



the ROBERTSON REPORT

Cultivating Public Service, National Leadership and Global Engagement

Celebrating 10 Years

Quarter 3 • September 2020

Robertson Fellowship Graduates Take on New Opportunities Amid Global Pandemic

In its 10th anniversary year the Robertson Foundation for Government (RFG) board members, advisors and staff extend a hearty congratulations to the 2020 Robertson Fellow graduates -- our 10th graduating class.

Despite the significant and ongoing challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, the Class of 2020 persevered to complete their studies and pursue positions to help serve the government and citizens across the U.S. and around the world. RFG is tremendously proud of their accomplishments.

See below for a sample of the range of career opportunities the fellows are embarking on:

- [Lalitha Adury \(Fletcher\)](#) - Boren Fellowship, Bahasa Indonesia
- [Tucker Boyce \(UMD SPP\)](#) - Foreign Affairs Officer (Presidential Management Fellowship), Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, U.S. Department of State
- [Peter Casey \(Bush\)](#) - Analyst, Homeland Security and Justice Team, Government Accountability Office
- [Joseph Farmer \(Bush\)](#) - Fraud Research Specialist, Guidehouse Inc.
- [Roger Gildersleeve \(Maxwell\)](#) - Sr. Consultant, National Security Group, Booz Allen Hamilton Inc.
- [Abigail Kamp \(UMD SPP\)](#) - Program Analyst (Presidential Management Fellowship), Bureau for Foreign Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development
- [Javier Montalvo \(UMD SPP\)](#) - Trade and Industry Analyst (Presidential Management Fellowship), Bureau of Industry and Security, U.S. Department of Commerce
- [Vy Nguyen \(UCSD GPS\)](#) - Research Analyst, Acumen, LLC
- [Brett Northfield \(Fletcher\)](#) - Budget Analyst (Presidential Management Fellowship), Office of Budget and Resource Management, U.S. Agency for International Development
- [Cory Rogers \(UCSD GPS\)](#) - Information Officer, Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development
- [Erica Stuke \(Maxwell\)](#) - Policy Advisor, Office of Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes, U.S. Department of the Treasury

Visit our Fellow Directory to learn more about our current fellows, recent graduates, and other alumni of the RFG Fellowship.

[View Fellow Directory](#)

Announcing the Class of 2022 Fellows



RFG is also pleased and proud to announce the most recent additions to the Robertson Fellows' network. Seventeen new fellows began in the 2020-2021 academic year, which marks the 12th class supported by RFG.

Bush School, Texas A&M University

[Robyn Battles](#)

[Demetria Charlifue](#)

[Autumn Clouthier](#)

[Clay Parham](#)

[Ryan Sullivan](#)

Maxwell School, Syracuse University

[Ricky Cieri](#)

[Eli Marin](#)

[Katherine Maxwell](#)

[Kelli Sunabe](#)

School of Global Policy & Strategy, University of California San Diego

[Jack Alegre](#)

[Rory Guild](#)

[Cate Pollock](#)

School of Public Policy, University of Maryland

[Victoria Adofoli](#)

[Ryan Damron](#)

[Phoebe DeVos-Cole](#)

[Katherine Seevers](#)

[Sarah Williamson](#)

You can see all 32 of our current fellows on our website (new and also second-year students who are in the Class of 2021), where you can read more about their backgrounds, graduate school specialties, and plans for after graduation.

Robertson Fellows and the COVID-19 Pandemic



From Thailand to the local passport agency

In this profile, [Topher Taylor \(UCSD GPS, '21\)](#) discusses his research foci—which range from disability rights on college campuses to Thai politics—and how his time as a Robertson Fellow has prepared him for a career in the federal government. He also discusses how the novel coronavirus pandemic has affected his coursework and summer internship at the passport agency in San Diego.

[Read the story](#)

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.

New Fellowship Honors Barbara Bush



After the passing of Barbara Bush in 2018, the RFG Board of Directors voted to establish a fellowship in her memory at the Bush School, through the Texas A&M Foundation. This fall the first recipient of the Women in Public Service Fellowship in Honor of Barbara Bush was named.

The fellowship supports deserving students pursuing a master's degree with a focus on intelligence studies and public policy from Texas A&M University's Bush School of Government and Public Service. The Women in Public Service Fellowship deepens RFG's partnership with the Bush School, which started in 2011. The fellowship also opened the door for The Jack and Carolyn Little Family Foundation to step into an expanded donor role

door for the Bush and Carolyn Little Family Foundation to step into an expanded donor role with the Bush School by joining RFG to co-sponsor the fellowship.

