



Annual Report 2019-2020

Preface

This has been a challenging year. The global pandemic prompted the suspension of the Fulbright program globally in March 2020. The suspension required us to terminate all program activities. There was a mandatory evacuation compelling US Fulbrighters to return to the United States and many, though not all, Dutch Fulbrighters also opted to return to the Netherlands. There was also a delay to the start of the Fulbright program for academic year 2020-2021. Only degree-seeking students were permitted to travel for the start of the academic year in August / September. All other programs were postponed to start in January 2021. All meetings we have organized since March 2020 have been virtual. We were also meant to celebrate our 70th anniversary in March 2020, with a large event at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. It had to be cancelled. Needless to say, the pandemic has caused many complexities for our organization and others.

Despite these challenges, we are pleased to report on the continued vibrancy of our programs.

Introduction

The first bilateral agreement promoting educational exchange between the US and The Netherlands was signed and put into effect in 1949. The Netherlands America Commission for Educational Exchange (NACEE) was formed in 1972 as a successor to two separate entities: the US Educational Foundation in the Netherlands (active since 1949) and the Netherlands-America Institute (promoting educational exchanges with the US since 1946). From 1949 until 1972 the US government provided the major part of the support to the Fulbright Program and related activities, from 1972 onwards, the Dutch government supported the activities with a contribution of an approximately equal amount. The treaty provides that both governments should contribute 50% of the Commission's operating costs. The US government covers the sizable administrative expenses for the Fulbright Program in the US.

In the period July 1, 2004 to July 1, 2019 the NACEE was operating under the name of "Fulbright Center." On July 1, 2019 the NACEE became the "Stichting Fulbright Commission the Netherlands." This transition improved the professionalism of our operations and being a Stichting better enables us to work in a manner consistent with our mission. For the sake of clarity, we will simply call the organization the Fulbright Commission or the Commission herein.

Period covered

This report covers the period October 1, 2019 until September 30, 2020.

Primary Objectives

The Fulbright Commission's primary objective remains the creation and administration of educational exchange programs in order to promote mutual understanding between Dutch and American citizens. The Commission strives to maintain the prestige of the Fulbright Program, to pursue opportunities to offer additional grants and develop programming consistent with its mission, and to reach out to underrepresented populations.

Fulbright Program

The Fulbright Commission administers the Fulbright Program from its office in Amsterdam. The program promotes mutual understanding between Dutch and American citizens. A measure of Fulbright's success in the Netherlands is the fact that many leaders in Dutch politics, journalism, education, science, and industry are program alumni. Similarly, many American alumni have achieved success either back in the United States or in the Netherlands. Since 1949, more than 4,820 American and Dutch citizens have been awarded Fulbright grants. The Fulbright Commission continues to work toward strengthening contacts with Dutch institutions of higher education and enhancing program support. The Commission also pursues opportunities to work with appropriate institutions on projects conducive to enhancing mutual understanding.

Meaningful engagement

The Fulbright Commission provides a high level of service to the recipients of Fulbright grants and tries to ensure that they have meaningful experiences and are able to fully engage both in their studies and with their local communities. This is crucial to the mission of promoting mutual understanding at the individual level. Participating in the Fulbright Program means much more than simply receiving grant funds in a bank account. Fulbright grantees are expected to act as ambassadors for their country and as such, they are given a great deal of support to facilitate this role. Dutch students receive support in the form of orientations and preparatory courses in the US. During their stay they are invited to regional conferences and events and can participate in seminars, conferences, and special social and cultural events organized by their host institutions. American students and scholars receive assistance in the form of orientations, mid- and end-of-year evaluation sessions, and other events. They participate in social activities offered by the Fulbright Commission and the Netherlands Fulbright Alumni Association (NFAA). Both in the US and in Europe, grantees can take part in enrichment activities. In the Netherlands, Fulbright students may take part in a speakers program and are invited to high schools to speak about topics such as American politics, immigration, or diversity issues. The Fulbright Commission also offers similar enrichment opportunities to participants in its teacher programs.

Basic support from both governments

The Fulbright Commission receives structural financial support from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State as well as from the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science. The Educational Advising branch of the US Department of State provides a small amount of additional support. The legal basis for these subsidies is the Bilateral Agreement between the Dutch and American governments signed in October of 1972.

