



FULBRIGHT Iceland

ICELAND - UNITED STATES
EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION

Annual Report FY 2020

1 October 2019 – 30 September 2020



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Cover photos: Dr. Lára Jóhannsdóttir at the FAI II final meeting; Fulbright-NSF Arctic fellow Greta Wells at Móskarð

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



FY2020 started off very much in accordance with expectations, but half-way through everything obviously changed. The spring was characterized by uncertainty and constant reassessment, and the summer and fall by putting new plans into action. Throughout, the Commission put a premium on constant and consistent communication with grantees, making sure that their interests and safety were at the forefront of any decision-making.

We regret having had to cut short grants or postpone them. It was also difficult to observe that grantees were unable to get the full experience of the exchange, as many of our grantees who were able to stay on grant had to comply with lockdown rules and other safety measures that curtailed their ability to interact with the host community. Fortunately, no grants were cancelled, although some grantees-select decided to withdraw or re-apply later. I am so proud of all our grantees, both U.S. and Icelandic, for the way they handled the disappointments and challenges thrown their way during the pandemic. Despite everything, we had a successful year, all things considered, with grantees finishing or almost finishing their Fulbright projects with enthusiasm and good grace. And while the start of our 2020-2021 program was drastically curtailed, we are moving forward with determination in the new year.

The turmoil of the last months has inevitably put a strain on our administrative capabilities. Additional work due to program suspension, changes in grant periods and working with grantees to find acceptable solutions have all been resource intensive, but the Commission gladly meets these challenges. We have also managed to strengthen our grant program as we look to the future and continue to ensure that Fulbright Iceland is taking into account the priorities of our stakeholders. In FY2020 we laid the groundwork for two important initiatives. Firstly, three Icelandic ministries decided to jointly provide funding to enhance Iceland's participation in Fulbright Arctic Initiative III. Secondly, the U.S. Embassy is partnering with the Commission on a health exchange that is directly related to the current pandemic. Additionally, through an initial private contribution, we are also proud to be able to now offer extra funding that will be available for disabled U.S. scholars. This is an important development as we work to lower barriers and promote diversity in our programs.

In February we managed to roll out our new Commission website and I must say we are quite happy with the results. We also started a new project to highlight grantees through video profiles. The first one was premiered at the same time as the website was launched.

Let me thank all our partners and stakeholders for getting through this year with us, for working to make the best of the situation and for seizing opportunities to support the Fulbright Program. Please be assured that we at Fulbright Iceland are committed to staying true to our mission to promote mutual understanding through scientific, academic and cultural cooperation, thereby enhancing Iceland-U.S. relations and our collective capabilities to greet the future from a position of strength.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Belinda Theriault". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Belinda Theriault, Executive Director

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN



What a year it has been. We started out with a strong schedule of activities for FY2020 and a busy fall semester. In the beginning of 2020, we were forging ahead with no idea what was right around the corner. By mid-March we found ourselves in crisis mode. Fortunately, the Commission was well prepared to meet challenges, both financially and administratively. The Board has been in frequent contact with the Executive Director throughout the crisis, monitoring developments and providing input. We as a Board have emphasized the importance of a fully bilateral approach to the crisis, as the Commission is a bi-national entity, answerable to both the Icelandic and U.S. governments.

I had the pleasure of meeting with some of our U.S. grantees over the summer and it was wonderful to hear how much they appreciated the strong relationship with the Commission, the support and the communication provided throughout the crisis, despite the fact that their grants were cut short. We were also all relieved that our Icelandic students were able to finish their academic year, even if the circumstances were drastically altered. Our Icelandic scholars did return home without having an opportunity to complete their projects, as research facilities were no longer available, and for this the Board is sorry. Ultimately, governments and grantees themselves had to put safety and wellbeing at the forefront of decision-making and decisions often had to be made with incomplete information and great uncertainty.

While we are not out of the woods yet, the Fulbright Program has proven to be adaptable and capable of meeting such an unprecedented challenge. This is the good news. That does not mean that we do not remain concerned. At a time when international cooperation is so crucial, we are still faced with massive uncertainty. While some of our grant programs are smaller this year, others are at full capacity, and the pandemic has led to various additional costs and resource needs, many of which will only become evident in FY2021 and beyond. The crisis has also led Commissions to realize more than ever the need for adequate contingency funds.

While we have met the challenges of the past months somewhat successfully, we have further challenges ahead. We must make it absolutely clear that we remain committed to a strong Fulbright program that is adaptable and solution-oriented, that we are ready to enhance successful elements of the program and are open to innovation and experimentation when appropriate.

Currently, the Icelandic government is enhancing Iceland's participation in the successful Fulbright Arctic Initiative, while the U.S. Embassy is providing funding for various Commission projects, including an exciting new initiative that will directly address pandemic-related issues. As a former ambassador of Iceland to the U.S., I can say unequivocally that Fulbright remains an important pillar of the bilateral relationship. The Fulbright Iceland Board of Directors looks forward to working to ensure that the program continues to evolve so that we may secure its continued success.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Hjálmar W. Hannesson'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Hjálmar W. Hannesson, Chairman of the Board FY2020

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, as well as PhD students who undertake shorter research visits to the US, Icelandic scholars who are awarded grants to undertake research in the U.S. U.S. students who are awarded Fulbright grants to enter a study program or conduct research and U.S. scholars who teach and/or conduct research in Iceland. In addition, the Commission provides opportunities for Icelandic institutions to receive U.S. scholars for shorter periods through the Fulbright Specialist Program and Inter-Country Travel Grant Program. Finally, the Commission offers various opportunities outside the formal Fulbright Program as Fulbright Commission Iceland grants. Additional ad-hoc programs may be implemented in given years.

The Commission has grant partnership agreements with the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the U.S. National Science Foundation. The Commission administers the Boas Award for LLM studies at Harvard and the Cobb Family Fellowship for graduate studies at the University of Miami. The Commission also has MoUs with a few US universities.



Board meeting, December 2019.

In addition to the grant programs and advising activities, the Commission has a wider mandate with regard to enhancing the bilateral U.S.-Iceland relationship. To this end, the Commission undertakes a variety of activities, but these were curtailed in FY2020 due to the pandemic.

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, D.C. Below is a list of grantees for 2020-2021, although only a couple of these grants were able to commence before the end of FY2020. The vast majority were postponed until the spring semester of 2021. The second list shows grantees for 2019-2020. These grants primarily took place in FY2020.

Due to the pandemic, the program was greatly affected from March 2020. In April, the US Department of State suspended the program for U.S. grantees worldwide. This meant that all grants that had been started were ended in April. Many U.S. grantees chose to stay in Iceland on their own, while some returned to the U.S. Those American scholars who had not yet started the grant period were allowed to defer to the 2020-2021 academic year. Most Icelandic students stayed in the U.S. and finished the academic year, although studies were online, while one student returned to Iceland and completed her degree program online. Icelandic scholars had their research periods cut short. Grantees received their full grants, irrespective of whether the grant period was cut short or not. While specialist grants took place in the fall of 2019, no specialist grants took place in 2020 and summer programs, including both EducationUSA Academy and Summer Institute grants, were cancelled. No Icelandic students and only two U.S. students started grants in the 2020 fall semester. The Commission is committed to the safety and interests of our grantees. Happily, most grants will move forward in the spring semester, although a couple will be deferred. We anticipate a full program in the coming year.

