



FULBRIGHT Iceland

ICELAND - UNITED STATES
EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION



ANNUAL REPORT FY2024

1 OCT. 2023 - 30 SEPT. 2024

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Cover photos: Nathaniel Wire on a field trip; FAI IV Scholars Anna Karlsdóttir, Sigrún Sigurðardóttir and Rachael Johnstone; Sigurbjörn Edvardsson at Harvard graduation; Fulbright Scholar Rory Stuart performing at Múlinn Jazz Club; Garrison Gerard at UT Messan; grantee enrichment in Elliðarárdalur; Axel Bjarkar hiking the Appalachian trail with SUSI.



I am happy to say that we had another productive year at Fulbright Iceland, with fantastic grantees who made us proud. And while our work is all about the grantees and the work that they do, the work that makes it all possible should also be acknowledged. I want to use this opportunity to acknowledge the staff of Fulbright Iceland, ECA and the cooperating agencies. A lot goes on behind the scenes that is not apparent to everyone. Our commission is comparatively small, so each person wears multiple hats and takes on a variety of roles. We could not offer the strong program that we have, the events, etc., without a dedicated staff that is

committed to the ideals of Fulbright and that has the ambition to always do more and better.

Every year we strive to innovate in our work and FY2024 was no exception. We concluded a partnership with the American-Scandinavian Foundation to administer their grant application process for Icelandic students. We hope this is just the start of a mutually beneficial relationship and I thank my wonderful colleague Sally Yerkovich at ASF for all her work to make this happen. Sally and I both see this as a win-win, and the Fulbright Board agrees. This partnership will make us more efficient, allow for a more effective use of funds and lead to further collaboration in the future.

We also saw the first grantee of the Fulbright Iceland and Greece cooperation, which was exciting. The first recipient of this grant, which is art-focused, went to jazz composer and musician Rory Stuart. In addition to his work with students and composing, we in Iceland were able to enjoy a few jazz concerts that he held with Icelandic collaborators.

Just before the end of the fiscal year, we welcomed Fulbright specialist and Ukrainian American filmmaker Andriy Semenyuk to Iceland for a very special project focused on telling the stories of Ukrainians in Iceland. The project was completed in FY2025, so you will hear more about it next year! Knowing how impactful teacher exchanges are, we were very excited to join the Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching Research, with the first American teacher awarded this grant spending the spring 2025 semester with us.

Let me finally note that twenty scholars for Fulbright Arctic Initiative IV were selected last spring, from the six Arctic participating states. Iceland was for the first time offered three spots in the cohort, which is of course a testament to the fine work being done by Icelandic scholars in Arctic research.

These illustrations of our work are only examples of the value that the Fulbright Program in Iceland creates. We are dedicated to providing opportunities that will make both American and Icelandic Fulbrighters better equipped to excel in their chosen fields, to make our countries safer, stronger and more prosperous, while strengthening the bonds of friendship between our peoples. As we continue to promote the important values of Fulbright, we hope to have your support to do even more in the coming years.



Belinda Theriault, Executive Director



It has been an honor and privilege to chair the Fulbright Iceland Board for the past year. As a Fulbright alumna I have a deep appreciation for the program and I understand the great benefits it brings, not only to grant recipients, but to our societies on a broader level. The establishment of the global Fulbright Program in 1946 was a pivotal response to unprecedented geopolitical circumstances. Its creation in the aftermath of World War II reflected the critical need to foster international understanding and cross-cultural dialogue. Fulbright is a merit-based program, which supports students and scholars from all backgrounds and helps them to succeed in the world today. Fulbright Iceland fosters collaboration and understanding between

the people of Iceland and the United States, allowing us to share our skills, talents and perspectives and this makes both countries stronger in the end.

This past year we saw many great Fulbright projects come to fruition. We are proud to support a breadth of projects, with grantees coming from all over the U.S. and Iceland, from different types of institutions and at different stages in their careers. Disaster response, cyber security, the Arctic, education and public health are but a few examples of areas where we are working together successfully. I know that my Fulbright scholar grant a few years ago presented excellent opportunities for continued collaboration long after my stay in the U.S. ended, and I know that this is the case for the vast majority of our grantees. These long-term connections and collaborations are a huge part of the value of Fulbright.

Another important benefit of the Fulbright Program is the support system for grantees. This is a unique feature of Fulbright and its 49 commissions. Having that support system is increasingly important in today's world. We on the Board are proud of the high level of satisfaction that both U.S. and Icelandic grantees express regarding the support they receive from Fulbright Iceland. We often talk about our Fulbright family, and we mean it!

One issue about which the Board has had concerns is the discontinuation of the EducationUSA Academies. This summer program for high school students garnered much attention in Iceland and had become our most competitive grant program, with over 60 applications last year for two spots. I know the Commission and the U.S. Embassy have been trying to work out a way to continue this program outside of the formal EducationUSA network and I sincerely hope that these efforts will be successful. These students come back and are great ambassadors for U.S. education amongst their peers.

I would finally note that the Board was very pleased to work with the Executive Director to find a longer-term solution for the Commission offices. We had been looking for some time for an appropriately sized space in a central area, within our budget. Finally, at the beginning of FY2024, the Commission moved to a historic building in a great location. I can safely say that this move has made a big difference to all stakeholders, both in terms of having a stable longer-term home and having a versatile space that meets the needs of the Commission. We are energized and ready to move forward.



Bryndís Björk Ásgeirsdóttir

Professor of Psychology, Reykjavík University

The Commission, which operates under an agreement between the governments of Iceland and the United States, implements a merit-based grant program for graduate students and scholars. Grantees include Icelandic students who are awarded grants to commence graduate studies, Icelandic visiting student researchers (PhD students who undertake shorter research visits to the U.S.), Icelandic scholars who are awarded grants to undertake research in the United States, 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 additional Fulbright opportunities at different times, as well as non-Fulbright grants that are in line with the goals of the Commission. Various ad-hoc programs may be implemented in given years.



Fulbright Iceland Board of Directors at the April board meeting

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 memorandums of understanding with U.S. universities. Toward the end of FY2024, the Commission concluded an agreement with the American-Scandinavian Foundation to administer certain ASF grants.

FY2024 saw the start of Fulbright Arctic Initiative IV, which will continue over the next two fiscal years. For the first time, the Commission participated in the Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching Research Program with the selected grantee arriving in early 2025. In addition to the grant programs, events and advising activities, the Commission has a wider mandate to enhance the bilateral U.S.-Iceland relationship. To this end, the Commission undertakes a variety of activities.

Grantees are selected by the Fulbright Iceland Commission Board and confirmed by the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board in Washington, D.C. On pages 6-7 please a list of grantees for 2023-2024, who were grantees for most of FY2024. The second list, on pages 8-9, shows grantees for the 2024-2025 academic year, most of whom started their grant period in the fall of 2024, shortly before the end of the fiscal year. The Commission consistently receives outstanding applications from American and Icelandic scholars and students.



Board Chair Bryndís Ásgeirsdóttir and the ED discussing new TOEFL exam

During my Fulbright, I began a Master's program in Sustainable Energy Engineering at Reykjavik University. This program challenged me academically and broadened my understanding of energy issues, but it also helped me to grow personally in ways I never expected. The class work at Reykjavik University was mainly oriented around projects and group work. This structure allowed me to work with students from across the world with different backgrounds and experiences. These projects challenged me academically and personally, as people's diverse experiences were both an asset and provided a unique set of challenges. The coursework also helped me to develop new skill sets such as learning new programming languages and working with modeling software. These are valuable skills that I will be able to use long beyond the completion of my degree.

The Fulbright program has been an incredible, life-changing experience for me. This was my first time living on my own that wasn't in a dorm and I was worried about the prospect of having to navigate a new country and the responsibilities of living on my own. The Fulbright program helped to make a smooth transition. I have much more confidence in myself for living abroad and moving to a new place. I have made both personal and professional connections that I know will last beyond my time in Iceland."



Christine Groves (U.S. Coast Guard Academy), M.Sc. Program in Sustainable Energy at Reykjavik University



Fulbright Specialist Gregory Falco with family and friends at Kirkjufell



Arnhildur Tómasdóttir at a Fulbright seminar in Boston

1. GRANTEES 2023 - 2024

Name	Field	Home Institution	Primary Affiliation
ICELANDIC STUDENTS			
Arnhildur Tómasdóttir	Genetic Counseling	University of Iceland	Stanford University
Gríma Irmudóttir	Documentary Media	University of the Arts London	Northwestern University
Hrafnkell Guðjónsson	Law	University of Iceland	University of California, Berkeley
Ivana Nikolic	Law	University of Iceland	Harvard University
Jónatan Hróbjartsson	Law	University of Iceland	Duke University
Sigurbjörn Edvardsson	Law	University of Iceland	Harvard University
- Visiting Student Researchers			
Emil Dagsson	Econometrics	University of Iceland	Brown University
G. Ríkey Thoroddsen	International Relations	University of Iceland	Harvard University
Sólveig Sanchez	Ecological Restoration	Agricultural Univ. of Iceland	University of California-Davis
ICELANDIC SCHOLARS - Fulbright Arctic Initiative IV			
Anna Karlsdóttir	Geography	University of Iceland	University of Alaska Anchorage
Rachael Johnstone	International Law	University of Akureyri	Polar Institute, Wilson Center
Sigrún Sigurðardóttir	Nursing	University of Akureyri	University of Alaska Anchorage
U.S. STUDENTS			
Sebastian Acevedo	Biology	Santa Clara University	Icelandic Institute of Nat. Hist.
Annesley Black	Energy Studies	U.S. Milit. Acad. West Point	Reykjavik University
Eleanor Greer	Environmental Sciences	Wellesley College	Agricultural University of Iceland
Kristie Gonzalez	Medieval Studies	University of Puerto Rico	University of Iceland
Christine Groves	Engineering	U.S. Coast Guard Academy	Reykjavik University
Nathaniel Wire	Geophysics	Pomona College	University of Iceland
- Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research			
Garrison Gerard	Environmental Studies	University of North Texas	Hornafjörður Research Center
Emily Herbert	Materials Science	Drexel University	University of Akureyri
Andrew Jester	Energy	Villanova University	University of Iceland
Daison Weedop	Environmental Sciences	University of Maine	Hólar University
U.S. SCHOLARS			
Gita Steiner-Khamsi	Education	Columbia University	University of Iceland
- Fulbright-MFA Arctic Scholar			
Gregory Harris	Environmental Studies/Writing	Harvard University	University of Iceland
- Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research			
Christopher Dunn	Environmental Sciences	Colorado School of Mines	Stefansson Arctic Institute
Barbara Kerr	Education	University of Kansas	University of Iceland
Derek Schutt	Geology	Colorado State University	University of Iceland
- Fulbright-NSF Distinguished Scholar in Cyber Security and Critical Infrastructure			
Dipankar Dasgupta	Computer Science	University of Memphis	Reykjavík University
Larry Leibrock	Computer Science	Idaho State University	University of Iceland
- Fulbright Greece-Iceland Joint Award for Arts and Design			
Rory Stuart	Music	The New School	Iceland University of the Arts
U.S. SPECIALISTS			
Jason Beckfield	Sociology	Harvard University	University of Iceland
Wanda Gregory	Computer Science	University of Washington-Bothell	Reykjavík University
Cheryl Ann Purdy	Cyber Security	University of the Cumberland	University of Akureyri
Gregory Falco	Disaster Response	Cornell University	Bifröst University
JoAnn Conrad	Folkloristics	Diablo Valley College	University of Iceland
Andriy Semenyuk	Film	N/A	Iceland University of the Arts
Marcia Van Riper	Nursing	University of N. Carolina	University of Iceland

