

## FOUR KEY PROGRAMS IN TITLE VI AND FULBRIGHT HAYS 102 (b) (6):

### NRCs, FLAS FELLOWSHIPS, DDRA, AND FRA

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Two of the three original grant programs established under Title VI of the National Defense Education Act, now the Higher Education Act, were National Resource Centers for Foreign Language and Area Studies (NRCs) and Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships (FLASs). Two of the four original grants programs established under Fulbright-Hays 102 (b) (6), which supports the overseas training component of international education programs for Americans, are the Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) and Faculty Research Abroad (FRA) programs.

Together, these four programs constitute a basic foundation for foreign language and area studies programs in American higher education. NRC grants support the campus centers that make possible interdisciplinary teaching and research on foreign areas and cultures. FLAS fellowships support the graduate students who become the next generation of language and area experts. The pre-doctoral DDRA program makes it possible for graduate students to conduct their dissertation research in the field overseas. The FRA program supports post-doctoral research that keeps faculty in touch with ever-changing realities abroad. I will discuss each of these in turn, with more attention to the NRCs, which have the most complex mission. I speak from experience, having been an NRC director since 1980, first at the University of New Mexico and more recently at Duke.

### NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND AREA STUDIES

It is not an exaggeration to say of Title VI funding that seldom has so little done so much for so many. In the current fiscal year, Title VI and Fulbright Hays 1-2 (b) (6) appropriations together represent less than two-tenths of one percent of the Department of Education budget. The original NDEA legislation envisioned a fifty-fifty partnership in which the government and the university would split the cost of a center that would provide foreign language and area training to prepare foreign area experts. To successfully compete in a peer-reviewed process for an NRC award, universities had to provide evidence of strong commitment to studies of a foreign area or international topic and to teaching the relevant foreign languages, as demonstrated by the strength of its language and area-expert faculty in terms of both quality and quantity, by the strength of

the library collection on the world area to be covered, and by the investment of the university's own resources in the staffing and programming of the center. Over time, the fierce competition to obtain title VI status led universities to increasing their investments in order to remain competitive. By 1978-79 the Office of Education staff reported that Title VI grants covered only 9.1% of the cost of a center.<sup>1</sup> The Rand report of 1981 found that this figure had fallen to 6%.<sup>2</sup> The current figure is probably below 5%, but specific data are not available. The leveraging effect of the Federal investment in National Resource Centers has been remarkable.

Before the introduction of the Title VI support for campus-based foreign area centers, there were only a handful of such centers at American universities. There were professional associations of foreign area scholars only for Asian Studies and the Soviet bloc, and very few journals publishing research on foreign areas. Today there are more than one hundred Title VI-supported NRCs and hundreds of other area studies programs, many of which were started with Title VI support from the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program. Large professional associations exist for Latin American Studies, Middle East Studies, and African Studies, as well as smaller association for fields such as Southeastern Europe studies, Turkish Studies, Brazilian Studies, Caribbean Studies, and Canadian studies. There are now hundreds of area studies journals that include all regions of the world.

It is important to understand that the NRCs are interdisciplinary in nature, but not non-disciplinary. In other words, the area studies faculty affiliated with an NRC have their primary appointments in a disciplinary department such as history or political science. The courses taught are disciplinary courses that may be cross-listed with the area center. Without the presence of the center, these faculty members from different departments would have little contact. The center brings the faculty together to form an intellectual community. Every center is required to offer less commonly taught languages. Because of small enrollments in many cases that are not supported by language departments, many centers employ teachers of rare languages to insure that these are offered.

The language and area studies courses offered can lead to a variety of degree options. At the undergraduate level these are usually certificates, minors, and majors. At the graduate level centers frequently offer an MA degree in area studies. At the Ph.D. level it is usually expected that the student will obtain a Ph.D. in a discipline, while also developing language and area expertise and doing dissertation research overseas. These extra requirements mean that it takes longer to get a Ph.D., which is why the FLAS program is so important. Many NRCs also provide degree options for graduate students in professional programs such as business, law, medicine, and engineering.

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<sup>1</sup> Ann I. Schneider, "NDEA Centers: How They Use Their Federal Money," in *President's Commission on Foreign Language and Area Studies*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., November 1970, pp. 169-174.

<sup>2</sup> Lorraine M. McDonnell, et. al., *Federal Support for International Studies: the Role of NDEA Title VI* (Santa Monica: the Rand Corporation, May, 1981).

In addition to teaching undergraduate students, training graduate students, and offering less commonly taught languages, the NRC is expected to support faculty research and the collection of foreign library materials, maintain an active program of speakers, conferences, and colloquia, and not least, to conduct outreach to schools, as well as to colleges, businesses, media and other consumers of international information.

