



# USAID Alumni Association

## April 2021 Newsletter

### Note from the UAA Board

March has been a busy month. An important highlight was the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) confirmation hearing on March 23 for Ambassador Samantha Power, the Biden Administration's nominee for USAID Administrator. Her opening statement may be viewed [here](#). At this time, we do not know when the SFRC and the full Senate will vote on Ambassador Power's nomination.

Another highlight this month was the presentation of Acting USAID Administrator Gloria Steele at a meeting of the Development Issues Committee on March 18. The Acting Administrator gave brief remarks and then answered questions from an audience of more than 100 UAA members, posed by DIC co-chairs Steve Giddings and Steve Haykin. See the summary of her comments below and a link to the more detailed report on the website.

UAA has also made progress in two other key areas including preparing a statement of intent regarding improved diversity in UAA and broadening cooperation with USAID through the Memorandum of Understanding signed last summer. Stay tuned for separate messages and to the website and this newsletter for updates and ways to become involved.

### Calendar of Upcoming UAA Events

**POSTPONED:** The **March 24<sup>th</sup> UAA Book Club** meeting was postponed due to a last-minute scheduling conflict. The new date has yet to be determined to join Richard Blue in a review and discussion of the book, *The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again*, by Robert D. Putnam with Shaylyn Romney Garrett. Stay tuned.

**Thursday, April 8, 2021, 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.** (note extended time). UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue will host a virtual meeting of "Bob Gersony in Conversation with Ambassador Rick Barton." Gersony is the subject of a just-published book by best-selling author Robert Kaplan entitled *The Good American – The Epic Life of the U.S. Government's Greatest Humanitarian*. Rick Barton, founding director of USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives and the first Assistant Secretary of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations, will engage Gersony in conversation about key aspects of his career. Please click [here](#) to sign up for this event.

**Wednesday, April 14, 2021, 2:00-3:00 p.m. Virtual UAA briefing from USAID's Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL) Bureau.** Please join fellow UAA alumni for a special briefing on recent updates to USAID strategy and policy led by Assistant to the Administrator for Policy, Planning, and Learning **Michelle Sumilas** and her senior staff. The event will be hosted on Zoom by the UAA Development Issues Committee and will be open to all alumni who

have registered with the UAA. This special briefing is a further initiative in the growing collaboration between the UAA and USAID spelled out in the 2020 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two organizations, linked [here](#), whereby UAA members may have an opportunity to contribute on a voluntary basis their knowledge, experience and perspectives in the furtherance of USAID's mission. The Gratuitous Services Agreement (GSA) template is linked [here](#). Those interested in participating in this briefing **must sign up by COB Monday, April 12**, by clicking [here](#). Please note that sign-up requests received after the deadline may not be able to be accommodated; sign-ups may be cancelled, if needed; and because it is sent to large numbers of persons at once, the email with the Zoom link might be sent to the spam folder by your email system, so please check there.

**Tuesday, May 4, 2021, 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.** UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue will host a virtual meeting with "Mark Green in Conversation with George Ingram." Ambassador Green, just-appointed President and CEO of the Wilson Center, will comment on lessons learned from his three years (2017-2020) as USAID Administrator and will offer his advice for the new Administration. Watch for an email closer to the event with details on how to sign up.

#### **SAVE THE DATES for UAA Social Events:**

**Sunday, May 23, 2021, 4:00-6:00 p.m.** The UAA Spring Reception, our second social event this year, will be held virtually via Zoom. More details will be provided closer to the event.

**September, 2021, date/time/location TBD.** The UAA annual Summer Picnic will be held at a gathering in the D.C. area or virtually via Zoom, depending on the coronavirus pandemic situation nearer the planned date. A hybrid picnic, held both in person and virtually, is also being considered. Stay tuned.

**Friday, October 29, 2021, time TBD.** The UAA Annual General Meeting will be held at the Center for Global Development in Washington D.C., if conditions permit. More details will be provided nearer the event.

## ***New!* on USAIDAlumni.org**

### **Job & Volunteer Opportunities –**

- ***Urgent!* HHS Detail Opportunity on Southern Border with Children in Distress.** USAID has made a request for UAA alumni members to consider applying for paid Re-Employed Annuitant Details on the U.S. side of the southern border for up to 120 days with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This is part of the Biden Administration's urgent effort to care for and place unaccompanied children who have crossed the border into the United States. Re-employed FSOs and GS may possibly be eligible for a waiver of the normal rule against dual compensation; USAID plans to request such a waiver with relevant Federal offices. Spanish-language capability is preferred but not a prerequisite. **Applications are due by April 16th, 2021.** See more information or fill an application from [HHS](#) or contact USAID's Human Resources Specialist Monika Parker at [moparker@usaid.gov](mailto:moparker@usaid.gov).

