

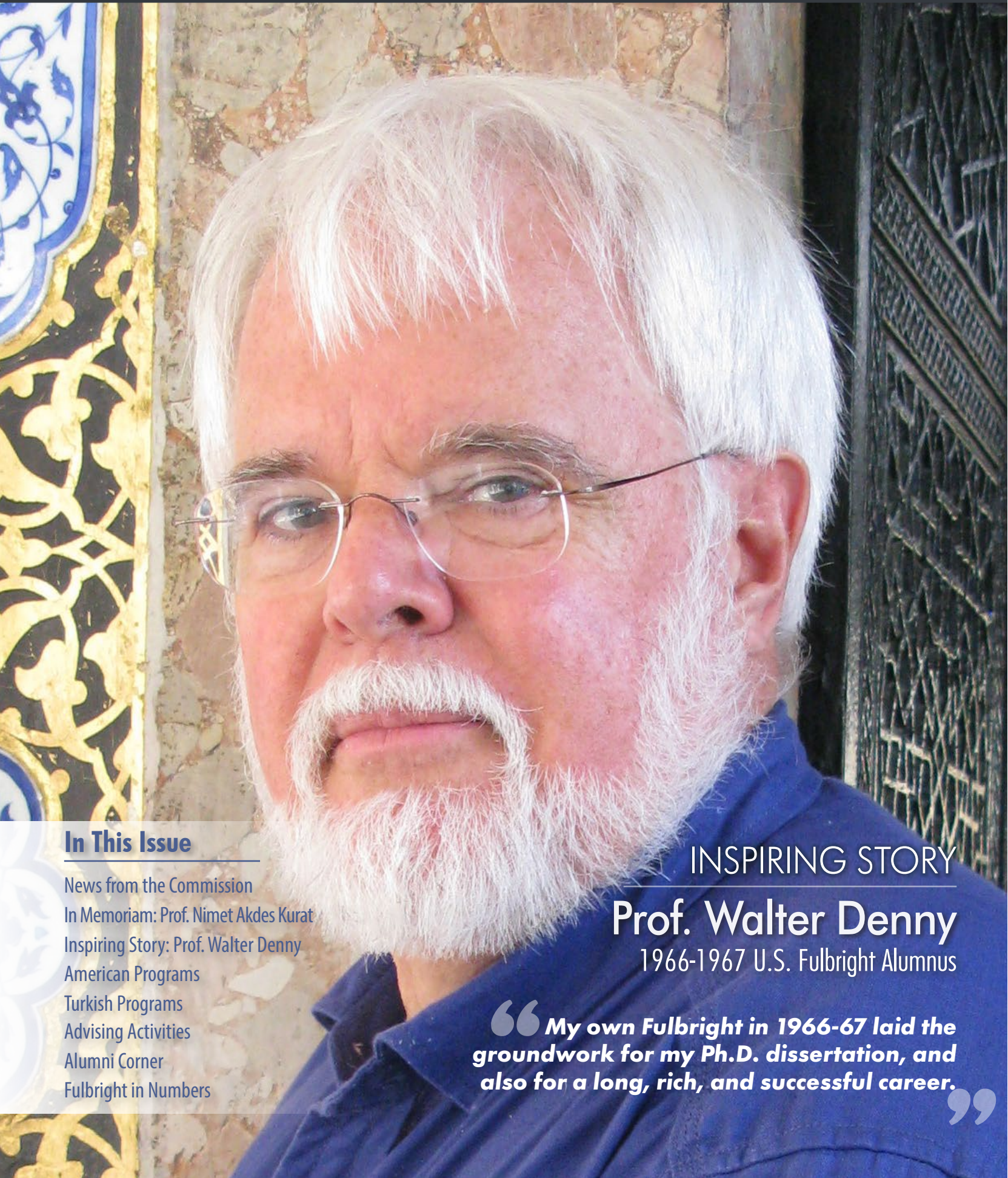


THE TURKISH FULBRIGHT COMMISSION
NEWSLETTER

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Issue 1



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INSPIRING STORY

Prof. Walter Denny

1966-1967 U.S. Fulbright Alumnus

“My own Fulbright in 1966-67 laid the groundwork for my Ph.D. dissertation, and also for a long, rich, and successful career.”

From the Executive Director

Dear Fulbright friends,

Welcome to this latest issue of our biannual newsletter. Once again, as you'll read about on the following pages, we've had another busy six months. In addition to updating you on changes and developments in our Commission, we are always happy to be able to share with you in these newsletters personal stories of current and former Fulbright grantees, and inform you about opportunities that you, as a friend or alumnus of Turkish Fulbright, might be interested in taking part in.

In this issue we are happy to report on news from our current English Teaching Assistant (ETA) program grantees. The ETA program in Turkey was, just a couple of years ago, the largest of its kind in the world, and we are extremely happy that it has resumed this year after a two-year hiatus. This year's ETAs are now well settled in their host institutions, and have also had the opportunity to attend special seminars in Bulgaria and Ukraine--which you can read about below.

We were also proud to have recently hosted once again a 2-day workshop on fostering engagement in study abroad, intended for strengthening Turkish universities' capacity for hosting and sending students to and from abroad for educational exchanges.

Also in this issue I think you'll enjoy reading the inspiring story of Professor Walter Denny, whose connection with Turkey--through Fulbright--extends back to his father's Fulbright grant in the late 1950s, which first brought a 16-year-old Denny to Istanbul. He would later spend his own Fulbright grant year in Turkey nearly a decade later, and since then, has developed a lifelong professional and personal connection with this country.

Finally, I need to note some comings and goings. First I'd like to welcome as our new Board member Ms. Stephanie Kuck, who has also recently joined the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul as the Public Affairs Officer, and also Mr. Jeffrey Hovenier, the new Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara and our new honorary Board Chairman. Sadly, I also have to mention the departure of a few of our valued staff members at the Commission, in each case the result of family changes and relocation--both within Turkey and overseas. All of our departing friends will be sorely missed. I personally would like to extend my warmest wishes and thanks to them as they make these moves in their lives, and remind them that they will always remain a part of the Fulbright family.

Enjoy these and all the rest of the news and stories in this issue. Wishing you the best for the holiday season and New Year.



Prof. Ersel Aydınli

An Inspiring Story

Prof. Walter Denny is an American historian of Islamic Art. He is currently teaching at University of Massachusetts Amherst. His primary fields of teaching and research are Islamic Art and Architecture, in particular the artistic tradition of the Ottoman Turks, Islamic carpets and textiles, Islamic imagery in European Art, and issues of economics and patronage in Islamic Art.

He did undergraduate work at Robert College (Istanbul), Grinnell College, the State University of Iowa, and received his BA cum laude from Oberlin College in 1964. After graduate study at Harvard University and Istanbul Technical University on a Fulbright Fellowship, he received his PhD in Fine Arts from Harvard in 1970.

(You can read our interview with Prof. Walter Denny on pages 10-13)



News from the Commission

Fulbright Alumni Association Meeting in Ankara

Members of Fulbright Alumni Association organized a networking meeting in our Ankara Office. President of the Fulbright Alumni Association Faruk Aktay and Association

Board member Mert Özgür mentioned that the Fulbright Alumni Association aims to reach Fulbright Alumni across Turkey and gather them under one roof.



Fulbright Alumni Association meeting in our Ankara Office

Visit by the Chargé d'Affaires



Chargé d'Affaires Mr. Jeff Hovenier (in the middle) visits our Ankara office with Mr. Scott Weinhold (right) Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Consulate in Ankara

In September, the recently appointed Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Mr. Jeffrey M. Hovenier, visited our office in Ankara. During his visit, Mr. Hovenier was able to meet with our staff and was informed about our Commission and the programs we administer for both American and Turkish grantees.

A Warm Welcome to Our New Board Member

We are delighted to welcome Ms. Stephanie Kuck, Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul, as our new Commission Board member. After starting her new role at the U.S. Consulate and as our Board Member, Ms. Kuck visited our Ankara Office. Her enthusiasm to serve on the Commission Board and her impressive work experiences will bring valuable assets to our activities for establishing mutual understanding between the people of the U.S. and Turkey.



Ms. Kuck visited our Ankara Office on October 4, 2018.

Our Executive Director's Attendance at the American Chambers of Commerce Turkey's Public Affairs Committee Meeting

Our Executive Director, Prof. Ersel Aydınlı attended the gathering of the Public Affairs Committee hosted by the American Chamber of Commerce Turkey (AmCham Turkey) on November 8, 2018, where he spoke on the importance of culture in increasing the richness of the international business environment.



Our Commission's Executive Director making his remarks on the importance of cultural aspects in business environments. (Permitted to be used by AmCham Turkey)

The English Teaching Assistant Program in Turkey Resumes After Two Years

Our Commission is pleased to announce that the English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Program in Turkey has officially resumed after a period of two years. The ETA Program in Turkey started with a small group of grantees in 2001-2002, but by 2016 it had become the largest university level ETA Program in the world, with over 100 ETAs participating. For the 2018-2019 academic year, a group of eight bright and enthusiastic college graduates from the United States have come to Turkey to spend a year teaching English in state universities in Ankara.



ETA grantees during the orientation program

A Warm Goodbye to Our Colleagues

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Ms. Seher Türkyılmaz Sinclair, Ms. Bahar Deniz Türkaslan Tekin, Ms. Begüm Nebol Özdamar and Ms. Tess Waggoner for their invaluable services to our Commission.

Ms. Seher Türkyılmaz Sinclair served as both the Deputy Executive Director and Finance Officer during her seven years with the Turkish Fulbright Commission. Her many contributions and tireless efforts were critical in helping grow the reputation and scope of our Commission.

Ms. Bahar Deniz Türkaslan Tekin's seven years of service as the Advising Coordinator greatly enriched the development of the advising services with her innovative ideas on how better to help our grantees.

Ms. Begüm Nebol Özdamar, as the Turkish Programs Officer, will be leaving the commission to start a new chapter in her life in the beginning of 2019. Her meticulous work has always been deeply appreciated in the Commission during her five years of service.

Ms. Tess Waggoner, as a former ETA grantee, served as American Programs Assistant and ETA Advisor, and contributed tremendously to our Commission in giving culturally-appropriate responses while communicating with our American grantees.

We wish them all the very best in this new chapter in their lives. We would like to express our indebtedness by highlighting their remarkable service.



Our staff with Ms. Seher Türkyılmaz Sinclair (fifth person from the right) at the goodbye dinner organized to show our appreciation.



Ms. Bahar Deniz Türkaslan Tekin (right) and Ms. Tess Waggoner (left) at the goodbye dinner.



Ms. Begüm Nebol Özdamar at the goodbye dinner.

Changes in Our Commission

Our Commission is growing with the participation of Ms. Didem Çınar, Dr. Özlem Erden, Ms. Güneş Tunç and Ms. Neslihan Tekman. We are delighted to welcome our new staff members. Ms. Didem Çınar as the Finance Officer; Dr. Özlem Erden as the Senior Executive Assistant of our Commission; Ms. Güneş Tunç as the Program Assistant and Ms. Neslihan Tekman as the Administrative Assistant.

We also would like to congratulate Ms. Nazlı Bulgurluoğlu and Ms. Duygu Kimençe on their promotions. Ms. Nazlı Bulgurluoğlu served as Program Assistant in our Commission and has recently been appointed as the Advising Coordinator. Ms. Duygu Kimençe, our former Administrative Assistant, was first promoted to be the Program Assistant, and is now serving as our interim Turkish Programs Officer. We wish them good luck in their new positions.



Photo: Didem Çınar (left, top), Dr. Özlem Erden (left, bottom), Neslihan Tekman (right, bottom), Güneş Tunç (right, top)

Fulbright Office Retreat in Mudanya, Bursa

Our Commission prepared an Office Retreat Meeting in Mudanya, Bursa. During this trip, we had the opportunity to come together and bond as a team. Interacting in a new environment helped us refocus on our priorities as the Turkish Fulbright Commission. We enjoyed a guided historical tour of Mudanya, and learned more about the Armistice of Mudanya and the cultural mosaics of this beautiful coastal province.