Name	Field	Home Institution	Primary Affiliation
INTER-COUNTRY TRAVEL GRANT			
Iveta Silova McGurty	Comparative Education	Arizona State University	University of Iceland
OTHER FULBRIGHT COMMISSION ICELAND GRANTS			
- Summer Institute			
Axel Bjarkar Sigurjónsson	Engineering	Reykjavik University	Shippensburg University
- EducationUSA Academy			
Eron Thor Jónsson	Upper secondary	Verzlunarskóli Íslands	Boston University
Vaka Sif Tjörvadóttir	Upper secondary	FAS	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Univ.
- Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship			
Heiðrún Vala Hilmarsdóttir	Upper secondary	Kvennaskólinn in Reykjavik	Purdue University



Emily Herbert collecting samples



Chris Dunn giving a talk at University of Stavanger during Inter-Country Travel Grant to Norway



“During my stay at Brown as a Fulbright Visiting Student Researcher, I have gotten to know great people in my field of research as well as made valuable personal connections. Shortly after my arrival, I started working on a research proposal with a group of researchers, consisting of both professors and Ph.D. graduates from Brown. We aim to publish an article in a high-impact peer-reviewed journal.

I want to emphasize that the Fulbright grant not only made it possible for me to devote my time to research in a very inspiring environment but also to make valuable contacts and listen to world-renowned experts in my field of research discuss and introduce their work. Fulbright has allowed me to live in the U.S. with my family, develop my research, and make contacts and friends for life.”

Emil Dagsson, PhD student in Econometrics at University of Iceland, Visiting Student Researcher at Brown University

2. GRANTEES 2024 - 2025

Name	Field	Home Institution	Primary Affiliation
ICELANDIC STUDENTS			
Berglind Bjarnadóttir	Biology	University of Iceland	Dartmouth College
Guðrún Sigurðardóttir	Law	University of Iceland	Columbia University
Hildur Hjörvar	Law	University of Iceland	Harvard University
Hrefna Svavarsdóttir	Linguistics	University of Iceland	Harvard University
- Visiting Student Researchers			
Ágústa Jónsdóttir	Environmental Sciences	University of Iceland	Mass. Institute of Technology
Erna Jónsdóttir	Pharmacology	University of Iceland	University of Georgia
ICELANDIC SCHOLARS			
Berglind Magnúsdóttir	Comparative Education	University of Iceland	Columbia University
Haukur Þorgeirsson	Literature	University of Iceland, ÁMI	University of California, Berkeley
Iris Nowenstein	Linguistics	University of Iceland	University of Pennsylvania
Jóhanna Jakobsdóttir	Biostatistics	University of Iceland	Stanford University
- Fulbright Arctic Initiative IV			
Anna Karlsdóttir	Geography	University of Iceland	University of Alaska Anchorage
Rachael Johnstone	International Law	University of Akureyri	Polar Institute, Wilson Center
Sigrún Sigurðardóttir	Nursing	University of Akureyri	University of Alaska Anchorage
U.S. STUDENTS			
Bridget Cassata	Biology	Amherst College	University of Iceland
Melissa Guido	Painting and Printmaking	School of Visual Arts	Reykjavik School of Visual Arts
Mía Schwartz	Geology	University of Minnesota	University of Iceland
Ben Simmons	Zoology	University of Vermont	Icelandic Inst. of Natural History
- Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research			
Jack Ivie	Environmental Sciences	Drexel University	University of Iceland
Arisha Khan	Public Health	Johns Hopkins University	University of Iceland
Liza Wilson	Geology	SUNY at Buffalo	University of Iceland
- Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research / Fulbright-National Geographic Award			
Konstantine Vlasits	Music Studies	New York University	Hornafjörður Research Center
U.S. SCHOLARS			
Jean Davidson	Bioinformatics	Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo	University of Akureyri
Julio Rivera	Business	Carthage College	University of Iceland
- Fulbright-MFA Arctic Scholar			
Kanwalroop Dhanda	Business	Sacred Heart University	University of Iceland
- Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research			
Carey Clouse	Forestry	Univ. of Massachusetts-Amherst	Iceland University of the Arts
Anthony Ives	Environmental Sciences	University of Wisconsin-Madison	Mývatn Research Station
Aaron Kennedy	Meteorology	University of North Dakota	Icelandic Met Office
Sara Maxwell	Environmental Sciences	University of Washington-Bothell	University of Iceland
- Fulbright-NSF Distinguished Arctic Research Scholar			
Hongjie Xie	Environmental Sciences	University of Texas-San Antonio	University of Iceland
- Fulbright-NSF Arctic Security Scholar			
Jarrod Hayes	International Relations	Univ. of Massachusetts-Lowell	University of Iceland
-Fulbright-NSF Cyber Security and Critical Infrastructure Scholar			
Kelly Caine	Computer Science	Clemson University	University of Iceland
- Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching Research			
Sabrina Miller	Education	East Side Community High School	University of Iceland
- Fulbright Arctic Initiative IV			
Mariah Seater	Public Health	Tulane University of Louisiana	Family Justice Center in Reykjavik

Name	Field	Home Institution	Primary Affiliation
U.S. SPECIALISTS			
Beatrice Bridglall	Education	Student Freedom Initiative	Univ. Centre of the Westfjords
Rainer Lohmann	Environmental Sciences	University of Rhode Island	University of Iceland
Karen Hammerness	Education	American Museum of Nat. History	University of Iceland
Douglas Larkin (TBC)	Education	Montclair State University	University of Iceland
Gregory Falco (TBC)	Disaster Response	Cornell University	Bifröst University
<i>Additional Specialist are expected to be added later in the year</i>			

OTHER FULBRIGHT COMMISSION ICELAND GRANTS
- Nordic Youth Grant for Arctic Encounter Symposium

Jósteinn Kristjánsson	Chinese, Political Science	University of Iceland
Sturla E. Jónsson	Political Science	University of Iceland



Dipankar Dasgupta with students



Andrew Jester hiking along Móskaðshnjúkar with friends from University of Iceland



“During my two-week visit to Iceland as part of my Fulbright Specialist position with Bifröst University, I focused on preparing for a spring workshop on Compound Crisis Management. The workshop aims to immerse students, industry professionals, and government representatives in a scenario where managing one crisis becomes more difficult due to the emergence of a second crisis. My goal was to develop a realistic and engaging tabletop exercise for this purpose.

To build the foundation for this exercise, I conducted a series of unstructured interviews with experts in various aspects of crisis management. These conversations allowed me to deepen my understanding of the intricate web of dependencies in crisis response and identify the most appropriate crises to simulate in my workshop. Between now and my next visit, I’ll be synthesizing this information to craft a scenario that not only reflects the real-world challenges Iceland faces but also engages participants in thoughtful, collaborative problem-solving.”

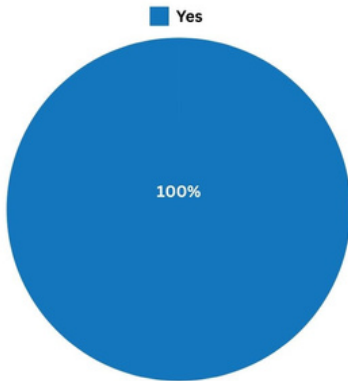
Dr. Gregory Falco, Assistant Professor at Cornell University on his first visit of two as a Fulbright Specialist at Bifröst University

3. GRANTEE FEEDBACK 2023 - 2024

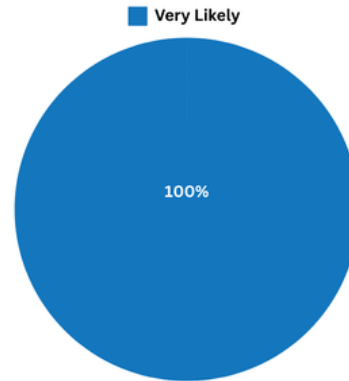
U.S. Scholars:

Below are a few highlights from final reports of Fulbright Iceland U.S. scholars regarding the impact of their Fulbright on them and their careers.

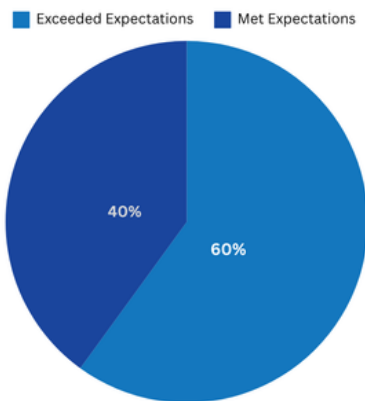
Did you make new contacts and acquire new collaborations in the host country?



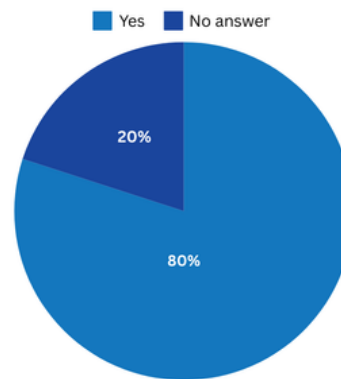
How likely is it that you will remain in contact after you return home?



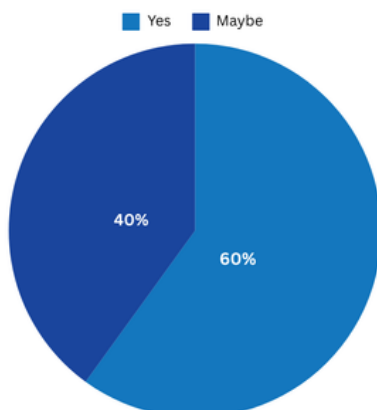
Did the Fulbright Iceland Scholar program meet your expectations?



