



the ROBERTSON REPORT

Public Service. National Leadership. Global Engagement.

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Alumni Spotlight

RFG is pleased to present the first in a series of fellow spotlights. This month we feature William Creedon (UMD SPP, '18), a Presidential Management Fellow at the Office of Management and Budget.

Creedon graduated cum laude from Macalester College with a B.A., majoring in economics and minoring in statistics.

Having lived and worked in Illinois, California, and North Carolina, William is proud to have spent his childhood in Minnesota.

[Visit William Creedon's profile](#)

What or who prompted you to focus on public service?

There was no single experience or person. It began with my grandparents' habit of talking about politics, then my interest in history during public school years, and, as a tipping point, my realization while working in a private sector job I didn't like after college, watching "Parks and Rec", that I was meant to be a public policy and public service guy. I also benefited since undergrad from a great advisor, Prof. Sarah West, who taught me about the richness and challenges of public finance and economic policy.

How has the Robertson Fellowship influenced your career to date?

The Robertson Foundation always reminds me of the ideal of civil service, and that people of all walks of life and nationalities depend on the professionalism of American civil servants, whether in foreign policymaking, foreign service, or elsewhere. It has also made me more motivated to hold leaders to high expectations and personally commit to ongoing learning and professional growth.

Were there specific graduate courses that you found prepared you especially well for government service?

I would say my U.S. foreign policymaking process and program evaluation courses. Policymaking helped me appreciate the interconnectedness and complexities of both the

executive branch bureaucracy and our shared-powers government, as well as the importance of being a quick study and clear communicator. Evaluation because it taught me how to make rational inferences and define and measure performance in policy situations that so often require decisions with very limited information.

What excites you most about working in your public service career?

I love the opportunities public service provides for meeting great people and learning about complex governance issues and policies. I also feel good about contributing professionally to a country with, generally speaking, such an inspiring narrative and set of values; it's far from perfect, but I feel the "American experiment" has refined itself and its aspirations in often very positive ways.

Is there an experience in your government position that has been/was particularly enlightening or surprising to you?

The retirement parties of two long-tenured budget technocrats at OMB shortly after I arrived. My eyes were opened to the importance of office culture and institutional memory in maintaining the functioning of good government (and occasionally bad). And how political officials have a significant opportunity to make things in their agencies better, but a much smaller ability to do harm, fortunately, at least in the short-term. The former underscores the importance of managing the civil service to prevent brain drain as older servants retire, and the latter underscores the power of political officials to bring positive leadership, if they bring the talent and find the pluck to do so.

Are there particular resources that you recommend to individuals interested in a career in public service?

I've always found GovLoop to be a helpful general resource for current and prospective public servants. I think *The Hill* and *Politico* are useful news sources, and the Congressional Research Service is fantastic when you need to do a deeper dive. I'm probably a tad biased (and a total nerd), but I think it's very helpful to have at least a basic understanding of how the appropriations and budget process works (and what Congress has to pass each year if they want to keep the government running!), and to know where to find statutes (agency websites, [uscode.house.gov](https://www.uscode.house.gov), or [law.cornell.edu](https://www.law.cornell.edu)). The Congressional Research Service provides [appropriations tracking](#), and GAO has a great [glossary of budget terms](#).

What advice do you have for current fellows and early career professionals as they pursue a career in public service?

Be patient with the processes of governing, but quick to make starts. I've usually made mistakes when I try to make 'executive' or concluding decisions too quickly because something feels like it is dragging. And you lose opportunities to build strong collaborative relationships - even though it takes more time and may feel tedious, you honor your colleagues by offering to include them in decisions and recommendations. Not only does this lead to better, longer-lasting solutions, but these relationships (and the accompanying positive reputation you earn) pay dividends throughout your career. But be quick to make starts - it's far easier to tell your leadership that something might be an issue, that you might not understand how to do something, or to involve colleagues or offices that might have objections or helpful views, and to walk it back when you figure it out, than to sit on something. This approach will also help you learn your job a lot faster so that over time there are fewer false alarms.

