ONIS Newsletter Vol. I, no. 4 (March 1, 2020)

The ONIS newsletter is a monthly record of news concerning applications for nationally and internationally competitive scholarships, primarily for undergraduates and primarily for the Twin Cities campus of the University of Minnesota. If you would like to have a copy emailed directly to you, please send a request to natschol@umn.edu. Follow ONIS on Twitter (@natscholUMTC) for the latest news and updates.

Celebrations:

In March we begin to see the results of a lot of hard work by our student applicants over the course of the year. We will be taking note of the results here, on Twitter (@natscholUMTC), in press releases, and elsewhere. Our first recognition this year goes to junior Chemistry major Meghan Cahill, who has been awarded a Fulbright-Mitacs fellowship to spend this summer conducting research in atmospheric chemistry at the Université de Montréal in Quebec, Canada. The Fulbright-Mitacs Globalink program is a new initiative of Fulbright Canada that funds students from the U.S. to engage in research in any academic discipline during the summer with professors at Canadian universities. Applications for next year will be due at the end of October.

Events:

March 27, 12:00, 240 Northrop – Fulbright Kick-Off: learn about how to apply for a Fulbright award to support study, research, or teaching abroad. Junior, seniors, grad students and recent alumni are all welcome.

March 27, 3:00, 240 Northrop -- Knight-Hennessey Scholars Information: The Knight-Hennessey Scholarship covers the cost of a graduate degree at Stanford University plus cohort-based professional development and leadership training. A representative from Stanford will be on campus to describe the program and application process.

Scholarship Deadlines:

NIH Undergraduate Scholarship: up to $20K/year and paid research training at NIH labs for students with exceptional financial need and interests in biomedical, behavioral, or health-related social science research. Deadline: March 18.

Truman Scholarship Campus Deadline: $30K for graduate study for active, engaged student leaders who plan careers of public service. Apply as a sophomores for a campus nomination by April 1.

UK Scholarships Campus Deadline: Rhodes, Marshall and Churchill scholarships cover the full cost of 1-3 years of graduate study at Oxford, Cambridge and other British universities. Juniors, seniors or recent grads must apply for a campus nomination by April 1.
Katie Engevik of Roseau enrolled at the University of Minnesota in 2009 and graduated with honors and majors in English and German in 2013. As an undergraduate she studied for a year in Graz, Austria as an international exchange student at Karl-Franzens University. After graduation she spent 2014-15 as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Germany. She currently teaches German as Lincoln High School in Thief River Falls and leads student trips to Europe.

1. What scholarships did you apply for and what did they allow you to do?
I applied for a U.S. Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Program. During my undergrad, I studied German and English Literature, and I studied abroad for a year in Graz, Austria. After such a life-changing experience, I knew I wanted to go back to a German-speaking country, and I knew I wanted to be a teacher. The Fulbright program allowed me to spend a year as an English teaching assistant at a high school in Berlin, Germany. My role was to be a support to other teachers and a cultural ambassador. Not only did I gain insight into German language and culture, but I gained valuable work-experience that prepared me for my teaching career.

2. How did being awarded a scholarship change your academic and/or professional development? What other opportunities has it opened for you?
It certainly changed my career path and helped me truly understand what it means to be a professional in the field of education. As I was going through the application process, I developed stronger relationships with my professors. I received a lot of encouragement and support throughout the process. It was because of those relationships that I became a German teacher. When I graduated from the U of M, I wasn’t sure if I wanted to teach high school English or German. As a Fulbright E.T.A. in Berlin, I learned that, although I still loved English literature, I did not enjoy teaching English grammar very much. I also learned a great deal about Berlin and the students I interacted with every day. Additionally, I appreciated having some time to reflect on which teaching license to pursue. After I returned home, I stopped at the U of M to thank one of my German professors, Dr. Charlotte Melin, for all of her support. A week or so later, I had an e-mail in my inbox about a job opportunity in which she thought I might be interested. I substitute taught, applied for a few teaching positions, and before I knew it, I was teaching German.
I also developed connections with a few Berliners and other U.S. Fulbrighters that helped me grow as a person and as a professional. In fact, I ran into another Fulbrighter at the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Conference this fall in Washington D.C. who works for the Goethe Institut, and just last week, I wrote a friend in Berlin to catch up and practice my German. You really never know how an experience like this will impact your future!

3. What did you learn about yourself through the application process? What particular skills or knowledge did you develop? How has the experience continued to be valuable?

I learned that, in order to write an excellent Statement of Grant Purpose and Personal Statement, I needed to listen to the feedback from those advising me, and I needed to write many drafts in order to get them just right. It gave me an opportunity to reflect on why I wanted to be a teacher. I also learned how to write about my experiences and qualifications in a concise and direct manner. I became a better writer, and I gained confidence in myself, especially knowing that I had so much support from my professors. One of the most exciting parts was when I had the opportunity to interview in front of a group of professors using my German language skills which, at the time, was something that I did not realize I would be doing again when interviewing for teaching jobs. That was the best preparation I could have asked for!

4. What are you working on now?

Currently, I'm teaching German at Lincoln High School in Thief River Falls, MN, and I'm writing my thesis for the Masters in World Language Education through Concordia College in Moorhead. I have learned so much, and I would highly recommend the program for any language educators looking to earn their M.Ed. I also just took a group of students to Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein this last summer for the first time. We will be going again, next time to Berlin, in the summer of 2021.

5. You have accomplished a lot. Really, how much do you sleep at night and what do you do to unwind?

At the moment, there's not a lot of time to take a breather, but I do enjoy reading, cross-country skiing, yoga, mountain biking, and running. I learned a long time ago that if I'm not
exercising on a regular basis, I simply don't function as well. Lately, I have also been trying to read for 30 minutes each evening, and it really helps me unwind from the day. I always try to get a full night's sleep, because it's very difficult to teach if you're tired and dragging! If you're not excited about what you're doing, teenagers pick up on that and mirror your energy.

6. Is there anything that you wish someone had told you at the beginning of your college career

Study another language and, if you are able, study abroad for a whole year. It felt like it took six months just to get acclimated, and staying longer added so much to the experience. If you learn at least one other language, and it will open many more opportunities along the way. Also, try to think of every challenge in college as an opportunity to grow instead of stressing about whether or not you're doing it "right." Try not to be embarrassed about making mistakes. Read your syllabus, listen to the professor, show up to class on time and prepared, work hard, use the resources available to you, and do your best. No one will remember what score you earned on a final paper, but those around you in your future career will notice the skills you developed. You will carry everything you've learned with you for the rest of your life, so seize every opportunity that you can!