

Joana Carlson

Florida State University Ph.D. student Joana Carlson of Galveston, Texas, has received the prestigious Fulbright Full Grant, which she will use to study in China for her dissertation, "Horizontal Diplomacy and the Chinese Revolution."

The Texas City High School graduate will work in the archives and other repositories in both Beijing and Shanghai.

The Fulbright program is the largest international exchange program in the United States. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, it offers opportunities for students, scholars and professionals to study and conduct research internationally as well as opportunities for university teaching and teaching in elementary and secondary schools worldwide.

Assistant Director of FSU's Office of National Fellowships Jamie Purcell said the Fulbright program awards only the highest caliber students with a genuine commitment to cultural engagement, and it has an extensive selection process in the United States as well as in the host countries.

"The application process itself is quite a feat," Purcell said. "Students spend months designing a comprehensive and detailed plan for how they will carry out their work abroad. Being awarded a Fulbright grant is an extraordinary distinction and a career-launching opportunity."

After receiving her undergraduate degrees in political science and Spanish from Harding University in Searcy, Ariz., Carlson lived in the province of Hubei, China, for two years. She taught college-level conversational English classes her first year and studied Mandarin full-time during her second year. She was the first foreign student ever to take history classes at Central China Normal University (CCNU) in Wuhan, China.

According to Max Friedman, an assistant professor of history at FSU, Carlson's dissertation project will extend the general understanding of the early Cold War, including comparing the U.S. responses to revolutions in China and in Cuba.

"Joana will break new ground here as well as advance our understanding of the varieties of U.S. responses to third world nationalist revolutions," he said of Carlson's dissertation. "Her work is of such high quality and originality that I expect her to find a place among the most innovative practitioners of international history."

Aaron Feng Lan, an associate professor of Chinese language and literature, suggested that Carlson apply for the Fulbright. He said she submitted a compelling application, including a thoughtful formulation for a research project and an impressive dedication to the fields of her chosen studies.

"I was not surprised when I was informed of her award of the Fulbright grant," said Lan. "Joana truly deserves the award. She is an outstanding graduate student not simply because she is smart and hardworking, but also because she possesses a vision about her future career and is persistent in her pursuit."

Neil Jumonville, chair of FSU's Department of History, said Carlson is certainly one of his brightest graduate students, but agreed with Lan that, even beyond her scholarly ranking, there was much more to admire about her.

"Her energy and leadership around the department crack like a bolt of lightning," said Jumonville of Carlson, "but she is anything but brash or abrasive. On the contrary she has a rather quiet and measured personality, a winning sense of collegiality and a kind of glow about her."

The China Fulbright requires its recipients to have the ability to conduct research in Mandarin. Though Carlson says she isn't sure she will ever be completely fluent, she is able to speak, read and write it

proficiently. She can also speak Spanish and Modern Greek.

Carlson is one of eight FSU Fulbright award winners this year. Half of the school's Fulbright applicants (10 out of 20) were selected as awardees or alternates this year, with 40 percent (8 of 20) actually winning. This is a higher yield than most of the nation's top-producing Fulbright schools.

Joana Carlson is the daughter of Bruce and Ann Marshall Carlson of Dayton, Texas. For more on the Fulbright Program's history, scholarships and awards, visit: <https://us.fulbrightonline.org/about.html>.