



Fulbright  
University  
Việt Nam



# Fulbright University Vietnam Self-Study Report for Candidacy

Submitted to New England  
Commission on Higher Education

March 2024



# Fulbright University Vietnam

## Self-Study for Candidacy

### Submitted to NECHE

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**Institutional Characteristics Form**  
Revised September 2009

This form is to be completed and placed at the beginning of the self-study report:

Date Mar 11, 2024

1. Corporate name of institution: FULBRIGHT UNIVERSITY VIETNAM CORPORATION \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date institution was chartered or authorized: May 16, 2016 (establishment decision granted by the PM);
3. Date institution enrolled first students in degree programs: September 2018 (Co-design undergraduate students); October 2017 (first Master's degree cohort under FSPPM)<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_
4. Date institution awarded first degrees: June 24, 2023 (undergraduate Class of 2023); August 2019 (MPP Class of 2019 under FSPPM)
5. Type of control:

Public

Private

State

Independent, not-for-profit

City

Religious Group

Other

(Name of Church) \_\_\_\_\_

(Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Proprietary

Other: (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. By what agency is the institution legally authorized to provide a program of education beyond high school, and what degrees is it authorized to grant? Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) Graduate level (Master of Public Policy); Undergraduate level (Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Engineering) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Level of postsecondary offering (check all that apply)

Less than one year of work

First professional degree

At least one but less than two years

Master's and/or work beyond the first professional degree

---

<sup>1</sup> The former Fulbright Economic Teaching Program became the Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management (FSPPM) upon the establishment of Fulbright University Vietnam.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma or certificate programs of at least two but less than four years | <input type="checkbox"/> Work beyond the master's level but not at the doctoral level (e.g., Specialist in Education) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate degree granting program of at least two years                  | <input type="checkbox"/> A doctor of philosophy or equivalent degree  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Four- or five-year baccalaureate degree granting program      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other doctoral programs _____  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)  |

8. Type of undergraduate programs (check all that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational training at the crafts/clerical level (certificate or diploma) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liberal arts and general |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational training at the technical or semi-professional level (degree)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher preparatory                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two-year programs designed for full transfer to a baccalaureate degree      | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional                        |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                         |

9. The calendar system at the institution is:

- Semester     Quarter     Trimester     Other \_\_\_\_\_

10. What constitutes the credit hour load for a full-time equivalent (FTE) student each semester?

- a) Undergraduate \_\_\_\_\_ credit hours  
 b) Graduate 12 - 24 credit hours  
 c) Professional \_\_\_\_\_ credit hours

11. Student population:

a) Degree-seeking students:

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total
Full-time student headcount	716	71	787
Part-time student headcount	0	45	45
FTE	716	86	802

b) Number of students (headcount) in non-credit, short-term courses: 0

12. List all programs accredited by a nationally recognized, specialized accrediting agency.

Program	Agency	Accredited since	Last Reviewed	Next Review
MPP	FSPPM	2019	2023	2024

13. Off-campus Locations. List all instructional locations other than the main campus. For each site, indicate whether the location offers full-degree programs or 50% or more of one or more degree programs. Record the full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE) for the most recent year.

Add more rows as needed.

	Full degree	50%-99%	FTE
A. In-state Locations			
N/A			
B. Out-of-state Locations			
N/A			

14. International Locations: For each overseas instructional location, indicate the name of the program, the location, and the headcount of students enrolled for the most recent year. An overseas instructional location is defined as “any overseas location of an institution, other than the main campus, at which the institution matriculates students to whom it offers any portion of a degree program or offers on-site instruction or instructional support for students enrolled in a predominantly or totally on-line program.” **Do not include study abroad locations.**



Name of program(s)	Location	Headcount
N/A		

15. Degrees and certificates offered 50% or more electronically: For each degree or Title IV-eligible certificate, indicate the level (certificate, associate's, baccalaureate, master's, professional, doctoral), the percentage of credits that may be completed on-line, and the FTE of matriculated students for the most recent year. Enter more rows as needed.

Name of program	Degree level	% on-line	FTE
N/A			

16. Instruction offered through contractual relationships: For each contractual relationship through which instruction is offered for a Title IV-eligible degree or certificate, indicate the name of the contractor, the location of instruction, the program name, and degree or certificate, and the number of credits that may be completed through the contractual relationship. Enter more rows as needed.

Name of contractor	Location	Name of program	Degree or certificate	# of credits
N/A				

17. List by name and title the chief administrative officers of the institution. (Use the table on the following page.)

18. Supply a table of organization for the institution. While the organization of any institution will depend on its purpose, size and scope of operation, institutional organization usually includes four areas. Although every institution may not have a major administrative division for these areas, the following outline may be helpful in charting and describing the overall administrative organization:

- a) Organization of academic affairs, showing a line of responsibility to president for each department, school division, library, admissions office, and other units assigned to this area;
- b) Organization of student affairs, including health services, student government, intercollegiate activities, and other units assigned to this area;

- c) Organization of finances and business management, including plant operations and maintenance, non-academic personnel administration, IT, auxiliary enterprises, and other units assigned to this area;
- d) Organization of institutional advancement, including fund development, public relations, alumni office and other units assigned to this area.

19. Record briefly the central elements in the history of the institution:

The story of Fulbright University Vietnam begins with the establishment of the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program (FETP), now the Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management (FSPPM), in 1994 by the Harvard Vietnam Program. Powered by funding from the U.S. Department of State, FETP built a reputation as a center of excellence in Vietnam's public policy research and teaching. In 2012, the Trust for University Innovation in Vietnam, an American nonprofit corporation, was established to sponsor and shepherd the idea that FETP could be developed into an American-style university in Vietnam.

As Fulbright continues to grow, we proudly carry the tamarind tree at the center of our seal, rooted in our history and growing to meet Vietnam's needs. Since that day in the tree's shade, Fulbright has received extensive support from both the American and Vietnamese governments. After donating 15 hectares of land for our future campus in Ho Chi Minh City's District 9, the Vietnamese government granted Fulbright our operating license in 2017. Additionally, since 2016, Fulbright has been receiving generous support from the Department of State Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs and the United States Agency for International Development to advance the University's mission and goals. In 2023, we proudly graduated our first undergraduate class.

Major milestones:

**2013** - Fulbright highlighted by President Truong Tan Sang and President Barack Obama.

**2014** - The US Congress allocates funding to create an American-style university in Vietnam.

**2015** - The Ho Chi Minh City government grants 15 hectares of land in the Saigon High-Tech Park.

**2016** - The Vietnamese government grants Fulbright its establishment license.

**2017** - The Vietnamese government grants Fulbright its operating license.

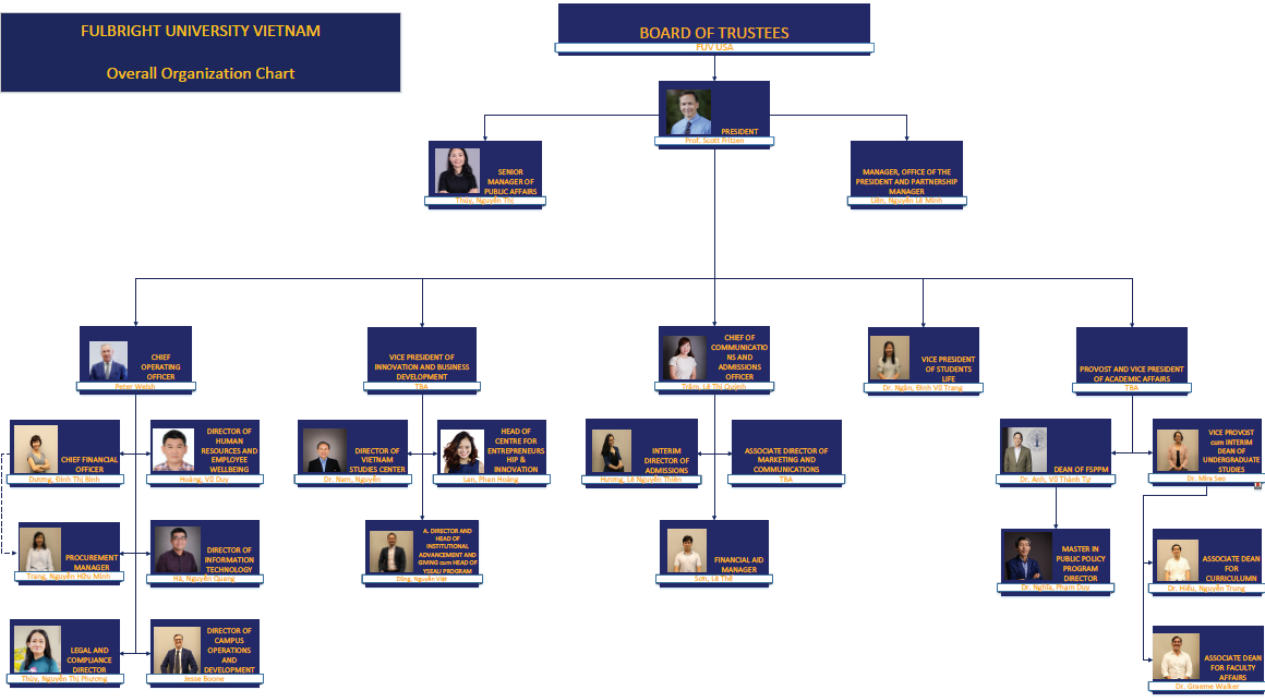
**2023** - The first undergraduate class of Fulbright University Vietnam graduates.

CHIEF INSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

<b>Function or Office</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Exact Title</b>	<b>Year of Appointment</b>
Chair Board of Trustees	Thomas Vallely	Chairman of Board of Trustees	2012
President/CEO	Prof. Scott Fritzen	President	2023
Executive Vice President	Peter Welsh	COO	2021
Chief Academic Officer	TBD	Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs	TBD
Deans of Schools and Colleges	Dr. Vu Thanh Tu Anh	Dean of Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management	2016
Deans of Schools and Colleges	Dr. Mira Seo	Vice Provost and Interim Dean of Undergraduate Studies	2023
Chief Financial Officer	Dinh Thi Binh Duong	Chief Financial Officer	2023
Chief Student Services Officer	Dr. Dinh Vu Trang Ngan	Vice President of Student Life	2024
Planning	TBD	Vice President of Innovation and Business Development	TBD
Institutional Research	Dr. Mira Seo	Vice Provost	2023
Assessment	TBD	TBD	TBD
Development	TBD	Vice President of Innovation and Business Development	TBD
Library	TBD	Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs	TBD
Chief Information Officer	Nguyen Quang Ha	Director of IT	2018
Continuing Education	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grants/Research	Huynh Thanh Tung	Grant Management Manager	TBD
Admissions	Le Thi Quynh Tram	Chief of Communication and Admissions Officer	2023
Registrar	Dr. Dinh Vu Trang Ngan	Vice President of Student Life	2024
Financial Aid	Le Thi Quynh Tram	Chief of Communication and Admissions Officer	2023
Public Relations	Nguyen Thi Thuy	Senior Manager of Public Affairs	2024
Alumni Association	TBD	TBD	TBD
Other			

# OVERALL ORGANIZATION CHART

**FULBRIGHT UNIVERSITY VIETNAM**  
Overall Organization Chart



**Table of NECHE Actions, Items of Special Attention or Concerns**

<b>Date of NECHE Letter</b>	<b>Details of Actions, Items of Special Attention or Concerns</b>	<b>NECHE standards cited</b>	<b>Self-Study page number where addressed</b>
1/31/2023	Notification of Eligibility with 6 areas of emphasis listed below	See below	
	Comprehensive and cohesive strategic plan	2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.14, 7.15	
	Completing construction of the Saigon Hi-Tech Campus		
	The effectiveness of the governance structure	3.2, 3.8, 3.9, 3.12	
	Sufficient laboratory space	7.21	
	Learning Outcomes assessment	8.9, 8.3, 8.6, 8.8, 8.10	
	Developing an integrated budget	7.17, 9.2, 9.7	

## Introduction

Fulbright University Vietnam (hereafter Fulbright) submits this self-study as part of our application for Candidacy with the New England Commission of Higher Education. In January 2022, we began the process that has led to this point by submitting the “Requirements of Affiliation for Free-Standing Institutions Abroad,” our ‘eligibility report.’ After a visit to Fulbright by President Schall in May 2022, we submitted a revised “Requirements of Affiliation” report in August and hosted a visiting team in October. At its meeting on November 17, 2022, the Commission (hereafter ‘NECHE’) declared Fulbright “eligible to apply for candidacy for accreditation”, and on January 31, 2023, NECHE sent Fulbright University Vietnam a detailed letter identifying six “areas of emphasis” that needed special discussion in the self-study.

Immediately after the Eligibility Review team left campus, we began the self-study process. We took the 182 numbered remarks under the 9 standards and divided them up among the relevant administrative units on campus. We named 13 ‘executive sponsors,’ and each of them named an ‘operational lead’ in their unit. In many cases, responsibility for individual numbered paragraphs were shared across areas of the University. Each operational lead was then given the responsibility for preparing a report on each numbered paragraph, divided into three parts, “Where are we?,” “What might be missing?,” and “Next Steps,” and these three parts correspond fairly closely to the Description, Appraisal, and Projection divisions used by NECHE. Emphasized during this process was that the second two were at least as important as the first and that one important goal of this process was to map out what needed to be done by the time of the application for Initial Accreditation, not just for the Candidacy phase.

These reports were completed by the summer of 2023, about the time President Fritzen took office, and the Fall was devoted to 242 pages of these reports being integrated and summarized into a single draft of less than half that length, while at the same time President Fritzen and his team addressed a number of pressing issues, including some reorganization, a number of searches, enrollment challenges, and finally the task of securing the funds to build the new campus.

NECHE’s letter informing Fulbright that it was now eligible to apply for candidacy said that in addition to the required discussion of how Fulbright is progressing towards meeting the 9 Standards, Fulbright needed to “update the Commission on its progress in six areas”:

- 1) Strategic Planning
- 2) The completion of the new campus
- 3) The effectiveness of its governance structure

- 4) The sufficiency of laboratory space for the academic program
- 5) The state of assessing learning outcomes
- 6) Developing an integrated budget for Fulbright's operations in Vietnam and the United States.

Considerable progress has been achieved in a short period of time on all of these "areas of emphasis," and discussions of each of them are integrated into the Narrative under the respective Standards.

President Fritzen has made the completion of a full Strategic Plan by the end of the current fiscal year (June 30, 2024) a major priority in his first year. However, given that time frame, the timing of this self-study comes at an awkward time to include much of the substance of that plan, since it is a work in progress at present. Chapter 2 contains an overview of the planning process. We certainly expect to be able to share further strategic plan details, including more detailed financial modelling to supplement Chapter 7's presentation, when the site visit team is on campus during April 2024.

The project of building the new campus has recently received a major boost with the guarantee of enough private funding to unlock the \$37 million federal loan from the Development Finance Corporation (hereafter DFC). We are therefore approaching an important 'all systems go' point on the new campus, with a projected campus occupancy in Fall 2026. This is discussed at length in Chapter 7, as is the related issue of how we are responding to the needs for laboratory space in the current Crescent campus. Fulbright's governance structure shares many things in common with American-style universities around the world but also has some unique, Vietnam-specific features, and these are discussed in detail in Chapter 9. Assessment is an area where rapid progress has been made, under the direction of Vice-Provost Mira Seo, and this is discussed in Chapter 8. Finally, the operational budget is discussed at length also in Chapter 7. As the governance discussion in Chapter 3 and 9 delineates, Fulbright Corporation (hereafter FUVC) is the Vietnamese legal structure that authorizes operations in Vietnam, but it is owned by FUV USA, so that it is the combination of American and Vietnamese law that ultimately shapes Fulbright's governance. This two-nation structure, particularly given the differences in the customs and laws of the two countries, means that the fully integrated budget system that the NECHE letter awarding Fulbright eligibility seems to be asking for is not realistic: we are fully integrated at the strategic level, but we are not fully integrated at the ground level in every respect, nor can we be. The financial discussion in Chapter 7 should in this sense be nested within the governance discussion in Chapter 3 and 9.

Does the rapid progress described on these six key "areas of emphasis" mean that there is no work left to be done? Of course not: the campus needs to be built, assessment and evaluation systems are

nascent and not fully mature, and Fulbright will continue to build programs, diversify revenue and grow enrollments. But we are confident that the state of the university deserves NECHE candidacy, as we are confident that within the five-year window candidacy creates, Fulbright will address these challenges and fully meet the 9 Standards discussed in the 9 chapters which follow.



## Institutional Overview

Although Fulbright University Vietnam (hereafter Fulbright) is a relatively new institution, its origins date back to 1994, when Harvard's Kennedy School of Government founded the Fulbright Economic Teaching Program (FETP), which taught both short-term programs and which in 2008 began offering a (currently NASPAA-accredited) Masters in Public Policy (MPP) in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) in Vietnam. In 2016, with the support of Senator John McCain, Secretary of State John Kerry, and President Barack Obama, FETP separated from Harvard and was renamed the Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management (FSPPM), now envisioned as part of a new Fulbright University Vietnam, also offering undergraduate degrees. The undergraduate program was launched in 2018, and in June 2023, it graduated its first cohort.

Fulbright was thus envisioned from the start as an institution which combined an American-style liberal arts college with an American-style professional program granting graduate (primarily professional) degrees – a well-subscribed category in the U.S. context, but non-existent to date in Vietnam. The plan from the start was to build a residential campus, which will also be the first of its kind in Vietnam.

Essential to Fulbright's start-up years has been the extensive support provided by the US government, with USAID providing the bulk of its operational funding at first, and the Development Finance Corporation (DFC) providing a \$37 million loan which will be instrumental to the construction of the residential campus in HCMC's Saigon Hi-Tech Park in District 9 (D9). The land in D9 (worth well over \$50 million) was provided by HCMC on a 50-year rent-free basis. The project is a truly bi-national one, a fact underscored by the composition of the board, administration, and faculty.

During the first five years of the undergraduate program (2018-2023), the major focus was building the undergraduate curriculum, hiring the faculty, and of course recruiting students. The academic year 2022-2023 marked an important evolution in the development of Fulbright in at least three ways: first, Fulbright graduated its first graduating class in June 2023; second, at the end of that month, the founding president, Mme Dam Bich Thuy was succeeded by Dr. Scott Fritzen; finally, the accreditation effort that was planned from the beginning kicked into gear, with the submission of the Report of Affiliation, a visit by NECHE President Schall and an site visit team, and the awarding of the status of 'eligibility' by NECHE in a January 2023 letter. President Fritzen quickly launched a strategic planning effort, since Fulbright had been operating without a formal strategic plan, and the development of that plan and the submission of this self-study have been major foci in this academic year.

The strategic planning process formally began in November 2023. Working groups have begun drafting analysis and strategies and presenting to each other; we estimate a first draft may be

completed early May, and a finalized report and an implementation plan for 2024-2027 by mid-summer 2024. This is an ambitious time frame, but the critical need we recognize for near term, adaptive planning and execution, makes this an urgent priority. More detail about the content of the plan as we have it will be in Chapter Two, but briefly the ‘pillars’ of the plan are: 1) Vision, Mission, and Critical Value statements; 2) an Environmental Scan and Strategic Positioning of Fulbright; 3) Changing lives through a transformational educational experience for our students; 4) Pursuing relevance and impact in Vietnam and on a global stage through knowledge creation and creative forms of societal engagement; 5) Achieving our university: building community and capabilities for sustainability.

This process has been informed by the work on the self-study that had already begun: the analysis of the 9 Standards and 182 numbered paragraphs through the lens of ‘where are we,’ ‘what might be missing’ and ‘next steps,’ a somewhat less formal version of NECHE’s Description, Appraisal and Projection format provides both a big picture view of the major issues and challenges facing Fulbright and a more fine grained set of tactics and timelines.

The major findings of the self-study can be divided into accomplishments and challenges. We have built a strong, innovative and unique undergraduate program with an exciting faculty committed to the institution. Development of capacity in institutional research and assessment is critical, but current evidence indicates that a high-quality institution is emerging. We have also done a tremendous amount of institution-building in terms of governance, human resources, student services and all of the myriad dimensions of a university in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In short, elaboration of the human and policy infrastructure of our university is well underway.

We hope in this self-study both to demonstrate the tremendous accomplishments of Fulbright in institution-building in a short period of time *and* to be both candid and reflective about the challenges we face moving forward and about how we will successfully address those challenges. The road map for addressing those challenges will be forthcoming when we complete the strategic planning process now underway, which is described in Chapter 2. We consider it useful to give here an overview of the major strategic priorities for Fulbright going forward.

We see five major strategic priorities which need to be pursued over the next five years, from 2023 to 2028. These are:

- 1) Attain initial accreditation from NECHE,
- 2) Build and move into the new campus,
- 3) Create a sustainable financial model,

- 4) Achieve an Integrated Fulbright,
- 5) Position Fulbright in the Vietnamese educational space.

### **Accreditation**

Accreditation is a goal in the service of several other related goals. We believe that we are on track to be one of the first institutions in Asia to receive American institutional accreditation, and this will work to ‘assure’ others of our academic quality; NECHE accreditation is one part of our broader validation and Quality Assurance (QA) strategy, which also includes compliance with the QA system of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (hereafter MOET), and establishing an Office of Institutional Research. We see accreditation as a way for us to measure our own progress and engage in the self-critique and honest reflection that the best institutions of higher education have in their DNA.

### **Build and move into the new campus**

Essential to the binational partnership that created Fulbright was HCMC’s commitment to provide 15 hectares of land in the new Saigon Hi-Tech Park campus for a permanent campus for Fulbright. Chapter 7 goes into detail about the state of this project, which has just received an essential go-ahead. The new campus isn’t just an important end in itself; it is also a crucial means to creating the American-style liberal arts residential campus that we envision Fulbright to be.

It should be noted that D9 is still a district in Vietnam’s largest city and a vibrant urban environment. So the relevant model for Fulbright is less Williams or Bates, say (colleges in splendid isolation following a rich American tradition) than Wellesley or even Barnard (colleges with a coherent residential campus that simultaneously take advantage of the co-curricular learning created by a discrete campus yet also enjoy a culturally rich urban setting). When NECHE’s letter asks about “plans to transition from a city-based campus to a rural campus,” this doesn’t get the context quite right. The transition will be from a university in leased facilities on the edge of the core city within a [22-million strong metropolitan area](#) (the third largest in Southeast Asia), to a to a campus-based institution on a different edge of that same core city. The letter is of course correct in saying that this transition needs to be planned for; indeed, it is only with the move to the new campus that the full potential for Fulbright to be distinctive in the Vietnamese context can be fully realized.

### **Create a Sustainable Financial Model**

Fulbright was not created with a large initial endowment or fund on which it could rely for several years; instead, it has had to mobilize resources as it has developed. Therefore, the most important priority for Fulbright beyond building the new campus is creating and implementing a sustainable

financial model. Chapter 7 goes into considerable detail on our budget and this emerging model. What follows here are some highlights of that analysis.

First, the expenditure side of our budget is being watched very carefully. All start-ups incur substantial overhead that is disproportionate to early student numbers; we are no exception. That said, we have levelled off the rapid faculty and staff hiring of the first five years, and are being very cautious in approving additional headcount, focusing only on truly critical needs. We are also building our model on the assumption of a rise in the student to faculty ratio from 14:1 (as at present) to 20:1 within approximately 5 years, which will further improve efficiencies without sacrificing quality of engagement.

Second, revenue mobilization and diversification are critical to Fulbright's quest for financial sustainability. Fulbright began with a multi-year commitment from the government of the United States (primarily via USAID and the Department of State) that was essential to getting off the ground. In turn, the milestones that USAID set for its series of grants have been an important source of strategic directions for Fulbright to date. USAID and Department of State funding have been a major start-up funding source to date; but they are best understood as continuing and relatively long-term sources of support, as is commensurate with the high ambitions and long-term nature of this institution-building project. The share of US government funding in the overall operation is, by design, declining over time as the university expands and diversifies revenue. This doesn't mean that we need to plan a future without grant funds, as we currently receive other sources of US government funds as well as some grants from Vietnamese sources. But it does mean that grant income is part of a multifaceted resource acquisition plan, with tuition and private gifts as growing shares of a core funding triad.

Tuition revenue has been affected by a combination of factors, including our commitment (unique in Vietnam) to need-based financial aid for students of outstanding merit. At the same time, student recruitment, as discussed in Chapter 5, has not met targets in the past two years, putting near-term pressure on the budget that must be addressed. This is prompting three key steps:

- Systematic efforts, beginning from last summer, to rethink our admissions process and student recruitment strategy;
- Preparations to launch new degree programs at the graduate level (in economics and business) that can pull in more full-fee paying students, in addition to business and artificial intelligence majors at the undergraduate level that will appeal to a new market segment; and
- A strong push, now that funds for the construction of our new campus are assembled, to raise scholarship funds, which can help us generate revenue that we are currently losing to tuition

waivers (our discount rate hovering around 45%), and that will enable us to expand enrollment without compromising our foundational commitment to educational access and equality.

Development efforts to secure private gifts are currently in a state of transition, after lower than anticipated realization of pledged funds during the previous three years. We have conducted in-depth reviews of different segments of potential donors, from the local and US-based corporate sectors to high net-worth individuals in both the US and Vietnamese contexts. These conversations (several of which are moving towards specific proposals and asks), coupled with the December 2023 \$20 million equity contribution (from a Vietnamese conglomerate, Sovico) that completed the total funds necessary for building phase 1a of the campus, bolster our optimism that realized major gifts will continue to accelerate in 2024 and beyond.

### **An Integrated Fulbright**

Most universities begin with an undergraduate program and then add graduate programs at a certain point in their evolution. Fulbright's history is just the reverse, as the inception of Fulbright was the Harvard-managed Fulbright Economic Teaching Program, which offered training programs in Vietnam from 1994 on. The FETP morphed into the Fulbright School of Public Policy Management in 2016, offering an MPP program which has an important place in public policy in Vietnam and is accredited by NASPAA, the specialized accreditation agency for public administration and policy programs. The decision was then made in 2017 to create Fulbright University Vietnam, in essence adding an undergraduate program to a successful professional school.

A major strategic priority over the near term is to fully integrate these two units in order to make sure that the potential teaching, learning and research synergies of the current structure are maximized. These include smoothing the pathway from the undergraduate program to FSPPM. At present, the faculties of the two programs are largely distinct: we intend to make it possible for FSPPM faculty to contribute to related undergraduate majors such as economics, and for appropriate social science faculty to teach in FSPPM as well.

### **Position Fulbright in the Vietnamese educational space**

Fulbright has a bold educational vision to be the first English-medium liberal arts college on the American model in Vietnam. The attractiveness of US-style higher education in Vietnam is clear, as an increasing number of Vietnamese, including many Fulbright faculty and staff, have found their way to the United States. Over 20,000 Vietnamese currently study in the United States, making it the seventh largest source of American international students (and the countries ahead of it are larger, wealthier or both). This shows that there is a tremendous desire in Vietnam for American-style education, broadly seen to be the best in the world.

As Fulbright establishes itself across Vietnam as *the* place in Vietnam to receive an American-style educational experience within Vietnam itself, there should be a clear market for what we offer, especially for those for whom the price of an education in the US is unaffordable. Yet, education in Vietnamese-medium universities is much more affordable, so if one frames the issue simply in terms of cost, Fulbright is potentially caught in the middle (the nightmare of any marketer): higher in cost than Vietnamese universities but potentially ambiguous in “prestige” as compared with a “Made in USA” degree. Furthermore, Fulbright is not the only provider of English-language education in Vietnam: RMIT and British University Vietnam are well established in Vietnam, offering British-model education, and VinUni is a new, single corporation-backed Vietnamese entrant with deep pockets, offering serious competition.

Our response to this challenge has to be both philosophical and practical. The philosophical part is a deeper reflection on what a Fulbright education is and represents. What is the value proposition for Fulbright University Vietnam? The name itself makes the case: Fulbright doesn’t just signify the United States but also the program of international exchange associated with Senator Fulbright that has done so much to connect the world. Fulbright is deeply and fundamentally global, open to the world and connecting the world through the vibrant country of Vietnam and vibrant Ho Chi Minh City. It is a university in which a strong professional school important for the nation is connected to an undergraduate liberal arts college based on the best American models. But it is not simply an ‘import,’ as the liberal arts model is being infused with Vietnamese characteristics, and since the Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management (the graduate component of the university) has a rich and very successful 28-year tradition of localizing and contextualizing knowledge in innovative ways within the Vietnamese setting. Vietnam has a rich and proud intellectual culture of its own: connecting the culture of the liberal arts to Vietnamese culture and traditions will be essential to the success of Fulbright.

On the undergraduate side, now that we have a curriculum in place, a set of majors approved, and learning objectives established for the undergraduate education and for each of the majors, the strategic direction for the undergraduate program is to realize the potential of Fulbright to truly be Fulbright University Vietnam, to be the globally connected liberal arts college with deep roots in Vietnam.

