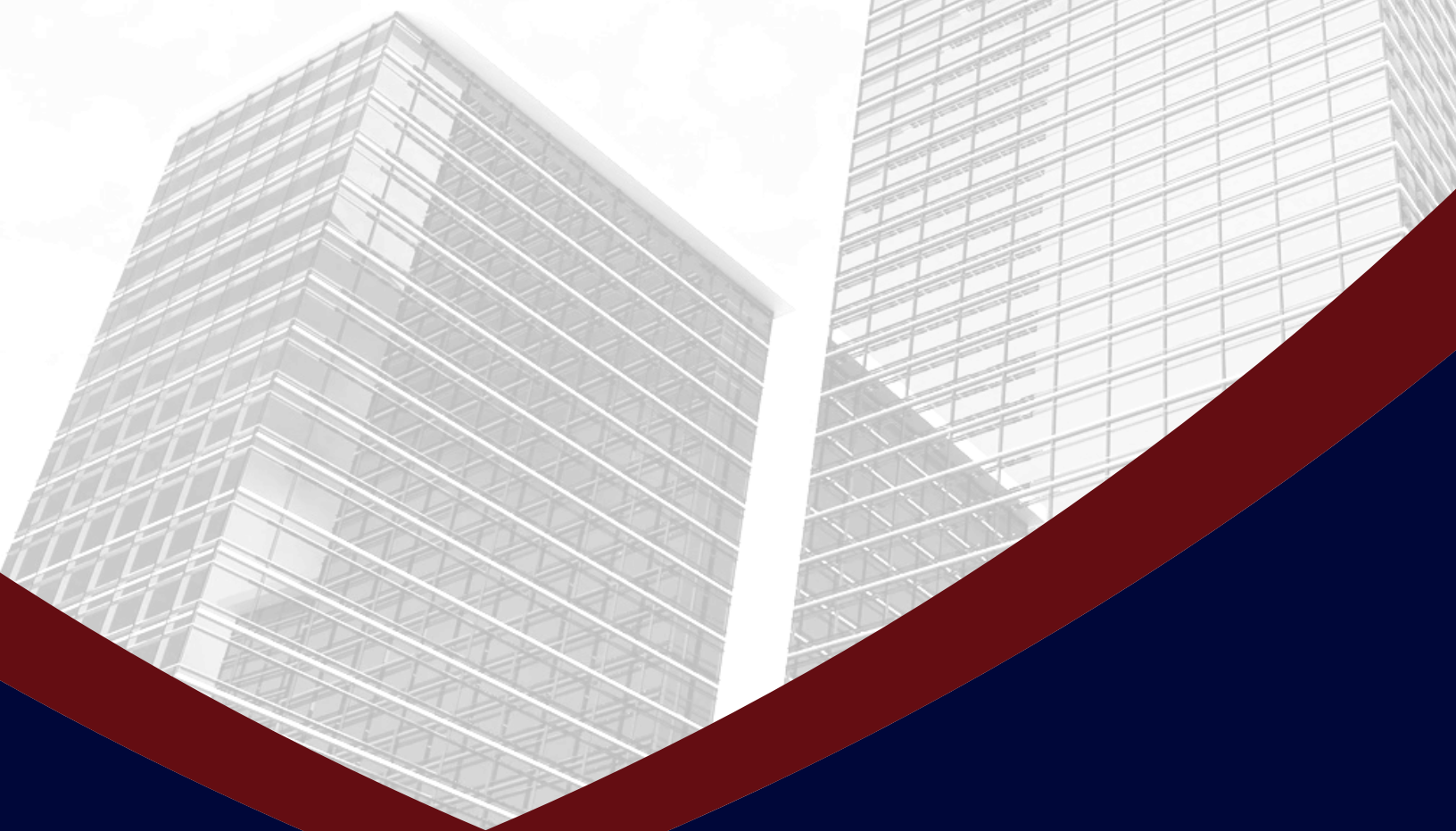


2025 ANNUAL REPORT



**WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL
OF GREATER HOUSTON**

Global Perspectives, Local Conversations

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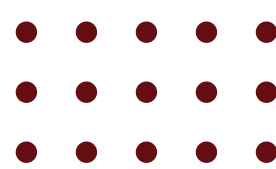
Elizabeth Matthews
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Jose Valera
Michaela van Schalkwyk
Stuart Vogt

LETTER FROM THE CEO



Dear Members, Supporters, and Friends,

In a world defined by rapid change and growing complexity, the mission of the World Affairs Council of Greater Houston—to foster global understanding and meaningful dialogue—has never been more important. Throughout 2025, our community demonstrated that Houston is not only one of the most internationally connected cities in the United States, but also one of the most curious, engaged, and globally minded.

