



Outcome Assessment of the U.S. Fulbright Student Program

Executive Summary

June 2005

The Office of Policy and Evaluation of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State contracted with SRI International (SRI) to conduct a series of assessments of the outcomes and impacts of various exchange programs under the overall umbrella of the Fulbright Educational Exchange Program, the U.S. government's flagship international education program.

The objective of the Outcome Assessment of the U.S. Fulbright Student Program is to document the contribution of the "Fulbright experience" to the professional and personal lives of Program alumni and to demonstrate – in quantitative and qualitative terms – the Program's effectiveness in achieving its legislative goal of fostering mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.

Overall Assessment

"Every Fulbright grantee is an ambassador of peace and good relations for the United States. In addition, every American with strong international experience and global understanding is an asset to the United States in our increasingly interdependent world."
(U.S. Student to Vietnam)

"My Fulbright experience was transformative for me. I returned to the U.S. a better thinker, a better problem-solver, more self-confident, and a better citizen. My Fulbright was a tremendous learning opportunity, and when I came home, my first impulse was to give back to the country that made it possible. I joined AmeriCorps and was selected to be a Promise Fellow, helping to network resources for youth in northeast Tennessee."
(U.S. Student to Nepal)

"The Fulbright Program is the best example of citizen diplomacy I can think of. It is exposing future academics, leaders and decision-makers from the U.S. and other countries to each other at critical points in their university experience." (U.S. Student to Germany)

The above quotes from alumni of the U.S. Fulbright Student Program are just a few of numerous examples to demonstrate that the Program is not only achieving its legislative mandate of promoting mutual understanding and cooperation between the people of the United States and the people of other countries, but also developing leaders in the United States who maximize their Fulbright grant experiences in conducting their post-Program personal and professional lives. U.S. Students who participated in the Program between 1980 and 2000 assess their Fulbright experiences very positively and almost unanimously agree that the Program was valuable to them and that they are proud to have been a Fulbright student.

For the majority of Program alumni, participation in the U.S. Fulbright Student Program counted as one of their best life experiences and, in some cases, actually changed their lives. Most alumni think of themselves as cultural envoys and see the Program as an ideal way to generate cross-cultural learning and understanding. The Program also generates extensive impacts on the Student grantees' leadership and professional development, as evidenced by their post-Program achievements and activities, and enhances their understanding and appreciation of their host country and its people, institutions and culture. In turn,

the Program contributes to the development of lasting ties and relationships at the personal, professional and institutional levels.

The individual U.S. Fulbright Student exchange experience also benefits the people around the Student grantees – in their host country and in the United States – thereby generating a powerful multiplier effect in a variety of ways both during and after the grant experience. This multiplier effect further demonstrates that the Program serves as a powerful and important tool of public diplomacy.

Overall, two primary themes emerged in the Students' comments: the importance of their role as cultural ambassadors by helping to increase understanding of Americans, their values and culture, and the capacity of the Fulbright experience to increase Americans' understanding of other cultures. The following comments illustrate these views:

“While the Fulbright program provides opportunities for Americans to interact with people from their host country, thus helping both sides gain a deeper understanding of the other, I believe that its greatest contribution is in creating a pool of people in the U.S. who have an in-depth understanding of various countries. Recent events have certainly shown us that the most far flung areas of the globe can have a direct bearing on the well being of the U.S.” (U.S. Student to Bulgaria)

“Fulbright[ers] are mini-ambassadors. They continue to interact with people from their host countries. They continue to represent the U.S. and its values, particularly our great regard for education and scholarship. They give foreigners a chance to see the U.S. in a different light. In today's world, when so many countries view the U.S. in a negative light, the Fulbright program is a bright beacon that continues to relay a message of positiveness, hope, and integrity.” (U.S. Student to Egypt)

Program Description

The U.S. Fulbright Student Program awards Student grants to U.S. citizens who have completed a baccalaureate degree, are master's level or doctoral candidates, or young professionals and artists. The Program provides the unique opportunity for Student grantees to experience total cultural and professional immersion in the host country and culture. The Program also provides opportunities for in-depth learning experiences, leadership development, and intellectual, professional and artistic growth. In most cases, Student grantees pursue their own grant projects, which cover a wide range of topics and grant activities, including a combination of university coursework, independent field research, and special projects in social or physical/life sciences, arts and humanities, and other fields.

