

The Fulbright Fund

(Managed by the King Baudouin Foundation)

COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE
Between the United States of America, Belgium and Luxembourg

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The Fulbright Program



For over 60 years, the Fulbright Scholarship Program, funded by an annual appropriation from the U.S. Congress and by cooperating governments overseas, has provided scholarships to “the best and brightest” for study abroad. Grants are available to U.S. citizens for post-graduate study or post-doctoral research in 140 countries around the world. At the same time, grants are also given to non U.S. citizens worldwide for similar projects in the United States.

Since 1946, the Fulbright Program has demonstrated to the world that international educational exchanges provide unbounded opportunities for fostering learning, improving understanding between people of other cultures, and expanding the leadership potential of the participants.

Alumni of the program around the world include heads of state, cabinet ministers, members of the legislative branches of governments, judges, heads of corporations, university presidents, journalists, artists, professors and teachers.

As former Secretary of State Colin Powell said in a speech in July 2003, “Our rising leaders in the Fulbright program establish relationships with counterparts abroad that will form the foundation of successful and mutually beneficial partnerships in the years ahead.”

As of the academic year 2009-10, for Europe alone, since 1949, 125,728 European citizens have received grants to study, teach or conduct research in the United States and 76,111 Americans have received grants to come to Europe for similar purposes.

Some statistics¹

150

The Fulbright Program operates in 150 countries around the world. In Belgium and Luxembourg, as well as in 49 other countries, bi-national Fulbright Commissions have been established to administer the program.

325 000

Since 1946, more than 325,000 individuals have received Fulbright grants worldwide.

6 000

Annually, approximately 6,000 Americans and citizens of other countries receive Fulbright grants to study, teach, lecture and conduct research.

1 100

1,100 Americans have received Fulbright grants from the Commission to study in Belgium

2 500

2,500 citizens of Belgium and Luxembourg have received Fulbright grants from the Commission to study, teach or conduct research in the U.S.

"The Fulbright Program aims to bring a little more knowledge, a little more reason, and a little more compassion into world affairs and thereby to increase the chance that nations will learn at last to live in peace."

-- Senator J. William Fulbright

¹ From 1946 to the academic year 2008-09

The Fulbright Program in Belgium and Luxembourg: Organization

In Belgium and Luxembourg, the Fulbright Program is administered by the Commission for Educational Exchange. The Commission is managed by the Board of Directors, composed of five Americans resident in Belgium, four Belgians appointed by the French and Flemish Communities, and one Luxembourger appointed by the Luxembourg Ministry of Education.

The American Ambassadors to Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Union serve as honorary co-chairmen.

In addition, the Commission's Board of Directors has an advisory committee to oversee the Fulbright-Schuman Program. This committee is composed of representatives from the European Commission, the U.S. Mission to the European Union, and academics involved in U.S.-EU relations.

In 2003, the Commission concluded an agreement with the prestigious King Baudouin Foundation to create the Fulbright Fund within the King Baudouin Foundation. Corporate and individual donations to the Fulbright Fund at the King Baudouin Foundation are tax deductible in Belgium.

In addition to administering the Fulbright grants, the Commission also runs an excellent advisory service for students of any nationality who are seeking information on studying in the United States. The Commission moreover liaises with Belgian universities so as to increase the awareness of the availability of scholarships and to encourage the best students to apply.



Funding of the Program

The program, which has been the catalyst for so much movement and scholarly activity, began with a surprisingly modest and practical idea: that war material left in foreign countries by the United States after World War II could be sold to those countries in local currency, and that the funds thus earned could be spent by the U.S. government in the form of grants for educational exchange.

Today, the primary source of funding for the Fulbright Program is an annual appropriation made by the U.S. Congress to the U.S. State Department. Participating foreign governments, as well as host institutions in the United States and abroad, contribute through cost-sharing, as well as by indirect support such as salary supplements, tuition waivers and university housing.

For the Belgian program, the non-U.S. funding is provided by annual contributions from the Belgian Federal Ministry of Scientific Policy. Although the Agreement establishing cost-sharing specifies a contribution of 50% of the budget from the U.S. and 50% from Belgium, the current budget reflects a contribution of 32.6% from the United States Department of State, 52.2% from Belgium, and 15.2% from the private sector.

In Belgium, the Fulbright Program has been growing steadily since its creation in 1948. This growth, however, combined with governmental budget constraints, has reinforced the need for support from private and corporate donors.

“Educational exchange can turn nations into people, contributing as no other form of communication can to the humanizing of international relations.”

-- Senator J. William Fulbright

The mechanics of the grant

Grants are awarded to study, teach, lecture and conduct research on the basis of academic or professional qualifications and leadership potential, plus ability and willingness to share ideas and experiences with people of diverse cultures. While the majority of Fulbrighters are post-graduate students or post-doctoral scholars, many professionals from outside academe participate: lawyers, judges, doctors, scientists, architects, engineers, journalists, musicians, artists, poets, business executives, public servants, and others.

A variety of scholarship programs ranging from straight grants to loan schemes can be organized under the umbrella of the Fulbright Fund. The Commission managing the program can be extremely flexible and adaptable to the specific needs of donor companies. Any scheme can be considered which will foster education in the United States for outstanding individuals.

Contributions may be earmarked for a specific field in which donors wish to support scholars. The Belgian candidates for Fulbright grants tend to be in fields where the U.S. has special expertise. In the scholar category, most Belgian applicants are in the sciences (medicine, bio-medical research, engineering, etc), whereas the large majority of the Belgian graduate students are in professional fields, such as law, business, public administration.