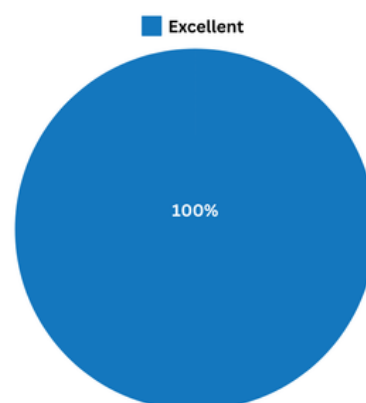
Do you think your Fulbright experience will have a positive impact on your career?



Will your Fulbright grant activities lead to any publications?



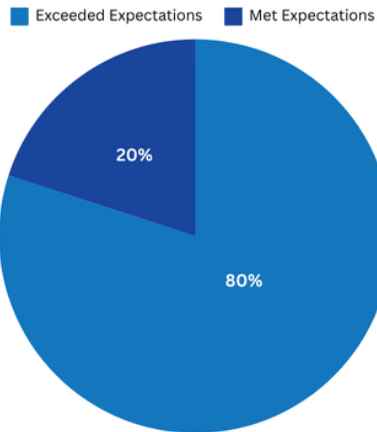
Evaluation of the information from the Commission during the grant period:



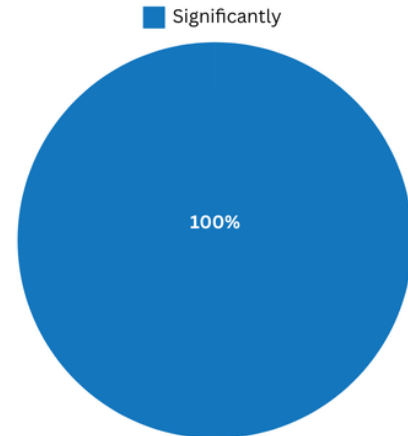
U.S. Students:

Below are a few highlights from the final reports of Fulbright fellows regarding their Fulbright experience.

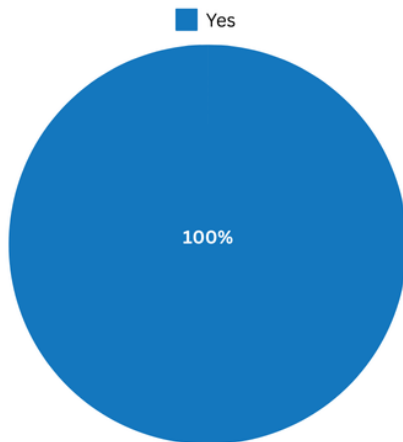
Did the Fulbright Iceland Student Program meet your expectations?



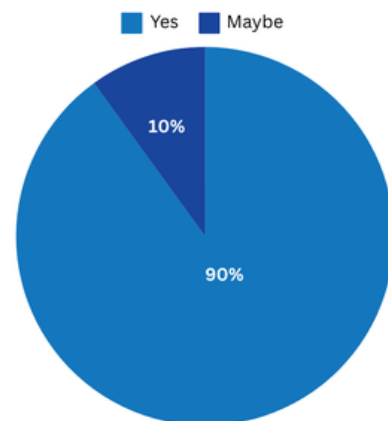
Studying in Iceland broadened my horizons and gave me new perspectives.



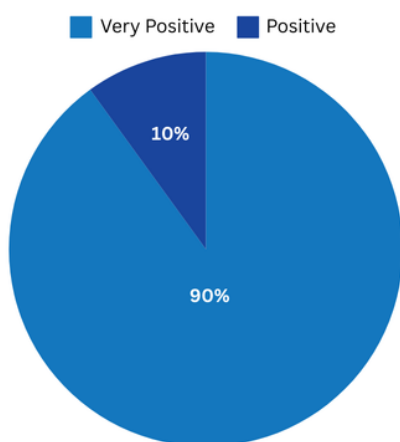
Did you establish personal/professional relationships that will continue after your return to the U.S.?



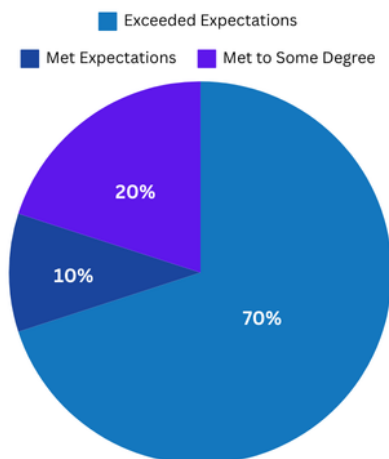
Have you or will you encourage other U.S. and Icelandic students to apply for a Fulbright?



Fulbright's effect on student's personal development:



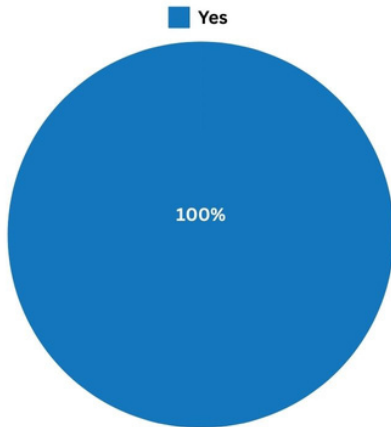
My studies/research in Iceland met my expectations



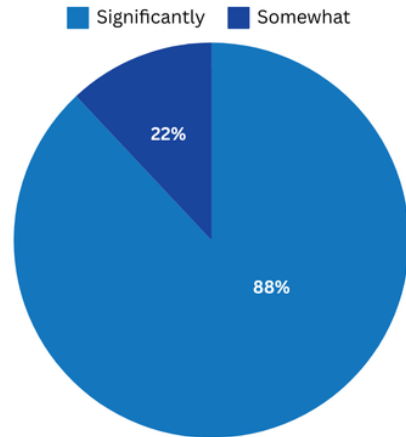
Icelandic Students:

Below are a few highlights from final reports of Fulbright Iceland students regarding the impact of their Fulbright on them and their careers.

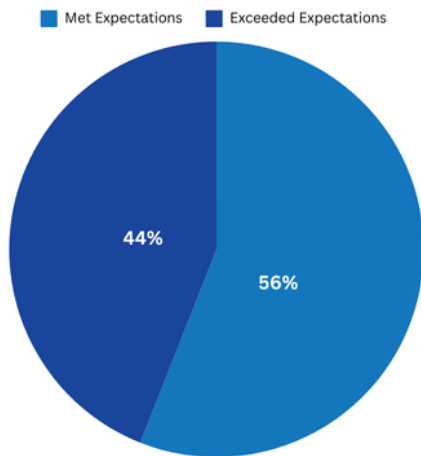
I made professional contacts that will continue to be of value after my return to Iceland



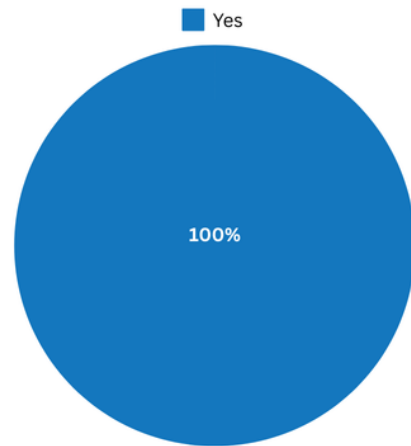
Studying in the U.S. broadened my horizons and gave me new perspective.



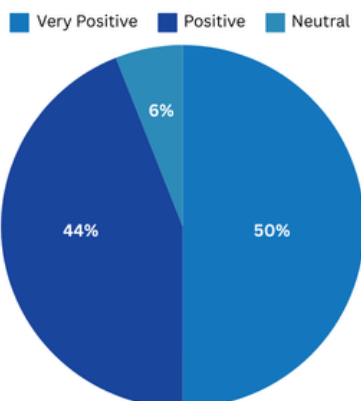
Did the Fulbright U.S. student program meet your expectations?



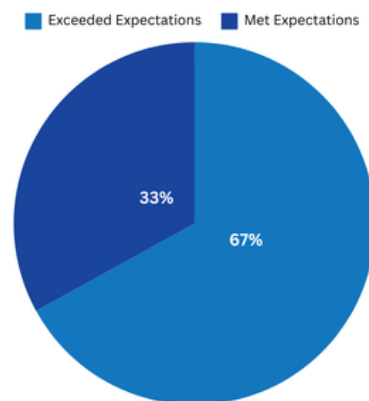
Have you or will you encourage other U.S. and Icelandic students to apply for a Fulbright?



What was Fulbright's effect on your personal development/skills?



My studies/research in the U.S. met my expectations?





Sólveig Sanchez at the Golden Gate bridge in San Francisco



Gregory Harris visiting Háafell goat farm

“This year has left me with a wealth of enriching experiences, and I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity. One of the standout aspects of my year has been the relationships I formed with professors, fellow students, and individuals outside the academic sphere. Northwestern University offers the unique advantage of taking courses across various departments. This allowed me to interact with students from diverse disciplines, such as history and environmental science, and gain different perspectives. This interdisciplinary approach has greatly enriched my understanding as a documentary filmmaker.

Last March, I was invited to attend the 2024 Atlanta Fulbright Seminar on Exploring the Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement, the experience was nothing short of transformative, thanks to the enriching experiences provided through site visits and community service initiatives.



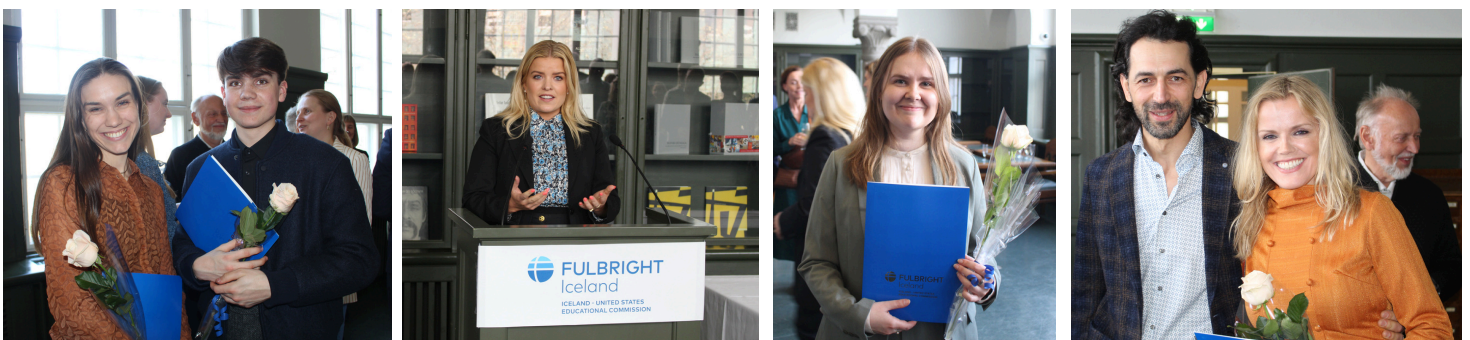
In conclusion, my Fulbright year in the USA has been an invaluable chapter in my academic and professional journey. I am deeply grateful to the Fulbright commission in Iceland for this opportunity, and I look forward to contributing to the global exchange of ideas and knowledge in the years to come.”

