

FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



**PERSONAL STATEMENTS
&
GRANT PROPOSALS**

STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE

English Teaching Assistantship

The Malaysian experience was all so new to me when I enrolled in World Music. I then fell in love with the rich cultural diversity of the country with influences from China, India and Arabia. Instruments such as the Gambus, Harmonium and Serunai indicate variety that the country offers. Of various origins, these instruments are used to make harmonious music and illustrate how diverse cultures are manifest through the art forms that promote global connectedness. I am making a decision to pursue a Fulbright Grant in Malaysia to fulfill my passion for international awareness through the English language and performing arts.

The Fulbright ETA grant will serve as a key asset to helping me fulfill my purpose in life. I will have the opportunity to immerse myself in organic Malaysian culture and will be so fortunate to share the beauty of the English language, specifically creative writing. Using my gifts of dance and spoken word, receiving this grant will allow me to interact with Malaysian communities through the development of a performing arts troupe. It is my goal to teach children in Malaysian communities the modalities and grammatical components of the English language, but it is my dream to coordinate the learned skills of the classroom applying them to outside experiences through an afterschool performing arts program. Incorporating American cultural practices and popular ideologies will provide students with tools necessary to compare Malaysian and American histories of intertwined cultural beliefs.

It is my hope that the performing arts troupe will become an extracurricular activity for students and their families. Channeling students' creativity, will invite them to explore traditional Malaysian culture in relation to a developed Malaysia and America. I am hopeful that students will be able to create scripts for traditional shadow plays, develop contemporary Malay dramas, and even produce scripts for Malay films or television shows. During my leisure time it would be an honor to work with an organization like My Performing Arts Agency, with the purpose of supporting and continuing an appreciation for the arts through development of artistic and cultural efforts in Malaysia. I hope to express my gratitude for my hosting community, through artistic civic engagement.

During my academic career at Spelman I served as a mentor at KIPP Elementary, in what society deems the "at risk" West End community. I had the privilege of assisting first through fifth grade students with reading and writing. After battling with myself on various career options, working with these children enlightened me on what my true calling was. Servant leadership is my passion and what better way to serve the world than through the intellectual development of young minds? In addition to feeding their minds, I also had the ability to exercise their physical bodies with assistance from my sorority. We would host weekly step showcases, educating children on the communication of African American slaves through physical movement. Being able to see the educational results and develop proper physical wellness of children who are underserved in society brought an unexplainable joy.

The opportunity to instruct Malaysian students will provide me with life skills necessary to become a global change agent. Just as the Gambus and Harmonium collaborate to create beautiful traditional Malaysian sounds, I will collaborate with students to create a comfortable environment that allows students to learn from my experiences and knowledge and allows me to learn from theirs. I will strive to understand linguistic and cultural practices while serving my students through performance in spoken word and movement, getting to the very roots of language and cultural expression.

Personal Statement

Malaysia, English Teaching Assistantship

I have never been one of those people who have always known exactly what they wanted to do with their life as far as a career. I have always known that I would like to work internationally and that I wanted to work with people, but as far as a job title, I was never quite sure what to tell people. As I prepare to complete my undergraduate experience and make decisions regarding my future I have to remind myself that although I may not know exactly what my future holds I know what my ultimate goals are and how to follow an appropriate path to reach them. I believe that receiving a Fulbright Grant will be one of the best ways for me to take the next steps in reaching my goals.

While studying abroad in Japan from September 2012 to August 2013 I made an important connection about changing the world around me. The people who would benefit most from me sharing my experiences would be children, the next generation of society's change agents. While in Japan I spent time with a student from Malaysia and I deeply enjoyed listening to stories about her rich cultural background. I also began hearing about Malaysia's rise in the global sphere and efforts in improving community development. With the cultural experience that I hoped to experience and my newfound desire to teach and work with children in mind, I decided that Malaysia would be a great place to begin my post graduate journey as an English Teaching Assistant.

