



The UNA-NCA

Graduate Fellows Program



2021

Annual Report



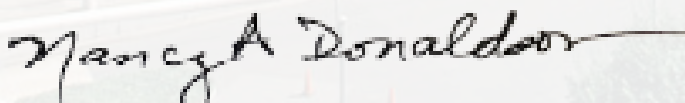
The United Nations Association *of the* National Capital Area

Established in 1953, the United Nations Association of the National Capital Area (UNA-NCA) is among the largest and most active chapters of the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA), serving over 2,000 members and beneficiaries. Although a chapter of UNA-USA, UNA-NCA operates as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit and is solely responsible for securing funding to support its operations and programs. UNA-NCA's mission is to increase public understanding of the United Nations, encourage a robust US-UN relationship, and help prepare the next generation of global citizens. In partnership with more than 60 organizations, UNA-NCA makes its voice heard through advocacy and public education work throughout the Washington, DC area.

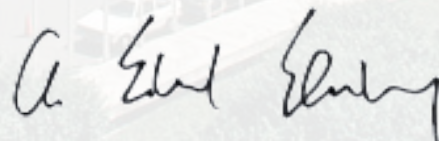


Letter from GFP Co-Directors

Welcome to the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the UNA-NCA Graduate Fellows Program (GFP). The mission of the GFP is to provide the next generation of leaders in international affairs an unparalleled platform for understanding, and learning to navigate, the United Nations. The Program invites graduate student Fellows from universities in the Washington Metro Area to adopt a “UN Lens” – to view the world from the standpoint of the United Nations, whether this be the Secretary-General, the Security Council or another UN inter-governmental body, or an in-country UN Resident Coordinator. The GFP also provides career support to Fellows as they contemplate careers in UN-related organizations. The GFP experience leads Fellows to understand that alongside the UN’s political, financial, structural and bureaucratic realities there is a very human organization comprised of strengths, weaknesses, possibilities, and hopes for a better future. Fellows learn to appreciate the UN as a dynamic, evolving collection of organizations - a network of moving, interacting components that affect, and are affected by, a host of forces.



Nancy Donaldson



A. Edward Elmendorf

GFP Leadership Team

A. Edward
Elmendorf



Ed Elmendorf's career includes positions with the US Mission to the UN, the UN Secretariat, and the World Bank. Ed also served as President and CEO of UNA-USA in 2010, to negotiate the alliance between UNA-USA and the UN Foundation. Ed has co-author of Better Health in Africa (World Bank, 1994) and served as Study Director for the 2016 book by James Wurst, The UN Association of the USA – A Little Known History of Activism and Advocacy. With UNA-NCA, Ed has served as volunteer President and Board Chair and currently serves as Co-Director of its Graduate Fellows Program.

Nancy
Donaldson



Nancy Donaldson served as the Representative to the United States and Canada for the international Labor Organization, a specialized UN agency, and Director of the ILO Washington DC office, from 2010 to 2017. She is currently Co-Chair of the Advisory Council, and Co-Director of the Graduate Fellows Program for UNA-NCA. Ms. Donaldson also serves as the Chair of the Monitoring Committee of the Fair Labor Association. She has advised governments, unions, civil society organizations and corporations for 30 years.

Tom
Bradley



Thomas Bradley retired as a senior officer in the United States Air Force, having served 30 years on active duty. Tom has also served as Executive Director and CEO of a non-profit educational association and consultant to the US Department of Defense. Tom earned a master's degree in peace operations in 2018 from the Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University. Tom serves on the UNA-NCA Board of Directors and Executive Committee as Vice Chair of Programs and is an Assistant Director of the Graduate Fellows Program (2018 to present).

