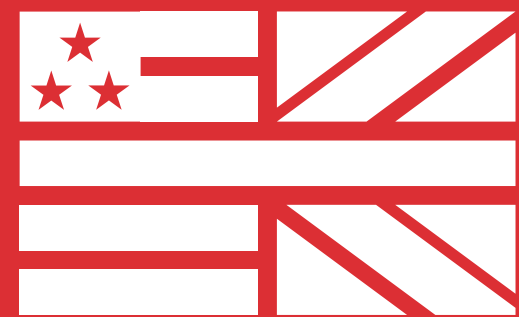


THE US-UK FULBRIGHT COMMISSION

Strategic Plan
2020–23

FULBRIGHT



From 17-year-olds to septuagenarians, we support education exchange between talented people of all backgrounds between the UK and the USA, enabling study, teaching and research at some of the world's most exciting universities through scholarships, advice, coaching and experiential learning.



A world where there are no obstacles to learning, understanding and collaboration.

Our Vision

We advance knowledge, promote civic engagement and develop compassionate leaders through education exchange between the peoples of the US and the UK.

Our Mission



Credit: Jim Choate

Executive summary

To solve global challenges we urgently need to bring together the minds and the energy of people from all cultures and backgrounds.

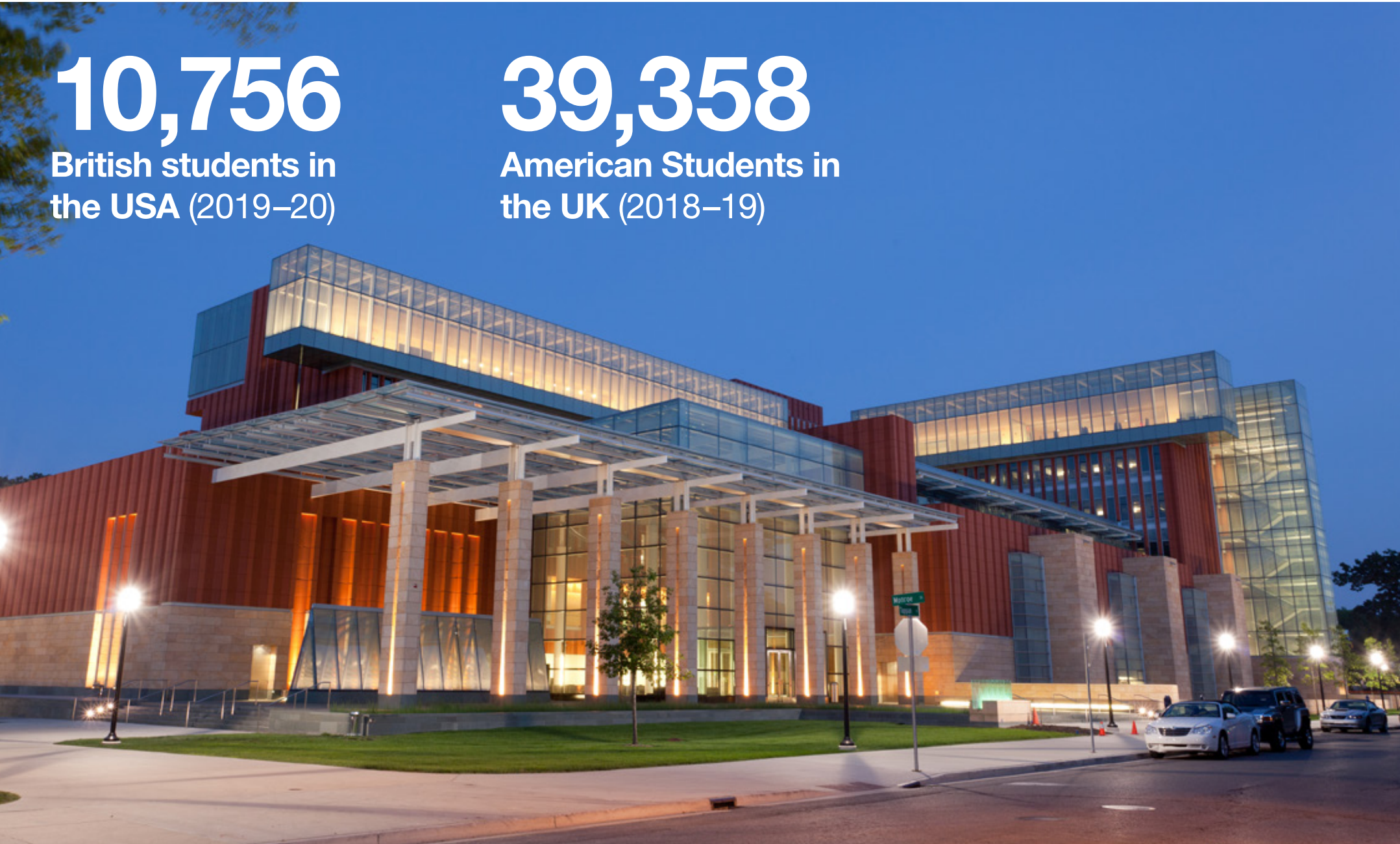
The calamity of COVID-19 has disrupted every dimension of our lives across the globe. The Black Lives Matter movement has sparked a worldwide reckoning and laid bare the racial inequality that exists in every society. Climate change continues to melt glaciers and wreak extreme weather and havoc. The next few years could be the most unstable and unpredictable in the 70+ year history of the Fulbright awards.