Student grantees are selected through a merit-based, open competition. Approximately 1,150 grants are awarded each year, typically for one academic year of study or research. Most of the funding comes from an annual appropriation made by the U.S. Congress to the U.S. Department of State. Participating governments and host institutions in foreign countries also contribute financially through cost-sharing and indirect support.

The Program is administered in the United States by the Office of Academic Exchange Programs in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The Institute of International Education (IIE), a private organization that facilitates international exchange in higher education, assists in the administration of the Program under a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Program Goal

The principal legislative goal of the U.S. Fulbright Student Program is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs has operationalized this broad goal through four distinct indicators:

- **Satisfaction:** Overall satisfaction with grant conditions, and with opportunities to study, conduct research, and develop interactions with a diverse set of American and foreign colleagues and friends.
- **Educational/professional and cultural learning:** Personal and professional interactions and activities at the host institution; participation in social, community, and enrichment activities; and learning about the host country culture and society.
- **Effects on behavior:** Personal and professional enhancement/attainment; professional contributions (products, resources, knowledge) to home or host institution; and using and sharing new knowledge/skills.
- **Linkages, ties, and institutional change:** Development and maintenance of personal, professional, and institutional linkages and ties; and participation in activities designed to foster international cooperation and/or educational exchange.

Evaluation Methodology

A stratified random sample of U.S. Fulbright Student Program alumni was identified from the total population of 14,302 individuals who were awarded a Student grant during a twenty-year period – from the 1980-1981 to the 2000-2001 academic years. Two stratification variables were used: time period of the grant (1980-1990, 1981-1995, and 1996-2001) and geographic region.

This sample represented all seven geographic regions of the world U.S. Fulbright Students studied or worked in during their grant: 1) Sub-Saharan Africa; 2) East Asia & the Pacific; 3) Eastern Europe and Eurasia; 4) the Near East and North Africa; 5) South Asia; 6) Western Europe; and 7) the Western Hemisphere. The Program in Eurasia is a relatively recent addition and includes Estonia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Russia, and Ukraine. The table below shows the final number of respondents stratified by time period and region.

Final Number of Respondents Stratified by Time Period and Region				
Region	1980-1990	1991-1995	1996-2000	Total
Sub-Saharan Africa	41	43	46	130
East Asia & Pacific	52	51	54	157
Eastern Europe & Eurasia	28	34	63	125
Near East/North Africa	29	29	36	94
South Asia	29	37	41	107
Western Europe	126	94	96	316
Western Hemisphere	45	53	59	157
Unknown	0	0	0	1
Total all Regions	350	341	395	1087

Source: SRI International, U.S. Fulbright Student Program Survey, 2004

The SRI assessment team held a series of initial program review interviews with Fulbright Program managers from ECA’s Office of Academic Exchange Programs, as well as individual interviews with U.S. Fulbright Student Program alumni who were selected to represent a diversity of host countries, geographic regions, academic disciplines, and years of their Fulbright Student grants. These combined perspectives helped inform the design of the survey instrument used to collect data from a sample of Program alumni.

Concurrent with program review interviews, an extensive search effort was undertaken to locate valid email addresses for Program alumni who participated in the 1980-2000 timeframe. Ultimately, SRI obtained a total of 1,723 valid email addresses of Program alumni for survey administration from July 1, 2004 through September 30, 2004. By the time the survey was closed on October 1, 2004, a total of 1,087 valid completed surveys had been received for a 63% response rate. This impressive response rate is in itself an indication of the high regard alumni have for the Program.

The findings of this assessment are based primarily on the quantitative results of the survey administered to Program alumni, and supplemented by qualitative information obtained from the open-ended questions in the survey.