This year, we welcomed thousands of members, students, business leaders, diplomats, and community partners to conversations that explored the issues shaping our world—from geopolitics and global energy markets to international trade and cultural exchange. These gatherings reminded us that informed dialogue strengthens our city, our institutions, and our ability to navigate global challenges together.

Our members remain the foundation of the Council. Whether attending a distinguished speaker event, participating in a small-group dialogue, or supporting student programs, your involvement helps ensure Houston continues to play a meaningful role in international conversation. We are equally grateful to our generous supporters and partners across Houston’s business, academic, and civic communities. Your investment in the Council’s mission enables us to expand programming, bring world-class voices to our city, and provide educational opportunities that prepare the next generation of global leaders.

One of our greatest sources of pride is our work with students and educators. Through our education initiatives, young people across the Greater Houston region are gaining the tools to think critically about international affairs, engage with diverse perspectives, and understand the global forces that will shape their future.

Their curiosity and enthusiasm give us great optimism for the years ahead. None of this work would be possible without the dedication of our Board of Directors. Their leadership, guidance, and belief in the Council’s mission continue to strengthen our organization and ensure we remain responsive to the needs of our members and our community.

Houston’s global story continues to evolve, and the World Affairs Council is proud to serve as a convening place for ideas, perspectives, and dialogue. Together, we are building a more informed, connected, and globally engaged Houston.

With appreciation,

Maryanne Maldonado

Chief Executive Officer
World Affairs Council of Greater Houston

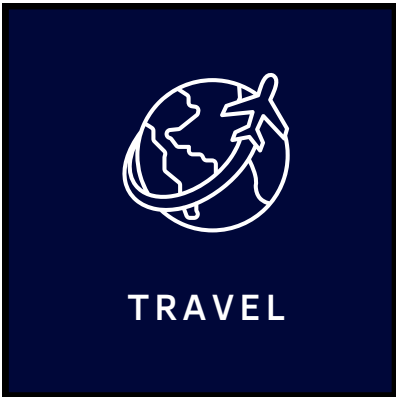
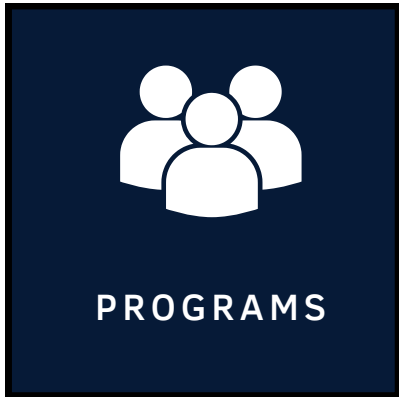


MISSION



The World Affairs Council of Greater Houston is dedicated to promote greater understanding of the world, its people, politics, economies and cultures, and to enable the Greater Houston community to better understand its role and participate more effectively in a global world.

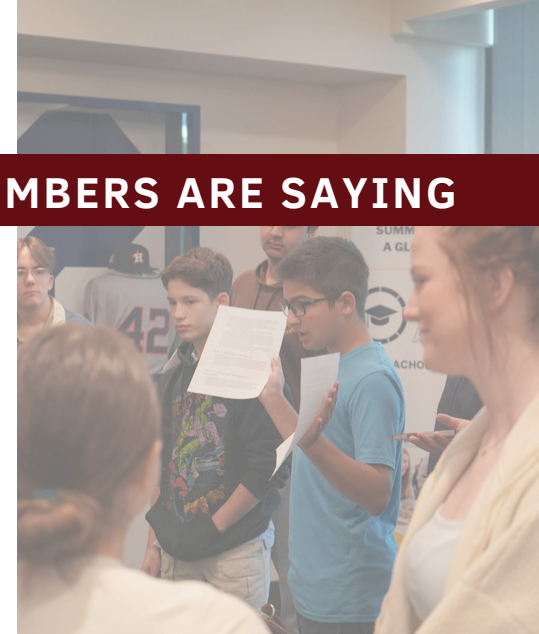
PILLARS OF SERVICE





WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE SAYING

"We have been members of the Houston World Affairs Council (WAC) for many years and attended many very interesting programs. We find that the acquaintances we have made through WAC and the experiences we have had are valuable regularly in our daily lives."



