In uncertain times, we wonder: Do our assumptions about the world still apply? Can we separate facts from opinions? How can the institutions we created adapt to new situations? How do we incorporate different voices into a coherent conversation? How can we contribute positively?

Training in international affairs and policy builds a critical foundation of expertise—regional, cultural, economic, political—to recognize the underlying forces at work in the world. Programs challenge students to develop the critical thinking, communications, leadership, and teamwork skills to navigate a changing landscape. Graduates are distinguished by their flexibility and adaptability. These traits are fostered by an interdisciplinary curriculum and the rich community of people with whom they study.

As you begin your search for a master’s program, consider how you can establish a grounding in the past, prepare for the present, and get ready to adjust to the future. Look at how programs support innovation in their field. Ask by what means they incorporate diverse perspectives. Discover in what ways students challenge established ideas and formulate new ones.

Greek philosophy tells us that the only constant in life is change; yet, moving forward requires making plans, getting the proper training, and building a profession. International affairs graduates master underlying principles of an ever-changing world to help prepare for the future.

By Carmen Iezzi Mezzera
Executive Director,
Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (@apsiainfo)

ForeignAffairs.com/GraduateSchoolForum
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study in a region that matters at an institution that matters

why is the asia-pacific important to the united states, and the world?

the asia-pacific is home to two-thirds of the world’s population, two-thirds of the global economy, and provides two-thirds of all global economic growth. it is the arena that poses the most serious challenge to the united states’ international role since it emerged as a global power over a century ago. it is also the region that hosts six of the world’s nine nuclear states, and four of those have the fastest growing stockpiles and the most unpredictable nuclear doctrines.

the asia-pacific is one of the most significant regions in the world, and the region in which the greatest challenges to the u.s.-led global order will play out. this region has global implications for changing economic relations, potential conflict, and security challenges.

why do students need to study at the australian national university (anu)?

anu is the sixth highest ranked institution for politics and international studies worldwide. we are the leading australian university in this area, and across all disciplines, anu is twentieth in the qs world university rankings in 2017.

thanks to our location within the asia-pacific, the bell school is home to the world’s leading international experts in asian and pacific politics, international relations, strategic studies, and diplomacy. the class lecturers speak with authority on issues of regional and international significance, thanks to their deep engagement with the region.

our approach to research and education is distinct and unique: we bring leading disciplinary expertise and deep knowledge of the region from a global perspective into the classroom. many of the centers in the bell school are over fifty years old, representing a rich tradition of rigorous graduate education and world-class academic research and training.

why is canberra, australia a great place to study?

canberra is the nation’s capital, and our proximity to government ensures our teaching staff has strong and influential relationships with decision makers. our students are provided with access to these networks through guest lectures, seminar series, internship opportunities, and other events throughout the year.

canberra has been ranked the number one most liveable city in the world for 2016 and 2017, according to a recent quality of life index. known as the “bush capital,” it is common to see kangaroos and wombats on the vast green campus of the anu. there are natural parks and reserves just a few minutes’ drive from anu, as well as a thriving bar and restaurant scene in the city center. with many students living on-campus, the university precinct offers all the amenities students need to complete their studies, as well as places to relax with friends.
Preparing for the Complexities of a Changing World

Graduate study offers talented students the chance to advance their careers and make a difference in the world. Why is the study of international relations important?

The perspective of history shows that we live in a time of unprecedented peace, cooperation, and widespread prosperity. However, the world is also more complex, interconnected, and vulnerable than ever before. Every day, news headlines remind us of the work that remains to be done to assist the millions of people who are affected by economic instability, security challenges, poverty, inequality, and vulnerability. People who can understand and translate the complexities of a changing world—and can lead effectively with that knowledge in hand—are needed now, more than ever before. Whether serving as investment bankers, international media correspondents, energy consultants, or countless other career possibilities, students of international relations will be instrumental in achieving a safer, more equitable, and just global order.

How does Johns Hopkins SAIS stand out from other schools of international relations?

Finding solutions to multifaceted issues like water scarcity, population growth, terrorism, and economic development requires innovative thinkers connected to history and committed to shaping the future.

Through a rigorous graduate curriculum rooted in the study of practical application of international economics, international relations, regional studies, and language, Johns Hopkins SAIS attracts exceptional students eager to solve real-world problems and lead institutions driving positive global change. The school maintains three distinct competitive advantages: location, reach, and platform. Our campus locations in Washington, DC, Bologna, Italy, and Nanjing, China offer unique educational and professional opportunities and experiences in today’s competitive higher education environment. Our reach—through a diverse student body, faculty, and alumni—ensures access to an influential and global network of scholars, policymakers, and industry leaders. Finally, the university’s strong tradition of scholarship and exceptional faculty provide the foundation for a transformational educational experience.

How should aspiring foreign affairs professionals think about their futures?

There have been surprising geopolitical developments in the past year, causing many pundits to question the prospects for globalism and cooperation. Young people may think that perhaps this is not the best time to serve the public good. In times like these, some may dispute the merits of working in international affairs, but I beg to differ. The most pressing global challenges today are beyond the reach of talented diplomats, economists, entrepreneurs, business executives, and nonprofit visionaries—if they are working alone. The world needs change agents who can understand and translate the complexities of a changing world. Johns Hopkins SAIS is dedicated to educating and preparing the next generation of global leaders in government, the private sector, multilateral institutions, and the nonprofit sector to serve the billions of people around the world who wake up every day working for a better life. I encourage you to learn more about our unique community of globe-trotting polyglots and passionate activists that will challenge and inspire you to study with purpose.
Judith Kelley
Senior Associate Dean
ITT/Terry Sanford Professor of Public Policy Studies
Professor of Political Science
Duke Sanford School of Public Policy

‘Outrageous Ambitions’ for the Greater Good

At a time when political discourse is antagonistic and polarized, what is the Sanford School doing to promote constructive dialogue?

An international affairs career—whether in the field or conducting research on global concerns—requires an exchange of ideas from a rich diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences. To achieve this exchange, all partners must feel secure, welcomed, and respected, and all voices must be heard. These values and skills are critical to navigating these contentious times. At the Duke Sanford School, we work both to model them and to teach them.

In the classroom, our faculty address issues such as power imbalances and structural inequality. Outside of class, our committee on diversity and inclusion holds brown-bag discussions and training modules. Student groups—such as Sanford Pride, the Latin American and Caribbean Group, and Sanford Women in Policy—strive to make our campus welcoming to everyone.

Our student body is diverse. Some of our Master of Public Policy students arrive from stints in the Peace Corps, the U.S. military, and international nongovernmental organizations. Each year, our Master of International Development Policy program attracts mid-career professionals from more than twenty countries. With our small program size and collaborative spirit, students are able to establish career connections that reach across continents.

Globalization, mobile technologies, and social media are transforming global affairs. How does the Sanford School prepare students for rapid change and uncertainty?

Thinking imaginatively and being future-oriented are essential. The policy issues we face are cross-national, and we need big ideas. At Duke and Sanford, thinking big is in our DNA—our founder, Terry Sanford, challenged students to pursue “outrageous ambitions” for the greater good. Our students embrace that entrepreneurial spirit. They recently established a social innovation working group, a nonprofit board leadership program, and even a coding club. With their input, our curriculum focuses more on analyzing big data and incorporates ideas from behavioral economics and human-centered design.

Sanford students pursue these new approaches while also building core competencies in politics, microeconomics, statistics, and management. Through group projects for global and local clients, they also practice critical teamwork skills. Some choose to develop subject area expertise—security studies, environment and energy, or international development, for example—or pursue dual degrees in business, law, and environmental management.

How can students find mentors and role models?

Our accomplished alumni hold influential positions around the world. They include the founder of the Global Fund for Children, a humanitarian affairs officer working in Syria with the UN Refugee Agency, U.S. Foreign Service officers fighting human trafficking, and the founder of a global health-care access nonprofit. Our faculty, too, have broad experience. They include a former diplomat, military leaders, economic advisors to foreign governments, and a State Department policy planner. Because of our relatively small program sizes, our students have access to these faculty mentors.

In addition, our dedicated career services staff provides individualized career counseling—assisting with not only a first job but also with planning for the third, or fifth, position. They help students hone networking skills and make connections to our far-flung alumni network. Graduates leave the Duke Sanford School with a forever-widened worldview.
A Spotlight on Eurasian Energy Politics

European University at St. Petersburg is a private graduate school and the top research university in Russia. It is a well-known destination for students from the United States, Europe, and Asia who are interested in all aspects of Russian and Eurasian studies. Why have you decided to launch a specific Master of Arts (MA) program with a focus on energy affairs in Eurasia?

In the twenty-first century, competition and cooperation over energy resources have become key factors in international affairs. The intensive one-year ENERPO (Energy Politics in Eurasia) and two-year ENERPO Plus programs are the only MA programs in Russia where students can learn and discuss, in English, a variety of topics, including Russian-European and Russian-Asian energy relations and challenges, influence of energy sector on politics, and economics and social development in the post-Soviet space. Interestingly, Albert Hirschman’s observation of 1945, an expansion upon Machiavelli, seems to be correct: “a textbook for the modern prince should contain extensive new sections on the most efficient use of quotas, exchange controls, capital investment, and other instruments of economic warfare,” including energy.