1. Grantees 2020-2021

	Field	Home	Host
Icelandic Visiting Student Researchers			
Birna G. Ásbjörnsdóttir	Medical Sciences	University of Iceland	Harvard Uni./Ma. General Hospital
Karen Birna Þorvaldsdóttir	Psychology	University of Akureyri	University of Michigan
Salvör Rafnsdóttir	Medical Sciences	University of Iceland	Johns Hopkins Uni.
U.S. Students			
Sadie Cook	Photography	Yale University	Iceland Uni. of the Arts
Nick Fry	Sustainable Energy	University of Montana	University of Reykjavik
-Fulbright-Ministry of Education and Culture			
Rachel Britton	Icelandic Language	SUNY College at Geneseo	University of Iceland
-Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Grant			
Corrie Nyquist	Biology	University of Minnesota	University of Iceland
U.S. Scholars			
Priscilla Barnes	Health Sciences	Indiana Uni. Bloomington	University of Iceland
-Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Grant			
Adam Booth	Geology	Portland State University	Icel. Ins. of Nat. History
Christine Palmer	Biology	Castleton University	Icel. Forest Research
Christopher Hamilton	Geology	University of Arizona	University of Iceland
Laura Watt	Environmental Science	Sonoma State University	Uni. Centre Westfjords
Lukas Danner	Political Science	Florida Int. University	University of Iceland
Russell Lansford	Biology	Uni. of S. California	S. Icel. Nat. Res. Cntr.
Sara Rathburn	Geology	Colorado State Uni.	University of Iceland
Skylar Young-Bayer	Fisheries	University of Maine	Freshwater Res. Instit.
-Fulbright-NSF Cyber Security and Critical Infrastructure			
Gregory Falco	Computer Science	MIT	University of Iceland
-Fulbright Global Scholar			
Farida Jalalzai	Political Science	Oklahoma State Uni.	University of Iceland

Two U.S. Scholars of the 2020-21 cohort were deferred until 2021-22 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Meeting with the new U.S. Embassy PAO, Patrick Geraghty



The ED of the Swedish Fulbright Commission, Eric Jönsson, visited with staff in fall 2019

2. Grantees 2019-2020

	Field	Home	Host
Icelandic Students			
Erna Vala Arnardóttir	Piano Performance	Iceland Uni. of the Arts	Uni. of S. California
Ingvi Hrannar Ómarsson	Education	University of Iceland	Stanford University
Kristján Páll Guðmundsson	History	University of Iceland	Columbia University
Sóley Kaldal	Global Affairs	University of Iceland	Yale University
Icelandic Scholars			
Árni Heimir Ingólfsson	Music History	Árni Magnússon Institute	Yale University
Gísli Kort Kristófersson	Psychiatric Nursing	University of Akureyri	University of Minnesota
- Fulbright Arctic Initiative			
Lára Jóhannsdóttir	Business	University of Iceland	Dartmouth College
U.S Students			
Joshua Rivers	Anthropology	University of Wisconsin	University of Iceland
Nicholas Borbely	Icelandic language	Beloit College	University of Iceland
Tiffany White	Language and Literature	UC Berkeley	University of Iceland
- Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Grant			
Adam Zimmer	Anthropology	Uni. of Massachusetts	University of Iceland
Greta Wells	Geography	University of Texas	University of Iceland
U.S. Scholars			
Jonathan Wilcox	English	University of Iowa	University of Iceland
Mary Hendrickson	Agriculture	University of Missouri	Agri. Uni. of Iceland
Barry Zellen	International Relations	Georgetown University	University of Akureyri
- Fulbright-NSF			
Darren Larsen	Geology	Occidental College	University of Iceland
Derek Doran	Computer Science	Wright State University	Reykjavik University
Michael Whitney	Oceanography	University of Connecticut	University of Iceland
- Fulbright-Ministry for Foreign Affairs			
Lauren Fields	Fisheries	NOAA	University of Akureyri
U.S. Specialists			
Anna Gotlib	Philosophy	CUNY, Brooklyn College	University of Iceland
Dennis Riege	Environmental Science	University of Maryland	Agricult. Uni. of Iceland
Jonathan Trent	Environmental Science	UC Santa Cruz	University of Akureyri
Other Fulbright Commission Iceland Grants			
- EducationUSA Academy			
Elísa Sverrisdóttir	College Preparation	Commercial College Icel.	St. Cloud State Uni.
Katrín Ósk Einarsdóttir	College Preparation	Reykjavik Junior College	University of Wisconsin
- Summer Institute			
Lenya Rún Taha Karim	Entrepr. & Econ. Dev't	University of Iceland	University of Tennessee
- Other			
Erlendur Sveinsson	Fulbright Iceland alumni collaboration grant		



Fulbright scholar Dr. Mary Hendrickson having an impromptu lunch with the Prime Minister at the Agricultural University.



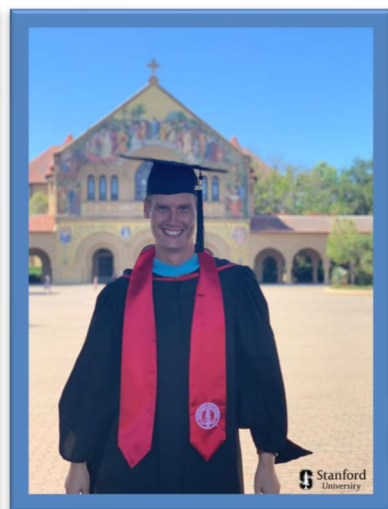
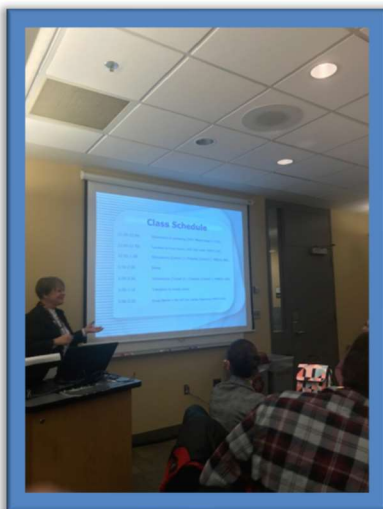
Fulbright scholar Dr. Lauren Fields touring in the north with her Fulbright buddy Sigthrúður Jóhannsdóttir

"I spent a semester in Iceland teaching Old English language, literature and culture. In addition to my teaching experience here, my bag of tricks for teaching the Icelandic sagas in Iowa has been thoroughly revitalized by four months of visiting sites important for Icelandic culture and viewing the country with the eyes of a medievalist. I have loved learning about contemporary Iceland and serving as an ambassador of US culture. And Fulbright offered me a web of connections beyond what I ever imagined. Iceland is a great place for any medievalist to visit, and Fulbright provides a wonderful framework for cultural exchange at its best."

Dr. Jonathan Wilcox (University of Iowa),
Fulbright scholar at the University of Iceland

"I developed a course on data driven cybersecurity, engaged in multiple research activities at the intersection of machine learning and cybersecurity, engaged with the broader Icelandic community at the government and public level and delivered a seminar course on cybersecurity planning and practice to working professionals in Iceland. The project had many successful outcomes despite the abbreviated project period due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of publications are in the works, based on research performed or interactions with remote research teams during the Fulbright scholar grant."