"The World Affairs Council of Greater Houston stands as a crown jewel of civic engagement."

Membership in the World Affairs Council ranks among the reasons our family calls Houston home."



"Houston's World Affairs Council has significantly broadened our understanding, interest, and curiosity about national and international affairs. Through its programs, we've engaged in meaningful discussions with distinguished guest speakers and fellow Council members, many of whom are local and international influential thought leaders."

Thank you to the Council's leadership team for their vision and dedication."



EDUCATION

The World Affairs Council of Greater Houston prepares future professionals for international careers by delivering high quality events, cultural experiences, global knowledge, and professional network opportunities.

The Council connects students to global leaders and offers educators personal and professional development opportunities.



Student participants

2400+

Model UN participants

800+

Academic WorldQuest
Students

250+

Scouting Merit Badge
Students

120+

GSA Registrations

100+



800+
PARTICIPANTS

SECOND LARGEST MODEL UN CONFERENCE IN HOUSTON

Houston's second largest Model Un Conference focuses on global diplomacy, research acquisition and skill development. Students represent nations around the world in United Nations committees like the UN Security Council and UN Refugee Agency. Through coalition building, cooperation, and debate, students find solution to some of the world's most pressing issues.



2025 ACADEMIC WORLDQUEST

Academic WorldQuest is a fast-paced, team-based competition for high school students to test their knowledge of current international politics, geography, global economics, history, and world cultures.

250+
PARTICIPANTS

*The 2025 Competition
was hosted at the home
of the Houston Astros!*



2025 WORLDQUEST CHAMPIONS



Carnegie Vanguard High School



The winning team represented their High School and the World Affairs Council of Greater Houston in the National WorldQuest Competition in Washington D.C.

The team placed 2nd out of 60 teams.

GLOBAL SCHOLARS ACADEMY

SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



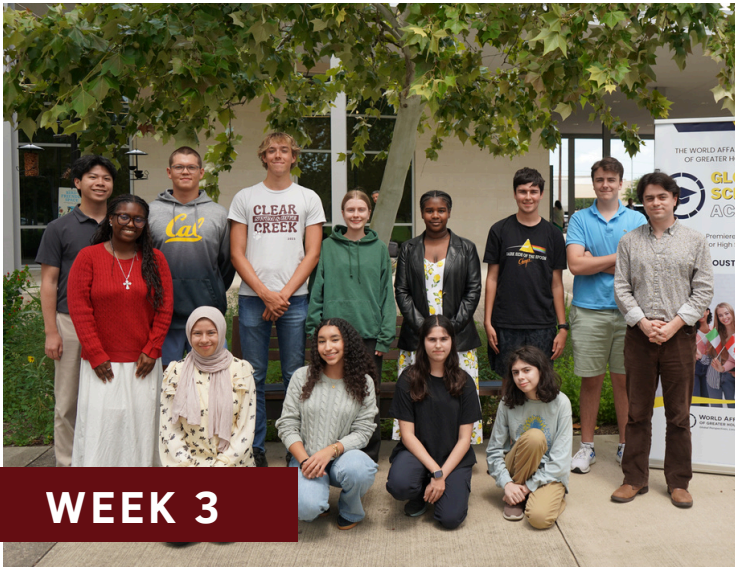
100+
STUDENTS

A week long program designed to provide an exclusive and unique opportunity to learn about international affairs and prepare for an international future.

WEEK 1



WEEK 2



WEEK 3



WEEK 4

"I enjoyed it a lot more than I thought I would. The activities were very fun and personally, I enjoyed when the simulations got a little intense because it kept me interested."

"10/10. I learned so much."

"It was really fun and I had a lot of fun talking about international relations."

"Absolutely wonderful. The best camp I have ever attended."

"Very good. Worth it!"

"Fun and I learnt a lot. It definitely got me even more interested in global politics and diplomacy."

SCOUTS OF AMERICA MERIT BADGE PROGRAM

The World Affairs Council of Greater Houston provided Merit Badge classes designed to improve civic engagement, arm Scouts with global awareness, and create well-rounded Eagle Scouts!