German-Turkish Fulbright Commission Staff Meets in Ankara

Program Officer of the German Fulbright Commission, Ms. Annina Kull, visited our Ankara office and was welcomed by our colleagues Nazlı Bulgurluoğlu and Dr. Özlem Erden. In this short visit, they were able to exchange ideas about improving alumni networking and advising activities.



Ms. Annina Kull (in the middle) from the German Fulbright Commission visits our office in Ankara



Thanksgiving Dinner in Ankara and Istanbul

We celebrated Thanksgiving with our grantees both in Ankara and Istanbul. A Thanksgiving potluck celebration was held at our Ankara Head Office on Tuesday November 20, 2018 for our ETA Grantees. Grantees who are placed in Eskişehir, İzmir and Istanbul also came together at a Thanksgiving Dinner in Istanbul on Friday November 23, 2018. Our Executive Director, Prof. Ersel Aydınli and his wife, Prof. Julie Mathews-Aydınli, Commission staff, U.S. Scholars, student researchers, and their families and alumni came together and enjoyed a wide range of traditional American Thanksgiving dishes as well as some classic Turkish food.

Turkish Alumni Associations Meeting in Antalya



The Turkish Alumni Associations organized an alumni meeting in Antalya on December 8, 2018 in collaboration with one of our alumni, Prof. İsmail Tufan, at Akdeniz University. Our Senior Executive Assistant Dr. Özlem Erden, who is also a Fulbright alumna, was invited to this meeting. In this meeting, Dr. Erden highlighted the importance of alumni relations for developing better ties among Fulbrighters, and the president of the Turkish Alumni Association, Faruk Aktay, invited Fulbright alumni to become members and connect with other Fulbright scholars, teachers, professionals and students. Prof. Tufan gave a presentation on his research on gerontology and invited the students of 60+ Tazelenme University to his panel. 60+ Tazelenme University is a unique project that provides educational service to people over the age of 60.

Workshop on Fostering Study Abroad Engagement

On November 27-28, 2018, our Commission prepared a second workshop in a series entitled “Workshop on Fostering Productive Cultural Exchange through U.S. Study Abroad Program” to foster study abroad engagements in higher education institutions. This workshop began with the welcoming remarks of our Executive Director, Prof. Ersel Aydınli. Prof. Aydınli emphasized the importance of timely responses to international students’ study abroad experiences to strengthen relationships with partnering countries and institutions. After his remarks, Dr. Özlem Erden facilitated an introduction activity to help participants get to know each other better before taking part in the workshop sessions and panels.

The Workshop sessions began with our Advising Coordinator Ms. Nazlı Bulgurluoğlu’s presentation on the Turkish Fulbright Commission and on Fulbright grants for Turkish citizens, and American Programs Officer Ms. Mevlüde Bakır’s presentation on Fulbright Grants for American Citizens, in order to introduce some of our grants that can help the attendees’ institutions send and receive students and academics to and from the U.S. and Turkey. Ms. Bulgurluoğlu gave a second presentation on the American Higher Education System to inform participants about the characteristics of American Higher Education.

Later in the workshop, Ms. Jennifer Lawson from the U.S. Department of State Study Abroad Office connected to our workshop through a digital platform to discuss challenges, opportunities, and resources for recruiting and receiving U.S. study abroad students. Our panel aimed to discuss real experiences of U.S. students in Turkey so for this purpose we invited two of our former grantees, Mr. John F. Hadley and Mr.





Kyle A. Zurcher, who are both currently graduate students in Turkey, to share their study abroad experiences with workshop participants. Participants and our presenters continued their fruitful discussions on how to improve study abroad practice at a group dinner.



On the second day, our workshop began with two panel sessions on model study abroad practices in state and private universities in Turkey. Our first panelists were Prof. N. Zeynep Atay, Vice Chancellor of Boğaziçi University, and Dr. İbrahim Yorgun, Director of the International Cooperation Office at Middle East Technical University. They shared their experiences in building and strengthening their international exchange relations with other institutions in different countries through signing bilateral agreements and effectively monitoring memoranda of understanding. In the second panel, panelists Ms. Burcu Sarsılmaz Çoşan, Director of the Office of International Programs at Koç University, and Ms. B. Yasemin Başar, Student Advisor at the Office of International Students and Exchange Programs at İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, shared their institutions' policies and practices to further international exchanges and to better accommodate both degree-seeking international students and short-term exchange students.



In the afternoon of the second workshop day, our participants worked together as teams to develop effective strategies to solve issues regarding student exchanges. Each group received a story on an imaginary international student, which was written by gathering real study abroad experiences of international students in Turkey. Our participants worked in collaboration to solve the problem of this international student and presented their group's work to the others. In a final group discussion, participants suggested alternative solutions to other groups to improve their action plans.



We are delighted to complete this workshop with success and hoping to host the next one in the following year. We also thank our participants for their time and effort.

In Memoriam: Prof. Nimet Akdes Kurat

A Refugee, a Historian and a Fulbright Scholar: Nimet Akdes Kurat

Prof. Nimet Akdes Kurat, who was born in Berkete Village in Kazan, Tatarstan, was a renowned historian on Russian-Turkish political relations. He passed away in a tragic traffic accident while he was travelling from Ankara to Istanbul in 1971. He started his education in Russia and travelled to Germany for his graduate studies in 1922. After Germany, he could not go back to his village due to the Russian occupation, and instead came to Turkey as part of the forced migration movement that occurred during the early years of the young Turkish Republic.

Prof. Kurat began studying philosophy and history in the Faculty of Literature in Istanbul University. In the following year after his arrival in Istanbul, he was hired to organize and translate Turkology texts written in Russian, Turkish and Polish in the Institute of Turkic Studies. Upon graduation from the History Department, he became a teacher in the Konya Teacher Training High School.

The Turkish Government supported his Ph.D. research on Eastern Europe and Byzantine history by sending him to Breslau and Hamburg University in Germany in 1929. He finished his Ph.D. studies in 1933 and returned to Istanbul. He was promoted to a tenured position at Istanbul University, but shortly after his promotion, he went to Uppsala University in Switzerland. While there he revealed important document regarding the Prut Military Expedition and wrote his book "The Prut Military Expedition and Peace". In 1938, he returned to Turkey.



Between 1938 and 1941, he worked as a history teacher in Denizli High School and the Gazi Institute of Education in Ankara. When a new department on Russian Language and Literature was opened in 1944, he was appointed to work as an assistant professor. In 1944, he became a professor in the Medieval Age program. His archival work on the Medieval Age continued in the United Kingdom between 1946-1947.

His research in 1956 on the relations between the United States and the Near East during the second half of the 19th and the first years of the 20th centuries was his first step to earning the Fulbright award. He received \$1200 from the Rockefeller Foundation. Nimet Akdes Kurat's journey with the Fulbright Program began in 1961, when he researched on American-Turkish relations between 1800-1960 at American University in Washington D.C.

Nimet Akdes Kurat was a pioneer in the field of history because of his emphasis on the importance of using systematic research methods to better reach and analyze archival material and resources. Unfortunately, the field of history lost Nimet Akdes Kurat at an early age, as he passed away in a tragic bus accident while he was travelling from Ankara to Istanbul in 1971. However, historians and scholars continue remembering his legacy in history with symposiums dedicated to his name.

An Inspiring Story: Prof. Walter Denny

Two Decades of Love for Islamic Art



Prof. Walter Denny at Rustem Pasha Camii

(continued from page 2)

Can you briefly tell us about yourself?

I have been teaching at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst for almost 49 years, since completing my Ph.D. at Harvard in 1970. I presently hold the title of Distinguished Professor of the History of Art and Architecture. One of my primary areas of research is the art and architecture of Ottoman Turkey. I am married to Alice Robbins, a professional musician specializing in Early Music, and have one son, Matthew, who is completing his Ph.D. in Political Science at age 30. Both Alice and Matthew share my enthusiasm for all things Turkish.

You studied at Robert College in Istanbul. What was the reason for studying at Robert College?

My father, Wayne Denny, taught Physics at Grinnell College in Grinnell Iowa. For a 1958 sabbatical, he applied to Fulbright to teach abroad, and was given the choice of two English-language institutions, one in Istanbul (Robert College) and one in Peshawar, Pakistan. An Iowa neighbor drew our attention to the October 1956 National Geographic Magazine article on Robert College, and the rest, as it turned out, is (art) history. While there, I took courses at both Lise and University level while I was 16 years old.

How did you become interested in Islamic architecture? Is there a significant person that influenced you?

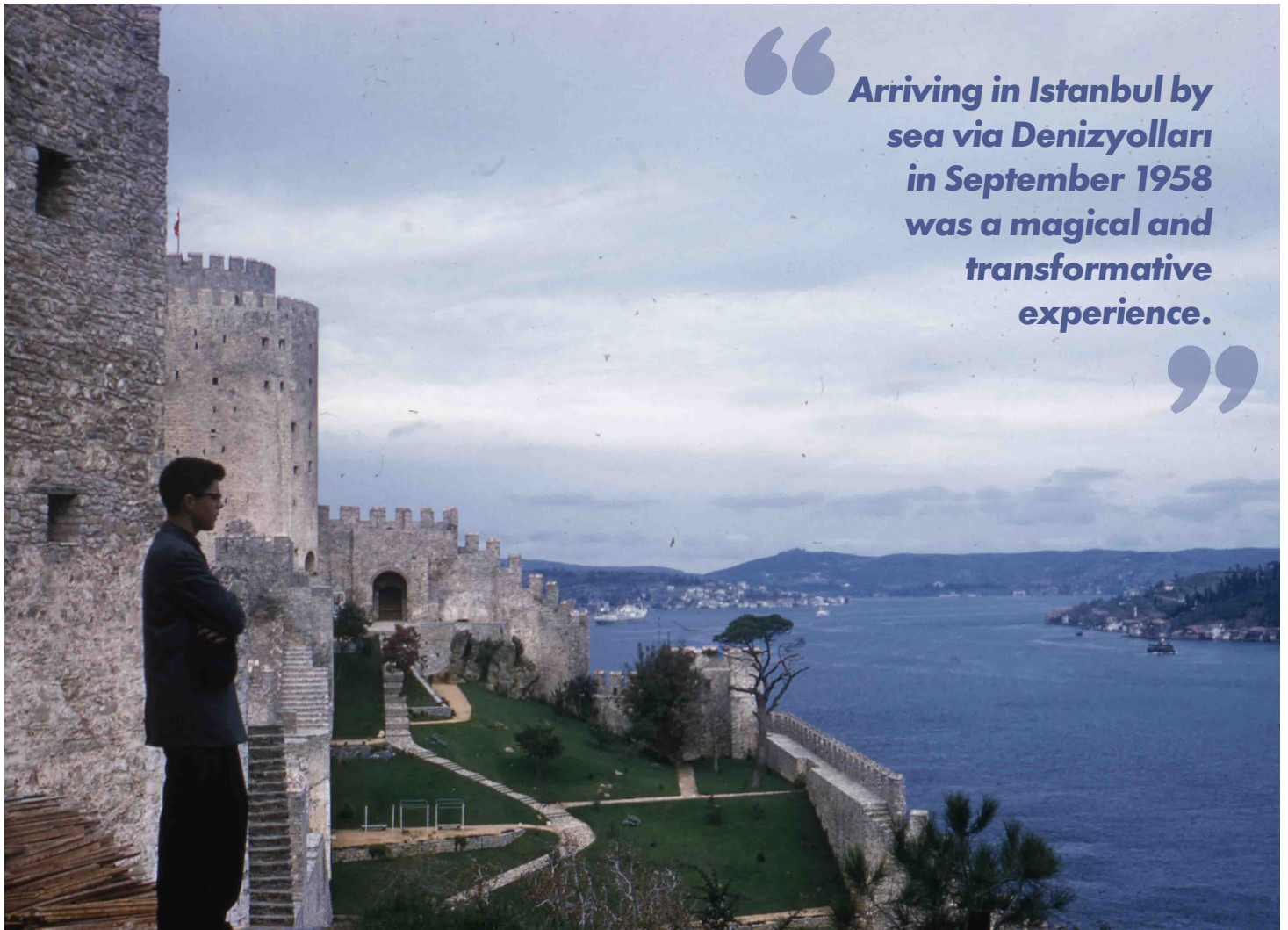
A combination of my new fascination with Istanbul, systematic photography of Ottoman buildings, and a life-changing college course in the history of music turned me away from the sciences, and eventually led to my choice of History as a major at Oberlin College (1960-64) and History of Art with a specialty in Islamic art as my Ph.D. field at Harvard University (1964-1970).

