

Project Brief: Fulbright Alumni Leadership Development Program

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Purpose

This project brief outlines a concept plan for a leadership development program that advances AFAA's commitment to:

- Creating a vibrant, connected Fulbright Alumni community;
- Supporting the development of professional, academic and personal excellence; and
- Sharing ideas, inspiring others, challenging the status quo.

The Fulbright Alumni Leadership Development Program provides a facilitated adult learning experience that enables alumni "... to make sense of and act upon the personal, social, occupational and political environment in which they live" (Brookfield, 1986, p. vii). The program will support a cohort of alumni to generate projects that further the Fulbright mission of international understanding, while supporting graduates to accelerate the growth and success of their social entrepreneurship efforts.

Background

Fulbright alumni routinely identify that the Fulbright experience is a seminal moment in their lives. Many scholars return transformed by their inclusion in a new global community dedicated to research collaboration, cultural understanding, and the exchange of ideas. During their Fulbright experience many scholars, who were selected for their Fulbright because of their innate social entrepreneurship, may develop a fresh sense of purpose for their role as agents of positive social change. As Alumni, they may hold a new sense of place in the world and what is possible. It is inevitable, however, that on their 'hero's return', alumni must try to find a way to fit back into a community that may not necessarily be ready for them.

To achieve effective social change, social entrepreneurs themselves need supportive working and social environments to enact change (Catford, 1998). Given the transformative nature of their Fulbright experience, alumni may join or re-join work settings which lack the cultural readiness, organisational capacity or other resources to embrace new ways of thinking and working (Keleher et al, 2005). Without support, Fulbright alumni these experiences could have a major mitigating impact on the efforts and outcomes of scholars' efforts to implement their Fulbright learning outcomes as individual change agents (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Rappaport, 1987).

To maintain innovation as social entrepreneurs, Fulbright alumni need knowledge, skills and confidence to analyse, envision, communicate, empathize, mediate, enable and empower across individuals and organisations. They also need to think holistically, proactively, reflectively; and be able to seize opportunities to broker more effective political relations. Importantly, they need to know how to act as ‘boundary spanners’ by bridging the conceptual, cultural and ideological gaps between disciplines and sectors (Catford, 1997; Duhl, 2000).

Leadership development involves promoting change at the individual, organisational and wider social systems levels. This transformational skill set itself must involve a transformative style of learning in which the practitioner is empowered as a critical, reflective, lifelong learner (Kieffer, 1984; Mezirow, 1991). Yet these skills are often learned causally or invisibly, rather than developed through any organised process.

The Fulbright Alumni Leadership Development Program

The proposed Fulbright Alumni Leadership Development addresses a critical gap in the Fulbright experience by providing an opportunity for alumni to reflect collectively on their implementation experiences and support each other to develop renewed strategies for creating positive social change.

The proposed Fulbright Alumni Leadership Development Program draws directly on several core features of empowering adult learning.

- i. Participants are involved in a “purposeful exploration” of particular knowledge, skills, or “in a collective reflection of common experiences” (Brookfield, 1986, p. 2)
- ii. Learning takes place in a group setting
- iii. The overall learning process draws on the experiences, skills and knowledge brought by each participant to the setting
- iv. The personal qualities which participants bring to the group can provide the group with valuable learning opportunities
- v. The interactions between group members are respectful, even whilst social values, assumptions and attitudes are being challenged
- vi. The teaching-learning process will draw continuously on participants’ expectations of their learning goals, the agreed methods being used and the way by which the education process is being evaluated.

Alumnus in Residence

Drawing on the “Alumnus in Residence Program” developed by the US Fulbright Association’s New York Chapter¹, all participants will develop an idea for implementation during AFAA’s Fulbright Alumni Leadership Development Program. All participants will select one project for official endorsement by AFAA via the Alumnus in Residence Program.

AFAA will help to accelerate the growth and success of the selected alumnus project by providing access to mentoring, community connections, related programming, promotional support and other resources over 12 months. The selected Alumnus in Residence will be able to draw on up to \$2000 to pay for project expenses, logistics associated with hosting events, one conference registration fee, etc. The range of support provided will be made with reference back to AFAA’s National Committee.

