



Comisión de Intercambio Cultural,
Educativo y Científico entre España
y los Estados Unidos de America

Commission for Cultural, Educational
and Scientific Exchange between
the United States of America and Spain

ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021

November 2021

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. HIGHLIGHTS

As in previous years, the Commission received its core support from the U.S. Department of State and the Spanish government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation and through the Ministry of Universities.

The Ministry of Universities also continued collaborating with the Commission through a specific program for Spanish Master seeking students, although it temporarily ceased the program for Spanish Scholars.

COVID19 impacted all programs and management of grants. However, aside from the aforementioned program for Spanish Scholars, the Commission was able to maintain all different programs, albeit with a significant reduction in the total number of grants.

Funds received for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) program from regional governments remained unchanged as did the number of awards in this important program.

The Commission continued receiving support from Spanish universities willing to host US Fulbright professors and researchers although some of the Scholars withdrew due to the pandemic. Of the 25 Scholars who were able to complete their research and teaching objectives despite the pandemic, 13 were co-sponsored by 8 different Spanish universities. The Commission was in constant communication with all universities to keep them fully informed, and mutual collaboration promises to remain strong once the pandemic is over.

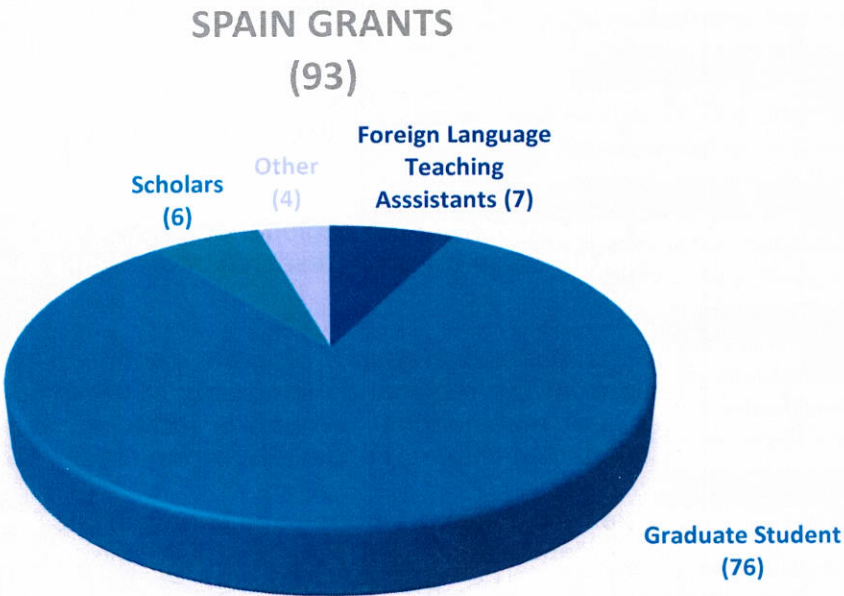
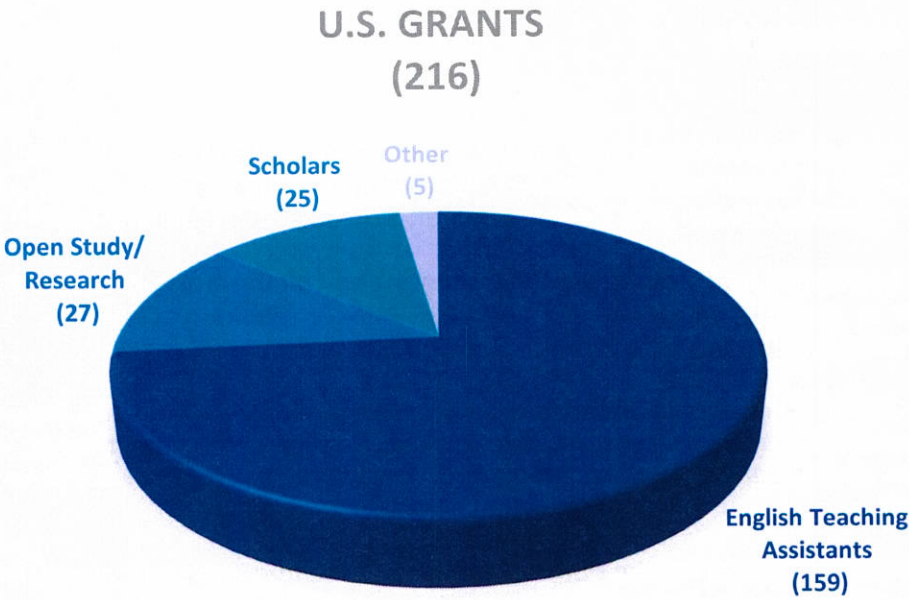
The FLTA program was substantially reduced due to constraints coming from the US Universities, and the Commission had to negotiate the new scenario with the already selected grantees.