For people, “life is movement.” For countries, “life is energy,” as it affects entire industries and the economy. Energy security is a very intricate subject depending on economic, political, and social factors. What helps your students become experts in this field?

The ENERPO program offers students an exceptional interdisciplinary program combining energy-related courses from various disciplines—political and social sciences, economics, law, and history—in order to gain answers to basic questions. These questions vary from whether a combination of national energy security models could entail a system that could be accepted as a global common good, to if it is possible to merge different energy security approaches by exporters, importers, and transit states, as well as by climate change advocates and their opponents. Also what is the take on this from businesses and other industries.

In order to provide a practical approach on these issues, we arrange ENERPO workshops—roundtable meetings with prominent experts and energy business representatives from Russia and abroad. The seminar on world oil and gas affairs helps students analyze energy market news on a daily basis and prepare materials for a weekly ENERPO e-newsletter and a quarterly ENERPO journal. The summer school in Tyumen, known as the capital of Russian oil, and regular internships give our students the opportunity to immerse themselves in the industry and to attend both research and industrial facilities related with energy production.

This year, the fifth class of students graduated from the ENERPO program. What are their career prospects?

Solid education and strong skills in energy markets and political analyses, along with the opportunities for summer internships and career counseling, help students start their career in business, government, journalism, nongovernmental organizations, and academia. Some of our alumni work as energy analysts or traders in international energy companies; others use their skills in civil service or seek degrees in law and business or PhDs. Being a truly international program with students from more than a dozen countries—the United States, Australia, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Norway, Russia, the Caucasus, South Korea, Turkey, and the Gulf States—ENERPO guarantees a rich and vivid multicultural experience.
Management Matters: Applying Business Strategy to an International Affairs Education

Alnoor Ebrahim joined The Fletcher School in 2016 as a professor of Management, and teaches courses on Leadership, International Business Strategy, and Managing NGOs and Social Enterprises. Ebrahim has shared his expertise with the NGO Leaders Forum, the G8 and other major groups, and penned the award-winning book, “NGOs and Organizational Change: Discourse, Reporting, and Learning.” He received a Ph.D. in Environmental Planning and Management from Stanford University’s School of Engineering and has worked on projects with The World Bank, ActionAid International, and many leading organizations throughout his career.

You have a formidable background in academia and have also worked with the NGO Leaders Forum and a working group established by the G8. How has this experience informed your work as a professor at a school of international affairs?

So that my research can help tackle critical international issues, I am constantly engaging with global leaders on the challenges they face. The NGO Leaders Forum was a gathering of chief executive officers of the largest humanitarian development organizations based in the United States. I worked with a team to provide leaders with insights from research and policy that could help inform their discussions on core management challenges—such as how to design governance, impact measurement, and accountability.

I also served on an impact measurement working group established by the G8 to provide guidance to impact investors on how to measure the social impacts of their investments. I draw on these experiences in the classroom, as they pose real-world challenges, help inform new research, and provide networks for student projects and career connections.

Fletcher’s curriculum offers a strong multidisciplinary approach to international affairs. How does this broad view of today’s global landscape prepare students for long-lasting careers in a variety of sectors?

Today’s complex international problems—such as climate change, poverty, human rights, security, and sustainable development—require an ability to work across disciplines. At The Fletcher School, we prepare students to work across the boundaries of economics, law, business, and diplomacy in order to craft integrative solutions. Whether public policy, diplomacy, or another field, careers today require an ability to see the big picture and to galvanize diverse stakeholder groups toward a shared purpose.

The business world is accustomed to periods of uncertainty. How do you train students to be nimble and adaptive regardless of their chosen career path?

Uncertainty in the global economy has many roots—political instability, security and cyber threats, and risks to our food supply from climate change. This means we must train students to analyze these broader underlying forces, develop public policies that can address them, and lead organizations that can anticipate and manage them. This is true not only of careers in business but also in government and in civil society.

My courses teach students that the central task of leadership is to frame the challenges in a way that motivates collective problem-solving. The solutions to complex problems will rarely come from the top but are almost always jointly discovered.
The Center of Gravity for Asia-Pacific Studies: GSAPS

What innovative ways has your program found to prepare students for an age of uncertainty?

The election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States and Brexit are two recent examples of the age of uncertainty, as these events were totally unexpected for many people. Although unexpected—or because they were unexpected—these events have had significant effect on the global economy and on politics. Increased uncertainty makes it difficult for graduate students interested in international studies to identify an area of specialization. In order to prepare students for an age of uncertainty, the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies (GSAPS) emphasizes not only the development of expertise in a core discipline from areas such as international politics, economics, cooperation, society and culture, history, and others but also an understanding of the foundations of multiple disciplines. Through effective education and training, GSAPS nurtures students with a core competence as well as broad issue coverage, so that they can be competitive and flexible in dealing with problems in an uncertain world.

The merit of learning from and understanding diverse perspectives now takes a more important role than ever. How is your school responding?

Recognizing the importance of understanding diverse perspectives, GSAPS offers a broad range of courses, from politics and economics to society and culture to history. Besides wide issue coverage, GSAPS’s curriculum spans regions, from the Asia-Pacific to Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Our faculty members offer multiple, rich perspectives: not only do they have excellent academic achievements across different disciplines, but they also come from various countries and diverse backgrounds, including former officials in international organizations, journalists in mass media, and researchers in think-tanks. To broaden perspectives, students are encouraged to participate in exchange programs at graduate schools in foreign countries. One unique international program is the East Asian University Institute, a joint education program with four universities in Asia. As a way to encourage students to pursue high-level research, GSAPS offers selected students funds for conducting research in foreign countries.

What are the unique strengths of your program?

Situated in the center of Tokyo—a gateway to a rapidly growing Asia—GSAPS is an ideal location for students interested in conducting research in regional and global issues and in gaining experiences in international activities. Our MA program takes in approximately one hundred and twenty students annually, of whom 80 percent are from over fifty countries outside Japan. One unique feature of our MA program is project research: carried out in seminar style, the objective is for the students to prepare their MA thesis under the guidance of academic advisors. As well, GSAPS offers scholarships to qualified students, resulting in the successful recruitment of top students. Furthermore, the graduate school enjoys the advantage of being a part of Waseda University, one of the oldest and best private universities in Japan and Asia and the alma mater of a number of Japan’s former prime ministers. Students and alumni of GSAPS have the opportunity to be a part of the broader global Waseda University network.

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Laura Bloomberg  
Dean  
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University of Minnesota

Bringing the World into the Humphrey School and the Humphrey School into the World

The Humphrey School of Public Affairs is uniquely positioned to impact complex global challenges that demand innovative and effective approaches. Guided by a dynamic curriculum, and with the support of a globally engaged faculty, Humphrey School students are trained for careers in foreign policy, global affairs, international development, and human rights and humanitarianism.

What innovative ways has your program found to prepare students for an age of uncertainty?

The world needs visionaries to address daunting and ever-changing global challenges involving diplomacy, conflict prevention and management, humanitarian response, global migration, human rights, food security, climate change, poverty, and inequality. Our curriculum combines core courses in policy analysis and implementation with an array of academic opportunities to learn from practitioners through internships and field studies. Our partnership with the Stimson Center in Washington, DC, provides students research and internship opportunities with experts, and crisis negotiation exercises presented by the U.S. Army College—most recently with retired Ambassador Thomas Pickering—train students to negotiate international crises. We also leverage technology in ways that bring the world into the school and the school into the world by connecting students with professionals around the globe, and hosting an online collection of public policy teaching cases produced at institutions in Africa, Asia, East Asia, Central and South America, and across the United States.

How does the Humphrey School create learning environments where a diversity of views is present and allowed to flourish?

Faculty, staff, students, and alumni share a deep commitment to social justice and the celebration of diversity that are the legacy of our namesake, Hubert Humphrey, a statesman recognized internationally for his contributions to improving the well-being of humanity. We continuously review curriculum against our schoolwide goals of equity, inclusion, and diversity, and our classroom discussions are guided by ground rules for respectful and inclusive discourse. We have prioritized hiring practices that help to ensure a diversity of tenure and tenure-track faculty members—not only with regard to race, but also country of origin, orientation, and political view. Our faculty bring a global mindset and guide students to apply newly learned skills in a global context.

How are you preparing students to remain flexible in their career paths?

We prioritize two essential skills that are transferrable in uncertain times: public policy analysis and public policy implementation through community engagement. Students learn evidence-based best practices that shape effective policy and gain skills to engage respectfully with multiple stakeholders throughout the communities impacted by such policies and practices. Our Master of Public Policy (MPP) degree program, which includes a global policy concentration, trains students to lead and manage across sectors, institutions, and diverse populations and learn to solve complex problems in dynamic, uncertain environments. In courses on U.S. foreign policy and bilateral relations taught by our diplomat-in-residence, students explore ways that international diplomatic norms are continuously challenged by changes in the international political structure, the rise of non-state actors and organizations, and the explosion of digital technology and social media.
Embracing Diversity—Understanding Complex Perspectives of International Affairs

Studying at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna (DA) is an opportunity to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of international affairs in order to prepare for the varied challenges of an international career. Vienna, as a seat of a high number of international organizations, is a comparative advantage, as well as the alumni network of more than 2,100 alumni from more than 120 countries.