## CHAPTER 1

### STANDARD 1: MISSION AND PURPOSES

#### I. Description

Fulbright University Vietnam has a courageous and ambitious mission. The name of the institution captures a number of important parts of this mission that it may be useful to detail, and each word deserves emphasis and separate discussion.

**Fulbright:** Fulbright is named after Senator J. William Fulbright, known around the world for the Fulbright program of international academic exchange. This name—authorized by the Department of State when John Kerry was Secretary of State—situates Fulbright as part of—yet distinctive among—the ‘American style’ universities around the world. Like the American University of Beirut, the American University of Cairo, etc., Fulbright declares itself an American-style university, proud to bring the traditions of American higher education—almost universally seen to be the best system of higher education in the world—to another part of the world. Yet the program that Senator Fulbright created wasn’t simply one-way, taking America to the world; it also brought the world to America. The fundamental principle of the Fulbright program is international exchange. So the name Fulbright both aligns us with the AUBs and AUCs of the world, honorable company to be in, but also makes it clear from the start that Fulbright is a binational enterprise, Vietnamese as well as American in its nature and definition.

**University:** America’s contribution to higher education is complex, as one feature of American higher education has been continuous innovation. But a few themes stand out, and Fulbright embodies many of them. The first is the notion of a liberal arts education, that the undergraduate experience isn’t just a preparation for a career but is also an invitation to the life of the mind, to read and study broadly as well as deeply. This finds its purest expression in the liberal arts college, an institution that makes undergraduate education its primary (or indeed exclusive) focus. Fulbright is very much a liberal arts college in the traditional American model, with a strong core curriculum and distribution requirements that create breadth combined with the depth of a traditional major. There is nothing else like this in Vietnam (and in fact very few models like this in all of Southeast and East Asia). The classic liberal arts college is a residential college, creating rich possibilities of co-curricular learning. Although Fulbright (again uniquely in the context of Vietnam) has a residential requirement, it won’t have this fully residential flavor until the D9 campus is built. Even then, of course, it will be a residential campus on the edge of a vibrant city of nearly 10 million people, not quite the bucolic environment we associate with most American liberal arts colleges. But of course Fulbright is a university, not a college, and it is a university because of the presence of the Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management (FSPPM), a professional school which has already received its own [American professional accreditation by NASPAA](#) (the only such program in all of South East Asia). Another key

feature of American higher education is the professional school, and the co-location of a liberal arts college and a professional school is not uncommon and historically was the generative matrix out of which America's greatest universities emerged.

Vietnam: AUB and AUC name a relationship to a city, Fulbright is Fulbright University Vietnam, not Fulbright University in HCMC. This is an important aspect of the mission: although located in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's largest and economically most vibrant city, Fulbright seeks to be a university for all of Vietnam.

This can be seen very clearly in the formal mission statement. Fulbright's mission statement, approved by the President and the Governing Board in 2016, is as follows:

*The mission of Fulbright University Vietnam is to inspire new generations of leaders and ambitious thinkers of diverse origin to serve Vietnamese society and contribute to a better world. As Vietnam's apex university, founded on the premise of Vietnamese-American partnership, we practice and teach continuous innovation in pursuit of bold, ethical answers to local and global challenges. Our design for academic programs of exceptional quality embraces scientific, social, and humanistic modes of inquiry and action, optimized for a dynamic and impatient future.*

FSPPM has its own mission statement, also worth quoting:

*The Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management's mission is to advance transformative, innovative, and inclusive public policy and management in Vietnam—and the region - through its commitment toward excellence in teaching, research, and civic engagement. We are dedicated to preparing new generations of leaders with the integrity, knowledge and competencies necessary to have a significant impact in whichever field they pursue. We are committed to promoting the understanding and best practice of public policy and management by producing high-quality, evidence-based research. We are striving to providing a public sphere that fosters policy dialogues across Vietnam—and the region - in an effort to enhance the public interest, particularly in fields with great social impact.*

While there are some differences in emphases between these two, reflective of the more focused mission of FSPPM, they have a number of common characteristics. First is that Fulbright's vision and focus is on the future, a future marked by innovation, which of course makes sense in a university fewer than 10 years old located in a country changing as quickly as Vietnam. That vision is defined as innovating in the service of Vietnamese society and a broader global context, and the distinctive character of Fulbright in this context is as a Vietnamese-American partnership to bring educational programs of exceptional quality based on the American model to serve the needs of Vietnam.

"Impatient" is not a word found in many mission statements, but Fulbright is impatient in the way Vietnam and in particular HCMC are impatient. So if Fulbright is an American-style university, it



nonetheless is one with Vietnamese characteristics and its mission is to serve the needs of Vietnam, although there is also a regional and international dimension.

Standard 1 also asks about the purposes of the institution. Fulbright aims to provide a world-class education with a liberal arts curriculum while addressing the opportunity gap to access high-quality education through unique need-based financial aid programs. It also aims to draw on the best traditions of American liberal arts education and on Vietnamese intellectual traditions in a truly bi-national, indeed global way. Additionally, the institution has a clear yet practical purpose to further develop its educational and other functions including scholarship, research, and public service.

While Fulbright's purposes may be more implicit, the mission has been fully explicit. As a young and relatively small university, Fulbright has an advantage that its units are small and connected, which means that it can effectively communicate its mission and purposes to all stakeholders, ensuring that everyone is on the same page. Fulbright has taken steps to ensure that its mission is widely understood and accepted by all members of the community. The mission statement is clearly articulated in official documents; furthermore, regular meetings and public events are key channels for communicating and reinforcing the institution's mission and purposes.

Since the formal adoption of the mission statement in 2016, it has been widely distributed in both written and digital forms to all stakeholders, including students, parents, donors, partners, and the public:

- The actual text of the mission statement on [Fulbright's website](#), [annual reports](#), [brochures](#), etc. shows that the mission statement exists and is published in official channels.
- The university's website, social media profiles, newsletters, etc. displaying the mission statement demonstrates that the mission statement has a presence in the university's digital media and publications. Besides, references to the Fulbright mission statement in other external publications such as media articles, partnership announcements, and donor spotlights show that the mission statement has spread beyond the internal university community.
- Through several assessment tools, surveys, or reports that evaluate how well specific programs, initiatives or partnerships align with the Fulbright mission statement, we can see that the mission statement is actively used to guide decision making and to evaluate the work of the institution.

## **II. Appraisal**

The mission statement has resonated strongly and gained robust support from the community of people who care deeply about liberal arts education and its role in empowering Vietnam's next generation of changemakers.

The uniqueness of Fulbright's model helps it to attract a significant number of talents in administration, faculty, and students who are among the biggest believers in its vision. The school's purposes and mission statement are therefore a critical backbone to guide all founding members in shaping the direction of the curricula, improving the student learning experience and developing their respective objectives within their individual units. However, we also need to develop mechanisms to ensure that new members of the community, especially those who do not interact with external partners or work directly with students, are fully aligned with the institution's mission and purpose. As the student body grows and the organization expands, there is always a risk of siloed thinking and a lack of alignment with the institution's mission and purpose.

Over the past 5 years, the current mission statement has provided valuable guidance to the institution. It remains highly relevant to the needs of Vietnam and has successfully provided overall direction in planning, evaluation, and resource allocation. Additionally, the institution has focused on liberal arts approaches, promoted diversity, and directed financial aid and sponsorship to close the opportunity gap in education, which has empowered the next generation of change makers in and for Vietnam.

## **III. Projection**

Fulbright is now in the process of fundamentally reassessing the mission, vision and values statements of the university as part of its strategic planning process, through a specially designed survey as well as town hall sessions focused on the topic. Despite the success of the current mission statement, there is a recognition of the need to revisit it and ensure its continued pertinence for the next 5-10 years. By doing so, the institution can ensure that its mission statement continues to align with the evolving needs and expectations of its stakeholders, while staying true to its core values and principles.

Fulbright has not formally defined a set of purposes in the way it has defined a mission statement; the current strategic planning process should by its completion later this year yield a set of formally defined purposes for the university.

## Data First Forms - General Information

<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b>			
<b>Institution Name:</b>	Fulbright University Vietnam		
<b>OPE ID:</b>			
		<b>Annual Audit</b>	
		Certified:	Qualified
<b>Financial Results for Year Ending:</b>	06/30	Yes/No	Unqualified
<b>Most Recent Year</b>	2023	Yes	Unqualified
<b>1 Year Prior</b>	2022	Yes	Unqualified
<b>2 Years Prior</b>	2021	Yes	Unqualified
<b>Fiscal Year Ends on:</b>	06/30	(month/day)	
<b>Budget / Plans</b>			
<b>Current Year</b>	2024		
<b>Next Year</b>	2025		
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Reed Way Dasenbrock		
<b>Title:</b>	Quality Assurance Officer		
<b>Telephone No:</b>	1-808-799-4226		
<b>E-mail address</b>	<a href="mailto:reed.dasenbrock@fulbright.edu.vn">reed.dasenbrock@fulbright.edu.vn</a>		

### Standard 1.1: Mission and Purposes

<b>Document</b>	<b>Website location</b>	<b>Date Approved by the Governing Board</b>
<b>Institutional Mission Statement</b>	<a href="https://fulbright.edu.vn/our-mission/">https://fulbright.edu.vn/our-mission/</a>	December 1st, 2022
<b>Mission Statement published</b>	<b>Website location</b>	<b>Print Publication</b>
<b>December 1st, 2022</b>	<a href="https://fulbright.edu.vn/our-mission/">https://fulbright.edu.vn/our-mission/</a>	
<b>Related statements</b>	<b>Website location</b>	<b>Print Publication</b>
<b>Institutional Vision Statement</b>	<a href="https://fulbright.edu.vn/our-mission/">https://fulbright.edu.vn/our-mission/</a>	
<b>Institutional Core Values</b>	<a href="https://fulbright.edu.vn/our-mission/">https://fulbright.edu.vn/our-mission/</a>	
<b>Institutional Statement of Diversity</b>	<a href="https://fulbright.edu.vn/our-mission/">https://fulbright.edu.vn/our-mission/</a>	
<b>Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management Mission Statement</b>	<a href="https://fsppm.fulbright.edu.vn/en/about-us/mission/">https://fsppm.fulbright.edu.vn/en/about-us/mission/</a>	
<b>Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management Vision Statement</b>	<a href="https://fsppm.fulbright.edu.vn/en/about-us/mission/">https://fsppm.fulbright.edu.vn/en/about-us/mission/</a>	
<b>Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management Core Values</b>	<a href="https://fsppm.fulbright.edu.vn/en/about-us/mission/">https://fsppm.fulbright.edu.vn/en/about-us/mission/</a>	
<b>Institutional Vision Statement</b>	<a href="https://fulbright.edu.vn/our-mission/">https://fulbright.edu.vn/our-mission/</a>	

Notes: The latest Institutional Mission, Vision and Core Values statements were approved by the Board on December 1, 2022. In addition to the institutional mission, vision and core values, our Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management (FSPPM) also has its own mission, vision and core values statements reflecting their unique professional education program and the long history of engaging with different levels of governments to introduce, research and consult on best public policy or management practices. It is worth

nothing that, since the university's inception, the Board of Trustees, University Leadership and FSPPM leadership have always been aware of aligning FSPPM with the University while maintaining and protecting the unique values and characteristics that the program has cultivated over its almost 30 years history.

The University has always been strategic in communicating its mission, vision and core values statements to the internal Fulbright community and the wider public. While we allow for active use, distribution and promotion of mission, vision and core values statements to the public, we make sure that the statements used in any materials shall not differ from those published on our official website, and all publications must be approved by Head of Marketing and Communications Department.

Our University is currently conducting a strategic planning process to help re-define the University and set direction for the next three years 2024-2027. This process may result in a change of mission, vision and core values statements of the University within the next 6 months. We will update any changes on all official channel and inform NECHE as soon as it is approved by the Board of Trustees.

## CHAPTER 2

### STANDARD 2: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

#### A. Planning

##### I. Description

The history of planning at Fulbright is complex and continues to evolve. FSPPM is a well-established, successful program with 20 years of experience, first as connected to Harvard and then on its own; it has been accredited by [NASPAA](#), the relevant professional accreditor, since 2019. The Fulbright undergraduate program was initially planned by a small group of faculty and incoming student “co-designers” starting in 2018 (and this was the only time that students participated in curricular planning).

From the announcement of the establishment of Fulbright University Vietnam in 2016, and our initiation of operation in 2017-2018, the university has seen a significant transition from an idea to a fully operational university and campus with a functional full undergraduate program and an expanding graduate program. This period of operation has also seen a significant diversification of revenue stream of the University away from a fully grant-based institution, though much remains to be done.

In the first [5 years](#) (2016-2021), with our full operation officially started in 2018, and with the first intake of undergraduates starting their first year in 2019-2020, Fulbright has exceeded the original growth plan of admitting roughly around ~120-150 students prior to our transition to a permanent campus. As the first private non-profit university in Vietnam, Fulbright has made a significant development in [academic programs](#) and started to generate its own revenue streams:

- The undergraduate program started its operation in 2018 and matriculated its first batch of students in 2019, growing from zero to 500 students in less than 3 years (total enrollment is currently 728 students).
- With a long-term record of academic quality and advanced governance practices, FSPPM has expanded its core [Public Policy Analysis](#) to a larger audience with a master’s program and an Executive Program in [Leadership and Management](#).
- The financial aid program (the first of its kind in Vietnam) provided to both Graduate and Undergraduate degree-seekers has gradually dropped from providing 56% of tuition in 2018-2019 academic year to 41.7% for the class of 2027.
- We have therefore been able to reduce our reliance on US government grant sources, from 95% of revenues in 2016 to 43% for the fiscal year 2023, thanks to the rapid growth in academic programs and student enrollment.

One of the six “areas of emphasis” highlighted in NECHE’s letter of January 31, 2023 awarding Fulbright eligibility was the need to discuss our progress in “developing and implementing comprehensive and cohesive strategic plans that meet USAID benchmarks and correspond with financial and fundraising goals in support of the institution’s planned expansion and growth.” And it is fair to acknowledge that at the time Fulbright received this letter, it had not made much progress in this respect. However, with the arrival of President Fritzen in 2023, the somewhat ad hoc and informal approach to planning that had been in place has been replaced by a formal, campus-wide effort to create Fulbright’s first strategic plan. A comprehensive strategic planning exercise was launched by the President and Executive Committee in November, and the plan focuses on four main areas or strategic planning themes, each guided by focused working groups composed of internal leadership and community members.

Working groups have begun drafting analyses and strategies and presenting them to each other as well as to a Steering Committee chaired by the President. Broad information gathering has begun, existing reports have been gathered, and a community survey has been distributed. Five Town Hall conversations took place in January and February of this year, and further follow up is planned. Each working group will also conduct focus groups and then submit draft reports outlining three areas, a situation analysis, proposed strategies and tactics, and targets and monitoring. We expect first drafts of these reports by mid-March, with an anticipated State of the University address reporting on these drafts to the community by the end of March. We anticipate a finalized report—at least in draft form—for a 2024-2027 Strategic Plan by the time of the site visit in late April. We recognize that this is an ambitious time frame, but the critical need for an overall plan for the university makes this an urgent task.

Given this timing, we consider it premature to try in this document to anticipate the final conclusions of the planning process we are in the middle of. The Institutional Overview at the start of the Self Study contains reflections on some of the overall priorities that Fulbright needs to be pursuing at present, and we hope to have material on the plan that we can share with the team when they are in Vietnam for the site visit.

## **II. Appraisal**

It is obviously premature to attempt to appraise a strategic planning process still underway, though it is worth noting that the effort and the process has been well received by the university community to date. Looking backwards, we should note that until this process, planning for the University as a whole has been housed with the Office of Development and Strategy, which initiated a University Dashboard which collected in one place much of what a comprehensive planning effort would need. However, this effort was somewhat isolated from the rest of the university and has not yet provided the basis for a comprehensive, university-wide planning framework. The Chief Financial Officer (hereafter CFO) has a good handle on the financial data of the university and reports regularly to the Chief Operating

Officer (hereafter COO), President and the Board on these matters, but improving budget awareness for other parts of the university is still a priority and work-in-progress.

It is fair to say that the budget process already in place develops ‘a realistic course of action to achieve identified objectives.’ The discussions in Chapter 7 go into considerable detail about how Fulbright responds to financial contingencies and engages in budget planning and forecasting. The budget process in an institution as small as Fulbright is one in which the priorities of the units that make budget proposals are clearly communicated to the financial side of the house. Moreover, the overall priorities of the institution (create an undergraduate program following an American liberal arts model, create the institutional structures needed in a university, build a new campus) certainly inform the allocation of resources. However, we are some distance from achieving the full spirit of 2.4, which implies a structural connection between the budget planning on the financial side and overall planning. The strategic planning process and increasingly integrated operations of the Executive Committee provide an excellent opportunity for making improvements in this area.

One of President Fritzen’s key initiatives to do so has been to revitalize the role of the Executive Committee (ExComm), headed by the president and comprised of all vice presidents, deans and unit directors. The ExComm meets bi-weekly to set goals, track progress and solve problems that cut across administrative units. It also takes the lead on strategic planning (now in progress). The ExComm will be the focal point for managing the move to the D9 campus: the physical space has been designed but the actual move and the change in campus life and culture will also require planning and a sense of priorities based on existing resources and capabilities.

## **B. Evaluation**

### **I. Description**

The Fulbright Undergraduate program is a young program in start-up mode, but that has not prevented us from learning through systematic review. A team of [external reviewers](#) came to evaluate the undergraduate program during the co-design year in Spring 2019. Among the recommendations were to establish clear learning objectives, clear pathways of study and a clear curricular map. As a result of the review, academic leadership began to develop majors and create requirements and learning objectives for each major. Over the course of several years, these objectives were met: there are now 11 majors managed by Major Coordinators and each major has its requirements, pathways of study, and formal learning objectives.

Drawing on this process of review and reflection, the structure of the [undergraduate curriculum](#), including the Core Curriculum courses and structure, the existence of majors, and [capstone expectations](#), was decided upon in Fall 2021. Evaluating an academic program is of course only possible after the program has been designed and taught, and we have just arrived to this point with



the graduation of our first class in June 2023. Since the review in 2019 only covered the co-design year, it was not able to evaluate current majors or the current design of the undergraduate curriculum. We have just completed a focused review of certain aspects of the undergraduate general education [curriculum](#), and as is discussed in Chapter 4, its recommendations have just been approved by the faculty and will be implemented during 2024-2025.

The Finance Department must submit regular budget reports to USAID and the State Department, and senior leadership conducts regular meetings with representatives from USAID to provide quarterly progress reports on the Fulbright grant, which constitutes a large part of our operating budget.

Since the beginning of the NECHE accreditation process in 2022 and a MOET audit of our graduation qualifications for our first graduating class in 2023, the undergraduate (hereafter UG) program has begun to develop more systematic approaches to assessment (as will be discussed in Chapter Eight). As part of the MOET process, the faculty who are the “Major Coordinators” for each of the 11 approved majors are writing [Self-Assessment Reports](#) following the ASEAN University Network (hereafter AUN) model to fulfill MOET’s requirements for local accreditation within 5 years (MOET accepts AUN accreditation). MOET also requires an internal Quality Assurance office, and the process of staffing that office is now underway, with a .2 QA officer focused on the NECHE process on board, a recently hired data coordinator, and a second QA position focused on MOET authorized.

These campus-wide efforts have been complemented by a number of other activities, including the Assessment, [Core Curriculum](#) and AUN workshops discussed above in Issue #5. The Dean of Students’ office has administered the NSSE in [2022](#) and 2023, and the results of this are discussed below in Chapters 5 and 8. In anticipation of the first graduating class in Spring 2023, the faculty Assessment Committee has been revising course evaluation instruments, designing [end of year surveys](#), and planning senior [exit surveys](#) for the first graduating class. Analyses of the results of the surveys and focus groups are included in the relevant [evidence folders](#). The Office of the Provost collaborates closely with Development and Career Services to collect data on outcomes for our graduating seniors in terms of their future plans and employment and has formed an Alumni Relations task force in the absence of a formal office as of now.

FSPPM has been accredited by the US-based Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) since 2019 and provides [annual reports](#) to NASPAA on its programs and activities.

## **II. Appraisal**

Regarding assessment, a great deal of activity is underway, a culture of assessment is being built among the faculty, and the right steps are being taken. We are therefore well on our way to

demonstrating a record of success in evaluation activities to inform changes in academic programs and allocation of resources inside the undergraduate program. The initial cohesion of these efforts was hurt by the absence in previous years of a formal Office of Institutional Research; IR has now been placed in the Provost's Office and a comprehensive strategic planning process has been launched. These two developments will help create the integrated processes of evaluation that we need as well as strengthen the planning/resource allocation feedback loop across the campus, the key issue surrounding planning on campus discussed above.

### **C. Projection**

We expect by the end of this semester to have a Strategic Plan for 2024-2027. That plan should help enormously with the need to improve the mutual awareness and dialogue between Academic Affairs and Finance, to make resource allocation a more systematic and goal-driven process, and to strengthen the connections between the academic program and other key units in the university.

In terms of the assessment of academic programs, the next key step is [Program Review](#). A system of Program Review has been designed and approved, and late 2025 or 2026 is our best estimate of when our first formal Program Review will take place.

## CHAPTER 3

### STANDARD 3: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

#### I. Description

Fulbright's structure as an American-style university in Vietnam has features found in other international American institutions and others unique to Vietnam and Fulbright. Typical in institutions of this kind is a bifurcation between American and 'on the ground' operations. Fulbright is legally constituted as a non-profit in Vietnam called Fulbright University Vietnam Corporation (FUVC). However, the notion of a non-profit with a self-governing and self-perpetuating board (the structure of most American private universities) is not possible in Vietnam where even non-profits must have an 'owner.' So the owner of FUVC is Fulbright University Vietnam USA (FUV USA), which is structured as a typical American 501c3 (with a self-governing and self-perpetuating board) and is chartered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Four key documents provide an overview of this structure. The first is the [Charter of the Fulbright University Vietnam Corporation](#), a document that exists in English and in Vietnamese. Second is the [By-Laws of Fulbright University Vietnam Corporation](#), which exists in a Vietnamese version as well as an English one, and this document describes the operations of the Board of Trustees and the relation between FUVC and FUV USA. (FUV USA was originally called the Trust for University Innovation in Vietnam, Inc. [TUIV], the name used in these two founding documents.) The third document is the [FUV USA Articles of Organization](#), which formally established the 501c3 structure at the American end, and the fourth is the [IRS Determination Letter](#) confirming our non-profit status.

The organizational design of Fulbright itself can be found in two faculty handbooks. The [undergraduate Faculty Handbook](#), just approved in 2022, includes a dedicated section on the University's history and governance and provides detailed information on the institution's structure, including the [Board of Trustees](#) (hereafter Board) and Executive Council. Additionally, the Handbook delves into faculty governance, highlighting shared governance and standing faculty service roles, as well as undergraduate committees, and it mentions a number of important policies that define faculty roles. The [FSPPM Faculty Handbook](#) predates the undergraduate Faculty Handbook, as indeed FSPPM predates the undergraduate program, and it is more focused on FSPPM-specific issues.

#### II. Appraisal

Despite its binational structure, there is nothing very unusual about how the Board is structured or operates. What is worth emphasizing is that this structure guarantees the autonomy and independence of Fulbright in Vietnam, since the owner of FUVC is FUV USA which has to operate according to American laws and operates according to American principles and values. The hinge between the (largely) American-based Board and the (largely) Vietnam based administration is the

Executive Council, comprised of the President, Provost, COO, and the Secretary of the Board. One anomaly in how Fulbright was initially organized was that the President, Provost and COO each reported directly to the Board, but this has been changed with the hiring of the new President in 2023. As the [current Org Chart](#) shows, the Provost and COO report to the President who reports to the Board.

The administrative structure below the Board level is still in the process of rounding into shape. With President Scott Fritzen having just begun in July 2023 as Fulbright's second president, and with a number of important positions vacant (the Provost) or filled with interim appointments (the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Director of Student Recruitment), President Fritzen has had the opportunity to make changes to the internal structure of the university as he and the Board see fit. He has been moving quickly in this direction, filling the Dean of Students position, combining Admissions and Communications under a single Director, and unifying Fulbright's development activities in Vietnam under the newly created (though not yet filled) position of Vice President for Innovation and Business Development.

## **A. Governing Board**

### **I. Description**

The Board derives its legal fiduciary responsibility for the governance of the university based on its status as the board of directors of FUV USA, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation incorporated and based in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. FUV USA is the sole and controlling shareholder of FUVVC, a Vietnamese limited liability company incorporated under the laws of Vietnam. By charter, FUVVC operates on a nonprofit basis. This structure ensures that the Board is the university's only governing board recognized under the laws of the US and Vietnam.

The Board is an independent, self-perpetuating governing body (i.e., it appoints its own members). There are no members appointed or nominated by external governmental or private agencies. The individual trustees possess a wide range of areas of expertise including higher education, finance, law, communications and public affairs, management consulting, technology, and banking. More than two-thirds of the board are free of any personal or family financial or commercial relationship with the university. On a few occasions the university has entered into service contracts with firms owned or affiliated with board members when, in the judgement of disinterested board members and in compliance with Section 3.10 of FUV USA's bylaws, those firms were uniquely well qualified to provide services to the university. All Fulbright trustees understand their fiduciary obligations to the university, and the Board has a clear policy on [Conflict of Interest](#). All trustees are required to complete on an annual basis the FUV USA [COI Annual Statement](#) which is submitted to the Board Secretary for his review.

The university's Board meets on a quarterly basis according to a predetermined schedule over zoom and face-to-face during an annual meeting held on campus in HCMC. At each board meeting, the Board receives a general report from the President and a financial report from the President and Chief Operating Officer. Other agenda items of the quarterly board meetings are determined by the Clerk of the Board, who solicits inputs from the President, the Chairman, and other trustees. The Board concentrates on the issues of greatest importance to the university's growth and development over the near and long term including fundraising, campus development, the university's relations with the governments of Vietnam and the United States, and the continued development of the university's academic programs. The work of the Board is supported by several standing committees including the Finance Committee, which works with the university leadership to build and monitor the university's annual budget; the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, which maintains an ongoing dialogue with the university's academic leadership on matters pertaining to the development of the undergraduate and graduate degree programs including the student experience and the Governance and Fundraising Committees.

The Board approves important university policies which are developed by the university administration in consultation with the appropriate university constituencies and with external professional review as needed. It also regularly reviews the university's performance in key areas relating to student satisfaction and success and faculty development. The Finance Committee of the Board works with the financial administration of the university and of FUV USA's Massachusetts office to ensure that independent audits are conducted annually in accordance with the laws of the US and Vietnam and complies with terms of our federal funding agreements. In keeping with its bylaws and fiduciary obligations, the board approves these external audits and the annual budget and monitors the university's financial performance on an ongoing basis.

Vietnam-based board members regularly visit campus to attend events such as convocation, graduation, and other seminars and programs and many US-based board members visit Vietnam frequently as part of their professional and personal lives. The Board is in the midst of a generational transition in membership. Over the past three years eight new trustees have been appointed and two have retired. The Board endeavors to ensure that its members reflect the diversity of the constituencies it serves and its unique status as a Vietnamese-American endeavor. Twelve of the 20 members of the Board are ethnically Vietnamese, roughly split between Vietnamese nationals and Americans of Vietnamese heritage.

As has been already noted, the Board recently completed a successful search for its next president. The search was led by a subcommittee of the Board appointed for that purpose who consulted regularly with university constituencies including multi-day campus visits by four semi-finalist candidates. The full board voted on the final appointment. The president's contract stipulates that the Board will review his performance on an ongoing and annual basis for the purpose of supporting and

optimizing the president's performance and to determine appropriate performance bonuses. The Board evaluated the previous president annually, and a 360 evaluation of her was conducted in 2021.

## **II. Appraisal**

Fulbright's institutional independence helps ensure the president's authority as the CEO. All Fulbright personnel report, directly or indirectly, to the president. In our view this is a strength of Fulbright and contrasts with those international American-style universities that are structured as joint ventures between US and foreign institutions. At Fulbright all personnel are hired (and therefore can be fired) by the university; no one is seconded from institutional partners or sponsors or the government.

Individually and as a body, the Board is deeply committed to maximizing and optimizing its ability to serve the interests of the university. As a young institution transitioning out of its initial "start-up" phase, Fulbright has drawn on the expertise and commitment of its trustees in ways that go far beyond what is normally expected of the trustees of long-standing "steady-state" institutions. Depending on their areas of expertise, board members are occasionally asked to support members of the university's leadership team and administration. The annual in-person meeting provides an important venue for the Board to meet with members of the university community to maintain and deepen ties amongst themselves, and to engage in extended discussions about the university's current activities and strategic development. These experiences, combined with the board's quarterly board meetings, help cultivate a deep understanding of the university's mission, goals, priorities, and activities. The Board is therefore a mature, functional board that has fulfilled its responsibilities as laid out in the university's founding documents.

