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MEDIA RELEASE

Fulbright sponsors New Zealand speakers at major international Antarctic conference

Fulbright New Zealand is sponsoring researchers from three different New Zealand universities to speak at next week's fifth Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) Open Science Conference in Portland, Oregon. The major international conference is held every two years to draw attention to Antarctic issues, and provides an opportunity for scientists from a variety of disciplines and countries to present their work and network within the global Antarctic science community.



Dr Inga Smith from the University of Otago will be one of three Fulbright New Zealand-sponsored speakers at the 2012 SCAR Open Science conference in Portland, Oregon

New Zealand speakers at this year's SCAR Open Science Conference, from 16-19 July, will include three university researchers funded under Fulbright New Zealand's Travel Award programme, which funds New Zealand academics, artists or professionals to present their work to American audiences. Dr Rochelle Constantine from the University of Auckland will present her research on tracking East Australian humpback whales to their Antarctic feeding grounds. University of Waikato PhD candidate Tanya O'Neill will present research on soil surface recovery from vehicle and foot traffic in Antarctica, and Dr Inga Smith from the University of Otago will present research on sea ice growth rates near Antarctic ice shelves.

"We are delighted to support the attendance of these three New Zealanders at such a significant conference. We are sure that their contributions will be valuable to the international scientific community and to policy makers," says Fulbright New Zealand's Executive Director, Mele Wendt. "Like the Fulbright education exchange programme, Antarctic research is consistently recognised as a strong point in NZ-US collaboration."

In addition to speaking at the SCAR conference, each Fulbright grantee will share their knowledge more broadly in the United States, including with colleagues at Oregon State University, Dartmouth College and the University of Washington, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s National Marine Mammal Laboratory in Seattle and the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary at the mouth of Massachusetts Bay.

Last week 2012 Fulbright US graduate student Wells Weymouth returned to the US, having completed a Postgraduate Certificate in Antarctic Studies at the University of Canterbury. Wells travelled to Antarctica last summer to observe the circadian rhythms of workers.

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Fulbright New Zealand was established in 1948 to promote mutual understanding through educational and cultural exchanges between New Zealand and the United States of America. The Fulbright programme offers a range of prestigious awards for New Zealand and American graduate students, academics, artists and professionals to study, research and teach in each other's countries. Fulbright New Zealand offers over 70 exchange awards each year – half to students and half to scholars – and more than 1,500 New Zealanders and 1,200 Americans have benefited from a Fulbright award to date. The programme is mainly funded by the US and New Zealand governments with additional funding from award sponsors, private philanthropists and alumni donors.

See www.fulbright.org.nz for details about Fulbright awards and how to apply, or download a Media Fact Sheet of further background information here:

www.fulbright.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/mediafactsheet.pdf

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