



## The Fulbright Journey: Reflections on a Challenging and Rewarding Experience in Saudi Arabia by a Nursing Professor



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### ABSTRACT

The Fulbright Program offers opportunities for faculty and students from the United States to participate in cultural exchanges for up to one year. Faculty have the opportunity to teach and conduct research with their colleagues in participating countries worldwide. My six month nursing faculty Fulbright Award at Umm Al-Qura University's School of Nursing in Saudi Arabia provided me with many opportunities for professional development. Upon arrival, the nursing school was in the midst of an accreditation process and requested my engagement in these activities. As a result, I had the opportunity to work collaboratively with far more faculty and administrators than originally anticipated. This set the foundation for productive teaching workshops and ongoing research exploring women's awareness about breast cancer within the cultural context of a conservative society. In this paper, I reflect on my journey and highlight important considerations for selecting a country and setting an agenda for teaching and research. Nursing faculty interested in global health are encouraged to become Fulbright Scholars and promote collaboration of nursing professionals and academicians worldwide.

### Introduction

In 2016, I was honored to be a Fulbright Award recipient for Teaching and Research in Nursing. This article is a reflection on my personal experiences during the six months I spent completing my Fulbright activities. My exchange site was the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) at Umm Al-Qura University (UQU) located in the Holy city Makkah Almukarramah (i.e., an honorable title associated with this city indicating its prestigious status, subsequently referred to as Mecca in this report).

The Fulbright Scholar Program is an international educational program established by the Fulbright organization in 1946. The United States (U.S.) Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs administers the Fulbright Scholar program in collaboration with the Council for International Exchange of Scholars. The Fulbright program's primary objectives are to provide students and scholars worldwide with opportunities to exchange expertise in education and research. In the long term, these relationships establish collaborations among colleagues in the affiliated institutions in the U.S. and other countries ("United States Department of State. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs", n.d.).

The Fulbright organization offers multiple programs and scholarships from which U.S. and international students and faculty can choose. The students' programs focus on research, traditional award

grants, English teaching assistance, and other special programs. The faculty Fulbright programs offer specific awards to selected U.S. scholars to serve as teachers and/or researchers in other countries for a period that varies from a few weeks to a full year. Funds for the Fulbright programs are provided through the U.S. Department of Education, participant countries, organizations, and donations. Funding Awards vary based on, for example, the country, type of program, and length of the grants. Since the establishment of the organization, Fulbright Award recipients from different disciplines and areas of expertise have described their experiences as positive, beneficial, and transformative (Arndt & Rubin, 1993; LaRocco, 2015; Zhu, 2018).

The application and selection processes are very intensive. For faculty awardees, the application process requires the applicant to submit a proposal that includes a self-description, rationale for choosing the selected country, and anticipated impact of the experience on the home and host institutions. In addition, the applicant is required to describe the proposed teaching and research project(s). The time between submission and notification can take a year. More details about award descriptions and eligibility can be found on the Fulbright organization's website at <https://www.cies.org/programs>.

### Fulbright Nursing Scholars

According to the 2013 Fulbright annual report, there were 51,518

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U.S. awardees for all disciplines from 1949 to 2013 (U.S. Department of State, 2014 Annual Report). They reported 160 countries participating in the program worldwide. However, Fulbright Awards in the U.S. average 3000 per year for competitive and merit based awards to students and scholars from different disciplines (“United States Department of State. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs”, n.d.).

Arndt and Rubin (1993) reported that the first Fulbright awardees included two nurses from Burma who came to the U.S. to practice nursing in late 1948. An accurate accounting of Fulbright Nursing Scholars since the program was initiated in 1946 is unavailable. However, Downing, Hastings-Tolsma, and Nolte (2015) reported that between the years of 2001–2013, approximately 90 nursing faculty from the U.S. were selected as Fulbright Awardees. Based on the estimate of 3000/year (as reported above) over 13 years, there were approximately 39,000 cross discipline student and faculty awards, and only 90 were for nursing scholars.

