

FAAC NEWSLETTER



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FULBRIGHT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF CAMBODIA (FAAC)

Alumni on the Move—Lecture Series in Siem Reap

By Peou Chivoïn, MA Media Theory & Research, Southern Illinois University Carbondale (2008)



Despite the myriad of their professional and personal commitments, the alumni of Cambodian Fulbright Program, as part of the Fulbright Alumni Association of Cambodia (FAAC) lecture series, conducted an awareness-raising workshop at the University of Southeast Asia, Siem Reap, on September 19—20, 2008.

With the presentation themes on study skills, youth and volun-

teerism, and study plan writing, the objectives of the trip were to provide the students in the province with useful information about further study abroad, to share with them the Fulbright experiences, to increase awareness on the Fulbright program, and to offer them networking and other opportunities.

The workshop attracted dozens of students and faculty members of the University of Southeast Asia, Siem Reap, who were enthusiastic and asked a lot of interesting questions.

The presenters of FAAC included Mr. Men Nimith, FAAC president and country director of Arbitration Council of Cambodia; Mr. Theam Rottanak, FAAC vice president and national consultant in Management and Reform; Mr. Om Soryong, FAAC treasurer and deputy

head of IFL's English Department; and Ms. Bunchan Sumana, FAAC member and advisor at RUPP's Educational Advising Center.

The FAAC had in the past conducted several workshops on diverse themes, ranging from stock market to health issues, from education to governance, at several higher educational institutions in Phnom Penh, including RUPP, PUC, HRU, UC and NUM.

The next stop for the FAAC lecture series is at Build Bright University, Sihanoukville, in late February.



New Fulbright Scholars on the Move—Ready to Leave Home

By Peou Chivoïn, MA Media Theory & Research, SIUC (2008)

The twelve selected candidates for the 2009-10 Fulbright Scholarships are getting ready for their academic and social adventures in the coming Fall. Eight of them are principal candidates and have been assured of funding, while the other four are alternate candidates whose sponsorship is subject to available funding.

All the twelve scholars have had their admission applications sent to various US universities and are now awaiting admission results, expected in the coming months. "I hope to make the best use of the opportunity to benefit Cambodia upon my return," said Sopha Ratana, a principal candidate for Environmental Studies.

The twelve selected Fulbright scholars for 2009-10 are:

- Ms. Soun Ratana (Master's)
- Mr. Kang Rithisal (Master's)
- Mr. Roth Hok (PhD)
- Mr. Chhoeung Kiriroath (Master's)
- Mr. An Sokhhoem (Master's)
- Mr. Sopha Ratana (Master's)
- Mr. Huy Khy (Master's)
- Ms. Norng Utara (Master's)
- Mr. Chea Chheangy (Master's)
- Mr. Ouk Thanin (Master's)
- Ms. Hour Thany (Master's)
- Mr. Sowath Rana (Master's)

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FAAC in brief:

- **Acting President:** Mr. Theam Rottanak
- **Treasurer:** Mr. Om Soryong
- **Secretary General:** Ms. Thon Vimealea
- **Issue Editor:** Mr. Peou Chivoïn
- **Alumni To Date:** 84 members

THE INSIDERS' STORIES

Fulbright the Hope for Cambodia



By Chim Guanghui, MA
East Asian Languages & Cultures, University of Kansas (1997)

The prestige of the Fulbright scholarship has been such that many aspirants have been unfazed by multiple failures and continued to fight for a limited selection every year. The attraction of Fulbright stems not just from its prestige, but also from the fact that it is one of the fairest scholarship offerings around in Cambodia. People of high caliber from all fields of endeavor have equal chances for being selected. The integrity of

the selection process has never been questioned by all involved.

Another amazing fact about the Fulbright program in Cambodia is the extremely high rate of returnees. The ultimate objective of the program is to educate selected Cambodian scholars the necessary skills and values to bring back and rebuild their nation. The fact that 99 percent of all scholars have returned to serve their country shows the soundness of the selection process as well as the right conscience of the selected scholars not to fail their country and the promise

they made to themselves. Cambodian Fulbright scholars have populated a widening range of sectors from governmental to non-governmental, from public to private, and from educational to industrial.

The return of the Fulbright program to Cambodia in 1994 could not have been timelier. It coincided with the return of peace and the reconstruction process that began at that time. We have been an indispensable part of that process ever since and will only grow more prominent in the coming years.