Seventy-five years on from the coining of the term ‘special relationship,’ there is a renewed UK focus on the relationship with the US.

On both sides of the Atlantic, universities have played a critical role in fighting COVID-19 and higher education generally is seen as a key driver of the economic recovery from the pandemic. At the same time, there is pressure on universities to prove their value to wider society. These trends represent challenges as well as opportunities for the US-UK Fulbright Commission.

Our mission is to advance knowledge, promote civic engagement and develop compassionate leaders through education exchange between the peoples of the US and UK.

Our vision is a world where there are no obstacles to learning, understanding and collaboration.



How our work creates impact:

- The promotion of academic excellence and curiosity advances human knowledge.
- The Fulbright recruitment and selection process invests in human potential thereby increasing social mobility.
- The immersive experience of exchange between the US and UK – whether as Fulbright awardee or EducationUSA advisee – deepens understanding of the other country and fosters compassionate leadership.
- Communities created through Fulbright fellowship cohorts and research/teaching collaboration have the potential to contribute to global problem solving.

Our strategic priority for the next three years is to grow and show our impact in each of the above four areas with an especial emphasis on:

- Tackling Global Challenges
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Six concrete goals for 2023:

- 1

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:
Programmes that assert the vibrant diversity of both the UK and the US.
- 2

Global Challenge Teaching Fellowships:
Newly established fellowships devoted to advancing global challenges.
- 3

Undergraduate Programme Expansion:
A sustainable and expanded US and UK undergraduate Summer Institutes programme.
- 4

University Partners:
A doubling of American university partnerships.
- 5

Public Engagement:
A raised profile of the Commission and its civic engagement.
- 6

Alumni Engagement:
A dynamic and connected alumni community.

In order to achieve these goals, we are going to invest in:

- Making the most of our people.
- Designing an Impact evaluation methodology.
- Expanding our communications and events capacity.
- Building a robust data infrastructure.

Supporting this drive for growth are:

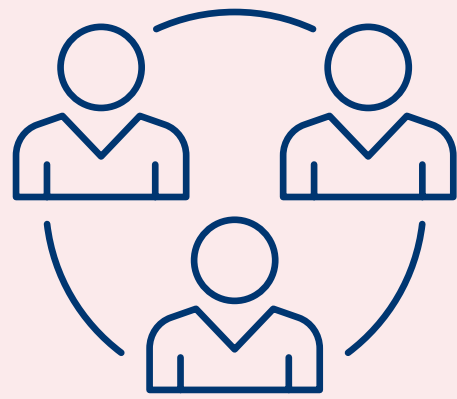
- Our existing government, university, and charity partnerships.
- A new fundraising strategy incorporating alumni, foundations, and high net worth individuals.

The US-UK Fulbright story is relevant and distinctive in the following ways:

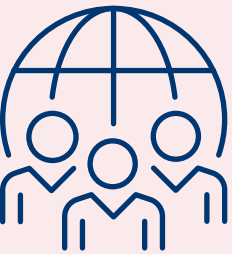
- It explicitly places a high value on the social impact of its programming through its commitment to civic engagement, widening participation and solving global challenges.
- It is the only education exchange programme that goes both ways across the Atlantic.
- It provides access to an influential and inclusive community of alumni engaged in furthering better international understanding.