Gríma Irmudóttir, MFA in Documentary Media at Northwestern University

4. SUMMARY OF GRANT-SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

A. Events for Icelandic Grantees

Two orientation meetings were held for grantees leaving for the U.S. for the 2024-2025 academic year in spring 2024 – a virtual one in March and in-person in April. In May, a send-off reception was held at the National Culture House to honor the Icelandic grantees, with the Minister of Higher Education and the U.S. Ambassador in attendance.





“Before heading to the USA, I sent 36 of my samples to the lab at UC Davis. I then used my stay to scan part of those samples in the Davis’s SEM and EDX machines. Furthermore, I took advantage of the UC Davis online library. I got access to many closed-access papers which helped me build a stronger literature review for my research papers. Apart from the lab and writing sessions, I assisted several seminars about soil science but with different focuses, e.g., agriculture, management of waste and minerology. In addition, in early October, I attended a conference with my colleagues, where I got a variety of new knowledge and was able to network with important and successful researchers. A collaboration was founded there with the University of Arizona, which will continue after my Fulbright experience.

Apart from the research and work, I experienced the culture thanks to friends and colleagues. Friends took me to typical USA experiences like line dancing at a local bar, watching a football game where the university team played, attending an NBA basketball game and going to a drive-in cinema. My visits to Yosemite and Sequoia national parks were a highlight of my stay.

Overall, the people I met were all very welcoming. All of them taught me something about the U.S. culture and I plan to stay in contact with them. Many friends are now very interested in visiting me to Iceland.”



Sólveig Sanchez, PhD student in Soil Conservation at the Agricultural University of Iceland, Visiting Student Researcher at University of California-Davis



“My project was focused on investigating the food webs of spring-fed cave ponds in Iceland and the relationship between Arctic charr (*Salvelinus alpinus*) morphology and diet. In conducting sampling, lab work and analyses, I was exposed to and learned a variety of skills that will contribute to my future career as an ecologist. The method of gastric lavage that my supervisors taught me will be useful in future studies where I may encounter relatively small fish.

Rock scrubs and epi-benthic traps were ways of sampling invertebrates that I hadn't heard of but were especially useful in the small shallow sites we sampled. At the beginning of my grant period, I was unfamiliar with many of the invertebrate taxa I had to identify, but I gradually became better at identifying them. In working with eDNA analyses, I also learned the process of DNA extraction. In addition to developing professionally I also grew as a person. Being in Iceland taught me about the culture, its history, and the people while also giving me a perspective of what it is like to live in a country that I am not from. The connections I made will be especially important to me since I see myself continuing to study Arctic charr.”

Daison Weedop (University of Maine), independent research project at Hólar University



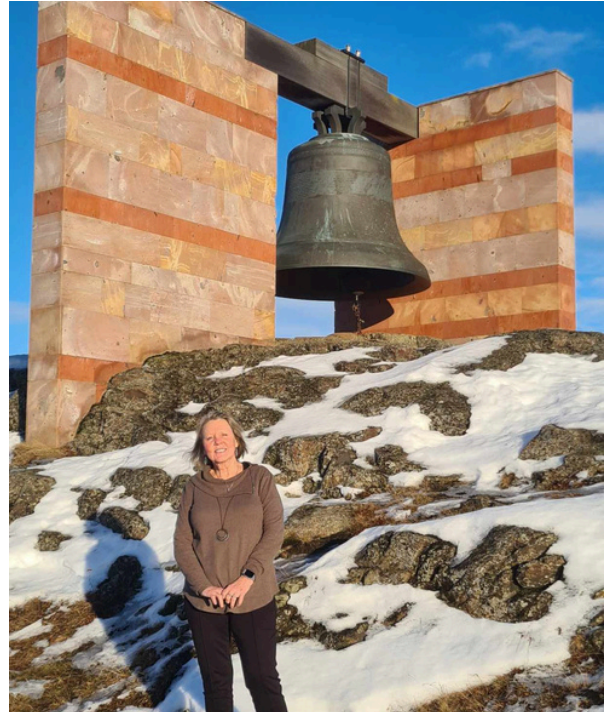
Sebastian Acevedo with family visiting



U.S. Scholar Iveta Silova came on an Inter-Country Travel Grant from Finland to speak at the University of Iceland



Ivana Nikolic with fellow Harvard students



Specialist Cheryl Purdy in Akureyri



Garrison Gerard recording glacier sounds

“The Fulbright project helped to develop our capacity by filling gaps in our course offerings and our faculty’s research profile. We found this experience enriching, enjoyable and extremely helpful. The Fulbright Specialist Program offers an excellent way to build our network and enrich our program.”

Valdimar Hafstein, Professor of Folkloristics at the University of Iceland, host to Fulbright Specialist Dr. JoAnn Conrad

B. Events for American Grantees

The Commission organizes a variety of events for U.S. grantees through its monthly enrichment program, with events 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 with the Commission. A member of the Fulbright Board often joins in grantee events, providing a welcome opportunity for Board members to become better acquainted with the grantees they have selected.



Enrichment Activities in FY2024:

October 2023: Nature walk in Elliðaárdalur

November 2023: Visit to the Iceland Ocean Cluster

December 2023: Advent concert with KK and Mugison

January 2024: Visit to Alþingi, the Parliament of Iceland

February 2024: Ceramic design at Noztra

March 2024: Performance of *Frozen* in Icelandic at the National Theater

April 2024: Horseback riding in Mosfellsdalur

May 2024: Fulbright Forum with lunch and post-forum celebration

September 2024: Orientation for incoming U.S. grantees

In FY2024 we offered a variety of enrichment events that allowed grantees to make connections and enjoy a broad spectrum of Icelandic activities. Towards the end of the fiscal year, in September, the Commission welcomed a new group of U.S. grantees with an orientation day into all things Fulbright and Iceland.





“Mine was a teaching and research position, and the mix proved to be perfect. No better home community could be imagined than Háskóli Ísland’s Environment and Natural Resources Program, where I taught a writing course to a mix of Master’s and PhD students. My other course, “Icy Cold and Hot off the Press,” for HI’s Creative Writing Program, was no less exciting.



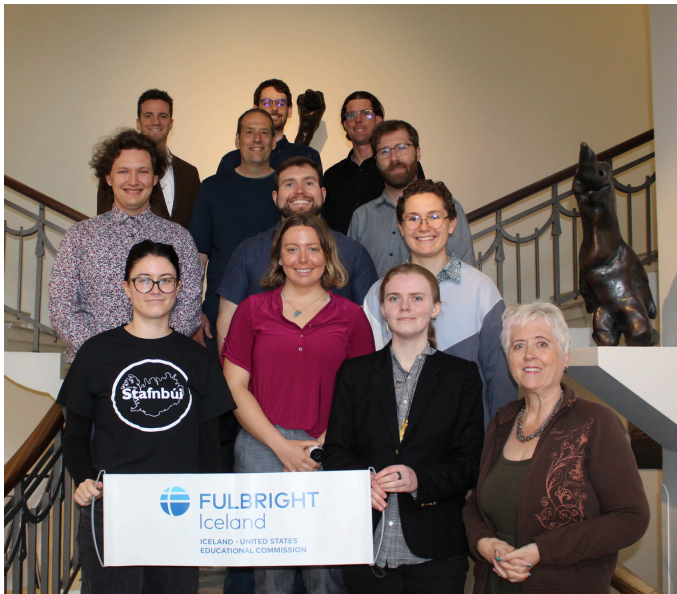
For research, I dove into four main subjects: salmon conservation, national parks and international tourism, Ocean Cluster and the woman who saved the Icelandic goat. My piece on Ocean Cluster was the most read in that weekend edition of the Boston Globe.

I’m grateful for the incredible support of the Fulbright Commission and the whole Fulbright Iceland community, and for being granted this opportunity to get to know Iceland and build a strong community of friends and colleagues. I plan to make my relationship to the university an ongoing one and have already made one visit back.”

Gregory Harris, Adjunct Professor at Harvard Kennedy School, hosted by the University of Iceland

C. Fulbright Forums

Four Fulbright Forums, where U.S. Fulbright grantees have an opportunity to present their projects in Iceland, were held during the fiscal year in November and December 2023 and April and May 2024. These events showcase the wide variety of topics that grantees have used their Fulbright grant to address, whether they are studying, teaching or doing research.



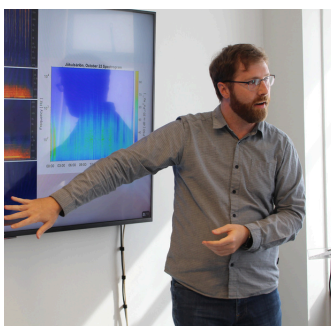
May presentation event for grantees



Gregory Harris and Larry Leibrock



Eleanor Greer



Clockwise from top left: Emily Herbert, Gita Steiner-Khamski, Dipankar Dasgupta, Garrison Gerard

Top: Barbara Kerr; bottom: Nathaniel Wire



Fulbright Specialist Wanda Gregory at Reykjavík pond



Gríma Irmudóttir filming with fellow student

“I came to Iceland to work with Dr. Guðmundur Guðfinnsson and Dr. Enikő Bali of the University of Iceland, as well as Dr. Simon Mathews, on combining petrology and seismology to constrain the temperature of the Iceland Plume, the deep hot upwelling that is producing the volcanism and basalt that has created Iceland. My responsibility was to perform seismic tomography using the Pn wave to estimate seismic velocities in the uppermost mantle in the north Atlantic. This line of research was partially new to me and was a perfect way to spend a sabbatical—learning new methods and using new code.



I envision at least two publications that will come from this work: one on the temperature estimation of the north Atlantic from seismology, and one where we combine the seismology and geochemistry to infer the temperature of the Iceland plume. Our collaboration will continue when I return home. While in Iceland I was able to take advantage of two Fulbright inter-country travel grants to Norway and Madrid, which have resulted in invitations for continued collaboration as well.”

Dr. Derek Schutt, Professor at Colorado State University-Fort Collins, hosted by the University of Iceland

D. Fulbright Iceland at Arctic Circle



Arctic scholars and fellows speaking at the Arctic Circle panel

Fulbright Iceland hosted a breakout session moderated by the ED at the annual Arctic Circle conference in October 2023. Seven Fulbright Iceland Arctic scholars and fellows presented their projects and engaged with conference participants about their research. The Commission also organized a Fulbright Arctic Initiative IV information lunch at Arctic Circle, where an ECA representative and FAI alumni gave prospective applicants advice and insights into the program.

