International Fulbright Program Comes to the AEC

By Tiffany Edwards, program assistant & editor of AEC Newsline

This summer, the AEC is hosting a special program of 24 Fulbright students from all over the world. The Fulbright program is an international exchange student program. It was started in the United States in the 1940’s and has grown to become one of the most prestigious exchange programs in the world. Senator William J. Fulbright hoped the program would “bring a little more knowledge, a little more reason, and a little more compassion into world affairs, and thereby increase the chance that nations will learn at last to live in peace and friendship.”

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While there’s no doubt that going to class, doing homework, and studying hard are key elements to improving our language proficiency, that doesn’t mean we can’t have any fun while learning a language. The AEC offers students several opportunities each semester to take their English study outside of the classroom and have a little fun with it!

Attending conversation groups is a great way to enhance your academic study and practice your spoken English. Feras Ahmed, from Saudi Arabia, feels that “conversation groups helped me to improve my English a lot compared to my first semester.” Conversation leader Jenny Curatola feels that “the international students who come to conversation groups are some of the bravest and most talented people at KU, and they know that proficiency comes with lots of practice.” She feels conversation groups give students “the opportunity to improvise conversation” and can expose students to new vocabulary.

In addition to improving your English, conversation groups are a great way to have fun and make friends here at KU. This summer the AEC has ten conversation leaders. I recommend going to several different conversation groups with different leaders to find a group and a leader you like. AEC conversation leaders are students, just like you. Many of them are also studying foreign languages and hope to study abroad, just like you. Curatola hopes that conversation groups can provide students “a safe place to ask questions about their new home and make friends with students from all over the world.”

Besides attending conversation groups, students this summer have also had a blast participating in a variety of activities. They made a mess, made some friends, and had a barrel of fun learning how to cook Mexican food. They visited the Maker Faire in Kansas City’s historic Union Station where they saw wacky and wonderful inventions. They saw Shakespeare performed live in beautiful Southmoreland Park in Kansas City. We’ll have several activities throughout the fall semester so be sure to check your KU email and Facebook regularly. Don’t miss out! If you haven’t joined our Facebook page, search for “Applied English Center Conversation Groups” and click “join” to be added to the group. There are a couple of guidelines to activities, though. Students need to sign up beforehand, and there are limits to how many students can attend. Signing up for activities is easy. Just stop into the AEC office and our desk assistant will help you. We look forward to chatting with you!
The Fulbright students visiting the AEC are from nearly 20 different countries. They’re not only internationally diverse, but also academically diverse. They have many different majors and interests. They are studying such subjects as law, geology, public health, literature, and art.

One of the students, Helen Kamandhari, from Indonesia, has a Master’s in TEFL and Business. She has come to the United States to get her PhD in Instructional Design and Technology. After completing the pre-academic program in the AEC, Helen will continue on to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and University. She feels KU has encouraged her “to be more direct in, and unafraid of, giving my opinions in class”, and has prepared her “to be fully mentally prepared to compete and to cooperate with students at VTech before my arrival there.”

In addition to academic preparation, the students will take part in several cultural activities. They have participated in an Independence Day Barbecue and traveled to the Kansas History Museum in Topeka. While in Topeka, the group visited the Brown v. Board of Education Historical Site, which was of particular interest to Kamandhari. She had studied African-American literature during her undergraduate program. For Kamandhari, the historical site “was a more tangible experience since I could be in touch with the reality of the past.”

The Fulbright students will be at the AEC for six weeks before they go to their academic institutions.

This activity is sponsored by the US Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs as part of its Fulbright Program, the US government’s flagship international exchange program. This activity is administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE).
Americans love the summer. School is out (out = closed) and people take vacations. We have picnics and family reunions. We try to stay cool (you will see people wearing less clothing), and we have fun. Summer is also the season for the great American sport – baseball. Do you want to start a conversation with an American in the summer? You can start with a comment about the last game for the Kansas City Royals baseball team. For better or worse*, sports are a big part of American life, and a lot of common idioms come into American English from sports.


Read this one which is derived from the Wikipedia article (please notice how this author acknowledges Wikipedia as the source for the idioms; the author avoids plagiarism this way). This site gives examples of the idiom or explains how it is used in everyday language:


It takes some time and effort, but I hope you will try to learn some basic information about sports while you live here. You will hear sports idioms frequently. Talking about the local high school, college or professional sports team’s latest (latest = most recent) game is a common conversation-starter.

I hope you enjoy the summer.

Mark Algren
Director

*"For better or worse"

Under good or bad circumstances, with good or bad effect. For example, For better or for worse, he trusts everyone. This term became widely familiar because it appears in the marriage service of the Book of Common Prayer (1549): "With this ring I thee wed, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, for better or worse, til death do us part." [Year: Late 1300s]

Source:

http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/for+better+or+for+worse
Advice on Living Abroad

Here at the AEC we’re used to students coming to us from abroad. This fall, however, two of our teachers will go abroad. Kellie Smith-Herrod and Lynette Hosek have both accepted teaching positions in Asia. Smith-Herrod will be teaching in Vietnam, while Hosek will be teaching in Kazakhstan. Since you all are the experts on living abroad, I wanted to ask your advice for them as they get settled into their new homes. Here’s what you said:

“After you arrive you may have some allergies because the food is different. One traditional way to help with this is to eat the local tofu. The bacteria can help to balance your body and make you feel more comfortable.”

Daniel Wang

“Plan to take more time than you expect preparing your classes.”

Myeongmi Han

“First, I think they should respect the system in this country. Second, they must know the value of the dollars, for example before I came to America I talked with someone who knows about the value for my coins. Third, I think they should know about the culture and what they are eating.”

Abdul Rahman

“Go to the doctor and dentist before going abroad to stay healthy. I had my teeth checked and cavities filled before I came here.”

Yu Nakamura

“Live in a safe area. Be careful with strange people even if they look nice.”

Ahmed Muyidi

“Travel will give you more Information about your life, you will learn a lot of new things!”

Abdulhadi Alghafli

“Before I came here I checked the KU website, maybe they can check the website of the university before they go. I also ate Japanese food as much as possible before I came here.”

Noriko Muto

“Take American food with you!”

Mami Nobori

“If you have headaches, take your own medicine from home.”

Mika Tabata
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CLUES ACROSS
1. The train stops here
5. The people who work on a ship, or on a plane.
7. To invalidate; stop a booking or a planned journey.
10. You can cross the Channel by ferry ....... through the tunnel.
11. Stop.
13. A booking, a guaranteed place.
15. Luggage.
16. Section of a journey.
19. Person travelling on holiday.
24. Opposite of “finish”.
25. Your destination must be ............ on your booking form.
26. Entrance hall, or foyer.

CLUES DOWN
2. He sells holidays.
3. You need them before you take the plane.
4. to be the proprietor of.
5. This train is for Edinburgh, ............ at York and Newcastle.
6. While you’re on holiday, others are at ............
8. A flight that is not on a regular service, but has maybe been hired by a tour operator.
9. Perhaps you do this differently on holiday.
12. We’re going ....... the Costa Brava.
14. Visitors who are staying in your house, maybe.
17. A place where tourists often spend the night.
18. Use soap and water.
20. I’m going to ............ with my grandparents for a fortnight this summer.
21. A nice pale bronze colour on your skin.
23. Opposite of night.

Enjoy your Summer