

**MORE DEGREE-SEEKING DUTCH UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES
AFTER INTRODUCTION STUDENT LOAN SYSTEM AND US STUDENTS IN THE
NETHERLANDS AT A RECORD HIGH**

November 14, 2016 – The 2016 *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, released this week, finds the number of **Dutch students** in the United States increased by **23.8** percent to **2.445** over the past five years, an 8.3% increase over last year.

This increase is primarily driven by the growth of degree-seeking undergraduate students, **34%** over the past five years. This is a remarkable trend, considering the fact that US higher education is traditionally viewed by Dutch students, parents and counselors as costly, and may be partially attributed to the following. The introduction of plans, in October 2012, to reform the government grant system into a loan system spurred students and parents to consider more higher education options including those in other countries than the Netherlands. Some have argued that, since education would be more expensive in our country and the system does not allow for easy switching between majors, a more flexible four-year bachelor's degree in the US could actually become an affordable option. Minister of Education Bussemaker also invested in alerting students about starting their research early and to be thorough. The Fulbright Center has seen an unprecedented increase in the number of visitors of information sessions as well as those requesting individual meetings. The fact that application dates for Dutch institutions are now earlier in the senior year supports early research. US universities, who often require early application, benefit from the fact that Dutch students are researching their options sooner. A majority of Dutch students applying to US higher education institutions finds the flexible broad curriculum appealing, while also being drawn to US campuses for the possibility of combining an academic major with sports, music or the arts.

The Netherlands can also pride itself for the tradition of sending **non-degree** students to the US, and this category has seen a 29% growth in five years (683 in 2015/16). This number includes gap year students, students on bilateral exchanges or ISEP, as well as students enrolled in other short-term courses.

The number of Dutch students enrolled at the **graduate** level in the U.S. stabilizes at 525 after a slight decrease in the past years. This decrease may be attributed to intensifying global competition for graduate students. Also, Dutch students are finding it more and more difficult to fund their graduate education in the U.S. since they could no longer apply for one of the comprehensive grants of the Huygens Scholarship Program, after this program was discontinued.

US colleges and universities hosted a record number of 1 million international students during the 2015/16 academic year. International students represent 5 percent of the student population at US campuses.

Looking at the reverse side of the student mobility picture, Open Doors also reported that **2,929 American students** studied in the Netherlands in the 2014/15 academic year, an increase of 12 percent. A further growth may be expected since EP-Nuffic joined IIE's Generation Study Abroad initiative to increase staff and student mobility between the Netherlands and the US last Spring. Also, EP-Nuffic is currently researching ways to intensify educational collaboration with the US, including efforts to increase student mobility between the US and the Netherlands.