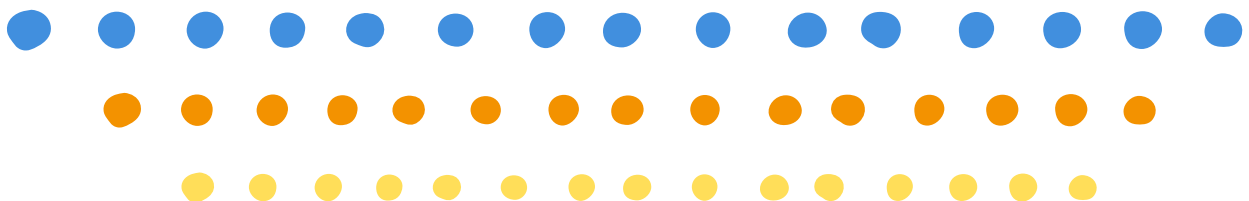




# Graduate Fellows Program 2023 - 2024 Annual Report



# Message From our Board Chair



I had the opportunity as the Chair-Elect to witness the Graduate Fellows Program (GFP) in action and participate actively with the Fellows. These are my observations:



The uniqueness of the Graduate Fellows Program draws from the delivery of the sessions by experienced United Nations, World Bank and international development and diplomacy professionals coupled with the best in academic excellence in delivery. This rich experience placed in the nation's capital provides a great grounding in policy development, advocacy and technical insight into the complex issues that countries must deal with and where the UN plays a critical role.

In addition, I personally felt that this was enhanced by the discussions conducted by the students who came from many different countries and backgrounds. While many were attending local universities, this does not reflect the deep international and professional experience many of the students brought with them, nor the sharing of knowledge between them that was so valuable.

This trifecta – practitioners, academics, and engaged students – prepares Fellows to begin serious international work before even the first day. This preparation carried through to the mentoring and Career Dinners where the Fellows had access to additional professionals working in international development, diplomacy, global security, global health, food security and humanitarian aid – both domestically and internationally. The conversations and relationships developed from these opportunities will last a lifetime.

And finally, the Graduate Fellow Program alumni network offers a rich source of professional and personal friendships. Several former fellows continue their engagement in UNA-NCA programs and activities.

My commitment as your new Board Chair is to reinvigorate the GFP alumni network and enhance those connections. These professionals can help shape the future of the world.

**Chair of the Board**

**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has."**

**Margaret Mead**



# About the Graduate Fellows Program

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. UNA-NCA's mission is to increase public understanding of the United Nations, encourage a robust U.S.-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 throughout the Washington, DC area. Although it is 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.



Founded in 1991 by former Dean of the George Washington University (GWU) Elliott School, Maurice East, and UNA-NCA past-president and volunteer Ed Elmendorf, the Graduate Fellows Program brings together a group of competitively selected graduate students each spring semester to focus on the United Nations. Since its foundation, UNA-NCA leaders and staff have guided over 500 students from a dozen Washington, DC, Maryland, and Northern Virginia (DMV) universities in an exploration of the United Nations.

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



# Message from the GFP Leadership Team

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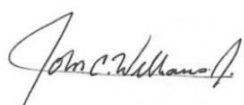
The 2024 UNA-NCA Graduate Fellows cohort of 21 individuals was selected from 67 applicants and drew students from 9 universities in the DC metro area. We launched the 2024 GFP program with an informal gathering and orientation in a historic DC apartment building. A 14-week program of weekly meetings on Friday afternoons followed, held at a George Washington University classroom. The program included 10 sessions focused on priority topics, a visit to the United Nations in New York for the UNA-USA Global Engagement Summit, two career sessions, and a final session where Fellows focused on their perceptions and concerns around the United Nations.

