



<http://www.vef.gov>

## **OVERVIEW: November 2011**

The Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF) was established by the U.S. Congress under the Vietnam Education Foundation Act (2000), creating educational exchange activities for Vietnamese nationals to pursue graduate studies and professional development at U.S. universities and for Americans to teach at Vietnamese universities and, thus, building the bilateral relationship between the United States and Vietnam. VEF is governed by a thirteen-member Board of Directors: two U.S. Senators, two U.S. Representatives, three U.S. cabinet members, and six members from the U.S. citizenry appointed by the U.S. President. A Board-appointed American Executive Director oversees VEF operations, conducted through two highly coordinated offices: the U.S. Headquarters in the Washington, D.C., area and the Hanoi Field office in Vietnam. VEF receives an annual budget of U.S. \$5 million from the U.S. Congress until 2018.

The VEF programs focus on the sciences (natural, physical, and environmental), engineering, mathematics, medicine (including public health and health sciences), and technology (including information technology). The following are the core VEF activities: (1) Fellowship Program, bringing Vietnamese nationals to the United States for graduate degree programs, funded through cost-sharing agreements with U.S. universities; (2) Visiting Scholar Program, funding Vietnamese nationals with a Ph.D. to develop their professional skills via studies, research, and/or observational activities at leading U.S. institutions; and (3) U.S. Faculty Scholar Program, providing grants to American professors to teach courses at Vietnamese institutions for one or two semesters, on-site in Vietnam or via interactive, real-time videoconferencing. VEF capacity-building efforts build the relationship between U.S. and Vietnamese institutions and government entities and strengthen the foundations in Vietnam for the return of VEF Fellows and Visiting Scholars to their home country.

The following data summarizes select activities since operations began in March 2003 until November 2011.

### ***Educational Exchange Programs***

Under the **Fellowship Program**, launched in 2003, VEF has supported **378 Fellows** in graduate programs at **80 top-tier U.S. universities**. Of the 158 Fellows who have already received graduate degrees, 103 have been awarded doctoral degrees and 55 have received Master's degrees. Forty of these graduates are completing postgraduate Academic Training in the United States before their return to Vietnam. The number of VEF Fellows currently enrolled in U.S. graduate school programs is 220.

Of the **118 Fellows**, who have **completed their academic program** with VEF:

- **82 (70%) have returned** to Vietnam:
  - ✓ 35 (43%) work in the corporate sector.
  - ✓ 20 (24%) hold positions in the academic and research sector.
  - ✓ 11 (13%) work in the development sector in areas of research and education.
  - ✓ 9 (11%) head their own private companies or are self-employed.
  - ✓ 4 ( 5%) returned to Vietnam recently.
  - ✓ 3 ( 4%) work in the civil service.
- 9 continue to pursue doctoral programs in the United States through other sources of funding or are in the United States as J-2 dependents.
- 27 are working overseas in the following countries: Australia, Canada, England, France, Israel, Korea, the Netherlands, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, and the United States.

Of the **220 Fellows**, who are **currently enrolled** in U.S. universities:

- 92% are pursuing doctoral degrees and 8% are pursuing Master's degrees.
- 68% are male and 32% female.
- 38% are pursuing degrees in engineering, 17% in computer science, 14% in biological sciences, 9% in physical sciences (physics and chemistry), 9% in public health, 7% in mathematics, 5% in agriculture, and 1% in environmental science.

Under the **Visiting Scholar Program**, whose first cohort began in 2007, **32** top-level Vietnamese with doctorates have been sent to **25** major U.S. universities for a self-designed, post-doctorate level program for up to 12 months.

- **29** have completed their professional development programs and have returned to Vietnam.
- **2** are expected to finish postdoctoral programs in the United States by August 2012; **1** has been approved to defer to the 2012-13 Academic Year.

Under the **U.S. Faculty Scholar Program**, whose first cohort began in 2008, **17** American professors have been selected to teach courses at **16** Vietnamese institutions either on-site in Vietnam or via video conferencing from the United States.

