

Polish Students at AIPES

Matthew Kwasiborski and Brigit Moore

Lady Blanka Rosenstiel, President of the American Institute of Polish Culture, has sponsored Polish students going to the American Institute on Political and Economic Systems (AIPES) since 1999. Twenty-five percent of the Polish students (28 of 110) who have benefited from this great academic and cultural experience have received scholarship support from Lady Blanka Rosenstiel.

AIPES was launched by The Fund for American Studies (TFAS) in Washington, D.C., in partnership with Georgetown University and Charles University, in 1993. The program takes place each summer in Prague, Czech Republic. It was the first international program organized by TFAS, which now hosts other programs around the world for students in the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America.

This summer, AIPES 2011 welcomed 118 students from 31 countries to Prague for the 19th annual Institute. The 2011 Institute began on July 5 and ended on July 26. We were pleased to have two outstanding Polish students, Agnieszka Mietka and Bartosz Troczynski, join us this summer for the institute. While attending AIPES, Agnieszka and Bartosz, along with the rest of the AIPES class, studied fundamental political and economic concepts using the American model as its focus. Two outstanding American faculty members, along with four teaching assistants, led the academic components of the entire program.

In addition to the challenging curriculum, students attended several guest lectures given by prominent regional figures. The guest lecture series included presentations given by Dr. Cyril Svoboda, the former Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of the Czech Republic; Mr. Carri Ginter, a partner at the Sorainen Law Firm in Estonia; and Mr. Jovan Andonovski, Macedonian State Secretary for EU Affairs. The newly appointed US Ambassador to the Czech Republic, the Honorable Norman Eisen, also delivered a lecture about eliminating government corruption. Finally, we were pleased that Ms. Eliska Coolidge again joined our students to discuss personal responsibility, ethics and etiquette. Students also had the opportunity to participate in economics "boot camps" to help strengthen their knowledge in the fields of micro and macro economics. The AIPES students also enjoyed a legislative simulation, a chance to discuss contemporary issues as well as work on their public speaking and leadership skills.

We have started a new tradition at AIPES by bringing back young, prominent alumni of the program to share academic and professional advice with the students. They also discussed how they think participating in AIPES helped them to advance in their professional careers. The 2011 Alumni Panel included representatives from Hungary, Macedonia, and the Netherlands.

Agnieszka and Bartosz had the opportunity (along with their colleagues) to present Poland's cultural heritage to the rest of the group. Each year, AIPES hosts cultural presentations, so that the students are able to share their country's history and culture.



Bartosz Troczynski and Agnieszka Mietka

On July 26, the AIPES 2011 students attended a formal graduation ceremony at the beautiful 14th century Carolinum, a great symbol of Charles University. We were honored to have President Boris Tadic, of the Republic of Serbia, as our keynote commencement speaker.

As new graduates of AIPES, Agnieszka and Bartosz now join the ranks of more than 12,000 alumni of The Fund for American Studies, representing more than 100 nations around the world.

The Fund for American Studies wishes to thank the American Institute of Polish Culture, especially Lady Blanka Rosenstiel, for their continued support of Polish students attending AIPES. We are proud of all of our Polish alumni, and we hope that the future leaders of Poland continue to attend AIPES thanks to Lady Blanka Rosenstiel and the American Institute of Polish Culture. ∞