120+
SCOUTS



YOUTH DIPLOMACY FORUM

JAMES A. BAKER III
INSTITUTE
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Youth Diplomacy Forum is a transformative experience that features a unique opportunity for students and educators to engage with diplomats, subject experts, and industry leaders while participating in immersive activities to explore and engage deeply with key international issues.



PROGRAMS

The Council hosts world-renowned expert speakers, thought-leaders, and global affairs experts for lectures, panel discussions, luncheons, film screenings and networking events.



Program Registrants

5600+

Memberships

1400+

Programs and Events

110+



WINE & WISDOM SERIES

Intimate event series that brings members together for conversations over wine with experts and thought leaders discussing timely global issues.



MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY

Designed to honor and recognize the unwavering service and sacrifice of active-duty military personnel, veterans, and their families.



GLOBAL ENERGY SUMMIT

The Global Energy Summit examines the dynamic forces shaping today's energy landscape.

Opening remarks by Cristina Saenz de Santa Maria, Chief Operating Officer, DNV Maritime.

Follow by panel discussions on demand and supply with **speakers from DNV, Amazon Web Services, ExxonMobil, Siemens and SLB.**



GLOBAL YOUNG
PROFESSIONALS



GLOBAL YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Empowering the next generation of leaders, the Global Young Professionals (GYP) is dedicated to fostering a vibrant community of ambitious individuals passionate about global affairs, cultural exchange and meaningful connections.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS & U.S. FOREIGN POLICY INSTITUTE

The Institute is a professional development program tailored for individuals in international business, government, diplomacy, global risk analysis, and NGOs. Offering comprehensive insights, it navigates global affairs, geopolitics, and U.S. foreign policy through expert-led sessions and interactive discussions, fostering applicable knowledge across diverse fields.



2025 Institute Graduates

70

Total Alumni

200

Classes Provided

120+



INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY SYMPOSIUM

LEADERSHIP. EMPOWERMENT.
ACHIEVEMENT. DEVELOPMENT.

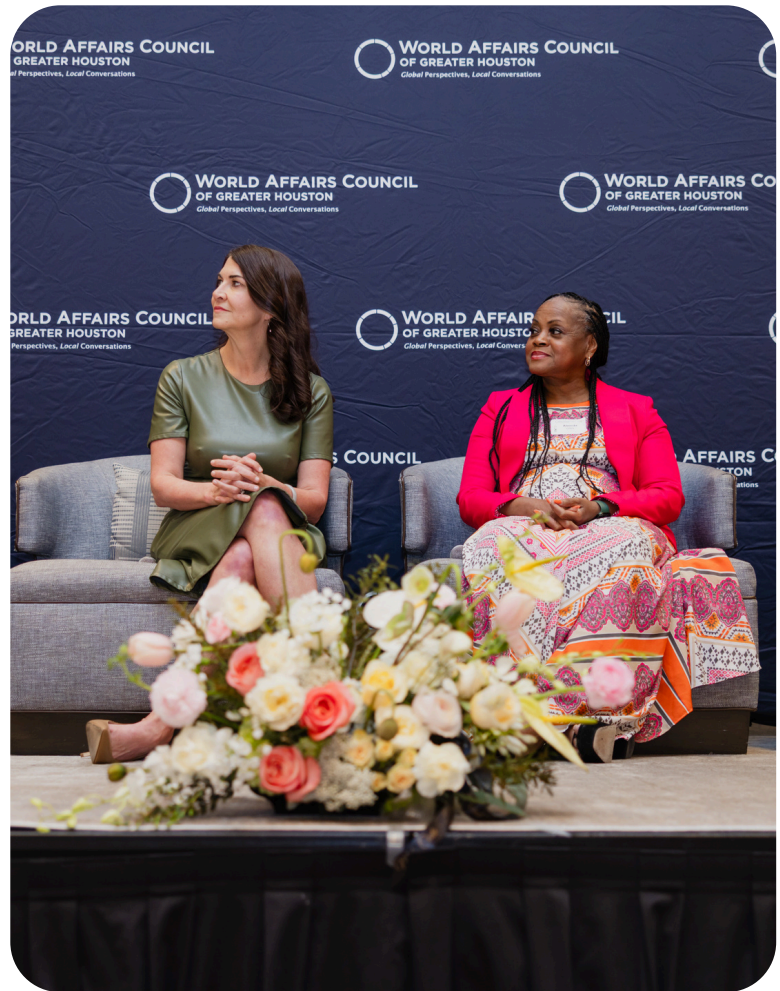
L.E.A.D. is a thoughtfully curated professional development afternoon featuring a pinnacle lineup of presenters offering impactful dialogue followed by a champagne reception in an atmosphere advantageous to meaningful networking and building long lasting relationships.