I have continued to do research and photography in Turkey through my almost five decades at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Dozens of books, exhibition catalogs, articles, reviews, and other publications have appeared as a result of my falling in love with Istanbul in 1958, along with hundreds of public lectures and conference papers, the former giving me a chance to share my enthusiasm for Turkey and its artistic traditions among thousands of Americans. In addition, I have had the wonderful opportunity to lead museum-related tours focusing on Islamic art and architecture to Turkey for Harvard University, the University of Massachusetts/ Amherst, and other institutions.

How did you feel when you arrived in Turkey?

Arriving in Istanbul by sea via Denizyolları in September 1958 was a magical and transformative experience. I was 16, an ideal age to begin exploring the city in free time after my classes at Robert College, Robert Academy and high school correspondence learning from the University of Nebraska. At that





Prof. Walter Denny at Rumeli Hisari in 1958

“ Arriving in Istanbul by sea via Denizyolları in September 1958 was a magical and transformative experience. ”

time, I had the ambition of visiting all of the Ottoman mosques of Istanbul. 60 years later, the task is still not complete. In 1958 a next-door neighbor in Bebek, Nerime Gürdoğan, at one point suggested I explore Mimar Sinan’s mosque of Rüstem Pasha, which I did, finding the mosque’s tile decoration both beautiful and complex. I didn’t imagine then that it would become the eventual subject of my Ph.D. dissertation and appear again and again in many of my publications.

How did you make the decision to apply for the Fulbright Program?

College study of French, German, Italian and Arabic was followed by courses in

Modern Turkish and Ottoman in graduate school. After completing two years of preliminary course work at Harvard, I decided to apply for a Fulbright grant to get more first-hand field experience and to improve my language skills. I then spent the academic year 1966-67 on my own Fulbright in İstanbul, photographing extensively and studying the history of Ottoman architecture with Professor Doğan Kuban (a Turkish Fulbright Alumnus) at İstanbul Technical University, then based at Taşkışla near Taksim.

How did your Fulbright experience help you professionally and personally?

I am fortunate to have benefited from two Fulbrights: My father’s

and my own. As a sixteen-year-old son of a visiting Fulbright professor, I dreamed of sharing the magic and wonder of my newly-adopted second country with others. My own Fulbright in 1966-67 laid the groundwork for my Ph.D. dissertation, and also for a long, rich, and successful career during which I have had the opportunity to share -- through my teaching, photography, publications, video and audio production participation, conference papers and public lectures – my enthusiasm and love for the great artistic traditions of the Ottoman Empire and the hospitality, language, cuisine, and contemporary arts of today’s Republic of Turkey.



“ **I am fortunate to have benefited from two Fulbrights: my father’s and my own.** ”



Prof. Walter Denny at Mimar Sinan Tomb in 1990.

Did you have the opportunity to visit different parts of Turkey during your Fulbright experience?

Meral Selçuk Sirel, the head of the Istanbul Fulbright office, was an extraordinary Abla-in-Chief for all of the Istanbul Fulbrighters in those days, helping me to get settled in

Istanbul and encouraging my getting to know Anatolia as well. During the year, I not only photographed buildings and works of art extensively in İstanbul, but made a number of trips to Anatolia, visiting dozens of historical sites from the west coast to as far east as Doğu Beyazıt, during a time when the hotel and highway

situations were, to put it mildly, quite challenging. Many of the thousands of photographs I took during that year were digitally scanned and are now available to scholars and teachers worldwide through ArtStor, a photographic archive initiated by the Mellon Foundation.

We know that you are a member of different professional associations. Can you tell us the importance of these associations in furthering US and Turkey relations?

Over a half-century, my professional associations with the American Research Institute in Turkey, the Institute of International Education (Fulbright Commission) and the Institute of Turkish Studies in Washington have enabled me to assist many younger scholars in developing their ties with Turkey and its museums and academic institutions. Without these associations, American interest and scholarship in Turkey would never have developed to the extent that it has today. Apart from ArtStor, my own archive of over 140,000 photo negatives and transparencies, and now an equal number of high-resolution digital photographs, continues to be shared with dozens of scholars, and continues to grow as I continue to pursue photography and research in Turkey.

What would you advise to the U.S. scholars who are planning to come to Turkey with a Fulbright grant?

My advice to anyone going to Turkey, especially to young scholars going for the purpose of academic study, is to sharpen your language skills as much as possible beforehand, and to take the opportunity to broaden not only your academic field of interest but your wider knowledge of Turkish history, art, cuisine, customs and folkways. Remember that Turkey



is a large country with a huge range of cultural experiences, so take the opportunity to travel widely, and get to know the towns, villages and countryside as well as the big cities.

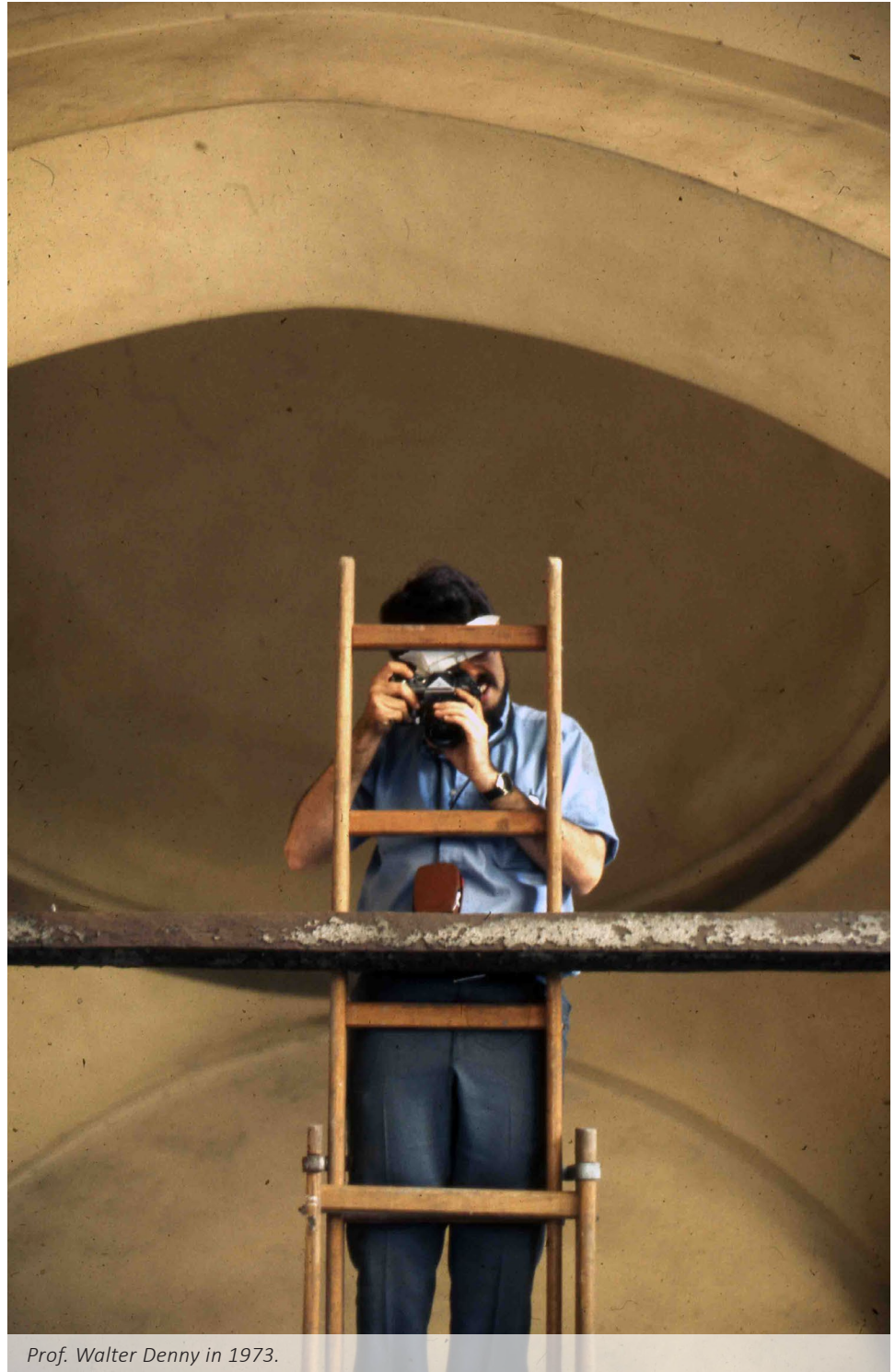
What tips you would like to share with Turkish students and scholars, who would like to pursue a degree and conduct research?

Be prepared as a foreigner studying in the United States, to take a bit of time to travel and acquaint yourself with the vast complexity and variety that is America. If you are studying in an American college or university, expand your horizons beyond your own department or specialty.

Share your own heritage with your new American friends. This can make your research and study both pleasant and successful, and in the end, of course, will benefit both your host country and Turkey itself.

Is there anything you would like to add to conclude our conversation?

Today, sixty years after that first encounter with İstanbul, and after dozens of return trips, Turkey, from the Aegean to Ararat, remains at the center not only of my scholarly life, but also, through my many wonderful Turkish friends and colleagues, at the center of my personal life as well. For example, November of 2018 marks the sixtieth year of my long and enduring friendship with Professor Nurhan Atasoy, who has become in her own country a living legend in the field of Ottoman art and architecture. Turkey started out for me as a marvelous wonderland of history and monuments; today it is for me primarily a large group of wonderful and talented Turkish colleagues and friends who have enriched my life and taught me much about their homeland. ■



Prof. Walter Denny in 1973.

“

If you are studying in an American college or university, expand your horizons beyond your own department or specialty.

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American Programs

The American Programs Unit of our Commission welcomed its grantees for the 2018-2019 academic year from different grant categories. Three Senior Scholars, four Student Researchers and eight English Teaching Assistants have started teaching and conducting research at universities and research centers in Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, and Eskişehir. Two additional grantees who received the Fulbright Greece-Turkey Joint Research Award have started the first part of their grant periods in Greece in September and will be arriving in Turkey in January 2019 to start the remaining

part of their grant periods. We wish all our grantees a productive and successful academic year in Turkey.

Turkish universities are welcome to host U.S. scholars and students on their campuses in different grant categories offered by the American Programs Unit of our Commission. The application deadline and requirements for each program differ. Universities interested in hosting a scholar or a student can always contact the American Programs at amprog@fulbright.org.tr for information.

Senior Scholars' and Student Researchers' Orientation Meeting

The Orientation Meeting for the 2018-2019 academic year grantees was held on September 24-26, 2018 in Ankara. Three Senior Scholars and three Student Researchers from Eskişehir, İstanbul and İzmir attended the meeting. The meeting offered various sessions conducted by program staff, our colleagues from the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, and scholars in different academic fields. The sessions included lectures on Turkey, Turkish art, archaeology, and recent challenges and developments in the country. The meeting also included cultural visits to significant sites in Ankara such as Anıtkabir -the Mausoleum of Mustafa

Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic-, the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, and the Citadel area.

