Student Receives Prestigious Boren Award

Martin (Marty) Fankhanel has been awarded a Boren Fellowship to study in India during the 2017-18 academic year. Marty is currently a graduate student in Experiential Education at Minnesota State University, Mankato. After participating in the South Asian Flagship Language Initiative (SAFLI) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for eight weeks, Marty will study Urdu for four months in Lucknow, India. Marty previously worked overseas for the Peace Corps with the American Spaces initiative in Albania, an experience which sparked his interest in immigration issues. Marty received his bachelor’s degree in German Education from Concordia College and is currently pursuing a master’s degree in Experiential Education in the Department of Educational Leadership at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Marty hopes to become an expert on cultural inclusion and integration, focusing particularly on Muslims to the United States. He intends to work for the State Department or USAID as a Foreign Service Officer and believes that learning the Urdu language and culture will provide a strong foundation for this career goal.

David L. Boren Scholarships and Fellowships are sponsored by the National Security Education Program (NSEP), a major federal initiative designed to build a broader and more qualified pool of U.S. citizens with foreign language and international skills. Boren Awards provide U.S. undergraduate and graduate students with resources and encouragement to acquire language skills and experience in countries critical to the future security and stability of our nation. In exchange for funding, Boren award recipients agree to work in the federal government for a period of at least one year. “The National Security Education Program,” according to Dr. Michael A. Nugent, NSEP Director, “is helping change the U.S. higher education system and the way Americans approach the study of foreign languages and cultures.”

This year, the Institute of International Education, which administers the awards on behalf of NSEP, received 791 applications from undergraduate students for the Boren Scholarship and 194 were awarded; 340 graduate students applied for the Boren Fellowship and 114 were awarded. Boren Scholars and Fellows will live in 44 countries throughout Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia, Latin America, and the Middle East. They will study 36 different languages. The most popular languages include Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, Portuguese, Japanese, Swahili, and Korean. “To continue to play a leadership role in the world, it is vital that America's future leaders have a deep understanding of the rest of the world,” says University of Oklahoma President David Boren, who as a U.S. Senator was the principal author of the legislation that created the National Security Education Program and the scholarships and fellowships that bear his name. “As we seek to lead through partnerships, understanding of other cultures and languages is absolutely essential.”

Since 1994, over 6,000 students have received Boren Awards. Boren Scholars and Fellows represent a vital pool of highly motivated individuals who wish to work in the federal national security arena, and program alumni are contributing to the critical missions of agencies throughout the federal government. An independent not-for-profit founded in 1919, IIE is among the world's largest and most experienced international education and exchange organizations. Undergraduate and graduate students interested in applying for the Boren Awards should contact...
IIE at boren@iie.org or visit www.borenawards.org.

Students who are currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program at Minnesota State University, Mankato and are interested in applying for the Boren Awards should contact the Office of University Fellowships at fellowships@mnsu.edu or visit www.mnsu.edu/fellowships.