Key Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Grant Profile of Respondents

A profile in survey respondents shows that the respondents were almost equally distributed across the three grant time-periods: 1980-1990 (33%); 1991-1995 (31%); and 1996-2000 (36%). This near equal distribution allowed for important analyses of changes that have taken place in the U.S. Fulbright Student Program, including a few emerging trends in student selection.

One of the changes is a gradual shift in the educational level of students selected over the past twenty years. During the time periods studied, the number of recent college graduates gradually increased from 21% in the period from 1980-1990, to 27% in the period from 1991-1995, to almost half (43%) in the period from 1996-2000; whereas doctoral candidates remained the same for the first two time periods but decreased significantly (from 64% to 44%) in the 1996-2000 period.

The sex composition of the survey respondents also shows a near equal distribution of males (52%) to females (48%). This finding represents a second gradual shift over the past twenty years as the number of females gradually increased from 41% in 1980-1990, to 46% in 1991-1995, to more than half (55%) in 1996-2000, perhaps mirroring changes in the general U.S. student population over similar time periods. Males decreased only slightly from the 1980-1990 to the 1991-1995 time periods (from 59% to 54%), but decreased significantly (from 54% to 45%) in the 1996-2000 time period.

Survey respondents pursued their grant activities in 122 host countries and were most often in the arts and humanities (49%) and social sciences (38%). Respondents pursued a wide range of projects during their grant, as well as worked on Master's thesis; enrolled in formal coursework; taught English; participated in creative or performing arts; wrote/edited articles, books or creative works; and conducted collaborative work with host country colleagues.

Current Education Level and Employment Profile

The profile of survey respondents' current education level indicates that 66% have earned a Doctoral degree or equivalent, or a Master's degree (26%). With regard to respondents' current employment profile, the majority of respondents (87%) reported being employed full-time or part-time, with more than two-thirds of them (69%) employed in a college or university and another 11% in private industry or a for-profit company. About 9% each were either self-employed or employed by a private not-for-profit organization, and just 4% each in the civil service or a public sector organization.

The study findings clearly demonstrate that the U.S. Fulbright Student Program has had a tremendous effect on the careers of nearly all Program alumni respondents – clearly contributing to their leadership development and career opportunities. The vast majority of respondents indicated that their grant experience had a positive effect on their career (89%), their ability to get the job of their choice (75%), and gave them greater insight into their professional field (74%). Most significantly, 83% of respondents reported that their current employment is related to the work they pursued during their Student grant. Nearly half (47%) are currently in the field of *education*.

International Professional Activities Influenced by Grant

The study findings also indicate that most alumni have assumed an important role and responsibility in promoting international dialogue and cooperation in their current work. The vast majority of respondents reported that their current work, to some extent, involves: interaction with people and/or organizations in countries outside of the United States (92%); international educational or cultural issues (88%); international political or social issues (72%); and international relations or foreign affairs (65%).

The extensive impact on international professional undertakings by alumni is illustrated by the following comments:

“The Fulbright Program allows young scholars to go abroad during an impressionable period in their careers. While students are working hard in graduate school, their ideas for international affairs are able to mature through the program. This leaves a long-legacy of future leaders with international aspirations.” (U.S. Student to Uganda)

“Living.....under an oppressive regime, and witnessing first-hand such phenomena as refugee expulsions, intimidation of peasant by the military, and beatings of detainees ... this opened my eyes to the issue of human rights. Soon after returning to the US, I volunteered as a country specialist for Amnesty International. Later, I used my Fulbright language and field experience from Burundi to work as a United Nations human rights monitor in Rwanda.” (U.S. Student to Burundi)

“My Fulbright experience directed me in a path of international work, graduate school etc. and I became the international expert in several departments of different companies, worked abroad in several countries and worked for a foreign company in the U.S. for 10 years - 4 of which were as President and COO of the U.S. operations.” (U.S. Student to Morocco)

Study Findings

The findings of this assessment provide strong and profound evidence of the Program’s overall success and its diverse effects on grantees in their professions and personal lives. The evidence of multiplier effects is also significant as personal, professional and institutional relationships are established during the grant and continue for lifetimes. Most importantly, the Program is succeeding in promoting mutual understanding and contributing positively to other critical aspects related to U.S. national interests.

