



# Annual Report FY 2014

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Fulbright

**1 October 2013 – 30 September 2014**



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## **MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



One of the great things about Fulbright is its relevance over a wide variety of disciplines. Fulbright caters to the natural and social sciences, the humanities, the arts and the professional fields like engineering, law and business. This allows Fulbright to take a cross-disciplinary approach to the issues of our day, to bring together thinkers, researchers and artists in a meaningful dialogue that takes into account different perspectives, different points of reference and different approaches to problem solving. I truly believe that this is a major strength of the program. We at the Commission strive to reflect the diversity of the program in the work we do.

The Commission had a busy year. Despite continuing budget cuts, we are working to maintain services and even bring about innovations. This is a challenge. While the Icelandic government contribution remained stable, there is still a glaring lack of parity with the US government funding. Unfortunately, FY2014 saw a further 3.5% decrease to the US government contribution. We have now seen US budget cuts every year for the past three years. On a more positive note, outside of core funding, the Commission signed an important agreement with the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs on a new three-year pilot project, the Fulbright-MFA Arctic Scholar Grant. The Commission is thrilled to cooperate with the Ministry in this important area, which is increasingly being prioritized by Fulbright and the Commission.

To continue on a positive note, the Fulbright Alumni Association in Iceland (FFSÍ) made for the first time a financial donation to the Fulbright Commission. FFSÍ was founded in 2008 and one of its main goals is to support the work of the Commission. Fundraising for Fulbright is a priority for the Alumni Board members and last year they had accumulated sufficient funds to donate half a grant. This is no small accomplishment. Their effort allowed the Commission to send one additional Icelandic student to the US. This is indeed a noteworthy milestone in the work of FFSÍ and the Commission appreciates the hard work and dedication of our Fulbright Alumni.

Finally, a few words of thanks are appropriate. I would like to thank Minister of Education and Culture Illugi Gunnarsson for his goodwill and support. Early in FY2014 we said a fond farewell to US Ambassador Luis Arreaga, who was a strong and steadfast ally of the Fulbright Commission during his years in Iceland. Fortunately, Chargé d’Affaires Paul O’Friel quickly became a good friend to the Commission, always ready to step in and lend a helping hand when needed. I would also like to thank the Fulbright Board of Directors for its cooperation and hard work throughout the year, as well as our partners at ECA, CIES and IIE. Last but not least, I thank our fabulous Icelandic and US grantees for a successful FY2014.



Belinda Theriault



## **LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

In 1992 Fulbright changed my life. Fulbright opened a door to endless possibilities, to meeting new challenges with confidence and to engaging in an academic environment which was more exciting than anything I had previously experienced. Some people did not understand why I would go to the US to get a PhD in Spanish. Quite simply, through Fulbright I gained access to one of the best Spanish programs in the world, where I engaged on a daily basis with many of the premier scholars in my field. In addition, my time in the US contributed significantly to my becoming a well-rounded person; I cannot put a price tag on the experience and insights I gained during my student years in the US.

I see my time on the Fulbright Board of Directors as an opportunity to give back to a program that has done so much for me. I care deeply about the Fulbright Program and believe that the Fulbright Commission in Iceland provides an invaluable service. I want to see other Icelandic students and academics benefit as I did and I want to see US students and scholars benefit as well, while at the same time enriching Icelandic academic life.

During my year as Chairman of the Board, the ED and I consulted regularly. The Commission generally functions smoothly and impeccably. The Board is kept well informed of all developments, not only through Board meetings, but also through regular updates from the ED. I know I speak for the whole Board when I say that we are extremely pleased with the running of the Commission, the innovations that have been introduced and the services that are provided, especially in light of budgetary challenges. We are also delighted with the high quality of grantees that the program continues to attract, both Icelanders and Americans.

The Board is worried about cuts to the grant program due to the current funding situation. Both real and nominal government funding continues to decline in USD terms. With such a small Commission and no fat to trim, this inevitably negatively affects grants. Not only has the number of grants significantly declined over the past 15 years, but the Board is unable to make necessary increases in grant amounts. I therefore urge the US government to halt its funding cuts and the Icelandic government to increase funding to restore parity between the two governments. Despite efforts by the Commission to bring in new funding, the governments who are signatories to the agreement on which the Fulbright Commission is founded must live up to their responsibilities. We must all work together to ensure a strong Fulbright presence in Iceland.

Margrét Jónsdóttir Njarðvík,  
Chairman of the Board FY2014

## I. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTIVITIES

The Commission implements a selective grant program for both graduate students and scholars. Grantees include Icelandic students who are awarded grants to commence graduate studies in the US, Icelandic scholars who are awarded grants to undertake research in the US for 3-12 months, US students who are awarded Fulbright grants to spend 9 months in a study program or doing research in Iceland, and US scholars who teach at the university level and do research for one semester. In addition to the core Fulbright grants, the Commission provides opportunities for Icelandic institutions to receive US scholars for shorter periods. These opportunities include grants for Fulbright Specialists who come to Iceland for 2-6 weeks and inter-country travel grants for US Fulbright scholars in other European countries who come to Iceland for up to one week. Icelandic scholars can also teach at the college level in the US through the Scholar-in-Residence program. Finally, the Commission is able to offer an Icelandic student the opportunity to participate in a 5-week long summer institute. In addition to Fulbright grants, the Commission oversees Icelandic applications for the Boas scholarship towards an LLM at Harvard and the Cobb Family Fellowship for graduate study at the University of Miami.



Fulbright Commission Board Meeting in April 2014

In addition to the grant programs and advising activities, the Commission has a wider mandate in regard to enhancing the bilateral US-Iceland relationship. To this end, the Commission undertakes a variety of activities.

The Commission consistently receives outstanding applications from Americans and Icelanders, scholars and students. Grantees are selected by the Fulbright Commission Board, in cooperation with the Fulbright Scholarship Board in Washington, DC. Academic

excellence, project merit, leadership abilities, the ability to meet challenges, civic-mindedness, and diversity are among the criteria that are weighed by Board members, when choosing from among the many excellent applicants each year.

Below is a list of grantees for 2014-2015, many of whom began their grant period in September 2013, one month before the end of the fiscal year and, grantees for 2013-2014, who were grantees for the majority of FY2014.

