



# John Edwin Mroz Global Leadership Institute

## Annual Report 2024-2025



COLLEGE OF  
**CHARLESTON**  
MROZ GLOBAL  
LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE



COLLEGE OF  
**CHARLESTON**  
SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES,  
CULTURES, AND WORLD AFFAIRS



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### MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

In 2024-25, the Mroz Global Leadership Institute continued to create opportunities for our students to explore global issues and develop the skills needed to navigate the interconnected world. Through engaging public events, hands-on learning, and professional development opportunities, we helped students build the skills of global fluency and gain a deeper understanding of diplomacy in action.



Our *World Affairs Colloquium Series* brought leading voices to campus to explore pressing global challenges. In collaboration with the International Studies Program, we hosted Dr. Amy Jo Dowd in the fall for a talk on global education policy. In the spring, we again partnered with International Studies to welcome a College of Charleston alumna, Deniz Houston ('16), who delivered a talk on technology, AI, and authoritarianism. Her visit offered students a good example of how an International Studies degree from CofC can open the doors to careers in policy and diplomacy. We concluded the series with an analysis of US-China relations by David Firestein, President & CEO of the Bush China Foundation.

The *Fourth Annual Mroz Summit, "Diplomacy, Global Governance, and Transitional Justice,"* featured diplomats, scholars, and journalists in conversation about human rights and international law. This year's Summit was dedicated to Karen Linehan Mroz, whose vision was instrumental in founding the Institute. Her legacy was honored through heartfelt reflections from student mentees, faculty, and CofC leaders who worked closely with her, as well as a keynote address by Randa Fahmy.

Our *Global Ambassadors Program* offered eight students a yearlong immersion into global affairs and the intricacies of foreign service careers. Through weekly policy briefings, discussions, and a field trip to Washington, DC students deepened their knowledge of diplomacy, foreign service, and internationally focused careers.

We remain committed to cultivating informed, interested, and globally minded future leaders. We are especially proud of our students, who introduced speakers, facilitated discussions, and engaged in thoughtful dialogue with our guests. Their curiosity, professionalism, and drive embody the mission of the Mroz Institute.

Thank you for your continuous support of our programs.

Max Kovalov, Ph.D.

Instructor, International Studies Program

Bennett Director, Mroz Global Leadership Institute

College of Charleston





## 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR AT A GLANCE

### World Affairs Colloquium Series – 373 participants

- **Improving Learning With Equity: Lessons for International Education Policy and Practice From Ethiopia, Afghanistan, India, and Kenya** – Dr. Amy Jo Dowd, development scholar and expert on international children's education.
- **Technology and AI as Power: Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Digital Age** – Deniz Houston, Digital Policy Advisor at the EU Delegation to the US in Washington, DC and a CofC Alumna ('16).
- **US-China Relations: What to Expect Under the Second Trump Administration** – David Firestein, President and CEO of the George H. W. Bush Foundation for US-China Relations

### 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit, “Diplomacy, Global Governance, and Transitional Justice” – 490 participants

- **El Salvador's Civil War Through the Lens of a Photographer** – Robert Nickelsberg, former TIME magazine photographer, and Dr. John Thomas, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the College of Charleston.
- **Karen Linehan Mroz and Her Impact on CofC and Students** – Remarks by President Hsu, Provost Austin, Dean Arias, Associate Dean Ganaway, Dr. Pehl, and Dean White.
- **Mentor, Mother, & Middle East Maven: The Life and Legacy of Karen Mroz** – keynote address by Randa Fahmy, international expert in global government affairs, energy policy, & national security.
- **A Better World: John Edwin Mroz and the EastWest Institute, 1980-2020 – A Microhistory of Track-2 Diplomacy** – panel discussion with Dr. Emily Whalen, historian of US foreign policy and the Middle East, and Senior Non-resident Associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.
- **Drawing Lines, Not Blood: The Peaceful Resolution of Disputes** – fireside chat with Dr. Emilia Justyna Powell, Professor of Political Science and Law at the University of Notre Dame. Co-sponsored by the Notre Dame Club.
- **From Impunity to Accountability: Grand Corruption and the Path to the International Anti-Corruption Court** – Ambassador Allan Rock, former Canadian Ambassador to the UN and former Interior Minister of Canada.
- **Can Leaders Get Away with Mass Murder? Do Global Human Rights Norms Still Matter?** – Ambassador Stephen Rapp, former US Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice and Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.



### **Student leadership and professional development programs – high-impact interactions with diplomats, foreign service officers, and international leaders**

- David Firestein, President and CEO of the Bush China Foundation
- Deniz Houston, Digital Policy Advisor at the EU Delegation to the US
- Jesse Golland, career FSO, Economic Officer at the State Department, currently serving a tour in the US Embassy in Mexico City.
- Dr. Amy Jo Dowd, development scholar and expert on international children's education.
- MaryAnn Robinson, Senior Program Officer in the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, UN Department of State.
- Dr. Ryan Berg, Director for the Americas Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies.

### **Field trip to Washington, DC with Global Ambassadors – 8 students**

- The Estonian Embassy
- The Panamanian Embassy
- Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Americas Program
- Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft
- Save the Children



Global Ambassadors at the Estonian Embassy



# ABOUT MROZ INSTITUTE: FOUNDING, MISSION & STRATEGIC PARTNERS

## The Founding

The John Edwin Mroz Global Leadership Institute (Mroz Institute) is a collaborative partnership between the College of Charleston's School of Languages, Cultures, and World Affairs (LCWA) and the EastWest Institute (EWI). Since 1980, EWI has facilitated candid discourse among world leaders to form sustainable solutions for major political, economic and security issues. After 40 years of work, the EWI transitioned its operations to several strategic partners, chief among them was the College of Charleston. The formation of the Mroz Institute came with a more than \$2 million gift from the EWI Board of Directors and a nearly \$500,000 gift from longtime EWI supporters, the late Marshall and Arlene Bennett through the Bennett Family Foundation.