Every NRC is required to have a serious outreach component, usually centered on collaborations with K-12 school and colleges of teacher education. These efforts involve such activities as in-service teacher training, re-certification courses, curriculum workshops for teachers, and the provision of materials for teaching on international topics, such as films and videos, music, and visual materials. Most centers now have internet web sites to disseminate teaching materials and resources to serve the needs of teachers and students. Excellent examples of center outreach are UCLA's "OutreachWorld" website at <http://www.outreachworld.org/> and the University of New Mexico's Clearinghouse for Latin American Resources Outreach (CLARO) site at <http://laji.unm.edu/claro.php/>. Many centers also provide other outreach services such as speakers for civic groups, interviews to news media, and consulting with corporations and business organizations such as chambers of commerce.

Each NRC is therefore involved with every aspect of the pipeline that produces expertise to serve America's national needs: the K-12 system, the undergraduate experience, and graduate and professional training. How well does the NRC system work? The answer is very well indeed, given the limited resources available to each NRC. Some brief examples follow.

How well do the NRCs carry out their function of teaching less commonly taught languages? The numbers speak for themselves. NRC's offered 226 different less commonly taught languages during the 2001-2004 period. Government agencies, including the Defense Language Institute and the Foreign Service Institute offered only 75 less commonly taught languages in the same period.<sup>3</sup> Would these languages be taught without Title VI support? The answer is that many would not. A 1997 survey of Title VI NRC Directors by the National Foreign Language Center found that only 9% of the directors said that they could continue teaching their current offerings of less commonly taught languages if title VI funding were discontinued. Asked specifically which languages could not be taught without Title VI support, the directors listed 115 language offerings that would have to be dropped.<sup>4</sup>

How well do the NRC's carry out their function of meeting the nation's need for personnel with foreign language and area expertise? Examples of NRC-trained personnel are easy to cite, such as Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, and General John Abizaid,

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<sup>3</sup> These data are available on line at <http://elctl.msu.edu/summaries/world/>

<sup>4</sup> National Foreign Language Center Director's Study (Center for Opinion Research, Institute for Social Research, University of New Mexico, unpublished, 1997), p. 10, Table 24, and page 4, Table 10a.

Commander of the U.S. Central Command. Almost all faculty teaching at NRCs are themselves graduates of NRC institutions. Informal communication indicate that the vast majority of personnel at defense and intelligence agencies with deep language and area expertise were trained at institutions with NRCs, but actual numbers are not public. It can be said, however, that the Foreign Area Officer program of the U.S. Army sends its officers to train at NRCs. During the period I directed the Latin American Institute at the University of New Mexico, 44 active-duty Army Officers and four active-duty Air Force officers received M.A. degrees in Latin American Studies.

To sum up the impact of the Title VI NRC program, it has transformed the intellectual landscape of the United States by creating a network of foreign language and area centers that teach tens of thousands of students very year, offer less commonly taught languages that otherwise would not be taught in the U.S., produce a stream of original research, provide outreach services to K-12 education and other groups, and train the next generations of language and area experts for service in government, business, and education.

On the negative side, these accomplishments are increasingly difficult to sustain. The amount of the average NRC grant in constant 2005 dollars has declined from \$335,643 in 1967 to \$239,288 this year, a decline of 29%. In spite of the decline since 1967, added mandatory activities have been added such as outreach, evaluation, and expanded LCTL instruction, putting additional pressure on NRC budgets. Little more can be expected from these centers given current levels of funding. More funding would enable the NRCs to do a better job in fulfilling both their original and expanded missions and to train more students to higher levels of proficiency.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND AREA STUDIES FELLOWSHIPS

The FLAS fellowship program is an indispensable partner to the NRC program. FLASs are normally bundled with an NRC grant, which means that the same university applies for both NRC states and for FLAS fellowships. The best proposals are likely to receive both kinds of awards. This has several advantages over an unbundled fellowship program in which the individual student is awarded a portable fellowship that he or she can use to attend any institution. First, it means that fellowships are available to recruit students to the programs that are most highly ranked by a peer review process. It also means that the academic institution can select the students that best fit its particular strengths in foreign area studies. It is cost efficient because it obviates the need for an expensive selection process to award portable fellowships in a national competition. In contrast, portable fellowships are not only expensive to award but also require that the student select an institution of study. Because a student's information about program quality is likely to be less accurate than the peer review process that ranks NRC applicants, portability may result in a student attending an unsuitable program.

FLAS fellowships are crucial for many PhD programs, because to add foreign language and area studies training on top of the normal requirements of a PhD program requires extra time, often from one to three years in duration. University financial aid is geared to the normal PhD timetable, making it impossible for students to develop foreign language and area studies expertise. FLAS fellowships make the difference by providing the time and support for the foreign dimension.

FLAS fellowships also are a mechanism for leveraging more resources from universities. FLAS awards include a stipend for the student and an institutional allowance to the university in lieu of tuition, which falls below the regular tuition levels of most universities. Because the allowance is less than the tuition at most institutions,, the universities must finance or swallow the difference.