Dr. Derek Doran (Wright State University), Fulbright-NSF scholar in cyber-security and critical infrastructure at Reykjavik University



Icelandic grantees: Dr. Gísli Kort Kristófersson giving a lecture at the University of Minnesota, student Sóley Kaldal with her children at Yale, and Ingvi Hranar Ómarsson graduating from Stanford.

3. Summary of Grant-Supporting Activities

A. Events for Icelandic grantees

In spring 2020, two orientation meetings were held for grantees leaving for the U.S. for the 2019-2020 academic year, one in March and one in April. The latter was an online meeting. Unfortunately, the Commission was unable to hold a reception for Icelandic grantees in May, as is customary. The pandemic also meant that all spring Fulbright enrichment seminars and workshops were cancelled.

“The main objective of the project was to work with the faculty of the University of Minnesota in the adaptation of mindfulness-based interventions for persons with mental illness as well as future research proposals and dissemination of already executed studies in the area of mindfulness and mental health. I was able to start this work despite Covid-19, although of course I did not get as far as I would have liked due to the epidemic.

I especially think it was helpful for the students I interacted with to hear how the healthcare systems in the two countries differ, and what we could learn from each other. I think understanding both the limitations of universal healthcare and its strengths really helped them to think about health care delivery differently.

Spending time at such an esteemed institution has improved my self-image as a scholar and confidence in the direction my research trajectory is heading. I got significant support from senior colleagues in the US to forge my own path as a scholar and researcher. This was something that I needed and appreciated greatly.

Dr. Gísli Kort Kristófersson (University of Akureyi), Fulbright scholar at the University of Minnesota

“The cohort of the Learning, Design & Technology program (LDT) at Stanford consisted of 22 people from 11 different countries from 5 continents. Diversity of background, experience and ideas is probably the strongest and most important aspect of the program. This is where I learned the most, from our conversations and activities in and out of the classroom.

I had Intended to go to Washington, D.C. for a Fulbright Enrichment Seminar in the spring, but the event was cancelled. This was, of course, a huge disappointment since I was looking forward to meeting and learning from fellow Fulbright grantees. But I understand the decision and think it was the correct one.

I have to give huge credit to Stanford for the way they handled their pandemic response with great communication, as well as precautionary and early reaction. Teaching moved online with Zoom, Flipgrid, websites, Mural and other online tools. Teachers sent material home to us so we were able to perform experiments and participate fully in all activities. Being a student in a fully online environment was a great experience for me as a teacher. Since the cohort had spent 2 quarters together, we had very good connections and were able to host game nights, trivia nights, Zoom happy hour, social distance meetings at parks etc. which made things easier. I was able to reach my goals, although Covid-19 changed my MA final project greatly since visiting schools and conducting user tests for the project was not possible, but I adapted and navigated the new reality.”

Ingvi Hrannar Ómarsson, Fulbright fellow at Stanford University.

B. Events for American grantees

The Commission organizes a variety of events for U.S. grantees through its enrichment program. The program's monthly grantee events are tailored to give grantees an opportunity to explore their host country, gain insight into Icelandic society, culture, and customs, and foster a sense of community among the grantees and between the grantees and the Commission. A member of the Fulbright Board often joins in grantee events, providing a welcome opportunity for Board members to get to know the grantees they have selected. Two grantee presentation events were hosted by the Commission in December, where departing U.S. scholars talked about their projects and experiences in Iceland.

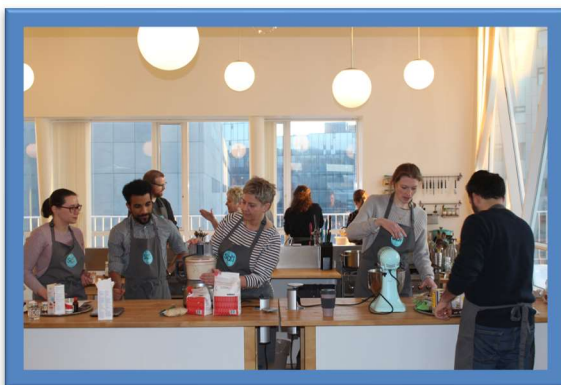


Visiting the Parliament of Iceland

Sadly, the Commission had to cancel enrichment events as of April 2020 due to the pandemic. This meant that U.S. grantee presentations in the spring had to be cancelled as well. Since the program was suspended rather abruptly, there was no possibility to organize a virtual event, but grantees did submit a final report.

Towards the end of the fiscal year, in August/September 2019, the Commission traditionally welcomes a new group of U.S. grantees. The largest group usually arrives in the fall, even though some grantees arrive later in the academic year. This past fall was very different. Only grantees in degree programs were allowed to start in the fall semester, so Iceland only welcomed two grantees at that time. They were given a somewhat shorter version of orientation. The majority of U.S. grantees arrived in the beginning of 2021, when scholars and non-degree seeking students were allowed to start their grants. Thus, our main orientation session was postponed to January 2021.

The Commission was able to send one U.S. grantee to a diversity seminar in Amsterdam in early March 2020 but plans to send another grantee to a seminar in Helsinki in spring 2020 were cancelled.



Pre-pandemic enrichment: Enjoying a cooking class where grantees learned to make Icelandic Christmas cookies; A night of opera at the National Theater

C. Enrichment activities in FY2020:

October	An evening of opera at the National Theatre
November	Visit to Alþingi, the Parliament of Iceland, and coffee with Member of Parliament Ólafur Þór Gunnarsson
December	Christmas cookie baking class Scholar presentations
January	Visit to the U.S. Embassy Mini orientation session
February	Excursion to a handball game
March	Outing to the town of Hafnarfjörður
September	Orientation for incoming U.S. grantees



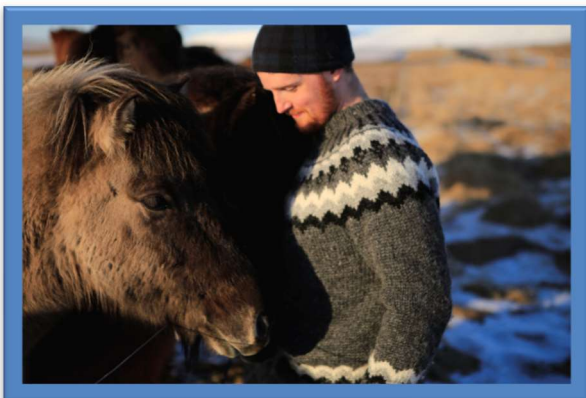
Grantees enjoying their first-ever handball match (pre-pandemic).

"This project set out to explore what future fisheries management may look like in the Arctic. The results will be presented to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Additionally, I may compile the results from this study into a white paper as a resource for future negotiations on fisheries management in this region. I am grateful to Fulbright and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for granting me this opportunity to undertake an academic exercise in understanding management of an emerging high seas area, build up my own toolbox and skills for international fisheries, learn about the domestic fisheries management strategies of my host nation, and make connections for future collaboration and research when I return home".

Dr. Lauren Fields (NOAA), Fulbright-MFA Arctic scholar at the University of Akureyri

"I developed and taught a course in environmental sciences and agriculture titled "Sustainable Agriculture: The Intersection of Agroecology and Sustainable Rural Development". In addition, I developed a graduate readings course for a newly entering PhD student. A personal goal of the project was to broaden my own perspective on the possibilities of new food and farming systems in rural areas through co-learning with AUI faculty and students. This knowledge will inform my own teaching and research in the U.S. I have also established contacts with the West Iceland Rural Development Office for collaborative research in resilience and rural development. I anticipate further cooperation with AUI in terms of international student engagement as well."