John Edwin Mroz



LCWA has a special connection to EWI, as John Mroz was instrumental in the school's creation at the College of Charleston. One of the key initiators, local entrepreneur Hilton Smith, tapped the expertise of his friend, John Mroz, founder of the New York City-based EastWest Institute.

With the help of Mroz's international vision, LCWA opened its doors in 2006. To preserve the legacy of EWI's visionary leader, who passed away in 2014, we created the new John Edwin Mroz Global Leadership Institute housed within LCWA.



## The Mission

The mission of the John Edwin Mroz Global Leadership Institute is to promote essential skills of global fluency, educate students about diplomacy, and prepare them to become future global leaders through a comprehensive strategy of international education and experiential learning. We seek to preserve and continue the values and legacy of EWI and its founder, John Edwin Mroz, a fiercely independent champion of conflict prevention and resolution. Issues surrounding public health, the economy, the environment and sustainability, food security and migration affect everyone, everywhere, and are at the heart of our international security. The Mroz Institute cultivates the skills students need to engage with such challenges and, through an emphasis on mentoring, helps develop students who will become international agents of change and global leaders. The programming, colloquia, and archival projects at the heart of the Mroz Institute's mission ensure every College of Charleston degree is an asset in the international marketplace and every student is a potential leader in a tightly interconnected global world.



### Strategic Partners

The College of Charleston inherited the EWI legacy alongside four prominent foreign policy organizations that adopted existing EWI programs: the Atlantic Council, the George H. W. Bush Foundation for US-China Relations, the Observer Research Foundation America, and the Stimson Center.

EWI's Balkan Dialogues initiative migrated to the Future Europe Initiative at the Atlantic Council, complementing the initiative's existing work on the Western Balkans, which seeks to build further Euro-Atlantic political and economic integration.



**Atlantic Council**



GEORGE H. W. BUSH FOUNDATION  
FOR U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS  
乔治布什美中关系基金会

EWI's US-China High-Level Political Party Leaders Dialogue is now hosted by the George H. W. Bush Foundation for US-China Relations, which has extensive experience organizing Track-2 diplomatic discussions between current and former government officials from the United States and China.

EWI's Middle East and North Africa work moved to the Stimson Center, an independent research center promoting international security, shared prosperity, and justice. Stimson has three decades of experience conducting Track-2 and Track-1.5 diplomacy. Its well-recognized work on water and energy issues will be enhanced by the addition of the hydro-diplomacy project. Stimson also took on both the US-China military-to-military dialogue and the US-Russia military-to-military dialogue.

**STIMSON**



The institute's Global Cooperation in Cyberspace programmatic work encouraging countries in the Global South to participate in international efforts to moderate the use of cyber weapons and research to improve the security of the technology supply chain transitioned to Observer Research Foundation America, the new Washington-based center of India's leading think tank, the Observer Research Foundation.



## 2024-25 PROGRAMMING

### World Affairs Colloquium Series

The Mroz Institute World Affairs Colloquium engages speakers with international experience to address topics of global importance. In the Fall of 2024, we collaborated with the International Studies Program to bring to campus Dr. Amy Jo Dowd for a talk on the challenges in international children's education policy.



In the Spring of 2025, in partnership with the International Studies Program, we brought to campus Deniz Houston for a guest lecture on the use of technology and AI by authoritarian regimes. Deniz's talk resonated strongly with students, in part because she is a graduate of the College of Charleston's International Studies program (Class of 2016). Her ability to connect her undergraduate experience to a career in digital policy within the Washington, DC foreign policy community offered students a concrete and relatable example of how to translate academic interests into professional opportunities. We concluded the Speaker Series with an impactful and timely public talk on the US-China relations under the new administration by David Firestein.

Each speaker's visit was planned to offer students multiple points of engagement, from large public lectures to classroom visits and small-group conversations. Public events focused on global issues, encouraging discussions with both students and faculty. In smaller settings, speakers shared insights about their careers, academic backgrounds, and the realities of working in international fields, offering practical advice on the skills and preparation valued by globally focused organizations.



Global Ambassadors discussing human rights  
with Ambassador Allan Rock



International Studies Program faculty  
with Dr. Amy Jo Dowd





### **"Improving learning with equity: lessons for international education policy and practice from Ethiopia, Afghanistan, India, and Kenya" - by Dr. Amy Jo Dowd, October 14, 2024.**

Dr. Dowd, a development scholar and expert on international children's education, examined the evolution of international education policy, focusing on the transition from access-driven goals like "Education for All" and the MDGs to the learning-centered aims of the SDGs. Using case studies from Ethiopia, Kenya, and India, she argued that simply getting children into school is not enough—real progress depends on what students actually learn. She drew attention to the continued exclusion of girls, children with disabilities, and rural learners, and pointed to gaps between policy commitments and actual implementation. Her talk called for grounded, inclusive approaches that address both access and quality. This public talk was co-sponsored by the International Studies Program and Mroz Global Leadership Institute.



