Extending the Fulbright Legacy

The University of Oxford is commemorating Senator J. William Fulbright, one of Oxford’s most distinguished alumni, whose vision for better international understanding is implemented on a continuing basis in the Fulbright Programme of Academic Exchanges.

The proposal, initiated by Pembroke alumnus Brian Wilson in 2007 and comprising the US-UK Fulbright Commission, the University Department of Politics and International Relations, the Cultural Affairs Office of the US Embassy, Pembroke College, and the Lois Roth Endowment, honours and reflects Fulbright’s personal, political and intellectual legacy and will make a substantial, long-term contribution to the academic life of his former College and University. It involves creating a University Fulbright post, hosting an Annual Distinguished Lecture at Oxford and an Annual Fulbright Visiting Professor, as well as Fulbright rooms at Pembroke College.
Fulbright arrived as a Rhodes Scholar in 1925, after receiving a political science degree from the University of Arkansas. He adapted his American football skills to rugby and played lacrosse for the University while reading Modern History at Pembroke College, with Ronald McCallum, later Master of Pembroke (1955-1968) serving as his tutor. Fulbright received a law degree from George Washington University (1934), practised as an anti-trust attorney in the US Department of Justice for two years, then lectured in law at the University of Arkansas, where he became the youngest university president in America (1939-1941). He believed that "law is the essential foundation of stability and order both within societies and in international relations". The University of Arkansas has erected a bronze statue of the Senator, built a Fulbright Peace Fountain and named its College of Arts and Sciences after him.

After his election in 1942 to the House of Representatives, the House adopted the Fulbright Resolution encouraging the United States to support international peacekeeping initiatives and to participate in what became the United Nations. In 1944, he was elected to the Senate as a Southern Democrat representing Arkansas, for the first of his five six-year terms. He promoted the passage through Congress in 1946 of Public Law 584, which established the Fulbright Programme of international educational grants for Fellows and Scholars, initially using funds from the sale of surplus military equipment. This programme set in motion ‘the greatest movement of scholars across the face of the earth since the fall of Constantinople in 1453’, as Ronald McCallum put it in 1963. Some 800 US scholars go annually to over 155 countries, and similar numbers of scholarships are awarded for foreigners to lecture or conduct research in the US. 325,400 Fulbrighters from 155 countries have participated in the programme since 1948. In 2013 Congress voted $242.8 million and foreign governments contributed a further $80 million to the programme.

Fulbright was a formidable voice of dissent in the Senate, being the sole voter in 1954 against the funding of the McCarthy Investigation Committee, and raising serious objections to the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. A distinguished and effective Chair of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (1959-1974), he held several hearings on the Vietnam War; his book, The Arrogance of Power (1967), which questioned the moral justification for that war and attacked the Congress for its failure to set limits on the executive, still has great resonance today. His other published books on international relations subjects included Prospects for the West (1963), The Crippled Giant (1972), and The Price of Empire (1989).

Fulbright stated in his later life that the two most important influences in his life were Cecil Rhodes and Ronald McCallum, and he maintained a lifelong correspondence with his former tutor. Giving the McCallum Memorial Lecture ‘Fifty Years On’ in October 1975, Fulbright said that, ‘My experiences in Oxford were clearly the major influence in determining my approach to public or political matters, and especially to international affairs.’
2. International Relations at Oxford

We consider that the most appropriate subject area to commemorate Senator Fulbright should be in the field of international relations, which is very well established at the University of Oxford, and that the post should therefore be located in the Department of Politics and International Relations.

In more recent years, the department has become one of the most important centres for graduate work and advanced research in the subject. It has consistently gained the highest rankings, and in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework produced the highest number of 4* outputs in the discipline in the United Kingdom. It has an outstanding two-year taught Master’s course (admitting 20–25 students per year), a large and flourishing doctoral programme (around 85 doctoral students), and a large community of post-doctoral fellows. At the undergraduate level, the subject thrives, with the International Relations core paper being among the most popular Politics courses within the Philosophy, Politics and Economics degree (PPE).

