



FULBRIGHT Romania



Annual Report

FISCAL YEAR 2021

October 1, 2020–September 30, 2021





FULBRIGHT Romania

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Connecting people and places.
Advancing ideas.
Creating opportunity.

In 2021, we celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the global Fulbright Program. Since the program's inception in 1946, over 400,000 people from 160 countries have participated in the Fulbright Program, enriching their education, advancing their careers, and making meaningful contributions abroad and at home. Throughout 2021, the dedicated anniversary website (<https://fulbright75.org>) featured stories, news, and events, recognizing the program's history of positive impact on the lives of individuals as well as on global and local communities.

The Fulbright Program is the U.S. government's flagship international educational and cultural exchange program, creating connections in a complex and changing world. Led by the U.S. government in partnership with 160 countries worldwide, Fulbright offers programs for passionate and accomplished students, scholars, teachers, artists, and professionals of all backgrounds to study, teach, and conduct research, helping to build mutual understanding and find solutions to critical international concerns.

One connection at a time, Fulbright brings people together and moves nations towards a more peaceful world.

In Romania, the Fulbright Program has been present since 1960, bringing durable changes on Romania's path to progress and democratization, and profoundly influencing lives and professional careers, communities at large.

Since 1960, over 3400 Romanians and Americans participated in these exchanges, benefitting from funding

for graduate studies, research, teaching, professional development, and cultural exchanges in general.

The Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission was inaugurated in May 1993 with the support of the American and Romanian Governments, following the bilateral agreement between the U.S. Department of State and the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Board of Directors

The activities of the Commission are carried out in virtue of Law no. 50/2014 and supervised by its Board of Directors, a bi-national body with planning and coordinating responsibilities. The Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission board consists of ten members, five American citizens and five Romanian citizens. The Ambassador of the United States to Romania and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania serve as honorary co-chairs and appoint the members of the board.

Honorary Co-Chairs:

Adrian Zuckerman, U.S. Ambassador to Romania (until January 2021)

David Muniz, Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., U.S. Embassy (starting January 2021)

Bogdan Aurescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania

U.S. Board Members

Nicolae-Victor Zamfir – President of the Board (until June 2021)

General Director, National Institute for Physics and Nuclear Engineering "Horia Hulubei"

Scott A. Reese (until July 2021)

Public Affairs Counselor, U.S. Embassy

Timothy Gerhardson (starting July 2021)

Public Affairs Counselor, U.S. Embassy

William J. O'Connor

Cultural Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy

Radu Florescu

CEO, Cheil Centrade South East Europe

Monica Cure

Author and Fulbright Alumna

Romanian Board Members

Remus Pricopie – President of the Board (starting July 2021)

Rector, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration

Daniela Gîțman

Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ligia Deca (until December 2020)

Presidential Adviser, Department of Education and Research

Adrian Curaj

General Director, The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI)

Alexandru Mihai Ghigiu

Vice-Rector, National School of Political Studies and Public Administration

Marian Preda (starting May 2021)

Rector, University of Bucharest

Fulbright Team

Mircea Dumitru

Executive Director

Corina Dănăilă-Guidea

Romanian Program Director

Mihai Moroiu

American Program Director

Laura Pari

Financial Manager

Loredana Bucuroaia

Program Assistant

Mihaela Doagă

Educational Adviser

Ruxandra Rădulescu

Educational Adviser

Maria Ciobanu

Building Custodian



The Fulbright Grants

Grants for Romanian Citizens

The Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission offers exchange opportunities to Romanian citizens – scholars, students and professionals - for study, research and teaching in the United States, in any subject and at any accredited U.S. higher education institution.

Grants are awarded through open merit-based competitions supervised by bi-national panels.

Candidates may apply in any field except clinical disciplines, allowing for the specific timeline of each competition for Romanian citizens. Grant duration varies from a couple of weeks to one academic year, depending on the category of grant the applicant wants to apply for.

- **The Fulbright Student Program** – awards for Romanian graduate students for master's study or research at accredited U.S. universities;
- **The Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program** – awards for Romanian professors, researchers and professionals who have a doctoral degree or equivalent (certified) to conduct research and/or lecture at accredited U.S. universities.
- **The Fulbright-RAF Visiting Scholar Award** – dedicated to Romanian academics from technical universities/faculties who wish to carry out a semester-long fellowship in residence at the University of Rochester – AIN Center for Entrepreneurship.
- **The Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program** – for mid-career professionals with demonstrated leadership potential, public service commitment and the capacity to take full advantage of a self-defined program of independent study at a leading U.S. university.
- **Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program** – Media Literacy Cohort: a six-week professional development program for secondary-level school teachers;
- **Study of the U.S. Institutes for European Student Leaders** – a five-week academic program for undergraduate students;
- **The Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Program** – offers opportunities to non-U.S. visiting scholars from different countries, including Romania, to teach at U.S. colleges and universities for one or both semesters of one academic year.
- **The Fulbright Schuman Program** – offers scholarships to European citizens for research or lecture in the United States on a topic that is relevant to US-EU relations, EU affairs/policy, or EU institutions and shows relevancy to at least two EU member states.

ROMANIAN GRANTEES 2020–2021

FULBRIGHT VISITING SCHOLAR PROGRAM

1. Vlad Răzvan BACIU

Home Institution: Heart Core Cultural Association, Oxygen Orchestra, Bucharest

Host University: Indiana University, Bloomington

Field: Music/Composition Techniques

Type of Grant: Research

2. Mihai Tudor BĂLINIȘTEANU

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: "Ștefan cel Mare" University of Suceava

Host University: Columbia University

Field: Humanities/Psychology-Neuroesthetics

Type of Grant: Research

3. Vasile Cătălin BOBB

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Baia-Mare Branch

Host University: Boston College

Field: Philosophy/Ethics-Hermeneutics

Type of Grant: Research

4. Călin Nicolae COTOI

Home University: University of Bucharest

Host University: Indiana University, Bloomington

Field: Sociology of Environment

Type of Grant: Research

5. Mihai DOROFTEI

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home Institution: Danube Delta National Institute for Research and Development, Babadag, Tulcea

Host University: Oregon State University

Field: Biology/Ecology

Type of Grant: Research

6. Marius G. GUȚU-ROBU

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: Politehnica University of Bucharest

Host University: Georgia State University

Field: Computer Science/Natural Language Processing

Type of Grant: Research

7. Mihai Bogdan IOVU

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca

Host University: State University of New Jersey, Rutgers

Field: Social Work

Type of Grant: Research

8. Ioana PĂUN

Home Institution: National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest

Host University: Pace University, NYC

Field: Fine Arts/Digital Art

Type of Grant: Research

9. Emanuel TUNDREA

Home University: Emanuel University of Oradea

Host University: Biola University

Field: Bioinformatics

Type of Grant: Research

FULBRIGHT-RAF VISITING SCHOLAR AWARD

1. Sorin Gabriel ANTON

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași

Host University: University of Rochester, Rochester, NY – AIN Center for Entrepreneurship

Field: Entrepreneurship

Type of Grant:

Research/Academic Training

2. Ciprian Romeo COMȘA

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: "Gheorghe Asachi" Technical University of Iași

Host University: University of Rochester, Rochester, NY – AIN Center for Entrepreneurship

Field: Entrepreneurship

Type of Grant:

Research/Academic Training

3. Cătălina CRIȘAN

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca

Host University: University of Rochester, Rochester, NY – AIN Center for Entrepreneurship

Field: Entrepreneurship

Type of Grant:

Research/Academic Training

4. Elena OVREIU

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: Politehnica University of Bucharest

Host University: University of Rochester, Rochester, NY – AIN Center for Entrepreneurship

Field: Entrepreneurship

Type of Grant:

Research/Academic Training



Romanian Grantees

FULBRIGHT STUDENT PROGRAM

1. Miruna CHIPARA

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: University of Birmingham

Host University: Harvard University

Field: Biomedical Engineering

Type of Grant: Research

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2. Robert CHIȘ CIURE

Home University: University of Bucharest

Host University: University of Wisconsin - Madison

Field: Philosophy/Cognitive Neuroscience

Type of Grant: Research

.....

3. Carina COZMINSCHI

Home University: University of Bucharest

Host University: The New School, NY

Field: Media Management

Type of Grant: Master's

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4. Anamaria GEORGESCU

Home University: "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urban Planning, Bucharest

Host University: University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Field: Urban Planning

Type of Grant: Master's

.....

5. Ștefania KEREKES

Home University: Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca; "Iuliu Hațieganu" University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Cluj-Napoca

Host University: The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Field: Public/Health Policies

Type of Grant: Research

6. Ioan Daniel MIHALCEA

Home University: University of Bucharest; National University of Political Studies and Public Administration

Host University: Northwestern University

Field: Communications/Photo Studies

Type of Grant: Research

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7. Cristina NICHIFOROV

Home University: Politehnica University of Bucharest

Host University: The University of Texas at San Antonio

Field: Electrical Engineering

Type of Grant: Research

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8. Alexandra Maria TĂUȚAN

Home University: Politehnica University of Bucharest

Host University: Harvard Medical School, Berenson-Allen Center for Noninvasive Brain Stimulation

Field: Biomedical Engineering

Type of Grant: Research

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9. Oana ȚENTER

Home University: University College London

Host University: University of California Santa Cruz

Field: Film Directing

Type of Grant: Master's

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

1. Amedeea ENACHE

Home Institution: Estuar Foundation

Host University: University of Minnesota

Field: Economic/Sustainable Development

.....

2. Delia MARINESCU

Home Institution: Libertatea Daily Newspaper

Host University: Arizona State University

Field: Communication/Journalism

FULBRIGHT TEACHING EXCELLENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

1. Elvira KISS

Home Institution: Omega Secondary School, Târgu Mureș

Host Institution: Kent State University

Field: 21st Century Classroom Media Literacy

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2. Otilia MACHEDON

Home Institution: "Saint Mary" Secondary School, Galați

Host Institution: Kent State University

Field: 21st Century Classroom Media Literacy

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3. Corina Mariana MITRULESCU

Home Institution: "Tudor Vladimirescu" National Military College, Craiova

Host Institution: Kent State University

Field: 21st Century Classroom Media Literacy

FULBRIGHT TEACHING EXCELLENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM (cont.)

4. Corina MOISE POENARU

Home Institution: Technical High School, Buzău

Host Institution: Kent State University

Field: 21st Century Classroom Media Literacy

SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN STUDENT LEADERS

Due to the pandemic, the program pivoted to a hybrid format with a virtual component in summer 2021 and an abbreviated in-person component in the U.S. in summer 2022 (if conditions will allow).

1. Alexandra NANU

Home University: University of Bucharest

Host University: Washington State University (hybrid format)

Field: Journalism and Media

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2. Nicoleta SOLOMON

Home University: Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca

Host University: University of Tennessee – Chattanooga (hybrid format)

Field: Entrepreneurship and Economic Development

CYBERSECURITY IN UNIVERSITIES – STUDY VISITS TO THE U.S.

1. Adrian ALEXANDRESCU

Home University: Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iasi

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2. Titus Constantin BĂLAN

Home University: „Transilvania” University of Brasov

.....

3. Adrian Viorel COLEȘA

Home University: Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Computer Science

.....

4. Ioan Daniel HUNYADI

Home University: “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu

.....

5. Dorin IORDACHE

Home University: Ovidius University of Constanta

.....

6. Răzvan Victor RUGHINIȘ

Home University: Politehnica University of Bucharest



The Fulbright Grants

Grants For American Citizens

Fulbright offers programs for passionate and accomplished U.S. students, scholars, teachers, artists, and professionals of all backgrounds to study, teach, and conduct research in Romania, helping to build mutual understanding between our two countries and to find solutions to critical international concerns.

Applications in any field are welcome. According to the policies established by the Romanian Fulbright Board, the program tries to reach as many local universities and students as possible. The Commission strongly encourages grantees to travel to other university centers to give public talks and lectures, attend conferences and participate in American Corners events and other similar activities.

- **The U.S. Scholar Program** is designed for American academics, professionals, and artists with a Ph.D. (or other terminal degree) interested to teach, conduct research and/or undertake professional or artistic projects in Romania in a wide variety of academic and professional fields. The U.S. Scholar Program also includes "Hyphenated" grants, which are partly sponsored by Romanian universities and mirror both the interest in the Fulbright program of higher education institutions and the intention of the Fulbright Commission to increase the number of grants it offers.
- **The U.S. Student Program** offers recent graduates, post-graduate candidates, professionals and artists an opportunity to teach or conduct research in Romania, through English Teaching Assistant (ETA) Awards or Research Awards. Candidates at all degree levels will be considered, but preference is given to advanced graduate students who are interested in international education and teaching. The Commission accepts proposals in all disciplines.
- **The Fulbright Specialist Program (FSP)** promotes linkages between U.S. academics and professionals and their counterparts at host institutions in Romania. The program is designed to award grants to qualified U.S. faculty and professionals, in select disciplines, to engage in short-term collaborative projects at host institutions which initiate these projects. To participate in the program, host institutions must develop and submit project proposals, and U.S. experts must apply to join the Fulbright Specialist Roster.

American Grantees 2020–2021

FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS

1. Eric Fure-Slocum

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: St. Olaf College, MN

Host University: West University of Timișoara

Field: American Studies

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2. Haning Hughes

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: United States Air Force Academy

Host University: University of Bucharest

Field: Language Teaching

.....