Contributing to Leadership Development

Overall, respondents assessed their U.S. Fulbright Student Program experiences very positively and indicated that the grant experience promoted significant personal growth and development, including leadership development. The majority of respondents reported that the Program had a positive effect on their: self-reliance and self-confidence (92%); ability to work closely with people different from them (89%); willingness to take risks (84%); problem-solving abilities (82%); ability to lead others (71%); and willingness to lead others (70%). In addition, 86% of respondents felt the Program enhanced their ability to serve in a leadership capacity in their profession.

Most strikingly, nearly all respondents (93%) agreed that the Program was a life-changing experience for them. The following quotes demonstrate that the Program was successful in honing leadership skills and aptitude, as well as providing a life-changing experience:

“I decided to become an MD/PhD instead of a PhD student because I was influenced by the Ugandan physician researchers in my host country. I also wanted to take on more of a leadership role in international health. Directly after the Fulbright I studied health

and human rights in a Masters' program in social sciences. I am writing this from Ecuador-- none of this in my life would have happened without the Fulbright grant." (U.S. Student to Uganda)

"Not only did the Fulbright give me the chance to imagine an alternate future, but I developed skills that I use daily in the workplace. These include the ability to communicate complex ideas to a general audience, and the ability to work closely with people with very different motivations and work styles than my own. I think that I am a stronger leader as well...I am definitely more willing to take chances when put in leadership roles..." (U.S. Student to Namibia)

"The Fulbright experience was a truly life-altering experience for me. I gained a self-confidence and worldly perspective that has helped me in the many leadership roles I have had since." (U.S. Student to Germany)

Contributing to Mutual Understanding

The primary goal of the Fulbright Educational Exchange Program is the promotion of mutual understanding between people of the United States and the people of other countries through educational and cultural exchange programs. The findings of this outcome assessment prove that the U.S. Fulbright Student Program is very successfully meeting this goal, as well as all of the legislative goals of the Fulbright-Hays Act.

The study findings indicate that 99% of respondents agreed that the Program helps to increase mutual understanding between the people of the U.S. and people of other countries and promotes international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement, while 98% agreed that the Program helps to strengthen the ties that unite people of the United States and other nations.

The two dominant themes that emerged from study respondents' comments were: 1) it was very important to them to be with people different from themselves; and 2) they were able to contribute to mutual understanding by presenting a realistic picture of the United States and Americans. They felt that they were able to correct many misperceptions through numerous conversations. The following quotes help illustrate these impressive findings related to the contribution of mutual understanding:

"I feel the Fulbright program's basic goals are absolutely the best way to promote peace and understanding." (U.S. Student to Romania)

"The opportunity for sustained contact with another country over a period of a year has immeasurable affects on the life of the person from the US as well as the people in the host country that you come into contact with. It is very difficult to measure this impact, but...perhaps the most important contribution to increasing 'mutual understanding' is that the grant provides the opportunity to build lasting relationships, which over time can have significant impact." (U.S. Student to Brazil)

"The U.S. Fulbright Student Program educates globally growing numbers of thought-leaders and influencers to understand cultural similarities and differences and create international relationships. Global divisions come in so many different shapes and sizes, [but] the program creates people who understand people." (U.S. Student to Austria)

Influencing People in the Host Country

The study findings further demonstrate that respondents successfully utilized their new and developing leadership skills during their Student grants by influencing and shaping host country citizens' perceptions and views of the United States and Americans. The most prominent way, reported by 83%, is that they helped increase understanding of Americans, and American values, and/or culture.

More than two out of three respondents (69%) also felt they imparted new knowledge about their field of study or discipline, and a similar percentage (66%) felt they helped increase understanding of the importance of cross-cultural communication. Two thirds of all alumni respondents (66%) felt they had been instrumental in increasing interest in studying or visiting the United States and almost half (49%) in increasing understanding of U.S. history, government, initiatives, or policies. Others felt they helped broaden host country citizens' interests in international issues (40%) and almost one third of the respondents (27%) reported that they left behind research instrumentation, textbooks, journals, or other materials not formally available.

