



The “Golden Class” of White House Fellows fittingly had the opportunity to explore the “city of 100 golden spires” for our international policy trip. Prior to our domestic policy trip to New Orleans, we discussed John Gardner’s articulation in *On Leadership* that “Leaders must foster the process of renewal” and focused on applying that renewal to a large organization known as a city. For this trip, it seemed fitting to look at the renewal of a country, the Czech Republic, following the Velvet Revolution and the country’s transition from totalitarianism, under both Nazi occupation and Soviet domination, to a liberal democracy.

From March 9-14, the U.S. Embassy, under the leadership of Ambassador Andrew Schapiro and with the support of his wife, Tamar Newberger, hosted our exploration of Czech history, politics, culture, and the on-the-ground impact of U.S. foreign policy. We had the opportunity to meet with multiple political leaders, including some of the Founding Fathers of the modern Czech Republic who were able to describe the leadership that former Czech President, writer, and dissident Vaclav Havel provided to help the nation transform itself following the collapse of Communism. We also heard about current political trials that the country continues to face, which includes gridlock, partisanship, and discrimination. These critiques sounded quite familiar to ones we hear regularly at home. However, irrespective of these challenges, it was evident that the Czech Republic has come a long way and has a lot to be proud of from its history and its efforts over the past quarter century.

That pride was evident throughout our meetings with business leaders, cultural leaders, community leaders, and political leaders. One of the highlights of the trip was our visit to the Prague Castle with Hynek Kmonicek, Special Advisor to the President. Mr. Kmonicek said that our “best



*The 2014-2015 class meets with Ambassador Andrew Schapiro and his wife Tamar Newberger.*

experiences come from stories and people,” and he led by example as an amazing storyteller. He traced the history, with colorful commentary, of the Czech Republic’s origins in the 9<sup>th</sup> century as a slave trading country—selling Poles to the French—to being the seat of the Holy Roman Empire, becoming part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, living through the Nazi occupation and Communism, and emerging as a liberal democracy. The Czech story was one of continual national renewal.

Ultimately, John Gardner believed the roots of organizational and societal renewal began within us as individuals, requiring “self-renewal.” Our trip to Prague, including our visit to the Terezin concentration camp, reminded us that “we can’t write off the danger of complacency, growing rigidity, imprisonment by our own comfortable habits and opinions” if we want to grow as leaders in our respective fields and pursue the common good through public service.

**BY SCOTT HANDLER**  
*U.S. Department of Commerce*



# A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Commissioners, Fellows, Alumni, and Friends,

After a long and busy winter, spring is a welcomed sight here at the White House! In addition to the cherry blossoms, spring brings the selection process for the program. We are in the midst of our regional panels and we are thankful to regional hosts and panelists for their time and dedication to the program. We would also like to thank the hosts and readers who participated in our annual reading groups this February. We had an incredible show of support from the alumni community with over 100 alumni participating in nine cities across seven states over five weekends. This is a true testament to what it means to be a part of the White House Fellows family and we are humbled by the dedication shown by former Fellows.

A special member of the White House Fellows family, Jack LeCuyer, Executive Director of the White House Fellows Foundation and Association (WHFFA), is retiring in November 2015. Jack is an institution for the fellowship and we thank Jack for his incredible commitment to the President's Commission. Looking ahead, we are excited to welcome David Moore as the incoming Executive Director. David was a Fellow in the 1996-1997 class and has 32 years of leadership and staff experience, including 25 years of service in the U.S. Air Force, and seven years of experience in the private sector. We look forward to working with David and the WHFFA in the months ahead.

The fellows kicked off 2015 with the second of a three-part leadership development series that was followed by our annual mid-year Commissioners meeting. Despite the looming snow, the Commissioners gathered in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building to meet with the current class of Fellows and discuss ways to continue to support the program. The Commissioners also had a session with leadership and organizational development coach, Dr. Nate Allen, to experience some of the key components of our leadership curriculum.

A few weeks after the Mid-year Meeting, we were thrilled to welcome two new members to the President's Commission on White House Fellowships – Lisa Ling and Amanda Hesser! Lisa is the Executive Producer and Host of *This is Life with Lisa Ling* on CNN, a program that began airing in 2014. Amanda is CEO of Food52, a website she co-founded in 2009. We are honored to have both of them join this devoted group of Commissioners.

