



Boren-Flagship Scholarship Launches Government Careers

A Boren-Flagship Scholar is one who has participated in a Language Flagship overseas capstone program and received a Boren Scholarship through the National Security Education Program (NSEP). Providing up to \$20,000, the Boren Scholarship is available to students interested in studying languages that are deemed critical to U.S. national security for a minimum of six months abroad. Upon graduation, Boren-Flagship Scholars fulfill at least one year of federal service in the field of national security where the skills acquired through their Boren-Flagship experience will be utilized.

The benefits of participation in a Boren-Flagship program extend beyond graduation and include special hiring authorities, resume assistance, and exclusive hiring events. These benefits not only ensure that all Boren-Flagship students are successful but also that they have a smooth transition into the workforce.

Lauren Buchholz, a 2017 graduate of The University of Rhode Island Chinese Flagship program said, "Perhaps most significantly, when I came back to the U.S., I found that most government agencies hire starting at the advanced high-superior level. That is, they ask for language skills much higher than the average undergrad who graduated with a Chinese degree, but at about the desired proficiency level for Flagship graduates. In short, without Flagship, my language skills wouldn't make me a competitive applicant for any language-related position."

Special hiring authorities are also provided to Boren-Flagship students that enhance their competitiveness for federal jobs. Two distinct hiring authorities that awardees receive are Schedule A and the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2013. Through the Schedule A hiring authority, Federal agencies can potentially expedite the hiring process by appointing an individual non-competitively. Under NDAA 2013, any federal agency with national security responsibilities may non-competitively appoint a Boren Award recipient to the excepted service and later convert that



LAUREN BUCHHOLZ

Lauren Buchholz pictured at the The Great Wall at Jinshanling, located about 80 miles (130 kilometers) northeast of downtown Beijing.

appointee to career or career conditional status in the competitive service.

Daniel Higuchi, a 2015 Boren-Flagship Scholar to Almaty, Kazakhstan, described the Schedule A hiring authority as one of the greatest benefits after completing a year abroad. "It enabled me to apply, interview, and be hired directly by my office. There was [also] precedent in my office for hiring Boren Scholars, so that definitely helped."

Recognizing the importance of well written resumes for the hiring process, NSEP provides resume assistance to all Boren-Flagship Scholars. Through NSEP, scholars also have unlimited access to mock interviews, job consultations, and assistance with other job application materials.

During exclusive hiring events, Boren-Flagship awardees are provided with opportunities to submit their resumes directly to hiring officials. Previous agencies hosting events have included Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency,

Flagship Students Prepare for Capstone Year

For most students, a capstone year entails completing a project or a course; for a Language Flagship student, it entails much more. After years of studying and testing to ensure advanced language proficiency, the average Flagship student is faced with their final endeavor as a student—the capstone year. The Language Flagship capstone program is a nine to twelve month rigorous study abroad program which consists of intensive language instruction, direct enrollment opportunities, homestay opportunities, and an internship in the target language. Through participation in the capstone program students are able to reach a superior level of proficiency and acquire a deep knowledge of culture, which is the foundation of being a global professional.

Ensuring that every student has a successful capstone year abroad is no small task, as it requires preparation by parents, students, and staff. Conrad Henkel, a Russian Flagship alumni who spent his capstone year in Kazakhstan studying Russian from 2015-2016, described "Film Study" as one of the most helpful pre-capstone classroom activities for him. "Being able to quote classic movie lines in the appropriate context was incredibly helpful in connecting with native speakers," said Henkel.

Emily Hawthorne, an alumna of the University of Texas at Austin Arabic Flagship program, said spoken practice during the domestic portion of her program prepared her for the capstone year.



CONRAD HENKEL

Conrad Henkel (left) playing his guitar with a local student from Al Farabi Kazakh National University while in Kazakhstan for his capstone year.

Minds of Boren-Flagship Students ... (from page 1)

and the U.S. Department of State. Within each of these agencies, Boren-Flagship awardees currently hold a variety of positions, including linguists and foreign affairs officers.