The GFP 2024 program focused on 10 issues selected from among the many that are on today's global agendas. Each topic was facilitated by a leader who had direct operational and, often, academic experience with United Nations agencies. Topics ranged from an overview of the UN system and highlights of the 2024 agenda to the UN's financial challenges, human rights issues, climate change, approaches to development, and the UN's changing approaches to becoming an organization that "looks more like the world's population". Fellows brought varied personal knowledge and, in several cases, experience to the program. The 2024 cohort was marked by its wide international diversity.

Fellows are expected to engage in learning outside the program sessions, and we encourage networking among Fellows. Advance preparation for the Program included study of the UN's Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development in an SDG Primer used by UN staff and prepared by the UN itself, and a UN knowledge tool designed especially for the GFP. Each week, Fellows were expected to engage with the issues of the day, drawing on background papers prepared in advance. The aim was to focus both on a UN perspective, helping Fellows to understand how the UN mission is lived, and, notably through two case study exercises, to put themselves in the shoes of those who make UN policy.

A noteworthy feature of the GFP Program is career support through a system where senior mentors are matched with each fellow, alongside advice from the GFP team, and two robust career sessions led by panels of professionals working in the field. These sessions included Fellows from prior cohorts as well as senior leaders, to convey a nuanced view to support individual career planning and networking. The Friday afternoon timing of sessions encouraged informal get togethers. The final session combined fellow and co-director presentations with presentation of certificates. It was followed by a social gathering.

This report provides information about the GFP Program leaders and volunteers, the 2024 Fellows, guest resource persons, the GFP Career Program sessions and panels, the GFP mentorship program, highlights from an anonymous survey of the Fellows at the end of the Program, and a look to the future in GFP25. We thank the Fellows, our UNA-NCA colleagues, the many volunteers who contributed to the Program, and the program coordinator, Keegan Mobley.



**John Calvin Williams**  
Co-Director



**Katherine Marshall**  
Co-Director



**Tom Bradley**  
Co-Director



# GFP Leadership Team



## **A. Edward Elmendorf**

Ed has been actively involved in UN organizations for over 50 years, including the UN itself, the World Bank, UNA-USA and UNA-NCA. He served as President and CEO of UNA-USA prior to its alliance with the UN Foundation and our Past President and Board Chair of UNA-NCA. Ed served as a Senior Advisor of the UNA-NCA Graduate Fellows Program for 2024.



## **Katherine Marshall**

Katherine is a senior fellow at Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Professor of the Practice of Development, Religion, and Conflict in the School of Foreign Service, and Executive Director of the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), following a long World Bank career, Katherine served as a co-director for GFP24.



## **John (Cal) Calvin Williams**

Cal is a retired Senior Economist at the International Monetary Fund (IMF). During his IMF career he served as the IMF Resident Representative in Zaire (now the DRC) and in Mali. Prior to IMF, Cal was an international commercial lending officer with a major international bank. Cal served as a co-director for GFP24 and on the UNA-NCA Board of Directors.



## **Tom Bradley**

Tom has been assistant director of the UNA-NCA Graduate Fellows Program, from 2018 to present day and served as a co-director for GFP24. After a career in the US Air Force he has served on the UNA-NCA Board of Directors 2009-2017 and 2019-present.



## **Stephen F. Moseley**

Steve is our Past President and Board Chair of the UNA-NCA Board of Directors, elected for the first Term in 2017. Previously, he served as Chair of the UNA-NCA Advisory Council, and member of UNA-NCA's Executive Committee and the Board of Directors.



## **Keegan Mobley**

Keegan is the current Graduate Fellows Program Coordinator. Previously, he interned with UNA-NCA as GFP24's Program Assistant while earning his MA in Global Environmental Policy at American University.

