families around marine conservation, climate change adaption, and social environmental justice. For her efforts, Koch was named a 2018 National Geographic Adventurer of the Year. Most recently, Koch facilitated participatory photography workshops with fishermen and fishmongers in Homa Bay, Kenya along Lake Victoria focused on the impacts of pollution, extreme weather events, and low fish availability on human security. Koch studied Psychology with concentrations in Anthropology and Justice & Peace Studies at Georgetown University and recently earned a Masters in Marine Biodiversity & Conservation from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Koch is a member of the Fisheries Conflict Research Consortium where she collaborates with researchers around the world, with a focus on universities from underrepresented countries, to compile case studies on fisheries-related disputes into an interactive Story Map. In Vietnam, you can find her with camera in hand at a fish market on a beach facilitating photography workshops with fishermen and their children. Otherwise, she's teaching swim lessons or gone surfing with her new Vietnamese friends.

**19 English Teaching Assistants (ETAs) in Vietnam AY 2019 - 2020**


**Laura Hillard** recently graduated from George Mason University where she studied Economics and Global Affairs, with a concentration in international development. This year, she is teaching at Hà Tĩnh Gifted High School in north-central Vietnam. She is excited to build relationships with her students and the broader Hà Tĩnh community. Laura's interests include international economic policy, photography, traveling, and exercising.



**Katherine Cassidy** is a recent graduate of Wake Forest University ('19), where she studied politics/international affairs and religious studies. She currently teaches in Thái Nguyên province in northern Vietnam at the Thái Nguyên University of Education. As an ETA, she hopes to develop strong relationships with her students through cross-cultural communication and establishing an inclusive classroom environment. In her free time, she is enjoying getting to know the city through early morning runs, exploring coffee shops, trying new foods, and visiting city landmarks.



**Annie Trang** is a Fulbright ETA at Quảng Bình University in Đồng Hới city. She recently graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park with a B.S. in Physiology and

Neurobiology and B.A. in Philosophy. She is grateful for the opportunity to share stories with her students over a cup of coffee and to cultivate those about her heritage by practicing Vietnamese at the markets. Annie is thrilled to actively grow alongside and serve her community within and beyond the classroom.



**Alison Corey** is a Fulbright ETA at Thọại Ngọc Hầu High School for the Gifted in An Giang Province. She is a recent graduate of Connecticut College, where she studied Government and Anthropology. While at Connecticut College, she spent a semester studying abroad in Hanoi, Vietnam. Her study away program provided the opportunity for her to study Vietnamese language, history and culture. Alison is excited to continue to learn more about Vietnam, and take advantage of this unique opportunity to foster mutual understanding. She hopes to form lasting connections with students, faculty, and the Long Xuyên community.



**Alyssa Alfonso** graduated from Georgetown University in May 2019 with a BA in English with a minor in Economics. Before Fulbright, she worked with several equitable development nonprofits focused on improving access to affordable housing in Washington, DC. Her interests include reading, hiking, listening to economics podcasts, and making ice cream. This year, she is thrilled to be exploring Cần Thơ city and co-teaching at the wonderful Lý Tự Trọng Gifted High School. The kindness of students and teachers alike has been astounding, and she is excited to get to know the community and the city even better in the coming year.



Since graduating from the University of Washington (2014) with a degree in Medical Anthropology and Global health, **Brandie Nordstrum** has worked in nutrition education with AmeriCorps and then as a coordinator of educational programming for immigrant and refugee families. She has grown to love adapting her communication methods to more effectively accommodate different learning styles. During her time in Vietnam she is excited to explore the culture, food, and education system. Most importantly, she looks forward to learning more about the various interests of Vietnam's youth and how to bridge those interests with the English language and American culture. Her hobbies include aerial arts, hiking, and (currently) trying ALL the food. In the future, she intends to use her experience and newly developed skills to better assist youth as a counselor.



**Kevin Ho** is a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant at Tay Nguyen University in Buon Ma Thuot, the coffee capital of Vietnam. Majoring in English and Education, Kevin plans to utilize his formal education to engage with his second year students majoring in English linguistics and English pedagogy. Additionally, he plans to learn more about the culture and people of Vietnam in order to further understand his own identity as a Vietnamese-American.