In addition to providing an opportunity for sharing and exchanging expertise, the Fulbright experience provides nursing faculty with an excellent opportunity to become immersed in the experience of another culture, foster international collaboration, and share their expertise with peers and colleagues in a new environment. In some countries, the experience may be challenging in terms of time differences, housing location, collaboration, communication (language), cultural expectations, political conflicts, and resources available (Bell-Scriber, 2015). However, the personal and professional benefits outweigh these challenges. Fulbright recipients have reported the advantage of educational exchange and international travel in academia (Dooley, Dooley, & Carranza, 2008; Leininger, 1998; McElmurry, Misner, & Buseh, 2003; McWhirter, 1988; Oerther, 2016). For example, McElmurry et al. (2003) noted that “collaboration with people from different countries, whether in the form of health research or participation in cultural or health care delivery interchange, substantially benefits all parties involved” (p. 23; cited in Haussler, 2006). Others have suggested that the ability of faculty to prepare culturally and linguistically competent students is enhanced by their participation in a true international experience (Dooley et al., 2008).

We live in an increasingly open world, and many academic institutions have incorporated international and global agendas in their strategic planning to prepare 21st century students. Nursing schools should follow their institutions' strategic planning and integrate global and international health affairs into their curricula. A true immersion in other cultures is a good learning strategy for faculty to prepare culturally competent students (Nicholas et al., 2009). The common teaching strategies (e.g., reading assignments, websites, videos) may not be as effective as real-life or cultural immersion experiences (Dooley et al., 2008).

There is a scarcity of publications regarding the impact of Fulbright Scholar experiences on nursing faculty – perhaps due to limited participation of nursing professionals in Fulbright programs. This article provides an overview of my personal experience as a Fulbright nursing scholar in the Middle Eastern region and the ways it benefited me as a professional nursing faculty member. It is anticipated that this article may also encourage peers and colleagues to consider participation. Furthermore, their exchange of expertise will serve to integrate international experiences and approaches into their nursing practice, education, and research. My experience was truly life changing; it enhanced my self-reliance, confidence, mutual communication skills, as well as provided me with a higher level of flexibility, openness, and competency.

### Decision to seek Fulbright in KSA

As a nursing educator, I thought of what would be important to me professionally and what I wanted to accomplish to make an impact on my academic career. I knew where my passion was – I wanted to contribute to the growth of international and global health. For

example, I had travelled making presentations at international conferences and conducted research collaborating with international colleagues. I also chaired my nursing school's International Committee and worked with the dean and other colleagues to start a multidisciplinary global health program. Moreover, my interest in international and global health about women motivated me to learn more about women in strict religious societies. I felt that the Fulbright opportunity was timely and would broaden my perspectives and provide the experience I needed.

My home institution was very supportive and encouraging providing me with a sabbatical leave with 50% salary and full benefits. The Fulbright organization and host institution contributed to cover the rest of my salary. In order to manage my absence, my school of nursing hired an adjunct professor to teach my courses for the Fall and Spring semesters. Although I was absent from campus, I continued working on important tasks via electronic communications. For example, I managed two online proposal defenses for PhD students and continued attending my interdisciplinary team meetings.

Although I am not from the KSA, I had a specific interest in the host country. My personal background was from an Arabic Muslim Middle East country adjacent to the KSA. All Middle Eastern Muslim countries share a broad Arabic Islamic background. I am fluent in the Arabic language (i.e., speak, read, and write), and I practice the same religious beliefs as the host country. This was one of the important factors for the selection of the host country. I had been in the KSA once to perform pilgrimage in 2012; however, the purpose was limited and was a short visit to one city.

Before my decision to apply for the Fulbright Scholar in KSA, I was aware of the status of women in general and Mecca in particular. I had served as an advisor to many students from the KSA who came from different cities. When I was in the KSA, I followed the dress code for women. Although I did not cover my face with a veil as women from Mecca are expected to do, I respected the cultural traditions and followed expected rules and customs. It is also of interest that the degree of cultural restrictions imposed upon women is varied among different families across the KSA.

My personal and professional attraction to the KSA, the city of Mecca, and the host institution was related to their unique spiritual and religious characteristics, their cultural diversity, the region's economic status, my fluency in the Arabic language, my travel experiences, and my personal background. The KSA would also provide an interesting environment to continue my professional development and research focus on exploring women's awareness about breast cancer within the cultural context of a conservative society in the city of Mecca. I attempted to seek a balance between my comfort zone and the KSA's social expectations.