While in Japan I had the opportunity to work with children at a local elementary school as a volunteer in their English class which allowed me to gain vital skills. I did presentations on my life in the United States, listened to the students give presentations about places they wanted to travel, their favorite foods and hobbies, and about why they wanted to learn English. The students were enthusiastic, inquisitive, and genuinely happy to be able to have a native English speaker there to provide assistance. I also had experiences working with Japanese students during my everyday life as a student at Tsuda College. Tsuda is an all-female college in Tokyo that focuses on empowering women through providing a strong background in English. Although I was learning Japanese, my friends were learning English and I found joy in providing assistance with editing papers and sharing my methods for remembering difficult English grammar rules. Through these experiences I acquired a strong desire to continue helping people around with a desire to learn something I could teach.

After returning to the United States, I continued to implement what I learned about tutoring and assisting in a classroom by becoming a volunteer at a local after school program in Atlanta, Georgia. The program provides tutoring and mentoring to elementary students from underserved communities. Through this program I have been able to gain patience and mentoring skills. Further, I have been able to continuously apply methods for understanding and working through cultural differences that I acquired in Japan.

In order to continuously promote cultural exchange and understanding, aside from assisting academically through teaching English, I would stay civically and culturally engaged in my host community through promoting music appreciation. Music is a medium people can often easily find common ground within and it is very important to me. As a classically trained cellist I want to embrace and create opportunities to share and perform within the community.

As an English Teaching Assistant I want to offer my ability to be relatable to students and provide encouragement. I understand the frustration and anxiety that can come from learning a second language. Nevertheless, I also understand the pride that comes from rising above and facing these challenges. I have grown and changed as a result of all of my experiences and I want to provide the encouragement and hope for others to dream bigger so that they too can be the change they wish to see in the world.

STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE

Spain, English Teaching Assistantship

The first two times he asked me to marry him, he did so in a combination of Spanish and English as I was on my way to my next class; I could only chuckle and shake my head as I left the room. Though we both knew that my answer would be no, he proposed completely in English for the final time on my last day at *Colegio Virgen de Gracia*. He was a twelve year old Granadino, and I was a 20 year old American. However, to say that I was flattered would be an understatement; rather, I was truly humbled. I had been a volunteer English Teaching Assistant at *Colegio Virgen de Gracia* for twelve weeks and had worked with 14 classes, including this young man's class. I had watched him progress from speaking broken English to gaining the knowledge and courage to propose marriage to me completely in my language. I do not claim to be the sole reason for his progress, but I felt an immense sense of pride at his progress and honor that he would demonstrate his newfound language skills through that final proposal.

What none of my students knew was that they taught me just as much, if not more, about speaking Spanish than I had taught them about English. When I began volunteering at *Colegio Virgen de Gracia*, I struggled with composing basic sentences in Spanish. Thus, volunteering with classes of varying age groups for twelve weeks in Granada helped me further develop my own Spanish while my students were simultaneously developing their English skills. Instead of teaching the language to them in a traditional manner, I allowed them to write songs in English or divide into groups and then teach the lesson through games. I found that this non-traditional manner of teaching English excited my students and made them want to learn more about the language, which gave me an amazing sense of fulfillment as I wanted them to love and appreciate my native language as much as I did theirs.

I would love to return to Spain as an English Teaching Assistant because I believe that it would be an amazing opportunity to help others who struggle with the challenges of a new language in a country that I came to view as my second home. The ability to learn a language as widely-spoken as English will help prepare my students to become globally aware citizens who will commit to making positive social change. Outside of the classroom, I would like to work with Amnesty International, specifically working with refugees and immigrants, whom I hope to help begin successful new lives by assisting them with finding housing, stable employment, and any other issue with which they may need assistance.

