Networking event with academic institutions in Phnom Penh
By CHAN Virak, Fulbright Scholar 2006-2008

On the morning of October 23, 2010, the Fulbright Alumni Association of Cambodia (FAAC) in collaboration with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S embassy in Phnom Penh organized a networking event in one of the seminar rooms of the Cambodia-Japan Cooperation Center (CJCC). Participants in the event included representatives from the U.S embassy, Fulbright alumni and alumni from other U.S exchange programs, FAAC volunteers, representatives from the Cambodian Higher Education Association (CHEA) and more than 20 representatives from different academic institutions in Phnom Penh. The event started at 8:00AM with a welcoming speech by the FAAC president followed by a remark from the Public Affairs Officer of the U.S embassy and each participant’s self-introduction. Then all the participants had a chance to socialize and establish professional network during the 40-minute coffee break. The event ended with a presentation of the activities and services provided by the FAAC, questions and comments from participants.

This particular FAAC event not only provides an opportunity for representatives from different higher educational institutions to network with alumni of different U.S exchange programs, but also raises awareness about the importance of volunteerism among the participants. The two offices of FAAC at Puthisastra University and the Institute of Foreign Languages of the Royal University of Phnom Penh have provided opportunities for undergraduates and recent graduates from different universities in Phnom Penh to get involved in a number of FAAC voluntary services. Different Fulbright alumni have also volunteered to provide services to the community. The services include sharing learning and life experiences with high school and university students both in Phnom Penh and in some provinces, providing discipline-specific consultations to university students, providing updated information on different scholarships and important tips on scholarship preparation and other academic-related services.

The FAAC now consists of more than 100 Fulbright scholars majoring in different fields of study from the U.S, and has been very well-known for its voluntary Fulbright lecture series program at different universities in the provinces and in Phnom Penh. The FAAC has always encouraged university representatives to benefit from this service by giving their students a chance to meet face-to-face with some of our young and enthusiastic Fulbright alumni.

A big event of the year: FAAC Annual Retreat 2010
By HANG Monycheat, FAAC Communications Assistant

To strengthen the connection among alumni from all the US exchange programs, FAAC arranged an annual retreat to Preah Sihanouk Province on December 04-05, 2010. Joined the retreat were 30 participants including Fulbright alumni, representatives of all the US exchange programs, and representatives from the US embassy. (continue to page 3).
Please tell us about your work and educational background.

I obtained a BEd in Teaching English as Foreign Language from the Institute of Foreign Language, Royal University of Phnom Penh in 1994, and an M.A. in International Affairs, Ohio University, USA, in 1996. Immediately after my return from the United States, I joined UNDP Cambodia as Programs Officer for works related to social development and poverty reduction. Since 2001, I have been with ADB Cambodia Resident Mission, initially as Programs Officer for works related to social development and poverty reduction. I have been working on governance and public sector management since 2003.

What was the most important event that significantly changed your life? Why?

Getting a Fulbright scholarship was a life changing experience. Back in 1994, I was among the first batch of Cambodian students under the Fulbright scholarship after the civil wars. It was a dream come true. While spending most time on learning on campus, I also managed time for socializing such as spending time with students from different countries and with residents around the campus. No other time had I felt as extensively enriched as the time spent during two years under the Fulbright program.

What led you to pursue a Fulbright scholarship?

My top priority was to pursue higher education abroad where good learning opportunities were available. As Cambodia opened up after the Paris Peace Accord in 1991, education in the West was preferred. Accordingly, I prepared myself to be qualified for a graduate study and for a scholarship. Fulbright scholarship had just resumed its operation for a graduate study and for a scholarship. Fulbright scholarship had just resumed its operation for a graduate study and for a scholarship. Fulbright scholarship had just resumed its operation for a graduate study and for a scholarship. Fulbright scholarship had just resumed its operation for a graduate study and for a scholarship. Fulbright scholarship had just resumed its operation for a graduate study and for a scholarship. Fulbright scholarship had just resumed its operation for a graduate study and for a scholarship. Fulbright scholarship had just resumed its operation for a graduate study and for a scholarship. 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The first Fulbright Mentoring Program

By CHEA Kagnarith, Fulbright Scholar 2008-2010

During the previous provincial lecture series by members of FAAC, there were a number of concerns by provincial students who thought they were unable to compete for scholarship opportunities with urban students and thus could not contribute competitively to their community’s development. These concerns are truly legitimate. FAAC sees this not only as a challenge but also an opportunity for fostering and decentralizing development.