Under a new agreement with the Regional Government of Galicia, it sponsored a program for Galician artists to carry out research or academic studies at institutions in the United States.

Funding for the Spanish graduate program continued to be supplemented through sponsorship from the regional governments of the Junta de Andalucía and private foundations and multinational companies including, Cosentino, Fundación Iberdrola España, Fundación Mapfre, Fundación Ramón Areces and Grifols.

The Commission continued promoting and enhancing its PreDoctoral Research Program, allowing doctoral candidates from Spanish universities a six to twelve month research stay in the U.S. with the objective of completing their thesis upon their return to Spain. As a result, the Commission signed an agreement with the Regional Government of Andalucía whereby it provided additional funds to award doctoral researchers at universities of that Region.

FY-21 Grants



FY-21 Non-Core Sponsorships

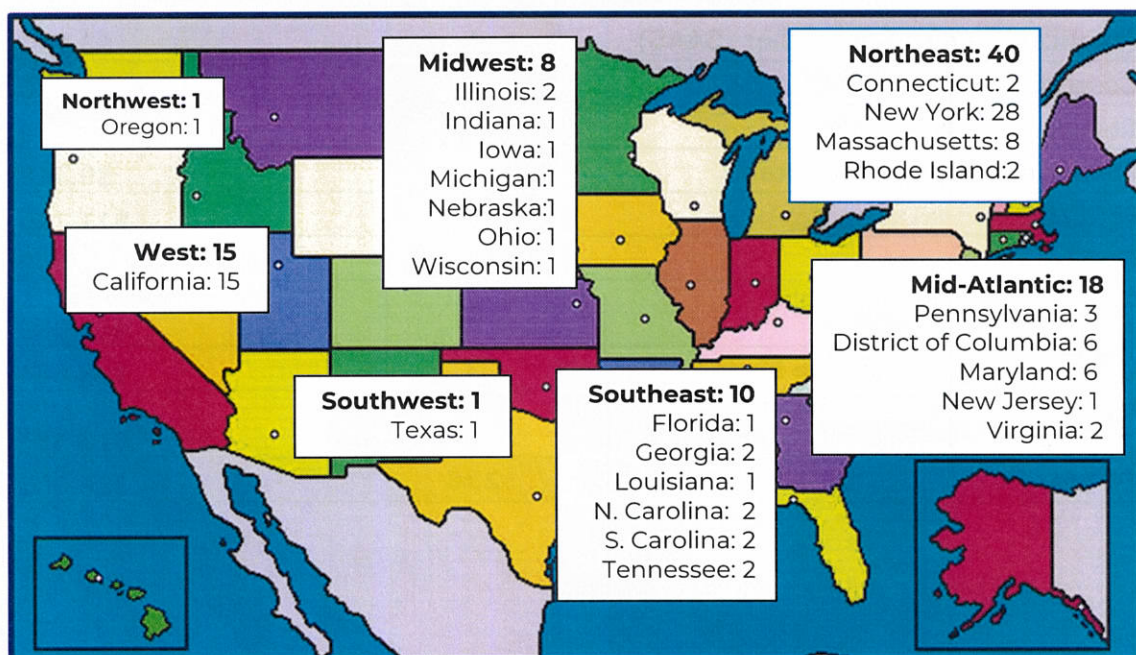
SPONSORS	#GRANTS	AMOUNT CO-FINANCED
Galicia Regional Government	49	\$628.021
Ministry of Universities	20	\$1.116.732
Canarias Regional Government	32	\$255.925
Madrid Regional Government	29	\$235.012
La Rioja Regional Government	24	\$157.171
Asturias Regional Government	14	\$96.772
Andalucía Regional Government	10	\$477.581
IE Business School	7	\$82.261
Universidad Camilo José Cela	6	\$65.303
Ministry of Culture and Sport	5	\$292.700
Universidad de Málaga	9	\$99.076
Fundación Iberdrola España	2	\$117.080
International Institute Madrid	2	\$5.000
Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona	1	\$17.932
Universidad de Murcia	1	\$12.820
Universidad Politécnica de Madrid	1	\$18.279
Fundación Mapfre	2	\$117.080
Fundación Ramón Areces	4	\$234.160
Universidad Carlos III	1	\$24.031
Universidad de la Laguna	4	\$45.423
Universidad de Salamanca	2	\$4.683
American Studies Researcher (SAAS)	1	\$3.512
Cosentino	1	\$58.540
Colegio Decroly	1	\$10.884
Fundación Secretariado Gitano	1	\$9.718
FERE/CECA	1	\$11.146
Grifols	1	\$58.540
National Institute for Public Administration	1	\$65.385
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid	3	\$48.684
Universidad de las Palmas de Gran Canaria	1	\$16.557
TOTAL	236	\$4.386.008

