



**FULBRIGHT**  
The Netherlands

# Annual Report 2024-2025



## Preface

On 20 October 2024 the Fulbright Commission the Netherlands celebrated its 75th Anniversary. It was a joyous celebration full of reunions, fond memories of our past, and hopeful glimpses into our future. Keynote speeches were given by the Honorary Chairs of our Board, Minister Eppo Bruins and U.S. Ambassador Shefali Razdan Duggal, who embody our Commission's binational foundation, as well as by Professor James Kennedy, who reflected on the history of Fulbright.

At the occasion of the jubilee event the Fulbright Commission started a fundraiser for a hardship fund for Fulbrighters, as well as for funding one scholarship (a Trailblazer Opportunity Scholarship) for a participant in the Campus Scholarship Program.

We shared with our alumni that besides donations, there are many other opportunities for alumni to engage with our Commission: from serving on Fulbright selection panels, to hosting current Fulbright grantees in their home for an Alumni Dinner, or anything in between that they feel called to offer the bonded network of Fulbright alumni in the Netherlands.

We can look back at an anniversary event that was a success in many respects. The Fulbright Commission the Netherlands is thankful for the support it receives from both its alumni and other friends of the Program.



## Introduction

The first bilateral agreement promoting educational exchange between the United States 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 United States.

In the period of 1 July 2004 to 1 July 2019 the NACEE was operating under the name of "Fulbright Center." On 1 July 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. It is explained in more detail herein. 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 of 1 October 2024 until 30 September 2025.



We must try to expand the boundaries of human wisdom, empathy, and perception, and there is no way of doing that except through education.

- Senator J. William Fulbright



## **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 5,000 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 United States. 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 United States 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.



*US Fulbright grantees orientation at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, September 2024*

### **Basic support from 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 into 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.

### **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.



*Bert Kraaimoore, Political and Economic Counselor at the US Embassy the Hague, at the introduction meeting for incoming Fulbright grantees at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, September 2024.*

## **75th anniversary of the Fulbright Program**

What marked a highlight of the year is that we celebrated our 75th Anniversary with a jubilee event in the H'ART Museum (formerly: Hermitage) in Amsterdam on 20 October 2024..

The gold we have at Fulbright, is our alumni. We are immensely proud to have among our alumni so many highly talented individuals. While all of them have their Fulbright experiences that have enriched them, they have pursued careers in so many different fields and directions. It is great to hear back from our alumni. And, as we so often hear from our alumni, it is inspiring for them to hear from each other. By reconnecting with Fulbright and other Fulbrighters, it is always exciting to see how Fulbright has figured into the lives of alumni, and sometimes has led to a turning-point from which all else would follow.

At the Fulbright Commission the Netherlands we did not simply want to see as many alumni as possible at the 75th Anniversary. Obviously, our goal has been to stay engaged with our alumni also after our jubilee event. For the success of our Commission, and for the good of next generations of Fulbrighters, we highly depend on our alumni. In the countdown to our jubilee event we asked our alumni for their Time, Talent, and Treasure. We asked for donations, but also for being a mentor to current Fulbrighters, or for sitting on selection panels.

And indeed, alumni showed up in high numbers, and they gave back in various ways. We are thankful for this support. The jubilee event was an important moment for looking back and forward.

# 75th Anniversary Celebration



## Mid-year evaluation



On 30 January 2025, the US Fulbright grantees were asked to present their progress at the mid-way point of their grant. The day concluded with a lovely dinner at EYE Film Museum.

### **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 2024-2025, the NAF has offered to fund a total of 3 Dutch and 11 US students. The NAF organizes special enrichment activities for the Dutch grantees during their stay in the United States and social events for its alumni both in the United States and in the Netherlands.

### **The 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 EUR 5,000 to a Dutch Fulbright grantee and one additional scholarship of EUR 2,500 to an undergraduate student starting a bachelor's degree in the United States.