Our world in figures

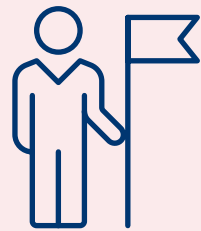
The Global Fulbright Program



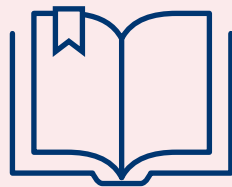
160+
countries in partnership



390k
Global alumni



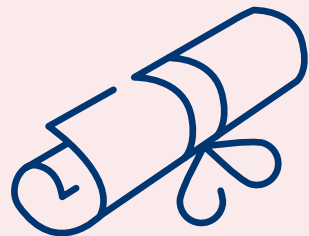
39
Heads of State
or government



60
Nobel Laureates

US-UK Fulbright Commission

75th
anniversary
year in 2023

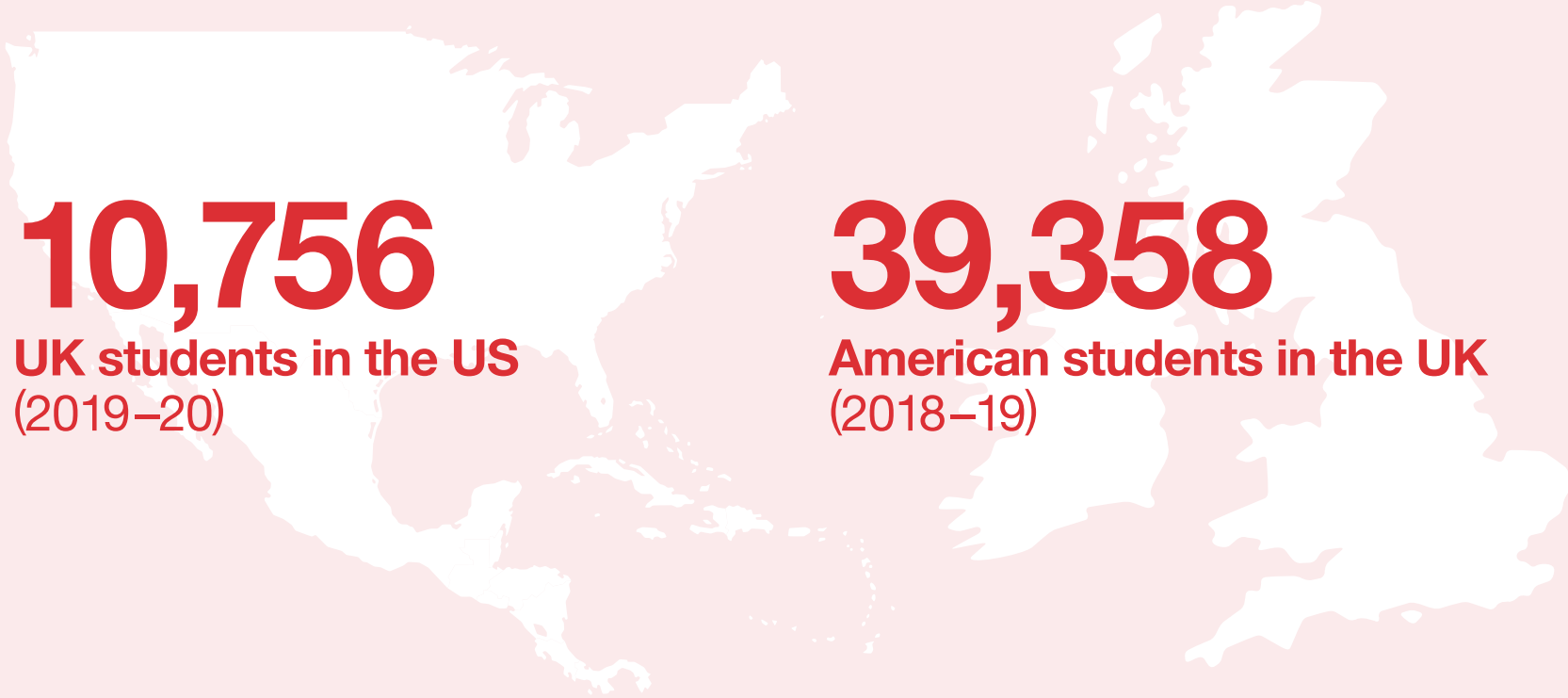


24,000+



Exchanges

EducationUSA

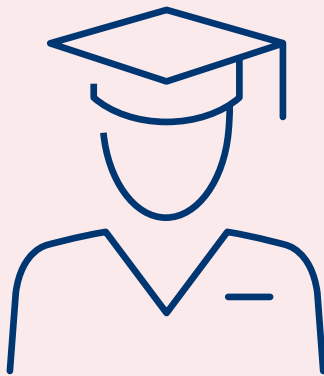


Sutton Trust US Programme

412
Sutton Trust US Programme
students admitted to
US universities
(2013–2020)

74
different US universities
attended by Sutton Trust US
Programme students
(2013–2020)

\$109m
in financial aid accessed by
Sutton Trust US Programme
students
(2013–2020)



80%

of students who are in the first generation
of their family to go to university
(2013–2020)

Seventy-five years on from the coining of the term ‘special relationship’ there is a renewed UK focus on the relationship with the US.

Contents

11	The wider context
12	The US-UK Fulbright Story
13	Looking Ahead
15	Overview
17	Detailed Roadmap
27	Investment



The wider context

The global Fulbright Program was created in 1946 in response to an exceptional political situation – the end of a brutal world war and the urgent need for greater international understanding.

Today, 75 years on, the world is faced with the unprecedented challenge of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating impacts on human health, society and the global economy.

In the UK, Brexit is now a reality. Hence the relationship with the US will take on even greater importance for the UK government and economy. For universities, acute financial issues, partly caused by the pandemic, will put severe pressure on budgets and research, alongside the disruption of student mobility. UK universities are looking to explore how best to enhance links with American counterparts and their profile among American students.

Over on the other side of the Atlantic, the pandemic has upended business as usual for universities and has disproportionately affected students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are more likely to have dropped out or not to have enrolled in the first place. Add to this a growing lack of confidence, according to polling organisations such as Gallup and Pew, in the importance of a college education among the wider public.