Dr. Mary Hendrickson (University of Montana), Fulbright scholar at the Agricultural University of Iceland



Adam getting to know the unique breed of Icelandic horse



Greta on a hike in Þórsmörk, a nature reserve in South Iceland

D. Fulbright breakout session at the Arctic Circle Conference

As part of its commitment to Arctic scholarship and research, the Fulbright Commission and its grantees have actively participated in the Arctic Circle Conference over the past years. The annual conference in October 2019 was no exception. The important work being done by U.S. Fulbright scholars in the Iceland program was highlighted during the Fulbright breakout session. The session was chaired by the Commission Executive Director, where ten participating scholars had an opportunity to present their research. Scholars gave short introductions, followed by roundtable discussions which allowed for meaningful interaction with the audience. The following scholars participated:



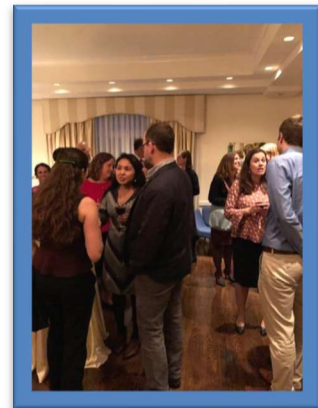
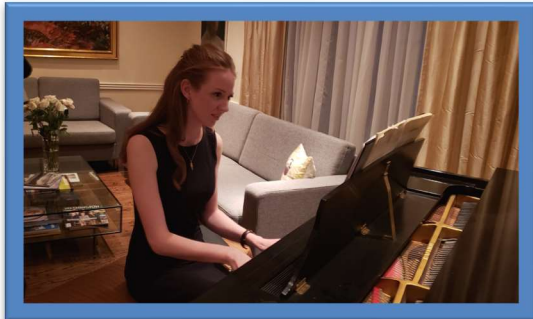
- Adam Netzer Zimmer, PhD student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Fulbright-NSF Arctic research fellow at the University of Iceland
Project: Understanding Inequality through Icelandic Anatomical Collections
- Nicholas Robinson, PhD student, University of California Davis, Fulbright-NSF Arctic research fellow at the University of Iceland
Project: Diversification and Sustainability of Subarctic Agriculture and Food Systems
- Greta Wells, PhD candidate, University of Texas Austin, Fulbright-NSF Arctic research fellow at the University of Iceland
Project: Reconstructing Glacial Lake Outburst Floods along the Hvítá River and Gullfoss Waterfall, Iceland
- Dr. Lauren Fields, Foreign Affairs Specialist, NOAA, Fulbright-MFA Arctic scholar at the University of Akureyri
Project: Fisheries Management: Iceland and the Central Arctic Ocean Agreement
- Dr. Lára Jóhannsdóttir, Professor, University of Iceland, FAI scholar
Project: The Role of Non-Life Insurance Companies in Economic Development in the Arctic
- Dr. Soili Nysten-Haarala, Professor, University of Lapland, FAI scholar
Project: comparing corporate social responsibility and benefit sharing schemes of resource extracting industries in the Arctic
- Dr. Josée Lavoie, Professor, University of Manitoba, Director, Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing
Project: Development of optimal models of contracting in health in Indigenous environments
- Dr. Katie Cueva, Adjunct Assistant Professor, University of Alaska, Anchorage, FAI scholar
Project: Community health workers in the circumpolar north
- Dr. Gwen Healy Akearok, Co-Founder, Executive and Scientific Director, Quajigiartiit Health Research Center
Project: Health research conducted locally, by northerners, and with communities, in a supportive, safe, culturally responsive, and ethical environment
- Dr. Christina Larsen, Research Director Center for Public Health (Greenland)
Project: Understanding health among indigenous populations in the Arctic
- The Executive Directors of Fulbright Canada and Iceland discussed Fulbright Arctic grant opportunities.

E. Fulbright Arctic Initiative II final meeting



The final meeting of FAI II was held in Washington, D.C. in the last week of October 2019. The Icelandic Ambassador, Bergdís Ellertsdóttir, hosted the main reception for this Fulbright event, and the Commission brought Fulbright fellow Erna Vala Arnardóttir from USC to D.C. to give a piano performance, which was a highlight of the evening. The reception was attended by FAI scholars, members of the

FFSB, representatives of the State Department, Fulbright Commission EDs, IIE and NSF representatives, Fulbright Iceland Arctic alumni and various other guests who are involved with Arctic work.



4. Communication and Outreach

Communication with a wide variety of stakeholders is a priority in Commission work. A major development in FY2020 was the launch of the new Commission website. Much effort was put into creating a fresh look and a site that is easy to navigate. At the same time the Commission introduced its first grantee video profile, which is part of a larger project to better highlight grantees and their important work. The Commission is collaborating with filmmaker and Fulbright alumnus Erlendur Sveinsson, making this a real Fulbright project.

The Commission newsletter was given a new look and the format was changed to make it more compatible with social media.

Various outreach activities took place throughout the first half of the fiscal year. From March outreach was curtailed due to the pandemic. In fall 2020 most outreach was conducted on-line, although very limited in-person outreach was conducted, in strict observance of social distancing rules.



63rd anniversary event: Unveiling of the new website, with Avista website designer and our resident filmmaker in attendance.



Grantee presentations in December 2019. Lauren, Nick and Jonathan.

ED visit to the Agricultural University in fall 2020, with strict observance of social distancing protocols.

II. ADVISING ACTIVITIES

1. The EducationUSA Advising Center and Advising Services

A. Advising and outreach

The EducationUSA advising 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.



In FY2020, the advising center maintained its weekly opening hours, whereby the center was open all day Tuesdays and on Thursday afternoons. Additional appointments were given outside opening hours as needed. During the spring of 2020 advising was conducted virtually but limited in-person advising was resumed in August by appointment.

The advising center has a library of reference materials that is accessible for students and scholars to use in-house, in addition to electronic databases. Furthermore, students can borrow preparation books for tests that they must take when applying to U.S. schools, including TOEFL, SAT/ACT, GRE and GMAT. While the library keeps a small 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 Fulbright adviser provides in-house advising services to students interested in studies in the U.S., on an individual and group basis. Additional services are provided through speaking engagements, participation in fairs, and contact with appropriate schools and universities. Presentations that highlight Fulbright grant opportunities also feature general student advising, and vice versa. Thus, all opportunities are used to create synergies between grant promotion and advising.