# The GFP 2024 Fellows

## 2024 Fellows' Origins

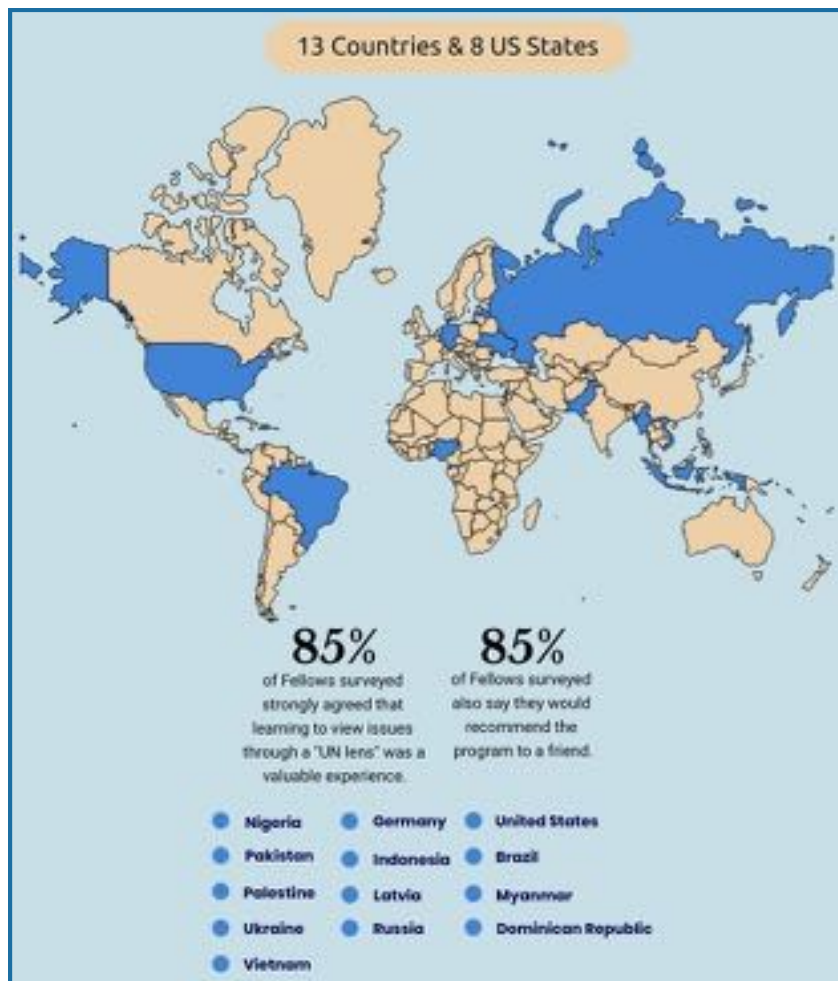


Figure 1: The 2024 GFP cohort accepting their certificates of completion.

## Participating Universities



# What is a UN Lens?

A UN Lens looks at topics, issues, and conflicts through what the UN is doing, has done, and should be doing. This requires our Fellows, and Program leadership alike, to dive into the week-to-week backgrounders, which are distributed each week with an appropriate topic review, to expand our knowledge, write proposals and become micro-experts on the matter. This also requires us to engage with professionals in these fields, whether they are currently in the UN system, retired from it, or interacted with the UN system throughout their career.

We accentuate our careers sessions by splitting them into two parts for the 2024 GFP cohort, **Careers in UN Organizations** and **Careers in the UN Network Organizations**. Allowing for a full look at jobs and opportunities, and how to interact with these fields at an entry level.



Figure 2: Co-Director Cal Williams and Guest Speaker Vincent Valdmanis from the UN Foundation

