



Strategic Plan

FY 2017–2022
2019 Update

Strategic Planning Team

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Vision

We envision a future in which any U.S. student who dreams of studying abroad will be able to participate. We believe the value of education abroad is so great that no barrier—financial, curricular, or personal—should be insurmountable. We foresee a future in which our scholars work to increase global understanding, give back to their communities, and mentor future generations of Fund for Education Abroad scholars.

Mission

The Fund for Education Abroad (FEA) provides scholarships and ongoing support to students who are underrepresented among the U.S. study abroad population. FEA makes life-changing, international experiences accessible to all by supporting minority and first-generation college students before, during, and after they participate in education abroad programs.

COVER |

Lindsay Lebel

Fund for Education Abroad (FEA) Scholar 2011-12:
Morocco, Argentina, India, South Africa
(Tufts University)

<http://fundforeducationabroad.org/author/lindsay-lebel>

The Fund for Education Abroad (FEA) was established in 2010 to address the need for an independent scholarship provider to enable more American college students to study abroad. FEA is the only national nonprofit study abroad scholarship provider funded exclusively with philanthropic support, and the only independent organization dedicated to providing scholarships to students who are least likely to study abroad. FEA increases access for promising first-generation college students, students of minority background, and/or community-college students with scholarship awards of up to \$10,000, the largest independent award available.

The FEA Board and Staff are judicious stewards of resources and are committed to sustainably and intentionally

- (i) increasing the number of scholarship awards for underrepresented students with established financial need,
- (ii) delivering on high-quality programming to support our scholars and alumni,
- (iii) broadening brand engagement and reach, and
- (iv) enhancing and maintaining organizational, governance, and financial processes to ensure the fulfillment of the FEA mission.

The Fund for Education Abroad by the Numbers

- > Since 2010, **more than \$1.8 million** disbursed to **465 undergraduates** for study around the world
- > **61% first-generation** college students
- > **79% minority** students
- > **32% community college** students (now or in the past)
- > FEA reviewed **2,354 completed applications during the annual application cycle** of 2019-2020, and an additional **1,800 in the Spring application cycle** for a **total of 4,154 annual applications**
- > **\$605,000 awarded** to 175 students (or 4% of applicants) in 2019

The Next Three Years

FEA is poised to invest more deeply in the international education of the next generation, sustainably scaling our efforts so that our scholars may work to increase understanding, give back to their communities, and mentor future generations of FEA Scholars. This strategic plan provides a roadmap to accomplish the following goals and objectives:

Goals

Goal One:

DEEPEN ACCESS

FEA is a mission-driven organization focused on access and equity, yet the dilemma remains that only 4% of applicants received awards as of 2019. This “highly selective” award rate is more competitive than Ivy League college admissions. The number of high-quality student applicants far exceeds the number of available scholarships. FEA envisions a future in which “no barrier—financial, curricular, or personal—should be insurmountable”. However, our low award rate is a perceived barrier, and particularly discourages the first-generation college and minority students we seek to fund.

Our top priority is to increase our capacity to reach and fund greater numbers of applicants who are statistically, least likely to study abroad, raising the number of scholars funded and the amount of monies disbursed.

To ensure we reach these students and generate the highest-quality applicant pool, we commit to increased recruitment and outreach efforts.

Objective 1: Increase institutional outreach by 15% each year (as of 2019, 1000 campus contacts) with direct and digital information mailings.

Objective 2: Remain vigilant that our application review process foregrounds all worthy applicants and that selected students are among those least likely to study abroad without scholarship support.

Objective 3: Work with a national steering committee to lead a philanthropic campaign of \$10million by end of 2022 (as of 2019, \$3.5million) to increase capacity to fund more students.

Objective 4: Increase percentage of applicants awarded scholarships to 8% (as of 2019, it is 4%).