The following grantees participated:

Daison Weedop

Project: Arctic Charr: Adaptations to Cycling Food Webs

Garrison Gerard

Project: The Arctic Soundscape of Iceland: Examining Ecological Interaction Through Acoustics

Andrew Jester

Project: Feasibility of Biomimetic Micro-Climates Using Geothermal Waste Heat

Dr. Christopher Dunn

Project: Applying the Environmental Humanities to Conservation Management and Policy in Iceland

Dr. Derek Schutt

Project: Measuring the Temperature and Extent of the Iceland Plume in the Lithosphere and Asthenosphere

Dr. Barbara Kerr

Project: Creative Communities in Iceland; Origins, Dynamics, and Impact on Innovation

Gregory Harris

Project: Community and Conservation in the Arctic



FAI IV information session with the ED, ECA's Cecilia Kocinski-Mulder, FAI IV co-leader Elizabeth Rink, FAI alumnae Gwen Holdmann and Silja Bára Ómarsdóttir, and Fulbright Sweden ED Eric Jönsson



From top to bottom: Daison Weedop, Barbara Kerr Derek Schutt discussing his research with a conference participant

E. Fulbright Health Exchange

The U.S. Embassy supported the Fulbright Iceland Health Exchange in order to foster collaboration between Icelandic and U.S. institutions on COVID-19 research. One Icelandic scholar visited Harvard University in FY2023 and at the beginning of FY2024 a U.S. scholar came to Iceland to continue the collaboration. Towards the end of October 2023, the program concluded with a Commission-sponsored lunchtime talk at the University of Iceland, where the two scholars, Sigrún Ólafsdóttir and Jason Beckfield, introduced their research on attitudes towards COVID-19 policy responses in the two countries.



Fulbright Health Exchange at the University of Iceland

F. Communications, Publications and Local Outreach

Various outreach activities took place throughout the year, both virtual and in-person, including participation in university international days, presentations on the different Fulbright grant programs and liaison with a variety of partners. The Commission also received guests from the U.S. for both formal and informal consultations. Two Fulbright Iceland newsletters were published, in January and June 2024, highlighting new grant opportunities, recent events and grantee and alumni activities.



The ED with Sally Yerkovich, Director of Educational Exchange at the American-Scandinavian Foundation



Indiana University students at the Commission

For the third year in a row, Fulbright alumnae Priscilla Barnes and Lily Albright brought a group of undergraduate students from Indiana University Bloomington to the Commission during their week-long study tour of Iceland to learn about Iceland and Fulbright opportunities. They also met one of the U.S. fellows for an opportunity to ask questions on their experience living and studying abroad in Iceland.

G. International Cooperation

In November 2023 the ED visited John Hopkins University, Morgan State University, George Washington University and Georgetown University to talk to scholars and students about the various grant opportunities offered by Fulbright Iceland. This led to a virtual presentation for students from a number of D.C. area universities, where the Fulbright Iceland student adviser provided tips for applying for a Fulbright and outlined grant opportunities in Iceland.

A welcome innovation in the work of Fulbright in Europe was the first meeting for staff from all the European Commissions, which was hosted by Fulbright Bulgaria in Sofia in March 2024. A Program Officer from Fulbright Iceland participated in the three-day intensive meeting, where the staff members discussed different approaches and best practices.

The annual European ED meeting was hosted by Fulbright Spain in Madrid in April 2024. The meeting addressed a number of topics, such as the use of AI in applications, fundraising and partnerships, various administrative procedures, staff retention and wellbeing, GDPR, tools for assessing the impact of Fulbright and alumni relations.



The ED visiting John Hopkins



Fulbright Program Officer with Nordic colleagues at European Commissions staff meeting in Bulgaria



Fulbright Denmark ED Sophia Vejlgard visited the Commission in June



ED with colleagues at the ED meeting in Madrid



University of Louisiana welcomed the ED with the Icelandic flag

In May, the ED visited universities and stakeholders in Maine, with a focus on promoting Arctic grant opportunities in Iceland, as many universities in Maine do Arctic-related work. She also used the opportunity to discuss other grant programs, meeting with university presidents, faculty, students and staff. She attended a global ED meeting organized by ECA in New Orleans, where budgets and related topics were at the forefront. She also attended meetings with Fulbright campus reps from all over the U.S., organized by IIE. She used the opportunity while in the south to visit the University of Louisiana to learn more about the university’s impressive research programs and discuss possible cooperation.

The first in-person meeting of the fifth cohort of Fulbright Arctic Initiative took place in northern Norway in September. The ED was asked to attend and give a presentation on the do’s and don’ts of writing a policy brief. It was also a welcome opportunity to get to know the cohort and to work with the co-lead scholars, other Arctic EDs and representatives of ECA and IIE on the development of FAI.



The ED with FAI IV co-lead scholar Elizabeth Rink and Cecilia Kocinski-Mulder from ECA in Tromsø



The FAI IV cohort in Alta

“My journey at Harvard Law School has been one of immense personal and academic growth. Over the past year, I have been challenged and inspired in ways I never imagined. The rigorous academic environment at Harvard has sharpened my legal skills, broadened my perspective, and deepened my understanding of complex legal issues. I managed to fulfill my objectives when it came to course selection in the areas of constitutional law, legal theory, corporate law, and international law.



Beyond the classroom, one of the most enriching aspects of my time at Harvard has been the incredible community of people I’ve had the privilege to meet and befriend. I want to thank Fulbright for their generous grant and the invaluable opportunity to study in the United States. This experience has been transformative and has enriched my academic and personal growth. Being a part of the group of Fulbright recipients is an honor, and I look forward to contributing to the global community and fostering cross-cultural understanding.”

Sigurbjörn Bernharð Edvardsson, LL.M. in International Law at Harvard University

5. NON-FULBRIGHT GRANT ACTIVITIES

In summer 2024, the Commission offered grants to three different summer programs for young students. The Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSIs) for Student Leaders for undergraduate students, and the Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship (BFTF) and EducationUSA Academy for high school students (see the chapter on Education USA advising center for program details).

A. Study of the U.S. Institutes

SUSIs for Student Leaders are intensive short-term academic programs intended to provide undergraduate student leaders with a deeper understanding of the United States while simultaneously enhancing their leadership skills. One Icelandic undergraduate student, Axel Bjarkar Sigurjónsson, was selected to participate in a 5-week SUSIs program on Environmental Issues at Shippensburg University, Pennsylvania in June and July.



Axel Bjarkar during homestay with fellow SUSI participants and his homestay family

During the program, participants took part in academic sessions and engaged in experiential learning opportunities that explored energy, sustainable development, the risks of natural disasters and much more. They engaged with the local community, which included a weekend homestay at a farm and meeting with local environmental non-profits. Other activities included kayaking the Susquehanna River, hiking a part of the Appalachian trail and a field trip to Albuquerque, visiting petroglyph sites and stormwater management facilities. This was in all likelihood the last SUSI for students that Iceland will participate in, for the time being at least, as the SUSI for students is not expected to continue beyond FY2024.

B. Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship

The Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship is an intensive short-term exchange program, created to foster relationships among young Europeans and Americans to build strong linkages and an awareness of shared values. The Commission was able to offer this opportunity in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy. For four weeks in June and July, Heiðrún Vala Hilmarsdóttir participated in the BFTF program at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, exploring issues such as youth engagement, support for democracy and civil society, and economic prosperity.

Programs activities included lectures, seminar discussions and presentations, faculty- and mentor-led workshops, community service activities, site visits, social and cultural activities, and homestay with an American family. During the program, participants went on field trips to Indianapolis, Chicago, Philadelphia and Washington D.C., where they among other things visited the U.S. Capitol and the White House.



Heiðrún Vala at the White House

“At the 2024 Study of the U.S. Institutes at Shippensburg University, I gained valuable and important insights into environmental issues and learned about their local effects. It was great to get different perspectives on bottom-up and top-down approaches and how they work together effectively. Additionally, I learned a lot from all the international friends I made during the course, the U.S. peer mentors, professors and the community leaders I was fortunate to meet.



I was looking forward to learning about environmental issues and tying it with my interest in engineering and data science, and it definitely delivered. Early on, we delved into sustainable farming practices, including regenerative agriculture, permaculture, and the use of riparian buffers. It truly opened my mind since I had previously associated commercial agriculture with extremely potent greenhouse gases. However, I learned that these practices not only help mitigate climate change but also actively enhance the environment when implemented effectively.”

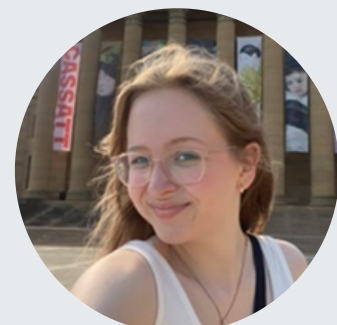
Axel Bjarkar Sigurjónsson (Reykjavik University), Summer Institute on Environmental Issues at Shippensburg University summer 2024

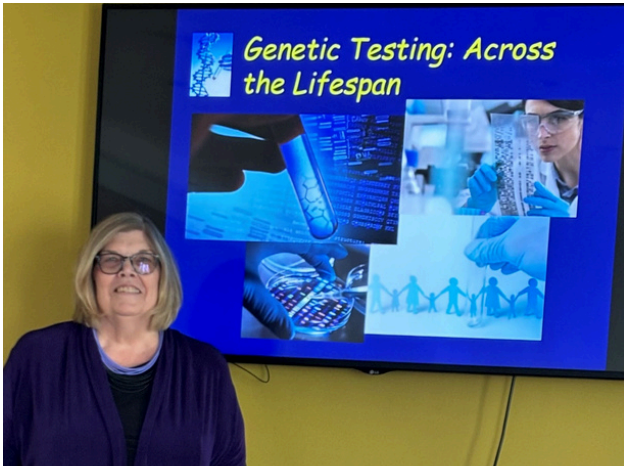


“Taking part in the Ben Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship program was one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever had. I got to know so many wonderful and accomplished kids who made this month unforgettable. I learned a lot from the teachers, mentors, and students.

Project Citizen gave us an opportunity to develop a project that solves an issue in our community. I developed the project A New Country: A New Reality, which aims to help teenage immigrants and refugees in my town to get settled.”

Heiðrún Vala Hilmarsdóttir (Kvennaskólinn í Reykjavík), Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship to Purdue University summer 2024





Fulbright Specialist Marcia Van Riper



Derek Schutt backpacking



Jónatan Hróbjartsson at Duke



Nori Greer at Svínafellslón

“Pursuing my Master’s in Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling at Stanford has been an amazing opportunity. Learning from some of the best specialists in the field has significantly boosted my understanding and skills. Stanford’s rigorous academic environment and state-of-the-art facilities have given me a solid foundation in human genetics, and the training in genetic counseling has been particularly valuable. The collaborative spirit and intellectual rigor here have pushed me to think critically and innovatively.