Dr. Amy Jo Dowd



Dr. Amy Jo Dowd with Global Ambassadors



### **“Technology and AI as Power: Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Digital Age,” by Deniz Houston, February 3, 2025. Co-sponsored by International Studies Program**



Deniz Houston at the EU Delegation to the US

Houston is a Digital Policy Advisor at the EU Delegation to the US and a CofC Alumna ('16). Her talk focused on the intersection of geopolitics and technology in the digital age. Deniz traced the evolution of tech power from the Cold War to today's AI-driven landscape, contrasting US market-driven innovation with the EU's regulatory emphasis on safety, privacy, and democratic values. Her insights highlighted the urgent need to align emerging technologies with democratic principles and underscored Europe's leading role in shaping global tech governance.

Deniz's visit offered students a powerful example of how an International Studies degree from the College of Charleston can open the doors to careers in policy and diplomacy. Drawing on her own path, from internships and fellowships to graduate school and her current role at the EU Delegation, she emphasized how the interdisciplinary foundation of the INTL major prepared her to understand the work of international institutions, think critically about global challenges like, and communicate across cultures. Although she works in digital policy, Deniz noted that her interest in technology developed without any technical background in programming. People skills, language proficiency, and curiosity can be just as valuable as technical expertise.

She encouraged students to take initiative by organizing a conference or event to demonstrate leadership, follow-through, and the ability to get things done. These are qualities that stand out in competitive policy environments. Her ability to link classroom learning to real-world challenges in digital policy and AI, international cooperation, and democratic governance gave students a better sense of how to translate their academic interests into professional goals. For students considering careers in foreign affairs, her talk highlighted the importance of building relevant experience early, staying curious, and being prepared to adapt to an evolving international landscape.



Deniz Houston discussion of foreign policy careers with Global Ambassadors



### **"US-China Relations: What to Expect Under the Second Trump Administration," with David Firestein, March 24, 2025.**



David Firestein's talk on US-China relations

David Firestein is the President and CEO of the George H. W. Bush Foundation for US-China Relations. In his talk, Firestein analyzed the evolving dynamics of US-China relations and their global implications. He emphasized the bipartisan shift in Washington, DC toward a more confrontational stance, highlighting continuity between the Trump and Biden administrations on trade, technology, and national security. Firestein argued that changing US assumptions about China, from partner to rival, have influenced global alignments, including closer China-Russia ties. He also addressed the diminishing emphasis on cooperation and human rights, replaced by a transactional, interest-driven approach. This was David's third visit to the College of Charleston, and he has remained a good friend of the Mroz Institute. He was especially generous with his time, participating in multiple student discussions and contributing to the EastWest Institute Oral History Project. In addition to his public talk, he engaged closely with Global Ambassadors and shared insights from his career in diplomacy and US-China relations.



David Firestein with Global Ambassadors (left) and students after his talk (right)





### 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit, “Diplomacy, Global Governance, and Transitional Justice”

A major highlight of the year was our two-day summit exploring diplomacy, conflict, and global justice through a series of thought-provoking sessions with scholars, diplomats, and practitioners. Now in its fourth year, the Mroz Institute’s annual summit has become a signature event on campus, highly anticipated by students for the opportunity it provides to engage directly with global experts.

This year’s program opened with a powerful reflection on El Salvador’s civil war, led by photojournalist **Robert Nickelsberg** and facilitated by **Dr. John Thomas**. We honored the legacy of **Karen Linehan Mroz** through remarks by College leadership and a keynote address by **Randa Fahmy**, who spoke about Karen’s impact on empowering young women and displaced persons. The summit featured sessions on diplomacy and international law: **Dr. Emily Whalen** explored the evolution of Track-2 diplomacy and the work of the EastWest Institute; **Dr. Emilia Justyna Powell** discussed peaceful dispute resolution; **Ambassador Allan Rock** addressed grand corruption and the need for an international anti-corruption court; and **Ambassador Stephen Rapp** examined the current state of global justice in the face of mass atrocities.

Together, these conversations offered students and faculty critical insight into the practice of diplomacy and the ongoing challenges of promoting peace, accountability, and cooperation in a complex global landscape.

#### El Salvador’s Civil War Through the Lens of a Photographer.

Robert Nickelsberg, a former TIME magazine photojournalist, explored the legacy of El Salvador’s civil war through black-and-white images and analysis of political violence, memory, and historical accountability. Dr. John Thomas facilitated the discussion.

As he described each image, Nickelsberg shared firsthand accounts of political violence, repression, and the risks of working in conflict zones. Students reflected on how much a single photograph can convey—and how it can also be misinterpreted without full context. One student remarked that this gap between appearance and reality mirrors how we consume news and media today.



Fireside chat with Robert Nickelsberg and Dr. Thomas



### **Karen Linehan Mroz and Her Impact on CofC and Students.**

This session featured remarks by President Hsu, Provost Austin, Dean Arias, Associate Dean Ganaway, Dr. Pehl, Dean White, and students Sara Solan and Adeline Rios on the contributions of Karen Mroz to student development, global engagement, and the College's international programs. Panelists emphasized that leaders develop their skills over time and leadership can be taught through the intentional development of academic and interpersonal skills. They highlighted the importance of listening to student needs and preserving institutional memory. Karen Linehan Mroz was remembered as a "memory worker," deeply committed to recording and passing on the lessons of the EastWest Institute.



CofC student Sara Solan giving remarks in celebration of Karen's life and legacy

### **Mentor, Mother, and Middle East Maven: The Life and Legacy of Karen Linehan Mroz.**

Randa Fahmy is internationally recognized for her work in global government affairs, energy policy, and national security, with more than 30 years of legal and public policy experience. She was also a close friend of Karen Linehan Mroz. Fahmy delivered a powerful keynote reflecting on Karen's life and legacy, highlighting her commitment to humanitarian work and her impact on marginalized communities in the Middle East. She emphasized the importance of addressing the real needs and suffering of ordinary people, rather than relying on the rhetoric of political leaders. Her responses to challenging questions on Gaza, the West Bank, and US policy resonated deeply with the audience.