Jacob Parsley, a 2012-2013 Boren-Flagship Scholar, is currently an International Program Specialist for NASA's Office of International and Interagency Relations (OIIR). In his position, he coordinates and often leads the international negotiations, activities, and foreign affairs of various NASA Science Mission Directorate missions and programs, many of which feature high-profile international partnerships. Parsley said, "Boren-Flagship equipped me with intercultural communication skills and overall experience overseas that helps me in my job every day. The patience, preparation, and flexibility involved with completing Boren-Flagship directly translate to governmental international relations work."

Additionally, NSEP provides Boren awardees with exclusive job postings that cater to those who have yet to fulfill their federal service requirement. "Nearly all employers are attracted to the language skills gained in Boren-Flagship, but in my experience two other advantages have been more important" said Parsley. "First, employers greatly respect the fact that being a Boren-Flagship means that various organizations (National Security Education Program, your home university, etc.) have all decided to invest in you and your potential. Boren-Flagship stands out as a huge investment in you by the federal government, and that gets noticed. Secondly, employers are attracted to the fact that Boren-Flagship Scholars are people who decided to do



Daniel Higuchi (right) horseback riding while in Kazakhstan for his capstone year.

something very hard and very unconventional, often for no other reason than their personal interest in the language and country, and did it successfully. Boren-Flagship signals that not only is this an individual who follows their interests and takes on challenges, but this is also someone worth investing in—which is really what all employers are looking for."

Although most Boren-Flagship students agree that the program is intensive, they also agree that it is an invaluable experience worth repeating. Buchholz sends this message to students considering the Boren-Flagship program: "It's hard but definitely worth it. It's genuinely the most beneficial thing for your language skills."

Word from Flagship

Sam Eisen
Director
The Language Flagship



INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The Language Flagship is now at a point where we're seeing impressive results and placements for our students. The Boren-Flagship Scholarships have dynamically expanded opportunities for Flagship students to compete successfully for federal job opportunities related to their skills and expertise.

As the Flagship program continues to expand, with new programs and partnerships across the country, our ability to provide students with valuable resources continues to expand as well. Flagship works with partners such as the Department of Homeland Security to place Boren-Flagship awardees in offices which include the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). We have alumni such as Ari Gore, who made use of his Flagship experience to secure a position overseas as a Foreign Service Officer, and Jacob Parsley, who is working at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

The Op-ed from representatives of USCIS in this issue illustrates how the reputation of Flagship graduates is growing within the federal sector, and partners are recognizing the cultural, and communication skills of Flagship students as critical to the mission of U.S. national security. Our recent placements of Boren-Flagship graduates is encouraging and a culmination of years of program development and work with individual students by the NSEP service team to help match the graduates with employers who need their talents. Our challenge is to draw in more talented students interested in federal service and building further on the reputation Flagship alumni are creating among our partner agencies. The Boren-Flagship Scholars are the vanguard showcasing the skills that can be developed with intensive study through the Flagship capstone program.

Long-standing Community Member Honored for Remarkable Contributions to the Field

In 2008, The Language Flagship established The Language Flagship Leadership Award to celebrate individuals who have demonstrated tremendous support toward advancing the field of language education—the very heart of Flagship's mission. Individuals who have received this honor have been recognized throughout the Flagship community for their exceptional work and contributions to the field. The Language Flagship directors presented the 2018 Language Flagship Leadership Award to Dr. Dan E. Davidson, founding president of American Councils for International Education and professor emeritus at Bryn Mawr College.

Dr. Davidson revolutionized the fields of second language acquisition, overseas language and cultural immersion, and proficiency assessment. With exceptional diplomacy and partnerships throughout the world, Dr. Davidson led American Councils and established the organization as a lead American education and international training organization focused on U.S. funded undergraduate and graduate level programs; in addition to his renowned research, his publications as an author and editor, his oversight of national assessment programs in various foreign languages, and more.

"The Leadership Award means much more than you can imagine, in light of the distinguished company of past recipients, but also in view of the many other members of this community who are no less deserving of this recognition," said Davidson. "Currently, there are very few theoretical or pedagogical models which address the relationship between linguistic competencies and cultural competencies. In 2004, when I became engaged in the Flagship program, no one would have believed this possible on the scale and at the cost for which Flagship and its partners now regularly accomplish these goals."



Dr. Dan E. Davidson,
Founding President of
American Councils for
International Education

AMERICAN COUNCILS

Students Prepare ... (from page 1)



EMILY HAWTHORNE

Emily Hawthorne (third from the left) touring a minaret in Islamic Cairo while in Egypt for her capstone year in 2011.

