

ATHENS, GA. UGA professor Fausto Sarmiento has been honored as a Fulbright Scholar Ambassador.

Sarmiento, an associate professor of mountain science at the Geography Department is the first representative from Georgia to serve on a pilot cohort of Fulbright Scholar Ambassadors. With some dozen other Fulbright Scholars, Sarmiento was trained in Washington DC to become a spokesperson of the Council of International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) of the Institute of International Education (IIE) to inform American faculty who will need motivation to conduct research, teach, or both, overseas. Each year the Fulbright Scholar program send 800 faculty members and professionals abroad to lecture and conduct research in a variety of academic and professional fields to promote understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.

The task of these goodwill ambassadors is to promote the program to college and university faculty members and other professionals, based on their personal experiences and to provide information about prospective participants applying for Fulbright Scholarships. Sarmiento participated as a Fulbrighter in 2004 when he took part in the International Education Administrator program in Japan and included research on comparative ethnoecology of mountains of Japan and Ecuador.

His participation as reviewer for the applications sent to the committee on environmental sciences allowed Sarmiento to know the type of international work that American faculty can do abroad. Knowing that the bestowing of a Fulbright Scholarship becomes a coveted recognition of scholarship and academic outstanding in someone's field, Sarmiento is committed to facilitate the participation of promising academics, raising stars in the American scientific and professional landscapes.

He is happy to be part of the first cohort of ambassadors from 2009-2011. In June, while the Association of Latin American Studies (LASA) met for the first time in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, there was a special recognition to Sarmiento as the first Latino academic ambassador. In this meeting Sarmiento mentioned that most of his efforts are geared to recruit young faculty from non-traditional fields and novel research topics, particularly those involved in mountain geography and global change research. His appointment for an initial three years term will take him to visit campuses across the United States with the message of developing mutual understanding for peace and progress, which is what Senator William Fulbright worked so strongly for in the past.

Sarmiento is a well-known mountain scholar who participates in international levels. Sarmiento is the regional editor for Latin America for the Journal of Mountain Research and Development. He is advisor on the human dimension of global change for the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI), task force member of cultural landscape conservation, and deputy vice chair for capacity building of the Mountain Biome, at the World Commission of Protected Areas (WCPA) of the World Conservation Union (IUCN). On campus, he was co-director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (now Latin American and Caribbean Studies Institute LACSI) and director of the Office of International Education (OIE) helping UGA to consolidate its leadership on study abroad and academic exchanges. He teaches environmental geography courses, emphasizing conservation of biodiversity, mountain ethnoecology and Latin American sustainable development.