Many of Fulbright’s particular concerns are strongly represented in Oxford, including the importance of international law and international organisations, the concern with war and conflict generally and the diversity of traditions of thought on international relations. International Relations in Oxford has always taken a broad view of the subject. Oxford’s strengths include the attention paid to the links between International Relations and related disciplines such as Law, History and Philosophy, and the large number of Oxford faculty who combine disciplinary excellence with expertise on particular regions of the world.

International Relations in Oxford incorporates a series of major research programmes (including the Centre for International Studies, the Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict and the Cyber Studies Programme); a wide range of research projects (such as ‘Measuring Peace Consolidation’ and ‘Power and Region in a Multipolar Order’); and international collaboration (e.g. the Oxford/Princeton Global Leaders Fellows Programme, based at University College, Oxford). These programmes, not to mention Pembroke’s own College-hosted research projects on the Changing Character of War, and Human Rights, are dedicated to rigorous research, to teaching an outstanding body of students from across the world, and to contributing towards public policy, in which the new Blavatnik School of Government is also destined to play a key role. These programmes support Fulbright’s belief in the importance of universities as places where ‘we can dare to think ‘unthinkable thoughts’ and to explore all of the options and possibilities that confront us in a complex and rapidly changing world’, combined with serious engagement with the world of public policy.

In these varied ways, then, Oxford has taken forward Fulbright’s belief in the ‘power and importance of learning and experience as the crucible – the only crucible – in which a new kind of international relations can be shaped’, and his emphasis on the need for ‘perception and perspective about the world, both as to the varieties of preferences and aspirations in different societies and as to the common humanity which unites all societies’. 

Pembroke College has been one of the constituent colleges of the University of Oxford since its official foundation in 1624. Over the centuries, a significant number of Pembroke students have gone on to make great contributions to public life. Prominent alumni include the lexicographer Samuel Johnson (pictured above right); Sir William Blackstone (second from left), whose Commentaries on the laws of England (1765) laid the foundation for the common law of the English-speaking world; the Methodist preacher George Whitefield; James Smithson (above left), founder of the eponymous Smithsonian Institution in Washington; US Senator Richard Lugar; Lord Heseltine; King Abdullah II of Jordan; and former Polish Foreign Minister and journalist, Radosław Sikorski. The latter received tutorials from Dr Zbigniew Pelczynski, who also taught former President Bill Clinton while he was studying at Oxford.

In November 2005, Senator Lugar gave a speech at Pembroke College commemorating the 100th anniversary of Senator Fulbright’s birth, and remarked that, ‘Senator Fulbright and I shared a remarkable number of common experiences, though generally these occurred decades apart. Both Senator Fulbright and I won Rhodes Scholarships after earning our Bachelor’s degrees. Both of us chose to study at Pembroke College. Both of us focused much attention on government and economics while at Oxford. And both of us were blessed with the same tutor, R. B. McCallum.’

Physically, Pembroke College is concentrated in its traditional site in the centre of Oxford, with a fine building on the Thames a few minutes’ walk away. The main site has considerable historic interest and importance, since it includes the 15th century refectory building of Broadgates Hall that is now the Senior Common Room.

The Old Quad was built in the 17th century, the Chapel was consecrated in 1732, and the Chapel Quad was expanded with a new Dining Hall and extra lodgings for Fellows and students in 1848. The poet John Betjeman wrote to the Master: ‘Dear Mr McCallum, Pembroke is, as you know, my favourite college because it is the last of old Oxford left, architecturally, venously, socially and atmospherically.’