**19 English Teaching Assistants (ETAs) in Vietnam AY 2019 - 2020**


**Emily Giel** is a Fulbright ETA at Vĩnh Phúc Gifted High School in the beautiful Vĩnh Phúc province, Vietnam. She is a very proud Arizonan, and she graduated from Arizona State University with degrees in data analytics and marketing and minors in Spanish literature and gender studies. Emily looks forward to learning more from her students each day, trying new Vietnamese foods, and serving as a cultural ambassador as she makes connections in her community. When she isn't teaching, Emily loves boxing and eating chè with her students.



**Amelia Giancarlo** is an ETA at Hue College of Education in Hue. She is a graduate of Rhodes College in Memphis, TN where she studied Anthropology, Sociology, and French (2019). Amelia exclusively teaches speaking and listening skills to students training to be tour guides and primary school English teachers. When she's not teaching, Amelia enjoys cooking, journaling, and running. As the second semester approaches, she hopes to improve her Vietnamese language skills and continue eating lots of nem lui around Hue.



**Lena-Phuong Tran** is a 2nd-generation, Vietnamese American teaching at the Bảo Lộc Gifted High school in the Central Highlands. She is a graduate of Pitzer College ('18) where she majored in Cognitive Science and minored in Media Studies. She looks forward to developing her understanding of the Vietnamese identity from the lens of a younger generation and designing a student-centered curriculum for English learners. She hopes to one day perfect cooking dishes such as chè đậu trắng and xôi ba màu.



**Zachary High** graduated from Lycoming College with a B.S. in biology and a second major in Spanish. He is currently teaching at Tây Bắc University in Sơn La, Vietnam, where he says he is "enamored of the mountainous topography." The physical environment, which reminds him of his home in Pennsylvania, along with the welcoming social environment from the students and teachers, makes him excited about his journey in Sơn La this upcoming year. Zachary looks forward to growing closer with the students and teachers, both inside and outside of the classroom. Following his grant, Zachary plans to attend medical school at the Penn State College of Medicine.



**Marissa Pham** graduated in May 2019 from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, with a double-major in Human Health and Sociology. She is ecstatic to be an ETA at Chu Văn An Gifted High School in Lang Son where the students are equally talented inside and outside of the classroom. As a half-Vietnamese American, she has enjoyed experiencing and learning more about her father's home country for the first time and having the opportunity to engage in cultural exchange with students, fellow teachers, and new friends in Vietnam. In the coming months, Marissa looks forward to learning more Vietnamese language, promoting critical thinking and creativity in the classroom, and mastering the art of a quick snooze while lying across her electric bike.



Xin Chào! my name is **Zachary Wishart** and I am currently teaching at Hoang Le Kha High School for the Gifted in Tay Ninh Province. I graduated from Ball State University in 2019 with a BS in Social Studies Education and a BA in History. As an ETA, I am most looking forward to fully immersing myself within Vietnamese culture through food, conversing with students and local residents, language acquisition and communal engagement. Fulbright has allowed me to experience and learn about a new culture in a way never before accessible and for that I am eternally grateful.

**19 English Teaching Assistants (ETAs) in Vietnam AY 2019 - 2020**


**Phoenicia Schwidkay** is an English Teaching Assistant (ETA) for Binh Duong University. A graduate from the University of North Carolina - Asheville (BA in Classics, '18), she hopes that her time in Vietnam will provide insight for improving ESL programs back in the United States. "The last thing I would want for my students is to feel like they have to suppress their cultural identity just to learn another language. I hope that I can communicate that to my students in Vietnam, and give them an opportunity to use English as a way to share who they are with the world."



**Liam Connor** studied information systems at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. He is an English teaching assistant at Thai Nguyen University Lao Cai Campus in Lao Cai Province. Through work as a medical volunteer in Long An and Tien Giang, as well as ESL work at his University in Baltimore, he became acquainted with Vietnamese culture and English teaching practices. He has been teaching students with a variety of English classes, learning Vietnamese, and connecting with the community of Lao Cai. He is excited to be working in Vietnam and cannot wait to see what the remaining months have in store.