My time volunteering at *Colegio Virgen de Gracia* taught me that teaching is an exchange between the teacher and the student. While I was able to impart my knowledge about the English language to my students, they treated me as a true *Granadina* and gave me the opportunity to view their city and language through their eyes. What I saw, coupled with the sheer beauty of having had the opportunity to work with such an amazing group of people, made my time under the shadow of the Alhambra hill among the best and most informative days of my life. Being an English Teaching Assistant in Spain will allow me to participate in an exchange of cultures with more Spanish children and learn more about different areas of the country while also introducing them to my native country and culture. This experience will prove invaluable in my future career as a member of the United States Foreign Service, where I plan work as a management officer and eventually represent the U.S. as an ambassador. Thus, I wish to return to Spain as an ETA to enable students to see the value of a second language, and to repay the gift of knowledge that my students so easily bestowed upon me when I volunteered in Granada in Fall 2010.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

, Spain, English Teaching Assistantship

“Who are you?” This is an extremely common question when people want to know more about me; however, the answer is far from simple. I could easily say that I am a 21 year old African-American female from Alabama, that I was raised in an average, middle-class family, and that, until I entered the gates of Spelman College, I believed I would remain in the South forever, a thought that was fine with me. Yet, that answer barely scratches the surface of who I am now and does not, in the least, explain why I am currently applying for a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Spain, a country that is roughly 4,600 miles from my native Alabama.

When I arrived at Spelman College in August 2008, my life’s aspirations were fairly simple: I wanted to graduate with honors, enter Emory School of Law in the fall of 2012, study criminal law, return to Alabama, become a lawyer and, eventually, a judge. Three years later, that dream has no relevance for me. I always knew that I would be a Spanish minor, but, until I came to Spelman, the thought of studying the language and culture abroad never occurred to me. I honestly did not know that such an opportunity was possible. However, during my first two years, students and professors, alike, told me about amazing opportunities to go abroad. They saw in me the potential to go to a new country and successfully experience and navigate a new culture long before I saw the same potential in myself. Simply put, Spelman opened my eyes to life outside of the South.

Two experiences, both during my junior year of college, collectively impacted my life and changed my career plans. The first occurred during the fall semester of that year when I studied abroad in Granada, Spain. My time under the Alhambra hill gave me the opportunity to live in a country far from home and gain a new perspective that was extremely unlike that which I had known in the American South. During my semester in Granada, I lived with a host mother, went to Morocco, rode a camel, and traveled throughout southern Spain. It was a new world for me. At times, I was nervous about being so fully integrated in a culture so unlike my own; however, I learned that being thrust into new cultures was the easiest and most authentic way to learn about them. By December 19, 2010, Granada was just as much my home as Alabama was.

The second experience that altered the course of my career occurred during the spring semester when I participated in a Domestic Exchange program at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. Stanford exposed me to a slew of new cultures within the borders of my own country that I almost denied myself the opportunity to learn about. Most notably, I tutored a Mexican immigrant in English, and her story and struggles exposed me to the plight of immigrants in America. I had never truly considered the hardships that people faced when coming to America, so my tutoring experience made me more cognizant of this.

So, who am I and why am I applying for the Fulbright ETA in Spain? I am someone who almost missed the opportunity to discover the beauty of new cultures due to a lack of knowledge of life outside of her own miniscule portion of the world. I am someone who came to Spelman College three years ago with her life already planned and, instead of working to make that dream life a reality, I spent my junior year of college away from everything and everyone I had ever known and discovered that what I want to do with my life is foster greater understanding between cultures. To that end, my year away from the South helped me determine that I would like to enter the U.S. Foreign Service as a management officer and make a career there. While moving my career forward, a Fulbright ETA will give me the opportunity to experience Spanish culture in a different region and another chance to introduce Spaniards to my culture.