Soonhoon
Ahn

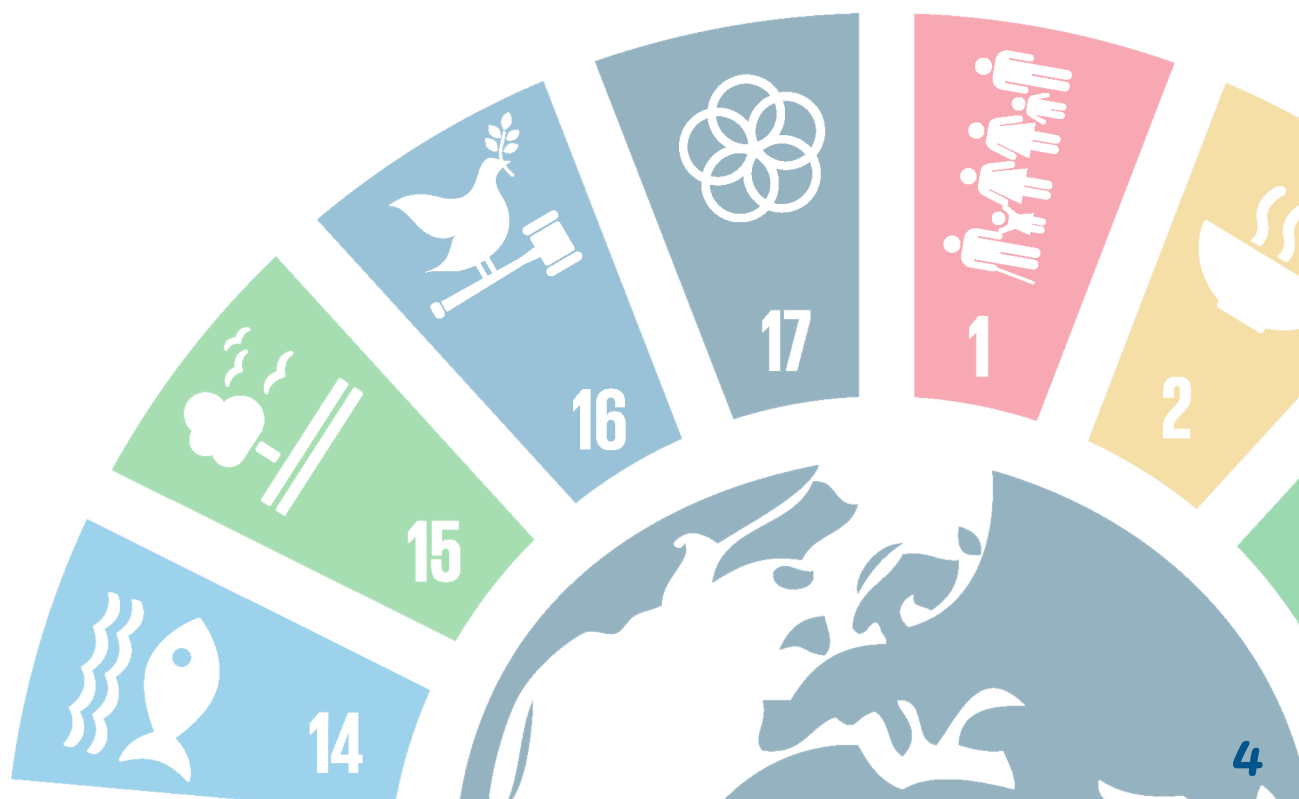


Soonhoon Ahn is a career strategist who has spent 30 years across the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and private career consulting, with clients such as the United States Department of State. Soonhoon is the Founder, Founding President, and a Legacy Member of the APCDA (Asia Pacific Career Development Association) and a Legacy Member of DACOR (U.S. Diplomat and Consular Officers-Retired). Soonhoon serves as Director of Career and Mentorship with the Graduate Fellows Program.