The Diplomatic Academy of Vienna’s graduates enjoy a high reputation in international organizations. Was that an advantage for you?

Laura: The reputation of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna (DA) was definitely an advantage. However, for me, the DA network was even more valuable. Being able to ask other DA alumni about their career and work experiences allowed me to gain a better understanding of the expectations and different work fields; consequently, it helped me to prepare for my interviews. The DA also provided me with valuable career advice.

Tamojit: While applying for jobs, I did feel that the DA piqued a certain admiration and was a good starting point for a conversation. Moreover, the alumni base of the DA is spread across international organizations in Vienna, and that definitely helps in getting to know the job market better. The alumni network has had a major role in supporting my efforts in navigating through the system while looking for a job. In general, the informal nature of the alumni club allows one to keep abreast of recent trends and news from other organizations.

The challenges for future leaders are manifold. How did your studies at the DA help you navigate through these uncertain times?

Laura: The challenges that today’s leaders face are not all new. They are, however, more interconnected and demand holistic approaches to tackle them. Understanding the political, legal, economic, technical, and environmental dimensions behind new approaches are now more essential than ever. This was at the core of the Environmental Technology and International Affairs program, which has allowed me to start an international career in the energy sector. It helped me to develop a global mindset and to fully acknowledge the imperative necessity of worldwide cooperation to successfully address current and future challenges.

Tamojit: I believe that we are going through a period of seismic shifts in the international order. These are interesting times for us to enter the professional field because there is more need than ever for fresher and more rigorous efforts to piece the puzzles of the international system together. The DA’s contribution in this regard, for me, definitely lies in its commitment to diversity, whether it is cultural or academic. The DA’s multicultural and tightly knit student community allows one to interact and appreciate people from different cultures and walks of life. Second, the multidisciplinary approach of the Master of Advanced International Studies program placed me on solid ground with a better understanding of interconnected issues and allowed me a 360-degree perception to think of issues from multiple viewpoints.

Both of these factors, I believe, contribute to overcoming the challenges that one may face while navigating through life as well as through professional journeys.

Laura Beitz
Master of Science in Environmental Technology and International Affairs Program, 2015
Junior Professional Officer, UN’s Sustainable Energy for All

Tamojit Chatterjee
Master of Advanced International Studies Program, 2017
UN’s Sustainable Energy for All
Leading and Succeeding in a World of Uncertainty

How are you preparing students to succeed in an uncertain global environment?

Unpredictability has always been a defining characteristic of global affairs. We teach students to not only expect uncertainty but also to capitalize on it and use it as an opportunity for transformational change. That is only possible if one understands the roots of changes taking place, so we instill in our students a truly global outlook—one that does not take the U.S. perspective as universal. Our students study the opposing vantage point, question assumptions, and plan for the unexpected, which builds resiliency in times of flux.

How relevant and contemporary is the curriculum and learning environment?

At the LBJ School, we prepare students by constantly adapting our curriculum to incorporate new tools, methodologies, and ways of thinking. Specifically, students pursuing our Master of Global Policy Studies (MGPS) degree are well-versed in the traditional areas of study—development, diplomacy, security, humanitarian aid—and they understand how modern forces change how we confront issues such as the emergence of non-state actors, sustainable development, climate patterns, and cyber warfare. We put a strong emphasis on experiential learning, in which students study policy through real-world exposure and practice, including participation in a year-long policy research project funded by an external client.

Students have the unique advantage of accessing the vast resources of The University of Texas (UT) at Austin, a Tier 1 research institution. MGPS students are afforded ten dual degree options, choose from existing specializations, or design one based on their personal career trajectory. They especially benefit from the LBJ School’s affiliations with the Clements Center for National Security and the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law, both of which integrate expertise from across UT as well as from the private and public sectors to tackle pressing global security challenges. Notably, LBJ is host to UT’s new China Policy Center, a laboratory for the study of contemporary U.S.-China relations. Our Latin America working group investigates the most serious issues facing the region over the next decade, with Texas a gateway to this region of the world. We continue to see high-level officials from Washington, DC, and around the globe make us a destination for important exchange and dialogue. In the last two years, we hosted a secretary of state, secretary of defense, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director, Federal Bureaus of Investigations director, director of national intelligence, and several U.S. senators.

How do you connect students to jobs in their desired fields?

Our faculty include world-renowned scholars and former senior officials in the departments of state and defense, the National Security Council, U.S. Agency for International Development, the World Bank, and more. In recent years, students have taken jobs at the U.S. State Department and the Defense Department, the CIA, the U.S. Senate and House Armed Services Committees, the World Bank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Brookings Institution, the Atlantic Council, prominent nongovernmental organizations, and nonprofits.

Whether through our faculty, LBJ’s Washington Center in DC, Austin’s burgeoning global community, or through our engaged alumni network numbering over 4,100 on the world stage, our students are exposed to the full range of professional possibilities.
Stanford Offers Far More Than a Traditional Policy Degree

Michael A. McFaul is the former U.S. ambassador to Russia, 2012–2014; former senior director for Russia and Eurasia, U.S. National Security Council, 2009–2012; senior fellow, Hoover Institution; and professor of political science, Stanford University

What differentiates the Ford Dorsey Program in International Policy Studies (IPS) from other policy studies programs?

Stanford has a strong tradition of collaborating across disciplines, which creates a truly interdisciplinary learning environment. IPS students can fulfill program requirements at other Stanford professional schools, such as the Graduate School of Business, the Law School, the Graduate School of Education, the design school, and even the medical school. Over the next few years, we will be rolling out more joint-degree programs to take greater advantage of these opportunities. This interdisciplinary spirit is heavily influenced by Silicon Valley’s entrepreneurial and innovative ethos. Unique courses such as hacking for defense and hacking for diplomacy afford our students opportunities to approach national security issues from a technological perspective. Courses that combine technology and international policy are unique to Stanford and differentiate us from traditional policy schools.

IPS recently underwent a reorganization, moving into the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI). What changes are on the way as IPS settles into its new home?

With its diverse faculty, FSI creates greater opportunities for IPS students to work across disciplines and to receive an applied education. Over the past few years, we have worked to give students more experience with real clients in our practicum and in other classes. In the autumn quarter of 2018, there will be a new, stronger curriculum that will provide future public service professionals with even greater tools for their careers. Additionally, we will continue to grow the robust career development opportunities available to students.

What skills do students obtain in your program?

The IPS curriculum prepares students to address problems in diplomacy, governance, security, international economic policy, energy and environmental policies, and development. Our students tell us that they chose our program in order to get a firm grounding in analytical and quantitative skills. IPS graduates leave the program with expertise in quantitative analysis, policy writing, decision-making, and negotiation, among a host of other skills that contemporary policymakers need. Since students can take classes in different departments and schools at Stanford, many also obtain skills in finance, computer science, management, and other fields.

Our students must also study one of the five areas of programmatic concentration: democracy and development, energy and environment, global health, international political economy, and international security. In 2018, we are adding an additional concentration in cyber policy.

What networking and career opportunities can IPS offer to students?

At Stanford—and FSI in particular—we have a group of people with incredible policy experience. At FSI alone, there are four former ambassadors, while Stanford is home to former U.S. cabinet officials, policymakers from federal and state governments, and, of course, the Silicon Valley community. We also routinely host non-U.S. policymakers in our visiting diplomats programs. There is an increasing demand for tech companies to have effective government and international relations departments, and many of our recent graduates have accepted jobs at some of the Valley’s most exciting enterprises. IPS is not a traditional policy degree in many respects—we offer far more than that!
Ready for the Real World: Putting Diplomacy into Practice

As a student from Serbia, what aspects of diplomacy do you value most?

Sometimes it feels as if I have only lived in times of uncertainty, which is why international relations and diplomacy have always been a big part of my life. Growing up in Serbia and the war-torn Balkans region in the 1990s, I knew about United Nations (UN) missions and the diplomats who were active in the region. I was fascinated with diplomacy and its application as an instrument that states could use to negotiate and realize their national interests.

After graduating from college in 2009 with a degree in finance, I started working for a global banking firm and then moved to a major professional services company. These experiences offered me a deeper understanding of globalization and cross-border cooperation and helped me to appreciate collaboration within teams—all hallmarks of diplomacy.

After working for a few years, I decided to pursue a master’s degree in international affairs. At Seton Hall University’s School of Diplomacy and International Relations, I gained a strong foundation in international relations theory, improved my analytical and research skills, and expanded my knowledge of global institutions. I also studied with international affairs scholars and career diplomats and participated in a study seminar in Cyprus, where I met the country’s current president and other top leaders. I also spent a week at the UN with students from around the world, where we attended briefings and heard from senior UN officials about the organization’s dynamics and the daily challenges diplomats face.

