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KEYNOTE



Anthony Koliha

Director, Office of Global Educational Programs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Anthony Koliha is the Director of the Office of Global Educational Programs at the U.S. Department of State, where he oversees a portfolio of international teacher, professional, and global mobility programs and services across four branches. Prior to joining ECA, he was the Director of International Programs in the College of Arts and Sciences at Indiana University, Bloomington, where he helped successfully launch a new School of Global and International Studies, in addition to expanding international programs and providing senior leadership for over a dozen federally-funded international, area studies, and foreign language centers. Mr. Koliha previously held joint posts as Director of the Fulbright Program in Russia and International Director of the Russia/Eurasia office for the Institute of International Education. Mr. Koliha has also worked at the Social Science Research Council and American Councils for International Education. He holds degrees from Kenyon College and Indiana University, Bloomington.



Matt Miller

Deputy Director, Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Bureau of African Affairs

Matt Miller arrived in the Bureau of African Affairs' Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in August 2020 after three years as the Public Affairs Officer in Dakar, Senegal. Matt joined the Department in 2001, and his previous assignments include serving as a Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs; Senior Watch Officer in the Operations Center; Assistant PAO in Bratislava, Slovakia; Information Officer in Yaoundé, Cameroon; Watch Officer in the Operations Center; Political Officer in Paris, France; and Consular Officer/Staff Assistant in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Matt was born in Western Pennsylvania but spent the formative years of his youth in South Carolina, where he studied English, History, and Political Science at Presbyterian College. He speaks French, Portuguese, Slovak, and Haitian Kreyol.

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SESSION 1 - U.S. Foreign Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa



Ron Rhinehart

Program Officer for Africa, Office of Analytic Outreach, Bureau of Intelligence and Research

Ron Rhinehart is a Foreign Service Officer currently serving as Program Officer for Africa in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research's Office of Analytic Outreach. He is responsible for bringing non-governmental experts together with analysts and policymakers throughout the Executive Branch and Intelligence Community on priority issues for Sub-Saharan Africa. He has previously served as a Narcotics Affairs Officer at Embassy Kabul, as a Consular Officer at Consulate General Rio de Janeiro, and as a Political-Economic Officer at Consulate General Lagos. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he was a sales and finance executive in the software industry. He has an undergraduate degree from San Jose State University and an MBA from Santa Clara University.



Georgia Jewett

Stabilization Advisor, Office of African Affairs, Bureau of Conflict Stabilization Operations

Georgia Jewett is a Stabilization Advisor with the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Conflict Stabilization Operations (CSO). As a member of CSO's West Africa team, Georgia covers the Lake Chad Basin and manages CSO's programs and partnerships in Nigeria. Since March, Georgia has been virtually deployed to U.S. Embassy Abuja to support data analysis and conflict reporting. In 2019, Georgia deployed to Niger where she led development of Embassy Niamey's interagency stabilization strategy. She also coordinated the United States' support to Niger's defection and rehabilitation program. Previously, Georgia worked for Creative Associates International, an international NGO, in the education in conflict division. She is also a Teach for America corps member. Georgia holds an MA in international relations and international economics with a concentration in conflict management from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and graduated valedictorian from the University of Vermont with a BA in political science.

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Liz Liu

Special Coordinator for the Young African Leaders Initiative, Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Bureau of African Affairs

Liz is a Public Diplomacy-coned Foreign Service Officer currently serving in the Africa Bureau's Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (AF/PDPA) as Special Coordinator for the Young African Leaders Initiative, the U.S. government's signature effort to invest in the next generation of young African leaders. In August 2021, she will move on to serve as Senior ASEAN Affairs Officer in the East Asia Pacific Bureau. She is also currently serving as Vice President of the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association, a State Department employee affinity group (EAG) representing over 800 members. In this role, she helps lead AAFAA's 15-member executive board and partners with fellow EAGs to promote professional development opportunities and advocate for crosscutting diversity, equity, and inclusion issues to create a more equitable and welcoming workplace for all Department personnel. Liz previously served in AF/PDPA as the Assistant Cultural Coordinator and as a Press Officer in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Her overseas assignments include Taiwan and the Philippines. Liz holds an MA in International Affairs at the University of California, San Diego, and a BA in Political Science from the University of Florida. Prior to the Foreign Service, she served as an AmeriCorps volunteer at a Washington, D.C.-based NGO. She is married with two children, Sebastian and Olivia.

