

VEF to select candidates for high quality human resources training

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Dr. Lynne McNamara

The Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF) is an initiative of the U.S. Congress and is a U.S. Federal Government agency. VEF is in its 9th year of operation in Vietnam, stated Dr. Lynne McNamara, VEF Executive Director. Article by Kim Ngan.

Could you please share the information about the VEF activities?

VEF is annually funded with U.S.\$5 million by the U.S. Government until 2018. The VEF Fellowship Program has sent 385 Vietnamese Fellows to study at 82 leading universities in the United States, the majority of whom pursue a doctorate degree. Besides the Fellowship Program, the VEF Visiting Scholar Program brings opportunities for Vietnamese citizens to participate in post-doctorate level programs at universities in the United States. As of July 2011, VEF has a network of 176 VEF Alumni consisting of 141 Fellows, 24 Visiting Scholars and 11 U.S. Faculty Scholars. A small number of Alumni Fellows are still continuing their post-degree Academic Training in the United States.

Please tell us the purpose of the working visit of the U.S. scientists to Vietnam?

With the support of the U.S. National Academies, these scientists will be interview panelists in the oral exams to select candidates for the VEF Fellowships.

VEF expects to send up to 45 new Fellows to begin graduate programs in the United States in the fall of 2012 in the fields of study supported by VEF such as sciences (natural, physical, and environmental), engineering, mathematics, medicine (including public health and health sciences), and technology (including information technology). These U.S. professors will also conduct twelve lectures and discussion sessions at eight universities and research institutes in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. The 3rd VEF Alumni Conference, with the theme "VEF Alumni Network: Unity and Growth", will be also held in Can Tho City at the end of August.

Are there any recent innovations in VEF's operations?

U.S. President - Obama appointed two Vietnamese Americans as VEF Board Members: Mr. David Duong, Chairman of Board of Directors cum CEO of California Waste Solutions and Vietnam Waste Solutions, who received prestigious Bay Trade Global Award for his achievements of world trade and environmental stewardship, and recently, Ms. Sandy Dang, the Founding President of Asian American LEAD (AALEAD), which supports immigrant families through a broad array of educational and social services, are new VEF Board Members.

VEF is giving more priorities during the selection process to female candidates, fields of study of high demand in Vietnam such as agriculture; while still making efforts to balance the ratio of candidates' places of origin. We are also having an intention of strengthening the support to some new fields of study as well as social sciences.

Who are eligible for the VEF Fellowship Program?

All Vietnamese citizens with at least a Bachelor's degree, or higher; Vietnamese students graduating from overseas universities are eligible for the Fellowship Program in the fields supported by VEF. Candidates must have an overall grade point average (GPA) of at least 7.0/10.0; English proficiency with the evidence of TOEFL score no older than one year from the date of the opening of the online application or a minimum score of 6.5 IELTS; or degree from an English-speaking country no older than 2 years from the date of applying for the VEF Fellowship.

People who are interested in VEF programs can visit the VEF website at www.vef.gov for more detailed information.

Thank you very much!