All of these experiences gave me a realistic understanding of the complexity and hard work involved in diplomacy. Managing the demands of today’s multilateral world requires a new generation of diverse, well-informed, and flexible international front-runners.

How did your experience at the School of Diplomacy enhance your ability to work in diverse settings?

Among the things I valued most about the School of Diplomacy were its small class size, communal environment, and global student body. For example, our art and science of negotiation class simulations gave us a chance to practice negotiating in real-time with students of different backgrounds. I have used the skills I gained in that class in my new global role at work. I also had an opportunity to hear different perspectives on the U.S.-Iran nuclear deal from Iranian and U.S. colleagues who thoughtfully represented opposing points of view. I heard firsthand about issues in Afghanistan from a student who worked in his country’s ministry of foreign affairs. This level of engagement is unique. It helped me grow personally and professionally and showed me the value of diversity—not just in terms of ethnicity, religion, and race—but in opinion and perspective, as well.

What advice would you have for new students of international relations?

There is a need for students who, as international civil servants, will focus on accomplishing something rather than becoming somebody. My modest advice to these future global leaders is to never stop learning, be flexible about their careers, especially in times of uncertainty, and to remain open to hearing different points of view.
Today’s Professionals Can Never Learn Enough

Tell us a little bit about your background.
I began at MCI Telecommunications—which later became Verizon. I started in an entry-level position and worked my way up to be a regional service vice president in the enterprise customer division. I was able to grow and learn because I worked with and for some of the best leaders and most supportive mentors of my career.

Three months into Michigan State University’s program, my husband and I moved from Chicago to San Francisco, where I am now responsible for the global privacy solutions organization at TRUSTe.

Why did you choose the Master of Science in Management, Strategy and Leadership degree, specifically?
I believe that a person can never learn enough about management and leadership. It is an ever-evolving field of study. I use strategy in nearly every part of my role and knew that sharpening my skills in this area would also be of benefit.

Why did you choose to pursue an online master’s degree from Michigan State University (MSU)?
I had wanted to pursue a master’s degree for a while but did not want to put my life on hold. I travel often for work and for personal reasons; I would not have been able to pursue a program that did not offer the flexibility of online learning. I have written papers from various places and was able to manage school while moving cross-country.

Prior to this program, I had not found a reputable program that I could be proud to attend. Once I did a little research, I knew this was the answer. MSU’s Broad College of Business has produced some fantastic leaders and has an excellent reputation.

With your new learnings, where do you hope to go?
This knowledge enhances my abilities, replenishes my toolkit, and increases my confidence. Eventually, I may also pursue a higher level of education. In the near future, I would also like to pursue undergraduate online teaching.

What is your most valuable learning so far, and how have you been able to apply it?
I have been able to apply many things. During the first class, I was able to create a business scorecard, and during the second class, the instructor helped me to implement an employee survey related to our mission.

The cohort that I have been with since the beginning has been so impressive, knowledgeable, and fun. These are connections that I will keep for a long time.

What advice would you give to others considering enrolling in the program?
You must be organized, be able to plan school around your busy life, be committed to learning and contributing to the class, and be incredibly disciplined throughout the program.

What or who is driving you to succeed during this process? How?
I will be the first one in my family to earn an advanced degree. I am proud of this, and it drives me.

What’s your number one takeaway from this experience?
If you listen, you can learn so much from those around you. It is important to be a lifelong learner.
Rachel Korberg, MA ’13
Yale Jackson Institute for Global Affairs
Associate Director at The Rockefeller Foundation

Preparing Leaders for Pressing Global Challenges

How did Jackson prepare you not just for your first job after graduate school but for the rest of your career?

What drew me to Jackson was the ability to learn from a diverse group of fields and people. I took classes not just at Jackson but also at the Schools of Management, Law, Public Health, and Forestry & Environmental Studies. This helped me learn how to be a translator between fields and perspectives. For example, in my current job, I may speak with Silicon Valley in the morning and then to an organizer or a scientist in the afternoon—taking courses and learning with leaders in all of those spaces have really helped.

Prior to Yale, you were involved in several non-profit organizations and government agencies. After graduate school, you transitioned into private sector work. How did your Jackson degree help you to make this change?

My career was initially in the global development and humanitarian world. At a certain point, though, I was frustrated not to see more results. Instead, I saw work happening without enough impact and collaboration with the communities that were actually living these challenges. I needed a moment to reflect and reorganize. I was grateful that Jackson gave me an opportunity to do that.

While at Jackson, I ended up building my skills in business strategy and finance. I took this training to my job as vice president at a frontier markets investment firm. One of my favorite projects was a market study on energy-efficient appliance manufacturing in Ghana, and we later advised the government on how to spur more manufacturing. Jackson helped me to make that shift into the private sector.

How would you advise students interested in global development to take advantage of their time at Jackson, given the program’s flexibility?

Don’t be afraid of digging into policy and business approaches—getting outside of the typical tools used by the global development sector will serve your career. Take courses that explore, and really grapple with, criticisms about development aid. I would also suggest taking at least one class on something that you’ve never done before. One of the best classes I took while at Jackson was a six-person, PhD-level history seminar with historian Tim Snyder.

How did you benefit from the Jackson community?

What I loved most about Jackson was the students’ commitment to service. A few of my classmates were former military, for example; despite my being an aid worker at the time, I quickly realized that what we had in common was that we were all committed to serving in some way. Jackson students come from all around the world and from different sectors. Because it’s a small program, we were able to spend time together and expanded each other’s perspectives. It’s a great community.

Ms. Korberg leads the Foundation’s efforts to identify new, large-scale opportunities for impact.

Yale Jackson Institute for Global Affairs
You are a medical anthropologist specializing in humanitarian assistance and global health who teaches international affairs. Tell us about your research and approach to teaching.

My research draws on insights from ethnographic field work and ongoing conversations with many different people in the Horn of Africa to help improve the global health policies and humanitarian interventions that affect them. My goal as an instructor at the School of International Service (SIS) is to share these experiences with my students and, therein, help them more effectively recognize, analyze, and redress health inequities, both in faraway places like the Horn of Africa and right here in Washington, DC.

How has your work with humanitarian organizations such as UNICEF and the United Nations (UN) World Food Program informed how you teach international affairs?

As an anthropologist, I consider UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations as cultural systems with discernable histories, symbols, rituals, and values. In class, we study how power operates within these organizations. We ask how power relations affect how we define a humanitarian crisis, a famine, or an epidemic, and how and by whom particular health and humanitarian interventions are designed and evaluated. To supplement scholarly and policy texts, I introduce students to aid workers, policymakers, and beneficiaries who can offer grounded insights into the importance, challenges, and inadequacies of particular foreign interventions.

How does the SIS curriculum, built around the combination of knowledge and practice, benefit students?

In my classes, I make sure that every student ends the semester with three things: scientific and programmatic proficiency, depth of historical knowledge, and the ability to critically analyze global inequities. First, I make sure students are knowledgeable about the science and policy underpinning health and humanitarian interventions. Second, I teach the history and roles of international organizations and governments in the development of laws and intervention strategies. Students exit the class understanding, for example, the history, structure, and critiques of the UN World Health Organization and how it positions itself for future global health challenges. Third, students gain critical thinking skills to evaluate how diseases or problems are prioritized and how groups of people and problems can sometimes be left behind or obscured.

SIS was founded on the promise of educating international affairs students to wage peace. How do you apply this to your work?

“Waging peace” means building relations of trust and fighting for social justice. Anthropologists have long studied the role of health in people’s social identities and the cultural sensitivity required to optimize medical care—especially in the aftermath of war or violence. Health care has important societal effects; conversely, social relations shape the outcomes and evaluations of the medical care people receive. Therefore, health and humanitarian responses can never be limited to building clinics and donating material goods but must also include explicit efforts to foster trust and reconciliation. Histories of violence make relief operations and clinical encounters between oppositional groups formidable. However, in my work, I have found that healthcare providers and aid workers, by explicitly working to undo political tensions, can build meaningful rapport across antagonistic divides. In other words, peace can begin in the clinic.
Using Uncertainty to Gain Future Strategic Advantage

You’ve been asked to comment on how “stay ahead in uncertain times”. Why is this such a critical question?

The goal of any graduate program in global affairs must be to educate students on how to be effective in shaping the future in whatever occupation they choose, when that future is surrounded by uncertainty. Political realism teaches us to expect surprise: relations among states are anarchic, power competition is never ending, periods of stability are transitory. Globalization and rapid technology innovation accelerate change and further widen the range of uncertainty. The current power transition, from U.S centric to non-centric, and the absence of effective management of this transition, make the present period in IR uniquely unstable and dangerous.

Making smart strategic decisions in conditions of uncertainty is a critical source of future competitive advantage, and is a focus of the MS in Global Affairs offered by the NYU School of Professional Studies Center for Global Affairs (CGA). Managing uncertainty is hard. Some organizations wait for ‘clarity’ before making big decisions, but clarity never arrives while opportunities to shape the future are forfeited. Some double down on existing strategic assumptions, but rapid change degrades these assumptions and existing strategy loses its robustness. Some conclude that all is uncertain, failing to leverage what we do know about the world, and thus make poor choices that invite unintended consequences.