¹ <https://www.fulbrightny.org/fair>

Aim

The Fulbright Alumni Leadership Development Program (LDP) will support a select group of AFAA members to:

1. Debrief, discuss, reflect on their personal and professional journeys following their Fulbright
2. Gain insight and a renewed sense of purpose about their role as community leaders
3. Generate action plans and a community of practice for influencing, engaging and implementing change
4. Bridge the gap between the Fulbright program and their practice as active global citizens creating positive social change
5. Develop an idea for implementation as AFAA's Alumnus in Residence
6. Graduate from the Leadership Development Program as recognised 'AFAA Fellows'.

Project Leads

- Prof Jon Adams, 2019 Fulbright Senior Scholar; Distinguished Professor of Public Health, Faculty of Health at UTS
- A/Prof Iain Butterworth, AFAA President

Audience

- Fulbright alumni within several years post-Scholarship
- People working in practice as policy makers, civic leaders, directors, managers, practitioners, researchers, writers, performers, artists, educators, advocates
- 10-15 people.

Format

- Two-day weekend event
- People arrive Friday night, leave Sunday afternoon
- Program will feature vigorous physical activity and time outdoors
- Saturday dinner
- The two days will involve a range of learning processes, including:
 - Round-table discussions
 - Small group work
 - Didactic presentations
 - Personal reflection and writing
 - Dinner speeches
 - One-on-one coaching
 - Guest speaker
- Content will include:
 - Influencing and engaging stakeholders
 - Communication
 - Collective impact
 - Ways of framing effort, documenting activity and measuring change

Day 1

Morning

- Reflecting on the alumnus journey: what did you want to achieve? What have you been able to change?
- What barriers and enablers have you faced?
- What are your goals now, at this stage of your life?
- How can you leverage off AFAA – and work with it?

Afternoon

- Each participant begins to develop a proposal for implementing their experience into something that delivers on AFAA's mission.
- Small group discussions and plenary
- Presentation: Influencing and engaging stakeholders in a distracted world

Evening

- Formal dinner. Each participant to share 2-minute speech

Day 2

Morning

- Discussion Forum with UTS community (staff and students).
 - What does the world look like to undergraduate UTS students? What are their priorities? What can we learn from Greta Thunberg? How can we collaborate with her generation? What do they think AFAA's / alumni's efforts should address?
- Small group work:
 - Participants progress their proposals for a social entrepreneurship program that delivers on AFAA's mission.

Afternoon

- Next steps: creating an ongoing community of practice
- Participants present their proposals
- Participants then vote on which one of them will become AFAA's "Alumnus in Residence" for the following year.
- UTS/AFAA will then commit to support that person to implement the winning idea over the next 12 months by providing access to mentoring, community connections, related programming, promotional support and other resources.
- All graduates of the AFAA program become 'AFAA Fellows' and will be identified for their leadership skills.
- Participant Evaluation

Evaluation methodology

We have an opportunity to document how participants can use the two-day leadership program to generate change across the social system. Community Capacity is defined as community's ability to mobilise, identify and solve community opportunities and challenges. The Californian Healthy Cities and Communities evaluation (Kegler et al, 2003) documented community capacity by tracking (i) measures of civic participation; (ii) mechanisms for community input and for the distribution of

community power; (iii) skills and access to resources; (iv) sense of community and social capital/trust; (v) social and inter-organizational networks; (vi) community values and history; and (vii) capacity for reflection and learning.

We expect to be able to document changes in community capacity by gathering evidence of how participants generate change across five interrelated levels of analysis: from the level of individuals, through to measures of civic participation and changes at the organisational, inter-organisational and community levels of analysis. Sources of evidence will include individual and group feedback, evaluation feedback captured at the conclusion of each event and follow-up correspondence.

Selection process

- Interested AFAA members are eligible to apply. They need to explain “why do you want to be part of this program?, and “What can you bring to the program?”
- Applicants are assessed for their commitment to progress AFAA’s goals
- Applicants present a vision for implementing change

Budget

- UTS will provide \$10,000 seed funding towards first year program event
- Participants would invest in their own travel costs to attend the venue
- **AFAA seeks \$22,000 top-up funding to help cover venue, accommodation, meals, Saturday dinner and the \$2000 Alumnus in Residence project support fund.**

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