Grantees also attended a reception hosted by Mr. Jeffrey M. Hovenier, Chargé d'Affaires, U.S. Embassy in Ankara on September 24, 2018 at his residence. Attendees at the reception included the Commission Board Members, Senior Scholars and Student Researchers, ETA Grantees, key host institution partners, alumni and the Commission staff. A welcome dinner was also hosted by the Commission in honour of the grantees.



Senior Scholars and Student Researchers Orientation Meeting



Reception at the Residence of the Chargé d'Affaires



Visit by Crisis Management Trainer for the Foreign Service Institute

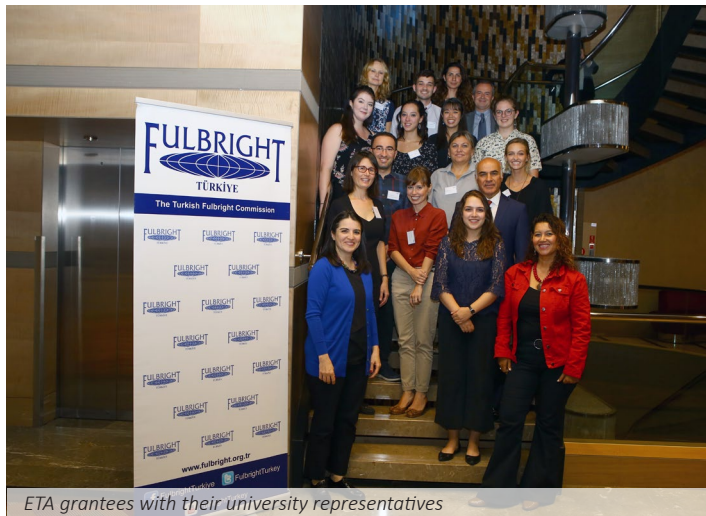
Mr. Daryl Sink who is a lead Crisis Management Trainer for the Foreign Service Institute and who spent sixteen years with the Peace Corps, visited our Ankara Head Office on November 29, 2018. Following Mr. Sink's crisis training sessions for the U.S. Embassy staff in Ankara, a meeting was organized with some of our grantees. During the meeting, Mr. Sink shared his personal experiences with our grantees, answered their questions and provided our grantees with his learned strategies for dealing with their personal safety.

The English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Program Orientation Meeting

The Commission is happy to be welcoming a new group of ETA Grantees after a two-year break to what was formerly the largest program of its kind globally. Eight grantees have started their teaching responsibilities at public universities in Ankara. An Orientation Meeting Program was held in Ankara on September 17-22, 2018 prior to their grant periods. Prof. Ersel Aydınli, Executive Director of the Turkish Fulbright Commission and Mr. Scott Weinhold, Counselor for Public Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, welcomed the grantees and officially commenced the meeting.



ETA grantees at the Ankara Citadel



ETA grantees with their university representatives

The meeting provided the grantees the chance to hear presentations on Turkish culture, history, politics, the Turkish education system, and also to receive introductory Turkish language courses as well as English Language Teaching methods workshops to make our grantees feel as informed and ready as possible for their stay in Turkey. The grantees also had the opportunity to meet with their university representatives in person and learn more about their institutions and teaching responsibilities. Former grantees who are currently studying or teaching in Turkey held a panel to discuss their individual views of the program. The Commission hosted a welcome dinner for the grantees with the attendance of the university representatives and the Commission staff. The grantees also visited the cultural and historical sites in Ankara.

ETA Regional Enrichment Seminars in Sofia and Kiev

Four of our ETA grantees traveled to Sofia, Bulgaria to attend the ETA Regional Enrichment Seminar on Media Literacy and Critical Thinking, which was held on November 1-4, 2018. The Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission hosted the conference and invited ETAs from around Eastern Europe to attend. The seminars focused mainly on methods for teaching students how to be smart news consumers in today's media landscape. There were also seminars on how to lead classroom conversations on controversial topics, and where to find useful classroom resources online. Our grantees gained valuable insight into how to incorporate both media literacy and critical thinking activities into their classrooms. The ETA's also participated in several cultural activities that the Bulgarian Commission organized, including a lesson on Bulgarian folk dancing and a bread-making workshop that focused on community-building.

Four of our ETA Grantees also attended a Media Literacy Seminar in Kyiv, Ukraine on November 25-29, 2018. The interactive workshop explored the concept of media literacy with a focus on the tumultuous media relationship between Ukraine and

Russia. The seminar included topics such as how to recognize misinformation campaigns, how to fact-check and fight fake news, and how to understand individual roles and responsibilities in regards to disseminating false information. In addition to the seminar sessions, the Fulbrighters visited places of historical and cultural significance and thereby learned about Ukrainian culture, history, and current affairs, focusing particularly on the Revolution of Dignity of 2014.



ETAs in Sofia, Bulgaria



ETAs in Kiev, Ukraine

Stories from U.S. Grantees

Nikki L. M. Brown

2018-2019 U.S. Senior Lecturer
University of New Orleans, Louisiana / Ege University, Izmir

Exploring the Black Experience in Izmir

It is midterm examination time here at Ege University, and coincidentally it is also the week of Thanksgiving. This presents an unexpected opportunity for reflection. If there's a memory or thought or idea that stands out, it is that my time in Turkey has been a gift. There is the gift of teaching in Izmir at Ege University, which has opened up to me to the bright students and the dedicated faculty of the American Culture and Literature Department. My colleagues are so thoughtful that they gave me a teaching schedule that allows me to finish some overdue projects from the United States.

But on a deeper level, living in Izmir has given me the gift of time, or rather the awareness that my time here is limited. After only a week in Izmir, I realized that there are so many, almost too many, places to visit. Time is running out, and I must get on with seeing this beautiful country. So far, I have seen Ephesus and Bergama/Pergamon, Tarsus, Adana, and in two weeks I plan to visit Bursa and its cities.



Nikki Brown at Ephesus

Still, when I stop to think about the gift of this experience, I realize that it has been unconventional on many levels. For one, I am a single African American woman, teaching African American history and American women's history in Izmir. Before I left, my friends and family in the United States were worried that I would be unsafe here or that I would face harassment as a single woman. They were wrong. Since Turkish culture emphasizes hospitality and warmth, I have been welcomed here with openness and friendship. There is also the unexpected change in career path, where I started a brand-new project on the descendants of enslaved Africans in the Ottoman slave trade, expanding Ottoman and Turkish history, as well as the definition of the African diaspora.

Another thing that is different is that I brought my two cats with me on this journey from New Orleans to Izmir. It was 24 hours of travel over four flights. My advice to anyone bringing animals overseas – spend the money on the membership to the VIP airport lounge of one of the big carriers, like Turkish Airlines or Delta. After 24 hours of travel with two cats, I have never appreciated so deeply the unlimited glasses of wine, bowls of tomato soup, and large, spacious bathrooms.

Now that it's been two months, I have come to understand that the best gift Turkey has to offer the world is its people. I am talking about the beautiful students full of energy, friends eager to speak English and visit America, colleagues who independently put together my travel plans to southern and western Turkey, dedicated public servants who want you to have the best bureaucratic experience ever, strangers who escort me to the grocery store with the freshest vegetables in Izmir, business owners who are not too busy to share a cup of tea with me, the independent vendors at the farmers' market sharing their newest cheese, and the dolmuş drivers who slow down when they see me running and trying to catch up.



Although there are things from the United States that I miss – primarily African American hair products – the experience here so far has been more rewarding than I could have imagined. Even when things are challenging here, it's still pretty good. Over many delicious meals of Turkish food – a chicken stew, rice with olive oil, or mezes of fish from the region, I have listened to my colleagues about their projects, their families, their summer travels, and their memories of attending university in Turkey. So far, this amazing experience has shown me that I must step away from the work of studying people in the past and take advantage of the wonderful gifts of meeting people in the present.

“ There is the gift of teaching in İzmir at Ege University, which has opened up to me to the bright students and the dedicated faculty of the American Culture and Literature Department. ”



Nikki Brown at St. Pauls Chapel in Tarsus

Stories from ETA Grantees

Lina M. M. Jurkunas

2018-2019 ETA Program Grantee

San Francisco State University, California / Middle East Technical University, Ankara

Why Turkey?

As a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant, one of the most common questions I receive from people inside and outside of my host city of Ankara is “why Turkey?” While a valid and understandable question, a more pressing idea to ask, in my opinion, is “how has your experience in Turkey changed you so far?” I feel constantly challenged – in a positive way – by my new living and working environment, by the Turkish language which I’m still learning, and by my daily interactions. At the core of my stay thus far, have emerged important relationships with my students, colleagues, host university members and fellow ETAs – the sum of which has affected me in both subtle and noticeable ways.



Lina Jurkunas at Blue Bus Concert at METU with her host university contact person

Likely the most influential group – a group which I see nearly every day – are my students. Through their kindness, respect, and sincerity, my students have given me a sense of belonging within a large university where it’s easy to feel like a stranger. My students have run to other classrooms in search of extra chalk, have asked if I need anything to eat or drink during break time, and have laughed with me over the confusion of how to address me. Should they call me teacher? Too elementary. Professor? Too formal. Ma’am? Too British. Lina? Too casual. Hocam? Too Turkish for an American English teacher. (We settled on the latter, in case you might be curious). My students have reminded me of my strengths as a teacher and have also helped me recognize my characteristics that I’m still working on improving. I’ve noticed that I’m learning to let go of perfection, to accept a more flexible notion of time (how late is too late to come to a class?) and to de-necessitate the use of technology for teaching.

The students enrolled in my academic writing classes, the faculty and staff of the Modern Languages Department at METU, the representatives who support me at my host university, my fellow Fulbright ETAs and the Turkish Fulbright Commission, have played an instrumental role in shaping my experience and perspectives. I thank these groups of people for helping me to reaffirm my strengths professionally and personally and look forward to the remainder of my time as an ETA in Turkey.

“Through their kindness, respect, and sincerity, my students have given me a sense of belonging within a large university where it’s easy to feel like a stranger.”



Lina Jurkunas hiking in METU campus

Shelby C. Smithson

2018-2019 ETA Program Grantee

University of Alabama, Alabama / Hacettepe University, Ankara

Walking the Backstreets of Ankara

I never thought I would settle into the city so easily. This place has subtly but swiftly become home. As I look back on only two months of being here, I am most grateful for the local friends I have made. They really have been the key to my falling in love with this place. I had many Turkish friends before coming here, which meant numerous encounters with Turkey's culture. I thought I knew Turkey, until I came here. I have met so many different people here. I have learned that there isn't just one type of Turkey. There certainly isn't just one type of Turk. This place is paradoxical, surprising, and dynamic. I have been so lucky to meet and become close with some very special local friends. They have selflessly opened their homes, their friend circles, and their lives to me. I've learned and experienced things I would never have been able to on my own. The experiences I have had are not ones someone can just stumble upon while sightseeing. I have danced the halay at a traditional Turkish village henna night. I have drunk raki with a Turkish parliamentarian on a top floor terrace overlooking Kizilay. I have walked the backstreets that tourists and even Turks never see. I've chatted with local



Shelby Smithson with her ETA and Turkish friends in Kizilay Square in Ankara



Shelby Smithson drinking tea with her friends in oldtown of Ankara

artists in their workshops situated in historical Armenian homes. I have been introduced to the music of musicians such as Ahmet Kaya and Selda Bağcan, who tell the stories of Turkish history that we never learned in school. I've sat and listened to countless stories of hardship and loss. My friends have been patient with my naive, American questions, as well as cultural and language misunderstandings. They have been gracious and hospitable. They have allowed me to experience their Turkey. And for this I am forever grateful. Local friends are truly the key to experiencing genuine culture in a foreign country. And then one day it doesn't seem so foreign anymore.

