

PRESS RELEASE

Fulbright x Columbia Collaboration Celebration

Ho Chi Minh City, November 7, 2025: Fulbright University Vietnam hosted a Collaboration Celebration with Columbia University’s Weatherhead East Asian Institute, marking a new chapter in academic partnership, innovation, and cultural exchange.

The event marked the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Fulbright University Vietnam and Columbia University, underscoring their shared commitment to advancing interdisciplinary research in public policy, the arts, and digital humanities.

Strengthening Academic Collaboration

The newly signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Fulbright University Vietnam and The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York, represented by its Weatherhead East Asian Institute, establishes a broad framework for future collaboration in research and scholarly exchange.

Under the agreement, the two universities will pursue opportunities to promote joint faculty and student research, co-sponsor academic discussions and symposia, host visiting scholars, and develop new programs across technology, the humanities, and the social sciences.

This partnership reaffirms Fulbright University Vietnam and Columbia University’s shared commitment to academic freedom, cross-cultural dialogue, and innovation in higher education, paving the way for deeper collaboration that connects Vietnam’s dynamic educational landscape with Columbia’s global research network.

Public Policy and Leadership Initiative: Building on a Legacy of Impact

A key component of the ongoing partnership between Fulbright University Vietnam and Columbia University is the Public Policy and Leadership Initiative, jointly implemented by the Fulbright School of Public Policy and Management (FSPPM) and Columbia University.

Launched in 2024 with the inaugural Executive Leadership Program for Ho Chi Minh City leaders, the initiative builds on a long-standing tradition of collaboration between FSPPM—formerly the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program (FETP)—and Harvard University’s Kennedy School in research and policy dialogue. This continuing collaboration with Columbia University represents a further evolution of that legacy, fostering academic exchange and leadership development in Vietnam’s policy landscape.

Through activities such as Vietnam Executive Leadership Program (VELP) and other joint programs, the two institutions collaborate to advance policy dialogue, capacity building, and

evidence-based research, engaging senior government officials, business leaders, and scholars across Vietnam.

Digitizing Vietnam: Preserving Heritage through AI Technology

Digitizing Vietnam (DV) is a cornerstone project of the Vietnam Studies Center (VSC) at Fulbright University Vietnam, developed in collaboration with Columbia University's Weatherhead East Asian Institute, which preserves, curates, and makes accessible rare Vietnamese manuscripts, texts, and visual materials through advanced digital tools.

Building on Fulbright University Vietnam's pioneering Digital Humanities curriculum (2022–2023)—including the courses Digital Humanities in Vietnam Studies Contexts and Applied Digital Humanities for Vietnam Studies—the project has grown into a dynamic platform that connects traditional scholarship with computation, visualization, and AI.

This new direction explores how AI can help interpret, generate, and converse with cultural data, turning archives into living dialogues rather than static collections. Ongoing goals include:

- Developing AI tools for text and image analysis of Vietnamese sources;
- Using generative AI for cultural reconstruction and visualization;
- Training a new generation of scholars fluent in both culture and code;
- Exploring ethical and authorship questions in the age of AI.

Fulbright University Vietnam and Columbia University are joining forces to connect the past, present, and future, fostering a digital transformation that keeps humanity at its core.

Expanding Educational Frontiers

The event also spotlighted other joint initiatives between Fulbright University Vietnam and Columbia University, including the upcoming Vietnam Summer Program, featuring Peter Mach, a member of Fulbright University Vietnam's Global Advisory Board, as one of the main speakers and Vietnam Arts in Action, led by award-winning director Tony Bùi, also a member of Fulbright University Vietnam's Global Advisory Board.

In a keynote session titled “Towards a New Era of Development: Technology, Higher Education, and the Future of Reform in Vietnam,” speakers such as Mr. Thomas Vallely (Founding Chairman, Fulbright University Vietnam's Board of Trustees), Dr. Jonathan Pincus (Dean, FSPPM), Annabel Lee (Director of Strategic Policy Engagements and Campaigns, Amazon Web Services), Mr. Hiệp Huỳnh (General Director, ACEN Vietnam), and Former Vietnamese Ambassador to Germany Vũ Quang Minh explored how technology and higher education can drive Vietnam's continued reform and innovation.

A Partnership for the Future

The ceremony concluded with an MOU signing between Dr. Liên-Hằng T. Nguyễn, Director of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University, and Dr. Đinh Vũ Trang Ngân,

President of Fulbright University Vietnam to reaffirm both institutions' long-term commitment to academic exchange, digital collaboration, and the nurturing of future scholars.

This latest agreement builds on a rich history of collaboration between Fulbright University Vietnam and Columbia University. The two institutions first formalized their partnership in July 2022 with the signing of an educational agreement during the conference “Understand the Past | Transform the Future,” hosted by Columbia University’s Weatherhead East Asian Institute.

About Columbia University

Founded in 1754, Columbia University is one of the world’s leading centers of learning, research, and innovation. Located in New York City, Columbia fosters a global community of scholars dedicated to addressing complex challenges through interdisciplinary collaboration and academic excellence. Its Weatherhead East Asian Institute serves as a hub for the study of modern and contemporary East, Southeast, and Inner Asia, promoting cross-cultural understanding through research, teaching, and public engagement.

About Fulbright University Vietnam

Founded in 2016, Fulbright University Vietnam is an innovative, future-oriented university dedicated to bringing the best education to Vietnam. Fulbright serves the next generation of Vietnamese entrepreneurs, scientists, engineers, policy innovators, and artists through undergraduate and graduate educational programs of exceptional rigor that provide students with the skills, adaptability, and international network to thrive in a fast-changing world.

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