**Fulbright Commission partners  
and sponsors in FY2014:**

**Vesturgarður ehf.**

## 1. Grantees 2014-2015

	Field	Home	Host
<b>Icelandic students</b>			
Chrissie Telma Guðmundsd.	Music	Iceland Academy of the Arts	University of Arizona
Erlendur Sveinsson	Film	The Icelandic Film School	Columbia University
Heimir Thórisson	Systems Engineering	University of Iceland	University of Virginia
Jóhanna Björk Pálsdóttir	Mechanical Eng.	University of Iceland	Purdue University
Kári Hólmur Ragnarsson	Law	University of Iceland	Harvard University
Kristján Jónsson	Computer Science	University of Iceland	Univ. of California, San Diego
Vídir Smári Petersen	Law	University of Iceland	Harvard University
<b>Boas scholarship</b>			
Kári Hólmur Ragnarsson	Law	University of Iceland	Harvard University
Vídir Smári Petersen	Law	University of Iceland	Harvard University
<b>Icelandic Scholars</b>			
Páll Melsted	Computer Science	University of Iceland	Univ. of California, Berkeley
Marjan Sirjani	Computer Science	Reykjavík University	Univ. of California, Berkeley
<b>Summer Institute</b>			
Katrín Hulda Gunnarsdóttir	Environm. Stewardsh.	East Icel. Technical College	University of Kansas
<b>US students</b>			
Alyssa Grahame	Political Science	University of Massachusetts	University of Iceland
Sophia Wassermann	Environmental Sci.	Vassar College	University of Iceland
Scott Shigeoka	Music, MTVU award	Washington State University	Iceland Academy of the Arts
Julie Summers	Icelandic	Corban University	University of Iceland
<b>US scholars</b>			
Janelle Knox-Hayes	Political Science	Georgia Inst. of Technology	University of Iceland
Daniel H. Shain	Biology	Rutgers University	University of Iceland
Kristofer Claude Neslund	Business / Accounting	Ashland University	University of Iceland

*"I had a terrific Fulbright experience, learning about the difference in media --- my expertise --- and culture. In addition to lecturing to students, I was very fortunate to meet with some of the country's top journalists on digital and evolving media issues. I'm very much interested in continuing my relationship with the University of Iceland, and have offered to do monthly media presentations for classes via Skype. I think this perfectly illustrates the power of the Fulbright experience. What starts as an academic exchange can evolve into a longer-term learning experience for all. I very much look forward to being involved in that experience and serving as an ambassador for the Fulbright program."*

Ray Marcano, Fulbright Specialist, hosted by the University of Iceland Journalism Program.



## 2. Grantees 2013-2014

	Field	Home	Host
<b>Icelandic students</b>			
Ásdís Ólafsdóttir	International Relations	University of Iceland	New York University
Egill Bjarnason	Journalism	University of Iceland	University of California
Fridrik Ársælsson	Law	University of Iceland	Harvard Law School
Fridrik Á. Friðriksson Hirst	Law	University of Iceland	Harvard Law School
Guðmundur Kári Stefánsson	Astrophysics	University of Iceland	Pennsylvania State Univ.
Hólmfríður Arnalds	Psychology	University of Iceland	University of North Texas
<b>Boas scholarship</b>			
Fridrik Ársælsson	Law	University of Iceland	Harvard University
<b>Icelandic Scholar</b>			
Þorgerður Einarsdóttir	Gender Studies	University of Iceland	Rutgers University
<b>Scholar-in-Residence</b>			
Margrét Björnsdóttir	Art	At-Large	Green River Commun. College
<b>Summer Institute</b>			
Rut Þorsteinsdóttir	Environm. Stewardsh.	Breiðholt College	University of Kansas
<b>US students</b>			
Derek Barisas	Biology	Washington and Lee Univ.	University of Iceland
Burke Jam	Installation Art	University of Montana	Iceland Academy of the Arts
Ryan Dennis	Creative Writing	At-Large, New York	The Agricultural University
Sarah Lucht	Medicine	Gustavus Adolphus College	University of Iceland
Jonathan Marshall	Energy Studies	At-Large, Oregon	Reykjavik University
Elliott Brandsma	Icelandic Language	Texas State University	University of Iceland
<b>US scholars</b>			
Kristin Van Gaasbeck	Macro-Economics	California State University	University of Iceland
Thomas Brewer	Arts Education	University of Central Florida	University of Akureyri
Robin Grenier	Museum Studies	University of Connecticut	University of Iceland
<b>Specialists</b>			
Ray Marcano	Communications	Cox Media Group	University of Iceland
Murthy Rallapalli	Computer Sciences	Stevens Institute of Techn.	Reykjavik University
Margaret Ellen Dunn-Snow	Education	St. Mary-of-the-Woods Coll.	University of Akureyri
Lawrence Ingalls Buell	Literature	Harvard University	Reykjavík Academy
Dolores T. Burton	Education	New York Inst. of Tech.	University of Iceland
<b>Inter-Country Travel Grant</b>			
Rory John Stuart	Music	New School	FIH School of Music



Icelandic grantees: artistic expression, making new friends and giving a talk to a US audience.



US grantees enjoy experiencing the magnificent nature of Iceland.

*"My year in Iceland through a Fulbright grant was one of the most rewarding, challenging, and formative times in my life. I cannot begin to express how grateful I am to have had the opportunity through Fulbright to conduct research in breast cancer with leaders in the field."*

Sarah Lucht, Fulbright fellow, University of Iceland Cancer Research Lab.

*"I will without a doubt be active in the Fulbright community in the future. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Fulbright for supporting my studies, and not least the opportunity to participate in a fantastic Gateway seminar in Reno and a Fulbright enrichment seminar in Pittsburgh."*

Fridrik Árni Fridriksson Hirst, Fulbright fellow, Harvard Law LLM Program.



### 3. Summary of Grant-Supporting Activities

#### A. Events for Icelandic grantees

In spring 2014, two orientation meetings were held for grantees leaving for the US for the 2014-2015 academic year, one in March and one in April. The Commission also held a reception for Icelandic grantees, hosted at the US Embassy on 21<sup>st</sup> of May. The reception was attended by Icelandic grantees and their guests, representatives of the Ministry for Education and Culture and of the US Embassy, the Fulbright Board, Commission staff and alumni representatives.



Icelandic grantees and family members enjoying themselves with Fulbright representatives at the grantee reception hosted by the Fulbright Commission

In the spring of 2014, six Icelandic students participated in Fulbright enrichment seminars in Atlanta, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Portland. These seminars offer Fulbright fellows an opportunity to delve into a particular theme. Topics in FY 2014 included inter alia advocating for civil rights and social entrepreneurship and innovation. Various additional local opportunities were offered to Icelandic grantees during the year.

