



# fellowS

NEWS ABOUT PEACE CORPS FELLOWS/USA

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FROM THE OFFICE OF DOMESTIC PROGRAMS

## PCVs Return to Liberia

Late last year the Peace Corps returned to Liberia after nearly 20 years. The Peace Corps left Liberia in 1989 when a civil war, which killed an estimated 250,000 people, broke out in the nation. U.S. Chargé d’Affairs Brooks A. Robinson called the decision to re-enter Liberia “an important milestone which signifies America’s confidence in Liberia’s recovery and stability.”

President Bush visited Liberia in February 2008. This prompted negotiations between the American government and the Liberian government about the return of the Peace Corps

to the country. The president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, appealed to the United States which, according to Cletus Sieh, Liberia’s acting minister of information, “was able to respond in a positive way.”

According to Sieh, most of the Peace Corps Volunteers will help in the education field, as well as agriculture and health. “Most of them are going to be in the academic area. Of course, there will also be others that will be involved in the technical areas, especially in the areas of agriculture, and engineering. And the bulk of them would be in the

academic field, and let us not also forget in the area of health.”

Twelve new Volunteers were sworn in on October 27 by Peace Corps Director Ron Tschetter. At the ceremony Tschetter said, “Liberia has faced great challenges and shown the world its strong spirit. I want to thank President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf for welcoming the Peace Corps back to work with the Liberian people. We’re proud to continue the American legacy of providing education Volunteers to Liberia, and to be able to contribute to the country’s development efforts.”



Liberia Country Director  
Lucianne Phillips.

## Fellows/USA Reaches (and Surpasses) Fifty Partners!

The Fellows/USA program expanded significantly last year. By December, when the sixth school of the year officially became a part of the program, it had reached a high-water mark of 51 partner schools. The expansion bodes well for both the Peace Corps and the program itself, which is likely to benefit from increased visibility and a renewed sense of excitement and energy brought out by both veteran members and the new partners. Across the nation, universities

are focusing on nurturing more globally-minded students, and on internationalizing their campuses. Fellows/USA, with its returned Volunteer participants and its emphasis on service, will certainly contribute to the vibrancy of the partner institutions.

### Bowling Green State University

Ohio’s Bowling Green State University (BGSU), educating approximately 3,000 graduate

students, now gives returned Peace Corps Volunteers the chance to earn master’s degrees in cross-cultural and international education through their School of Leadership and Policy.

Fellows will work with local and national organizations such as the Ohio Migrant Education Center; Rural Opportunities, Inc.; Adelante, the Latino Resource Center; and the Toledo Public Schools system. Fellows will be given both assistantships, which include stipends based on the number of hours worked, and full tuition waivers.

Margaret Zoller Booth, associate Professor and graduate coordinator for the program, said she believes “a Peace Corps Fellows-Bowling Green State University partnership will benefit everyone involved...A collaborative effort between BGSU and the Peace Corps would only strengthen the university’s expertise in the educational and in-

ternational arenas. Furthermore, the other BGSU students would gain tremendously from being in classes with them. I discovered this for myself when I was a returned Peace Corps Volunteer from Kenya, attending classes with other returned Volunteers. Our classes were all stronger as a result of the unique experiences brought into the classrooms. I see this partnership as a win-win situation.”

### Drew University

Peace Corps Fellows at Drew University, Madison, N.J., will be able to concentrate their Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree in a number of different subjects: secondary biology, chemistry, English, mathematics, social studies, and Spanish.

Fellows will intern in an under-served school district where they will student-teach and tutor students. Also, Fellows will be



Any returned Peace Corps Volunteer who satisfactorily completed service is eligible for the Fellows/USA program.

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Participating Fellows will receive a \$5,000 grant for their first year of study and will also receive a full-time salary as nursing residents during their second year of study.

## University of Southern California

Expanding the options for Fellows/USA applicants in the state of California, the [University of Southern California](#) also joined the Fellows/USA family. Students can choose to pursue Master of Public Administration, Master of Planning, Master of Health Administration, or Master of Real Estate Development degrees. All degrees for Fellows will be offered through the School of Policy, Planning, and Development (SPPD).

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers selected for the program will receive a \$10,000 scholarship to be disbursed over two years. They will also be eligible for additional, merit-based funding.

