

Your Story

The Fulbright Program, now in its 53rd year, has amassed an alumni body of some 225,000, representing nearly every nation of the world. To many grantees, being a Fulbrighter has been virtually synonymous with self-discovery, and by extension, self-realization. Grantees also report that their Fulbright adventure has helped them achieve a new awareness and understanding of the world and of their own countries. Along with this awareness has come a new-found or reinforced comprehension that individual actions can make a difference, and that the unique bi-national nature of the Fulbright Program can, indeed, foster mutual understanding among nations.

If you would like to share your own Fulbright story, submit pictures from your time abroad or comment about the program, we invite you to take the time to tell us in your own words about your Fulbright experience. You may write about a specific incident or the overall experience of the exchange. Some Fulbrighters have written about what they learned, what made a difference or what the experience has meant to them, their home institutions and their families. Your story may be chosen for publication on the CIES Web site, so any pictures, negatives or slides that you can include with your story will only enhance its publication.

Due to internet constraints we ask that you limit your story to 500 words. We will also choose three or four pictures to post on the website.

The primary purpose of the grant was to share/exchange expertise and experience with the Coastal & Marine Resources Center (CMRC) at the University College Cork, and the broader marine/coastal geographic information systems (GISs), and seabed mapping communities throughout Ireland. Dr. Wright and the CMRC are both involved in similar projects in these areas, and benefited greatly from continued opportunities to share their knowledge and experience between different parts of the world. Dr. Wright was particularly pleased to be hosted in great part by one of her former graduate students, who had since secured a post at the CMRC and had helped to make the initial connections between OSU and CMRC.

Among so many things, Dr. Wright learned about the spatial data infrastructure being built in Ireland, and the many challenges that they face due to most of their geospatial data being sold in commercial-like enterprises (so different from the U.S.). She was introduced to how the academic system works in Ireland (schedules, course loads, curricula, student advising). And so much was learned about Irish culture and history: e.g., the various effects of the "Celtic Tiger" at that time (the Irish economic boom), the continuing importance of the local pub and local music to Irish culture and identity, the physical landscape in the southern half of the country, even a sense of the mythical Irish state of being. The visit has since blossomed into 2 NSF grants on the US side, a series of 5 international workshops, a book released in 2010 (<http://www.icoastalatlus.net/handbook>), and the founding of a new collaborative called the International Coastal Atlas Network (<http://www.icoastalatlus.net>).

For Dr. Wright it was far and away the best professional experience that she had ever had (photo album at <http://dusk.geo.orst.edu/ireland/>). This was due to being linked to such an outstanding host institution. I will look forward to participating again.