Three Icelandic students participated in the Gateway orientation program sponsored by the US State Department in August 2014. This five-day program, which is offered to first-year Fulbright foreign students upon their arrival in the US, provides an overview of the Fulbright program, its goals, student responsibilities, and specifics of US academic and cultural life, as well as leadership training and networking opportunities. The opportunity to meet other Fulbright fellows from around the world is one of the most valuable elements of the Gateway experience. In FY 2014 students travelled to Gateway seminars in Florida, Idaho and New Jersey.

#### **B. Events for American grantees**

The Commission organizes a variety of events for US grantees, through its enrichment program, which was first introduced in FY2012. The program's monthly grantee events are tailored to give grantees an opportunity to explore new places, gain insight into Icelandic society and customs, and foster a sense of community among the grantees and between the grantees and the Commission. A member of the Fulbright Board will often join in grantee events, providing a welcome opportunity for board members to get to know the grantees they have selected.

All US students and scholars present their projects towards the end of their stay at special events hosted by the Commission. For Fulbright scholars in Iceland for the fall semester, an event is held in November/December. A larger event is held in the spring. In the past three years, this has established itself as an important tradition, both for the grantees themselves and for the Commission, the contracting parties, alumni, and other friends of Fulbright.

Towards the end of the fiscal year, in August/September 2014, the Commission welcomed a new group of US grantees. Grantees participated in a half-day orientation session at the Commission in the beginning of September. Talks were given by the Commission Executive Director and



Visiting the Marine Research Institute

Adviser, US Embassy Consular Officer and Fulbright Board Member Marcy Brown and Fulbright alumnus Elliott Brandsma. After the session, participants enjoyed a meal featuring fresh Icelandic fish at a downtown restaurant.

In addition to the grantee events, the ED meets with grantees at different times and grantees are invited to additional events, both at the Commission and the US Embassy.

#### *Enrichment activities in FY2014:*

- October: Day trip to South Iceland and farm of the Alumni Association Chairman
- November: US Embassy visit and coffee with Ambassador Arreaga  
Presentation event for departing scholars
- December: Christmas concert
- January: Visit to Althingi, the Parliament of Iceland
- February: Visit to the Marine Research Institute
- March: Bun Day celebration at the ED's home
- April: Presentation event and reception
- May: Farewell dinner
- September: Orientation for incoming US grantees



Grantees getting ready to present their work, spring 2014



Waiting for Bun Day buns, visiting with US Ambassador Arreaga, pre-concert drinks and farmhouse meal with Alumni Association representatives



In addition to the events mentioned above, the ED met separately with the various specialists who were hosted by Icelandic universities during FY2014. One specialist, Dr. Rallapalli, held a Fulbright tech-talk at the Commission on social media threats, which brought a number of guests to the Commission for the first time.



Tech talk by Dr. Rallapalli; Dr. and Mrs. Buell enjoying the Icelandic summer with Fulbright representatives; Dr. Dunne-Snow with University of Akureyri colleague Dr. Sigrún Stefánsdóttir; and Dr. Burton with the ED at Harpa.

### C. Showcasing Fulbrighters in the arts

American jazz guitarist and Fulbright grantee to the Czech Republic Rory Stuart received a Fulbright inter-country travel grant to Iceland in January 2014. The Commission and the US Embassy co-hosted an open concert at Harpa Concert Hall where Rory gave an outstanding performance along with local musicians Scott McLemore, Thorgrimur Jónsson and Sigurdur Flosason.



On Reykjavik Culture Night in August 2014,

the Fulbright Commission and the US Embassy partnered to host a Fulbright Artist Showcase. A number of Fulbright alumni took part in the event, showcasing visual arts, music and cinematic art. The art exhibition featured three Icelandic artists, Katrín Inga Jónsdóttir Hjördísardóttir, Ingibjörg Jóhannsdóttir and Sossa

(Margrét Björnsdóttir). The film program featured director Oskar Thor Axelsson. The musical

program featured a video performance by pianist Kristín Jónína Taylor and live performances by pianist Tinna Thorsteinsdóttir, violinist Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir, flutist Berglind María Tómasdóttir and pianist and composer Halldór Smáráson, who performed with singer Nadía Pálsdóttir. The event was a great success, thanks to the contributions of these great artists, whom Fulbright is proud to have sponsored.



#### **D. Other events**

Two US alumni brought student groups to visit the Commission. Artist Dana Roes brought a group of art students from Edison State College in Florida to Iceland in March and in June Dr. Eugene Williams brought a group of biology students from Salisbury University. These occasions were used to highlight Fulbright opportunities in Iceland for US students.

In connection with Design March 2014, the Commission partnered with the US Embassy to host an event for teachers in the field of design. Two leaders from AIGA, the professional association

for design in the US, led a workshop for Icelandic teachers. This also provided an excellent opportunity to discuss opportunities in design through the Fulbright Program.



Teachers visiting the Commission during Design March1

### **4. Other Commission Activities**

#### **A. Arctic focus - Agreement with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

The Commission concluded an agreement with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) in early 2014. The agreement sets up a three year pilot project whereby the Ministry will fund the Fulbright-MFA Arctic Scholar Grant. This grant will bring one US scholar to Iceland per academic year for one semester to teach, as well as conduct research. The visiting professor will teach undergraduate and/or graduate courses, advise students who are carrying out research in the scholar's field of expertise and assist with curriculum development. The grant is open to scholars in a wide variety of Arctic fields. The first grant will be awarded for the 2015-2016 academic year. This agreement is a significant milestone in the work of the Commission, which views the MFA as an important partner.

## B. Partnership Award

The Fulbright Commission administers the Partnership Award in cooperation with the US Embassy. The award was established in 1991 by Ambassador Chuck Cobb, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between Iceland



Fulbright representatives with award recipient dr. Kristján Ragnarsson and Ambassador Cobb



and the United States. He and his wife presented the City of Reykjavik with the sculpture *Partnership* to commemorate the anniversary and

established this award at the same time. The award goes to an American who has

demonstrated a long commitment to fostering US relations with Iceland and to building bridges between the two countries. The recipient is selected every two years, on average, by the Board of Directors of the Fulbright Commission.

After receiving and reviewing nominations, the Board selected Dr. Kristján Ragnarsson, Lucy G. Moses Professor and Chairman of the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York.