**Sydney To** is from San Jose, California. He just graduated from Bowdoin College with a double major in English and philosophy. He is currently teaching at Dong Nai University in Bien Hoa. His academic interest is Asian American literature, and he intends to pursue a PhD in English after his Fulbright year. In his free time, he likes to read fiction and watch old movies.



"Hey from Yen Bai! I am **Connor Mullins** - the ETA that has been assigned to spend the next year working with the English Major class at the Yen Bai Teacher Training College, located in Yen Bai province up north in the mountains. I graduated from the University of New Hampshire in '18 with my B.A in English and Education, and '19 with my M.Ed in Secondary Education. Coming from Worcester, Massachusetts. I am humbled to have received a Fulbright position, hoping to use this experience to make an impact in my student's lives, and grow personally and professionally in ways I had never considered."



**Ellie Grabowski** is an ETA at the Ba Ria - Vung Tau College of Education in the city of Ba Ria. She graduated from Carleton College in June 2019 with a degree in French/Francophone Studies and English. She loves those moments in the classroom when the teacher and students are both learning from each other. So far, she is most enjoying teaching her very enthusiastic students, exploring different parts of her city and province, and learning Vietnamese. In her free time, she likes to read, journal, swim, and try as many different kinds of Vietnamese coffee as possible.



**Travis Stahl** recently graduated from Carnegie Mellon University with a M.S. in Public Policy and Management. He is currently serving as an ETA at Hung Vuong University in Phu Tho Province. He is grateful for the opportunity to both teach and learn during his Fulbright grant in Vietnam.

On September 13th, 2019, Prof. Frank Proschan - an American anthropologist under the Fulbright Scholar Program donated a number of academic books to the library of Faculty of Anthropology, University of Social Sciences & Humanities (USSH), Vietnam National University in Hanoi. In addition, Prof. Frank Proschan is donating a collection of selected textbooks and references in English to library of Faculty of Anthropology in order to help promote and improve the quality of its research and training activities according to international standards.



*In the photo:  
"Prof. Phạm Quang Minh, Rector of USSH and  
Dr. Frank Proschan"*

Source: <http://ussh.vnu.edu.vn/d6/en-US/news/ProfFrank-Proschan-donates-books-to-Faculty-of-Anthropology-1-690-19332>

## De-briefing session and Re-entry seminar for the newly-returned Vietnamese Scholars and Students

Reunion is the time when most newly returned grantees look forward to seeing their fellows again and sharing the memories and experiences from the U.S. As an annual practice, this year, eighteen Vietnamese scholars, students and FLTA gathered in Can Tho for a 3-day reunion with lots of exciting activities. The Reunion started with an exchange session with faculty members and students of Can Tho University. While the group of Fulbright scholars shared their tips on preparing a winning research proposal for funding, the Fulbright students and FLTAs talked to the young people on how the US Education has changed their lives. Participants were inspired by the real stories of the real people who have gone through the Fulbright selection process, and have lived the American life and education within the Fulbright timeframe.



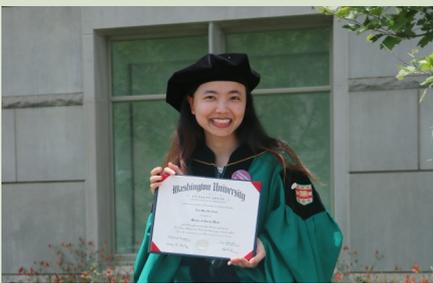
The Reunion was followed by the presentations from all Fulbrighters on their time in the U.S. Personal experiences were told, achievements were highlighted, secrets were revealed, and thoughts were shared. All Fulbrighters were thinking about what they could do to pay it forward to the community upon their return to the best of themselves. Ideas on the alumni grant projects were discussed in small groups. Among them, there are some great ideas which receive a lot of supports from Fulbrighters such as LGBT corner in An Giang Province to provide information and support for the LGBT community; English Training for Trainers in the Mekong Delta region; etc.



