



Utilizing Fulbright Finland for partnership building with U.S. Institutions — Tia-Maria Sjöblom, Int. Relations Adviser, School of Culture and Creative Industries

Background: Metropolia cooperation with US institutions

- Focus has been on Erasmus+ cooperation to Europe, due to the funding factor
- ICM funding to US has been rather difficult to get
- For Erasmus + 200 outgoings annually, to US less than 8
- Metropolia has 6 ongoing bilateral student exchange agreements to US, the agreements often requires living on campus, but tuition fees are waived out, exchange number balance is an important issue with the agreements
- Lately the increase of research cooperation and also summer schools

An example of real life case how partnerships can start to US ...

- Huge interest in US exchanges for example from the fields of Music and Film
- One day a Music student walks in to the International Office and says: 'I want to go to US, Nashville and I have already found a good university, Belmont University, how can I get there?'
- First reaction?
- What's next? E-mail contact, is it worth it, when there are no connections beforehand? Do they already have partners in Finland?
- What did happen after the e-mail?

Story continues, next steps...

- The visit from Belmont's Head of International Relations to Metropolia December 2022
- Metropolia Music teacher visited Belmont at early 2023 while concert touring in US
- Dean and Professor of Architecture from Belmont visited March 2023
- Director of School of Music from Belmont visited June 2023
- Student Exchange agreement done in Fall 2023
- All good in US end, how about Metropolia, discussions arise
- And finally a visit from Metropolia to Belmont, with the grant of Fulbright Finland Foundation

The Fulbright Finland Travel Grants for Institutional Partnership Building

- short-term travel grants for higher education representatives from Finland to travel to the U.S. for a minimum of one week and a maximum of three months to initiate or advance long-term institutional partnerships between the candidate's Finnish home institution and U.S. host institution. More information:
- <https://www.fulbright.fi/travel-grants/fulbright-finland-travel-grants-institutional-partnership-building>
- Applying the grant in January 2023, process & requirements
- Interview March 9, positive decision March 17 – Yippee!
- Virtual orientation and live orientation day in May – very useful
- Visit to Belmont University US in October 2023!

Visiting Belmont University (Nashville)



What happened after visit...

- First exchanges spring 2024: Belmont Fashion design student to Metropolia, Metropolia Music student to Belmont
- Teacher exchanges spring 2024 from Belmont to Metropolia: music, voice and guitar master classes (2 teachers), Fashion Design visit
- GREAT START! THEN...
- The head of International relations from Belmont left to another university – for a while some confusion and then another surprise: new possibility for a cooperation with another university in California?!

Lessons learnt – tips for cooperation

- Be bold when reaching new contacts, it might actually work – Finnish education / finnish 'weird' culture is surprisingly well known or at least interesting
- Connect the right faculty people working together, when they hit well together, nothing can stop the cooperation
- Personal contacts between the Int. Office staff helps a lot, talking the same language – visit if possible and remember the Fulbright Finland funding possibilities!



Thanks!