Substantial in-country support from the US government

At the request of Executive Directors of Fulbright Commissions, the Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) has provided insight in the costs of the Fulbright Program incurred in the United States and funded by the US

government. These costs include the administrative fees paid to the two cooperating agencies, namely the Institute of International Education in New York (IIE) and the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars in Washington D.C. (CIES), as well as the costs made for insurance, conferences, day-to-day support, evaluations, impact studies, and other expenses. The estimated costs for the Dutch grantees to the US and the US grantees to the Netherlands is nearly USD300,000 per year. This figure is not reflected in the Commission's financial report.

Substantial in-country support from organizations in the Netherlands

The in-kind contribution from the Dutch side comes from universities and government organizations and consists of supervision, tuition fee, payment of residence permits and the provision of space for receptions and meetings. These annual costs are estimated at €75.000.

Close cooperation with the Netherland-America Foundation

Since 2001, the New York-based Netherland-America Foundation (NAF) and the Fulbright Commission have worked closely together in supporting a number of Fulbright grantees each year who receive hyphenated NAF-Fulbright grants. The organizations also collaborate on other programs. In 2019-2020, the NAF has offered to fund a total of three Dutch and seven US students. The NAF organizes special enrichment activities for the Dutch grantees during their stay in the US and social events for its alumni both in the US and in the Netherlands.

Ivy Circle

The Ivy Circle, an organization that strives to create and sustain an active community in the Netherlands of alumni of leading North American universities and business schools, provides one additional scholarship of EUR5.000 to a Dutch Fulbright grantee.

Direct support from corporate sponsors

This year, Elsevier B.V. supported two Fulbright grants for Dutch PhD students to carry out research for their dissertations.

Although we have other corporate sponsors including law firms, no suitable candidates were found for the grants they offered this year.

Small foundation support

The Fulbright Commission does not actively seek support from small foundations. However, if foundations wish to hyphenate their grants to students or researchers, the Commission is open to doing so on the condition that the grant is consistent with the mission and criteria of the Fulbright Program and the funder is willing to let the Commission manage the grant. Two hyphenated grants were offered in this year, namely the Fulbright-Tjallingh Roorda Foundation Grant that supports medical research and the Fulbright - New Netherlands Research Commission Grant, a research institution focused on Dutch-American history but these were not filled. These are highly specific grants and it is therefore challenging to find suitable candidates.

Sponsored grants

Dutch universities support the Fulbright Program by sponsoring one or more grants for international students via the Fulbright Program. Maastricht University was the first to do so in 2010. Other universities have followed suit. In 2019-2020, the following universities offered to fund grants: VU University Amsterdam (4 grants), Maastricht University (1 grant), Radboud University (2 grants of which, 1 for second year), Technical University Delft's Faculty of Applied Sciences (2 grants of which, 1 for second year), TU Delft Industrial Design Engineering (2 grants of which, 1 for second year) and Erasmus University Rotterdam (1). A special grant in this

category was developed in cooperation with the Mauritshuis in The Hague and enabled a US painting restoration student to take courses at the University of Amsterdam's Restoration Department and practice her skills in the Mauritshuis, funded by the US based Friends of the Mauritshuis. A grant for this category was awarded in 2019-2020 for the third consecutive year.

Unfortunately for all of the Fulbright grantees in this academical year, the program was suspended globally In March 2020 due to the pandemic. We paid out all grants in full until the end of June to the grantees as instructed by ECA, and if any funds remained for July and August, this was returned to the sponsors. Most grantees returned to their home countries, though some opted to stay. US grantees were required to return to the United States, but a few elected to remain in the Netherlands as private citizens. Some Dutch grantees also elected to remain in the United States.

Student experiences

Dorieke Overduin (Georgetown University)



When I returned from a spring break trip, Washington DC went in lock down. Everything was closed and Georgetown started to cater only online lectures. Far more boring, but it was thanks to this mandatory confinement that I graduated with honours and distinction. The year itself flew by. And all clichés are true. Georgetown Law school was impressive, located only 400 meters of the Supreme Court and the Capitol, it was truly at the heart of American lawmaking. The students and professors were really the best they could select from home and abroad, the competition was fierce, and the level of education high.

