

Cross-Border Coffee Break: Fulbright Specialist Program Offers Opportunity to Two GBSN Members

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Presenters: Bryan Andriano, Executive Director, Global and Experiential Education, George Washington University School of Business
Stephen Paterson, Dean, International College, National University of Management, Co-Founder, Mekong Business Challenge

- 1. How long did the Fulbright application take you and what were some of the resource requirements for NUM? Can you also speak about language/cultural barriers if any (in having Bryan help set this program up for NUM).**

University side:

The university has to engage with the local U.S Embassy. The public affairs office at the local embassy controls the program in that country. They generally want some commitment and financial cost-share. What NUM did was to cover Bryan's accommodation.

NUM made a direct request for Bryan. They approached the embassy with a developed project and the specialist they wanted. Fulbright then communicated with Bryan who then had to apply and get into the roster. The actual program can be between two to six weeks, and can be focused on curriculum development, or how to develop a strategic plan for the university, etc. The program does give some guidelines in terms of what the areas are they want to support.

Fulbright Specialist Side:

You would assume that with a program that provides such a substantial opportunity, they are careful with the application process. In total it took about three to three and half months for me to get from interested all the way through approved on the the Fulbright side. My application was definitely fast tracked knowing that there was an organization that was interested in a placement. To describe the way that the program itself is structured, if you think about it, there are two sides. Normally, in a Fulbright that's for scholarship or teaching it's kind of one-sided, an individual submits their application, which is a robust description of their academic credentials and their capabilities, and then they are placed. In this, the structure is a little bit different because they are a project-based, there needs to be a tight coupling between the expertise of those who are selected and the projects that there placed on. The applications come from both sides, so Steve

just mentioned the process that he went through on the university side, we say... yes, we are interested in a project, it would have this go on that side. The Fulbright commission would either accept or deny the institution.

On the other side, the individuals that can just apply based on their expertise and say... I have expertise in accreditation or in finance curriculum and both organizations and individuals can be accepted. There is a list of projects. Fulbright in this way less so than another are the permutations of the Fulbright program, plays a role in matching institutions and experts. So in the purest form, someone with expertise applies and the institution applies; Fulbright accepts them and says... hey, I hear that Bryan may be a good fit for your need at NUM. So that's the formal official track.

Another track, which they encourage, is for institutions to step forward and say... "we are interested in hosting someone for a challenge that we face, here are the delimitations of that challenge and we know that there is someone at xxx University who can be of assistance and we would like them to come in."

Once you apply for the Fulbright Specialist Program and are accepted, you have access to their roster of projects for up to three full years. Lets say a specialist didn't have the benefit of having a university reach out to them directly; they can still express an interest and apply and have access to that full list of all the universities and all their challenges around the world. It's almost like a dating service.

There's certainly a benefit to having the institution express interest in an individual. These are short projects between two to six weeks. So the more you know each other on the front end, the better you can understand their needs and more quickly you can produce something that is useful for them. There's certainly a benefit on that side. The only requirements are from the specialist side: you have to be a US citizen, and hold a terminal degree or have substantial professional experience that would be the equivalent of expertise knowledge that would be terminal degree.

2. What advice would you have for other GBSN members who would be interested in leveraging the Fulbright Specialist Program?

For GBSN member universities outside the US, my advice would be to contact the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in your home country to learn more about the Fulbright Senior Specialist Program. The Embassy is also involved in the application process.

3. How can my school find out about applying to Fulbright opportunities?

Same answer as Question 2.

4. Should we connect directly with the GBSN team to help us find a specialist within the network?

Yes, GBSN can be involved in terms of finding the right candidates at other GBSN member universities. For example, if a university in Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa would like to recruit an expert in Strategic Planning to serve as a Fulbright Senior Specialist, simply share the request with the GBSN network to help identify the person with the right expertise.

GBSN is working on developing a system on our website for individuals from member schools to submit interest in offering expertise as well as for institutions to submit challenges, areas they would like to develop, or types of partnerships they are looking to create.

5. How did you engage corporates in the development of the program? Did you already have connections or did you need to build new relationships?

NUM does have a lot of existing corporate partnerships. The university has a corporate advisory board. They have a good relationship with McKinsey and Company – in terms of our Mekong Challenge for the last 12 years in terms of mentoring with partners in the region.

The university has been working more closely with the U.S. Embassy in Cambodia to facilitate introductions. The Embassy opened the doors to Salesforce, Microsoft and Facebook in Singapore. The Embassy connects well with American brands that come to Cambodia, so engaging their help in developing those partnerships on the American side is valuable. The university also has good relationships with Japanese companies, European Chamber of Commerce, there are many chambers of commerce in Cambodia, so we tap into those networks to get participation from key companies we want to engage with in terms of the program.

Networking is extremely important.

6. I'm from a GBSN member school. Can you suggest a couple of ways to connect with other members to build a similar partnership?

I think it is extremely important to attend the GBSN Annual Conferences plus other education events during the year, as this will create networking opportunities for member universities to meet up and discuss possible partnerships. It was by attending last year's GBSN Conference in Washington D.C. that Bryan and I were able to connect to discuss his availability to serve as a Fulbright Senior Specialist.

7. With the new delivery modes, specifically MOOCs, how did you mitigate the higher education regulations on contact hours requirements, etc.?

Coming from the U.S. – we have highly regulated environment – not just from the government but by the accrediting bodies, it would be difficult for us to find a way to integrate MOOCs in the way you did at NUM.

Steve – we’re only talking about one MOOC and the idea here is to promote life-long learning. By exposure to the MOOC; if it’s a positive experience, people will continue with that habit as they go forward with their career, in looking to what is available on Coursera, Udacity, etc. That’s the habit we’re trying to develop.

The Ministry of Education accreditation committee accredits NUM. This is different than the U.S., where you have more rigorous standards. Basically, the university has to adhere to a certain number of credits in our masters program, but there is flexibility in how we assign those credits in terms of experience-based learning and projects. This is what we are leveraging, so in some ways we can be more creative because we have that flexibility. The one MOOC within this program is something we believe we can justify to the ministry and to the national accreditation body here. Again, there is only one. In certain cases, we may approve the courses. There are different types of MOOCs and different types of criteria for completing diff MOOCs. The university can approve the one that people want to take as their elective, giving them the ability to pick a subject. The university does have the ultimate say in whether it will recognize the amount of rigor in a particular MOOC and whether it is accepted it into the program.

8. Can the models presented be applied in any master’s course other than innovation: for example an MBA in finance?

Yes, I think it’s important to rethink the structure of every academic program to see if there is a better or more effective way to deliver the essential knowledge and skills and meet the needs of both students and employers (and other stakeholders). Many universities from around the world are already experimenting with more innovative MBA program structures.

9. Can the model be replicated / adopted in other setting especially Africa?

Definitely. I think the upcoming GBSN Annual Conference, this coming November 7-9 in Nairobi, Kenya, would be a good opportunity to promote this type of cooperation among member universities. Visit www.gbsn.org/2018kenya for more information on the conference.

10. How did you manage to create, build, nurture corporate links in the program. Is it through capstone projects or are there any other actions you undertook?

In the Cambodian context, we were already receiving feedback from the corporate sector that they were not satisfied with the quality of business school graduates. We then found that they were very open to working with us via the capstone projects, Design Sprints and Innovation Seminars. To start this process, I would recommend that business schools should create a Corporate Advisory Board and then invite key members from the private sector to serve on this Advisory Board. Would also recommend reaching out to the various national Chambers of Commerce (e.g. US Chamber of Commerce, Euro-Cham, British Chamber of Commerce, etc.).