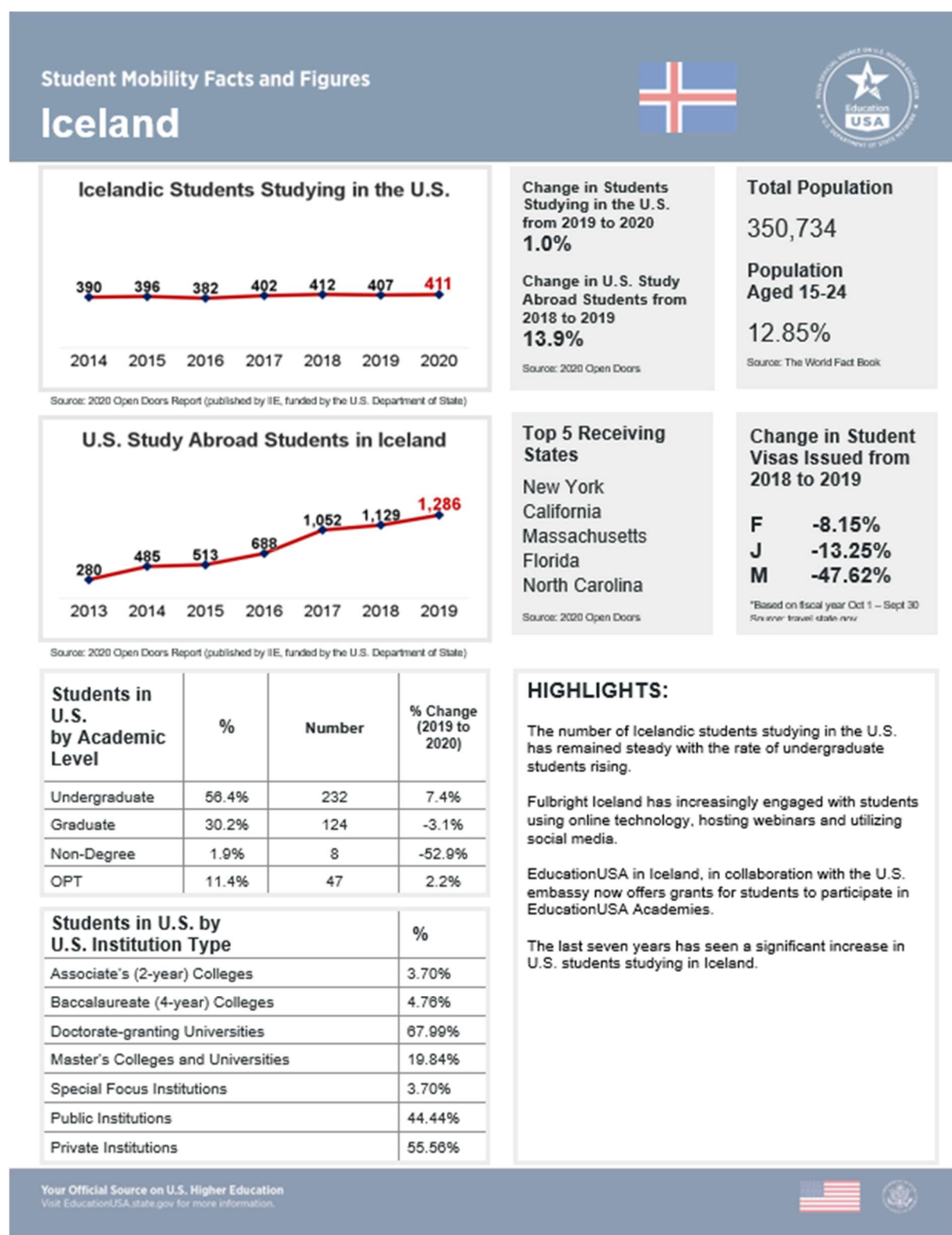
EducationUSA team at International Day,
Reykjavik University

During FY2020 the Fulbright EducationUSA adviser participated in two international days, at the University of Iceland and Reykjavík University, but from early spring no in-person events were held. An online session in September was watched by more than 700 individuals. The Advising Center highlighted various interactive online events organized by EducationUSA, such as online chat sessions, web conferences, and fairs during FY2020. Such events give students the opportunity to attend interactive online lectures on studies in the U.S. and chat with representatives from U.S. colleges and universities.

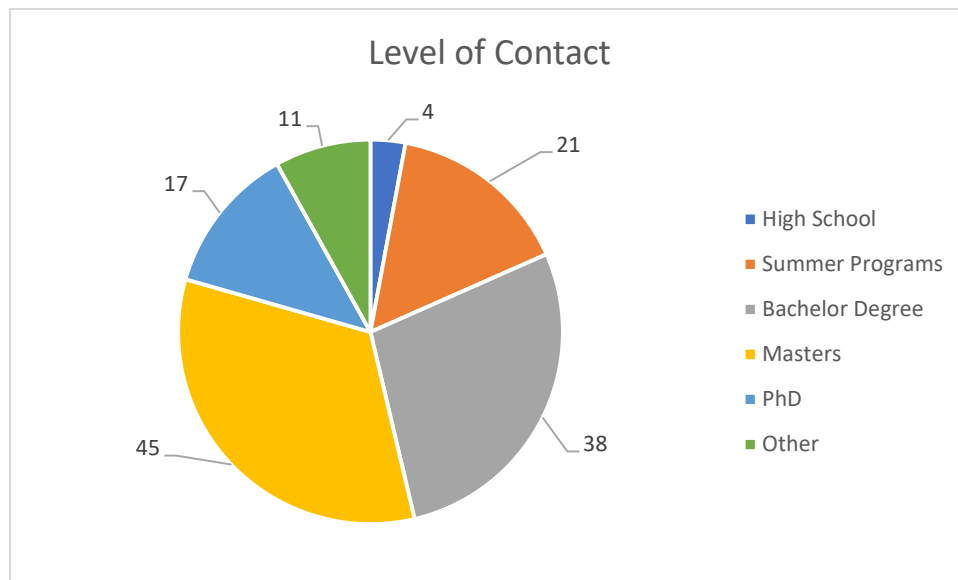
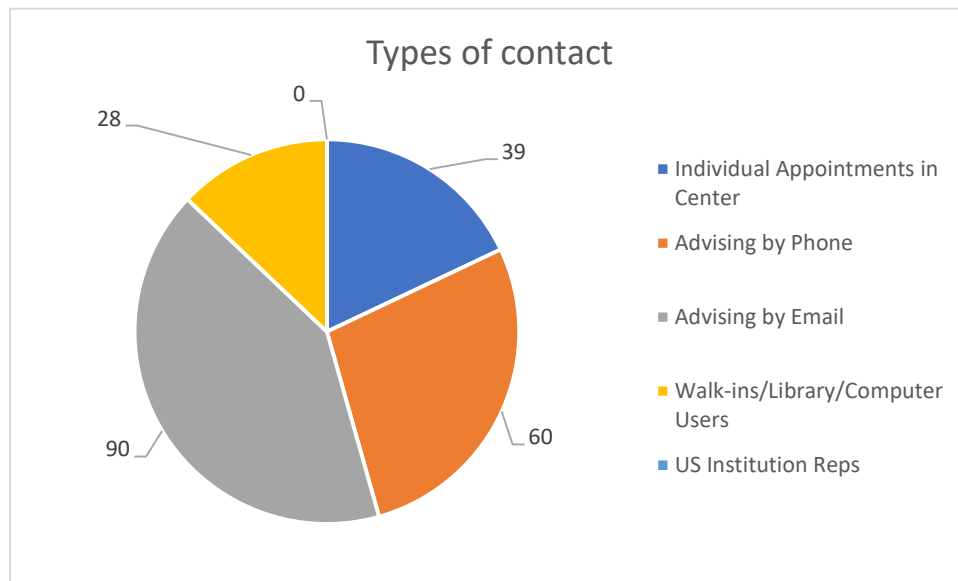