Goal Two:

INVEST IN SCHOLARS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER STUDY ABROAD

Our internationally educated, diverse alumni pool is a significant and growing societal resource, and for FEA, the accomplishments and testimonials of alumni substantiate the impact of our mission. Alumni express gratitude to FEA for making possible their “dreams” of study abroad and are one of our most important future donor constituencies; they seek opportunities to give back as volunteers, develop professionally, and connect to a community committed to international exchange. ***As we increase the number of students we fund annually, it is urgent that FEA create programmatic, mutually beneficial, long-term relationships with all scholars before, during, and after they study abroad.***

Alumni programming will provide leadership opportunities, professional development, and a network of alumni, led by an Alumni Council, which will convene quarterly by phone and annually at an Alumni Conference. FEA will foster the professional development of alumni through alumni programming.

Objective 1: Before study abroad, connect students with a peer mentor recently returned from the same region of the world where the student is studying, and network scholars to their “class.”

Objective 2: During study abroad, ensure students blog weekly following a career curriculum focused on key competencies learned abroad and sought by employers, fostering their career readiness.

Objective 3: After study abroad, network alumni to other classes with a strategic communications plan positioning FEA as a long-term professional resource for international engagement and alumni leadership opportunities, including Alumni Ambassador roles on campus, Alumni Council members, and/or Alumnus Trustee roles, serving a two-year limited term on the FEA Board of Trustees.

Objective 4: Pilot a programmatic, educational relationship with a corporate partner (or partners) willing to collaborate with FEA on how best to provide professional development opportunities to alumni, whether through mentoring, internships, or other integrations into professional life.

Goal Three:

BROADEN BRAND ENGAGEMENT

To offer a value potentially greater than the financial award itself we must broaden brand engagement to create a recognized national scholarship that conveys an enduring stamp of approval to the recipient. Receipt of an FEA Scholarship will be emblematic of a promising student of diverse background, who overcame statistical odds to have an immersive education abroad.

Further, broadening brand engagement will increase our reach to students who had not previously considered study abroad.

Finally, broader brand engagement of FEA as a sustainably managed, mission-focused non-profit that awards exceptional scholars and delivers high-quality career integration programming will engender confidence among donors and facilitate our mission.

- Objective 1:** Introduce an FEA Finalist category to recognize top-scoring, unfunded students.
- Objective 2:** Assert our values with a diversity statement and ensure that our purpose is also expressed in statement.
- Objective 3:** Rebrand our scholarship categories, including general, named, and legacy scholarship to create greater engagement with funders.
- Objective 4:** Create a strategic communications plan for the remainder of the campaign, and at its conclusion in 2022, engage in a brand audit.

Goal Four:

BUILD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

FEA is committed to financial sustainability, transparency, and the judicious use of resources to meet or exceed commitments to stakeholders. FEA will continue to engender trust and strengthen relationships with constituents by following financial and fundraising controls consistent with good business practices.

Campaign gifts to fund named scholarships, programmatic giving opportunities, and the endowment, the bedrock on which FEA will build a sustainable future, will serve generations of scholars to come.

New programs including the Access Partner program for vetted businesses offers annual support of the mission and dedicated scholarships hosted by FEA. An increase to the number of members of the Board of Trustees during the comprehensive campaign will help FEA increase its reach to new audiences and support for programming. In addition, policies and internal controls will scale to match the growth of the organization.

- Objective 1:** Establish a financial roadmap toward \$3million annual revenue, maintaining programmatic expenses of 85% or more, with overhead expenses at 15% or less, while investing 10% of unrestricted revenue in an operational endowment for the sustainability of FEA.
- Objective 2:** Develop programmatic partnerships to build synergies between partner organizations and FEA’s goals including the Access Partner program and Advisory Board, and add a new corporate partnership program that seeks to mentor and/or foster opportunities for FEA alumni.
- Objective 3:** Broaden and deepen our touch points with both existing and potential donors to ensure support for the annual fund with a continued focus on the annual Scholar Gala, volunteer fundraising for dedicated scholarships, and alumni donors, while establishing an endowment and a planned giving program.
- Objective 4:** Steward the organization with comprehensive policies outlining practices, partnership vetting, and succession planning and the like, to ensure consistent delivery of the FEA mission.



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