To improve the quality and amount of accommodation for its 360 undergraduates, 200 graduates and 30 visiting students from American universities, Pembroke in 2013 completed the construction of a new building complex immediately outside the old city wall and joined by a footbridge to the old College site. In this new complex, the College has a fitting memorial to Senator Fulbright in the form of a suite of rooms primarily for holders of Fulbright academic posts, fellowships or scholarships.
4. Goals of the Fulbright Memorial Campaign

The ultimate goal of the Campaign is to honour and commemorate Senator Fulbright with a permanent memorial in the form of academic posts in the Department of International Relations, together with an appropriate Oxford infrastructure to support them. We are seeking funding for the following:

1. In the near term, to work with the US-UK Fulbright Commission to promote the annual Visiting Fulbright Professor and thereafter establish a permanent, full-time academic post in the University, initially in the form of a Fulbright Early Career Fellowship in International Relations, with funding being sought of around £60,000 per year. This would allow an outstanding young scholar to take forward his or her postdoctoral research and to develop teaching skills in college tutorials for undergraduates and in seminar teaching and lectures for the department.

2. In the longer term, to create a permanent Fulbright Chair in International Relations, the endowment of which will cost just over £4 million.

A number of initiatives have already been realised or are being realised under the Fulbright banner:

i. An apartment named after Senator Fulbright in Pembroke College’s new building complex, which has been funded by pledges from Brian Wilson, reinforces the historic connection between Senator Fulbright and Pembroke through his tutor, R.B. McCallum, later Master of the College, who was also Brian’s tutor in 1948. The College has played host to two Fulbright Visiting Fellows: Professor Joseph Nye, Harvard University Distinguished Service Professor, Harvard Kennedy School, and Professor Deborah Welch Larson, Professor of Political Science at UCLA. Professor Robert Rohrschneider of Kansas University will be visiting during the 2015-16 academic year, and future Fulbright Visiting Professors are expected, under an arrangement recently agreed between the Fulbright UK-US Commission, Pembroke College and the Department of Politics and International Relations.

ii. Five Annual Fulbright Lectures have been organised by the University Department of Politics and International Relations, and given by a high-profile public figure or academic, as part of the effort to draw attention to the Fulbright Memorial Campaign. The subject is International Relations, broadly defined, but including a focus on the links between theory and practice and/or the role of culture and human values in international life. The lectures take place each year in Pembroke College’s new Pichette Auditorium or a University venue, followed by a formal University Dinner hosted by the College, which also provides accommodation for the speaker. Lecturers receive a Fulbright grant to cover travel costs and subsistence, supplemented by additional funds from the Lois Roth Endowment and the US Fulbright Association.

The Inaugural Fulbright Lecture was given in May 2011 by Professor Anne-Marie Slaughter, Director of Policy at the US Department of State. The second lecture was given a year later by Ambassador Thomas Pickering, who also lectured in London and Edinburgh under the aegis of the US-UK Fulbright Commission. In 2013, the speaker was Nobel Prize-winning oncologist, Dr Harold Varmus, who has headed some of the most important government- and privately-funded health research institutes in the USA. In 2014, the speaker was Professor Joseph E. Stiglitz, Fulbright Alumnus and Nobel laureate in Economics who analysed the features of global inequality and assessed its impact. In 2015, the focus will shift to the new geopolitical uncertainties wrought by Russia’s newfound but anciently rooted assertiveness on the world stage with a lecture by another former US Ambassador to Moscow, Jack Matlock.
5. Fundraising for the Fulbright Memorial Campaign

The US/UK Fulbright Commission, one of a global network that continues the programme of educational grants started by Senator Fulbright, selects the brightest and best of British and American scholars to take part in an exchange programme between the United Kingdom and the United States.

The Commission, whose work is core funded by the two governments, provides postgraduate students, academics and professionals with grants to expand their educational and cultural experience through a period of study, lecturing or research abroad. From 2010 onwards, the Commission is also partnering with the top research Universities, as well as research charities and corporate sponsors, to support joint Fulbright Awards. This new initiative will see exceptional American scholars cross the Atlantic in fulfilment of Senator Fulbright’s vision. The Commission supports fundraising for a permanent Fulbright academic post in Oxford as well as contributing funds for a distinguished high-profile Annual Fulbright Lecturer.