So what are the attributes of organizations that succeed in an uncertain world?

They take the future seriously. They try to understand and track forces for change in their environment. They make sure the assumptions upon which strategy are based leverage the best knowledge available, and are subjected to reality checks as the world evolves in unexpected ways. Their strategies are tested against alternate, plausible futures, which minimizes surprise and helps prepare for change, both positive and negative. They are conscious of risk, but not immobilized by it, understanding that any strategy comes with downsides, and that these can be mitigated by making risk explicit and planning actions if risks materialize. Successful organizations find the right balance between knowledge and imagination. They know how to think about uncertainty, how to organize themselves to reduce surprise and manage risk. Because they see the world more clearly than others they turn uncertainty to strategic advantage.

So how exactly does CGA prepare students to excel in this world of surprise and uncertainty?

Thinking about the future permeates the MS in Global Affairs. I oversee a concentration (one of eight) called International Relations/Global Futures, which is devoted to teaching the substance and process of future international developments. My book Pivotal Countries, Alternate Futures, recently published by Oxford, synthesizes many years of teaching and consulting on the future. I also supervise an ongoing research project for the UN, involving five students per semester, on countering emerging terrorist threats. Many other professors who teach in the program also are focused on the future. Regina Joseph teaches strategic foresight and the uses of big data, conducts forecasting tournaments and policy hackathons; Mary Beth Altier leads our Transnational Security concentration, which focuses on emerging global threats; and Jennifer Trahan who heads our International Law and Human Rights concentration, ran a global conference at CGA this past semester on the future of global justice. These are just a few examples of how coping with uncertainty and surprise is woven into CGA’s curriculum and public events.
Educating for the World of Tomorrow: Where Technology and Change meet Global Affairs

Why does your School aim to educate for “the world of tomorrow”?

The world is changing at an exponential pace. In the last three decades life expectancy increased by an average of three months per year lived, century-old companies ceased to exist and many of the jobs performed by humans for generations were taken over by robots and algorithms. In the last two years alone humanity produced more data than in the previous twenty millennia. Advances in artificial intelligence, robotics, the biological and medical sciences and many others will mean that the world where our graduates will live will be very different to the one we know today. Many more of our jobs will be automated, we will have redefined the concept of privacy and of security, and the boundaries between local and global will have become completely blurred. This complex and interdependent world will be in dire need of leaders capable of navigating it and of guiding its companies, institutions and governments. We aim to be at the forefront of the process of educating those leaders both at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

How does the IE educate its students to address current and future challenges?

At IE School of International Relations we are committed to innovation in education. This is not only reflected in the use of technology in the classroom and beyond but also in how our teaching is always focused on trends of change. We do not educate for the past but for the future. This requires linking our teaching to the latest advances in the fields of technology and innovation and leveraging the power of the humanities to make sense of such a rapidly changing landscape. It also requires providing our students with a solid foundation on how the private sector works. We are strong believers in the need for the public and private sectors to work together to solve some of the greatest problems of our time. By bringing together knowledge about technology, public policy, business and global affairs we seek to educate individuals capable of succeeding in an ever-changing world.

What is the IE experience and what sort of careers do IE graduates have?

The IE School of International Relations is a cosmopolitan institution. The vast majority of our students are international. Our language of instruction is English. And our students get to spend time in both Madrid, the over-4-million-strong capital of Spain, and in Segovia, a UNESCO World Heritage site where the IE owns a beautiful 13th century monastery.

Our Bachelor and Master in International Relations graduates have gone on to work for some of the world’s largest corporations in strategy, business development and institutional affairs departments. Some are working for multilateral institutions such as the United Nations or the World Bank. Others have gone into politics and the public sector more broadly. Others, in turn, are helping some of those in need in our world through their work in NGOs and other philanthropic institutions. Overall, our graduates have made the most of their education and are working at the frontier of global affairs. We are very proud of them. I encourage readers to join us here in Spain, to accept future challenges affronting humanity and to take part in our vast alumni community currently continuing to make the world a better-governed place for all.
Building Skills and Expertise in an Innovative Program

What does Rockefeller College offer students pursuing professional international affairs careers?

With origins in a graduate public administration program established in 1947, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy recently launched an innovative Master of International Affairs (MIA) program that emphasizes flexibility and individualized attention. International affairs students build core competencies in international relations and policy analysis, economics, management, and quantitative methods. They develop expertise in areas such as global and homeland security, diplomacy and global governance, information technology policy and management, global public management, and international development administration.

How do Rockefeller’s international affairs students acquire skills and expertise required for a changing world?

Our highly accomplished international affairs faculty members offer skills-based courses to meet changing demands in a range of concentration areas.

More wars are now fought within states than between them, and civil wars spill across borders as terrorist attacks. Students concentrate electives in global and homeland security to learn about insurgencies and the causes of political violence that spans international borders as well as develop the necessary skills to work in organizations that must deal with terrorism. International affairs students desiring even more specialized expertise may enroll concurrently in certificate programs in homeland security or cybersecurity or focus their elective coursework on intelligence analysis.

To meet millennium development goals or support counterinsurgency strategies, states and international organizations increasingly turn to nongovernmental organizations for project implementation. To become skilled development professionals, students focus their studies on international development administration and take courses offered by faculty from Rockefeller College’s Center for International Development (CID), which has implemented over $200 million in development projects for national governments—such as the U.S. Agency for International Development—and international organizations—such as the United Nations Development Program.

As half of the world’s population gains internet access, governments are going online to serve their citizens and are becoming vulnerable to cyber attacks in the process. Students develop solid e-governance skills by focusing their studies on information technology policy and management and taking courses with faculty affiliated with the University at Albany’s Center for Technology in Government (CTG), which has partnered with over one hundred and fifty government agencies.

Students hone their skills through internships in these and other areas of specialization. With assistance from our career development staff, Rockefeller College students routinely intern at federal and state homeland security, law enforcement, and intelligence agencies. Our students also intern with CID on international development projects and with CTG on government technology projects, as well as with their partners around the world.

What flexibility does the MIA program offer to students with varying needs and career paths?

Whether full-time or part-time, students take courses in-person or through synchronous distance learning using web conferencing. This means students may continue their coursework even when interning in other cities or when traveling for work. While offering internship and experiential learning opportunities to students who need to build their résumés, we also enable students with extensive professional experience to focus solely on their academic training. Regardless of the path taken, students acquire the skills and knowledge they need to succeed.
West Coast-Trained for a Washington, D.C., Think Tank

Immediately after the School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS), you headed to Washington, D.C., as a research analyst at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. What are you working on now, and how did your graduate studies help?

Currently, I track various metrics for measuring the North Korean economy to ascertain how and at what levels their economy is growing. I also have an ongoing project assessing the extent of South Korean humanitarian and economic aid in North Korea.

I have always wanted to be in the mix of discussions on U.S. foreign policy in East Asia, and Washington, D.C., is the hub. GPS combines quantitative analysis skills and top-notch research and was the best place for my studies.

What lessons prepared you to work at a leading think tank?

I use my quantitative skills every day. The economics training at GPS is great, and so is the broad training in public policy. In a town like Washington, D.C., you are never too far removed from politics, and I gained a superb foundation for understanding this. It is not about learning facts; it is about acquiring that foundation to analyze problems in many contexts.

North Korea represents uncertainty for many in the world. What are your thoughts on the current tensions?

We are in a very difficult time. We need bold new ideas to signal the intent of the U.S. toward long-term peace and engagement with North Korea while simultaneously improving sanctions enforcement and continuing to punish aberrant behavior. This is not an easy balance to find.

Just as important as analyzing these complex policy issues, it is necessary to connect them with stakeholders. That is why I maintain relationships with government officials, diplomats, and members of the media. This makes my work better but also allows for opportunities to share it with others.

As a graduate student, how pivotal were your multiple fellowships?

Immensely pivotal. The Robertson Foundation for Government Fellowship provided unparalleled financial assistance to support my training in public policy with an eye on public service. The Boren Fellowship provided funding to study Korean in South Korea, and the Rosenthal Fellowship supported my U.S. Department of State internship. The Career Services staff at GPS kept me up to speed with fellowship deadlines and made sure my applications were solid.

To what extent has your collaborative work with faculty benefitted you?

While a student, I had the chance to work with truly fantastic professors such as Stephan Haggard and Susan Shirk—experts in Korea and China, respectively. It is hard to imagine a better place to study if you want to think deeply and critically about Northeast Asia policy.

I am currently working on research with Stephan Haggard and writing posts for his and Marcus Noland’s blog, North Korea: Witness to Transformation. Faculty members Susan Shirk and Emilie Hafner-Burton also have been very helpful in encouraging me in my career and carrying on policy discussions even after classes ended.
Wei Liang  
Professor & Co-Chair of the International Trade and Economic Diplomacy Program  
Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

Real World Issues Inspire Graduate Degree Learning

How does the Middlebury Institute prepare students for an age of uncertainty?
The Middlebury Institute of International Studies is a professional graduate school in Monterey, California. Our goal is for students to develop professional skills and gain up-to-date industry knowledge through our innovative learning approaches. We understand that new teaching methods are needed to better suit the learning needs of students with professional goals. Our master's degree in international trade and economic diplomacy is a good example of our approach to teaching.