STATEMENT OF GRANT PURPOSE

_____, Morocco, Anthropology
Sub-Saharan African Migrants in Morocco: Navigating Space through Activism and Identity

I had always made sure that I allotted five extra minutes to walk from lunch to my next class so that I could purchase a 20 ounce bottle of Coca-Cola and a Kit-Kat bar for six dirhams each, totaling roughly a dollar and twenty cents. I had been doing this habitually for the first few weeks of living in Rabat because, as I later understood, it was my way to cope with being in such a dissimilar place. I clung to the things I knew, which happened to be foods. Overtime, however, I began to indulge in candy coated peanuts and other local sweets, and I realized that this transition from clutching onto the things I knew to loosening the grip meant that I had been adjusting to my new life in the old medina of Rabat.

Morocco began to grow on me. Weekly trips to the hammam (the public bath) with my host mother became a ritual, eating couscous on Fridays with my host family and also learning to navigate the narrow streets in the medina started to make me feel like I had overcome my initial challenges. Inside of the classroom I learned about sub-Saharan African migration to Morocco and Moroccan migration to Europe, which inspired me to further explore the social, political and economic context in which I was living in the next four months. And it was an interaction at a roundtable discussion with three sub-Saharan African migrants, a Nigerian woman and two Cameroonian men, who illuminated with words their lived experiences of being "African" in Morocco that amazed me. I learned how they maintained their faith amidst oppression and furthermore, this discussion became the catalyst for my passion in exploring the intersections of migration, activism and identity in Africa as an international exchange student.

Taking into account the discrimination provoked by Moroccan society, I have formulated several questions to gain insight into this intriguing topic. What are the ways that sub-Saharan African migrants engage in activism? How is this activism stratified in terms of class and gender? In what ways does this activism or shared space between migrants and activists facilitate maintaining transnational ties and identities with the home country? And lastly, how is the Moroccan government addressing this issue, especially with recent recommendations for policy changes proposed by the National Human Rights Council of Morocco? While it is my goal to understand this contemporary issue that surfaced in the late 1990s from an anthropological perspective, I must consider the history of this nation to further draft and frame this conflict. While Morocco is a significant actor in this issue and has demonstrated accountability, it is also the European Union (EU) that plays a significant role. Morocco has maintained close ties with France because it was a protectorate until 1956, which therefore explains the close relationship that exists today. Today, the EU has put extensive pressure on Morocco to keep migrants, the majority being sub-Saharan Africans, out of Europe oftentimes at the cost of death, and consequently, the pressure to monitor the borders and regulate "undocumented" migration movements has produced this severe discrimination.

Since this research aims to understand the lived experiences of sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco, employing qualitative methods, including interviews, participant observation, and a content analysis will yield primary and secondary data. I

will use in-depth semi- and unstructured interviews in order to invite conversation and elicit narratives that will highlight the reasons the migrants emigrated, and their current living situations. It is important that I am able to decipher patterns by analyzing the diction, which serves to understand how these migrants conceptualize their own positions. I will also employ the use of participant observation, which will allow me to become involved in the community, take part in activities, and experience first hand the migrants' experiences. Finally, I will conduct a content analysis on news articles and brochures provided by migrant-activists, and also on government documents that raise the issue of sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco, in order to understand what is being discussed and how this issue is being addressed.

During the initial phase of the research (between October and December 2014), I will improve my intermediate French level by enrolling in courses at the Center for Cross Cultural Learning (CCCL) in Rabat. These intensive language courses will provide advanced speaking and writing skills that I will use during my field research. If awarded the Critical Language Enhancement Award, I will spend six months prior to the beginning of the grant period taking an intensive Modern Standard Language Arabic course at CCCL, which is needed to engage in meaningful discussions with natives. During phase two (between January and February 2015), I will begin conducting interviews and observing the cultural exchanges in Rabat. Between March and April (phase three) I plan to move to Casablanca, another heavily sub-Saharan African migrant concentrated city that is located one-hour south of Rabat via train, and continue gathering data. The final phase will consist of the following major activities: by the end of May I plan to complete my data collection process; in June I will analyze the data that consists of field notes and documents, and finally in July I will complete the research paper.