## *My healing journey*

*By Tra My Tran*

I am Tra My, a clinical social worker serving street children and survivors of human trafficking. I just returned to Vietnam in June 2019 after studying master's program of clinical social work at George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis.



When people asked me about my experiences in the United States, some of them did not wait for me to respond. They asked and answered at the same time, saying “You must have such a great life in the US, right? You got paid for everything. You have nothing to worry about...” Others reached out to me and asked me to help them with their application to Fulbright program, believing that this prestigious scholarship will lead them to a better future. Well, I have no argument as I did enjoy my student life in America where I lived every single day in gratitude and appreciation for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Yet, there is one aspect that people often do not ask or mention (and I myself never expected before leaving for my study) when they talk about studying overseas is the struggle with mental health issues.

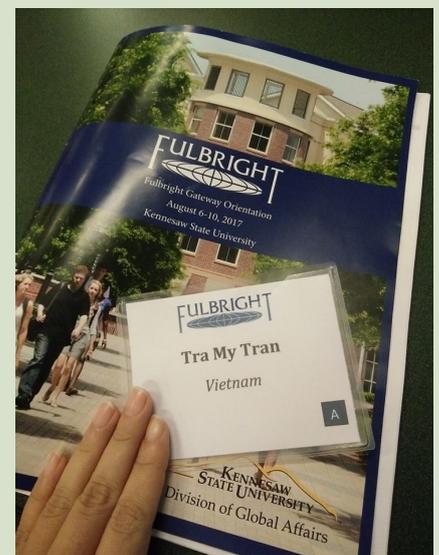
It took me seven years to prepare for my application to Fulbright scholarship and admission to one of two best social work schools in America. I studied hard to improve my English, worked days and nights to make myself a potential candidate for the scholarship. However, I had never thought that one day I would fall in the trap of depression when studying overseas – the time I should have enjoyed

myself the most. Out of my control, I suffered from clinical depression for more than six months in my second year in America. You may quickly question why a graduate student studying mental health struggle with depression. I do not feel offended if you do as I was the very first one who asked myself that question. “Why me? Why now?” were the most recurrent thoughts I had on those days when I woke up having no energy to get myself out of bed, when I isolated myself from people, when I easily got angry over minor things, and when I spent nights crying for no reason. The fact that I, a future mental health practitioner, struggled with a mental illness was indeed embarrassing and prevented me from seeking professional help. The feeling of shame, self-blaming, and confusion locked me in the circle of negative thoughts and took away my ability to experience happiness. They were like monsters who were just waiting for the right moments to beat me down. I called myself a failure until I talked to my professor. He listened and just gently said that **“Tra My, depression is real, nobody is immune to it. It does exist, but you are not your depression!”** His response was such an awakening that I came to realize I have power over my mental illness by changing my perspective and reaching out for help.

I also came to fully understand that I can never become a source of support for anyone either professionally or personally if I deny the vulnerable aspect of myself. I then sought psychotherapy provided by Student Health Center and committed to work on my mental problems. This process turned out to be valuable learning experience for my postgraduate job as a clinical social worker. Being on therapy means fighting against my up-and-down mood to keep my academic and out-of-school life on track. Getting myself control over depression means learning to

validate my feelings and love myself a little more day after day. I also practiced mindful walking in the park as a grounding exercise to regulate my emotions. This activity was a nature retreat that created a path to my inner peace and balance.

Now looking back, I am grateful that depression came to me when I was by myself in a foreign country. This experience was definitely scary, however, it was a reminder that I need to take care of myself physically, emotionally, and mentally to enjoy my life to the fullest. If you are struggling with mental health issue, I know you may feel panicked, confused, and even hate yourself for what you are suffering. Mental illness is real but it does not define you. Please believe that you are not alone and that recovery is possible if you seek help. Fulbright program is a useful source of support you may want to count on. Sharing your concerns with your Fulbright or IIE advisor and utilizing available resources on campus were also great choices. **“There is no health without mental health”** – the more you are aware of your inner broken pieces, the more you are capable of healing them into an integrated self.