Geographic Distribution

U.S. Grants in Spain (216)



Spanish Grants in the U.S. (93)



II. ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. EUROPEAN REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

a. U.S Program

Due to the pandemic, European regional activities were very limited, but two of our predoctoral researchers and six teaching assistants were grateful for the opportunity to attend the EU-US Young Leaders Seminar: "Future of Cities" seminar hosted by the Fulbright Commission in Brussels.

b. Spanish Program

The Commission in Spain is a Permanent Observer on the Andorra Fulbright Bilateral Committee. Collaboration continued by attending the annual Bilateral Committee meeting. Support services were offered to the departing Andorran student, who was invited to the virtual pre-departure orientation organized by the Commission.

2. GRANT SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

a. U.S Program

**Note: All grant supporting activities during the 2020-21 grant year were held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Predeparture Webinars

Commission staff led a series of predeparture webinars for incoming grantees which highlighted topics including: the visa process, healthcare, travel, housing, banking, communication, and cultural adaptation.

Virtual Orientation

As Fulbright grantees arrived in Spain or prepared to arrive in Spain, the Commission organized and led a comprehensive [Orientation for US Grantees to Spain and Andorra](#), held in a virtual format due to the pandemic. This two-day-long orientation served as a way to welcome grantees and provide them with information about their grant, host region and Spain. It also served to review the support and resources available to them during the grant year. This included sessions on grant logistics, details on Spanish regions, pedagogy, research, cultural adaptation, and community-building activities.

Office Hours

With the intention of creating further avenues of support for grantees, the U.S. Program Team implemented a weekly time block for office hours. Each of the four Program Associate reserves four hours a week for intentional one-on-one communication with the grantees in their respective programs.

Volunteering & Community Involvement Webinar

The Fulbright Commission invited the U.S. Embassy in Madrid, the American Space Valencia, and EducationUSA Spain to present a [virtual session](#) to Fulbright Spain grantees in order to make grantees aware of volunteering & community engagement opportunities in Spain.