3. Gabriel Prajitura

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: SUNY College at Brockport

Host University: Politehnica University of Bucharest

Field: Mathematics

.....

4. Nathaniel Wallace

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: South Carolina State University

Host University: "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași

Field: American Studies

FULBRIGHT-UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST AWARD

5. Julie Leventhal

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: University of North Texas

Host University: University of Bucharest

Field: Psychology

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6. Ana Oprisan

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: College of Charleston, SC

Host University: University of Bucharest

Field: Physics

FULBRIGHT-OVIDIUS UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA AWARD

7. Madalina Tanase

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: University of North Florida

Host University: Ovidius University of Constanța

Field: Education

FULBRIGHT STUDENTS

1. Brianne Altier Ard

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: Tulane University of Louisiana

Host University: University of Bucharest

Field: English Teaching Assistantship

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2. Rajnesh Chakrapani

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: University of Iowa

Host University: University of Bucharest

Field: Language and Poetry

.....

3. Ioanida Costache

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: Stanford University

Host University: The "Elie Wiesel" National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania

Field: Human Rights



American Grantees 2020-2021

FULBRIGHT STUDENTS (cont.)

4. Lucas Griffith Fagre

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: University of Iowa

Host University: Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

Field: Public Health (Romania-Bulgaria Fulbright Award)

5. Colleen Ruth Grogan

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

Host University: University of Craiova

Field: English Teaching Assistantship

6. Mark Mangelsdorf

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: University of Massachusetts-Amherst

Host University: Transilvania University of Braşov

Field: English Teaching Assistantship

7. Jennifer Crystal Mendez

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: Loyola Marymount University, CA

Host University: "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi

Field: English Teaching Assistantship

8. McNeeley Ann Moore

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: The University of Tennessee-Knoxville

Host University: "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu

Field: English Teaching Assistantship

9. Claire Elizabeth Palo

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: University of Chicago

Host University: Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca

Field: English Teaching Assistantship

10. Aurelien Georges Dominique Tafani

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: University of South Florida

Host University: University of Bucharest

Field: Archaeology (Romania-Bulgaria Fulbright Award)

FULBRIGHT-HAYS PROGRAM

1. Leah Valtin-Erwin

deferred to AY 2021-2022

Home University: Indiana University-Bloomington

Host University: University of Bucharest

Field: History

FULBRIGHT SPECIALIST PROGRAM

Applications approved in FY2021 for the Fulbright Specialist Program

1. Discipline:

American Studies

Host University:

Transilvania University of Brasov (during 2022)

Fulbright Specialist:

Francis Robert Shor - Wayne State University

2. Discipline:

Computer Science and Information Technology

Host University:

University Politehnica of Bucharest (during 2022)

Fulbright Specialist:

Erica Briscoe - University of Maryland

3. Discipline:

Public/Global Health

Host University:

Transilvania University of Brasov (October, 2022)

Fulbright Specialist:

Patrick Coyne - Medical University of South Carolina

4. Discipline:

Communication and Journalism

Host University:

West University of Timisoara

Fulbright Specialist:

to be established

5. Discipline:

Communication and Journalism

Host University:

Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca (during 2022)

Fulbright Specialist:

To be established





Fulbright Exchanges in Numbers

AY 2020-2021

53

FULBRIGHT
GRANTEES

30 RO/23 U.S.

GRANTEES BY CATEGORY

Romanian

- 9 Scholars
- 4 Fulbright-RAF Scholars
- 9 Students
- 2 H.H.Humphrey
- 4 Fulbright TEA
- 2 SUSI

American

- 7 Scholars
- 4 Student researchers
- 6 ETAs
- 1 Fulbright-Hays
- 5 Specialists

1960-2021

3478

FULBRIGHT
GRANTEES

2231

Romanian Grantees

1247

American Grantees

COMMISSION UPDATES

Fulbright at 75: A Global Response to Global Opportunities and Challenges



On May 18, 2021 the Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission honored 75 years since the global Fulbright Program was initiated and 60+ years of its presence in Romania through a virtual event titled "Fulbright at 75: A Global Response to Global Opportunities and Challenges."

The celebration, moderated by Executive Director Mircea Dumitru, brought together distinguished U.S. and Romanian high officials, Fulbright alumni, partners, and friends who joined us online to mark this significant milestone. We were honored to be joined by Acting Assistant Secretary Matthew Lussenhop, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Minister of Foreign

Affairs Bogdan Aurescu, Scott A Reese, Public Affairs Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Romania, and Nicolae-Victor Zamfir, President of the Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission's Board of Directors, for the welcome and opening remarks.

Romanian & U.S. alumni E. Patrick McDermott, Vlad Mixich, Amy Liu, Kathleen Laraia McLaughlin, Ioana Mischie, and Augustin Ioan shared their thoughts on the impact and significance of the worldwide Fulbright Program and its role in the development of academic and cultural relations between Romania and the U.S., as exemplified through their professional and personal Fulbright stories.

The event was part of the [Fulbright Country Day](#) initiative launched by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to celebrate the 75th Anniversary.

The Fulbright Program's success is based on a sustained commitment to international bilateral partnerships and shared priorities. Fulbright Days celebrate the impact of these important partnerships across the globe.

More details about the events and activities planned by organizations around the world to mark this important milestone are available at:

<https://fulbright75.org/>

& GRANT-SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

Internationalization of Romanian Higher Education – The Role of the Fulbright Program

On April 12, 2021, the Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission, in partnership with the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences (FSPAC), Babeş-Bolyai University, organized a live-streamed workshop on the role played by the Fulbright Program towards the internationalization of higher education in Romania.

The event brought together Romanian and U.S. Fulbright alumni, distinguished guest speakers from four major U.S. universities, representatives of the Fulbright Commission and of Babeş-Bolyai University.



The invited guests discussed about the significant contribution the Fulbright Program has had on the academic and cultural relations between Romania and the U.S., emphasizing its role in the

institutional development of Romanian universities, not only in terms of research and teaching, but foremost in terms of advancing internationalization.

Cybersecurity in Universities – Study Visits to the U.S.

The Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission together with Fulbright Commissions based in Poland, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovak Republic co-organized the competition for a new program addressed to academics in the field of cybersecurity.

Originally planned as an in-person study visit in the U.S., the program was redesigned to a hybrid format due to the restrictions imposed by Covid-19 and the competition

deadline was extended until December 20, 2020. Out of 30 selected participants from 9 eligible countries, 6 are Romanian academics from universities that have cybersecurity programs (or with a program near to open) in Iasi, Brasov, Sibiu, Constanta, Cluj, and Bucharest.