“ I never thought I would settle into the city so easily. This place has subtly but swiftly become home. ... They [local friends] have selflessly opened their homes, their friend circles, and their lives to me. I've learned and experienced things I would never have been able to on my own. They have selflessly opened their homes, their friend circles, and their lives to me. I've learned and experienced things I would never have been able to on my own. ”

Turkish Programs

2019-2020 Academic Year Turkish Student Core Program Nominees

Our Commission has selected its 2019-2020 Student Program nominees, whom we have met at the Initial Orientation Meeting. The meeting was held at the Point Hotel Ankara on September 7, 2018. In addition to receiving information about program rules and responsibilities from Fulbright staff, the nominees got to learn about the application process to U.S. universities.

We have already started the placement period for our nominees, as they have been working on finalizing their submission plans. They will be applying to American universities in 34 different study fields.



Student Program Nominees and the Commission Staff at the Initial Orientation Meeting held in Ankara

Initial Orientation for the 2019-2020 Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) Program Nominees



FLTA Program Nominees and the Commission Staff at the Initial Orientation Meeting held in Ankara

The Initial Orientation for our 2019-2020 FLTA nominees, who will begin their program in the United States in the summer of 2019 subject to successful placement at a host institution, was held in our Ankara Head Office on October 12, 2018. Our nominees received vital information about the FLTA Program and had a chance to meet with one another and the Commission staff in person. We are as thrilled as they are to help them through their placement process.

Application Period for the 2020-2021 Grants

Applications will be open soon!

Keep your eyes peeled for the announcements published on our website for the 2020-2021 academic year grants.

*The deadline for application for the 2019-2020 Community College Initiative Program is **January 16, 2019.***

For more information: www.fulbright.org.tr



Stories from Our Turkish Fulbright Grantees

Nazlı Değer

2018-2019 Prof. Aziz Sançar Ph.D. Grant Program Grantee
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, Ankara / University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Becoming a Member of Newly Found Communities

When I was notified that I was elected for a special grant to be the part of world-renowned scientist Dr. Aziz Sançar's research group, I was filled with excitement and a wide range of ideas in my mind. I thought of my position as different than that of other Fulbrighters considering that I already knew where I would be going and what I was going to do, and because of that, I had a longer time to prepare myself for the new journey ahead of me.

My journey started with my three fellow Fulbright grantee friends with whom we were assigned to the same Gateway location in Rochester in New York. This Gateway was, in a single word, "Fantastic". Initially, I was not sure what to expect from this orientation, but it was lucky of me that my expectations were exceeded enormously due to the presence of the incredibly friendly and helpful Gateway team and very well enriched orientation schedule, which became both educational and informative to us, the new Fulbrighters, and showed us the unseen faces of American culture. I also had a chance to enjoy Niagara Falls and catch a glimpse of the panoramic Canada view, which is by far one of the most stunning experiences I have ever had. In addition, I was with an amazing group of Fulbrighters from around the world, most of whom first-time US visitors, such wonderful people, to share time, happiness and memories and to recall and revisit even after the orientation.

My new home, Chapel Hill... It is a small, cute and also fascinating city, one may have seen from old American movies but this time, it is real. What surprised me the most about my new home was the culture of people to form communities. I saw people proudly wearing the university's colors and logos and locals proudly claiming their Chapel Hill identity, which were both fascinating and encouraging for me to feel more at home and as part of the community to which I now belong. Above all, I had a chance to literally observe their definition of being a community in good days or in bad days after a hurricane hit the East Coast, and people were eager to help those affected by donating canned food or other supplies.

As a scientist in training, one would like to select the place for their training to fit them and to be supportive enough to lead and encourage them to do greater in their research and in their personal lives. I might be blessed in this regard and I feel the support is right behind me both from Dr. Aziz Sançar through his amazing teachings and mentorship and also from the lab team who are willing to support my learning, my adaptation and my research as best as they can. I am glad to have a chance to be where I am now and I am delighted that I am the part of my newly found communities.

“ I might be blessed in this regard and I feel the support is right behind me both from Dr. Aziz Sançar through his amazing teachings and mentorship and also from the lab team who are willing to support my learning, my adaptation and my research as best as they can. ”



Nazlı with Turkish friends in Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area in front of Türk Evi

Umur Gökmen

2018-2019 Master's Program Grantee

Middle East Technical University, Ankara / University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

One of the first things I noticed when I first arrived here was the abundance of the university colors in every possible place. It felt strange, seeing a lot of people sporting the colors in many ways, even the people who are not directly affiliated with the university. I would assume that Ann Arbor's culture being so deeply embedded with the university's helps amplify that impression.

It does not take long until that realization turns into a desire to blend in. However, this may result in a little hole in your wallet if you commit too much, especially when the prices for official merchandise are not quite on the reasonable side. Nevertheless, they do give out a lot of free stuff in many events throughout the campus, which include T-shirts and rarely sweaters. For this reason, I would suggest any newcomers to be patient for a little while before buying official merchandise, unless you are planning to go to a football match (which you should). There, you will definitely stand out if you're not wearing the colors in the student section.

This brings us to another thing that I think any foreign student coming to the US should know of, which is the enormous scale of the college football scene. While it is most prevalent among undergraduates, it is still a fairly popular social activity among graduate students to devote almost half of their Saturdays to pre-gaming and going to watch the match after. I strongly suggest anyone who has accepted their offer of admission to be ready to jump in on the opportunity when they receive the offer for a football season ticket. Even if you can't make it to a game, you can still sell the ticket, even for a profit for some games!

Also, I should say that American sports have an interesting balance between socializing and actually watching the sport. I still have yet to feel comfortable with the way of watching sports here: Breaks are very frequent, especially in broadcasts. This is much different than soccer, which is almost always the most popular sport in every country except the US and Canada, since there is only a single break in the whole game. Fortunately, it's not too hard to start enjoying football when there are friends to guide you through what's happening, while also using this opportunity to socialize!

“ I strongly suggest anyone who has accepted their offer of admission to be ready to jump in on the opportunity when they receive the offer for a football season ticket. ”



A group photo with the professors organizing the Gateway, Helen Roland and Stephen Johnson, and the president of MDC, Eduardo Padron.

“Back then, I was really excited about my forthcoming academic experience but little did I know how my graduate degree in the United States would contribute to my profession in many other ways.”



Gizem (second from the left) in front of a stretch of the High Line, New York.

I remember almost a year ago, as soon as I found out that I was granted a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue a master's degree in the United States, I was already so occupied with applications, examinations and graduate school research. In between this busy period, I realized that I hadn't even had a minute to stop and think how I felt until one of my friends asked me, "Your entire life's going to change. How do you feel about it?"

It took couple of seconds for me to realize that there was no word to describe how I felt, but I just said, "I'm excited," and then added, "countless well-known economists who made significant contributions to their fields were educated in the United States. I can't wait to start my graduate experience as a prospective economist and receive the best possible education."

Back then, I was really excited about my forthcoming academic experience but little did I know how my graduate degree in the United States would contribute to my profession in many other ways.

After a year later, here I am making the best out of myself pursuing my economics masters in Columbia University. The high quality of academics and the difficulty of the program provide a framework for me to compete with myself every day. I wake up motivated every morning, excited to pursue my passion, economics, and be taught by an outstanding faculty, whose columns I read and podcasts I listened to during my undergraduate years.

Besides the academic excellence, Columbia University's diverse and competitive student environment has contributed to me in many ways. I have been able to meet people from all around the world, and I'm able to be not only in cultural interaction, but also to exchange information on global economics.

In addition to the theoretical work we are involved with in class, we also share ideas with one another on the real life applications of our work and contribute to each other's knowledge of economics by telling each other how economics and policy making works in our home countries and by discussing daily economic developments.

Esma Kot Artunç

2018-2019 Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) Program Grantee
Bülent Ecevit University, Zonguldak / University of California, Santa Barbara

How many roles do you have as an individual? As a Fulbright FLTA, I do have plenty of them from a teacher/learner to a community service volunteer, and I am enjoying every single role I have owned here because I have learned lots of invaluable things!

Let me touch upon some of my experiences and observations in those roles. As a teacher/learner, what I like best about my classes is that I do not teach my language, but rather we exchange our languages with my students so both parties learn at the same time in the class. Thus, at the end of my classes I feel satisfied both as a teacher and as a learner. What is more, I can definitely say that every foreign language teacher should experience teaching his/her native language as a foreign language at least once in his/her life because it helps you increase your awareness about both language teaching and your mother language itself.

As for my volunteer role here, before coming to the States, I came up with some ideas about what I could do as a volunteer, but when I came here and saw the volunteering opportunities, I was totally impressed! There are so many opportunities that you just can't help taking part in one of them. I work for two community service programs. First I joined a community called 'Food not Bombs'. Every Sunday we cook vegetarian food for homeless people, but of course anyone else who wants to eat is also very welcome. We serve the food at a park in Isla Vista and then clean up. The second one is an environmental program called 'Adopt-A-Block'. This community works to keep Isla Vista clean all the time. Every day they have a map of certain streets to hand to the volunteers. So as a volunteer I grab a map, wear a vest, get a trash bin, gloves and a grabber and begin cleaning up the streets of beautiful Isla Vista. I believe volunteering is the best way of engaging in the community in a foreign country and, of course, finding inner peace, so this role is one of my favorites!

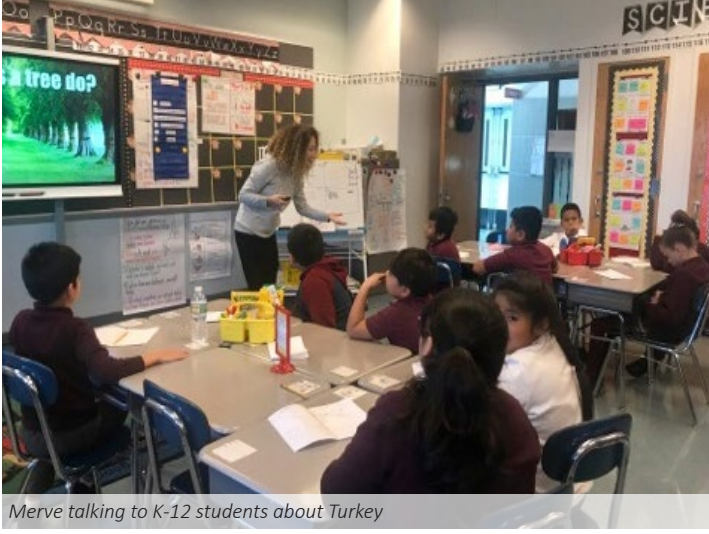


Esma during a volunteering activity

“ ... I came up with some ideas about what I could do as a volunteer, but when I came here and saw the volunteering opportunities, I was totally impressed! ”

Merve Şanal

2018-2019 Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) Program Grantee
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, Ankara / New York University



Merve talking to K-12 students about Turkey

I have been in New York City for about two months and I find this city quite exciting, charming and bustling! In such a crowded city, it might also be difficult to form one's own little community. However, 'One To World', which is a non-profit, New York based organization, makes it a great experience by bringing Americans and international students together to share their lives through numerous cultural events and organizations. I would like to mention one of their flagship programs that I participated in and enjoyed being part of.

Global Classroom trains international students to become Global Guides for K-12 students in New York City-area schools. K-12 students have a chance to meet different international university scholars through interactive workshops that engage

them in learning about world cultures and global issues on a regular basis. Each student has a passport where they write down the information regarding the Global Guide they meet. After completing the training provided by One To World, as a Global Guide, I had the opportunity to share my culture with the 9-10 year-old students by leading workshops about Turkey and international issues. In my workshops, I introduced myself and my country through visuals and interactive games and then focused on the importance of 'green space' as part of their curriculum focusing on Human Rights around the world. The students were very interested in the language we speak, food we eat and activities we generally do. As a follow-up activity, having reflected their ideas on the importance of trees, the students designed and drew a park they would like to see in their neighborhood.

