

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

How U.S. Foreign Policy is Made

Speaker Bios



Amanda Beck

Economic Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan

Amanda Beck is an Economic Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan, covering finance, banking, and sanctions issues. Prior to Amman, she served in the Political and Economic Section at the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia, Cyprus, first as Deputy Political Chief and later as Assistance Coordinator during the 2015-16 Cyprus settlement talks. At the State Department headquarters, she worked as a Desk Officer in the Office of Pakistan Affairs and the Office of the Coordinator for Assistance to Europe and Eurasia. Her first assignment was as a Consular Officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil, Ecuador. A San Diego native, she holds a B.S. in International Politics from Georgetown University and an MBA from the UCLA Anderson School of Management.



Heidi Manley

Chief of USA Study Abroad, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Ms. Heidi Manley is the Chief of USA Study Abroad, part of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), serving as the lead for American student mobility within the State Department. She oversees two of the Department's leading programs to support American students, the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program and the Critical Language Scholarship Program, which she launched in 2006. Heidi also has the lead for creating and overseeing a number of capacity-building initiatives to increase and diversify American student mobility, including the Capacity Building Program for U.S. Study Abroad for accredited U.S. higher education institutions, also known as the IDEAS Program (Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students), and Study Abroad Engagement Grants for U.S. Embassies and Fulbright Commissions worldwide. She also oversees all public affairs initiatives and alumni programming for American student mobility programming and activities. Heidi previously served as the Deputy Director of ECA's Office of Global Educational Programs and as a Special Projects Officer in the Office of Academic Exchange Programs, where she oversaw a number of programs and initiatives under the flagship Fulbright Program. Heidi is the proud mother of seven-year-old twin boys and the equally proud wife of a recently-naturalized American citizen, who is a native of Brazil.

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Theresa Gagnon

Program Officer, USA Study Abroad, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Ms. Theresa Gagnon serves as a Program Officer in the USA Study Abroad Branch of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) at the U.S. Department of State in Washington D.C. She is responsible for managing the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program and is the USA Study Abroad Branch's liaison for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Theresa is a Civil Service Officer and has been with the Department of State since 2010. Prior to joining ECA, she was a senior analyst in the Strategic Planning and Analysis Division of the Office of Inspector General. She previously worked on strategic planning, evaluation, and resource management issues in the Bureau of Budget and Planning, and helped implement recommendations from the first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review during her temporary service in the office of the Deputy Secretary of State. Before joining the Department, Theresa taught English language and American culture in rural Spain through the Auxiliares de Conversación Program, managed by the Spanish Ministry of Education. She is originally from Seattle, WA, and is a graduate of the Elliott School of International Affairs at the George Washington University, where she spent her junior year studying Latin American Politics and Spanish language in Buenos Aires, Argentina.