The program started with a virtual component, including 16 online meetings extended over a 4-month period (March-June



2021), and will continue with an in-person visit to the U.S. in Spring 2022.

The program is founded by ECA through Fulbright Poland and it is carried out in partnership with World Learning and Marymount University.

COMMISSION UPDATES

Media Literacy & Critical Thinking Workshop for EFL Teachers



On September 2 & 3, 2021, the Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission organized a two-day training workshop aiming to provide current secondary-level English teachers with know-how and tools to integrate media literacy and critical thinking in their classrooms. The event took place at the National Library of Romania and brought together 43 middle and high school teachers from around the country.

The workshop, titled "Teaching Excellence: Promoting Media Literacy and Critical Thinking in the English Class," opened with welcome addresses by Mr. Sandeep Paul, Information Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Romania, Dr. Rodica Cherciu, Inspector General with the Ministry of Education, and

Prof. Mircea Dumitru, Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission, who underlined the timeliness and relevance of the workshop in an age when facts are easily being turned into fiction, as well as the need to focus on early education to increase a long-term societal resilience to disinformation.

The presentations, lectures, and interactive workshops that followed were coordinated by our Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement (Fulbright TEA) Program alumnae Iuliana Dode, Elvira Kiss, Corina Mitrulescu, Corina Moise-Poenaru, and Nadina Nicolici. They shared, in turn, their own take on best practices and creative teaching methodologies for integrating media literacy and

critical thinking in the EFL classroom, showcasing various tools for nurturing critical reflection skills among middle and high school students. By tackling themes like fake news, propaganda, misinformation, and disinformation and focusing on a variety of innovative teaching methods and strategies to help students separate fact from fiction, build critical thinking skills, and overcome information overload, the sessions coordinated by the Fulbright TEA alumnae provided the most fruitful ground for discussion.

The event was made possible through funding received from the State Department's Teacher Exchange Branch.



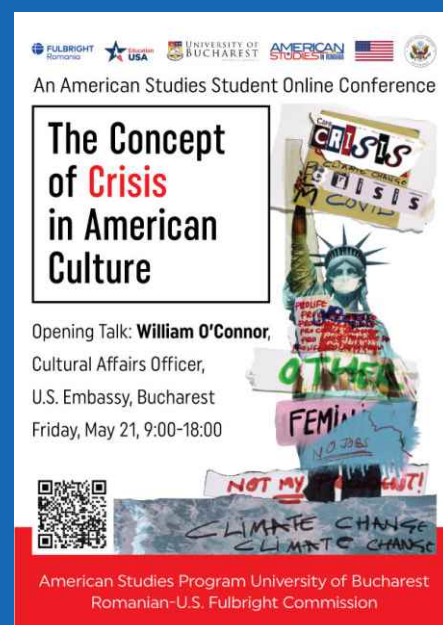
& GRANT-SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

The Annual American Studies Student Conference – Virtual Edition

On May 21, 2021 the Fulbright Commission had the pleasure of acting as virtual host of the annual American Studies Student Conference, organized by the English Department of the University of Bucharest. The theme of this year's edition was a topical one: "The Concept of Crisis in American Culture".

This year's edition brought together participants from around the country, as well as international participants. Following an engaging presentation by the guest of honor, William O'Connor, Cultural Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest, the participants delivered thought-provoking presentations on topics ranging from hyphenated

identities and residential segregation to hyperreality. The quality of the papers and the dynamic presentation style were highly appreciated by the audience. The conference jury had the difficult task of nominating only one paper as the winner of the "Dan Grigorescu" Award for the best American Studies conference paper and, after careful deliberation, the award went to MA student Sânziana-Miruna Popa, for her paper titled "Portrayals of the African American Community in The Birth of a Nation (2016)".



Virtual Pre-Departure Orientation for 2021-2022 Romanian Fulbright Students

On July 7, 2021, the Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission hosted a Virtual Pre-departure Orientation Seminar devoted to the Romanian Fulbright Student grantees leaving for the U.S. to study or conduct research in the next academic year (2021-2022).

The participants had the opportunity to interact with Fulbright alumni, but also with current Romanian grantees in the U.S. who were able to join us via Zoom. The session included lively discussions on various topics about living in the United States and about the U.S. academic environment, from practical issues (housing;



financial matters; staying safe community work; communication with home; travel in the US; special procedures and experiences during the pandemic) to ways of dealing with culture shock and adapting in a different

academic environment (cross-cultural matters; academic integrity; research opportunities; extracurricular activities; campus facilities; social life; campus jobs; internships).

COMMISSION UPDATES

Program Presentations and Seminars



As the Covid-19 pandemic continued to pose significant challenges during FY2021, most program presentations and seminars for promoting Fulbright competitions and offering guidance to potential applicants pivoted to an online format.

We're including below a selection, with the mention that the Fulbright alumni and grantees who accepted to share their experience and knowledge had an essential contribution to the success of these events.

- On March 11, 2021, Dr. Daniela Staicu, 2018-2019 Fulbright Student Researcher at Penn State University, Humanitarian Engineering and Social Entrepreneurship Program, was the guest speaker during an online seminar titled "Fulbright Student Application Walkthrough."

Daniela addressed several topics of interest to applicants planning to conduct research or enroll in a master's program in the U.S. through the Fulbright Student Program.

She touched upon topics such as writing the Fulbright application, identifying a graduate school program, asking for recommendations, and writing a solid CV.

- On March 23, 2021, the Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission organized an online workshop on essay writing, coordinated by Boston Kistka, Graduate Assistant at SUNY-University at Buffalo and EducationUSA Romania virtual intern.

During the workshop, Boston discussed with the participants – mainly prospective Fulbright applicants – about the components of strong essays by analyzing excerpts from successful Fulbright applications, and offered recommendations on the skills or qualifications to be highlighted in the texts. The workshop also covered topics like language and style for effective essay writing.

& GRANT-SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

● **On April 13, 2021**, the Commission organized another online seminar titled „Engage in the Fulbright Adventure: From applying to experiencing the U.S. academic life.”

The webinar was conducted by Andreea Cristina Sfia, 2019-2020 Fulbright grantee, Master's in Aerospace Engineering, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and Ionuț Daniel Șerban, 2019-2020 Fulbright Student Researcher in the field of Environmental Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston.

Andreea and Ionuț offered insider's tips on the application process, together with their suggestions and best practices to help applicants structure the most important components of their application, such as essays, CVs, recommendations, and select their U.S. school/program options. The alumni also talked about their Fulbright

experiences at ERAU and UMass Boston, their life and achievements as international graduate students before and during the pandemic.

● **On July 6, 2021**, the Fulbright Commission hosted a webinar dedicated to Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program applicants. Our special guest was Amedeea Enache, 2020-2021 Humphrey Fellow at University of Minnesota, in the field of Economic/Sustainable Development. Amedeea shared her perspective on the application process, along with practical suggestions from her own experience as a Humphrey fellow.

