



Press Release

Peace Corps Helps Record Numbers of Students to Attend Graduate School

While Washington works to bridge the gap between Wall Street and Main Street, a special group of graduate students are narrowing the divide between Main Street, U.S.A. and the rest of the world. This past year, the Peace Corps has seen record numbers of volunteers enrolling in its graduate school programs. Last semester, more than 700 students participated in Peace Corps Master's International and Fellows/USA programs, initiatives offering Peace Corps volunteers such benefits as reduced tuition or academic credit for Peace Corps service.

"In these trying financial times, many Americans are finding their choices narrowed," said Peace Corps Director Aaron S. Williams. "To people who dream of serving their country abroad and who also wish they could attend graduate school, the Peace Corps is telling them that they can do both."

Peace Corps graduate school programs are made possible through partnerships with a network of colleges and universities across the country. Fifty-two colleges and universities in 26 states and the District of Columbia participate in the Fellows/USA program, while Master's International partners with 64 institutions of higher learning in 31 states and the District of Columbia. These numbers have remained steady over the past year despite the fact that participating schools extend financial benefits to their Peace Corps students.

"It is a tribute to these institutes of higher learning that they have kept their doors open to Peace Corps volunteers even during the course of a recession," said Williams. "Their leadership demonstrates an unwavering commitment to our American traditions of service and volunteerism."

The Master's International program began at Rutgers University–Camden in 1987 and incorporates Peace Corps service into a master's degree program. Participating graduate students typically complete one year of study at their university before serving 27 months abroad with the Peace Corps. Upon their return, they then complete their schooling. Further information on Master's International is available at www.peacecorps.gov/masters.

Fellows/USA, which started in 1985 at the Teachers College of Columbia University, is specifically reserved for students who have already completed their tenure abroad with Peace Corps. In a special feature of this program, participating students apply the experience they have gleaned as Peace Corps volunteers to service learning projects in the United States. More details can be found at www.peacecorps.gov/fellows.