Student experiences

Sienna White (Technische Universiteit Delft)

Sienna expresses her view on the consequences of the pandemic as follows: "So much of this was out of the Fulbright control, which I want to completely acknowledge. However, this still remained a wildly stressful experience. Not knowing whether or not we'd be mandatory evacuated for a week was unbelievable stressful and I found it hard and emotionally draining to try and continue my work. I am not sure if I am a stronger person for having gone through this experience - getting



uprooted and then having my life change dramatically on the order of the days. It was hard and I still feel the effects (especially not saying goodbye to the all the people I care about in the Netherlands). But I will say that I have nothing but good things to say about the Fulbright program. I feel like I have had a year to explore my research and a new country. It has given me space and time to reflect on what makes me happy both personally and academically and I feel it has sharpened my sense of direction from a vague "work for a while" to a very specific career plan."

Memories



Introduction meeting Fulbright US Graduate Students and English Teaching Assistants August 2019. No one could then imagine that coming together in this way would not be possible later on.

Fulbright Teacher Programs

The Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State funds the Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching Program, which provides US primary and high school teachers the opportunity to conduct research in the Netherlands while being hosted by Dutch educational institutions. During the period that this report covers, the Commission welcomed four American grantees to the Netherlands in January 2020. Those grantees had to depart in March with the suspension of the Fulbright program. Due to the global pandemic, the teachers who were to come in January 2021 have had their grants postponed until January 2022.

The English Teaching Assistants (ETA) program launched in the Netherlands in the academic year 2017-2018 with 8 ETAs. In 2019-2020, the Commission welcomed 16 ETAs to the Netherlands. This program enables US students to gain teaching experience while at the same time offering support to schools in teaching English. Participating schools are spread throughout the country and include primary schools, secondary schools, vocational schools, and higher education institutions.

The program for this year's ETAs was cut short, concluding with the suspension of the Fulbright program globally in March 2020. We initially had 14 ETAs slated to participate in the 2020-2021 cohort. Unfortunately, a few host schools withdrew due to the pandemic resulting in only 9 ETAs participating in the 2020-2021 program which will run from January until June 2021. For the 2020-2021 cohort we have successfully applied for a new type of residence permits. The ETA program is special in that it is not only a meaningful experience for the grantee, but also for whole school communities. The ETAs interact with students, fellow teachers, administrators, sometimes parents or families.

Student experiences

Allyson Breyer, English Teaching Assistant at de Verwondering, Monnickendam.



"While I taught my students English, they taught me valuable skills such as determination, adaptability, and grit. I will never forget the mornings spent with students desiring extra time to practice their English or their eagerness to stick by my side and be a translator when needed. Their willingness to accept me so easily into their school continues to warm my heart and motivates me today as I continue my teaching career in the US."

Other Fulbright programs

We sometimes welcome grantees who are recipients of other Fulbright grants, most often participants in the Fulbright Schuman or Fulbright-Hays programs. The Fulbright Schuman program, administered by the Fulbright Commission in Brussels, was developed in the 1990s and provides grants for citizens of EU member states to conduct research in the United States and American citizens to conduct research in the European Union. The Fulbright-Hays program, administered by the US Department of Education, awards grants to individual U.S. K – 14 pre-teachers, teachers and administrators, pre-doctoral students and postdoctoral faculty, as well as to U.S. institutions and organizations. Although the Fulbright Commission does not administer these programs, should grantees of these programs be in the Netherlands, we welcome them and include them in our programming and provide local support as needed.

Fulbright Program Alumni

The Netherlands Fulbright Alumni Association (NFAA) is based in the Netherlands organizes events for alumni, such as a Thanksgiving dinner and various smaller meetings and gatherings. The association functions independently from the Fulbright Commission. The Commission provides financial and logistical support for certain activities of the NFAA. Fulbright alumni are welcome as members of the Ivy Circle, an organization in the Netherlands for alumni of prominent US universities that provides some financial support to Fulbright Commission programs, and can fully participate in Ivy Circle events and activities.

Fulbright Association

US-based alumni of the Fulbright Program may become members of the Fulbright Association, a national organization based in Washington, D.C. This organization carries out important lobbying work to help protect the Fulbright Program from budget cuts and to strengthen the program in the United States.