● **On September 30, 2021**, the Commission hosted the webinar "Preparing a Strong Application for the Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program." Fulbright Alumna Dr.



Laura Irimieș, from Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, shared her experience concerning the application process, as well as tips on preparing the project statement and the other application components. Dr. Irimieș also gave us an overview of the time spent in the U.S. as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Arizona State University, Phoenix.

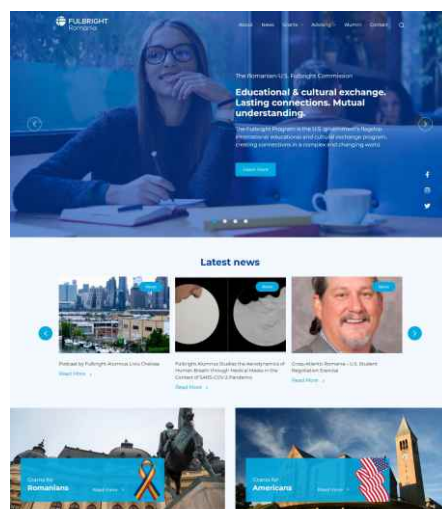
Brand-New Website

In December 2020, the Romanian-U.S. Fulbright Commission launched its brand-new website, now online at <https://fulbright.ro>. Our goal was to provide a more intuitive way for our visitors to learn about the Fulbright Program for both Romanian and U.S. citizens, but also to highlight the experiences and achievements of our alumni & grantees in a more user-friendly format.

You may read some of their stories here:

<https://fulbright.ro/alumni/>

We will continue to update the content with helpful information, announcements about current competitions & events, news, and stories from our Fulbrighters.

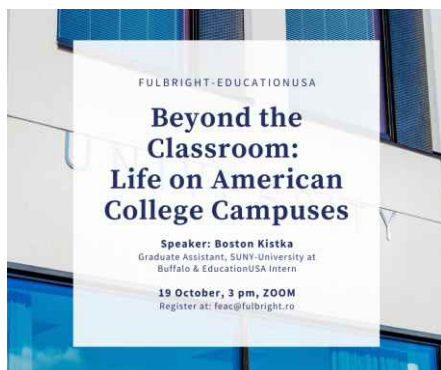
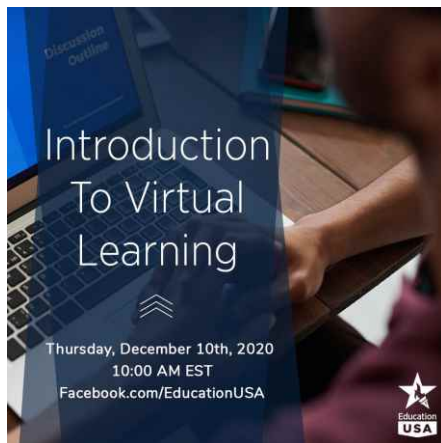


Fulbright Educational Advising Center (FEAC-EducationUSA)

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

1. Outreach

In the context of the covid-19 pandemic, our outreach efforts were conducted exclusively via online means, which enabled us to continue to promote our programs to students across the country. Despite the problematic situation, we managed to acquaint an average **600** prospective applicants with the opportunities afforded by the U.S. higher education system and the advising services and generous resources awaiting them at FEAC-EducationUSA.



Maricela Dominguez, EducationUSA Romania VSFS intern and Florida International University senior, leading a workshop on college application essay writing

a) Virtual Fairs

We reached an average 100 prospective undergraduate and graduate students through our participation in the Spring 2021 editions of the Romanian International University Fair/RIUF (virtual edition) and Access Masters Online Event. We received significant positive feedback and several of the participants voiced an interest in availing themselves of our services and taking part in our future events.

b) Webinars and Virtual Workshops

We conducted monthly webinars and virtual workshops on topics ranging from "The Liberal Arts Model" to "Writing a Strong Application Essay". We also conducted a series of joint webinars with the American Spaces network. Guest speakers included EducationUSA REAC Katherine Scodova and our first cohort of virtual interns joining us via the VSFS program. An average 500 students from high schools in Bucharest, Bacău, Cluj-Napoca, Craiova, Constanța, Călărași, Medgidia, Pitești, Sibiu, and Târgu Mureș joined us online for these events.

2. Opportunity Funds Program

FEAC-EducationUSA kicked off the first Opportunity Funds program in Romania in the spring of 2016. In March 2021 we started working with our sixth cohort, made up of four highly promising high school students from Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Piatra-Neamț, and Timișoara. They are currently receiving funding from EducationUSA to cover their application-related fees and personalized guidance every step of the way to boost their chances of admission, with a full scholarship, at a U.S. university. Our cohort advising activities were also conducted exclusively online.

The EducationUSA Opportunity Funds program assists highly qualified students who are likely to be awarded full financial aid from U.S. colleges and universities but lack the financial resources to cover the up-front costs of obtaining admission, such as testing or application fees.



REAC Katherine Scodova and EdUSA Romania VSFS Intern Connect with Romanian Students via Webinar



Exchange Opportunities for Romanian students

Romanian Fulbright Alumna Wins GOPO Award



Romanian Fulbright Alumna Ana Pasti won the GOPO Award for Best Short Fiction Film with "In Between | *În Noapte*," a film depicting an encounter between a career driven woman in her mid-thirties and a twelve year-old boy selling used books in a parking lot. The 15th edition of the GOPO Awards Gala took place on June 29, 2021, in Bucharest. The short film was written and directed by Ana, who also took on the role of leading actress.

In 2011, Ana Pasti won a Fulbright award and completed an MFA in acting

at USC in Los Angeles. She has performed on both continents in over 25 theater productions, numerous short films, award winning features and popular TV series. She became interested in writing while collaborating in developing two ensemble theater pieces based on Sophocles' Greek tragedies *Electra* and *Trojan Women*, both performed at Dock Scene Theater in LA. **IN BETWEEN** is Ana's directorial debut.

Trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmV3LpNskzY>

Using Cold War Spy Satellite Images to Analyze Ecological Change



Fulbright alumnus Dr. Mihai-Daniel Niță, professor in the field of Forest Engineering at Transilvania University of Brașov, was featured in an article published by *The New York Times* in January 2021 about using Cold War spy satellite images to analyze historical ecological change. Dr. Niță's research on this subject started during his 2016-2017 Fulbright grant at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The article is available at:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/05/science/corona-satellites-environment.html>

ALUMNI AND GRANTEES

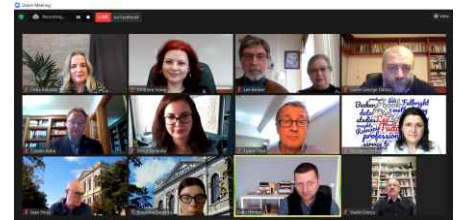
Pioneering Handbook for Journalism and Communication Science Education

On March 5, 2021, scholars from Romania and the United States joined forces for their own Fulbright75 event.