RFG alumna advocates for fertility treatment as a matter of reproductive choice



[Madison Chapman \(Fletcher, '20\)](#), who earned her Master's degree in Development Economics, Humanitarian Studies and Gender from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, has received a Presidential Management Fellowship to launch into federal service. She also survived lymphoma while in graduate school, and now that she's been in remission for more than a year, she wanted to get more involved in the cancer advocacy community. Chapman recently published an article on cancer treatment and fertility in *Ms. Magazine*.

[Read more](#)

LinkedIn Group for RFG Fellows & Alumni Network

RFG has relaunched the LinkedIn [RFG Fellows & Alumni Network Group](#) to serve as an online fellows' community hub to share news, jobs, events and more. Over 2021, RFG aims to connect all current fellows and alumni who use LinkedIn. Staff have already invited fellows they are connected with to join, so please accept any invitation you receive. Or create a new LinkedIn connection with Alexandra Ghara, Lauren Hertel and/or Cynthia Robinson and we can then invite you to join the group.

For those who join and wish to share posts, simply click Share, and then select "Group members" on the "Anyone" dropdown and choose RFG Fellows & Alumni Network. Please [contact RFG Communications Manager Lauren Hertel](#) if you have any technical questions.

Public Service Recognition Week 2021

Public Service Recognition Week 2021, hosted by the Partnership for Public Service, will be held May 2-8, 2021. Join in recognizing our nation's federal employees who worked tirelessly

to serve the public during the myriad challenges our nation faced this past year, and as they continue to address tough issues with tenacity and dedication.

The Partnership is hosting all PSRW 2021 events virtually, and will have resources to help celebrate. Visit the [PSRW website](#) for simple, low-cost suggestions to show appreciation to civil servants.

During PSRW, the Partnership will also announce the 2021 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal finalists to recognize the exceptional service and accomplishments of federal employees. Visit the [Sammies website](#) to learn more about past honorees. RFG is a proud supporter of the Sammies.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield confirmed as U.N. envoy



Linda Thomas-Greenfield, who served briefly on RFG's Advisory Board last fall before being nominated as President Biden's U.N. envoy, was confirmed by the Senate by a vote of 78 to 20 on February 23rd.

[Read more](#)

Sean O'Keefe honored with National Public Service Award

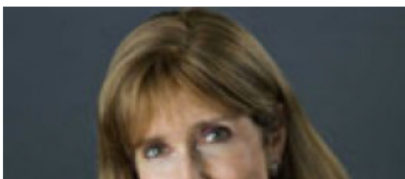


The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) announced it will honor Sean O'Keefe (Maxwell, '78) along with four other alumni and one student of the Maxwell School during their 2021 Annual Conference. Mr. O'Keefe is a co-sponsor of one of the Robertson Fellowships at the Maxwell School.

"There are so many reasons to be proud of the Maxwell global network, and their commitment to the public good both domestically and abroad," says David M. Van Slyke, dean of the Maxwell School. "These six remarkable individuals are outstanding examples of achievement in the spirit of public service and serve as an inspiration to us all."

[Read more](#)

The soft but unmatched power of US foreign exchange programs



RFG Advisor Paula Dobriansky and colleagues recently published an opinion piece in *The Hill* about the positive benefits of exchanges, which facilitate direct engagement with counterparts in the academic, governmental, business and cultural fields and are effective in promoting economic



and cultural norms and are effective in promoting economic values of private enterprise and free markets.

[Read more](#)

Biden signs Executive Order killing Schedule F, restoring collective bargaining rights

On January 22, President Biden [signed an executive order](#) rescinding a series of orders issued by former President Trump aimed at gutting federal employee unions and stripping federal workers of their civil service protections.