In March, the Fellows participated in a policy trip to Prague. In preparation for the trip, the class met with former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, a native of the Czech Republic. We were honored that she asked for a follow-up meeting, and upon their return, the Fellows debriefed with Dr. Albright on their observations from the trip. While in Prague, the Fellows were able to see Prague Castle, the largest ancient castle in the world; visit Terezin, a military fortress and WWII concentration camp; and attend numerous meetings with leaders of government, business, and civil society.

Spring is a time of new beginnings, and we are thrilled to welcome Andy McGavern as our new Special Assistant! Andy comes to us after his most recent assignment in the White House Office of Presidential Personnel, and will continue the incredible work done by Rashida Kamal. I also want to recognize and thank our current group of interns, Marlee Burns and Joe Nelson. Joe and Marlee have been incredible resources for us during a busy time for the program, and we wish them well with their next adventures.

We look forward to a strong finish for the current class and bringing in a new group of Fellows to continue this important tradition.

Warmest regards,

Jenny



Members of the 2014-2015 class explore Prague during their international policy trip.

# Placement Report



**I**t is spring in Washington, DC, which means that it is cherry blossom season! For Treasury, it also means that we are in the midst of performance oversight and budget hearing season. Regardless of the time of year, I have been continually impressed by how seamlessly the Treasury team comes together to get things done.

Upon arriving at Treasury I became a member of the Build America Investment Initiative Interagency Working Group. I immediately began to work on the Infrastructure Investment Summit that commenced at Treasury two short weeks after my start. The Summit was an incredible event to kick off the Fellowship year and immerse me into the Treasury culture. Since the event, the Treasury Build America Team has passionately worked in unison with the interagency Working Group to develop recommendations and executive actions for the President that were announced in early January. Interestingly, infrastructure is an area in which many Americans are able to rally around—offering hope that our hard work this year will yield positive outcomes.

My work at Treasury has provided a

unique opportunity to interact with and coordinate across government (including state and local governments), other agencies, and private organizations. Most importantly, I have had the incredible opportunity to witness the leadership of the Treasury Secretary, Jacob J. Lew. With Secretary Lew's guidance, it is no surprise that Treasury is ranked among the best places to work in the Federal Government. The Secretary demonstrates his leadership by empowering and trusting his staff to make difficult and meaningful decisions. I have observed that, although many core traits of a good leader remain constant, a great leader is able to adapt to the ever-changing needs of the people of an organization.

Each year, my family and I look forward to the warmth that spring brings—this year is no exception. Sadly, the cherry blossoms of this year also mark the midway point of our Fellowship year. And although I am disappointed that my time with Treasury is getting short, this season will certainly be as productive as the last. In parallel, during an all-appointee meeting at Treasury, the White House Chief of Staff handed out notecards with this motivating message from the President: “We are entering the fourth quarter, and really important things happen in the fourth quarter.”

**BY KARI FLEMING**

*U.S. Department of the Treasury*



*Above: Kari Fleming at the U.S. Department of the Treasury.*



# Placement Report



**O**n the night of January 20, 2015, I gathered with a group of my Department of Labor (DOL) colleagues in the Secretary's Conference room to

watch the State of the Union Address. This gathering marked the culminating moment of my professional engagement in the first half of my Fellowship. As President Obama articulated his vision for paid leave, apprenticeships, and minimum wage, his words reinforced the reality that I have been fortunate enough to observe and take part in – DOL is at the forefront of the administration's domestic policy.

In a time where our nation has experienced a precipitous drop in unemployment to 5.5%, and we are in the midst of the longest uninterrupted stretch of private sector job growth in United States history, there could not be a better time to work at DOL and contribute to growing job opportunities for the American people.

I am placed in the Office of the Secretary, and have derived some of my most significant learning experiences from attending the daily senior staff meetings with Secretary Perez, at-

tending Deputy Secretary Lu's weekly Departmental Management Meetings, learning from Secretary Perez's negotiations in the resolution of the West Coast Port Labor Disputes, and contributing my thoughts to the development of the 2014 DOL Memorandum to the President. In addition, I had an opportunity to serve as the Volunteer Coordinator and member of the Planning Committee for DOL's annual Black History Month Celebration. Our program featured a dialogue between Congressman John Lewis and Secretary Perez; I was honored to take part in such a momentous occasion.