Host Institution Fulbright ETA Sessions

Commission staff led Fulbright ETA information sessions for the bilingual coordinators, or host institution representatives, of each respective region. These sessions outlined the purpose of the Fulbright program and offered clear information about the role of the Fulbright ETA in the institution.

Virtual Check-in Meetings with grantees in Asturias, La Rioja, Galicia, Madrid, Málaga, and the Canary Islands

Grantees in these six regions participated virtually in orientations for all language assistants organized by each regional government. Following these orientations, Commission staff led check-in meetings with the Fulbright grantees in order to give them an opportunity to voice their experiences and concerns with their host institutions, role as an ETA, and general adjustment.

Fulbright Annual Spain Video Competition

Fulbright Spain grantees were encouraged to participate in the Fulbright Spain Video Competition to illustrate their experience as a Fulbright grantee. They were introduced to the competition and given instructions during the Virtual Orientation. The Commission received [27 submissions](#) and voted on three winners to be featured at the End-of-Year celebration in June.

Virtual Magic Pedagogy Workshop



The Commission invited Spanish Fulbright grantee and magician, Manuel Oliver, to lead an [interactive virtual magic workshop](#) for interested Fulbright ETAs. Participants learned how to use magic to connect with their students emotionally and how to teach their students English by showing them how to do magic tricks in their classes.

End-of-Year Event for U.S. Grantees

On June 3, 2021, the Commission hosted a Virtual End-of-Year Event for the U.S. grantees completing their grants. The event featured the winners ([first place](#), [second place](#), and [third place](#)) of the 2020-21 Fulbright Spain Video Competition, included a talent show, and offered opportunities for grantees to reflect together on their experiences. Using the prompt, "Express your Fulbright experience in three words", grantees created a Word Cloud as a visual representation of these experiences.



b. Spanish Program

Fulbright grantees engage in grant enhancement activities in preparation to their departure, upon arrival in the U.S., during the grant period and as returned alumni. These supplementary activities are especially designed and organized to augment grant benefits as well as boost public visibility of the Fulbright program as a public-oriented service entity vis-à-vis competing educational exchange programs that lack benefits beyond basic grant allowances.

Pre-departure Virtual Orientations

In July 2021, a two-day-long, pre-departure virtual orientation program was held for academic year 2021-2022 departing students. The sessions offered special opportunities to bring together individuals from various student grant categories and backgrounds to form a cohesive group with common interests.

In total, 66 grantees attended, representing five Commission grant categories. Activities included: ice-breakers, staff presentations, discussions on grant administration topics and clarifying visa regulations. Alumni panels also shared personal, professional and academic experiences with departing grantees.



Opening slide to the "Cultural Aspects" section of the virtual pre-departure orientation

A second, smaller virtual orientation was organized in September for the five recently selected grantees of the Ministry of Culture Program in the Arts.

The Commission is also grateful to the U.S. Embassy in Madrid in their assistance in organizing group visa processing sessions for student grantees.



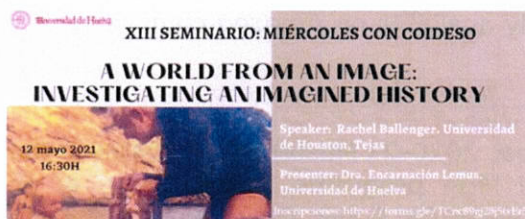
Screenshot of the presentation shared at Fulbright Program info sessions highlighting the "Prize to a Fulbright Trajectory" awarded to Dr. Javier Solana and presided over by H.M King Felipe VI

A rigorous campaign was carried out to increase public awareness of the Fulbright Program with 31 virtual information sessions attended by nearly 1,100 potential candidates.