Other Activities

Educational Advising

The Fulbright Commission continues to be a national center of expertise regarding American higher education. It adheres to the high quality and ethical standards of EducationUSA, a network of 430 advising centers in 175 countries, supported by the US Department of State. These standards require that the Commission provide objective, impartial, and complete information in an accessible way. The Commission offers expertise on subjects including admission tests, financing, suitable placement at US colleges and universities and collaboration between Dutch and American higher education institutions.

We offer advice and resources to any Dutch student interested in studying in the United States. In addition to finding comprehensive information on our website, students can attend regular information sessions and webinars to meet with advisers and alumni and learn about specific topics. In a typical year, the Commission organizes 10 regional information sessions, visits several study abroad fairs and information evenings at local high schools, but we had to shift our outreach strategy due to the pandemic. All in-person events were cancelled after March 2020. These events were replaced by online events and webinars. We organized 11 webinars on topics such as undergraduate and graduate admissions, budgeting and scholarships, essay writing and more. We also launched a YouTube channel so students can access these webinars later.

Representatives from US colleges and universities have the opportunity to attend recruitment fairs and connect with the advisers for country-specific information. Due to the pandemic we had to shift to online fairs where representatives and students could connect.

The advisers also trained a volunteer corps to visit high schools, assist the staff during large events, host the Commission's information sessions, and participate in panels. This year, much of the volunteers' time was spent on virtual events.

Campus Scholarship Program

The Campus Scholarship Program targets Dutch senior students at VWO or HAVO-schools to enable them to study at an American liberal arts college by arranging a placement and a sizable reduction of the costs. These are not placements for degree-granting programs, but for a year of study in the US. Although private exchange organizations offer similar programs, what distinguishes the Fulbright Commission from all other programs is that the Commission does not accept fees from host institutions to generate placements, so that it can offer participants a choice of universities suited to the needs and preferences of the students. The high level of service to both students and parents is another distinguishing feature of this program, much valued by the families. The program has a number of prominent alumni, ranging from writers and journalists to CEOs and politicians. The costs of this program are covered by income received from participation fees. In 2019-2020, 41 students participated in the program.

Most of the CSP students in 2019-2020 cohort concluded their programs early due to the pandemic. We were busy working with 24 admitted students for academic year 2020-2021 when the pandemic struck. Most of those participants opted to defer or withdrew and only six CSP students travelled to the United States to begin their CSP years in August 2020. Of the remaining 18 students, the majority enrolled in Dutch higher education. Of this cohort, ten students will participate in the program in the 2021-2022 academic year.

For the 2021-2022 academic year, 16 new students were selected to participate. With application deadlines in the midst of the pandemic, student interest for the 2021-2022 academic year has been significantly lower.

Student experiences

Nikita van Dieën (Truman State University)



“As a participant in the Campus Scholarship Program during the 2019-2020 academic year, I studied at Truman University in Kirksville, Missouri. It has been a valuable experience which I will never forget. Missouri might not be everyone’s first choice when considering studying in the U.S., but I didn’t regret my decision to study in the rural Midwest for one second. I have come to know a completely different side of the U.S. and fully experienced the American student life. I lived on campus, where everything takes place - from taking classes to social activities. Because Kirksville is a small city, and Truman State University a relatively small university, you quickly become part of a close-knit community.

Truman works with the liberal arts and sciences principle, which allowed me to choose from a broad and diverse offering of courses. I took classes that prepared me for my current studies, International Relations and Organizations, but also took other classes such as Spanish. Living on a campus is in one word: fantastic. The campus offered a great number of extracurricular activities. I decided to join a local sorority, which gave me the opportunity to engage in many fun events and build a large group of close friends. I met so many interesting people during the year and made friends for life.

I also learned a lot during the year. In addition to exploring new classes, I learned how to be more independent and really got to know myself as a person. One of the things I learned, was how to manage unexpected situations. What do you do when everything turns out different than planned? 2020 was the year when covid-19 became a global pandemic. I was on spring break in Mexico when I learned that Truman State University would be closing their campus in response to covid-19. I had to make a quick decision and decided to fly to family friends in Florida. I spent the last 2,5 months of my stay in the U.S. with them and finished my studies at Truman online.