In this section, I will discuss more details about the reasons for my selection of the country, and how the experience impacted my personal, professional, and home institution. Every year, the Fulbright organization calls for applications from/to different regions, such as Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and other regions. I was attracted to the Middle Eastern region and especially to the Gulf countries such as the KSA. Recent medical and nursing advances there have included: (1) changes in the health care systems; (2) increased international openness with the Western World; and (3) increased economic growth which has attracted people from other countries to seek employment opportunities in the KSA.

Although I knew Mecca as a Holy city, and had visited the *Haram* in 2012 (as mentioned previously), that visit was short, and I never had any contact or information about the host institution. Before I submitted my Fulbright application, I conducted an internet search and found that UQU is the oldest and the largest university in Mecca. In addition to nursing, I found that UQU included many disciplines (e.g., humanities, health sciences, engineering, computer sciences). The School of Nursing was established in 2005 as a department within Applied Medical Science (UQU, 2017). In 2011 and based on an

increased need for nurses, nursing became an independent discipline and increased its enrollment of women. The enrollment of men into the nursing program started more recently in 2014; the men's nursing program is located in a separate section and building from the women. However, the two sections follow the same nursing program with male nursing faculty teaching male students, and female faculty teaching female students. Since there is a significant shortage of qualified academic nursing professionals, the majority of UQU's nursing instructors and academic staff are non-Saudi (e.g., Egypt, Sudan, Indonesia, Jordan, India, and Ireland).

Overall, I found UQU to be an excellent prospective host site for my Fulbright proposal. My interests included: (1) experiencing their academic environment; (2) being in close contact with the faculty and community; (3) learning about the academic and social cultures of students and faculty; and (4) seeking teaching and collaborative research opportunities. This experience would also be of importance to my home institution in many ways, and in particular, related to my serving as the advisor for Duquesne University's Saudi Student Organization for many years. This UQU experience would facilitate a broader cultural awareness and generate insight into how UQU students and faculty view the U.S.

It is also pertinent to understand that as a faculty member in a prestigious Catholic institution, I was also interested in exploring how different ethically-based faiths contribute to shaping the nursing practice. Through the Fulbright experience, I would be able to share real life experiences to educate diverse nursing students and communities in both countries. My belief in the importance of integrating ethically-based faith into nursing education is a very important component for providing culturally competent care to diverse populations.

In short, I was honored to be the first Fulbright scholar from the School of Nursing at Duquesne University. I anticipated that the experience I would gain as a Fulbright scholar was in line with the mission and vision of the School of Nursing at Duquesne University. Their Mission Statement focuses on offering quality education to diverse student populations, preparing the next generation of nurses, and supporting faculty to become national and international leaders (Duquesne University, 2018).

### The host country: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Mecca

The KSA is one of the largest Arab Muslim Middle Eastern countries and is characterized by its unique religious significance, oil production, and thriving economy. It occupies about 80% of the Arabian Peninsula (Albejaidi, 2010). Based on the most recent census data, the population in 2017 was estimated at 32,552,336 (General Authority for Statistics, 2018). The projected population of the KSA is estimated to be 39.8 million by 2025 and 54.7 million by 2050 (Almalki, Fitzgerald, & Clark, 2011). Among all Middle Eastern countries, KSA has a prestigious status having two major Islamic landmarks. The first is the largest Holy Mosque worldwide (called *Haram*) located in Mecca. The second is the Prophet Mosque located in the city of Al Medinah Almonawarha. These two cities host thousands of Muslim visitors from all over the world on a daily basis and millions of pilgrims during the annual pilgrimage season.

The city of Mecca is located in the Western part of KSA and is the holiest city for all Muslims as it holds the *Kaaba*. The *Kaaba* is a small cube-shaped building built of black stones established by the father of the prophets (Ibrahim and his son Ishmael). The significance of Mecca to Muslims is deeply rooted and almost indescribable. The significance of the *Kaaba* was mentioned in the Quran – it was the first house established to symbolize the house of God. It was also designated by Prophet Muhammad as the direction site (*Qiblah*) where Muslims face for their five daily prayers. It is also a site for pilgrimage. The population of the city is highly diverse. The majority of non-Saudi residents have migrated from almost every Muslim country in the world and settled there to be close to the Holy Mosque for both worship and

employment opportunities. The formal language is Arabic, which is also the language of the Quran; however, the citizens of these two cities are extremely diverse, speaking, in addition to Arabic, many other languages.