III. GRANTEE AND ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. ACHIEVEMENTS

a. U.S. Program

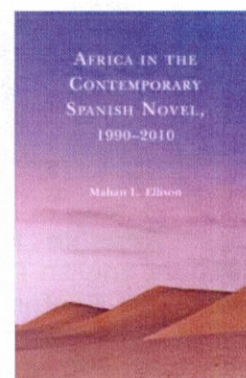


Rachel Ballenger, 2020-21 Predoctoral Researcher at the *Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales-CSIC* in Madrid and the *Universidad de Huelva*, presented at the Seminar titled "[A World from an Image. Investigating an Imagined History](#)" at the *Centro de Investigación en*

Pensamiento Contemporáneo e Innovación para el Desarrollo Social (COIDESO) de la *Universidad de Huelva* in May 2021.

Audrey De Paepe, 2018-19 Predoctoral Research & 2019-20 renewing Predoctoral Research Mentor at the *Universitat de Barcelona*, was first author on [the journal article "Gray Matter Vulnerabilities Predict Longitudinal Development of Apathy in Huntington's Disease"](#) published in May 2021 in *Movement Disorders*, the official journal of the International Parkinson and Movement Disorder Society.

Mahan Ellison, 2020-21 Joint Spain-Morocco Senior Scholar at the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*, had his book [Africa in the Contemporary Spanish Novel, 1990-2010](#) published in August 2021 by Lexington Books.



Maia Evrona Donnelly, 2019-20 Joint Greece-Spain Senior Scholar, had her [translations from Yiddish of poems by Avrom Sutzkever published in the Columbia Journal](#) as well as [on the Yiddish Book Center website](#); the latter, in particular, speaks to both the Greek and Spanish elements of her Fulbright project.



Megan Feragne, 2020-21 English Teaching Assistant in Galicia wrote a multilingual children's book about daily life in Galicia. The storyline is about a young girl named Sabela, a common Galician first name, and her pen pal, Sydney, from the United States. Throughout the book, Sabela mails letters to Sydney explaining her lifestyle and incorporates daily expressions in *Gallego*. The book was published and presented at the Ourense Public Library and included a press release in *El Espanol*. The book is titled ["To Galicia We Go! ¡A Galicia Vamos!"](#) and is currently available on Amazon.com.

Bryce Johnston and Margaret McLeod, 2020-21 Master's Candidates in the International Development and International MBA programs, respectively, at IE University in Madrid, worked with the USC Center for Public Diplomacy to publish their essay ["Is Mutual Understanding Through Exchange Still Possible?"](#) which affirmed the significance of the mission of the Fulbright Program in a post-COVID world.



[Melanie Kirby](#), 2019-20 National Geographic grantee at the *Coordinadora de Organizaciones de Agricultores y Ganaderos* (COAG) in Málaga, was [interviewed for NPR](#) about being a displaced Native American farmer and the pressures of student loan debt on young farmers.

Rosalyn Kutsch and **Sydney Park**, 2020-21 English Teaching Assistants and Global Classroom Mentors in Madrid, led the 2020-21 Global Classroom (GC) program for 70 schools with over 700 students in the *Comunidad de Madrid*. Due to the pandemic, Rosalyn and Sydney spearheaded the transition of the Global Classrooms conference to an online format, coordinating with teachers, language assistants, and officials from the *Comunidad de Madrid*. Thanks to their hard work, the GC conferences in Madrid were completed online for the first time in the 15-year history of the program. Furthermore, the 40 students selected to compete in the virtual Global Classrooms International Model United Nations conference in New York won the award for Best Delegation, and 85% of the Spanish students who participated in the conference received at least one award.



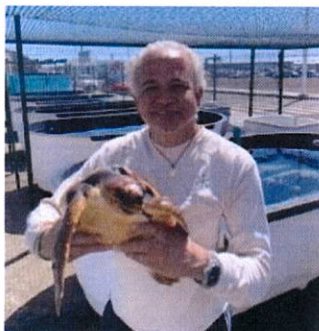


Sarah (Silvs) Silverstein, 2020-21 English Teaching Assistant in Galicia collaborated with the U.S. Embassy in Madrid and ALAS, a feminist LGBTQI+ organization in A Coruña, to lead a Week of LGBTIQ+ Visibility at her school *IES Afonso X O Sabio* in May 2021. As a part of the programming, Silvs organized a presentation and screening of the film "Amor, Simon" and a [music and inclusion workshop with students](#). The *Consello de Cambre* (municipal government) promoted both events [on their social media](#).