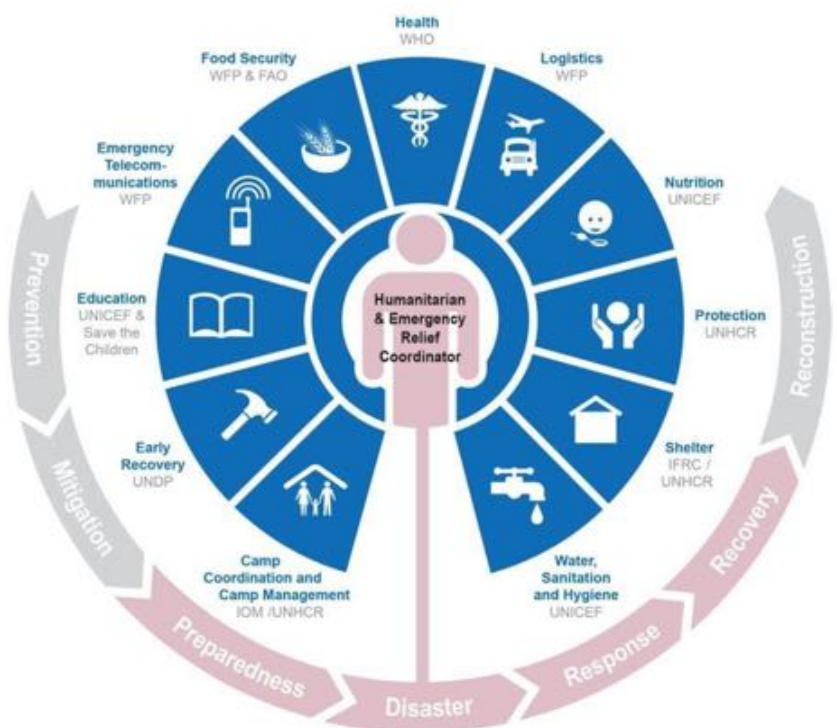


Figure 3: Graph delineating the conceptual framework for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at field level. Fellows are exposed to frameworks such as these throughout the program.



# OCHA



# GFP24 Topics & Partners

The Graduate Fellows Program covers many topics over the spring semester. We recognize that many of these topics below could have a whole semester class spent studying them. We focus on each topic for a week, providing an expansive background paper, written by seasoned professionals in our leadership, advisory council, and directors of the program.

## Exploring the UN System: Structures, Debates, and Issues

*Guest: Ambassador Rick Barton, Lecturer at Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs, Ambassador to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in New York, the UN's Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva and founded USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives*

## A UN Lens on the Finances of the UN System: How are the UN System's Financial Resources Used? Who Pays for the UN System Today and How? Who Should Pay Tomorrow, and How?

*Guest: Andrew Hyde, Senior Fellow and Director at the Stimson Center*

## Towards Peace and Security: The United Nations at Work

*Guest: Antti Pentikäinen, Director of the Mary Hoch Center for Reconciliation and Research Professor at the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution*

## A Lens on UN Resident Coordinators in the Field: Translating Principles into Practice in Individual Member States

*Guest: Yesim Oruc, UN Resident Coordinator - Guyana*

## Human Rights at the Heart of The United Nations - Principles and Practice

*Guest: Christen Broecker, Deputy Director, Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights*

## A UN Lens on How the UN System Responds to the Ever-Increasing Number of Humanitarian Crises with a Look at the Challenges of Experience in Syria

*Guest: Vincent Valdmanis, Director of Peace and Security Policy for the United Nations Foundation at the Better World Campaign*

## United Nations and Artificial Intelligence: Promoting Good Governance and Sustainable Development

*Guest: Renee Dopplick, Attorney of Digital Technology and Environmental Law, Former UNA-NCA Board Member, Co-chair of the International Law Committee, ABA Deputy Representative to the UN*

## The UN and Development Challenges: With and Beyond SDGs

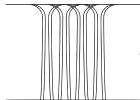
*Guest: Ellen Goldstein, Former World Bank Country Director Bangladesh and Myanmar; Published author of "Damned if you do: Foreign Aid and My Struggle to Do Right in Myanmar." Currently an international development consultant and leadership coach*

## The UN, The Challenging Environment, and Climate Change

*Guest: David Waskow, Director of the World Resource Institute's International Climate Initiative*

## Ideals and Practice at the UN for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

*Guest: Anne Simmons-Benton, UNA-NCA's Board Chair, Principal at Deep Water Point and Associates, Co-Head of the US Delegation to the Women20 (W20), Deputy Chair for the Society for International Development - US, Board Member for Mines Advisory Group - US*



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# Career Sessions

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To engage the Fellows about the UN, and help equip them with the means to make an impact upon the UN and the issues it addresses, the Graduate Fellows Program considers its Career Strategy sessions, which take place twice during the Fellowship, 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 opportunity to develop a professional connection with mid-career and senior international affairs practitioners.

