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Project ID	477
Project Name	Developing Case Studies on the Conduct of Diplomacy and Diplomatic Tradecraft
Office	Office of the Historian
Bureau	Administration
Project Description	The Senior Advisor for the Study of the Conduct of Diplomacy solicits academic input for the background research to support the drafting of the Policy Implementation Review "Promoting International Stability: Lessons Learned from U.S. Diplomacy in Thailand, Botswana, and Bolivia." (Cases include: Preparing for Thailand's 2003 Designation as a Major Non-NATO Ally; Convincing Botswana to Participate in the 2006 Peace Operations in the Sudan; and Enhancing Counterterrorism Cooperation with Bolivia.) A case study (for the purposes of this project) involves a diplomatic mission (almost always a bilateral embassy) trying to achieve something concrete over a definable period of time that can be judged to be a success or failure. While final research includes material not publicly available, much of the necessary work relies on open sources, e.g., memoirs, speeches, or interviews of key people who were active at the given times, oral histories (as collected by the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and elsewhere), press releases, transcripts of press briefings (especially including background briefings), reports by U.S. government agencies (USAID, Congressional Research Service, et al), reports from NGOs in the relevant field, and academic articles. This project would be appropriate for graduate students of Diplomatic Studies, International Relations, or History.
Final Product Format	Word document with relevant, fully footnoted background information (length would vary according to how much data is identified).
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	This project would be appropriate for graduate students of Diplomatic Studies, International Relations, or History. I would expect to share copies of previous completed reviews, additional information about where to find key materials, examples of the type of background information that would be useful, as well as hints on where to find key documentation were this project to be selected. I'd be happy to share purpose-built reading lists. This project could be modified to have the three case studies split among members of one academic team or between multiple institutions. For more information, contact: Dr. Cynthia R. Doell Senior Advisor for the Study of the Conduct of Diplomacy United States Department of State, Office of the Historian doellc@state.gov
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	479
Project Name	Can Smarter Housing Make Better Diplomats? A Megacity Systems Challenge
Office	General Services
Embassy	Peru
Bureau	Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)
Project Description	<p>Where we house our personnel directly affects quality of life, commute burden, retention, productivity, and ultimately the effectiveness of American diplomacy. U.S. Embassy Lima manages a large residential portfolio in a 10-million-person megacity defined by extreme congestion, crime variability, rental volatility, environmental stressors, and a rapidly evolving urban landscape. Housing decisions must balance strict budget constraints, security requirements, access to schools and medical care, proximity to mission facilities, and availability of recreation and community assets—all while mitigating the impact of severe traffic and long commute times.</p> <p>This project asks a graduate-level team to conduct a spatial and systems analysis of the Embassy’s housing footprint relative to mission facilities, transportation corridors, essential services, and recreational assets. Students will evaluate tradeoffs among cost, commute time, crime patterns, and access to services, while examining whether strategic clustering of personnel can strengthen community cohesion and resilience without increasing cost or risk. Leveraging Lima’s dynamic urban environment and the State Department’s rapid personnel rotation cycles, the team will produce actionable, data-driven recommendations for optimizing housing placement within budget realities. While grounded in Lima, the analytical framework developed could inform diplomatic housing strategy in high-density cities worldwide.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>The deliverable will be a single, integrated housing decision-support tool built for Embassy Lima and designed to be adaptable beyond the Department of State. This tool—likely GIS-based or structured as a spatial modeling dashboard—will allow users to evaluate housing placement against defined constraints and objectives: budget ceilings, commute times, crime patterns, proximity to mission facilities, access to schools and medical care, recreational assets, and opportunities for strategic clustering to foster community cohesion. It should enable scenario testing and produce clear visual and analytical outputs to inform housing board decisions and long-term portfolio strategy in a rapidly evolving megacity.</p> <p>While tailored to the specific operational requirements of a diplomatic mission—including security considerations and mission-critical facilities—the analytical framework will be broadly transferable. Urban planning departments, large employers, universities, NGOs, and civil society organizations face similar challenges: how residential location affects commute burden, workforce cohesion, access to essential services, and overall organizational effectiveness. The final product will include a documented methodology outlining data inputs, analytical structure, and implementation steps so that other institutions—both within and beyond government—can adapt the model to strengthen community design, mitigate commute impact, and improve organizational performance in complex urban environments.</p>
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Urban Planning</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Statistics</i>

	<p>At its core, this project is a constrained optimization problem in a dynamic urban system, requiring students to balance cost, security, commute burden, access to services, and community cohesion under evolving city conditions.</p> <p>Data Availability & Scope</p> <p>Embassy Lima can provide anonymized and aggregated data sufficient for robust analysis, including housing locations (generalized for security), rental cost bands, commute time estimates, personnel rotation patterns (arrival/departure timing and family composition trends), and proximity to mission facilities. Publicly available datasets (crime statistics, traffic patterns, environmental indicators, urban infrastructure, land use, and commercial development data) can supplement the analysis.</p> <p>This project is well-suited for advanced graduate students comfortable with GIS, spatial modeling, quantitative analysis, and policy tradeoff evaluation. The analytical challenge is real: students will work within defined budget ceilings, operational requirements, and evolving urban conditions rather than idealized assumptions.</p> <p>Lima presents a uniquely dynamic research environment. It is a rapidly evolving megacity with severe congestion and environmental stressors, making it an ideal “urban laboratory.” At the same time, the State Department’s high personnel rotation cycle creates a compressed dataset of workforce turnover, arrivals, departures, and family composition changes that is rarely available in private-sector housing studies. This offers a rare opportunity to examine how residential placement interacts with commute burden, retention patterns, and organizational resilience over time.</p> <p>While tailored to a diplomatic mission, the framework developed could inform housing strategy for other large institutions operating in dense urban environments—universities, hospitals, multinational corporations, NGOs, and municipal agencies. Students will be designing not just a map, but a replicable decision-making methodology.</p> <p>Level of Impact</p> <p>This work will inform real housing board decisions. The goal is a usable tool—not a theoretical paper. Students will produce a professional-grade decision-support framework that can influence how and where people live in a megacity context.</p> <p>Potential for Multi-Semester Work</p> <p>If a team <i>*is interested*</i> in expanding the scope, the project <i>*could*</i> extend beyond one semester. Phase I could focus on tool development and Lima modeling. A Phase II team could validate the framework against additional cities or test longitudinal workforce outcomes.</p>
Additional Information	
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	480
Project Name	Which Vehicles Survive Lima? Engineering a Fleet Replacement Strategy for a Megacity Under Extreme Urban Stress
Office	General Services
Embassy	Peru
Bureau	Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)
Project Description	<p>U.S. Embassy Lima must continually replace vehicles to sustain operations—but “replace every X years” is not a strategy in Lima’s operating environment. Lima’s extreme congestion (low speeds, prolonged idling, high engine hours per mile), heavy particulate matter that accumulates on roadways, minimal rainfall, salt-heavy coastal air, and large humidity swings likely accelerate wear in ways not captured by standard manufacturer assumptions. We need data-backed guidance on how these stressors affect vehicle performance, failure modes, and lifecycle cost so we can set an optimal replacement cadence that reduces downtime, controls maintenance costs, and improves operational readiness within budget constraints.</p> <p>This project asks a graduate-level or hybrid grad-undergrad team to analyze (1) the optimal replacement cadence for vehicle categories under Lima conditions and (2) the best-fit fleet mix for the Embassy’s real mission needs: high-level official transport, group movements, airport/visit delegation baggage capacity, mail/logistics, furniture/appliance movement, and mobile maintenance teams carrying tools. Students will crosswalk mission use-cases with local market realities (vehicle availability, “buy today” parts availability, service options, in-house maintenance limitations) and identify which models perform best in Lima based on durability, parts/service access, and resale value. The result should be evidence-based recommendations that are actionable for near-term procurement and defensible for long-term planning.</p>
Final Product Format	The deliverable will be a single, integrated fleet replacement and fleet-mix decision tool built for Embassy Lima and designed to be adaptable to other posts and institutional fleets. The tool should translate Lima stressors and operational use-cases into decision outputs: recommended replacement cadence by vehicle category, a ranked shortlist of suitable models by use-case, and the drivers behind each recommendation (e.g., sensitivity to particulate exposure, fuel quality, idling/engine-hour accumulation, corrosion risk, cooling system load, filter life, AC performance). It should allow scenario testing—e.g., if a vehicle is primarily “VIP transport” vs. “cargo/tools,” or if pollution/idle time increases—so the recommended models and cadence adjust based on the factors that matter most.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	<p>"Data availability & constraints: Embassy Lima can provide anonymized fleet inventory and usage patterns (by vehicle role), basic maintenance and downtime patterns, replacement history, and sourcing pathways. Students can supplement with publicly available information on Lima’s environmental conditions and traffic patterns, plus manufacturer maintenance schedules, reliability data, and local service/parts market research. We operate with budget constraints, limited in-house maintenance capability, and a practical requirement for parts/service turnaround time (i.e., “available today” vs. special order).</p> <p>Broader applicability: While tailored to diplomatic mission constraints, the framework is transferable to other dense, high-pollution cities and to large fleets (universities, NGOs, municipalities, corporate fleets). The research question—how megacity stressors</p>

	<p>change lifecycle cost and optimal replacement cadence—is relevant to urban mobility planning and fleet engineering more broadly, and may be valuable for industry-facing careers in automotive engineering, operations research, sustainability, and transportation systems.</p> <p>One-semester feasibility: The project can produce a usable tool within one semester if scoped to the Embassy’s main vehicle categories and a shortlist of locally available models; a second semester could validate and refine assumptions using additional data or apply the model to other cities/posts."</p>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	481
Project Name	Performance-Based Conditionality & PSEA Compliance
Office	Peace and Security Affairs
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	UN peacekeeping remains one of the UN’s most visible and resource-intensive activities, yet persistent concerns about uneven troop performance and cases of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) continue to undermine mission credibility and congressional confidence. Although the UN maintains a formal “zero tolerance” policy, enforcement depends heavily on troop-contributing countries, and reimbursement structures are only weakly tied to measurable performance or prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) compliance. As major contributors such as China expand their role in peacekeeping deployments and leadership, the standards governing conduct and accountability carry increasing strategic importance. This project would develop a practical U.S. policy framework to link peacekeeping reimbursement, deployment eligibility, and mandate renewals at the United Nations Security Council to verified performance and PSEA compliance benchmarks. The project would assess legal, political, and budgetary feasibility and identify concrete tools the United States could use in negotiations to strengthen accountability and incentivize higher standards. The goal is to move peacekeeping from aspirational commitments to enforceable, measurable performance expectations while reinforcing U.S. leverage and protecting taxpayer resources.
Final Product Format	Policy options memo (25-30 pages) with an executive summary and annex outlining potential model language for mandate renewals and budget negotiations.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	482
Project Name	Conditions-Based Exit & Accountability Framework for Peacekeeping
Office	Peace and Security Affairs
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	<p>Many UN peacekeeping missions have become open-ended, with expanding mandates and limited mechanisms to measure progress or define end states. Concerns about cost discipline, strategic drift, and accountability-including performance shortfalls and SEA-continue to shape U.S. debates about the future of peacekeeping. Without clearer benchmarks tied to political progress and operational effectiveness, missions risk becoming indefinite stabilization efforts rather than temporary tools to support conflict resolution. This project would design a standardized, conditions-based review framework that integrates political benchmarks, operational performance metrics, and PSEA compliance into mandate renewals at the United Nations Security Council. The project would identify options for embedding sunset reviews, measurable transition indicators, and accountability triggers into future mandate negotiations. The resulting framework would provide the United States with practical tools to promote more disciplined, time-bound, and accountable peacekeeping operations while maintaining flexibility in complex political environments.</p>
Final Product Format	Research paper with a policy blueprint section and an executive briefing slide deck summarizing key recommendations.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	483
Project Name	Strategic Competition in UN Peacekeeping Governance
Office	Peace and Security Affairs
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	UN peacekeeping is not only a conflict-management tool but also a venue for institutional influence. The China has steadily expanded its financial contributions, troop deployments, and leadership roles within peacekeeping missions and the UN Secretariat. This growing presence allows Beijing to shape operational norms, procurement channels, and leadership pipelines in ways that may not align with U.S. priorities on transparency, accountability, and performance standards. This project would map PRC influence across peacekeeping governance structures-including senior appointments, troop contributions, procurement systems, and committee negotiations-and identify strategic pressure points where the United States can reinforce high standards and coalition leadership. The objective is to produce actionable recommendations that strengthen U.S. leverage in the United Nations Security Council and budget negotiations while protecting institutional norms that support effectiveness and accountability.
Final Product Format	Strategic assessment memo (25-30 pages) with a short executive briefing deck.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	484
Project Name	Peacekeeping Leadership & Senior Appointments as Strategic Terrain
Office	Peace and Security Affairs
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	Control over senior peacekeeping leadership positions-including Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs), Force Commanders, and senior Secretariat roles-shapes mission priorities and operational culture. As strategic competition deepens, leadership appointments increasingly reflect geopolitical alignment as well as professional merit. This project would analyze trends in peacekeeping leadership appointments, assess how influence is exercised through nomination and selection processes, and identify options for strengthening U.S. coalition-building around qualified, accountability-focused candidates. The objective is to ensure that peacekeeping leadership reinforces performance standards and transparency in an increasingly competitive institutional environment.
Final Product Format	Research paper with a policy recommendations section and short briefing slides.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	485
Project Name	Project X-Ray 2.0: Automating EU Legislative Analysis for Timely U.S. Diplomacy
Office	Office of European Union & Regional Affairs
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	<p>The European Commission proposes hundreds of pieces of legislation annually, each often hundreds of pages long. As with any legislative process, the best time to advocate for U.S. interests is during the legislative drafting phase - before legislation is finalized and becomes law. However, systematically tracking and analyzing this volume of legislation may require resources beyond what a single office or even team of legislative analysts can provide. EUR/ERA - the EU Desk at the State Department - has developed Project X-Ray (PXR), an AI-powered analytical framework that rapidly summarizes EU legislative proposals into digestible, two-page summaries. These summaries enable U.S. diplomats to assess potential impacts on U.S. foreign policy and engage EU counterparts early on the draft bills. The current system has proven highly effective. However, PXR currently requires manual intervention: staff must regularly access the EUR-Lex database, copy legislative text, process it through AI tools, review the output, and disseminate findings via email. This Diplomacy Lab project seeks university teams to develop an automated, end-to-end dashboard solution using publicly available tools and legislative information that would: (1) automatically retrieve new legislative proposals from EUR-Lex and other EU databases on a scheduled basis; (2) process them through publicly available generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT API, Claude API, or similar platforms) based on published U.S. foreign policy priorities (e.g. the National Security Strategy); (3) generate legislative summaries without human intervention; and (4) create a user-friendly dashboard for reviewing, editing, and disseminating results. As an added goal, the dashboard would (5) allow users to calibrate the importance of different national security priorities in assessing the legislation as U.S. foreign policy priorities change. The goal is to transform PXR from a manual process into PXR 2.0, a fully automated system that ensures consistent, comprehensive coverage of EU legislation affecting U.S. interests while allowing EUR/ERA officers to calibrate the tool's sensitivity and policy priorities within the tool itself. Students will work with existing PXR documentation, sample outputs, and EUR/ERA subject matter experts to design and prototype this automated solution using open-source tools. The project combines technical skills (API integration, automation platforms, dashboard design) with policy judgment (understanding what makes legislative analysis useful for U.S. diplomats and EU interlocutors). This represents an opportunity to create a scalable model that could be adapted for tracking legislation from other international bodies while learning about the U.S.-EU relationship.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>A fully functional, AI-powered dashboard built using publicly available tools that automates the complete EU legislative analysis workflow. The dashboard must: (1) automatically retrieve new legislative proposals from EUR-Lex and other publicly available EU databases on a scheduled basis; (2) process retrieved legislation through open-source AI analysis (such as ChatGPT API, Claude API, or similar publicly available platforms) to generate comprehensive summaries assessing the legislation and its impact based on publicly available U.S. policy documents; (3) present results in an intuitive web-based interface for EUR/ERA staff to review analyses; (4) enable one-click dissemination of approved summaries to relevant workgroups/email distros; and (5) include calibration tools allowing users to adjust the AI's focus on specific policy priorities. The final product should be a working tool accompanied by user documentation and a final presentation demonstrating the dashboard's capabilities.</p>

Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>European and Eurasian Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Additional Information	The primary POC, Konrad Turski, will depart EUR/ERA on or around July 2026. At this time, the secondary POC, Daria "Dasha" Tyers will become the primary POC. This project is supported by EUR/ERA leadership; as needed, Dasha and EUR/ERA leadership will identify additional POCs to serve as counterparts for the university teams.
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	486
Project Name	Understanding China's Tech Diplomacy in Southeastern Europe
Office	Economic Section
Embassy	Greece
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	China seeks to promote its economic and military modernization goals through tech diplomacy, including policy advocacy, support for SOEs and privately owned enterprises, and partnerships with local universities. This diplomacy is global, including in the countries of Southeastern Europe: Albania, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Turkiye, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. This project will work with the State Department's regional subject matter
Final Product Format	Report and presentation including data visualization.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	487
Project Name	Developing A Digital Media Strategy for Holocaust Education
Office	SEHI (Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues)
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	Project description (background, why it matters, what is the question) Holocaust education is essential so that we learn from the past, remember the victims, and prevent genocide, as well as being a tool to combat antisemitism. But how we teach this history has to change. Students learn differently than they used to, even as Holocaust survivors and eyewitnesses are dying, depriving younger people of the chance to learn from those who were there. Concurrently, there is a proliferation of false information as Holocaust denial and distortion are ubiquitous online. Circulated and amplified by use of social media and its algorithms, these hateful ideas thrive not only in the darkest corners of the Internet, but on mainstream social media platforms as well. According to a 2022 report by the United Nations and World Jewish Congress, 17% of all TikTok content about the Holocaust engaged in distortion or denial, along with 19% of all similar content on Twitter/X. Experts agree that education, from amplifying accurate histories to training critical thinking and social media literacy skills, is the best defense against Holocaust denial. Can your students design an effective, accurate social media strategy on Holocaust education to reach their peers, and produce sample short-form videos for TikTok and Instagram?
Final Product Format	The Office of the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues would ask students to design and test responsible, compelling social media strategies that communicate accurate history to their peers online. Ultimately, the project would produce two deliverables; first, 5-7 short videos (for Instagram and TikTok), and second, a written document describing a social media campaign strategy that could be replicated or expanded in the future. Students would design a strategy that best fits their interests and that they feel is most pertinent, e.g., educating on certain pivotal events, debunking common myths, uncovering the history of organized Holocaust denial, or highlighting survivor testimony. As the United States celebrates its 250th birthday, students might focus on an American angle, such as how General Eisenhower and American soldiers responded to what they saw when they liberated the camps. With applications in the fields of History, Communications, and Political Science, this project would be an excellent opportunity for students to learn about the Holocaust and practice critical thinking skills, and for the Office of the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues and the State Department to gain valuable insight about social media from its most active users.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>European and Eurasian Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Additional Information	Our office is experienced in Diplomacy Lab projects and looks forward to partnering with you. We are part of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. For more information about what we do, look here: https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-political-affairs/bureau-of-european-and-eurasian-affairs/office-of-the-special-envoy-for-holocaust-issues/
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	488
Project Name	Reimagining Study Abroad: Alternative U.S. Learning Experiences for Sierra Leonean Students Facing Visa Restrictions
Office	Public Affairs Section
Embassy	Sierra Leone
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	In June 2025, the U.S. government added Sierra Leone to the list of countries facing visa restrictions due in part to a 35.83% visa overstay rate for students. As a result, all student and tourist travel for Sierra Leonean nationals was suspended. However, while protecting its borders, the United States also remains committed to promoting American educational excellence and recognizes the long-term benefits of training international students in U.S. methods and values. Through public diplomacy programs like EducationUSA, the State Department helps international students access U.S. higher education and assists U.S. institutions in global recruitment. Embassy Freetown’s Public Affairs Section (PAS) seeks ways to provide American educational opportunities to Sierra Leoneans who cannot travel to the U.S. Virtual options exist, but only about 30% of Sierra Leoneans have internet access, mostly via cell phones. Overseas campuses of U.S. universities offer promise, but we need more information on their courses, degrees, and third-country visa requirements. Financial constraints also pose a challenge, so options that include financial aid are preferable. We seek comprehensive research on available alternatives and detailed proposals for new models of long- or short-term experiences. This project offers students a chance to expand access to transformative education for Sierra Leoneans, support U.S. academic institutions, promote American values, and foster future partnerships.
Final Product Format	We hope to receive 1) An annotated directory/market research of American schools with overseas campuses and/or online degrees that would be appropriate for Sierra Leone constraints with information about programs, costs, and visa requirements for Sierra Leoneans. 2) At least one detailed proposal for an alternative option that reimagines Study Abroad and how we can promote American academic excellence and models overseas without travel to the United States. The proposal should include a rough budget.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Marketing</i>
Additional Information	Useful Links: EducationUSA: https://educationusa.state.gov U.S. Embassy Freetown: https://sl.usembassy.gov https://www.forbes.com/sites/annaesakismith/2025/05/20/us-universities-launch-overseas-campuses-to-beat-visa-hurdles/ Sierra Leone Country Profiles https://theodora.com/world_fact_book_2023/sierra_leone/index.html https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094194
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	489
Project Name	Dollar Diplomacy: Strengthening U.S. Economic Engagement in Pacific Island Countries (PICs)
Office	U.S. Consulate Auckland
Embassy	New Zealand
Bureau	U.S. Mission (U.S. Mission)
Project Description	The Pacific region represents a critical arena of strategic competition between the United States and China, where economic influence directly shapes security outcomes and political alignment. This project will map the current landscape of U.S. private sector engagement in Pacific Island Countries (PICs), identify untapped investment opportunities aligned with PICs' development needs, and analyze Chinese private sector investments' alignment with the needs of the Pacific. Building on Deputy Secretary Landau's February 2026 Pacific Agenda Summit, this project will provide actionable intelligence on how U.S. companies can expand their footprint across key sectors including infrastructure, critical minerals, energy, telecommunications, and financial services. Students will research successful U.S. business models in the region, assess market opportunities that align with both commercial viability and PICs' genuine development priorities, and document cautionary examples from Chinese investments. The deliverable will equip policymakers and the private sector with concrete recommendations for increasing quality U.S. economic engagement that offers PICs transparent, sustainable alternatives to predatory investment models.
Final Product Format	1) Executive Brief (4-5 pages) for senior leadership review that includes: key findings on current U.S. private sector presence in PICs; list of U.S. companies and philanthropies that should consider expanding into PICs summary 2) Database or excel worksheet for U.S. Department of State staff practical use that includes a list of U.S. companies and philanthropies that should consider expanding into PICs with personnel contact details 3) Sector-by-sector analysis (15-20 pages) that includes detailed assessment of each priority sector with a maximum of 5 pages for each sector (infrastructure, critical minerals, energy, telecommunications, and financial services), current U.S. company activities and success stories, market gaps and opportunities, specific PIC needs and investment considerations, competitive landscape including Chinese presence 4) Social media tiles and graphics summarizing current U.S. company activities and success stories in PICs at a personal human story level
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>East Asian Pacific Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Additional Information	
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	490
Project Name	Improving Somalia’s Investment Climate
Office	Political-Economic Section
Embassy	Somalia
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	Research Somali investment climate and regulatory framework, compare to needs and expectations of American countries in priority sectors (hydrocarbons, strategic minerals) and develop a list of realistic and achievable reforms for the Somali Government to undertake that would improve Somalia’s investment climate, making it easier and safer for U.S. companies to invest. Embassy Political and Economic Section would support research focus and advise on feasibility of reforms to propose. The final product would be presented to the Federal Government of Somalia by the research team virtually, with Embassy personnel present.
Final Product Format	presentation
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Development</i>
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	491
Project Name	The Opening of New Arctic Shipping Routes
Office	Political/Economic Section
Embassy	Norway
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	<p>Melting Arctic sea ice will lead to shorter shipping routes that help diversify supply chains and reduce transit times between Europe and Asia. However, substantial geopolitical, environmental, and logistical obstacles remain. Russia has made clear its position on the Northern Sea Route and China, as a major trading nation, could be a key beneficiary of a shorter Europe/Asia transit route. Norway, as an Arctic nation with a large shipping sector and its strategic Svalbard territory, will also be a key player on this issue. The Norwegian government's new major research program Arctic Ocean 2050 is an indication of the priority the country places on all Arctic-related subjects. The Arctic shipping route issue is of strategic importance to the United States as well.</p> <p>Understanding the pros and cons of expanding Arctic shipping routes will inform U.S. Embassy Oslo's work in the Arctic and facilitate implementation of the Administration's economic and political objectives in the region. What is the economic potential of new Arctic shipping routes? What are the challenges, opportunities, and risks? Who are the major players and what are their equities?</p>
Final Product Format	White paper -- as long as makes sense to cover the topic.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Arctic Region Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	492
Project Name	NATO Expansion and Ramifications for Norway's Arctic Defense Posture
Office	Political/Economic Section
Embassy	Norway
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	Sweden's and Finland's accession to NATO is a significant development for all three Nordic countries. In Northern Norway, the NATO expansion has created a basis for new institution-building: a civil-military emergency preparedness center will open this year in the border town of Kirkenes, where the goal is to establish joint North-Nordic cooperation and to demonstrate Norwegian government presence in the border area with Russia. New NATO coordination functions are also commencing in Norway's coastal Arctic city of Bodø, with the opening of a new NATO Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC). Much of the infrastructure in the Scandinavian Arctic runs north/south along national lines instead of west to east, leaving logistical challenges for NATO integration. These developments are an opportunity for the United States to reinforce our bilateral relationship in Northern Norway and the North Nordic region by increasing our influence through joint military exercises, training opportunities, and strategic investment in NATO infrastructure. What is the concrete effect on Norway of Sweden's and Finland's accession to NATO? What are the additional opportunities for collaboration with Norway? What are infrastructure gaps and what kinds of investments would alleviate them? What are the overall challenges?
Final Product Format	White paper -- as long as makes sense to cover the topic.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Arctic Region Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	493
Project Name	Innovation in Northern Norway
Office	Political/Economic Section
Embassy	Norway
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	Northern Norwegian contacts from a wide range of industries (defense, bioeconomy, space, health) have approached U.S. Mission Norway with a request to strengthen transatlantic ties due to a lack of European venture capital and an overbearing Norwegian and EU regulatory environment. They perceive the United States as an alternative untapped opportunity for the North but they are not sure whom to contact in the United States. A Diplomacy Lab project on best practices in innovation and how to organize innovation hubs, incubators, or other ways of fostering innovation would be highly useful and would inform Mission Norway's outreach with Northern Norwegian industry. What are the opportunities for increased bilateral cooperation in the field of innovation (defense incubators, research parks, and individual companies)?
Final Product Format	White paper -- as long as makes sense for this topic.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Arctic Region Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	494
Project Name	Invisible Americans: Estimating Dual National Populations in Argentina to Enhance Crisis Response
Office	Consular Section
Embassy	Argentina
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	U.S. embassies and consulates abroad play a critical role during crises to keep U.S. citizens informed about conditions impacting their safety and security, and in extreme situations, organize evacuation options for U.S. citizens seeking to urgently depart a dangerous area. However, we can only reach U.S. citizens when we know who and where they are. To accomplish this goal, U.S. diplomatic missions produce estimates of the number of private U.S. citizens in country. While most missions have access to reliable data from their host governments on the number of entries of U.S. passport holders, our biggest blind spot is quantifying the number of U.S. citizen dual nationals in country who do not enter on a U.S. passport and thus are not captured in this data. The goal of this project is to create a methodology for the U.S. Embassy in Argentina to estimate both the size of the U.S.-Argentine dual national population in general and the subset of the population present in Argentina. Ideally, this methodology could be replicated by other embassies to estimate the size of their own dual national populations. This information will enhance the U.S. government’s ability to assist and protect the entire scope of the U.S. citizen population by providing a more accurate snapshot of messaging and evacuation needs in times of crises.
Final Product Format	The U.S. Embassy in Argentina would like a short research paper and a presentation outlining the research methodology, sources, and final results and recommendations.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Western Hemisphere Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Statistics</i>
Additional Information	More information about the State Department’s role in helping U.S. citizens during a crisis abroad is available at https://travel.state.gov/en/international-travel/help-abroad/crisis-response.html#assistance-item-a98d3b76f2 . An evaluation of the State Department’s evacuation planning and implementation, including challenges faced while estimating the size of U.S. citizen populations abroad, is available at https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-08-23
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	495
Project Name	Smart Travel Planning and Optimization for Africa
Office	Engineering Security Center
Embassy	South Africa
Bureau	Diplomatic Security (DS)
Project Description	<p>1. Background & Problem Statement AF engineering and technical offices support some of the world’s most geographically dispersed and logistically challenging missions. Travel is costly, bandwidth is limited, and routing is often disrupted by air schedule changes, security incidents, and seasonal constraints. Current travel planning relies heavily on expert knowledge and manual coordination. A repeatable, data-driven approach is needed to improve efficiency, resilience, and workload sustainability- without compromising mission readiness or security.</p> <p>2. Project Objectives & Key Research Questions Efficiency & Reliability: How can ESC/ESO/TSO travel be optimized to minimize total travel time, cost, and layovers? Which regional hubs yield the most resilient itineraries in the face of disruptions? How should posts be sequenced based on risk, outage likelihood, inspection cycles, and project milestones? What staffing and scheduling adjustments reduce burnout while improving service levels? Risk-Aware Routing: How can risk indices (airport reliability, weather seasonality, geopolitical volatility) be incorporated into routing models? What contingency “branch plans”(A/B/C options) minimize mission impact during disruptions? How do risk-weighted hubs improve continuity and responsiveness? Which “trip triggers”(e.g., overdue inspections, critical outages) should automatically raise routing priority?</p> <p>3. Scope of Work & Methodology Student teams will: Encode human-centered constraints-duty limits, rest requirements, maximum trip duration-into optimization models. Construct composite risk scores per route segment using public sources (airport punctuality proxies, historical weather windows, standard advisories). Build rotation-equity metrics to ensure fair distribution of travel, especially to high-hardship locations. Develop sustainability KPIs such as rest ratios, trip cadence, and rework rates. Conduct scenario planning comparing staffing models (fixed team, rotational surge, remote support supplements). Build an offline-compatible scheduling assistant that balances time, cost, risk, and sustainability. Review literature on fatigue management and high-tempo international field operations; gather anonymized inputs if permissible.</p> <p>4. Data Requirements (Unclassified/Non-Sensitive) Post coordinates, maintenance intervals, estimated visit durations (anonymized) Public flight schedules and route maps Generic patterns of weather, airport reliability, and typical regional disruptions Duty-of-care constraints (rest, maximum duty day) Aggregated, non-sensitive inspection/outage cadence data 5. Ideal Student Skillsets Operations research, logistics modeling, data visualization, human-factors research, policy analysis.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>Integrated Optimization Toolkit Python/OR-Tools model balancing time, cost, risk, and sustainability. GIS Routing & Decision Dashboard Offline-ready risk maps, recommended hubs, and optimized itineraries. Contingency Routing Playbook Branch plans (A/B/C routes), activation criteria, and checklists. Rotation Equity & Sustainability KPI Package Metrics, templates, sampling plans, and baseline thresholds. Implementation Guide & Policy Crosswalk Practical adoption steps aligned with travel and duty-of-care policies. Training Package & Tabletop Exercise Kit Training slides, facilitator notes, and disruption scenario materials.</p>

Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Statistics</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>African Studies</i>
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	496
Project Name	Mapping China’s Middle East Diplomacy at the UN Security Council
Office	Office of United Nations Political Affairs
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and second-largest contributor to the UN regular budget and peacekeeping budget, China views the UNSC as a key tool for its diplomacy and international credibility, including on conflict resolution, sanctions, and counterterrorism. President Xi Jinping elaborated on this in an October 2021 speech, saying, “China has faithfully fulfilled its responsibility and mission as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, stayed true to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and upheld the central role of the United Nations in international affairs.” China is also the largest troop contributor of the permanent five UNSC members, including over 450 troops in UNIFIL (Lebanon) as of December 2025, and a 2024 report by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission assessed that China’s participation in UN peacekeeping helped bolster the People’s Liberation Army’s image and provide its troops with overseas military experience. China has expanded its bilateral diplomatic engagement in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in recent years, positioning itself as an alternative mediator to Western actors and a vital economic, development, and security partner for regional states. Recent examples include China’s brokering of Saudi-Iranian rapprochement in March 2023 and its hosting of Palestinian factions in Beijing in July 2024. These bilateral efforts have not necessarily translated into greater leadership at the UNSC. For the United States, a better understanding of China’s approach to the MENA region at the UNSC (including Israeli-Palestinian affairs, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Yemen, Libya, and Western Sahara) could enable the United States to confront a new era great power competition and advance the 2025 National Security Strategy goal of preventing adversarial powers from dominating the Middle East. This project will analyze open-source information on China’s public positions on MENA issues at the UNSC from 2018 to present, including voting records, explanations of vote and other statements during Council meetings, press statements, speeches by senior Chinese officials, and official Chinese government or CCP commentary. Students will examine how China’s positions have changed over time, identify patterns in China’s rhetoric, examine how China’s positions align with or diverge from other permanent UNSC members (with a particular focus on Russia), and assess how China’s approach varies by issue area. The research will provide actionable insights into China’s MENA diplomacy at the UNSC and inform U.S. strategy.
Final Product Format	Students should produce a 15 to 20-page research paper (not including works cited), as well as a separate policy memorandum no longer than five pages long that summarizes key findings from the research and includes strategic recommendations for U.S. policymakers on how this research can inform U.S. diplomacy at the UN. Students are encouraged to use data visualization as part of the research paper.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Middle East/North African Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Law</i>
Additional Information	The following links may be helpful as initial resources for students working on this project. U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Report, Chapter on “China and the Middle East”: https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/Chapter_5--China_and_the_Middle_East.pdf (2024)

	<p>Carol Silber (Washington Institute for Near East Policy), “China’s Track Record on Middle East Diplomacy”: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/chinas-track-record-middle-east-diplomacy (2023)</p> <p>Camille Lons et al. (European Council on Foreign Relations), “China’s great game in the Middle East”: https://ecfr.eu/publication/china_great_game_middle_east/ (2019)</p> <p>Courtney J. Fung (The China Quarterly), “Separating Intervention from Regime Change: China’s Diplomatic Innovations at the UN Security Council Regarding the Syria Crisis”: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741018000851 (2018)</p> <p>“Xi Jinping Sends Congratulatory Message to UN Special Commemorative Meeting in Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People”: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/zyxw/202511/t20251126_11761013.html (2025)</p> <p>Remarks by Wang Yi at the UNSC High-Level Meeting “Practicing Multilateralism, Reforming and Improving Global Governance”: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjbzhd/202502/t20250219_11558555.html (2025)</p>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	497
Project Name	Where Did the Mandarin Students Go? Exploring the Decline in U.S. Study of Mandarin and Study Abroad in China
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	China
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	The United States faces a growing need for professionals with deep Mandarin language skills and firsthand experience in Mainland China at a time when geopolitical tensions and security concerns have contributed to a decline in U.S. student participation in China-based study abroad programs. Building a pipeline of China-capable Americans remains essential to advancing U.S. diplomatic, economic, and national security interests. This project, sponsored by U.S. Embassy Beijing, will examine current trends in U.S. student interest in Mandarin language study and identify the key factors shaping decisions about long-term study abroad in Mainland China. By grounding its analysis in data and student perspectives, the project will provide timely insights to inform the Department’s educational diplomacy strategy and strengthen public engagement ties during a complex bilateral period. Students will assess levels of interest in Mandarin study, analyze how perceptions of China influence academic choices, and identify practical and psychological barriers to semester- or year-long programs in Mainland China, including cost, credit transfer, safety concerns, and family influence. Drawing on surveys, interviews, existing datasets, and comparative case studies of successful language and country programs, the team will develop actionable recommendations for programs, incentives, and outreach strategies that could reverse declining participation and expand opportunities. The final report and presentation will equip policymakers with evidence-based options to revitalize U.S.-China educational programs and help cultivate the next generation of China-capable professionals.
Final Product Format	The project will culminate in a policy-ready analytical report (approximately 25-35 pages) that synthesizes research findings on trends in Mandarin language study, barriers to long-term study abroad in Mainland China, and comparative models from other country and language programs. The report will include an executive summary and prioritized, actionable recommendations designed to inform Embassy and Department programming decisions. In addition, students will deliver a concise leadership briefing presentation and supporting data annex, ensuring the findings are both analytically rigorous and immediately usable for policy and program development purposes.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>East Asian Pacific Studies</i>
Additional Information	Main research questions include: 1. What are current levels of interest among U.S. students in learning Mandarin Chinese, and how have these trends evolved in recent years? 2. What factors influence students' decisions to study or not study Mandarin? 3. What specific obstacles prevent interested students from pursuing long-term (semester or academic year) study abroad programs in Mainland China? 4. What programs, incentives, or interventions could effectively increase U.S. student participation in China study abroad programs?
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	498
Project Name	Eyes on Eswatini: Student Sleuths for Labor Rights!
Office	Political/Economic
Embassy	Swaziland
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	Eswatini, a small landlocked country in Southern Africa, faces persistent challenges in upholding internationally recognized labor rights. Despite ratifying key International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, Eswatini continues to experience violations such as child labor, labor trafficking, restrictions on trade union activities, and other abuses that undermine the rights and dignity of workers. These issues are compounded by limited independent media coverage and restricted civil society space, making it difficult for the international community to obtain accurate, timely information on the state of labor rights in the country. This project invites a team of university students to conduct open-source reporting on labor rights violations in Eswatini during 2026. By leveraging publicly available information-including news articles, NGO reports, social media, and government documents-students will identify, document, and analyze at least ten significant labor rights violations occurring within the year. The findings will provide the U.S. Department of State with a clearer, evidence-based picture of the labor rights environment in Eswatini. This information will inform diplomatic engagement, policy recommendations, and potential programming to support labor rights and human dignity in the region.
Final Product Format	<p>1. List of 10 Labor Rights Violations (2026): For each violation, students will provide: A concise summary of the incident or pattern of abuse. The specific law or international standard being violated (e.g., Eswatini Employment Act, ILO Convention 87). Two separate, credible sources reporting on the violation (e.g., news outlets, NGO reports, official statements).</p> <p>2. Short Memo with Recommendations (max. 4 pages): The memo will synthesize findings and offer actionable recommendations for U.S. policy, engagement with Eswatini, and support for local civil society actors.</p>
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Human Rights</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Civil Society</i>
Additional Information	The two major newspapers in Eswatini are "The Times" and "The Observer". The most common social media outlet is Facebook.
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	499
Project Name	American Leadership at UN Rome Agencies: Strategic University Engagement
Office	Public Diplomacy Section, U.S. Mission to UN Agencies in Rome
Embassy	U.S. Mission to the UN-Rome
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	<p>The U.S. Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome (USUN Rome) seeks dynamic partnerships to dramatically increase collaboration between U.S. universities and the UN agencies helping to feed the world. USUN Rome represents American interests at three critical multilateral institutions addressing global hunger and effective agricultural production: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). These agencies reach tens of millions of people worldwide, coordinate international responses to food crises, and shape global food security policy. Yet despite their global importance, many American students and faculty are unaware of opportunities to engage with these agencies through careers, research, or institutional partnerships. The United States faces increasing competition for influence at these institutions from countries like China and Russia, making it critical to strengthen American presence through personnel, expertise, and partnerships.</p> <p>U.S. land-grant universities-with their deep expertise in food systems, agriculture, nutrition, and development-represent an extraordinary but underutilized resource for deepening this engagement. However, systematic pathways connecting these institutions to FAO, WFP, and IFAD remain underdeveloped. USUN Rome seeks a university research team to help build these connections by exploring key questions: Which U.S. universities are best positioned for partnership with UN Rome agencies, and what specific capacities do they offer? How do universities successfully partner with international organizations, and what models work best? What communications materials and strategies will effectively engage universities and promote opportunities to students and faculty? Who are the relevant land grant university alumni working at the Rome-based agencies? Who are the relevant alumni working in recipient countries identified as priorities for billions of dollars of funding from Title II Food for Peace and the State Department, including through the recent memorandum of understanding with the UN Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)? What existing partnerships do land grant universities have in the priority recipient countries of U.S.-OCHA and Title II funding?</p> <p>This project offers students hands-on experience in multilateral diplomacy with real-world impact. Students will map the landscape of U.S. land-grant universities and their international programs, research successful university partnerships with UN agencies and other international organizations and create practical tools the Mission can use - including an outreach strategy and communications materials. Working closely with mission staff throughout the semester, students will learn how U.S. missions operate, how to navigate the intersection of foreign policy and higher education, and how to create and advance strategies to address real diplomatic challenges. Students will develop skills directly relevant to careers in foreign policy, international organizations, and global agricultural development. The deliverables developed through this project will directly support the launch of the U.S. Mission’s university engagement initiative.</p>
Final Product Format	After further refining deliverables based on conversations between the Mission and the university, students will deliver an integrated toolkit which may include the following components: (1) a comprehensive database and analysis identifying which U.S. land-

	<p>grant universities are priority targets for partnership, including profiles and tailored outreach strategies;</p> <p>(2) a partnership framework guide containing best practices from successful university-international organization partnerships and case studies of existing MOUs, especially identifying relevant research collaboration taking place in priority countries; (3) sample communications and outreach materials including social media content infographics that the mission can deploy immediately to engage universities and promote collaboration; and (4) an initial list of land grant university alumni who are either serving in the Rome-based organizations or who are from countries identified as priorities for Title II and State Department OCHA funding. Students will present their findings and recommendations to Mission leadership virtually at the end of the semester.</p>
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Food Security</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Development</i>
Additional Information	<p>The U.S. Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome is one of a handful of specialized U.S. missions to international organizations, reflecting the importance of multilateral diplomacy in advancing American interests. The three Rome-based agencies-FAO, WFP, and IFAD-shape global responses to hunger and agricultural development. American engagement ensures these institutions reflect U.S. values of embracing innovation, pursuing evidence-based approaches, and maximizing efficiency.</p> <p>USUN Rome is committed to being an engaged partner throughout the semester, providing initial briefings, regular check-ins, review of materials, and direct access to foreign policy practitioners. Students will gain rare insight into how multilateral diplomacy actually works through practical engagement with a real diplomatic challenge, developing skills in research, strategic analysis, stakeholder engagement, and communications that are directly transferable to international careers.</p> <p>This project is open to students from variety of backgrounds, including international affairs, science and technology, agriculture, communications, and partnerships. Graduate level preferred, but undergraduate will be considered. Land grant universities especially welcome to apply. Mission staff overseeing the project are familiar with Diplomacy Lab, having sponsored several teams previously.</p> <p>More Lives Saved for Fewer Taxpayer Dollars: Trump Administration Leads “Humanitarian Reset” in the United Nations - United States Department of State (https://www.state.gov/releases/under-secretary-for-foreign-assistance-humanitarian-affairs-and-religious-freedom/2025/12/more-lives-saved-for-fewer-taxpayer-dollars-trump-administration-leads-humanitarian-reset-in-the-united-nations/)</p> <p>USDA to Purchase 211,000 Metric Tons of American Commodities, Administer Food for Peace Program as America First International Food Assistance (https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAO/bulletins/40672c6)</p>
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	500
Project Name	Strengthening Costa Rica’s English-for-STEAM Workforce Pipeline to Support U.S. Nearshoring and Supply Chain Resilience
Office	Public Diplomacy
Embassy	Costa Rica
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	<p>Costa Rica is an important partner in U.S. efforts to diversify advanced manufacturing and technology supply chains through nearshoring. Companies operating in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, microelectronics, shared services, and technology increasingly require workers who combine strong technical skills with English proficiency. A national needs analysis conducted with the Ministry of Science, Innovation, Technology, and Telecommunications (MICITT) and the National Learning Institute (INA) identified several systemic challenges, including coordination gaps between education and workforce institutions, curriculum misalignment with labor market needs, and uneven regional access to English and STEAM training. MICITT has requested deeper workforce-focused analysis to help inform the development of a national Center of Excellence and strengthen connections between English proficiency, technical training, and employer demand.</p> <p>Through this project, student research teams will examine English education in Costa Rica to identify opportunities to strengthen workforce pipelines that support both Costa Rica’s economic development and U.S. economic security objectives. Students will analyze gaps in Costa Rica’s education-to-workforce pipeline, assess how English proficiency levels align with workforce demand in high-growth sectors such as AI, cybersecurity, and advanced manufacturing, and explore policy strategies that could scale workforce development efforts. The resulting analysis and recommendations will help inform future Embassy programming, bilateral engagement, and policy discussions with Costa Rican partners.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>Policy Report (15-20 pages) analyzing workforce pipeline gaps and policy opportunities Executive Summary for Policymakers highlighting key findings and recommendations Policy Recommendations Matrix outlining short-, medium-, and long-term actions Data visualization or dashboard illustrating workforce pipeline gaps or English-for-STEAM capacity (Optional)</p>
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Development</i>
Additional Information	The Embassy can share background information (e.g. the national needs analysis conducted with MICITT and INA) and can help identify additional in-country data sources such as workforce statistics. Having Spanish skills is a plus.
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	501
Project Name	U.S.-Australia-New Zealand Space Education: Strategic Partnerships in Workforce Development
Office	United States Consulate (Auckland)
Embassy	New Zealand
Bureau	U.S. Mission (U.S. Mission)
Project Description	<p>The United States, Australia, and New Zealand share complementary strengths in the rapidly growing space sector and a commitment to advancing democratic values and strategic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. New Zealand has emerged as a significant player in commercial space launch capabilities, Australia possesses world-leading reserves of critical minerals essential to space technologies and is advancing space commercialization, and the United States maintains global leadership in space technology, research, and education.</p> <p>Currently, there is limited comprehensive information about the range of opportunities available for Australians and New Zealanders to pursue space-related education in the United States, including aerospace engineering, space medicine, satellite technology, component fabrication, critical minerals processing for space applications, and related fields. This information gap may limit the development of the next generation of space sector professionals who could contribute to trilateral cooperation and reduce the risk of talented Australians and New Zealanders pursuing training and partnerships with strategic competitors, including the PRC.</p> <p>"What educational pathways exist for Australian and New Zealand students/professionals to study space-related fields in the United States, and how can these pathways be leveraged to strengthen trilateral space sector cooperation, workforce development, strategic partnership, and resistance to influence from strategic competitors such as China, Russia, and the European Space Agency?"</p>
Final Product Format	<p>The format of the material produced can be left to the discretion of the researchers. It should include the following deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensive database/matrix of U.S. space-related educational programs accessible to Australian and New Zealand students and professionals - Analysis of funding opportunities and application processes, including identification of gaps - Identification of barriers and recommendations for reducing them - Strategic recommendations for coordinated Mission programming to promote these pathways - Policy brief on strengthening trilateral space sector workforce development and its contribution to Indo-Pacific security - Analysis of how educational pathways can counter PRC influence and build resistance to strategic competitors - Recommendations for potential trilateral initiatives or joint programming
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Additional Information	The research team should:

	<p>1) Map U.S. academic programs in space-related fields (aerospace engineering, space medicine, satellite technology, materials science, component fabrication, space policy, critical minerals processing for space applications, quantum technologies, artificial intelligence applications in space, cyber security for space systems, etc.) that accept international students from Australia and New Zealand</p> <p>2) Identify funding mechanisms, including: - Scholarship opportunities (Fulbright, university-specific, industry-sponsored, AUKUS-related opportunities) - Exchange programs (including those that could support trilateral collaboration) - Research assistantships and fellowships - Industry partnership programs - Opportunities specific to critical minerals and supply chain development - E-3 visa pathways for Australian graduates</p> <p>3) Analyze visa pathways and processes, (F-1, J-1, E-3 for Australians) and identify any barriers or challenges specific to space-related fields for Australian and New Zealand students</p> <p>4) Examine workforce development connections, among U.S., Australian, and New Zealand space industries, including: - Internship and Optional Practical Training (OPT) opportunities - Industry partnerships and collaborative research programs (including AUKUS-related opportunities) - Pathways for graduates to contribute to trilateral projects - Critical minerals supply chain workforce development - Defense industry integration opportunities - Space commercialization partnerships</p> <p>5) Assess current utilization, of these pathways by Australian and New Zealand students and identify gaps or underutilized opportunities</p> <p>6) Benchmark against competitor nations, educational offerings (particularly PRC) to understand where Australian and New Zealand students might alternatively seek training and the strategic implications</p> <p>7) Identify opportunities for joint Australia-New Zealand programming, that could be coordinated between the two missions to maximize impact and demonstrate trilateral cooperation</p>
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	502
Project Name	Digital Silk Roads in Finland: The Rise of Chinese Soft Diplomacy on Social Media
Office	Public Diplomacy Section, the U.S. Embassy in Finland
Embassy	Finland
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	<p>China’s soft diplomacy on social media has shifted from traditional state messaging to dynamic, culture- and lifestyle-focused content, using platforms like Instagram and TikTok to reach global audiences - especially youth. Chinese state media, diplomatic accounts, and influencers now promote Chinese culture, tourism, cuisine, and technology, using entertainment-driven storytelling and collaborations with overseas creators to shape international perceptions. This trend is increasingly visible in Finland and resonating strongly with young Finns.</p> <p>Therefore, it is essential to understand how Chinese soft diplomacy is influencing perceptions in Finland, particularly as embassy staff are restricted from directly accessing platforms like TikTok. This project will analyze the strategies, narratives, and cultural symbols used by Chinese actors on Instagram and TikTok in the Finnish context, with a focus on youth engagement. By providing a clear picture of these evolving trends, the project will equip the Embassy with the insights needed to navigate and respond to China’s expanding digital influence in Finland.</p>
Final Product Format	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) An analytical written report summarizing key findings on Chinese soft diplomacy strategies on Instagram and TikTok in Finland, including trends, narratives, influencer collaborations, and audience engagement. 2) Visually compelling materials like infographics that map out the main themes, actors, and content types, making complex trends accessible at a glance. 3) An engaging presentation or interactive workshop to share findings with embassy staff.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>East Asian Pacific Studies</i>
Additional Information	<p>A summary of an article in Uusi Juttu magazine (Finnish): “The Trending Chinamaxxing Is a Breakthrough in China's Soft Power: Chinese Social Media Content Spreads and Catches on When the West Lacks Vision”</p> <p>In recent years, the phenomenon of "Chinamaxxing" has emerged as a striking example of China's growing soft power, with Chinese social media content capturing the imagination of global audiences at a time when Western societies seem to lack compelling new visions. Platforms like TikTok and Douyin have not only revolutionized how content is consumed but have also made Chinese culture, technology, and everyday life more accessible and appealing to young people worldwide. Viral videos showcasing futuristic cities, innovative products, and unique lifestyles have contributed to a new, positive image of China-one that is cool, dynamic, and full of possibilities. This trend reflects both a genuine curiosity about China and a search for alternatives among Western youth facing economic and social uncertainty at home. Yet, while these videos highlight the energy and progress of modern China, they often gloss over the</p>

	complexities and challenges that remain beneath the surface, reminding us that the full picture is always more nuanced than what appears on our screens.
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	503
Project Name	Assessing the Feasibility of Expanded U.S.-Canada Transboundary Water Governance
Office	WHA/CAN US Embassy Ottawa, Econ Section
Embassy	Canada
Bureau	Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)
Project Description	<p>The International Joint Commission (IJC) has successfully managed transboundary water issues between the United States and Canada since 1909, but its current structure does not comprehensively cover all watersheds along the 5,525-mile border. This project would examine the opportunities and challenges in establishing IJC boards for all of the currently unrepresented watersheds, including the Yukon River Basin, Porcupine River, Milk River, and watersheds in the Pacific Northwest region. Each new board would require equal representation from both nations, and must include members of stakeholder communities including local Indigenous leaders, agricultural stakeholders, municipal water managers, and other key actors. After understanding the history, current operations, and challenges of the IJC, students would propose a new division of boards; compile an estimated budget for the expansion including Commissioner stipends, technical staff support, monitoring infrastructure, and secretariat functions; identify emerging water security threats in each watershed, including glacial melt, increased agricultural demand, risk of contamination from resource extraction, and changing precipitation patterns; and examine how expanded IJC coverage could provide essential mechanisms for early conflict resolution, scientific cooperation, and coordinated management. The proposal to establish the new boards would need to reflect the IJC's Mission and Mandate under the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty, while also taking into account other international, bilateral, and state- or provincial-level agreements relevant to U.S.-Canada transboundary water issues, including the Columbia River Treaty, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and the Lake of the Woods Convention and Protocol, among others.</p> <p>The project would examine the utility of this expansion to address current water security concerns that transcend the existing bilateral framework. Recent droughts in the Prairie Provinces and northern Plains states, flooding events in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest, and announcements of new mineral exploration projects that risk environmental contamination demonstrate that all watersheds along the border could benefit from formal IJC oversight. Currently many regions lack institutional capacity for coordinated response to transboundary water crises. New boards could facilitate data sharing on water quality and quantity, provide neutral forums for proactively resolving disputes, and enable joint planning for infrastructure investments and emergency response. The IJC's proven track record provides a tested model that could prevent costly conflicts while protecting the water security of millions of citizens in both nations. This project would look at this investment in preventive diplomacy and cooperative management and determine if it would yield significant returns by avoiding the economic and political costs of transboundary water disputes.</p>
Final Product Format	A Concept Paper and/or a Feasibility Study that examines expanding the work of the International Joint Commission to cover the entire U.S.-Canada border, including potential benefits to water quality management and U.S.-Canada relations, and proposed administrative structures and costs including divisions of responsibility between boards, staffing, and budget.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Water Security</i>

Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Geography</i>
Additional Information	https://ijc.org/
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	504
Project Name	Niger Business Bridge (NBB): Transforming American Spaces into Commercial Diplomacy Platforms
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Niger
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	<p>Embassy Niamey seeks a Diplomacy Lab to transform U.S. engagement in Niger from a traditional aid-based model to a strategic, trade driven partnership. As the Department reorients toward commercial diplomacy and economic statecraft, this project will examine how existing Public Diplomacy infrastructure, specifically the American Spaces in Niamey, Agadez, and Zinder and the Embassy’s exchange alumni networks including YALI and IVLP participants, can support U.S. commercial engagement. By expanding programming beyond cultural exchange to include entrepreneurship and technology engagement, the Embassy aims to better position these platforms to connect U.S. companies with emerging Nigerien innovators and business opportunities.</p> <p>The Niger Business Bridge initiative will task a Diplomacy Lab student team with analyzing the Nigerien and broader Sahelian markets to identify opportunities for U.S. companies in sectors such as technology, agriculture, and renewable energy. Students will develop a scalable and resource efficient model for American Spaces programming that supports commercial engagement and strengthens connections between U.S. firms and high potential local entrepreneurs. The final deliverables, including a commercial programming guide and a monitoring and evaluation framework, will provide Embassy Niamey with practical tools to expand opportunities for U.S. businesses and support trade driven partnerships in Niger.</p>
Final Product Format	The project will produce practical deliverables to help Embassy Niamey strengthen commercial diplomacy and better leverage its public diplomacy infrastructure. The primary output will be a Commercial Programming Blueprint outlining a scalable, resource efficient model for using American Spaces in Niamey, Agadez, and Zinder as platforms for entrepreneurship and business engagement. This blueprint will include sector briefing sheets highlighting high potential industries in Niger such as renewable energy, digital commerce, agriculture technology, and critical minerals, along with operational templates for hosting technology demonstrations, networking events, and business pitch sessions that connect local entrepreneurs with U.S. companies. The project will also develop an alumni driven engagement pipeline that maps exchange alumni from programs such as YALI and IVLP who operate in key sectors and proposes strategies for leveraging these networks to connect U.S. firms with local partners. In addition, the team will produce concise Market Entry Flash Reports summarizing commercial opportunities and regulatory considerations for U.S. companies exploring opportunities in Niger and the broader Sahel. Finally, the project will design a Monitoring and Evaluation framework with clear indicators to measure the effectiveness of commercial programming through American Spaces, including metrics related to partnerships formed, business connections facilitated, and opportunities created for U.S. firms.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Public-Private Partnerships</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	505
Project Name	Pathways for Democratic Transition in Nicaragua
Office	Political-Economic Section
Embassy	
Bureau	Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)
Project Description	Following the January 3 arrest of Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela, global media and political pundits have speculated about which authoritarian regime is “next,” with many mentioning Nicaragua. In addition to recent media speculation, Nicaragua analysts have long speculated about the age and health of the country’s co-dictators, and their succession plans through their children. With this current political climate, analyze potential pathways and scenarios for a democratic transition in Nicaragua. This could include reviewing international best practices for supporting peaceful democratic transitions in authoritarian contexts, and scenario planning for a change in authoritarian leadership. Provide relevant comparative case studies from other democratic transitions. Provide actionable recommendations for U.S. engagement to support a peaceful, democratic outcome.
Final Product Format	A three-to-four-page memo with proposed recommendations and analysis of current policy. The university team could deliver an accompanying presentation/brief to a panel of U.S. policymakers.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Democracy & Human Rights</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Western Hemisphere Studies</i>
Additional Information	
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	506
Project Name	Remittances in the Nicaraguan Economy and Policy Recommendations
Office	Political-Economic Section
Embassy	
Bureau	Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)
Project Description	<p>Nicaragua is the most remittance-dependent country in the Western Hemisphere and the third most dependent in the world, according to one study. Nicaragua received \$6.4 billion in remittances in 2025-equivalent to 30% of its GDP-with 84% originating from the-United States. While Nicaragua does not directly tax remittances, they boost consumer spending which generates abundant regime revenue through the consumption tax.</p> <p>The objective of this proposed research project is to investigate and better understand the remittance flows to Nicaragua. Provide a general overview on remittances in the Nicaraguan economy that includes how much money is sent, from where, and how. Then look at historical case studies where the United States limited remittances in other countries: how was this done and did it achieve the desired policy outcome? Then outline a range of policy options and how they would impact the Nicaraguan economy. Students are encouraged to reach out to public and private stakeholders for this project and think through negative unintended consequences of potential policy recommendations.</p>
Final Product Format	A six-to-eight-page memo with background on remittances in the Nicaraguan economy that includes how much money is sent, from where, and how. Then look at historical case studies where the United States limited remittances in other countries: how was this done and did it achieve the desired policy outcome? Then outline a range of policy options and how they would impact the Nicaraguan economy. The university team could deliver an accompanying presentation/brief to a panel of U.S. policymakers.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Western Hemisphere Studies</i>
Additional Information	
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	507
Project Name	Securing the AI Frontier: Advancing U.S.-New Zealand Alignment in AI Governance, Investment, and Technology Security
Office	Public Diplomacy Office, Embassy Wellington
Embassy	New Zealand
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	<p>Building on the success of the 2024 U.S. Speaker Program on Generative AI in New Zealand - which generated engagement across Parliament, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), AI Forum NZ, universities, and private sector leaders - this project asks a timely strategic question:</p> <p>How can the United States deepen AI policy, regulatory, and investment alignment with trusted partners like New Zealand to ensure advanced AI systems remain secure, economically beneficial to U.S. firms, and resilient against adversarial influence in the Indo-Pacific?</p> <p>As New Zealand advances its AI governance frameworks and seeks to scale its innovation ecosystem, gaps in venture capital access, regulatory coordination, export control alignment, and foreign investment screening present both risks and opportunities. Without proactive U.S. engagement, regulatory standards that are out of sync, or commercial gaps could weaken broader technology security cooperation and reduce U.S. firms' competitiveness in trusted markets.</p> <p>Through the Diplomacy Lab model, a U.S. university research team would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare U.S. and New Zealand AI governance approaches; Evaluate foreign investment involvement in sensitive AI sectors; Review export rules and how technology is shared; Identify opportunities for increased safety standards; Propose trusted innovation partnerships and venture pathways; Examine AI-enabled cybersecurity risks (including implications for healthcare data protection and critical infrastructure resilience). <p>The project will produce a practical policy and partnership roadmap that identifies concrete steps the United States and New Zealand can take to deepen cooperation on artificial intelligence governance, investment, and technology security. The research will highlight areas where regulatory approaches can be better aligned, where U.S. venture capital and technology firms can expand trusted partnerships in New Zealand's AI ecosystem, and where coordinated safeguards are needed to protect sensitive technologies from adversarial influence. The outcome will provide Mission New Zealand and Washington stakeholders with a clear set of recommendations to guide bilateral engagement with government agencies, industry, universities, and the AI Forum of New Zealand.</p> <p>The roadmap will also identify a set of actionable initiatives-such as joint research partnerships, investment pathways for U.S. AI companies, export control coordination, and collaborative approaches to AI-enabled cybersecurity risks-that can be advanced through diplomatic engagement, public diplomacy programming, and commercial</p>

	<p>diplomacy efforts. These findings will help position the United States as New Zealand’s preferred partner for trusted AI development while supporting broader Indo-Pacific technology security, innovation growth, and responsible AI governance.</p> <p>How the Project Will Be Used:</p> <p>This project has direct application to Mission New Zealand and State Department objectives.</p> <p>The findings would:</p> <p>Help guide U.S.-New Zealand tech cooperation, including engagement with MBIE, AI Forum NZ, and Parliament.</p> <p>Support Public Diplomacy programming, including future AI-focused exchanges, speaker programs, and potential announcements at an annual AI Forum Summit.</p> <p>Strengthen commercial diplomacy efforts by identifying pathways to position U.S. AI companies as preferred trusted partners.</p> <p>Work with trusted Indo-Pacific partners on export rules and investment checks.</p> <p>Build stronger pathways for EducationUSA and STEM cooperation, linking U.S. AI research institutions to New Zealand students and space/AI enterprises.</p> <p>Provide analytical research to support messaging on: Keeping America Prosperous (market & Venture Capital access)</p> <p>Keeping America Secure (prevent sensitive technology from being shared inappropriately and limit harmful foreign influence.)</p> <p>Keeping America Safe (joint approaches to AI-enabled cybersecurity risks)</p> <p>The policy roadmap could be used internally for reporting and strategy development, and externally to frame future bilateral announcements or AI Forum events.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>Preferred deliverables: Executive Policy Roadmap (10-15 pages)</p> <p>Clear recommendations; Risk assessment matrix; Short-, medium-, and long-term alignment opportunities.</p> <p>4-5 Page Options Memo Actionable recommendations for State Department engagement Comparative Governance Matrix (Appendix)</p> <p>Side-by-side comparison of U.S. and NZ AI regulatory approaches; Export control alignment gaps; Track foreign investment links.</p> <p>Optional: Presentation briefing (virtual) to Mission NZ and relevant Washington stakeholders; and if appropriate share the findings as a presentation at a future annual New Zealand AI Summit (Sept 6-8, 2026, Auckland is the next Summit).</p>
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>

Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Public-Private Partnerships</i>
Additional Information	Strategic Context: In 2024, Mission New Zealand executed a highly successful ECA- and S/TECH-funded U.S. Speaker Program bringing AI experts Jessica Zosa Forde and James Pavur to New Zealand. The program engaged Parliament, MBIE, the Cross-Party AI Group, AI Forum NZ, universities, and private sector leaders - reinforcing U.S. leadership in responsible AI and advancing follow-on conversations on regulatory practices, venture capital access, and trusted AI development best practices. This proposed Diplomacy Lab project builds directly on that momentum. Timeline: Project designed for one semester (~4 months), but findings could support a multi-year bilateral AI diplomacy strategy.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	508
Project Name	NATO in America: What Works, What Doesn't, and What Comes Next
Office	USNATO/PAA
Embassy	U.S. Mission to NATO
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	<p>The U.S. Mission to NATO invites students and faculty to take on an applied research challenge at the intersection of strategic communication, public opinion, digital media, and public diplomacy. This project asks a central question: how can U.S. foreign policy communication about NATO be made more relevant, persuasive, and accessible to audiences across America? While the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) remains the cornerstone of Western security, its relevance is increasingly questioned within communities across America. In an era of shifting domestic priorities, a significant gap has emerged: NATO familiarity in the U.S. trails behind the Alliance average, with particularly low engagement among women and the 18-24 demographic. For many, the Alliance feels like a distant bureaucratic entity rather than a domestic economic engine and a guarantor of local stability. The U.S. Mission to NATO is seeking a fresh, "outsider" perspective to bridge this divide. This project moves beyond traditional high-level diplomacy to meet Americans where they live, work, and consume media. Students will play a pivotal role in "measuring the pulse" of critical audiences. They will analyze our current digital footprint, evaluate the brand of the U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, Ambassador Matt Whitaker, and investigate how to better communicate "burden sharing"- specifically how the historic agreement to move toward 5% GDP defense spending translates into American jobs, a robust defense industrial base, and safer supply chains. Their research could directly influence how the U.S. Government narrates the value of international solidarity to its own citizens. For a university team, this is an opportunity to approach a live communication problem with both academic rigor and practical creativity. We are looking for researchers to analyze our existing digital content and platforms and assess how they are likely to be perceived by target audiences: what appears to work, what does not, which platforms seem best suited for engagement, and where there are missed opportunities. The project could draw on methods such as content analysis, audience research, focus groups, or other approaches the team considers appropriate. At the same time, this is not only a research exercise. It is also a practical exercise in the kind of audience analysis, message testing, and campaign thinking often expected in an advertising or communications agency setting, applied here to a real foreign policy challenge. We are looking for a team that can move from diagnosis to recommendation: identifying what kinds of NATO-related content and messages would better connect with American domestic audiences, what platform-specific strategies might be more effective, and what new campaign or content ideas should be developed. We are also interested in an assessment of the Ambassador's public-facing brand: how he is perceived as a communicator, what is working, what may be missing, and what more or less we should be doing in that space. Finally, we would welcome forward-looking recommendations on content production and the possible use of AI in communication workflows. Overall, this project is designed to give students the chance to apply academic methods to a real-world strategic communication problem, while giving the Mission fresh, evidence-based insights and creative ideas for improving how it communicates NATO to American audiences.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>We are looking for practical, presentation-ready deliverables rather than a long academic paper. Our preferred final products are: A visually strong slide presentation deck with the main findings, analysis, and recommendations. Raw data and supporting analysis in a usable format (preferably .xlsx) A short, written summary, ideally no more</p>

	than three pages, if the team would like to include a memo or Word document alongside the presentation. The final product should clearly show what is working, what is not, and what specific changes we should consider in content, platforms, branding, campaign development, and use of AI.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Additional Information	Here are the links to our platforms/content https://x.com/USAmbNATO https://x.com/USNATO https://truthsocial.com/@USAmbNATO https://www.facebook.com/USNATO/ https://www.instagram.com/usmissionnato/ https://www.linkedin.com/company/usnato/
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	509
Project Name	Cataloging Connections: Documenting Algerian Cultural Property in U.S. Holdings
Office	Public Diplomacy Section, United States Embassy Algiers
Embassy	Algeria
Bureau	U.S. Mission (U.S. Mission)
Project Description	<p>Preserving cultural heritage is a powerful catalyst for fostering international cooperation and deepening mutual understanding between nations. In 2019, the United States and Algeria signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to protect Algerian cultural property, recognizing the importance of safeguarding artifacts and archival materials that embody Algeria’s rich history and identity. Yet, many significant Algerian objects and documents reside in U.S. museums, libraries, and archives, often scattered across institutions and not easily accessible to researchers, policymakers, or the public. This dispersion makes it challenging for researchers, policymakers and the public to access and appreciate the full breadth of Algeria’s cultural legacy, understating the urgent need for greater collaboration and visibility.</p> <p>This project invites students to play a vital role in bridging that gap. Working under the guidance of a faculty lead, the student team will create a comprehensive catalog of Algerian objects and archival materials held in U.S. collections. By leveraging publicly available information and, when possible, collaborating with institutional staff, the team will document these items and, where feasible, trace their provenance. The resulting catalog will not only support the implementation of the U.S.-Algeria Cultural Property Agreement and its five-year action plan, but also provide a valuable resource for scholars, cultural heritage professionals, and both governments.</p> <p>The project’s impact extends beyond compliance with international agreements. It strengthens international partnerships, promotes the rule of law and supports the protection of cultural heritage as a tool for diplomacy. It offers students hands-on experience in cultural heritage research, digital cataloging, and international policy, while contributing to greater transparency and stewardship of global heritage. Ultimately, this initiative will help ensure that Algerian cultural property in the United States is documented, respected, and accessible-fostering deeper connections between our two countries and supporting the shared goal of cultural preservation.</p> <p>Project Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and document Algerian cultural objects and archival materials in U.S. collections using publicly accessible databases and institutional catalogs. - Establish provenance for cataloged items, utilizing available information and, where feasible, engaging with institutional staff for additional context. - Create a digital catalog that can be shared with the U.S. Department of State, Algerian authorities, and the public, supporting transparency and cultural heritage protection. - Support the implementation of the U.S.-Algeria Cultural Property MOU and its five-year action plan by providing a foundational resource for ongoing cooperation and research.
Final Product Format	A digital catalog of Algerian objects and archival materials in U.S. collections. A final report detailing methodology, findings, and recommendations. Presentation of results to the State Department and, if appropriate, to Algerian cultural authorities.

Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>History</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>African Studies</i>
Additional Information	<p>Our Algerian counterparts have already provided the names of several U.S. institutions known to hold Algerian objects and archival materials. A preliminary list of these institutions will be available to help students get started and focus their initial research efforts.</p> <p>This project presents an excellent opportunity to leverage artificial intelligence (AI) tools for tasks such as searching digital catalogs, extracting metadata, and identifying patterns in provenance information. Students with an interest in digital humanities or AI applications in cultural heritage are especially encouraged to participate.</p> <p>For background on the legal and diplomatic framework guiding this project, students are encouraged to review the Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States and Algeria on Cultural Property and related materials. The official text is available through the State Department's Cultural Heritage Center's website.</p> <p>This project may require more than one semester to complete, depending on the number of institutions surveyed and the depth of provenance research possible. Students interested in continuing the work beyond the initial term are encouraged to discuss this with the faculty lead.</p>
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	510
Project Name	Countering Chinese and Russian Influence in North African Higher Education
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Algeria
Bureau	Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)
Project Description	<p>As global competition for influence intensifies, North African higher education has become a strategic arena for engagement by major powers. China and Russia are expanding their presence in the region through Confucius Institutes, Huawei ICT Academies, Russian cultural centers, and research partnerships, often in sensitive technology fields. At the same time, Algeria’s recent pivot toward English-medium instruction and its University 4.0 initiative present a unique opportunity for the United States to offer compelling, values-based alternatives.</p> <p>This project invites students to investigate the scope and impact of Chinese and Russian educational programs across North Africa, using open-source research and expert interviews. Teams will map these actors’ engagement models, identify institutional vulnerabilities, and develop a practical toolkit of countermeasures and outreach strategies for U.S. education and public diplomacy teams. The resulting playbook will strengthen American influence and help the Department of State promote resilient, innovative, and values-driven educational partnerships in a region undergoing rapid transformation at this crucial time when malign foreign actors are increasing activity in critical sectors.</p>
Final Product Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Influence Assessment: A mapping and analysis of Chinese and Russian educational engagement across North African universities. - Strategic Framework: Identification of key vulnerability indicators and areas of opportunity for U.S. engagement. - Counter-Measure Toolkit: Actionable recommendations and resources for countering malign influence, including sample outreach talking points and partnership models. - Executive Summary and Policy Brief: Concise, actionable summaries for Department leadership and field teams. <p>Supplementary materials may include infographics, data visualizations, or digital resources, as appropriate. The final deliverables may be shared with relevant U.S. missions and partners across the North Africa and Middle East region.</p>
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Middle East/North African Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Additional Information	N/A
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	511
Project Name	Untangling the Data Web: Building a Practical Guide and Recommendations for Colombia’s Civilian Security and Migration Data Landscape
Office	Political Section
Embassy	Columbia
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	<p>Colombia’s civilian security and migration landscape is shaped by a challenging and fragmented data environment. Reliable, timely, and interoperable data are essential for effective policy, reporting, and program design - yet Colombia faces persistent gaps and inconsistencies. Meanwhile, a proliferation of “observatorios” and other initiatives has led to both data overload and poor interoperability, making it difficult to identify trustworthy sources and synthesize information.</p> <p>This project invites students to map and analyze the current data landscape for civilian security and migration in Colombia. The team will identify and assess key data sources from government agencies, NGOs, international organizations, and academic observatories, documenting their strengths, limitations, and relevance for U.S. policy and reporting. Importantly, the project will culminate not only in a practical reference guide for the U.S. Embassy Political Section, but also in a set of concrete, actionable recommendations tailored for Colombian stakeholders, the U.S. Government, and the international community. These recommendations should address ways to improve data collection, sharing, interoperability, and reliability, and suggest opportunities for collaboration and capacity-building.</p> <p>The final products will help U.S. diplomats and analysts more effectively access, interpret, and leverage data, while also providing a roadmap for stakeholders to strengthen Colombia’s data ecosystem. This will ultimately enhance the evidence base for strategic planning, reporting, and engagement in Colombia.</p>
Final Product Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A concise, user-friendly reference guide (10-15 pages) listing and evaluating key data sources, with recommendations for their use and notes on limitations/interoperability. - An analytical report (8-12 pages) summarizing the main challenges in Colombia’s data landscape, the implications for U.S. policy and reporting, and - crucially - concrete recommendations for Colombian stakeholders, the U.S. Government, and the international community to improve the data landscape. - Optional: A presentation or interactive data map/dashboard, if feasible for the student team.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Conflict, Stabilization & Reconstruction</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Western Hemisphere Studies</i>
Additional Information	<p>This project is ideal for students interested in international affairs, data analysis, public policy, or Latin American studies. Spanish-language skills are helpful but not required. The final products will be used regularly by U.S. Embassy Bogota to inform reporting, policy recommendations, and engagement with Colombian partners. The project offers students the opportunity to make a direct impact on U.S. diplomatic work and to shape recommendations that could benefit a wide range of stakeholders working to improve Colombia’s data landscape.</p>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	512
Project Name	Beyond the Frontier: Strengthening State Presence and Security in Colombia's Ungoverned Spaces
Office	Political Section
Embassy	Columbia
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	<p>Large swathes of rural Colombia remain outside the effective reach of the state, creating fertile ground for illegal armed groups, narcotraffickers, and criminal organizations. Despite years of efforts by the Colombian government and international partners - including security operations, development programs, and peacebuilding initiatives - these areas continue to experience violence, instability, and limited access to public services. The problem is worsening, with illegal groups expanding their influence and local communities suffering from insecurity, poverty, and exclusion. This project will examine the historical and current strategies employed by Colombia and its international partners to increase state presence and restore security in these regions. Students will analyze the effectiveness of law enforcement, military, and development interventions, and assess the underlying factors - such as inequality, lack of economic opportunity, and weak governance - that perpetuate the problem. Final products will include lessons learned and/or best practices that research uncovers.</p> <p>Drawing on case studies, interviews, and comparative analysis, the student team will develop concrete recommendations for Colombian stakeholders, the U.S. Government, and the international community. These recommendations will focus on innovative, evidence-based strategies to strengthen state presence, promote citizen-driven development, and reduce the power of illegal armed groups. The project aims to provide actionable insights for policymakers seeking to break the cycle of violence and marginalization in Colombia's ungoverned spaces.</p>
Final Product Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analytical report (15-20 pages) summarizing findings, lessons learned, and recommendations for Colombian stakeholders, the U.S. Government, and international partners. - Executive summary (3-5 pages) highlighting key recommendations and policy options. - Optional: Presentation or policy brief for use in stakeholder meetings.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Conflict, Stabilization & Reconstruction</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Western Hemisphere Studies</i>
Additional Information	This project is ideal for students interested in international security, development, public policy, Latin American studies, or conflict resolution. Spanish-language skills are helpful but not required. The final products will inform U.S. diplomatic engagement and support efforts to promote peace, security, and inclusive development in Colombia's most vulnerable regions.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	513
Project Name	A Comparative Analysis of Federal Identity Lifecycle Management and Data Quality Practices
Office	Data Analytics and Assessment (DAA)
Bureau	Bureau of Information Resource Management (IRM)
Project Description	<p>The Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Technology, Data Analytics and Assessment team manages the Master User Record (MUR), the authoritative source for enterprise identity attributes supporting the Department's zero-trust cybersecurity posture. The MUR centralizes user accounts, credentials, and access details for tens of thousands of employees worldwide, ensuring appropriate access to resources while reducing risks like unauthorized access and data breaches. DAA currently monitors data quality across four dimensions-completeness, uniqueness, validity, and compliance-using 12 key identity attributes. While this framework has proven effective, the Department seeks to understand how its identity lifecycle management and data quality practices compare to other federal agencies and industry leaders.</p> <p>This project asks student teams to conduct a comprehensive comparative analysis examining how federal agencies and comparable organizations manage joiner-mover-leaver (JML) identity attribute processes, with particular emphasis on business practices rather than technology solutions. Students will research identity lifecycle management approaches across federal agencies (such as DoD, DHS, Treasury, and Intelligence Community components), identify best practices for attribute quality management during lifecycle transitions, and assess State's current practices against these benchmarks. The analysis should address both technical data quality dimensions and business process considerations including governance structures, accountability frameworks, timeliness requirements, cross-functional coordination mechanisms, and change management approaches. Deliverables should include a comparative framework mapping JML practices across agencies, identification of gaps in State's current approach (both technical and procedural), and prioritized recommendations addressing business process improvements alongside data quality enhancements. This work will directly inform how the Department strengthens identity management for over 150 embassies and consulates worldwide, improving both operational efficiency and cybersecurity resilience.</p>
Final Product Format	A comprehensive research report (20-30 pages) including: comparative analysis of federal agency JML practices with emphasis on business processes and governance, assessment of State's current practices against identified best practices, gap analysis addressing both technical and procedural dimensions, prioritized recommendations with implementation considerations, and an executive summary suitable for senior leadership briefing.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Cyber Security</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Additional Information	Students will have the opportunity to engage with DAA subject matter experts and potentially conduct informational interviews with counterparts at other federal agencies (subject to availability and appropriate coordination). While specific MUR data cannot be shared due to security considerations, DAA can provide anonymized examples, process documentation, and framework materials. Recommended preliminary reading includes NIST guidelines on identity management, FICAM architecture documentation, and federal identity lifecycle management frameworks.

	Students should plan to examine both "what" agencies do (technical practices) and "how" they do it (governance, accountability, coordination mechanisms).
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	514
Project Name	AI-Enabled Data Discovery and Documentation for Enterprise Service Management Platforms
Office	Data Analytics and Assessment
Bureau	Department of Diplomatic Technology (DT)
Project Description	<p>The Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Technology, Data Analytics and Assessment team faces a persistent challenge common across large enterprises: incomplete visibility into data assets residing within complex service management platforms. The Department utilizes ServiceNow as its enterprise service management platform, which contains numerous custom applications and sub-applications developed over time to address specific operational needs. Similarly, the Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS) and other enterprise platforms contain valuable data assets whose existence, structure, and accessibility are incompletely documented. This visibility gap prevents comprehensive data inventory management, limits analytics capabilities, constrains data governance efforts, and creates barriers for users seeking to access information they need for mission operations. This project asks student teams to evaluate how emerging AI and agentic AI capabilities—specifically ServiceNow's Moveworks and similar technologies—can be leveraged to systematically discover, document, and expose previously unknown or poorly documented data assets within enterprise platforms. Students will research current capabilities of agentic AI tools for data discovery and documentation, assess their applicability to ServiceNow and comparable platforms like ILMS, and develop a framework for using these tools to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) identify and document data models for custom sub-applications, (2) assess data availability and access patterns, (3) recommend appropriate data exposure mechanisms (APIs, user prompts, dashboards), and (4) generate recommendations for connecting users to data through natural language interfaces. <p>The analysis should address both technical capabilities and implementation considerations including data governance implications, security and access control requirements, change management needs, and integration with existing data inventory processes. Deliverables should include an assessment of current AI-enabled data discovery capabilities, a proposed framework for systematic data discovery and documentation within State's enterprise platforms, specific recommendations for leveraging Moveworks or comparable tools, implementation considerations including governance and security requirements, and a pilot project design that could validate the approach with a specific platform or sub-application. This work will directly inform how the Department achieves more complete data inventory visibility, enhances analytics capabilities, and improves user access to mission-critical information.</p>
Final Product Format	A comprehensive research report (20-30 pages) including: assessment of AI-enabled data discovery capabilities and tools, proposed framework for systematic data discovery and documentation, specific recommendations for State's enterprise platforms (ServiceNow, ILMS), implementation roadmap with governance and security considerations, pilot project design, and an executive summary suitable for senior leadership briefing.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>

Additional Information	Students will have the opportunity to engage with DAA subject matter experts and ServiceNow technical staff (subject to availability and appropriate coordination). While access to production systems cannot be provided due to security considerations, DAA can provide sanitized examples of data models, documentation gaps, and user access challenges. Students should be prepared to evaluate emerging AI capabilities critically, considering both technical potential and practical implementation constraints within a federal government context. Recommended preliminary reading includes ServiceNow platform documentation, literature on AI-enabled data discovery and metadata management, and federal data governance frameworks.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	515
Project Name	Fraudulent Investments and Transnational Criminal Networks in the Pacific: Exposure for Public Diplomacy
Office	Office of Policy, Planning, & Resources for Public Diplomacy (Research & Evaluation Unit)
Bureau	Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (R)
Project Description	<p>This research project will expand on studies conducted in Palau that identified links between Chinese investments, transnational criminal networks, and the Chinese Communist Party. Using open-source data, the team will select three additional Pacific Island countries and analyze patterns of suspicious Chinese investments, mapping connections to criminal organizations and assessing their influence on local politics and economies. Based on this research, the Department of State’s Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources for Public Diplomacy will provide public diplomacy messaging and programming guidance to U.S. embassies throughout the Pacific Islands.</p> <p>The project will produce situation analyses, databases of suspicious actors and organizations, and risk briefs for each country, with recommendations for converting findings into public diplomacy messaging and programming tools. The research supports the Agency Strategic Plan Objective 3.1 “Strengthen the Indo-Pacific economic system to support U.S. reindustrialization and reinforce ties with allies” by enabling U.S. and partner governments to counter illicit influence, combat scam operations, enhance the potential for successful American commercial diplomacy throughout the Pacific.</p>
Final Product Format	Short briefing papers, or decks, related to at least three Pacific Island nations, outlining the extent of fraudulent Chinese investment identified, as well as potential U.S. messaging opportunities, especially with potential linkages to diplomatic recognition of Taiwan and strategic cooperation.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement</i>
Additional Information	Related research was conducted in Palau in 2025, and we are exploring similar topics in the Solomon Islands. Other potential countries for this research include Tuvalu, Nauru, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji, among others.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	516
Project Name	Beyond the Snapshot: Deepening Understanding of Haitian Civil Society Views on U.S. Engagement
Office	Caribbean Affairs
Bureau	Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)
Project Description	<p>The Haiti Desk aims to understand the views/perspectives of Haitian civil society on U.S. foreign policy in Haiti. While multiple offices within the Department of State have commissioned surveys on the views of the Haitian populace writ large, those surveys can be thought of as snapshot, rather than a holistic viewpoint. The selected university will engage with multiple Haitian civil society organizations and inquire about their opinions on U.S. policy in a longer, longitudinal fashion.</p> <p>Based on recent internal surveys, U.S. policy in Haiti has been viewed unfavorably by Haitians. We would like to delve deeper and understand those perspectives, as well as those that view U.S. policy in Haiti favorably.</p> <p>The Haiti Desk has been primarily exposed to the views of the Haitian diaspora but understand that American-based diaspora perspectives can vary largely from those in Haiti. Therefore, it is critical to understand the views of Haitians in-country. With limited Embassy staffing in-country (the Embassy has been on Ordered Departure since July 2023), students surveying of civil society actors over a longer period of time would be crucial to gaining a better understanding of their views.</p>
Final Product Format	The deliverable can be a combination of a research paper and presentation by the team.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Civil Society</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	517
Project Name	Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Multilateral Counterterrorism Engagement
Office	Peace and Security Affairs
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	This project would analyze the effectiveness, challenges, and opportunities for reform within and among key counterterrorism focused multilateral organizations such as UNOCT, UNODC, CTED, and regional organizations like the AU, ASEAN ARF, Council of Europe, NATO, OAS, and the OSCE. The project would focus on how the United States can lead or support reforms to make these organizations more effective and accountable. Multilateral organizations are at a crossroads, facing both legitimacy crises and urgent global challenges. U.S. leadership is critical to driving meaningful reform, which can take many forms. This project will provide the IO Bureau with fresh analysis and innovative ideas to inform its approach to multilateral engagement and reform.
Final Product Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation with actionable recommendations for the IO and other relevant Bureaus. - Comparative analysis of reform efforts in different organizations. - Stakeholder mapping to identify key partners and opponents of reform. - Case studies of successful or failed reform initiatives.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Counter Terrorism</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	<p>Suggested Research Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the main structural and operational challenges facing global and regional counterterrorism-focused organizations today? - How have recent global crises/conflicts exposed gaps in multilateral responses? - What reform proposals have been put forward by member states, and what are their prospects for adoption? - How can the United States leverage its influence to build coalitions for reform and ensure these organizations remain effective and relevant? - Where and through what actions can the United States achieve the greatest impact in multilateral counterterrorism reform efforts? - What are the risks and opportunities for U.S. interests in pursuing specific reforms? <p>Some suggested resources the team may wish to utilize follows, and we can provide additional sources during consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-National-Security-Strategy.pdf - https://www.state.gov/country-reports-on-terrorism-2 - https://www.un.org/un80-initiative/en/un80-initiative-action-plan
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	518
Project Name	Implications of China’s use of economic coercion on human rights and rule of law in countries in Africa and its effects on U.S. national security
Office	Office of Natural Rights
Bureau	Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)
Project Description	<p>China’s human rights abuses and repression of fundamental freedoms increasingly poses a threat to human rights and the rule of law in China and around the world. It uses its growing global power and influence to undermine democratic processes and shape global perception in ways that can weaken international human rights standards and state sovereignty. To achieve this, China has weaponized its economic dominance to bend African countries to its political will. It intimidates institutions and uses investments, trade restrictions, and market access to force compliance and foster economic dependence. This has a negative impact on human rights and fundamental freedoms in Africa, such as freedom of expression, resulting in self-censorship and avoidance of sensitive issues such as abuses in China. China also seeks to reframe and restructure multilateral human rights institutions in favor of China’s geopolitical interests.</p> <p>Through open-source information and interviews with academics, human rights defenders, civil society, and non-governmental organizations (NGO), the students will research China’s efforts in Africa to influence and shape narratives, China’s impacts on human rights and rule of law, and how this affects U.S. interests. Students will identify any patterns of such malign influence. This project provides an opportunity for students to learn about political nuances, the dynamics of diplomacy, and diplomatic relations, including U.S. foreign policy towards different African countries and the cross-cutting factors that can impact U.S. foreign policy. The students will develop an understanding of different countries’ vulnerabilities that China may leverage. Analysis of all available information and research findings will allow students to develop concrete and actionable policy recommendations for consideration by the U.S. government.</p> <p>Students will provide recommendations on 1) how the U.S. government should respond to China’s influence and exploit China’s vulnerabilities in ways that advance human rights, 2) what assistance countries will need to overcome China’s coercive influence, 3) areas the United States should focus on to best counter China, and 4) specific industries and third countries that the United States could work with, and in what ways, to accomplish the above aims.</p>
Final Product Format	10-15 page research paper, optional presentation
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Democracy & Human Rights</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>African Studies</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	519
Project Name	Digital Diplomacy Down Under: Engaging Young Australians Through Content Creators
Office	Embassy Canberra/Public Affairs Office
Embassy	Australia
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	<p>The challenge: How to address the widening gap in public support for the U.S.-Australia relationship among young Australians between the ages of 18 to 30. This generation of Australians is online; their opinions, lifestyles, and values are shaped by today’s digital ecosystem. Polling by the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research and the Lowy Institute - one of Australia’s leading think tanks - indicate a downward trend in positive views of the United States during the past 10 years. In a region where China is aggressively flexing its economic and military influence across the Indo-Pacific, this negative perception of the United States is having profound consequences for the future of the bilateral relationship and our capabilities to push back against China’s efforts to rewrite the global world order in its favor.</p> <p>The project: The Diplomacy Lab will identify key social media content creators, including influencers and micro-influencers, whom the U.S. Mission can collaborate with to counter negative perceptions and broaden awareness of the U.S.-Australia partnership beyond traditional security narratives. This includes pinpointing specific thematic areas - travel, food, lifestyle, sports, culture, technology, economics, innovation - that young Australians care about and where the U.S. Mission can showcase American excellence and buoy esteem for the United States among young Australians. By leveraging digital mediums that provide direct communication channels, this initiative will meet young Australians where they are, delivering messaging that informs, connects, and entertains, through voices they trust, to strengthen bilateral ties with the next generation of Australian leaders.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>The deliverable has two parts: (1) an analysis of Australian content creators and influencers between the ages of 18 to 30 based in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney that identifies leading personalities who could be inclined to work with the United States; and (2) a presentation on how the U.S. Mission can engage with content creators effectively, including actionable suggestions that can guide public diplomacy engagements for the year ahead.</p> <p>The analysis of the content creators should include biographical background, their digital media platforms, followers, engagement numbers (including their best performing posts and why), and thematic topics covered.</p> <p>The presentation focuses on a strategy to engage with content creators and provides examples of how we can work effectively with content creators. This can include ideas on how their audience reach can be leveraged to advance key policy goals of U.S. Mission Australia: sports diplomacy, critical minerals, space, safe borders and secure travel, emerging technology, agricultural products, etc.</p> <p>The strategy can also draw on U.S. resources that can enrich creators’ content. For example, content creators can be invited into U.S. diplomatic events, tour visiting U.S. military ships during Australian port calls, engage with U.S. sailors and Marines, amplification on our digital platforms, meet with high-level American officials.</p>

Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Youth Issues</i>
Additional Information	<p>U.S. Mission/Embassy digital media platforms (Australia-wide platforms) Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/USEmbassyAustralia/ X - https://x.com/USEmbAustralia LinkedIn - https://www.linkedin.com/company/usembassyaustralia?originalSubdomain=au Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/usembassyaustralia/?hl=en</p> <p>EducationUSA Australia (Australia wide but focused on education opportunities, including pathways via sports/sports scholarships, in the United States. for Australians) Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/EducationUSAAustralia/ YouTube - https://www.youtube.com/c/educationusaaustralianewzealand</p> <p>U.S. Consulate General, Sydney (covers the states of New South Wales and Queensland) Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/USConsulateSydney/ Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/usconsulatesydney/?hl=en</p> <p>U.S. Consulate General, Melbourne (covers the states/territories of Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory) Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/USConsulateMelbourne/ Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/usconsulatemelbourne/?hl=en</p> <p>U.S. Consulate General, Perth (covers the state of Western Australia) Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/USConsulatePerth/ Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/usconsulateperth/?hl=en</p> <p>Note: While there is no consulate in the cities of Adelaide and Brisbane, both are important to the future of the U.S.-Australia relationship. Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, is home to the Australian Space Agency, a major shipyard for submarine maintenance under the AUKUS trilateral security agreement, and an important cultural and technology hub. Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, will host the 2032 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, a gateway to the Pacific Islands and diaspora communities, and major emerging technology and critical minerals hub.</p> <p>Background information Meltwater - Social Media Statistics for Australia, Feb 9, 2026 https://www.meltwater.com/en/blog/social-media-statistics-australia Lowy Institute - 2025 Poll https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/report/2025/</p>
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	520
Project Name	Fake Products, Real Problems: Intellectual Property Rights in Pakistan
Office	Economic section of U.S. Embassy Islamabad
Embassy	Pakistan
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	<p>What do M&Ms, Louis Vuitton, chewable vitamins, and Microsoft Word have in common?</p> <p>All of these products have been used, copied, or reproduced without permission in countries around the world, including Pakistan. Widespread violations of intellectual property rights (IPR) in Pakistan, including copyright infringement, software piracy, and trademark counterfeiting, pose significant economic and legal challenges. Weak enforcement, limited public awareness, and a fragmented regulatory environment contribute to substantial revenue losses and undermine innovation and investment.</p> <p>Strengthening IPR in Pakistan is not just a legal reform issue; it sits at the heart of economic growth, technological advancement, and regional stability. As Pakistan seeks to expand its knowledge economy, attract foreign direct investment, and grow sectors like pharmaceuticals, IT, textiles, and creative industries, persistent gaps in patent protection, trademark enforcement, and digital piracy erode investor confidence, distort markets, and limit the ability of entrepreneurs to scale globally.</p> <p>Addressing these challenges requires more than legal reform; it demands an understanding of institutional incentives, informal economies, and the political economy of enforcement.</p> <p>A Diplomacy Lab project on Pakistan’s IPR in Pakistan offers an exciting, multi-disciplinary opportunity to work at the intersection of law, economics, development, and diplomacy. Students would analyze real-world data, engage with international agreements (such as the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights), assess enforcement mechanisms, and develop actionable policy recommendations that could inform U.S. diplomatic engagement. This project offers the chance to move beyond theory and contribute directly to policy conversations that shape innovation ecosystems, trade relationships, and economic opportunity in a strategically significant country. Students will gain invaluable insight into policy analysis, legal research, cross-cultural understanding, and diplomatic communication.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>This project will produce research-based, policy-oriented deliverables tailored to support U.S. diplomatic engagement in strengthening intellectual property rights (IPR) in Pakistan by drawing on global best practices. Deliverables will include comparative case studies of countries that have successfully improved their IPR regimes and exited the United States Trade Representative’s (USTR) Special 301 Watch List, identifying actionable steps that Pakistan could take to potentially exit the Special 301 watch list and/or improve the IPR regime. All products will be designed for practical use by U.S. Department of State regional and functional bureaus, Embassy Islamabad, interagency partners, and Pakistan’s Intellectual Property Organization.</p> <p>1. Global Best Practices Policy Report</p> <p>The primary deliverable will be a comprehensive policy report synthesizing international best practices for strengthening IPR protection and enforcement. The report will:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify a set of countries that have meaningfully improved their IPR regimes and successfully exited the Special 301 Watch List or achieved comparable progress in USTR assessments. - Provide comparative analysis of legal reforms, institutional capacity building, enforcement mechanisms, stakeholder engagement strategies, and use of technology in IPR administration. - Assess the political economy factors, coordination structures, and incentives that facilitated reform in each case. - Apply these lessons to Pakistan’s specific legal, economic, and institutional context, identifying priority areas for reform, feasible tactical approaches to instituting reform, and strategic sequencing of when reforms should be implemented and in what order. <p>The report will conclude with clear, evidence-based recommendations for U.S. diplomatic engagement, tailored to support Pakistan’s efforts to strengthen its IPR regime and improve its rating in future Special 301 evaluations.</p> <p>2. Executive Policy Brief A concise executive summary will distill key findings and recommendations from the full report into a high-level document suitable for senior policymakers. The brief will highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core lessons from countries that successfully improved IPR performance - Strategic implications for U.S.-Pakistan trade relations and economic partnership - Priority policy options for Embassy Islamabad and Washington decision-makers - Proposed indicators for tracking reform progress and dialogue outcomes <p>3. Briefing to Senior Leaders and Presentation Deck The student team will prepare a professional slide deck summarizing key findings, strategic considerations, and recommended engagement pathways, and will present this information to Department stakeholders and Embassy staff, including senior leadership.</p>
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Development</i>
Additional Information	<p>Pakistan is on USTR’s Special 301 Watch List, reflecting ongoing concerns regarding intellectual property protection and enforcement issues that warrant bilateral attention. While Pakistan has made some progress in updating IPR laws and improving coordination and enforcement, substantive deficiencies remain. Key areas of concern include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate IP laws and regulations - Weak enforcement mechanisms - High levels of piracy and counterfeiting - Lack of deterrent penalties for IP violations - Insufficient protection for specific IP categories (patents, trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets) <p>For this project, students will research best practices from countries that have substantially strengthened their intellectual property regime, with particular focus on those that have exited USTR’s Special 301 Watch List or Priority Watch List. Students may be able to collaborate with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office representative in New Delhi, Pakistan’s Intellectual Property Organization, and Pakistan’s Special Investment Facilitation Council, and other local stakeholders.</p>