In the process, I had the opportunity to learn about the American school system and practice my presentation skills. Also, the great experience of teaching small kids and helping them develop their critical thinking has already inspired me to think about how to implement a similar project in Turkey.

“ I had the opportunity to share my culture with the 9-10 year-old students by leading workshops about Turkey and international issues. ”

Derya Duran

2018-2019 Fulbright Postdoctoral Program Grantee
Hacettepe University, Ankara / Borough of Manhattan Community College, the City University of New York

Mixed Feelings in a City

Three months into my new life and I don't even know which discoveries to report here. Rainy New York City mornings, beautiful Central Park, magnificent skyline, charming coffee shops (also Instagram heaven), and movies under the stars? I am enjoying the idea that there is a bit of everything for everyone in this city. Things are moving so fast here; there are hundreds of events every day and literally you become a part of the sheer hustle and bustle

of the city. So sometimes I feel that I never have enough time for this unique city, but I am trying to be good at squeezing quality time. It is a matter of time management after all and NYC might be the best teacher to teach you how to be an expert on this issue. NYC is sometimes hard (trash on the streets, homeless population, subway transit, sometimes aggressive people), but we still love each other. Here you can never be alone (people, people



everywhere) but can manage your life on your own. At first as a person of believing in building true and deep relationships, I had difficulty in accepting that lack of connection and intimacy among people but in time I got used to it as there are many reasons for this 'sad' situation. To sum up, I have been extremely lucky with ending up in NYC which gives you so much to appreciate-diversity, high energy and variety- and which also sometimes makes you uncomfortable in your comfort zone.

These are the brand-new experiences for me and I hope you will stop by here sometime, somehow, and enjoy your time!

“ I have been extremely lucky with ending up in NYC which gives you so much to appreciate -diversity, high energy and variety- and which also sometimes makes you uncomfortable in your comfort zone.”



Derya with Orhan Pamuk in a theatrical adaptation of his 'Snow'

Seçkin Eroğlu

*2018-2019 Fulbright Postdoctoral Program Grantee
Izmir University of Economics, Izmir / Dartmouth College*

Nature and the Blessing of Civilization Coincides in Hanover, New Hampshire

I am living in a home inside a natural protection area. Here, it is forbidden to take out the trash earlier than the day the garbage truck visits, because garbage left outside attracts the bears. A few days ago, I was eating pistachios while watching outside through the window. My window is just a bit above the ground, due to the elevation difference between inside and outside. I realized a pair of eyes were watching me, a squirrel on a tree stump. For sure, he was craving for the pistachio. I opened the window and placed some along with a piece of Turkish delight onto a stone. Not only bears and squirrels, but here deer are also abundant. I meet a deer or a deer family weekly on the way home. My work is twenty minutes of walk from my home. There, I can find the cutting edge equipment that I never had in Turkey or during my PhD studies in Germany. The university sends weekly announcements of the social activities. These include things from workshops for improving social or professional skills, to travel plans or trivia nights. I started a salsa course here and could join many other social activities if I did not think it would disturb my lab work. Turkey can offer great nature or great blessings of civilization and technology

like high tech equipment or an active social life, but mostly never both together at the same time. While you can find the latter in the big cities, you miss the nature, or vice versa... I am talking to my father on the phone. He is surprised to hear I am not locking my home when I leave. Crime is extremely rare here, that people usually do not lock their homes or cars. He says it's risky, with an instinct of self-preservation towards me. We reconcile, there might not be a risk of theft, but a bear may enter the house so it is better to lock the door. On the one hand the cutting-edge equipment, on the other, only twenty minutes away, a risk for a bear to enter your home...

“ I started a salsa course here and could join many other social activities if I did not think it would disturb my lab work.”

Uğur Geçer

2018-2019 Community College Initiative (CCI) Program Grantee
Istanbul Ayyansaray University, Plato Community College, İstanbul / College of DuPage

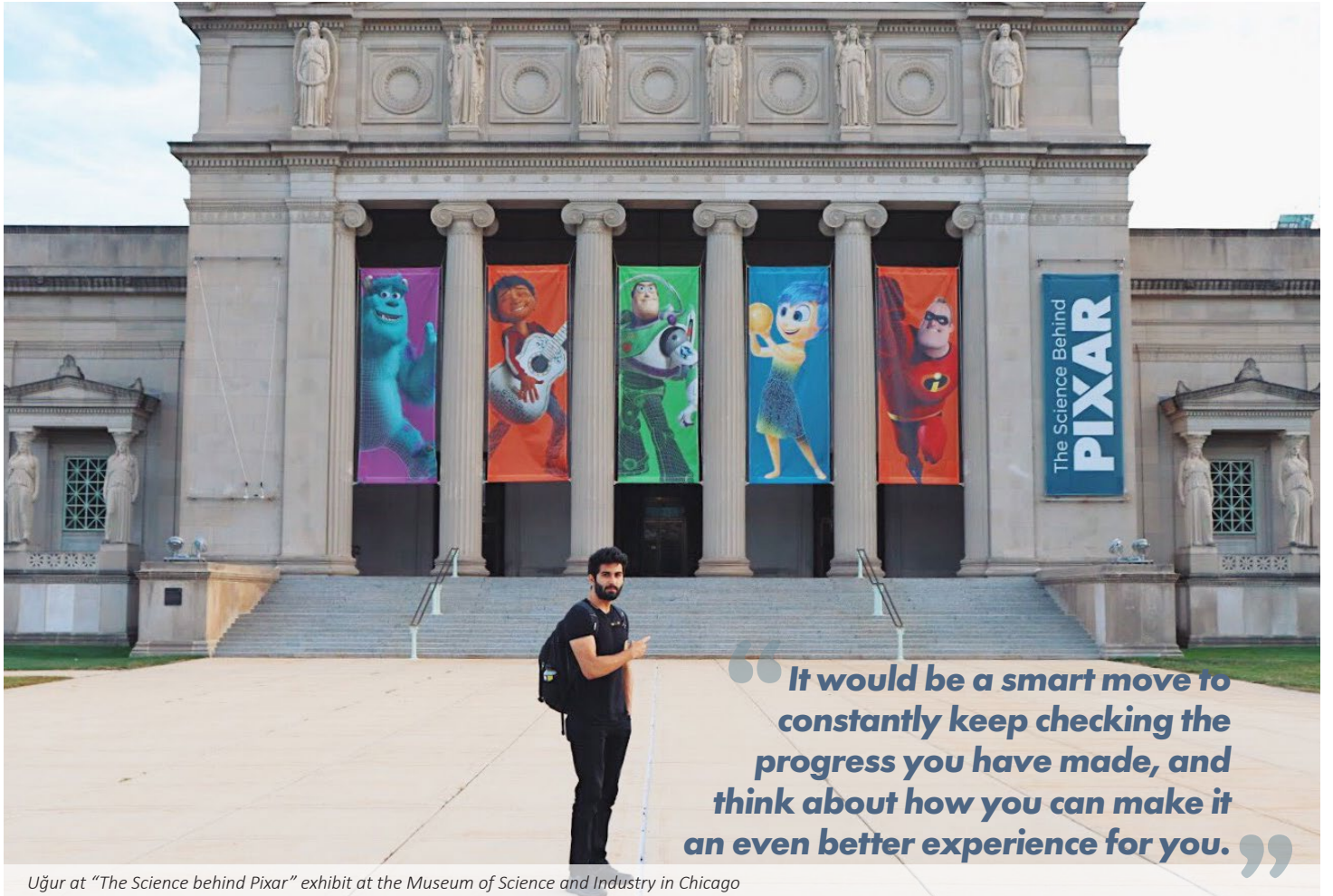
A Leap into the Home of 3D Arts

A well-known truth is that the U.S. is one of the best countries for any artist that works or wants to work for visual effects or animation in terms of reaching opportunities to work for major projects in well-known movie studios. So, my main reason to apply for this program was about being able to get the most out of the opportunities from this environment.

Through the CCI Program I have had the opportunity to attend one of the major events in the 3D arts field. At the event, I had a chance to meet the CEO of the company that develops the 3D software I am using in most of my 3D projects, to participate in workshops, attend artist talks, have one-on-one conversations with artists I have been following for a long time and maintain the contact even after the event. The network I have started to develop has opened the doors of some 3D studios for the internship phase, which is one of the requirements of the CCI Program.

Besides that, I had a chance to participate in the Wings Student Art Gallery at College of DuPage with a group project. The project was about installing abstract forms by using mostly wood pieces. As a group of students, we really enjoyed being forced to struggle in creative thinking and looking for solutions for problems. At the end, we were quite pleased with the interest of campus students in the gallery.

If I have to mention the academic life I am experiencing here, I should say that: it is passing so quickly. Also, if assignments, volunteering, events you want to attend outside of campus, and the internship phase aren't scheduled properly, it's so easy to lose control. That means it's possible to complete the program only by going back and forth between school and home. But there are hundreds of things to attend in every field. It would be a smart move to constantly keep checking the progress you have made, and think about how you can make it an even better experience for you.



Uğur at "The Science behind Pixar" exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago

Alumni Corner



Stories from American Alumni

Mary Jane Madden

*Fulbright Senior Specialist 2016; University of Minnesota
Acibadem University, Istanbul/Turkey*

Behind the scenes of faculty development at Acibadem University School of Nursing was a stimulating faculty, a playful experience and learning for all. As a Fulbright senior specialist in the fall of 2016, I facilitated a two-pronged learning experience for nursing faculty, one focused on further development of English skills and the other on active learning strategies that make a difference for students while “growing” master teachers.

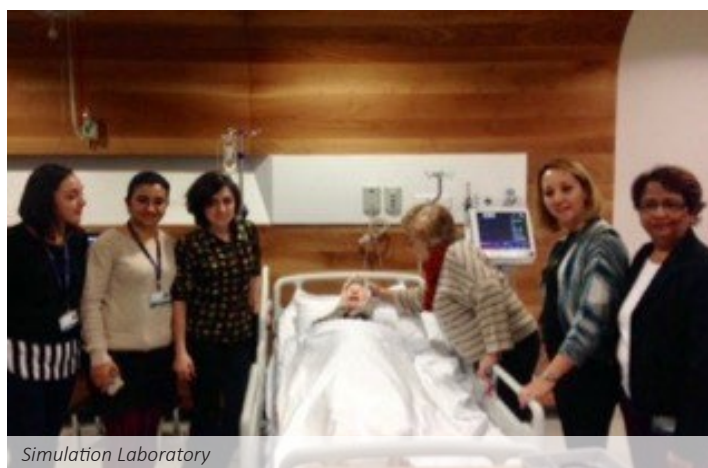
The nursing program is innovative with at least 50% of the student learning taking place in a “state of the art” simulation environment. The Acibadem faculty is a pioneer in this area and has led and participated in several international conferences.

Skill building for the Fulbright Program focused on becoming a master teacher with expertise in systemic thinking, (change systems, then people), leading change (end things before adding new work) and getting results by visualizing and creating the future, rather than only focusing on current problems.

Participants in the program claimed to not speak English, however they read professional journals, write professional



Visualizing results through applied learning



Simulation Laboratory

articles and read books, all in English. What was missing was experience in speaking English and feeling safe doing it. Working in small groups of four or five faculty, we created a safe space for making mistakes while discussing everything from traditional Turkish food to fortune telling after finishing your cup of Turkish coffee.

The greatest impact of our time together is summarized in faculty comments. “I can speak more comfortably and easily and I have more self confidence in English.” “I have learned a way to manage ‘monkey mind’ (distractions) so that I can focus on what I am doing.” “I had dreams about my future. Now I believe I can reach my dreams and I have more confidence in myself.” “I have always thought of social media as a negative thing and now I have ideas about how to use it for education.”