As a faculty member who has followed the careers of many foreign language and area studies students who held FLAS fellowships, I am impressed by how well FLAS awards achieve their objective. Almost all PhD students who are given a FLAS dedicate their career to teaching and doing research on the foreign area that they studied. In contrast, very few students without FLAS awards ever develop an interest in foreign area work. FLASs provide the entry point for foreign area specialization. FLAS fellowships are the crucial and essential recruiting tool for maintaining the nation's pool of expertise on international and foreign area issues. To put it differently, FLAS fellowships are the intake valve for the final phase of the international education pipeline.

The Congress is considering, and I would strongly support, the reinstatement of eligibility for undergraduate FLAS fellowships. If undergraduates were eligible to receive FLAS fellowships, they could begin their foreign language studies earlier and achieve higher levels of proficiency.

Unfortunately, overall funding for FLAS fellowships has declined in real terms more than any other component of the original Title VI programs. Current appropriations allowed for the awarding this year of 926 academic-year FLAS fellowships, as compared with 1,504 academic-year fellowships awarded in 1967. That is a loss of 578 fellowships, or 38%. The generation of area specialists that emerged in the late 1960s is retiring, and at the current level of FLAS support we will not be able to replace them.

#### DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH ABROAD [in Fulbright-Hays 102 (b) (6)]

Because Title VI programs support only domestic educational activities, the Fulbright-Hays 102 (b) (6) programs were added in the early 1960s to provide the missing overseas components required to complete the Title VI mission. The Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) program was an obvious need. PhD students doing dissertation research on foreign areas must to travel to those areas to do field work, visit archives, or collect data. Without first-hand in-country experience, it is almost impossible to generate the level of deep knowledge required for true foreign area expertise.

At the time of its inception, the DDRA program was only one of a number of sources of support for overseas doctoral research. Major foundations such as the Ford, Rockefeller, and Dougherty foundations were investing heavily in dissertation research on foreign areas. The Foreign Area Fellowship Program, administered jointly by the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council, was an important mechanism for disbursing these donations.

Over time the major foundations redirected their support and one by one ceased to fund dissertation research abroad. One rationale was simply that this was an activity in the national interest related to foreign policy, for which the Federal government should assume responsibility. Today the only source of funding for doctoral dissertation research abroad in many world areas is DDRA program.

Unfortunately, Fulbright Hays 102 (b) (6) appropriations have fallen well below their historic levels. In 1967 the Congress appropriated the equivalent of \$17.537 million in 2005 dollars for Fulbright Hays 102 (b) (6). In Fiscal Year 2005, the appropriation was \$12,610, a drop of 28%. Applications for the DDRA program vastly exceed the small number of awards available. The lack of funding for this essential program constitutes a bottleneck at the very end of educational pipeline.

#### FACULTY RESEARCH ABROAD [in Fulbright-Hays 102 (b) (6)]

The pre-doctoral research awards offered by the DDRA program have as an important counterpart the post-doctoral awards offered by the Faculty Research Abroad (FRA) program of in Fulbright-Hays 102 (b) (6). This program plays an important role in faculty development, especially for junior faculty, in maintaining language skills, and in supporting the overseas field research that is essential to keeping knowledge current.

The most productive period for field research in the career of an area specialist is usually the period immediately after completion of the dissertation. That is precisely the period of junior status in which it is most difficult to obtain support for field work abroad. The FRA program is one of the few sources of support for field work available to area specialists from any institution and from any area studies field. In fact, I would say that for faculty members at less prestigious teaching institutions, it is probably the only potential source of support.

Those of you familiar with issues of language retention will know that one must use a language or lose it, particularly if it is not one's native language. The cost of training an area specialist who speaks a foreign language is very high. If the specialist loses language fluency because he or she cannot conduct research abroad, then that investment is lost. The FRA program makes it possible for faculty to return to the field and refurbish their language skills.

Foreign language fluency is not the only asset that depreciates in the absence of overseas field research. The intellectual capital of the area specialist is in large measure

his or her degree of understanding of the current political context in a foreign country, which in turn is a function of the intellectual networks that keep one up to date. If the area specialist does not return to the field, he or she loses touch not only with current realities, but also with foreign institutions, with foreign colleagues and collaborators, and with important public figures. Changes of government or regime overseas often lead to the wholesale replacement of personnel in education, government agencies, and other institutions. The contacts that one depended upon in the past must be replaced or refurbished if one is to maintain area expertise.

The loss of funding for Fulbright-Hays 102 (b) (6) programs that I have previously mentioned affects the FRA program as well as the DDRA program. Applications for FRA awards also vastly outnumber the grants that can be made. Any increase in the appropriations level for these programs will be money well spent in the national interest.

The Faculty Research abroad program is therefore another key element in the integrated set of programs administered by the Department of Education to meet national needs. Continued investment in foreign area research is just as important to national security as continued investment in other fields like science and medicine. The world is a complex and ever changing set of realities that intersect with the interests of the United States. We must understand those realities if we are to protect the interests of this nation.