

CLASS OF 300/FRANKLIN TRICENTENARY

Extended Commentary

The Goal

The fundamental goal of the undertaking proposed here is to provide a continuous source of highly skilled individuals who can offer large assistance to not-for-profit advocacy groups seeking to improve fund raising, public relations and message impact.

Prologue

This Plan arises from what I learned during the nearly twenty years I lived abroad, extensive reading of exceptional thinkers, particularly - Locke, Paine, Madison, Jefferson, Hegel; close observation of 20th century personages who caused extraordinary revolutions on the strength of their ideas - Havel, Mandela, Ghandi, Gorbachov, Pope John; review of what made wartime leaders like Lincoln so successful and Osama bin Laden so worrisome; scholarly articles from the e-learning and environmental community; Stuart Brand's thought provoking book 'Clock of the Long Now'; a dozen or more biographies about Ben Franklin -- all of which are eclipsed by Franklin's "Way to Wealth" -- which takes ten minutes to read and a lifetime to completely understand.

<<http://itech.fgcu.edu/faculty/wohlpart/alra/franklin.htm#Way>>

I have also hugely benefited from being imagineer, and along with Dr. Midi Cox, chief cook and primary bottle washer to the largest and most unusual event in the education world - an event called Global Learn Day, now in it's eighth year.

Mostly, I attribute whatever personal growth I have made in the last decade to contacts with exceptional people doing extraordinary work in every part of the planet. They are connected to me by the magic of e-mail, blog, Wiki, streaming media, ham radio and that old fashioned instrument called the telephone.

Additionally, I have met with many of them in Europe, Asia, New Zealand, Australia and here in the Americas. There is no way I can thank them sufficiently.

All of it has made me better understand that we not only live in a globalized, Google-ized world, we also live in a world dangerously threatened by too much greed, too much me-first, too much NIMBY; that all first rate societies are, in my not-so-humble-opinion, at risk by a sound bite mentality which voraciously chomps at the one cornerstone on which all democracies must rest: An informed populace.

Finally, every bit of this has strengthened my conviction that the path to a safer, saner world runs through classrooms where motivation, pluralism, human rights and curiosity are on high display.

The Premises of this Plan

This Plan rests on the following convictions:

- * Well managed events are crucially important for advocacy groups. The need for skilled people to run them with excellence cannot be overstated.
- * Very few advocacy groups use affordable technology to significantly improve event management, fund raising, outreach, and message impact. The best model on the planet is <http://www.moveon.org>
- * The cost to train individuals who can effectively use their networking contacts and technology skill sets can be recovered reasonably quickly by the benefits those persons generate.
- * There are incalculable benefits from working overseas to help with the orchestration of a global event,
- * As proven by those who landed at Normandy, nothing fires the engines of synergy more than a common, challenging experience on behalf of a noble cause.

The Franklin Tercentenary

Ben Franklin's 300th birthday is January 17, 2006. Millions of dollars have been committed to make this the largest birthday celebration in history. From Maine to Hawaii, every public official from dog catcher to President of the United States will lead the applause. So too will thousands of noteworthy speakers from universities, colleges, non-profits and business enterprises, particularly those which are linked to the name Benjamin Franklin.

Every American Ambassador and every American consulate office in every country where the United States has formal relationships will be tasked to appropriately celebrate. This is an event comparable to the American bicentennial in 1976 -- except bigger because the planet has grown smaller and the media opportunities larger.

Our plan is to use the Tercentenary to help recruit highly motivated people to go abroad and help orchestrate the celebrations. Ultimately, many will be inaugural members to the "Class of 300".

Their 'real world' job during the four months they spend overseas is to help achieve what now seems unimaginable one billion persons will learn something about a man who rose from humble origins to become one the greats in human history.

Ben's 300th birthday is, for us, a rocket ship which can take us to destinations we have, so far, only dreamed about.

The Franklin Ambassador Program

We are determined to recruit a minimum of two hundred individuals to be placed in overseas capitals from October 2005 to January 2006. Their assignment will be to assist (and motivate) the U.S. Embassy to make the Tercentenary Celebrations as widely known, and applauded, as is possible in each particular country. After summer training in Eugene, Oregon, Ambassadors will be suitably equipped to make intelligent contact with those overseas - in the diplomatic corps, the business community, the Chambers of Commerce, Rotary and other service groups, and high ranking government officials. Equally important, they will have the tools to effectively contact the broadcast and print media. And, finally, they will have sufficient leadership skills to supervise the webcasting of large portions of the birthday celebration on January 17, 2006.