American and British academic researchers are playing important roles in the fight against the coronavirus and universities are being seen in both the UK and US as key players in the post-pandemic recovery. However, at the same time, higher education is under pressure to demonstrate its value to society. Consequently, university leaders are increasingly supportive of the synergies between public engagement and knowledge transfer with teaching and research. Looking internationally, global learning or ‘the process of diverse people collaboratively analysing and addressing complex problems that transcend borders’, is increasingly being recognised as integral to a modern university’s mission.

However, there is also recognition that studying abroad is generally an option for a small minority of students. The pandemic and its disruption of in-person teaching and international travel have upended the traditional model in the immediate term. Climate change and its long-term impact on travel and people’s desire to travel is making physical education exchange less attractive. Innovative virtual learning and simulation technologies are now at the heart of global education discussions.



“Being awarded a Fulbright Scholarship, and the Alumni Award, has afforded me an opportunity to showcase the importance of support. Yes hard work ‘can’ pay off, yes socio-economic barriers continue to be almost impermeable – but there are people within society that facilitate opportunity, not just by what they are afforded to ‘materially offer’, but the manner in which they support and humanise you.”

William Carter
All Disciplines Award, University of California, Berkeley (2020–21)



“As a Fulbrighter, I spent a year as a guest in Wales. I was welcomed into communities, both academic and creative, as I strove to gain a deeper understanding of the stories and traditions that have shaped me as a Welsh-American.”

Emma Watkins
Cardiff University Postgraduate Award (2018–19)

Image Credit: Andrew Marvin

The US-UK Fulbright Story

The 1948 treaty between the US and the UK governments specifically created the US-UK Fulbright Commission, one of the first Fulbright programmes in the world. And in the early 1950s, the first UK Fulbright Scholars crossed the Atlantic, sailing into New York. Today, our Fulbright community comprises teachers, artists, scientists, film makers and mathematicians, actors and doctors, MBAs, and MFAs, PhDs and MPAs all working towards advancing global change.

High profile US-UK Fulbrighters include:

- John Hope Franklin, Historian, awarded the US nation’s highest civilian honour, Presidential Medal of Freedom
- Milton Friedman, Economist, Nobel Prize winner in Economic Sciences
- Sylvia Plath, Author and Poet
- Richard Rogers, Architect
- Joseph Stiglitz, Economist, Nobel Prize winner in Economic Sciences
- Shirley Williams, Politician and Political Scientist

The US-UK Fulbright Commission celebrates its strong 20th century heritage, while looking forwards with a strategic plan that maps out its 21st century future.

