

# Inside U.S. Foreign Policy

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

### Career Conversations Speaker Bios

#### Room 1: Career in Education to the Foreign Service



#### 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.

#### Room 2: Perspective on the Civil vs. Foreign Service



#### 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.



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#### Room 3: Working in the Foreign Service as a Political Officer



**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.

#### Room 4: Rangel Program



**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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#### Room 5: Pickering Fellowship



**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.

#### Room 6: State Department Study Abroad Opportunities & Exchanges



**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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#### Room 7: Boren Awards and Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE)



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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#### Room 8: Life in the Foreign Service



J. Nathan Bland

*Diplomat-in-Residence, Tulane University*

J. Nathan Bland is a career Foreign Service Officer with over sixteen years of experience in a wide variety of areas with the U.S. Department of State. He is currently the Diplomat-in-Residence based at Tulane University in New Orleans, LA, where he is responsible for recruiting the best and brightest candidates from diverse backgrounds within Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas for U.S. Department of State career and student program opportunities. His most recent assignment was as an Assistant General Services Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City serving as the Embassy's primary Contracting Officer and overseeing logistics for VIP visits. Prior to that, he was the Political, Economic and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Section Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan, Belize. He also served as the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission in at the U.S. Embassy in Belize for nearly a year.

Previous assignments include a tour at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs where he led U.S. Government multilateral engagement on marine environmental protection issues in the Caribbean and ocean dumping. He also served as the Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See, and a Consular Officer at the U.S. Consulate in Shenyang, China. He began his career with the U.S. Department of State as a Presidential Management Fellow working in the Public Affairs Office for the East Asia and Pacific Affairs Bureau in 2004.

Nathan completed Executive Leadership Training from Harvard Business School as part of the Secretary's Leadership Seminar. Nathan graduated from Seton Hall University's School of Diplomacy and International Relations with an M.A. in Diplomacy and International Relations and an M.A. in Asian Studies. He wrote his M.A. thesis on China's efforts to stabilize the Xinjiang region drawing from his own experience living and working in the Xinjiang for 1½ years. He holds a B.S. in Business Administration from Louisiana College, and also successfully completed the State Department's Foreign Service Economic Studies course.