As I move forward in my academic and professional journey, I am committed to applying the knowledge and experiences gained here to contribute to the field of human genetics and genetic counseling. Thank you for this life-changing opportunity.”

Arnhildur Tómasdóttir, M.Sc. in Human Genetics and Genetic Counselling at Stanford University

1. 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 FY2024 it became necessary to decrease the hours devoted to EducationUSA due to budget decreases. The advising center is open one day per week for in-person appointments. Limited additional appointments are given outside formal opening hours.

The advising center has a library of reference materials and electronic databases accessible by students and scholars. 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 on an individual and group basis to students interested in studies in the United States. Additional services are provided through speaking engagements, participation in education fairs, and contact with appropriate schools and universities. EducationUSA presentations are now mostly done virtually. 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.

During FY2024 the emphasis was on maintaining core advising activities. Additional services cannot be provided under current circumstances.



U.S. Fulbright fellows often join the EducationUSA adviser at University International Days: Christine Groves at Reykjavik University in February (right) and Jack Ivie with the EducationUSA adviser April Dobbins at Reykjavik University in September (left)

2. EDUCATIONUSA ACADEMY

Two Icelandic high school students took part in summer programs at American universities as part of EducationUSA Academy in 2024. EducationUSA Academy allows students to learn about the higher education system and gain an insight into what it is like to study at U.S. colleges and universities. They also received practical tips and training on the college admission process. Eron Thor attended Boston University's summer program, where he was also able to tour other schools in the city, including Harvard and MIT. Vaka Sif attended Emory-Riddle Aeronautical University, which aligned with her interest in space, computer science, and entrepreneurship.



Vaka Sif and her group at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University



Eron Thor with his group visiting MIT

Offering this grant was one of the most impactful services of the EducationUSA advising center, as it led to many Icelandic students thinking about study in the United States. Many students contacted the adviser and came in for guidance specifically because they heard about this opportunity. The grants were funded by the U.S. Embassy in Reykjavik. These grants reached a high-demand market and the opportunity to apply was very much appreciated by students, for whom this was a learning experience even if they did not ultimately receive a grant. Unfortunately, the EducationUSA Academy program was shuttered in late 2024. However, pending funding approval, Fulbright Iceland plans to launch the Summer College Academy in 2025. Summer College Academy will provide funding and support for high school students to attend summer programs at colleges and universities in the U.S.





“I have always dreamed about studying abroad. The program at Boston University targeted students interested in entrepreneurship and innovation, and it really delivered. The experience greatly broadened my horizons and has brought me closer to fulfilling my dream of studying in the U.S. I am very grateful for the opportunity and have enjoyed my connection with the Fulbright Commission since returning to Iceland. I very much enjoyed participating in the Fulbright alumni Thanksgiving event, where I got to talk to many U.S. students currently on a Fulbright in Iceland and being able to discuss my future plans for study in the U.S. with them.

Eron Thor Jónsson (Verzlunarskóli Íslands), EducationUSA Academy, Boston University, summer 2024

“In June 2024, I got the opportunity to take a summer course at Embry Riddle. The program was very interesting, getting a glimpse into university life in the U.S., visiting colleges and an amazing visit to the Kennedy Space Center, as well as participating in an Aerospace Engineering Workshop. Since my time at Embry Riddle, my interest in studying science has never been higher. I also greatly value the opportunity to get to know American culture firsthand.”



Vaka Sif Tjörvadóttir (high school student in South-East Iceland), EducationUSA Academy at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

3. EDUCATIONUSA STATISTICS ICELAND FY2024

As can be seen in the figures on the following page, the number of Icelandic students studying in the U.S. has slightly decreased from the previous year but remains relatively stable in the longer term. This year there were fewer Icelandic students enrolled in a graduate or non-degree programs in the United States than the year before, with 6.9% decrease in undergraduate students and an 18.9% decrease in graduate students. More than half of the Icelandic students in the United States are pursuing an undergraduate degree. The split between private institutions and public institutions is relatively even, with private institutions slightly above public ones. The vast majority of Icelandic students are enrolled in universities which offer doctoral programs, and the top three receiving states are New York, Florida, and California.

Country and Area Facts and Figures 2024

Country:

Iceland

Iceland



364,036

Total Population¹



12.7%

Population Aged 15-24¹



123

International Student Place of Origin Ranking, 2023/24



37

U.S. Study Abroad Destination Ranking, 2022/23



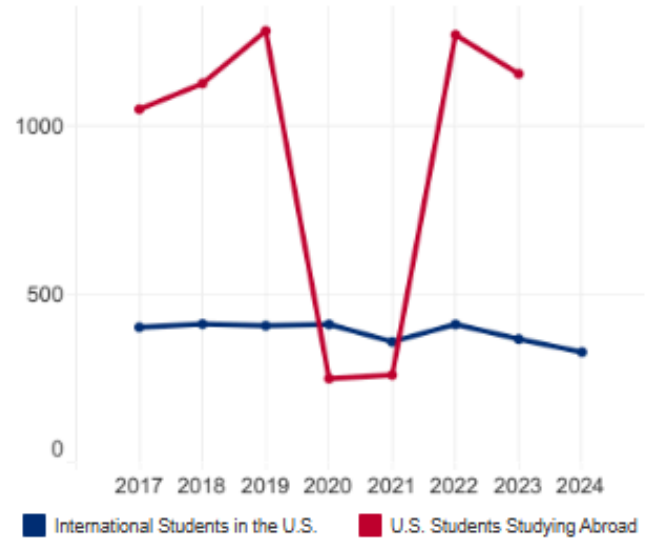
N/A

International Student Economic Impact, 2023²

STUDENT MOBILITY TOTALS

Year	International Students	U.S. Study Abroad
2023/24	328	N/A
2022/23	367	1,158
2021/22	411	1,274
2020/21	359	260
2019/20	411	249
2018/19	407	1,286
2017/18	412	1,129
2016/17	402	1,052

2016/17-2023/24



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BY ACADEMIC LEVEL

Academic Level	2022/23	2023/24	Total	Change
Undergraduate	189	177	54.0%	-6.3%
Graduate	111	90	27.4%	-18.9%
Non-Degree	22	13	4.0%	-40.9%
OPT	45	48	14.6%	6.7%

STUDENT VISAS ISSUED

Visa	Change 2022-2023 ³
F	-15.2%
J	-21.8%
M	-83.3%

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BY INSTITUTION TYPE

Institution	Total
Associate's Colleges	2.0%
Baccalaureate Colleges	8.1%
Doctoral Universities	68.4%
Master's Colleges and Universities	20.5%
Special Focus Institutions	1.0%
Private Institutions	51.2%
Public Institutions	48.8%

TOP RECEIVING STATES

- New York
- Florida
- California
- Massachusetts
- Pennsylvania

Source: *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. For more information, visit www.opendoorsdata.org.

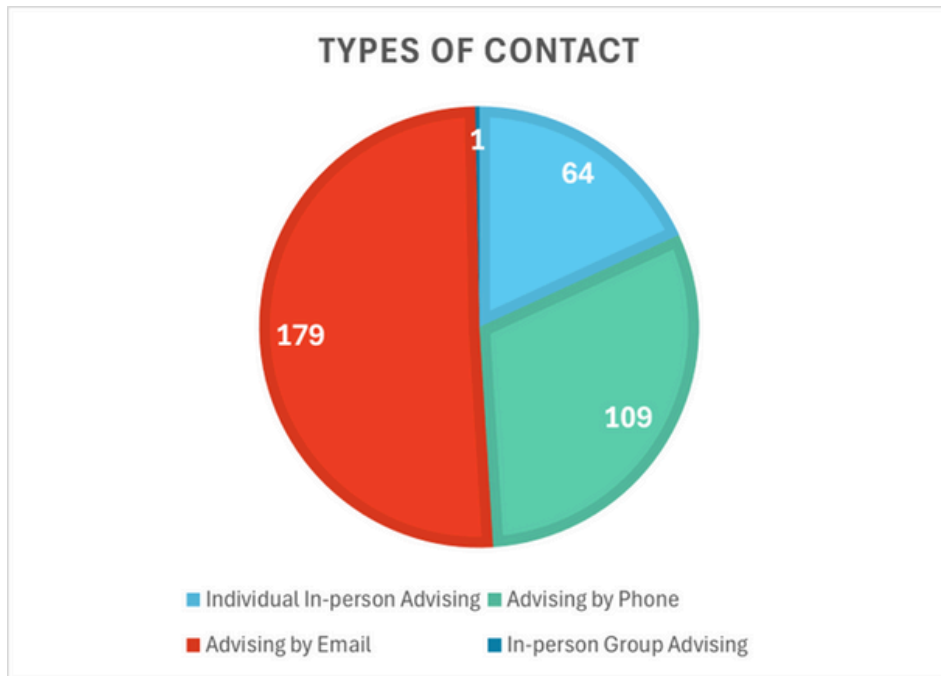
Other sources: ¹*The World Fact Book*, ²U.S. Department of Commerce, ³travel.state.gov (Fiscal year October 1 - September 30).

Note: N/A reflects information that is not available or not applicable. *Open Doors* does not publish rankings for totals of less than ten students.

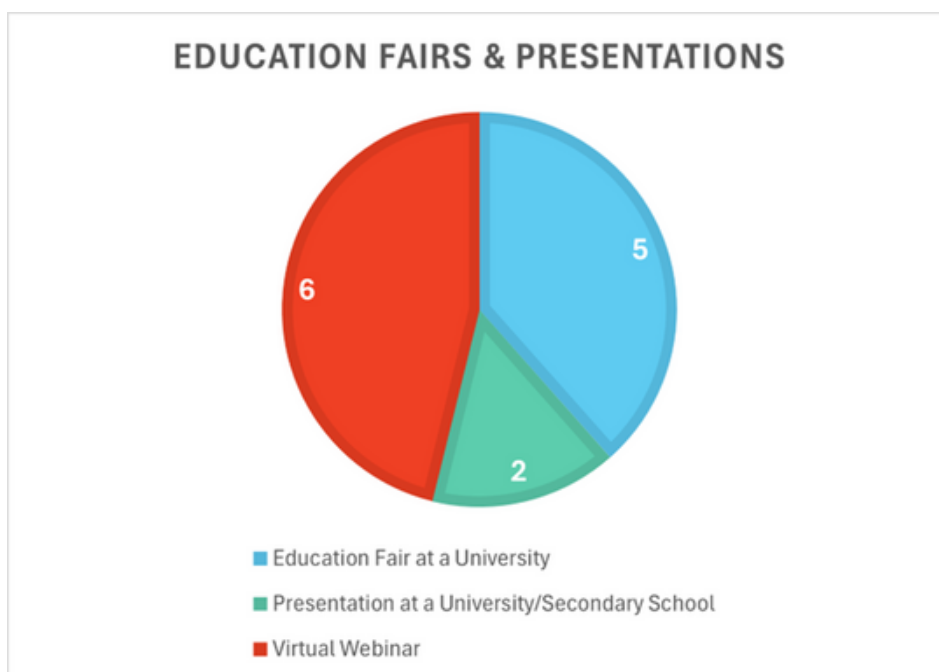


4. ADVISING CENTER FY2024

The most popular fields of study among students seeking EducationUSA advising in FY2024 were law, business, and engineering. Below are three charts outlining statistics for some of the types of contact and the different types of outreach activities held or attended by the center.