### **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.

### **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 2024-2025, the following universities have committed funding for grants: VU University Amsterdam (4 grants), Maastricht University (2 grants), TU Delft Industrial Design Engineering (1 grant for a first year student, and 1 grant for a second year student), Radboud University Nijmegen (1, who unfortunately withdrew at a late stage) and Erasmus University Rotterdam (1 grant). For the special grant in this category for a US painting restoration student to take courses at the University of Amsterdam's Restoration Department and practice their skills in the Mauritshuis, one grant was sponsored for the 8th consecutive year. Fulbright always welcomes more of these collaborations with Dutch universities.

## Excursions for US Graduates



*Since 2022, Fulbright Alumna Iris Plessius organizes a number of excursions for the US grantees in the Netherlands: Amsterdam, Maastricht & Margraten, and the Keukenhof were on the program in 2024-2025. This year, a new excursion was added and led by Executive Director Dr. Gradenwitz in The Hague.*

## Other Fulbright Programs

We sometimes welcome or administer 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 US, K – 14 pre-teachers, teachers and administrators, pre-doctoral students and postdoctoral faculty, as well as to US institutions and organizations. Although the Fulbright Commission does not administer these programs, should grantees of these programs be a Dutch national or come to the Netherlands, we welcome them and include them in our programming and provide local support as needed. In the academic year 2024-2025, one US PhD student received a Fulbright Schuman grant to do research in the Netherlands. We also welcomed one Fulbright Schuman US Scholar.

## Fulbright alumni dinners / Classroom Visit



*Fulbright Alum Dinner at the Gerbrandy family: Aditi Jagannathan and Grace Harsche, and Classroom Visit on the US elections at Rodenborch College by Kendra Gordillo and Maddy Cicha.*

The US students are given the opportunity to participate in excursions, alum dinners and classroom visits during their time in the Netherlands.

Alumni dinners are a particularly meaningful way for current grantees to connect with the Fulbright network. By opening their homes and sharing their experiences, alumni provide personal support, foster lasting connections, and help create the sense of community and mutual understanding that lies at the core of the Fulbright mission. Alumni can engage with the Fulbright Commission in many ways: as sponsors, hosts, partners, ambassadors, mentors, selection panel members, and volunteers.



*NFAA Thanksgiving Dinner at Utrecht University's historic Academy Building*



*US Fulbright Scholar Kim Wehle at the John Adams Institute lecture and at the "huiskamerlezing" organized by the Netherlands Fulbright Alumni Association.*

US Fulbright scholar Kim Wehle was the speaker at the annual Fulbright/John Adams Lecture in March 2025. She was also invited by the NFAA to give a huiskamerlezing in April 2025. Fulbright Alum Lennaert Posch hosted this meeting in his office.

### **Fulbright Program Alumni**

The Netherlands Fulbright Alumni Association (NFAA) is based in the Netherlands and organizes events for alumni, such as a Thanksgiving dinner. The association functions independently from the Fulbright Commission. The Commission provides financial and logistical support for certain activities of the NFAA.

### **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 information sessions and webinars to meet with advisers and alumni and learn about specific topics. The advisers also train a volunteer corps to visit high schools, assist the staff during study abroad events, host the Commission's information sessions, and participate in panels. This year, our student ambassadors visited 18 study abroad events at secondary schools and joined us at several study abroad events such as the BuitenlandBeurs.



*EducationUSA adviser Manon Kolsteren attended the NAFSA Conference in San Diego in May 2025.*

In late September 2024, we organized our annual College Night, which is part of the EducationUSA Western & Central Europe Fairs. More than 200 secondary students, their parents and school counselors signed up to meet with representatives from 19 American universities and testing organizations to learn about study opportunities in the United States. In November 2024 we organized the EducationUSA LLM Fair, which is hosted by a local law firm each year and allows law graduates to meet with representatives of American law schools for more information on LLM degrees.



*Fulbright Commission/EducationUSA booth at the Buitenlandbeurs, November 2024*



*College Night 2024, in Utrecht*

## 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. Participants in the Campus Scholarship Program also become part of the prestigious Fulbright community, gaining lifelong access to a network of alumni, scholars, and professionals committed to international understanding and leadership.

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 this year, a total of 10 CSP students have been selected to study in the US in 2025-2026. In the current academic year (2024-2025), a total of 25 students studied in the US.