Jack H. Knott, dean of SPPD, noted the benefits of the new partnership by saying, "Our school is committed to educating the future generation of leaders, and global experience and understanding are more important now than ever before. The Peace Corps' Fellows/USA program is a remarkable opportunity to bring additional global knowledge to SPPD's international programs and projects."

granted scholarships that will cover 40 percent of their school tuition.

Linda Swerdlow, director of the MAT program, said, "Drew's MAT is perfect for returned Peace Corps Volunteers. We are seeking candidates who can help American youth develop a global perspective, cross-cultural understanding, and an awareness of the global nature of the social problems they must solve in the future...We welcome returned Volunteers into our program."

## Monmouth University

Monmouth University in New Jersey now offers Fellows the opportunity to earn master's degrees in social work, with concentrations available in clinical practice with families and children and international and community development. Fellows can also obtain a joint Master of Arts in public policy, or a joint Master of Divinity. The Master of Divinity degree is offered in association with Drew University, another Fellows/USA partner school.

Fellows will intern in New Jersey-based community service agencies helping individuals, families, and communities address age, gender and social issues. They will be given assistantships that will both cover the tuition of nine credit hours, and also pay for room and board.

Dr. Robin Mama, the dean of the School of Social Work at Monmouth, said, "We are thrilled

to partner with the Peace Corps in the Fellows program. I look forward to having the returning Peace Corps Volunteers joining the Monmouth community as graduate students in our Master of Social Work program. Their experience will benefit the classroom, as well as the community, where their Peace Corps experience will definitely be put to use in their field internships."

## University of Alabama, Birmingham

Offering participating students Master of Science in Nursing degrees (MSN), the [University of Alabama, Birmingham](#) Fellows/USA program will prepare qualified RPCVs as clinical nurse leaders. Fellows who successfully complete their MSN may continue in their course of study to pursue either a Ph.D or a Doctor of Nursing Practice.

The school's website points out that a "key component of the Fellows program involves partnering with community organizations to provide opportunities for students to address selected community or health problems through their clinical practicum experiences. Fellows will address two major health issues during these community experiences: reduction of health disparities, and addressing the nursing shortage. The School of Nursing is honored to have been accepted as a Peace Corps Fellows program!"

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Peace Corps Fellows Elizabeth Slack and Nicole Weigand from Western Illinois University at a *Noches de Septiembre* event.

*Photo courtesy of WIU*

Committing to a Fellows/USA program is a big decision. Aside from the usual busy life of a graduate student, Fellows take on a service-related internship. On top of that, many Fellows are still getting used to life in the fast lane of modern America after having lived the slower-paced life of a Peace Corps Volunteer. Add all of this together, and you could end up with a recipe for misery. Yet misery isn't what Fellows experience. Some of the biggest advocates of the program are the Fellows themselves, who seem to take the challenges in stride. Juggling coursework and internships and the myriad other stressors that grad school can trigger, well, Fellows manage to make it all look easy.

Granted, their status as returned Peace Corps Volunteers gives them a head start in the "make do with what you have" department, but other factors play a role in the ability of Fellows to enjoy their time in their chosen programs. Camaraderie, social support, and the fun that comes with being a part of a Fellows cohort goes a long way toward making the experience of being a Peace Corps Fellow more than just an academic endeavor.

### Food and Fun

Befitting its role as the first Fellows/USA program, [Teachers College](#), [Columbia University](#), has the social support aspect of the program down to a science. According to Tom Tortorici, RPCV/Peru and program assistant for the Fellows/USA program there, the typical yearly cohort is between 20 and 30 RPCVs. Each year they are welcomed to

the program with a new cohort barbecue, which is attended by current Fellows, alumni, and participating teachers and school principals. This sets the stage for the new group to bond, but also to feel a part of a larger community of Fellows and Fellows/USA program supporters. Feeling support of that kind surely makes committing to the rigors of the program not only easier to handle, but more fun.

At [Johns Hopkins School of Nursing](#), the social aspect is guided less by tradition and more by the needs and wants of each yearly cohort itself. Lori Edwards, Fellows/USA program director at Johns Hopkins, says, "I build the socialization aspect of the Fellows program by collaborating with the students. They guide the programming for each year, but, I also get some of my best ideas from networking with the other Fellows program coordinators at our annual meeting. Talking with them and sharing best strategies has made a huge difference in our programming."