First, we use real-world issues as learning opportunities. Through the use of case materials based on current issues, we ask students to conduct role-playing negotiation simulations. For instance, we have an in-class negotiation simulation on global climate talks, Doha round negotiations, Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations, and a South China Sea dispute settlement. By providing detailed instruction and inviting professional negotiators to guide the process, we teach the subject matter in an engaging way and enable students to practice negotiation skills effectively. In addition, we have developed a number of immersive courses that give our students opportunities to conduct field research in different parts of the world, including East Asia, South America, and Africa.

What I am most proud of is that these unique practicum courses offer a rare opportunity for our students to develop, work on, and deliver a real policy-relevant research project from scratch. The knowledge they gain throughout this process endures; more importantly, the skills they acquire and practice in the field are applicable to their future endeavors anywhere in the world. These practicum courses develop professional research skills that cannot be learned simply by sitting in the classroom and library. Finally, the last semester of this graduate program allows students to gain additional professional experience at our Washington, DC, campus after they complete two semesters of coursework in Monterey.

The merits of learning from and understanding diverse perspectives now takes a more important role than ever. How is the Middlebury Institute responding?
This is important for a graduate professional school with a strong focus on international policy studies like the Middlebury Institute. It is our priority to make sure that students study complicated global issues by deeply understanding and appreciating the different and diverse perspectives presented to them. The policy studies and research initiatives we include in our degree programs are taught in over seven languages by scholars with different perspectives. Fortunately, we have a very diverse campus community: almost 30 percent of our students are international. Besides learning from open-minded professors, students truly enjoy learning from each other in the classroom.

What specific skills can the Middlebury Institute provide to its students while allowing them to remain flexible in their career paths?
We train our students in communication, public speaking, negotiation, qualitative and quantitative research methods, and much more. We know that we cannot teach students every skill they will need in their jobs, now or later; therefore, we put great emphasis in the classroom on knowing how to collaborate with others, learn continuously, and think critically. The goal is always to provide students with the skills and tools to be flexible and passionate throughout their professional life.
Grooming Future Leaders from Asia

Why study in Asia now? And why Singapore?

Because Asian economies are developing at a tremendous pace and power is shifting from the West to the East, there is a growing demand throughout the world to better understand Asian perspectives. Located in the heart of the region where East meets West, Singapore offers an unmatched vantage point to view and interpret these changes. Recent developments—China’s emerging role as the region’s champion of trade through the Belt and Road Initiative, in the context of a retreating Western order—signal the emergence of a new world order in which the actions of Asian powers matter more in global affairs than before. Therefore, studying in Asia enhances the global competitiveness of those who want to make a difference: our students achieve a strong grasp of the economic, strategic, and cultural dynamics of the region as they form new networks with Asia’s young policy and thought leaders. Singapore’s education reputation also continues to attract global attention, with the National University of Singapore ranking fifteenth in the world in the latest QS World University Rankings.

How does the Lee Kuan Yew (LKY) School of Public Policy groom leaders of tomorrow?

The LKY School is uniquely positioned to prepare future leaders for the new era. For over a decade, it has trained students from Asia and other parts of the world through its world-class public policy education. Our careful selection of students from the world over allows students to learn from one another through their diverse perspectives and varied experiences. This global network of fellow graduates and future leaders remain invaluable contacts throughout their careers. The LKY School allows its students opportunities to learn by engaging in dialogue with global luminaries and Asian leaders, such as Aung San Suu Kyi, former Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Kofi Annan, and David Cameron. The LKY School also facilitates internship opportunities and job connections for students, enabling graduates to move quickly to jobs in national governments, multilateral agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and research institutes.

What is special about the newly launched Master in International Affairs (MIA) program?

The LKY School launched its inaugural MIA program in August 2017. Our distinguished international faculty, with deep expertise on China, India, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the United States, and other Asian-Pacific powers, is committed to delivering an outstanding education in international affairs. Students in the MIA program will have the opportunity to work closely with faculty members, and they are expected to participate in the latest debates in international affairs from both a theoretical and practical point of view. Students who share our excitement about Asia and who aspire to an international career in policy, business, consulting, research, or academia will thrive in the challenging LKY School environment. Last but not least, our students are also encouraged to undertake practical fieldwork and internships, in addition to taking advantage of exchange programs with other top universities in Asia and beyond.
A New Kind of International Affairs

What was the original motivation for launching the Julien J. Studley Graduate Program in International Affairs (GPIA) in 2001?
Our founding director, Mike Cohen—who led the World Bank’s urban department for many years—wanted to design an alternative international affairs program. He wanted it to have a truly global focus—looking at issues in poor and middle-income countries, not only at the latest issues in U.S. foreign policy. The program would be committed to practice and getting students out in the field, and be critical, engaged, and iconoclastic, in The New School tradition. He put together a faculty with this in mind, and these orientations are still central to our program.

What are the program’s main academic and professional areas of focus?
We offer five concentrations: Conflict and Security, Media and Culture, Cities and Social Justice, Governance and Rights, and Development. Each provides a different set of real-world experiences and skills. In Conflict and Security students learn to conduct conflict assessments; in Media and Culture students learn transmedia design, and its links to advocacy; and so on. We also offer an extensive practice curriculum that provides a range of skills—geographic information systems, participatory design, monitoring and evaluation, media production, survey research, and many others—that are essential to the ever-changing field of international affairs.

What makes The New School’s program different from other international affairs programs?
Traditionally, the field has been centered on economics and political science. Although other programs bring in new perspectives, their core curriculum is still organized around classic areas. One can certainly study those topics at The New School, but our program is distinguished by our critical perspective, our commitment to practice and engaged learning, the unique possibilities in New York for students of international affairs, and the connections across The New School in media, design, and social research. There is no other international affairs program that combines this set of things.

Another attractive distinction of GPIA is that our program is flexible. We do not march students through a bunch of required courses—we believe that students should put together a course of study guided by their own interest. Our program has always been accommodating for nontraditional students: people who are changing careers or working full- or part-time. We are committed to making our program work for people in different situations.

Third, our International Field Program is an entirely unique opportunity for our graduate students. Students spend two summer months at our field sites abroad getting on-the-ground experience. They work and conduct research with community-based organizations, NGOs, and government agencies around the world.

What has been students’ favorite part of GPIA?
Students love the program and report that they find it to be a transformative experience. Dealing with international affairs is not like fixing a car—just a matter of knowing which part to replace or which screw to adjust. It is about critically engaging with the field: Why are we asking certain questions and not others? What political agendas are behind particular answers to global problems? Students who come to our program are interested in these questions, and I think they are satisfied with what they find.
Thriving in Uncertain Times

What is unique about Thunderbird, and how does it prepare you for a career in this age of uncertainty?

I am pursuing my Master of Arts in Global Affairs and Management; I just finished my first year. Essentially, the MAGAM is a specialized MBA. This summer, I took part in a Global Consulting Lab (GCL) in Ecuador with 3M Corporation; and now, I am doing an internship in Philadelphia with GE.

The applied learning projects give students a unique perspective on what it is like to work on an international platform, and the GCL was my first time working abroad. Currently, at my ten-week internship at GE, I meet people from Thunderbird all the time, and I work with people from all over the world. In fact, when I interviewed for the position, we had studied the GE-Electrolux acquisition—I was able to bring that knowledge to the conversation, and I think that was part of the reason why I got the job. The study was another Thunderbird experience that gave me an advantage.

Thunderbird has exceeded all my expectations. I tell people that it is the best decision I could have made—the doors it has opened have been incredible. At the school, we have the best professors and the best subject matters that really take students to the next level, both personally and professionally.

With all the changes going on in the world, how does your program give you a foundation for success in a dynamic job market?

The professors have in-depth background in what they are teaching—they have worked on a global stage with different people and different companies from around the world, and they bring that passion to the classroom and to the students. Everything about Thunderbird prepares students to be comfortable in uncertain situations. What I am learning at Thunderbird helps me to be more certain of the future and to make sure I have an impact going forward.

The merits of learning from and understanding diverse perspectives is more important than ever; how does Thunderbird prepare you for this?

The diversity at Thunderbird prepares students every day—classmates from around the world with different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. I am in Washington, DC, right now with four other students, and we’re all from different countries—Bolivia, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, and the United States. That’s Thunderbird. At GE, I go into this experience knowing how to work with people from all over the world because it is what we do in school every day, and that makes for an easy transition.

What specific skills are you receiving from Thunderbird that enables you to be flexible and to adapt to change on your career path?

We learn the hard skills, but the soft skills have been most important—relationship building and adapting to different working environments with different people. At Thunderbird, students are always in different situations with different people, and that’s where I feel I have grown the most. With this background, a Thunderbird graduate can always handle whatever is thrown at him or her.
Advanced International Studies in the Capital of Europe with Leading Academics and Experienced Practitioners

What is it about the Brussels School that encourages diverse opinions?