### “Connecting With The Global Development of The Social Work Profession”

*By Susan McConaughy, U.S. scholar 2019—2020*

The most meaningful experiences in my first months as a Fulbright Scholar at Da Lat University (DLU) occurred in teaching collaborations with students and faculty in the social work department. My teaching began by offering a core course in the social work curriculum, “Foundations of Social Work Practice”, to 47 second year social work undergraduates. This course covers the conceptual frameworks and values that underline social work practice. Teaching this core course quickly made me part of a working university: students and faculty engaged in the enterprise of developing professional training in the specific context of Vietnam.

Students here are gaining skills that are valuable to themselves and to their local communities. At the same time, students, faculty and I were engaged together in sorting out the particulars of practice in our own national and local contexts. Seeing the similarities and differences was a constant source of discussion. This joint enterprise created a strong link for me back to my professional community in the US over 4 decades. It has been rewarding for me to draw from my practice experience and find it so useful to this new generation of professionals in Vietnam. To be valued and “fully used”: this is what every older person wants as a capstone to a life’s work. Thank you, Fulbright and DLU!! At the same time, to question the centrality of my US experience in the context of practice in Vietnam has been a most refreshing tonic! I emerge re-charged to grow my outlook every day I leave the classroom.

At the same time, our collaboration also connected DLU faculty and students and I with the larger global development of the social work profession. I think that for all of us, this course provided an experience of being part of a larger professional community with an important mission: to extend the reach of social work values so dear to us, and to extend the understanding and acceptance of our knowledge and skills. Social work means more to many of us than a profession; it is a vocation.

In the classroom, I’ve drawn heavily from the teaching methods I’ve honed in my home universities: formative evaluation, reflective learning, self-reflective practice, the strengths-based approach, etc. These methods have been met with an enthusiastic response from both students and teachers. For example, we have done formative evaluation at four points during this semester. Students filled out 3x5 index cards anonymously answering the questions: What is the most important thing you have learned about the current framework? What important questions do you still have about it? My colleagues translated the students’ feedback to me, and we faculty discussed it. In every instance, we and the Dean of Social work were thrilled with the sophisticated and thoughtful questions students posed. My

love for these students grew as I heard how deeply they felt about their social work practice. We all went back into the classroom renewed and more deeply connected to our dear students each time as we discussed their sincere questions.

I have been so fortunate that DLU chose to support me fully by giving me the services of an experienced faculty member to translate my slides and interpret for me in the classroom. When Nguyen Thi Minh Hien translates my slides, she will ask for clarification of concepts when needed. I then get a chance to explain them more clearly, and sometimes introduce her to new ideas. In the classroom, she then not only interprets what I am saying, she also explains the concepts in her own way. We have become true co-teachers of this course. Mrs. Hien has also been able to “read the room” at times in ways that are supremely useful to our teaching. When we debrief after each class, she will give me her sense of what students understood and what they need more help with. We can then re-set our course.

I also modelled self-reflective learning and the value of formative practice by sharing – perhaps too much sharing – my own struggles learning to practice some of these concepts during my own practice as a social worker. I’m not exactly sure how this was taken, but I did gain a reputation as being very funny. I think that these experiences of formative evaluation were invigorating for all of us and I believe it will be sustained at DLU.

Another example of sharing relatively new teaching methods was our use of active, applied practice learning exercises two or three times in each class session. In these exercises, students worked first alone or in pairs to apply a concept; then shared with their small group of 6-8; and then each group reported out to the whole group.

This practice allows students to test out their ideas in manageable pairs before sharing with a larger group. Then the small group could bring different points of view together, and enliven the dialog. Finally each small group selected a speaker to share with the larger group. These sessions surprised us faculty with the capacity of students to put new ideas into use, and to show us quickly where they needed more instruction. It was thrilling to see so many students buzzing with discussion in their pairs and groups. Students later reported that they had gotten more confident sharing their own ideas, sharing their own stories, and discussing them with a group. Faculty in their other courses told me these students were much more confident than previous groups of students.