Kristján, a dual national, was selected for his important work in rehabilitative medicine and his efforts to build bridges between Iceland and the US in his field, including bringing extensive expertise to Iceland. The Board also took into account his impressive work for the American Scandinavian Foundation and the Icelandic Society of New York, as well as his previous work on the board of the Icelandic American Chamber of Commerce and his current Vice-Chairmanship of the Board of Össur Inc.



Dr. Kristjánsson making his acceptance speech



### C. Communications

The Commission continued to prioritize communications with a wide variety of stakeholders, including alumni and current grantees, former board members, universities and schools, sponsors and partners, prospective applicants and advisees, and relevant organizations. The 3rd and 4th issues of the Commission newsletter were published in October 2013 and May 2014. The ED had an article published in the newspaper Morgunblaðið in January 2014 in connection with the agreement signed with the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs to establish and Arctic scholar grant. Further, a piece on the Cobb Family Fellowship appeared in *Sæmundur*, the magazine of the Association of Icelandic Students Abroad, in March. The Commission's YouTube page was launched during the year. While it is currently a small presence, over the next years the Commission hopes to be able to strengthen the page considerably, although this will require some redistribution of staff resources. The Commission's Wikipedia page is expected to be finalized in FY2015.

### D. Outreach

Various outreach activities take place throughout the year. Also, during the early fall of each year, the ED makes special visits to all or most of the universities in Iceland, in connection with the upcoming application deadlines for core Fulbright grants. In August/September FY2014 the ED visited Bifröst University, the Agricultural University of Iceland, Keilir, The University of Iceland, The Iceland Academy of the Arts and Reykjavik University. During these visits, she gave talks on graduate education opportunities in the US and on Fulbright grant opportunities, combining general outreach with advising activities. She also discussed with faculty opportunities for Icelandic scholars to conduct research in the US, as well as opportunities to host US scholars.

### E. Other

The Commission ED hosted a lunch at her home for US Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Paul O'Friel. Guests included current and former grantees, as well as Fulbright Board members. This gave Paul the opportunity to get to know the work of the Commission and meet some of the people associated with Fulbright in Iceland.

The ED liaised with a number of partners over the year, in order to discuss the Fulbright Program and possibilities for innovation. These included government and parliament representatives, business people, and individuals involved with higher education and research, both in Iceland and the US. This work will continue in coming years, with the aim of strengthening the work of the Commission.



Guests dig into a homemade dessert at the Fulbright lunch hosted at the home of the ED.

## II. ADVISING ACTIVITIES

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### 1. The advising center and advising services

#### A. General advising and outreach



Fulbright/EducationUSA table at the University of Iceland's International Day

The advising center was able to maintain its opening hours despite budget cuts, meaning the center was open one morning and two afternoons a week. Additional appointments were given outside opening hours as needed. Telephone and e-mail inquiries were answered on a daily basis, to the extent possible. The center welcomes individuals interested in both undergraduate and graduate studies and provides comprehensive one-on-one

advising services for all fields and levels of university education.

The advising center maintains a substantial library of reference materials that students and scholars can use in-house, in addition to electronic databases. Furthermore, students can borrow preparation books for all tests that they must take when applying to US schools, including TOEFL, SAT/ACT, GRE and GMAT. While the library intends to keep a supply of certain key reference books and guides, as well as a comprehensive range of test preparation books, its main emphasis is now on assisting students with online information.

The ED and the adviser have worked together to provide services for those contemplating graduate studies in the US, through speaking engagements, participation in fairs, and increased contact with appropriate staff at the universities. Speaking engagements to highlight Fulbright grant opportunities often also feature student advising, and vice versa. Thus all opportunities are used to create synergies between grant work and advising. The Fulbright adviser also provides services to students contemplating undergraduate studies in the US, on an individual and group basis.



Students at Ármúli Comprehensive College listen to an EducationUSA presentation

The Fulbright EducationUSA adviser made four visits to upper secondary schools during FY2014, including to the Technical College, Borgarholt College, Ármúli Comprehensive College and the Commercial College. The adviser also took part in three international days at the University of Iceland and Reykjavik University, with a Fulbright/EducationUSA table. In addition to annual visits made to each university, the ED also gave talks on graduate studies upon request by individual universities.

Dr. Chris Medalis, Regional Educational Advising Coordinator at EducationUSA visited the Fulbright Commission in the spring of 2014. He provided valuable information and training to Commission staff. He also took part in idea development and offered advice on the future development of the advising center. The Fulbright Commission values its partnership with EducationUSA, which supports impartial and comprehensive advising services on US education around the globe in 170 centers.

### **B. Virtual College Fair 2014**

The Commission participated for the second time in the Virtual College Fair organized by EducationUSA in autumn. This exciting event gives students the opportunity to “meet” representatives of approximately 100 US colleges and universities for chats and attend interactive online lectures. This type of event is perfect for the tech-savvy students of Iceland, since Icelanders are quick to embrace new technologies and the opportunities they afford. The Commission held an open house where people could watch lectures on a big screen, but the beauty of the virtual fair is, of course, that students can access it from anywhere on their computer, tablet, or smart phone.