Kelly Smestad, 2020-21 Predoctoral Researcher at *Musikene* in Donostia-San Sebastián, was invited to perform with the [Bilbao Symphony Orchestra in February 2021](#) and in September 2021 hosted a seminar on American vs. European oboe reeds.



Aaron Stamper, 2020-21 Predoctoral Researcher at the *Universidad de Granada* and the *Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales-CSIC* in Madrid presented the paper "[Declarase por libre: The Fate of Moriscos Following the Alpujarras Uprising of 1568](#)" at the Renaissance Society of America's virtual conference in April 2021.



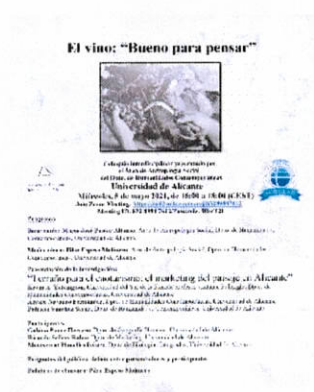
Roldán Valverde, 2020-21 Senior Scholar at the *Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria* (Canary Islands) and his team studying Loggerhead sea turtles saw their first publication in a peer reviewed scientific journal, generated four additional papers, and collaborated to study the reproductive physiology of pubescence in sea turtles using a captive-raised colony at the ULPGC. Dr. Valverde [spoke about his experience at the Center for Faculty Excellence upon his return to Southeastern Louisiana University in October 2021](#).

Charles Van Rees, 2018-19 Junior Scholar at the *Estación Biológica de Doñana* in Seville, was the primary author of the article [“Safeguarding freshwater life beyond 2020: Recommendations for the new global biodiversity framework from the European experience,”](#) published in October 2020 in the journal *Conservation Letters*. He was selected to lead the writing and coordination of this manuscript while attending an invitation-only biodiversity policy workshop in Ghent, Belgium, which brought together top freshwater ecologists from more than a dozen European countries, while on his Fulbright grant in Spain.



Lesser black-backed gulls feeding in a flooded rice field under active tilling. Isla Mayor, Spain. (c) C. van Rees 2018

Vianey Villamizar, 2020-21 Senior Scholar at the Barcelona Supercomputing Center (BSC), organized a two part minisymposium at the Society of Industrial and Applied Mathematics' (SIAM) Conference on Mathematical & Computational Issues in the Geosciences (GS21) in June 2021, titled “High Order Numerical and Domain Truncation Methods for Simulation of Waves” and at which he presented the talk [“High Order Local Farfield Expansions Absorbing Boundary Conditions for Elastic Scattering”](#) in collaboration with a colleague at the BSC.



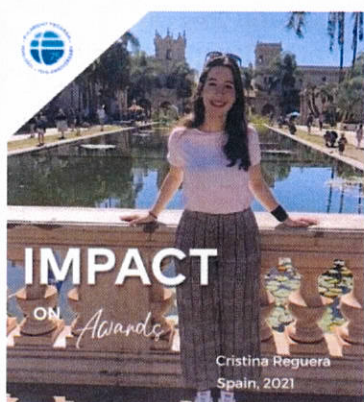
Kevin Yelvington, 2020-21 Senior Scholar at the *Universidad de Alicante*, organized a virtual colloquium titled “El vino: ‘Bueno para pensar’” on May 5th, 2021 and he and two of his Spanish undergraduate student advisees presented the paper “The Hypothetical Situation: The Anthropology of Tourism in Covid Times” at the [54th Annual Meeting of the Southern Anthropological Society](#) in June 2021. Kevin and his spouse, **Bárbara Cruz**, 2019-20 Senior Scholar at the *Universidad de Alicante*, were the keynote speakers at the University of South Florida’s Fulbright Day.

b. Spanish Program



Raquel Jorge Ricart and **Pau Ruiz Guix**, Graduate Students at George Washington University and Georgetown University respectively, were selected to be part of Banco Santander's and CIDOB's (Barcelona Center for International Affairs) first-ever #35Under35 Future Leaders Forum - a list of emerging future leaders across Europe.