## 1st Career Session: Careers in the United Nations and the World Bank Group Institutions

### **Panel Chair:**

*Paula Boland: UNA-NCA President*

### **Panelists:**

*Anne Musotsi: Communications Expert, UN Information Center*

*Sarah Jackson Han: Senior Advisor- UN Development Program (UNDP)*

*Alistair Sommerville: Senior Partnerships Officer-UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS)*

*Nikhila Gill: Government Partnership Officer-World Food Program (WFP)*

*Diana Seveney: Deputy Division Chief, Institute for Capacity Development Global Partnerships Division, International Monetary Fund (IMF)*

*Yumiko Kaizuka: Senior HR Officer, International Finance Corporation (IFC)*

*Kunal Khurana: Associate Finance Officer, International Finance Corporation (IFC)*

## 2nd Career Session: Careers in the UN Network

### **Panelists:**

*Elizabeth Hume: Executive Director and CEO, the Alliance for Peacebuilding*

*Sam Worthington: Chair of UNA-NCA's Advisory Council and immediate Past President of InterAction*

*Richard Ponzio: Senior Fellow and Director, Global Governance, Justice & Security at the Stimson Center; former GFP Fellow*

*Rachel Locklear Hall: Senior Program Officer, Federal Relations Team, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and former Associate Vice President at CARE*

*Hayley Pottle: Program Analyst on the Digital Inclusion team within the Innovation, Technology and Research HUB at USAID and former 2023 GFP Fellow*

*Dr. Candy Ho: Professor of Education, Integrative Career and Capstone Learning, University of the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, Canada; and Chair of CERIC (the Canadian National Career Development Association) [EE1]Add that Ponzio is former GFP Fellow.*

## Sessions Oversight Coordinator:

Stephen F. Moseley: Steve directed the 2024 GFP Career Sessions.

# GFP24 Beyond the Classroom

Every year, the Fellows are encouraged to join UNA-NCA committees and attend UNA-NCA events. One such event is joining the UNA-NCA at the Global Engagement Summit in New York City, hosted by UNA-USA, at the UN Headquarters General Assembly.



*Figure 3: Graduate Fellows and Tom Bradley (Co-Director, Graduate Fellows Program, UNA-NCA) in the UN General Assembly Hall during UNA-USA's Global Engagement Summit.*



*Figure 4: Graduate Fellows, Anne Simmons-Benton (UNA-NCA Chair of the Board), and Paula Boland (UNA-NCA President) at Stimson Center event.*

# Our Mentorship Program & Feedback by GFP24 Fellows

At the end of GFP24, the program leaders administered an anonymous survey of Fellows. This section of the report includes respondents' reactions to various aspects of the program.

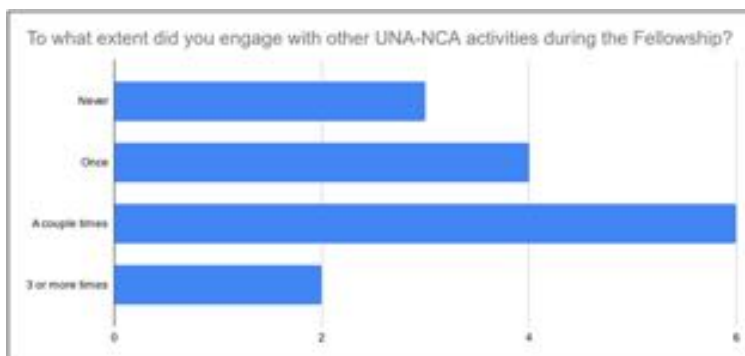
One key aspect of our Fellowship is connecting our Fellows with mentors who have a range of experiences and fields of expertise. The UNA-NCA network provides the GFP great opportunities for members to get involved as well as Fellows getting raw advice and experiences outside the "GFP Classroom". While our program is only a semester long, mentoring relationships may last longer. These mentoring experiences are bolstered by the plethora of additional UNA-NCA activities we encourage our Fellows to engage with.