As noted in the last issue of the Robertson Report, RFG joined 20 good government organizations on a [coalition letter](#) denouncing Schedule F and highlighting its harmful ramifications.

We invite current fellows and alumni to submit links to their published writings, mentions of their work in the media, promotions and more for inclusion on our website and this quarterly newsletter. Please [email Communications Manager Lauren Hertel](#) with links.

Alumni Corner

Are you an RFG Alumni Fellow looking to get more involved in the fellow community? The RFG Alumni Council is actively recruiting alumni fellows interested in taking on a leadership role or added engagement in alumni activities and initiatives. If you are interested in serving on the RFG Alumni Council or in some other leadership capacity, please [email RFG Program Director Alexandra Ghara](#). We will be reaching out in the coming weeks with further information about how you can get involved.

DEI Update

In June 2020, amidst a backdrop of uprisings due to continued racial injustices in the country, RFG released a statement reaffirming its commitment to support and promote policies and practices that enhance the federal government to ensure freedom and democracy for all Americans. The foundation vowed to explore and expand its efforts in the areas of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). As part of ongoing efforts, the Board of Directors endorsed the creation of an advisory group to inform and guide the foundation's DEI agenda ([read the RFG Board statement from June 8, 2020](#)).

"The formation of a fellows' advisory and action-focused DEI group is a natural progression in the foundation's aim to bolster previous DEI efforts and integrate DEI into all aspects of the organization," noted Geoff Robertson, RFG Board Chair. "RFG welcomes and encourages the engagement of Robertson Fellows in this endeavor."

Following a call for interest from Robertson Fellows, the RFG Fellows' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council was established with 13 inaugural members. The Council comprises

inclusion (DEI) Council has established that 15 inaugural members. The Council comprises both current and former fellows who are ready to use their insight, knowledge, and ability to make a more diverse and just system. They include:

- Ana Monzon (Maxwell, '17), Chair
- Jack Alegre (UCSD GPS, '22), Communications officer
- Kelli Sunabe (Maxwell, '22), Secretary
- Adriel Taslim (UCSD GPS, '18), Secretary
- Amy Donhauser (Fletcher, '11), Member-at-large
- Simona Griffith (UMD SPP, '19), Member-at-large
- Jill Maloney (UMD SPP, '17), Member-at-large
- Kelly Roberts (UMD SPP, '18), Member-at-large
- Sharon Swabb (UCSD GPS, '12), Member-at-large
- Topher Taylor (UCSD GPS, '21), Member-at-large
- Jacob Throwe (UCSD GPS, '19), Member-at-large
- Melia Ungson (UCSD GPS, '17), Member-at-large
- Jennifer Valdez (Maxwell, '19), Member-at-large

“Meant to promote greater representation across the program and to better prepare people from all backgrounds for a life of public service, we see this as a way to deepen our commitment to civic values,” explained Ana Monzon, who chairs the new Fellows’ DEI Council.

She stressed that diversity means more than just optics, and explained the DEI Council recognizes that discourse on diversity, inclusion, and equity is complex and many times uncomfortable, but it requires tackling it at the root. “Pursuing and fostering diversity and equity in the RFG Fellowship enhances the quality of our respective graduate programs as well as our workplaces, in federal government and beyond,” said Monzon.

Jack Alegre, DEI Council Communications Officer asserted, “Working on diversity, equity, and inclusion ennobles our human spirit. Our DEI Council commitment to diversity will be more than skin deep.”

At the December 2020 DEI Council meeting RFG Fellows’ Career Advisor Dr. Michael Schneider recapped his analysis on the issues of diversity within the federal government and how Robertson Fellows and others can help increase diversity and inclusion in the federal service ([read full article from June 30, 2020](#)).

The DEI Council has begun making great strides in solidifying a committed, fellow-led group with the full support of foundation staff. “We seek to facilitate efforts and to collaborate as strategic thought partners on matters of DEI,” said RFG Program Director Alexandra Ghara.