Celebrating the launch of the Romanian version of *The Changing Education for Journalism and the Communication Occupations: The Impact of Labor Markets (Dinamica educației pentru profesiile din jurnalism și comunicare: Impactul pieței forței de muncă)* by Professors Lee Becker and Tudor Vlad from the University of Georgia, the event brought together

Romanian and American Fulbright Alumni. The book represents an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of journalism education and occupations in the United States throughout the last thirty years and looks at characteristics and evolutions among students, graduates, and teaching staff.

The book was translated into Romanian by Fulbright Alumna Andreea Voina from Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca and is a pioneering handbook for



journalism and communication science education.

The event goes beyond a mere book launch, it recognizes the contribution of the two authors to the development of the journalism education and profession in Romania throughout the last decades.

Keith Hitchins: The Historian's Honesty

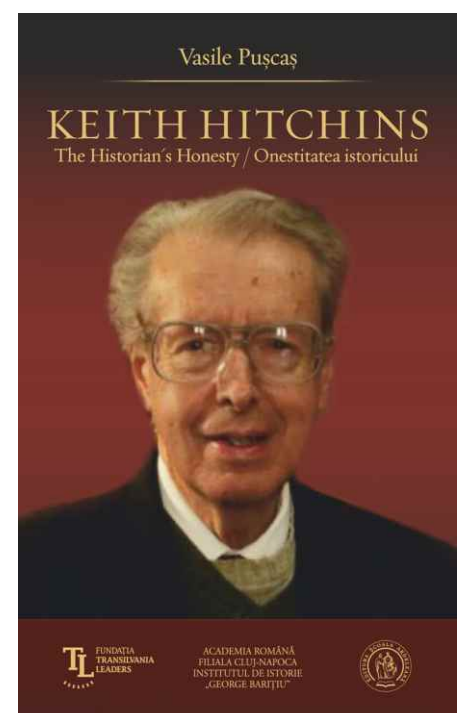
Professor Vasile Pușcaș, former Minister of European Affairs of Romania, Chief Negotiator with the European Union, and Fulbright alumnus, published a new book devoted to the personality and work of historian and scholar Keith Hitchins, professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the first American grantee to study in Romania under the auspices of the U.S.-Romania Cultural Exchange program back in 1960.

The book, titled *Keith Hitchins: The Historian's Honesty*, traces the career of Prof. Hitchins as one of the leading foreign

specialists in Romanian studies, highlighting the vast body of work he produced, the particular relevance and actuality of his approaches, and the assistance he provided to several generations of Romanian historians.

Read more at:

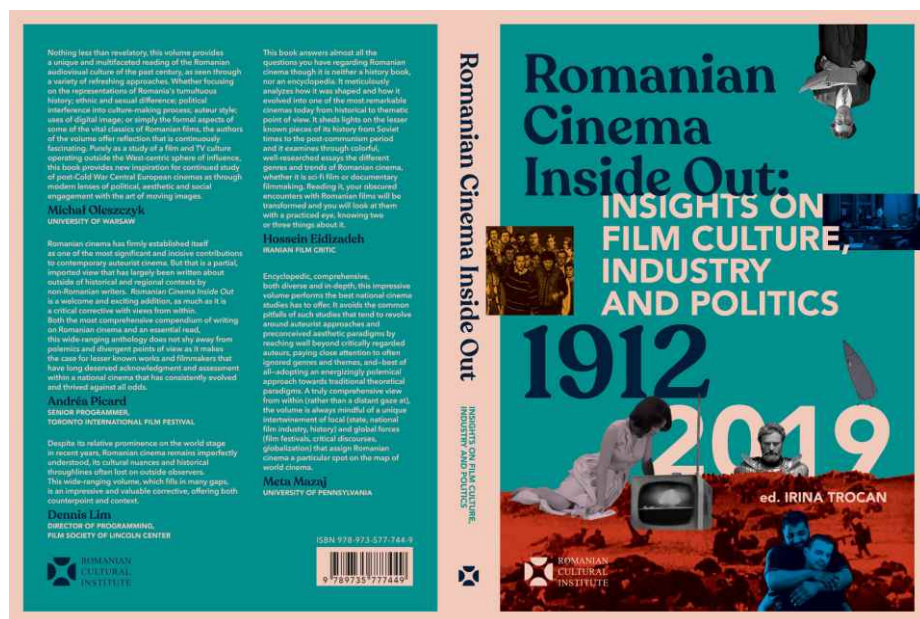
<https://scoalaardeleanacluj.ro/shop/istorie-contemporan%C4%83-c-169/keith-hitchins-the-historians-honesty-onestitatea-istoricului-ebook-p-626.html>



Romanian Cinema Inside Out

Fulbright alumna Dr. Irina Trocan coordinated and edited a critical anthology titled *Romanian Cinema Inside Out: Insights on film culture, industry and politics 1912-2019*.

The national book launch of the volume took place in July 2021, at Grădina cu filme – Cinema & More in Bucharest. About the book, in Irina's words: "Starting from the first Romanian film to count as cinematic art and getting to the present (and speculative future) of the national industry, *Romanian Cinema Inside Out* aims to spark conversation on new or rarely discussed topics concerning Romanian films of the past century. Patriotism and intellectual dissatisfaction, national identity and the representation of minorities, a proposed underrated canon of



female filmmakers and educated guesses on what made Romanians under socialism laugh are all approached in this attempt to write Romanian film history/ies."

Irina was a 2017-2018 Fulbright Student Researcher in the field of essay cinema at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Development and Role of Infectious Disease Policy in the European Union

On April 2, 2021, Ștefania Kerekeș, 2020-2021 Fulbright Student Researcher at University of Michigan, School of Public Health, held a virtual lecture on "The Development and Role of Infectious Disease Policy in the European Union." The virtual event guided the participants through some of the health policy strategies applicable in case of pandemic outbreak and described how the European Union deals with the actual pandemic. "Being a Fulbright Visiting Student Researcher at the

University of Michigan, School of Public Health," Ștefania wrote, "it is an honor and also an opportunity to connect with a global community where we can share ideas and work together towards a common goal. Conducting research in infectious disease prevention policies is a great challenge in today's world. Collaboration, cooperation and exchange of scientific information are key steps in elaborating strategies that could eliminate the current pandemic or could prevent future pandemics."