Here are some of the comments 2024 Fellows shared when asked about their thoughts on the GFP Mentorship Experience during an anonymous survey:

"I found it very valuable and beneficial to be connected with a mentor."

"I have greatly enjoyed my mentor. He has been very insightful and helpful."

"Mine was/is great. Although the mentor is very busy, he remains available and ready to help (or just chat about his experience)."



Another key aspect of our fellowship are the Career Sessions. Here are some of the comments 2024 Fellows shared when asked about their thoughts on the GFP Career Sessions during the anonymous survey:

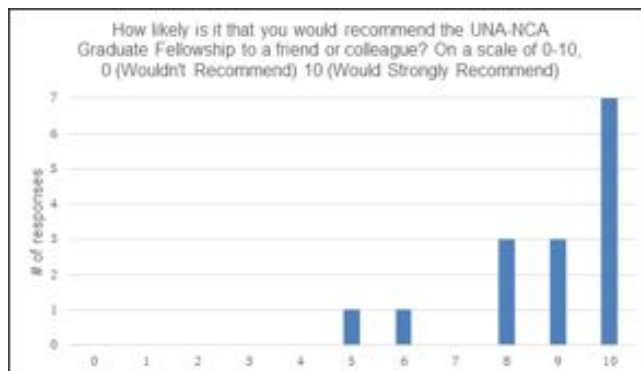


"I believe the career sessions were very informative. Particularly in ways to work for the UN and that there are many ways to work for and with the UN. It opened my eyes to where I applied and got the job I am in now because it was the better option for me to get my foot in the door per se within this field."

"I absolutely loved them, wish there were more!"

"The career session was very engaging. The session also provided participants with beneficial resources to support in job searching and placement in the various parastatals of the UN."

## Overall, a majority of Fellows surveyed (85%) would recommend the program to a friend!



# GFP Alumni Activities

Keeping in close touch with the hundreds of former Fellows is not always easy, so we encourage them to reach out and update us about significant developments in their lives. Here are a few examples of what we have heard over the past few years:

**Charlotte Prud'Homme**, a GFP '18 Fellow, shares her career journey before and after the Graduate Fellows Program. Charlotte is a native French speaker from Montreal who grew up in New Jersey, is passionate about peacebuilding and strengthening resilience in marginalized communities through food and farming.



Having worked, taught and consulted in 6 continents on regenerative systems, food security, fairtrade craft initiative and has partnered with multinational organizations, universities, governments, NGO's and the private sector. She holds a BA/MA from American University in Washington, D.C., her Permaculture Design Certificate from the KulKul farm in Bali, and last year completed the Tropical Forest Landscapes certificate program through Yale University.

Before moving to the Caribbean, Charlotte worked in Guatemala, Kenya, Israel, Sierra Leone, Costa Rica, Peru and India. Charlotte has managed a dynamic assortment of sustainable agriculture operations involving youth within the Caribbean including school gardens, orchards and food forests at The Center for Sustainable Development in Eleuthera, The Bahamas and most recently for The Walkers Institute for Regenerative Research Education & Design in Barbados.

Charlotte has integrated her skills in nonviolent communication and international environmental peacebuilding through hands-on research and volunteering. She currently lives in Barbados where she is an edible landscaping consultant, UN Live Museum Culture Curator, food writer for Barbados Foodie Magazine and an entrepreneur advocating for regenerative agriculture, climate, localized food systems, food security and building resilience amongst marginalized populations with a focus on women and youth.