Uniting Women Locally and Globally to
#LEADWithPurpose



OPENING KEYNOTE
BETTINA DEYNES

Carnival Cruise Corporation
Global Chief Human Resources Officer



2025 SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS



Saba Abashawi
Houston Airports



Mary Balagia
St. James UMC



Jennifer Carvajal Diaz
Pepsi Co



Wendy Craven
Cheniere



Heather Cykoski
WACH Board
Member



Janelle Daniel
Transocean



Helena Fyda
HESS



Amelda Giles
Navy Veteran



Angela Hucles Mangano
DASH



Carrie Hundley
Digital Meld



Jen Jewson
LyondellBasell



Tracy Josefovsky
Halliburton



Liz Karam
AWS Energy



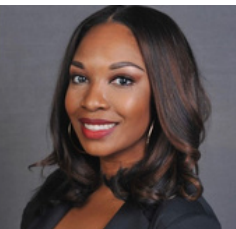
Kimerly King
Bechtel



Jessica Kipp
HP



Elfije Lamaitre
Capgemini



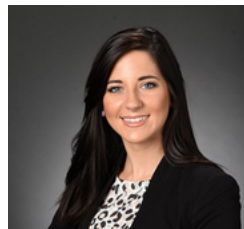
April Love
Sysco



Chassty Manuhutu
Aramco



Indira Mysorekar
Baylor College of
Medicine



Alissa Nixon Fono
Siemens



Nicole Owens
Houston Airports



Kristin Ruzicka
Weatherford



Carlos Sarmiento
SLB



Sarah Schultz
Akin



Sunday Shepherd
Chevron



Barbara Stoyko
Shell



Xina Togba
Bucc-ee's



Stuart Vogt
Transocean



Kim Foley
LyondellBasell



Bettina Deynes
Carnival Cruise

JESSE H. JONES AWARDS LUNCHEON

Annual gathering of global leaders in education,
business, finance, world affairs, and more.

HONORING

2025 INTERNATIONAL CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



Michael K. Wirth,

*Chairman of the Board
& Chief Executive Officer Chevron Corporation*

COMMUNITY IMPACT LEGACY AWARD

H-E-B

*Celebrating the 120th Anniversary
serving Texas communities*



GLOBAL EDUCATION & INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Honorable David M. Satterfield
U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

*Director of Rice University's Baker
Institute for Public Policy*



GLOBAL LEADERS OF INFLUENCE

The 2025 Global Leaders are recognized for their international impact, exceptional leadership, and their contributions to Houston's international spirit.



NORY ANGEL
American Leadership
Forum



MOHAMMAD ANWAR
Softway and Culture+



MARY BASS
Spencer Stuart



ALMA DEL TORO
Blue Wave



ALI DHANJI
Raymond James



DARCIE DURHAM
HTX Labs



ROLAND GARCIA
Greenberg Traurig, LLP



LILAC GUZMAN
Gastech Engineering



NICOLAS JIMENEZ
Comcast



JESSICA KIPP
HP



BONNA KOL
Asia Society Texas



PEGGY LIVANIOS
U.S. Energy Stream



**AMANDA
MARTIN-BROCK**
Aris Water Solutions



ELIZABETH MCGEE
Intel



**MARIA MONCADA
ALAOUI**
Sonic Automotive



RUSSELL RICHARD
Center for Houston's Future



JESS RICHARDS
Transocean



ANDRE'A STREETER
Microsoft



TYSON VOELKEL
Texas A&M Foundation

A NIGHT IN THE *City of Light* ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL GALA

The World Affairs Council of Greater Houston presents the prestigious 2025 International Gala, where Houston's international community converges for an extraordinary evening of global connection and cultural celebration.

An exclusive opportunity to engage with Houston's most influential diplomatic, business, and industry leaders for meaningful connections all while supporting educational initiatives for the next generation of global citizens.