However, given all the circumstances discussed above, the Board has not had the opportunity of engaging in formal self-assessments of its performance, given the need to act in real time in response to changing circumstances. Thus, no perspective external to the Board has been formally brought to bear on the operations of the Board itself, nor has it to date developed a formal program of professional development for the Board.

Additionally, there are some board oversight functions delineated by NECHE that have not yet been performed, for the logical reason that the function which the Board needs to oversee isn't in place yet. Although Fulbright has made impressive progress putting together the infrastructure of a university in a short period of time, the administrative structure is still a work in progress. There is as yet no internal audit function, although the Board commissions and reviews external audits annually. In 3.7, there is a reference to the Board regularly reviewing "the institution's systems of enterprise risk management." The systems of financial oversight described in Chapter 7 satisfy a crucial part of this criterion. However, there is as yet no business continuity program in case of a disaster, something inescapably part of enterprise risk management. As discussed in Chapter 7 below, work is progressing rapidly on this at a staff level, but as the plans are not yet formally approved, the Board has not exercised any

oversight over the as yet,unapproved Business Continuity Plan. This plan needs to be reviewed by the Executive Committee and then approved by the President, which should happen by the team visit in April.

## **B. Internal Governance**

### **I. Description**

The university has enjoyed a relatively high level of stability in its leadership over the past seven years at the level of the [Board](#), President, and [academic deans](#). This stability and continuity has helped ensure that decisions are informed by experience, expertise, and a high level of institutional knowledge. It has also meant that, at critical junctures, the university has been able to take decisive and appropriate action. The major internal decision-making structure is the Executive Committee or ExCom, which includes all the key stakeholders on campus and meets every other week. It plays an important role in approving policies and recommending their approval to the President, and in various chapters below there will be references to documents headed soon to ExCom for its approval.

The exception to this pattern of stability is clearly the position of the Provost, and since August 31, 2023, the position of the Provost has been vacant once again. One important recent change is that the Provost now reports to the President. The Provost oversees the academic programs with the assistance of a Vice-Provost and clear reporting lines from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Dean of FSPPM, the Dean of Students and the Director of the Fulbright branch of the YSEALI program. The Provost is a member of the Management team that includes the President, the Chief Operating Officer and the Secretary of the Board. In addition, the Provost stays in touch with the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board. Arguably, the recent clarification of the reporting line for the Provost will make that position more manageable and therefore give it greater stability. President Fritzen opened a search for a new Provost in November, finalists have just made campus visit, and we are confident that a new Provost will be named by the time of the site visit in April. Appointing a new Provost is an essential piece of restructuring to consolidate the Academic leadership of the University.

Faculty representatives have a say in University committees and other University-wide bodies that advise on matters affecting faculty in educational and administrative policy. The administration will provide enough time for relevant faculty committees to give input on matters that significantly affect the faculty. In the event that the administration does not accept the Faculty's advice, it will provide its reasons in a timely manner. Any communication from the faculty will clearly indicate if it is an official Faculty communication or a personal view.

[The Faculty](#) have a say in the curriculum in a number of ways. Each of the 11 majors has a Major Coordinator who takes the lead in determining course distribution. Two new Associate Dean

positions in Undergraduate Studies were created and appointed in January, a change from the somewhat awkward previous structure in which the Dean of Faculty and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies constituted parallel positions. The Associate Dean of Faculty runs faculty meetings and helps facilitate discussions surrounding course assignments. The Associate Dean of Curriculum works closely with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to determine requirements for majors and curriculum distribution. In addition, there is a Faculty Governance Committee that meets regularly with the President, the Provost and the Deans. The Faculty Governance Committee reports on Faculty issues, takes agenda items from the Faculty and brings them up for discussion with the academic leadership; their meetings with University Leadership have recently been formalized as monthly standing meetings. The Faculty Governance Committee also assisted the Provost in drafting a revision of the undergraduate [Faculty Handbook](#) which was voted on and approved by the Faculty in 2022.

There is a [Student Council](#) that regularly meets with the President and Provost. In addition, students often write emails to the academic leadership expressing their opinions on certain policies when conflicts arise.

With one unique exception which we will now go on to discuss, all instruction in Fulbright's degree programs is done on campus, taught by Fulbright faculty, with content designed by the faculty. We have no contractual agreements and we do no outsourcing of the courses that lead to the degrees we award. However, an aspect of the curriculum at Fulbright which NECHE will not have encountered before is the requirement under Vietnamese law that all Vietnamese students take a series of courses on Politics, Military Training and Physical Education. Although these courses do not count towards the required 128 credits, students need to complete them to receive an official diploma issued by MOET. However, the specific arrangements about who is to teach these courses and how they are to be taught are up to the individual institution. Therefore, we believe that we do 'maintain sufficient control over the arrangements to ensure quality in the academic program.'

## **II. Appraisal**

As a young university transitioning out of its formative "start-up" years, Fulbright has had the opportunity (and challenge) of designing and building an entirely new institutional structure and governance system. In undertaking this once-in-an-institutional lifetime endeavor, the university has drawn inspiration from the best practices in US higher education while remaining mindful of the need to tailor Fulbright's structures and systems to the Vietnamese legal, regulatory, social and cultural contexts in which it operates. From the university's earliest, pre-launch days we have embraced an ethos of continuous iteration and self-improvement aimed at optimizing the university's organizational structures and governance systems for the university's rapid growth and transformation.

Particularly in the university's early formative years, adjustments to our structures and systems were made in real time in response to changes in academic leadership and the exigencies of the global



pandemic. In other words, we were “building the airplane while flying it,” which means that while our review of our structures has been continuous and on-going, it has not been highly systematic. Now that the airplane is built and is flying, as we embark upon the pursuit of NECHE accreditation and are soon to start our newly approved system of Program Review, that process of review can become more systematic.

Fulbright upholds shared governance and aims to make decisions through dialogue and consensus, while also acknowledging the importance of institutional agility and clarity regarding decision rights, especially for a young institution. Transparency is the norm when it comes to information about faculty matters, with exceptions made only when public disclosure would harm an individual's or the University's interests. The [undergraduate Faculty Handbook](#) outlines the guiding principles of representation, information, consultation, reasoned justification, and communication. However, it is important to acknowledge that the implementation of these principles is still at an early stage. It is also important to note that these principles have been articulated so far only vis-a-vis the faculty, and the roles of other internal stakeholders are less well developed.

### **C. Projection**

As the university moves into a new phase of development—heralded by the achievement of several important recent milestones including the graduation of the university's first undergraduate class and the transition to our second president—there should be more opportunity for the Board to evaluate its performance more systematically. The addition of recently appointed trustees, many of whom are below the age of 50, will help ensure continuity and leadership in the years to come. The board is determined to increase the percentage of women on the board in the years to come. The Board will consider engaging AGB or another third party for Board training and evaluation.

The Board will also need to review the university's approach to ‘enterprise risk management’ by reviewing the plans that are being prepared now, by monitoring their implementation, and by insisting on the hiring of an internal auditor who reports independently to the Board as well as the President.

The internal reorganization of the administration and the filling of all vacant positions is a high priority for this semester, and we expect that substantial progress on this reorganization and filling of the administration will be made by the time of the April team visit.

It has to be said that having two Faculty Handbooks approved at different times with different scopes is not optimal. Many of the policies in the undergraduate Handbook apply to FSPPM as well, but since they were developed after the [FSPPM Handbook](#) was completed, they are not included in it. It is also the case that aspects of both handbooks are outdated, as is inevitable in a rapidly changing institution. There is also nothing comparable for other, non-faculty members of the organization, no comprehensive staff handbook that outlines roles and responsibilities for staff and collects the

relevant policies, especially those concerning salary review, in one place. Thus, a new comprehensive handbook for all employees, with separate sections as appropriate for faculty and for staff, and for undergraduate and graduate (FSPPM) faculty should be developed. This should help flesh out the roles of non-faculty stakeholders in shared governance as well as flesh out additional consultative mechanisms as needed.

As part of that process, a number of previously approved policies reflect or reference earlier stages of the university's structure, so there will need to be some clean-up of older policy documents to make them correspond to the new structure when the university reorganization underway now is complete.

## CHAPTER 4

### STANDARD FOUR: THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

#### I. Description

Fulbright offers three undergraduate degrees, BA, BS and BEngineering, in 11 subjects total with clearly articulated requirements, and an MPP with two tracks. We do not offer any associate degrees. All information about the Fulbright curriculum is published on [the university website](#), which was updated in August 2023. The design of the curriculum which took some years to reach its current form was the result of intensive discussion by the faculty and administration with some help from an outside review team in 2019; the General Education program (Core and Exploratory courses) was reviewed by a task force in Fall 2023. The undergraduate program controls its own curriculum development: the Curriculum Committee vets new course proposals, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies oversees course offerings, and both take responsibility for the quality of the curriculum.

[The overall design of the curriculum](#) is informed by the learning objectives established for the undergraduate program at Fulbright, which was divided into 3 categories, knowledge, skills and mindsets. Three aspects of 'knowledge' are called out: 1) a foundational education in the liberal arts that leads to specialized study in different majors; 2) focused study on important questions; 3) an emphasis on local challenges and opportunities for the development of Vietnam in a global context. Four 'skills' are emphasized: innovative and creative thinking, reasoning, critical thinking, and effective communication. Four 'mindsets' are identified: civic engagement, lifelong learning, ethical reasoning, and collaboration.

#### II. Appraisal

The primary focus at Fulbright over the past several years has been designing and building a strong undergraduate program. While we certainly have not stopped innovating or making changes to the undergraduate program, it has attained a level of maturity with our first graduating class such that it can be assessed and considered objectively. To put this another way, the past half-decade has been a period of revolutionary change; the next half-decade should be more a matter of evolutionary change.

##### A. Assuring Academic Quality

#### I. Description

Given Fulbright's short history, our focus to date has been developing, approving, and administering the academic programs, especially the undergraduate program which has just graduated its first class. That program has been developed largely by the faculty with the supervision of the Provost and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and our current structure for administering the academic

program and many of the relevant policies are contained in the recently approved undergraduate Faculty Handbook.

The curriculum has evolved since its first iteration in the co-design years. Instead of majors that fell along disciplinary lines, the co-design year faculty initially came up with the idea of self-designed interdisciplinary majors. The external review team felt this approach would not be understood in the Vietnamese educational context and so proposed reverting back to organizing the curriculum around majors. Each major is managed by a faculty Major Coordinator. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies manages the budget for the Undergraduate Program and allocates resources to each major for assistance with programming, technical needs and course enhancement.

New majors are proposed by the Faculty and submitted for approval to the Provost. Since 2021, the only new major approved by the Provost is Social Studies, although several new independent minor proposals have been developed by faculty and are undergoing review; these independent minors represent faculty and student research interests, would require no additional resourcing, and fall outside of MOET oversight, so would be very efficient to implement. While individual majors can and do propose refinements to major requirements and flow charts, there are at present no plans to eliminate any programs or change program requirements in such a manner as student progress would suffer any disruption. That said, we understand the formal USDE requirement to have a [Teach-Out Plan](#) to cover the extreme case of the closure of the institution, and we have developed this plan. Given the paucity and nature of English-medium post-secondary institutions in Vietnam, we would expect any students unable to finish their degree at Fulbright would in the first instance be looking inside Vietnam and therefore be looking for Vietnamese-medium institutions.

We understand that Fulbright will formally fall under the Commission's Substantive Change policies when it becomes a Candidate for accreditation, and we will certainly seek Commission approval prior to implementation of any actions that fall into these categories. As no curriculum should ever stand still, we are thinking about and planning some new degrees which we understand will need to go through substantive change, and some of this planning may have reached more concrete shape by the time of the site visit in April.

Now that we have graduates, a new set of tasks presents themselves to us: with the new graduates last spring, we conducted exit surveys and focus groups. The first [exit survey](#) and its data have been disseminated and included in the evidence folder, and a six month follow up survey was conducted and submitted for reporting in compliance with MOET requirements in December 2023.

Aside from the MOET-required courses described in Chapter 3, the only other case in which Fulbright uses outside resources for its programs is the occasional use of athletic facilities for student clubs in

such activities as badminton, basketball, soccer, tennis and volleyball. The facilities used are commercial facilities in the immediate vicinity of the D7 campus, and the total expense of this is less than USD \$20,000 a year. This arrangement will no longer be necessary when the D9 campus is built.

Of course, the clearest route to assuring academic quality is an excellent faculty, and we are building an excellent faculty at Fulbright. [Faculty hiring practices](#) will be discussed in Chapter 6. Once hired, faculty determine the content of their courses. Course content and curriculum is decided by the faculty with oversight by the Major coordinator. Teaching evaluations are one measure of assessing quality, and we have recently moved to doing these twice a semester, both at the mid-term point and at the end of the semester. The deans review these course evaluations and they hire and evaluate part-time faculty. Finally, as will be discussed in Chapter 6, faculty are evaluated annually by the Provost.

The final component of academic excellence comes from the student body, who in the liberal arts tradition are active contributors to the educational environment. Faculty hold high grading standards for students and regularly monitor student competency levels. Prospective students to the undergraduate program undergo a rigorous admissions program, and expectations for student success begin with admissions. Admission to Fulbright's undergraduate program requires a high level of competence in English, and most students in fact come from bilingual high schools in which at least some of the coursework has been in English. The standard requirement is a 6.0 on the IELTS exam (or an equivalent score on another exam). All course work in the undergraduate program is in English, and all material submitted for grading must be in English. In order to make sure that all of this is leading to 'collegiate-level skills in English' by the time of graduation, all graduating seniors in this first class took a Duolingo administered English language online tests that are certified by the Duolingo company's academic branch. These tests were administered in a secure test taking environment and certified externally. All senior-level independent research including capstones requires high levels of collegiate English. Samples of [capstone theses](#), research projects, and co-authored scientific papers have been provided.

Students are assisted in their voyage of learning every step of the way. Admissions refers students whose English isn't clearly at the standard necessary for success at Fulbright to the [Summer Bridge program](#) run by the Learning Support team. In addition, the English language mentorship program offers additional classes and workshops through Student Support. The scaffolded curriculum offers ensures that students acquire skills in critical thinking and analysis from the Core courses through the Capstone. Learning objectives and outcomes have been developed for each major with the

supervision of the assessment committee. Course levels and appropriate assignments are examined by the Curriculum Committee and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

At the graduate level, the Master in Public Policy (MPP) taught by FSPPM has rigorous expectations for student achievement with a complex set of learning outcomes and mature assessment policies and procedures for the program as is required by their specialized accreditor, NASPAA. (It should be noted that this is a bilingual program; the English expectations are not as high as in the undergraduate program, and several core courses are currently taught entirely in Vietnamese.) A student of the Master in Public Policy (MPP) program with a concentration in Policy Analysis (PA) is expected to complete minimum of 70 credits while a student concentration in Leadership and Management (LM) is required to complete at least 60 credits.

## **II. Appraisal**

The system for assuring academic quality in the MPP program offered by FSPPM is robust and has been itself been assessed through the [NASPAA accreditation](#) process. As the undergraduate program is newer and is just now engaging with the external accreditation process, the systematic assurance of academic quality is less well developed in the undergraduate program. Chapter 8 will describe where we are on the journey to create a robust culture and system of assessment for the undergraduate program, but we have a well-designed and innovative undergraduate curriculum, an excellent faculty, and excellent students. So all the components for academic excellence is there, as the early assessment results have begun to corroborate.

### **B. Undergraduate Degree Programs and General Education**

#### **I. Description**

Fulbright's undergraduate program provides a broad education in key disciplines and methods of inquiry across the arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, computing, and engineering. This breadth of knowledge is foundational to deep study within a major. Students at Fulbright develop the key skills and mindsets needed for academic and career success and the ability to make profound contributions as professionals, citizens, and lifelong learners.

Students will acquire knowledge of human perspectives and the natural world through:

- A foundational education in the liberal arts and sciences that leads to specialized study in a major.
- Focused study of important questions, using well-honed methods of thinking across disciplines to address complex twenty-first-century challenges.

- An emphasis on the local challenges and opportunities for the development of Vietnam in a global context.

The curriculum details are available to students on the student portal [OneStop](#), as well as the university [website](#), which has recently been updated with individual pages on the Core [Curriculum](#) and on each [major](#). Students are provided with information about the curriculum as soon as they apply, and through all four years with any curriculum updates. The revised [website](#) contains updated information concerning the entire undergraduate program, articulating the learning goals of the core, a page for each individual major and a consistent, clear design for academic information appropriate to current students and faculty, and to prospective students, parents, and faculty.

[The Undergraduate program curriculum](#) at Fulbright follows the liberal arts model, in which the general education program emphasizes learning core competencies from multiple perspectives to cultivate curiosity among the students. The general education program illustrates the potential of interdisciplinary study through [five Core courses](#) and eight Exploratory courses. (Following the recent recommendation from the Task Force on General Education, the number of Exploratory Courses will be reduced from eight to six.) It encourages students to discover their intellectual interests while developing the skills and competencies across disciplines to adapt and solve modern problems in a global context, aligning with the institution's mission to equip new generations of leaders with lifelong learning skills. After completing these requirements, students declare their major in consultation with an advisor by the end of year two.

There is therefore a robust general education curriculum with 52 credit hours (although two of the Exploratory Courses can be counted towards the major). The five courses in the [Core Curriculum](#) illustrate the potential of interdisciplinary study to solve modern problems and incorporate the key competencies of critical, innovative, and creative thinking; effective communication; civic engagement and collaboration; ethical reasoning; and lifelong learning. At most, 4 credits of the core can be taken as Pass/No Pass. Students take pre-assigned two of the core courses each semester in their first year, so they finish the core during their third semester on campus.

The second part of the foundational education at Fulbright is a set of Exploratory courses, currently organized in 4 categories:

- Category 1: Arts and Humanities (Art and Media Studies, History, Vietnam Studies, Literature).
- Category 2: Social Sciences (History, Economics, Social Studies, Psychology, Vietnam Studies).

- Category 3: Sciences and Engineering (Integrated Sciences, Engineering).
- Category 4: Mathematics and Computing (Mathematics, Statistics, Computer Science, Data Science).

Categories 3 and 4 will be combined into STEM, and students will be required to take two courses in each category to allow for earlier preparation in potential majors and to create a better balance across the disciplines. Exploratory courses encourage students to step out of their comfort zone by exploring broad areas of study and to discover more fully where their interests and passions lie. No course can be taken to fulfill more than one category. At most, 8 out of 32 credits can be taken as Pass/No Pass. Students typically complete the Exploratory requirements by the end of their second year.

By the time they declare their majors at the end of their second year, students have completed the Core (5 courses), completed the Exploratory courses (8 courses), taken at least 3 electives, and consulted with an academic advisor. In addition to these general education requirements, students are also required to complete between 4-12 credits of Experiential Learning (EL). EL credits can be fulfilled through [various pathways](#) such as an internship or an entrepreneurial startup project and are now monitored by [Career Services](#).

## **II. Appraisal**

The general education component of the Fulbright curriculum is innovative, well designed and rigorous. In the recent website refresh, the Vice Provost and the Core Course Coordinators have developed and articulated learning goals for the Core Curriculum as a whole, and a complete [website](#) for the Core and individual courses within the Core has been developed. This language is also being incorporated into the individual Self-Assessment Reports that each Major is producing for MOET/AUN to ensure consistency in the description of our general education structure and aims.

In Fall 2023, a faculty task force conducted an internal review of the general education curriculum, including the Core, Exploratory courses, and the experiential learning component of the curriculum. This [Curriculum Review Report](#) incorporated surveys of the faculty and students, an analysis of general education requirements and curricular design at a number of benchmark institutions, and a carefully articulated set of recommendations. The surveys reveal concerns about some aspects of the design of the general education program, particularly the connections between the Core and Exploratory courses and between the Exploratory courses and the majors. Students felt that there were too many exploratory courses and both faculty and students felt the pressure of fitting all these requirements along with the requirements of the major within a four-year window. In some majors, staffing was insufficient for both Exploratory and Major courses, leading to imbalances in course



offerings and difficulties in completing major requirements. But it should also be said that the report shows how seriously the faculty are taking their responsibilities for the design of the curriculum and how thoughtful the students are as well. In other words, the fact that some recommendations emerge from the report—recommendations just approved by the faculty for implementation next year—is itself evidence that there is a robust culture of general education on campus. Students are learning and thinking, faculty are learning and thinking, and although the curriculum is already in good shape, this impressive report had led to some evolutionary changes to general education at Fulbright.

## **C. The Major or Concentration**

### **I. Description**

As was discussed above, the design of the Fulbright curriculum didn't begin with majors, but the inclusive process of curricular design used at Fulbright led to the conclusion that majors were indeed needed. In June 2020, 10 majors were created: Computer Science, Economics, Engineering, History, Integrated Science, Law Culture and Society, Literature, Psychology, Visual Art and Vietnamese Studies. Math was added in 2021, Visual Arts became Art and Media Studies, and Law, Culture and Society replaced with Social Studies. Each of these 11 majors is managed by a faculty Major Coordinator, and each went through an approval process involving the faculty who teach in each major, the faculty as a whole, and Academic Affairs before being approved by the Board. This approval was based on student demand, the feasibility of consistent and regular course offerings and proper staffing with adequate faculty expertise. Each of the [11 majors](#) has a clear pathway with required courses at the introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels leading to an optional capstone, and each major has major-specific learning objectives at the major and course level based on established learning taxonomies or higher education rubrics. (For instance, the Arts and Media Studies major uses Bloom's taxonomy to define each stage of its Major learning goals, and Literature uses the AAC&U VALUE rubrics to define student achievement at each stage of the Major.) The detailed description and flowchart of the majors are published on students' [OneStop](#) portal, and on the new individual major pages since the website refresh. Some majors ([Integrated Science](#) and [Computer Science](#)) have different concentrations or tracks, and many majors have cross-listed courses with other majors.

[The Major descriptions](#) available on [the website](#) indicate each major's goals for skills, mindset, and career prospects and include a sample student pathway and a detailed flow chart for the requirements of each Major. Some majors, such as History, have recently instituted explicit expectations for workload (reading quantity, writing assignments, and bibliographic research) for each level of course offering. All Major trajectories culminate in upper-level courses that require high level skills appropriate to support independent research. Some students will choose to pursue an

optional [Capstone project](#): each Major has its own capstone proposal criteria (normally a minimum GPA and completion of all required introductory courses) and capstone grading rubrics.

Students are allowed to choose majors no matter their GPA, and major requirements are monitored by the Major coordinator and the Registrar as part of their graduation audit. Students may double major and add up to two minors, as long as they fulfill all necessary academic requirements.

## **II. Appraisal**

All of the majors submitted comprehensive [self-assessment reports](#) in June 2023, and any changes to the major flow charts and requirements undergo extensive oversight by the Curriculum Committee. While all majors are academically rigorous and adhere to consistent academic standards, supporting and enhancing small majors (like History and Literature) while staffing more heavily subscribed majors (like Arts and Media Studies and Economics) has been a challenge. It took some time to learn which majors would draw the most students in this untested liberal arts context, especially since students did not begin to choose their majors until 2021. With the extra hiring that we have recently done, more data on class enrollments, and extra time to develop the majors, we will now be able to balance the competing demands for faculty across the curriculum.

## **D. Graduate Degree Programs**

### **I. Description**

The only graduate degree program offered at Fulbright is the Master's in Public Policy and Management (hereafter MPP) taught by FSPPM. It predates the founding of the undergraduate institution, has been [accredited by NASPAA](#) since 2019, and has its own resources, faculty, programming, and budget.

The MPP offered by FSPPM is the first and only full-time program in Vietnam providing graduate education in American public policy, leadership, management, and public economics foundations, as applied in a Vietnamese context. The program equips both aspiring and practicing professionals in government, business, and universities with a strong theoretical, applied, legal, and evidence-based foundation in strategic management, leadership, economics, policy development, implementation, evaluation, critical thinking, and communication, negotiation and advocacy. Students also learn to define policy problems, design studies, undertake research, and analyze results. Program details and learning outcomes are posted [on the website](#).

[The program roadmap](#) and the relevant learning [competencies](#) of each course are introduced to students during an initial orientation session, and these are reflected in [course syllabi](#), the [student handbook](#), course instruction, exams, policy papers, and assignments, an [exit survey](#), and [the master's](#)

[thesis](#) which contains an oral presentation. Where the course has multiple professional writing assignments in every class, topics are suggested for students which are relevant to the competencies and learning objectives.

The program lasts four semesters in which the first term (Fall) provides key prerequisites for policy analysis, the second term (Spring) provides the student with analytic tools useful in policy implementation and organization management, the third term (Summer) provides a wide range of elective courses that suit individual career developments, and the last term (Fall of the following year) prepares the student for the thesis.

The program is designed to provide a solid theoretical foundation and practical tools for policy analysis and design. [Case studies](#) are not just supplements for lectures but are the main teaching method to help students deploy theoretical understanding to solve a specific problem. Students work in small teams to analyze cases, prepare policy memos, briefs or papers, then defend their research orally. This exercise typically occurs twice a semester in each class and is designed to develop skills in teamwork, collaboration, and management. This exercise also prepares students for their 8-12 credit, required thesis project: defining a problem, undertaking an analysis, and presenting the work in writing and orally. Students may prepare theoretical, methodological or empirical works for the assignment. They may use secondary data or develop their own data. The thesis is viewed as the culmination of the efforts which students have put into their learning over the 15-18 months of study.

The two tracks in FSPPM have a different orientation in that [Policy Analysis](#) (hereafter PA) is more research oriented whereas [Leadership and Management](#) (hereafter LM) is more application oriented. They therefore have different learning outcomes and different core courses. For instance, Negotiation, Public Management and Leadership in the Public Sector are core courses in the LM concentration as they focus on providing the student with managerial and leadership skills, mobilizing support and organizing for policy implementation. Regardless of the track, however, thanks to the diversified activities in the School, FSPPM students are provided with plenty of opportunities to interact with practitioners.

Every course syllabus must include at least one learning outcome associated with the NASPAA universal competencies. All syllabi must state the MPP's value proposition, "Competent, Committed, Confident, Connected, and Competitive," as a goal. Writing is a part of the foundation of the Program. Our Program requires students to prepare multiple professional writing assignments in every class. Except for Microeconomics, classes do not extensively use final exams to assess student learning outcomes. The Nucleus Faculty assesses the student's work periodically to maintain quality control and to assess learning outcomes.

The [MPP Nucleus Faculty](#) exerts substantial determining influence over the MPP. The faculty votes on all key issues regarding program and policy planning, curricular development and review, faculty recruiting and promoting, and student achievement through advising and evaluation. The only exceptions occur when and if the Faculty vote to authorize the MPP Director to make decisions on their behalf on a specific issue. At least 75% of the Nucleus Faculty is academically qualified, holding doctorates or law degrees from prestigious universities outside Vietnam. For those who are deemed professionally qualified, they must be (i) full-time, (ii) have a record of outstanding professional experience, (iii) possess a graduate degree, (iv) have relevant professional experience in their area of responsibility, (v) engage in professional and community service in support of their teaching responsibilities, and (vi) publish professional practice-relevant writing in their area of teaching.

Also, every semester, the school draws part-time/adjunct faculty from prestigious universities around the world to teach a course in the MPP program so that students can be exposed to a wide variety of perspectives presented by professors of diverse backgrounds. Most courses taught in FSPPM also have some sessions conducted by guest lecturers from high-level officials in the community, government agencies, and businesses.

FSPPM has a mission-specific goal of increasing research productivity among faculty, especially in the areas of economic transformation and public sector reform. All Nucleus Faculty present their research to students, faculty and community members at least once per semester through bi-weekly lecture seminars or a lecture session of one of their courses. The school seeks to enhance its capacity to produce and disseminate research in developing a deep understanding of the evolution of Vietnam from a planned economy to an advanced, market-based, globally integrated economy. In September 2021, the inaugural issue of Fulbright Review of Economics and Policy ([FREPE](#)) was published on the platform of Emerald Publishing. FREPE is a peer-reviewed, open-access international scientific research journal hosted by FSPPM. The journal aims to promote publications that employ rigorous analytical tools and advocate for evidence-based policy.

FSPPM's admission policies are discussed in Chapter 5 and aim at securing the widest participation of students drawn from across the country, from rural and remote areas as well as the major urban areas. FSPPM has had no students admitted under exemptions and on probation while attending the program. Generally, our policy is to treat every student as an individual case with whom we will work to make it possible to obtain their degree, while still meeting degree requirements in fact and in spirit.

To be eligible for graduation from FSPPM, a student

- must have successfully completed 70 credits (for PA) or 60 credits (for LM);
- must have attained the minimum cumulative grade-point average for graduation (B-);

- meet the English proficiency (equivalent to IELTS 5.5);
- must have successfully defended the thesis.