**Kristi Riggs**, a GFP '19 Fellow, is currently an Adjunct Professor at both Georgetown University and Southern New Hampshire University, where she teaches courses in Liberal Studies and Communications. She is also a second-year student in the Doctorate of Liberal Studies program at Georgetown University, focusing her dissertation on the experiences of Female-Headed Households in Jordanian refugee camps. In the summer of 2024, Kristi participated in a language immersion program in Jordan and taught English to Syrian refugees. This experience has had a significant impact on her academic research and professional trajectory.



**Palmira Mangae**, a GFP '20 Fellow shares her career journey since graduating from the program. "Since the 2020 Cohort of the GFP, I went on to complete my graduate school program in December of 2021 at the University of Maryland, College Park and was selected as a finalist for the Presidential Management Fellowship program, Class of 2022. In January of 2022, I was promoted to a Senior Specialist, Global Health at the Association of Public Health Laboratories where I had worked for about 6 years at the time. I continued working at APHL until early February 2023.

In February of 2023, I accepted an appointment to the Health Resources and Services Administration as a Presidential Management Fellow and Public Health Analyst. Currently, I am on a 6-month rotation, as part of the fellowship, to the Centers for Disease Control."



**Emma DeCaro**, a GFP '22 Fellow, is a hearing-disabled student from Gallaudet University. She writes that her GFP mentor "was critical to opening up a network of people who could advise and encourage me as I go through the US State Department Foreign Service selection process." Emma's key lesson of her GFP experience is "Don't be afraid to invite yourself to the party." This, she writes, is the essence of networking. Show up for events, ask your parents or teachers for contacts in a company of interest to you. Reach out, she advises!

Emma has had multiple internships. She advocated for Deaf Kurdish human rights initiatives with the Kurdistan Regional Government Representation and worked with a remarkable non-profit called Martha EDU to increase the literacy of deaf children in Amman, Jordan.



**Tatjana Titareva**, a GFP '24 Fellow. Through her GFP experience, Tatjana gained an all-encompassing overview of how the UN operates. Through her participation, she gained valuable networking opportunities that paved the way for exciting careers in AI policy development.

"The UNA-NCA GFP Fellowship provided a comprehensive overview of the UN, its bodies, and associated organizations. It also allowed me to network with high-profile individuals and experts aligned with the SDGs. Through these connections, I discovered exciting career paths, including acceptance into the Center for AI and Digital Policy's (CAIDP) AI Policy Clinic, a highly competitive online program focusing on AI policy analysis, research, and evaluation."



# Towards GFP25



*Figure 5: GFP24 Fellows during orientation.*

Planning for GFP25 is actively under way. The main elements of the Program are expected to remain as in prior years: examining key current global issues with a UN Lens, careers in UN organization and in the vast network of UN-related bodies, mentoring, and a visit to New York City for the UNA-USA Global Engagement Summit. New emphasis will be given to recruiting speakers with relevant current UN experience and to identification and assignment of mentors with experience relevant to the interests of individual Fellows. Opportunities for informal engagement among the Fellows will be given greater attention, as well as for participation in other UNA-NCA events and activities. Work to expand and support the GFP Alumni Network is expected, as UNA-NCA completed its' recruitment of a part-time GFP Program Coordinator (Keegan Mobley) and continues its recruitment of a new GFP Program Assistant.

UNA-NCA is deeply grateful to those current and future donors who are making it possible to support the GFP and to serve the students' needs, to understand and celebrate the role of the UN in sustaining its founding goals and mission for future international professional leaders. Please contact the UNA-NCA office at [unanca@unanca.org](mailto:unanca@unanca.org) or visit our donation page at <https://www.unanca.org/get-involved/give/donate> to explore how you, as a donor, can participate in and strengthen, through your tax-deductible donations, this highly successful international leadership development program for young professionals in the decade ahead.

**Thank you for an outstanding year of  
engagement and learning about the  
United Nations!**



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**2300 N St NW Suite 350, Washington, DC 20037**

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