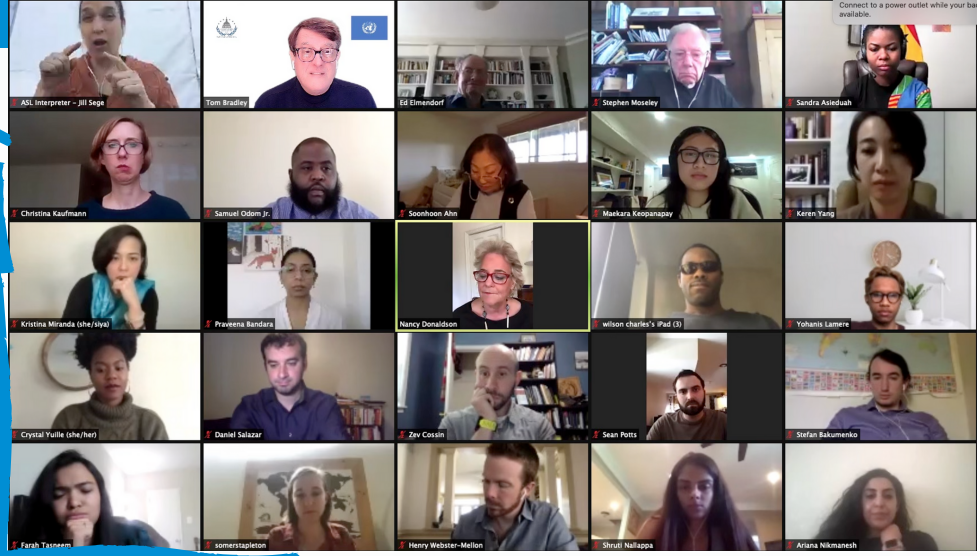
History of the GFP

Founded in 1991 by the former Dean of George Washington University's (GWU) Elliott School, Maurice East, and UNA-NCA past-president and volunteer, Ed Elmendorf, as a partnership between GWU and UNA-NCA, the Graduate Fellows Program invites select graduate students each spring semester to study the United Nations. Since its initial partnership with GWU, UNA-NCA leaders and staff have guided **over 500 students** from a dozen Washington, DC, Maryland, and Northern Virginia (DMV) universities through an **exploration of the United Nations system**.

Since 1991, the Program, like the UN, has changed considerably, adapting to our ever more interconnected and decentralized global community. What has remained constant, however, is the Program's **intense engagement in current UN issues**, support for Fellows in their **exploration of multilateral organizations**, weekly exchanges **between Fellows and officials** from UN and U.S. organizations, and leadership of the Program by **UNA-NCA volunteers with deep UN knowledge and experience**.



GFP Fellows



The Program usually admits around 25 applicants from DMV universities. Students enrolled elsewhere, but currently studying in the DMV area, are also encouraged to apply. Eligible applicants **must be pursuing a graduate-level degree** at the time of the Fellowship semester and will be considered regardless of their academic concentration, citizenship, age, race, or other personal characteristics. The Program provides reasonable accommodations for those invited to participate.

2021's all-virtual session permitted GFP faculty to admit a total of 36 Fellows, rather than the usual 25. In addition to those located in the DMV area, Fellows participated from places like **Berlin, Seoul, Bogota, California, Colorado, and Florida.**



**GFP RECEIVED
100+
APPLICATIONS
FOR THE 2021
SEMESTER**

2021 Fellows' Countries of Origin



- Azerbaijan
- Georgia
- Haiti
- North Macedonia
- Sri Lanka
- Bangladesh
- Germany
- Indonesia
- Republic of Korea
- Turkey
- Canada
- Ghana
- Nigeria
- Spain (Catalonia)
- USA



**UNIVERSITY OF
BALTIMORE**



1867
**HOWARD
UNIVERSITY**

I ILLINOIS



JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of ADVANCED
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

**GEORGE
MASON
UNIVERSITY**

**GALLAUDET
UNIVERSITY**

THE **CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY**
OF AMERICA



**AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY**
WASHINGTON, D.C.



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

GW

Elliott School of
International Affairs

GFP Priorities



Seeing the World With a UN Lens

“*The GFP use of a UN lens means that we look at global challenges from the perspective of UN leadership - from the inside. It means that whether it is global pandemic, conflict-driven migration, the UN Security Council, or the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, we see issues from the standpoint of the global community, rather than from the perspective of an individual country or interest group. It means that we work together to envision new strategies, partners and possibilities for international cooperation where others may only see obstacles.*”

– Nancy Donaldson & Ed Elmendorf, GFP Co-Directors

GFP Priorities



The SDG Primer

The SDG Primer aims to establish a common base of understanding and approach for the UN system in supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is meant to inform, in broad terms, the programmes and actions of all UN entities, including their engagement with government and civil society partners.