While there has been extensive recent literature on the topic particularly from scholars such as Hein de Haas and Mehdi Alioua, there has not been significant literature on this issue as it relates to agency and identity. Therefore, my research will examine these intersectionalities through a class and gendered lens, another theoretical approach that I used this semester while writing my Senior Thesis on sub-Saharan African migration to Morocco. The study that I completed in Morocco was conducted under the mentorship of Anna Jacobs, a 2011 Fulbright Fellow who is now a student at the University of Oxford. Jacobs, who although she is not a Moroccan scholar, was well versed in this issue of sub-Saharan African migration to Morocco with an interest in political implications. For further research, I propose to work with Dr. Mehdi Alioua, the leading Moroccan scholar of migration in Africa and Europe, whom I had the opportunity to interview during my initial trip to Morocco. I also intend to work closely with Dr. Souad Eddouada, the Academic Director for The School for International Training, who, along with Alioua, have committed to serving as affiliates for my proposed research.

The opportunity to further explore this research in Morocco is important because it will demonstrate the ways in which marginalized people in society overcome their struggles and will also examine broadly the implications of migration as a global phenomenon that has always taken place and will continue to take place. It is necessary and appropriate to confront issues of human rights as they relate to immigrants and combat xenophobia and other forms of racism that stem from a lack of awareness, especially in an age of transnationalism.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Morocco, Anthropology

We must understand our history and biography, the sociological imagination, so that we may develop a nuanced understanding of the present, as C. Wright Mills, famous 20th century American sociologist theorized. While a student at Spelman College I have come to understand the powerful social, political and economic institutions that govern our society, and in particular the stratification of socioeconomic statuses that strongly influence our everyday lives; subsequently, I have had an inclination to the disadvantaged, underprivileged and misrepresented people in society.

From the time I became a UNCF-Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow (MMUF) during my second year as an undergraduate, I developed an interest in mixed race identity. I struggled to understand my place as a young African American woman who shared both Asian and black features with an Irish surname in a society that has always viewed race in black and white. I became fascinated with understanding the larger context that informs the way individuals self-identify racially and the implications of that, and it was through Dr. Erica Williams, my MMUF mentor, and colleagues who supported this academic, yet personal journey. My interests later matured when I studied abroad for a semester in Morocco and saw firsthand a different meaning of disadvantaged and marginalized people.

I became so concerned with understanding how oppressed people fought for not only labor rights and citizenship rights but also fundamental human rights, and rather than explore the economic and political effects of migration, I sought to understand how individuals and communities are affected socially. Within this new space in which I understood transnational implications of everyday happenings, such as immigration, my intellectual curiosity accelerated, and the desire to become an anthropologist awakened. After countless bus rides to Takadoum, the most heavily populated sub-Saharan migrant community in Rabat, and endless walks through the medina, in and out of homes where conversations about lived experiences manifested with people who seemed so different to Americans yet were quite similar, I was enlightened. I accepted the idea that my purpose in life is to become an anthropologist, to help the voiceless find their voices. Similarly, it is my purpose to become a professor of anthropology and promote cross-cultural understanding and the core of ethics that, I believe, lies in respect.

The experiences and thoughts I engaged while in Morocco were further cultivated during the summer following my return to the United States. As a scholar and participant in The Leadership Alliance, I honed my research skills under the supervision of Dr. Keisha-Khan Perry of Africana Studies at Brown University, namely bibliographic research. I further advanced my communication skills by presenting my research at conferences and articulating my research interests to people of various disciplines. Aside from these intra-curricular opportunities, it has been Spelman College that has fostered my passions and abilities. I have immeasurably expanded my knowledge base and critical thinking skills that I have been able to translate into real-world experiences. The amalgamation of both experiential learning and in-the-classroom learning has taught me values of humanity by simply exercising good in the world, and furthermore, it has been a significant tool in applying theory to practice as the local is now understood in the global.