### Proposal for research and teaching

My research interests are rooted in women's health and the impact of their beliefs, behaviors, culture, and religious traditions on seeking preventive health screening – particularly breast and cervical cancer. My Fulbright proposal was focused on teaching (40% time) and research (60% time). The rationale for this allocation of effort was related to the research topic and the time that would be needed for data collection relative to teaching. The purpose of my research was related to understanding women's beliefs, behaviors, practices, and their awareness of breast cancer prevention in Mecca. In this city, the Islamic traditions are very strictly applied and followed. The emphasis on women's modesty is much stricter than in any other cities in the country, or even other Muslim countries. That is, all women must be covered from head to toe in public.

Women also limit their contacts with men. Before the newly passed law in 2018, women were not permitted to drive. They cannot even be in public places without being accompanied by a man – a husband or close male relative whom they cannot marry (*Mahram*) such as a son, father, or uncle. However, women are encouraged to seek educational opportunities and employment. In fact, students (men and women) are paid a stipend during their undergraduate education. Furthermore, they get free education including graduate degrees.

As a nurse researcher, I was interested in exploring how women care for their health and perceive breast health given their conservative cultural milieu. My research plan was to work with the nursing faculty at the host institution to conduct a qualitative research study. The aims of the proposed study were to raise awareness and learn more about breast health among Middle Eastern Arabic Muslim women, in general, and Saudi women in particular. Based on statistical data between 2001 and 2008, Mecca ranked in the third highest incidence rate of breast cancer at 19.4 per 100,000 women, below the Eastern region at 26.6 and Riyadh at 20.5 per hundred thousand women (Alghamdi, Hussain, Alghamdi, & El-Sheemy, 2013). At the national level, there had been some efforts to increase breast cancer awareness in the main cities; however, these efforts were limited to specific regions (Abulkhair, Al Tahan, Young, MUSAAD, & Jazieh, 2010).

Qualitative research that could illuminate the subjective experience and beliefs of Saudi women before they were diagnosed with breast cancer has been very limited in the KSA. A recent mixed method study that was conducted in Mecca with 40 healthy women 25–65 years of age examined women's perspectives about breast cancer awareness. The study revealed that: 1) there is a lack of knowledge of breast cancer risk; and 2) there is limited family and social support to obtain information about breast cancer, however, they were aware of the importance of early detection of the disease (Nageeti, Abdelhameed, Jastania, & Felemban, 2017). However, this study did not provide information regarding women's cultural feelings like embarrassment, modesty, and other issues that Muslim women in other countries have reported (Donnelly et al., 2013; Salman, 2012). My proposed study was focused on healthy Saudi women who reside in Mecca to explore: 1) their perception and cultural behavior related to breast cancer prevention; and 2) if their previous experience with the health care delivery in terms of access and costs affected their decision to seek screening. The findings from this study will broaden our understanding about the subjective feelings and experiences of women, characterizing women in Mecca specifically.

In addition to research, my Fulbright proposal included teaching and conducting workshops for faculty focused on teaching and research methods. Since the nursing program at UQU was recently established and is still in its early stages of development, I anticipated that sharing

my expertise in any nursing arena would be worthwhile. I was also very interested in learning about the students' environment and their interests in the nursing profession.

### Description of the Fulbright experience (October 2016–March 2017)

After receiving the Fulbright Award and before leaving the U.S., UQU, the host institution, developed and sent me a working plan (agenda) for the six month period. The work plan focused on nursing education, program evaluation, accreditation, faculty workshops, and student support. There was no plan, however, on conducting research. The plan was responsive to the needs of the host institution, while deviating somewhat from my initial Fulbright proposal. I had learned from previous awardees about the importance of negotiating the type of work that can be completed by scholars as necessary. Since research was a significant component of my proposal, I suggested to the host institution that it be included in the work plan. The host institution agreed and was very supportive of and receptive to my suggestion.

Upon my arrival, during my initial meeting with nursing school administrators, including the dean, I learned that there were two priorities in the strategic plan of the school. These priorities included: (1) completion of the accreditation process for the nursing program; and (2) establishment of a new graduate nursing program as well as supporting new graduates from UQU to study abroad for advanced degrees in nursing.