Although I was thankful for being able to stay with my family’s friends, the disappointment predominated. I was disappointed that my student life ended so abruptly, that I didn’t have the chance to say goodbye to my friends, and that the rest of my plans had to be cancelled indefinitely. In the end, I flew back to Missouri to gather my belongings and see the campus I held so dear for one last time.

Looking back at my time in the U.S., I think of a time with beautiful memories. I plan to return to the U.S., and Truman’s campus, when travel is again possible. I hope to catch up on some of the plans and experiences I missed, although my time at Truman has given me invaluable experiences and memories.”

KHMW Eizenga Program

In September 2018, we launched a new scholarship program, the KHMW Eizenga program. Made possible by a bequest from Professor Wietze Eizenga (1922-2017) to the Koninklijke Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen (KHMW), this program provides scholarships of \$50,000 to Dutch nationals for one academic year of study in the United States for an MBA or graduate level studies in economics. The Fulbright Commission handles program management on behalf of the KHMW. Two students received KHMW Eizenga scholarships to study in the United States during academic year 2019-2020. One student is pursuing an MBA at Harvard and the other is studying economics at NYU. Both had their studies interrupted due to the pandemic but will complete their degrees. One student was awarded a grant for academic year 2020-2021 and she is pursuing an MBA at Stanford.

Intensive Summer Program

The Fulbright Commission has participated in an intensive summer program called the Study of the US Institute for European Student Leaders since 2006. This program is sponsored by the Department of State and open to participants from 26 European countries. Unfortunately, the program was suspended for summer 2020. We hope to send Dutch students again in summer 2021.

Community Engagement – Partnership with the John Adams Institute

In order to better foster community and connect with our alumni and other supporters through public engagement and thoughtful programming, we established a partnership with the John Adams Institute (JAI). JAI provides an independent podium for American culture in the Netherlands. It brings the best and the brightest of American thinking from the fields of literature, politics, history, technology and the arts. On October 18, 2018, we co-hosted the inaugural annual lecture with JAI, The U.S. Midterm Elections: What's at Stake?, bringing Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jonathan Capehart to Amsterdam. Capehart is a contributor to MSNBC, host of "America on the Line" on New York Public Radio (WNYC) and a member of The Washington Post editorial board, where he writes about politics and social issues. He discussed the US mid-term elections which were crucial in shaping the American political landscape for the next two years and beyond. It was a lively evening with one of Washington's insiders about why the November vote was shaping up to be a battle for the future of the country.

The second lecture took place in October 2019 and featured the renowned historian Jill Lepore. She was speaking about her book, *These Truths – A History of the United States*. Lepore, staff writer at *The New Yorker* and a professor of history at Harvard, tracks these initial truths through the centuries, as they are sorely put to the test by slavery, racism, sexism, and many other alternate truths. The book does not attempt to tell the complete history of the US, but is rather a complete telling of what has shaped this country: the fundamental 'truths' of its founding. Through the lenses of events and people, Lepore reveals the complexity of the American political system, our struggles with democratic governance and equal treatment of our citizens. Lepore's analyses in *These Truths* are vital contributions to any future dialogues on where we are going and what to do with the reality we have created from a history we too often still fail to acknowledge. "It isn't until you start reading it that you realize how much we need a book like this one at this particular moment," according to Andrew Sullivan in *The New York Times Book Review*. It was a well-attended and lively event.

The third lecture was slated for just after the period covered by this report and was transitioned to an online event. Because it was focused on the election, it was deemed too sensitive and the Commission withdrew. The partnership with JAI will continue, however, along with the community engagement it offers.

Memories



Participants in “Our Voices – Navigating Identities in the Fulbright Program” at the Anne Frank House.

Diversity and Inclusion – Our Voices Seminar

Promoting diversity and inclusion has increasingly been a priority for the Commission and within Fulbright. Indeed, encouraging more diverse applicants was one of the reasons for increasing the size of the Fulbright student grants. We have also focused on this within the Commission team, convening a full day diversity and inclusion training for staff organized by the European Fulbright Diversity Initiative (EFDI) in November 2019.

To provide a meaningful opportunity for US Fulbrighters in Europe to engage with one another and connect, the Commission, in partnership with EFDI, organized and hosted the first Fulbright diversity seminar in Europe entitled “Our Voices – Navigating Identities in the Fulbright Program.” The Anne Frank House, an especially meaningful place for the gathering, graciously allowed us to use a part of the museum offices for the seminar. “Our Voices” took place from 28 February – 1 March, 2020.