	Helpful websites to get started (links provided upon request/university match): - USTR's Special 301 Report -Pakistan's Intellectual Property Organization - U.S. Patent and Trademark Office - Pakistan's Special Investment Facilitation Council - Pakistan's Ministry of Commerce - Competition Commission of Pakistan
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	521
Project Name	Virtual Horizons: Scaling Remote Workforce Opportunities for Tongan Youth
Office	Front Office
Embassy	Tonga
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	<p>Tonga faces significant geographic and economic constraints, often leading to a "brain drain" as youth leave the country for seasonal labor programs. To build domestic economic resilience, U.S. Embassy Nuku'alofa is partnering with Tonga National University (TNU) and BYU Pathway Worldwide to establish a new remote employment center. The pilot program has already demonstrated extraordinary potential: after an American company successfully hired five local workers with strong English and technical proficiency, they immediately requested 50 more.</p> <p>This project asks students to design a scalable business and operational model to expand this remote employment center. Students will identify specific sectors in the U.S. private sector (e.g., tech support, virtual administration, data entry) that are primed for remote Pasifika talent. Furthermore, the team will develop a strategic outreach plan to attract U.S. companies to this hub, effectively tying Tonga's economic future to U.S. markets and providing a sustainable, high-skill alternative to foreign malign economic reliance.</p>
Final Product Format	A 5-page scalable business plan and a "Target U.S. Employer" options presentation and contacts who want to partner in Tonga
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Youth Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	522
Project Name	Balancing Deep-Sea Mining and Cultural Conservation in the Pacific Through Advance Marine Scientific Research
Office	Political / Economic Section
Embassy	Tonga
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	Tonga sits at a critical environmental and economic crossroads. The nation is exploring deep-sea mining initiatives that could ensure Western access to critical supply chains and minerals essential for U.S. and allied security. However, these efforts must be balanced against vital ecological preservation, such as protecting the migration routes of humpback whales, which hold profound cultural significance in Tonga. This project asks students to design a policy framework that enables Western companies to explore these initiatives while ensuring environmental sustainability. Students will also help organize scientific exchange concepts to educate the Tongan public and government on sustainable mining technologies to secure Tonga's resource sovereignty.
Final Product Format	A 4-page options memo on economic opportunities paired with a scientific exchange public relations strategy and schools or research institutions who are willing to partner
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Oceans</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Additional Information	This project aligns well with programs at USC. Research will tie into ongoing cultural diplomacy efforts, including the study of humpback whale songs and traditional Tongan legends.
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	523
Project Name	Subnational Synergy: Leveraging the Tongan Diaspora through Sister City Diplomacy
Office	Public Affairs Section
Embassy	Tonga
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	The United States is home to a robust and highly engaged 75,000-strong Tongan diaspora. The U.S. Embassy in Nuku'alofa is seeking to broker formal relationships between subnational governments in Tonga (like Kolofo'ou and Vava'u) and U.S. cities with large diaspora populations (such as East Palo Alto, CA, and Honolulu, HI) to mobilize economic resources and cultural ties. Students will research successful subnational diplomacy models and draft a strategic roadmap for initiating and sustaining these Sister City agreements. The project will also analyze how these subnational relationships can be leveraged to advocate for shared immigration goals and economic resilience.
Final Product Format	Presentation on opportunities in the U.S. to connect potential Tongan Sister Cities.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Civil Society</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Additional Information	Ideal for the University of Utah's Hinckley Institute of Politics, the University of Hawaii Manoa International Relations program, and BYU given their proximity to large Pacific Islander communities
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	524
Project Name	Pacific Paradise Lost? Unlocking Tonga’s Tourism Competitiveness
Office	Political / Economic Section
Embassy	Tonga
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	While neighboring Pacific Island nations like Fiji and Samoa have developed robust, highly profitable tourism sectors, Tonga's tourism industry continues to lag behind its peers. This project asks students to conduct a comparative economic and business analysis to identify the structural, logistical, and marketing constraints holding back Tonga's tourism potential. Students will provide actionable recommendations to drive the export of American goods and agricultural products into Tonga's hospitality sector to address volatile foreign supply chains. The goal is to provide the Government of Tonga and local businesses with a concrete, private-sector-led framework to attract responsible foreign investment and boost local revenues.
Final Product Format	A data analysis report and an executive presentation slide deck.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	We highly encourage students from the BYU Marriott School of Business to bid on this proposal.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	525
Project Name	Bridging the Digital Moat: Applied AI and Connectivity in Tonga’s Outer Islands
Office	Public Affairs Section
Embassy	Tonga
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	The U.S. Embassy in Nuku'alofa is working to position the United States as a leader in technology and connectivity in the Pacific. This project will focus on the logistical and educational deployment of advanced digital infrastructure-specifically, rolling out 50 Starlink terminals and creating digital resource community centers. The student team will develop a strategic deployment playbook that evaluates how to sustainably integrate these technologies to protect Tonga's information sovereignty against foreign digital incursions. Furthermore, students will explore frameworks for forging partnerships with U.S.-based A.I. companies to establish A.I. certificate programs tailored for local youth and educators.
Final Product Format	A 10-to-15-page Deployment Strategy Playbook and a final virtual presentation.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Additional Information	We highly encourage teams from Stanford's International Policy Program to bid on this, given its focus on applied technology and policy in rural environments.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	526
Project Name	Your Opinion Matters!
Office	Political and Economic Section
Embassy	Botswana
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	<p>Botswana, an upper middle income and stable democracy for 60 years in the heart of Africa, is at a turning point. With the beginnings of what appears to be a protected economic crisis, unemployment approaching 40%, an inexperienced party in power, corruption on the rise, and a looming conversation about fundamental constitutional changes, now more than ever, tracking consensus on major issues is imperative. There is no independent, domestic, and Botswana-focused public opinion polling, largely due to resource constraints. Interested actors, like the USG, are forced to rely on Afrobarometer data that is often years old. This project aims to fill that void by connecting statistical and polling expertise in the United States with the University of Botswana Political Science Society (UBPSS) student organization and the Organization for Youth and Elections in Botswana (OYEBO), a non-government organization.</p> <p>This exchange program seeks to link a university in the United States and the UBPSS to train, share skills, and impart insights to strengthen Botswana students' ability to conduct strategic, meticulously prepared, transparent, and professional polling to provide important data. This data is essential to promote transparency and policy planning.</p> <p>Ideally, this exchange would include 1) history and context of opinion polling, 2) statistical modeling basics, 3) methodologies for polling data, 4) processing polling data, and 5) compiling polling data.</p> <p>In summary, an appropriate U.S. university provide staff to serve as experts and mentors, the UBPSS students and advisory professor would provide the mentees and "boots on the ground" to deliver the polling data, and OYEBO would provide political relevance and standing to leverage data into the Botswana public discourse.</p>
Final Product Format	Comprehensive, timely, and intellectually rigorous polling results on relevant political questions looming in Botswana that the USG (and others) can use to improve our engagement, project management, and policy formulation.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Statistics</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Democracy & Human Rights</i>
Additional Information	Ideally, this program would utilize students with a combination of political science and mathematical statistics background.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	527
Project Name	Connecting Cultures: Designing an American Studies Institute in Zimbabwe to Advance U.S. Interests in Africa
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Zimbabwe
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	<p>This project invites researchers to examine the potential benefits of establishing an American Studies Institute at Africa University, a Pan-African Christian institution located in Mutare, Zimbabwe. The initiative seeks to determine how such an institute could advance U.S. interests, foster mutual understanding, and serve as a dynamic public diplomacy platform for academic and collaborative research, community, and cultural exchange.</p> <p>The project will focus on two main components. First, it will identify models on which to base a curriculum and potential connections between Africa University and U.S. collaborators or advisers. Drawing on the experiences of similar American Studies Institutes in the region, students will investigate best practices, challenges, and success stories to pinpoint factors that contribute to successful and sustainable partnerships. Second, the project will assess the broader impact such a program could have on U.S. interests in the region. Key areas of interest include deepening understanding of the United States, strengthening people-to-people ties, building enduring relationships with U.S. higher education institutions, promoting public diplomacy through faculty and student exchanges, developing credit-bearing courses, certificates, and short institutes, and a digital resource library. The analysis will also consider the economic implications and the advancement of shared academic and research objectives.</p> <p>Through interviews, literature reviews, and engagement with stakeholders from both Zimbabwe and the United States, participants will evaluate how this partnership could enhance educational collaboration, promote public diplomacy, and increase awareness of American values abroad. Furthermore, the project will explore how these efforts can support U.S. strategic interests by cultivating future leaders with positive connections to the United States, expanding economic and educational opportunities, and reinforcing the United States' role as a preferred partner in higher education and capacity building across Africa.</p>
Final Product Format	A presentation including data, analysis of potential partners, and recommendations. An actionable analysis of experienced partner institutions in the United States; several sample curricula;
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>History</i>
Additional Information	With its multi-national student body from 31 African nations and strong reputation, Africa University offers a unique opportunity to engage on American Studies programming with a vibrant network of emerging professionals and thought leaders who are poised to shape the continent's future and strengthen the American regional footprint beyond a single-country impact. The university's established academic reputation and commitment to excellence position it as a hub for study on the United States (e.g. foreign policy, civics, economy, technology, culture, literature, and history) while nurturing future African leaders in a variety of fields, including governance, business, and civil society. Africa University also has a successful track record of international institution collaborations. Africa University effectively hosts Fulbright Scholars, international conferences, cross-border academic programs, and global

	<p>research initiatives. This makes Africa University a reliable and experienced partner for a joint U.S.-university venture. For more information on the university, visit https://africau.edu/.</p> <p>Mutare, located near Zimbabwe’s eastern border with Mozambique with nearly 3000 undergraduate and graduate students, is a gateway to regional trade and cross-border collaboration. The city’s strategic position enhances Africa University’s ability to attract students from across Southern and Eastern Africa, further amplifying its regional influence. Mutare’s proximity to key transport corridors and its role as a commercial center make it an important location for fostering economic and educational linkages. Establishing an American Studies Institute in Mutare leverages the city’s connectivity and Africa University’s reach, creating a platform for U.S. engagement that extends well beyond Zimbabwe’s borders and into the broader region.</p>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	528
Project Name	Understanding Kenya's Foreign Policy: Domestic Drivers and Strategic Priorities
Office	Political Section, U.S. Embassy Nairobi
Embassy	Kenya
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	This project analyzes how Kenya's foreign policy is shaped by domestic economic interests, regional security concerns, diaspora communities, business constituencies, and national development priorities. It examines the institutional mechanisms through which these interests are articulated and incorporated into policy, including the role of Parliament, civil society, media, think tanks, and business associations. The research explores how different domestic constituencies view Kenya's regional role and global partnerships, and how these perspectives influence Nairobi's strategic decisions. Understanding these dynamics will help the U.S. better align its engagement with Kenya's own priorities and identify areas of mutual interest.
Final Product Format	A Foreign Policy Drivers Assessment identifying key domestic constituencies and institutional actors that shape Kenya's external relations (based on publicly available information), and a Stakeholder Engagement Guide that maps how different interest groups - including business associations, religious communities, diaspora networks, and civil society organizations - influence foreign policy debates on specific regional issues.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Sociology</i>
Additional Information	Research should examine how domestic economic interests, cross-border ethnic and religious ties, and socioeconomic factors drive or constrain Nairobi's foreign policy decisions. Students should analyze publicly available sources including parliamentary debates, media coverage, think tank publications, and civil society advocacy to understand the domestic policy ecosystem.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	529
Project Name	News search on all China social media and official and government sites, including official WeChat pages.
Office	Regional Security Office Shenyang
Embassy	China
Bureau	Diplomatic Security (DS)
Project Description	Find a method of conducting news searches for all law enforcement, judicial, and security news on Chinese social media, official provincial websites and WeChat pages, as well as Chinese media outlets to provide the RSOs in China summaries of daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly news summaries and trends. The summaries should include information about key officials, crime statistics, and crime reporting, but also news about criminal law, judicial proceedings, and community law enforcement issues. These new summaries should be divided among each of the provinces.
Final Product Format	At minimum, I would like an information memo on how to perform a comprehensive news search targeted on the topics of police, crime, law enforcement, terrorism, cybercrime, criminal law, cyber law, national security, justice and judicial proceedings, community crime and law enforcement issues. If it's possible to actually produce a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual summary - that would be great!
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Narcotics and Law Enforcement</i>
Additional Information	Sources: Chinese media, WeChat, Red Note, Weibo, official government of China websites, any other China sources. Traditional U.S. Boolean news search engines are not able to scan China sources.
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	530
Project Name	Kenya's Regional Diplomatic Standing: Opportunities and Constraints in the EAC, IGAD, and AU
Office	Political Section, U.S. Embassy Nairobi
Embassy	Kenya
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	Kenya has historically positioned itself as a regional mediator and convener, with significant diplomatic investments in peace processes across East Africa and the Great Lakes. Recent initiatives include the Tumaini Initiative for South Sudan and the Nairobi Process for the DRC, alongside other regional diplomatic efforts. This project assesses Kenya's current diplomatic standing and influence within the EAC, IGAD, and AU across the Greater East Africa, Horn, and Great Lakes regions. It examines how Kenya's regional leadership is perceived by neighboring states, identifies areas where Kenya's mediation efforts have been most effective, and analyzes the dynamics between Kenya and other regional powers (such as Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Uganda) in multilateral settings. The research will help identify where U.S. support can most effectively complement Kenyan-led regional initiatives.
Final Product Format	A Regional Diplomatic Landscape Assessment (analyzing how Kenya is perceived by neighboring states and within regional organizations) and a Partnership Opportunities Scorecard that evaluates where U.S. support can most effectively complement Kenyan diplomatic initiatives in the EAC, IGAD, and AU.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Conflict, Stabilization & Reconstruction</i>
Additional Information	Students should analyze the dynamics between Kenya and neighboring states like Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Uganda regarding regional leadership and mediation mandates. The research should identify both Kenya's diplomatic strengths and the structural constraints it faces in regional organizations.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	531
Project Name	Kenya’s Regional Leverage: Mapping Diplomatic, Economic, and Security Levers
Office	Political Section, U.S. Embassy Nairobi
Embassy	Kenya
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	Under the 2026 National Defense Strategy's (NDS) emphasis on partner-led, U.S.-enabled security, the U.S. needs a granular mapping of the tangible tools Kenya possesses to shape outcomes across the Greater East Africa, Horn of Africa, and Great Lakes regions (specifically Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Sudan, and the DRC). This project assesses Kenya's levers of power, including economic tools (port access, trade, energy exports, financial system leverage), security tools (intelligence sharing, border controls, peacekeeping contributions), diplomatic tools (regional leadership, mediation capacity), and domestic authorities (visa policies, refugee management, banking regulations). The analysis will also assess Kenya's own interests and constraints in deploying these tools, recognizing that effective partnership requires alignment of interests.
Final Product Format	A Regional Leverage Toolset (a comprehensive directory of Kenya's economic, financial, and security levers), a Strategic Opportunity Assessment that ranks the most effective tools for specific regional challenges, and a Constraints Analysis identifying political, capacity, and resource limitations on Kenya's use of these tools.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Additional Information	The research should provide recommendations for how the U.S. could support Kenya in deploying these tools more effectively in pursuit of shared regional stability goals. Special attention should be paid to Kenya's financial sector influence, including its role as a regional banking hub, mobile money systems, and cross-border financial flows.
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	532
Project Name	Red Sea and Indian Ocean Strategic Alignments: Kenya's Sovereign Agency and the Spectrum of Influence
Office	Political Section, U.S. Embassy Nairobi
Embassy	Kenya
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	The 2025 National Security Strategy acknowledges that strategic competition encompasses not just military capabilities, but also governance norms and technology. This project investigates Kenya's deepening ties with the UAE, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and India. It analyzes how Kenya exerts its own agency to navigate these middle powers to further its national interests. Specifically, it maps the full spectrum of engagement - from defense cooperation and maritime security to educational exchanges, political party training, and technology ecosystems. The research evaluates how these multifaceted relationships shape Kenya's strategic orientation and create new patterns of regional engagement.
Final Product Format	A Sovereign Agency Assessment (evaluating Kenya's strategic objectives in these partnerships) and a Strategic Partnerships Matrix that tracks the correlation between defense cooperation, economic ties, educational exchanges, and technology partnerships across Kenya's relationships with UAE, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and India.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>History</i>
Additional Information	Students must investigate the "nexus" of deals - for example, how a defense contract might be linked to an education exchange or media partnership. The project should address whether this represents a continuation of Kenya's historical role as a littoral power with robust relationships with regional middle powers.
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	533
Project Name	Kenya’s Global Horizon: Capability and Standing in Peace and Security
Office	Political Section, U.S. Embassy Nairobi
Embassy	Kenya
Bureau	African Affairs (AF)
Project Description	In accordance with the 2025 National Security Strategy's (NSS) emphasis on burden-sharing and burden-shifting, this project evaluates Kenya's potential as a global security partner capable of projecting stability outside its immediate region. Given Kenya's historical contributions to missions in the Balkans and Southeast Asia, as well as its recent leadership of a stabilization mission in Haiti, the U.S. seeks to identify where Kenya can effectively serve as a mediator and security lead. The project evaluates Kenya's diplomatic standing and its ability to act as a multilateral convener - specifically its capacity to organize and lead coalitions of other nations to support collective security efforts in regions such as West Africa or the Sahel.
Final Product Format	A Global Capability Roadmap identifying 3-5 high-priority theaters for Kenyan leadership, a Multilateral Influence Assessment that cross-references Kenya's current diplomatic assets against specific regional security gaps, and a Capacity Gap Analysis identifying areas where Kenya would benefit from U.S. or partner support.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Conflict, Stabilization & Reconstruction</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political /Military Affairs</i>
Additional Information	One project deliverable should focus on evaluating Kenya's support in international organizations (e.g., specialized UN agencies, the Commonwealth, or maritime bodies) as a metric of its standing. Students should explore the political and logistical requirements for Kenya to assemble and lead multilateral coalitions outside of East Africa.
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	534
Project Name	1979 and 1985 agreement between the United States and the Government of China regarding U.S. Marine staffing at U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulates in China
Office	Regional Security Office Shenyang
Embassy	China
Bureau	Diplomatic Security (DS)
Project Description	We are seeking research assistance to find the 1979 and the 1985 agreement between the Government of China and the U.S. Government regarding U.S. Marine staffing at the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Consulates in China.
Final Product Format	We would like the agreements in their entirety. All file searches here in the consulate yielded nothing, we need some help searching for these original agreements for safe-keeping for future reference in our archives.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	The 2 agreements are frequently referenced in historical diplomatic notes between the U.S. consulates and the Chinese Provincial Government Foreign Affairs Offices, but no one has these agreements in electronic nor hard copy version for us to read.
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	535
Project Name	Bridging the AI Policy Gap: Building Policy Frameworks for Indian Universities using U.S. standards
Office	Public Diplomacy Section, Consulate General of the United States, Mumbai, India
Embassy	India
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	<p>This Diplomacy Lab project invites U.S. faculty and students to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of AI governance-in one of the world’s largest education systems. During this project, the team will analyze established AI policies at leading U.S. universities and engage directly with Indian academic leaders to develop a practical toolkit-to guide responsible AI use and promote the use of American AI platforms-in Indian undergraduate and graduate classrooms, research labs, and higher education administrations. This project offers U.S. teams the chance to gain hands-on experience in international policy development, cross-cultural engagement, and global education reform. Participants will enhance their understanding of AI ethics and governance and contribute to setting international standards-positioning the U.S as a leader-in a rapidly evolving field while strengthening U.S.-India academic ties.</p> <p>India is experiencing a rapid surge in artificial intelligence (AI) adoption across all sectors, with academia at the forefront of this transformation. Students, faculty, researchers, and publishers are increasingly integrating AI into every stage of academic work. However, the absence of robust research and publication ethics, nascent intellectual property regulations and unfamiliarity with verified and reliable AI resources and platforms has left Indian classrooms without a strong foundation for responsible AI adoption and governance. Developing clear and adaptable AI policies based on leading U.S. AI tools would-address critical issues such as academic integrity, data privacy, ideological neutrality, transparency-and trustworthiness-within academia and research. Academic institutions in India are actively seeking comprehensive frameworks-to guide the regulated use of AI within their academic and research communities. This gap in AI governance also poses a significant challenge to India’s efforts to expand academic partnerships with U.S. universities.</p> <p>The lack of clear research and guidance on AI adoption in most Indian institutions impacts research credibility, hampers administrative oversight,-and leads to disparities-in the quality of education-students receive-and-in students’ and universities’-research-results.-These gaps could significantly complicate collaboration with U.S. universities and companies, and hinder-the development of robust, mutually beneficial partnerships. In contrast, some U.S. universities-many of which are early adopters of AI and leaders in research-have well-established detailed policies and guidelines for AI use in teaching, learning, and research. Drawing upon a variety of American policies on AI governance, this Diplomacy Lab project aims to generate a similar framework for Indian universities to ensure-transparent, consistent and regulated-use of AI resources within academia and research.</p>
Final Product Format	A toolkit with AI governance policy framework
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Additional Information	For this project, The Public Diplomacy Section at post will introduce the team to a few institutions in the Western India region with whom they can survey the existing guidelines for AI use within their academic contexts and these institutions can be the recipients and adopters of the developed toolkit.
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	536
Project Name	Assessing the Impact of Irregular Migration, Counterterrorism, Border Security, Counternarcotics, and Human Trafficking on U.S. Interests in Tunisia
Office	Political Section - Embassy Tunis
Embassy	Tunisia
Bureau	U.S. Mission (U.S. Mission)
Project Description	<p>Tunisia’s strategic location at the crossroads of North Africa and Europe makes it a focal point for irregular migration. It also faces threats from transnational terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and human trafficking. These issues have direct and indirect implications for U.S. national security, regional stability, and bilateral relations. President Trump’s policies emphasize securing borders, combating transnational crime, and protecting American interests abroad. As the Middle East faces persistent instability and countries are ensnared in conflicts and wars throughout Africa, the United States, the Department of War, and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs have a critical need for a stable, reliable partner. Tunisia’s continued stability and reliability serve both regional and continental U.S. interests, making it an essential partner in advancing American priorities.</p> <p>Project Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze the extent to which irregular migration, terrorism, border security, narcotics trafficking, and human trafficking in Tunisia impact U.S. interests, referencing current U.S. policy priorities. - Identify the main actors, routes, and trends associated with these issues in Tunisia. - Recommend strategies for the Political Section, the Pol-Mil team, and the Embassy to advance U.S. interests and mitigate risks. <p>Key Questions to Address:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do irregular migration flows through Tunisia affect U.S. security, diplomatic, and economic interests? 2. What is the current threat landscape for terrorism and transnational crime in Tunisia, and how does it intersect with migration and border issues? 3. How do narcotics trafficking and human trafficking networks operate in Tunisia, and what are their regional and global linkages? 4. In what ways do these issues align with or challenge President Trump’s stated foreign policy priorities? 5. What practical, policy-relevant steps should the Political Section and Embassy Tunis take to address these challenges, strengthen bilateral cooperation, and advance U.S. interests? 6. How do irregular migration, terrorism, and transnational crime affect Tunisia’s political stability and its capacity to serve as a reliable regional partner? 7. In what ways does the confluence of these challenges impact Tunisia’s ability to contribute to regional security and stability?
Final Product Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A policy memo (10-15 pages) summarizing findings and recommendations. - An executive summary (2 pages) for Embassy leadership, Washington audiences, and the interagency.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Middle East/North African Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Counter Terrorism</i>
Additional Information	About Embassy Tunis Political Section:

	<p>The Political Section implements key Mission objectives, including advancing democracy and respect for human rights; promoting counter-terrorism cooperation; and expanding economic prosperity through increased bilateral trade and investment. Through its outreach to the Tunisian people and government, the Section also seeks to build stronger ties between our two countries.</p> <p>Activities: The Political Section follows, analyzes, and reports Tunisian political developments, and provides support and advice to the United States Ambassador to Tunisia on all political matters between the United States and Tunisia, including bilateral assistance. The Section comprises both American and Tunisian staff who specialize in political, security, and labor affairs. The Section’s officers represent the official views of the U.S. Government to the Government of Tunisia and the people of Tunisia. Officers also author reports for the U.S. Government about pertinent developments on the ground in Tunisia. Many of these reports are required by Congress and are available for viewing on the Embassy’s website.</p> <p>Local Partners The Political Section works with a variety of local partners, including representatives of the Government of Tunisia, political parties, non-governmental organizations active in the political, economic, social, and business fields, academics, and key influencers.</p> <p>Foreign Assistance Unit The United States remains a committed partner to Tunisia by working with its government, private sector, and civil society as they lay the foundations for the country’s future.</p>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	537
Project Name	Mapping International Alignment on Economic Reforms in Indonesia
Office	ECON
Embassy	Indonesia
Bureau	U.S. Mission
Project Description	<p>Indonesia is currently seeking accession to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a process that will require significant reforms across trade, regulatory, and governance systems. In February 2026, the United States and Indonesia signed an Agreement on Reciprocal Trade, establishing commitments to address a range of longstanding barriers affecting U.S. companies, including restrictions on digital trade and cross-border data flows, import licensing regimes, local content requirements, technical standards and certification procedures, intellectual property protections, and labor and environmental enforcement. These reforms will shape the future of U.S.-Indonesia economic engagement and could significantly influence Indonesia’s broader regulatory trajectory.</p> <p>This project would analyze where the priorities reflected in the U.S.-Indonesia trade agreement align with commitments Indonesia has already made to other partners-such as Japan, the European Union, Australia, Singapore, Canada, and the Republic of Korea-through trade agreements, World Trade Organization obligations, and other international frameworks. The goal is to identify countries whose priorities most closely align with those of the United States and where coordinated diplomatic engagement could reinforce reform during Indonesia’s OECD accession process. The resulting analysis would help identify coalition opportunities among like-minded partners and provide practical insights to inform U.S. diplomatic strategy with one of the world’s largest emerging economies.</p>
Final Product Format	I would like a paper/presentation that shows where there is the most alignment and with whom. In addition, a short memo to Embassy leadership that outlines an engagement strategy linked to individual countries/organizations with whom we could jointly lobby the Indonesian government.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>East Asian Pacific Studies</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	538
Project Name	Open Innovation Lab: Building the Next Generation of U.S.-India Academic & Research Partnerships
Office	U.S. Consulate General Chennai, Mission India, South Central Asia - Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	India
Bureau	Public Affairs (PA)
Project Description	To advance America First foreign policy goals by promoting the research and advancement of critical and emerging technologies under the TRUST initiative, this project aims to explore barriers to and opportunities for greater U.S.-India academic collaboration. While American researchers have maintained robust research networks with Chinese universities in the past, comparable large-scale U.S.-India academic partnerships led by American researchers remain underdeveloped, limiting pathways to advance U.S. innovation and strategic collaboration with India. U.S. university teams will identify, analyze, and create an actionable roadmap to initiate, augment, and nurture substantive and consistent collaboration between American researchers and Indian universities on TRUST themes (including AI, semiconductors, and quantum technology). The goal of this project is to build secure, long-term research bridges in critical TRUST initiative fields.
Final Product Format	The deliverable must be a high-impact TRUST Partnership Toolkit consisting of a 5-page actionable strategy memo and a "Compliance Playbook" containing standardized MOU templates and IP clauses. We do not require a theoretical research paper; instead, provide a practitioner-focused briefing and a "Pilot Portfolio" of five ready-to-sign collaboration packages that American and Indian researchers can immediately deploy. Research Collaboration: Barrier Map (China vs India) focused on policy + compliance + operations, not sociology. TRUST Partnership Playbook: step-by-step templates (MOUs, data clauses, IP clauses, visit protocols). Pilot Portfolio: 5-10 "ready-to-sign" collaboration packages tied to TRUST domains. Metrics Dashboard (12-18 months): A simple tracking tool to measure the success and growth of these partnerships. Research and Innovation Partnership Opportunities - Identification of potential joint research areas, institutional partners, and opportunities for collaboration in emerging technologies such as AI, semiconductors, and advanced manufacturing. Expanding the Research Reach - A strategy to move beyond elite institutions like IITs and IIMs to tap into India's 1,300+ universities to scale innovation across the entire country. Alternative Partnership Models - Exploration of collaboration options such as joint research centers, dual-degree programs, virtual research labs, and industry-academic partnerships that could provide similar benefits without requiring full branch campuses. Policy and Institutional Recommendations - Practical recommendations for U.S. universities and policymakers on the most effective models for expanding U.S.-India research collaboration.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Additional Information	Time taken to complete the project: 4-6 months
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	539
Project Name	Let's Go Nuclear!-Approaching U.S. Civil Nuclear Technology as a Clean, Reliable Way to Build Modern European Economies of Scale
Office	Press and Public Diplomacy, Strategic Communications Unit
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	<p>Under the Trump Administration, the United States is focused on strengthening bilateral relationships with European Union countries through commercial diplomacy, with a particular emphasis on expanding U.S. civil nuclear exports. As Europe works to reduce emissions and scale its power grid to meet the demands of AI and data centers-while preparing for the end of Russian oil imports-American companies offer modern, safe civil nuclear technology that can serve as a panacea for Europe's energy challenges and advance U.S. strategic interests.</p> <p>However, EU public opinion is not necessarily supportive. Some fear technology accidents, others believe renewables alone can meet future needs, and some prefer nuclear technology developed closer to home. In this project, students will select an EU country with civil nuclear aspirations, identify the primary narratives in opposition to U.S. civil nuclear technology, and, using a combination of research and theory, design a comprehensive U.S. government messaging campaign aimed at audiences who are undecided but open to discussion.</p>
Final Product Format	Students will prepare a country-specific communications plan that will include: - Target audience - Deployment schedule - Key messages and resonant themes - Traditional media approach - Social media approach - Evaluation criteria
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Marketing</i>
Additional Information	<p>U.S. National Security Strategy: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-National-Security-Strategy.pdf</p> <p>Deploying Advanced Nuclear Reactor Technologies for National Security - The White House: https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/05/deploying-advanced-nuclear-reactor-technologies-for-national-security/</p> <p>European Commission: Small Modular Reactors: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/nuclear-energy/small-modular-reactors_en</p> <p>Europe's Nuclear Renaissance: Powering the Future of Energy Independence: https://www.bearingpoint.com/fr-fr/publications-evenements/publications/europe-nuclear-renaissance/</p> <p>OECD-NEA: SMRs for Replacing Coal: https://www.oecd-nea.org/upload/docs/application/pdf/2025-10/7732_smrs_for_replacing_coal_rev.pdf</p>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	540
Project Name	Advancing Regional Water Cooperation in Central Asia - A Role for the OSCE
Office	Political Section
Embassy	U.S. Mission to OSCE
Bureau	European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)
Project Description	Water management remains a sensitive and strategically important issue in Central Asia. The region’s major river systems cross-national borders, and upstream hydropower priorities often conflict with downstream agricultural needs. Climate pressures, population growth, and aging infrastructure are placing additional strain on already fragile water systems. While Central Asian governments recognize the need for cooperation, existing regional mechanisms have delivered uneven results. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has supported water management initiatives in the region for many years, but there is an opportunity to reassess how the organization can most effectively contribute to regional cooperation going forward.
Final Product Format	A 20-page report, analyzing water management challenges in Central Asia and offering a prescriptive plan for the OSCE to add value and a set of recommendations for future engagement.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Water Security</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Climate Change</i>
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	541
Project Name	Winning the AI Race in Morocco: A Commercial Strategy for North and West Africa
Office	Casablanca Political and Economic Section
Embassy	Morocco
Bureau	Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)
Project Description	<p>Morocco is positioning itself as Africa's gateway for artificial intelligence-and Casablanca, the country's commercial capital, sits at the center of this transformation. With the 2030 FIFA World Cup on the horizon, the Moroccan government is accelerating a sweeping modernization agenda, investing heavily in digital infrastructure and positioning the Kingdom as a regional hub for technology and innovation serving not just Morocco but francophone West Africa. U.S. Consulate General Casablanca is seeking a comprehensive white paper and accompanying database that maps Morocco's emerging AI ecosystem to ensure U.S. companies are well-positioned to be the partner of choice. This project directly supports Mission priorities on commercial diplomacy and technology partnership, producing analysis that will inform U.S. engagement with government officials and private-sector leaders across the region.</p> <p>The white paper should examine Morocco's current and planned legal and regulatory framework for AI-including challenges around data sovereignty, localization requirements, and cross-border data flows. Students will identify public and private enterprises deploying AI solutions, assess government incentives and national AI strategies, and evaluate Morocco's ambitions to lead the broader African AI landscape. The accompanying database should catalog U.S. companies operating in-country with AI offerings, track competitor activity from other nations in this space, and identify gaps where American firms could compete. Together, these deliverables will serve as strategic resources for commercial advocacy and help shape U.S. technology engagement across North and West Africa.</p>
Final Product Format	White paper and accompanying database
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	542
Project Name	Applied AI for Foreign Policy Decision-Making
Office	Center for Analytics
Bureau	Department of Diplomatic Technology (DT)
Project Description	<p>For this project, students will work with the AI Innovation Hub, a team within the State Department's Center for Analytics (DT/CfA) that advances innovation at the intersection of foreign policy and artificial intelligence (AI). This team creates experimental AI tools to help tackle diplomatic challenges, provides tailored AI support to teams across the Department, and conducts AI model evaluation and research focused on foreign policy applications of AI and technology. The Hub empowers policy experts with tools and analysis to enhance the speed, quality, and impact of foreign policy decisions, with the overarching goal of advancing U.S. interests in global affairs. Students will work with the Hub to develop an experimental applied AI tool leveraging foreign policy or intelligence analytic techniques, such as Analysis of Competing Hypotheses or Alternative Futures Analysis.</p> <p>Students will research different analytical approaches based on identified needs and gaps, design an AI-driven solution to fill identified gaps, and prepare materials to test the tool's performance. Throughout this project, students will explore the overarching question of how to optimize AI tool performance for foreign policy analysis to support decision-making, considering factors such as model selection, data sources, system prompt design, and other variables that impact effectiveness.</p> <p>This project is particularly well suited for a small graduate-level or advanced undergraduate team with interdisciplinary expertise in foreign policy/international relations and generative artificial intelligence/data science. Project deliverables could include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A system prompt and model selection/tuning for a new policy analysis AI tool and 2) A written report with recommendations for how to optimize AI for foreign policy use cases, drawing on insights from the team's research, tool development, and testing process.
Final Product Format	Final product deliverables could include: 1) A system prompt and model selection/tuning for a new policy analysis AI tool. 2) A written report with recommendations for how to optimize AI for foreign policy use cases, drawing on insights from the team's research, tool development, and testing process.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Additional Information	While we are primarily looking for a team with interdisciplinary expertise in foreign policy/international relations and generative artificial intelligence/data science, we feel many different disciplines could be successful working on this project!
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	543
Project Name	Securing American Food Sovereignty through Domestic Fertilizer Independence
Office	Office of Global Food Security (GFS)
Bureau	Global Food Security (GFS)
Project Description	<p>The U.S. agricultural system is currently limited by its reliance on foreign nitrogen fertilizer and critical maritime corridors. Russia and China together control a dominant share of the market, with Russia alone exporting \$13.9 billion in fertilizer (16.6% of the global total) and China contributing another 10%. This dependency has reached a critical breaking point: following the March 2026 closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a passage responsible for 33% of global nitrogen and 20% of anhydrous ammonia, freight rates for tankers have doubled. For the American farmer, this is not just a regional supply issue, but is a direct threat to the planting season, as reduced nitrogen availability today translates into lower crop yields months later.</p> <p>To ensure long-term food security, this project will develop a strategy for fertilizer diversification away from synthetic fertilizer imports, addressing the fact that the United States currently accounts for less than 10% of global fertilizer production while remaining a major consumer. The team(s) will work to develop a strategy for expansion of the United States’ domestic sources to buffer against this instability by identifying opportunities for American innovations for diversifying fertilizer dependence. This project would explore innovative food system solutions to develop a diversification strategy, for example, advanced crop engineering, novel microbial application, improved soil health practices, and biofertilizers. Ultimately, this project will identify a strategy to secure the domestic food supply while harnessing American innovation, lowering energy needs, and reducing import dependency.</p>
Final Product Format	8-10 page research paper, and a final presentation.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Food Security</i>
Additional Information	It would be important to meet the team(s) on a semi-regular basis to check in.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	544
Project Name	Localized Agricultural Technologies for Refugee Resilience and Global Food Security
Office	Office of Global Food Security (GFS)
Bureau	Global Food Security (GFS)
Project Description	<p>Food security crises are increasingly concentrated in regions where conflict and displacement intersect with harsh, non-tropical drylands. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees are frequently trapped in a cycle of dependency on international aid, as traditional supply chains for fertilizer and seeds are often controlled by hostile or unstable foreign actors. This project would address the need to transition households facing current or recent food security crises from aid-recipients to self-sufficient producers. By focusing on the implementation of desert farming, including hydroponics, vertical gardens, and village-based seed enterprises, this project can create local food systems that are immune to global maritime chokepoints and foreign export restrictions.</p> <p>To ensure long-term food security for these communities, this project will execute a strategy for agricultural independence that moves away from a reliance on foreign-controlled inputs. The team(s) will work to establish localized food systems that can function independently of adversarial influence in the global market. By identifying and developing American-led biotechnological breakthroughs, drought-resistant technologies, and decentralized production methods, this project will target the problem of structural food insecurity. The overarching goal is to empower sovereign nations to harness their own resources, ensuring that the stability of their food supply is determined by domestic innovation and local production rather than the geopolitical maneuvers of foreign regimes.</p>
Final Product Format	8-10 page research paper, and a final presentation.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Food Security</i>
Additional Information	It would be important to meet the team(s) on a semi-regular basis to check in.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	545
Project Name	Telling America’s Story at the United Nations: Audience Strategy and Media Reach
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	<p>The first part of this project examines a growing public diplomacy challenge: how to communicate multilateral work to the American public in ways that are clear, relevant, and persuasive. The Public Diplomacy Section at the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna works on complex issues including nuclear energy, outer space, and drugs and crime through the United Nations system. These portfolios directly affect U.S. security, prosperity, and global leadership, yet their relevance is not always visible to the average American. This project would ask students to help identify how to better reach U.S. audiences, explain the value of this work to taxpayers, and develop communication strategies that make U.S. policy outcomes more accessible and meaningful.</p> <p>Effective public diplomacy depends not only on strong messaging, but on reaching the right journalists and outlets with the greatest relevance and influence. The second part of this project asks students to analyze who is covering the Mission’s core portfolios, where those reporters and outlets are based, what audiences they reach, and how the Mission can engage them more strategically. Drawing on methods from journalism, communications, marketing, and data analysis, students would help develop a more focused approach to media mapping, contact-building, and outreach that strengthens the Mission’s ability to place U.S. messages with the right messengers.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>The final submission would include a written memo of about 4-8 pages outlining key findings and recommendations, along with a presentation that summarizes the main conclusions in a clear, usable format. The presentation could also include sample outreach concepts, messaging frameworks, campaign ideas, advertisement concepts, or other messaging strategies designed to explain the Mission’s work and its relevance to the American public. The more concrete and actionable the examples, the better.</p> <p>For the international press portion, the ideal deliverable would be a targeted media database/spreadsheet that helps the Mission strengthen and expand its external engagement with the exact set of press who are seeking our news. This could include a curated database of journalists and outlets covering our core portfolios across print, radio, television, online, and magazine platforms. The database should include reporter names, outlets, contact information where publicly available, areas of coverage, geographic focus, and notes on relevance or audience reach. A well-structured media list of this kind would help the Mission better identify priority press contacts, refine its outreach, and ensure U.S. messages are reaching the most relevant messengers and audiences.</p> <p>The above findings and recommendations would be reinforced via a virtual presentation (either one single or one for each of the topics) that the student delivers to UNVIE’s Public Diplomacy Section.</p>
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Marketing</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>

Additional Information	Background: This project reflects a broader and recent shift in how the Department of State approaches audience identification. While public diplomacy has traditionally focused on solely foreign publics, there is now clearer emphasis on the need to communicate with the American public about the value of diplomacy and U.S. foreign policy results. Current Department guidance points to the importance of engaging domestic audiences more intentionally and explicitly. For UNVIE, that means better identifying how to explain multilateral work and outcomes to Americans in ways that show relevance, impact, and responsible use of taxpayer resources.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	546
Project Name	Project Constellation: Strategic Opportunities for U.S. Collaboration with Emerging Space Economies on Multilateral Space Governance
Office	IO/MTA
Embassy	U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	<p>The global space sector is expanding rapidly as new countries develop national space programs and commercial capabilities. Many of these emerging space actors are members of the Group of 77 (G77) and are increasingly influential in multilateral space governance, particularly within the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). Emerging space economies are investing in satellite systems, Earth observation platforms, and domestic regulatory frameworks to support their participation in the space economy. These countries frequently rely on international partnerships for launch services, satellite manufacturing, and training.</p> <p>At the same time, geopolitical competition is intensifying in the space domain. China has expanded cooperation with developing space programs through satellite development projects, infrastructure investments, and participation in initiatives such as the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS). Understanding which emerging space economies are most influential in COPUOS and most open to collaboration with the United States will help inform diplomatic engagement and coalition-building efforts in multilateral space governance.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>The sponsoring office would welcome a combination of analytical outputs rather than a single-format deliverable. Ideally, students would produce a set of products that together provide both policy insights and supporting data.</p> <p>Primary deliverables could include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summary Analytical Report (10-15 pages): A concise report summarizing the research findings and policy implications. The report would assess emerging space economies within the Global South (with a focus on countries within the G77) and evaluate their potential as partners for collaboration with the United States in the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). The report would include recommendations for diplomatic engagement, coalition building, and potential areas for collaboration in space governance and commercial space development. 2. Strategic Partnership Index or Comparative Dataset A structured dataset evaluating emerging space economies across multiple indicators, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - space sector capability and infrastructure - participation in international space governance forums - alignment with U.S. space policy priorities - existing partnerships with major space powers - indicators of external influence, including Chinese space cooperation initiatives The dataset could be used to generate a comparative index identifying countries with the greatest potential for U.S. collaboration. 3. Mapping and Visualization Products Students could develop visual products such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a global or regional map of emerging space economies within the Global South - visualization of international space partnerships - mapping of space infrastructure (satellite programs, ground stations, etc.) - identification of countries that are particularly active in multilateral space governance discussions.

	<p>4. Country Profiles or Case Studies (Short Briefs) Short country profiles (2-3 pages each) for selected emerging space economies outlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - national space program development - international partnerships in space activities - participation in multilateral space governance o opportunities for collaboration with the United States. <p>5. Commercial and Institutional Landscape Overview Where information is available, students could also identify relevant commercial stakeholders and business networks, such as national space industry associations, aerospace clusters, chambers of commerce, or technology innovation hubs that may support international space partnerships and commercial cooperation.</p> <p>6. U.S.-based non-profit organizations or civil society organizations specializing in space knowledge, policy, or experience working with U.S. government agencies on large scale projects. Students would research and organizations that UNVIE could potentially partner with on future large-scale projects focused on space diplomacy. Presenting a list of organizations with capacity and specialty in this would have an immediate next step towards our upcoming projects.</p> <p>These products would ideally be accompanied by a short presentation or briefing deck summarizing key findings and recommendations for policymakers.</p>
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Additional Information	The sponsoring office would be open to working with 2-3 universities if the teams wanted to split up the country profiles/case studies or the mapping exercise. We are also open to undergraduate or graduate teams.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	547
Project Name	Fusion Energy Diplomacy: Mapping Global Partnerships and Opportunities for U.S. Leadership
Office	UNVIE/IAEA
Embassy	U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	<p>Fusion energy is increasingly viewed as a transformative technology with the potential to provide abundant, carbon-free baseload power. Recent breakthroughs in plasma physics, advances in superconducting magnet technologies, and significant private-sector investment have accelerated the global race to commercialize fusion energy. The United States hosts one of the world’s most dynamic fusion innovation ecosystems, supported by national laboratory research programs and a rapidly growing private fusion industry. At the same time, many countries-particularly within the Global South-are beginning to explore how fusion energy could support long-term energy security and economic development strategies.</p> <p>Multilateral institutions such as the International Atomic Energy Agency play an important role in convening international cooperation on nuclear technologies, including fusion energy, and are increasingly serving as platforms for technical collaboration, capacity building, and discussions about future governance frameworks. As several countries expand fusion cooperation with developing economies and seek to position themselves as long-term technology partners, understanding these dynamics is important for shaping U.S. engagement. This project will support the development of a potential initiative-Project PLASMA-that aims to highlight U.S. fusion leadership through international collaboration, workforce development, and engagement with emerging fusion energy stakeholders.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>Students may produce a combination of research outputs, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summary Analytical Report (10-15 pages) A report summarizing the global fusion ecosystem, emerging stakeholders, and opportunities for international collaboration involving U.S. institutions and companies. 2. Global Fusion Ecosystem Map A visual map identifying: major fusion research hubs emerging fusion stakeholders international collaboration networks. 3. Fusion Partnership Dataset A dataset cataloguing: fusion research programs private-sector companies international partnerships training and research initiatives. 4. Case Studies Short country or regional case studies examining selected emerging fusion stakeholders and their potential interest in collaboration. 5. Briefing Presentation A presentation summarizing key findings and policy-relevant insights for policymakers.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Energy Security</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Public-Private Partnerships</i>
Additional Information	Post leads include State and interagency staff working on IAEA and multilateral strategy teams at U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Vienna.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	548
Project Name	Mapping China’s Industrial Influence in Morocco
Office	ECON
Embassy	Morocco
Bureau	Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)
Project Description	<p>Morocco is rapidly emerging as a manufacturing and logistics hub for Chinese companies in sectors such as automotive supply chains, batteries, critical minerals, and renewable energy. Understanding where Chinese firms are present - and how they are shaping Morocco’s industrial ecosystem - has growing strategic relevance.</p> <p>This project asks a student team to map and analyze the scope of Chinese commercial influence in Morocco over the past 10 years and include information on announced projects and those that actually materialized. Using open-source research, the team would identify Chinese firms and projects and compile a structured dataset capturing information including project type, amount, location, sector, scale where available, and stage of development.</p> <p>The final product should combine a structured map of Chinese firm activity with an analytical assessment highlighting key patterns. The overall objective is to produce a practical resource that helps the U.S. Embassy better understand where Chinese firms are focusing attention within Morocco’s economy and where there may be implications for future commercial competition and engagement.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>- Primary deliverable: a structured spreadsheet/database mapping Chinese firms and projects in Morocco (sector, location, amount, project description, status, and sources), potentially accompanied by basic visualizations or maps.</p> <p>- Supporting deliverables: a short analytical memo (approximately 6-8 pages) summarizing key patterns and a brief presentation of findings.</p>
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>African Studies</i>
Additional Information	
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	549
Project Name	Mapping 250 Years of U.S.-Mexico Collaboration: A Binational Timeline Project
Office	Public Diplomacy
Embassy	Mexico
Bureau	Public Affairs (PA)
Project Description	<p>As the United States Semiquincentennial (Freedom 250) approaches, this project will examine the historical evolution of cooperation between the United States and Mexico through key areas that shape bilateral engagement: sports, education, public health, security, and cultural exchange. Over the past 250 years, interactions between the two countries have extended beyond traditional diplomacy to include academic partnerships, athletic exchanges, joint public health initiatives, and cross-border cultural influence. Understanding these moments of collaboration provides insight into how people-to-people ties and institutional partnerships have contributed to regional stability, innovation, and shared prosperity across North America. Students will conduct historical and policy-oriented research to identify and analyze significant milestones in U.S.-Mexico cooperation from 1776 to the present, evaluating how these events reflect evolving diplomatic priorities and the broader trajectory of the bilateral relationship. The primary outcome will be a bilingual visual timeline (Línea del tiempo) highlighting major binational events, partnerships, and achievements over the past 250 years. Designed as an accessible educational and public diplomacy resource, the timeline will support Freedom 250 programming by illustrating how sustained collaboration between the United States and Mexico has contributed to shared progress, cultural exchange, and regional cooperation.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>The primary deliverable will be a bilingual (English Spanish) visual timeline highlighting key milestones in cooperation between the United States and Mexico from 1776 to the present, developed in recognition of the United States Semiquincentennial (Freedom 250). Students will work in six binational breakout groups composed of both U.S. and Mexican students, each focusing on a specific thematic area such as sports, education, public health, security cooperation, food and cultural exchange. Each group will identify and analyze milestones within their thematic area and contribute them to the overall timeline. This collaborative structure will promote cross-cultural dialogue, comparative research perspectives, and direct student-to-student engagement across borders. The final timeline will feature 15-25 significant binational events, partnerships, or initiatives, each accompanied by a short narrative explanation, historical context, and relevant visuals or supporting data. In addition to the visual timeline, students will produce a short analytical brief summarizing the research process, explaining the criteria used to select milestones, and identifying key themes emerging from 250 years of bilateral collaboration. The project will conclude with a final hybrid presentation to representatives from the U.S. Embassy, participating universities, and other interested stakeholders. The materials will be designed to support Freedom 250 public diplomacy and educational programming.</p>
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>History</i>
Additional Information	<p>This project is well suited for undergraduate students studying international relations, history, political science, public policy, public health and/or other careers. It will involve students from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México - UNAM FES Acatlán, many of whom are studying English as part of their academic studies. Participation in the</p>