ALUMNI AND GRANTEES

U.S. Fulbright Alumna Elizabeth Wiita Wins Prestigious Gates Cambridge Scholarship

In February 2021, U.S. Fulbright alumna Elizabeth Wiita was awarded a Gates Cambridge Scholarship to pursue a Ph.D. in Chemistry at the University of Cambridge. After graduating from Barnard College, Elli was a 2019-2020 Fulbright Student Researcher at Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiești, and continued her studies at Columbia University's Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science, as a National Science Foundation (NSF) Fellow.

"The opportunity to pursue research in Romania, in particular with Professor Dragoș Ciuparu, was instrumental to my

development as a scientist and to being awarded this scholarship. I am incredibly grateful for your generosity and to the Petrol-Gaze University for their support."

During her PhD in Chemistry, Elli will focus on the cellular processes that are fundamental for creating targeted health treatments, such as therapeutics, genome editing, and vaccines. "With this research," Elli wrote, "I seek to address not only crucial scientific questions, but also gaps in international medical care, where stable and easily transportable therapeutics are crucial in ameliorating health disparities."



Fulbright Alumna Veronica Anghel Wins ECPR Rising Star Award

In November 2020, The European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) honored Fulbright Alumna Veronica Anghel with the inaugural Rising Star Award, created as part of their 50th Anniversary celebrations to recognize a remarkable PhD student or early career researcher considered to have star potential in the field of politics and international relations.

More details about the award are available here:

<https://ecpr.eu/News/News/Details/614>

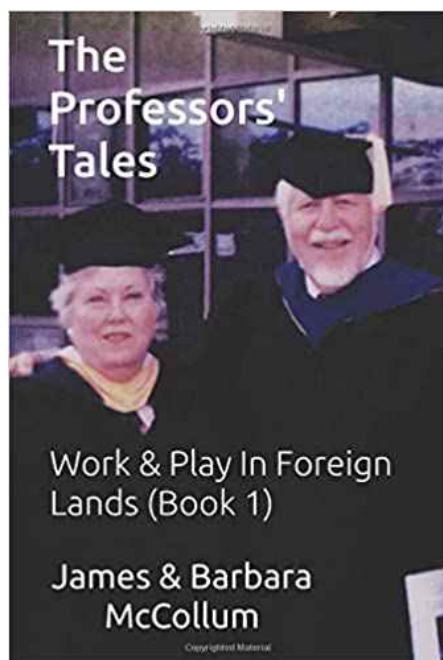
Veronica was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Stanford University in 2019-2020. She wrote about her Fulbright experience as a researcher in Political Science in an article published by Stanford Global Studies on Medium:



<https://medium.com/stanford-global-perspectives/on-stanford-stardom-and-how-to-be-the-least-smart-person-in-the-room-402a96fbccdf>

FROM FULBRIGHT

Work & Play in Foreign Lands



Dr. James McCollum, Professor Emeritus with The University of Alabama in Huntsville, has been a constant presence in Romania for almost 30 years, contributing in substantial ways to the development of academic and educational relationships between the U.S. and Romania. Two times recipient of Fulbright Scholar grants, in 1991 and 2001, and again as a Fulbright Specialist in 2005 and 2010, Jim McCollum is both a pioneer and a tenacious pillar of the Fulbright Program in Romania after 1989.

In the latest book narrating this long experience, titled *Work &*



Play in Foreign Lands, Professor McCollum and co-author Barbara McCollum evoke Romania and their many friends, former students and colleagues.

See more at:

<https://www.uah.edu/news/news/dr-james-mccollum-celebrates-uah-romanian-connection-with-book>

U.S. Fulbright Alumna Receives UMN 2020 Award for Global Engagement



U.S. Fulbright Alumna Dr. Elizabeth Lightfoot received the University of Minnesota Award for Global Engagement in recognition of her contribution to international understanding, global engagement, and institution building both at the University of Minnesota and abroad. The Virtual Award Ceremony and Reception took place on January 12, 2021 and included congratulation messages from UNM representatives, but also from international scholars, students and professionals with whom Dr. Lightfoot has collaborated over the years.

Dr. Elizabeth Lightfoot is a Professor of Social Work,

Director of the Doctoral Program at the School of Social Work, and a two-time Fulbright recipient, most recently at the University of Bucharest in 2018-2019, but also at the University of Namibia in 2008. During her Fulbright grant in Romania, Dr. Lightfoot mentored faculty and students and helped develop new approaches to training emerging scholars. She is hoping to develop an ongoing exchange program between the University of Bucharest and the University of Minnesota.

Read more about her work as an advocate for international education at:

https://global.umn.edu/awards/age/20_Lightfoot.html

ALUMNI AND GRANTEES

Fulbright Alumna Ioana Mischie Wins Open Frame Award

The Spheres City x Tangible Utopias, the visionary VR franchise directed by Fulbright alumna Ioana Mischie, won the prestigious Open Frame Award at goEast Film Festival 2021, becoming the first internationally awarded Romanian VR project.

Ioana accepted the award during the online Ceremony held on April 26, 2021: "We are infinitely humbled to receive this award and we warm-

heartedly dedicate it to the visionary children worldwide. This recognition invites us to believe there is a solid future both for daring civic imagination and for meaningful transdisciplinary VR practices.

Artistic VR has the power to facilitate profound societal change on the short, medium, and long term if used wisely."



The official trailer is available at:
<https://vimeo.com/476444668>

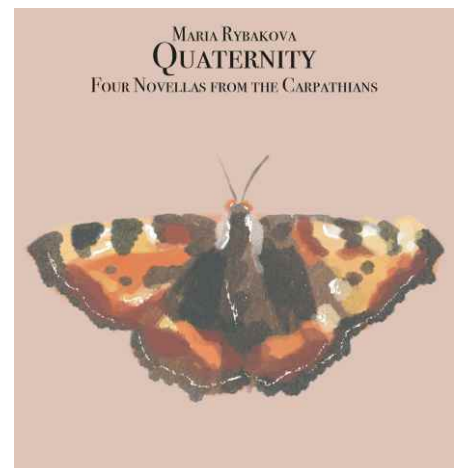
New Releases by Maria Rybakova

U.S. Fulbrighter Maria Rybakova's "Quaternity: Four Novellas From The Carpathians" appeared in September 2021 with the Ibidem Press. Maria wrote this book while on Fulbright Fellowship to Romania in 2019-2020. The novellas focus on anxieties, loves, and mistaken identities in the late 20th century:

https://edition-noema.de/noema_en/erzaehlungen-romane/quaternity-four-novellas-from-the-carpathians-9783838215860.html

Also, a Romanian translation of Rybakova's previous novel, "Anna Grom and Her Phantom," was published in September 2021 as well, by Editura Vasiliana, in Marina Vraciu's translation.

This novel is epistolary and talks about an otherworldly journey of a soul. It has previously been translated into German and Spanish.



