

State Department visit underscores Tulane's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in international education

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Tulane alumna Praveena Fernes (fourth from right), who graduated in 2018 with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health, cycles with a group in Thailand, where she conducted research with the support of a Fulbright U.S. Student Grant in 2019-2020. (Photo provided by Praveena Fernes)

Opening up opportunities for *all* Tulane students to engage in learning around the world is a top priority for the university. Such opportunities often involve U.S.

Department of State support through [Fulbright](#), [Gilman](#) and [Critical Language Studies](#) international fellowships and scholarships.

Tulane faculty and staff who work with students applying for these prestigious grants were pleased to welcome a delegation from the State Department's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs to campus in February.

Associate Provost for [International Affairs](#) Laila L. Hlass said, "At Tulane, our mission is to educate global leaders and engage in impactful research to solve some of the world's most complex problems.

"To be successful, we must think globally, with an equity and inclusion lens. And that's why we were thrilled to welcome the delegation from U.S. Department of State, so we can work together to better ensure broad access to international fellowships, and support Tulanians engaging in critical and culturally responsive global learning and research."

The State Department delegation included Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs in the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs Ethan Rosenzweig, Program Director of EducationUSA Robin Lathrop, Chief of USA Study Abroad Heidi Manley, and Director of the Gilman International Scholarship Program at the Institute of International Education Michelle Dass Pickard.

The primary purpose of the visit was "to encourage Tulane's efforts and collaborate on ways to improve access for students to these fellowships, particularly underrepresented students who may face barriers in applying," said Hlass.

Tulane has had outstanding success helping students obtain grants to study and teach abroad, but educators want to do more to enhance equity and accessibility in international education.

M. Casey Love, associate dean and director of the Newcomb/Tulane College Center for Global Education, said, "We were excited to connect with the State Department about these fellowships because Tulane's [Center for Global Education](#) is committed to equal access to study abroad for all Tulane students, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, financial background, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation.

"We offer financial support targeting traditionally underrepresented students, including scholarships from the State Department's Gilman Program and other need-

based scholarships from Tulane endowed funds,” said Love. “For example, with the support of a Gilman Scholarship, Zoe Ortiz, a junior studying Latin American studies and marketing, is spending her spring semester in Oaxaca, Mexico, studying migration and transnational communities.”

Since 2017, **44** Tulane applicants were offered Fulbright U.S. Student Grants to conduct independent research, serve as English Teaching Assistants or pursue graduate study abroad; **14** Tulanians were offered Critical Language Scholarships to engage in eight-week intensive language immersion programs in locations across the globe; and **18** Tulane students have had their study abroad funded by the Gilman Scholarship.

In addition to students, 12 Tulane faculty members have been selected as Fulbright U.S. Scholars since 2016–17. This year there are two: Jana Lipman, professor of history, in Austria, and Jordan Karubian, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, in Ecuador. The historic list of Fulbright U.S. Scholars is [here](#).

Jennifer Beers, coordinator for nationally competitive scholarships in the [Office of Fellowship Advising](#) at Newcomb-Tulane College, said, “We are thrilled with the outstanding track record of success Tulane applicants have with prestigious international fellowships. Our students’ abiding intellectual curiosity drives them to connect meaningfully with their studies, research activities and community engagement, preparing them to serve as strong cultural ambassadors. The Office of Fellowship Advising is proud to support these students in every step of the application process as they pursue their dreams and engage in learning around the world.”

The Office of Fellowship Advising offers Fulbright Friday Events on Fridays in April. [Click here for more information.](#)

On Tuesday, April 12, there will be two events related to Fulbright programs. Staff, faculty and other campus stakeholders are invited to learn more about the [Fulbright U.S. Student Program](#) for graduating seniors, alumni and graduate students at 2 p.m. in the Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life, Room 221. At 3:30 p.m. in the LBC, Room 201, there will be a [Fulbright U.S. Scholar](#) workshop for interested faculty and staff, who can [RSVP here](#).



A delegation from the U.S. State Department stops by the Tulane campus in February to talk up international fellowships and scholarships. Among the participants in the discussion were (front row, left to right) Annie Gibson, Tulane director of Study Abroad and Gilman Scholarship adviser; Ana Lopez, Tulane associate provost for faculty affairs; Ethan Rosenzweig, State Department deputy assistant secretary for academic programs; Laila L. Hlass, Tulane associate provost for international affairs; (back row, left to right) Robin Lathrop, program director for EducationUSA in the State Department's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs; Celeste Lay, Newcomb-Tulane College senior associate dean for academic affairs; Heidi Manley, branch chief of USA Study Abroad; and Paula Booke, director of the Tulane Center for Academic Equity. (Photo by Rusty Costanza)