Randa Fahmy's keynote address



### **A Better World: John Edwin Mroz and the EastWest Institute, 1980-2020 - A Microhistory of Track-2 Diplomacy.**

Dr. Emily Whalen, historian of US foreign policy, facilitated a panel discussion on the evolution of Track-2 diplomacy and the legacy of the EastWest Institute, John Mroz, and Karen Linehan Mroz. Dr. Whalen led a panel discussion with Dr. Tim Johnson, Mr. Hilton Smith, and Mr. Mitch Sonkin, who reflected on the legacy of the EastWest Institute. The panel described diplomacy as a constantly evolving ecosystem, rather than a rigid formula. They stressed that making a lasting impact requires humility, creativity, and a long-term horizon for building and sustaining programs. Speakers highlighted Karen Linehan Mroz's commitment to long-term change and reminded everyone that one doesn't have to be upfront to lead. All the guests present at the session received a complimentary copy of Dr. Whalen's book "A Better World."



Left to right: Mitch Sonkin, Dr. Emily Whalen, Hilton Smith, and Dr. Tim Johnson



### **Drawing Lines, Not Blood: The Peaceful Resolution of Disputes.**

This fireside chat with Dr. Emilia Justyna Powell, University of Notre Dame professor, focused on the peaceful resolution of international disputes and the role of international legal mechanisms. The fireside chat was facilitated by Dr. Max Kovalov and co-sponsored by the Notre Dame Club of Charleston. Drawing from her book, Dr. Powell explained how states choose among legal and diplomatic tools to resolve conflicts, emphasizing that peaceful settlement is one end of a broader conflict-management spectrum. The discussion addressed the evolution of state preferences, the tension between sovereignty and compromise, and the influence of legal traditions—particularly Islamic law—on negotiation styles. Dr. Powell also explored concerns about Western bias in international institutions.



Ambassador Stephen Rapp

### **From Impunity to Accountability: Grand Corruption & the Path to the International Anti-Corruption Court.**

Ambassador Allan Rock made the case for creating a dedicated International Anti-Corruption Court to confront grand corruption. Rather than focusing on new laws, he stressed the need for real enforcement, particularly in countries where leaders shield themselves from accountability. The proposed court would target high-level officials and their enablers, recover stolen public assets, and support victims. Ambassador Rock addressed concerns about sovereignty, cost, and feasibility, arguing that with growing support, especially from the Global South, the court could fill a critical enforcement gap and hold leaders accountable when domestic systems fail.

### **Can Leaders Get Away with Mass Murder? Do Global Human Rights Norms Still Matter?**

Ambassador Stephen Rapp, former US Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice, discussed the erosion of international human rights enforcement and the future of international justice and accountability for mass atrocities. Ambassador Rapp argued that while states cannot be imprisoned, the individuals who lead and act on behalf of them can and must be held accountable. He discussed the limits of international courts and the importance of domestic efforts, citing Syria's use of over 20 million documents to pursue justice. Despite obstacles, Ambassador Rapp expressed optimism in holding leaders accountable for the crimes against their own people.





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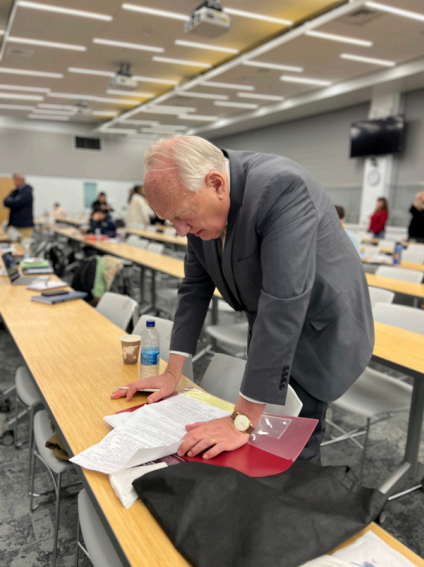
Left to right, back row: Robert Nickelsberg, Ambassador Allan Rock, Randa Fahmy, Provost Susanne Austin, Dean Aimee Arias, Dr. Max Kovalov, Associate Dean Bryan Ganaway.  
Left to right, front row: Adeline Rios, President Andrew Hsu, Sara Solan.



Ambassador Stephen Rapp and John Buggie at the welcome reception



Ambassador Allan Rock with Global Ambassadors and Bambi Downs



Ambassador Stephen Rapp working on remarks



Dr. Emilia Powell's fireside chat with Dr. Max Kovalov



Dr. Emily Whalen signing books



Robert Nickelsberg with students



Students at the welcome reception



Left to right: Hilton Smith, Catherine Smith, Theo Groh, Bija Bennett, Dr. Emily Whalen.





### Global Ambassadors Program

The Global Ambassadors program offers students hands-on exposure to international careers, particularly in the Foreign Service, civil service, and think tanks. Designed as a year-long professional development experience, the program connects students with diplomats, civil servants, and experts tackling global challenges.

In 2024-25, eight students met weekly with the Mroz Institute's director for in-depth discussions on US foreign policy, global affairs, and the inner workings of diplomatic service. Through weekly policy briefings and regular public engagement, students deepened their knowledge of diplomacy, US foreign policy, and international service careers. They met with high-level guests, including diplomats from Canada, Estonia, and Panama, policy experts from CSIS and the Quincy Institute, and career professionals from the State Department and Save the Children. A spring field visit to Washington, DC, reinforced these lessons through direct exposure to the institutions shaping global policy. Beyond the classroom, they played an active role in Institute programming by helping coordinate guest visits, introducing speakers, and participating in events.