It's Tough When You Get It



By Chan Sophal, MEd
Educational Psychology, University of Hawaii, Manoa (2005)

The Fulbright scholarship is well known for its prestige, and it is tough to get one. Yet, it is even tougher when you get one. I arrived in the State of Hawaii in August 2003. It was in the evening and I did not know where to go. Fortunately, a Cambodian living in Hawaii, came to pick me up. I was very surprised by his presence because I was not sure if he would come to pick me up because I failed to confirm with his time availability.

School did not start until two weeks later. I had some free time to get around and get to know the campus. Then the registration for class

started, and I met the Department Head. She recommended that I take three courses. Two courses were pretty easy for me, but the statistics course was a tough one. Since I still could not find a place of my own to stay, a hard subject was another pressure on me. I spent almost 80% of my time on that single subject. By then, I had learned that when we were far from home and met tough challenges, our homesickness could only grow. Frankly, at one point I even thought about coming back home, even if it meant dishonor.

My solutions to academic challenges had been critical, and I found two things very helpful. The first is forming a study group with other

classmates who had had similar problems. My group consisted of two ladies (one from Japan and the other the US), one man from the Philippines, and me. We supported each other when we needed to. It worked well, and I got a very good grade for the statistics course. The second is withholding the following philosophy: "Start to do things as early as possible," and "Be fair to ourselves, by giving ourselves plenty of time to complete even a small task." This has become a part of my life ever since. To be honest, when I fail to apply this rule, I get upset with myself. The Fulbright program has made students like me very strong and very independent.

"The Fulbright program has made students like me very strong and very independent."

BOOSTING YOUR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Improving Your Concentration

*By Om Soryong, MSc.
Instructional Design,
Southern Illinois Univer-
sity Carbondale (2002)*

Have you ever been reading a book while keeping thinking of something else? Isn't it frustrating that you cannot keep your mind on reading no matter how much you tell yourself to concentrate? Losing your concentration on what you are doing is detrimental to your study or work commitment, for at the end of the day, you find that you were not as productive as you expected. Keeping your mind focused on something for a desired period of time is a great challenge, but it is not impossible to learn to improve your concentration.

What is concentration anyway? Concentration is a multi-faceted concept. Before looking at how you can improve your concentration, it is crucial to understand what it is first. In his book about concentration, Sam Horn defines concentration as "the discipline of focusing on a chosen task and ignoring irrelevant matters." Based on this definition, if you are trying to think about or do several things simultaneously, you are not concentrating. Such a behaviour is called **polyphasic behaviour** which can jeopardize your performance. In addition, according to

Sam Horn, concentration is moral tenacity. Your concentration in this case stems from your keen interest in something and your genuine commitment to it.

"Why can't I concentrate?" Apart from your understanding of what concentration is, it is also important to find out why you cannot focus your mind on something. By answering this 'why' question, you will be able to identify the source of your problem. Only after you have identified the root of the problem, you will be able to seek solutions to it. Many of us cannot concentrate because of various reasons, some of which are interruptions, inattention habit, disinterest, procrastination, fatigue, and negative attitude. All of these reasons can be attributed to three main factors: external distractions, internal distractions, and lack of goals. For example, in terms of distractions, street noise, music, phone calls, TV, and other visuals make your concentration on a particular thing difficult. They are competing for and dividing your attention, more or less.

"How can I improve my concentration?" Once you have found the causes of your problem, you then should find appropriate remedies by doing something to get rid of the causes. For

example, if your attention is being distracted by noise, you should find a quiet room or place to study. It is also better for you to isolate yourself from TV, radio, telephone, and other visuals that easily distract your attention. If you are in the habit of doing or thinking of many things at once, you should practice what we call thought stoppage to return to your original task. It takes a bit of training to keep your mind off something else other than your chosen task. If you want to put off what you have to do now for no good reason, you should resist such temptation by thinking of the consequences for not doing your chosen task. Of course, the task that you want to delay is usually less pleasant than those that infiltrate your mind. But your resistance to procrastination and your effort to fight distractions will certainly pay off. As you can see, improving your concentration requires a bit of mind training and a great deal of your commitment and determination. After all, "there is no gain without pain."

"Of course, the task that you want to delay is usually less pleasant than those that infiltrate your mind ... After all, there is no gain without pain."