**Bulletin Board** -- With so much energy from the new Administration and USAID, we encourage you to check the UAA Bulletin Board on the website periodically for interesting information included in the 11 items currently featured, for example:

- USAID Announcement of new Agency appointments;

- ADST Interview with Ann Van Dusen: “1200 Monkeys Was the Least of It: A Case of Kickbacks and Sexual Harassment at USAID”;
- The White House: Interim National Security Strategic Guidance;
- America Forward: Restoring Diplomacy and Development in a Fractured World;
- The AAD and Cox Foundation: “Changing the Risk Paradigm for US Diplomats”;
- Arrival of New Political Appointee Leadership and Staff, from Gloria Steele; and
- “Journey to Mongolia” – a beautiful video by Alessandra Manzotti.

**Obituaries** – In the past month, we have lost the following USAID alumni: Susan L. Eaton, Catherine Ann Balsis, Julius “Julio” Schlotthauer, Christine Zarr, Stephen Windsor Bergen, Evenly “Burgess” Venezia, William L. Rodgers, Barry Riley, and Marilyn Elizabeth Wilkey Merritt.

**Articles** -- In the Articles section, you can find the following recent news items:

- **New! A global tax on corporations must consider developing nations** (*The Hill* by J.Brian Atwood, March 24, 2021)
- **New! What would Samantha Power’s NSC role mean for USAID?** (*Devex* by Michael Igoe, March 19, 2021)
- **New! Biden to restrict US aid to Central American governments, set new conditions for money** (*Los Angeles Times* by Tracy Wilkinson, March 10, 2021)
- **New! Missing link: Can USAID unite budget and policy?** (*Devex* by Michael Igoe, March 5, 2021)
- **New! Development Depends on More Than Aid — A New U.S. Agency Promises to Harness the Power of Private Investment** (*Foreign Affairs* by Gayle E. Smith, March 1, 2021)
- **New! USAID clarifies \$42M Myanmar funding shift** (*Devex* by Michael Igoe, February 19, 2021)
- **New! What new US Congressional leadership means for foreign aid** (*Devex* by Adva Saldinger, February 18, 2021)

## 2021 UAA Awards Program

In 2021, the UAA will continue to recognize significant contributions by USAID alumni through its signature Alumni of the Year Awards. Since the inception of the Awards Program in 2014, the UAA has recognized and celebrated new paths taken by USAID alumni to provide service to their communities and to make lasting contributions to others at home and abroad.

For the Alumni of the Year awards, your help is requested in identifying individuals whose post-USAID activities are truly exemplary and highlight the quality of our alumni community. We ask each of you to consider nominating (or self-nominating) someone you know who is deserving of this recognition.

The Awards Committee will accept nominations for Alumni of the Year, beginning now until July 31, 2021. Send nominations electronically to: [awards@usaidalumni.org](mailto:awards@usaidalumni.org). The award winners will be announced at the Annual General Meeting on October 29.

The 2021 UAA Awards Program guidance is provided on the UAA website. Please click [here](#).

## Development Issues Committee

**Gloria Steele, USAID Acting Administrator**, was the guest speaker at the March 18 Development Issues Committee meeting, which was attended by over 100 UAA members. Ms. Steele expressed appreciation for the continuing interest shown by alumni in USAID's work and her intention to join UAA after her service as Acting Administrator. The Administration's guidance to her was to take good care of the workforce. She expects her tenure to be brief, noting that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had scheduled a hearing on Administrator-designate Samantha Power's nomination for March 23.

Ms. Steele addressed a number of USAID opportunities and challenges, including:

- The USAID Administrator's inclusion as a member of the National Security Council which creates opportunities, during the interagency deliberations on national security issues, for the Agency to exercise global leadership on development issues;
- Regarding workforce diversity, her recent approval of a workforce equality plan; the Agency's increase in the number of Payne fellowships; its strengthening of relations with universities to improve recruitment of a diverse workforce; and the significance of the inclusion in the National Security Strategic Guidance of an explicit policy to "invest in our national security workforce, institutions, and partnerships";
- USAID's involvement in planning Administration policies and programs in Central America; and
- The Journey to Self-Reliance structure, developed under the leadership of former Administrator Mark Green, which has made an important contribution to USAID's effectiveness, making clear that our role is to help countries build the capacity and commitment to lead their own development.

For a more detailed report on Ms. Steele's conversation with UAA members during the meeting, please click [here](#).