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SESSION 1 - U.S. Foreign Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa



Matt Miller

*Deputy Director, Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs,
Bureau of African Affairs*

Matt Miller arrived in the Bureau of African Affairs' Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in August 2020 after three years as the Public Affairs Officer in Dakar, Senegal. Matt joined the Department in 2001, and his previous assignments include serving as a Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs; Senior Watch Officer in the Operations Center; Assistant PAO in Bratislava, Slovakia; Information Officer in Yaoundé, Cameroon; Watch Officer in the Operations Center; Political Officer in Paris, France; and Consular Officer/Staff Assistant in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Matt was born in Western Pennsylvania but spent the formative years of his youth in South Carolina, where he studied English, History, and Political Science at Presbyterian College. He speaks French, Portuguese, Slovak, and Haitian Kreyol.

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SESSION 2 - U.S. Foreign Policy in Tanzania



Taylor Cofield

Political Officer, U.S. Embassy in Tanzania

Taylor Cofield currently serves as a Political Officer with the U.S. Department of State and is completing her first diplomatic assignment at the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where she focuses on human rights, gender, trafficking in persons, and refugee issues in the political section. Most recently, she held a graduate fellowship at the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon, where she helped support Burma's political and economic reforms through the lens of women, peace, and security. In 2018, she was also a fellow in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, where she focused on advancing U.S. foreign policy in the Arabian Peninsula, with an emphasis on Yemen and the UAE. Taylor is a Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellow and a national Harry S. Truman Scholar, as well as an alumna of the U.S. Department of State's Critical Language Scholarship for Arabic. She earned a master's degree in international affairs from Texas A&M University's Bush School of Government and Public Service and a bachelor's degree in political science and peace studies from the University of Missouri where she was also a track and field student-athlete.



Kristin Mencer

Political Unit Chief, U.S. Embassy in Tanzania

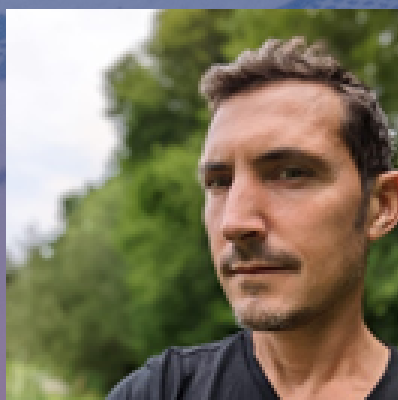
Kristin Mencer joined the Foreign Service in 2010. She is currently serving as the Political Unit Chief in the Political/Economic Section at the U.S. Embassy in Dar Es Salaam. Prior to joining the team in Dar, Kristin served as a Political Officer at the U.S. Embassy in London, where she covered a range of policy issues including NATO, cyber security, space security, and defense trade controls. Before London, Kristin served in the Bureau of European Affairs on the NATO desk and at the Embassies in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and Bridgetown, Barbados. Kristin is a graduate of Howard University in Washington, D.C., and The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. She is a native of Tennessee.

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SESSION 2 - U.S. Foreign Policy in Tanzania



Mike Pryor

Press Officer, U.S. Embassy in Tanzania

Mike Pryor currently serves as the Press Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. During his decade in the Foreign Service, he has served as the Public Affairs Officer in Lome, Togo; the Deputy Public Affairs Officer in Vientiane, Laos; and the American Citizen Services Chief in Nairobi, Kenya. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he spent six years as a Public Affairs Specialist in the U.S. Army. He deployed three times to Iraq and Afghanistan as a military reporter, and in 2008 he received the Paul Savanuck Award, the Army's highest award for journalistic excellence. From 2000 to 2001, Mike was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Zambia. He has a BA in history from Boston College.

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SESSION 3 - From Gilman Scholar to Foreign Affairs Practitioner



Brittany Hardy

Public Diplomacy Desk Officer, Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Bureau of African Affairs

Hailing from Arizona by way of Gary, Indiana, Brittany Hardy graduated from Princeton University in June 2014. She majored in Religion and minored in African American Studies and Spanish. She graduated with her Master of Public Diplomacy from the University of Southern California in May 2016. She has been in the State Department since September 2016 and has served in Rio de Janeiro and Nogales. She is currently a Public Diplomacy Desk Officer for the Bureau of African Affairs' Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.



