

2012 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Summer Institute

There will be one institute in the summer of 2012 with approximately 55 students: up to 45 European students plus 10 Americans. The age range for participants is 16 to 18 years old at the time of the institute. The institute will be four weeks long between late June and late August. Specific information about dates and location will be confirmed later.

Activities will include discussions of global issues of common interest, leadership and media training, collaborative project development, community service, educational travel, and plans for follow-on activities.

Program Background



*The initiative is named after the legendary American statesman and diplomat **Benjamin Franklin**, in honor of the inspiration his own life and career provides to those who are working to strengthen transatlantic cooperation. In today's terms, Franklin could be called a transatlantic man, someone whose career, interests, studies and life took him back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean, bringing Americans and Europeans closer in understanding. Even 300 years after his birth, Franklin's life offers inspiration to young citizens of today in the effort to bridge the Atlantic. As a diplomat and a printer, he leveraged the powers of diplomacy and of the media to explore how Americans and Europeans see each other and the world.*

Goals of the Institute

- to develop a commitment to transatlantic cooperation;
- to foster relationships between American and European youth from different ethnic, religious, and national groups;
- to promote mutual understanding between the United States and Europe/Eurasia;
- to develop a cadre of youth leaders who will share their knowledge and skills with their peers through positive action.

The Summer Institute will enable **teenagers (ages 16-18)** to participate in an intensive, four-week exchange program in the United States that focuses on the global issues that European and American youth face on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Students will participate in a variety of activities such as training sessions, workshops, community-based programs, study tours, and cultural events. Participants will work together on a joint project that presents and promotes the stated goals and objectives of the Institute.

Before and during the Institute, students will gather information on young adults' views about one or two areas of common or global interest, such as sustainable development, inter-ethnic cooperation, or human rights. The program will also provide the participants with a new perspective on mass media and how they learn about each other and the communities they live in, and the broader media culture. This will include training on the critical reading of printed, broadcast, and electronic media and the ability to judge the content and accuracy for themselves. Training will cover communication and presentation skills, problem solving, and team building. Community service activities, social and cultural activities, and home stays with American families will deepen the participants' experience of U.S. society during their exchange.

Recruitment/Candidate Profile

A. Nominees should have a strong interest in learning more about the transatlantic relationship, the role of a free press in a democracy, and an interest in public or community service. They should have a strong demonstrated interest in communications, advocacy, debate, or civic participation. They should have the academic aptitude for a program of this nature and personal qualities needed to be successful participants, including maturity, strong social skills, flexibility, and open-mindedness. These factors are particularly important given the diverse group atmosphere of the Institute. **English fluency is required.**

B. It is important that nominees exhibit serious interest in pursuing leadership opportunities in their home countries, and demonstrate a genuine desire to learn first-hand about the United States, its people, society, and institutions. It is also very important that nominees understand that, if selected, they will be expected to fully and seriously participate in all program components during the three-four weeks, as well as in follow-up activities afterward in the home country. In addition, participants should be ready to inform and educate Americans about the cultures and societies of their home countries in non-structured gatherings and in public presentations.

Candidate Qualifications

- Between 16 and 18 years of age as of July 1, 2012;
- Highly proficient in English, as demonstrated **in a personal interview, or** (if available) the results of a standardized test, such as SLEP or the TOEFL;
- Committed to enrolling in high school or university in their home countries;
- Demonstrate strong leadership potential and interest in transatlantic relations and diplomacy;
- Indicate a serious interest in learning about the United States;
- Sustained high level of academic achievement, as indicated by academic grades, awards, and teacher recommendations;
- Demonstrate a commitment to community and extracurricular activities;
- Have had little or no prior U.S. study or travel experience in the United States; nominees with significant U.S. experience may be considered on a case by case basis;
- Mature, responsible, independent, confident, open-minded, tolerant, thoughtful and inquisitive;
- Willing and able to fully participate in an intensive summer program, community service, and active educational travel program;
- Comfortable with campus life, shared living accommodations, travel and interaction with a multinational, coed group of participants from across Europe and the U.S., and comfortable with engaging various Americans in the broader community; able to adjust to cultural and social practices different from those of their home countries.

Funding/Travel

Costs for all U.S.-based activities will be covered by the organizers and host in the U.S.

International travel and related costs will be covered by the U.S. Embassy or home country partners and /or sponsors secured by the embassy.

All embassies will provide a pre-departure orientation to the accepted Fellow(s) to review the details of the program, cross-cultural issues, and travel and financial matters. Since many participants will be minors and will be traveling from their home country alone, the U.S. grantee organization will provide adult chaperones who will accompany participants on flights between one or two European airports to the location of Summer Institute and back.