



THE FOX INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS

at The Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale

MY EXPERIENCES AT YALE UNIVERSITY AS AN INTERNATIONAL FOX FELLOW

I spent the academic year 06/07 at Yale University as an International Fox Fellow. This report is aimed at future Fox Fellows to ease possible problems in the first months and to give them an early glimpse of what can be expected from the year. Altogether, the year at Yale University has been an exciting and very valuable experience.

The perfect program organization makes it easy to settle in quickly and to get familiar with all the Yale facilities. Within the first week, we were set to start with academic work, which is remarkable since there are quite a lot of things to organize and set up (furniture in the house, phone, internet access in the house, library access etc.). But thanks to the help from Larissa and Tara this all went very quickly.

The greatest challenge for the first months is to decide on the balance between working time for the PhD and for all the possibilities Yale offers.

For one, there are Yale's excellent academic courses. I would strongly recommend not to take more than ONE course per semester. The classes are very time consuming and with more than one class I would have been too distracted from the work on my PhD. Nevertheless, the class I did take was great. I took one very inspiring class at the School of Management with a former World Fellow and energy minister of the Philippines. The class focused on investment opportunities in renewable energy and offered both theoretical as well as practical insides into the question when, how and where to invest in renewable energy.

For another, it might also be interesting for some to become actively involved in the Yale community. At the School of Management I also became a member of the SOM energy club, which meets regularly to discuss broad energy issues in the fossil fuel, nuclear and renewable energy sector. In October, I organized the participation of some Fox Fellows and some members of the SOM energy club in the National Solar Tour 2006. We visited two facilities in West Haven and in Westport, which use solar energy to fuel and heat their buildings. I think activities such as these are great possibilities to be actively engaged in the Yale community.

Finally, Yale University draws fascinating speakers from all around the world to give talks at Yale. Last semester, I was fortunate to listen to several highly inspiring experts, such as James Hansen (one of the leading US climate experts), Mohamed ElBaradei (the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency) or Shimon Peres. All these activities are great but take up a lot of time. **Be careful not to get distracted too much!**

The aspect I found the most helpful in working on my PhD has been the atmosphere at Yale and among Yale students and Fox Fellows. Yale seems to be evaporating an optimistic and forward-looking sense, which I sometimes miss in Germany. Everybody is working hard, but more importantly everybody enjoys their work. It is inspiring and motivating to work in an environment which is so much more optimistic as it is at Yale.

One great feature of the Fox Fellowship program is the possibility to go on research trips. At the beginning of the second half year I went to Washington, DC and Philadelphia and later in the semester I flew to San Francisco. I conducted interviews, took part in academic conferences and was able to discuss central arguments of my PhD. This opportunity should not be missed. I am sure it will enhance everybody's work as much as it has enriched mine.

Other activities not to be missed: The McDougal Center regularly organizes dissertation boot camp. These are weekends where you are essentially given a quiet room to work in. The organizers of the boot camp took care of food and drinks. Twice a day somebody came in to do a short session of yoga or gymnastics with us. This weekend was great and I got a lot of work done. At the end of the second semester I also took part in a writing techniques workshop which was offered by the McDougal Center.

Besides the academic part, I also very much enjoy the many cultural opportunities that New Haven and New York City offer. I went to two shows of the Yale Repertory Theatre (please go, the theatre is great!!), visited the MOMA and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, and enjoyed the diverse dining possibilities both in New Haven and in New York City. Weekend trips to Cape Cod and Vermont were extraordinary chances to see more of the United States and some spectacular nature. In Cape Cod I saw humpback whales, which was an awe-struck experience and in Vermont I enjoyed great hikes with magnificent views.

And then, there is of course the personal involvement of Mr. and Mrs. Fox which makes this fellowship so unique and so rewarding.