B. EducationUSA Statistics - Iceland FY2020

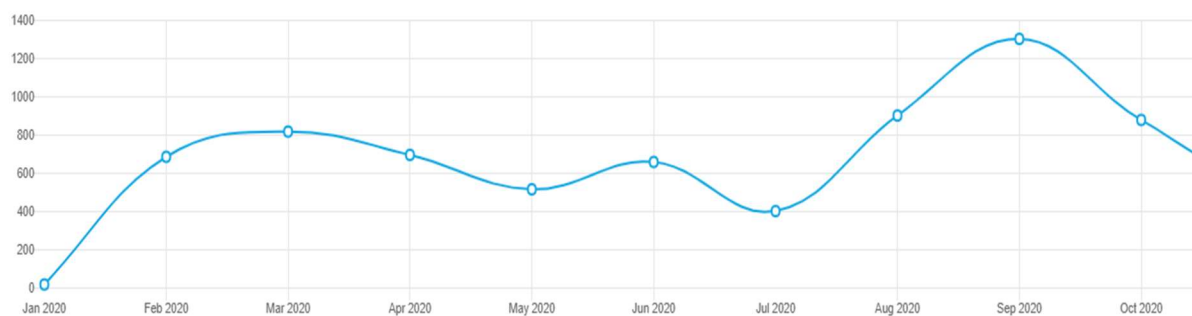
As can be seen below, the number of Icelandic students in the U.S. has remained steady, while the number of U.S. students in Iceland continues to increase. A large majority of Icelandic students in the U.S. are studying at universities which offer doctoral programs, while the split between private and public U.S. universities is fairly equal.



C. Advising Center FY2020



Visitors



Total Sessions on Webpage: 8254

Total Page Views: 23730

III. ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

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 amongst grant recipients and supporting the work of the Commission. Alumni Board meetings are generally held at the Commission offices, with Commission and U.S. Embassy participation.

In FY 2020 the Alumni Association held its annual Thanksgiving fund-raising dinner in November 2019. Keynote speeches were made by Minister of Environment Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson and U.S. Ambassador Jeffrey Ross Gunter. A raffle was held to raise money for Fulbright grants, with many Icelandic companies donating prizes.

The annual meeting was held in January 2020 at the Commission, where Dr. Sigrún Ólafsdóttir, Fulbright fellow 1999, Indiana University, was re-elected Chairman for 2020. The following alumni were also elected to the Alumni Association Board for 2020: Þorleifur Örn Gunnarsson, Bergljót Gyða Guðmundsdóttir, Fannar Freyr Ívarsson and Kristófer Másson.



Photos from the Fulbright Alumni Association Thanksgiving

IV. BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

1. Fulbright Board of Directors

Honorary Co-Chairs:

Lilja Alfreðsdóttir, Minister of Education, Science and Culture

Ambassador Jeffrey Ross Gunter, U.S. Embassy

Icelandic Board Members:

Hjálmar W. Hannesson **Chairman of the Board**, Ambassador Ret., Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Fulbright Student Program alumnus

Hulda Stefánsdóttir Artist, MFA, Director of Research Services, Icelandic University of the Arts

Dr. Páll Melsted Professor of Computer Science, University of Iceland, Fulbright Scholar Program alumnus

Dr. Hrunn Ólöf Andradóttir Professor, Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Iceland

Alternate:

Dr. Oddur Vilhelmsson Professor of Natural Resource Sciences, University of Akureyri, Fulbright Student Program alumnus

U.S. Board Members:

Stacey Katz **Vice-Chairman of the Board**, Chief Accounting Officer and VP Global Business Services, Marel

Emily Cintora **Treasurer**, Political Officer, U.S. Embassy

Oscar Avila Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy

Dr. Margaret Cormack Affiliate Professor, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Iceland, Professor Emeritus, College of Charleston

Alternate:

Elizabeth Lay PhD Student Researcher in Education

Warm thanks to Oscar Avila and Emily Cintora, who left the Board at the end of FY2020. They made a significant contribution during their time on the Board and provided much support to the work of the Commission.



The Board of Directors FY2020. New Board members Hrönn and Elizabeth. Social-distancing at the June meeting.



Chairman Hjálmar social distancing during a meeting; Emily and Ólöf attending a pre-pandemic final presentation event

The Board of Directors has important responsibilities in connection with carrying out the goals of the bilateral agreement between Iceland and the U.S., including setting and monitoring long-term program objectives. A major responsibility of the Board involves selecting grant recipients, which includes reading grant applications and interviewing candidates. In addition, the Board oversees the work of the Commission. The Board works closely with the ED. Individual Board members, who volunteer their time and expertise, are instrumental in achieving the goals of the Commission. The Board met five times during FY2020: in October, November, December, January, and June. Between meetings, consultations between the ED and the Board took place regularly. Board members take part in various Commission activities, although there were fewer events in FY2020 due to the pandemic.

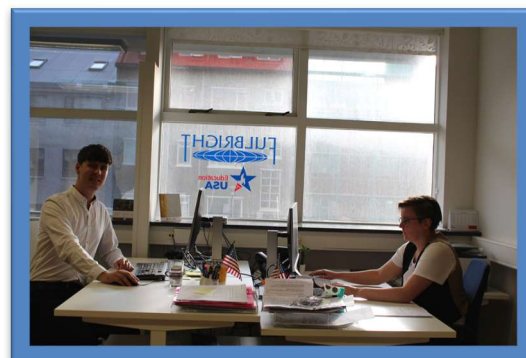
“I would like to express my sincerest gratitude for the Fulbright grant. The last year of my life was magical, despite the corona virus, and the enrichment from this experience is beyond what I could have ever hoped for. While I embarked on studies for a master’s in advanced studies at Yale Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, my children went to pre-school and elementary school and they loved it from day one. They became fluent in English within the first couple of months. Since I had my two young children with me, I had to prioritize when it came to extracurricular activities. Amongst the highlights was a lovely Fulbright information session at Yale Office for international students and scholars. For Thanksgiving we attended a Fulbright Alumni meal at Yale OISS and had a lot of fun. It was great to meet the other current Fulbrighters as well as the generations who came before us.

During my studies, I especially loved the seminar setup of some of my courses. I did not have previous experience with that format from the European universities I have attended. The professors would assign large quantities of readings before the class, and instead of using class-time for lecturing on the subject, they would lead critical conversations. This required active participation from the whole class and would draw out the most interesting parts of the subject and allow for the construction of new and creative ideas. This made for such an inspiring time that I have never had as much fun studying in my life.

Sóley Kaldal (Icelandic Coast Guard), Fulbright fellow at Yale

2. Fulbright Commission staff

For the better part of FY2020, the Commission team consisted of Executive Director Belinda Theriault, and two staff members, Randver Kári Randversson and Hjördís Jónsdóttir, who both held 75% positions. They both left the Commission in spring/summer 2020 to pursue new opportunities. Two new staff members started in August, Viktor Stefánsson and temporary staff member Sigríður Jónsdóttir, who held full-time positions.



New staff members settling in

3. International cooperation

The ED visited Washington, D.C. in the fall of 2019 on the occasion of Fulbright Arctic Week. The opportunity was also used for to meet with colleagues at the Icelandic Embassy, the State Department and IIE/CIES. Additional meetings took place in NYC. Meetings that were scheduled for spring 2020 and beyond were cancelled due to the pandemic.



Catching up with friends and colleagues from the Fulbright Association – and laying the groundwork for a new charitable fund for disabled grantees

V. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Below is the Financial Statement for FY2020, including a Statement by the Executive Director, Auditor's Report, Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Status of Funds Report, and Notes to the Financial Statements. The Statement was prepared by the Commission's accountant and Executive Director and audited by the Icelandic National Audit Office (INAO).