The total number of 2024 advising sessions was 353. Much of the center’s FY2024 advising occurred online or by phone. The EducationUSA adviser attended or facilitated 13 education fairs and presentations, visiting Reykjavík University and the University of Iceland, among other institutions.





“I was fortunate to receive the Greece-Iceland Fulbright award in the arts. I spent the second part of grant period in Reykjavik, where I worked with jazz students. I did a few performances while in Iceland, with some outstanding jazz musicians, and used the inspiration from Corfu and Reykjavik to also compose a number of pieces.

I offered a guitar masterclass and a rhythm workshop. Both got such an enthusiastic student response that, at the request of students, these were made into weekly classes for the entire three months. In addition, I worked directly with promising students in sessions through the semester and offered a composition clinic based on a class I created in New York.

An important part of my grant activities was the exploration of possibilities for collaboration, both remote and in-person, between my jazz students in Corfu and Reykjavik. Efforts are ongoing and I hope they will come to fruition after my Fulbright award time is completed. We are also looking into the possibility of students doing student-composed works via remote collaboration. These are exciting possibilities, which are made possible through the Fulbright grant.”

Rory Stuart, Associate Professor at the New School, hosted by the Iceland University of the Arts



Fulbright Specialist Andriy Semenyuk working with students



Daison Weedop in the field with Kári Heiðar and Grant Haines

“From my point of view, this collaboration with Dr. Dunn has proved to be valuable and informative. There is an old saying in Icelandic – "glögg er gests augað" (sharp is the eye of the guest) – and this can certainly be said of Dr. Dunn's research here in Iceland, shared from the perspective of his knowledge of wilderness preservation in the United States, in both theoretical and applied contexts.”

Dorvarður Árnason, Director of Hornafjörður Research Centre and co-host to Fulbright Scholar Dr. Christopher Dunn



“I have participated in numerous seminars, including on the Arctic, Arctic geopolitics, Russian politics, societal developments in China, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, to name a few. I was also able to participate in a four-day course on the Arctic and international law held by the Ted Stevens Center. What has stood out to me has been the community at Harvard. I feel very included, and I am looking forward to continuing to work on the relationships I have already established.”

Guðbjörg Rikey Thoroddsen Hauksdóttir, PhD student in International Relations at University of Iceland, Visiting Student Researcher at Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard Kennedy School



Annesley Black with Fulbright alumna Bethany Bronkema after running a marathon



Emil Dagsson and son at Brown University

“My decision to pursue an LLM in the U.S. is one of the best decisions I have made. I was the only Icelander at Duke and the year was full of great experiences. It was a privilege to learn under the tutelage of accomplished professors, who are more than willing to share their vast experience and knowledge. Being a Fulbrighter is an honor and I look forward to being part of the Fulbright alumni network.”

Jónatan Hróbjartsson, LL.M. in Business Law at Duke University



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Board Members Hrund Ólöf Andradóttir and Adam Bentley at their last Fulbright Board meeting

Board Members Hrund Ólöf Andradóttir and Elizabeth Lay left the Board at the end of FY2024 after serving for five years and Adam Bentley after serving for one year. They made significant contributions during their time on the Board and provided invaluable support to the work of the Commission.

The Board of Directors comprises a diverse group of leaders who bring a wealth of expertise and experience to the table. The Board has important responsibilities in connection with carrying out the goals of the bilateral agreement between Iceland and the United States, including setting and monitoring long-term program objectives and general oversight.

An important responsibility of the Board involves selecting grant recipients, which includes evaluating grant applications and interviewing candidates. 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 FY2024: in October, November, December, January, and April. Outside of meetings, consultations between the ED and the Board were frequent. Board members take part in various Commission activities, providing an opportunity to interact with grantees and to promote Fulbright Iceland.

2. FULBRIGHT COMMISSION

The Commission team consist of the ED and two staff members, who administer the grant programs, alumni affairs, the EducationUSA center, and other projects.

The Commission moved its offices in October 2023 to Laugavegur 13, 101 Reykjavik. The space is very well suited to the work of the Commission and allows also for small events to be held on the premises.



Fulbright Program Officer Pétur Valsson at the U.S. student orientation in September



The Commission is located at Laugavegur 13, 2nd floor



Fulbright Fellows Andy Jester and Garrison Gerard helping the Commission moving offices



“The primary goal of my grant was enrollment in a M.Sc. in Geophysics program at the University of Iceland. It is hard to summarize just how much I learned from my classes, but it includes how to set up a GPS station and process its data, introduce myself and order food in Icelandic, calculate how quickly magma bodies cool, and manipulate glaciological measurements to see if a glacier is shrinking or growing. I feel immensely grateful for my time here in Iceland.

I will be completing my degree in Iceland and know I will maintain the connections I have made regardless of where I will find myself after completing the program.”

Nathaniel Wire (Pomona College), MSc Program in Geophysics at the University of Iceland

“This was an incredible collaboration. I was privileged to be selected as a cinematographer-instructor, and I was excited to spend three weeks in Iceland working with the students on several documentaries showcasing Ukrainian war refugees in Iceland. The Ukrainian Refugee Stories on the Screen project is unique. The students have documented stories that are still developing and impacting current events. Another important aspect is the student's ability to understand the largest conflict in Europe since WWII and to see its immediate impact.



The educational value of the project is significant. Working closely with Ukrainians who were forced to leave their country brought a better understanding of their current challenges living in Iceland. In the modern world where digital media play a pivotal role, producing independent and objective stories is crucial.”

Andriy Semenyuk, independent filmmaker, Fulbright Specialist at Iceland University of the Arts



Nathaniel Wire on a volcano field trip with school



Gita Steiner-Khamsi participating in a PhD defense at the University of Iceland

“Prof. Gita Steiner-Khamsi contributed immensely to the School of Education during her three-month stay. She did outstanding work, providing valuable expertise in the field of education policy. During her stay we worked, for example, on laying the groundwork for an important administrative change within the department. Gita’s voice and input had a big part in moving the issue forward to a successful resolution.

Our collaboration with Gita has already resulted in the submission of one article to the NordSTEP journal and a presentation at a conference in Oslo (PoINet). We plan to continue our cooperation with Gita, both having her teach at the graduate level and continuing collaboration in the further development of education policy studies in Iceland.”

Berglind Rós Magnúsdóttir, Professor, Head of Faculty of Education and Diversity at University of Iceland School of Education, host to Fulbright Scholar Dr. Gita Steiner-Khamsi



Honorary speaker Margrét Jónsson Njarðvík addressing guests at the Alumni Thanksgiving

The Fulbright Alumni Association in Iceland (FFSÍ) 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. The main event for the Association is the annual Fulbright Alumni Thanksgiving celebration. The FY2024 event, held in November 2023, was well attended by alumni, current grantees and friends of Fulbright who celebrated together with a traditional Thanksgiving feast. U.S. Embassy PAO and Fulbright Board member Adam Bentley served as master of ceremonies and Fulbright alumna and Rector of Bifröst University, Margrét Jónsson Njarðvík was the honorary speaker of the evening. Two alumni happy hour events were held in winter and summer and gave alumni and new grantees the chance to mingle and share experiences.

The annual meeting was held in February 2024. Kristján Theodór Sigurðsson, Fulbright fellow 2018, University of California, Berkeley, was elected Chairman for 2024. The following alumni were also elected to the Alumni Association Board: Ingibjörg Friðriksdóttir, Margaret Cormack, Sóllilja Bjarnadóttir and Sólveig Ásta Sigurðardóttir.



Alumni sharing experiences with new grantees at the 4th of July Happy Hour



Alumni Board Members Sólveig Ásta and Kristján Theodór with 1959 Fulbright alum Hinrik Bjarnason and the ED

1. DONORS

Fulbright Iceland is registered as a charitable organization by the Icelandic tax authorities, so individuals and companies can receive tax breaks for charitable donations. Last year four individuals made donations to Fulbright Iceland. These individuals are:

- Ásbjörg Einarsdóttir
- Belinda Theriault
- Hólmgeir Björnsson
- Lára Jóhannsdóttir

Fulbright wants to thank them for their support and hopefully they will inspire others to follow in their footsteps. The funding received by donors in Iceland, 94.500 ISK, will go towards a grant for an Icelandic student in 2025-2026. With rising education costs, current allocations do not cover the breadth of work to which the Commission aspires. We want to support more Icelanders seeking education, as well as research and cooperation opportunities, in the United States. By donating to Fulbright Iceland, donors are investing in the future.

The Commission can also receive tax-deductible donation from U.S. taxpayers through a charitable fund housed at IIE. Two individuals made donations to the fund for a total of USD 172.50 total. They are:

- Norman Keul
- Kelly Caine

2. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Below is the Financial Statement for FY2024, 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. 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.

ICELAND -UNITED STATES EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION

Financial Statement and Balance Sheet
for the Fiscal Year 2023 -2024 (FY 2024)

February 2025

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Statement by the Executive Director

It should be noted at the outset that core contributions remain stable and equal between the two countries on an annual basis. In FY2024, however, due to discrepancies regarding when funding was received, the balance sheet shows a double contribution from Iceland (the 2023 contribution was received after October 1st) and one full contribution from the U.S., plus a small remaining portion of the FY2023 funding. Due to this anomaly in the receipt of funding, the balance sheet shows a skewed picture of funding on an annual basis.

Core government contributions are approximately 61% of total income for the fiscal year. The main component of additional funding this year is from the National Science Foundation. All supplemental funding is earmarked for specific projects, much of it for future projects, which in some cases take place over multiple years.

Grant commitments made in one year, may be paid out in the same fiscal year or they may be partially or wholly paid in subsequent years. For FY2025, with reference to grants that have gone forward already or are expected to go forward in the new year, the number of Commission grantees totals 39 so far, but this number is likely to increase. In FY2024, the number of Commission grantees totalled 39.

Revenue of the fiscal year from 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024 amounted to roughly 156 million ISK, with expenditures at approximately 142 million ISK. As is explained in the notes, some of what is classified as equity in the accounts is in fact already obligated or earmarked. Real contingency funds amount to approximately 100 million ISK. It is necessary for all Fulbright Commissions to have adequate contingency funds. The Commission had built up additional contingency funds due to an uncertain housing situation and in case the need would arise to purchase appropriate office space.