"All writing and reading activities were generally done at home to leave plenty of time in class for listening and speaking," she said. "Also, watching native language sources, like shows and real Arabic newscasts, and reading real news stories. These all really helped me."

For Marina Farrugia, an alumni of the Arabic Flagship Program at University of Maryland, College Park, the "How To" sessions that her program offered were great preparation for her capstone year in Morocco. According to Farrugia, these sessions focused on performing functions that were not normally covered in class. "We learned how to use Moroccan Colloquial Arabic to bargain in markets, buy things in pharmacies, and describe medical conditions," said Farrugia. "There are plenty of opportunities to discuss politics, economics, and other academic topics in class, but the opportunity to learn to describe with a pharmacist what your health issue is and how you would like to be helped is just not something you find in the classroom."

Mental wellness is also paramount during the preparation for the capstone year. Henkel participated in meditation classes the semester before traveling abroad. While overseas, Henkel used meditation and music to unwind. "Often times the things I did back home to relax were not available to me while abroad. Even the simple things, like taking a walk in solitude or watching some standup comedy, were interrupted by country conditions. Having an activity to decompress, that required only my headphones and a quiet place to sit, was very helpful," said Henkel.

The capstone year presents a unique challenge for every student, and this is an expected part of the experience, but at the same time students understand that the hard road leads to beautiful destinations. "It should be very challenging," Hawthorne said. However, "take advantage of being in a place where the language you want to master is literally all around you. Don't waste it."

Op-ed:

Employing Language and Cultural Skills to Serve Our Most Vulnerable Populations

Amelia Palmer and Timothy Knoth
USCIS Strategic Talent Acquisition and Resourcing Team

Every day at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), 19,000 government and contract employees administer our nation's lawful immigration system. Some of these employees are alumni of the National Security Education Program (NSEP) who have brought their unique experiences in language and cultural immersion to USCIS. There are many great programs and directorates within USCIS where aspiring NSEP Language Flagship alumni find a meaningful mission. These include the Field Operations, Fraud Detection & National Security, and Service Center Operations Directorates. Many NSEP alumni also find career opportunities in the Refugee, Asylum and International Operations (RAIO) Directorate.

RAIO assists people who are fleeing oppression, persecution, and torture, or who are facing urgent humanitarian situations. RAIO's international offices do everything from helping U.S. military members serving abroad to facilitating intercountry adoptions and assisting lawful permanent residents who have lost their Green Card and need to return to the U.S. The humanitarian nature of RAIO's work and its international presence mean that employees must be able to interact with and elicit critical information from individuals from different cultures.

A number of NSEP Language Flagship alumni have used cultural adaptability in their roles as RAIO officers. Refugee officers travel the world to interview people who apply for refugee status while asylum officers interview foreign applicants who are already in the United States. Overseas adjudication officers review and process immigration petitions at 23 U.S. Embassies. Officers in RAIO evaluate claims, review country conditions, conduct security checks, and assess whether a person is eligible for protection in the United States.

USCIS values the international experience, strong communication skills, and cultural sensitivity that many NSEP alumni develop through their international work. The insights they bring help overcome even the most challenging cultural differences, allowing NSEP alumni to play a vital role in how our nation serves the most vulnerable immigrant populations. To learn more about USCIS, visit www.uscis.gov.



UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

USCIS refugee officers travel to refugee camps around the world, such as this one in Chad, to interview refugees and determine their eligibility to resettle in the U.S.

New Programs Join The Language Flagship

The Language Flagship recently expanded to welcome six new domestic Flagship Programs for Arabic, Korean, Portuguese, and Russian. New programs are located at Brigham Young University and University of Mississippi for Arabic; University of Wisconsin, Madison for Korean; University of Texas, Austin for Portuguese; and Indiana University and University of Georgia for Russian. Victoria Hasko, director of the Russian Flagship Program at the University of Georgia, described the opportunity to join Flagship as a "professional delight."

"It's just thrilling that we now have the resources to support our students, and also to reward them with the unique opportunities that Flagship provides," said Hasko. The Language Flagship will announce its full and open competition for domestic undergraduate Flagship programs in spring 2019, with an anticipated deadline of fall 2019. For more information, visit www.thelanguageflagship.org/content/programs-and-competitions.

