

ASU named a top producer of faculty, student Fulbright awards for 2024–25

University offers intensive support with application process, interviews

By Mary Beth Faller, ASU News

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When faculty and students travel abroad on a Fulbright award, they're often working at the forefront of current events and cultural change.

[David Androff](#), a professor in the [School of Social Work](#) at Arizona State University, is currently a senior Fulbright Scholar researching social services for migrants in Spain and Morocco.

"The Morocco-Spain border has become a flash point for the global issue of migration," he said.

"It is now the deadliest border in the world, with an estimated 30 people drowning per day trying to reach Europe from Africa. I am learning about the unique policies, programs, organizations and people working to protect migrant rights and help them to become healthy and productive members of their communities."

Adelaide Randall, a 2024 ASU graduate, is teaching English in Bulgaria, which the United Nations recently declared as the world's "fastest shrinking country" because so many young people have emigrated.

"I was particularly drawn to explore how students perceive their own future, as well as the future of their country, and what they see as possible," Randall said.

Androff is one of [nine ASU faculty members](#) who are in the 2024–25 cohort of Fulbright U.S. Scholars and Randall is one of [14 student award winners](#).

The university's continued success in placing its faculty and students into the prestigious international exchange program has led to ASU being once again designated a [top-producing institution](#) of U.S. Fulbright award winners.

Arizona State University is one of only 19 universities that are top producers for both scholar and student awards — and one of only seven public universities to receive that designation. ASU also was a dual top-producing institution last year.

The rankings were announced on Tuesday by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which oversees the Fulbright program.

For the 2024–25 academic year, for doctoral-granting institutions, ASU ranked fifth overall for faculty awards. The five institutions with the most faculty awards are all public universities: Ohio State, with 14 faculty awards; Penn State, the University of Florida and the University of Wisconsin, 12 each, and ASU.

ASU ranked eighth among public doctoral-granting universities for student awards and 31st overall. For placing students into Fulbright positions, ASU ranked higher than the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Michigan.

The doctoral-granting universities designated as top producers in both categories, besides ASU, include Columbia University, University of Michigan and the University of Southern California.

ASU is successful at placing faculty and students into the Fulbright program because the university provides a high level of support during the application process. Applicants have access to information sessions and workshops, plus hours of advising, application review and interview preparation.

"This is our faculty fulfilling our charter globally," said Karen Engler, program director in the [Office of the University Provost](#) and ASU's [liaison](#) to the Fulbright scholar and specialist programs.

"Students in other countries get the opportunity to learn from the expertise of an American professor and about American culture and also to learn about ASU specifically."

Interested in Fulbright?

The ASU Fulbright Office will be hosting a variety of Fulbright information sessions for faculty and staff that not only provide an overview of Fulbright opportunities, but also strategies on how to build a competitive application.

The first round of sessions starts on March 6. Check out the [Fulbright schedule](#) for dates/times and to register. Contact [Karen Engler](#) directly to set up a Fulbright consultation.

[Fulbright Day](#) for faculty, staff and students will be held March 26.

ASU has been a top-producing institution for the Fulbright U.S. student program for 19 of the past 20 years, according to Kyle Mox, associate dean of national scholarship advisement in the [Lorraine W. Frank Office of National Scholarships Advisement](#) at ASU.

Nancy Gonzales, executive vice president and university provost, said, "At ASU, we celebrate the academic pursuits of our students and scholars who, through the Fulbright program, embody our commitment to academic excellence and global engagement."

"Their international experiences not only enrich their personal growth but also help forge lasting, positive connections across countries," Gonzales said. "We are proud of our reputation as a university advancing global impact and remain grateful for the visionary leaders who export the best of ASU to communities around the world."

Finding hidden opportunities

Androff said he pursued a Fulbright to advance his research in a unique setting and to study the complex global phenomenon of migration.

"I have been fortunate to develop a network of migration scholars, practitioners and policymakers in the region working on this issue," he said.

Androff, director of the [Office of Global Social Work](#) at ASU, chose his Fulbright award because he wanted to give his family the experience of living abroad.