Contributing to National Interest

Respondents also strongly felt that the U.S. Fulbright Student Program serves the national interest. Nearly all respondents (97%) agreed that the Program assists in the development of "friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world," which is one of the Program's legislative goals.

Overall, six major, and often overlapping, themes emerged. Program alumni believe the Program serves the national interest because it:

- Increases cross-cultural communication and understanding;
- Puts a human face on U.S. policies and culture, often counteracting mistaken or negative views derived from mass media or other sources;
- Builds long-term friendships;
- Builds professional networks that facilitate cooperation and the flow of ideas; and
- Enriches Americans' understanding of international affairs, which they pass on to peers.

The following quotes offer some respondents' perceptions of how the Program contributes to the national interest:

"The Fulbright program serves national interests by helping create expertise among our own country's leadership about the world. It helps disseminate enhanced understanding among the U.S. public through a multiplier effect as grantees return home. And, it provides a view of the US and its people much more favorable and ultimately, supportive of peace and understanding, than would be possible if the international community's understanding of the US came solely from official sources. It is no overstatement to say that programs such as Fulbright contribute favorably today to our national security." (U.S. Student to Spain)

"We need to continue to cultivate among our graduate student leadership the ability to pro-actively engage their international brethren in global cross-cultural communication and problem-solving. Our national interest is best served by student leaders who through their Fulbright experiences are sensitized to the social, political and cultural influences of other nations, particularly as it affects decision-making on critical issues confronting our planet in the decades ahead." (U.S. Student to Japan)

“The U.S. Fulbright Student Program serves U.S. national interests by affording future leaders the chance to expand their perspective by experiencing the cultures and values of the host country.” (U.S. Student to Spain)

Study Findings by Program Goal Indicators

The remainder of the key study findings are presented according to the following indicators: alumni satisfaction; educational/professional and cultural learning; effects on behavior; and linkages, ties, and institutional changes.

Satisfaction	<p>The U.S. Fulbright Student Program alumni respondents were overwhelmingly satisfied with their grant experiences and the opportunities afforded by their grants.</p> <p><i>Respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 99% -- the Fulbright experience was valuable; • 99% -- they are proud to have been Fulbright Students; • 98% -- they were satisfied with the Fulbright experience; • 93% -- the Fulbright Student grant was a life-changing experience; and • 79% -- they received sufficient information, assistance and other support from the Fulbright Commission and/or the U.S. Embassy in their host country throughout their program. <p><i>Respondents also indicated that they were “well prepared” for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% -- living in their host country; and • 63% -- carrying out grant-related activities in their host country. <p><i>In addition, respondents reported that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% -- the Program enhanced their professional credentials a great deal; • 78% -- the Program contributed to subsequent educational/career achievements a great deal; • 71% -- the Program affected their subsequent educational/career choices a great deal; and • 63% -- they would not have studied in their host country without the U.S. Fulbright Student Program.
---------------------	--

“The program was fabulous! I loved it and learned so much from it. Thank you for the experience. It played a big part in my life.” (U.S. Student to Germany)

“The Fulbright program sends the best and brightest of the U.S. abroad to study in and learn about foreign countries and cultures, and to represent the U.S. in those nations. It is a beacon of hope and light that exemplifies the absolute best of what America stands for. Fulbright scholars are the real American ambassadors abroad, ambassadors that return to share what they have learned with their nation.” (U.S. Student to Canada)

“I hope this survey effort provides information that will support continuation of the strongest possible funding for the Fulbright programs. My Fulbright grant changed my life. I hope many, many more people will have this opportunity, as they will never be the same afterward.” (U.S. student to Syria)

“I am extremely grateful for my Fulbright year. It was a life-changing experience for me. I think that the international objectives of Fulbright are immensely important, especially in our world today. Had it not been for Fulbright, I would not have had the opportunity to do the research and the travel that I did, and my life today would have been very different. I have benefited greatly from the Fulbright program.” (U.S. Student to Bulgaria)

