

Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. Foreign Policy in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada

Speaker Bios

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.



Ryan Rowlands

Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy Panama

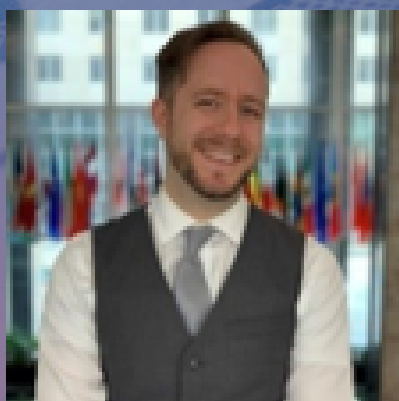
Ryan Rowlands is a career member of the U.S. Foreign Service. He joined the State Department in 2000 and served overseas in Mexico, Guatemala, Macedonia, and Serbia before joining Embassy Panama. Ryan has completed domestic assignments in the State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research as Director of the Office for Southern Europe and spent a year at the Eisenhower School at the National Defense University, where he completed a Master's Degree in National Resource Strategy. Prior to his time at NDU, Ryan studied biology at Whittier College and received his Juris Doctorate from California Western School of Law. He is a member of the California Bar. He is fluent in Spanish, Macedonian, and Serbian. Ryan resides in Panama with his wife and two children.

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Zach Braun

Program Specialist, Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA/PDA)

Zach is a Program Specialist within the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA), providing support to numerous cultural programs including the International Visitors Leadership Program and the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund. Before joining WHA, Zach worked as a Junior Program Officer in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs overseeing the life-changing exchange programs of incoming Camp Counselor, Intern, Secondary School Student, Summer Work Travel, and Trainee participants from across the world. Zach has received an M.A. at American University in International and Intercultural Communications and a B.A. at Duquesne University in Corporate Communications. He enjoys reading, cycling, exploring, wine tastings, movies of all kinds, and is an avid Philadelphia sports fan.



Andrea Stanford

Acting Spokesperson, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs

Andrea Stanford is a career Foreign Service Officer and currently serves as the acting spokesperson for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA). As head of WHA's communications team she is responsible for guiding Bureau leadership, Ambassadors in the field, and her team in designing and implementing strategic communication strategies that advance U.S. foreign policy priorities in the region. Prior to her work in WHA she served as deputy spokesperson at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York. She speaks Mandarin and Spanish and has held assignments in Shanghai, Shenyang, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic, Panama, Bahamas, and Washington, D.C. Andrea received her B.A. in broadcast journalism from Howard University and her M.A. in International Relations from the University of Denver.

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Maria Macarena Apud

Economic Officer, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Office of Economic Policy and Summit Coordination (WHA/EPSC)

Maria Macarena is an Economic Officer in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Office of Economic Policy and Summit Coordination (WHA/EPSC). She is the lead action officer for WHA participation in economic infrastructure related initiatives and analyzes and provides policy guidance on economic trends and extra-regional economic influence to advance U.S. foreign policy in the region. Maria Macarena served as WHA/EPSC's Energy Officer from 2014 to Summer 2020. She started her career at the State Department on the Colombia desk and prior to joining State worked for a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives for more than four years. Maria Macarena is the current Vice President for Civil Service for the Hispanic Employees Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies (HECFAA), a founding member of WHA's Diversity Council, and a 2018 International Career Advancement Program Fellow. She holds an M.A. in International Affairs with a focus on international economics from the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University (GWU), and a B.A. in Political Science and Psychology from GWU. A fluent Spanish speaker, Maria Macarena also has an intermediate knowledge of French. Maria Macarena is originally from Argentina and lives in Washington, D.C.

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Luis González

Political Officer, Office of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs

Luis González is a political-coned Foreign Service Officer serving as a Political Officer in the Department of State's Office of the Coordinator for Cuban Affairs. Luis previously served as an Economic Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City and Consular Officer at the U.S. Consulate General in São Paulo. Prior to the Foreign Service, Luis worked in the civil service at the Department of State as a Presidential Management Fellow in the Office of Foreign Assistance and the Bureau of Budget and Planning. Luis facilitated strategic planning workshops for U.S. Missions in Rangoon, Manama, Dhaka, Brasilia, and Lima. Luis grew up in Houston, Texas, and traces his family roots to the Rio Grande Valley. He earned his Master of Public Policy degree from Harvard University and Bachelor of Arts degree in Government, Latin American Studies, and Spanish and Portuguese from The University of Texas at Austin. He speaks Spanish and Portuguese.