The first recipient is [Autumn Clouthier \(Bush, '22\)](#), who says, “The creators of the fellowship are providing me with the essential resources and support I need to be successful.”

As a nonpartisan family foundation dedicated to educating future federal leaders, honoring the Bush matriarch’s expansive influence was an easy decision. RFG President Cynthia Robinson noted, “Creating a fellowship in her honor for students interested in public service is a proactive and productive way to celebrate and extend Barbara Bush’s legacy by attracting more future leaders to careers in policy and government service.”

[Read more](#)

Democracy in the Middle East Roundtable



On July 27, the Robertson Foundation for Government and the Rosenthal Fellowship program co-sponsored a roundtable on "Democracy in the Middle East" featuring Shadi Hamid of the Center for Middle East Policy and Amira Maaty of the National Endowment for Democracy.

[Watch the recording](#)

Virtual Internship Program Saves the Day During Pandemic



Last May, as the novel coronavirus spread and government employees began to realize temporary shut-downs might extend into summer and beyond, Nora Dempsey started hearing what she calls “stories of woe” about cancelled summer internships.

Dempsey is the senior advisor for innovation in the Office of eDiplomacy at the U.S. Department of State and the interim director of the Virtual Student Federal Service (VSFS). She and Megan Kuhn, a program analyst and head of student outreach for the VSFS, run a two-person operation that has



become the largest virtual internship in the world.

The VSFS played an instrumental role in facilitating RFG's summer internship program when nearly all of the Class of 2021 faced cancellation of their summer internships.

In the end, RFG Fellows did virtual internships across the U.S. Department of State and were able to participate in challenging projects.

[Read the full story](#)

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

RFG is proud to count among the Robertson Fellowship network individuals of Hispanic heritage, including the following who offered their thoughts on what careers in public service mean to them:

"Being Hispanic in federal government is not commonplace and as such there is much learning and exploration one must do on her own, without many examples and mentors that look like us - it's unbelievable but true that my generation is still trailblazing in the government sector. There is a personal and cultural implicitly-inherent responsibility that comes with that and a commitment that in our everyday workplace and professional circles we ensure to continue opening doors and advocating for people from our respective Latinx or other BIPOC communities. I hope for a day that public service becomes more representative of the American population." [Ana Monzon \(Maxwell, '17\)](#)

"As the son of someone who came to the United States to secure her political freedom, I value the opportunity to serve the country that has given my family so much." [Christopher Hill \(Bush, '18\)](#)

"Given the severe health and border crises impacting the Latino community, I hope to be part of a generation that gives us a greater say in decision making roles within government. Our community's enthusiasm for the American Dream led my mom to come to the US as a teenager from the Dominican Republic and led me to pursue a career in public service." [Javier Montalvo \(SPP, '20\)](#)

"For me, aspiring to work in public service as a Latina means seeking to diversify spaces and approach issues with the goal of increasing equity. As a person of color and member of the Latinx community, I not only want to use my unique perspectives and experiences in the public service but also ensure that I've supported future generations to do the same." [Eli Marin \(Maxwell, '22\)](#)

"You learn how important representation is when you work in public service. It brings me joy and pride to be able to take space in areas where diversity has an impact on the communities and people we serve." Jennifer Valdez ([Maxwell, '19](#))

DEI Advisory Council's first call scheduled

As part of the foundation's ongoing efforts to help the federal government attract a more diverse workforce, RFG will hold a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) call on Wednesday, October 7, from 3:00 - 4:00 pm ET. All fellows are welcome to participate. RFG Chair Geoff Robertson will be joining the call, along with RFG Fellowship Career Advisor Michael Schneider. Please [contact Program Director Alexandra Ghara](#) for details.

Alumni Corner: Financial Literacy Series Continues

A three-part Financial Literacy Series was launched in September with the aim to provide fellows and alumni the necessary information and tools to manage their finances and plan for the future. The first event, *Savvy Secrets to Negotiating Federal Salaries* featuring expert [Lily Whiteman](#) received excellent reviews. For any fellows and alumni who missed it, a recording of the session can be found on the [Resources page](#) of the RFG website (must be logged in to access).

The final two seminars have been organized with [Serving Those Who Serve](#) and will feature [Ed Zurndorfer](#), a Certified Financial Planner (CFP), Certified Employee Benefits Specialist (CEBS), and a top authority on Federal benefits training. His work is routinely featured in FedSoup, My Federal Retirement and The FedZone.