Certificates and Degree Programs George Washington University

Those recruited will have several options designed to both achieve new skills and advance their academic qualifications. Their choices will include the option to acquire either a Certificate in Event Management or a masters degree from George Washington University. Additionally, all those who complete the requirement of the Benjamin Franklin Institute of Global Education will receive a Franklin Tercentenary Certificate. Those appropriately certified will become members of The Class of 300, for which special credentialing will be accorded.

Courses

Approximately three dozen (online) courses designed to improve fund raising, event management, public relations and web-based communication will be specially available. These courses may be taken either prior to Franklin assignment overseas or after return. Certificates will be granted to those who successfully complete a minimum of five courses.

Why the overseas experience?

Many ask me why it is necessary to go abroad for a four month period. Why not just take the courses online without leaving your desktop?

The obvious answer is two fold:

First, promoting a world wide event takes good people on the ground in all 24 time zones. Eventually, I believe, "Counterparts" will become the heart of large

event making and they will become the "on the ground" instructors for "green" students who have not had the experience of helping to orchestrate a world wide event. I visualize many "Counterparts" will earn their living both by helping to put on events in the capital city and by recruiting others within the country who would like to learn how to improve fund raising and outreach.

Second, the "connections" that will result from the overseas experience can be very, very valuable. Not just with those in the country where assigned, but also by way of being a part of the worldwide undertaking.

The less obvious reason.....

The most important reason of all is not quite so obvious. The most important reason to go abroad is best expressed with this: "The view always depends on where you stand". Nothing changes view points like the experience of *working* abroad...the longer the better. When our Ambassadors return to their home country, they will have much wider perspective of how the "real world" really works.

Help from the Counterparts

Ambassadors will be assisted by "Counterparts" in each capital city to which an American Ambassador is sent. In particular, they will help with (public) transportation, housing, translations and appointment scheduling.

Housing for Ambassadors

The Institute will arrange appropriate modest housing (and some meals) for each Ambassador. Particulars about these arrangements will vary depending on destination and local costs.

Profile of Those We Seek

For those from the United States

We especially seek highly motivated persons from these backgrounds

- * Recent college graduates or those about to graduate
- * Those who are already involved in international activities
- * Those who have already worked abroad
- * Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
- * Those who have completed "missions" overseas
- * Those with foreign language capability
- * Those who are interested in working in the diplomatic arena
- * Men and women who have served abroad while in military uniform
- * Employees of advocacy groups wishing to expand global outreach

The Counterpart Program

We seek "Counterparts"

We seeks ambitious persons who reside in capital cities outside of the United States. The benefits to the persons elected are at least as large as are the benefits for the Americans we recruit.

Counterparts will be highly motivated with a sincere interest in improving his or her contacts and personal relationships with high ranking officials inside the capital city where they reside. Going in, they will understand that the opportunities to connect with leaders in all parts of the world will be unusually large and almost certainly will be an important stair-step to personal advancement.

While not required, some Counterparts may wish to avail themselves of on-line courses we provide to Ambassadors, the bulk of which will be provided to Counterparts either free or on scholarship basis.

Counterparts should be reasonably fluent in English, energetic, creative -- and tolerant. Most of their work will be part time and structured in a way that should not interfere with their regular employment and/or student activities.

Many will have studied abroad and most will come from backgrounds related to international trade, education, diplomacy, foreign affairs.

Ambassador Program -- Tuition, Housing, Related Expenses

The nature of the Ambassador Program is flexibly designed to meet the personal needs of each applicant. Some may wish to avail themselves of a full masters degree program from George Washington University. Others may be interested in the George Washington Certificate Program. Each option has different costs so precise details about total cost will be determined on an individual basis.

At minimum, the cost will be \$12,000. Full and part scholarships and a limited number of grants are available to those with exceptional backgrounds.

Applications

Applications begin by submission of an email to Dr. Midi Cox <midi@bfranklin.edu>. That email should include full biographic details and work history.

Who to contact?

All contact should be by electronic (e-mail) means

For educational institutions, advocacy groups or business organizations, please contact John Hibbs <hibbs@bfranklin.edu>. You may also wish to contact John by direct telephone in Eugene, Oregon 541 343 9389.

For those seeking information about either the Ambassador Program or the Counterpart Program, please write Dr. Midi Cox <midi@bfranklin.edu>

For further information please visit these websites

About the Benjamin Franklin Institute of Global Education
<<http://www.bfranklin.edu>>

About the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary
<<http://www.bfranklin.edu/ambassadors>>
<<http://www.benfranklin300.com>>

For "the largest, longest running birthday party, please light a birthday candle at
<<http://www.ben300.com>>

For early thoughts about the Class of 300, please visit
<<http://www.bfranklin.edu/ambassadors/classof300.html>>