### **C. College Day Reykjavik**

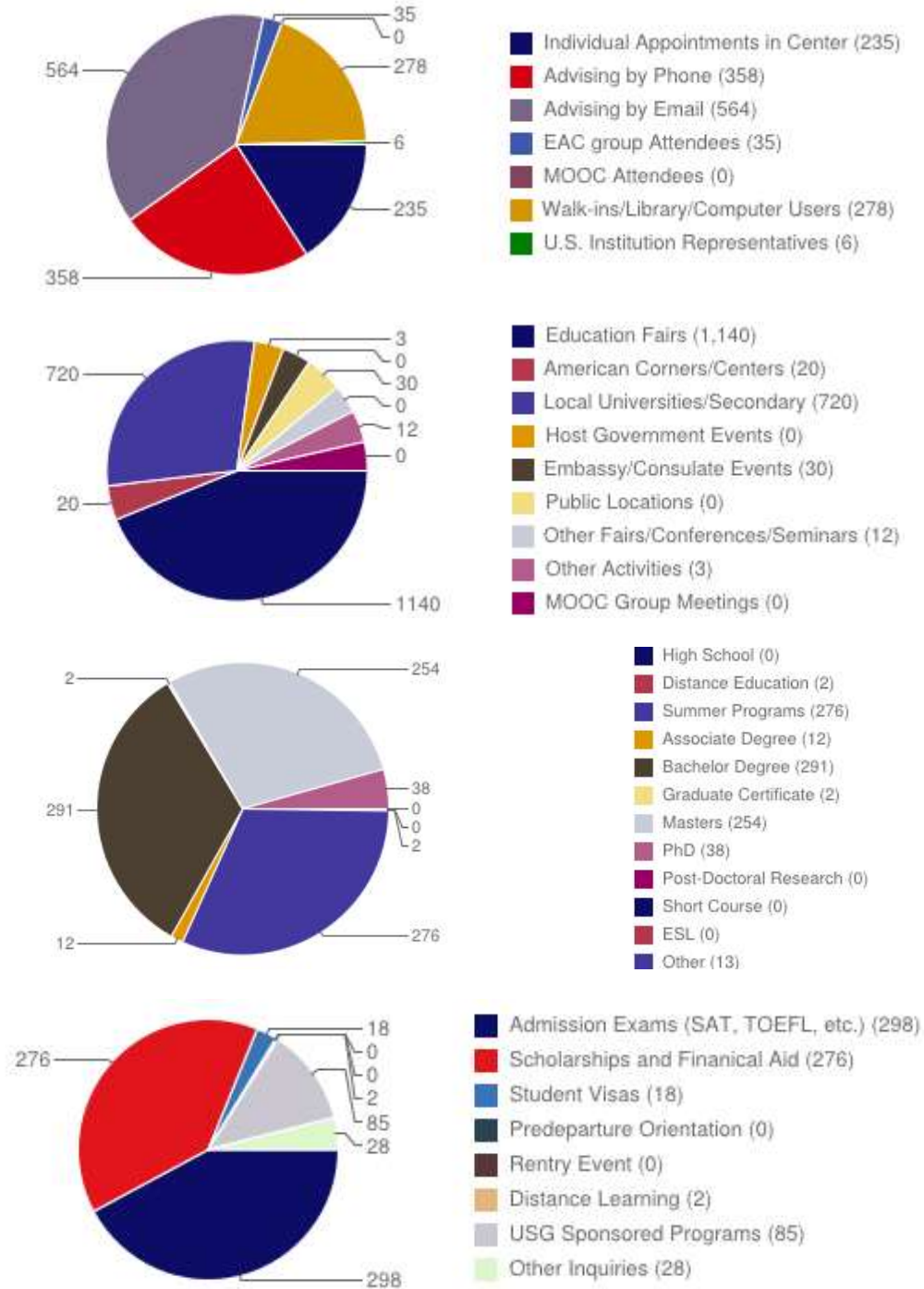
FY2014 saw the continuation of our collaboration with the Scandinavian College Fair – Nordic Tour. This event was co-organized by the College Council and the Commission, with support from the US Embassy. In addition, the Commercial College of Iceland provided an excellent venue for the fair and AMÍS generously funded a reception in honor of the US college representatives who attended.

Around 400 participants attended the fair, a 33% increase over the inaugural fair in 2013. Attendees had the opportunity to meet with representatives of 17 US universities and listen to a wide variety of expert lectures on topics, including Icelandic student loans for US study, acquiring a student visa, how to write a winning college application, and tips for applying to graduate school. University representatives were impressed with the high quality of students who attended the fair.



## 2. Advising statistics

### A. Advising Center FY2014

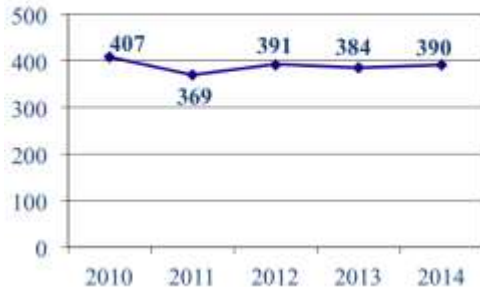


Website visitors: 7499

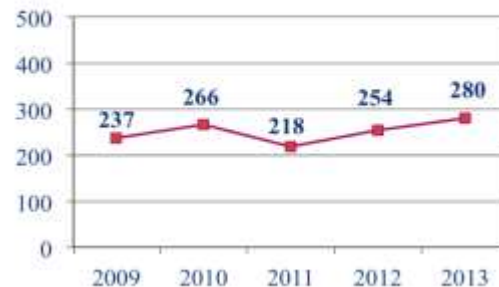


## B. EducationUSA statistics on Iceland 2014

**ICELANDIC STUDENTS IN THE U.S.**



**U.S. STUDENTS IN ICELAND**



**ICELANDIC STUDENTS IN THE U.S.**

Year	# of Students
2009/2010 Academic Year	407
2013/2014 Academic Year	390
5-Year % Change	-4.2%

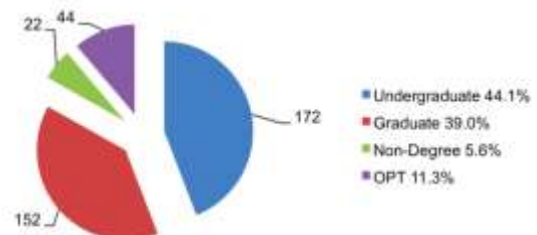
**U.S. STUDY ABROAD IN ICELAND**

Year	# of Students
2011/2012 Academic Year	254
2012/2013 Academic Year	280
1-Year % Change	+10.2%

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT BREAKDOWN**

Type of Institution	% of Students
4-Year Institutions	87.5%
2-year Community Colleges	12.5%

**ICELANDIC STUDENTS BY LEVEL**



**STUDENTS BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION**

Level of Study	% at Public Institutions	% at Private Institutions
Undergraduate	57.5%	42.5%
Graduate	41.1%	58.9%

### IMPORTANT TRENDS AND HIGHLIGHTS

- The U.S. is the 2<sup>nd</sup> study abroad destination for Icelandic students following Denmark. (Source: UNESCO 2012)
- Iceland has the highest proportion of graduate students in the U.S. of any of the Nordic countries.
- Columbia University, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and Auburn University were the top 3 host institutions of Icelandic students in the U.S. during 2013/14 academic year.

Data Source: Open Doors 2014 report, published by the Institute of International Education supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs

### III. ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

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The Fulbright Alumni Association in Iceland (FFSI) is an important partner of the Fulbright Commission. Founded in 2008, the Association has from the outset played an active role in fostering a sense of community among grant recipients. Alumni Board meetings are generally held at the Commission offices, with Commission and US Embassy participation.