Amaya Mendikoetxea Pelayo, 1993 Postdoctoral Researcher in Comparative Linguistics at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, became the new Dean at the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, one of only 17 universities led by women in Spain.



Cristina Reguera Gómez, 2020 Graduate Student of Intercultural Communications, received the UMBC (University of Maryland, Baltimore County) Graduate Student Association *Social Justice Award* for her creation of the "Buddy Program" at UMBC. This program assists international students in Maryland through their academic and cultural integration process.



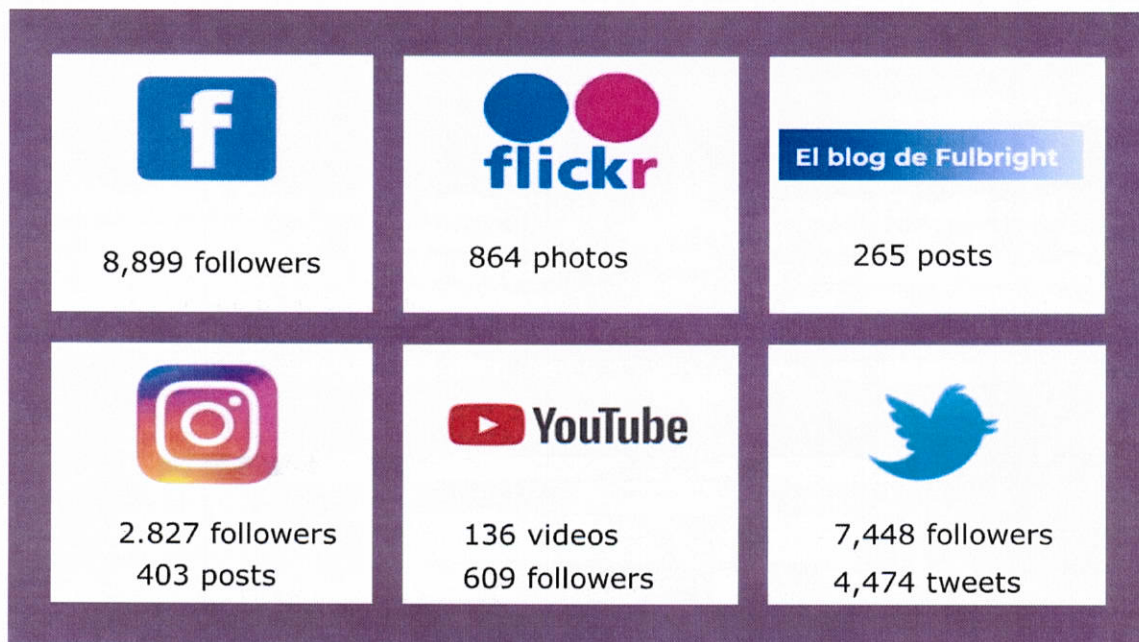
Maria Retuerto Millán, 2010 Postdoctoral Researcher in Materials Science at Rutgers University, is the recipient of the *L'Oréal-UNESCO Foundation For Women in Science International Award*. Maria currently works at the Institute of Catalysis and Petrochemistry-Spanish National Research Council (ICP-CSIC) fighting climate change using renewable energy. Her contributions towards efficient methods of renewable energy are focused on finding ways to store clean energy as a global resource.