To achieve this end, FAAC has initiated the Fulbright Mentoring Program (FMP), whose purpose is to help these underprivileged provincial students to stand a chance for any scholarship. The FMP focuses on three crucial areas: training them to be volunteers and leaders, turning them into real volunteers and leaders and guiding them with scholarship application. In December 2010, the best five provincial students or mentees from Kompong Cham (one from Western University, one from University of Management and Economics, one from Chea Sim University, one from Preah Sihanouk High School, and one from Pak Vanna School) were selected based on the interview and essay competition and were provided with the full financial support to come to Phnom Penh for two days to participate in the FMP.

First, for training, the mentees had a chance to learn about the FAAC volunteer activities, and environmental initiatives with urban universities. In addition, the selected mentees were also provided with workshop training on critical thinking and leadership by Youth Resource Development Program and AIESEC. Next, to turn them into real volunteers and leaders, all the mentees have to start up their projects when returning to their respective school in the province.

These mentees have planned to establish a reading club at the American Corner at the University of Management and Economics on February 06, 2011 to experience leading people. They are also planning to organize a Clean-Up Day on their respective campuses to promote volunteerism in environmental protection. Third with respect to guiding, each provincial student is paired with one Fulbright alumni or Fulbright Mentor. The mentors are expected to provide consultation through email and phone communication to provincial students advising them how to apply for scholarships as well as writing them recommendations.

The mentors additionally provide counsel on their academic and social issues. In return, these mentees have become the FAAC’s networking ambassadors with their respective institutions in promoting volunteerism and leadership. In a long run, FAAC intends to extend the FMP to seven more remote provinces: Pursat, Kompot, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Ratanak Kiri, Mondol Kiri, and Kratie. FAAC

Little but very meaningful contribution

By HANG Monycheat, FAAC Communications Assistant

On November 27, 2010, all members and volunteers of the Fulbright Alumni Association of Cambodia raised a total amount of $200 to assist the victims from the Koh Pich stampede, that happened on November 22, 2010. Our main contributors are Mr. Meach Sophana, Mr. Oum Pisey, Ms. Dek Dary, Ms. Ing Varony, Mr. Theam Rottanak, Mr. Sim Huy Chhoungh, Mr. Chan Sophal, Mr. Om Soryong, Mr. Chan Virak, Mr. Chea Kagnarith, Ms. Sar Samphors, Mr. So Sok Bunthoeun, Mr. Hang Monycheat, Mr. Chrup Mithona, and Mr. Chan Sovannara. On December 7, 2010, Mr. Chan Virak, on behalf of the association, handed the donation to four injured students, who were the victims from the tragedy and are also currently junior students at the Department of Japanese Language of the Institute of Foreign Languages. Each victim received an equal amount of $50 which is small but very helpful and meaningful in times of need like this. FAAC

Language learning skill workshop in Kompong Cham

By HAN Chansokhen, FAAC Volunteer

On November 28, 2010 at the American Corner at the University of Management and Economics, 4 FAAC members conducted a workshop that lasted about 3 hours under the theme of Language Learning Skills. Fulbright alumni, Mr. Chan Virak, Ms. Norng Utara, Mr. Chea Kagnarith, and myself were there to contribute to the usual FAAC Lecture Series Program. In the workshop, there were about 70 students coming from different universities in Kompong Cham province. They were enthusiastic in language learning and development, especially when they were answering 50 questions from the handout provided. The participating students were formed into three big groups; then, they worked on the handout by honestly answering the questions given. The 50 questions in the handout basically were the techniques reflecting their language learning styles. At the end of the activities, there were many good questions asked to the three alumni, especially about how to learn language efficiently and effectively. Some participants asked about how to improve their TOEFL scores and speaking skills. Some of the participants spoke good English as they mostly have participated in the reading and speaking clubs at the American Corner. With this curiosity and enthusiasm, the FAAC is looking forward to any future possible contribution to develop human resource in Cambodia. FAAC
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Communications Coordinator
Seang Soleak, Fulbright Scholar, 2007-2009
E-mail: soleak@gmail.com

FAAC Communications Assistants
+ Chan Sovannara, Senior, Department of Media and Communication (RUPP); E-mail: csovannara@gmail.com
+ Hang Monycheat, Senior, Institute of Foreign Languages (RUPP); E-mail: monycheat.iff@gmail.com

Text Editors
+ In Vichea, Fulbright Scholar, 2006-2008
+ Theam Rottanak, Fulbright Scholar, 2002-2004

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For more information:
FAAC Office at UP, Ground Floor, Building A
University of Puthisastra
Street 180 & 184, Boeng Rang, Phnom Penh

FAAC Office at IFL, Ground Floor, Building E,
Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL)
Royal University of Phnom Penh, Russian Fed Blvd

E-mail: camfulbrighters@gmail.com
Tel:(855) 13 75 74 43; (855) 13 72 87 82
Website: http://www.camfulbrighters.org
or http://www.cambodia.usembassy.gov/faac.html

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