



Fund for
Education Abroad

2025-2029

STRATEGIC PLAN





MISSION

To provide scholarships and ongoing support to students with financial need who face barriers to participation in education abroad.

FEA makes life-changing international experiences accessible by supporting students before, during, and after they participate in education abroad programs.

VISION

In today's interconnected world, we believe education abroad is an integral component of higher education. We envision a future in which all U.S. students are given equal access to education abroad experiences, regardless of socio-economic status.

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.

JEDI STATEMENT

FEA was born of the imperative to increase access to education abroad. Our call to action is Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) and has been since day one. We provide access to students who represent the rich diversity of our nation yet who are underrepresented in study abroad. In our day-to-day work we are grounded in these principles.

FEA is committed to the ongoing development and implementation of inclusive best practices in scholarship awarding, student support, nonprofit governance, and organizational development and management.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Co-founders Kate Simpson & Mark Lenhart

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dear FEA Community,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am proud to share with you the Fund for Education Abroad's new strategic plan, which is a roadmap that reflects both the strength of our mission and the ambition of our future.

Since FEA's founding, our mission has been clear: to increase access to education abroad for students historically underrepresented in international education. Today, as demand for our programs grows and the landscape of higher education continues to shift, that mission is more urgent than ever.

This strategic plan emerged from a highly collaborative and inclusive process, engaging voices from across our community—scholars, alumni, staff, donors, Trustees and emeriti, and institutional partners. Together, we envision a future where FEA not only sustains its work, but boldly scales its impact and leads the field in reimagining access to global learning.

The plan is organized around three core strategies:

- **Strengthen Programmatic Impact:** We will enhance our programming by deepening institutional partnerships, removing systemic barriers, and asserting FEA's role as a national leader in equitable education abroad.
- **Deepen Philanthropic Capacity:** We will expand our fundraising efforts through a shared, organization-wide commitment to philanthropy, aligning revenue strategy with the resources required to meet student need.
- **Leverage Board Leadership:** We will renew and strengthen the Board's structure, culture, and strategic role to ensure we are fully equipped to govern with purpose and partner in FEA's mission.

As Board Chair, I am inspired by the momentum we have built and by the possibilities ahead. This strategic plan positions FEA to meet this moment with clarity, resilience, and ambition. I look forward to working alongside you to bring this vision to life.

Dr. Amar Rewari, MD
Board Chair Fund for Education Abroad

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIES

By the end of 2029, Fund for Education Abroad intends to be a stronger, more impactful organization; therefore, the organization and its leadership will adopt three strategies to ensure focused growth.

STRATEGY 1 | STRENGTHEN PROGRAMMATIC IMPACT

FEA will enhance its core programming by deepening institutional partnerships, reducing persistent access barriers, and leading sector-wide innovation in accessible education abroad. This strategy positions FEA as both a direct service provider and a national leader in transforming and strengthening education abroad.

STRATEGY 2 | DEEPEN PHILANTHROPIC CAPACITY

To sustain and scale its impact, FEA will expand its fundraising capacity by aligning revenue strategy with organizational needs as well as strengthening a culture of philanthropy across all stakeholders, including the Board, staff, Access Advisory Board, volunteers, and donors. The strategy emphasizes shared responsibility, strategic investment, and long-term donor engagement to support FEA's mission.

STRATEGY 3 | LEVERAGE BOARD LEADERSHIP

FEA will adapt the structure, culture, and strategic role of its Board of Trustees to ensure it is equipped to govern effectively and partner in advancing the organization's mission. This includes refining Board practices, setting meaningful goals, and cultivating a high-performing, mission-aligned leadership.

Within each strategy are a series of goals. These goals contribute to the strategy through an action or series of actions and practices that are defined by best practices and informed by the context of both the environment and the organization's capacity. A strategic plan is intended to be the elevated set of strategies that the Board uses to understand impact. It is the responsibility of the staff to enact these strategies with regular reporting to the Board and their ongoing support and policy governance.



STRATEGY 1 | STRENGTHEN PROGRAMMATIC IMPACT



FEA's programming lies at the heart of its mission which is to remove barriers and create pathways for students to access education abroad opportunities. Throughout the strategic planning process, stakeholders from across the organization (Board, staff, donors, scholars, and partners) consistently emphasized the critical importance of strengthening and expanding FEA's programmatic offerings. While previous strategic plans have focused on alumni programming, FEA will align its programming in support of current and prospective study abroad participants. Given the shifting political and funding landscape, we recognize the possibility of a "lost generation" of future diplomats, internationally-minded business leaders, and globally adept STEM collaborators and researchers. We recognize the significant role we must play to meet this moment.



This strategy focuses on deepening relationships with institutional partners, removing persistent barriers to access, and asserting FEA's leadership role in shaping equitable study abroad opportunities.