Participants will receive a certificate upon successful completion of the SDG Primer. Click on the Sign Up button below to enrol now.

#Sustainable Development #free #online #Up to 1 week

An Engaging Experience



The Program offers Fellows a **highly interactive experience** by prioritizing a **conversational approach** to its weekly sessions, a robust mentorship program, and opportunities to participate in unique events. Among them, Fellows attend the **UNA-USA Global Engagement Summit** at the UN headquarters. While COVID-19 prevented Fellows from attending in-person during 2021, the summit continued virtually. Also, for the first time, Fellows **participated in the UN Staff College's 2021 SDG Primer** - a training course usually reserved only for UN staff.



GFP Priorities

Career Support

“*My mentor has been very generous with her time and connections – she's provided great feedback on my goals and resume, and has connected me with people working within my field at various agencies.*”

- 2021 Anonymous Fellow Survey

Endeavoring to teach the Fellows about the UN, as well as **equip them with the means to make an impact** upon the UN and the issues it addresses, the Program considers its Career Strategy sessions and semester-long mentorship program **essential to its programming**.

Career Strategy sessions invited Fellows to discuss the changing international careers landscape and the recruitment practices of international organizations with human resources professionals and hiring managers, while the Program's mentorship program offered Fellows an **invaluable opportunity to develop a professional connection** with mid-career and senior international affairs practitioners.

“*The mentorship experience was probably the most amazing part of the fellowship. The matching was excellent and it was for me, the beginning of a long term mentorship experience with my mentor. The expectations and the guidance were very clear.*”

- 2021 Anonymous Fellow Survey

GFP Priorities

Distinguished Guests



*Vivian Derryck, fmr. USAID
Asst. Administrator*



*John Negroponte, fmr.
Dep. Secretary of State*

Vital to gaining a realistic, nuanced understanding of the UN is to **learn from those who've worked closely with, and in, the Organization.** Drawing upon UNA-NCA's **extensive network of members and supporters**, the Program invites current and former senior U.S. and UN officials to attend each weekly session. Fellows and guests observe Chatham House Rules, allowing all participants to speak freely about their UN experiences. Guests from **dozens of international public and non-governmental organizations** have joined with Fellows to share their UN experiences and insights.



*Yesim Oruc, UN
Development
Program*



*Gillian Sorenson,
fmr. UN Assistant
Secretary-General
for External
Relations*



*Patricia Beneke,
fmr. North
American UN
Environment
Programme
Director*

*Felice Gaer, UN
Committee
against Torture*



GFP Priorities



Diversity & Inclusion



Diverse

In 2021, 33 graduate students from ten universities completed the Program. This cohort consisted of 9 Fellows from Asia or of Asian ancestry, 5 Black Fellows, and 19 Caucasian Fellows. 10 identified as males and 23 as females. 14 Fellows were born and raised outside of the United States.



Inclusive

The Program has led the way in UNA-NCA's accessibility efforts, providing Fellows the resources they need to participate fully. The virtual 2021 GFP program marked the second consecutive year that a deaf individual participated and the first time a blind individual participated. While needs may vary greatly, requiring the procurement of various services and technologies, the Program is committed to ensuring equitable access. The GFP is proud to be the first UNA-NCA program to accommodate such participants on a regular basis.