Global Ambassadors discussing State Department opportunities with MaryAnn Robinson



### Brief profiles of 2024-25 Global Ambassadors

- **Nicole Bravo Guibao** is a junior majoring in Public Health, with a double minor in Business in Spanish and Health Informatics. She is passionate about applying health-related technologies in the public health sector, particularly in international contexts. After graduation, she aspires to work at a global health organization such as the WHO or CDC, focusing on implementing innovative solutions to improve public health outcomes worldwide.
- **Cadence Gillaspie** is a senior double majoring in Public Health with a concentration in Global Health and Political Science with a concentration in Public Policy, and minoring in Communication. She plans to pursue a Master's in Public Health with a focus on global health policy after graduating from the College of Charleston and hopes to build a career with the World Health Organization.
- **Sydney Jackson** is a senior majoring in Political Science and International Studies with a focus on US-China relations, Southeast Asia, and intelligence affairs. She has a strong command of Mandarin Chinese. Most recently, Jackson participated in the US Department of State's Paid Internship Program in Washington, D.C. After graduation, she will pursue a degree in International Law and continue working toward her long-term goal of becoming an ambassador.
- **Kirti Laxmi Reddy** is a sophomore double majoring in International Studies and Political Science. She is interested in studying community dynamics, particularly diplomatic strategies for mitigating cultural conflict. After graduation, she plans to pursue a master's degree or attend law school.
- **Alexis Richter** is a rising junior majoring in International Studies and Political Science with a minor in Spanish. She is interested in international human rights and hopes to pursue a career in foreign service or with a non-governmental organization.
- **Maeve Ridings** is a senior double majoring in International Studies and Economics in the Honors College. She is focused on refugee displacement and conflict management, particularly the economic disparities affecting countries with significant diasporic populations. She hopes to work with a resettlement agency or the State Department to address these crises.
- **Caroline Smith** is a sophomore triple majoring in Political Science, German Studies, and International Studies. She is interested in international relations, especially within Europe, and has studied German for five years. She hopes to continue studying international relations and pursue a career in foreign service after graduation.
- **Piper Walrad** is a junior double majoring in International Studies and Environmental Studies with a minor in Spanish. A member of the Bonner Leader Program, she has led a community-based service trip abroad focused on the environmental and cultural impact of tourism. Piper is passionate about international work related to sustainable development and environmental conservation.





### High-impact interactions with guest speakers

- **David Firestein**, President and CEO of the Bush China Foundation. Discussion about US-China relations, the foreign service profession, and FSO skills, March 25, 2025.
- **Dr. Ryan Berg**, Director for the Americas Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies. Discussion on US foreign policy in Latin America, March 4, 2025.
- **Ambassador Allan Rock**, a former Canadian Ambassador to the UN and a former Minister of the Interior of Canada. Discussion about US-Canada relations, global partnerships, mini-multilateralism, public health, and current challenges in diplomacy, February 18, 2025.
- **Deniz Houston**, Digital Policy Advisor at the EU Delegation to the US in Washington, DC. Discussion about global careers, EU-US cooperation on technology and AI, February 4, 2025.
- **Jesse Golland**, career FSO, Economic Officer at the State Department, currently serving a tour in the US Embassy in Mexico City. Discussion about foreign service, US-Mexico relationships, and US foreign policy in Latin America, November 19, 2024.
- **Dr. Amy Jo Dowd**, a development scholar and expert on international children's education. Discussion about international careers in development, October 14, 2024.
- **MaryAnn Robinson**, Senior Program Officer in the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, UN Department of State. Discussion with Global Ambassadors about State Department careers, September 24, 2024.



Global Ambassadors at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)



### Field trip to Washington, March 3-7, 2025



Meeting at the Estonian Embassy



Visit to the Embassy of Panama



Discussion at the Quincy Institute



Global Ambassadors at Save the Children

- **Estonian Embassy.** We met with diplomatic staff at the Estonian Embassy for a conversation on Estonia's security priorities, cybersecurity initiatives, the importance of international law for small states, and Estonia's role in NATO and the EU.
- **Panamanian Embassy.** The Global Ambassadors met with embassy representatives to discuss Panama's environmental leadership, regional diplomacy, US-Panama relations, the challenges related to migration, and Panama's foreign policy.
- **Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Americas Program.** We met with Dr. Ryan Berg, Director of the Americas Program at CSIS, for a focused discussion on democratic backsliding, the growing influence of China, Russia, and Iran in Latin America.
- **Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft.** We met with staff at the Quincy Institute to learn about their approach to foreign policy analysis, emphasizing military restraint, diplomacy-first strategies, and US global engagement.
- **Save the Children.** We met with policy and advocacy staff at Save the Children to discuss global child welfare, humanitarian response efforts, and the organization's work influencing US development and aid policy.



Discussion about humanitarian response efforts at Save the Children

### Where are Global Ambassadors now?

**Kate Coffee (Global Ambassador 2021-22)** spent two years in Togo as a Peace Corps volunteer. She worked on health campaigns, taught middle school health classes, and participated in the latrine grant project.

**Brandon Eichelberg (Global Ambassador 2022-23)** completed a TEFL certification course through the Council on International Educational Exchange. He finished a year of teaching English as a foreign language in Madrid, Spain, and plans to return to Spain for another academic year.

**Christina Ferrell (Global Ambassador 2020-21)** moved to Washington DC to work as Program Coordinator at Pyxera Global, an NGO working on global challenges in local contexts by creating innovative partnerships across the public and private sectors and building local capacity.