A major milestone was reached in the work of the Alumni Association in 2014. After working very hard in the past years to start its fundraising efforts on behalf of Fulbright, the association was for the first time able to donate funds to the Commission. The donation, which covered expenses for half of a one-year grant, enabled the Commission to add one Icelandic student to the grantee group for 2014-2015. The Commission is very grateful for the Alumni Association's hard work and dedication.

Alumni activities in FY 2014 included the following events:

- The Alumni Association invited US grantees on an excursion to the Chairman's farm in South Iceland in October 2013. Grantees had an opportunity to see some of Iceland's spectacular rural landscapes, get to know Icelandic horses and sheepdogs, and enjoy a farmhouse meal.
- The Alumni Association hosted its annual Thanksgiving fundraising dinner in November 2013. Fulbright alumna Ambassador Sigríður Snævarr was the keynote speaker. A raffle was held to raise money for Fulbright, with many Icelandic companies donating fabulous prizes.
- The annual meeting was held in January at the Commission, where Ragnhildur Sigurðardóttir, PhD in ecology from Yale, was re-elected Chairman for 2014.
- Two events were held under the Alumni Talk Series:
  - Dr. Sigurdur Reynir Gíslason, PhD in geochemistry from Johns Hopkins University, gave a talk on the global carbon cycle, the subject of his recent book.
  - Dr. Sigríður Kristjánsdóttir, PhD in urban planning, who participated in a summer geology program at the University of Minnesota, invited guests on a walk through the city center, titled "Reykjavik – planned or not".

In addition to these events, Alumni Board members participate in a number of Commission and Embassy activities each year.



Alumni Thanksgiving, November 2013



## IV. BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

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### 1. Fulbright Board of Directors

#### *Honorary Co-Chairs:*

***Illugi Gunnarsson, Minister of Education and Culture***

***Luis E. Arreaga, US Ambassador to Iceland (until end November 2013)***

#### *Icelandic Board members:*

Dr. Margrét Jónsdóttir Njarðvík **Chairman of the Board**, PhD in Spanish language, Fulbright student program alumna, CEO of Mundo

Bryndís Brandsdóttir Research professor, Science Institute, University of Iceland, Fulbright scholar program alumna

Jóhannes Thórdarson M.Arch, partner at Gláma Kím Architects and former Dean, Department of Design and Architecture, Iceland Academy of the Arts

Dr. Fridrika Hardardóttir PhD immunology, Director, International Office, University of Iceland

Alternate:

Ríkardur Ríkardsson M.Sc. electrical engineering, Director of Business Development, Landsvirkjun National Power Company

#### *US Board members:*

Anna Benassi **Vice-Chairman of the Board**, Translator and musician

Marcy Brown **Treasurer**, Consular Officer, US Embassy

Paul Cunningham Public Affairs Officer, US Embassy

Paula Gould CMO, GreenQloud

Alternate:

Dr. Albert Vernon Smith PhD biology, Director of Statistical Genetics, Icelandic Heart Association, Assistant Professor, University of Iceland



Fulbright Board members: the Chairman with Paul O'Friel and Paula Gould with husband at the Alumni Thanksgiving, Paul Cunningham speaking at the Design March event and Albert Vernon Smith deep in thought during a board meeting

The Board of Directors has important responsibilities to carry out the goals of the bilateral agreement between Iceland and the US and to realize long-term program objectives. A major responsibility of the Board involves the selection of grant recipients, which includes reading grant applications and interviewing candidates. In addition, the Board oversees the work of the Commission and members participate in Commission activities. The Board works closely with the ED, and individual Board members, who volunteer their time and expertise, are instrumental in achieving the goals of the Commission. The Board met five times during FY2014; in October, November, December, January and April. Between meetings, consultations between the ED and the Board took place as necessary.

Warm thanks go to Paul Cunningham and Bryndís Brandsdóttir, who left the Board at the end of FY2014. These individuals did a great job in their years with the Commission. While they will be sorely missed, they will no doubt remain strong allies and advocates of Fulbright.

## 2. Fulbright Commission Staff

The Commission staff consists of the Executive Director and an adviser/administrative officer. The adviser held a 70% position during the fiscal year due to budgetary constraints. The adviser/admin position was held by two temporary employees during FY2014, Greta Ósk Óskarsdóttir, who filled the position from October to December 2013 and Tatiana Dimitrova, who stepped in for one year starting in January 2014.

It should be noted that the Commission's goal is to return the advisor's post to a full-time, permanent position as soon as the financial situation allows. This will be necessary if the Commission is to continue to provide an adequate level of service and fulfill its commitments vis-à-vis the contracting parties.

### *Conferences, meetings and training*



Fulbright Commission in Helsinki

The meeting was an opportunity to compare working methods and practices, discuss common problems and challenges, learn from each other and develop Nordic Fulbright cooperation, not least regarding the Arctic. All staff members of the Finnish and Norwegian Commissions took part in the meeting, along with the EDs from Iceland and Sweden.

Finally, there was a European ED meeting in Prague in April 2014. The meeting was part of regular consultations between Commissions and with the US State Department. The main discussions centered on budget issues, but a number of additional topics were addressed.



ED meeting in Prague

The adviser attended an EducationUSA training seminar for European advisers in September in Tblisi, Georgia.

"The Fulbright Program is extraordinary. I know that as the father of a Fulbright Scholar, and I know it as a Secretary of State who travels and meets enormous numbers of foreign leaders – in parliaments and palaces – whose first connection to America was through Fulbright".

Secretary of State John Kerry

On the occasion of the Fulbright Program being awarded the 2014 Prince of Asturias Award for International Cooperation

## **V. FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

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Below is the Financial Statement for FY2014, including a Statement by the Executive Director, Auditor's Report, Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Status of Funds Report, Notes to the Financial Statements, and Inventory of Non-Expendable Property. The Statement is prepared by the Commission's accountant and Executive Director and audited by the Icelandic National Audit Office (INAO), an independent body operating under the auspices of the Icelandic Parliament, Althingi. Its main role is to audit the financial statements of central government bodies and to monitor and promote improvements in the financial management of the State and in the use of public funds. It also undertakes the auditing of the accounts of entities that operate under the auspices of the State or provide statutory services or undertake other projects in exchange for payment or contributions from the State Treasury.