## Development Dialogue



On Wednesday, March 10, 2021, Jerry Hyman, former Director of USAID's Democracy and Governance Office, spoke on "Whither or Whether Democracy Promotion? Democracy Assistance, Development and Foreign Policy" at a virtual UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue. Jerry reviewed USAID's experience with democracy assistance and, among many other recommendations, stressed the need for a careful, non-ideological and honest assessment of these past programs to determine how future

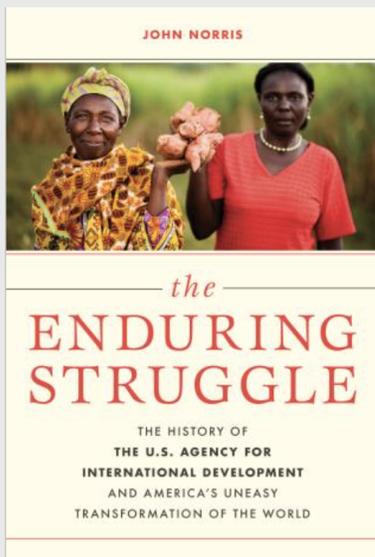
programs should be designed and implemented. His often-unconventional views led to a lively Q&A session with well over 100 attendees. To view the video of Jerry's talk and his responses to a raft of questions from the attendees, please click [here](#).

## Payne Fellowship Mentors Needed

The Donald M. Payne Fellowship Program is now accepting expressions of interest from UAA Members for its mentoring program. The Payne Fellowship is a USAID program, administered by Howard University, which seeks to attract and prepare outstanding individuals for careers as USAID Foreign Service Officers (FSO). Payne Fellows receive support for graduate school, professional development opportunities, and gain employment with the Agency in a rewarding career in the Foreign Service.

The 2021 Payne Mentors will be selected by early April and matched with their mentees before their summer internship starts. The time commitment for the mentor is minimal but can make a big difference for a USAID Payne Fellow and future FSO. If you are interested in this rewarding volunteer opportunity, please click [here](#) for more information. Or to fill out the Mentor Interest Form, go to: [https://howard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_4ZQ6Jyri6DftfmK](https://howard.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4ZQ6Jyri6DftfmK).

## USAID History Project



USAID alumni have very generously contributed funds to support the USAID Book Project. This advance [announcement](#) from the publisher Rowman & Littlefield means that, in a few short months, *The Enduring Struggle: The History of the U.S. Agency for International Development and America's Uneasy Transformation of the World* by John Norris will be published. Once we have more details about how the book will be publicized, we shall look to alumni to help us reach the broadest possible public.

## Alumni Profile: Craig Buck

Buck racing his Bobcat



Craig Buck served in three long-established USAID Missions in Turkey, the Dominican Republic and Peru. But his forte was in establishing USAID programs in newly independent countries and/or those emerging from wars or civil conflicts. Craig opened USAID Missions in Uganda; the five Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Kosovo; Montenegro; and Afghanistan.

He professed, "I had the great fortune of pioneering Missions and programs in circumstances we really never would have imagined. Since we did this in tabula rasa if the programs didn't work out, we only had ourselves to blame." USAID's seminal role in the Balkans and Afghanistan set up and staffed the institutional basis for economic governance and the instruments of

future market-directed growth that have endured long after USAID helped establish them.

Craig left Afghanistan after a year and a half in 2003 and later joined a private firm as its director of marketing and business development for several years. Subsequently, Craig has had both short- and long-term assignments that brought him back to many of the missions where he had originally helped establish USAID. One of his more gratifying assignments was as a member of the SFS Promotion Board, which gave him great confidence that USAID has talented and experienced staff to guide the Agency in the future.

Craig met his wife, Madina, in Kazakhstan where she worked with the United Nations. She followed him to Kosovo and Afghanistan, where they married. Since retiring in 2005, Craig has been involved in U.S. domestic politics and worked for a several Presidential and local level candidates. He volunteered for election administration duties, serving as the chief judge in different polling stations in Maryland. Craig's primary and middle school-aged children are year-round competitive swimmers, and Craig has qualified as a swim meet official in several capacities. Craig has shared his experience in addressing post-conflict development issues with students at the War College, universities, the Brookings Institution, doctoral research candidates, and diverse USAID workshops.

Craig wishes he had been a GSO as he deals with problems inherent in property management. Besides learning to operate a landscaping Bobcat, Craig has acquired electrical, plumbing, arborist, real estate, legal, and carpentry skills that may be needed for future assignments. Buck would welcome reconnecting with colleagues at [cgbuck2003@yahoo.com](mailto:cgbuck2003@yahoo.com).

## Newsletter Schedule

The next UAA newsletter will be sent on May 3, and subsequent issues will be published on the first Monday of each month or early that week if Monday is a holiday. We hope you enjoy receiving this news of your fellow alumni activities. If you have information you would like to share, your contributions are welcomed. Please send the information, along with a captioned picture of the event, date, and people shown, to [office@usaidalumni.org](mailto:office@usaidalumni.org).

**[Make Your 2021 UAA Membership Contribution](#)**

**USAID Alumni Association**

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