"We have been living in a UNESCO World Heritage site in Granada, a very walkable city beneath the Sierra Nevada mountains and close to the Costa Tropical. Granada is immersed in Mediterranean history. We love exploring the Moorish architecture, taking advantage of the rich tapas scene and participating in local art traditions.

"We definitely have had a lot of adjustments adapting to new cultures, however living here has given us a fresh perspective on how different people live and enjoy their lives."

Choosing which award to pursue is a critical part of the process because hundreds of positions are available and faculty can only apply for one, Engler said.

Each country designs its award based on what it would like the scholar to do — teach, conduct research or a combination of both teaching and research.

Some countries require that teaching be done in the native language and will require a proficiency exam, but most is done in English, she said.

Students and faculty members typically spend many months on their applications, starting with information sessions. Engler helps faculty members conceptualize their project proposal and then reviews their application materials, including multiple drafts of project or teaching statements, plus letters of recommendation.

“A big part of the discussion is to identify the best award for them and also to highlight hidden opportunities,” she said.

“Over 135 countries participate in the Fulbright program, and if you're open to considering other places, you would be surprised at how generous the Fulbright packages are and the incredible opportunity to make an impact in countries that might not be as developed as Western Europe,” she said.

Androff was appreciative of all the support from ASU.

“I encourage faculty to find the right award for them, and to push themselves in creating a new cross-cultural experience for themselves and their families that they will treasure,” he said.

Creating peer support for students

Randall is halfway through her 10-month stint in Bulgaria, which she chose because the posting allows her to lead her own classroom and develop curriculum.

“Bulgaria’s complex history — under Ottoman rule, its revolution, communist past and recent transition into the EU — provides a really interesting generational separation,” she said.

“This history deeply influences the present-day intergenerational Bulgarian family, offering a fascinating lens through which I can learn about how they see the world through their life experience.”

She teaches students aged 12 to 19, and has learned how to adapt and be flexible. Some of her classes navigate serious conversations and critical thinking, while others might focus on games and connection.

“While I am teaching English, the most crucial part for me is building relationships with each class, and each grade level, to teach them what they are interested in learning,” said Randall, who graduated in 2024 with a degree in psychology, minors in international studies and nonprofit management, and a concentration in religion and conflict.

Through the [Melikian Center at ASU](#), she spent two weeks in Ohrid, North Macedonia, studying language and culture just before her posting in Bulgaria.

ASU wants to increase the number of students who pursue a Fulbright award so the Office of National Scholarships Advisement has been doing cohort-based advising, Mox said.

“A lot of our students are doing group advising meetings and group workshops and draft reviews, which, in addition to capacity building, does a really wonderful job of building community and increasing accountability,” he said.

“It’s easy when you’re applying for these kinds of major awards to feel really alone. Nobody understands why you’re canceling plans on a Friday night to work on a revision of an essay.

“With the cohort model that we’ve been using, you see other people feeling the same way and you can relate and provide encouragement and support.”

Randall said that she was the first in her family to pursue an award like this.

“I went through a lot of internal phases during the application process, including moments of ‘imposter syndrome’ and doubts about whether something like Fulbright was too out of reach for me,” she said.

“As an undergraduate, the extensive application process felt pretty daunting, so having resources, deadlines and reminders from ONSA to keep me on track was incredibly valuable.”

She would advise any student considering applying for a Fulbright to reflect deeply on their intentions.

“The most important part of this application is your intention for why you are hoping to pursue a Fulbright and in your specific country of interest. How does it connect to you, how does it connect to your future host country?” said Randall, who is [blogging](#) about her experience.

“You can spend countless hours editing how you say something and how you write, but it is really why you write that will shine through to the Fulbright board. So invest your time in understanding your personal clear vision for this opportunity.”

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Adelaide Randall, who graduated from ASU in 2024 with a degree in psychology, won a Fulbright award and is teaching for 10 months in Gabrovo, Bulgaria. Courtesy photo

Text image(s)



David Androff, a professor in the School of Social Work at ASU, is currently a senior Fulbright scholar researching social services for migrants in Spain and Morocco. He took his family along and they are living in Granada, Spain. Photo courtesy of David Androff