The Council is developing a charter detailing mission, vision, and goals, and spearheading an audit that will gather baseline information on the makeup of the Robertson Fellows. The audit will provide needed information for addressing gaps in student outreach and other internal limitations or institutional shortcomings.

“For the DEI Council, the aim is to take what we have been given and learn from each other to deliver excellent public service,” Monzon stressed. “Forming this Council allows us to honor the trust that the Robertson Foundation for Government has placed in us to advise them, and affect change within the fellowship program and beyond that the future and our country needs to see.”

[The Legacy of African American Diplomats: Past, Present and Future](#)

[The Public Service Leadership Model of the Partnership for Public Service](#)

[Making Federal Agencies Evidence-Based: The Key Role of Learning Agendas](#)

[Opinion: It's Time to Reinvent How America Delivers Foreign Aid](#)

[Partnership for Public Service announces CapitolStrong](#)

[State of Renewal: The Department of State Today, Tomorrow and Beyond](#)

[Virtual Roundtable on Advancing National Interests in a Changing Global Context](#)

Opportunities

Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowship in Public Policy

Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowships in Public Policy are for outstanding mid-career American professionals to research and gain firsthand experience of public policy in New Zealand. Two to three fellowships valued at up to NZ \$58,500 are granted each year, towards three to seven months of research. Fellows will be based at a relevant government agency in Wellington, New Zealand and carefully paired with a leading policy expert who will serve as their mentor. To be eligible, you must be a US citizen with at least five years of experience in your profession in the public, business or non-profit sector. **Deadline: April 15.** [Learn more](#)

Margaret E. Mahoney Fellowship in Health Policy

The Margaret E. Mahoney Fellowship in Health Policy program provides stipends for outstanding Master's-level medical, dental, public health, public policy, and graduate nursing students enrolled at schools in the United States to conduct summer research projects on some aspect of health care delivery transformation for vulnerable populations and/or early childhood health and development, with an emphasis on policy implications. Fellows are also required to participate in a variety of leadership development activities and will have the opportunity to meet local and national health policy leaders. Fellows will receive a stipend of \$6,000 intended to cover living expenses. **Deadline: April 16.** [Learn more](#)

2021 Elliot L. Richardson Prize

The Elliot L. Richardson Prize is presented biennially to individuals possessing the public service virtues exemplified by Elliot L. Richardson, an Academy Fellow. Mr. Richardson was an exceptional public servant and the only individual in our nation's history to serve in four Cabinet-level positions in the U.S. government: Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), Secretary of Defense, Attorney General, and Secretary of Commerce. **Deadline: April 30.** [Learn more](#)

John R. Lewis Social Justice Policy Fellowship

Operated by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc. (CBCF), the program is designed to give young, Black professionals the opportunity to work in Congress and with the Foundation to address social justice and racial equity issues that affect the Black community. Distinguished by two six-month rotations, Social Justice Fellows will be placed in the U.S. Congress with Congressional Black Caucus members and the CBCF's Center for Policy Analysis and Research (CPAR) for a total of 12 months. **Deadline: April 30.** [Learn](#)

[more](#)

Fulbright Specialist Program

The Fulbright Specialist Program is a unique opportunity for U.S. academics and established professionals to engage in two- to six-week, project-based exchanges at host institutions in over 150 countries. Specialists, who represent a wide range of professional and academic disciplines, are competitively selected to join the Fulbright Specialist Roster based on their knowledge, skill sets, and ability to make a significant contribution to projects overseas. Specialists receive full funding to participate in Fulbright Specialist projects, including travel, stipend and lodging. Applications are accepted throughout the year. Peer review panels evaluate applications approximately every eight weeks. **Deadline: May 12.** [Learn more](#)