	project will allow students to strengthen their research, analytical, and cross-cultural collaboration skills while contributing to a meaningful public diplomacy initiative.
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	550
Project Name	Strengthening Sovereignty: U.S. Exchange Alumni as Partners in Lebanese Institutional Capacity Building.
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Lebanon
Bureau	Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)
Project Description	To make America safer and stronger, this project focuses on consolidating the cessation of hostilities and strengthening Lebanese governance. Students will research how alumni working within the Lebanese government or civil society are implementing U.S.-modeled collaborations to build institutional capacity and meet international obligations. The project aims to identify barriers these alumni face in advancing regional stability and disarming non-state actors.
Final Product Format	A policy memorandum with actionable recommendations for the Embassy to better support alumni/benefit from alumni in governance roles.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	551
Project Name	Efficient Methodologies in Mapping and Analyzing Regional Competitors' Engagements and Communication in Lebanon
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Lebanon
Bureau	Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)
Project Description	In 2023, Public Diplomacy Beirut (PDS) developed and piloted an in-house analytical tool to map regional competitors' activity and messaging targeting/in Lebanon. This tracker draws from open-source information and compares regional competitors' messaging to the Embassy's own activity, assistance, and messaging efforts with the objective of informing Embassy decision-making, reporting, programming, and messaging by identifying overlaps, gaps, and opportunities in different sectors. Despite the valuable data and insights it provided, especially by optimizing the Embassy's messaging and programming in Lebanon, the tool remained nonetheless time-consuming and labor intensive. PDS is seeking recommendations on resource-efficient methodologies to produce more frequent and comprehensive reports.
Final Product Format	Report with Suggested methodology
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	552
Project Name	Télé Liban: Public Broadcasting in a Polarized Media System
Office	Public Diplomacy Section
Embassy	Lebanon
Bureau	Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)
Project Description	This project examines how Télé Liban operates as Lebanon’s state broadcaster within a highly polarized and sectarian media environment. Through content analysis of news and political programming, the study will explore how the channel navigates domestic political sensitivities while maintaining a public service mandate. It will also analyze how Télé Liban frames major international actors-including the United States, China, Russia, and Iran-and consider whether international partnerships and external media cooperation influence the broadcaster’s positioning. The research will assess whether Télé Liban functions as a neutral public broadcaster, a consensus-building platform, or a constrained institution within Lebanon’s complex political and media landscape.
Final Product Format	Comparative research report and policy brief examining the role of public broadcasting in polarized media systems, with recommendations for strengthening institutional independence and resilience against political and external influence.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Additional Information	
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	553
Project Name	Race for Strategic Resources: Securing Access to Energy and Critical Minerals for the U.S. in Europe
Office	Area Studies
Bureau	Personnel & Training (PERT)
Project Description	<p>Ensuring secure access to energy and critical minerals is a top priority for the United States and its European allies. Recent events including Russia’s war against Ukraine, global market disruptions, and shifting supplier relationships have highlighted the importance of reliable, affordable, and resilient supplies of both energy and critical minerals. These resources are essential not only for keeping economies running, but also for supporting U.S. defense, advanced manufacturing, and new technologies.</p> <p>The U.S. government has made it a priority to ensure Europe reduces its dependence on unreliable or adversarial suppliers, strengthens supply chains, and deepens cooperation among trusted partners. This project invites students to explore how these priorities are playing out in Europe, and what they mean for the U.S. winning the race for strategic resources in Europe.</p>
Final Product Format	Students will produce a 10-to-15-page analytical report, including an executive summary and table of contents, designed for foreign affairs professionals. The report should provide a clear analytical assessment of the issue, examine major developments and strategic implications, draw on relevant case studies, and offer practical recommendations. Students will also develop a concise, visually engaging PowerPoint presentation that distills their principal findings and recommendations for a policy-facing audience.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>European and Eurasian Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Energy Security</i>
Additional Information	<p>Key Areas for Student Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy Security and LNG Diversification - Which European countries are most important for diversifying liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies? - How do infrastructure, regulations, and contracts affect Europe’s ability to access reliable energy? - What role does U.S. LNG play in supporting European energy security? <p>Critical Minerals and Supply Chain Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which critical minerals are most important for America’s defense and technology sectors? - Where do supply chain bottlenecks or overreliance on certain countries create risks? - How are the U.S. and its allies working together to secure these minerals and reduce vulnerabilities? <p>Allied Cooperation and Strategic Flexibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What models of partnership (such as joint investments or trade agreements) are being used to strengthen supply chains? - How do these efforts help both the U.S. and Europe respond to crises or sudden disruptions?

	<p>- What are the benefits and challenges of deeper transatlantic cooperation in these areas?</p> <p>Final products may be incorporated into National Foreign Affairs Training Center Area Studies regional courses preparing U.S. Foreign Affairs Professionals for assignments covering Europe and Eurasia. This project is well suited to interdisciplinary teams combining expertise in international relations, economics, and business or finance.</p>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	554
Project Name	Artificial intelligence and satellite remote sensing in U.S. foreign policy
Office	Office of Space Affairs
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the collection, processing, analysis, predictive analytics, and automated handling of satellite-based remote sensing data. As AI-driven technologies mature, what new opportunities and challenges will spacefaring nations encounter? Consider emerging domestic and international stakeholders in the public and private sectors and examine the U.S. foreign policy implications arising from AI-related advances in the field of satellite-based remote sensing.
Final Product Format	(a) 10-20-page, well-referenced analytical paper, and (b) oral briefing or slide presentation by the authors.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	555
Project Name	Strategic Competition with China in Europe
Office	Area Studies
Bureau	Personnel & Training (PERT)
Project Description	<p>Strategic competition with China in Europe is being shaped by control over infrastructure, technology, and the commercial networks that generate long-term influence. Ports, telecommunications systems, AI infrastructure, shipping corridors, and industrial capital flows can all create leverage with lasting geopolitical consequences. At the same time, European governments are under growing pressure to strengthen resilience, manage high-risk dependencies, and ensure that investment in strategic sectors supports long-term security as well as economic growth.</p> <p>This project invites students to examine strategic economic competition in Europe through four interrelated dimensions: ports and maritime infrastructure, AI infrastructure and sovereign compute, telecommunications and secure digital systems, and the role of Chinese capital and industrial overcapacity in shaping influence across strategic sectors. Through selected case studies, students will identify where economic relationships produce lasting strategic effects, how European actors are responding, and which sectors are likely to matter most in the years ahead. The project will help illuminate the infrastructure and commercial dimensions of competition in Europe and provide practical insight into how market access, strategic resilience, and long-term influence increasingly overlap.</p>
Final Product Format	Students will produce a 10-to-15-page analytical report, including an executive summary and table of contents, designed for foreign affairs professionals. The report should provide a clear analytical assessment of the issue, examine major developments and strategic implications, draw on relevant case studies, and offer practical recommendations. Students will also develop a concise, visually engaging PowerPoint presentation that distills their principal findings and recommendations for a policy-facing audience.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>European and Eurasian Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Energy Security</i>
Additional Information	<p>Ports, shipping, and maritime infrastructure How do ownership, financing, concession structures, and operational control in ports and maritime logistics create long-term strategic leverage in Europe and its surrounding trade corridors?</p> <p>AI infrastructure, data centers, and sovereign compute How is competition over AI infrastructure, data centers, energy supply, and compute capacity shaping Europe’s technological autonomy and commercial alignment?</p> <p>Telecommunications and secure digital systems Where do European telecommunications and digital infrastructure still face high-risk vendor exposure, and what policy or market tools are proving most effective in reducing strategic dependency?</p> <p>Chinese capital, industrial overcapacity, and strategic influence</p>

	<p>In which European sectors does Chinese capital, industrial overcapacity, or commercial presence translate into strategic leverage, and how can European partners respond without undermining competitiveness?</p> <p>Final products may be incorporated into National Foreign Affairs Training Center Area Studies regional courses preparing U.S. Foreign Affairs Professionals for assignments covering Europe and Eurasia. This project is well suited to interdisciplinary teams combining expertise in international relations, economics, and business or finance.</p>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	556
Project Name	EU Space Act Regulatory Analysis
Office	Office of Space Affairs
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	The proposed EU Space Act seeks to establish a common regulatory framework for space across the European Union. U.S. industry and government agencies are concerned regarding the scope of the proposed act, potential impact to U.S.-European civil and security space activities, and potential impact to U.S. industry wishing to provide space-based services within the European Union. Although the European Commission has stated publicly that it intends for text referencing “mutual recognition and equivalence” to address most concerns held by the United States, U.S. government and industry experts are skeptical. Since the initial introduction of the text in June 2025, subsequent drafts have been published (most recently, the outgoing Council of the EU presidency Denmark’s draft). This study should examine the most recent version of the EU Space Act, from both the European Council and European Parliament, as well as the U.S. space regulatory framework of the FAA, FCC, Department of Commerce, and others to analyze: Where are regulations equivalent to U.S. regulatory policy? Where do regulations reach beyond U.S. regulatory practices? What provisions of the EUSA set new precedent internationally? How might provisions within the EUSA effect national sovereignty or competencies? Identify how equivalence or mutual recognition is treated for regulations for foreign entities in the United States for space activities.
Final Product Format	The final product should include a comparison table of regulatory provisions in the European Council and European Parliament drafts of the EUSA compared to current U.S. regulations and equivalence processes. This should be accompanied by a summary analysis of findings and may also include suggestions for text edits to the EUSA to better align with U.S. regulatory practices.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>European and Eurasian Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	557
Project Name	Trade over Aid: How to Prioritize Investment and Influence in the International Space Community
Office	Office of Space Affairs
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	<p>Over the past year, the United States has changed how it approaches foreign assistance programs and capacity building efforts in many regions. There is a renewed interest to maximize the benefits and influence the United States receives from these programs while minimizing costs, including in the space sector. Given the rapidly evolving landscape of government and commercial space activities around the world, how the U.S. prioritizes and allocates funding abroad could have significant long-term effects on the global civil and commercial space sectors.</p> <p>Participants will be asked to engage in a hypothetical scenario where the United States has a dedicated budget of \$100,000,000 to distribute to a series of international projects and initiatives focused on promoting U.S. civil and commercial space. Examples could include joint construction and operation of telescopes to use for space situational awareness, technical advisory missions to facilitate the development of emerging space faring nations' space policies and regulations that are harmonized with U.S. approaches, providing grants to U.S. commercial space companies, among others. What countries and what types of initiatives should the United States pursue to maximize its returns? How should the United States assess the outcomes of these investments? What are important factors to consider when making foreign investments?</p>
Final Product Format	Report with funding allocation breakdown and oral briefing
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Development</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	558
Project Name	From Classrooms to Criminal Organizations: Investigating the Link Between Primary Schooling and Gang Activity
Office	U.S. Consulate Porto Alegre's Overseas Criminal Investigations Unit
Embassy	Brazil
Bureau	Diplomatic Security (DS)
Project Description	<p>This research project will examine the relationship between access to and quality of primary education and the prevalence of organized crime and gang recruitment among adolescents, using Brazil and the United States as case studies. The project aims to identify potential causal links and inform policy recommendations for U.S. Government (USG) foreign assistance in education as a tool to counter the growth and power of transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) that threaten U.S. national security and economic stability overtime. This project is in direct support of national security, foreign policy and America First priorities to make America safer, stronger and more prosperous.</p> <p>Research objectives include analyzing existing data and literature on education and gang activity in Brazil and the United States, identifying and comparing key factors influencing adolescent vulnerability to gang recruitment in both contexts, assessing the effectiveness of current education-focused interventions aimed at reducing gang involvement, and developing evidence-based recommendations for USG foreign assistance programs to support long-term counter-TCO initiatives. The recommended methodologies include literature review, data analysis, and comparative analysis.</p>
Final Product Format	An explanation of the research findings, to include data analysis, in any format would be acceptable.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Narcotics and Law Enforcement</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement</i>
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	559
Project Name	Africa’s Emerging Space Policy: Capabilities, Partnerships, and Opportunities
Office	Office of Space Affairs
Bureau	Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
Project Description	This project will commission a comprehensive study to map the current landscape of space policy and capability development across Africa. The study will identify leading countries and technologies, examine international partnerships, and assess opportunities for U.S. engagement. Key areas of research will include the status of space infrastructure, programs, and policy frameworks across African nations; the achievements of countries at the forefront of space development; and the most prevalent and emerging space technologies on the continent. The analysis will also explore which non-African countries and organizations are supporting African space initiatives and the mechanisms of their involvement. Additionally, the study will assess areas where African countries are seeking international partnerships-particularly with the United States-and the potential mutual benefits of such engagement. The scope will encompass a continent-wide overview, with case studies of leading countries and notable projects, and will address both governmental and commercial space activities, including current and planned initiatives as well as policy and regulatory developments.
Final Product Format	Comprehensive study with continent-wide overview, case studies, and analysis of governmental and commercial space activities, including current and planned initiatives, policy, and regulatory developments.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>African Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Science and Technology</i>
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	560
Project Name	Addressing AI-Generated Media While Protecting Freedom of Expression and User Privacy
Office	R/PPR/DF
Bureau	Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (R)
Project Description	<p>While challenges to identifying the authenticity of media is not new, the digitization of the information realm and the use of AI has exponentially increased the speed, scale, and reach of all forms of manipulated content. Malicious actors can use manipulated or synthetic media to facilitate cyber threats and other criminal activities. This includes impersonation of government officials or corporate officers and the use of fraudulent communications to access networks and sensitive information, and to influence populations to take specific actions. Such malign use of synthetically-generated media can erode online trust, which can impact individuals, businesses, and communities, and nations. Content manipulation technology, such as AI-generated text-to-image technology, “deepfake” voice, photo and video manipulation, can also be misused to target and exploit both children and adults for a wide range of crimes, including “sextortion” and the production of synthetic non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII) and child sexual abuse material (CSAM).</p> <p>This project aims to examine potential technical avenues to address these challenges in a way that preserves freedom and protects privacy. For example, so-called “content provenance” tools, which provide the recorded history, origin, and editing trail of a digital image, video, audio, or document file, can provide transparency on how digital content has been created, altered, and published. These tools can also help detect the malicious use of deepfakes and other synthetic content that aims to facilitate illegal activity. This project will help explore tools, policies, and recommendations on how such digital content transparency practices can be thoughtfully implemented so as not to stifle innovation or lead to infringements on users’ freedom of expression or privacy.</p>
Final Product Format	Research paper and a presentation of the findings
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Cyber Security</i>
Additional Information	Background on the State Department Digital Freedom Team: The U.S. Department of State’s Digital Freedom team (R/PPR/DF) is housed within the Policy Division of the Under Secretary for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy’s (R) Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources. R/PPR/DF protects American interests through the promotion and safeguarding of freedom of expression and privacy in digital spaces, including through technology governance and fostering favorable technological innovations. Our mandate is to engage experts and partners within and outside the Department to lead key elements of this work in support of the Administration's vision.
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	561
Project Name	Youth, Social Media, and Acephalous Movements in Africa
Office	Area Studies, Diplomatic Tradecraft and Emerging Technology
Bureau	Foreign Service Institute (FSI)
Project Description	Acephalous movements, characterized by their lack of centralized leadership, have become increasingly prominent in various African countries. In the recent past, the continent has witnessed a surge in youth-led activism. This may be due to Africa experiencing a significant "youth bulge," with a large proportion of its population under the age of 25. This demographic trend presents both opportunities and challenges for the continent. While a large youth population can be a source of economic growth and innovation, it also poses challenges related to employment, education, and social stability. Through case studies, this project will investigate the interplay between youth, social media, and acephalous movements in the continent; and how they (the youth) are utilizing these platforms to organize, mobilize, and sustain the movements to demand political and social change.
Final Product Format	Project participants should produce a final written report (MS Word) to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key case studies (2-3) examined, and lessons drawn from them. • Suggested recommendations on how AF governments could address youth concerns. • Opportunities for U.S. diplomatic engagement in influencing these policies. Project participants should produce a final presentation (PPT) of key findings and recommendations.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>African Studies</i>
Additional Information	Project will run from August or early September to December 2026 with deliverables expected in December.
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	562
Project Name	From Hype to Impact: Measuring the Real Value of AI at the State Department
Office	DT/CFA/AWE
Bureau	Department of Diplomatic Technology (DT)
Project Description	<p>Artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming a core capability for modern organizations, transforming how institutions analyze information, deliver services, and support decision-making. Governments and companies alike are investing heavily in AI, but many struggle to measure whether those investments are truly delivering value. Traditional return-on-investment (ROI) metrics-such as cost savings or efficiency-capture only part of the picture, especially in public institutions where mission impact is just as important as financial returns. At the Department of State, AI is already being deployed across our institution-from internal administrative workflows to public diplomacy and operational support-but there is currently no widely accepted standard for measuring AI's overall impact in government. This project asks a student team to help design an AI Impact Scorecard that would allow the Department to assess whether its growing AI portfolio is delivering meaningful results across the enterprise. If done, the AI Scorecard will be the first of its kind in federal government.</p> <p>Students will research and develop a practical framework that combines government ROI methodologies with leading benchmarking practices used in the private sector and international organizations. The goal is to create a scorecard that measures not only operational outcomes such as efficiency and productivity, but also broader institutional impacts such as mission effectiveness, workforce adoption and AI literacy, governance and risk management, and organizational readiness for responsible AI. Working across policy, technology, and management perspectives, the team will propose indicators, scoring methods, and example applications that demonstrate how the framework could be used in a large public-sector organization. The resulting scorecard would help the Department better understand where AI is creating the most value, where additional investment may be needed, and how to track progress over time-while also contributing to broader thinking about how governments measure the real-world impact of artificial intelligence.</p>
Final Product Format	The results of this project would provide the Department with an actionable framework for AI evaluation over time and comparing progress against external benchmarks. This project will develop and refine a prototype AI Impact Scorecard designed to help the Department assess how effectively it is adopting and scaling AI, and what effects AI use has to the institution and the public. The scorecard will build upon existing government methodologies for evaluating ROI-such as frameworks developed within federal agencies-and combine them with leading benchmarking practices used in the private sector and international organizations. The goal is to create a holistic evaluation model that measures both first order and second order impacts of responsible AI use. The team's deliverables could include a proposed theory of change, an AI Impact Scorecard framework, recommended metrics and indicators, an evaluation methodology for scoring and benchmarking, and examples of how such a scorecard could be implemented in a large public-sector organization across a few selected case studies.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Statistics</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Additional Information	We understand Stanford, MIT, Carnegie Mellon students are already working in these areas. The ideal candidate(s) need to know how to do measurements - must have a

	background in economics/statistics but also be interested in computer science. The project is particularly well suited for a graduate-level or advanced undergraduate team with interdisciplinary expertise in public policy, applied Generative AI, management science, or data analytics. Students will have the opportunity to explore emerging frameworks for AI maturity models, responsible AI governance, human-centered AI adoption, and organizational transformation, drawing on best practices from technology firms, federal agencies, research institutions, and international standards setting bodies.
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	563
Project Name	Restoring the Internet’s Promise of Universal Access: Digital Circumvention and Privacy Enhancing Technologies that Protect Freedom of Expression and User Privacy
Office	R/PPR/DF
Bureau	Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (R)
Project Description	<p>While the Internet was designed to be a borderless repository of human knowledge and marketplace for the exchange of information, it is increasingly being partitioned by national firewalls, geofencing, localization requirements, and invasive surveillance regimes. This creates a fundamental imbalance where access to information is dictated by your physical location. Strong encryption and circumvention technologies-like Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), satellite internet connections, and mesh networking apps-address this by decoupling identity and access from geography. Without these tools, information is controlled by gatekeepers who can vanish websites, silence dissent, or rewrite history. Circumvention technology restores the internet’s original promise of universal access. Encryption attempts to ensure users of technology have the ability to seek and share information privately, without needing to fear surveillance or reprisals.</p> <p>This project will examine the landscape of circumvention technologies. It will look at ways in which innovative technologies can better promote freedom of expression and privacy while also examining real concerns about malicious actors from misusing anonymity online to commit crimes, like scams, terrorist activity, or distributing child abuse material. The project team will use their research to produce recommendations about innovative technologies that help to protect freedom of expression and user privacy as well as suggestions for how to educate users in clear language on these topics.</p>
Final Product Format	Research paper and a presentation of the findings
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Cyber Security</i>
Additional Information	Background on the State Department Digital Freedom Team: The U.S. Department of State’s Digital Freedom team (R/PPR/DF) is housed within the Policy Division of the Under Secretary for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy’s (R) Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources. R/PPR/DF protects American interests through the promotion and safeguarding of freedom of expression and privacy in digital spaces, including through technology governance and fostering favorable technological innovations. Our mandate is to engage experts and partners within and outside the Department to lead key elements of this work in support of the Administration's vision.
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	564
Project Name	Leveraging Open-Source and AI Tools to Assess China’s Global Cultural Influence Networks
Office	Office of American Spaces and Educational Advising
Bureau	Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)
Project Description	<p>The U.S. Department of State’s Office of American Spaces and Educational Advising seeks a Diplomacy Lab team with expertise in open-source research and artificial intelligence to deepen our understanding of the global reach and influence of China’s government-sponsored public engagement platforms. As China expands initiatives such as Confucius Institutes and Luban Workshops, our goal is to better understand how their audiences and programming overlap with those of American Spaces and EducationUSA Centers. Your work will help us identify where Chinese public diplomacy activities most directly intersect with our own.</p> <p>We are looking for a Diplomacy Lab team to develop a replicable, resource-efficient process for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of foreign cultural platforms. By establishing a sustainable workflow, your research will empower the Department to proactively identify emerging areas of influence and respond with targeted, meaningful engagement. This project presents a unique opportunity to shape how the U.S. government allocates its public diplomacy resources, ensuring our programs remain relevant, effective, and responsive in a rapidly evolving global information environment.</p>
Final Product Format	The Diplomacy Lab team will be responsible for developing a replicable, resource-efficient process for the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of foreign cultural platforms. This process should leverage open-source intelligence and AI tools to regularly update our understanding of the audiences, programming, and reach of these platforms. In addition, we welcome the team’s expertise in designing a targeted, continuously updatable “heat map” that visually highlights areas of overlap and influence. This tool will enable us to more strategically focus our efforts and resources where they are most needed.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>East Asian Pacific Studies</i>
Additional Information	https://americanspaces.state.gov/ https://educationusa.state.gov/ https://ci.cn/en/qqwl https://en.chinaculture.org/50011363/cc
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	565
Project Name	Mapping a Comprehensive Scope of Brunei-China Economic and Business Relations: Trade, Investment, and Strategic Positioning within ASEAN
Office	Political/Economic/Consular Section
Embassy	Brunei
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	<p>Brunei’s economic relationship with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has grown rapidly in recent years, shaping the country’s trade, investment, and infrastructure landscape. This project invites a faculty-led undergraduate student team to conduct a comprehensive, semester-long analysis of Brunei’s economic ties with the PRC, Hong Kong, and Taiwan in the context of ASEAN. Students will map trade flows, foreign direct investment, and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)-linked projects, and build a database of Chinese-linked companies operating in Brunei.</p> <p>China is one of Brunei’s top trading partners, with bilateral trade reaching approximately US\$2.8 billion in 2024. Bruneian exports to China are dominated by petrochemicals and refined products, largely tied to the refinery complex operated by Hengyi Industries Sdn Bhd, a joint venture between Zhejiang Hengyi Group (Mainland China) and Damai Holdings. Major infrastructure cooperation includes the Guangxi Beibu Gulf International Port Group (Muara Port joint venture), China Harbour Engineering Company (Pulau Muara Besar Bridge construction), and the Pulau Muara Besar Bridge supporting industrial development. While Mainland China is the dominant actor, Hong Kong investment stock has at times exceeded Mainland flows, and Taiwan maintains smaller but distinct commercial linkages.</p> <p>The project will benchmark Brunei’s exposure against other ASEAN states, providing actionable insights into economic concentration, leverage points, and strategic implications.</p>
Final Product Format	Deliverables will include a policy-ready research paper, a professional briefing, and a comprehensive company database of Chinese-linked companies operating in Brunei.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>East Asian Pacific Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Development</i>
Additional Information	<p>Preliminary research sources include UN COMTRADE, IMF DOTS, UNCTAD, ASEANstats, Brunei MOFE, and corporate disclosures. This project may require engagement with Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) faculty and/or Registry of Companies and Business Names for local context and data collection. The project may be extended beyond one semester.</p> <p>Core Research Questions: What is the scale and structure of Brunei’s bilateral trade with Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan from 2000-2025 in context of ASEAN and overall Brunei trade? What percentage of Brunei’s exports and imports are attributable separately to Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and how concentrated are these exports by sector? What is the magnitude and sectoral distribution of FDI flows and stock from each jurisdiction, and what financing mechanisms are used? What projects in Brunei are formally or informally associated with the Belt and Road Initiative, and how do these compare to Chinese projects elsewhere in ASEAN?</p>