## Destinations of CSP participants in 2024-2025



In 2024-2025, CSP student's chosen destinations were the following: **Augustana College, IL (2), The College of Wooster, OH (1), Denison University, OH (3), Elizabethtown College, PA (1), Indiana University of Pennsylvania, PA (1), Kent State University, OH (3), Roanoke College, VA (6), San Diego State University, CA (1), Stephen F. Austin State University, TX (1), SUNY at Plattsburgh, NY (1), University of Colorado Boulder, CO (1), University of Central Missouri, MO(2), Western Carolina University (1).**

## Trailblazer Opportunity Scholarship

The Trailblazer Opportunity Scholarship provides a full scholarship for one or two high achieving Dutch students whose parents cannot afford to pay for the Campus Scholarship Program participation fees, and/or are first generation students. The Trailblazer Opportunity Scholarship covers all costs of studying in the United States, with support from the US Embassy the Hague, the Fulbright Commission, The Tjallingh Roorda Foundation, the host university in the US, and sponsored flights by JetBlue. In May 2023, the first two Trailblazer Opportunity Scholarships were awarded. These students will study at Denison University in the United States in the 2024-2025 academic year. In May 2024, the second two Trailblazer scholarships were awarded. These students will study at Stephen F. Austin State University in the 2025-2026 academic year.



*Trailblazer Opportunity Scholarship recipient Elise studied at Denison University in 2024-2025. During her stay, she recorded a short campus tour.*

## KHMW Eizenga Program

Since September 2018, we administer 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 USD 50,000 to Dutch nationals for one academic year of study in the United States for an MBA, or a Master or PhD program in economics. The Fulbright Commission handles program management on behalf of the KHMW. In the academic year 2024-2025 five students have pursued studies in the United States with the KHMW-Eizenga scholarship. In the spring of 2025, the selection committee selected another 6 grantees to study in the US for academic year 2025-2026.

## **Board Members of the Fulbright Commission**

The Fulbright Commission has a board comprised of both American and Dutch nationals. During the period this report covers, the board met five times and had three sub-committees in place: an Audit Committee, an Outreach Committee, and a Governance Committee.

During the period this report covers four board members left: Ms. Rosanne Engel, Mr. Gerbert Kunst, Ms. Mary Rodeghier Martin, and Ms. Addie Schroeder. Five new board member were added: Mr. Karl Guha, Mr. Joris Luyendijk, Ms. Nathalie Jaarsma, Ms. Danna Van Brandt, and Mr. Daniel Kanigan.

Dr. Anton Pijpers (Chair), Professor and President of Utrecht University;  
Dr. Emilie Gordenker (Vice Chair), Director of the Van Gogh Museum;  
Mr. David Korslund (Treasurer), Advisor on values-based banking;  
Ms. Rosanne Engel (Alternate Treasurer), Consultant at Bain & Company (until 11 October 2024);  
Mr. Karl Guha, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of ING Group (from 18 November 2024);  
Ms. Nathalie Jaarsma, Director of International Policy, Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (from 1 August 2025);  
Mr. Daniel Kanigan, Deputy Counselor for Public Diplomacy, US Embassy (from 15 August 2025);  
Mr. Gerbert Kunst, Director of International Policy, Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (until 15 April 2025);  
Ms. Hollis Kurman, Chairperson Ivy Circle NL, Writer, Supervisory Board Member.  
Mr. Joris Luyendijk, Author, Journalist (from 21 March 2025);  
Dr. Alexander Rinnooy Kan, University Professor of Economics and Business, University of Amsterdam;  
Ms. Mary Rodeghier Martin, Deputy Counselor for Public Diplomacy, US Embassy (until 30 June 2025);  
Ms. Addie Schroeder, Counselor for Public Diplomacy, US Embassy (until 31 July 2025);  
Ms. Danna Van Brandt, Counselor for Public Diplomacy, US Embassy (from 1 August 2025);  
and Mr. Abdel Zitar, Attorney, De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek

## **Staff**

The Fulbright Commission has a staff of four persons as of 30 September 2025:

Dr. Christward Gradenwitz – Executive Director  
Ms. Marion Haring – Financial Administrator  
Ms. Manon Kolsteren – Campus Scholarship Program Manager and Educational Advisor  
Ms. Linda Pietersen – Fulbright Program Manager

## Financial facts

This year's positive result of €28,542 is largely allocated to the special purpose funds. This is mainly due to the balance between the additional contributions allocated this year by the US government and the expenses incurred from additional contributions allocated in previous years, which are accounted for within the special purpose funds.