The seminar was open to US grantees from both the commission countries and post countries. We had an overwhelming number of applications - over 125 - for 36 places. Seminar participants came from 27 different European countries, including 10 participants representing 9 post countries (Malta, Albania, Andorra, Azerbaijan, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia, two from Croatia) and 26 participants from 18 commission countries.

“Our Voices” commenced with a dinner on Friday evening which gave participants the chance to get to know each other and become comfortable enough with each other to share their personal experiences the following day.

On Saturday, two-time Fulbright grantee Kenny Fries opened the seminar with a keynote that detailed his experiences of navigating his identity as a Jewish, gay

man with a disability in Japan and Germany. Kenny's keynote segued into the first session on "Storytelling". This and all four subsequent sessions centered on the questions that our participants had raised in their application forms. Our discussions, which ranged from claiming space and finding a voice to being a good ambassador and representative of the Fulbright Program, were inspiring and encouraging, but they also showed how complex and challenging the Fulbright experience can be for grantees from marginalized communities.

On Saturday evening we had a more casual dinner - a pizza party - which enabled grantees to mingle and converse more freely. On Sunday morning the grantees visited the Anne Frank House museum together, which they described as powerful. They then went their separate ways to travel back to their countries.

Both in the immediate responses we received and in their evaluation forms, participant feedback was very positive: many participants expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to share their stories and reflect on their Fulbright experience with peers. The Commission was pleased to be able to organize and support this seminar and hopes to see this initiative continued in Fulbright when possible.

Board Members of the Fulbright Commission

The Fulbright Commission has an impressive board comprised of both American and Dutch nationals. During the period this report covers, the board met four times and established a number of sub-committees, including an audit committee, an HR committee, a marketing and positioning committee, and an alumni engagement committee. One board member, Jill Adler, stepped down after many years of service. Three new board members were also added during the period this report covers.

Dr. Anton Pijpers (Chair), President, Utrecht University

Ms. Jill Adler J.D., East-West Parliamentary Practice Project (until July, 2020)

Mr. Jan Petit (Treasurer), director of ProFonte, a philanthropy consultancy company

Mr. Omar Cardenty, Deputy Public Affairs Attaché, US Embassy

Dr. Paul Broholm, Director, InsingerGilissen Bank

Dr. Jan Willem Gunning, Emeritus Professor of Economics, VU University

Dr. James Kennedy, Professor of Modern Dutch History, University of Utrecht

Ms. Anna Koolstra, Housing Policy Advisor, Municipality of Amsterdam (from February, 2020)

Mr. David Korslund, Consultant on Values-based Banking (from February, 2020)

Ms. Hollis Kurman, Chairperson Ivy Circle NL, Writer, Supervisory Board Member Save the Children NL

Dr. Alexander Rinnooy Kan, Professor of Economics and Business, University of Amsterdam (from February, 2020)

Staff

The Fulbright Commission has a highly qualified staff of five people as of September 30, 2020.

Ms. Mattie Bekink – Executive Director

Ms. Marion Haring – Financial Administrator

Ms. Manon Kolsteren – Campus Scholarship Program Manager and Educational Advisor

Ms. Linda Pietersen – Fulbright Program Manager

Ms. Melanie Strating – Program Manager, Teacher Programs and Educational Advisor

Financial facts

In general, it can be said that the numbers have been affected by fewer and shorter exchanges. This results in lower expenses for grants and operational expenses due to fewer grants being awarded and fewer students having participated. In proportion to this, the income of sponsors and participants is also lower. In addition, operational expenses are lower because meetings could no longer take place after March, 2020.

The reduction in operational expenses is also related to the fact that there was less need for investments of an organizational nature because a lot of work has been done on this in previous years. Also the lower salary costs due to fewer staff, has decreased the operational expenses.

A negative effect at the result is caused by a negative result on exchange rate difference due to the strongly changed USD rate.