Mr. Om Soryong is now Senior Lecturer and Deputy Head of the English Department, Institute of Foreign Languages, Royal University of Phnom Penh.

VISION: To Foster Peace and Development in Cambodia through the Promotion of Access to Quality Education and Cross-cultural Understanding

FULBRIGHT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF CAMBODIA (FAAC)



Mr. Theam, Rottanak, MBA,
University of Akron, (2004)
Acting President of Fulbright
Alumni Association of Cambodia
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Who We Are

The Fulbright Alumni Association of Cambodia (FAAC) was founded in 2000 and was officially launched on 16 November 2001.

Mission

We will fully utilize our available resources to promote educational and cultural exchanges, academic and professional counseling, and community service.

Way Forward and Focus

- Discipline-specific counseling
- Employment assistance
- Scholar Day (exchange activities)
- "Inspiration Trip"
- Roundtable discussion on TV

What We Have Done

- U.S. Education Week
- Fulbright Candidate Selection and Pre-Departure orientation
- Lecture Series
- Creation of resource center for students
- Informal group and individual academic advice
- The International Education Week
- Interview panel for Fulbright selection

Information sessions on the Fulbright Program (2010-2011) are available:

Phnom Penh

RUA: 17 Feb 09, 2:30PM – 4:30PM
PUC: 26 Feb 09, 5:00PM – 7:00 PM
RUPP: 05 Mar 09, 2:30PM – 5:00PM
RULE: 19 Mar 09, 9:00AM – 11:00AM

Siem Reap (11 Feb 09)

University of S.E. Asia: 9:00AM – 11:00AM
BBU: 2:30PM – 4:30PM

Battambang (13 Feb 09)

Battambang University: 9:00AM – 11:00AM
UME: 2:30PM – 4:30PM

Sihanoukville (19 Feb 09)

BBU: 9:00AM – 11:00AM
UME: 5:30PM – 7:30PM

Kampong Cham (28 Feb 09)

Western University: 9:00AM – 11:00AM
UME: 2:00PM – 4:00PM

FULBRIGHT STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS FOR 2010-2011

The **Fulbright Program** was established to increase mutual understanding between the peoples of the United States and other countries, through the exchange of persons, knowledge and skills. It provides funds for students, scholars and professionals to undertake graduate study and advanced research. The program was promoted by and named after Arkansas senator J. William Fulbright, who promulgated its passage through the US Senate in 1946.

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy is pleased to announce the opportunity to compete for 2010-2011 Fulbright Student Fellowships for graduate study in the United States leading to a Master's degree or a Ph.D. To be eligible, applicants must:

- Have a strong academic background and a record of excellence in previous studies;
- Have completed a Bachelor's degree from a recognized college or university for those applying to study in the U.S. for a Master's degree program, or have a Master's degree from a recognized college or university for those applying to study in the U.S. for a Ph.D. program;
- Be proficient in English (minimum score of 570 on TOEFL or ITP, or 230 on computer-based TOEFL), or 88 on internet based TOEFL, or 7.0 on IELTS;
- Demonstrate ability to adapt readily to a foreign environment;
- Be in good health and able to undergo a rigorous study program; and
- Have no previous study experience in the United States.

Fulbright Student Fellowship grants provide round-trip transportation to the United States, as well as tuition, fees and living expenses for full-time graduate study. Grant provisions do not include financial support for dependents.

The application and detailed instructions are available at: <https://apply.embarc.com/student/fulbright/international/>, or www.iie.org/fulbright/apps. The Fulbright Selection Committee will only accept online applications, which will be due by **June 12, 2009**. Applicants must submit all required supporting documents and test score reports directly to the Fulbright Committee of the U.S. Embassy Phnom Penh. For further information, please contact Mr. Chau Sa at tel. 023-728248, or email: chaus@state.gov.

Applicants who **do not already have an official TOEFL** score of 570 or above should plan to take the Institutional TOEFL Practice (ITP) on March 21, 2009 at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Registration for the ITP is available through the Educational Advising Center at RUPP (room 103) from Monday-Friday, with a registration deadline of March 13, 2009. The next ITP available will be April 25, 2009, with registration deadline of April 17, 2009. Please contact Mr. Hang Chanthon for registration of the ITP at 023-884-320.