## **II. Appraisal**

The FSPPM faculty reflects the highest standards and public service values in teaching, research and service, reflecting different perspectives, approaches, and opinions. All faculty members have been actively engaged in policy discussion and debate in Vietnam via government forums, formal media outlets, and social media. Moreover, at least half of the faculty are involved with policy advisory work at national, regional, or provincial levels.

The MPP program incorporates global modern knowledge with insightful local understandings of the Vietnamese context. FSPPM focuses both on delivering advanced knowledge to students and promoting essential competencies for strategic thinking, life-long learning and effective leadership and cooperation in the workplace. FSPPM is also a pioneer in innovative approaches to enhancing learning experiences and outcomes. For nearly three decades, FSPPM has successfully recruited a student base which is diverse in background, geographic locations, work experience and expertise. Our students are policy makers and consultants, university faculty and researchers, and managers in public, private and non-profit organizations. FSPPM students work in many fields including industry, agriculture, mining, the environment, banking, housing, tourism, airlines, healthcare, education, energy, taxation, and public administration. Our diverse student body creates a learning environment that enriches every student. Finally, at FSPPM, we emphasize a friendly and cooperative ambience among students and between students and faculty that emphasizes mutual respect and academic integrity.

## **E. Transfer Credit**

### **I. Description**

The issue of transfer credit only affects the undergraduate program, as FSPPM has not accepted any transfer credit from other institutions for its programs. The [Transfer Credit Policy](#) is designed to ensure that any course credits transferred into Fulbright meet the standards and requirements of the Fulbright Undergraduate Program. This policy is published on the [OneStop](#) portal and is accessible to all students, faculty, and staff. According to the policy, Fulbright accepts a maximum of 64 credits for eligible courses taken at an accredited institution or at a Vietnamese institution authorized by MOET with the courses taught in the English language. This cap means that students at Fulbright complete far more of their credits at Fulbright than the 25% figure cited as a floor by NECHE. A student must get a grade of C or better in the course to apply for transfer credit, and the course must be reviewed by a Subject Matter Expert (hereafter SME) and approved by the Dean's Office. The SME is a Fulbright faculty member who is an expert on the specific subject matter of the course; the SME is assigned by

the Dean of Undergraduate Studies during the credit evaluation process. The courses are transferred for credits only; the grades are not counted toward the student's GPA. If in the judgment of the SME, the course is equivalent to a course which is part of the Fulbright curriculum, the transferred course will be listed under the Fulbright course name and number in the transcript; if this is not the case, then the course can still be accepted if it meets a Fulbright undergraduate program requirement. The [Transfer Credit Policy](#) also defines the courses which are not eligible for transfer. Internship program credits are not eligible for transfer credit, and neither are the following kinds of courses: courses considered by the SME to be below Fulbright 100-level courses, courses equivalent to the courses that a student has already passed at Fulbright, courses offered for non-credit and continuing education units, and non-academic or vocational-technical courses. These limitations help maintain the academic quality and integrity of the degree awarded by Fulbright.

The Registrar's Office is responsible for the transfer credit process by collecting all the required documents for evaluation including but not limited to the [Application for Credit Transfer form](#), transfer course details (description, learning outcomes, syllabus, assessments, etc.), and transcripts issued by the host institution. These required documents are sent to the Dean's Office for assigning the SME to evaluate. The SME provides the rationale for granting or not granting the credits as well as confirms the course equivalence and course level counted toward the Fulbright major. The final approval is from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies before the student is informed. The transfer course is displayed on the student's transcript apart from the Fulbright Institutional Credits. The Registrar oversees the awarding of the transfer credit and updates the student transcript. A database of awarded transfer credits is recorded in the SIS. Although the transfer credit database is not publicly available for students to access, a student receives the results of granted credits, and the course equivalence if any via email.

Fulbright recognizes the educational value of AP and IB taken before matriculation by the students. A student may earn a maximum of eight (8) credits from AP with a score of 4 or higher and from IB with a score of 5 or better. However, Fulbright does not give any credit for prior experiential learning.

## **II. Appraisal**

In response to increasing demand from the students to participate in the Exchange Program and experience study abroad, the Academic team and Registrar's Office have reviewed and published the latest version of the [Transfer Credit Policy](#), version 3.0. The transferred courses database has been set up in the Fulbright Student Information System for better management. This database allows the Registrar's Office to track the Exchange or Study abroad program offered by both partner and non-partner with Fulbright. The agreements with Fulbright partners (Yale-NUS, Bard College, New Jersey Institute of Technology) are also recorded in the database on Salesforce.

## **F. Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit**

### **I. Description**

At Fulbright, oversight of the integrity in the award of academic credits involves multiple layers from the Faculty, Major Coordinators, Program chairs, the Curriculum Committee, Deans, the Vice Provost, and the Provost. But the authority for awarding credit for students in their courses rests with the faculty. Fulbright uses the “credit hour” as a quantum of course workload in the Undergraduate Program. The Curriculum Committee evaluates all new courses proposed by the faculty in order to ensure that the number of contact hours per week (typically three in class) and the workload assigned will add up to a rigorous and appropriate standard for the level of the course and that all courses are taught for 14 weeks (or the equivalent number of hours in the 8-week summer session). Each major also provides estimated workloads and sample assignments for each level of the course in the major. The updated course evaluation forms ask students to self-report on how many hours per week they spend on homework outside of class; the equation for Core courses is a minimum of two hours for each contact hour. According to the [Fulbright Academic Policy \(V4.0\)](#), a student should typically maintain a full-time course load of sixteen (16) credit hours per term to make standard progress towards completing the degree, though any course load between 12 and 20 is considered full-time. Any student registering for fewer than 12 credits in any semester or who after dropping a course will complete fewer than 12 credits needs to complete and file a “Petition for an Alternative Course Load” with their advisor.

A student may need to earn more than 128 credits to graduate if (1) a student has not chosen a major by the end of the sophomore year, or (2) a student changes his or her major in the junior or senior year, or (3) a student adds a second major or a minor. If the attempted credits exceed 144, there may be implications for the student’s financial aid package. The registrar team tracks and ensures all students meet the graduation requirements prior to the awarding of the degree.

The Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Vice Provost, and Provost ensure that the delivery of courses and programs allows all students to be able to obtain their degrees within four years. They work together to plan, review, and approve the course offerings for each academic year, and course planning has now extended into a two-year prospective cycle. The approved course offerings for each term are published on the [One Stop](#) portal with the class schedules so that all UG students can access it. On the One Stop portal, students can go to My Studies\My Enrollment to view the list of courses for each term and detailed information about course titles, course descriptions, course learning outcomes, a tentative schedule, possible assignments, and grading. By obtaining the course details, a student has the opportunity to understand the course content and then prepare for their course load. The

Registrar's Office in collaboration with the Academic Affairs team develops and administers this as well as monitors its effectiveness.

All new as well as existing courses that have substantial updates regarding learning outcomes, objectives, and assessments must be described in the Course Proposal Form which is submitted by the course instructor to the Curriculum Committee. This committee is chaired by a senior faculty member and composed of faculty from across the disciplines. At set dates during academic term, the Curriculum Committee collects Course Proposal forms from the faculty and assesses these proposals. Committee members will be divided into different categories according to their fields of expertise to review the forms. They cannot approve their own course proposal. Once the course is approved, the Curriculum Committee will inform Academic Affairs and the Registrar team to update the course information to One Stop.

Faculty are responsible for the course content with clear course learning outcomes that meet the learning outcomes of the major. Any academic course offered for credit, including a general academic course, an experiential learning course (internship, independent study, fellow programs), or a transfer course, must demonstrate that the course credits earned are based on the course learning outcomes, possible assessments, and the final grade. Students earn academic credits when they meet learning outcomes and pass the course requirements.

The [Academic Policy document](#) outlines many of the academic policies structuring the offering of the curriculum at Fulbright and specifically, it provides instructions to both faculty and students regarding the timeline for course add/drop/withdrawal in a specific semester.

At Fulbright as in most other places, the Covid-19 pandemic sped up the introduction of new technologies and new forms of teaching and learning. The online courses during the Covid-19 pandemic were designed to give students an opportunity to interact with faculty and other students in various ways, from Zoom to Canvas conferences and discussion functions. The Information Technology team provided the technologies to set up the network and classroom to assist faculty to deliver the courses during this time. Zoom and Teams are used extensively on campus, both for instruction and for administration. Each online class has a Zoom password, and only enrolled students in the class can access it to participate in the course. The institution also uses Microsoft 365 for secure documents, collaboration, and file sharing. Fulbright provides a unique login ID for individual students and requires multi-factor authentication to ensure information security and protect student privacy. [A Student Records Privacy Policy](#) protects student records in terms of personal information at Fulbright. The Registrar's Office is responsible for managing the student database on Salesforce with full access rights. Authorized persons with an appropriate purpose can access specific student information, as reviewed and confirmed by the Registrar.



Fulbright offers a number of services to support students in academic matters, including but not limited to learning support, peer mentoring, academic advising, counseling, One Stop inquiries and a hotline. These services are accessible by booking on the [One Stop](#) portal via Submit Inquiry or by booking an appointment directly with the service teams.

The Fulbright degree and Transcript of Records include student information including but not limited to the student's name, student ID, birth date, status, program, period of enrollment, and major information. The Fulbright degree is managed by Academic Affairs while the [Transcript of Records](#) is produced by the Registrar's Office following all academic policies. The degree and transcript of each student is available in both English and Vietnamese with the credits awarded in accordance with the common accreditation standards and the requirements of MOET. Students will receive the Bachelor's degree when they complete both the Undergraduate Program requirements and the MOET requirements.

In order to track the student's academic credits and ensure that the student's academic pathway meets the degree requirement to graduate on time, Fulbright provides clear requirements for continuation in, termination from, or re-admission to the undergraduate program which are compatible with the Fulbright educational purposes. Students must maintain good academic standing with a minimum GPA of 2.0 and have no academic or non-academic warnings at Fulbright. Any decisions about the continuing academic standing of enrolled students are based on the instructions in the Academic Policy and administered by the Registrar's Office. The Registrar consults the relevant internal stakeholders and/or talks with the students if needed before announcing the student status of continuation (active), leave of absence, withdrawal, or termination (dismissal).

Re-admission is for the students who officially withdraw from Fulbright and want to return to Fulbright after a specific time. The Registrar seeks final approval from the Dean of Students to approve the students withdrawing from Fulbright. [The Academic Policy \(V4.0\)](#) describes the procedures for withdrawal from Fulbright and re-admission to full-time status.

The [Code of Academic Integrity](#) with the Violation of Academic Integrity Report form—published [on One Stop](#)--has been developed and implemented by the Registrar's Office in collaboration with the Academic Affairs to provide administrative support for the faculty to ensure the integrity of the grades and credits awarded in the individual courses. Given the rise of AI, a faculty working group has already proposed and instituted some revisions to the Code of Academic Integrity as of Fall 2023.

Students may earn academic credits as transfer credits completed through [the Exchange Programs](#) at Fulbright. The Academic team and Career Services are responsible for this program. The process used for transfers from academic partners is essentially the same process as with other institutions, a

process described in detail above: transfer credit is evaluated by the SME and approved by the Dean to ensure academic integrity and the award of academic credits toward the degree. Currently, Fulbright has active Exchange Programs with Yale-NUS in Singapore and Bard College, with a newly approved 3+1+1 (a Master's Pathway program) with the New Jersey Institute of Technology and others in an advanced state of discussion.

These agreements ensure the transfer of credits for the student participating in the program. We also have an agreement with Princeton University for the implementation of the "Global History Lab" and "History Dialogues" projects. A record of the relevant MOUs is kept in the Office of the Provost, and the Vice Provost has currently taken over global academic partnerships. This database of transfer articulation agreements is shared internally on SharePoint. Revisions of these MOUs would need to be mutually agreed upon and would be handled by the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

## **II. Appraisal**

Faculty provide information about academic integrity and instructions in the course syllabus published in Canvas, so the students can easily access and follow this information. Faculty and students can report any violation of academic integrity with the evidence provided to prevent cheating and plagiarism. This report will be sent to the Dean and Registrar for recording purposes. The Registrar keeps and attaches this report to the student's record on Salesforce so that the student's Advisor can see it and then provide the appropriate advice if required. The Registrar organizes the hearing panel if an issue arises with a student concerning academic integrity. This panel is chaired by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and includes faculty, members of the student council, and the Registrar.

The [Transfer Credit Policy](#) was revised during the Summer of 2023 and has been published on the [One Stop](#) portal which is accessible by all staff, faculty, and students. The list of currently approved transfer courses is also being updated, but due to the rapid growth of exchanges, this list has not been publicly available to the students. It will be revised by the Dean's Office and be published by the start of the next academic year.

## **G. Projection**

Articulating the connection between the Core, the Exploratory courses that have just been approved by the faculty and may be implemented by Fall 2024, and the trajectory to the majors still needs reinforcement through advising and external messaging. Core courses have been rolled out since the Co-design Year while the Exploratory requirements were only introduced to the curriculum since AY2021-2022. There is still work to be done on how the individual courses dovetail together as well

as how general education fits with the majors to produce exit competencies. [Core Curriculum Coordinators](#) will continue considering this as they refine their individual courses.

[The Curriculum Review Report](#) conducted in Fall 2023 contains a number of recommendations concerning the core that have just been approved by the Faculty and may be implemented by Fall 2024. The main recommendation is to reduce the number of Exploratory courses from 8 to 6, as mentioned above, in three categories, reduced from four. This will increase space for students to take more electives in their first two years and—most importantly—to allow faculty in highly enrolled majors the ability to manage the demands for Core, Exploratory and Major courses. This focused review will then be followed by a full Program Review of the undergraduate curriculum in late 2025 or early 2026 according to the recently approved model for [program review](#).

The majors are still in the early years of delivery and are therefore presumably in need of further development. Faculty are continuing to improve the current structure, streamlining the essential requirements, and adjusting the concentrations to be in line with current faculty expertise. In addition, the Assessment Committee has recently instituted additional required course reports on required major courses to ensure that required courses are fulfilling the needs of the major. A review of the majors is currently underway as part of the MOET process, and [Program Review](#) when it is initiated will help ensure there is adequate consistency across majors while maintaining depth and specialization.

MOET requires assessment according to their model, but going forward we hope that we will be able to use the data required for MOET for the more open-ended and reflective model characteristic of US-style accreditation. As we are building up an assessment system and culture from the introductory courses up, as it were, we have also not yet begun to systematically whether students are attaining the exit competencies in information literacy and critical thinking that NECHE expects. The faculty Assessment Committee has been discussing different models for assessing exit competency since October 2023, and is still determining the most efficient model for our small scale and limited staffing resources.

Although the Learning Support team can support students' English to an extent, there is not at present a dedicated writing center. The results of the Duolingo exam combined with other information flowing from our expanded assessment efforts are being analyzed to determine that our students' English ability—especially their writing ability—is at the level we expect. There has been some discussion about the need for a Center for Teaching and Learning which would help faculty address many of these issues.

Some new degrees are in the planning stages at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. A faculty task force has been convened to design a new minor and potentially a new major in Business and Society. A number of independent minors have been proposed (in East Asian Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Science and Technology Studies) and are currently being reviewed for implementation as soon as March 2024. These independent minors can be supported with existing faculty and courses and therefore implemented without further resources in staffing; some seniors will be able to add the new minors with their existing coursework. Another possibility is the introduction of an Artificial Intelligence minor or concentration within Computer Science. At the graduate level, an MA in Economics is being proposed, and we are studying the addition of an MBA or Executive MBA further down the road (perhaps as early as the Fall of 2025). Enhancing Economics at the graduate level and introducing business into the undergraduate curriculum will also have the corollary effect of creating an important bridge and combined activity between the FSPPM and the undergraduate faculty, strengthening our programs, utilizing our resources more efficiently and creating more cohesion across the institution at the same time. We recognize that new degrees will need NECHE Substantive Change approval once we receive candidacy, so we will keep in close touch with NECHE as our internal planning for these degrees is completed and they receive internal approval.

Other possibilities can be considered as part of our Strategic Planning this year for serious consideration once the D9 campus is built and our current space constraints are removed. One possibility that is already being considered for the new campus is separating the Integrated Sciences major into Chemistry, Biology and Physics majors. As we get closer to moving into the new campus, it would be timely to survey the student body to gauge student interest in additional majors.

Concerning FSPPM, one thing that is lacking is an incentive mechanism to encourage faculty and research staff to be involved in revenue-generating activities such as the executive education program, consultancy projects and research initiatives. We also need to explore ways to enhance the research collaborations between our faculty and our students. The opportunities are certainly plentiful: through the engagement in a variety of School's research projects, the students can explore interesting topics for research and consultation from different perspectives and methodologies. One external barrier to this is MOET's policy that a thesis must be an individual and independent work, even though the curriculum is built on project learning, a mode of learning far more in keeping with the world of work our student will encounter after graduation. We are therefore exploring the possibility of requesting MOET's approval to consider Group Capstone projects as another option for the master's thesis.

The registrar team has collaborated with IT on a Course Audit tool which checks the student's academic progress towards the degree and graduation. This tool is now being reviewed by the Registrar in collaboration with the technical support from the IT team to adjust the Major and /or Minor requirements. The Registrar will communicate with the Academic Affairs team and Major Coordinators to review the Curriculum requirements to include any recent changes. We will also need to re-organize and clean up the course offerings database in the current system before launching this tool. The Registrar team expects to have this tool completed and used by Undergraduate students by Academic Year 2025-2026.

We plan to expand more exchange programs starting in the academic year 2024-2025. We are currently developing a hosted summer program on Vietnamese culture, history, and language that may enable us to pursue more exchanges in kind with partner institutions in future. The MOU/transfer articulation agreements should be uploaded on the SIS for better management in the future. The terms and conditions related to the transfer credits or course evaluation should also be stated in the transfer articulation agreement for transparency. Fulbright has also signed multiple MOUs with various universities in the US, UK, Taiwan, and Vietnam, but has yet to launch any exchanges as a result of these MOUs due to a lack of funding to cover student costs. We are aware that some of these exchanges will also need NECHE Substantive Change approval in those cases where our partners are not US-accredited institutions.

To proactively ensure academic integrity among the students, besides a clear policy with frequent reminders and communication from the faculty and administrative staff, the institution is still working towards a cohesive plan for integrity. Further discussions with more stakeholders including Academic Affairs, faculty, students, and the Registrar will be necessary to keep the [Code of Academic Integrity](#) updated and relevant.

## CHAPTER 5

### STANDARD 5: STUDENTS

#### A. Admissions

##### I. Description

The criteria for admission to the undergraduate program at Fulbright are published on the website. Under the section, “[Apply to us](#)”, the characteristics of the prospective students are publicly shown.

These distinctive characteristics have guided our recruitment activities, which represent a very different model from typical score-based admissions at selective local universities in Vietnam. In order to identify the students with these characteristics, the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid at Fulbright has created our own admissions application divided into four main sections: (1) Personal Information, (2) Academic Information, (3) Activities and Awards and (4) an optional Portfolio (where students have the choice to either submit a Personal Essay or an Original Piece of Work). To ensure that the students can be successful in the full English instruction environment at Fulbright, we set the minimum entry English requirement to be IELTS 6.0 (or equivalent). Regarding academic and other support programs/services, we offer, pay for, and proctor a free online English test (the Cambridge English Placement Test) for all students who pass the first round or who are not able to afford other English tests.

The Office of Admissions and Financial Aid has also publicized policies regarding [admissions requirements](#) and [financial aid](#) in both Vietnamese and English in print form and on the website. Each applicant is assessed twice: through the application form and the individual interview round. The application grading is consistent with the published admissions criteria, looking at the applicant's academic strengths (based on the student's GPA, academic awards, and standardized test scores if any), characteristics (through the non-academic awards and activities) as well as the quality of the submitted portfolios. All of these are holistically viewed and factored based on a set of strict rubrics toward an individual score for each applicant. The rubrics are set forth by the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid to seek students who have a solid knowledge foundation, an ability to learn in a full-English environment as well as the three characteristics (Intellectually Curious, Pioneering, and Responsible) that Fulbright is looking for. Then, the applicants are shortlisted for a bilingual, 20–30-minute individual interview round, in which admissions officers assess their English-speaking capacity, commitment to Fulbright, and their level of thinking.

If we admit any students whom we think need help in terms of English acquisition, we recommend them to the [Bridge Program](#)—an optional, six-week program run by Learning Support--so that they can receive more academic training before matriculating at Fulbright.

To reflect its program mission and training requirements, [FSPPM's admission](#): (i) are open to the widest participation of students drawn from across the country; (ii) accept Vietnamese students from urban, local, rural, and provincial areas, especially ethnic minorities and women; (iii) accept both pre- and in-service students; (iv) meet MOET's requirement of English proficiency that must be at least level 4 or higher out of 6 or higher according to the foreign language proficiency framework for Vietnam stipulated by MOET; (v) require the admitted student either to leave their employment or preferably secure a leave of absence from their job according to the program schedule.

## **II. Appraisal**

The [Student Affairs and Services](#) (SAS) department has made a lot of progress over the past three years in tracking and maintaining student enrollment and improving the diversity and inclusion mission among the student population.

65% of the undergraduate student body is female, for an almost 2:1 ratio of women to men; in contrast, FSPPM has almost identical 1:1 distribution (50.32% female and 49.68% male). Both the undergraduate and graduate programs come from all over Vietnam, though the pattern is somewhat different. 42% of the undergraduates come from the Southeast, where HCMC is located, with 21% from the Red River Delta where Hanoi and Haiphong are. 11% and 12% respectively from the North Central and South-Central Coast constitute another substantial component, with 14% from the rest of the country (Central Highlands, Mekong River Delta, Northeast and Northwest Vietnam). FSPPM has an even larger Southeast presence, with 69% of the student body, and 17% from the Red River Delta, so only 14% from the other 6 regions.

As the Data First Form for 5.2 shows, the number of students enrolled at Fulbright has increased each academic year, from 322 FTE in AY20-21 to 723 in AY23-24. Graduate enrollment has decreased across this period, from 46 FTE to 29 FTE, so the increase in undergraduate enrollment has been more robust than the increase in overall enrollment, from 276 FTE to 694. However, this steep increase is mostly a function of adding additional cohorts to the undergraduate program; looking at the number of new entrants produces a different pattern. 163 new students enrolled in AY 20-21, followed by 213 and 212 in AY 21-22 and AY 22-23, which looked like a healthy pattern of growth. The fact that AY 22-23 was level compared to AY 21-22 was the subject of mild concern, but that concern has subsequently intensified, as only 157 new students enrolled in FY 23-24, essentially returning us to the number of incoming students three years ago. Of even greater concern is the fact that those 157 students were generated from 706 applications, of whom 494 were accepted, while the 163 students in AY20-21 came from 647 applications of whom only 205 were accepted. So the acceptance rate soared from 31.7% to 70%, while the enrollment rate plunged from 79.5% to 31.8%.

Despite these concerning trends, our students continue to represent the best from top high schools in Vietnam. 80% of admitted students of the Class of 2027 are from high schools for gifted students,

with an average IELTS score of 7.0; nearly half of them achieved a GPA of 9.0 or higher on a scale of 10. Additionally, via our recruitment activities, we are maintaining diversity in terms of geography and socio-economic backgrounds.

These developments have prompted a deepening campus-wide conversation about enrollment and retention management in the current academic year. The Board and the Communications team have commissioned two outside studies, which indicate that many Vietnamese parents and prospective students are unfamiliar with the concept of “Liberal Arts education.” While they may appreciate a broader-based education as a means to greater versatility, creativity, and future work-readiness, the default assumption among our Vietnamese audience is that undergraduate training is essentially vocational—that is, the major eventually becomes the career. Translating and disseminating an American-style liberal arts model of undergraduate education to this audience requires much more sustained effort.

These studies have made several concrete suggestions about changes that can and should be made. During this academic year, the Admissions team (now joined by Communications in a new organizational structure) worked closely with PANL, an educational consulting firm, to formulate a range of strategies and steps to address this challenge as part of a broader push to increase enrollments. These have included the following:

- Identifying key messaging on academics and revamping the Fulbright website. The website now features much more detailed information in English and Vietnamese on general education through the Core Curriculum, each of the individual majors, and career trajectories for each major. Our first graduating class and their successful launch into careers and post-graduate education are also a key proof of concept for our model of education, and their successes are also highlighted in each major page and in a new alumni page.
- Enhancing Career Services and the Alumni networks to connect our new undergraduate alumni to FSPPM graduates and Fulbright fellowship alums should also help assuage the uncertainty that some families and even students have expressed that a liberal arts degree is not career-oriented; this messaging is also a much stronger part of the updated Admissions and Marketing presentations and outreach.
- Segmenting market and prioritize resources: an emerging ‘optimized’ model suggests a strong focus on Tier 1 and private schools in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, and on renewed emphasis on the Mekong Delta, while maintaining recruitment efforts nation-wide.
- Refocusing Financial Aid: an emerging strategy is introducing merit-based scholarship and streamlining the need based financial aid to support targeting students with different needs and priorities, as suggested by the [this structure](#).



- Optimizing the admissions offer process: instead of releasing the admissions results of all applications at the end of the recruitment cycle, PANL suggested Fulbright’s Admissions and Financial Aid Office to release the admissions results for students who do not apply for financial aid within 20 working days and the results of those who do within 50 working days ([Flowchart](#)).
- Updating the value proposition that Fulbright communicates to the market, to focus on three pillars: Fulbright offers a **world-class education** in an **inclusive community**, transforming individuals for a **lifetime of opportunity**.
- Building and implementing digital marketing social media campaigns. During this year admissions cycle, the Office of Marketing and Communications has implemented the first performance marketing campaign to explore the new sources of growth on digital and social platforms; increased the publicity of the new President via various popular podcasts in the country; collaborated with media to enhance Fulbright’s public visibility; and refreshed the branding image. Also, this admissions cycle is the first time Fulbright implemented SEO (search engine optimization) and SEM (Search Engine Marketing). In addition, we are producing multiple videos in various formats to introduce the majors offered and the learning environment at Fulbright that are compatible with different social media channels.

In short, starting a new liberal arts program in an environment where this model is very unfamiliar has required more broad education and outreach than anticipated, but this gap is being addressed imaginatively and energetically through more targeted marketing along with new academic initiatives internally and with partner institutions, along with process redesign.

The Office of Admissions and Financial Aid have drafted an official bilingual admissions policy which is waiting for approval by the president and the board but should be in place by March 2024.

## **B. Student Services and Co-Curricular Experiences**

### **I. Description**

At Fulbright, Student Affairs and Services ([SAS](#)), previously known as the Student Life Department, aspires to provide accessible services to all undergraduate students during their full-time study. SAS promotes student engagement, residential activities, and social, career, academic, and wellness needs.

From the academic year 2021-2022, the University expanded the resources of the SAS department in order to meet rising student needs from the different cohorts. These rising needs include, for example, mental health and counseling support, career services, parent connection, and financial advising. Currently, the SAS department has 22 staff including full-time, part-time, and interns to offer an array

of student services, from physical to mental health services that empower the student learning experience. The Office of the Registrar is under SAS and collaborates with the Academic Affairs team to provide additional support and advice in academic matters, including the academic progress check, the transcript, transfer credits, major and degree audits, and other policies and procedures. SAS promotes a diverse and inclusive campus and residential environment in which students are encouraged to test and refine the knowledge, skills, and values they acquire in their classes. In partnership with the students, SAS follows the university's mission in focusing on student-centered programs and services that empower students to develop their abilities to think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, and demonstrate competencies worthy of future leaders and change-makers in Vietnam and the world. Going forward, the SAS team will need to develop and integrate a system of assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of these services to students' learning outcomes.

At Fulbright, individuals responsible for student services are qualified by formal training and work experience. The new hires follow standardized [HR recruitment](#). When onboarding, new employees participate in the many different required HR trainings, including a Fulbright Familiarization session and training on the [Code of Ethical Conduct](#), the [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#), first-aid training, and performance management training. New employees must complete the onboarding checklist within the probationary period.

Those who are new to the Undergraduate program receive information from their Academic Advisor even before the Orientation weeks, and the goal is to each advisor to stay with the same students in their academic journey from the first day of study at Fulbright until their graduation. Students can connect with their advisors via email to introduce and share their academic interests for a better understanding of current expectations as well as to obtain advice for the future. The student may request that the Academic Advisor be changed. By the end of Year 2, students have Major Advisor(s) to work with them on the major requirements and a Capstone if approved.

In addition, students can reach out to the services offered by the Learning Support team if they need additional assistance to pursue their academic and educational goals at Fulbright. Learning Support is under Academic Affairs and provides academic advising sessions and workshops for improvements in English language and study skills. Peer Mentors are Fulbright work-study students who earned excellent results in specific courses or areas and work in Learning Support to share their own experiences and tutor others who seek support in understanding the academic subject.