**Cadence Gillaspie (Global Ambassador 2024-25)** will start as Master of Public Health-Humanitarian Health and Disaster Response student at the George Washington University



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**Haley Hawkins (Global Ambassador 2023-24)** will start a Master's Program at Johns Hopkins SAIS in fall 2025. Her program will focus on the Middle East, Geopolitics, and Counterterrorism. In summer 2025 she attended the 8-week Arabic program at Middlebury College for an immersive, intensive language study designed to accelerate fluency.

**Syd Jackson (Global Ambassador 2024-25)** will attend the University of South Carolina's Law School to study international law.

**Maddy Landa (Global Ambassador 2021-22)** taught English as a recipient of the 2024-2025 Fulbright Program in Spain.

**Adeline Rios (Global Ambassador 2022-23)** was awarded the Rotary Grant and will attend Oxford University in Fall 2025. She was also accepted to Kings College and LSE.

**Claire Turner (Global Ambassador 2022-23)** participated in a year-long virtual internship at the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. She worked on international disability rights and researched opportunities to expand the rights of people with disabilities.

**Jack Watson (Global Ambassador 2021-22)** was awarded the Critical Language Scholarship to study Arabic in Amman, Jordan in the summer of 2024. Taught English with the TAPIF program in Paris in 2025 and I was selected as a Fulbright ETA to Algeria for 2025-26. He will teach at a vocational center outside Algiers.

**Rhi Wilkinson (Global Ambassador 2022-23)** was selected as a Fulbright ETA and will spend the next year teaching English in Leipzig, Germany.



Three generations of Global Ambassadors with Dr. Maldonado and Dr. Kovalov at the 2025 LCWA Award Ceremony: Syd Jackson, Rhi Wilkinson, Adeline Rios, Maeve Ridings, Caroline Berg





### Meet the new cohort of Global Ambassadors, 2025-2026

- **Jake Castino** is a rising senior double majoring in International Studies, with a concentration in Global Studies, and History, and minoring in Education. He has studied history and international relations in Athens, Greece, and plans to pursue additional international study and work opportunities. Jake is interested in a career in foreign service, potentially through an NGO, the US Department of State, a diplomatic role, or a related pathway.
- **Lucas Guyton** is a rising senior in the Honors College, double majoring in History and Political Science with a concentration in Politics, Philosophy, and Law (PPLW). He has a strong interest in international law and multilateral organizations. Lucas has participated in Model U.N., Model O.A.S., and Model A.U., and has studied history in London and Edinburgh. He also serves on the Honor Board and plans to pursue a J.D. to become an international lawyer.
- **Annie Sylvester** is a senior in the Honors College majoring in International Studies, with a concentration in Global Studies, and minoring in Political Science and Spanish. She studied abroad in Barcelona, Spain, where she developed a passion for language learning. Annie is interested in international migration policy in the Mediterranean region and hopes to pursue a career in foreign service.
- **Jorja Jersek** is a junior in the Honors College, double majoring in Public Health and Biology on the pre-medical track. With a strong interest in global health, she plans to pursue both a Master's in Public Health and a medical degree. Jorja aspires to practice medicine while consulting for international health organizations to address global health challenges and shape policy.
- **Rhys Baker** is a sophomore majoring in Political Science and International Studies, with a concentration in Global Studies. He is interested in international politics and alternative forms of governance. Rhys hopes to pursue a career in international affairs.
- **Samantha Goldfrank** is a rising sophomore in the Honors College, working toward a dual degree in Economics and Political Science, with a concentration in Politics, Philosophy, and Law, and a certificate in Global Leadership. She is interested in international law, foreign agreements and trade, and the mitigation of cultural tensions across borders. After graduation, Samantha hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in foreign policy or international relations.
- **Lauren Ferhat** is a junior double majoring in International Studies and Spanish, with a concentration in Latin America and the Caribbean and a minor in Leadership for Sustainability. She has studied alongside students in both Iceland and Cuba. Lauren is passionate about community-led international development and plans to work abroad with a B Corp-certified organization.



### Remembering Dr. Joseph Nye

Joseph Nye passed away on May 6, 2025. He was an incredible scholar and intellectual. Every political science student is familiar with his writing on “soft power” and “complex interdependence.” He wrote about globalization before the term was coined. His insight that military or economic power alone does not bring global influence is as important today as ever. Dr. Nye served as a Board Member of EWI and knew John Mroz well.

I was fortunate to host a fireside chat with Dr. Nye during the 2024 Mroz Institute Summit. Hosting this fireside chat with Dr. Nye gave us the opportunity to reflect on the evolution of his ideas and to discuss the future of global affairs. We explored how Dr. Nye’s thinking has adapted over time, the strategic challenges facing US-China relations, and why soft power remains essential. His insight and clarity reaffirm the importance of thoughtful leadership, international cooperation, and a deep sense of curiosity in today’s world.

Dr. Nye’s granddaughter, Avery, was a senior at the College of Charleston, and she introduced her grandfather at the summit, calling him Joe-Fish because he had traveled around the world and had many friends. I’m grateful for the opportunity to meet Dr. Nye. Below is a partial transcript of our conversation. You can also view the full fireside chat on the [Mroz Institute YouTube channel](#).



### Are the US and China destined for war: cold or hot? Fireside chat with Dr. Joseph Nye & Dr. Max Kovalov, February 22, 2024.

**Max Kovalov:** Dr. Joseph Nye has profoundly shaped the way I understand globalization, power, and international relations. I first encountered his work as a graduate student in a political science course on globalization. One of the assigned readings was an edited volume, and the first chapter—co-authored by Dr. Nye and Robert Keohane—introduced concepts like soft power, thick and thin globalism, and complex interdependence. I still have that same book on my shelf.