Francisco Sánchez Madrid, 1980 Postdoctoral Researcher in Immunopathology at Harvard University, received the *Santiago Ramón y Cajal National Research Award* for his contributions to the field of Biology. Currently, Francisco serves as the Head of Immunology and Director of Health Research at La Princesa Hospital and continues to teach as professor at the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid.



Carmen Torras Genís, 1979 Graduate Student in Computer Science at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, received the *Julio Rey Pastor National Research Award* for her accomplishments in the areas of Math, Computer Science, and Communications Technologies. Currently, Carmen is a professor in mathematics and researcher at the Institute of Robotics and Industrial Computing (IRII)

IV. SOCIAL / PROFESSIONAL MEDIA

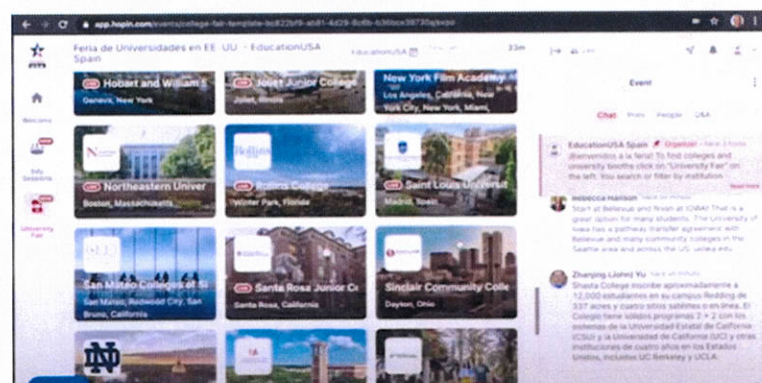


V. EDUCATIONAL ADVISING

According to Open Doors, in the 2019-2020 academic year 7,954 students from Spain were studying in the United States, which is a 9.5% increase from the previous academic year. Spain has moved up to the be number 21 place of origin worldwide for students studying in the United States.

1. OUTREACH

EducationUSA Spain once again participated in the annual EducationUSA Europe LL.M. Tour in November, this time virtually, in collaboration with EducationUSA centers in Croatia and Italy, in which 25 law schools participated with 126 attendees. For the first time, EducationUSA Spain also organized a comprehensive US University fair in May in a virtual format, with 60 participating HEIs, 5 info sessions and nearly 500 attendees from all over the country.



EducationUSA Virtual US University Fair – May 2021

Advisers also conducted numerous virtual presentations to Spanish universities about opportunities for US Study as well as to public and private high schools throughout Spain where there they spoke to high school students about studying in the US and the Competitive College Club program. They also worked with counselors to provide them with knowledge on the US higher education system and filling out US university applications. Furthermore, EducationUSA advisers, in conjunction with Fulbright, held multiple virtual information sessions at Spanish universities regarding graduate studies in the US.

2. IN-CENTER ADVISING

EducationUSA Spain continues to run its two-year cohort advising program: Competitive College Club (CCC) with its high school members gaining admission to top universities around the US. It also began a special, similar, cohort advising program in January, through the support of the US Embassy in Madrid, specifically for 2020 Fundación Amancio Ortega Scholarship winners.

Continually, EducationUSA offers monthly online sessions of 5 Steps to US Study and Ask the Adviser sessions, in addition to other topic-specific sessions, at times in collaboration with US HEIs, to the public. Requests for information are met by email, phone and video-calls. Individual advising takes place regularly. In June, EducationUSA Spain, with the participation of US Consular Services, organized a virtual Pre-departure Orientation which was also livestreamed on their YouTube channel.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA

EducationUSA is active on social media with 2,860 followers [Facebook](#), 2,370 followers on [Twitter](#) and 203 followers on LinkedIn. [Instagram](#) saw the greatest increase, with 1.551 followers. Information on universities in the U.S., articles of interest related to higher education, information sessions, events and college fair promotion are shared across platforms. EducationUSA Spain has also worked to develop its YouTube channel and currently has 150 videos published with 223 subscribers.