<p>Educational/ Professional and Cultural Learning</p>	<p>Students participated in many diverse types of learning and program activities all of which significantly enhanced their knowledge and understanding, in general:</p> <p><i>Respondents agreed, almost unanimously in many cases, that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% -- their Fulbright experiences led to a deeper understanding of the host country; • 97% -- led to a deeper understanding of social, economic, and cultural diversity among different nations; • 93% -- they developed a better understanding of American society and culture after seeing it through the eyes of people from their host country; and • 91% -- their Fulbright experiences led to a professional expertise they would otherwise not have developed. <p><i>Respondents also learned more about their host country's:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% -- culture and way of life; • 97% -- political system and economy; • 96% -- relations with the United States; and • 95% -- educational system.
<p><i>“In the past year, I have worked for the U.S. government. I have met with world leaders, from Egypt, Lebanon, Israel and I have been able – as a result of my past experiences – to relay to them both my thorough knowledge of the Middle East (as a regional expert) and to explain U.S. policy and attitudes towards this region.”</i> (U.S. Student to Egypt)</p> <p><i>“I can only say that I came away with a greater understanding of my host country and the world in general, and I believe that friends, colleagues, and acquaintances I made while in Poland developed a greater understanding of the U.S. and its people.”</i> (U.S. Student to Poland)</p>	
<p>Effects on Behavior</p>	<p>Participation in the U.S. Fulbright Student Program had positive effects on Students’ post-grant professional lives and achievements, as well as on their personal lives.</p> <p><i>Respondents indicated that they have:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 88% -- stayed abreast of current events in their host countries; • 84% -- incorporated aspects of their Fulbright experiences into subsequent professional activities; • 69% -- revisited their host country; • 63% -- participated in formal and informal activities related to their host country; • 61% -- become more internationally focused in their interests and worldview; and • 58% -- become more involved in research relating to host country. <p><i>Respondents felt the Program had a positive effect on their ability to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81% -- explain U.S. values/policies to people of other countries; • 75% -- assume a responsible role on behalf of the United States in an international setting.

	<p><i>Respondents overwhelmingly share their Fulbright Student grant experience with others in the United States:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 98% -- share their new knowledge and experiences through some form of media or community activity; • 93% -- share through informal conversations; • 50% -- share through formal speeches, lectures or presentations; • 28% -- through demonstrations of host country's customs; and • 19% -- through interviews with U.S. media. <p><i>Many alumni have also produced academic or professional works as a direct result of their Program:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65% -- produced papers or gave presentations at scholarly or professional meetings; • 59% -- completed their Doctoral dissertations; • 57% -- have written articles in refereed journals or edited volumes; • 34% -- have written articles in non-referred journals or edited volumes; and • 29% -- have written books or monographs.
<p><i>“There are COUNTLESS ways in which my Fulbright experience has influenced my life and professional activities. I was able to work on Track II peace processes involving Hamid Karzai at the Afghanistan Foundation in 1999. My knowledge of Islam and the Muslim world has become a great asset for me. I have the credibility of having lived and studied in Pakistan, and I have visited Madrasas, and interviewed radical Islamists...It is impossible to express how my direct experience has shaped my perspective and enables me to interact with people in places like Algeria and Indonesia that other scholars would have difficulty talking to because of their lack of access to and experience with Islamists.” (U.S. Student to Pakistan)</i></p> <p><i>“I started an NGO that provides educational scholarships to rural students in Patzun, Guatemala. The organization is a direct result of my experience in the Peace Corp and as a Fulbright Scholar. I truly understand the importance of giving students an opportunity to reach outside their own communities and explore new ideas through continued education.” (U.S. Student to Mauritius)</i></p> <p><i>“I am currently an Associate Professor of International Policy Studies, and my Middle East expertise, which I first gained with my Fulbright grant, has opened many doors to many, many opportunities, especially since September 11, 2001.” (U.S. Student to Bahrain)</i></p>	
<p>Linkages, Ties, and Institutional Change</p>	<p>Continuing relationships with host country contacts and institutions is one of the most important outcomes and enduring legacies of the U.S. Fulbright Student Program.</p> <p><i>Alumni respondents are overwhelmingly maintaining ties to their host country:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 97% -- have maintained contact with individuals met during the grant, with the vast majority being “personal” contacts; • 95% -- have interacted with people from the host country by engaging in some form of media, community, and/or social activities; • 93% -- have visited people from the host country in their homes; • 80% to 90% -- read local newspapers and/or watch news on local television stations related to the host country;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73% -- have continued to collaborate with host country colleagues; • 69% -- have revisited their host country, with 63% returning to participate in conferences or seminars. <p><i>In the 12 months prior to survey completion, respondents had contact with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76% -- personal contacts from the host country; • 53% -- professional contacts from the host country; • 47% -- fellow U.S. Fulbrighters. <p><i>Furthermore, alumni overwhelming promote the Fulbright “legacy” and ideal, as almost all respondents recommended to friends and colleagues that they:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96% -- participate in international exchange programs, in general; • 95% -- apply for a Fulbright grant.
<p><i>“My experience further strengthened my commitment to pursuing an academic position that focuses on international exchange, teaching, promotion of culture in the public sphere, and intellectual rigor. I commute between Europe and the U.S. on a regular basis, so have established a life that truly crosses borders and involves professional and personal relationships with Europeans and others. I also believe strongly in the necessity of supporting study abroad for all Americans at some point in their education or professional lives.” (U.S. Student to Germany)</i></p> <p><i>“Each year over one hundred students pass through my classes. My students come from small towns in Idaho. The Fulbright program has touched them through me. They learn from me what I learned while in the host country. An enduring commitment to international study and travel is part of my pedagogical philosophy. [The Fulbright Program] allows what was unimaginable to actually be experienced. International education is an important key to a more peaceful and cooperative world of globalizing forces.” (U.S. Student to Thailand)</i></p>	