- **11** have completed their teaching programs.
- **6** are engaged in teaching programs during the present 2011-2012 Academic Year.

**109 leading U.S. research universities** have joined the cost-sharing VEF Alliance.

### Capacity Building

To strengthen science and technology in Vietnam and to foster opportunities for collaborative exchanges between the United States and Vietnam, VEF has organized the following activities.

- **54** scientists from **44** U.S. institutions delivered **145** lectures/presentations at **49** Vietnamese host institutions.
- **11** seminars/workshops were presented in Vietnam by **29** experts, representing **16** U.S. organizations.
- **2** major research reports on higher education in Vietnam: (1) *Observations on Undergraduate Education in Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, and Physics at Select Universities in Vietnam* (August 2006); and (2) *Observations on the Current Status of Education in the Agricultural Sciences in Vietnam* (January 2007).
- Special projects were initiated and/or developed by VEF, including:
  - (1) Millennium Science Initiative (MSI) to establish Centers of Excellence in Vietnam in science and technology in cooperation with the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton, NJ) and the Science Initiative Group (2004 – 2006). Initiated at the request of the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST).
  - (2) World Class University (International Standard University) development in Vietnam: arrangements to visit leading U.S. universities (2006). Initiated at the request of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET).
  - (3) Vietnam Fund for Supporting Technological Creations (VIFOTEC), encouraging creativity in the sciences and technology in Vietnam (2006, 2007) in cooperation with MOET.
  - (4) Conferences in Vietnam: Young Vietnamese Scientists Meeting (June 2005, July 2007); International Biomedical Engineering Conference (July 2007); and OpenCourseWare Consortium (OCWC) Global Meeting (May 2010).
  - (5) Vietnam OpenCourseWare (VOCW) in Vietnam: a repository of high quality, up-to-date teaching and learning materials, available free as open educational resources. VEF successfully transferred its responsibilities for the VOCW program to MOET in January 2010. The project began in 2005.
  - (6) Creative Commons License (CCL) Vietnam to facilitate recognition of intellectual property rights related to VOCW, while CCL serves all forms of creativity. VEF transferred its responsibilities in 2010 to Creative Commons International and a Vietnamese law firm, D&N International.
- VEF assisted the **Vietnam International Education Development (VIED) division of MOET**, at their request, to develop their scholarship program, emulating the VEF process by providing the following: (1) training on developing a successful application and selection process; (2) related VEF materials and forms as well as the VEF Online Management System software; (3) occasions to observe and participate in VEF operations and procedures, including interviews and orientations; and (4) introductions to U.S. university members of the VEF Alliance.
- VEF assisted the **National Foundation for Science and Technology Development (NAFOSTED) of MOST** to develop their Online Management System based on that of VEF.
- At the request of the former U.S. Ambassador Michael Michalak, VEF co-organized and co-sponsored, together with the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi and MOET, the **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Education Conference** in Vietnam in April 2011 to strengthen higher education ties between the United States and Vietnam.

International educational exchange builds bridges between countries and people, contributing to global peace, tolerance, and understanding. As scientists and engineers, the VEF Fellows, Visiting Scholars, and Faculty Scholars are contributing to a mutually beneficial relationship between Vietnam and the United States.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Contact information:**

**VEF U.S. Headquarters:** 2111 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 700, Arlington, VA 22201, USA  
Phone: 1-703-351-5053; Fax: 1-703-351-1423; Email: [information@vef.gov](mailto:information@vef.gov)

**VEF Vietnam Field Office:** Hanoi Towers, Suite 502, 49 Hai Ba Trung St., Hoan Kiem Dist., Hanoi, Vietnam  
Phone: 84-4-3936-3670; Fax: 84-4-3936-3672; Email: [vefhanoi@vef.gov](mailto:vefhanoi@vef.gov)