As a result, total equity has remained almost unchanged compared to last year (September 30, 2024: €918,928; September 30, 2025: €918,631).

The special purpose funds have increased this year from € 504,113 on September 30, 2024 to 532,952 on September 30, 2025. Special purpose funds consist of contributions that have been earmarked for specific programs or projects. As these activities often span multiple years, the funds remain reserved until they are used for their intended purpose.

| <b>Financial facts and figures</b> |                    |                    |                    |                    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                                    | <b>2021-2022</b>   | <b>2022-2023</b>   | <b>2023-2024</b>   | <b>2024-2025</b>   |
| <b>Income</b>                      |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| US government contribution         | € 296.263          | € 321.545          | € 342.986          | € 587.782          |
| Dutch government contribution      | € 614.366          | € 410.000          | € 422.000          | € 422.000          |
| Third party income                 | € 659.412          | € 820.038          | € 944.912          | € 806.961          |
| <b>Total income</b>                | <b>€ 1.570.042</b> | <b>€ 1.551.583</b> | <b>€ 1.709.898</b> | <b>€ 1.816.743</b> |
| <b>Expenses</b>                    |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Fulbright grants                   | € 816.849          | € 718.069          | € 889.674          | € 772.054          |
| Operational expenses               | € 726.848          | € 891.664          | € 972.959          | € 996.372          |
| Financial income and expenses      | € -112.974         | € 34.964           | € -20.221          | € 19.775           |
| <b>Total expenses</b>              | <b>€ 1.430.723</b> | <b>€ 1.644.697</b> | <b>€ 1.842.412</b> | <b>€ 1.788.201</b> |
| <b>Result for the year</b>         | <b>€ 139.319</b>   | <b>€ -93.113</b>   | <b>€ -132.514</b>  | <b>€ 28.542</b>    |
| <b>Total equity</b>                | <b>€ 864.198</b>   | <b>€ 898.890</b>   | <b>€ 918.928</b>   | <b>€ 918.631</b>   |

### General comments on the financial results

In addition to government contributions, the Commission has two other main sources of income referred to as "third-party income." This includes contributions from sponsors, such as friendship organizations like the NAF, Dutch universities supporting Fulbright programs, and income generated from non-Fulbright programs.

The US contribution is higher than in the previous year due to additional funding for the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Fulbright Program (\$10,000), the celebration of America's 250th anniversary (\$20,500), and yet-to-be-specified collaborative projects (\$275,000). These additional contributions have been allocated to special purpose funds. The base contribution from both the US and the Dutch government remained unchanged compared to last year.

Of the additional funding allocated by the Department of State (\$720,000), the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (€110,000), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EUR €600,000) between 2016 and 2018, approximately €160,000 was spent on scholarships during this year. These one-off funds have contributed over several years to increasing both grant amounts and the number of grant recipients, exactly as intended. The remaining funds will be fully spent by the end of FY2026.

Fewer Fulbright grants were awarded than in the previous academic year, which is reflected in lower third-party income and reduced expenses for Fulbright grants.

Operational expenses were higher mainly due to costs associated with the celebration of the 75th anniversary of Fulbright.

Financial income and expenses were negative this year due to a higher negative currency exchange rate difference compared to last year.

The level of equity allows the Commission to fulfil its obligations should government funding be reduced or discontinued. These obligations would include operational expenses and contractual commitments, salaries and severance payments in the event of a closure of the Commission, and related costs.

According to the budget for the next fiscal year (2025-2026), total expenses are estimated at €1,406,702. Income is expected to equal this amount, resulting in a break-even result. At present, it is known that both income and expenses will be approximately €172,414 lower due to the KHMW-Eizenga program being paused.