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# Nine 'Noles win Fulbrights

## Fulbright Awards given to nine FSU students, alumni

**By: Liz Cox**

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A record nine Florida State University students and alumni have recently received Fulbright Awards, the highest number FSU students have received in a single year.

FSU's 2007 winners are Natalie Binder, Dan Carlson, Jamal Grimes, Megan Hewitt, Katie Hodges, Anna Philp, Matt Phipps, Natasha Rocas and Nathan Timpano. Three Seminoles - Thomas Henderson, Timothy Lorton and Douglas Westlake - were also awarded as alternates, meaning that they still may receive the Fulbright Award if other students decline or more funds become available.

"Nine is a really big number of awards for Fulbright," Jamie Purcell, director of FSU's Office of National Fellowships said, which offers students assistance in pursuing scholarships and awards like Fulbright. "Lots of schools may have multiple award winners, but having nine really puts us ahead of many universities in the country, in terms of how many (Fulbrights) in a single year our students have won."

According to Purcell, the hard work of the students was a big factor in their achievements.

"The students that did apply worked really hard on their applications," Purcell said. "This is an application process that really takes months, and these students all put months into it."

The Fulbright Award, which began in 1946 as a bill sponsored by J. William Fulbright and signed into law by President Harry Truman, allows students, teachers, scholars and professionals to travel to foreign countries to study, teach, lecture and conduct research. According to its Web site, the original purpose of the Fulbright program was to "enable the government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries."

Purcell discussed how the University environment may have aided the students in achieving the awards.

"We have a very Fulbright-friendly campus because there are so many different activities, a lot of research going on and just a lot of cultural awareness already, and all of those are things that Fulbright is looking to support," Purcell said. "When we went out to start promoting this program, there was a really rich environment to pull from, and a lot of students who found an interest in this program were already really great candidates for this award."

Each of the nine winners have pursued various areas of study, are traveling to different countries and have different goals for what they will do with their Fulbright Awards.

Binder, who earned her Bachelor's degree in political science and interdisciplinary social sciences, plans to travel to Indonesia with an English Teaching Assistantship. She will teach at an Islamic girls boarding school in East Java.

"I hope to start a Web and video blog where the girls can practice their English, talk about their lives and maybe become pen pals with American girls of the same age," Binder said. "I think it would be a chance to build friendships across cultures, which is what the Fulbright scholarship is all about."

Carlson earned a master's degree in oceanography in April and will travel to Israel under a Fulbright full grant to conduct research on the coupling between ocean dynamics and ocean life in the Gulf of Eilat.

"The Gulf of Eilat is a small, deep, body of water in the northern Red Sea," Carlson said. "It is well-known for its world-class scuba diving because of the incredible diversity of both corals and fish. It's also a politically charged area as it is bordered by Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Thus, in addition to all the normal scientific challenges, there are cultural and political hurdles as well."

Grimes, who earned his Bachelor's degree in risk management insurance with an emphasis in finance, has also received an English Teaching Assistantship. He will be teaching high school students in South Korea.

"Personally, it's an opportunity I've been given because of people who've imparted their time, energy, prayers and lives into me," Grimes said. "I owe a great deal to my mother for the foundation she gave me. I did not get here alone. The fellowship is an esteemed honor and responsibility."

Hewitt, who also received a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship, received her Bachelor's degree by double majoring in anthropology and religion. She plans on teaching high school students in Indonesia.

Hodges will teach in Taiwan for 11 months with her English Teaching Assistantship. She earned a Bachelor's degree in elementary education in April and will be teaching grades one through six.

Philp, who graduated with a Bachelor's degree in International Affairs, received a French Government English Teaching Assistantship. While teaching English in France, she will also pursue further study of the French language and French immigration and history.

"Basically, I don't think there's a word that can hold all of the excitement I feel about this trip," Philp said. "I'm past 'excited' and 'amazed.' I can't wait to get over there. I hope to

study through personal interactions and possibly some university classes in France the history of immigration in the last 100 years, specifically of French-Algerian immigrants."

Phipps will graduate from FSU in August after double majoring in creative writing and Spanish. He plans to teach in Chile with his English Teaching Assistantship while also "perfecting his Spanish" and researching the Chilean cueca, an Andean musical genre.

Rocas studied both literature and creative writing at FSU and received a Bachelor's degree in English. She will travel to Turkey with her English Teaching Assistantship, where she plans to teach English, engage in the Turkish culture and explore her own American-Mediterranean heritage. She also plans to complete a book of poems exploring Levantine culture and identity.

Timpano, who earned a Master's degree in art history from FSU in December 2006 and is currently working on his doctorate, received a Fulbright full grant a well.

"I will be conducting research for my art historical/interdisciplinary dissertation on theatrical body gestures appearing in Viennese Expressionist paintings that were created in the early years of the

twentieth century," Timpano said. "My Fulbright grant will allow me to conduct research on a full-time basis at various institutions in Vienna. The opportunities offered to me through this grant will be invaluable in attaining the information I need to effectively complete my dissertation."

The application process for 2008-2009 Fulbright Awards is currently open, and the deadline is in September. Students who are interested in pursuing a Fulbright Award for that time period should start the process now, said Purcell. Interested students can visit the Office of National Fellowships Web site at [onf.fsu.edu](http://onf.fsu.edu) or call the office at (850)644-2208.

"(The awards) really bring a lot of recognition to the University because Fulbright is one of the biggest scholarship programs out there," Purcell said. "It has a wonderful name. It offers amazing experiences for our students, and hopefully many of them will bring their experiences back with them, share them with future Fulbright applicants, and this whole process will continue to grow on our campus."

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