



President's Commission on White House Fellowships · Fall 2016 Newsletter

2016-2017 White House Fellows Orientation in Gettysburg, PA

After weeks of anticipation following the humbling news that we had been selected as White House Fellows, we eagerly kicked off our Fellowship year with Orientation Week in Gettysburg, PA. Jenny and her dynamic team could not have chosen a more powerful place. Gettysburg is replete with examples of courage and leadership during the bloodiest battle ever fought on American soil, and is a place where two of our most remarkable presidents, Abraham Lincoln and Dwight D. Eisenhower, figure prominently.

We began our Gettysburg experience with lunch at beautiful Gettysburg College, hosted by college President, Dr. Janet Riggs, and the current class of Eisenhower Institute and Fielding Fellows. These young Fellows were truly impressive. Many of us commented that we were not nearly as accomplished, mature, or focused at their age! During lunch, Susan Eisenhower spoke about the serious challenges that our country faces, and inspired us to make no excuses as we sought to change our nation for the better. She then took us to the Eisenhower Farm and gave us a very personal look into the lives of President and Mrs. Eisenhower. We felt extremely privileged to have experienced this with her.

The next day, we walked the battlefield with Dr. Christian Keller of the Army War College. It was exciting to visualize Buford's forethought on Cemetery Hill and Chamberlain's leadership on Little Round Top. Better still, Dr. Keller's poignant examples of the many variables at play amidst the fog of war challenged us to ask the right questions and not settle for linear solutions.



The 2016-2017 class of White House Fellows with the Eisenhower Fellows at Gettysburg College.

The most compelling aspect of our week was the Fellow Forums, where each Fellow shared some of their formative experiences, what makes them tick, and their priorities and goals for the future. Not only did the Forums help us get to know each other more intimately, but they gave us great hope that despite our diverse backgrounds, we could look forward to better understanding one another as we seek to address some of our nation's biggest issues together.

On our final day, we practiced team building at the Gettysburg College Challenge Course. We worked together to climb a 50-foot floating ladder and put our trust (and courage) in our classmates' hands as they pulled us higher and higher on a giant swing. It was the perfect culmination to an incredible week and helped cement a bond that we look forward to building upon this year.

BY MICHAEL MORALES
U.S. Small Business Administration

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Commissioners, Alumni, Fellows and Friends,

We are thrilled to welcome the 2016-2017 class of White House Fellows and launch their official fellowship year. The class is made up of a dynamic group of individuals from all around the country and represent a range of professions, including military, business, law, medicine, and local government. This year's placements are equally diverse, and we are happy to have the Fellows working at agencies and offices ranging from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of the State. On behalf of the entire program, I want to extend a special thank you to placement principals and everyone who participated in the placement process. We sincerely appreciate your support and look forward to working with you throughout this year.

For the last 8 years, each new class of Fellows has had the great fortune of participating in our Orientation Week at Gettysburg College in conjunction with the Eisenhower Institute. As Mike Morales, a member of the current class, outlined in the opening article, Gettysburg provided the perfect setting for the Fellows to get to know one another and to kick off their study of leadership. We would like to thank Gettysburg College President Dr. Janet Riggs and the entire team for their incredible hospitality. We would also like to thank Susan Eisenhower, Jeffrey Blavatt, and David Wemer for their incredible partnership and the behind the scenes tour of President Eisenhower's Farm.

We are also honored to announce that Cara LaPointe, WHF class of 2013-2014, will serve as the interim Director of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships during the months of October, November, and December of this year. Cara is being detailed from her position in the U.S. Navy, where she serves as Chief of Staff to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Unmanned Systems. In addition, we are pleased to introduce Yazmeane Watson, our new Special Assistant, who comes to us as an intern in the White House Office of Public Engagement. We are thrilled to welcome Cara and Yazmeane to the team and hope that some of you will be able to connect with them over the next several months. Last but not least, we are excited to share that this summer, Ashley Keenan was promoted to serve as our Deputy Director and Andrew McGavern was promoted to serve as our Associate Director. Among other responsibilities, Ashley will facilitate our Education Program and Andy will run the recruitment through selection processes.

Finally, fall brings a new season of recruiting for the program and we need your help! In November 2016, we will open the online application and we hope you will encourage the exceptional leaders in your lives to apply. We ask everyone to get involved—whether you choose to host an outreach event, promote the program on social media, or introduce us to potential recruiting partners.

Thank you for your ongoing support for the program. We look forward to working with you in the weeks ahead.

Warm regards,

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The 2016-2017 class of White House Fellows at the Gettysburg College Challenge Course.

Meet the 2016-2017 Class!