[Fulbright Orientation Week](#) is an annual initiative organized by the Student Engagement team with the aim of welcoming new students, providing them with some essential competencies and helping them achieve a smooth transition from high school to university. The 2023 version held in August featured a series of informative workshops and recreational activities, aiming to foster eleven change-maker

competencies, including innovative and creative thinking, ethical reasoning, critical thinking, knowledge, collaboration, effective communication, reasoning, lifelong learning, civic engagement, health and wellness, and sense of self. During the program, new students teamed up and worked together to propose an innovative idea for the First Fulbright Project 2023. The prompt for this year was "At Fulbright University Vietnam, our mission is to inspire new generations of leaders and ambitious thinkers of diverse origin to serve Vietnamese society and contribute to a better world. As the next generation of Fulbright, what activity/event would you implement to enhance the wellbeing of Fulbright community in 3 months?". As a result, 4 ideas were selected for funding out of the 14 incredible proposals. Students rated the program as 9.3 out of 10 in terms of their satisfaction over the 2-week duration. 87% of new students felt connected with each other and 94% of them had developed skills to work effectively with others as a result of the program. Orientation Week 2023 was described as fun, innovative and well-organized by most students, who saw it as a valuable opportunity to collect essential information and build relationships with faculty, staff, and fellow students at Fulbright.

It is crucial that SAS commits to the student's well-being. Fulbright acknowledges the challenges to navigate changes at college and common mental health needs among young adults. The [Wellness Center](#) offers counseling services, wellness programs, a safer community, and accessibility services to all Fulbright students. A student can find useful resources about Health and Wellness Services on the [One Stop](#) portal. Whenever the students declare their disability or health challenges, the information will be shared with the Wellness Center so that Wellness Center staff are aware of the situation and can prepare if any special assistance is needed. Students who need personalized academic plans will connect with the Accessibility Service which is part of the Wellness Center to share their physical or mental health challenges that may impact their study achievements. The Wellness Program Coordinator works closely with the student and the Academic team, consisting of Academic Affairs representatives and relevant faculty, to create personalized education plans known as Equitable Learning Plans, which help the student achieve their academic goals throughout their time on campus. The Wellness Center also offers Safer Community, a central point of enquiry, response, and support for concerning, threatening, or inappropriate behaviors, including sexual harassment or assault. The Safer Community service is private, confidential, free of charge, and available for all Fulbright students.

The Wellness Center also provides mental health care to all enrolled students through counseling services (both individual and group). Fulbright counseling services offers a private and safe space for students to receive support, process challenges, and come to terms with their solutions and resources throughout their college journey. The counseling service is free and confidential. The counseling service also works with external mental health providers to coordinate referrals for students with specific needs to ensure holistic support. The Wellness Center adds great value to

SAS's mission of enhancing the student experience and empowering student success through the availability of personalized counseling support, which promotes self-awareness and agency.

The [Residential Life](#) team at Fulbright University is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for undergraduate students. Student housing covers both the Fall and Spring semesters. Students attending courses in the summer must register separately for summer housing. At Fulbright, students are assigned housing at the Docklands Residence. In Fall 2023, Fulbright welcomed 388 out of 696 students, representing 55.75% of the student population, into our residences. Notably, first-year and third-year students boasted the highest residency occupancy rates, at 77.5% and 75.2%, respectively. Our Residential Life [Policies and Rules](#), accessible on [One Stop](#) and effective since August 2022, outline the regulations for fostering a safe community within our residence. These guidelines are in harmony with the [Residence Occupancy Agreement](#), which students sign upon dorm registration. Within the residence, the Residential Life team offers various training workshops aimed at fostering lifelong learning by integrating the intellectual and social aspects of our students' lives. These workshops cover essential topics such as physical and mental first-aid, self-defense, non-violent communication, safety protocols, and conflict resolution. This comprehensive series of activities is designed to cultivate a sense of belonging and facilitate multifaceted personal development. Through these workshops, students not only enhance their professional skills but also learn to embrace diversity, refine interpersonal communication, and empower their independence.

The clear ethical standards to guide student conduct as well as to emphasize the University's commitment to student engagement are found in the [Student Code of Conduct](#) published on the [One Stop portal](#). The Student Code of Conduct is currently under review, starting from Fall 2023. This review aims to promptly address student misconduct cases and ensure that the code is up-to-date and effective in maintaining a positive learning environment. The [One Stop](#) portal also hosts a Student Feedback section, which lays out detailed processes and procedures for student [complaints](#), reviews and resolution of student grievances. The entire process is clearly stated in the Student [Complaint Policy](#), also publicly and easily assessable on [One Stop](#) portal.

The [One Stop portal](#), launched in the Fall of 2020 by the Student Experience team, is a comprehensive portal accessible to all undergraduate students, faculty, and staff. All the key information, such as the [Student Handbook](#), the [Code of Conduct](#), the [Academic Policy](#), the [Transfer Credit Policy](#), the [Student Records Privacy Policy](#), [Housing Guidelines](#), [Tuition fees](#), [Student Complaint Policy](#), and the [Code of Academic Integrity](#), are well publicized, clearly stated, and readily available on this page. Students can also find their academic results on this portal. To expand and strengthen the services provided, the Student Experience team set up a One Stop corner open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 Monday to Thursday for on-site support. Students can come by and ask questions and quickly get an answer. The Student Experience team reviewed and redesigned the [One Stop](#) portal in

collaboration with IT in order to enhance the portal and improve the connection with the student body. The upgraded portal recently went live to all UG students on January 29, 2024. The primary features that were updated are: Browse Knowledge, Ask Something, and Announcement. After being launched, Student Experience is eager to collect user feedback for further enhancement by collecting student feedback through Focus Groups in this Spring 2024 term.

The Student Financial Services (Billing) team provides students with clear and timely information about the cost, any outstanding balances, and any refund/re-credit. Billing announces the [Tuition Fee and Charge Guide](#) for a specific Academic Year before the Fall term starts. This policy can be found on the One Stop portal with detailed instructions for the payment of the tuition fees and the timeline to follow if any changes in the academic plan impact the student's status.

Student records are defined in the Student Records Privacy Policy published on the One Stop [portal](#) and accessible by the staff, faculty, and students. Student records consisting of student directory information, transcript of records, GPA, academic warning letter, etc. are currently stored on the Fulbright CRM system, administered by the Fulbright Information Technology (IT) team. The Student Records Privacy Policy was developed by the Registrar's Office. It clarifies the principles of student information processing, from collecting to handling it by authorized persons. A new version of this policy has been updated in collaboration with the IT and Legal team to ensure the policy's alignment with the internal guidelines and the Vietnamese Law on Privacy and Data Protection and is currently being reviewed.

The university utilizes the Student Information System developed on Salesforce to manage all the student records during their study time, from admission to graduation. The Registrar's Office is responsible for managing this part of the system and ensuring accurate student enrollment information every term. The IT team addresses any technical issues as well as system maintenance. Students can access the One Stop portal and register for the interested courses via "My Studies."

Fulbright has seen key changes in student career services through the establishment of the [Career Development](#) team. Career Services only serves undergraduates. In the next year or so, we are looking into how to support master students at FSPPM on their career and professional growth. Initially, this team just managed undergraduate internships as a part of the Experiential Learning Program (ELP) and looked for industry partnerships to offer career opportunities to undergraduates. Currently, the Career Development team also supervises the overall work study program (previously known as the Signature Internship Program or SIP). Career Services offers services for career advising, [career day](#), [career talks](#), and workshops to meet students' needs and prepare them with essential skills and capabilities before graduation.

We also have a carefully planned need-based financial aid scheme. Financial aid is distributed through a well-organized program and is reserved for applicants with Vietnamese citizenship only.

The financial aid package ranges from 10% to 100%. The financial aid policy is carefully laid out on the [website](#). Currently, applicants have the choice to either submit a Financial Aid Opt-Out Form (if their family doesn't need financial aid) or a Financial Aid Application. There are application [guides](#) for both cases (in both .pdf and video formats) available on the website. If the applicants apply for financial aid and are advanced further in the admissions process, their parents/guardians are contacted by the Financial Aid Officers to have an in-depth financial aid interview carried out in-person at their household (in most of the cases, no matter where they live in Vietnam) or online via Zoom (if they live in a remote/inaccessible region). This interview, which usually lasts at least an hour, serves to verify the information that they have shared in the financial application and to follow up on financial details not yet shared/not shareable in the online application. Besides need-based financial aid, the University also awards merit-based scholarships. The criteria are clearly published on the [website](#).

Since the first cohort of undergraduates was admitted in 2019, Fulbright has not only focused on knowledge inside the classroom but also outside. Experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic, our students faced new challenges and new opportunities that demanded our responses to and support for their evolving needs. Among the resources for education outside the classroom are supporting teams and initiatives dealing with first-year orientation, [student clubs](#) and [Student Council](#), leadership camp, the ASEAN Social Impact Program ([ASIP](#)) and Career Services. These experiences reflect a liberal arts education in achieving not just knowledge but also competencies beyond the classroom.

The Fulbright [Student Council](#) was first established in 2021. By now, we have had three generations of Student Council elected by the student body. The students run the marketing campaign for the application and election every year. The selected candidates will present in front of the student body to share their vision and commitment. The Student Council organization is well organized and supervised by the Student Affairs & Engagement Manager to minimize any gap between student needs and university operations. The Student Council supports student club activities following guidance from Student Engagement. With 24 official [clubs](#) and more than 500+ students who are part of a student club, undergraduates enjoy the dynamic and various co- and extra-curricular experiences at Fulbright. All clubs and organizations must follow the [Student Clubs Policy](#), published on [One Stop](#). The purpose of this policy is to assist the clubs in establishing and effectively leading successful activities, as well as ensuring a safe and transparent environment for all Fulbright members. All clubs' activities and budgets are reported to and supervised by Student Engagement.

Fulbright offers an off-site camp for students named Fulbright [Leadership Camp](#). This is an innovative and unique project-based leadership training aiming for highly motivated, intellectually curious Fulbright students who are interested in social issues and in creating positive change. In the Spring of 2023, Student Engagement hosted the second Leadership Camp for more than 50 Fulbright student leaders who were either student club leaders or students with strong leadership potential.

In addition to taking physical education courses, students can also participate in athletic training and games organized by student sports clubs and by Student Engagement. Sports clubs offer weekly training with coaches for all their members and frequently compete with teams from other universities. Student Engagement organizes Sports Week, a week-long co-educational tournament between sports clubs of Fulbright and other universities, and Try-out Series, where students with little prior sports experience can try certain sports such as archery and mountain climbing for the first time.

## **II. Appraisal**

The registration system has been improved since Fall 2023 to assist students as they select courses. The Course Audit Tool has been reviewed with the IT team and updated to reflect the changes in the curriculum and in Major and Minor requirements and should be ready for students and advisors in the Spring registration period. However, the development and customization of the SIS in-house to manage student records and their academic progress is still not complete. The system has been improved with the registration platform, transfer course management, and student records dashboard based on the close discussion and engagement between the Registrar's Office and the IT team. The Course Audit Tool has been developed and run by the Registrar's Office, but we are still working on full functionality that will let students access and track their academic progress.

## **C. Projection**

Admissions and recruitment is for obvious reasons a major focus at present, perhaps the major focus aside from building the new D9 campus. Our goals for this year call for an increase in completed applications (from 706 to 800), applications accepted from 494 to 550, and admitted students from 157 to 170, and these goals are more modest and therefore more attainable than some of the aspirational but unrealistic goals of the past several years. As important as enrollment growth and tuition income is, the current D7 campus is close to capacity, so the real potential for growth lies in the move to the D9 campus.

Phase 1A of the campus buildout allows for an enrollment of 1500 students, assuming the residential requirement is retained. Waiving the residential requirement for students from HCMC would allow a further increase to around 2000, although we could also get to that number by building the additional student residences envisioned for Phase 1B. Perhaps as important as this numbers, we believe that the move to the D9 campus will produce both considerable 'buzz' and will go a long way to realize our ambition of being the first truly residential university in Vietnam with all of the opportunities for co-curricular learning and student enrichment offered by such a campus.

In our judgment, the policies and practices of SAS as detailed above show a strong record of accomplishment and institution-building in SAS. However, we do recognize that a number of areas

need work. Although Fulbright shares a commitment to diversity by respecting the dignity of the individual and fostering mutual understanding in the community, the university has not developed formal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goals that might guide the staff, faculty, and students. A working group examining diversity, equity and inclusion is part of the strategic planning exercise that is currently underway; work that comes out of this can contribute to a formal DEI plan. One challenge is simply that the terms in which DEI is discussed—indeed the term itself—is born out of a very specific American context. The Vietnamese context of Fulbright is quite different. However, the admissions policies and practices discussed in this chapter reflect diversity and inclusion practices around socio-economic background, regional origin, and minority status that give us a foundation for the campus-wide discussion now getting underway.

Since starting from the Class of 2025, students in their Junior and Senior years will normally not be eligible for housing as housing will be prioritized for students in their first two years, the Residential Life Policies and Rules should be revised to reflect this change. The revision of the Residential Life Policies and Rules should be completed by no later than the summer of 2024.

Appropriate privacy guidelines for general information is still a work in progress. Additional training sessions about data processing aligned with the safety and security guidelines along the lines of those during Orientation Week in August 2023 are needed in order to raise the awareness of faculty and staff as well as students of their rights and responsibilities for protecting student records. In order to align the Student Records Privacy Policy with the latest data protection guidelines issued by the IT team, the Registrar's Office, IT, and the Legal office have all reviewed a new version of this policy, now under review by the Executive Committee. We expect this new policy to be in place and widely shared across the campus by the beginning of the Fall 2024 term.



## CHAPTER 6

### STANDARD 6: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SCHOLARSHIP

#### A. Faculty and Academic Staff

##### I. Description

As a new institution with a compelling mission in a fascinating part of the world, Fulbright has been able to assemble a high-quality faculty with a strong commitment to the campus mission in less than five years. The foundation of the institution's teaching and learning is the faculty and academic staff. The regular full-time faculty have increased dramatically in recent years, from 22 in FY2020-2021 to 55 in FY2023-2024, with a corresponding reduction in part-time and visiting faculty from 29 to just 6 this year. Faculty ranks were introduced for the first time in FY2023-2024, and the 'juniority' of the faculty is shown by there being 33 assistant professors, 18 associate professors and just 4 professors. In addition, there are 2 learning support specialists, 2 lab technicians, and 1 librarian, all of whom are considered non-instructional faculty but are listed as academic staff in the Data First Forms.

Fulbright has an exceptionally well qualified and truly exciting group of young faculties committed to and moved by Fulbright's mission. They are fairly evenly divided between Vietnamese who have returned home after education abroad and non-Vietnamese faculty—mostly from United States and other English-speaking countries. The institutions from which they have received their doctorates is an impressive list, including many of the very best institutions both in the US and around the world. The faculty are well-qualified with teaching experience and advanced degrees and experience in their fields, and they have a high level of engagement and interaction with students. Almost all (95%) of the full-time faculty and visiting faculty have Ph.D. degrees. The Deans have doctorates and have more than a decade of expertise in their respective disciplines. Additionally, student support services are delivered by well-qualified staff with both formal education and relevant experience in Student Affairs and Services, Academic Affairs, and the Center of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Departmental managers, learning specialists, counselors, and Career Services professional staff have a master's or an equivalent professional degree. Support staff are skilled and committed to serving students, and they play a significant role in student success.

The institution requires full-time, visiting, and adjunct faculty to have at least a doctorate degree in their disciplines, except for faculty who teach practical courses (art studio, filmmaking courses, etc.) in Art and Media Studies, where the minimum requirement for education is a master's degree. Under the terms of faculty titles and rank ([The Faculty Handbook](#), page 14), faculty contracts fall into three categories: full-time, visiting, and adjunct. All faculty are appropriately integrated into faculty governance, have appropriate opportunities for professional development, and serve on Undergraduate Committees as appointed by the Associate Dean of Faculty in consultation with the

Dean of Undergraduate Studies. The composition of the faculty reflects the institution's mission, programs, and student body.

The quality of the faculty is very high, and we have been able to hire new faculty successfully, adding large numbers of faculty the past two years. One exception to this that should be noted is the library. There is just one permanent librarian on staff at present, and one librarian is clearly insufficient to adequately staff the library (although we have an additional position in the library currently supported on grant funds). A search for a second permanent librarian position was unsuccessful last year, but it has been re-authorized and is in the hiring plan for 2023-2024. It should be noted that a substantially expanded footprint for the Library is in the D9 campus plan, and garnering the needed resources to build the Library will need to be a high priority over the near and medium term.

[The Benefits Policy](#) that describes the benefits packages for faculty and professional staff was approved in 2022, and the salary and benefit packages are competitive in the Vietnam/HCMC labor market. HR will continue to benchmark our benefits and salary range with the help of the Remuneration Report prepared by Mercer in 2021 to make sure that our packages remain attractive enough to acquire and retain talents.

The hiring cycle commences in the fall semester and is completed the following spring semester. At the beginning of every academic year, the Major Coordinators review and propose their plan for recruitment in the upcoming year aligned with the whole institution's mission and vision. Academic Affairs then makes a full-time faculty hiring proposal based on the student enrollment numbers, the need for full-time faculty by disciplines, and the number of course offerings. After review by the Finance department, the plan is reviewed by the Executive Management for final approval by the COO and President.

[The Faculty Hiring Process policy](#) was rolled out in 2023 as the key document describing the faculty hiring process. This contains detailed instructions, and communicates expectations for administrators, hiring committees, full-time faculty, and the candidates, including the essential qualifications for the position. All candidates for a full-time faculty position are expected to have published in internationally recognized outlets in their area of expertise with the intention of ongoing quality research output.

Once a search is approved, the hiring process involves the Provost, deans, hiring committees from each major, Academic Affairs staff, and HR talent acquisition staff. The HR staff review and publicize the minimum and preferred qualifications for every approved search. Faculty have a substantive voice in hiring. The hiring committee includes a majority of full-time faculty (led by a Major Coordinator), although it may also include staff. The search committee reviews applications, interviews candidates and recommends finalists to the deans. The selected candidate undergoes a background check, including education verification, as well as a professional reference check

conducted by HR, and will then go through contractual negotiations with HR. Academic salaries and benefits are competitive to attract qualified candidates. The institution also has a very rigorous recruitment and selection policy for Professional and Administrative roles described in [the Recruitment and Selection Policy for Professional Staff](#). Hiring in this area strictly follows the approved headcount budget by Executive Management.

Although the institution does not yet have a formal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy, our hiring procedure for both faculty, academic, and professional staff are explicitly committed to the overall goal of diversity as can be seen in the [Statement of Diversity](#) which is on our public website.

[All job descriptions](#) also contain the following statement: Fulbright is an Equal Opportunity Employer and committed to fostering a campus community that recognizes the value of all persons regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender expression and identity, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background. Both hiring policies state that according to the principle of equal opportunity all candidates will be recruited and selected on merit, regardless of their identities, life experiences, genders, and beliefs. Moreover, Fulbright promotes a diversity of perspectives by forming an interview panel with at least three members, encouraging that the interview panel be constituted by those with different backgrounds, genders, and departments. Students and staff who participate in candidates' presentations are also encouraged to convey feedback and comments in the evaluation form.

In the undergraduate [Faculty Handbook](#) approved last year, the institution has articulated (on page 27) the expectations for the teaching, service, and research by the faculty by rank that are consistent with the mission and purposes of the institution. The scholarly expectations for faculty are defined under the terms of Teaching, research, and Faculty Governance ([undergraduate Faculty Handbook, page 7](#)), Appendix I: Academic Performance Framework for Contract Renewal and Promotion (undergraduate Faculty Handbook, page 27) and the Academic ranking and salary ranges policy. Faculty academic performance is specified based on three ranks: Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor. The institution implemented the Academic Ranking Policy in Spring 2023, which set standard salaries and benefits for the faculty. Furthermore, the policy also outlined how faculty can earn promotions based on their annual performance evaluation.

Full-time faculty are encouraged to engage in academic research and professional development. Beginning with AY 2022-2023, we have collected evidence of scholarship among full-time faculty members by the year's end. Fulbright recently announced and is implementing a [Performance Management Policy](#), which addresses and governs the faculty's teaching workload, research and service responsibilities. For the performance management system, Fulbright uses BIPO (a cloud-based management system for Human Resources), where all faculty and professional staff set their individual and developmental goals at the beginning of the academic year. Faculty discuss

progress towards the achievement of those goals with their Dean during their annual performance review.

The institution requires the faculty to complete the Academic Performance Review (annually) and the Institutional Performance Review (in the third year of every four-year contract), and both are described in the [Faculty Handbook](#) (p. 15). Faculty members complete an annual faculty development form outlining their research, teaching, and service accomplishments at the end of the academic year and submit it, along with an updated CV and any necessary documents, to the Provost and the Dean who also review the faculty member's student course evaluations. Faculty evaluations are based on three performance areas: developing the students (teaching, advising), external impact (research, grants, external partnerships) and developing the institution (service). This process allows the faculty member, the Dean, and the Provost to review and reflect on the faculty responsibilities and determine whether the faculty member effectively carries out their assigned duties. The Dean also assigns a performance rating and may meet with the faculty member if the self-rating assigned by the faculty member and the performance rating assigned by the Dean differ. The Dean uses the annual performance review to make recommendations to the Provost related to salary raise recommendation and contract renewal. The Provost has the final say in the performance rating. This process is currently being reviewed after its first implementation and will be revised in consultation with the Faculty Governance Committee and Academic Leadership.

The institution has a formal [Internal Labor Regulation for staff](#), which sets out the procedure for resolving grievances for all employees and is approved by the local government. However, as a result of the new local Labor Law coming into effect in 2021, we have had to revise our Internal Labor Regulations as well as supplement the Democracy Regulation; these have just been approved by the relevant local authorities, and we will roll out the revised version out this semester.

An important value for Fulbright is to encourage continuous learning and development. In keeping with this, there is a [Professional Development Fund Policy for Faculty](#). Academic and professional staff have funds allocated each fiscal year to regularly take advantage of professional development opportunities. Each year, most full-time faculty and professional staff apply for PD funds, mostly spending on conference participation, course registration, research expenses, and membership fees. Professional staff are also encouraged to seek professional development opportunities (described in the [Training and Development Policy](#)). The Human Resources department allocates funds for training expenses to ensure staff grow, and develop, and learn best practices for their work.

The undergraduate [Faculty Handbook](#) includes relevant policies concerning the faculty such as Conflict of Interest. Fulbright also has a [Code of Ethical Conduct](#) which sets out principles for faculty

to act responsibly and ethically, a [Code of Academic Integrity](#) (updated in 2022), and a [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) with a formal procedure for complaints and resolving grievances.

A very important policy contained in the [Faculty Handbook](#) concerns academic freedom (page 17). The institution honors and respects the academic freedom of its faculty as is articulated in this policy. Specifically, the pursuit of truth requires an assurance of the freedom of inquiry without fear of reprisal from within the University, and to the extent the University can reasonably be expected to act, from without as well. For these reasons, Fulbright adheres to the following portions quoted from the 1940 Statement of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) regarding academic freedom. The principles of academic freedom are fundamental to Fulbright's entire community and institutional culture. Fulbright's policy is derived from of these precepts:

- Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.
- Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matters which have no relation to their subject.
- University teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should always be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution. (AAUP 1995, pp 3-4) (6.12)

To protect academic freedom, Fulbright will strive to eliminate adverse consequences resulting from controversy or conflict arising out of the reasonable academic pursuit of truth or the free expression of the results of inquiry. Additionally, academic freedom requires a heightened commitment to internal accountability. As is stated in the undergraduate Faculty Handbook, "Fulbright faculty members should at all times conduct their research in accordance with the values, professional standards, and applicable policies of the University. Fulbright affirms the broad discretion of scholars to choose the topics of their research, to formulate hypotheses and present conclusions, to express views about the implications of their research, and in general to enjoy the protections of academic freedom. Freedom of inquiry and expression for individual scholars is a core value of the University. At the same time, Fulbright faculty members are expected to conduct their research in a manner befitting a member of the Fulbright community. Faculty are responsible for adhering to University policies on such aspects of research conduct as conflicts of interest and commitment,

disclosure of data and findings, classified and proprietary work, and the participation of human subjects in research.”

## **II. Appraisal**

With an excellent but young faculty in place professional development of the faculty becomes an important emphasis. A mechanism to reward high achievements in research and scholarly work is lacking, as is a system to keep track of and support faculty research, a publication database, support for finding and applying for grants, and grant management. In short, research management needs to be institutionalized in Academic Affairs.

As shouldn't be a surprise in such a young and rapidly evolving institution, documents describing personnel policies and practices have been rapidly evolving and new ones being issued. The [FSPPM Faculty Handbook](#) precedes the one for the undergraduate faculty, but the [undergraduate Faculty Handbook](#) contains some campus-wide policies which also pertain to FSPPM faculty. In addition, the new [Performance Management Policy](#) was adopted after the adoption of both handbooks. As was discussed in Chapter 3, there are therefore certain to be inconsistencies among all of these documents that need to be ironed out.

### **B. Teaching and Learning**

#### **I. Description**

The institution's official site, "Student-Centered Approach to Teaching and Learning" ([Why Choose Fulbright - Fulbright University Vietnam](#)) articulates the institution's profound commitment to teaching and learning. The institution admits students from provinces all across Vietnam through programs that foster students' capabilities and needs. The Deans, the Curriculum Committee, and Major coordinators lead and develop the academic program. Proposed courses are scrutinized and approved before being posted on the course registration system. The entire full-time faculty meets monthly to discuss and address any issues that arise and share their understanding of student learning successes and challenges.

From the early days, Fulbright faculty have been engaged in various discussions on “how we teach.” Based on significant research, experience, and reflection concerning student learning and education, the Fulbright undergraduate program has been developed and executed in line with the following principles:

- **Active Learning:** People learn best when they make first-hand observations, experiment with new ideas and practices, conduct their own evaluations, and articulate their own views. In particular, students should do the majority of observing, thinking and discussing in their classes and studies.

- Student Empowerment: Learning should be guided by questions that students own themselves.
- Rigor and Integration: The tradition of the liberal arts, sciences, and engineering build the habits of mind and open important discourses that students need to be deep, life-long learners.
- Transdisciplinary: The learning process should not only be supported by, but transcend, traditional disciplinary boundaries.
- Mindful Community: The learning process is significantly enhanced in an empowering and reflective community of faculty, staff and students.
- Whole Person: Meaningful learning, of both students and faculty, means the development of whole people, expanding wisdom along with knowledge and skills.

There is a [set of overall learning outcomes](#) for the undergraduate program, and these have been described in Chapter 4. [Each major](#) in the Undergraduate program has a set of learning outcomes, both at the major level and course level, that reflect and are consonant with the overall goals, and the instructional methods of each course are designed to facilitate the achievement of these academic goals. In keeping with the liberal arts tradition, instructional methods and modes of delivery necessarily vary across disciplines and are designed to serve the different learning needs of students in different academic contexts. For example, most of the Engineering courses are offered with a hands-on instructional method in the Makerspace, while for the humanities and social sciences, methods of lecturing, student discussions, and seminar roundtables are essential.

Learning Support staff are extremely involved in student academic skills development from the six week [Bridge program](#) in the summer which prepares students with less English fluency and background for college level language to one on one consultations. They also supervise the peer tutors and mentors.

Students are strongly encouraged to work with faculty as research assistants through [the Work Study Program](#). The Undergraduate Program allows students to work up to 10 hours/week to support faculty research through the Work Study Program. Students can also apply for the [Student Research Fund](#) to support their independent research, including support for their Capstone project.

Academic advising at Fulbright is provided all through the four years of the undergraduate curriculum. As they first enter the university, each first-year student is randomly assigned to a faculty as first-year advisor. The first-year advisors help students through their first two years to help them onboarding with the new academic culture and pathway, choosing courses and guiding them through the choice of a major. Students are also able to change advisors if they wish to do so. As the conversations deepen into different major areas, students will be asked to indicate preferences for a major advisor, who will be assigned after they declare their major at the end of their sophomore year.

Finally, students who choose to do a Capstone project are also assigned to a Capstone advisor based on their preference and availability of faculty. The Capstone advisor works closely with students through the senior year to provide guidance and assessment of the capstone projects.

## **II. Appraisal**

A concern is that over time, as we moved away from a one-faculty team into a department-like structure, where faculty now work in 11 different teams (the majors), the discussions on the content and methods of instruction have also moved to a more discipline-specific setting. After the development of the majors in 2021, there has been less and less university-wide discussion of issues about teaching and learning. In addition, we need the major-specific discussions that have taken place to shift from creating the curriculum to monitoring the quality of our delivery of that curriculum.

We are also looking to create a system to review and assess the quality of advising. In recent student surveys, statements about a lack of guidance and understanding of the academic trajectory indicate some weakness in advising resources and attention. [A new set of advising guidelines](#) was disseminated to faculty before Orientation in 2023, and additional advising opportunities, including an “advising day” to be held in early January, have been instituted this year. The advising load needs to be balanced between high demand areas (Economics, Psychology, Arts and Media Studies, Computer Science) and the low demand ones (Vietnam Studies, Literature, History). Fields with high student-faculty ratios are finding it challenging to provide high-quality advising. In addition, assessing the quality of advising needs to be incorporated into the review of the faculty member’s workload by the relevant deans.

