



OFFICE OF
GLOBAL INITIATIVES
AND INTERNATIONAL
SERVICES

FGCU FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR TOP OFF AWARD PROGRAM

Program Proposal: FGCU will maintain the current base salary for all full-time faculty members who win a Fulbright US Scholar Program Award for the duration of their award.

Rationale: Given FGCU's interest in raising its national and international profiles, encouraging the pursuit of Fulbright Scholars Awards among our faculty is an effective, low cost means to an important end. FGCU has historically had very few Fulbright Scholar applicants/awardees. A reason for this may lie in the conditions of the Fulbright Scholar Award, where stipends are lower than most base salaries, and the housing costs, costs of partner/family airfare, child education, etc., often cause awardees to incur additional personal expenses to fulfil the terms of the Fulbright Scholar Award. This award program seeks to remove that disincentive and encourage fuller, broader participation in the Fulbright Scholars program.

Eligibility: All full-time FGCU faculty are eligible to receive salary support in the form of a TOP OFF AWARD for Fulbright Scholar Program (FSP) Awards. (*Other Fulbright awards such as the Fulbright Specialist Program, Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program, International Education Administrators Program, and Fulbright Nexus Program, etc., would not be eligible in this program*).

Funding: TOP OFF AWARDS are subject to the review and approval of the awardees' Dean and the Provost (with the expectation of approval) and should, whenever possible, be approved in advance of an external application or award. Approval will guarantee that the college will make up the difference between the award amount and the faculty member's base salary, prorated to the duration of the award and continuing to provide the associated/ benefits. The funding comes from the budgeted salary normally allocated to the college. In the past, colleges would have benefited from salary savings of Fulbright Scholar awardees. With this initiative, some of those savings would be redirected back to the awardee.

Benefits: While on leave from FGCU to complete their award, a Fulbright Scholar would also keep all benefits including ongoing accrual of sick leave balance contributions. In particular, health care benefits would be maintained with both the University and employee paying their regular share of costs. FGCU and the awardee will also continue to make retirement contributions during the period of leave.

Process: Once the faculty member receives the award, they should share the Fulbright award document with their College Business Manager, the Department Chair, and Dean. The awardee will submit a request for a leave of absence for the period of the award.

Sabbatical: Ideally, a Fulbright Scholar Award would be taken in conjunction with a sabbatical leave. In that scenario, the University sabbatical guidelines for compensation would supersede the TOP OFF AWARD program. The total compensation of sabbatical pay, Fulbright stipend and/or TOP OFF AWARD funds would not exceed the full-time, base salary rate for the period of the leave. When the leave doesn't coincide with a sabbatical, the salary amounts not covered by the Fulbright award will be covered by the applicant's College. The appropriate FTE will be calculated and submitted on a request for leave of absence. The Department Chair will arrange adjunct replacement for the awardees' courses during leave period.

Obligation to the University: Recipients of the TOP OFF AWARD incur an obligation to FGCU upon their return to campus. As with the sabbatical award, where recipients agree to return to full-time employment for a period equal to the length of their sabbatical award, recipients of the TOP OFF AWARD must agree to continue employment with FGCU for a period of two years after the

close of their Fulbright award period. Awardees will sign a promissory note to formalize the agreement. Failure to meet this obligation will result in retroactive forfeiture of the funds paid out through the TOP OFF AWARD as described in the promissory note. In addition, TOP OFF AWARD recipients will serve as a Faculty Fellow in the Office of Global Initiatives and International Services (OGIIS) for an entire academic year within the two- year period of obligation. The Faculty Fellow will receive one course release during their fellowship period paid for by OGIIS.

The Fellow will serve as campus liaison for the Fulbright Program and promote the Fulbright programs to FGCU faculty and students, organize Fulbright information sessions and outreach activities, serve on campus-level review committees for student applicants and pursue or support other Fulbright opportunities on behalf of FGCU.

The Fellow may meet their obligation to the University and OGIIS through other, internationally focused projects as arranged in consultation with the Assistant Vice President for International Programs such as:

- Manuscript preparation for scholarly or creative work developed during Fulbright Scholar Program.
- Proposal and Execution of Workshop, Conference, Performance or Exhibition of work with clear global, international or transnational themes and materials.