Grantees must travel on an exchange visitor visa and therefore pledge to return to their home country or to another EU country and reside there for two years before seeking permanent residence in the United States. This increases the chances that the grantees will effectively return to their country and, if applicable, to their previous employment.

The amount of a donation is obviously left to the discretion of the donor. Preference is given to recurrent amounts of the same magnitude, which makes planning and advertising towards potential applicants much easier. In general, we estimate that a year at a US university costs \$35,000-\$80,000. (Unfortunately, due to limited government funds, the Commission can only give partial grants to selected students and scholars.) Any amount is helpful but, as an indication, key corporate donors give today annual amounts between €15,000 and € 30,000.

Thanks to an agreement with the King Baudouin Foundation, corporate, institutional or individual contributions can be made to the Fulbright Fund within the King Baudouin Foundation. Contributions are tax deductible for the donors.

Every dollar or Euro donated to the Fulbright Fund goes directly to the students selected.

List of institutional donors

Since 1980, many prestigious organizations in Belgium have contributed generously to the work of the Commission.

A.T. Kearney
Allen & Overy
American Chamber of Commerce
American Women's Club of Brussels
Baker & McKenzie
Belgacom
Chicago University Alumni in Belgium
Cobepa
Columbia Club of Belgium
Covington & Burling
DHL
Euroclear
Ford Motor Company
Freshfields, Bruckhaus & Deringer
Harvard Club of Belgium
Liedekerke, Wolters, Waelbroeck, Kirkpatrick
Linklaters De Bandt
Loyens & Loeff
Loyens & Loeff Luxembourg
McKinsey & Co.
Monsanto
Morgan Guaranty Trust
Procter & Gamble
Stibbe
S.W.I.F.T.
Skadden Arps
Texaco
Van Bael & Bellis
Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering

Why contribute to the fund?

Foster international education, cross-cultural exchanges. The individuals who have benefited from them contribute greatly to the success of their organization and to the well-being of their communities.

Build brand awareness within the top ranking students by associating with the prestigious Fulbright Program. Moreover, scholarships may carry the company's name and donors may define specific educational objectives. Donors may also have the name of their company listed on the Commission's web site. Since the staff of the Commission visits Belgian universities at least once a year to announce the available grants, the name of the company will also be widely disseminated amongst the top-ranking students on the Belgian campuses. Some of the law firms who contribute to the Fulbright Fund have seen an enormous increase in the number of spontaneous applications for positions with their firm since they began donating to the Fulbright Program and their name has been circulating among the top of the last-year law students.

Meet top potential recruits before they start looking for a job. Donors contributing at least € 15,000 on an annual basis can assist in the selection process by interviewing prospective candidates for the awards. The donor organizations are given a list of résumés and applications carefully prepared by the Commission and participate in the interviews of the relevant applicants. In this way, the company is not only able to select the grantee they want to "call their own" (and who would go to the United States with the company Scholarship), but can also see many of the other brightest and best university graduates in their field of interest. Donors will be encouraged to give a grant of € 15,000 to only one student. This will foster greater loyalty by the student to the donor organization. Smaller donations are, of course, always welcome. However, these donations will be distributed by the Commission's selection committee. Every donating company receives at the end of each year the list of Belgian and Luxembourg grantees, indicating their background and their programs of study at the specific university they have decided to attend. These lists can obviously serve as a basis for future recruitment drives.

Get access to a network of Fulbright Alumni. The former grantees form a very active association consisting of over 1,200 members divided into five regional chapters in Belgium and Luxembourg. The membership database is available to the donors.

Help shape the program for the future. A high-ranking member of a donor organization making a significant contribution over a number of years is usually invited to become a member of the Advisory Committee of the Commission's Board of Directors. All donors and their representatives are also invited to all major events of the Commission, such as receptions for departing and returning grantees.

History

1946

The Fulbright Program is the U.S. Government's premier international educational exchange program. The Program began with an Act which was introduced in the U.S. Congress by Senator J. William Fulbright, and signed into law by President Harry S. Truman on August 1, 1946. In the words of Senator Fulbright, it was designed "to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries."

1948

Belgium was one of the first countries to sign an agreement establishing a foundation to carry out the new program. The "U.S. Educational Foundation in Belgium", established by Executive Agreement on October 8, 1948, existed for 20 years.

1968

By 1968, when Belgium's debt to the United States had been paid, the advantages of the scholarly exchange program were so apparent that it was decided to continue on a cost-sharing basis. The "Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States of America, Belgium and Luxembourg" came into existence on December 12, 1968, when representatives of the three participating governments signed a new Agreement. The Commission in Belgium is unique: it is the only tri-national Commission in the world.

1980

As the public sources of funds for educational purposes are diminishing, the Commission has turned to the private sector for tax deductible donations to help solve the problems of students and scholars.

1991

Since the academic year 1991-92, the Commission has also administered a small Fulbright exchange program between the United States and the European Union. In terms of the program, grants are available for approximately 12 Europeans to participate in the EU Scholar-in-Residence Program to teach about the EU at American universities or for research on US-EU affairs in the United States. On the American side, approximately 12 grants are available for post-doctoral research on US-EU affairs or other EU topics which are supranational in nature; for lecturing at the College of Europe in Brugge; or for post-graduate study on the EU or US-EU relations. Grants are tenable in any of the Member States of the EU.

2003

The Fulbright Fund is integrated into the King Baudouin Foundation. The Commission for Educational Exchange maintains its objectives and independent functioning.

Whom to contact?

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How to donate:

Corporate, institutional or individual donations may be made to the following account of the King Baudouin Foundation: 000-0000004-04 with the reference "Fulbright Fund."

Contributions are tax deductible in Belgium for the donors.