During the second event, *Understanding Federal Retirement and Insurance Benefits* on Tuesday, October 6, 2020 from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. ET, Mr. Zurndorfer will cover topics involving the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), including FERS annuity, the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) and Flexible spending accounts. [See the full agenda](#)

The final session, *Financial Planning and the TSP*, will be held on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. ET, and will include the following topics: setting financial goals, paying down and managing debts (credit cards, student loans, etc.), reducing one's 2020 federal income tax liability, fundamentals of investing, and the importance of contributing to an IRA and to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). [See the full agenda](#)

RFG Fellows and alumni should have received email invitations and registration links to both events. If you have not received an email to register, please contact [Program Director Alexandra Ghara](#).

Recordings of the webinars will be posted on the RFG website and on RFG social media pages following each event.

Opportunities

The Herbert Scoville Jr. Peace Fellowship

The Herbert Scoville Jr. Peace Fellowship Program invites recent college and graduate school alumni to apply for full-time, six-to-nine month fellowships in Washington, DC. Outstanding individuals will be selected to work with nonprofit, public-interest organizations addressing peace and security issues. Applications are especially encouraged from candidates with a strong interest in these issues who have prior experience with public-interest activism or advocacy. Issue areas covered are: Nuclear Nonproliferation and WMD, Climate and Security nexus, Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution, Emerging Technology

Threats, and Global Health Security. Deadline for the spring 2021 semester is October 9.
[Learn more](#)

Resources

New Ready to Serve website helps with the political appointment process

After election day, the victorious presidential candidate will need to fill thousands of key government positions. If you're interested in working in a presidential administration, the newly-launched [Ready to Serve website](#) from the Partnership for Public Service has all the information and guidance you need to navigate the complex process. With fewer than 90 days until the election, it's not too early to get a head start.

[Learn more](#)

Enhancing Public Governance: An Agenda for 2021 and Beyond

A new paper from the National Academy of Public Administration offers an agenda to help change the way we govern and engage as citizens.

[Learn more](#)

Breaking into a male-dominated national security arena

Women are vastly underrepresented in leadership roles within the federal government, especially in the national security field. In a new Transition Lab episode, Jamie Jones Miller and Nina Hachigian discuss their careers, how they handled uncomfortable situations and the importance of bringing more women into leadership positions.

[Listen now](#) or [read highlights](#)

Beijing+25: Accelerating Progress for Women and Girls

The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security (GIWPS), with support from The Rockefeller Foundation and in collaboration with Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State (2009-2013), released this new report, which serves as a roadmap to advance global gender equality. As the Covid-19 global crisis risks rolling back women's modest gains and slowing or even reversing progress, the report provides a roadmap for a post-pandemic world.

[Learn more](#)

Upcoming Events

October 2

Talking Transitions: Perspectives for First-term and Second-term Administrations

10:00 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. ET

The Partnership for Public Service's Center for Presidential Transition will host a virtual event on presidential transitions in association with the George & Barbara Bush Foundation, the Clinton Presidential Center, the George W. Bush Presidential Center, the Obama Foundation and UVA's Miller Center.

[Register](#)

October 5

2020 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals

8:00 pm ET

Join the Partnership for Public Service to celebrate this year's extraordinary honorees.

including private sector Spirit of Service honoree, Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft. Their first-ever virtual program will highlight the work and accomplishments of exceptional individuals and feature several special guests, including **Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama**.

[Register](#)

October 5-9 and October 13-16

The Virtual Government Hall of Fame Gala

This October, Government Executive will celebrate 2020 Hall of Fame inductees and Teddy winners through a special series of virtual events, including a new Teddies category, The Covid-19 Response. Winners will be unveiled each day beginning with the Teddies from October 5-9, 2020, and then October 13-16, 2020 for the Government Hall of Fame.

[Learn more](#)

October 6

Customer Experience Summit 2020

9:00 a.m. ET

The Partnership for Public Service, in collaboration with Accenture Federal Services, is hosting a summit on transforming customer experience in government.

[Register](#)

October 15

Best Practices in Applying to Grad School

Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA)

11 a.m. - 12 p.m ET

[Register](#)

November 5-10

NAPA Fall Meeting 2020

The 2020 Fall Meeting of the National Academy of Public Administration is an excellent opportunity to learn about and share best practices and address critical issues of good governance. The event will be held online.

[Register](#)

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

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