John Balouziyeh

2002-2003 Fulbright Student Researcher
Galatasaray University, Istanbul/Turkey

The civil wars in Syria and Iraq, coupled with political unrest throughout the region, have led to one of the greatest humanitarian crises of the century, with over 3,000,000 Syrian refugees now claiming asylum in Turkey. John Balouziyeh (2002-03 Fulbright Fellow to Istanbul), an attorney with the law firm Dentons, leads Dentons' Refugee Assistance Project, an award-winning partnership between his law firm and various humanitarian agencies, including the Norwegian Refugee Council, European Lawyers in Lesvos and the UN, in providing pro bono legal assistance to Syrian refugees in the areas of international law, administrative law, refugee rights, landlord-tenant relations and personal status laws. John has prepared Syrian asylum-seekers for their first-instance interviews for refugee resettlement.

John recently published [Hope and a Future: The Story of Syrian Refugees](#), a book documenting the humanitarian plight of Syrian refugees in Turkey, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. The book, most recently launched as an audio book available on [Audible.com](#), discusses how public-private partnerships, civil society and corporate initiatives can make a positive impact on Syrian refugees living in Turkey and the broader region.

Most recently, John has advised the Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG), a global pro bono law firm that provides legal

assistance to post-conflict States, on the protections afforded under public international law to persons internally displaced in the Iraqi civil war. John's team at Dentons provides legal analyses that will be brought before judges to prosecute state and non-state armed groups for war crimes committed in Iraq's civil war.

John's work with internally-displaced persons in Iraq and Syrian refugees has won multiple awards, including Legal Week's "CSR Initiative of the Year" three years in a row (2015, 2016 and 2017).



Pictured with Hassan Muslim Mustafa at Kawergosk Refugee Camp in Iraq. Like many of his Syrian neighbors, Hassan's chief complaint was, "I am hungry; I have no food."

James Goode

1999-2000 Fulbright Senior Lecturer
Bilkent University, Ankara/Turkey

Less Than an Hour Away, But a World Apart

In fall 1999, I enjoyed a Fulbright senior lectureship at Bilkent University in Ankara. I was working on a history of archaeology, focusing on the important role of Ataturk in the development of this field. In 1930 he had spent a day at an American excavation at Gavurkale just south of the capital. I wanted to see the ancient site, and the university assisted me. They provided a car and a driver, who knew the area well. My wife and I set off one sunny morning, unaware what an adventure it would prove.

We soon turned off the highway onto a gravel road, leading us passed recently harvested fields. Soon, we saw the mound rising from the plain. As we hiked toward the top, we noticed

images of gods carved into the rock. This location had served as a religious site for both Hittites and Phrygians.

While we were admiring the scene and taking pictures, three shepherds appeared with their flock and several Anatolian sheepdogs. The dogs wore collars with large spikes to protect them from wolves. Whenever we moved toward the sheep, the dogs put themselves between us and the flock. We got the message!

The shepherds began unloading various utensils from their donkey. They built a fire to make tea—the universal beverage. We contributed some pastries from the city, and soon the six of us were seated around the fire enjoying the refreshments and each other's company.



Suddenly, the sky darkened as a storm approached. We hurriedly thanked our hosts and raced for the car, far below. We didn't make it; the heavens opened, and the temperature dropped dramatically. By the time we got inside, we were wet and shivering, but we had no complaints.

Less than an hour later, back at our university apartment, warm and dry, we marveled at the experience—and we still do almost twenty years later. Some of the pictures—but not this anecdote—appeared in my book, *Negotiating for the Past: Archaeology, Nationalism, and Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1919-1941* (2008).



James Goodie in Gavurkale

Amer Taleb

2015-2016 Fulbright ETA

Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Muğla/Turkey

Can you briefly tell us about yourself? How do you define yourself? What is your background?

Thank you for asking! I'm a 2015, University of Arizona, Journalism grad (Go Wildcats!) and Tucson native.

In terms of work experience, I've been blessed enough to have doing things like volunteering at an orphanage in Mexico, reporting from inside the Supreme Court/White House and living with a former president in Nigeria for a research project. And, along the way, learning so much from so many.

At the moment, I'm deeply honored to be teaching English at Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi, and with my lovely wife, İpek, working on a project for almost 2 years that we feel very excited about: using social media to help Turkish students learn English. Long-term, it's our dream to replicate this model for language learners all across the world.

How did you hear about the Fulbright ETA Program? Why did you choose Turkey to teach English?

I'd heard about the Fulbright Program through a college advisor. I had a long-standing interest in Turkey (my parents bought me a cartoon about Fatih Sultan Mehmet when I was 5). By the time I applied to the ETA Program, I had already developed a strong passion for teaching English through working with refugees in Tucson. When I saw the ETA position in Turkey, it was an opportunity to do what I loved in a country I'd been fascinated by for almost 20 years.



Amer Taleb is with Prof. Ersel Aydınli at Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University

What was your first impression of Turkey?

I have these beautiful, vivid memories of seeing Istanbul from a bird's-eye view as our plane descended toward the ground. I can't recall my very first thoughts, but they were probably something like, "Wow. Amazing. We're really here."

Can you tell us about your teaching experience as a Fulbright ETA in Turkey?

It was wonderful! I had the opportunity to lead speaking classes, and I probably worked with about 150-180 students per week at Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi. Sometimes challenging, but always rewarding.

What was the most interesting/exciting things for you during your grant period?

- 1) Falling in love and marrying İpek. It's the highlight of my existence.
- 2) Visiting the Hagia Sophia. I'm not even going to try to describe it, because I don't believe the words exist to capture its beauty.
- 3) Turkish food!!! The great mystery of my life is how I managed to actually lose weight in Turkey. I ate my body-weight in mantı and künefe every week.

How do you think Fulbright has changed your life?

If you were to pick virtually any aspect of my life, from personal to professional, being a part of Fulbright has had an incredibly profound effect on it. A thousand pages to say "Thank you" wouldn't even be a drop in the ocean to express the level of gratitude, appreciation, respect and indebtedness I feel toward this beautiful program, and everyone in the US, Turkey and around the globe who make it possible.



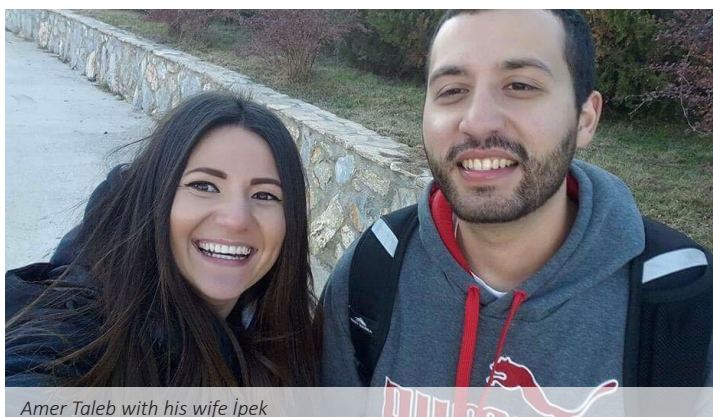
You and your wife İpek have an Instagram page 'eglençeli_ingilizce'. What made you have this Instagram account? What was your motivation?

At our orientation in Ankara, Ersel Bey, the head of Fulbright in Turkey, told us to view English teaching as a form of international development. That concept was probably the seed for what we're doing now. We started this project about 2 years ago, and since then, have been fortunate enough to have grown our community to about 25,000 members. From daily Instagram stories to live YouTube lessons, we try to do anything we can to support our students.

The majority of our students are Turkish and in high school/college. So, our approach is to teach English in a fun, useful way, and to focus on topics that are highly relevant to our core demographic. We even work with 2 companies to give a free English book/magazine to one of our followers every Sunday. Based on the messages we receive on a weekly basis, we feel like we're making a real difference in the lives of our students.

10 years from now, our hope is that the percentage of Turkish people who are fluent in English will increase dramatically. If that can be achieved, we think it would have an incredibly powerful/positive effect on virtually every sector in Turkey – from education to tourism and everything in between.

And, most importantly, that kind of widespread, sectoral development would help improve the standard of living and quality of life for people all throughout Turkey. Through our social media pages, İpek and I hope we can make a humble contribution toward that effort, and as mentioned above, do the same thing for as many people/nations around the world as possible.



Amer Taleb with his wife İpek



How do you think your Fulbright experience affected and will affect your academic, personal and professional life?

In 4 words: direction for my passion. For the rest of my life, I'll always be grateful to Fulbright for a thousand different reasons. None more than for allowing me to follow my dreams in such a wonderful country that I'm honored to, along with the US, call my beloved home.

What would you advise to those who are planning to apply for the Fulbright Program and those who are already in Turkey?

I'll answer this one and close by sharing a true story I heard a long time ago:

In the 1960s, Maria and Azzam were born on opposite sides of the world. And yet, their childhoods were similar in the sense that both were defined by severe hardship: hers in a poor Mexican village, and his trying to survive the Lebanese Civil War.

Prof. George Gawrych

2008-2009 Fulbright Researcher
Bilkent University, Ankara/Turkey

I, Professor George Gawrych, was a Fulbright Senior Scholar during the academic year Sept 2008–July 2009 from Baylor University. The year of intense research was most productive. I managed to collect primary source material in the archives on Kemal Atatürk. My book *The Young Atatürk: From Ottoman Soldier to Statesman of Turkey* was published in 2013 and received the Distinguished Book Award from the Society for Military History. It was translated into Turkish and has gone through three printings in less than three years. While conducting research, the US Embassy in Ankara helped put me on a speaking tour of Turkey and even trips to Albania and Greece to give presentations.

Prof. George
Gawrych's
books about
Atatürk



The fact that they learned English was one of the main catalysts that propelled them from their neighborhoods to the University of Arizona. Maria and Azzam: survivors, college graduates, success stories – and, my parents.

In the world we live in today, learning a language in general and English in particular can unlock an unbelievable amount of opportunities. It did for my parents, and it can for anyone else. So, to those who'd like to join the Fulbright ETA Program and to those who are currently a part of it, please don't diminish your efforts by thinking you're "only an English teacher."

You're helping students acquire a skill that can bridge their dreams into reality. You're changing people's lives. We applaud you. And, are ready to help you in any way we can!

Lastly, if anyone would like to get in touch, offer us advice or collaborate, please feel free to reach us at ipekandamer@gmail.com or our Instagram page: [@eglenceli_ingilizce](https://www.instagram.com/eglenceli_ingilizce).

We'd love to hear from you!



Prof. George Gawrych speaking at a conference on his work

Moreover, I participated on a national media covered panel on Atatürk hosted by the Turkish General Staff: "Atatürk as a Military Leader in the War of Independence," Asker ve Devlet Adamı Atatürk, Symposium, Turkish General Staff, Ankara, Turkey, 19 May 2009. The presentation was published by the Turkish military.

Stories from Turkish Alumni

Hikmet Geçkil

2009-2010 Fulbright Senior Scholar
Inonu University, Malatya/Turkey

I had the privilege to be supported by the Fulbright Program to pursue a research project that could not be possible without the wonderful academic environment that I was in. My proposal needed a laboratory with multidisciplinary focus. My host laboratory at Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology was one of the best places in this regard.

In September 2009, when I arrived at Boston Logan Airport it was midnight. I took a taxi-cab to the hotel that I had booked a room in for 5 nights for a sum equal to half of my scholarship pay by Fulbright, expecting that I would rent a flat by that time. But, no chance. The rental houses or flats in Cambridge area, where MIT and Harvard have almost overlapping campuses, were either rented or just too expensive. After 5 nights and still not being able to start my studies, I had to move to another relatively cheaper hotel in Kendall Square, the biotechnology hub of Boston. After several days in my new cozy place, I realized that if I wanted an affordable flat in a decent place, I had to look for it in the nearby suburbs. Finally, I found a spacious flat in beautiful Arlington, where I was accompanied by my family during a short semester break.