What we do:

- We award Fulbright grants to US and UK students seeking to do a postgraduate degree or research across the Atlantic and to American and British scholars – and mid-career professionals – seeking to do research or teach in each other’s country.
- We partner with the Sutton Trust to support high achieving state school students from low-income families across the UK explore the possibility of US study and apply for comprehensive financial aid.
- We work with UK universities to bring bright American undergraduates who have never been abroad to themed summer schools in the UK.
- We partner with EducationUSA to offer programmes, events and advice for UK students and professionals interested in studying at accredited higher education institutions in the USA.

Our core values:

- **Inquisitive:** we embrace continual learning and believe in the power of education to change lives and communities.
- **Scrupulous and considerate:** we are committed to transparent, fair, and respectful practices.
- **Collaborative:** we seek out connections and partnerships.
- **Inclusive:** we aim to represent the diversity – in all its dimensions – of both the UK and the US.
- **Entrepreneurial:** we are creative thinkers and experimenters.
- **Enthused:** we are passionate about our work and celebrate each other.



The promotion of academic excellence and curiosity advances human knowledge

Our alumni have gone on to be politicians and authors, business professionals, composers and Nobel Laureates.



Our priority for the next three years is to grow and show our impact in promotion of academic excellence, increasing social mobility, exchange between the US and the UK and contributing to global problem solving.

The achievement of 6 Core Goals for 2023

- 1

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:
Applicant and finalist pools to all our programmes (Fulbright awards, Summer Institute, and other programmes) that are representative of the diversity – in all its dimensions, from ethnicity and socio-economic background to geography and institution – of both countries.
- 2

Global Challenge Teaching Fellowships:
Newly established fellowships devoted to advancing knowledge on three key global challenges: climate change, racial inequality and pandemics, while innovating through the provision of a virtual programme that democratises access to international exchanges, advances digital teaching and learning approaches, and deepens US-UK university collaborations.
- 3

Undergraduate Programme Expansion:
An expanded UK-based Summer Institute programme for American undergraduates that is financially sustainable, and the introduction of a broadly comparable programme that enables UK undergraduates to connect with the US.
- 4

University Partners:
A doubling of American university partnerships that expands the scope of our existing standalone financial awards through the introduction of fee waivers by partner universities, combined with supplementary stipends. Leading to more UK talent experiencing the US as Fulbrighters, and consequently, a balance in the numbers of scholars on both sides of the Atlantic.
- 5

Public Engagement:
A public engagement programme that works with all Fulbrighters to demonstrate the civic dimension of our work and raise the profile of the US-UK Fulbright Commission.
- 6

Alumni Engagement:
A dynamic alumni community across our programming – from Fulbright awards to Summer Institutes – that engages in a range of activities, from social meet-ups, and professional networking events to volunteering and giving.



“International collaboration adds so much value to research, especially in the field of pathogens. The current SARS-CoV-2 pandemic serves to demonstrate how necessary cross-border sharing of knowledge and skills is for combatting disease. I continue to collaborate internationally, with scientists in Ireland, the UK, Brazil, Spain, France and indeed the US.”

Adrian Allen
Northern Ireland Public Sector Scholar Award (2015–16)

An evidence-based strategy:

To arrive at these six key objectives, we systematically gathered information through conversations and meetings with Commissioners and staff. This internal intelligence gathering was complemented by external meetings with governments, universities, various scholarship organisations, and other stakeholders as well as surveys of our US and UK alumni. The path forward that emerged from this work was clear.

In order to achieve these goals we are going to invest in:

- 

Making the most of our people.
- 

Designing an Impact evaluation methodology.
- 

Expanding our communications and events capacity.
- 

Building a robust data infrastructure.



Social impact through a commitment to civic engagement, widening participation and solving global challenges

The following roadmap discusses our six concrete goals in conjunction with three themes that we believe reflect and anticipate transformational change within UK and US academic institutions, on both sides of the Atlantic:

- Civic engagement, widening access and solving global challenges.
- Strengthening transatlantic links.
- Building alumni communities.



Goal: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

Widen the pool of applicants and finalists from hitherto under-represented universities and regions.