Conclusions

Overall, the U.S. Fulbright Student Program is profoundly realizing its legislative mandate of improving mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. The strong quantitative and qualitative evidence collected through this outcome assessment supports this conclusion, as Program alumni strongly believe the goal of mutual understanding is served in a variety of ways and facilitated by their total cultural and professional immersion in the host country culture and society.

The Program successfully contributes to grantees’ leadership development through challenging and stimulating program activities and by providing grantees’ with the unique experience of living and studying abroad, all of which has led to longer-term impacts on grantees’ personal, professional, and institutional behaviors and activities. The Program has also afforded grantees a unique opportunity for educational, professional and personal interactions that have changed their knowledge and understanding, both of the host country and the United States.

The Program also provides Student grantees with continuous opportunities to share and explain the United States and its culture to people in their host country. In addition, they develop and maintain long-lasting personal and professional contacts, which have enabled them to continue the exchange of information, thoughts and ideas from diverse viewpoints over time.

As with earlier assessments of other Fulbright Program components, the U.S. Fulbright Student Program has received a high level of endorsement from its participants. They believe, as do their U.S. Scholar, Visiting Scholar, and Visiting Student counterparts, not only that they themselves have benefited from the Program, but that the Program has also increased the understanding and tolerance of many of their students, colleagues, family and friends with whom they have interacted since completing their grants. They provide many concrete examples of the U.S. Fulbright Student Program continuing to promote mutual understanding between the peoples of the world, thereby strengthening relations between the United States and other nations and serving the national interest.

Based on the findings of this outcome assessment, SRI concludes that in its long history, the U.S. Fulbright Student Program has made a significant contribution to promoting greater understanding between the people of the United States and people of other countries. This conclusion is especially important at a time when U.S. Public Diplomacy faces significant and urgent challenges. Expanding this and other such educational programs will ensure a greater multiplier effect, which, in turn, will greatly contribute to meeting the pressing public diplomacy challenges of today and the future.

Prepared for:
U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
Office of Policy and Evaluation

For a copy of the full report, please:
Call (202) 619-5307 or
E-mail: pdevaluations@state.gov

Prepared by:
SRI International
Center for Science, Technology
and Economic Development
Arlington, VA 22209