GFP Priorities

Engaging with UNA-NCA

Fellows are offered a **variety of ways to engage with UNA-NCA** once the Program comes to an end. UNA-NCA's large and active membership affords Fellows a **wealth of opportunities to connect with international affairs professionals** while UNA-NCA and GFP alike benefit from Fellows serving as members of the Board of Directors, committee chairs, and UNA-NCA volunteers in various roles. Following the conclusion of the 2021 semester, **one Fellow has joined the UNA-NCA Board as the Graduate Student Representative, another serves as an Advocacy Fellow**, while others have joined program committees or write for UNA-NCA's blog, Snapshots.



GFP '21 Fellow Keren Yang performs during UNA-NCA's annual membership meeting




GFP faculty and '21 Fellows gather for a graduation celebration

GFP Sessions



- ◆ Beginning in mid-January of 2021 and running until late April, the Program met weekly for a total of 14 two-hour sessions each Friday afternoon. Included among them are a combined orientation and introduction to career strategy, two two-hour career strategy sessions, ten substantive sessions supplemented by special guests, and a concluding celebration during which Fellows and faculty shared their personal learnings from the semesters and visions for the future of the UN.

Background Notes

- ◆ In advance of each Friday session, GFP Co-Directors supplied Fellows with informal background notes – original works ranging in length from 10-30 pages related to the week's topic. The notes are continually drafted and revised up to the time of their release, ensuring each is as timely and accurate as possible.
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Session Design

- ◆ Sessions center upon Fellows' interactions with guest(s), faculty, and with one another. Sessions are structured to be conversations, occurring first in plenary with guests and then often within small groups that guests rotate amongst. In 2021, GFP experimented with Fellows serving as panel-style discussants during a session. Fellows with a particular area of expertise engaged one another during the plenary session, providing an opportunity to experience serving on a panel and discussing complex issues before their peers.

GFP Sessions

In 2021, the GFP received the UNA-NCA Richard and Anne Griffis Program Leadership Award

2021 GFP Topics

- Leadership in Action, Part I: The Global Pandemic and the UN Mission
- Leadership in Action, Part II: The Global Pandemic and the UN 2030 Agenda
- The UN at 75: Expectations and Challenges
- UN Costs: Who Pays & Should Pay, Today and Tomorrow?
- Power and Influence at the UN: An Iraq Case Study
- The UN & Human Rights
- The UN & Climate Change
- The UN and Peacebuilding: A Liberia Case Study
- A Gender Lens on the UN Lens
- The UN & the Future of Global Governance

Guest Affiliations



COMMITTEE
AGAINST TORTURE
UNITED NATIONS



GLOBAL
CENTER ON
ADAPTATION



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



THE WORLD BANK



United Nations
Environment Programme



United Nations
Information Center
Washington

The Value of GFP

Results from 2021 Survey

“I feel I have gained a much stronger understanding of how the UN works...I was so impressed with the knowledge and professionalism of faculty, speakers and fellows and feel that I gained just from engaging with others who are developing thoughts on these important issues. I hope to stay engaged with UNA programming and participants.”

- 2021 Anonymous Fellow Survey

“Deeply impactful. I never thought I could see myself in a space like this. For me to be among incredibly brilliant and beautiful minds and beings. I felt honored to be among peers who are truly changing the world. I am very grateful for this experience, and I am thankful for the connections and friendships I have made because of this fellowship program. Thank you.”