La Betleem colo-n jos

U.S. Fulbright Alumna Dr. Colleen Bertsch arranged and recorded an instrumental version of *La Betleem colo-n jos* (*Down in Bethlehem*).

The song is a Romanian carol, for the Heritage Organization of Romanian Americans in Minnesota:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XX-ztdue9FY>

The organization hosted a holiday Zoom gathering during which they sang carols, recited Romanian poetry, and enjoyed each other's company from the safety and comfort of their own homes.

Colleen was a Fulbright researcher in 2015-2016, at "Gheorghe Dima" Music Academy of Cluj-Napoca, in the field of Ethnomusicology.



FULBRIGHT STORIES

Read more stories from Fulbright alumni:
<https://fulbright.ro/alumni/>



"The Fulbright experience meant a lot to me. I had the chance to learn what true music teaching means and, through research, to broaden my musical understanding getting to realize limitless perspectives of new music techniques."

Vlad Răzvan Baciú

Fulbright Visiting Scholar, 2020-2021

"This cultural exchange is a story about our universal values unfolding from random acts of kindness and generosity to rich and thoughtful conversations with my academic peers. Each day I have the opportunity to learn about the broader meaning of the word education."

Daniel Mihalcea

Fulbright Student Researcher, 2020-2021



"As my U.S. experience is coming to an end, I started to wrap things up and to think about all the amazing adventures that I have encountered in the past couple of months. Beside finishing my doctoral thesis and writing research papers with colleagues from the University, I had the opportunity to meet extremely intelligent people and to make new connections. [...] Tasting the American student life would not have been possible without the Fulbright program and without the people that helped me to evolve both personally and professionally."

Ștefania Kerekeș

Fulbright Student Researcher, 2020-2021

"There are not enough words to express my unforgettable experience in the U.S. I will be forever grateful for this amazing opportunity, and I highly recommend to everybody to apply for the Fulbright scholarship. Living and studying in the U.S. is life-changing from all the possible points of view."

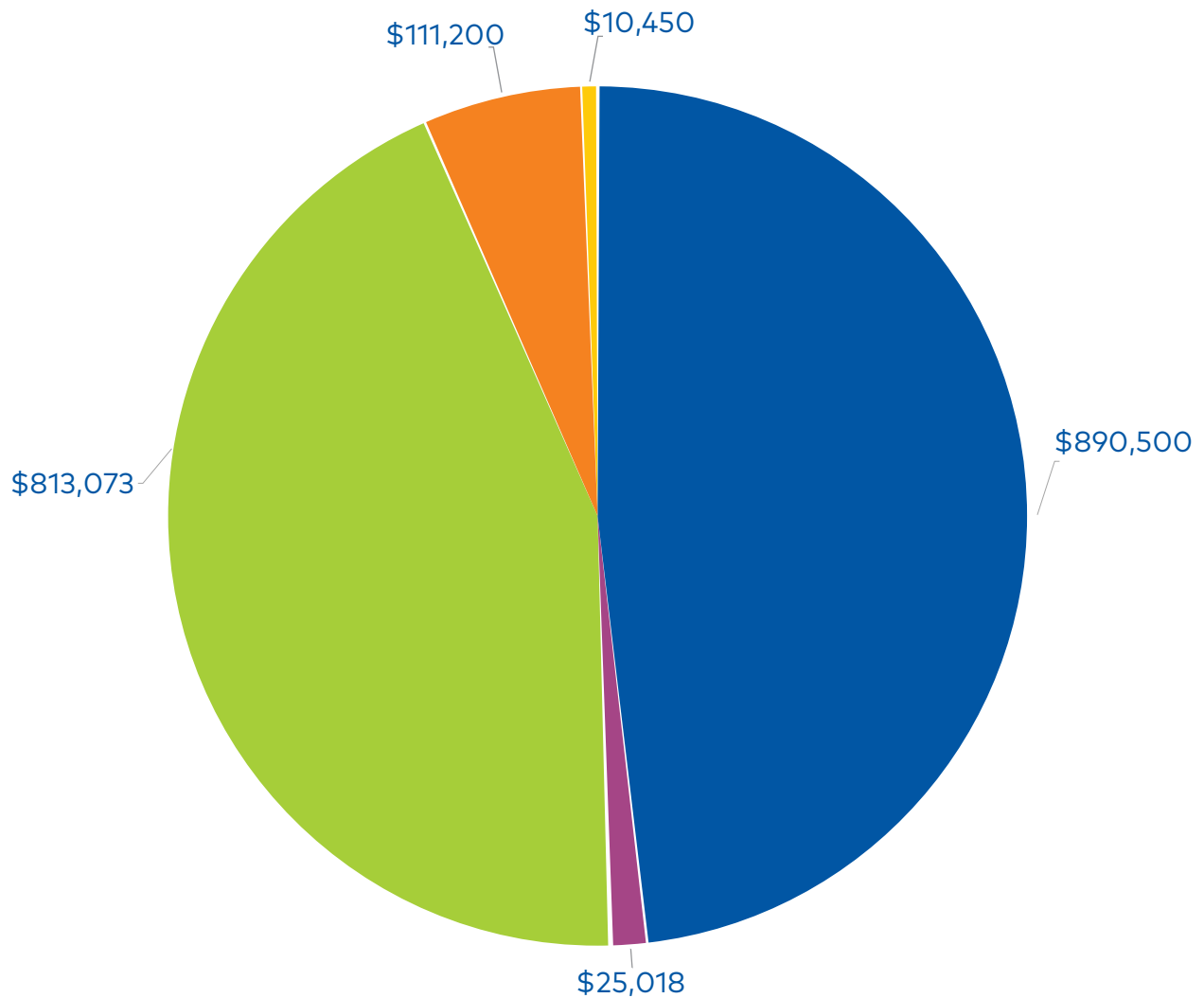
Cristina Nichiforov

Fulbright Student Researcher, 2020-2021



FY 2021 BUDGET

In FY 2021 the Commission's total budget amounted to \$1,850,241



\$890,500 funding from ECA, US Department of State (**\$852,875** allocation; **\$37,625** End of Year Funds)

\$813,073 funding from the Romanian Government (amount received in Romanian currency)

\$25,018 EducationUSA grant for advising and Opportunity Funds Program

\$10,450 US Embassy grant - support for advising

\$111,200 funding from the Romanian-American Foundation to support eight Fulbright-RAF Scholar Awards

Additional Support:

\$80,000 (estimated amount) - In kind support from the Romanian Government (office space and utilities)



**2 Ing. Nicolae Costinescu St., District 1,
Bucharest, 011878 Romania**

Tel: +4021 230 7719

E-mail: office@fulbright.ro

Website: <https://fulbright.ro>

facebook.com/FulbrightRomania

twitter.com/FulbrightRO

instagram.com/fulbrightromania