Now that the commission is in a space that is expected to be longer-term, it was decided last spring to decrease contingency funds and release some of this funding for projects and grants over the next years, while maintaining adequate 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 and other partners. This is done in consultation with the State Auditor and only contributions that are verifiable and quantifiable are included.

For the first time, the in-kind contributions include awards and benefits received by Fulbright fellows (students) from universities, including those not administered jointly by the Commission. This funding can be attributed, at least in part, and often significantly, to their Fulbright status. This practice is aligned with the practice in various Fulbright Commissions. However, while some students have been promised awards and benefits for the duration of their studies, only the first year funding is counted here, as it would not be appropriate to include funding now that is contingent upon future satisfactory performance and which will in some cases be received when the student no longer has Fulbright status.

As Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission in Iceland, I hereby confirm and accept the financial statements for FY2024.



Belinda Theriault
8 January 2025

Auditor's report

To the board of the Iceland - United States Educational Commission

The Icelandic National Audit Office has audited the accompanying general purpose financial statements of the Iceland - United States Educational Commission, as of and for the financial year ended September 30th 2024, as listed in the table of contents. This financial statement is the responsibility of the management. The Icelandic National Audit Office'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.

Icelandic National Audit Office believes that the audit provides a reasonable basis for its opinion.

It is the Icelandic National Audit Office'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 2024 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, February 18th, 2025

Guðmundur Björgvin Helgason
Auditor General

(digitally signed)

(electronically signed)

Iceland - United States Educational Commission

INCOME STATEMENT

October 1 2023 - September 30 2024

	Notes	FY 2024 ISK	FY 2023 ISK
Revenues:			
Allocation, US government.....	4	33.279.951	61.651.784
Allocation, Icelandic government.....	4	62.419.500	0
Other contributions, US government.....	5	16.223.146	11.536.642
Other contributions, Icelandic government.....	6	6.000.000	6.949.750
Other contribution-NSF-US government.....	7	37.735.500	75.693.750
Other contributions.....		0	382.719
Total revenues:		<u>155.658.097</u>	<u>156.214.645</u>
Expenditures:			
Program costs, Scholar program.....	8	46.063.234	27.650.844
Program costs, Student program.....	8	41.045.855	34.098.317
Program costs, Specialist program.....	8	755.741	1.030.453
Program costs, Other program.....	8	1.829.917	12.484.708
Salary and salary related costs.....		36.318.193	34.174.694
Rent and utilities.....		4.353.973	2.593.634
Services.....		3.883.794	2.989.418
Equipment and furniture.....		1.267.791	294.096
Supplies.....		453.765	501.750
Travel, training and transport		84.247	446.441
Grant supporting activities.....		5.458.705	4.524.675
Total expenditures:		<u>141.515.215</u>	<u>120.789.030</u>
Income (deficit) before interest expense/revenue		14.142.882	35.425.615
Interest expense/revenue.....		14.956.213	3.493.675
Exchange rate (loss)/profit.....		<u>(2.385.212)</u>	<u>(16.040.443)</u>
Income for the year		<u>26.713.883</u>	<u>22.878.847</u>

Iceland - United States Educational Commission
IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS/EXPENDITURES

October 1 2023 - September 30 2024

	Notes	FY 2024 ISK	FY 2023 ISK
Grant and grant-supporting Icelandic funding:			
Government grant for Icelandic studies, Árnastofnun.....		0	1.780.400
Icelandic government non-cash contributions.....		85.000	0
Host institution costs for US students, scholars and specialists.....		7.584.850	5.221.978
		7.669.850	7.002.378
US funding:			
US Embassy contributions.....		451.182	404.040
Direct DoS grantee funding (SUSI, Specialists, etc.).....		10.418.711	6.123.800
BOAS Award.....		1.354.900	0
Host institution costs for Icelandic students*		32.066.554	5.471.200
		44.291.346	11.999.040
Total non-cash grant and grant-supporting contributions		51.961.197	19.001.417
Administrative			
Auditing services (Icelandic funding).....		600.000	600.000
Total non-cash administrative contributions		600.000	600.000
Total non-cash contributions		52.561.197	19.601.417

* This includes only funding for first year of studies. In some cases funding is documented for up to four subsequent years totalling an additional 734,644 USD in host university funding for Icelandic students. This is not counted in the annual accounts, as it has not yet in hand.

Iceland - United States Educational Commission

BALANCE SHEET

September 30 2024

	Notes	FY 2024 ISK	FY 2023 ISK
Assets			
Cash (USD)	4	252.118.936	247.586.378
Cash (ISK)	3	40.604.192	19.466.639
Rental deposit.....		900.000	0
		<u>293.623.128</u>	<u>267.053.017</u>
Total Assets		<u>293.623.128</u>	<u>267.053.017</u>
Liabilities			
Current liabilities.....		18.000	4456
Unpaid salaries and employment tax.....		655.128	738.861
Income-tax deduction and pension funds.....		488.400	561.983
		<u>1.161.528</u>	<u>1.305.300</u>
Trust account			
Funds on hand October 1.....		265.747.717	242.868.870
Income for the year.....		26.713.883	22.878.847
Funds on hand September 30.....		<u>292.461.600</u>	<u>265.747.717</u>
Total Liabilities and Equity		<u>293.623.128</u>	<u>267.053.017</u>

Iceland - United States Educational Commission

STATUS OF FUNDS REPORT

For Year ending: September 30 2024

1.	FUNDS ON HAND OCTOBER 1 2023.....	267.053.017
	-Current liabilities	-1.305.300
		<u>265.747.717</u>
2.	RECEIPTS: CURRENT FISCAL YEAR	
	A. Current Year Receipts:	
	1. Received from U.S. Mission.....	49.503.097
	2. Host Government Contribution.....	68.419.500
	3. Other Contributions.....	0
	4. Other Funds received.....	37.735.500
	5. Interests on Deposits.....	14.956.213
	6. Exchange fluctuation.....	-2.385.212
	Total Received Current Year	<u>168.229.098</u>
3.	DISBURSEMENT: CURRENT FISCAL YEAR	
	A.Current Year Disbursement	
	1. Administration and advising.....	46.361.763
	2. Grant supporting activities.....	5.458.705
	3. Program.....	89.694.747
	Total Disbursement Current Year	<u>141.515.215</u>
4.	FUNDS ON HAND SEPTEMBER 30 2024.....	292.723.128
	-Rental deposit.....	900.000
	-Current liabilities.....	-1.161.528
		<u>292.461.600</u>

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. The exchange rate used throughout the report is the sales rate from Íslandsbanki on 30 September 2024, 135,49.
2. The bank balances as per statements from Íslandsbanki hf., accounts no. 560169, 405300, 8347 and 7358, have been verified at September 30 2024 as ISK 29.957.882, 44.704, 10.579.529 and ISK 22.077, taking into account payments at the end of the fiscal year.
3. A dollar account no. 102882 in Íslandsbanki hf. has been verified as at September 30 2024 USD 1.860.794 or ISK 252.118.936 (exchange rate booked at daily rate of 135,49).
4. The US government core allocation for FY2024 was USD 232.750. Additionally, the final payment for FY2023 (USD 17.584) was received in October 2023, after the end of the FY 2023 fiscal year. The Icelandic government contribution for FY2024 was ISK 32,1 million. Further, Iceland's core contribution for FY2023. ISK 30,3 million was received in October 2023 and therefore is included here.
5. Other US government contributions includes Education USA funding, US Embassy funding and funding from ECA for FAI IV, in addition to a small intercountry travel grant.
6. Funding from the Ministry of Higher Education for FAI IV.
7. Annual contribution from NSF for the Arctic program.
8. 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	34.255.594
Icelandic Scholars	11.807.640
US Students	28.021.395
Icelandic students	13.024.460
Program cost US specialists	755.741
Other grant programs	<u>1.829.917</u>
	<u>89.694.747</u>

9. Fulbright-MFA Arctic Scholar Program disbursements

Grant & supporting	3.138.399
Admin costs	<u>219.688</u>
Total expenditures	<u>3.358.087</u>

The balance of MFA funds at end of FY2024 is ISK 4.292.819.

10. Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Program disbursements

Grant & supporting	35.153.391
Admin costs	<u>3.515.339</u>
Total expenditures	<u>38.668.730</u>

Total NSF Arctic disbursements amount to approximately USD 285,000.

The balance of NSF Arctic funds at the end of FY2024 is approximately USD 548,000 (ISK 74 million). This is obligated to future grants and associated costs.

11. Cyber Security Program dispersements

Grant & supporting	6.487.224
Admin costs	<u>648.722</u>
Total expenditures	<u>7.135.946</u>

The balance of Cyber Security funds at the end of FY2024 is approximately USD 81,000 (ISK 11 million).

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

12. Although not part of the annual accounts, an inventory of non-expendable property is maintained by the Commission and has been updated for FY2024. Current value is ISK 1.995.837. ISK.

13. Non-expendable property is insured for ISK 8.239.105. Additional insurance includes insurance for costs associated with property damage, liability insurance and accident insurance for staff. The Executive Director is bonded to the amount of USD 25.000. Insurance is valid for one year and is renewed annually.

14. 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. Starting this year, grants and benefits from US universities to Icelandic Fulbright grantees are included with in-kind contributions as they are verifiable and quantifiable.

15. The Icelandic Government paid both the FY2023 and FY2024 core contributions in FY2024. The US Government paid the full FY2024 contribution and a small amount remaining of the FY2023 allocation. When additional government cash contributions are taken into account, the funding ratio is approximately 56% US to 44%. When government non-cash contributions on the balance sheet are included, the US government allocation ratio is 63% to 37% Icelandic.

16. Ratio of administrative costs to grant costs, including non-cash expenditures shown in the income statement.

Grants and grant supporting activities	147.114.649	76%
Administrative costs	<u>46.961.763</u>	<u>24%</u>
Total costs	<u>194.076.412</u>	<u>100%</u>

17. Funds that are already obligated/earmarked for specific projects in FY2024 and beyond in ISK:

MFA	4.292.819
NSF Arctic	74.244.004
Cyber	11.018.184
ECA Arctic	13.655.847
EoY funding	6.095.994
ECA dependent supplement	1.539.340
US Embassy funding	139.391
Bruce Fowler Mobility Fund	<u>1.216.070</u>
Total	112.201.648
Projected non-earmarked obligated grant funding	50.000.000
Projected admin costs for 6 months	<u>26.000.000</u>
Total	76.000.000
Total obligated funding	<u>188.201.648</u>
Contingency funding	105.421.480



FULBRIGHT
Iceland

ICELAND - UNITED STATES
EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION