



**The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual VEF Fellows and Scholars Conference**  
**Washington, D.C.**

**Sunday, January 4 – Monday, January 5, 2009**  
*(Arrival on January 3. Departure on January 6.)*

**MEETING LOCATIONS: The National Academy of Sciences (NAS):**

National Academy of Sciences building  
2101 Constitution Ave., NW (Entrance on C Street)  
Washington, D.C. 20418

National Academies' Keck Center  
500 Fifth Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

**HOTEL: Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill**  
400 New Jersey Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
Phone: 202-737-1234

**Dear Fellows and Scholars:**

Greetings to all of you! We have another exciting conference planned this year by VEF and the National Academies with an Organizing Committee including VEF Fellows. All VEF Fellows, including Fellows on Academic Training, and Visiting Scholars are expected to attend as stated in your grant letter. We are attaching the tentative conference agenda. A final agenda will be sent to you later.

**Please carefully read the information below and meet the deadlines.**

**DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 10, 2008**

- **Finalize all TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS with Omega World Travel. Go to their website and complete the required information NOW. Details below.**
- **REGISTER for the Conference by logging onto the OMS and completing the form entitled, *6th Annual Conference Registration – January 2009*.**

**1. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**

VEF will pay for the most economical means of travel on government-approved carriers following the most direct route from your present residential location to the Washington, D.C., area and back. VEF must follow U.S. Federal Travel Regulations. The most economical means of travel will be determined by Omega World Travel (referred to also as Omega) and include air, train, and bus.

Outside of the local and nearby areas, air travel is the typical means of travel. Please note that the Federal Travel Regulations do not allow Omega to book travel on a non-government-contracted airline. Omega will book air travel into one of the following three airports located in the Washington, D.C., area:

- (1) Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI);
- (2) Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA); or
- (3) Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD).

If your home base is located near Washington, D.C., VEF will consider covering car rental or reimbursement for gas and expenses for your personal vehicle.

- Approval depends on consideration of the most economical means to get to the Conference.
- Please contact the VEF Director of Finance, Accounting, and Administration DFAA, Ms. Lana Walbert, **in advance** regarding any request involving a car. Her email is: lanawalbert@vef.gov

VEF will not pay for any additional stops during your trip or deviations from travel by direct route to the Conference. VEF has provided your official residential address to Omega and this will be your point of departure and return.

### **Arrival/Departure Dates**

You need to arrive by late afternoon on Saturday, January 3, 2009. You may leave no sooner than Tuesday morning, January 6.

- ✓ You may arrange your tickets to arrive earlier than January 3 or depart after January 6.
- ✓ Please note, however, that there will be an additional fee of \$40 to Omega if you choose to change from the original set of dates authorized by VEF for travel to the Conference, namely January 3 for travel to the Washington, D.C., area and January 6 for departure from the Washington, D.C., area.
- ✓ If such changes result in an additional cost for the ticket itself, you will also be responsible for that cost as well. Omega will work with you to get you the best airfare possible.

Please note that VEF is paying ONLY for your hotel room during the official conference dates, specifically for the nights of January 3, 4, and 5, 2009.

### **Travel Reservations**

Please make all travel reservations through Omega World Travel via their specially designed website for VEF: <http://www.owt.net/clientsites/vef/>

At their *Welcome to VEF Travel* page, you will be required to complete the *Profile Builder*, listed on the left, to provide more detailed information for the travel agent.

- You will also be asked to provide credit card information.
- Your credit card will be charged only for any additional costs for which you are responsible, such as dependent travel, changes in dates or itineraries, or multiple ticket changes.

After you have completed the *Profile Builder*, click on *Reservation Request* at the left to complete and submit your reservation online.

- The online reservation is the starting point and the primary and best way for you to make travel arrangements.
- If you need to speak to an agent in person, in the center of the *Welcome to VEF Travel* page, you will see the contact information for the travel agents, indicated as *Lead Agent* and *Agent*.

For your information, VEF pays a fee to Omega for ticketing your reservations for January 3 - 6. If you change from those VEF approved dates or origins or destinations, you will have to pay an additional fee of \$40 to Omega. Therefore, please be well-prepared when you schedule your flights and don't make changes. Importantly, respond to Omega immediately when they have confirmed your travel arrangements. Otherwise, you may lose that reservation.

You may incur further charges by Omega for changes under the following circumstances:

- Once Omega has your trip ticketed, i.e., has already-booked your tickets, if you need to change your tickets, you will need to pay a fee of \$40 to Omega.

- If you ask Omega to arrange for deviations, but then you revert to the original plan, you may still be charged an additional fee for the additional service, even though you did not follow the final result.

