

Network for European and United States Regional and Urban Studies (NEURUS)

Fellowships for Research Semester Abroad

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Program Description

NEURUS is a thirteen university consortium organized to strengthen understanding of comparative regional and urban development in the U.S. and Europe through student research exchanges, continental seminars, distance learning, and faculty research collaboration. NEURUS was originally established with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). In addition to Illinois, partners include Arizona State University, Humboldt University Berlin, Jönköping International Business School, Korea University, the University of Barcelona, the University of California Irvine, the University of Florida, the University of Groningen, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Pécs, the University of Tübingen, and the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration.

As resources allow, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning awards NEURUS exchange fellowships to graduate students interested in combining study with the conduct of a research project during one semester at one of the European partner universities. Over twenty DURP students have participated in the NEURUS exchange program since its inception in 1998. European and Korean students also study at Illinois each year within the framework of the NEURUS program.

The NEURUS study program consists of a distance course on European regional issues (administered by the University of Groningen but completed prior to departure to the host university), a research support seminar at Illinois, a research support seminar at the host university, and a self-defined research project conducted by the student while resident in the host country. Students may also take additional courses at the host university according to their interests. In addition, beginning in AY 2010/2011, all NEURUS participants and faculty at all partners will gather in Europe in the fall to discuss students' research projects and program issues. A similar consortium-wide seminar will be held in the spring in the United States.

For more information about NEURUS, go to www.neurus.org. (Note: To see examples of past student research papers, click on "Alumni" on the main page and then "Student Papers".)

Fellowship Grants

NEURUS fellowships currently consist of approximately \$3,000 to cover the cost of roundtrip travel from the U.S. to the European host institution as well as other student expenses. The fellowships include a waiver of tuition and most fees during the exchange semester. Students who complete the semester requirements, including the research

paper, will be awarded three graduate units (or 12 hours) of academic credit, ensuring that participation in the program does not impede progress toward degree requirements.

All instruction at host universities in the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany is in English. Knowledge of German for Vienna, Berlin, or Tübingen, or Dutch for Groningen would be an advantage, but is not necessary. Foreign language demands are somewhat higher for study at other European partner institutions. For example, intermediate-level knowledge of Spanish or Catalan is recommended for study at the University of Barcelona.

Application Process

NEURUS Fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis. Since the purpose of the semester study is to prepare a research project (normally a case study) on a topic related to European (or comparative European/U.S.) regional and urban development, graduate students are most likely to be selected. Selection criteria include the applicant's academic record, the quality of the statement of intent (which should include a brief description of a proposed research project), and a letter of reference from either the student's advisor or a faculty member able to judge the appropriateness of the NEURUS program to the student's academic program. Note that the topic of "urban and regional development" is very broadly conceived; all fields including land use, environment, economic development, community development, and housing are possible. Selection is made by the Illinois NEURUS Program Coordinator, Professor Edward Feser, in consultation with the partner institutions. The purpose of the inter-institutional consultation is to help to identify a good match between successful applicants and the host program that is best able to serve and guide the student's overseas experience and research project.

To apply, first contact Professor Feser to schedule a meeting to discuss your interest in the program and how it fits into your two-year course sequence and capstone plans. Note that most MUP students participate in NEURUS in the second year of their program. PhD students are also eligible to participate at appropriate stages in their programs. After the initial meeting, 1) prepare a 3-5 page letter of intent describing how a NEURUS fall semester abroad would fit into your course of study and the general issue on which you propose to conduct research; 2) obtain copies of your undergraduate and latest Illinois graduate transcripts; 3) provide the name and contact information for your letter of recommendation. Submit all materials to Professor Feser.

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis. Applications for fall semester exchange should be received approximately 10 months prior to the planned date of departure (March 1st for a departure to the host university in the subsequent January). Please direct any questions to either Professor Feser (email: feser@illinois.edu).