The accreditation process required an independent auditor to evaluate the quality of the nursing program. Due to reasons pertaining to internal affairs, the school was unable to invite international consultants to serve as independent auditors for program evaluation and quality improvement. The school of nursing's dean and associates discussed the importance of achieving the school's goals to be accredited for program growth and pursuing graduate degrees abroad for Saudi nurses. At that time, the school had been successful in passing the accreditation assessment of a nursing organization from Germany. I agreed to take on the role of the independent auditor.

### Background on the UQU School of Nursing

Historically, nursing in Saudi Arabia had been dependent on employment of foreign nurses. Due to economic growth and employment opportunities in the country, foreign health professionals including nurses have been attracted to serve as health care providers for short and long-term contracts. The KSA's society is also very conservative, and Saudi women did not find nursing to be an attractive profession. However, with the recent changes in the KSA's health care system, the government encouraged Saudi citizens to seek professional nursing credentials. The KSA established many schools of nursing and encouraged their citizens to enroll in and obtain graduate and undergraduate degrees. The KSA's objective was to generate Saudi nursing professionals who could take the lead in establishing a Saudi healthcare workforce. Currently, the nursing profession is culturally more acceptable as a profession for women as well as for men. Furthermore, there are opportunities to obtain graduate degrees from Western and American accredited institutions. As a result, international accreditations of the undergraduate programs in the KSA are required to assure opportunities for their graduates to seek higher degrees abroad.

In the KSA, all academic institutions must meet specific quality standards for higher education, and all programs are required to be consistent with these standards. Nursing program evaluation and accreditations had not been my specialty areas at my home institution. However, I did have the opportunity to work collaboratively with colleagues to prepare a report for the National League for Nursing Center of Excellence in Nursing Education. This experience along with my review of the literature proved to be extremely valuable for serving as UQU's independent auditor. Serving in this role, I was responsible for

ensuring that the national standards and substandards were met according to the specified quality criteria. I was also responsible for developing reports that highlighted strengths, weaknesses, gaps, deficits, inconsistencies, and other issues. This process was very work intensive. However, with coordination and collaboration of UQU's nursing department chair and faculty, we developed a set of four development phases.

*Phase 1* consisted of reviewing the school's vision, mission, core values, objectives, and curriculum. *Phase 2* consisted of a comprehensive review of two important documents that all Saudi Universities follow – documents that the KSA's National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment (KSA-NCAAA; 2009) developed and administered. The first document designated standards explaining the process of program assessment to ensure the consistency of the evaluation process of the learning outcomes across all academic institutions in the country. The second document, *Self-Evaluation Scale for Higher Education Programs*, included eleven detailed standards that were expected to be met for accreditation. *Phase 3* was implementation of the evaluation process, and *Phase 4* consisted of developing and completing the final reports about each single standard with clear recommendations for improvements. These four phases required four months of continuous work and collaboration with the nursing school administrators, faculty, chairs, students, and quality improvement workgroups across the nursing school.

### My Fulbright Scholar teaching and research accomplishments

Although the program evaluation and the accreditation process were not components of the initial Fulbright Scholar proposal, my experience was positive, unique, and extremely valuable. In fact, this experience allowed opportunities to develop close relationships with individual faculty and enabled my learning about their system faster than anticipated. Through this process, I learned much more than I had expected to learn about the school's program, faculty, students, research, activities, resources, and academia in general. I participated in extensive one-to-one faculty interviews. These sessions provided significant opportunities to understand their teaching strategies, students' issues, management and auxiliary staff issues, clinical site requirements, and student culture. I might have never learned about these and many other aspects of UQU's nursing school had I not served as their independent auditor.

In addition to program evaluation, I conducted four workshops that focused on the following topics: (1) teaching strategies and learning styles; (2) evidence-based practices; (3) qualitative and mixed method research; and (4) assessment and evaluation in nursing education. UQU nursing school's chair and faculty selected the workshops. Indeed, given the extensive interviews conducted during the evaluation, I was able to adjust the workshops to be more tailored to their needs and interests than originally planned. The faculty were very receptive, and the workshops were very interactive. As part of the process, an open forum was convened with potential candidates to study abroad for masters or doctoral degrees. The students expressed their interest about studying abroad; thus, I was able to meet their need for an international consultant to discuss the application process, requirements, number of credits, and other related subjects.

UQU requires scholarly work for faculty promotion and contract renewals. There were diverse research interests among nursing faculty members such as pediatric nursing, community health, and medical surgical clinical research. There was significant faculty interest in collaborating among themselves on different research projects. However, the focus on prevention and health promotion, particularly women's preventive health cancer screening, was absent. As a result, many nursing faculty were interested in collaborating with me in my proposed research.