Another very meaningful part of my time in Da Lat has been my experience struggling to learn the Vietnamese language. It was a challenge for me to defy the odds (or a tired stereotype about the older brain) and learn a new language at the age of 69. This is thanks to daily – and twice daily – language lessons with native speakers. (Skype, italki and Fulbright have made this affordable for me.) Vietnamese is an intriguing and beautiful language with its melodious flat tones, it’s new sounds that my throat must learn to make, is softer and more fluid use of the mouth. I love the logic of the language and its imaginative nouns! Learning this language has been a distinct pleasure *and* a work out!

My struggles learning Vietnamese has “leveled the field” in my relationships with my Vietnamese colleagues and students who in recent years are pressured to acquire quite a bit of facility in English. English can be a difficult language to learn because it also requires the production of new sounds, new forms of emphasis rather than tones, bewildering pronunciation rules, etc., etc. We can laugh at ourselves as we take more risks in our new languages.

Maybe most important of all, learning the sounds of the Vietnamese language has forced me to listen, to listen closely to my experience in Vietnam. It is music to my ears.



*In the photo: “Ms. Nguyen Thi Minh Hien, lecturer of the Social Work Department, Da Lat University, and Dr. Susan McConaughy are working with undergraduate students to apply the Strengths Perspective to their practice of social work.”*



## Developing a Computing Curriculum for a New University by Dr. Clif Kussmaul, Fulbright Specialist at Fulbright University Vietnam Sept.—Oct. 2019

As a professor, I watched students return from international experiences with new insights, attitudes, and skills that would help them through the rest of their lives. As a student, I did not study outside of the US, unfortunately, but the Fulbright Program has enabled me to have life-changing experiences outside the US.

In 2009-2010 I was a US Scholar at the University of Kerala, in southern India, and I return to India almost every year to visit friends, lead faculty workshops, and attend conferences. In 2017 I was a Specialist at Ashesi University, in Ghana, and I have just finished a second Specialist project at Fulbright University Vietnam (FUV).

FUV is a recently created private, nonprofit university in Ho Chi Minh City. FUV is inspired by the American liberal arts tradition, and committed to innovation and serving Vietnamese society. FUV is supported by the Vietnamese and American governments, and grew out of the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program. In addition to the existing Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management, FUV is also developing an undergraduate program in engineering and the liberal arts and sciences, which enrolled its first class of 113 students in the fall of 2019.

As a Fulbright Specialist, my primary goal was to help develop the undergraduate computing curriculum. Thus, I worked with the computing faculty to review existing curricular models, develop a high-level structure, write a full set of course descriptions, and draft more detailed syllabi for the first few courses.

I also participated in a variety of other activities with Fulbright faculty, students, and staff, including a workshop on Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL), lectures

and made many new contacts that I hope will lead to new collaborations. I shared my knowledge and experienced, and learned many things about Vietnam, education, and computing



on Free & Open Source Software (FOSS), and numerous discussions about computing, curriculum design, pedagogy, and other topics. In computing disciplines change is constant, and thus computing curricula must also change to stay current.

FUV is a new institution, working to decide how its curriculum will be structured and how it might evolve in the coming years. I supported Ashesi University in going through a similar process 15 years ago, and I have visited a variety of new engineering colleges in southern India. I find it exciting to visit and exchange ideas with people at such institutions. I had a wonderful time, reconnected with colleagues from past projects,

that will help me in the future. I also enjoyed day trips to the Cu Chi Tunnels, Ha Long Bay, and the Mekong Delta, and exploring sights, restaurants, and shopping in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi.

*In the photo: Dr. Clif Kussmaul gave a public talk on "Free & Open Source Software (FOSS)" at the U.S. Consulate's American Center in HCMC.*

## “If no whale temple is nearby, a new one will be built”

*by Dr. Ellen Hines*

*Fulbright ASEAN Research Scholar at Danang University of Education*

**Dr. Ellen Hines, the Associate Director of the Romberg Tiburon Center for Environmental Studies, is also a Professor in the Department of Geography & Environment at San Francisco State University.**

Her research addresses population and community ecology of threatened and endangered species in local conservation efforts and regional scale coastal and marine management science. Her emphasis is on the evolution of consistent standards of field methods and monitoring techniques, and the creation of educational materials that can be applied to community-based conservation planning.