GOAL 1 | DEEPEN RELATIONSHIPS

- **Recalibrate Access Partner Program:** Assess the current structure and benefits of the Access Partner Program to ensure deeper engagement, clearer value alignment, and sustained commitment from institutional partners.
- **Align Board of Trustees and Access Advisory Board:** Foster collaboration and shared accountability between these two governance bodies to create a unified vision for partner engagement and access strategy.
- **Create an Innovative Tiered Partnership Model:** Develop differentiated levels of partnership that reflect institutional capacity, commitment to access, and shared leadership in the field.

IN 15 YEARS...



“FEA’s scholarship gave me a chance. It was an experience out of the country that I will never forget, but the scholarship itself was an important vote of confidence in my sentiments that studying abroad was important and valuable for me as an individual and emerging global citizen. It was nice to be recognized as having barriers to making this experience a reality, and then have those barriers knocked down significantly through an FEA scholarship.”

– FEA Scholar, 2019



GOAL 2 | REDUCE ADDITIONAL BARRIERS

- **Develop an Independent FEA Study Abroad Office:** Pilot a virtual or hybrid advising program for students at institutions without dedicated study abroad offices—offering support in planning, applications, pre-departure, and re-entry.
- **Shift Resource Allocation for Scholarships:** Adjust the scholarship application and selection processes to maximize organizational capacity, deploying FEA’s limited resources as efficiently as possible to make impactful awards for scholars facing significant barriers to study abroad.

GOAL 3 | ADVANCE ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- **Support Institutions with Limited Infrastructure:** Create tools, templates, and direct support services for colleges and universities with small or no study abroad offices to help them build internal capacity.
- **Unite the Field as a Convener and Expert:** Position FEA as the central thought leader on access in study abroad by convening institutions, funders, and students around policy change, research, and field transformation.

STRATEGY 2 | DEEPEN PHILANTHROPIC CAPACITY



To sustain and scale its impact, FEA must elevate its fundraising strategy in alignment with the organization’s long-term vision. With growing demand for access to education abroad and a commitment to awarding scholarships equitably, increased investment is essential. Deepening FEA’s philanthropic capacity is not only a financial goal, it’s a shift that invites deeper engagement, broader visibility, and stronger partnerships for the organization.

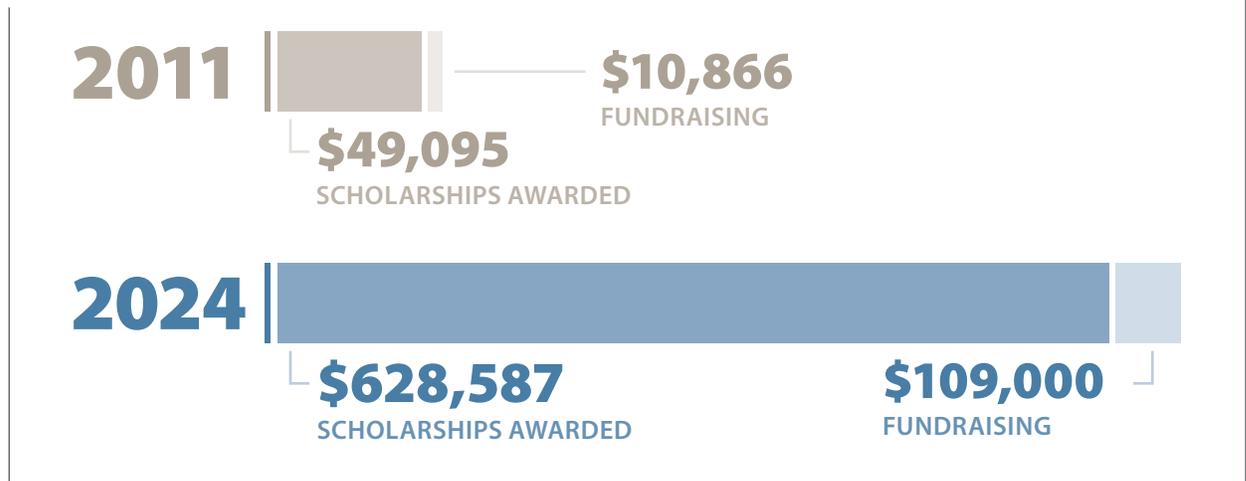
This strategy prioritizes understanding real-time financial needs, building a fundraising mindset across all levels, and expanding the capacity of FEA’s Board and staff to achieve greater successes in achieving the mission.



GOAL 1 | UNDERSTAND ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS

- **Calibrate Fundraising Goals with Organizational Strategy:** Align revenue targets with programmatic growth, staffing plans, and long-term impact metrics. Fundraising goals should reflect operating needs, current programming, and expanded offerings.
- **Shift Toward Unrestricted Philanthropy:** Promote and normalize giving that allows FEA to deploy funds where they are most urgently needed—particularly in supporting top scholarship applicants, regardless of restrictions tied to donor intent.
- **Conduct Scenario Planning:** Model various fundraising outcomes (e.g., conservative vs. aggressive scenarios) to ensure the organization is prepared for shifts in donor behavior or economic conditions.