Writing skills are currently introduced in the Core Curriculum, largely in the first semester Global Humanities course, for which Learning Support has coordinated assignment specific programming to support the scaffolded writing trajectory. All incoming first-year students need a great deal of academic support, but Vietnamese native speakers entering an English language college level liberal arts curriculum may find themselves stretched beyond typical American native English speakers who might enter with a broad background in the American system.

## **C. Projection**

As should occasion no surprise given the young age of Fulbright, there is additional policy work that is needed in the near future. A formal policy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for faculty and staff that responds to the specific circumstances of Vietnam is badly needed. We also need to draft a policy concerning visiting/adjunct faculty and graduate student employees during 2023-2024, turning to current procedure for graduate assistant and visiting/adjunct faculty recruitment that involves collaboration among full-time faculty, Deans, and HR into a formal process, along with policy which would describe their responsibilities, working conditions, and compensation. A task that we can turn



to now that our new [Labor Regulations](#) have been approved is a careful examination of this welter of partially overlapping policies to identify gaps and inconsistencies. Of particular importance is the creation of a single Fulbright-wide Faculty and Staff Handbook, with separate sections for faculty and staff as well as for FSPPM and for the undergraduate program as appropriate. We also need to make sure that this Handbook is consistent with the other relevant policies mentioned in this section.

The various assessment activities and reviews discussed earlier should lead to a continuing and systematic review of teaching and learning methods. The current work on the strategic plan should help develop the plan to address this issue systematically and over the long run. The growth of the university and the move to the new campus will also help sustain that conversation: instructional techniques and delivery systems need to be prepared to adapt with the new technology and also to make the most use of our expanded campus in D9. For example, the availability of large lecture halls, theaters, science labs, makerspace and art studios will provide us with a significantly diverse set of teaching methods and delivery that are not available right now. The space dedicated to STEM fields in D9 will be expanded to 5-10 times what we have right now, and the location of D9 campus right in the heart of Saigon High-tech Park R&D center will enable us to interact much more actively with tech firms and other science partners in the neighborhood. Last but not least, the use of remote classroom and hybrid teaching delivery, which have all been embedded in the design of the D9 campus, will also open up a lot more opportunities for new ways of teaching and learning in the next decades.

We are looking for creative ways to provide resources to support teaching improvement at Fulbright among our young faculty cohort. There is a significant need for more learning support resources beyond the extant Learning Support Team (currently three staff + one incoming writing specialist), an issue that should be addressed in the strategic plan. Peer to peer activities are one part of the answer, and a Teaching Buddy Program was piloted in AY 2023-24. In this program, faculty observe each other, discuss the classes that have been observed, and reflect on best practices in teaching. A Center for Teaching and Learning that could house a dedicated Writing Center and integrate Learning Support's broader academic skills training will enhance student learning immeasurably; we hope to have one up and running for the 2024-25 academic year. In the meantime, Undergraduate academic leadership will try to offer more pedagogical discussions in new faculty orientations, guest talks and workshops. Classroom observations should be incorporated into the evaluation that leads to an overall performance review, as well as encouraged for the purpose of self-improvement.

HR is also proposing to move forward with an internal Learning Management System for staff. This will manage the learning process of staff and faculty, tracking which courses have been taken, and suggesting appropriately tailored courses for each employee to take.

A focused review of the content and methods of instructions should take place in the next year or two at both the program and major level. A review of "how we teach" principles should also take place, as

the program has moved away from the original intention and design to a more traditional structure of majors. As we move to the new campus in District 9, with a significant increase in enrollment, the availability of classrooms, lecture halls, science labs and studios, and the advancement of education technology post-covid (such as zoom and other online/hybrid platforms), the questions of “how we teach” in this new context needs a thorough review.

## CHAPTER 7

### STANDARD SEVEN: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

#### A. Human Resources

##### I. Description (Human Resources)

At present, in addition to the faculty discussed in Chapter 6, Fulbright employs 133 full-time staff, 35% of whom are male and 65% female. The Operations division – housing Human Resources, Finance & Accounting, Campus Operations & Development, Information Technology, Legal & Compliance, and Student Affairs & Services – employs a total of 68 individuals. The Academic Division encompasses 36 non-faculty employees. The anticipated Innovation and Business Development Division, combining Admissions & Financial Aid, Marketing & Communications, Development and Strategic Initiatives, Center for Entrepreneurship, and Innovation, and the YSEALI Academy, collectively employs 40 individuals.

We ensure that we have sufficient personnel for the different units of the university through the budget process. The deans and heads of department propose an annual hiring plan which HR reviews for executive management. After considering the plans and the budget picture for the next year, executive management will approve and return the budget headcount and hiring plan to deans and department heads to execute. Furthermore, Fulbright developed and in FY2023 deployed a [Performance Management](#) policy and a new system to follow up and evaluate its personnel annually – which is applied to both faculty and professional staff. This provides an opportunity for employees to review their performance as well as to establish goals and professional development plans in their areas of expertise.

Fulbright has developed clear and precise [job descriptions](#) for all its personnel. In all our job descriptions, we include the statement that Fulbright is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The statement on diversity on our [website](#) has already been quoted, and our [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) for Professional Staff and [Faculty Hiring Process](#) Policy also states that all candidates will be recruited and selected on merit, regardless of their identities, life experiences, genders, and beliefs.

The Human Resources department has a full set of relevant [policies](#), many of which are mentioned elsewhere in this Self Study. All policies are available on the institution's public share drive for all employees. The institution ensures that HR policies are reviewed and updated on an annual basis or as and when the local laws change.

## **II. Appraisal (Human Resources)**

We are proud of the work accomplished during the last few years in creating policies appropriate for our context and dynamic growth. The challenge moving forward is to make sure that all employees understand our policies and are fully compliant with them, a significant challenge in an institution with a growing and changing workforce. Communication is the key here, so we need to turn from policy development to policy explanation and the development of 'buy-in'.

### **B. Financial Resources**

#### **I. Description (Financial Resources)**

Our finance team is strong. Fulbright's Finance Department is presently under the leadership of a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who possesses an extensive background of over 20 years in auditing, accounting, and finance. The CFO reports directly to the COO and works closely with the President.

The department is further reinforced by a team of 14 highly skilled finance professionals who bring a broad spectrum of experience to the table, ensuring the responsible management of the university's financial resources. Among this qualified team are two ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) members and a CPA holder, as well as two individuals holding Master's degrees. This collective proficiency provides a strong foundation for effective financial management of the university.

Internally, Fulbright maintains rigorous control mechanisms for all financial transactions, including budgeting, procurement, and the payment process. The University's budget and accounting functions are designed to uphold the integrity of its finances through responsible financial management, a systematic budget process, robust internal controls, and timely financial reporting. These mechanisms are also periodically reviewed by the Finance Department for potential enhancements and risk management purposes. These procedures have consistently facilitated prudent financial decision-making, leading to a stable financial standing for the university over the years.

Some of Fulbright's internal safeguards to ensure judicious management of its finances, budget process, and timely financial reporting include:

- Internal financial policies and procedures, such as the Fulbright [Financial policy](#), [Cost Norm Policy](#), [Fixed Asset Policy](#), [Cash Advance Policy](#), [Travel Policy](#), [Payment Policy](#), and [Contract Review Policy](#), among others. These policies serve to maintain the integrity of the accounting information and aid in fraud prevention.

- Regular monitoring of budget activity throughout the fiscal year. Budget transfers typically require the CFO's approval, except for transfers of \$20,000 or more, which need the approval of both the COO and the President.
- The annual budget is updated quarterly to provide a rolling forecast for the fiscal year, reflecting changes to operating results and any circumstances that may impact the university's operations. Actual results are tracked monthly and shared with senior leadership and the Finance Committee. The Board receives updates on actual results and forecast revisions at quarterly meetings.
- The Finance Department generates monthly financial reports, bank reconciliations, cash projections, and quarterly income statement projections. This information helps senior management review university operations and forms a solid basis for informed financial decision-making.
- **Systems** are employed to enforce separation of duties and automate processes, ensuring that no steps or authorizations are bypassed (for example, the Payment Request System and the Travel Request System).

All Fulbright's fiscal **policies and procedures** are clearly stated in writing and shared with other departments. They are also reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that they are in compliance with ethical and sound financial practices. Below is our list of policies that have been developed:

Name	Effective Date
Fulbright Financial Policies & Procedure Manual	Nov 2018
Credit Card Policy & Procedure	Jan 2018
Fixed Asset Policy & Procedure	Mar 2018
Cost norm policy	Jan 2022
Cash advance policy	Apr 2022
Procurement policy	Jul 2022
Travel Policy	Aug 2022
Payment Policy	Nov 2022
Contract review policy	Dec 2022
Memorandum of Understanding Policy	Mar 2023

These policies cover all relevant areas, including budgeting, insurance, risk management, internal transfers and borrowing, and institutional advancement and development activities. These policies were created with input from experienced financial professionals, legal advisors, and relevant stakeholders of the University. They include principles of transparency, accountability, integrity, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, and they emphasize the importance of avoiding conflicts of interest and ensuring fair and equitable financial practices.

Moreover, Fulbright has mechanisms in place to respond to financial emergencies and unforeseen circumstances, which, thankfully, we have not yet had to draw on. We maintain a reserve fund (contingency fund) which is about \$0.5M to \$1M as part of our annual budget to ensure we can handle unexpected expenses and financial emergencies. This fund acts as a buffer, providing financial stability and helping to protect our mission from unforeseen financial challenges.

The Finance Department has clear policies and procedures for budgeting and mechanisms to control actual spending on activities to ensure alignment with budget. Any unbudgeted expenses and expenses exceeding the budget allotment requires approval from a higher level: the CFO can approve anything up to \$20k, but anything above that requires the approval of the COO. The Finance Department also performs a quarterly risk assessment to identify and mitigate financial risks. This includes assessing potential threats, such as economic downturns or natural disasters, and developing contingency plans to address unforeseen circumstances.

The Finance Department also prepares and presents financial reports on a quarterly basis to key stakeholders, including Executive Management, the Finance Committee of the Board, and a large number of regulatory authorities (including MOET, Saigon High-Tech Park and the HCMC City Department of Investment and Planning, Tax Department, and Statistics Department). Transparent and accurate financial reporting—described more fully in Chapter 9—promotes accountability and helps build trust with stakeholders.

The Board has full autonomy in all budget and finance matters and has direct oversight over the university's budget. As outlined in Fulbright's [Bylaws](#) and [Charter](#) (and as discussed in Chapter 2), the Board of Directors is vested with several responsibilities and authorities, which include:

- Approving the annual budget, tuition, required fees, housing and board charges, and merit scholarship budget; regularly monitoring the University's financial condition; establishing policy guidelines affecting all institutional assets, including investments and the physical plant; and approving, reviewing and monitoring strategic and business plans.
- Annually selecting the auditors of the University's financial operations.
- Authorizing any debt financing and approving the securitization of loans.
- Deciding on the salaries and other benefits of all personnel including, but not limited to, the Key Officials (the General Director, Controller, Authorized Representative, and such other Officials of the Company as FUV USA shall determine).

The Board has the primary responsibility for the ethical oversight of the institution. In the Board's [Bylaws](#), Article 3 is "Monitor the University's ethical, regulatory, risk and other management and compliance issues", and Article 10 on [Conflict of Interest](#) indicates the Board's ethical responsibilities. There should be an annual declaration of the Board about the institution's ethical oversight not just of financial resources but also across the institution.

The two key reports to the Board each year are the proposed budget for the next year, approved at the June board meeting, and a revision of the budget in accordance with actuals prepared close to the end of the fiscal year and then re-approved by the Board. Additionally, financial reports are presented to the Board for review on a quarterly basis. We have instituted both internal and external mechanisms to thoroughly assess our financial condition, working capital, capital projects, cash flow requirements, and overall financial management. Internally, our Finance Department regularly conducts comprehensive financial analyses and audits, ensuring rigorous budgetary control and prudent financial decision-making.

Moreover, these evaluations are not solely for compliance purposes; we actively utilize the results to continuously improve our financial management practices and sustain institutional integrity. For instance, in November 2020, we underwent a preliminary survey for grant awarding conducted by USAID. Following the survey, we received recommendations from USAID to enhance our internal control and financial management mechanisms. We have taken these recommendations seriously, and to date, we have satisfactorily addressed each point of guidance, demonstrating our commitment to constant enhancement of our financial operations.

Externally, we engage professional auditors annually to provide an impartial review of our financial operations. Additionally, we undergo regular reviews and audits for grants we receive. All audit results and findings are presented to management and the Board, and promptly addressed. The audit process is slightly different for FUVVC (in Vietnam) and for FUV USA (in the US), given the different regulations in place in each country.

One aspect of the financial reporting structure which is relatively unusual is that, as has been described above and in Chapter 3, Fulbright has two related but distinct entities, FUVVC (in Vietnam) and FUV USA, the 'Sole Member' or owner of FUVVC. FUVVC in Vietnam and FUV USA are separately audited each year. The policy of the FUVVC is to change auditors every three years, and the choice of the auditor is approved by the Board. KMPG conducted the audits for FUVVC from FY2018 to FY2020, and Ernst & Young did the FY2021 and FY2022 audit.

FUVVC's financial statements are initially prepared in accordance with Vietnam Accounting Standards, before being converted to adhere to the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and US Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (US-GAAP). These statements are audited annually by external auditors, and subsequently reviewed by the university's leadership, the Finance Committee, and the Board. For the past three years (data for which are available in the Data First tables), the University has consistently received unqualified opinions, denoting "clean" audits. Additionally, the University is subject to periodic reviews and audits for grants received from USAID and the Department of State.

Per the stipulations of FUV's [Bylaws](#), the Board of Directors holds the authority to appoint auditors for the university's financial operations. They also have the discretion to establish relevant audit conduct policies, including the assignment of responsibility for the same to specific university personnel or members of the Board of Directors.

External auditors perform annual audits of financial statements and propose procedural enhancements via a management letter. Both the audited statements and the management letter are reviewed by the Finance Committee, which reports any issues or exceptions in the management letter to the Board. No such issues have been reported, which is why Appendix 3 does not contain any Auditor's Management Letter.

The university's budget process currently involves all relevant stakeholders from the very beginning. Typically, the budget process for the next fiscal year commences in the early Spring semester. A meeting is held between the President, Deans, and department heads to discuss budget priorities in relation to the strategic plan and the annual budget goals. Each department head reviews the previous year's expenditures, assessing current requirements and anticipating future departmental needs in alignment with the University's overall strategy and goals set by the Board, and then proceeds to develop a departmental budget in alignment with the overall strategy and objectives. Following numerous levels of scrutiny, these budget requests are then synchronized with divisional priorities and forwarded to the Finance Department for consolidation and preliminary review. The COO, Provost and President subsequently review, evaluate, and prioritize these divisional requests. These prioritized requests are then funded in order of ranking, subject to the availability of resources, and the budget for the next fiscal year is approved at the June Board meeting.

## **II. Appraisal and Projections (Financial Resources)**

Note: Drawing a line between 'appraisal' and 'projection' – the structure used in other sections – is perhaps more challenging in this area than in any other. As the ensuing discussion shows, we are in the middle of an intense analysis that looks forwards as well as backwards. In the interest of telling a coherent story, we combine the appraisal and projections sections here.

### *Revenue growth and financial sustainability in a dynamic start-up*

Now that we have discussed the budget process used at Fulbright, we need to turn to the results of that process. The financial resources available to Fulbright in its start-up phase have clearly been "sufficient to support its mission."

As an institution of higher education, Fulbright prioritizes the pursuit of excellent educational outcomes. This commitment is integral to our budgetary focus and influences all aspects of our resource allocation and financial decision making and is evident in the pattern of outlays over time. The proportion of our overall operating expenses devoted to the directly mission-supporting



activities (instruction, research, academic support and student services) as opposed to indirectly mission-supporting activities (mainly institutional support – meaning primarily staff salaries – and facilities) increased in a linear fashion each year from FY2021, from 44% to a projected 56% in FY2024 (cf. Data First table 7.3). The university's approach to multi-year financial planning concentrates on preserving its high standard of education for students while simultaneously steering the institution towards financial sustainability. The CFO is in the process of constructing, and the Board of Trustees reviewing, a long-term forecasting model, which is designed to adapt to various factors that may significantly impact the university's financial future such as enrollment, other revenue sources, and operating expenses. This tool helps us prepare for and manage unexpected changes, accounting for potential fluctuations in revenue and expenses and therefore providing us with a roadmap for financial sustainability in the face of change and uncertainty. The model outlines revenue sources and lays out a comprehensive roadmap for the university to attain financial stability, and it also pinpoints key benchmarks that must be reached to achieve financial sustainability.

This financial model is intended to equip the CFO with the necessary insights to advise the COO, the President, and the Board on key decisions related to the annual budget and any proposed investments or debt obligations. The CFO frequently meets with the President, the COO, and the Finance Committee to review current year performance and to provide updates to longer-term financial planning. The model in development is being prepared for review by the full Board – in line with our [Charter](#) – at the upcoming March 2024 in-person meeting. The CFO and President will be happy to brief the NECHE visiting team on the latest – and possibly Board-approved – version of this model in detail during the April visit.

In looking at the evolving financial model of the university, the key revenue parameters to keep in mind include the mix among grant support, tuition, philanthropy, and other forms of revenue generation. In what follows, we provide some background on each of these, before turning to the expenditure side, including the implications of the move to the D9 campus.

### *US-government grants*

The largest single source of support in this start-up phase has been support from USAID and the Department of State. Initially, before undergraduate students arrived on campus, US government support provided almost all of the support for the institution, comprising 79-96% of total resources from over the period FY2016-2020. As undergraduates arrived and began to pay tuition, the percentage of the university's budget that comes from the US government has stabilized at between 40-52% of total operating revenue over the period FY2021-2023, as reported in the Data First tables; we expect this percentage to continue to decline further and gradually in the coming years, as other sources of revenue (particularly tuition and gifts), increase in absolute magnitude.

How sustainable is US Government support as a part of Fulbright's financial model? It should be noted that USAID grants expire every few years, with planning for the next extension beginning roughly one year ahead of this schedule, making for little confirmed certainty about specific levels of support. And USAID has expressed their expectation that the overall share of government funding in the operational budget should decline over time – which is exactly what is occurring. At the same time, we consider the approximate absolute amount of funding from this category to be stable into the foreseeable future. The history of Fulbright's founding is relevant here. The impetus to begin Fulbright came from the US Government, and the government committed to substantial financial support of the university, primarily through USAID funding allocated for Vietnam, during this start-up phase. Government funding and commitment have been strong across both Republican and Democratic administrations over time, and we have strong reason to believe based on what is essentially a diplomatic and political analysis that support is likely to remain robust and consistent over the next several years.

What if U.S. government funding does go significantly down at some point in the coming years? The effect this serious scenario would have on our operating revenues would depend, of course, on how great the decline is and at what point in the future. The further out into the future such a decline is, the less the overall impact, given anticipated growth in self-paying students, anticipated increases in other forms of revenue generation, and the declining share of the U.S. grants within the overall operating budget. In a hypothetical scenario of a 50% drop in U.S. government grants occurring within the next three years, the impact would be greater; the fall in revenue would be approximately equivalent in magnitude to 33-50% of the financial aid that is being given in the form of tuition waivers to support lower-income students (see line 7 of Data First table 7.3, in comparison with 50% of line 9). The effect, other revenue sources being equal, would be to push the university away from its commitment to equity and affordability. It would likely also have the effect of lowering average academic quality. In short, it would be a major disruption and a serious blow to our mission. That said, it is not a scenario we think likely; but we need to prepare for it by doing exactly what we need to do in any scenario, that is, aggressively diversify revenue while carefully managing costs.

### *Tuition and enrollment growth*

Under any scenario, tuition will in any scenario have to form a growing share of revenue. This is dependent on two factors: enrollment growth and the discount rate. The main one is growth in enrollment itself. As noted in Chapter 5 (also see Data First Table 5.2), this has been a source of concern in the past two years: the size of the incoming Freshman cohort was stagnant between AY2021 and AY2022 and declined by 26% (from 212 to 157 incoming students) in AY2023. The graduate program in public policy also saw a 22.8% decline over the same period. What drove these declines? Some portion of it is highly likely to be situational. Fulbright saw a 30% increase in its freshman cohort from AY2020 to AY2021, as students intending to study abroad found it impossible

to do so in pandemic conditions. By AY2023, such restrictions were gone so the students intent on studying abroad were able to go, just as an economic downturn began in Vietnam, strengthening the price sensitivity of other potential applicants looking to stay in Vietnam. We are seeing very positive signs for a rebound in AY2024; for example, the number of applications to Fulbright that have been opened each day throughout the Spring admissions cycle is on average three times greater than over the same period last year (we will have more accurate data about deposits to secure places in the incoming class by the April site visit). There is no doubt, however, that last year's decline warrants energetic, creative problem-solving and adjustment, as well as new program development, both of which are in progress (and are described in Chapter 5). Meanwhile, overall enrollment is still continuing to increase, from 480 in FY22 to 630 in FY23 to 728 in FY24, but this flattened curve does extend the start-up phase of the university.

How much will enrollment need to increase? Our current projections for our base case model are under review by our Board of Trustees and may still shift, but the projection [table](#) (see at the end of this chapter) gives an indication of our thinking. We target a modest increase in freshmen enrollment growth this year for the incoming undergraduate and graduate cohorts, while overall enrollments decline slightly due to the knock-on effects of the poor AY2023-24 recruitment year. Then, we anticipate one more year of modest growth in AY2025-26 before we move into the D9 campus (on which more below). At that point (from AY2026-27), we anticipate three effects will lead to a meaningful jump in new student enrollment (the current thinking is an aggregate year-on-year increase of 10%), taking advantage of the increased capacity that is brought online: a) new graduate programs in business and economics, and a new undergraduate major in Business, Policy and Society (along with a likely expansion of programming in Artificial Intelligence through the New Turing Institute), will come on board; b) the excitement surrounding the opening of the campus itself (and its attractive residential space) will generate increased applications and yield; and c) our new, more social media-driven approach to student recruitment will have had sufficient time to mature and pay dividends.

A second factor is the discount rate. This rate, which has bounced around between 43% to 47% in the past three years, is not overly high in comparison to the average for US private colleges (which is around 60% and rising). The commitment of Fulbright as the first university in Vietnam to systematically factor needs-based financial aid into its admissions strategy makes us sensitive to the discount rate, which we will continue to watch carefully and adjust within the financial model. The current target foresees it declining by a few percentage points to about 40% over the next five years, to reflect the increased tuition raised from full fee-paying business students on the graduate side as well as an anticipated steady increase in funded scholarships (our major development priority now that campus financing has been completed). These should allow us to continue to build on our historical commitment to equity and need-based financial aid even as we generate the increased tuition revenue we will need to fuel growth and quality improvements.

### *Private gifts*

Another major driver of revenue growth in the future is private gifts. Fulbright has experienced some success, some challenges and some reasons for optimism in this regard. Over the past five years, Fulbright has raised approximately \$7.3 million from private gifts, not counting the December, 2023 \$20 million Sovico conglomerate “equity contribution” (a legal guarantee to assume liability for repayment of both principle and interest of a loan of an equivalent sum) to fund the new campus. This can be taken as a validation of the basic notion that Fulbright can attract the interest of an emerging wealthy donor class, primarily in Vietnam but including the U.S. as well.

Yet we have also experienced challenges in this area. The broadest challenge is simply that private fundraising for higher education in Vietnam is an entirely new undertaking in which we are pioneers. Even basic policy and financial structure support – such as a way to set up a Vietnam-based endowment, and for donations to be tax deductible – are either lacking or insufficient in this context. And of course, there is another structural challenge that any start-up university faces, which is the absence of a well-developed alumni base. We actually have almost 2,000 ‘graduates’ of executive education and degree programs of the public policy graduate school, most of whom are civil servants, so that is a positive (though most graduated before this entity was part of the university). But on the undergraduate side, it will be years before graduates can be expected to make meaningful financial gifts (as opposed to engaging them in minor fundraising as part of a general outreach to this community).

Compounded with the structural challenges above, we have also experienced slowness in converting pledges to actual received donations, which has been negatively affected by two factors: a) the pandemic and current economic slowdown in Vietnam, coupled with b) difficulties experienced in building a capable and stable professional fundraising operation to date. There are signs that both factors are trending positive. President Fritzen has received re-confirmation from several donors who had pledged \$5 million each that they intend to follow-through on their commitment as economic conditions continue to stabilize. And conversations with several new donor prospects beyond that initial group are advancing.

Moving forward, we have increased our target for private fundraising to \$2.5 million per year in our base case scenario. We believe this may be a number subject to considerable year-on-year variation, but the over trend is likely to be positive. The fundamental strength we are building on is excellent positioning as a high-profile project within the US-Vietnam bilateral relationship.

### *Sponsored research and executive education*

These two sources also show promise for expansion and are the main impetus behind the anticipated hiring within the next two months of a senior executive focused on business development. We

anticipate substantial opportunities for net revenue increases achieved through executive education and sponsored research (meaning, in the latter case, overhead, primarily attributable to the graduate policy program and the [Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation](#)). Our analysis is that there are good prospects for Fulbright to leverage its high-profile brand to attract mission-serving clients in both areas in the coming years, and we are gearing up to support this through executive hiring (business development) and policy development (a task force has been launched to survey executive education possibilities and supporting policies).

### *The move to D9, and other notes on expenditures*

As can be seen above, the construction of the D9 campus will have significant impacts on Fulbright's strategy and finances. As of December 2023, all funding necessary to build the campus has been raised, and the final regulatory hurdles for beginning full-scale construction are now being overcome. It is anticipated that we will transition to the new campus (with phase 1A resulting in a fully functional campus) by Fall 2026. What implications flow from this move?

First, as mentioned above, enrollment can expand. Enrollment can only grow incrementally at the D7 campus, even with the expansion of space for the 2023-2024 academic year, and the footprint of the D7 campus, despite its attractive location, isn't that of the residential liberal arts college. In contrast, the D9 campus allows, even in its first 1A construction phase (already discussed in this chapter), for up to 1500 students, close to a doubling of current enrollment. How fast we expand to that number is an open question, but the ability to flexibly accommodate growth to that level alleviates a major hurdle and gives us space for further innovation.

Second, the new campus will also help sustain the university's academic quality and its public image. It will reinforce Fulbright's brand identity in the Vietnam marketplace as the only residential liberal arts institution in the country on an American model. And the new facilities will enhance both curricular and non-curricular learning by providing new state-of-the-art classrooms, science and engineering labs and facilities, and facilities for exercise and sport on campus. Being located in the Saigon High-Tech Park will create opportunities for STEM and business-related synergies (such as research and internship possibilities, and new clients for executive education).

Yet the financial implications of the move to the D9 campus are complex. In addition to the possibility of additional tuition income discussed above, we will no longer need to pay the costs of the D7 campus, which total around \$3 million a year. There is a four-year grace period built into the loan, the first disbursement of which is estimated to be July 2024. Thus, in the first two years of occupying the campus, we will only be liable for interest payments on the DFC loan. Once the full interest plus principal repayment kicks in, the annual estimated payment (principal plus interest) in the early years will be \$5,6 million significantly above the current D7 rent figure of approximately \$3,000,000. Therefore, it is also correct to say that even as the D9 campus creates capacity and an

attractive new value-proposition for students, it also increases the pressures to successfully convert that capacity and attractiveness into increased on-the-ground enrollment. But it is also correct to say that the greater capacity of the new campus can house far more additional students than would be necessary to cover this extra expense.

Other expenditure-related parameters that we will watch closely concern faculty and staff growth and the student-to-faculty ratio. As in all young universities, Fulbright has had to build the teaching and staffing capacity to deliver a full suite of educational programs in advance of enrollments that could support those numbers at steady state. Going forward, we are keeping a close watch on personnel growth, focusing faculty growth onto emerging areas with high demand (current or expected), such as business education, and ensuring that each additional staff position is carefully vetted for its impact on mission-critical functions. To help us control costs – but also after carefully considering different models – we have also made the policy decision to see the student-to-faculty ratio go up from its current 14:1 to 20:1 over a five-year period, at which time we can reassess.

To summarize, Fulbright faces significant uncertainties, challenges, *and* great opportunities on its path to financial sustainability. To address these challenges – surely not surprising in a ‘start-up’ university – Fulbright needs to continue to evolve. Enrollment, financial aid, fundraising, building operations, and finance are all involved in a complex relationship, and we will continue to strive for improved communication among these parts of the university and to tie the modeling of the financial future of Fulbright to evolving operational realities and opportunities through our strategic planning and updates process.