The status, role, and mandate of the INAO are laid down in the National Audit Act of 1997. The Office also takes into account the standards and guidelines of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), as well as the standards of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) and the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), insofar as these are applicable to state auditing.

The Presidential Committee of Althingi appoints the Auditor General for a period of six years, and the Auditor General employs the staff. The staff must be completely independent of the ministries and organizations they audit.

ICELAND - UNITED STATES  
EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION

Financial Statement and Balance Sheet  
for the Budget Year 2013 - 2014 (FY 2014)  
Amounts are in ISK

March 2015

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## Joint statement by the Executive Director and Chairman of the Board

In FY2014, the Icelandic government contribution, received from the Ministry of Education, amounted to 14.5 million ISK, the same as the previous fiscal year. In addition, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs provided 2.308.600 ISK. The US government monetary contribution decreased by 3.5%, following a 10% decrease over the past two years, bringing the US contribution to 213,374 USD. Both governments provide additional funding or in-kind contributions, which when included, bring the government funding ratio to 61% US and 39% Icelandic. This does not include various US government expenditures which are not part of the Commission's annual accounts.

Grant commitments made in one year, may be paid out in the same fiscal year or they may be partially or wholly paid in the next fiscal year. For FY2014, the Commission awarded 7 grants to Icelandic graduate students, 2 Fulbright grants and 1 joint Fulbright-ÁMI grant to US students, 2 grants to Icelandic scholars, 3 grants to US scholars and 1 inter-country grant to a US scholar. In addition, 1 US student received a Fulbright-mtvU award to Iceland and 1 Icelandic student took part in a summer institute. 2 Icelandic students received a Boas award. 4 US Specialists visited Iceland in FY2014. In FY2013, the Commission awarded 6 Fulbright grants to Icelandic graduate students, 5 Fulbright grants and 1 joint Fulbright-ÁMI grant to US students, 1 grant to an Icelandic scholar and 3 grants to US scholars. In addition 1 Icelandic student received a Boas award, 1 took part in a summer institute and 1 Icelandic scholar received a Scholar-In-Residence award.

The Commission accounts are based on cash accounting, and thus show only funds received and dispersed through the Commission accounts during the fiscal year in question. Receivables and debt are not shown, but these are generally small amounts. Revenue of the fiscal year from 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2014 amounted to close to 48 million ISK, with expenditures at approximately 45.6 million ISK, the balance sheet shows a slight surplus. When taking into account that the MFA contribution is earmarked for use next year, there is an actual deficit of approximately 1 million ISK, which is not evident due to cash accounting. This is covered by funds on hand from the previous year.

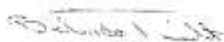
This year we continue to develop the financial statement to include non-cash contributions, both governmental and non-governmental. For FY2014 this includes an Icelandic government contribution through the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic language studies and other in-kind contributions from the public and private sectors. This allows the financial statement to better reflect actual financial value. This is done in consultation with the State Auditor and only contributions that are verifiable and quantifiable are included.


However, there are still important contributions, which are not part of the financial statement. These substantial awards are part of the Commission's grant programs, but are funded directly through Fulbright cooperating agencies and other partners. These non-cash contributions provide substantial additional value to the grants program, which is not captured in the annual accounts. It is important to provide information on these contributions, to give a more accurate picture of the Commission's value. Below is a list of non-cash contributions not included in the annual accounts, limited to direct contributions that are quantifiable. **This amounts to over 7 million ISK in grant and grant-supporting funds, which is not part of the income statement.** The figures below are documented, but are not part of the audit, and are published under the responsibility of the ED. These figures do not include various additional indirect benefits such as additional grants and scholarships received by students, which can be at least partly attributed to their Fulbright status, and amount to close to an additional 40.000 USD.

Non-cash contributions not included in the financial statement	USD
Specialist grants paid by CIES	27.834
Gateway seminars paid by IIE	3.167
Fulbright enrichment seminars paid by IIE	6.997
Frank Boas Scholarship for International Legal Studies at Harvard Law	20.000
<b>Total quantifiable non-cash contributions not included in annual accounts</b>	<b>57.998</b>

As Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission in Iceland and Chairman of the Board in FY2014, we hereby confirm and accept the financial statements for FY 2014.

27 March 2015



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## Auditor's report

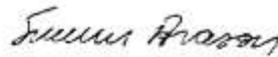
To the board of the Iceland - United States Educational Commission

I have audited the accompanying general purpose financial statements of The Iceland - United States Educational Commission, as of and for the financial year ended September 30th 2014, as listed in the table of contents. This financial statement is the responsibility of the management. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on my audit.

I conducted my audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. These standards require that I plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. I believe that my audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In my opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Iceland - United States Educational Commission, at September 30 2014, and the results of its operations and the cash flows of its proprietary fund types for the year then ended, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles in Iceland.

National Audit Office, 27 March 2015



Svelinn Arason,  
Auditor general.

## Iceland - United States Educational Commission

**INCOME STATEMENT**

October 1 2013 - September 30 2014

	FY 2014 ISK	FY 2013 ISK
<b>Revenues:</b>		
Allocation, US government.....	27.263.114	28.721.663
Allocation, Icelandic government.....	14.500.000	14.500.000
Other contributions, US government.....	2.763.384	151.428
Other contributions, Icelandic government.....	2.421.400	0
Other contributions.....	788.150	2.388.839
<b>Total revenues:</b>	<b>47.736.048</b>	<b>45.761.930</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>		
Program costs, Scholar program.....	4.952.533	5.086.954
Program costs, Student program.....	19.873.918	20.910.900
Program costs, Other program.....	340.271	352.130
Salary and salary related costs.....	13.603.488	13.234.036
Rent and utilities.....	3.122.980	3.043.960
Services.....	1.120.200	1.141.474
Supplies.....	353.090	218.698
Travel, training and transport .....	783.119	807.714
Communication and PR.....	319.016	496.881
Grant supporting activities.....	1.154.670	1.641.708
<b>Total expenditures:</b>	<b>45.623.285</b>	<b>46.934.455</b>
<b>Income (deficit) before interest expense/revenue</b>	<b>2.112.763</b>	<b>(1.172.525)</b>
Interest revenue.....	122.080	143.817
Exchange rate (loss)/profit.....	(726.136)	185.971
<b>Income for the year</b>	<b>1.508.707</b>	<b>(842.737)</b>