CAPACITY COMPARISON





GOAL 2 | BUILD A CULTURE OF FUNDRAISING

- **Develop a Compelling, Mission-Driven Case for Support:** Clearly articulate FEA's value proposition, impact, and urgency in materials that inspire giving from individuals, foundations, and institutional partners.
- **Co-Create Fundraising Goals with Board and Staff:** Engage both Board and staff in setting annual philanthropic goals. Empower them with training, tools, and shared language to fundraise effectively.
- **Normalize Fundraising as a Shared Responsibility:** Foster an organizational mindset where fundraising is viewed as a collective effort (not limited to staff) by integrating philanthropy into Board orientation, retreats, and goals.

GOAL 3 | EXPAND FUNDRAISING FLUENCIES

- **Strategically Grow Staff:** Add staff to meet increased fundraising goals and diversify revenue streams.
- **Focus on Institutional Giving and Partnerships:** Deepen relationships with corporations, foundations, and academic institutions to unlock larger, more sustainable funding sources.
- **Build a Pipeline of Major Donors:** Launch a major gifts strategy to cultivate high-net-worth individuals and other stakeholders with capacity and commitment to FEA's mission.

Photos (both pages): FEA Scholar Alumni and Volunteers the 2024 Annual Scholar Gala.

STRATEGY 3 | LEVERAGE BOARD LEADERSHIP

A dynamic, engaged, and forward-thinking Board of Trustees is essential to the vitality and long-term success of any nonprofit organization. FEA's Board has played a pivotal role in shaping the organization's vision, fueling its growth, and ensuring its sustainability. As FEA moves into a new chapter, the Board must evolve alongside the organization.

This strategy focuses on renewing and strengthening the Board's structure, culture, and strategic role to better meet emerging challenges and opportunities. The goal is to foster a high-performing, mission-aligned Board that not only governs but also partners with staff and stakeholders in achieving FEA's long-term vision.

BOARD GIVING

100%
in our "Bringing
the World Home"
campaign.

2017-2022

100%

2023 & 2024

GOAL 1 | REFLECT ON CURRENT BOARD FUNCTIONING

- **Conduct a Governance Audit:** Conduct a comprehensive review of Board practices & policies, structures, and officer & member responsibilities to identify opportunities for increased engagement, efficient decision-making, and seamless alignment with the organization's mission and fiduciary responsibilities.
- **Evaluate Role in Staff Support:** Assess the Board's current and potential involvement in staff development, performance evaluation, and leadership cultivation to strengthen the connection between governance and organizational growth.
- **Review Committee Structures and Charters:** Ensure Board committees are strategically aligned, clearly defined, and adequately resourced to support organizational needs and improve accountability.

GOAL 2 | ENVISION AND SET BOARD GOALS

- **Develop Annual and Multiyear Goals:** Collaboratively identify short- and long-term objectives for the Board that support both internal capacity building and external mission advancement. These goals should be specific, measurable, and integrated into the organization's broader strategic plan.
- **Establish Metrics of Effectiveness:** Define success both individually and collectively, including measurable indicators for participation, leadership, contributions, and strategic impact.
- **Implement Self-Assessments:** Introduce a structured annual self-evaluation process for Board members and committees to reflect on performance and identify areas for growth.



FEA Trustees, partners, and donors at the 2022 Annual Scholar Gala.

GOAL 3 | ADJUST & SUPPORT BOARD CULTURE

- **Foster Shared Learning and Development:** Create regular opportunities for Board members to grow through training, reflection, and dialogue. Better utilize channels for regular, effective communication.
- **Recruit for Alignment and Impact:** Actively seek out new Board members whose skills, experiences, and values align with FEA's evolving goals, addressing identified gaps and enhancing the Board's diversity, expertise, and capacity.
- **Develop a Board Mentorship Program:** Pair new Board members with experienced ones to accelerate onboarding, deepen engagement, and build stronger relationships among Trustees.
- **Celebrate Successes and Contributions:** Create mechanisms to regularly recognize Board achievements, both individual and collective, to build morale and commitment.



CONCLUSION

This strategic plan charts a bold path forward for Fund for Education Abroad. Grounded in FEA's mission and shaped by the perspectives, hopes, and vision of our community, it affirms our unwavering commitment to accessible and transformative global experiences for all students. The plan is both a reflection of where we've been and a vision for what's possible when governance, philanthropy, and programming work in tandem. Across the three strategies—programmatic impact, fundraising, and Board leverage—runs a common thread: shared responsibility.

We believe that progress is only possible when we act together. Expanding our impact, deepening our culture of philanthropy, and leveraging our Board leadership will require not only new tools and resources, but also a renewed sense of purpose. Every Trustee, staff member, donor, scholar, and partner has a vital role to play in bringing this plan to life.

As we enter this next chapter, we do so with gratitude for the momentum we've built and with resolve for the work ahead. Now is the time to lead with courage, act with integrity, and invest deeply in a future where global education is truly accessible to all.

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