

2011 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TRANSATLANTIC FELLOWS SUMMER INSTITUTE

Summary

The four-week Institute, which will take place during the month of July, will accommodate approximately 55 students: up to 45 European students plus 10 Americans, aged 16 to 18. Institute 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. Specific information about dates and location will be confirmed later.

Program Background

Summer institute for young Americans and Europeans follows the model of the Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows institutes convened since the summer of 2006. The institutes intend to foster relationships among the younger generations of Europeans and Americans to promote awareness of shared values in light of the global challenges of the 21st Century.

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.

The Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Summer Institute

The goals of the Institute are

- 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, and
- 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 to prepare 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 in which they live, 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 focus on 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.

Candidate profile

Nominees should have a strong interest in learning more about diplomacy, the transatlantic relationship, the role of a free press in a democracy, and 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.

It is important that nominees have exhibited 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 four weeks, as well as in follow-up activities afterward in their home countries. 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.

Funding/Travel

Funding for participation in the U.S. institute

The costs for all U.S.-based activities will be covered by U.S. Government grant.

International travel and related costs

Selected candidates will have the opportunity to apply for funds at Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship fund. Award will cover domestic travel in the home country, such as a visit to the capital for a visa interview, round trip international travel to the United States, a travel allowance and pre-departure orientation.

Pre-departure orientation will be provided for selected candidate 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. host institution will provide adult chaperones who will accompany participants on flights between one or two European airports to North Carolina and back.