SESSION 2 - U.S. Foreign Policy in Mexico



Jennifer Schuett

Public Diplomacy Desk Officer for the Office of Mexican Affairs, Public Diplomacy Desk Officer for the Office of Canadian Affairs, Strategic Communications Lead for Migration

Jennifer Schuett is a Public Diplomacy coned officer who joined the State Department in 2015. Jennifer served in the Office of the Special Advisor for International Disability Rights in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, as well as a tour in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, and another in Yangon, Myanmar. Prior to joining the State Department as an officer, she served at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, and worked with USAID West Bank & Gaza, as well as various NGOs in the D.C. area. Jennifer earned her master's degree in Latin American Studies from Georgetown University and her B.A. in International Relations from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

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Yvonne Gonzales
Counselor for Political Affairs

Yvonne Gonzales is the political counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City. She joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 2003. Most recently, she served in Harare, Zimbabwe, where she was the chief of the political and economic section. Prior to that, she served in Washington as special assistant to former Deputy Secretary Tony Blinken with responsibility for Western Hemisphere Affairs and as senior Brazil desk officer. In New York, she was the special assistant to former U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice. She also worked at U.S. Embassies Pretoria, Jakarta, and Panama. Yvonne hails from the great state of California. She graduated from California State University, Fullerton, with a B.A. in political science and earned an M.S. in Foreign Service from Georgetown University.



Winnie Hofstetter
Public Diplomacy Officer

Winnie Hofstetter has just joined PAS Mexico City for her sixth tour. She is a Public Diplomacy-coned officer. Previously, she has served as a Public Diplomacy Desk Officer in WHA/PDA, CAO in Rangoon, Burma, PAO in Malta, Vice-Consul in Curaçao in the Dutch Caribbean, and Vice-Consul in Abuja, Nigeria. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Winnie was a high school teacher of French and Spanish and served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Hungary where she taught English in a primary school. Winnie was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and grew up in Covington, Louisiana, and Lakewood, Colorado. She is married and has an 11-year-old daughter.

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David Mico

Acting MCCCCA, Consul General, U.S. Embassy Mexico City

Acting Minister Counselor for Consular and Consulate Affairs David Mico arrived in Mexico City in August 2018. He first served as the Country Coordinator for Visas across Mission Mexico and since 2020 has served as the Consul General. He was previously the Consul General and Principal Officer in Merida, Mexico, from 2015 to 2018. Prior to his posting in Merida, he served as a Division Chief in the Bureau of Consular Affairs in Washington, D.C., from 2012 to 2014; as Consul in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from 2009 to 2012; as Consul in the U.S. Consulate General in Barcelona, Spain, from 2005 to 2008; and as Deputy Chief of the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine, from 2002 to 2005. His other postings include the U.S. Embassies in Hungary and El Salvador. David received a B.A. and an M.A. in International Affairs from The George Washington University, and an M.S. in National Resource Strategy from the National Defense University.

SESSION 3 - Alumni Panel



Amelia VanderLaan

Outreach Officer, USA Study Abroad, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Amelia VanderLaan is a Foreign Service Officer currently serving as the USA Study Abroad Outreach Officer in the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. She previously served as the Assistant Public Affairs Officer at U.S. Embassy Cyprus from 2017 to 2019 managing exchange and cultural programs along with outreach initiatives. From 2015 to 2017 she served in Canada heading the Investment Visa section of the U.S. Consulate in Toronto. Prior to the Foreign Service, she was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to teach in Sinop, Turkey, for one year. She also advised students on pursuing international opportunities when she worked as a fellowships advisor at Smith College and served as a Teaching Fellow at Athens College. Amelia graduated from Smith College with a B.A. in Government. She received her M.A. from the University of Athens in Southeast European Studies. She speaks Greek, Turkish, and Spanish.

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Terry-Ann Wellington
Vice Consul, U.S. Embassy Bogota

Terry-Ann Wellington is a first-tour Foreign Service Officer in Bogota, Colombia. Terry-Ann received the Gilman Scholarship in 2013 to participate in an intensive Russian program at the University of Texas and the International University in Moscow. During her undergrad, Terry-Ann interned for the U.S. Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica, and the Department of State's Office of Russian Affairs. Additionally, she studied abroad in London and France through King's College London. As a 2017 Pickering Fellow, Terry-Ann interned for the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States and the U.S. Embassy in North Macedonia. Terry-Ann has also interned for the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Better World Campaign. Terry-Ann received a Bachelor of Arts in Plan II Honors from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Public and International Affairs in Human Security from the University of Pittsburgh.



Chuma Nnawulezi
Consular Officer, U.S. Embassy Mexico City

Chuma is a native of Omaha, Nebraska. He earned his bachelor's degree in Political Science and Philosophy from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. In his undergraduate program, Chuma participated in study abroad programs in India, Senegal, and Argentina as a Gilman Scholar. He holds a Master of Science in Foreign Service from Georgetown University. Prior to joining the Foreign Service in July 2017, Chuma worked as a foreign policy fellow in the U.S. House of Representatives. In his first post, Chuma served as Political Section Chief at U.S. Embassy Djibouti and liaison officer with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Chuma currently serves as a Consular Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City. He speaks French and Spanish.

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SESSION 4 - Networking

[Click here](#) to see Networking Session Participants.

SESSION 5 - Careers at State



Ron Packowitz

Diplomat in Residence for the Midwest

Ron Packowitz has been a Foreign Service Officer for more than 20 years, serving in locations from Ecuador to Afghanistan. A career consular officer, Ron led the U.S. embassy's response to the victims of a series of terrorist attacks in London in 2017. Currently the State Department's Diplomat in Residence for the Midwest, Ron is based in Chicago, where he is recruiting the next generation of Foreign Service officers and specialists.



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.