Our diverse international student body, representing fifty-five nationalities and backgrounds, ensures students are exposed to diverse perspectives—it is what our school is built on. The different backgrounds, academically but also professionally, create a stimulating environment in our seminars. We encourage this participation and consider all other viewpoints, which results in some lively discussion! These perspectives are built into the classes that students take as electives; for example, our module on migration, conflict, and human rights challenges students’ perceptions by inviting guest speakers into the class each week to cover a range of issues across the spectrum of human migration. These speakers, with personal firsthand experiences of conflicts and human rights, inspire students to think beyond the theories.

What specific skills do you provide students to allow them to remain flexible in their career paths?

Achieving a balance between the theoretical and the practical is something that is vital toward building a flexible career. For instance, our module on European Union (EU) migration law provides students with a sound grounding in the law governing regular migration within the EU as well as an opportunity to undertake an internship at the EU Rights Clinic and put their theoretical knowledge to use by advising them on their rights under EU migration law. In several modules, students play simulation games—for example, acting as mediators in an international conflict or negotiating among EU member states. By learning how to use these tools effectively, our students are able to achieve success in many avenues of life, even if these sometimes fall outside of the formal scope of their education.

How does the Brussels School equip students to face the challenges of an uncertain world?

Our students choose us for many different reasons, but the ability to combine a world-class education with outstanding networking opportunities in Brussels among the international community is the reason we hear most. The ever-increasing competitiveness of the job market post-graduation puts a heavy emphasis on the combination of study and internships. To help our students, we come at the challenge from two angles.

First, through our academic programs, we ensure that students have a firm grasp of both the theoretical approaches and practical applications of the subject they are studying. We teach them to read critically, to analyze problems, and to learn how to develop a coherent and balanced argument. Our lecturers are a mix of academics and practitioners who are not only at the cutting edge of their fields of research but also have extensive work experience, and they bring that experience and advice into the learning environment.

Second, our careers coach helps students consider the international job market. Through a series of workshops, seminars, and networking events, students make contacts across a range of organizations and practice their networking skills with potential employers.
How to Maximize Your Education for an International Career in a Changing World

What makes your school unique in preparing students for international careers?

Area studies, which simply refers to deep academic engagement with particular world regions, is critical to developing global citizens able to create new knowledge and contribute to pressing policy debates. Only by studying a region, by immersing oneself in a culture, language, and society, can one learn to think more sophisticatedly about a particular geographical space and to engage with it in a constructive, empathetic, and useful way. This is why the Jackson School, and in particular its MA programs in area studies and Applied International Studies, is so important to both the scholarly and policy communities.

What aspects of the Jackson community do you value?

The Jackson School has expert faculty in most of the world’s regions, from South Asia to Europe to North America, and also enjoys the privilege of having the most Title VI centers—eight—of any institution in the United States. These Title VI centers provide graduate students with unique resources that enable them to devote themselves to their studies and to research and write papers and theses that they can use as a knowledge base for the remainder of their careers, whether they be in public service, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, or academia. These centers, as well as the Jackson School as a whole, provide students with connections to diverse Seattle communities, including the business community—the Pacific Northwest is home to Starbucks, Amazon, Microsoft, and other major multinational corporations—and government community—for example, I was recently appointed to the City of Seattle’s International Affairs Advisory Board.

How is your institution keeping competitive in the face of new challenges?

We are leading new frontiers—in cybersecurity, technology, arctic research, outer space, and religion—and using innovative teaching of international studies that are important to society now. Simply put, the Jackson School takes its engagement with the world seriously; we value both our ability to train excellent scholars and global citizens dedicated to using their knowledge for public purposes. We are committed to providing students with hands-on training about how to use their knowledge in nonacademic settings. For example, in our MA in Applied International Studies program, students work on applied research projects that are designed to allow them to bring their academic knowledge to bear on decisions made by influencers of global policy. Indeed, many of our students take special efforts to communicate their knowledge to the public, writing op-eds, articles, and essays read by people throughout the world.

As a whole, the Jackson School combines the best in academic and pragmatic training. Students leave our programs with a deep knowledge of both theory and practice and use their knowledge to build lasting careers in the industries and sectors that presently define our world.

Daniel Bessner
Anne H.H. and Kenneth B. Pyle Assistant Professor of U.S. Foreign Policy
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Continuing to Think Globally

Both within the United States and abroad, groups espousing nationalism and isolationism are on the rise, casting doubt on global trade and international institutions. How has this affected the Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS)?

Our mission—preparing the global leaders of tomorrow—has never been more important than today, with the global order being questioned in so many ways. This is a critical and exciting time to be engaging students in interdisciplinary discussion at the highest levels, and we find that SFS students are intellectually engaged and politically committed. Concerns that applications to a school of international affairs might dip in this environment have, to date, proven unfounded: SFS applications are at an all-time high.

How is SFS adapting as the world and the job market change so quickly?

The strengths of our graduate programs in international affairs have always been on the cutting edge. We are top-ranked for many reasons, but surely one is that our Washington, DC, location provides faculty who are top practitioners as well as important thinkers. Our location also offers unparalleled access to internships and practical experiences—exactly the kind of interdisciplinary problem-solving that marks the best education today. Students may spend the morning studying global trade with a government economist who worked on the Trans-Pacific Partnership and then head to the Federal Reserve in the afternoon to research capital flows. Classes from Monday to Wednesday might give way to an internship at Freedom House on Thursday and Friday.

What are the advantages of SFS having nine different master’s degrees in international affairs?

The SFS graduate programs offer an ideal balance of focus and context. Our three largest programs cover broad and vital themes: international affairs and diplomacy, security studies, and international development. Then, we have five additional programs that offer multidisciplinary focus on regional studies: Asian studies; Arab studies; Eurasian, Russian, and East European studies; German and European studies; and Latin American studies. We have also just introduced a new master’s in business diplomacy aimed at executives. This range of choices gives students a small cohort experience within a larger graduate community.

How does the atmosphere at Georgetown bring students the diverse perspectives that are increasingly important?

At their core, the SFS graduate programs are highly global. We have students from many countries and cultures, each of whom contributes in critical ways to inquiry and discussion. Our faculty of more than one hundred and twenty professors comes from and understands a huge variety of cultures, languages, and philosophies. And, because Georgetown is located in our most international and global city, our campus continuously hosts important international leaders. Just last year, we heard from foreign ministers from France, Argentina, Sweden, Panama, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates and the former president of Kiribati—not to mention former Secretary of State John Kerry and the former chief executive officer of GE, Jeff Immelt. In most cases, these visitors not only spoke to the university but also took the time to engage with SFS students in small groups. There simply is not a more powerful university forum in the world for the leaders and thinkers who matter most in international affairs.
Acquiring Diverse Perspectives in an Age of Uncertainty

What innovative ways has your program found to prepare students for an age of uncertainty?

We are living in a period of transformation. The world has witnessed dynamic changes, and continuity of the postwar liberal order has been called into question. Such times of profound change create opportunities as well as uncertainties.

Our Graduate School of International Relations (GSIR) offers innovative programs and courses that prepare students for an age of uncertainty by introducing them to different perspectives and experiences. The dual master’s degree program, which offers qualified students the opportunity to study at two institutions, enhances our students’ flexibility in approaching an uncertain world and in addressing the issues they may face.

For instance, in the global cooperation program, which is taught in English, students learn the theoretical foundations and the practical applications of international cooperation from seasoned academics and experienced professionals. They study side-by-side with domestic students, international students from over thirty-two countries, and foreign government officials who come to GSIR via prestigious scholarship programs offered by the Japanese government.

Courses like “professional training” provide hands-on experience concerning the rapidly changing world of international development in Asia and beyond by specialists who have worked for national and international organizations. The dual master’s degree improves the students’ ability to respond to developing situations and prepare them to work anywhere in the world upon graduation.

The merit of learning from and understanding diverse perspectives now takes a more important role than ever. How is your school responding?

Understanding diverse views and perspectives is a strength in uncertain times, and that is a skill we foster and champion at GSIR. Located in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan and home to multiple World Heritage sites, our school attracts many international students as well as faculty members, who make up over two-thirds and one-fourth of our intellectual community, respectively.

In order to enrich our students’ educational experience, we recently launched the global and Japanese perspectives program (GJP), which is taught in both English and Japanese. The program specifically prepares students to examine global issues from the Japanese and Asian perspectives, along with other established approaches to these issues. Students focus on the experience and history of Japan and of Asian countries to develop alternative and critical insights to world affairs. They will also have the opportunity to acquire Japanese language skills through courses such as the “GJP platform”, where students learn about Japan and international relations either in Japanese or in English, depending on the language that they wish to improve.