Sammie Tafoya

Pickering Fellow, U.S. Embassy Khartoum

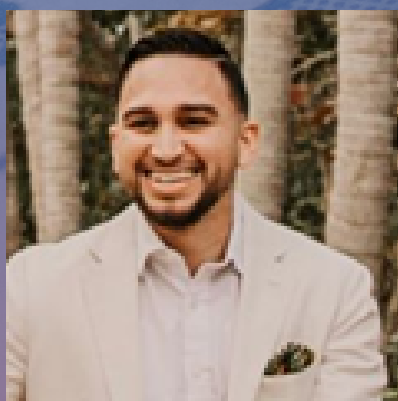
Sammie Tafoya is from Siloam Springs, Arkansas. There Sammie completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Arkansas with majors in Political Science, Journalism, African and African American Studies, and a minor in anthropology. With support from the Gilman Program, Sammie was able to create a documentary thesis while studying abroad in South Africa. Throughout this process Sammie worked with the Amy Foundation and Sunday Times while she interviewed academics, government officials, citizens across multiple provinces, and leaders in South Africa's revolution to end Apartheid. The practice of interviewing various segments of a country's population to inform her analysis led Sammie to pursue a career in the Foreign Service. After graduating, Sammie moved to Washington, D.C., to work on West and East African programs for Search for Common Ground. In 2019, Sammie was selected as a Thomas R. Pickering Fellow. Since then she has worked on sanctions and human rights portfolios on the State Department's Iran Desk, drafted legislation on Iraq and Red Sea issues for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, worked on the climate and human rights portfolios for Embassy Khartoum, and graduated from American University with a MA in International Affairs with a focus on U.S. Foreign Policy and National Security. In September she will begin diplomatic training for her career in the Foreign Service.

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SESSION 3 - From Gilman Scholar to Foreign Affairs Practitioner



Hermes Grullon

Watch Officer, Operations Center, Executive Secretariat

Hermes Grullon is a Foreign Service Officer since 2015. He currently serves as a Watch Officer in the Department of State's 24/7 Operations Center. He previously served as the sole Political Officer in Embassy Djibouti and as a Consular Officer in Embassy Managua. He is an alumnus of the Pickering Fellowship, Rangel Scholars Program, and Gilman Scholarship Program. As a first-generation college student, he completed his BA at DePauw University and his MA at Johns Hopkins SAIS. He is from Brooklyn, New York, born to Dominican parents. He and his wife, Audrey Lopez, have a 16-month old daughter, Aaliyah.



Rebecca Gailey

Program Officer, USA Study Abroad, Office of Global Educational Programs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Rebecca Gailey is a Program Officer for USA Study Abroad within the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), where she oversees a portfolio of capacity building and professional development initiatives. She manages the IDEAS Program (Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students), which provides grants and resources to help U.S. colleges and universities expand their study abroad programming. She also oversees professional development workshops for study abroad advisors and alumni of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program and Critical Language Scholarship Program. Rebecca previously worked as the Special Assistant for ECA's Office of Global Educational Programs and in program development at American Councils for International Education. She was a Boren Scholar to Tanzania and later returned to her host community to partner with local teachers to create an education nonprofit that trains high school and college students to run arts-and-science-based school break programs for elementary school students. Rebecca holds degrees in international relations and journalism from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a Master of Public Administration degree with a focus on education policy from the George Washington University.

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SESSION 4 - Careers at State



Yolonda Kerney

Diplomat in Residence for the DC Metro Region

Dr. Yolonda Kerney joined the United States diplomatic corps as a Foreign Service Officer in 2004. She served as Counselor for Public Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Mission to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean, and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States; Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Jamaica; Cultural Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in the Republic of Cameroon; and Economic Officer and Chief Consul at the U.S. Embassy in the Republic of Guinea. She is the recipient of several Department of State Meritorious Honor and Superior Honor awards, and the Lois Roth Award for Excellence in Cultural Diplomacy. Dr. Kerney is a proud alumna of Howard University from which she earned undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees in music history and literature, and religious studies. Before joining the Foreign Service she served as a music historian at the United States Library of Congress.



Abigail Barnes

Recruiter, Consular Fellows Program

Abigail Barnes is the Consular Fellows Program (CFP) recruiter. She is a Virginia native and studied International Relations and French at the College of William & Mary. Her first experience with the Department of State was interning for the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, where she analyzed human resources management policy reform to provide policy recommendations. She developed an interest in learning about languages and people from completing a five-year Spanish immersion program and a visit to Russia. She enjoys trying new things, and speaks intermediate French and elementary Russian and Spanish.