To ensure awareness and appeal, the Fulbright Commission needs energetically to share its story and to promote the many varied opportunities it offers.

We have begun to tackle this challenge with targeted outreach and informational events tailored to universities that have traditionally been underrepresented in our cohorts. However, it is clear that we need to do more.

Taking our cue from the Fulbright Adviser Program that provides information and guidance about the Fulbright Awards on hundreds of campuses across the US, we will pilot a Fulbright Champion programme at a small number of UK universities. These champions will work with us to put together events and build exposure for the Fulbright awards on their campuses. Once we have successfully tested the model we will look to expand our Fulbright champion corps to more universities across the UK.

We have identified an opportunity for Fulbright alumni to offer support to Fulbright Award candidates during what can be a daunting application process. We will be piloting a digital platform that will profile ‘Fulbright ambassadors’ and offer a safe messaging system for those interested in applying for an award to connect with those who have been awarded one in the past. This will enable prospective applicants to hear from a wide range of Fulbrighters and for us to showcase the diverse range of backgrounds, fields, and experiences that Fulbrighters have. Furthermore, we aim to widen the pool of scholar and student applicants from the UK by providing additional financial assistance.

“My year as a Fulbright Scholar was the best year of my life. I learned how the US and the UK can learn from one another in terms of health care delivery. This grant year opened my mind to the ways I can change the world for the better. I returned home with optimism to make a positive impact during my career in medicine.”

Fulbrighter, 2020 alumni survey

A vision for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the US-UK Fulbright Commission

- Inclusive and equitable awards processes that result in grantee cohorts that accurately represent the diversity of both the UK and the US, and in particular both countries’ ethnic and racial diversity. A Fulbrighter community that does not shy away from the uncomfortable, hard work of working towards racial equality and social justice and, indeed, celebrates its leadership on this issue.
- Fulbright-funded research, teaching and programming that advances understanding of racism and makes a meaningful contribution to addressing the global challenge of racial injustice.
- An organisation – staff and board – who represent the diversity of today’s UK, and who embrace a culture of respect, engagement and belonging across the UK.



“I’ve always wanted to go outside of the US, but that’s something I never really thought would be possible for me.”

Steven Vargas
UK Summer Institute, Shakespeare’s Globe, London (2017–18)

The Fulbright UK Student Awards are generous grants but they are designed to be contributions to the costs of a masters or doctoral degree in the US and not fully funded. As part of our commitment to increasing participation of under-represented groups, the Commission launched its Opportunity Fund in Spring 2020 and invited students to apply for additional financial support.

We recognise that the cost of taking up a US education, even with a Fulbright Award, is a barrier for many UK students. The Opportunity Fund is a step in the right direction. However, it is only a partial answer as it does not provide full financial support for a graduate degree at an American university.

The feedback we have received from both students and university representatives leads us to conclude that there are talented UK students who are not applying for a Fulbright Award for financial reasons.

In order to be able to offer more fully funded awards we are working on two fronts. On the one hand, we will fundraise to increase the financial value of a number of awards. And, on the other, we will establish more partner awards with US universities that would subsidise tuition costs.



“It’s hard to put a finger on just what it was that changed me, probably because it was no one thing – it was everything... Everyone should have such an experience. Would the world not be a far better, more tolerant place if they did?”

Fulbrighter, 2020 alumni survey

1,782
Applications for Fulbright Awards**

**For application cycle 2020

127
Fulbright awards in academic year 2021/22

Goal: Global Challenge Teaching Fellowships:

Establish high-profile themed fellowships focused on tackling global challenges.

One of the joys of Fulbright fellowships is the serendipity of the unexpected proposal. However, at a time when society is desperate for solutions to “wicked problems” such as climate change, there is clear value in the Commission focusing a certain number of awards on these pressing issues.

To solve our shared global problems we urgently need to bring to the table a diversity of experiences and perspectives. We need to create environments where meaningful connections can be formed between people of all backgrounds. We need better understanding of the problems we are dealing with and more global citizens who know how to communicate and work together.

Our new Global Challenge Teaching Award will fund pairs of teaching faculty – one US, one UK – to co-create and co-deliver a semester long virtual exchange between their two universities.

Focusing on three specific global challenges – racial justice, pandemics and climate change –, these awards will enable our grantee pairs to use the latest technology and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) pedagogy to bring together classrooms in the UK and the US in intercultural dialogue and learning.