One of the ways the Fellows in Johns Hopkins School of Nursing Accelerated Class of 2009 began to socialize and bond was through weekly meetings throughout their first summer. "Simply showing up and having some food helped them feel like they made it through the week. They just loved that weekly experience," Edwards notes.

### Team Building Takes Many Forms

Other schools take different routes to team building within their Fellows/USA programs. For instance, Fellows at [Western Illinois University](#) have a group orientation at the beginning of each year. According to Fellows/USA program manager Karen Mauldin-Curtis, the orientation often includes a day of facilitated team building in which program staff also participates. Another perk of Fellows/USA life is a Peace Corps Fellows/USA office, where Fellows can gather to use the work stations, conference room, and lounge. Fellows at Western Illinois also gather for lunch time meetings each month.

## Putting the FUN in Fellows/USA

Team building within Fellows/USA programs takes many forms. Some universities, like Western Illinois, require core courses to bring Fellows from various academic departments together around a topic that benefits them all. Teachers College, Columbia University, has each new cohort spend his or her first four months together participating in summer intensive training. They've dubbed the training, "urban education boot camp" and it provides not only an introduction to working within an urban school system, but also allows for true bonding between the members of the cohort.

Whatever means a Fellows/USA partner school might use to create cohesion and a sense of community within their program, the end result is a sense among the Fellows that their program is more than just graduate school. Erin Graves, a Fellow at Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, feels "surrounded by like-minded individuals, whom I am continuously inspired by and eager to learn from the more I spend time with them."

### Bonds That Last

The bonds created during a Fellows/USA program can be as strong—or stronger—than the

ones created within the Peace Corps itself. Lori Edwards says, "Students repeatedly report that they have made lifelong friends as part of the Fellows/USA program." That support and feeling of camaraderie goes a long way to ensure that Fellows finish the program, and that they feel they have a full experience, complete with learning, internships, and the sense that they were all in it together. Those interpersonal bonds last, and so do the bonds the students feel toward the university they attended, and the program staff that helped them through it.

Some Fellows, it should be noted, leave their programs with more than just a graduate degree. According to Edwards, "Among the alumni of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing there has been at least one marriage and there are many Fellows who now have babies and children!" She adds that there are no grandchildren yet, but give them time. Perhaps a new generation of Fellows/USA students is growing up listening to the stories of the fun and companionship fostered within Fellows/USA programs across the country, and waiting patiently for their turn.



Fellow Mike Toso (standing far left), a Western Illinois University student, Fellow David Weaver (in PC shirt), Kevin Timilin to David's right (Director of International Center on Campus) and Fellow Kyle Turk (front left). The picture was taken while a group of Fellows was working on their booth for the International Bazaar.

*Photo courtesy of Western Illinois University*

## Fellows/USA Spring Census

School	Fellows
Bowling Green State University	1
Carnegie Mellon University	15
Columbia University Teachers College	40
Cornell University	1
Drew University*	0
Duke University	13
Duquesne University	8
Florida Institute of Technology	7
Fordham University	4
George Mason University	7
George Washington University	8
Georgia College & State University	1
Humboldt State University	1
Illinois State University	7
Indiana University	8
Johns Hopkins University	62
Kennesaw State University	4
Loma Linda University	3
Marquette University	9
Monmouth University*	0
New Mexico State University	9
Northern Arizona University	2
Rutgers University	2
Seton Hill University	4
Southern New Hampshire University	6
The New School	20
University of Alabama-Birmingham*	0
University of Arizona	53
University of Cincinnati	6
University of Colorado Denver	1
University of Denver	43
University of Maryland-Baltimore	6
University of Maryland-Baltimore County	15
University of Maryland-College Park	1
University of Michigan	15
University of Missouri-Columbia	9
University of Missouri-Kansas City	1
University of New Orleans	7
University of Oregon	9
University of Pennsylvania	2
University of Rochester*	0
University of South Carolina	5
University of Southern California*	0
University of Vermont	7
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	2
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point	0
University of Wyoming	1
Western Illinois University	12
Western New Mexico University	13
Wichita State University	0
Xavier University	3
Yale University	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>457</b>

\* New program in the 2008-2009 academic year

## Two Fellows/USA Partners Join Master's International

The Peace Corps recently welcomed both [Indiana University](#) and the [University of South Carolina \(USC\)](#) as Master's International (MI) partner schools. Although different in scope—MI combines graduate study with Peace Corps service—the programs both promote the internationalization of graduate campuses. The newly partnered MI programs will benefit from the established Fellows/USA programs on the campuses. Peace Corps looks forward to expanded partnerships with both.