With the esteemed presence of the **Dean of the Consular Corps of Houston and Consul General of France, Valérie Baraban**, this year's French-inspired gala transforms Houston into the 'City of Lights,' offering a carefully curated experience that blends professional networking with cultural immersion.





2025 SPEAKERS

Elliot Abrams

Former Special Representative for Iran and Venezuela

Michael Ard

Former CIA analyst

Bryan Burrough

Journalist and Author

William J. Burns

8th Director Central Intelligence Agency

Anna Hammarlund Blixt

Consul General of Sweden in Houston

Chris Canetti

President, 2026 FIFA World Cup Houston Host Committee

Gen. In-bum Chun

South Korean Army Lieutenant General

Jim Conway

Former Special Agent of the FBI

Mark L. Clifford

President, Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation

Gregory A. Daddis

Melbern G. Glasscock Endowed Chair in American History, Texas A&M University

Shannon Spann DeBruyn

Former CIA Intelligence Officer

Khaled Elgindy

Visiting Scholar & Adjunct Instructor, Georgetown University & former Director MEI Palestine Program

Brian Greene

President & CEO, Houston Food Bank

Raymond F. Greene

Director of the American Institute in Taiwan

Gabrielle Hall

Consul General of Australia in Houston

Toby Harnden

Award-winning Author and former Foreign Correspondent

Susan Harper

Consul General of Canada in Dallas

John Hennessey-Niland

Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, 1994 World Cup USA

Patrick Jenevein

CEO at Pointe Bello & Writer

John F. Kirby

Former White House National Security Communications Advisor





Jim Krane

Co-Director, Middle East Energy Roundtable, Baker Institute

Gabriel Labrador

Investigative Journalist

Frank Langfitt

NPR London Correspondent

Nick Lavery

Active-duty Green Beret

James M. Lindsay

Senior Fellow in U.S. Foreign Policy, Council on Foreign Relations

Livia Link-Raviv

Consul General of Israel to the U.S. Southwest

David Lynch

Global Economics Correspondent for the Washington Post,

Aung Kyaw Moe

Deputy Minister of Human Rights, National Unity Government of Myanmar

Angela Hucles Mangano

President of the Houston Dash

Scott Mann

Retired U.S. Army Green Beret

Bruce Misamore

Chief Financial Officer of YUKOS

Andrew S. Natsios

Former Administrator of USAID



Michael P. Pelletier

Former U.S. Ambassador to Madagascar & Comoros

Mike Pompeo

70th U.S. Secretary of State

David M. Satterfield

Director, Baker Institute for Public Policy, Rice University

Peter V. Sheffield

Chief Sustainability Officer & VP of External Affairs at Enbridge

John Sherman

Dean of the Bush School of Government and Public Service

Sarang Shidore

Director, Global South Program, Quincy Institute

Amb. William B. Taylor Jr.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine

Nick Tran

U.S. Army veteran

David Tyson

Retired CIA operations officer

Kristian Coates Ulrichsen

Fellow for the Middle East at the Baker Institute

Chase Untermeyer

Former U.S. Ambassador to Qatar

Yao-Yuan Yeh

Scholar at the University of St. Thomas

TRAVEL

Guided by the Council's mission and by engaging in people-to-people, in-country exchanges, Council travelers receive greater global understanding and create deep personal relationships around the world.



2025 DESTINATIONS

Saudi Arabia · Greece · Cyprus ·
Uzbekistan · Turkmenistan ·
Kazakhstan · Kyrgyzstan ·
Mongolia · Morocco



2025 STAFF



Maryanne Maldonado
Chief Executive Officer



Sandija Bayot
Chief Development Officer



Ronan O'Malley
Chief Programs Officer



Cheri Rocha
Director of Operations



Jahan Jafapour
Director of Programs



Ethan Eyre
Director of Education



Eli Quezada
Membership Coordinator



Maria Guarache
Brand Strategy &
Growth Manager



Itziar Vazquez
Senior Brand Strategy
& Growth Manager



Leonardo Scarparo
Strategic Communications
& Marketing Associate



Saeye Anzueto
Strategic Engagement
& Growth Associate



David Dennis
Finance Manager



DeVonte Hughes
Finance Coordinator

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Suite 1025
Houston, Texas 77008
(713) 522-7811
wachouston.org