## **C. Information, Physical and Technological Resources**

### **I. Description (Information, Physical and Technological Resources)**

Two of the areas of emphasis in the NECHE letter awarding Fulbright eligibility focused on issues concerning physical resources: a specific issue concerning the facilities for scientific education in our present facility and the all-important issue of our plans for the new campus in District 9.

The facilities Fulbright has used since the inception of the undergraduate program in 2019 are located in District 7. Referred to either as the “[Crescent Campus](#)” or simply as “D7,” the space available is of high quality but is certainly constrained. During the 2022-2023 academic year, Fulbright occupied 3601 sqm but this footprint was expanded for [2023-2024](#) to 4456.72sqm for ~900 students and staff including 11 functional classrooms and areas, 20 normal classrooms, 25 meeting rooms and areas, 15 offices, 10 utilities rooms and areas. This expansion provides badly needed additional laboratory and instructional space for our programs in science and engineering.

The D7 campus is well-maintained and has clear Campus Usage guidelines. At present, these guidelines are in separate documents issued by different categories of users, guidelines for [students](#)

issued by Student Life and for [staff and faculty](#) issued by HR. The Campus Operations and Development Department issued Campus Rules and Regulations for external partners who use our facilities for educational activities or events in May 2023. All these various Campus Guidelines have just been combined into a single document which is currently awaiting approval by the Executive Committee.

The D7 campus is safe and secure. All personnel must swipe their access badge before entering Fulbright non-public areas, including students. Public areas are also separated from sensitive/private areas with access doors. Physical access to Fulbright's sensitive areas is separated into different access levels in accordance with each person's roles and responsibilities. Access timing is granted as per different categories of users to comply with the building's regulations and to ensure safety for every party. We have 2 layers of security including the building's security service and Fulbright's outsourced security service to ensure access, safety, security and emergency responses. Since we are currently renting the D7 campus, its infrastructure (aside from IT and instructional technology) belong to the building and not to Fulbright.

We do not yet have an approved integrated Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) Management plan. Parts of that plan already exist, but in separately developed and approved documents, some developed by EHS staff under the direction of HR, with others developed by the Facilities team under Campus Management. Campus Department and EHS staff are gathering the existing documents into an integrated EHS Management Plan which is currently undergoing review by the Executive Committee.

It became clear last academic year that we needed more space in our current campus in District 7 dedicated to STEM fields, an issue identified by the Eligibility Site Visit team and defined as an "area of emphasis" in the January letter from NECHE granting us eligibility. For 2023-2024, we have been able to expand our current science lab as a result of the [expansion](#) of the current campus by an additional area of 900m<sup>2</sup>. The space of 50m<sup>2</sup> which was a shared classroom with many other events (art and engineering classes, music rehearsal, etc.) has been replaced by a new area of 80m<sup>2</sup>, a more functional space only reserved for science purposes with proper lab workstations of 25 seats. The former science lab has been transformed into another Makerspace of 30m<sup>2</sup>, enabling the engineering students and faculty to expand their projects and classroom activities with a focused working area only for engineering purposes.

With this [expansion](#) and additional space for science and engineering, we have been able to offer more courses and provide space for research projects for students and faculty. For example, we were only able to offer 8 Engineering courses in AY22-23, but in AY 23-24, this number increased to 14. Similarly, the 10 course offerings in Integrated Science for AY 22-23 increased to 15 course offerings - a 50% expansion of course delivery. This science lab and Makerspace expansion will

clearly help us meet the needs of our academic curriculum, creating room for a healthy growth path on the delivery of our STEM programs.

The new science lab with bigger space, better facilities and more equipment will additionally optimize efficiency, elevate lab integration, increase accuracy in research, and therefore support our students and teachers in teaching and learning. For example, while the previous classroom/lab has a few normal wooden tables that are not appropriate for experiment and research, and no washing system attached, the new science lab provides users with two island central table systems with hanging cabinets above and closed anti-corrosive cabinets below, a faucet and a sink made from high-grade PP material, and a glass hanger at one end of the table. The tabletop is coated with chemical resistant material. This table system can support proper work surface for lab users and storage area for commonly used chemicals/ tools/ equipment for all integrated science courses. While the former lab had no storage at all, the new lab provides an additional 8m<sup>2</sup> of storage and closets, so that lab coats, goggles and other lab tools can be stored safely, preventing cross contamination from used lab coat to lab equipment/tools. Having designated areas for different types of supplies makes the lab safer and more organized. Furthermore, the new lab also provides a separate preparation area which did not exist before, allowing the science staff to work with large volumes of chemicals, samples, and equipment without interference. This is especially helpful with lab sessions where students are working in the main lab space. The chemical storage cabinet provides proper storage areas of controlled substances and hazardous materials, especially for flammable and corrosive chemicals. The availability of fume hood and proper chemical storage are allowing us to have and work with more abundant types of chemicals, while the biological safety cabinet space protects users from hazardous materials and biological agents and prevents contamination of the samples under experiments.

Most importantly, the former lab safety system with one basic first aid kit and one portable eyewash station was not adequate according to the general lab safety guidelines. The new lab with a more stable eyewash station, a body wash station, and a fume hood will prevent the release of hazardous and volatile substances into the general laboratory space, allowing the safer and more controlled running of chemical reactions inside the fume hood.

Of course, the lasting solution to our space crunch for science and engineering instruction will be the [D9 campus](#). The first phase of the [D9 campus](#) will include a Makerspace of 1200m<sup>2</sup> and hard science labs of 800m<sup>2</sup>, providing more than an order of magnitude more space. This area is split into four teaching labs, some dedicated to specific purposes (biology, field botany, chemistry, physics) and one multi-function lab. We have worked with Perkins Eastman and our faculty to ensure up to date designs and layouts that match our current and future curricula. The area also includes separate storage and prep areas, gas storage and transmission systems, lab staff offices, meeting rooms, appropriate extraction and filtration systems, and safety features such as eye/body



wash. So the space will be of much higher quality and has been designed from the ground up for the specific purpose of instruction in science and engineering, in addition to being much bigger. This expansion will not come a moment too soon, as there is clearly more interest in STEM fields than our current space configuration allows us to educate. So the expanded space should help recruit students and allow us to consider some programmatic changes that we are not in a position to consider at this time.

The D9 campus will of course affect far more than just instruction in science, and the state of the development of the new campus is one of the 6 areas of emphasis called out by NECHE in the January 2023 letter awarding Fulbright eligibility that we need to discuss. Fulbright has from the inception of its undergraduate program been operating in leased facilities in District 7. While the leased space in the '[Crescent Campus](#)' in D7 is modern, of high quality, and is conveniently located near restaurants, a mall, and an attractive lake, it is not space that lends itself to the American-style residential learning rich in co-curricular learning that Fulbright wants to embody. So from the very beginning, the plan was that Fulbright would build a residential campus, and the Vietnamese government granted the University 15 hectares of land in the Saigon High Tech Park in the burgeoning district across the river in District 9. This report outlines where the planning and construction of the [D9 campus](#) is at present.

The huge recent news here is that we have, as of December 31, 2023, secured all of the financing necessary for the construction of the new campus, which will proceed full scale by mid-2024 (regulatory steps permitting). This is a true milestone on our journey, and should result in us occupying our new permanent campus, with fully functional range of facilities including purpose-built dorms, by the Fall of 2026.

Over the past several years Fulbright has successfully developed an outstanding design for our D9 campus that has been a compelling part of our communication with our students, faculty, donors and other stakeholders. Despite delays associated with the Covid-19 crisis, we began the construction phase of our project in 2021, completing the earthworks package and piling package during that year. Although we had by the end of this phase received the commitment from DFC for \$37 million in construction financing that has already been discussed, the DFC loan required a matching commitment that took us until late 2023 to secure.

In the intervening period, however, we did not stand still as we developed the plan to phase the construction of the D9 campus which we are following.

Phase 1A (which will be summarized below) takes a set of contiguous buildings from our original Phase 1 plan (for which the estimated budget is circa \$120m and consists of 11 separate buildings) and creates a sub-phasing which will deliver the above four objectives. This 'Phase 1A' consists of

five separate buildings set within landscaped space and external sporting facilities and requires a budget of circa \$55m. It has the following key characteristics:

- Importantly, this sub-phasing has been planned vertically rather than horizontally. In other words, Phase 1A will see most of the footprint of the full Phase 1 implemented from the outset, so as to minimize ongoing construction interruption. With the exception of the residential building, the structures in Phase 1 are five levels. We will fully fit out the first three levels in Phase 1A, with the upper two levels being constructed just to bare shell with only the basic fire and life safety systems in place. These upper levels consist of approximately 20k sqm of space to grow into, which could be easily fitted out over a summer break or during other downtime, and this gives the university the flexibility to easily add different types of spaces in the future as its needs evolve.
- 21k sqm of student dormitories plus 30k sqm of other built space, built over seven hectares.
- The main structures that are not included in the Phase 1A build are the iconic longhouse at the front of the campus and the second dormitory. Given the 20k sqm of open space on the upper two levels to be fitted out at a later date, the student capacity could easily be increased to 2000+ once the second dormitory (approximately 9k sqm, 500-600 capacity) has been implemented. Alternatively, that capacity could be reached at any time should the university elect to waive the residential requirement (i.e., these upper levels, if dedicated to teaching space, would be sufficient to serve a student population of over 2000).
- Rigorous sustainability standards will be met – including LEED Gold and EDGE certifications - and vehicles will be kept to the periphery and sub-level of the campus, ensuring a very pedestrian-friendly environment.
- The iconic library and performing arts building, whose grand stairway draws inspiration from and is proportionate to the famous Spanish Steps in Rome, will be the initial focal point of Phase 1A until we build out the full Forum Building in a later phase.
- The ‘prime real estate’ of this Phase 1A, i.e., the lawn buildings and the Library, will be focused on educational and mission-critical activities such as studying, co-working, laboratory and engineering activities.
- We will deliver a full suite of sporting facilities including a gym, wellness rooms, a running track, basketball and tennis courts, and a soccer field using a combination of external and internal space. Included is an onsite state-of-the-art health and wellness clinic.
- Landscaping will include both primary areas (the key lawns enclosed by the Phase 1A buildings, key thoroughfares and rainwater catchment reservoir) which will be fully landscaped; and secondary areas (the perimeter of Phase 1A, other low use areas contiguous on our buildings) which will have low cost landscaping to be further developed at a later date, and which will function as a nursery to nurture mature trees for use in future phases.

- Only a minority of faculty will live on the university campus, with other faculty relying on existing or new local accommodation of which there are plentiful good options in close proximity to the site.
- Capacity will be dedicated to maximizing the scale of the undergraduate program, allowing the graduate school to move from D7 at a later date if needed.
- We will build a limited basement footprint in Phase 1A, allowing us to submerge automobile parking and certain ancillary / utility functions.
- Infrastructure to accommodate future phases will be provisioned in Phase 1A so as to limit construction interruptions and resource limitations going forward. This includes a separate physical utilities plant.
- As the campus is launched in Fall 2026, we plan to immediately continue building out the rest of the Phase 1 footprint, ideally starting with the iconic Longhouse building.

The footprint of Phase 1A is a triangle shaped plot centered around the iconic great lawn using the lawn buildings and library to enclose the key lawn feature on the two other sides. The plot extends forward to a temporary welcome building that will be an arrival point for first time visitors, allowing us to activate the main entrance to the campus. Regular visitors will be able to enter the campus area through this front entrance or the rear entrance as per their convenience.

Phase 1A includes a set of five buildings that enable the full university experience for our students. Buildings are as follows (referencing building numbers from the original design):

- Flatiron B – Student Accommodation with capacity for 1200 students with GFA of 21k sqm.
- The library and performing arts building with GFA (gross floor area) of 12k sqm containing the library, two theaters of ~250 capacity each, faculty offices, the health and wellness center, and back of house functions (loading docks, mail room, etc.).
- Academic lawn buildings focused on education and student life space.
- Central utilities plant (CUP).
- In addition to these buildings, the following key features would be included in Phase 1A:
- Outdoor sporting facilities, including pitches, courts and exercise facilities.
- Interior lawn as core community space.
- Exterior lawn (providing opportunity for some student-designed space usage, e.g. temporary art creating space, additional lab space and pop-up retail and restaurants).
- Basement of 13,000 sqm GFA, allowing sub-surface connectivity across the two sides of the campus, capacity for parking of 250 cars, 500 motorbikes and select utilities.
- Bus parking with charging stations for up to 10 buses.
- Glass reception building at the front of the campus showing the full campus model and completing the enclosure of the fourth side of the Interior lawn.
- Raised ground and steps up to the main entrance of the campus.

The initial budget for Phase 1A should be approximately \$70m accounting for all hard costs and additional soft costs. Of this budget, approximately \$16m has been spent to date, with another projected \$2m in 2023, \$35m in 2024, and \$23m in 2025. A key approval milestone – approval of the 1/500 scale masterplan – coincided with the arrival of our new President in July and this clears the way for design completion and construction (contingent upon funding).

Critical Construction Deadlines are as follows:

- **July 2023** – final approval of 1/500 scale masterplan approval received
- **Q1–Q2 2024** - design completion and Construction Permit submission
- **Q3– 2024** - construction remobilization (contingent on funding availability)
- **Q3 2026** - completion
- **Q3 2026** – final testing and commissioning
- **Fall 2026** –the opening of campus

To meet these deadlines, construction must begin with full deployment by Q3 2024.

As has already been noted, the land on which the campus is being built has been granted Fulbright by the Vietnamese government; the value of this land has been estimated at between \$80 and \$100 million. The Phase 1A construction project as described above has a projected budget of \$70 million, of which \$16 million has already been spent. Fulbright has secured a loan from the DFC of \$37 million, and a private equity contribution of \$20 million by the Vietnamese conglomerate Sovico. This completes the funding needed for the new campus; the challenge is now to finish the detailed design work (most of which has been completed) and construction permit process in the next few months, so that full-scale construction may begin by the middle of 2024. about “plans to transition from a city-based camps to a rural campus.

Information technology plays a key role in the university achievement of purposes. It consists of strategy, technology implementation, on-going support, and maintenance. In 2019, we worked out the [IT strategy](#) with all stakeholders including Faculty, Finance, Outreach, Admissions and Operations that was subsequently approved by USAID. We have adopted a cloud-first strategy to provide “Anywhere, anytime” teaching and learning platform. To ensure security safety, cost efficiency and scalability for IT service deliveries now and in the long run, we have based the university’s IT systems on platforms from world’s largest software companies: Microsoft, Salesforce. In FY22, we implemented SAP Analytics Cloud for financial budget management; we have also budgeted for Finance System improvement in FY23. During the pandemic, we invested about US\$400,000 and considerable staff efforts in classroom hybrid technology to extend our learning and teaching capability. As a result, our classes can continually be delivered in online or hybrid mode at high standards.

Fulbright has released many [information security policies](#) to create a rigorous security framework to protect data integrity and security. These policies cover a wide range of security aspects from data security to endpoint and user security. Monitoring and responding to illegal and inappropriate use of Fulbright technology systems and resources is carried out by collecting user activity audit events from Fulbright technology systems, sending them to the SOC (Security Operation Center) service or the Salesforce Security Center.

All Fulbright systems are purely cloud-based systems from among the most well-known Cloud Service Provider (CSP) including Microsoft 365 and Salesforce. The availability of the system is therefore well ensured by the CSPs.

Course management, a module of [FSIS](#) – based on Salesforce [Education Data Architecture](#), helps the Registrar Office manage offered programs, program plans, program enrollments, majors, major requirements, courses, course offerings and registration, transcripts, transferred credit and degree audit.

While the SIS course registration application had been a particular source of frustration for students in the past, the [course registration](#) app has completely been rebuilt with a shopping-cart model, which allows students to select all courses and enroll with one click. In addition, the new course registration incorporates course prerequisites in order to ensure that students can only enroll in the courses for which they are eligible. To prevent network congestion during the enrollment time, we engaged an external professional load testing service, and the load tests they performed, which simulated the application running under heavy load like in real situation, helped identify and resolve possible issues. The new app not only allows students to easily plan their upcoming courses but also provides administrators with course demand information before registration time so they can add class capacity as needed. In this upgrade, we have also integrated the SIS with [Canvas LMS](#), which means that students have access to their courses in Canvas LMS automatically as soon as they are enrolled. This is a huge time-saver for the staff in Academic Affairs and the Registrar. The new app has received a lot of positive feedback from students so far and provided them with a smooth and enjoyable experience in 2 recent cycles, August 2023, and January 2024.

In September 2023, we successfully implemented OfCourse, a cloud-based software that makes it fast and easy for schedule-makers to build near-perfect course schedules. The software saves Academic Affairs hundreds of hours and reduces 90% of scheduling team's time while creating better schedules, which incorporates many different variables i.e. faculty demands, course diversity, and room availability. In December 2023, we developed the Course Proposal app in SIS. The app helps faculty handle the whole process of course proposal, evaluation, and approval. The information about approved courses will be used to create course offerings. This eliminates manual copy and paste when it comes to creating course offerings for registration.

As FSIS aims at managing the whole student life cycle from outreach to application, student, and alumni, FSIS provides advisors with a 360 view of student information via the faculty portal. This was launched several years ago, and in September 2023, the advisor portal was updated and relaunched. The FSIS maintains virtually all records of interactions at every touchpoint with student from admissions to graduation including academic results and statistics, English level, financial aid offers, wellness, learning support requirements and progress, billing and financials, resident life, support request areas, GPA, and progress toward graduation.

The undergraduate program has four academic staff supporting teaching, learning and research. In the academic year 2022-2023, with 760 students and almost forty faculty, the academic staff supports all logistical course planning, course activities, course materials, teaching and research planning. We have one Makerspace area for technical and Engineering courses, one Science lab, one Art Studio, and eight classrooms to operate the program. Since the pandemic, all classrooms have been fully equipped with hybrid setups.

Until this year, we only have a small [library space](#) of 112 sq m that is shared between the two programs, run by one librarian who is an FSPPM employee – which is clearly insufficient. A grant is currently supporting a second librarian, and a search for a permanent undergraduate librarian to direct the library has been authorized, is in the hiring plan for 2023-2024, and should start soon. From August 2023, with the new campus expansion in D7, there is now an additional small library of 51m<sup>2</sup> (largely unstaffed, however) that can be used for the undergraduate program. Currently, the Fulbright Library offers over 6,700 titles, totaling more than 8,100 copies. It also provides access to more than 20 premium online e-databases with over 225,000 e-books and more than 48,000 e-journals. Additionally, there are 40 free-access, open-access databases covering disciplines such as Public Policy, Law, Government, History, Biology, Computer Science, Arts & Media, Economics, Finance, Accounting, and Philosophy which align with the disciplines taught and studied at FSPPM. All students have access to a wide range of information resources available at the Fulbright Library, including both printed resources and electronic databases. They can also take advantage of various library services such as copying documents, ordering books, providing feedback, interlibrary borrowing and returns, librarian consultations, and document borrowing and returns. The library has implemented a policy that enables graduate students to access library resources electronically.

## **II. Appraisal (Information, Physical and Technological Resources)**

The Fulbright Student Information System ([FSIS](#)) is designed to help the University manage the whole student lifecycle, from outreach – admissions – student life – alumni to donor/fundraising. FSIS aims at creating a single database, where all student data are securely and transparently collected, stored, processed, and analyzed to support student success at Fulbright. The reality has not quite met the ideal, however. Although the in-house developed dashboard can display enrolled student data and records effectively by student ID, name, and email, the transparent access to full

student data needed for essential institutional research has been limited by the high priority placed at Fulbright on protection of student data and privacy. Currently, access to student data must be explicitly requested and approved by data owners regardless of position. There is also a separate alumni database containing self-reported data from surveys and other sources; upon graduation, seniors' Fulbright email addresses are automatically converted into Fulbright alumni addresses to maintain continuity of contact. However, this database is maintained separately by the Alumni Relations task force and is not yet integrated into the current SIS.

A well-functioning physical library with sufficient staffing is a critical need for faculty and students of both the undergraduate and the graduate programs. On the digital side, we have access to J-STOR and a few other basic academic subscriptions, but they are not enough. Some specialized fields such as Arts need special collections that are costly. Textbooks are an area of critical need. Most of our undergraduate classes use e-books or journal articles, without a proper channel to order and distribute textbooks. The current library has more resources for public policy program and resources in Vietnamese, rather than a more comprehensive selection of resources for the liberal arts and sciences in English. We have many books donated by various donors currently sitting in a storage room because there is not enough shelf space. Students also need a much quieter library space for studying. In addition, a clear organizational structure for the Library needs to be decided upon. At present, the one librarian is an FSPPM employee, reporting to FSPPM. Staff in the undergraduate program work with him and with the faculty to serve the needs of the undergraduate program. Although good working relations are in place, this is not an optimal organizational structure.

### **III. Projection (Information, Physical and Technological Resources)**

Clearly, the building of the D9 [campus](#) is essential to the future of Fulbright, and this will be a highly dynamic environment over the next 24 months. But we have great plans, we have finally assembled the resources to implement those plans, and we are moving ahead. One final issue concerning space is a brief mention in the NECHE letter of January 2023 about “plans to transition from a city-based campus to a rural campus.” We would not completely agree with this way of stating the transition, as no one would consider the new D9 campus just outside the largest city in Vietnam to be rural. But moving to the new campus is a move from a set of buildings fully embedded in an urban context to a more residential campus at some remove from the center of HCMC, and so undoubtedly aspects of this move will affect the campus culture and climate in numerous ways. We think it is a fair summary of the current situation that the focus of the campus effort has been planning the physical space of the campus, and that space has been planned with both academic needs and the co-curricular aspects of student life in mind. But this question from NECHE is a good reminder of the issues that we will need to be facing as campus construction moves ahead.

Disaster recovery plans ([DRP](#)) for the data in business-critical platforms are in place since October 2023. However, Fulbright has not had a completely integrated Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to prepare for unexpected situations and ensure continuity of the campus operations. The objective of the BCP is to coordinate recovery of critical business functions in managing and supporting the business recovery in the event of a facilities (campus) disruption or natural disaster. A disaster is defined as any event that renders a business facility inoperable or unusable so that it interferes with the organization's ability to deliver essential business services. Crucial steps towards a complete BCP were the documentation of the disaster recovery availability of the data and the implementation of cloud data backup for data in the Salesforce platform, activities which were recently completed. At the same time, Campus Operations and EHS have cooperated to draft "[Emergency Procedures](#)" and a "[Campus Continuity Plan](#)" that has been fully drafted and is under review by the Executive Committee at this time.

The usability and functionality of the SIS and related systems has seen an enormous improvement over the past year. An SIS assessment program has been conducted involving all departments using SIS to identify areas for improvement and upcoming new features. IT has committed to an ambitious program of addressing the requirements across the remainder of FY24, and in the Executive Committee review, each department has agreed with IT what its priorities for improvement are and a timeline for moving forward. Work clearly remains to be done involving finding the perfect balance between concern for the privacy of student data and the need for access to that data, but this is work primarily at the policy level as the technical constraints are insignificant. Another extension of the database that poses no technical challenge is the incorporation of alumni information into the SIS: once Alumni Relations has come up with strategies, business processes, and system requirements, IT team can onboard Alumni Relations to SIS to systematically manage their activities.

In addition, IT has planned several upcoming initiatives:

- Work Study Program ([WSP](#)): to foster the complete paperless WSP management from job advertising, application and selection, contracts, budget control, timesheet logging and approvals and payments, IT will develop the app on Salesforce. This app helps streamline all activities from hiring departments and students, including job evaluation, which is linked with student records.
- Online student request [forms](#): at this moment, there are quite a number of paper-based request forms (i.e. Leave of Absence, Dormitory, Credit transfer, Refund request, etc.). We will create online forms, which allow students to submit the forms online via the OneStop Student Portal. The whole process from notifications to approvals will be done systematically. This will be a big time-saver and greatly improve student satisfaction.



- Learning Pathway: This will help students to design their own study path with details of required courses taken towards a major for every semester in 4 years at the university. This tool helps students validate selected courses based on major requirements, course prerequisites, and cross-listed eligibility.
- Degree Audit: this tool makes a formal evaluation of a student's previous and current academic course work and creates an analysis of what degree requirements that student still needs to complete to graduate.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): as an innovative university, we are keen on applying new technology to improve operational efficiency. We've recently acquired a Microsoft Copilot license for some selective pioneers from the President's Office, UG faculty and IT. The initial feedback has been very positive in terms of work efficiency improvement and wide area of possible applications. We also plan to invest AI in Salesforce platform. We will likely start with OneStop student case management to help responding to student requests more quickly. The next step would be using AI to predict student academic performance or to identify students at risk of failure or dropout so we can proactively help them.

The design of the D9 [campus](#) has a dramatically expanded space for the library, 2300m<sup>2</sup>. The challenge at that point will be providing the library materials, in both physical and digital formats, to adequately use that much larger footprint. Fundraising for the Library will be a critical task once the move to the D9 campus is funded; the Library has benefitted from donations, so we have some evidence that this will be an attractive part of Fulbright's development efforts.

## CHAPTER 8

### STANDARD 8: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

#### I. Description

Fulbright University Vietnam has a four-year liberal arts undergraduate program and a small professional school offering the MPP in two different tracks on a single campus in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. So we are in one location, an undergraduate student body and a professional school student body, without any substantial difference in modality.

Our [website](#) and messaging (whether in terms of admissions or communications to external stakeholders) consistently emphasize the undergraduate-focused, American-style liberal arts education Fulbright provides. Fulbright's [residential life](#), [co-curricular activities](#), and [wellness support](#) are all unique features in Vietnamese higher education. Fulbright demonstrates its distinctive characteristics as a not-for-profit, independent Vietnamese university by stating its commitment to diversity and inclusion (in the Vietnamese context, this means holistic admissions and recruiting students from all regions and ethnicities in the country), and its mission to educate leaders who will contribute to the nation.

Fulbright's mission and aspirations for students are well articulated and have not fundamentally changed. Fulbright's website provides explicit statements about the social [mission](#) of the university and its aspirations for its students. The website also defines specific areas of development for students: knowledge, skills, and mindsets. All majors have aligned their learning goals and outcomes with these ideals:

Our approach is to educate the whole person. At Fulbright, we want students not only to know important things, we want them to be able to do important things and be the kind of person who can live an intentional, fulfilling life.

Throughout Fulbright's program students will contemplate meaningful values, grow in character, and develop important competencies for life and work: critical thinking, innovative and creative thinking, effective communication, reasoning, collaboration, ethical reasoning, civic engagement, and lifelong learning.

One of the six areas of emphasis raised in the NECHE letter of January 31, 2023 awarding Fulbright eligibility was progress in the area of outcomes assessment: we have a great deal to report here, and of course more work to do.

Fulbright's relatively new undergraduate program has recently stabilized after some early changes in direction, most dramatically from DIY majors and no departments to a set of 11 Major programs in

2020. The Core Curriculum has always been the basis of the Undergraduate general education program, but its shape and the courses themselves have changed; they acquired their current structure since 2020. As the Undergraduate program has stabilized, regular assessment practices such as course evaluations have been implemented and improved. The undergraduate Assessment Committee has been active in reviewing and proposing updated course evaluation instruments with more standardized quantitative and qualitative questions, the timing and administering of course evaluations (midterm and end of semester) according to best practices, and regular formal review for required courses in every major. A faculty workshop on assessment was held with an external consultant in summer 2020 to familiarize all faculty and UG leadership with assessment best practices, and a Core Curriculum faculty workshop was held in March 2022 which also served as a limited external review of Fulbright's general education program. Starting this year, the Core Curriculum course coordinators have been submitting annual reports on their individual courses and sharing them with their teaching teams to reflect on the past year's course, and to help onboard new teaching team members.

These processes are developing with guidance from the Office of the Provost, where the Vice Provost has set up an Office of Institutional Research to gather, consolidate, and analyze data from across the university to support all departments. MOET requires an office of Quality Assurance/Quality Control [QAQC], and an officer experienced in MOET regulations has been hired and integrated into the Office of Institutional Research. Thus far, new software for surveys (Qualtrics) has been acquired, a Data Coordinator has been hired to gather and organize existing data, and the Assessment Committee and Career Services have designed and implemented [end-of-year surveys](#) for all enrolled students and [exit surveys](#) for seniors. As the office of institutional research matures and adds staff, the data streams from Admissions, Student Affairs, UG Academic Affairs, Grants Reporting to USAID (Finance), and FSPPM will all need to be integrated for efficient data management and more powerful analysis and accurate reporting to internal and external stakeholders. This institutional research will contribute to and inform current and future strategic planning by the new President and academic leadership.

In 2023, MOET required Fulbright as a Vietnamese institution of higher education to review its Undergraduate majors for the first time and submit individual reports on each degree granting major as part of MOET's certification of our degrees. MOET accepts the format of the [ASEAN University Network](#) (hereafter 'AUN') accreditation. With the help of a consultant from AUN in March 2023, the faculty have been mapping the courses in each major to the curriculum in a series of [Self-Assessment Reports](#) (SAR) which are now largely complete. All Majors mapped their curricula, developed learning goals for individual courses, published learning goals for the Majors, and instituted Capstone criteria and grading rubrics. These learning goals build on the foundational academic and intellectual skills

introduced in the Core Curriculum, and foster deeper expertise in research, disciplinary awareness, and relevance to professional careers and post-graduate education. The major-specific learning goals are designed to parallel and advance the overall learning goals for the undergraduate curriculum to be discussed later.