Robert Accordino (U.S. Department of Defense), Cambridge, MA, is a physician focused on the health care of children with developmental disabilities. He completed a fellowship in child and adolescent psychiatry at Massachusetts General and McLean Hospital of Harvard Medical School.

Raven Bukowski (White House National Security Council), Akron, OH, is a Major in the United States Army. She last served as Director of Intelligence for a Joint Special Operations Task Force. In this role, she delivered intelligence assessments to U.S. Interagency and Intergovernmental partners that directly informed policy-level decisions on military operations to defeat ISIL.

Linden Dahlkemper (U.S. General Services Administration), Erie, PA, is a Lieutenant in the United States Coast Guard. She most recently served as an Instructor in the Department of Humanities at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. Previously, she served as the Operations Officer on the Coast Guard Cutter ASPEN and subsequently led counter-narcotics and maritime transportation operations in the Pacific.

Sharice Davids (U.S. Department of Transportation), Rapid City, SD, served as the Deputy Director of Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation in Porcupine, South Dakota on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation where she acted as in house legal counsel and laid the foundation for a social enterprise program.

Lloyd Edwards (U.S. Office of Personnel Management), Equinunk, PA, is a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy and a Navy SEAL. He has led special operations throughout Africa, Europe, and Asia, and has deployed twice to Afghanistan and three times to Iraq. His service has been recognized with multiple military decorations including the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, and the Combat Action Ribbon.

Timothy Gatlin (White House Office of the First Lady), Houston, TX, is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army. He served as the strategic planner for the Director of the Army's Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Prevention program, and has published on topics including leadership, state-sponsored development programs in Iraq, and regionally aligned forces. His awards include the Bronze Star Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal.

Erik Iverson (U.S. Department of State), Philadelphia, PA, recently served as Deputy Director for Planning at the City of Philadelphia's Office of Emergency Management. He also contributed to the planning and execution of major events including the 2016 Democratic National Convention and the recent papal visit to Philadelphia.

Joseph McGeehin (White House Office of the U.S. Trade Representative), Newtown Square, PA, served as Chief of Staff to the Chairman and CEO of Morgan Stanley, where he worked with senior executives around the world to enhance client engagement with the firm and drive business development. Additionally, represented Morgan Stanley in the Council on Foreign Relations' Corporate Leaders Program.

Michael Morales (U.S. Small Business Administration), Naranjito, Puerto Rico, is a Lt. Colonel in the United States Air Force. He recently served as Commander of the 538th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron in Kabul, Afghanistan. He piloted over 200 combat airlift missions into Afghanistan and Iraq, and earned the prestigious Airlift/Tanker Association Young Leader Award and the Air Force Association Company Grade Officer of the Year.

Warren Morgan (U.S. Department of Education), Cleveland, OH, served as the Academic Superintendent for Cleveland Metropolitan School District's turnaround schools. Under his leadership, schools achieved significant gains in literacy and attendance, outperformed the district's graduation rate, and decreased suspensions.

Austin Ramirez (White House National Economic Council), Milwaukee, WI, served as the president and CEO of HUSCO International, a global engineering company. During his tenure, the company was designated a Global Growth Company by the World Economic Forum and recognized as Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year.

Lindsey B. Ross (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), Los Angeles, CA, is taking leave from residency at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, where she is a senior neurosurgical resident physician studying the pathogenesis and surgical management of neurological disease. She is dedicated to serving disadvantaged populations and working towards policy change with a focus on impoverished communities as it pertains to disparities in medicine.

Kyle Scherer (U.S. Department of Justice), Dover, OH, was most recently an Associate at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, with broad experience advising clients in liability management and corporate finance transactions. He is a veteran of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and is the recipient of a Bronze Star Medal.

Tina R. Shah (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs), Chicago, IL, is a Pulmonary and Critical Care physician-scientist focused on transforming healthcare delivery for patients with chronic diseases. She completed her fellowship at the University of Chicago, where she designed the care cycle for patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

Anjali Tripathi (U.S. Department of Agriculture), Woodland Hills, CA, is an astrophysicist and focuses on the formation and evolution of planets. She has pioneered the characterization of planet forming environments and developed the first 3D simulations of planets evaporating due to extreme atmospheric heating.

Bryant Cameron Webb (White House Office of Cabinet Affairs), Spotsylvania, VA, is a physician and lawyer who works at the intersection of health and social justice. He is a passionate champion for health equity and is committed to advocating for the health needs of underserved and marginalized communities, and founded EquityRx, a health equity organization combining research, education and advocacy to address social determinants of health.