INAO is an independent body operating under the auspices of the Icelandic Parliament, Alþingi. The Office is a part of the legislative branch and its monitoring of the executive branch. Its main role is to audit the State accounts and the financial statements of State bodies and to monitor and promote improvements in the financial management of the State and in the use of public funds. The Office's remit covers all ministries, agencies, and other State bodies, including public companies in which the State has a majority holding, and all budgetary chapters. The Office is also authorized to audit private companies, associations, non-profit organizations, or any other bodies that receive Government funds or guarantees.

The National Audit Act stipulates that the Office shall have access to all data important for the performance of its tasks. It may call for financial and performance-related data from all State bodies. It is also permitted access to original documents and reports prepared in relation to invoices issued to the Government, in order to verify the content of the invoices and the Treasury's payment obligations. Furthermore, the Office may request reports on the disposal of grants and other contributions from Government funds and assess whether such payments have achieved the intended results.

The legal status, role, and mandate of the INAO are laid down in the National Audit Act of 1997. The Office consults the standards and guidelines of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), the standards of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), and the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), in so far as these are applicable to State auditing.

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

"The Institute of Earth Sciences and the Icelandic Meteorological Office house many of the world's leading experts in my field. Working down the hall from these scientists allowed me to tap into this expertise daily, whether through informal chats over coffee about field site access, scheduled meetings about analyses methods, presentations at local conferences, or translations of academic articles from Icelandic to English. Much of this knowledge is not published and is only accessible through integration into the Icelandic research community. There is no replacement for the daily, in-person research exchanges that my Fulbright experience facilitated.

I am currently preparing two manuscripts based on my project results and expect two additional publications to follow over the next year. Though disappointed that my Fulbright grant ended early, its impact will extend far beyond my dissertation work, through both research connections in the Icelandic geoscience community and friendships with other Fulbrighters from a wide range of disciplines. I can honestly say that this has been the most rewarding experience of my life so far."

Greta Wells, Fulbright-NSF Arctic research fellow, PhD student in Geography (University of Texas)

**ICELAND - UNITED STATES
EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION**

**Financial Statement and Balance Sheet
for the Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 (FY 2020)**

January 2021

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Statement by the Executive Director

In FY2020, government core contributions remained stable, but there is not complete parity due to a change in the exchange rate. The Icelandic government decided in December 2020 to supplement the Icelandic contribution with an additional payment of 3.4 million ISK, which reflects the decreased value of the ISK vis-a-vis the USD, which occurred in 2020.

Core government contributions are, however, only approximately 36% of total income for the fiscal year. The Commission partnership with the National Science Foundation, which includes both annual funding for the Fulbright Iceland-NSF Arctic grant program and the Fulbright Iceland-NSF cyber security and critical infrastructure grant program, is the main component of additional funding, but there is also significant funding from both the State Department and the US Embassy in Reykjavik (Other contribution, US government). The Icelandic government is also providing additional funding for specific Arctic programs. All extra funding is earmarked for specific projects, much of it for future projects, which in some cases take place over multiple years. When looking at total government funding paid to the Commission in FY2020, not just core funding, the ratio is approximately 78% US and 22% Icelandic. When non-cash contributions on the balance sheet are included, the US government allocation ratio is 76% to 24% Icelandic. This final ratio is the most accurate measure of total government support.

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 2020-2021, with reference to grants that have gone forward already or are expected to go forward in the new year, the Commission awarded a total of 20 grants. (The original figure was higher, but the pandemic had a detrimental effect, with grants either postponed or grantees deciding not to accept grants during the current academic year). In FY2019, the Commission awarded a total of 26 grants.

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. Revenue of the fiscal year from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2020 amounted to roughly 148 million ISK, with expenditures at approximately 72 million ISK., approximately 30 million less than was budgeted. A significant portion of these funds will be paid out in FY2021 to grantees whose start dates were postponed. As is explained in the notes, most of what is classified as equity in the accounts is in fact already obligated or earmarked. Real contingency funds amount to 55 million ISK. It has become abundantly clear to commissions worldwide during the current crisis how important it is to have contingency funds. The Commission expects to utilize a portion of current contingency funds for projects and grants that are in the works, but it will be important to maintain necessary contingency funds.

The financial statement includes in-kind contributions, both governmental and non-governmental. This allows the financial statement to better reflect actual financial value and real contributions from the contracting parties. This is done in consultation with the State Auditor and only contributions that are verifiable and quantifiable are included. Due to the pandemic, in-kind contributions are lower than in a normal year.

There are additional important contributions, which are not part of the financial statement. Icelandic Fulbright fellows (students) often receive additional benefits in the form of grants and scholarships from US universities, that are not administered jointly by the Commission. These can be in some cases fully, and in most cases at least partly, attributed to their Fulbright status. Further, the Icelandic government contributions to Icelandic universities for costs associated with US full-time students. These contributions provide real value to the Fulbright Program although they are not counted here. As Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission in Iceland, I hereby confirm and accept the financial statements for FY2020.

Auditor's report

To the board of the Iceland - United States Educational Commission

INAO 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 2020, as listed in the table of contents. This financial statement is the responsibility of the management. The INAO's responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on its audit.

The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. These standards require that the audit is planned and performed to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining 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. INAO believes that the audit provides a reasonable basis for its opinion.

It is the INAO's opinion, that the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Iceland - United States Educational Commission, at September 30th 2020, and the results of its operations and the cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles in Iceland.

Icelandic National Audit Office

an e-signature
Skúli Eggert Þórðarson
Auditor general

an e-signature
Ingí K. Magússon
Director of auditing

Iceland - United States Educational Commission

INCOME STATEMENT

October 1 2019 - September 30 2020

	FY 2020 ISK	FY 2019 ISK
Revenues:		
Allocation, US government.....	26.678.151	25.602.746
Allocation, Icelandic government.....	26.100.000	25.400.000
Other contributions, US government.....	32.312.906	45.783.016
Other contributions, Icelandic government.....	6.505.800	0
Other contribution-NSF-US government.....	56.263.500	47.996.000
Other contributions.....	0	203.684
Total revenues:	147.860.357	144.985.446
Expenditures:		
Program costs, Scholar program.....	23.507.408	30.505.548
Program costs, Student program.....	12.449.263	23.263.957
Program costs, Specialist program.....	32.940	3.345.507
Program costs, Other program.....	0	1.982.328
Salary and salary related costs.....	25.121.976	24.234.611
Rent and utilities.....	2.189.916	2.130.996
Services.....	1.758.507	1.481.313
Supplies.....	880.263	170.147
Travel, training and transport	477.707	521.769
Communication and PR.....	512.894	356.410
Grant supporting activities.....	4.364.336	3.196.708
Total expenditures:	71.295.210	91.189.294
Income (deficit) before interest expense/revenue	76.565.147	53.796.152
Interest expense/revenue.....	2.218.078	1.120.998
Exchange rate (loss)/profit.....	23.422.336	9.461.434
Income for the year	102.205.561	64.378.584

Iceland - United States Educational Commission
IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS/EXPENDITURES
 October 1 2019 - September 30 2020

Grant and grant-supporting	ISK	ISK
Government grant for Icelandic studies, Árnastofnun.....	1.305.000	1.504.400
Icelandic government non-cash contributions.....	0	343.950
Host institution costs for US scholars and specialists.....	2.557.426	2.507.686
US Embassy contributions.....	0	177.696
Direct DoS grantee funding.....	2.300.797	2.714.907
Cobb Family Fellowship.....	0	1.851.000
Total non-cash grant and grant-supporting contributions	6.163.224	9.099.639
 Administrative		
Auditing services	600.000	600.000
Total non-cash administrative contributions	600.000	600.000
 Total non-cash contributions	6.763.224	9.699.639