Even before this process, major coordinators worked with individual faculty to create consistency within each course level and align each course's objectives with the learning goals for the major. These alignments in table format are also submitted in proposals for new courses and verified by the Curriculum Committee. This robust course mapping has improved faculty awareness of consistent skills and learning expectations by course level within the majors.

All courses administer course evaluations at the end of the semester, and these have recently been updated to contain more quantitative as well as qualitative feedback. Some Majors already have evaluation expectations by course level (e.g. consistent page counts for reading; and types of assignments); others are still working through these categories. The Curriculum Committee has been guiding relative coursework and assessment standards for different course levels. Some Majors are conducting focus groups with graduating seniors and submitting reports on the students' reflections about their experiences within the major. The Office of the Provost in collaboration with the faculty Assessment Committee has designed [end-of-year surveys](#) for students in years 1-3 and an [exit survey](#) for seniors; these will all be administered annually. As many of these assessment practices have been recently introduced or revised, it is not yet clear how robust the data are (course evaluation response rates were initially low, but have been steadily increasing to around 60% for semester 1 of AY 2023-24). There has been some benchmarking against external institutions: there was an external review of the undergraduate program conducted in 2019 (its first year of operations); a workshop on the Core Curriculum in March 2022 conducted by the Director of the Common Curriculum from Yale-NUS (now the Vice Provost and Interim Dean of Undergraduate Studies of Fulbright), both of which considered other similar institutions in their assessment of the Fulbright program; just last Fall there was a Task Force on [General Education](#) which benchmarked aspects of the undergraduate curriculum against a number of benchmark institutions.

Student engagement represents two critical features of collegiate quality—the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities, and how the institution deploys its resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to get students to participate in activities that decades of research studies show are linked to student learning. Our central effort in the area of co-curricular assessment is [NSSE](#), administered by Student Experience in 2022 and 2023, which provides analysis and benchmarking with other institutions who

administer this survey on student experience, although Fulbright's uniqueness made the construction of peer groups unusually challenging.

NSSE annually collects information at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about first year and senior students' participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. Our [NSSE 2022](#) results targeted the first-year student responses. With the 215 first-year students enrolled in the Undergraduate program, there were 159 responses, taking up 75% of the response rate in the NSSE survey. Our NSSE response rates were truly impressive, between 50 and 70% each time (in comparison with the normal response rate of 5-30% in other institutions), and this itself is a positive indicator of a high level of student engagement. Given the quality of the initial results, the NSSE 2023 was conducted again in the Spring 2023 term, focusing on the first-year and fourth-year students to get a bigger picture of student services provided throughout the campus.

The analysis of the NSSE results tell us a lot about how student services and other aspects of the Fulbright experience are perceived by students. The analysis is too lengthy for us to do more than simply highlight a few points here, but the full report is available. The [NSSE 2022](#) report indicates that 84% of first-year students rated their overall educational experience at the institution as "Good" or "Excellent". The very high scores on the Campus environment theme demonstrate the benefits and satisfaction of students with the supportive environment for the undergraduates. The quality of interactions and supportive environment indicators represent the effectiveness of the student services provided to students.

As Fulbright is graduating its first cohort in June 2023, quantitative data on graduate outcomes are new. Under the Office of the Provost, Fulbright has instituted a task force on Alumni Relations in June 2023 with collaboration between Development and Career Services. Career Services and the Office of the Provost have been gathering data on graduating students' plans: the Office of the Provost administered the first annual [Senior Exit Survey](#) in June 2023. The collected data is available and already being utilized by Communications in the website overhaul. Career Services will continue to work with graduates on their professional development and use these relationships to maintain contact and gather data on alumni. Alumni Relations has sent a follow-up survey to graduates in early December: the results have been reported to MOET and disseminated to the community. There is an undergraduate alumni organization, FUVA, and FSPPM alumni group, but a dedicated Alumni Relations office has yet to be formalized.

FSPPM has maintained its own records and [external reporting](#) for NASPAA since its accreditation in 2019. As a much more established program, FSPPM has been running annual performance reviews

of faculty tracking their [publication outputs](#) and utilizing [course evaluation](#) data to monitor their teaching performance. Course syllabi, assignments, and thesis assessments are also collected as evidence of effective teaching. Student data from admissions to enrolment, grades, graduation rates, and post-graduation outcomes are recorded to track student progress through and beyond the program. The program assesses student learning outcomes through surveys of graduating students ([Student Exit Survey](#)) to determine their self-assessment of the competencies learned in the Program. [Questions](#) ask about their knowledge of a topic before starting the Program then learning at Program's end. [Student Class Evaluations](#) are also conducted in every class. An [Alumni Survey](#) is periodically undertaken to collect information about their employment situation and to determine the long-term retention of learning, and importantly whether the learning was useful in landing a job, mastering job requirements, and receiving promotions, raises and recognition. finished. The graduation rate for the MPP program has recently been 90%. MPP program graduates are surveyed 6 months following graduation. Of the most recent MPP graduates surveyed, 91.4% were employed right after graduation, 4.3% pursued higher education and 4.3% were still looking for employment.

## **II. Appraisal**

The current NECHE accreditation process and MOET review have helped Fulbright establish essential assessment processes across the curriculum; staffing needs across the Core and the Majors, and space and infrastructure allocations will all be informed by this data in future. Each major has developed learning objectives and learning outcomes.

The institution has not set any goals in the area of co-curricular learning. Setting some goals, especially for the areas assessed by NSSE, would be very helpful, as goal setting is critical in institutional change and achieves improved educational outcomes by getting good data, communicating what the data means to invested parties, and having a clear use for the data.

Annual reviews for faculty and staff were only implemented in 2021, and the Dean of Undergraduate Faculty and the Provost review the faculty dossier and course evaluations as part of this performance review. The process is being reviewed this year. In addition to systematic review of course evaluations, faculty will need more resources to support improving their pedagogy to develop peer observation and assessment: in the short term, before we have a Center for Teaching and Learning, the Associate Dean of Faculty will be responsible for providing more resources such as workshops and activities to help faculty collaborate on pedagogy.

Further coordination and assessment of experiential learning programming conducted by the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, YSEALI, and internships organized through the Career Services

office will help integrate student professional experiences into their overall education trajectory and skills training.

Systematic collection and assessment of senior capstone research and [exit survey](#) data from seniors will allow Major coordinators to understand students' achievement on graduation. Consolidating alumni data on graduate placement and employment will enable better understanding of programs' successes and areas to improve, and this information will be shared with major coordinators and UG leadership to aid in strategic planning for the majors.

All of this reflects our efforts to create a culture of assessment and to create the structures and processes that will enable assessment across the entire curriculum. To date, however, these efforts do not address NECHE's desire to assess exit competences in the undergraduate program, something that will be an important priority in the coming year and with the graduation of our second undergraduate cohort last June. Since we have just graduated our first students and have been changing the curriculum in the course of this first class's progress, now that the curriculum is fairly stable, we can turn to this task, analyzing how the core, the majors and the electives work together to create a Fulbright graduate.

FSPPM, as a longer established unit, already has put in place a good deal of what the undergraduate program will need. They regularly conduct employer surveys of their graduates and have a full system of assessment aligned with the expectations of their specialized accreditor, NASPAA. This includes [alumni surveys](#), student [exit surveys](#), focus groups with students and alumni, an independent review of writing assignments, syllabi and exam questions, as well as a look at theses and thesis defenses. These surveys serve as valuable tools for assessing the relevance of the curriculum, the effectiveness of the educational programs, and the overall quality of graduates in meeting the demands of the job market. Based on the feedback received from [employer surveys](#), initiatives can be implemented to enhance specific skills and competencies of graduates. This may involve incorporating new courses, workshops, or experiential learning, all opportunities to better prepare students for the evolving needs of the industry. It will be important going forward for some of the expertise on these matters in FSPPM to be shared with the undergraduate program.

### **III. Projection**

As has already been discussed, [Program Review](#) should start in 2025 or 2026, and this will provide a more accurate picture of how Fulbright has developed and grown in the area of assessment. In preparation for this, majors will be expected to prepare and submit annual reports; these should include a review of all course evaluations for major courses, special reports on the required major

courses, and any other data acquired through focus groups, the previous year's annual student surveys, and consultation with faculty.

While data gathering and organization are increasing gradually across the University, there has not been sufficient time for analysis and establishing systems for review and implementing improvements for the Undergraduate program based on the analysis. We are therefore only in the early stages of using assessment results systematically to improve what we are doing. We have devoted an entire section of the strategic plan for 2024-27 that we are currently formulating to enhancing the steering capacity of the leadership across all functions, including assessment.

The results of the NSSE 2023 will be available from NSSE this semester and should provide illuminating comparisons between the first two surveys. After receiving the NSSE 2023 results, the Student Experience team will work with the internal stakeholders, especially Student Affairs and Services, Communications, and Admissions, to discuss the results and plan for the next steps to improve student services and contribute to the University's goals in diversity, equity, and inclusion.



## CHAPTER 9

### STANDARD 9: INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

#### A. Integrity

##### I. Description

In the January 2023 letter from NECHE granting eligibility to Fulbright, six ‘areas of emphasis’ were called out as needing particular focus in the self-study for candidacy which this document represents. The “structure and effectiveness of Fulbright University Vietnam’s governance” was one of those issues, and a discussion of this issue appropriately belongs here as well as in Chapter 3.

Designing an effective governance model in the Vietnamese context presents significant challenges. Private, nonprofit universities have enjoyed formal legal recognition only since 2012, and to date Fulbright is widely considered to be the first and only true nonprofit university in Vietnam. Other private universities are for-profit and highly commercialized. Fulbright’s [Board of Trustees](#) is therefore the first and thus far only example of an independent fiduciary governing board whose members are motivated to serve by altruism and a belief in the university’s mission rather than pecuniary interest. Fulbright’s governance model embraces several core principles generally associated with the governance of private universities in the United States including the role of an independent fiduciary board as the supreme decision-making body and an empowered chief executive (e.g. president) who implements the strategic direction set by the board.

As noted above, the university is foundationally committed to being an exemplar of a well-governed, values-driven Vietnamese university and nonprofit institution. This commitment extends to our approach to legal and regulatory compliance in the two jurisdictions where we operate, Vietnam and the US.

The members of Fulbright University Vietnam’s Board of Trustees derive their fiduciary authority from their [legal status](#) as the directors of Fulbright University Vietnam USA (“FUV USA”), a 501(c)(3) [nonprofit](#) corporation domiciled in Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup> FUV USA served as the applicant of record when seeking permission from the Vietnamese authorities to establish the university, a process that resulted in the creation of Fulbright University Vietnam Corporation (“FUVVC”), a Vietnamese [nonprofit](#) corporation that operates the university. Under Vietnamese law, FUV USA is the sole shareholder of FUVVC. Early in its existence (2016-2019), Fulbright University Vietnam was governed by two boards: the board of directors of FUV USA, the US nonprofit corporation, and the board of directors of FUVVC,

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<sup>2</sup> Note: Fulbright University Vietnam USA was incorporated in 2012 as the “Trust for University Innovation in Vietnam (TUIV).” In 2021, the board formally changed TUIV’s name to Fulbright University Vietnam USA. For the avoidance of confusion, it will be referred to throughout by its current name.

FUV USA's Vietnamese subsidiary. In principle, the FUV board was tasked with overseeing the university's operations while the FUV USA board set strategic direction. In practice, the dual board structure proved to be too cumbersome and slow-moving to effectively serve the interests of a fast-moving start-up institution, so in 2019 the FUV USA board exercised its authority as FUV's controlling shareholder to dissolve the FUV board and consolidate its members into the FUV USA board, which has thereafter operated as the Board of Trustees of Fulbright University Vietnam.

The University is chartered by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and has all of the requisite approvals to operate its campus in HCMC. On May 16, 2016, the Prime Minister of Vietnam approved the [establishment](#) of Fulbright. This was followed by the MOET Minister's approval of the commencement of training programs on June 2, 2017 and further approval from MOET to begin training programs and admissions. With MOET approval, HCMC formal approval is not needed, but the most significant sign of local government approval is the 50 year no-cost lease of 15 hectares of land from the government's Saigon High Tech Park on which the new campus of Fulbright is being built.

Fulbright has established a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that cover substantially its commitment to truthfulness, clarity, and fairness to its both internal and external stakeholders. Relevant policies include the [Code of Academic Integrity](#) (Acts of Academic Dishonesty), the Policy on Conflict of Interest included in the undergraduate [Faculty Handbook](#), and the [Code of Ethical Conduct](#) (Conflict of Interest & Commitment, Appropriate Treatment of Confidential and Private Information, Maintenance and Preservation of Accurate Records).

As discussed in Chapter 4, the [Code of Academic Integrity](#) plays an integral role in the transformative educational experience provided to its students. The Code of Academic Integrity includes a specialized section that covers Acts of Academic Dishonesty. The [Code of Ethical Conduct](#) offers a general overview of the obligations related to Conflict of Interest, Confidential and Private Information, and Accurate Records. Additionally, the undergraduate [Faculty Handbook](#) features a specialized section that provides a comprehensive approach specifically to Conflict of Interest.

As discussed previously in Chapter 7, Fulbright has implemented a robust system for recruiting, admitting, hiring, and evaluating employees, supported by a set of policies and procedures such as the [Faculty Hiring Process Policy](#), [Performance Management Policy](#), [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#), [Salary Review Policy](#) and [Promotion Policy](#). These policies and procedures are critical in ensuring that Fulbright adheres to fair and equitable selection criteria, appraisal processes, and disciplinary actions. Fulbright has also developed a comprehensive [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) that outlines our commitment to preventing discrimination and harassment, and provides procedures for handling complaints, resolving problems, and remedying situations when violations occur. By implementing this policy and its associated practices, we can guarantee adherence to non-

discriminatory principles in all our activities. A list of our continuing faculty, indicating departmental or program affiliation, showing degrees held and the institutions granting them, can be found here. The names and positions of administrative officers, and the names and principal affiliations of members of the governing board are also included on our website.

The pursuit of institutional accreditation has been a strategic goal since the earliest days of the Fulbright University Vietnam initiative. Indeed, the Congressional legislation through which Fulbright University Vietnam received its first US federal funding commitment specifically stated that the university should “achieve standards comparable to those required for accreditation in the United States.” The university’s founding team believed that seeking accreditation from a US regional accrediting body would advance several mission-critical objectives. First, it would challenge the university to hold itself accountable to the highest standards of academic quality and institutional governance. Second, it would advance the university’s mission of contributing to the advancement of Vietnamese higher education by demonstrating the value of international benchmarking. Finally, if Fulbright successfully achieves NECHE accreditation, it will provide the university with a compelling competitive advantage in the competition for human capital (students, faculty, staff) and the financial resources the university will need to thrive and grow.

In light of accreditation’s significance to the university’s institutional mission and development strategy, Fulbright attaches great importance to its relationship with NECHE and will always engage with NECHE with the utmost candor, honesty, and integrity.

## **II. Appraisal**

Fulbright University Vietnam was founded on the belief that governance would be a critical determinant of success.<sup>3</sup> In December 2015, in our first funding proposal to the United States Department of State, we wrote: “[Fulbright’s] governance system will be carefully calibrated to achieve maximum transparency, accountability, meritocracy and academic freedom...” We view effective governance as a prerequisite for achieving and maintaining the highest standards of academic and operational excellence. Additionally, we believe that one of the most important contributions Fulbright can make to the continued development of Vietnamese higher education is by serving as a model of

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<sup>3</sup> Our commitment to good governance was informed by several studies including “Peril and Promise: Higher Education in Developing Countries,” a study commissioned by the World Bank and UNESCO and written by a blue-ribbon international panel chaired by Harvard professor Henry Rosovsky and University of Cape Town professor Mamphela Ramphele. Our understanding of higher education governance in Vietnam was guided by several studies undertaken by researchers from the Harvard Kennedy School and The New School including “The Intangibles of Excellence: Governance and the Quest to Build a Vietnamese Apex University.”

effective, transparent, and accountable governance that other Vietnamese colleges and universities can learn from and emulate.

Fulbright was founded on the belief that Vietnamese higher education urgently needs new models and standards of institutional integrity, transparency, and accountability. The importance of serving as a model institution that other institutions in Vietnam can learn from and emulate guides and informs our approach to institution building. In a country where the government views organized civil society with some measure of hostility, Fulbright takes its status as one of the country's largest and most visible nonprofit institutions very seriously and endeavors to hold itself to the highest standards of integrity and transparency.

Fulbright is determined to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. This too is a pathbreaking commitment in a country where cheating and other forms of academic malfeasance are widely understood to be rampant. Here Fulbright embraces and builds on the traditions of our predecessor institution, the Harvard-managed Fulbright Economics Teaching Program (1994-2016). FETP built a hard-won reputation for academic integrity by holding its students and faculty to the highest standards even when that required FETP to sanction and occasionally expel repeat-offenders, thereby exposing the institution to criticism and external political pressures. All Fulbright students pledge to uphold an honor code that symbolizes the university's commitment to integrity and honesty.

Fulbright's unique (for Vietnam) commitment to integrity, academic freedom, and other core values is shared by the entire community but has special resonance and meaning for the Vietnamese members of the university community, from trustees and donors to faculty, students, and staff. Corruption, nepotism, and academic dishonesty are widespread in Vietnam, including in higher education. Fulbright's determination to build a different kind of institution is among the most attractive and compelling features of our value proposition and institutional identity.

Fulbright's good name and reputation is our most valuable asset; the preservation of the university's reputation and good standing is always a top priority for the university's leadership. This determination to maintain Fulbright's reputational capital informs the university's approach to approving and organizing all activities that are associated with the university.

## **B. Transparency**

### **I. Description**

We currently publish information regarding the institution as a whole on our website, including our [vision and mission](#), the [services/programs](#) we offer, updated information on [activities](#) happening at Fulbright, and information for [donations/giving](#). We publish the following information about the

undergraduate program on our main [website](#): mission, objectives, and expected educational outcomes; our status as a not-for-profit independent institution; requirements and procedures and policies related to [admissions](#); student [fees](#); academic programs, and other available educational opportunities; and the requirements for [degrees](#). We publish the following information about the graduate program on our satellite website: [mission](#), objectives, and expected educational outcomes; academic [programs](#), and other available educational opportunities; requirements and procedures and policies related to [admissions](#); the requirements for degrees; and student [fees](#).

A major project to update the website should be completed by the end of the 2023-2024 academic year. This includes a redesign of the feel and mood of the website, an improvement of the user interface and user experience (UI/UX), search engine optimization (SEO), and finally a new back-end for the site. Currently on the website, we have sufficient information regarding our processes for admissions and assessment in [Vietnamese](#) and [English](#) for the undergraduate programs. The information in Vietnamese is currently more extensive than the English version and we are currently in the process to translate and upgrade the English version to reflect the Vietnamese version. Similar information regarding [FSPPM](#) is also available. The process for employment is completely open to the public, with information including [opening positions](#), employee [benefits](#), and the [recruitment process](#).

Other information is available on our internal intranet. As discussed in Chapter 4, all policies regarding students' educational journey at Fulbright can be found in a student intranet hub, called [OneStop](#). Available policies include the Fulbright [honor code](#), the [Academic Policy](#), the [Code of Academic Integrity](#), the [Code of Conduct](#), [student records privacy](#), [transfer credit policy](#), and [student complaint policy](#). The public can also access this level of information as the OneStop link is available on the main website. However, OneStop also has a secured portion where students can learn their grades which is only open to the individual student. We publish the following information on OneStop (the student intranet): student fees, charges and refund [policies](#); rules and regulations for [student conduct](#); other items related to attending or [withdrawing](#) from the institution; [academic policies](#) and procedures; courses currently offered, and other available educational opportunities; and the [requirements](#) for degrees. Analogously, there is also an intranet for Fulbright staff and faculty called OnePlace, which can be accessed through the main website.

The Fulbright [Curriculum](#) and Course [Catalogue](#) is published on the One Stop portal and serves as the main resource for the undergraduate program and descriptions of the majors. We therefore do not have a single print catalogue in the traditional sense. This Catalogue is categorized into individual articles to provide detailed information about the requirements of the program and degree to the students. Students can find the detailed course description for each term in My Studies menu in the One Stop portal. This is updated and maintained by the Registrar's Office every term. The Academic

Affairs updates and publishes the Course Catalog and Curriculum, and the Registrar team ensures that accurate and complete course information is provided for the benefit of students as well as to guide them in the registration process to fulfill the academic requirements. All students can access the support services, co-curricular activity information, and non-academic opportunities on the [OneStop](#) portal. Other media channels including the Fulbright [website](#), Facebook [group](#) (Fulbright Undergraduate Students), [Instagram](#), Newsletter, etc., and in all of these up-to-date and transparent information about upcoming events or activities is posted. There is now a searchable [database](#) of all undergraduate courses offered at Fulbright on the new website, which can be sorted by tags (major, level, Core, Exploratory), and individual [pages](#) on the Core Curriculum, the individual classes within the Core, and a page for [each major](#).

FSPPM has of course a longer track record and has placement and employment information reaching back to FETP, all of which is reviewed by NASPAA when accrediting FSPPM. In addition, the school strives to stay in contact with employers through a [Reputation Survey](#) which looks at program recognition and reputation. This was conducted in [2018](#), and in the academic year 2023-2024, we expect to conduct an update survey of MPP's reputation with the contribution from the Fulbright School Alumni (FSA)'s representatives.

## **II. Analysis**

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the communication and announcement of campus updates were strongly promoted and sent via both email and published on the website through the internal portal (One Stop). One challenge, however, is that despite the different channels used to promote the information resources available to students, we haven't perfected appropriate and effective communication with the students. The more channels in which we post the information, the more distractions and confusion the students get from the latest update. One example of this problem is that while OneStop has a comprehensive course catalogue that lists all courses, there is an updated course list sent to students each year that lists the courses being offered the next academic year. The Student Engagement [Newsletter](#) now collects key events and information to provide a consistent and comprehensive version of the notices sent to all students.

## **C. Public Disclosure**

### **I. Description**

We fully disclose our [NASPAA](#) accreditation status and our current status of eligibility for [NECHE](#) accreditation on our main and satellite websites. The announcement of the forth coming NECHE visit is on our [website](#).

For the undergraduate program, a description of the size and characteristics of our student population is not yet published on the website. However, certain information regarding the incoming class is always published in our annual newsletter ([Year in Review](#)). For the graduate program, a description of the size and characteristics of our students can be found on the FSPPM website.

All forms of print and digital communications officially representing the institution are consistent with catalogue content and accurately portray the conditions and opportunities available at the institution. All information can be found on our webpage, intranet, and social media channels. All photos and videos are stored on both the University's cloud and physical hard drives, which are frequently checked and transferred to new ones every 1 or 2 years. We have a process to make sure all print and digital publications are in accordance with brand guidelines and available for access.

We consider that we are quite responsive to public requests for information. Such requests go to Communications, which estimates that it receives roughly 60 requests a month through its main Facebook fan page. Roughly 60% of these are queries about our admissions process, and the remaining 40% involve other matters, including current events, career opportunities, the graduate program, and other programs.

FUV Corporation in Vietnam files its audited statements to a number of governmental entities in Vietnam per Vietnamese regulations, the Ho Chi Minh City Tax Department, the HCMC Department of Investment and Planning, and Saigon Hitech Park. It is not required by Vietnamese law to make this information available to the public. FUV USA, in accordance with Massachusetts laws, files an annual tax [form](#) accompanied by its [audited financial statements](#), with the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and that information is available on the Public Charities website of the Attorney General's office.

Fulbright Undergraduate Program welcomes the first [graduating cohort](#) this June 2023. Career services began the information gathering on graduation outcomes with an initial survey of the graduating seniors in March 2023. Since then, Career Services has worked with the Office of Institutional Research and the UG program to gather and synthesize data on graduate outcomes through an [exit survey](#) administered in June 2023, and a six month check in [survey](#) administered in December 2023. A formatted [report](#) of these outcomes are posted online in compliance with MOET directives, but they are not intended for broad publication. The Career Services team also promotes career readiness through career education programs and courses to assist a successful transition into post-graduation opportunities.

## **II. Analysis**

Fulbright publishes information about our tuition and financial aid on our website for both the graduate and undergraduate programs. This information is considerably more limited than the equivalent in an American university would be since we do not offer institutional loans and there is no national program of financial aid in Vietnam the way there is in the United States. We therefore do not have any information on the expected amount of student debt upon graduation, and there is nothing corresponding to an institution's cohort default and loan repayment rates. However, there is more information that we could and should list here, as information about other fees, such as cost of living or textbooks, allowing students and parents to compute what in the US would be called the Total Cost of Attendance, is not yet made available.

Given the fledgling status of the undergraduate program, we do not yet have comprehensive documentation on program excellence, success in placement, and achievements of UG graduates.

### **D. Projection**

A section on Intellectual Property generated by faculty research should be included in the Faculty Handbook. The unified comprehensive Handbook for Faculty and Staff discussed above in Chapter 3 would ensure complete alignment among these various policies as they apply to Fulbright employees. Once that Handbook was complete, it would make sense to review comparable student policies to make sure that the policies for students and those for employees were completely aligned.

In the Academic year 2023-2024, as part of the website re-design project, SAS will provide and publish the undergraduate student size and characteristics to give the audience and potential users a better sense of the university's identity, mission, and education goals at Fulbright. We will work with other departments to have a better description of the student body for the undergraduate program and update it on the website. A specific description of the current campus and future flagship campus can also be created so that our audience does not have to look for it in the news section.

Fulbright should develop a clear statement and criteria to measure success in placement. We should have a clear section on our website on learning outcomes, that includes quotations and feedback from companies about our students to improve trust in what we offer; we are building mechanisms for this feedback such as focus groups for Career Fair participants. Functions supporting the Career Services in recording and managing student placement as well as the internship programs need to be built into the Student Information System. Now that we have the first group of graduates from our undergraduate program, the Communications team has been updating the website with information about our graduates but there is not as yet a dedicated alumni page.



In the near future, the Career Services Manager will work with internal stakeholders to build a tracking system to manage the placement expectations and outcomes for each student cohort. Another gap which we need to address now that we have graduates is we do not have clear and consistent criteria for student success rates. Student retention is tracked manually by the Registrar's Office. Student success criteria, goals for retention and graduation, and a strategy to achieve the goals that are set should emerge from the Strategic Planning now underway.

**AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS RELATING TO TITLE IV**



New England Commission of Higher Education  
 301 Edgewater Place, Suite 210, Wakefield, MA  
 01880 Tel: 781-425-7785 | [neche.org](http://neche.org)

**AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH  
 FEDERAL REGULATIONS RELATING TO TITLE  
 IV**

Periodically, member institutions are asked to affirm their compliance with federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including relevant requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act.

- 1. Credit Transfer Policies.** The institution’s policy on transfer of credit is publicly disclosed through its website and other relevant publications. The institution includes a statement of its criteria for transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education along with a list of institutions with which it has articulation agreements. (NECHE Policy 95. See also *Standards for Accreditation* 4.29-4.32 and 9.18.)

URL	<a href="#">Our Mission - Fulbright</a>
Print Publications	
Self-study/Fifth-year Report Page Reference	Page 27

- 2. Student Complaints.** “Policies on student rights and responsibilities, including grievance procedures, are clearly stated, well publicized and readily available, and fairly and consistently administered.” (*Standards for Accreditation* 5.18, 9.8, and 9.18.)

URL	<a href="#">Our Mission - Fulbright</a>
Print Publications	
Self-study/Fifth-year Report Page Reference	Page 42

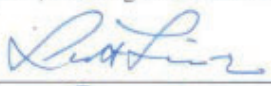
- 3. Distance and Correspondence Education: Verification of Student Identity:** If the institution offers distance education or correspondence education, it has processes in place to establish that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit. The institution protects student privacy and notifies students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity. (NECHE Policy 95. See also *Standards for Accreditation* 4.48.)

Method(s) used for verification	N/A
Self-study/Fifth-year Report Page Reference	

- 4. FOR COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS ONLY: Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Opportunity for Public Comment:** The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to notify the public of an upcoming comprehensive evaluation and to solicit comments. (NECHE Policy 77.)

URL	<a href="#">Invitation for Public Comments: The Upcoming Comprehensive Evaluation visit of The New England Commission of Higher Education - Fulbright</a>
Print Publications	
Self-study Page Reference	Page DFF58

The undersigned affirms that Fulbright University Vietnam meets the above federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including those enumerated above.

Chief Executive Officer:   
 Scott Fritzen

Date: March 11, 2024

*March 2016, June 2020, August 2021*