Placement Report

I arrived fifteen minutes early to my first meeting at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Ten chairs surrounded the table and fifteen more lined the walls. I sat down in one of the outer chairs. Although I had asked to be included in as many of Acting Director Beth Cobert's meetings as possible, I did not know what to expect. I wanted to understand her office's daily decision-making process and see how she processed information, achieved interagency collaboration, and communicated her vision and intent. I knew that I could learn a great deal from her broad leadership experiences in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, which would help prepare me for future leadership roles in the military.

When the Acting Director stepped into the room she glanced at me and said: "If there's an open seat at the table, you have to take it, Lloyd." Although brief, this interaction is representative of my experience at OPM thus far. The Acting Director and her team have given me a front-row seat, both literally and figuratively, to observe first-hand how they manage and lead OPM. It has also been an incredible learning experience to see how the Office of the Director creates, implements, and coordinates policies with other agencies and branches of government.

This brief exchange also reveals a characteristic that I believe is one of the reasons why Acting Director Cobert is such an effective leader. She has created a welcoming environment that elicits candor from anyone in the room, while maintaining a directive style to ensure that nobody strays too far off path. Through leading Navy SEALs and working for some of our nation's best military officers, I know how challenging it can be to strike such a delicate balance. Seeing how Acting Director Cobert navigates all the roles and responsibilities of a leader, while weighing various stakeholder equities and ushering OPM through such a significant time in its history, has been the greatest learning experience so far.

However, I am more than just an observer at OPM as I have also had the opportunity to help move the ball forward on a variety of projects such as implementing reforms to the Federal background investigations process and working on initiatives to improve cybersecurity workforce talent management. In addition to broadening my perspective, I know that having a front-row seat at OPM will make me a better leader and public servant, and I am honored and thankful for this opportunity.

BY LLOYD EDWARDS

U.S. Office of Personnel Management



Acting Director Beth Cobert with White House Fellow Lloyd Edwards at the Office of Personnel Management

Placement Report

#AtoZika. My goal has been to learn everything from A to Z about the Zika virus, since I started as a policy counselor in the Immediate Office of the Secretary for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). I thought cutting skulls open and dissecting eloquent brain tissue to access inconspicuous brain tumors was difficult, but I was met with a new match. This was a challenge that required a very different set of skills, but equally important; the opportunity to protect millions of lives through response efforts and management of an international public health crisis. This experience has been what I hoped for in the White House Fellowship; a true immersion into the world of health policy making. It was a hot and humid day in late August, when I stepped foot into the Hubert Humphrey building in Washington, D.C. I was pitched into a vortex of emails, international and interagency conference calls, unremitting monitoring and response to media, replies to copious questions from state and local officials, arduous legislation funding proposals and ever-changing policy memos.

Day one, I was welcomed with an introduction to the entire staff in the Immediate Office of the Secretary including those who lead efforts at some of the agencies and offices working on the Zika virus, including the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and more. I was greeted with a benevolent reception from all of the HHS employees and a pleasant working space, steps from the Secretary's office. I instantly knew this was going to be an experience of a lifetime.

My first week reminded me of my first days as a new doctor-intern on the hospital wards 6 years ago; I was struggling to drink water from a fire hose. Just as I was expected to remember medications and proper dosages needed to keep my patients alive, I was now tested to expeditiously learn a new language filled with unknown acronyms and casual political catch phrases, such as “circle back,” “grease the skids” and “land the plane”, test my writing, reading and communication skills and remember to bring the “unique perspective” I was hired for. Nevertheless, the excitement continued on the second day when I had the opportunity to meet the HHS Secretary, Sylvia Mathews Burwell,

an intelligent, commanding and devoted woman, who serves as an inspiring leader to everyone in the department. I am excited to work hard for her.

As a physician and scientist, the study and comprehension of the pathogenesis, diagnostics and management of Zika came naturally. However, the difficult work behind vector control, epidemiologic surveillance, outreach and public education and risk communication and management were all very new and vital to managing and stopping the epidemic. After reading about the lessons learned from the response and management of the Ebola crisis in Western Africa, one learns how important communication, outreach, education and a strong health system infrastructure are to fighting the spread of infectious diseases.

I feel very grateful to have this opportunity to learn about health policy making at the highest level in a time when it is most essential and under experienced and premier leadership. During this year, I hope to make a positive impact and to see the resolution of the Zika epidemic. #AtoZika.

BY LINDSEY ROSS

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services



White House Fellow Lindsey Ross at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Placement Report

One of the nation's biggest education dilemmas is the achievement gap between lower and higher income students. Sparse resources, minimal support for teachers and leaders, and lapsed funding in some urban and rural public schools demonstrates the importance of sufficiently investing in closing the academic achievement gap. My vision is to change urban education from the classroom to the Capitol by ensuring that low-income students have the same opportunities as their higher-income peers. Having served as a teacher, principal, and district leader in urban cities, I feel so blessed and honored to be placed as a White House Fellow at the U.S. Department of Education so that I can learn about all of the efforts happening at the federal level to ensure educational equity and access for all students!