**NON-CASH CONTRIBUTIONS**

October 1 2013 - September 30 2014

	ISK	ISK
<b>Grant and grant-supporting</b>		
Government grant for Icelandic studies, Árnastofnun.....	1.160.000	912.000
Specialist cost-share from Icelandic institutions.....	1.542.415	
US Embassy contributions.....	250.788	
<b>Total non-cash grant and grant-supporting contributions</b>	<b>2.953.203</b>	<b>912.000</b>
<b>Administrative</b>		
Rent discount.....	451.881	442.377
Auditing services .....	480.000	480.000
<b>Total non-cash administrative contributions</b>	<b>931.881</b>	<b>922.377</b>
<b>Total non-cash contributions</b>	<b>3.885.084</b>	<b>1.834.377</b>

## Iceland - United States Educational Commission

**BALANCE SHEET**

September 30 2014

	FY 2014 ISK	FY 2013 ISK
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash (USD) .....	6.954.332	4.499.458
Cash (ISK).....	4.599.055	5.480.942
	<u>11.553.387</u>	<u>9.980.400</u>
<b>Trust account</b>		
Alumni - Trust account.....	<u>49.264</u>	<u>275.692</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u><b>11.602.651</b></u>	<u><b>10.256.092</b></u>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Income-tax deduction .....	273.883	270.177
Pension fund deduction.....	198.774	138.200
	<u>472.657</u>	<u>408.377</u>
<b>Trust account</b>		
Alumni - Trust account.....	<u>49.264</u>	<u>275.692</u>
<b>Equity</b>		
Funds on hand October 1.....	9.572.023	10.414.760
Income for the year.....	1.508.707	(842.737)
Funds on hand September 30.....	<u>11.080.730</u>	<u>9.572.023</u>
<b>Total Liabilities and Equity</b>	<u><b>11.602.651</b></u>	<u><b>10.256.092</b></u>



## Iceland - United States Educational Commission

**STATUS OF FUNDS REPORT**

For Quarter ending: September 30 2014

		2014 ISK
1.	FUNDS ON HAND OCTOBER 1 2013.....	9.980.400
	-Current liabilities .....	-408.377
		<b>9.572.023</b>
2.	RECEIPTS: CURRENT FISCAL YEAR	
	A. Current Quarter Receipts:	
	1. Received from U.S. Mission.....	893.382
	2. Host Government Contribution.....	9.558.600
	3. Other Contributions.....	0
	4. Other Funds received.....	0
	5. Interests on Deposits.....	-21.737
	6. Exchange fluctuation.....	-1.157.028
	Total Received Current Quarter	9.273.217
	B. Total Previous Quarter receipts:	
	1. Received from U.S. Mission.....	29.133.116
	2. Host Government Contribution.....	7.362.800
	3. Other Contributions.....	788.150
	4. Other Funds received.....	0
	5. Interests on Deposits.....	143.817
	6. Exchange fluctuation.....	430.892
	Total Received Previous Quarter	37.858.775
	C. Total Funds Received Current Fiscal Year	<b>47.131.992</b>
3.	DISBURSEMENT: CURRENT FISCAL YEAR	
	A. Current Quarter Disbursement	
	1. Administration.....	3.962.614
	2. Counseling.....	1.458.115
	3. Grant supporting activities.....	445.635
	4. Program.....	13.465.495
	Total Disbursement Current Quarter	19.331.859
	B. Total Previous Quarters:	
	1. Administration.....	9.074.612
	2. Counseling.....	4.806.552
	3. Grant supporting activities.....	709.035
	4. Program.....	11.701.227
	Total Disbursement Previous Quarter	26.291.426
	C. Total Disbursement to Date	<b>45.623.285</b>
4.	FUNDS ON HAND SEPTEMBER 30 2014.....	11.553.387
	-Current liabilities.....	-472.657
		<b>11.080.730</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

1. The accounting records that have been kept include Journal, Status of Funds Report, Program Status Report, Grants Accounts and Fund Requirement Reports.
2. The accounts are based on cash accounting.
3. The bank balances as per statements from Íslandsbanki hf., accounts no. 560169 and 405300, have been verified at September 30 2014 as ISK 2.311.790 and ISK 2.287.265, taking into account payments at the end of the fiscal year.
4. A dollar account no. 102882 in Íslandsbanki hf. has been verified as at September 30 2014 USD 57.360,05, or ISK 6.954.332 (exchange rate booked at daily rate of 121,24).
5. There is no petty cash.
6. The Icelandic government contribution for 2014, of 14,5 million ISK, was paid in two installments, early year and summer. The US government contribution for FY2013 was used in FY2014.
7. Other US government contributions include an allocation from EducationUSA, funding in connection with the Summer Institute and the first payment for the mtvU grant.
8. Other Icelandic government contributions include the MFA Arctic grant and a small payment from the Ministry of Education for a grant-supporting activity.
9. Other contributions includes a gift of 450.000 ISK from the Fulbright Iceland Alumni Association and other smaller contributions.
10. Alumni - Trust account: This account is kept in trust for the Alumni Association. The funds do not belong to the Fulbright Commission.
11. Awards granted in one fiscal year are in some cases paid out the same year, in other cases they are paid out in part or in full in the next fiscal year.

US Scholars	4.952.533
Icelandic Scholars	0
US Students	9.079.843
Icelandic students	10.794.075
Other grant programs	340.271

12. Although not part of the annual accounts, an inventory of non-expendable property is maintained by the Commission and has been updated for FY2014. Current value is 1.437.386 ISK.
13. Non-expendable property is insured for ISK 6.115.801 (fire, burglary, etc.) from July 1 2014 to June 30 2015.
14. The bonding company, Sjóvá - Almennar tryggingar hf. confirms that Ms. Belinda Theriault has been bonded to the amount of USD 25.000. This insurance is valid for the period from July 1 to December 31 and renewed annually.
15. Total cash contributions from the US government amount to 30.026.498 ISK, while the Icelandic government contributions amount to 16.921.400 ISK, or a ratio of 64% to 36%.
16. Ratio of administrative costs to grant costs, shown first using only cash expenditures. The second ratio includes non-cash expenditures included in the income statement and is therefore a more accurate indicator.

	ISK.	%
Grants and grant supporting activities	26.321.392	58%
Administrative costs	19.301.893	42%
Total costs	45.623.285	100%
	ISK.	%
Grants and grant supporting activities	29.274.595	59%
Administrative costs	20.233.774	41%
Total costs	49.508.369	100%