Dr. Hines has extensive experience in GIS and remote sensing for marine and coastal spatial planning. She has conducted marine mammal research in Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar and Belize since 1999. Dr. Hines has been researching dugongs and coastal dolphins and porpoises along the eastern Gulf of Thailand since 2003. She is committed to collaborating with developing country scientists to solve conservation problems threatening marine mammals. In California, Dr. Hines works closely with the National Marine Sanctuaries outside San Francisco Bay to model habitat and human uses for marine mammals and seabirds. With her students, she works to create risk assessments for anthropogenic threats such as shipping collisions, and the effects of sea level rise on pinnipeds in coastal estuaries.

During the summer 2019, Dr. Hines is in Vietnam under the Fulbright ASEAN Program working with **University of Education – The University of Danang**. The purpose of regional research and monitoring is to highlight and assess the influence of events, processes, threats on local ecosystems. This research brings to light the issues affecting larger systems and allows us to understand important linkages and applications. Coastal marine habitats are under

ever-growing pressure due to rapidly increasing human populations and the consequential overexploitation of natural resources. In many areas, this pressure has resulted in the degradation of coastal resources that were historically sustainable and form the livelihood of local people.



Marine mammals, as top predators in nearshore and coastal ecosystems, are critical indicators of the condition and functioning of the ecological communities these people depend on. As umbrella species, their presence represents the biodiversity of their environment. Knowledge of their role in coastal systems is also vital towards evaluating their effect on prey populations, their harvesting by humans, their interactions with near-shore communities and fisheries.

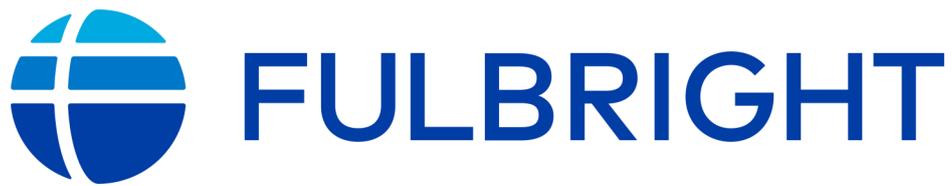
In Southeast Asia, there are approximately 30 species, perhaps 1/4 of the world's species. Many of these populations are declining due to over-fishing, human overpopulation, development, and by-catch. One of the first steps to ascertain the exposure and sustainability of marine

mammals in the face of these threats is basic inventory, what species, how many and where?

In Vietnam, the status of marine mammals in the adjacent waters of Vietnam remains poorly known and little studied. There are no abundance estimates for any species. There have been few field studies of marine mammals along Vietnam's 3,260 km of coastline. A series of marine mammal surveys have been undertaken in Vietnam that included riverine and selected coastal areas, and some measurements of marine mammal skeletal remains in whale temples. Fishermen in Vietnam believe that whales and dolphins are sacred animals. Dolphins are thought to save drowning fishermen and whales to rescue sinking ships. Therefore when carcasses are found, fishermen will bury them, as they do humans, clean the skeletons and take them to whale temples. If no whale temple is nearby, a new one will be built. These temples are an incredible opportunity to study the presence of marine mammal species along the coast of Vietnam.

This research will, in Vietnam, enable Dr. Hines to work with and train students and local scientists to set up survey protocols and morphometric (skeletal) measurements in whale temples to assess and confirm species presence.





Fulbright Program in Vietnam  
Public Affairs Section - U.S. Embassy in Hanoi  
Rose Garden Tower, 170 Ngoc Khanh, Ba Dinh, Hanoi  
Phone: (+84-24) 3850-5000/ Fax: (+84-24) 3850-5120  
Email: [vnfulbright@state.gov](mailto:vnfulbright@state.gov)  
Website: <https://vn.usembassy.gov/education-culture/fulbright-program-vietnam/>