From Flagship to Foreign Service

Growing up in the Chicago suburbs, Ari Gore was excited to learn and acquire a better understanding of the world, particularly the Middle East. He wanted to experience the culture, language, thinking, and lifestyle in the Middle East first-hand. He also desired to move beyond the perceived biases and stereotypes portrayed of the region; this led him to The University of Maryland's Arabic Flagship Program, through which he received a Boren award to fund his overseas capstone experience to Damascus, Syria. Through his participation in the Boren-Flagship program, Ari achieved advanced proficiency in Modern Standard and Levantine Arabic.

Ari's Arabic proficiency ultimately led him to employment with the U.S. Department of State as a Foreign Service Officer. He has since served in Riyadh, Tel Aviv, Washington, D.C., and is currently serving in Jerusalem. "The Flagship program played a crucial role in preparing me for my current position; mastery of a language is essential to establish credibility with interlocutors and to understand their worldview," said Ari. While reflecting upon skills that prepared him for his current assignment, Ari quickly highlighted interpersonal skills gained during his capstone year in Syria. "Language can bring people closer together and break down barriers," Ari said. "Learning to be a good friend, classmate, and student ambassador in a country with a historically complicated relationship with the United States was crucial in preparing me to serve as a Foreign Service Officer, and I'm incredibly appreciative of the opportunity I had."



Arabic Flagship alumni Ari Gore

Flagship Centers

Arabic	Russian
Brigham Young University	Bryn Mawr College
Indiana University, Bloomington	University of Georgia
University of Arizona	Portland State University
University of Maryland, College Park	University of California, Los Angeles
University of Mississippi	Indiana University
University of Oklahoma	University of Wisconsin, Madison
University of Texas, Austin	<i>Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Kazakhstan</i>
<i>Arab-American Language Institute in Morocco</i>	Turkish
<i>Moulay Ismail University, Morocco</i>	Indiana University, Bloomington
Chinese	<i>Azerbaijan University of Languages, Azerbaijan</i>
Arizona State University	African Flagship Languages Initiative
Brigham Young University	University of Florida
Hunter College	<i>The West African Research Center, Senegal</i>
Indiana University, Bloomington	<i>Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique</i>
San Francisco State University	<i>MS-Training Center for Development Cooperation, Tanzania</i>
University of Hawai'i, Mānoa	Indonesian Flagship Language Initiative
University of Minnesota	University of Wisconsin, Madison
University of Mississippi	<i>State University of Malang, East Java, Indonesia</i>
University of North Georgia	South Asian Flagship Languages Initiative
University of Oregon	University of Wisconsin, Madison
University of Rhode Island	<i>American Institute of Indian Studies, Jaipur and Lucknow, India</i>
Western Kentucky University	Persian
<i>Nanjing University, China</i>	University of Maryland, College Park
<i>Beijing Union University, China</i>	Portuguese
Korean	University of Georgia
University of Hawai'i, Mānoa	University of Texas, Austin
University of Wisconsin, Madison	<i>Federal University of São João del-Rei, Brazil</i>
<i>Korea University, South Korea</i>	

The Flagship Mission

The Language Flagship leads the nation in designing, supporting, and implementing a new paradigm for advanced language education. Through an innovative partnership among the federal government, education, and business, The Language Flagship graduates students who will take their place among the next generation of global professionals, commanding a superior level of proficiency in one of many languages critical to U.S. competitiveness and security.

What We Do

Flagship Centers offer students intensive language instruction to enhance their academic degrees, graduating students with professional-level language proficiency. Programs include periods of rigorous language and cultural immersion at Overseas Flagship Centers. The Language Flagship also funds a select number of pilot K–12 programs designed to provide an articulated path of language instruction for students from elementary school through college.

Flagship graduates leverage their superior language and cultural skills in various careers, offering an intercultural perspective to employers in the federal and state governments, global businesses, and nongovernmental organizations.

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THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

Contact Us

The Language Flagship
4800 Mark Center Drive
Suite 08F09-02
Alexandria, VA 22350

Tel.: 571-256-0702
Fax: 703-692-2615
E-mail: info@thelanguageflagship.org
Web: www.thelanguageflagship.org