Dr. Joseph Nye and Dr. Max Kovalov

Two decades later, I now teach these very ideas in my own classroom at the College of Charleston. Hosting this fireside chat with Dr. Nye gave us the opportunity to reflect on the evolution of those ideas and to discuss the future of global affairs. We explored how Dr. Nye’s thinking has adapted over time, the strategic challenges facing US-China relations, and why soft power remains essential. His insight and clarity reaffirm the importance of thoughtful leadership, international cooperation, and a deep sense of curiosity in today’s world. Dr. Nye, welcome to the College of Charleston!



**Q: How have your thoughts about globalization evolved over the past decades? Where are we today, trying to understand this phenomenon?**

**Joseph Nye:** Well, thank you very much, Max. It's a pleasure to be here at the College of Charleston. Before I answer your good question, I want to pay tribute to John Mroz—the founder, or at least the person in whose honor your Institute is named. John was not only a friend, he was one of the best public service entrepreneurs I've ever known. He created a public institute that brought Russians, Eastern Europeans, and Americans together to talk—right at the heart of the Cold War. I'm delighted that you've established this Institute in his name.

On globalization, you know, to some extent, there's now an argument that globalization is a bad word. Some people say they're globalists and localists, and the globalists are bad. But globalization is simply a fact. There are aspects of it that are good and aspects of it that are bad. But it's a product of technology. Globalization is the interdependence across continental distances. We've had that to some extent since Marco Polo and the trade routes that linked China and Europe, but now we have this extraordinary ability to link anywhere in the world instantaneously, just by pulling your cell phone out of your pocket. That's not going away. So when people say globalization is going away or we've outgrown it because of the conflicts we have today, no, that's just not correct. Some say look at the tensions between the US and China and how we're cutting back on trade, but this decoupling is very limited. It's selective decoupling in areas like national security—chips, for example—and that's a good thing. But we don't have general decoupling. We and China still have nearly half a trillion dollars in trade. Trying to decouple all that would have devastating effects on both economies and the world. So whether you like globalization or don't like it, it's a fact. And we're going to have to live with it. The worst thing is to treat it like an ideology. It's not. It's just a fact of what technology has done.

**Q: What makes you optimistic about US-China relations? What should our leaders—and theirs—do to avoid conflict?**

**Nye:** I have a friend at Harvard, Graham Allison, who's written a book, "Destined for War." And even though we're great friends and we go fishing together for salmon in Alaska, so there are some things we agree on, on "Destined for War," we disagree. I think we can manage the relationship to avoid war. Now, you can never rule something out. Humans make mistakes. We can make mistakes. But if you ask, "Why would he think we're destined for war?" He cites the case of the Peloponnesian War in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC where the Greek city-state system tore itself apart. Thucydides, the famous historian who described this, said the war was caused not by a particular set of incidents, but by the rise in the power of Athens and the fear that created in Sparta. In other words, it was inevitable that the rising power would create fear in the established power, and that would lead to war. He called that the Thucydides Trap.

I think that's not necessarily true and that we can manage that. And one of the reasons I believe so is that I don't see China passing the US. It's already slowing down in terms of economic growth. It had fantastic economic growth and did a great job of raising hundreds of millions of



people out of poverty with double-digit growth. But it's now down in the single digits—low single digits. And people say, “Oh, that's just temporary because of getting over COVID, or they have a property bust now, an overinflated property market.” I think it's deeper than that. If you look at the long term for China, they are suffering demographic decline. Their population and their labor force peaked in 2015. So instead of this great flow of labor coming from the countryside into the cities and producing this huge growth that you had in the last two or three decades—that's slowed. And economists will tell you there's an answer to that slowing of labor. When you don't have enough labor, you substitute technology, and that productivity then makes up for the missing labor. For China, its total factor productivity has been going down, not up.

People have said, “Oh, China will pass the United States by 2030.” My view is, probably not. But even if they do, there's a big difference between the US and China. China has allies such as Russia and North Korea. Russia is about a tenth the size of China. North Korea is an impoverished state. The US has allies all over the world—in Europe, in NATO, and in East Asia itself. We have alliances with Japan and with South Korea and Australia. When you add together the wealth or product of the American alliances and the Chinese alliances, we're about three to one.

If we maintain our alliances, I don't see how China is ever going to prevail. So this fear that's supposed to be created by the rising China is not a fear we have to succumb to. But—and here's why you can't rule something out—if we make dumb remarks and do dumb things, we can essentially destroy those alliances. To make comments like, “We don't care what Putin does and we're not going to protect allies who aren't spending enough”—that destroys the credibility of our alliances not just in Europe, but in Asia. That's handing a gift to the Chinese.

So in many ways, if you were a creature from Mars and you came down and looked at this contest between the Americans and the Chinese on Earth, and you said this is a high-stakes poker game, who's going to win—and you could peer over their shoulders and see what hands they held—you'd say, “Oh my God, the Americans have a much higher hand than the Chinese,” which is what I just described. But it depends on whether we play our cards well. If we discard our aces, we can still lose that game.



Dr. Joseph Nye with Global Ambassadors



Left to right, front row: Dr. Joseph Nye, Rose Gottemoeller, Dr. Jeff Helsing, Toni Verstandig, David Hickton, Ambassador Jimmy Story.