Income and expenses

Financial facts and figures

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
<i>Income</i>				
US government contribution	€ 338.021	€ 285.594	€ 343.152	€ 393.045
Dutch government contribution	€ 368.000	€ 402.471	€ 506.794	€ 500.144
Third party income	€ 961.718 +	€1.007.386 +	€1.070.330+	€ 616.683 +
Total income	€1.667.739	€1.695.451	€1.920.275	€1.509.872
<i>Expenses</i>				
Fulbright grants	€ 698.467	€ 791.293	€ 989.426	€ 680.159
Operational expenses	€ 992.992	€ 982.035	€1.097.687	€ 758.940
Exchange loss/(profit)	€ 19.162 +	€ (33.093) +	€ (54.717) +	€ 41.615 +
Total expenses	€1.710.620	€1.740.235	€2.032.397	€1.480.712
<i>Result for the year</i>	€ (42.882)	€ (44.783)	€ (112.121)	€ 29.160
<i>Total equity</i>	€ 799.797	€ 755.015	€ 642.893	€ 672.054

General comments on the financial results

Apart from the government contributions, the Commission has two other main sources of income named "third party income", i.e. contributions from sponsors such as a friendship organization like the NAF, Dutch universities and Host schools and income received for non-Fulbright programs. The general government contributions have remained stable compared to the year before. The US government shows a higher amount. This is due to the reimbursement of the COVID-related expenses. This is partly offset by lower spending on extra grants compared to last year. The third-party income has decreased. This is mainly the result of lower income of sponsors due to the impact of the COVID measures on the Programs.

In October 2016, the US government provided an additional USD720,000 stipulating that the funds be put towards increasing the size of the Fulbright grants over several years. This was a one-time allotment from the US side. In 2018 we learned that the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science would provide a one-time contribution of EUR100.000 in matching funds and that the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs would provide EUR600.000 in matching funds. These contributions more than match the US government funding. Of the Dutch and US government extra funds, approximately EUR136.854 has been spent in 2019-2020.

The level of the equity would allow the Commission to fulfill its obligations should the government funding be discontinued. These obligations would include operational expenses and contacts, salaries and severance in the event of a closure of the Commission, and related expenses.

Special circumstances – COVID-19 and leadership transition

COVID-19 Pandemic

As mentioned throughout this report, the COVID-19 global pandemic has compromised the Fulbright program and our other activities for academic years 2019 - 2020 and 2020 - 2021. The US department of State suspended all Fulbright programs globally on March 12, 2020. A mandatory departure was in place for US grantees in the Netherlands and they were required to leave the country. The US Department of State also mandated that we pay grantees their stipends in full through June 2020, cover travel expenses, and provide additional compensation to them. We incurred unanticipated COVID-related expenses of approximately EUR115.000. This includes the support we provided to students, the refunds we had to issue to the ETA host schools. This amount was almost fully reimbursed by the US Department of State.

The Department of State announced over the summer that most Fulbright programs for academic year 2020 - 2021 would not be permitted to commence until January 1, 2021. Only degree-seeking students were able to commence their Fulbright programs in the autumn if the universities are open and the travel advisories permit them to do so. Both American and Dutch research students and scholars, Dutch promovendi, and American ETAs will only be able to start their programs in January 2021. As a result of this, three ETA host schools who were to host four ETAs dropped out of the Fulbright program for academic year 2020 - 2021, but indicated that they will return in 2021 - 2022. So far, the contributions of the sponsors remains stable.

Despite the immediate challenges posed by COVID-19, we remain optimistic about the future of our programs and perhaps their heightened relevance. With the transitions of this year we are also better positioned to rise to challenges and offer meaningful opportunities in the spirit of promoting mutual understanding to both Dutch and American students, scholars, teachers, and communities.

Leadership transition

In late September 2020, the Fulbright Commission Executive Director informed the board that she would leave at the end of the year. A search was launched after the period covered by this report and a new Executive Director, Christward Gradenwitz, was hired. As a Fulbright alum himself, Mr. Gradenwitz has an MPA from Harvard University, a master's degree from Oxford, and a PhD in International Relations from Leiden University. He has worked with the IMF and the World Bank. Most recently, he was Deputy Secretary General in the Senate and a member of the Board of Directors of the Social Insurance Bank of the Netherlands (SVB). His employment commenced on December 1, 2020 to allow for overlap with the departing Executive Director, Mattie Bekink, and provide for smooth transition.