I recently had a one on one meeting with U.S. Department of Education Secretary, Dr. John King. During this meeting, Secretary King emphasized the three priorities of the Department of Education: Equity and Excellence; Elevating the Teaching Profession; and Access, Affordability and Completion. Secretary King discussed the importance of running through the tape during this last quarter of the Obama Administration. To ensure the department is working hard to provide quality education through the aforementioned priorities, Secretary King is leading efforts to support states with implementing the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). At the Department of Education, we are currently creating guidance and regulations so that states can provide educational equity through the new law.

The Department of Education has developed teacher and principal ambassador programs to advise policy makers on ways to effectively support educators. This effort has also led to grant programs to recruit, retain, and develop teachers and principals. When it comes to higher education, Secretary King highlighted the importance of not just getting students into college but supporting stu-

dents through to completion. From a policy perspective, the Department of Education has created resources to support completion through financial aid options, mentoring, and second chance programs. To make college affordable and completion attainable, we are protecting students and taxpayers through increased accountability and financial oversight of for-profit educational providers.

The portfolio of assignments I have been working on so far have been supporting some of the native youth education grant programs, writing recommendations for promise zones and new turn-around school grants, transitioning the My Brother's Keeper Success Mentors program, and creating Federal Student Aid resources for educators.

Education is a window to opportunity and the failure to provide this right to all can disqualify some students from reaching their fullest potential. Our actions today have a profound impact on the future of our country tomorrow. Through the White House Fellowship, I am gaining knowledge, resources, and tools to take back to local communities to impact and support improvements in public education and community development.

BY WARREN MORGAN
U.S. Department of Education



Secretary John King with White House Fellow Warren Morgan at the U.S. Department of Education

Recruit the 53rd Class of Fellows!



DO YOU KNOW A FUTURE WHITE HOUSE FELLOW?

It's not too soon to think about the next selection cycle! Alumni and friends of the program are our best ambassadors and there are many ways to support our recruitment and selection efforts.

HOST AN OUTREACH EVENT — If you'd like to host an outreach event, please let us know how we can best support you. We also welcome any suggestions on outreach and recruitment opportunities through your professional and social networks.

SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA — Consider sharing information about the White House Fellows program and the application process on social media platforms you may participate in, or even email listservs.

ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT — Hosting or attending an application reading group can be a nice opportunity for regional alumni to reconnect, or for classes to host a mini reunion. We are always looking for regional diversity among our reading groups, so we hope you'll consider serving as a host! We also hope you'll volunteer to read applications during the series of reading groups we will coordinate throughout the country and at the White House Fellows office in Washington, DC. Finally, if your professional bios do not already note your affiliation with the White House Fellows program, we hope you will consider highlighting your connection. We have found that references like these are extremely helpful in expanding our reach to broader audiences.

If you have any suggestions and/or are interested in participating in any of the above, please feel free to contact our Special Assistant to the Director, Yazmeane Watson, at YWatson@whf.eop.gov.

2016-2017 Education Report

Speaker Seminars

- ◆ Susan Eisenhower, Chairman Emeritus, Eisenhower Institute
- ◆ David Simas, Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Political Strategy and Outreach
- ◆ Vice Admiral Philip Cullom, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Fleet Readiness and Logistics
- ◆ Cecilia Munoz, Assistant to the President and Director of the Domestic Policy Council
- ◆ U.S. Senator Cory Booker
- ◆ Beth Cobert, Acting Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management
- ◆ Roy Austin, Deputy Assistant to the President for the Office of Urban Affairs, Justice, and Opportunity

- ◆ Colonel Everett Spain & Colonel Tony Burgess, U.S. Army
- ◆ Wendy Spencer, Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service
- ◆ Michael Froman, U.S. Trade Representative, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative

Special Events

- ◆ 2016-2017 White House Fellows Significant Others Luncheon at the White House Navy Mess
- ◆ 2016-2017 White House Fellows Welcome Reception at the Home of Mary and Jeff Zients

Service

- ◆ Volunteering with Age in Place, a local DC non-profit

About the WHF Program

The White House Fellows Program is a nonpartisan program that offers exceptional young leaders firsthand experience working at the highest levels of the Federal government. **For more information, please visit:** www.whitehouse.gov/participate/fellows.

Please send any comments, questions, or other newsletter-related communication to: whitehousefellows@whf.eop.gov