USC's new MI program, offered through the Moore School of Business (MSB), will grant candidates International Master of Business Administration degrees, in tandem with a 27-month Peace Corps assignment. MSB offers the same degree through the Fellows/USA program.

"We are thrilled to expand our partnership with the Peace Corps through the Master's International program," says Dean Hildy Teegen. "The Peace Corps' broad history and focus on international development, combined with the MSB's 35 years of world-renowned international business education, provides the perfect platform for expanding the impact of the Peace Corps around the world."

Indiana University, another current Fellows/USA partner, which enrolls Fellows in either Master of Public Affairs, or Master of Science/Environmental Science degree programs, will now offer students the opportunity to pursue both degrees through the MI program.

## OUP Hosts Conference

Last fall the Office of University Programs hosted a conference for the university coordinators who work with Master's International and Fellows/USA programs to ensure that they have the tools and information needed to continue growth of the programs and numbers of participants. The conference was attended by almost 100 coordinators and included sessions on topics such as being an effective coordinator, recruiting students, marketing the programs, and writing successful grants.

The energy was obvious, and should result in the continued increase in participants for both programs, which are hovering at all-time highs. Coordinators from each program were able to share ideas and best practices, as well as inspiration and encouragement.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Recruiting Office played a key role in the success of the graduate school fair, during which coordinators were able to engage in direct recruitment with nearly 70 potential Peace Corps applicants, nominees, returned Volunteers, and members of the public.

The efforts of the many Peace Corps staff members who played important roles in helping to train and conduct presentations were well-received and much appreciated. One Fellows/USA coordinator summed up the feelings of many attendees, saying, "Overall it was a very dynamic and interesting two days. I always learn so much here, and I enjoyed seeing other staff and coordinators."

There will be another coordinator's conference this year, so watch for further information to be sent your way.

# From the Program Manager

From time to time we all succumb to the reassuring daydream of a stable state, when nothing changes and the comforting blanket of sameness is wrapped warmly around us, insulating us from forces beyond our control.

Despite this daydream, we know that change can be both positive, and surprisingly invigorating. It can lift us out of well-worn ruts, give us a different perspective from which to view our world, and inspire us to be daring.

This winter, in addition to the usual end of the semester and year, an administration ended. Inauguration day saw us standing on the threshold of a cascade of changes that may impact us in ways both obvious and obscure, regardless of party affiliation, of ballots cast, or even of interest in political affairs.

At times, politics can be divisive, but the Peace Corps enjoys an amazing amount of bipartisan support. Its mission draws people in and focuses them. During my time here, I've been impressed by each employee's level of commitment. The temps, the political appointees, the RPCVs, the consultants—everyone works together. Sure, there are times when we're not all in sync, but more is accomplished than sometimes seems possible, given our budget limitations.

Like Volunteers in the field, the Peace Corps staff is constrained not just by money, but also by time. The agency's "Five-Year Rule" means that most people are here for no more than five years before they move on to other jobs. Put into place to fight bureaucratic entrenchment, the rule creates a sense of urgency among staffers to not waste a single moment because they know those moments are ticking away.

In all of its many facets, from its stated goals to its employment policies, Peace Corps embodies change. Will the changes looming on our horizon dare us to be bold? No crystal ball is clear enough to tell, nor will any show us the outcomes of those actions we choose to take. But let us each make a promise to ourselves: This year I will venture, at least a small distance, from the comfortable cocoon of my routines, and I will strive to see my world from new perspectives. This one change may make all the difference.



*Julie Driver*

## Continue to Make a Peace Corps Difference!



### Third Goal

Share your personal Peace Corps stories about your country of service with your community. You can help Americans increase their understanding of the world and its people while inspiring others to make a difference too.



Visit [www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal](http://www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal) for ideas by the RPCV community and resources to help you prepare and present your Peace Corps activity.

Don't forget to register your Third Goal participation online. RPCVs who engage in Third Goal activities are encouraged to officially register with us once a year. You can help gain greater support to the Peace Corps from Congress.