For students who want to build a career in Japan after their studies, the program offers courses in business management and the economy in Japan as well as Japan’s role in East Asia, Japan in world history, and Japanese politics and foreign relations, which give them the understanding necessary to develop a successful career in Japan. GSIR also connects students to internship opportunities that complement their education and increase their skills in the global market place.
Making a Difference, in a World of Differences

The power of Alejandro Pérez’s international relations degree is its breadth. Maxwell’s Master of Arts (MA) program uniquely combines international scholarship with transferable leadership and management skills drawn from the number-one ranked public affairs program in the country. Backed by a required internship in Washington, DC, or abroad, the degree provides excellent preparation and access for public service professionals to find and succeed at their vocation.

As a political science undergraduate who grew up on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, Perez first prepared for a career in the U.S. Foreign Service; however, he later discovered a passion for policymaking. In all cases, Maxwell served him.

You have spent eighteen years on Capitol Hill and in the White House. How did your time at Maxwell impact your career path?

Maxwell’s MA program, with its built-in flexibility and diverse intellectual community, gave me the tools to develop my own path and exposed me to people who were also trying to find their own paths. Through its Washington program, it gave me the opportunity to participate in internships at the Department of State and on Capitol Hill. During those internships, I discovered that I enjoyed international work, but I also decided that rather than serving in diplomacy, I would prefer to help shape foreign policy.

As Deputy Assistant and Special Assistant to President Obama for eight years, you offered strategic guidance on a wide range of major issues, some of them international in focus and some of them not. How did Maxwell prepare you?

On Capitol Hill, you have an opportunity to make major contributions in the policy arena, but you need to absorb, understand, and distill a wide range of complex subjects quickly, and you need to put your thoughts on paper concisely. From international trade, the environment, and national security to taxes, health care, and education, Maxwell’s interdisciplinary approach to public policy issues offers a unique space for developing and enhancing this type of analytical thinking. In addition, the range of disciplines and viewpoints at Maxwell challenged my thinking and prepared me for the diversity of backgrounds and partisan viewpoints on Capitol Hill and for building coalitions across various groups.

How does your current work for the Attorney General of California build on your prior experiences?

My job now is to monitor federal legislation in Washington through the California lens to keep the California Congressional delegation up to speed on the Attorney General’s actions and to partner with them to defend and advance California’s interests. Some of these have an international dimension—immigration and clean energy and the environment are key issues in California, for example. Much of my work pertains to domestic policy, like health care. Both are served by my Maxwell degree.

Wherever I end up serving, I believe there is a positive role for government to play, and my main goal is to be part of a government that helps people. Maxwell shares that belief and prepared me well.
Analyzing Uncertain Times in International Affairs

How is the Pardee School curriculum adapting to the changes in the world and preparing for the future?

The key to understanding, thriving in, and improving a world that is changing in rather unpredictable ways is the ability to see how seemingly disparate events and trends influence each other. Our curriculum is designed to give our students a solid foundation in international diplomacy and negotiations, international economics, quantitative analysis, global governance, and research design. Graduates will be able to discern the interplay of different factors, such as shifting centers of economic development, the role of religion, and the rise of non-traditional actors, and how they influence the direction of world events. With this strong foundation, students will be able to delve more deeply into their particular areas of interest. When they graduate, our students will have the specialized knowledge they need, with the broad vision to put it into perspective. To do well, both depth and breadth are required.

The merit of learning from and understanding diverse perspectives now takes a more important role than ever. How is the Pardee School responding?

One of the changes we are most excited about is introducing a strong component on ethics throughout our curriculum. Decisions and policies have consequences, and even well-intentioned actions can have unanticipated negative effects. We want our students to consider the challenges confronting policy makers, to recognize that sometimes there are no “right” answers, and to know that life cannot be reduced to bumper sticker slogans. Improving the human condition is only possible with a strong, ethical base. A second change requires all students to have a grounding in international negotiations: there is no challenge facing us today that can be solved by one country or institution alone. We are also putting a renewed emphasis on quantitative analysis. Good decisions are made on the basis of good information, and our students will be well-equipped to understand what is relevant and what is not.

What specific skills does the Pardee School provide students, which will prepare students for their desired career paths?

Pardee has two unique features. The first is a strong interdisciplinary faculty, including world-class experts on international relations, history, political science, sociology, international security, and regional studies. The second is the hearty collaboration between traditional academics and professors of the practice. Our students work with professors who have spent their careers in studying and writing on the key issues of our times and with professors who come from careers in diplomacy, intelligence, and the military, benefitting from their experiences in policy formulation and implementation. We also offer experiential learning, where students, both individually and in groups, take on projects and research opportunities for real-world clients. Indeed, two of our recent graduates were hired to implement recommendations from their graduate research papers. We expect our students to approach their studies with these practical applications in mind.

Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies

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Celebrating 20 years of Service: Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders

In its 20th anniversary year, the Bush School of Government and Public Service is fulfilling its mandate from President George H. W. Bush to prepare the next generation of principled public servants to cope with the unprecedented challenges of the 21st century international landscape. Bush School faculty and students hold and express a wide variety of views on the challenges facing our nation, and they do it with integrity, civility, and mutual respect. The blended faculty of scholars and practitioners, many of whom served in government and NGOs, offer guidance on both the theory and practice of effective and ethical service in public institutions charged with ensuring national security. Texas A&M offers Bush School students access to the myriad of resources of a 60,000-student, Tier One research university and membership in the Aggie network of thousands of graduates already serving in government, the armed forces, diplomacy, and the private sector.

How does a Bush School education set students apart?

Bush School students have wide latitude to shape their study program to meet current interests and prepare for a great career in public service. We encourage unconventional thinking about pressing issues that range from gender in American foreign policy to grand strategy to the politics of trade and development. A typical second year at the Bush School might include an internship with the Defense Ministry of Latvia or the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi, a simulated NSC meeting with the President on an international crisis, a VTC with students at the Russian Diplomatic Academy in Moscow, and a briefing of the Commanding General of the U.S. Special Operations Command on the results of a student-led capstone research project on emerging terrorist threats.

The Bush School offers this quality education at an affordable cost so students can pursue their fields of interest without acquiring burdensome debt. As a public institution, Texas A&M offers some of the lowest tuition/fees among the APSIA schools. As a premiere graduate school, the Bush School tops that with scholarships to all admitted MIA students, backing our commitment to educating future public servants.
Ideas with Impact: Policy-Relevant Research in Action

What is unique about the research conducted at the Sié Center?

The Sié Center at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies fosters research to advance global peace and security that is innovative in many ways. Our efforts focus on emerging security challenges. As the twenty-first century unfolds, international armed conflict is on the decline, while other forms of organized and interpersonal violence have spread. Our research provides rigorous analysis of this violence and the various ways and groups that affect it, all with an aim to enable better governance and foster peace.

Our research is connected with the wider world. We engage cooperatively and respectfully with the range of ideas, approaches, and actors in the broader global politics arena. We actively involve policymakers, practitioners, and the public—from identifying research questions to translating findings into meaningful contributions to the public discourse.

A significant part of our research is collaborative; we have projects that include all eight of our full-time faculty. Three staff members, three postdoctoral scholars, and more than 35 MA and PhD research assistants also work on various initiatives at the Center. We are proud to be a team that is driven to improve lives through path-breaking, rigorous, and practice-oriented research on mitigating and promoting alternatives to violence.

What are some of the new research initiatives at the Sie Center?

The Sié Center was one of five research institutes to receive a $1 million, two-year grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 2014 as part of its efforts to inform critical global issues with accessible expert analysis. Our project seeks to understand how different nonviolent strategies that are used by non-state actors affect violence in armed conflict. Our collaboration with diverse groups opens channels of communication, allows for real-time responses to policy inquiries, and facilitates dynamic programmatic changes that respond to rapid shifts in global politics.

In another important research project, the Center partners with research institutes in Norway, South Africa, and Nepal for a global effort to study how international norms and local dynamics combine to create innovations in peacebuilding. We also have ongoing data collection projects on nonviolent and violent campaigns and outcomes (NAVCO), social conflict (SCAD), corporations and human rights (CHRD), private security (PSM), and women’s participation in protests (MicroMob).

How are students involved in the Sié Center’s activities?

Students are an integral part of our team. The Sié Fellowship program was established when the Center was founded. Each year, the program selects 10 leadership-bound MA students as Sié Fellows. They receive a free-tuition scholarship to the Josef Korbel School, have the chance to conduct research with faculty, and take advantage of a host of other mentoring, ethics training, cohort building and networking opportunities. Sié Fellows emerge from the program as budding global leaders.

Faculty regularly co-author with their students and co-present with them at major academic conferences. PhD students serve, with the managing editor, as the production team for the newest ISA journal: the Journal of Global Security Studies (JoGSS), which is edited at the Center.
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About APSIA

The Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA) brings together the leading graduate programs dedicated to professional education in international affairs. Members have demonstrated excellence in multidisciplinary, policy-oriented international studies.

APSIA strengthens members and affiliates by sharing information. It promotes international affairs education through online and in-person events and supports employers in finding highly-qualified personnel.

Visit APSIA.org to discover what you can do with an APSIA degree, learn about hiring APSIA students and alumni, register for admissions events around the world and online, and find fellowship and scholarship information.

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