Back row: Dr. Max Kovalov, Dean Aimee Arias, and students Chloe Hudgins, Griffin Wynn, Caroline Berg





### **Q: How do you assess American soft power today?**

**Nye:** Power means the ability to get others to do what you want. And soft power is the ability to do that by attraction rather than coercion or payment. So we think of sticks and carrots as the way most people think about power, which I call hard power. You can measure GDP and the size of the military. In 1989, I was writing a book to refute the British historian Paul Kennedy, who had written a book, “The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers.” He said the US was in decline. I thought this was wrong, and I was trying to total up American hard power—the carrots and the sticks—and said, “There’s still something missing in terms of the American ability to get others to do what we want.” And that’s attraction. Power is not just coercion and payment, it’s also attraction. Or to use that metaphor of carrots and sticks and extend it, you have to add magnets. Carrots and sticks are important, that’s hard power. But if you have a magnetic effect, you can save a lot on carrots and sticks.

I introduced this idea of soft power to get people to take a broader perspective on what US power was about. When I first used the concept—literally sitting at my kitchen table writing notes for the book—I had no idea it would take off. But in 2007, the then-president of China told the Communist Party that they had to invest more in soft power. And I thought, wow, that concept has come a long way from the kitchen table.

China started to invest heavily in efforts to be more attractive. Their foreign minister even invited me to dinner in Beijing just to ask how to increase soft power. But the US has advantages that China can’t easily replicate. For example, China has tensions with many of its neighbors. It’s hard to build cultural attraction in New Delhi when your troops are killing Indian soldiers on the Himalayan border. Also, a lot of soft power comes from civil society, not just government. In the US, our soft power comes from universities, foundations, Hollywood. China doesn’t allow that kind of free civil society. So their ability to build soft power is limited. You can see this in polls. If you ask people around the world which country they find more attractive, the US ranks higher in most regions – Asia, Europe, and Latin America. The only region where we’re about tied is Africa. So the US leads in soft power—again, unless we do something stupid.

### **Q: What advice would you give to students preparing for careers in today’s world?**

**Nye:** Be curious. That’s the number one thing. Don’t think that you can understand the world by sitting in Charleston—or even in Washington. Try to get abroad. Try to study abroad. Talk to international students who are here. Travel. Do everything you can to understand how others think. Because if you don’t understand how others think, you’re going to miscalculate when it comes to diplomacy or foreign policy.

Curiosity is what drives good diplomacy, good leadership, and good global citizenship. It’s not just about learning other people’s facts, it’s about understanding their stories and the way they see the world. So I’d say to students: stay open, stay curious, and don’t stop asking questions. That’s the best preparation you can have for a meaningful role in global affairs.



### EWI Archives and Oral History Project

In partnership with the College of Charleston Libraries, we continue recording interviews for the EWI Oral History Project to tell the story of EWI's global efforts to develop sustainable solutions for today's political, economic, and security challenges. We interview our guest speakers in person and remotely about little known stories of EWI's work on conflict resolution and mediation. We update the project's page as we conduct and process the interviews. Here are some of the recent additions to the Oral History Collection:

- David Firestein, President and CEO of the Bush China Foundation. He served as senior VP and Perot Fellow at the EWI.
- General Michael Moseley, 18th Chief of Staff of the Air Force, EWI Board Member.
- Allen Collinsworth, EWI Board Member, president and founder of Fara Group Inc., an Istanbul based consulting company
- Ambassador Cameron Munter, EWI CEO and President (2015-2019), US ambassador to Pakistan (2010-2012).
- The Honorable James Creighton, EWI Chief Operating Officer (2011-2015).

The interviews and the transcripts are available for students, faculty, and researchers in the [Oral History Collection](#). Consider an oral history interview to tell the important stories of EWI. Contact Max Kovalov (kovalovm@cofc.edu) to schedule an interview.

### Upcoming programs in 2025-26

## SAVE THE DATE!

#### **"The pivot to Latin America and great power competition"**

- by Dr. Ryan Berg, Director of the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

When: **September 15, 2025 @5pm.**

Where: Wells Fargo Auditorium, Beatty 115 (5 Liberty St)



**"Digital Battlegrounds: Confronting Online Threats to Democracy and Elections"** - by Sasha Havlichek, President and CEO of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), dedicated to safeguarding democracy by tackling polarization, extremism, and authoritarianism.

When: **November 3, 2025 @ 5pm.**

Where: Wells Fargo Auditorium, Beatty 115 (5 Liberty St)

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit will focus on the challenges of International Development. Save February 19-20, 2026 in your calendars.** Scan the QR code for the full calendar.





### How can you help?

We welcome your support at any level of engagement as we prepare our students for future global careers. There are multiple ways to engage with the Mroz Institute:

- Contribute to the Oral History Project. You can either visit us in Charleston or we can plan an interview remotely, depending on your schedule.
- Join us as a speaker or connect us to speakers who can be invited to present at our programs – World Affairs Colloquium Series and thematic summits.
- Join the EWI Society – a group of friends and colleagues from the EastWest Institute.
- Visit us in Charleston in person or join remotely for the talks and meet our speakers.
- Mentor our International Scholars and Global Ambassadors.
- Include the Mroz Institute in your annual philanthropy. LCWA's development representative Brian Rowe will be glad to speak with you about various giving opportunities. Brian can be reached at 843.991.4361 or [rowebp@charleston.edu](mailto:rowebp@charleston.edu)
- Contribute to the Mroz Institute general fund, the Global Ambassadors Program or Karen Linehan Mroz Global Leaders Scholarship fund.



All these engagement opportunities will be meaningful to our efforts, so please let us know what would be meaningful to you.

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- Contact Max Kovalov at [kovalovm@charleston.edu](mailto:kovalovm@charleston.edu) about any programming questions.
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# John Edwin Mroz Global Leadership Institute

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