- 2021 Anonymous Fellow Survey



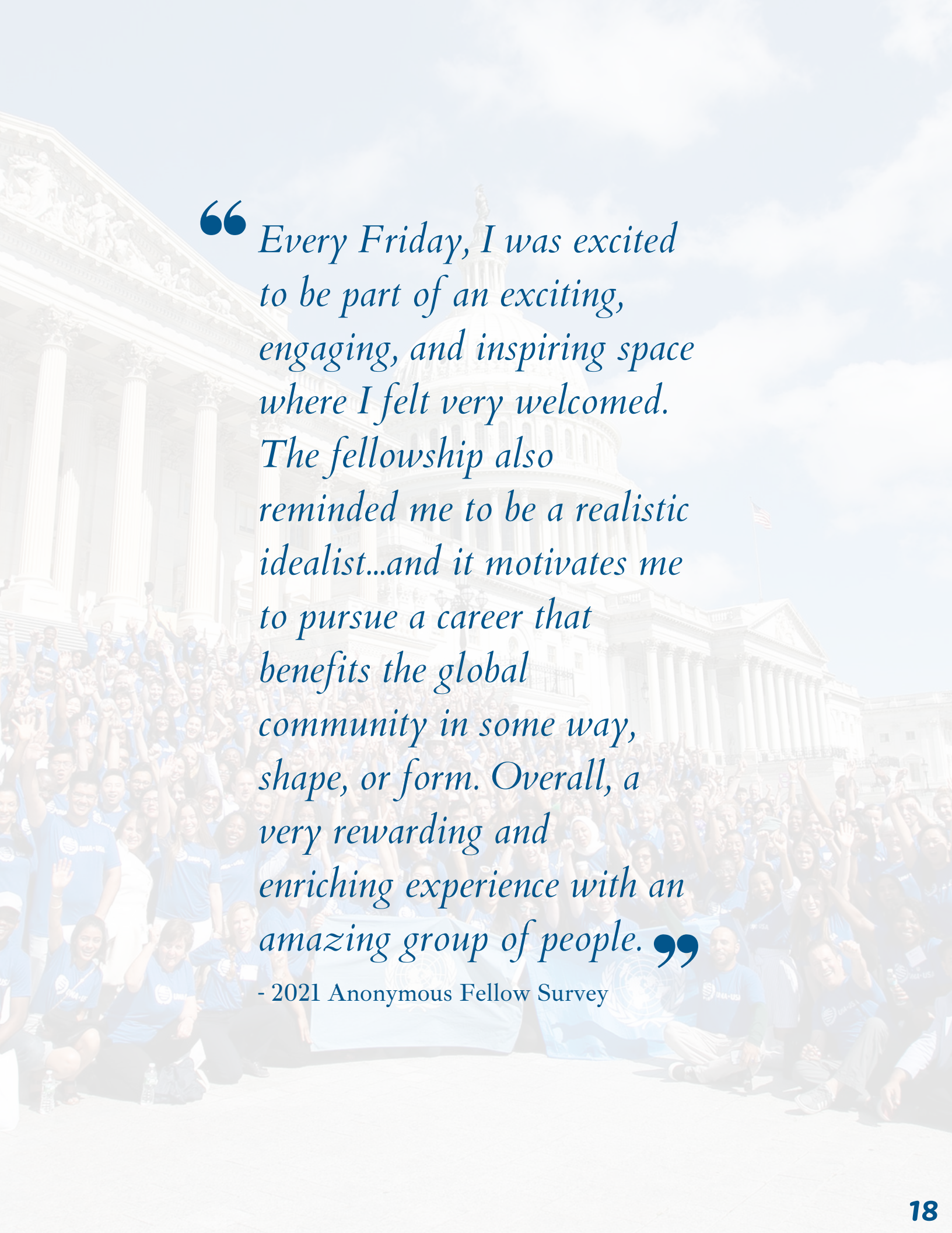
91%

Of surveyed Fellows say they'd strongly recommend the program to a friend



90%

Of surveyed Mentors would recommend serving as a mentor to their friends or colleagues

A large group of diverse young people, mostly in blue t-shirts, are posing for a group photo in front of the US Capitol building. They are smiling and waving, with some holding up a blue banner featuring the United Nations logo. The background shows the iconic neoclassical architecture of the Capitol under a bright sky.

“Every Friday, I was excited to be part of an exciting, engaging, and inspiring space where I felt very welcomed. The fellowship also reminded me to be a realistic idealist...and it motivates me to pursue a career that benefits the global community in some way, shape, or form. Overall, a very rewarding and enriching experience with an amazing group of people.”

- 2021 Anonymous Fellow Survey

To learn more and explore
how you can get involved,
please send an email to:
gfp@unanca.org

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