I explained that the research would be focused on exploring women's perception, cultural behavior and health care experience related

to early detection and prevention of breast cancer. I was able to form a research group consisting of four faculty to work on women's health (two from the KSA and two from Sudan). This research group reviewed the research proposal and provided feedback. Each member was assigned a task such as recruitment, data collection, and other research components. We also submitted the research proposal to the nursing school's ethics committee (the official UQU representative) obtaining approval for data collection. The proposal was then submitted for IRB approval from the home institution.

Since these approval processes would take time, the UQU nursing faculty team agreed that we would continue our work through varied electronic communications. This research was an important goal in my Fulbright proposal; my plan was to make another trip to help in the recruitment and interview process. The time frame for completing the research was proposed to be approximately one year. In March 2017, I made a trip to the KSA and met with the research group. We worked collaboratively and completed the data collection. The data analysis process is ongoing and will be completed before the end of 2018.

## Reflections

Based on my experience with selecting a Fulbright host site, I would provide the following suggestions for others making this decision. Faculty who are interested in seeking Fulbright opportunities must have a good understanding about the country (e.g., demographics, culture, healthcare and educational systems) and the host institution (e.g., mission and vision, administrative structure). It is also very important to ensure that the host institution understands the Fulbright Scholar's proposal (e.g., teaching only, research only, or both) and the scholar's expectations. Contact with a previous Fulbright Scholar for the host country is recommended, if possible (in my case, I was the first Fulbright in nursing school at UQU). The regional leader of the Fulbright program can facilitate contacts with previous Fulbright Scholars.

In addition, language is a very important tool for communication with students and faculty. Even though people at UQU spoke English, there were conversations, words, and phrases that could not be expressed in English. For example, the majority of formal documents are presented in the Arabic language. I recommend that Faculty seek a Fulbright opportunity in countries where they know the language; if not, it will be critical to have ready access to translators. Finally, while familiarity with the culture may be useful, much more is learned during the actual experience.

The goals for my Fulbright award were met. The Fulbright experience and its many achievements exceeded my expectations. Based on the report that the chair of UQU's nursing program filed, my contribution also met the expectations of the university and school. To me, the most valued professional achievement was completion of the nursing school's program evaluation process, which was unexpected. Engagement in their accreditation process allowed me to work and know the program administrators and faculty members more closely and more quickly than anticipated. Furthermore, the investment of time in the evaluation process established excellent foundations for implementation of my research agenda. I was able to develop respectful and trusting personal and professional relationships with diverse faculty and professionals from other disciplines. I have planned ongoing activities continuing our relationships and enhancing my capacity for collaborative work into the future.

During my Fulbright experience at UQU, I learned about finding the appropriate evidence, identifying gaps, improving the program, and identifying strategies to meet accreditation requirements. It was an extremely rewarding learning experience that moved me out of my "comfort zone," challenged me, and forced me to realize my professional and personal potential. I was able to apply my previous experiences to build my skills and complete the charge as expected. Along with my experiences, I am very grateful for the internet resources and

online technology which facilitated my work including access to the library of my home institution. These resources were critical to the success of my Fulbright experience.

In my role as an advisor to some UQU students, I learned firsthand about the university experience in the host country. This experience will help me to better serve Saudi students when they come to study in the U.S. at my home institution. In addition, I will be better prepared to advise these students about how they could apply what they will have learned in the U.S. to their own cultural context and to better serve their country and profession.

There are many unpredictable circumstances that may arise when your Fulbright experience moves from proposal to action. There may be challenges or obstacles to scholars to meet their proposed goals for teaching and research. However, scholars need not be afraid to stray from their own agenda. Rather, it is important to be open and willing to work with the host institution's agenda as well. During my Fulbright experience, I was determined to achieve my goals as well as the host and home institutions' goals.

Throughout this journey, the key ingredients to my success were: (1) remaining flexible and open to negotiation and communications and (2) making best use of my potential, expertise and ability to collaborate with others. The Fulbright Scholar experience was a life-time opportunity for both personal and professional growth. I believe that through international educational exchange and shared expertise, scholars and peers in other countries set the stage for collaboration and globalization of nursing for future generations.

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