The Lois Roth Endowment was established in America in 1986 on the death of Lois W. Roth (left), by colleagues and friends to commemorate her two decades as a US cultural diplomat. It furthers international exchanges in the social sciences and humanities and supports academic programmes of this type, making small grants ‘to help things happen which otherwise might not’. The Endowment is chaired by Dr Richard T. Arndt, husband of the late Ms Roth, both of whom were Fulbright Fellows and also founding members of the American Fulbright Association.

The US Fulbright Association of alumni has been making its own contributions to the project since 2013.

Pembroke College has recently raised on average in excess of £2.5 million each year for operating and endowment needs. A capital campaign, which raised funds for a new £29 million building programme with contributions from a high percentage of Pembroke alumni, ended successfully in 2013. The new building complex, in addition to providing the Pichette auditorium, seminar rooms and café, offers accommodation to nearly 100 students, as well as a number of apartments for postgraduates and visiting academics with families. The College will provide accommodation for Visiting Fulbright Professors and is committed to assist in fundraising for the ongoing Fulbright Memorial Campaign.

The University Department of Politics and International Relations has a strong and successful record of fundraising for academic posts. Externally funded posts in International Relations include the John G. Winant Lecturership in American Foreign Policy, the John Swire Fellow in the International Relations of East Asia, and the Lester B. Pearson Professor of International Relations. It will be fundraising from Oxford alumni and other organisations for a permanent Fulbright post in International Relations.
6. Donor Recognition and Involvement

The University of Oxford would not exist without the vision and generosity of its benefactors. The University is delighted to acknowledge the contributions of our donors in ways befitting their generosity. This could be achieved in any number of ways, some of which are outlined below. We would be happy to discuss the means of recognition that would best suit the benefactor’s wishes.

**Naming Opportunities**

Full endowments and large benefactions present a variety of naming possibilities for donors. Naming is one way in which the University demonstrates its appreciation to those great philanthropists who share its vision for knowledge creation and the advancement of ideas. The endowment of posts and programmes is a particularly significant contribution, as it ensures the continuation of research and teaching activity in perpetuity. This safeguards our academic work against the vagaries of passing trends that might otherwise jeopardise its continued viability.

**The Chancellor’s Court of Benefactors**

Philanthropic contributions which cumulatively total more than £1.5 million by an individual benefactor, or £3 million by an organisation, once received in full, enable the Chancellor to invite the benefactor to join the Chancellor’s Court of Benefactors (CCB). The Court meets annually in Oxford for the formal ceremony of admission. The occasion provides an important opportunity for benefactors to engage with the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Heads of House and senior academics, and to develop a greater understanding of the life and work of the University and the colleges. The Chancellor’s Court is the University’s most prestigious donor recognition society and includes many of Oxford’s most valued friends and supporters, such as George Soros, Charles Simonyi and Leonard Blavatnik. Members are invited to private events throughout the year.

**The Vice-Chancellor’s Circle**

The Vice-Chancellor’s Circle was launched in 2009 to recognise those individual, foundation and corporate benefactors contributing £250,000 and above to the collegiate University. In addition to receiving regular communications from the Vice-Chancellor and other senior officers, members will be invited to special meetings of the Vice-Chancellor’s Circle. These occasions will showcase the breadth of intellectual talent at Oxford and the significant contribution to society of alumni and friends.

**The Master’s Circle at Pembroke College**

The Master’s Circle was launched in 2013 to recognise individual benefactors, alumni and friends, whose donations received by Pembroke College total £50,000 and above. Members are invited to exclusive annual meetings of the Circle, including an Annual Dinner. These events showcase the work of the College and set out its current strategic thinking for the future.
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