Iceland - United States Educational Commission

BALANCE SHEET

September 30 2020

	FY 2020 ISK	FY 2019 ISK
Assets		
Cash (USD)	224.752.041	124.609.645
Cash (ISK)	16.854.262	14.167.422
Paid interest taxes	0	380.879
	<u>241.606.303</u>	<u>139.157.946</u>
Total Assets	<u>241.606.303</u>	<u>139.157.946</u>
Liabilities		
Unpaid salaries and employment tax.....	145.255	125.990
Income-tax deduction and pension funds.....	907.155	683.624
	<u>1.052.410</u>	<u>809.614</u>
Trust account		
Funds on hand October 1.....	138.348.332	73.969.748
Income for the year.....	102.205.561	64.378.584
Funds on hand September 30.....	<u>240.553.893</u>	<u>138.348.332</u>
Total Liabilities and Equity	<u>241.606.303</u>	<u>139.157.946</u>

Iceland - United States Educational Commission

STATUS OF FUNDS REPORT

For Year ending: September 30 2020

		2019 ISK
1.	FUNDS ON HAND OCTOBER 1 2019.....	139.157.946
	-Current liabilities	<u>-809.614</u>
		138.348.332
2.	RECEIPTS: CURRENT FISCAL YEAR	
	A. Current Year Receipts:	
	1. Received from U.S. Mission.....	58.991.057
	2. Host Government Contribution.....	32.605.800
	3. Other Contributions.....	0
	4. Other Funds received.....	56.263.500
	5. Interests on Deposits.....	2.218.078
	6. Exchange fluctuation.....	<u>23.422.336</u>
	Total Received Current Year	173.500.771
	B. Total Funds Received Current Fiscal Year	173.500.771
3.	DISBURSEMENT: CURRENT FISCAL YEAR	
	A. Current Year Disbursement	
	1. Administration and advising.....	30.941.263
	2. Grant supporting activities.....	4.364.336
	3. Program.....	<u>35.989.611</u>
	Total Disbursement Current Year	71.295.210
	B. Total Disbursement to Date	71.295.210
4.	FUNDS ON HAND SEPTEMBER 30 2020.....	241.606.303
	-Current liabilities.....	<u>-1.052.410</u>
		240.553.893

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Accounting records have been kept according to Icelandic law and the ECA Fulbright Manual for Bi-national Commissions and Foundations. Amounts are in ISK.
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 2020 as ISK 7.702.888 and ISK 9.151.374, 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 2020 USD 1.617.619, or ISK 224.752.041 (exchange rate booked at daily rate of 138.94).
5. There is no petty cash.
6. The Icelandic government contribution for 2020 was 26.1 million ISK, paid in 2 installments. It should be noted that an additional contribution of 3.4 m ISK was made in December 2020, to make up for the deteriorating value of the ISK vis-a-vis the USD, but this payment will be part of the FY2021 accounts. The US government contribution for FY2019 was used in FY2020, 213,374 USD.
7. Other US government contributions include 4 years of funding from Education USA (100,000 USD), EoY funds from DoS for specific future projects (85,000 USD) and funding from the US Embassy for specific future projects (close to 9 m ISK).
8. Other contribution NSF refers to the Fulbright-NSF Arctic grant program and the Fulbright-NSF cyber security and critical infrastructure grant program.
9. 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	22.154.848
Icelandic Scholars	1.352.560
US Students	12.297.155
Icelandic students	152.108
Program cost US specialists	32.940
Other grant programs	0

10. Fulbright-MFA Arctic Scholar Program disbursements

Grant payments	832.340
Grant supporting	13.000
Admin costs	59.174
Total expenditures	904.514

The balance of MFA funds at end of FY2020 is 373,000 ISK.

11. Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Program disbursements

Grant payments	10.930.515
Grant supporting	92.582
Admin costs	1.102.310
Total expenditures	12.125.407

Total NSF Arctic disbursements amount to approximately 87,000 USD.

The balance of NSF Arctic funds at the end of FY2020 is approximately 475,000 USD.

This is obligated to future grants and associated costs.

Notes to the Financial Statements contd.

12. Fulbright-NSF Cyber Security Program disbursements

Grant payments	7.022.581
Grant supporting	0
Admin costs	702.258
Total expenditures	7.724.839

The balance of NSF Cyber Security funds at the end of FY2020 is approximately 225,000 USD.

This is obligated to future awards and associated costs in cyber-security and critical infrastructure. This may include both specialist and core scholar awards.

13. Although not part of the annual accounts, an inventory of non-expendable property is maintained by the Commission and has been updated for FY2020. Current value is 597,380 ISK.

14. Non-expendable property is insured for ISK 6.000.000 (fire, burglary, etc.) from July 1 2020 to June 30 2021.

15. 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 January 1 to December 31 and renewed annually.

16. In-kind contributions are all contributions that do not go through the Commission accounts, i.e. are paid either directly to the grantee or are received by the Commission or a grantee in-kind.

17. When it comes to core contributions paid out in FY2020, the Icelandic and US government are fairly equal, although the fall of the ISK vis-a-vis the USD means that the US amount is a bit higher this year. When additional government cash contributions are taken into account, the funding ratio is 78% US to 22% Icelandic. When government non-cash contributions on the balance sheet are included, the US government allocation ratio is 76% to 24% Icelandic. If we include the Icelandic supplemental contribution, which was received in December 2020 and will therefore only be counted next year, even though it is part of the Icelandic governments FY2020 contribution, the ratio changes slightly, to 74% US to 26% Icelandic.

18. Ratio of administrative costs to grant costs, including non-cash expenditures shown in the income statement. Admin costs are a slightly higher proportion in FY2020 than expected due to fewer grants moving forward on schedule due to COVID.

	ISK.	%
Grants and grant supporting activities	63.363.710	67%
Administrative costs	31.541.263	33%
Total costs	94.904.973	100%

Notes to the Financial Statements contd.

19. Funds that are already obligated/earmarked for specific future projects in FY2021 and beyond:

MFA	372.833
NSF Arctic	65.763.994
NSF Cyber	31.196.309
EducationUSA	7.396.621
EoY project funding	16.830.531
FAI III	4.000.000
US Embassy project funding	8.871.862
Remaining ECA funding from 2018 to increase grant amounts:	16.934.345
Total	151.366.495
Projected non-earmarked obligated grant funding	18.865.000
Projected admin costs for 6 months	16.250.000
Total	35.115.000
Total obligated funding	186.481.495
Contingency funding	55.124.808

Undirritunarsíða

Ríkisendurskoðandi
Skúli Eggert Þórðarson



Undirritað af:
Skúli Eggert Þórðarson
1702532649
Dags: 27.01.2021
Tími: 13:02:11
Astæða: Samþykkt
Signet ID: d6bea0a0-
8b06-4388-87cf-
e9fc14799362

Sviðsstjóri
Ingi Kristinn Magnússon



Undirritað af:
Ingi Kristinn
Magnússon
3010557149
Dags: 27.01.2021
Tími: 13:21:41
Astæða: Samþykkt
Signet ID: d6bea0a0-
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