Please note that Omega World Travel is providing VEF with an *After Hours* service, which can ONLY be used for true emergencies. We appreciate your kind cooperation.

- The *After Hours* service is NOT to be used to make or change reservations.
- You will be charged a fee for any call to the emergency number if the case is not truly an emergency.
- We advise that you keep the Omega emergency number (1-800-285-6342 and ask for code S-CT81) readily available while you are travelling in case of a real emergency situation, such as cancellation of your flight or a serious medical emergency, which delays your departure.

**You do not need to pay for your travel as VEF has already made arrangements with Omega World Travel. You will only be responsible for any changes to those travel arrangements.**

### **Dependents**

If you have family members joining you for the Conference, Omega can make travel arrangements for them as well. You will need to complete a separate *Reservation Request* for each dependent and indicate to Omega the relationship to you. You will be responsible for payment for any travel arrangements made for your dependents.

### **Variations from Approved Routes or Dates**

Omega is only authorized to provide round-trip travel for you from your principal place of residence (point of origin as pre-determined by VEF) to the Conference and return. Travel is authorized only for the following dates: departure from point of origin on January 3, 2009, and return to point of origin on January 6, 2009. Any variations that result in extra costs to VEF will be your financial responsibility and must be paid directly to Omega.

### **Confirmation of Ticketing**

If Omega determines that you will be using train or bus travel, you will need to indicate your time preference in the online *Reservation Request* form. Omega will then return an itinerary to you by email for your approval. Once you approve, Omega will mail to you your ticket.

For those of you travelling by air, after you submit your online reservation, Omega will send you a copy of your itinerary to review and approve for ticketing.

- If you agree with the itinerary, forward it back to Omega with your approval for Omega to proceed to ticket your travel. Omega will then send you a confirmation with your electronic ticket.
- If your itinerary is not acceptable, send it back and advise Omega what you need. Once Omega sends you an acceptable itinerary, send it to Omega with your approval to ticket and Omega will finalize the ticket.

- **Do not delay in this process as you want to be assured to get the best available reservations possible.**
- Omega will send you an email, issuing you the final electronic ticket, accompanied by your final itinerary. Once an e-ticket has been issued, you are financially responsible for any changes.
- Print that electronic ticket receipt and carry it with you while you travel.
- You will NOT be issued a paper ticket. Instead, all you need at the airport is a copy of your electronic ticket confirming the details of your flights along with your government issued photo identification.
- A Boarding Pass will be issued at the airport.
- If you have any questions about e-tickets and procedures, please contact Omega World Travel.

You should travel with both your passport and another form of photo identification, such as a U.S driver's license. **PLEASE USE YOUR PASSPORT AS THE PRIMARY MEANS OF IDENTIFICATION** as the tickets will be issued according to your name as it is listed in your passport.

#### **Ground Transportation upon Arrival**

For ground transportation arrangements, please check online for the availability of public shuttles, buses, or metro (subway) services into Washington, D.C., and/or to the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill.

The best information on ground transportation to get to the hotel is at the hotel website:  
<http://washingtonregency.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/services/transportation/index.jsp>

<h2><b>2. HOTEL: Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill</b></h2>
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<p><i>(<a href="http://www.washingtonregency.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/index.jsp">http://www.washingtonregency.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/index.jsp</a> com)</i></p>
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#### **Reservations**

VEF has made hotel reservations for you on the basis of double occupancy (2 people per room), so that you will have a chance to get to know each other better. As you know, one of the purposes of the conference is to network. VEF will make the room assignments; so, please do not ask for specific roommates. All the rooms are NON-SMOKING.

#### **Accompanying Dependents**

Please be aware that VEF will not cover expenses for your dependents' transportation, lodging, or meals. If you wish to have your legal dependent(s) share your room at the hotel, please register on the OMS and a reservation will be made for you by the Conference Organizers under the VEF room block. The hotel's discounted room rate is \$209 for a single bed or \$233 for a double room (2 beds) per night. Extra charges may apply for each additional person in a room.

**Process to Pay.** If you reserve a room for yourself and your dependents (not sharing a room with another VEF Fellow), you will be responsible for paying the entire room bill on your credit card when you check out of the hotel. After the Conference, you will complete a form provided to you by the VEF Director of Finance, Accounting, and Administration, Ms. Lana Walbert, and attach a copy of the hotel receipt to receive a refund from VEF for half the cost of the room for 3 nights. Payment into your bank account by Electronic Fund Transfer may take several weeks.

### **Additional Nights**

If you plan to arrive prior to January 3 or check out after January 6, please inform VEF Staff via the OMS no later than the November 10 registration date in order to receive the negotiated rates for the hotel, if the rates are still available. Please indicate the specific duration of your additional stay outside the official conference dates. After November 10, if changes are necessary, inform the VEF staff as soon as possible of any changes or additions. Please understand that cancellations may result in a penalty fee by the hotel, which you will be responsible to pay.

### **Greeting by VEF Staff**

One or more of the following VEF staff members will greet you as you check into the hotel on Saturday, January 3:

- ✚ Dr. Phuong Nguyen, Country Director, Hanoi Field Office
- ✚ Ms. Binh Dang, Program Manager, Fellowship and Visiting Scholar Programs, Hanoi Field Office
- ✚ Ms. Le Nguyen, Program Assistant, Fellowship and Visiting Scholar Programs, Hanoi Field Office

### **Hotel Cost**

VEF will ONLY pay for the cost of your room. Any additional costs, such as phone calls, movies, room service, laundry service, additional beds/cribs, business center, internet, or transportation service will be at your own expense. **To cover these potential charges, the hotel will ask each person at check-in for an imprint of your credit card or for \$50 cash deposit per day.** The cash will be refunded or the credit card will not be charged if there are no incidental charges. **Please be prepared.**

### **Conference Registration Room**

After you check into the hotel on January 3, *please go to the Conference Registration Room in the hotel between 12:00 noon - 9:00 p.m. to pick up required Conference materials.* Please inquire about the VEF Conference Registration Room number upon check-in.

### 3. CONFERENCE VENUE

Sessions as well as breakfast and lunch on January 4 and January 5 will be held at the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). Specific locations for each event will be provided in the Conference Agenda, which you can pick up at the Conference Registration Room at the hotel.

Transportation from the hotel to the NAS and return will be provided for VEF Fellows and Visiting Scholars as well as other participants invited by VEF. (Identification badges must be worn to get on the bus.) Buses will depart from the hotel only once in the morning and return to the hotel after the last session/event. Bus departure times will be listed in the Conference Agenda.

Evening sessions as well as the final Gala Dinner will be held at the Hotel.

### 4. INTERNET USAGE

The hotel has T-Mobile internet at a rate of \$9.99 for 24 hours usage. Check the hotel website for more details. Please note that VEF will not pay for individual internet use at the hotel.

Please note that, as a courtesy to the speakers, **NO COMPUTERS are permitted TO BE USED in the NAS Auditorium during sessions** and cell phones must be turned off or, alternatively, turned on to vibrate only.

### 5. ADDITIONAL FUNDING PROVIDED BY VEF

1. Conference Allowance. During the Conference Registration at the hotel, you will receive an expense card for \$200 as supplementary funds to help you pay for your expenses related to travel to/from airports, additional meals, and incidental expenses. No receipts are required.
2. Support for Poster Presentations. Those giving poster presentations during the Conference will each receive financial support of up to \$70 toward the cost of printing. Please save your receipts and submit to the DFAA, Lana Walbert, along with a completed reimbursement form, which will be available to you after the Conference.
3. Meals. The following meals are provided **at no charge** to the participants during the Conference: continental breakfast and lunch on January 4 and 5; a reception on the evening of January 4; and the final Gala Dinner on the evening of January 5. You are responsible for all other meals.

## 6. DEPENDENTS

Unfortunately, due to space requirements and financial issues, spouses and children are NOT allowed to join the Conference sessions or Conference meals. However, legal dependents accompanying a Fellow or Visiting Scholar to the Conference will be provided complimentary tickets for the Gala Dinner on January 5. These tickets will be issued to the Fellow or Visiting Scholar during the Conference Registration at the hotel.

## 7. GALA DINNER

The Gala Dinner celebration will be held on Monday evening, January 5. You will receive your Gala Dinner ticket during the Conference Registration on January 3. You must have a ticket to enter the Gala Dinner. No ticket – No entry.

If you plan to bring your dependent(s) to the Gala Dinner, they MUST be registered at the OMS. You will then receive a Gala Dinner ticket for yourself and your registered legal dependents.

If you wish to purchase a ticket for a friend or relative, a limited number of additional tickets for the Gala Dinner will be available to be purchased during the Conference Registration for approximately \$90 each.

## 8. DRESS and WHAT TO BRING

Weather: January can be a very cold month in Washington, D.C, so dress accordingly. Check the local area and weather websites for more details.

Dress: Plan to wear business attire during Conference sessions, dinners, and receptions. For men, this means a dress shirt and tie (a jacket is also a nice addition). For women, this means a dress, suit, or pantsuit. In both cases, dress shoes (not sandals or sport shoes) should be worn.

Health Matters: As with all travel, be sure to bring your prescription drugs, if any, and **VERY IMPORTANTLY**, evidence of your health insurance coverage.

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**See you in January!**  
**THE VEF STAFF**