

Letter from the Chair of the Fulbright Finland Foundation Board of Directors

Once again, the Fulbright Finland Foundation activities continue to shine and set records during 2022. As highlighted in the [Year in Focus 2022](#) review, we had an exceptional year of facilitating 136 grantees within 52 different grant programs for various levels of academic, professional and alumni exchange between Finland and the USA. This growth was partially due to awards carried over from the previous year during the pandemic restrictions, but it also shows the significant commitment and attractiveness of our programs.

This ties perfectly to the Foundation's 2021-2026 strategy implemented by the Members of our Board of Directors and Foundation staff. Our current 5-year strategy focuses on two main issues, the first being responding to the increased demand for international citizen diplomacy through professional and educational exchanges. The fundamental means to account for this demand is by growing the financial ability to significantly increase awards, either by direct financing or through our partnerships. The Year in Focus 2022 metrics definitely show increased capacity in this regard, with legacy gifts, renewed private partnerships and the "[launch a scholarship program](#)". We have made it easier to financially donate in both the USA and Finland, with funds going directly to facilitate additional grants. Annually there are dozens of exceptionally well-qualified candidates that still do not get funding for the Fulbright Finland-USA exchanges due to the lack of funding, and we want to change this. If your life or career have been impacted by the Fulbright Finland Foundation programs, either as a grantee yourself or among your family and colleagues, I strongly encourage you to consider "paying it forward" by [donating](#) specifically to our Finland-USA program for increasing grantee awards and thus eventually our greater impact by alumni.

The second area of our 5-year strategy addresses how we strive to promote inclusion and engagement of diverse audiences and stakeholders via new platforms. Again, the Year in Focus 2022 highlights excellence in our alumni activities, for example through mentoring, buddy programs, and outreach ambassadorships. The lifetime professional networks and impact of our alumni is an asset we are proud of and want to continue to tap into for greater citizen diplomacy. The engagement also comes through increased use of positive social media visibility, for instance with our new branding video and the accessibility of participating with on-line events including highlights shared in webinars from our scholars and alumni.

Reflecting back, our Foundation's actions and strategy implementation have all taken place in the midst of significant international issues of 2022, including the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war in Ukraine, and the global economic challenges. Together we have been strong in our Fulbright community to be a positive light, together. The relaxation of restrictions and optimism towards travel has meant a boom in the collaboration between Finland and the USA, also with respect to Finland's pending NATO membership. The war in Ukraine has reminded us of the importance of coming together for peace, and of the personal relations fostered through international exchange that strengthen cultural understanding and peace. The financial concerns of the past year highlight the awareness of economic spending towards areas where we see the greatest value and return-on-investment. I cannot stress enough that I whole-heartedly believe that our individual investments (no matter how big or small; both in donated time and direct monetary donations) to the Finland Fulbright Foundation programs bring worldwide impact for decades to come.

In conclusion, I would also like to acknowledge the exceptional work of the Fulbright Finland Foundation staff under the superb leadership of CEO Terhi Mölsä, for all the behind-the-scenes actions that make our program a world-class example. The Members of our Board of Directors are highly committed to strengthening the Foundation's strategy and mission. Together, with our grantees and alumni, we can continue to find global solutions for tomorrow's challenges through sharing in the academic and professional experiences between Finland and the USA. Thank you everyone who contributed to the great achievements of 2022 and we look forward to setting new records in the years ahead. We hope you are on-board with us to make a difference!



Dr. Erika Holt
Chair of the Board of Directors
Fulbright Finland Foundation