	Which major Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong, and Taiwan companies are registered or operating in Brunei, and what are their sector classifications and ownership structures? How does Brunei rank among ASEAN states in terms of trade, FDI, and BRI project exposure to China, and is Brunei more or less economically concentrated relative to its neighbors?
Academic Level	Undergraduate

Project ID	566
Project Name	Freedom250 Threads: Cataloguing and Reimagining Thai Silk - Jim Thompson and the U.S.-Thailand Fashion Exchange
Office	Public Diplomacy
Embassy	Thailand
Bureau	East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
Project Description	<p>As the United States prepares to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026 (Freedom250), the U.S. Embassy Bangkok seeks to highlight the legacy of Jim Thompson, an American entrepreneur whose work helped revive and elevate Thai silk onto the global fashion stage. In the mid-20th century, Thompson connected Thai artisans and textile traditions with international designers, fashion houses, and major American retailers, helping introduce Thai silk to global markets and department stores such as Macy’s and Bloomingdale’s. Today, the Jim Thompson Foundation in Bangkok maintains a collection of approximately 800 historic textile pieces that document the evolution of Thai silk design, weaving traditions, and cross-cultural artistic exchange. This project explores how Thompson’s work represents a powerful example of American entrepreneurship, cultural partnership, and the two-way exchange between Thai craftsmanship and global fashion innovation.</p> <p>Through Diplomacy Lab, graduate students will assist in researching and contextualizing this textile collection by examining textile provenance, fashion history, and commercial fashion networks associated with Jim Thompson silk. Students will help analyze how Thai textiles influenced international designers and fashion trends, while also exploring how global fashion movements shaped Thai textile production and design. Research may include identifying designers, fashion houses, and retail channels that incorporated Jim Thompson textiles, as well as developing preliminary cataloguing frameworks and historical documentation for the collection. Findings will support the development of a Freedom250 cultural diplomacy initiative in Bangkok, potentially culminating in a curated exhibition or fashion showcase featuring up to 250 garments or design pieces inspired by historic Thai textiles, highlighting the enduring cultural and creative exchange between the United States and Thailand.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>The Embassy seeks a set of research and curatorial deliverables that support both scholarly documentation of the Jim Thompson textile collection and the development of a public-facing Freedom250 cultural initiative.</p> <p>First, students will produce a preliminary catalogue framework for approximately 800 textile pieces held by the Jim Thompson Foundation, including basic documentation of textile provenance, design motifs, materials, weaving techniques, and historical context where available. The catalogue should help organize the collection in a format that supports future museum documentation, research, and exhibition development.</p> <p>Second, students will identify and curate a selection of approximately 250 textiles or design concepts suitable for a Freedom250 exhibition or fashion showcase in Bangkok. The curated selection should highlight key themes emerging from the research, including the role of Jim Thompson as an American entrepreneur who helped elevate Thai silk to the international fashion stage, the collaboration between Thai artisans and global designers, and the two-way exchange between Thai textile traditions and global fashion innovation.</p>

	Students should present their findings in a final written report (approximately 20-30 pages) accompanied by a curated catalogue or digital spreadsheet of the collection and a visual or thematic framework for the proposed exhibition or fashion showcase. The project should conclude with a presentation summarizing the research findings, curatorial themes, and recommended textiles for exhibition.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	<p>This project is being developed in collaboration with the Jim Thompson Foundation in Bangkok, which maintains a significant textile collection documenting the evolution of Thai silk design and global textile exchange. The Foundation is interested in strengthening the historical documentation and fashion history context of this collection, particularly in understanding how Jim Thompson textiles were incorporated into international fashion collections and retail markets.</p> <p>The research conducted through this project will directly support planning for a Freedom250 cultural diplomacy initiative in Bangkok planned for 2026, potentially culminating in a curated exhibition or fashion showcase featuring textiles or garments inspired by the Jim Thompson collection.</p> <p>Subject to available resources and institutional interest, the Embassy may explore the possibility of hosting a faculty mentor and up to three participating students in Bangkok for a short research visit to engage directly with the Jim Thompson textile collection and related cultural institutions. This project may be particularly relevant to graduate students studying fashion history, textile studies, museum studies, art history, cultural heritage preservation, or curatorial practice.</p> <p>Background resources that may be helpful include: Jim Thompson House Museum and Foundation: https://www.jimthompsonhouse.com</p> <p>Overview of Jim Thompson and Thai silk history: https://www.jimthompsonhouse.com/about-jim-thompson</p> <p>Additional background materials and collection information can be shared with participating student teams at the beginning of the project.</p>
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	567
Project Name	Bridging the Language Gap: English for Pandemic Preparedness and Health Security in East Africa
Office	Regional English Language Office
Embassy	Ethiopia
Bureau	Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)
Project Description	<p>Public health professionals in East Africa rely on English to communicate critical information during outbreaks, coordinate with international partners, and implement pandemic preparedness strategies. Yet, there has been no comprehensive assessment of where English-language resources for training and communication are missing or insufficient across the region. Strengthening these resources is essential not only for regional health security but also for U.S. interests in promoting global stability, safety, and effective international collaboration. The U.S. Department of State’s Regional English Language Office (RELO) in East Africa, which supports professional English-language education programs across the region, will benefit directly from this project.</p> <p>Students will conduct a comparative gap analysis of English-language public health materials in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania. Using publicly available documents, training resources, and guidance materials, they will identify areas where English-language content is limited or inconsistent and propose priority topics for future RELO-supported programs. The final deliverables—a research report with visual comparisons and actionable recommendations—will provide RELO and other stakeholders with clear, practical insights to guide English-language curriculum development and strengthen pandemic preparedness across the region, giving students the rare chance to produce work that is both academically rigorous and policy-relevant.</p>
Final Product Format	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gap analysis report (15-20 pages): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive summary (1-2 pages) - Comparative tables and visualizations showing English-language resource gaps across the five countries - Narrative analysis of patterns and trends - Recommendations for RELO-supported English-language training programs - Appendices with sources, reviewed materials, and supplementary charts or glossaries 2. Presentation deck (8-12 slides) summarizing findings and recommendations for faculty and RELO staff 3. Optional conceptual module suggestions: priority topics for future English-language training (without full curriculum development) 4. Optional Semester 2: Applied Follow-Up If extended into a second semester, students could translate the gap analysis into practical outputs, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designing English-language training modules or micro-courses targeting pandemic preparedness and outbreak communication - Developing digital or low-bandwidth learning resources (glossaries, templates, slides) for health professionals - Conducting remote pilot testing with students or health workers to refine materials - Producing a final RELO-ready package that can be implemented in workshops or online programs
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Global Health</i>

Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Education and Cultural Studies</i>
Additional Information	https://americanenglish.state.gov/support-near-you-regional-english-language-officer-relo https://www.facebook.com/RELOEastAfrica/
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	568
Project Name	Mapping China’s Middle East Diplomacy at the UN Security Council
Office	Office of UN Political Affairs
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	<p>As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and second-largest contributor to the UN regular budget and peacekeeping budget, China views the UNSC as a key tool for its diplomacy and international credibility, including on conflict resolution, sanctions, and counterterrorism. President Xi Jinping elaborated on this in an October 2021 speech, saying, “China has faithfully fulfilled its responsibility and mission as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, stayed true to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and upheld the central role of the United Nations in international affairs.”</p> <p>China is also the largest troop contributor of the permanent five UNSC members, including over 450 troops in UNIFIL (Lebanon), and a 2024 report by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission assessed that China’s participation in UN peacekeeping helped bolster the People’s Liberation Army’s image and provide its troops with overseas military experience. China has expanded its bilateral diplomatic engagement in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in recent years, positioning itself as an alternative mediator to Western actors and a vital economic, development, and security partner for regional states. Recent examples include China’s brokering of Saudi-Iranian rapprochement in March 2023 and its hosting of Palestinian factions in Beijing in July 2024. These bilateral efforts have not necessarily translated into greater leadership at the UNSC. For the United States, a better understanding of China’s approach to the MENA region at the UNSC (including Israeli-Palestinian affairs, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Yemen, Libya, and Western Sahara) could enable the United States to confront a new era great power competition and advance the 2025 National Security Strategy goal of preventing adversarial powers from dominating the Middle East.</p> <p>This project will analyze open-source information on China’s public positions on MENA issues at the UNSC from 2018 to present, including voting records, explanations of vote and other statements during Council meetings, press statements, speeches by senior Chinese officials, and official Chinese government or CCP commentary. Students will examine how China’s positions have changed over time, identify patterns in China’s rhetoric, examine how China’s positions align with or diverge from other permanent UNSC members (with a particular focus on Russia), and assess how China’s approach varies by issue area. The research will provide actionable insights into China’s MENA diplomacy at the UNSC and inform U.S. strategy.</p>
Final Product Format	Students should produce a 15 to 20-page research paper (not including works cited), as well as a separate policy memorandum no longer than five pages long summarizing key findings and including strategic recommendations for U.S. policymakers on how this research can inform U.S. diplomacy at the UN. Students are encouraged to use data visualization as part of the research paper.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Law</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Middle East/North African Studies</i>
Additional Information	The following links may be helpful as initial resources for students working on this project.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Report, Chapter on “China and the Middle East”: https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/Chapter_5--China_and_the_Middle_East.pdf (2024) - Carol Silber (Washington Institute for Near East Policy), “China’s Track Record on Middle East Diplomacy”: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/chinas-track-record-middle-east-diplomacy (2023) - Camille Lons et al. (European Council on Foreign Relations), “China’s great game in the Middle East”: https://ecfr.eu/publication/china_great_game_middle_east/ (2019) - Courtney J. Fung (The China Quarterly), “Separating Intervention from Regime Change: China’s Diplomatic Innovations at the UN Security Council Regarding the Syria Crisis”: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741018000851 (2018) - “Xi Jinping Sends Congratulatory Message to UN Special Commemorative Meeting in Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/zyxw/202511/t20251126_11761013.html (2025) - Remarks by Wang Yi at the UNSC High-Level Meeting “Practicing Multilateralism, Reforming and Improving Global Governance”: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjzbhd/202502/t20250219_11558555.html (2025)
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	569
Project Name	Assessing Impact of UN General Assembly Resolution
Office	Office of UN Political Affairs
Bureau	International Organization Affairs (IO)
Project Description	<p>As the United States pushes the UN to return to basics and to advance U.S. interests, the actions of the UN General Assembly (GA) have come under increased scrutiny. The 193-member GA is the main deliberative, policymaking, and representative body of the UN but is often overshadowed by the UN Security Council. A targeted analysis of GA action and influence would help inform U.S. strategy in engaging the GA and securing U.S. wins. The results of this project would guide IO in identifying potential resolution topics, determining resources to dedicate to GA initiatives, refining our strategy on GA voting, and further reforming the GA itself.</p> <p>The first part of this analysis would include three to four 2-pg case studies of the “after effect” of a GA resolution from the last ~5-10 years. For example, do you see countries incorporating the language or position in their domestic policies? Does it change coalitions contributing to global challenges? Does it create a “common” view or approach on an issue that is evident in how that issue is handled internationally or is there little ripple effect once the resolution passes until the next time it is considered in the GA? The second part of the analysis would focus on GA voting and behavior: what is the percentage of GA resolutions that pass vs fail; how often in the last ten years has the U.S. led a resolution in the GA, on what topics, and what was the outcome; and are there changes that could be made within the GA (aka reforms that could be implemented) that would increase the GA's contribution to advancing U.S. interests.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>(1) Four 2-page case studies, each profiling a GA resolution adopted in the last 5-10 years.</p> <p>(2) Analysis to be provided and a format agreed on between IO and the student team that lays out analysis on UN voting behavior.</p> <p>This could be a policy brief, slide presentation, info-graphic or dashboard and can be decided as the project proceeds.</p>
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Law</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	570
Project Name	Next-Gen Crisis Readiness: Optimizing U.S. Embassy Communications Worldwide
Office	Crisis Communications Unit
Bureau	Global Public Affairs (GPA)
Project Description	<p>When crisis strikes anywhere around the world—from natural disasters to terrorist attacks and everything in between—the U.S. Department of State and our embassies overseas must be prepared to communicate quickly, credibly, and with one voice to advance U.S. diplomatic objectives and provide vital safety and security information to American citizens in affected areas. To meet this challenge, the Department is working to roll out a new "Unified Crisis Communications Plan" in 2026. This initiative will modernize and consolidate previous approaches into a single strategy for missions worldwide that integrates digital media, traditional press relations, and consular communications. Because what we do and say in the first hours of an emergency can shape the trajectory of bilateral relationships and save lives, it is critical that our new framework reflects the gold standard of modern crisis management.</p> <p>We are seeking a student "consulting team" to evaluate our new crisis communications planning template against current academic and industry best practices. This will entail conducting a literature review on best practices in crisis operations and communications, followed by virtual "field research" facilitating interviews or focus groups with staff of U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Sections currently stationed at embassies overseas. By synthesizing academic theory with the on-the-ground realities of our missions overseas, the team will help identify blind spots and recommend practical improvements to our plan. This is a unique opportunity to directly shape how the U.S. government communicates with American citizens and global audiences when seconds count.</p>
Final Product Format	A practical, actionable consulting report (15-20 pages) assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the new crisis communications planning initiative based on the team's academic and field research, along with an executive presentation on the team's key recommendations for the Department's Global Public Affairs crisis communications team.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Communications</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	This project is designed to be completed within a single, four-month semester. The Department of State's Crisis Communications Unit (CCU) will provide the students with the proprietary 2026 Crisis Communications Template, additional internal documents on the rollout, and standard operating procedures. The CCU will also directly assist the student team in recruiting and scheduling overseas embassy staff for virtual interviews and focus groups. Students will be expected to familiarize themselves with foundational crisis communication frameworks (such as Situational Crisis Communication Theory) prior to the kickoff meeting.
Academic Level	Either Graduate or Undergraduate

Project ID	571
Project Name	The Other Side of the Deal: Recipient Country Perspectives on U.S. Foreign Military Sales
Office	Defense Security Cooperation University
Agency	Department of War
Project Description	<p>Foreign Military Sales (FMS) represent a critical component of U.S. security cooperation, facilitating the transfer of defense articles, services, and training to allied and partner nations. Managed primarily by the U.S. Department of War, FMS programs aim to enhance partner military capabilities, promote interoperability, and strengthen security relationships in support of shared strategic objectives. With billions of dollars in annual transactions, FMS is a significant instrument of U.S. foreign policy and a major driver of the global arms trade. Understanding the impact and reception of FMS agreements is therefore crucial for both policymakers and practitioners. There is extensive existing research on why the U.S. sells arms to other countries and why governments seek arms from the U.S. and other suppliers, but there are limited insights on how arm transfers are perceived by the public in recipient countries either positively or not.</p> <p>This project would investigate how FMS agreements are covered by the media and perceived by the public in a specific country that receives significant military aid or weapons from the U.S. The core research question would be: "How do local media narratives and public opinion in a recipient country shape, or challenge, the official government justification for purchasing U.S. military equipment?"</p> <p>This research would provide a valuable counter-perspective to the typical U.S.-centric analysis of FMS and highlight the complex domestic politics at play in these international transactions. These insights would also help the security cooperation workforce better anticipate challenges and communicate our value proposition to partners.</p>
Final Product Format	<p>The project will deliver four-six short case studies, possibly one for each DoD Area of Responsibility (AOR): AFRICOM, EUCOM, CENTCOM, INDOPACOM, NORTHCOM, and SOUTHCOM. Drawing from historical or recent FMS examples, each case study will feature a sentiment analysis of local media coverage and public discourse to quantitatively measure how the agreement was perceived. Key media excerpts, social media commentary, and leadership remarks will be translated into English to provide direct, contextual evidence for the analysis. The final case studies can be presented in one of the following formats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Reports (approx. 1,500-2,000 words each) • Short Videos (5 minutes or less) • Interactive Presentations
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>International Relations / Linguistics</i>
Additional Information	More information about DOW's AORs: https://www.war.gov/About/combatant-commands/

	More information about foreign military sales: https://www.dsca.mil/Programs/Defense-Trade-and-Arms-Transfers/Foreign-Military-Sales
Academic Level	Undergraduate/Graduate

Project ID	572
Project Name	From Data to Deterrence: Using Financial Indicators to Predict Internal Security Risks
Office	Defense Security Cooperation University
Agency	Department of War
Project Description	This project seeks to explore to what extent we can determine the susceptibility of a country to internal violence based who has access to the means of violence. If it is possible to use public financial or other data to identify those who own, train on, or use weapons—what might be called “likely gun toters”—then researchers and policymakers could use these individuals’ financial footprint in other areas of human activity to provide an assessment of the risk for coups d’etat, instability, and the breakdown of order. In addition, such a behavioral model of the security sector would inform assessments of the performance of government programs targeting defense institutions and security sector governance and reform. The first step in answering this question is if it is possible to identify, at scale, those in an economy or society who have access to the means of violence.
Final Product Format	A paper outlining a methodology for identifying likely gun toters, with illustrative evidence of plausibility and an oral presentation.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Computer Science</i>
Additional Information	
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	573
Project Name	Achieving Sustainable Change in Security Cooperation: A Multi-Level Framework for Transformation
Office	Defense Security Cooperation University
Agency	Department of War
Project Description	<p>A critical challenge in security cooperation (SC) is the persistent implementation gap between technical inputs and institutional outcomes. SC initiatives operate across multiple levels - strategic, operational, and tactical - to deliver equipment and training, build capabilities, and strengthen institutions. However, these efforts often struggle to catalyze enduring structural change across all levels of a partner organization. This implementation gap arises when partner organizations adopt surface-level compliance with donor expectations, while entrenched organizational norms, such as centralized patronage and a lack of transparency and accountability, prevent meaningful change. Organizational change management (OCM) offers a systematic approach to managing and implementing change within organizations. Leveraging OCM in SC can help practitioners assess a partner organization’s readiness for change, provide a structured approach to engaging partners and overcoming resistance, and improve the sustainability of SC initiatives.</p> <p>This project focuses on Phase I of a multi-phased initiative to address this challenge. The goal of this first phase is to develop a conceptual framework that aligns principles of organizational change management (OCM) with security cooperation practices across the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of intervention. By integrating OCM methodologies with cultural and political analysis, this framework will equip SC practitioners with an informed approach to designing initiatives that foster sustainable partner behavioral change while accounting for real-world complexities.</p>
Final Product Format	A comprehensive framework informed by the literature that outlines a multi-level analysis of key OCM principles, approaches, and possible indicators for achieving partner institutional change in security cooperation. The framework can utilize any change management model (ADKAR, Lewin, Kotter, etc.) as a theoretical lens to assess a partner's readiness for change.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Psychology</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Business Affairs</i>
Additional Information	<p>Students in focused on Political/Military Affairs and International Relations are also welcome to apply.</p> <p>More information about security cooperation: https://samm.dsca.mil/chapter/chapter-1</p>
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	574
Project Name	Resolving the Supply-Demand Mismatch: Global Needs and U.S. Defense-Industrial Capacity
Office	Defense Security Cooperation University
Agency	Department of War
Project Description	<p>Demand for U.S. arms and training – from multiple global crises, and from countries that fear Chinese aggression or the enduring threats from Russia, Iran and North Korea – now far outpaces the ability of the U.S. security cooperation enterprise to respond. The U.S. defense industrial base’s focus on systems developed for the U.S. Department of War means the arms available for export are often ill-suited to partner needs. This has two major implications. First, it suggests that U.S. security cooperation strategy must adapt to an era of constrained resources: we can no longer operate under the simple principle that “more is better.” Second, if the U.S. is to remain the “partner of choice,” we must build the capacity of our defense industrial base to meet the needs of partners—and to do it more effectively and more efficiently.</p> <p>This project seeks a new approach to defense industrial strategy that maintains a technological advantage for U.S. forces, provides appropriate systems to partners seeking to develop capabilities or shift away from Russian systems, and meets the urgent needs of partners in crises. Guiding questions include: How might we incentivize the defense industrial base to meet the needs of both the U.S. military and our partners? What are the costs and benefits of export-specific manufacturing lines (including for value arms), third-party licensing or ceding markets to partners to meet growing international demand? International armaments cooperation can create a more robust defense industrial base and resilient supply chains needed for combat-ready U.S., allied and partner forces but may also create new dependencies within which the U.S. military is not used to operating. How should we think about the costs, benefits and risks associated with international armaments cooperation? Are there ways to mitigate the inherent risk, while leveraging some of the benefits?</p>
Final Product Format	Policy analysis report with evidence-informed recommendations for security cooperation practitioners
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political/Military Affairs</i>
Additional Information	More information about foreign military sales: https://www.dsca.mil/Programs/Defense-Trade-and-Arms-Transfers/Foreign-Military-Sales
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	575
Project Name	Security Cooperation in the Gray Zone
Office	Defense Security Cooperation University
Agency	Department of War
Project Description	<p>Conflicts of the future – not unlike those of the past – are expected to involve significant irregular warfare activities in the so-called “gray zone.” As technology advances and tensions between nuclear-armed powers heighten, irregular strategies, including the use of non-conventional forces, covert operations, cyber-attacks, and information operations, help weaker states balance the scales while decreasing the likelihood of escalation. Even more conventional conflicts will have activities that run the full conflict spectrum, as we see with Russia’s war in Ukraine. Historically, U.S. security cooperation activities, including military training, arms transfers and defense-institution building, have focused on conventional forces and conventional weapons, even at times when irregular activities were dominant. This mismatch threatens the ability of the U.S. to prepare partners to share the burden of future conflicts.</p> <p>This project seeks to understand the implications of the shift to irregular warfare, gray zone conflict and emerging conflict domains (cyber and space) for the practice of U.S. security cooperation. Guiding questions include: How do strategy, tactics and the capabilities required for irregular warfare and gray zone conflict differ from conventional warfare and counterterrorism? What challenges (legal, political, strategic, etc.) do we face in security cooperation activities when the primary actors in irregular warfare may not be conventional forces and may include non-state actors? Are there novel strategic challenges to effective security cooperation for the cyber and space domains or for non-traditional security actors?</p>
Final Product Format	Policy analysis report with evidence-informed recommendations for security cooperation practitioners
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Other</i>
Additional Information	More information about security cooperation: https://samm.dsca.mil/chapter/chapter-1
Academic Level	Graduate

Project ID	576
Project Name	Reducing Risk, Improving Outcomes: The Security Cooperation Risk Register
Office	Defense Security Cooperation University
Agency	Department of War
Project Description	<p>Security cooperation (SC) stands as a cornerstone of U.S. national security strategy, representing a significant investment in building the capacity and capabilities of partner countries to address shared security challenges. Yet, despite its importance and the substantial resources dedicated to it, SC is a complex and inherently risky undertaking. While we recognize that the ability for something to fail is possible, there lacks a comprehensive effort to track the possibilities. In other sectors, this is solved with comprehensive project management tools like risk registers.</p> <p>While anecdotal accounts and retrospective program evaluations offer glimpses into the reasons for these failures, there is a critical absence of a systematic and centralized framework for identifying, assessing, and mitigating the most common risks across the diverse spectrum of SC activities. Existing risk assessment approaches tend to be ad hoc, incomplete, or ill-suited to capture the nuanced realities of SC environments. This absence of a standardized, prospective risk assessment process hinders effective SC planning, resource allocation, and performance monitoring, leading to inefficiencies and missed opportunities. We risk allocating resources to high-risk programs without acknowledging them, overlooking viable opportunities due to an overestimation of perceived risk, and potentially contributing to unintended consequences like instability and corruption because we don't mitigate risks. In the field of infrastructure project management, risk registers have proven to be invaluable tools for anticipating potential roadblocks, mitigating unforeseen challenges, and ultimately improving project success rates.</p> <p>To address this critical gap, this project aims to develop a practical and comprehensive risk register tailored specifically to the unique challenges of security cooperation. Inspired by the successful use of risk registers in infrastructure project management, this register will serve as a proactive tool for SC planners and decision-makers. By systematically identifying, categorizing, ranking, and offering mitigation strategies for the most common risks associated with SC initiatives, this project will empower those responsible for security cooperation to make more informed decisions, allocate resources more efficiently, and ultimately enhance the effectiveness and impact of U.S. security assistance, contributing to a more secure and stable world.</p>
Final Product Format	The final product will be a risk register for security cooperation delivered as an interactive and customizable spreadsheet.
Primary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Political/Military Affairs</i>
Secondary Discipline/Expertise	<i>Economic and Finance Issues</i>
Additional Information	More information about security cooperation: https://samm.dsca.mil/chapter/chapter-1
Academic Level	Graduate