Hikmet Geçkil with his son on the way to Disneyland, Orlando



Hikmet Geçkil with his family in Walt Disney, Orlando

When the project was finished after 6 months, we had three publications with Harvard-MIT names on them as my host institutions and Inonu University as my affiliated institution in Turkey, acknowledging also the support of Fulbright. One of these publications has already been among the "Highly Cited Articles" being cited by 400+ journal articles, more than 50 books and subject to 47 patents. While this may seem a success, the spectacular side of the Fulbright Program, however, is its deep and lasting effect by instilling in you an understanding and appreciation of other cultures and people in this New World. Through many cultural gatherings and meetings with host families and friends you get a sense of knowing how a country could achieve so much in relatively such a short time of its history. To me, the answer resides in its embracing of other people irrespective of their origin, religion, race etc. Without mincing words, I wish each of the people of a Muslim country like mine had the chance to see this country and meet its people first hand, something that would certainly change any prejudice.

Canan Mesutoğlu

2015-2016 Visiting Student Researcher
University of California, Berkeley

I received my Ph.D. degree in Curriculum and Instruction, at Middle East Technical University, Turkey in June, 2017. I was awarded with a Fulbright Visiting Ph.D. Student Scholarship for the 2015-2016 academic year at the University of California, Berkeley. My recent research focuses on science learning progressions, and on design of professional development programs on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) for K-12 students and teachers. The Fulbright experience facilitated my academic improvement on science learning progressions and on STEM Education.

For my Ph.D. dissertation, I collaborated with educators and engineers to deliver a teacher professional development program. The main goal of this research was to develop a

learning progression for teacher understanding of engineering design process. Learning progressions define increasing learning sequences built on research and analysis of empirical data. Auditing two classes at the Graduate School of Education, UC Berkeley, I learnt the methodology for developing learning progressions and using the data analysis program; R Studio.

In 21st century classrooms educators should expose learners to complex real-life problems and in-depth knowledge on STEM disciplines. During my time in the USA, I worked as a volunteer at several organizations in Berkeley including the Lawrence Hall of Science, and Bay Area Scientists in Schools (BASIS). I implemented STEM activities for K-12 students in multiple schools, took part in teacher development programs, and guided visiting students' exploration of engineering design activities. I participated at an orientation for volunteers at the Ingenuity Lab of Lawrence Hall of Science, where we worked on a design quest to design a robot. My team mate was a post-doctoral student at the Graduate School of Education, UC, Berkeley. In the Tech Museum of Innovation, San Jose where as part of a group of Fulbrighters, I had the chance to explore design studios, augmented reality and virtual reality experiences for K-12 students. Upon my return, my research on STEM education was published in School Science and Mathematics and in the International Journal of Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education.



Canan Mesutoğlu at Fulbright Association Northern Chapter Meeting



Working on a STEM project at the University of California, Berkeley

Saniye Çancı Çalışaneller

2011-2012 Visiting Student Researcher
University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland

I visited the United States as a Visiting Student Researcher to do research on my Ph.D. dissertation and develop it further. Besides my academic gains, I also found a variety of opportunities to experience American culture in different contexts, which I would like to focus on in this brief reflection on my stay in the States.

First, I would like to talk about watching a football game in a stadium, which provided me with the chance to experience a leisure activity and reflect on it. I knew that American football was an important part of the national culture, but I did not actually think about the atmosphere in a stadium and its importance for people in the stadium. Watching the game was fun, of course. But the stadium itself turned out to be a place where people not only watched the game but also socialized and got relaxed. Exchanging small talks with other viewers while waiting in line to get something to eat or engaging in conversations with friends while watching the game gave the stadium a festive-like, relaxing atmosphere. I think it was this atmosphere that attracted people to the stadium. Additionally, the stadium gave the sense of belonging to a community and solidarity while supporting your team together with other people.

I also experienced the importance of being part of a community in another American context when I attended the 2012 Nashville Fulbright Enrichment Seminar, entitled U.S. Politics and Elections: Democracy in Action. Within the framework of Community Service Activities in the symposium, together with other fellow Fulbrighters, I had



Nashville-Community Service Activity-2012 Nashville Enrichment Seminar

the opportunity to get involved in the activity of trash collection. For me, it still is one of the most memorable days in my stay in America because I observed how American people value volunteerism to contribute to their community as part of that community. This also made me see all the voluntary fundraising activities organized by students on campus back in College Park from a different perspective. It was not only about collecting money but also about being a part of that community by voluntarily putting effort and allocating time for the betterment of that community. In a sense, it was about being an active member of a society without waiting for a passive acceptance.

Reading about a culture and studying it through books can teach you the basic elements of that culture; however, experiencing a culture as part of it can make you better understand the spirit of that culture so that you could appreciate and relate to it, and this is what the Fulbright Program provides for the Fulbrighters.



Maryland Stadium – University of Maryland vs University of Virginia football game

Advising Program

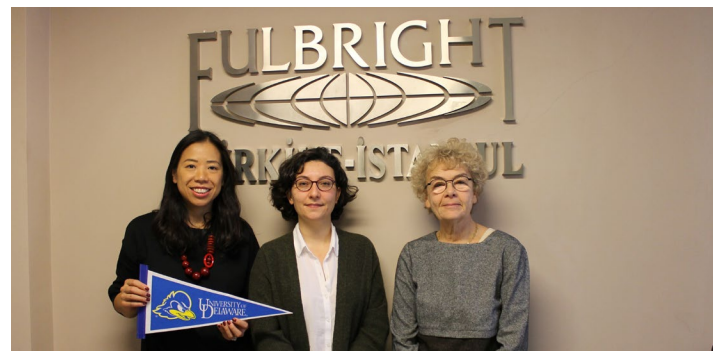


Visits from US Higher Education Representatives

In our capacity as EducationUSA offices, we have hosted several Education Institution Officials in our Istanbul and Ankara offices over the last months.

On October 9, the International Enrollment & Operations Coordinator Associate Director of International Admission Official from Saint Michael's College, the Director of International admissions from Johnson & Wales University, the Associate Director of International Admissions from Wentworth Institute of Technology; on October 12, the Officer for International Student Recruitment from Diablo Valley College; on October 25, the Associate Director of Graduate Recruitment from the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences at the George Washington University; on November 5, Admission Officials from three boarding schools, Northfield Mount Hermon, Riverstone International School, and Western Reserve Academy;

and on November 15, the Director of International Admissions at the University of Delaware visited our Istanbul office, where we shared information on possible opportunities for student recruitment, and learned about the strengths of these institutions.



The Director of International Admissions at the University of Delaware visited our Istanbul office.



The George Washington University visited our Istanbul office.



The George Washington University visited our Ankara office.

International Education and Alumni Fairs

As Fulbright and EducationUSA, our advisers from Ankara and Istanbul attended international education fairs to inform participants about our Commission, programs and advising services provided to students and universities.



On October 11-13-14, 2018, we opened a booth at the Akare Study Abroad Fair, where we advised around 200 students at various levels on education in the U.S. Our Education Adviser also gave a presentation on Education in the US and Fulbright grant programs. Our presentation was on demand and over 170 students attended the presentation given by our advising officer.

On November 7, an Alumni Fair was held in Ankara. Our Istanbul and Ankara Advisers held a booth in Alumni Fair in Ankara, on November 7. Our education advisers gave a presentation at the fair. In this well-attended presentation, our advisers introduced the Fulbright Grants to the participating students.



Our Commission's booth at the Alumni Fair

Outreach Activities

As part of the outreach program, our Educational Advising team visits high schools and universities in order to present Fulbright Grants and to provide comprehensive and accurate information about the higher education system in the US. Since the beginning of the 2018-2019 Academic Year, our Istanbul Office visited Saint Michel French High School for "Study in the USA" presentation and Koç University for a

"Fulbright Grants and Study in the USA" seminar.

Our advising team also aims at reaching out to a wider audience, including students who live in different parts of Turkey, by organizing webinars on "Fulbright Grants", "Study in the USA", and on specific application procedures such as required tests and application essays.



Professional Development Activities

As Fulbright, our adviser from Ankara attended the “International Education and Scholarships Panel” held by the Turkish-American Association on October 14, 2018. Our education adviser gave a presentation about all Fulbright Grants, which was attended by 65 individuals.



High School Workshop: Higher Education in the US

The Fulbright Istanbul Office organized a full day “Higher Education in the US” workshop at the Point Hotel Barbaros on Tuesday, November 20, 2018. There were 16 participants most of whom came from Istanbul and a few from other cities, from 13 public and private high schools. They learned, asked questions and shared their experiences about the many facets of US higher education, like its advantages, important statistics, school research and selection, the application and admission processes, school characteristics, standard tests, finances and financial aid. The US Vice Consul in Istanbul gave a presentation on student visas. Participants who were chosen to represent their schools included English teachers, school counselors, administrators, or college counselors; some were new to the topic, while others were experienced – so it was a perfect occasion for learning from each other as well.



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The Turkish Fulbright Commission



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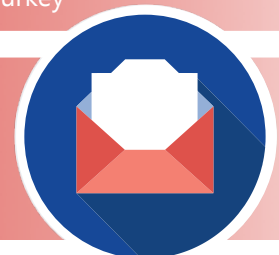


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newsletter@fulbright.org.tr

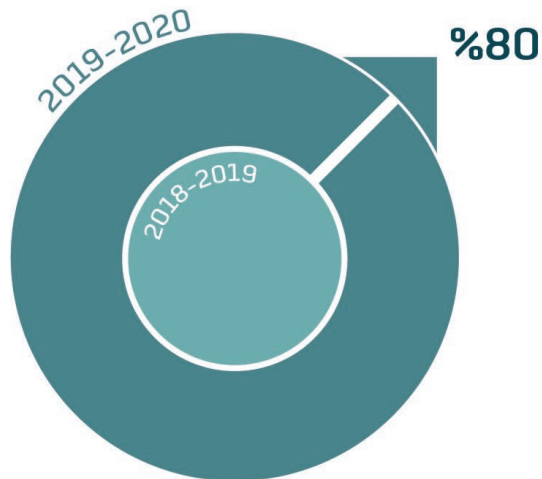


The Turkish Fulbright Commission in Numbers

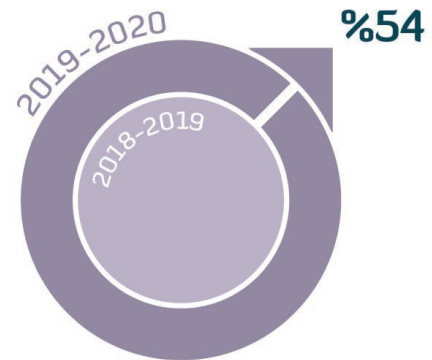
Fulbright Programs on Demand

The number of applications submitted for the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program, Post-Doctoral Program, Ph.D. Dissertation Grant and Visiting Scholar Program increased from the 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 academic year. These programs are on demand among Turkish students and scholars.

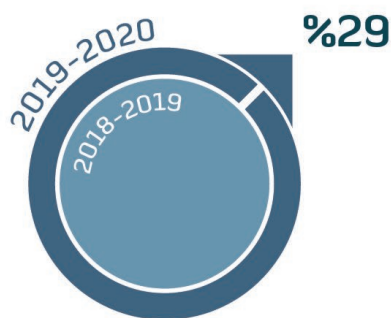
Hubert H. Humphrey Program



Post-Doctoral Program



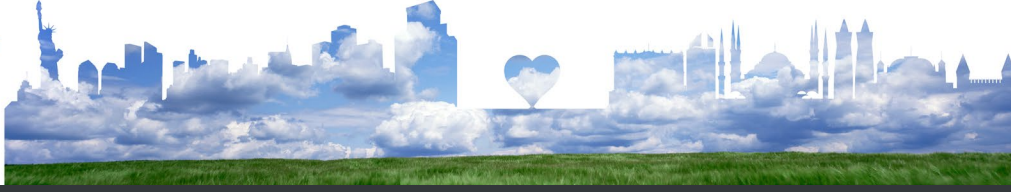
Visiting Scholar Program



Ph.D. Dissertation Research Grant



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Please send contributions and comments to:

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