

MEDIA RELEASE

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US Fulbright scholars to boost rural and regional research

The Regional Universities Network (RUN) today announced a new partnership with the Australian-American Fulbright Commission to provide scholarships to US academics that will see them undertake regionally-relevant research at RUN universities.

The Chair of RUN, Professor Helen Bartlett, said that the partnership between Australian universities and Fulbright was the first globally to focus research on regional issues.

“Each year for four years, RUN will fund two academics from the United States to come to Australia, and undertake research relevant to rural and regional Australia. The RUN Fulbright Scholar Award recipients will focus their work on one of RUN’s three collaborative research themes, which includes Crops and Food for the Future, Health and Wellbeing in the Regions, and New Industries.

“The scholars will be based at one of the network’s seven universities. They will also spend time at other RUN universities to deepen the collaboration and inspire RUN academics to become Fulbright Scholars,” Professor Bartlett said.

Fulbright Australia Executive Director, Thomas Dougherty, said that Fulbright was excited to partner with RUN in fostering collaborations between institutions and scholars from regional Australia and the American heartland.

“This is the first opportunity of its kind in our 70-year history, enabling U.S. experts to work with a diverse range of institutions, from Far North Queensland to inland Victoria. The RUN Fulbright Scholar Award’s focus on regional issues has clear potential to improve the lives and livelihoods of Australians and Americans alike,” Mr Dougherty said.

The first two recipients of the RUN Fulbright Scholar Award are:

- Professor Dr Levon T. Esters from Purdue University. Dr Esters will undertake the project, *A USA-Australia Nexus Approach to Expanding Access to Tertiary and Career Education: A Vocational Psychology of Agricultural Perspective*, and be based at the University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba. The project will examine Agricultural Career Education as a strategy to enhance the tertiary and career prospects of youth and adults in regional, rural and remote areas.
- Professor Courtney Meyers from Texas Tech University. Professor Meyers will undertake the project, *Exploring Agricultural Communications in Australia*, and be based at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga. The project will build capacity to offer an academic program in agricultural communications.

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