Open to faculty across the UK and the US, promotion of these awards will be designed to encourage applications from a wide diversity of institutions and will target universities that have traditionally been underrepresented in Fulbright awards such as HBCUs (in the US) and post-1992 universities (in the UK).

The creation and delivery of these new global challenge virtual exchanges will:

- Promote and enrich the teaching of racial justice, climate change and pandemics.
- Support and showcase innovation and excellence in digital teaching and learning.
- Democratise and diversify international education exchange by making it accessible, affordable, and scalable for a greater number of students, especially those unable to take part in traditional exchange programs.
- Support the building of sustainable transatlantic relationships between students, faculty and universities based on the values of equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Encourage subsequent academic collaborations linked to transformational research.



“As a Fulbrighter, you act as a bridge. A way of connecting two countries. We live in a world in which so many voices are speaking, but few are speaking to each other.”

Daisha Brabham
Royal Holloway, University of London
Postgraduate Award (2019–20)

“My Fulbright project has had a profound personal and professional impact. I have grown in confidence and have learnt to adapt and function across cultural boundaries, conveying the benefits of global learning to students from all disciplines.”

Fulbrighter, 2020 alumni survey

Goal: Expansion of Undergraduate Programme:

Grow the size and impact of the Summer Institutes (SIs)

The Fulbright UK Summer Institutes are themed programmes for US undergraduate students during which they can explore the culture and history of the UK while experiencing higher education at a UK university. Participants are selected for academic merit, leadership potential and cultural curiosity. We explicitly prioritise candidates who have never left the US and are unlikely to without our support. A majority of our participants are low income and/or first generation students from a diverse range of backgrounds.

We have extensive anecdotal evidence of the transformational impact of the United Kingdom Summer Institutes programme. One clear indication of its popularity is the fact that we received over 800 applications for 30 places in 2020.

This is a programme with the potential to scale. Equally, it is a model that could be replicated for a similar UK student cohort to have a life changing summer school experience in the US.

We will draw up a case for support for the expansion of UKSI while, at the same time, putting together a proposal for a US Summer Institute programme for talented UK students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with the aim of building a vibrant transatlantic student community between these two cohorts, through a series of virtual exchange events.

326
UKSI exchanges
(2010–2020)

94%
of 2020 cohort had never travelled
previously outside of the US

45
states were represented in our
2020 application pool



+800
we received over
800 applications for
40 places in 2020



The only exchange
programme that goes
both ways across
the Atlantic.

The immersive experience of exchange
between the US and the UK deepens our
understanding of the other country and
fosters compassionate leadership.



Goal: University Partners

Expand and strengthen the network of US university partnerships.

At the moment, the Commission’s UK university partners considerably outnumber US university partners.

We intend to double the number of US partner universities. This will support a number of our objectives. It will expand and strengthen our network of US and UK universities. It will showcase the exciting diversity of the US higher education landscape to UK applicants. Through the subsidising of tuition fees for UK students, it will enable us to offer more fully funded awards.



“My Fulbright award enabled me to develop new focuses and frames of reference in my academic work, and afforded me time and mental space to explore new issues and literatures in ways that would otherwise have taken years. The experience of living in several cities in America, and of forming contacts with people there, radically altered my understanding of the USA and of its, and my, place in the world.”

Fulbrighter, 2020 alumni survey

Goal: Public Engagement

Engage the US and UK publics in the work and stories of Fulbrighters.

Immersion in the “other culture” is at the heart of the Fulbright ethos, as is civic engagement and compassionate leadership. Many of our Fulbrighters make public outreach part of their exchange year and, indeed, of their careers.

The Barzun Prize for Youth Engagement funds community projects proposed by American Fulbrighters while they study in the UK. Separately, the Fulbright Month of Action brings together alumni and awardees to volunteer in their local communities and spread the word about Fulbright programmes.

The move to virtual events and gatherings, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, opens up a myriad of ways in which to engage the wider public in the exciting work of Fulbrighters, and in which to share the uniquely illuminating perspectives that transatlantic comparing and contrasting can bring.

Our new communications strategy will focus on connecting Fulbrighters and their experiences with the general public, and raising the profile of the Commission by telling the stories of how our programming, and our alumni, have made a difference to their communities, and to society as a whole.



Goal: Alumni Engagement

Build alumni loyalty and engagement.

