Széchenyi University concludes a Fulbright Scholarship Agreement

On Tuesday 26th February, Dr Péter Földesi, Rector of Széchenyi István University and Dr Károly Jókay, Managing Director of the Fulbright Committee, signed a cooperation agreement. One of the principle goals of the collaboration is to invite lecturers and professors from the United States to be involved in the delivery of 24 new English-taught academic programmes to be launched in September 2019, within the University’s current internationalization drive.

Initiated by Senator J. William Fulbright in 1946, the prestigious Fulbright Programme, covering more than 160 countries, offers scholarships for students, teachers and researchers. The bilateral programme not only provides possibilities for US students, lecturers and researchers to study and work abroad, but offers generous American scholarships for foreigners. Hungary’s participation in the programme started in 1978, and since that time more than 1,100 Hungarians have been granted the scholarship. Rector Földesi emphasized that the agreement with the Fulbright Commission is a new milestone for the long-term future of Széchenyi István University. The experience gained during the scholarship can fundamentally determine the career of the students, faculty members and researchers, with the benefits of the exchange programme being enjoyed by both the host institution as well as by scholars themselves. On their return home, American academics who spend a period teaching or researching in Győr can serve as ambassadors for Széchenyi István University.

Dr. Jókay Károly, Managing Director of the Fulbright Committee, said that the newly concluded contract would continue the good practice that had already begun, since US teacher-researchers had already been in Győr, and Széchenyi students and academics had already had placements in America with a Fulbright scholarship. The current agreement is also particularly important, as a separate chapter has been dedicated to Széchenyi István University in the programme catalogue listing universities around the world which offer American applicants a partnership in a host institution.

Dr. Eszter Lukács, Vice-Rector for Educational Affairs at Széchenyi István University highlighted the fact that from the 7 English-taught academic programmes presently available in 2018-2019, for the coming academic year it is planned to launch twenty-four programmes, twenty of which enjoy Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship support. During this current phase of qualitative expansion, the Fulbright Foundation will be in a position to attract prestigious professors to Győr who, within the framework of the 24 English-taught programmes, can become research partners of Széchenyi scholars and lecturers to the University’s students.

For his part, the Chancellor of Széchenyi István University, Dr Bálint Filep, expressed his gratitude to the University’s adviser, Prof. Kirk H. Downey, former Dean of Texas Christian University, for his role as a mediator in the cooperation agreement with Fulbright. Furthermore, the University’s senior management gladly acknowledges that the origins of this important contact lie in Professor Downey’s longstanding
academic collaboration with Dr Tibor D?ry, Associate Professor and Director of the Mobilis Interactive Exhibition Centre.

Following the signing of the framework contract, Dr. Károly Jókay gave a presentation on the range of possibilities offered by the Fulbright scholarship scheme. And while the agreement was focussed on attracting American academics to Gy?r, he provided detailed information on the diverse opportunities for Hungarian students, lecturers and researchers to visit US institutions of Higher Education. The head of the Fulbright Commission pointed out that roughly half of the applicants came from rural universities, and half of the scholars selected to come to America were not from universities in Budapest. Similarly, there is an effort to send professors and students arriving from overseas to all parts of Hungary. Annually, an average of 20-25 US scholarship fellows can come to Hungary and the same number of Hungarian grantees can travel to the US.

Fulbright Teacher, Researcher, and Student Scholarships are available in all fields of study. For teachers, a prerequisite is the PhD / DLA degree and an invitation from the American University. The duration of the scholarship is 1 or 2 semesters. A research scholarship is also available with a PhD / DLA degree and an invitation from an American accredited institution. The duration of the scholarship is 3-5 months. The basic
A condition for postgraduate student scholarships is a minimum of BA / BSc degree in the relevant subject. Candidates may choose any US university. Further details are available on the Fulbright website: http://www.fulbright.hu

At this point in the presentation Dr Jókay invited Fulbright alumni who were present in the audience to give short accounts of their experiences as grantees at HEIs in the United States.

In 2010, while still a PhD candidate, Dr Attila Borsos, Senior Lecturer and Vice-Dean, was awarded a Fulbright study scholarship following a year of preparatory work in Hungary. He continued his studies at the University of Connecticut in the field of Civil Engineering. Thanks to Fulbright, it is now possible for students to work together with experts of international repute, a once unattainable goal for Hungarian students. In the US he did research in the field of Road Safety under the supervision of Professor John Ivan. It was in that period that he wrote his first papers of international significance and, moreover, his working relationship with Dr Ivan has remained until today.

Dr Éva Happ, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Tourism in The Kautz Gyula Faculty of Business and Economics returned in mid-January from Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) after a Fulbright guest lecturer scholarship. She was interested in finding an instructor placement in a university with a tourism programme. Following successful contacts, she and the Institution soon reached an agreement on the subject she could offer. During the time of the scholarship she was also in Boston, where she had the opportunity to make a study of tourism-related training programmes.

Dr. Orsolya Kegyes-Brassai, Associate Professor in the Department of Structural and Geotechnical
Engineering, Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Transport Sciences, at Széchenyi István University, was a Fulbright scholar in America several years following the defence of her PhD. Even as a student, she had been determined to take the opportunity to study in the US on a scholarship. Her special field of interest is earthquake assessment and she located an area in the United States with similar seismic risks to this region.