Presidential Innovation Fellowships

The Presidential Innovation Fellows (PIF) program is a highly competitive 1-year fellowship that seeks to attract top innovators into government, capable of tackling issues at the convergence of technology, policy, and process. Fellows are embedded within federal agencies to collaborate on challenges with innovators. Fellows are based in Washington D.C. for the duration of the Fellowship, and are considered full-time employees of the federal government. Fellows receive a GS15 level salary, which typically ranges between \$120-150,000. Applications are accepted throughout the year and hiring is on a rolling basis depending on the needs of agency partners. **Deadline: May 14.** [Learn more](#)

Events

April 7

Profiles in Moral & Ethical Leadership: The Legacy of President Jimmy Carter

3:30 p.m. EDT

Join a conversation hosted by the Volcker Alliance in partnership with More Than Just Parks, the Atlanta Film Festival, and the new documentary *CARTERLAND*. The film examines the tragic yet inspiring story of America's most misunderstood president, Jimmy Carter, and explores how Carter's selfless leadership and moral integrity ultimately cost him the presidency.

[Register](#)

April 7, 14, and 21

Webinar series from USAJOBS and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Navigating USAJOBS, April 7, 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. EDT, [learn more and register](#)

Resume Writing, April 14, 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. EDT, [learn more and register](#)

Interviewing Techniques, April 21, 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. EDT, [learn more and register](#)

April 16

Meridian Diplomacy Forum - The Path Forward: Strengthening American Statecraft

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. EDT

Leaders from the administration, Congress, State Department, foreign ministries, the private sector, and civil society will join the 2021 Meridian Diplomacy Forum to discuss the path forward to strengthen U.S. global leadership and modernize diplomatic practices and capacity to meet the demands of emerging challenges. The Diplomacy Forum will also serve as the official launch of Meridian's DiplomacyRISE initiative.

[Learn more](#)

April 19

Virtual Peer Coaching: Leading People ECQ

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. EDT

Join Young Government Leaders from across the country and coaches from the Federal Coaching Network for a Peer Coaching Workshop to explore the power of using a "question approach" to uncover the wisdom of the team in devising strategies and insights for "leading people." Learn together in small groups about the Leading People ECQ through a process that will teach you a methodology you can apply immediately as a leader and team member. Attendees will have an opportunity following the session to continue with peer coaching and/or sign up with a one-on-one coach. For more information [contact Program Director Kayleigh Remavich](#).

April 22

Advancing Women's Leadership in Politics and Peacebuilding

9:00 a.m. EDT

Fourth session of five-part event series on The Way Forward for Gender Equality, in partnership with the Georgetown Ambassadors for Women, Peace and Security and the Rockefeller Foundation.

[Register](#)

May 12-13 with pre-conference workshops on May 11

Code for America Virtual Summit: Designing an Equitable Government Together

A two-day virtual experience that brings changemakers into one room—public servants, advocates, technologists, and organizers-- to break through some of the governments' biggest challenges by removing barriers and expanding government access to serve all Americans. The Summit offers dozens of keynotes, breakout sessions, and workshops focusing on four tracks: Design + Delivery; Civic Innovation + Data; Operations + Management; and Technology + Policy. Only \$50 for registration April 1-30.

[Learn more](#)

May 17-21

Women in Global Policy

9:00 a.m. EDT

At the five-day online Women in Global Policy seminar, undergraduate college women will learn how to launch their international policy career through participating in policy discussions, diplomacy simulations, and connecting with women leaders who are shaping policy in DC and across the world.

[Learn more](#)

April 15, May 6, June 16, July 8

Best Practices in Applying to Graduate School

In this monthly series, APSIA's International Admissions and Operations Manager will answer questions about: selecting a graduate program, preparing an application, paying for school, career opportunities, and more.

[Learn more](#)

August 4-5

NextGen Government Summit 2021

The NextGen Virtual Summit is open to people looking for professional development to advance their government careers. Every role, function and level of expertise of public servant is welcome at NextGen.

[Learn more](#)

Visit our [Events page](#) for additional upcoming events, which we post regularly.

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