One of the top reasons candidates give for applying for a Fulbright award is membership of the Fulbright community. Recent surveys confirm that alumni are enthusiastic about becoming more involved with other Fulbrighters and with the Commission. The potential for an active and supportive alumni network on both sides of the Atlantic, is there, and we will seize it.

In consultation with the Alumni Advisory Council and individual alumni in the UK and US, and mindful of global best practice, we will develop an alumni engagement programme that celebrates, informs, inspires and involves our alumni in many different ways. From regular communications and events to volunteering opportunities and giving campaigns, we will look to build an ever more beneficial relationship between the Commission and our Fulbrighters.



“The Sutton Trust US Programme has taught me that impossible simply means you haven’t learned about the ways to make something possible yet.”

Jone Bagdanskyte
Sutton Trust US Programme (Cohort 9)

Looking ahead to 2023
– investment and financial sustainability

We are creative thinkers and experimenters, we seek out connections and partnerships.

“I began a collaboration with scientists at Edinburgh University – it has lasted over 25 years.”

Fulbrighter, 2020 alumni survey



Investment is a cornerstone of ensuring efficiency and sustainability in our activities. As we build our capacity, we are focusing on four priorities:

Priority One:
Make the most of our people.

Priority Two:
Design an impact evaluation methodology.

Priority Three:
Expand our communications and events capacity.

Priority Four:
Build a robust data infrastructure.

Our staff are our key resource. To deliver our strategy we need an effective organisational structure, a complement of skills and, crucially, a workforce that represents the diversity of today’s UK, and that embraces a culture of respect, engagement and belonging. We aspire to create working conditions and benefits that attract and retain talent. Through the regular collection of insights from staff alongside goals-driven performance management, we are reviewing and updating internal policies, instilling a collaborative, and entrepreneurial culture.

We will invest in designing an evaluation methodology and infrastructure to measure the impact of our programming on individuals and society, from how the Fulbright community is tackling global challenges to how we are promoting diversity, equity and inclusion. Evidence based assessment is at the heart of our approach to communications and broader external engagement activities.

How we tell our story, how we promote our awards and our new initiatives, how we put together public events – these are all crucial to our future success. Deep engagement through communications channels, including events, is a powerful way to bolster the quality and quantity of stakeholder relationships. We will expand our communications and events capacity through a new strategic communications plan orientated towards a wider cross-section of stakeholders: the general public, alumni, corporations, trusts, foundations, and high net-worth individuals.

Our stakeholder data is a critical asset for our work. In order to fully leverage this intelligence, a significant investment needs to be made. Building a robust data infrastructure involves, as a first step, migrating data held in a range of databases onto a single bespoke platform. This then is followed by ongoing database management, and the upskilling of the entire organisation, in order to synchronise operations and embed an integrated approach to stakeholder management across teams.



We are deeply grateful to our generous government, university and non-profit funders. Continued and diversified fundraising is crucial to our long-term sustainability and to realising our ambitions.

To put together a successful fundraising campaign we need to be able to source intensive research insights concerning prospective donors, show impact and to tell stories. The establishment of a stronger database infrastructure and of a new fundraising approach, alongside an enhanced communications capacity advance us along our planned trajectory.

A detailed fundraising plan is on track.



4 Governments are our biggest single funders

- The Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the US State Department, the home of the global Fulbright Program
- The UK’s Department for Education
- The Scottish Government
- The Welsh Government

52 of our funders are universities – our largest single group of funders

16 NGO and foundation partners



“Life as a Fulbright Scholar at Vanderbilt was a huge privilege, as was the opportunity to experience Nashville and the complexities of the American South. A year at Vanderbilt helped take my research in new directions and I was excited to make connections with Nashville’s small Haitian community.”

Philip Kaisary
Fulbright Scholar Award, Vanderbilt University (2015–16)



“Growing up in a Scottish town, the idea of studying literature in New York City was a scenario only fit for the movies. Since starting my MFA at NYU, I’ve been inspired by both the city’s endless energy and the incredible thinkers I’ve been exposed to.”

Catherine Penman
All Disciplines Award (Fulbright Alumni Award), New York University (2018–19)

The US-UK Fulbright Commission
Unit 302
3rd Floor Camelford House
89 Albert Embankment
London
SE1 7TP

Contact: info@fulbright.org.uk

FULBRIGHT