On behalf of the Secretary, I primarily work with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). My portfolio in ETA includes working with the Office of Apprenticeships to develop and implement a strategy that will enable us to double the amount of Registered Apprenticeships in the next 4 years, and contributing to the DOL-led Skills Cabinet that brings together agencies to collaboratively improve skills training. Overall, my placement has been a good fit, and I have gotten the opportunity to work on the issue that I am most passionate about—providing youth with opportunities and career paths to make a positive impact on their families and communities.

**BY WRENDON HUNT**  
*U.S. Department of Labor*



*Left: Secretary Tom Perez is joined by Congressman John Lewis and White House Fellow Wendon Hunt at the Black History Month program at the U.S. Department of Labor.*

# Education Report

## SPEAKER SEMINARS

- ◆ Thomas Perez, Secretary of Labor
- ◆ Jeanne Lambrew, Deputy Assistant to the President for Health Policy
- ◆ Cecilia Muñoz, Director of the Domestic Policy Council
- ◆ Ernest Moniz, Secretary of Energy
- ◆ Emmett Beliveau, Director of the White House Military Office
- ◆ Gina McCarthy, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency
- ◆ Susan Molinari, Vice President of Public Policy at Google
- ◆ Tom Daschle, CEO of the Daschle Group
- ◆ Joe Riojas, Chief of Staff at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- ◆ Dan Pfeiffer, Assistant and Senior Advisor to the President
- ◆ Christine Wormuth, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
- ◆ General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- ◆ Jean Case, CEO of the Case Foundation
- ◆ VADM Philip Cullom, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Fleet Readiness and Logistics
- ◆ James Tira, Desk Officer for the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic
- ◆ Norman Eisen, Former U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic
- ◆ Madeleine Albright, Former U.S. Secretary of State and Chair of the Albright Stonebridge Group
- ◆ Petr Gandalovič, Czech Ambassador to the United States
- ◆ John Lewis, U.S. Congressman (GA)
- ◆ Wendy Spencer, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service
- ◆ Michele Flournoy, CEO of the Center for a New American Security and Scott Gould Senior Advisor, Boston Consulting Group
- ◆ Trent Lott, Former U.S. Senator (MS)
- ◆ Donald Verrilli, Jr., Solicitor General of the United States
- ◆ Strobe Talbott, President of the Brookings Institution

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PRAGUE POLICY TRIP

- ◆ Meeting with Ambassador Andrew Schapiro
- ◆ Visit to Lobkowicz Palace with Prince William Lobkowicz

- ◆ Visit to the Terezín Memorial and Museum
- ◆ Meetings with Section Heads from the U.S. Embassy
- ◆ Visit to Google for meeting with Tania le Moigne, Director
- ◆ Meeting with Hynek Kmonicek, Special Advisor to the President, at Prague Castle

## SPECIAL EVENTS

- ◆ Leadership and professional development training with Dr. Nate Allen
- ◆ Dinners with the Fellows hosted by Mary and Jeff Zients
- ◆ Outreach event with Air Force Cadets
- ◆ Visit to the U.S. Holocaust Museum
- ◆ East Wing tour for Fellows and family
- ◆ Foreign Travel Briefing and Country Briefing with the National Security Council

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

- ◆ Lunch preparation at Walter Reed Center
- ◆ Orchard maintenance at Bread for the City
- ◆ Brown Bag lunch sessions with White House Interns





# Help us recruit the next class!

There are still many ways you can get involved with the program. Here are five things you can do to help us reach potential applicants:

1. **Engage One-on-One.** Identify exceptional individuals who could become White House Fellows and encourage them to apply.
2. **Send an Email.** Please share information with your professional and social networks.
3. **Utilize Social Media.** Post messages promoting the program to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. using #WHFellows #BecomeaWHF #WHFellowsat50
4. **Sponsor an Event.** Consider hosting an outreach event. White House Fellows program staff will lend support and provide background materials.
5. **Leverage Earned Media.** We invite you to submit op-eds, contribute to news stories, and/or author blog posts to share your experiences with the White House Fellows program.

## Thank you from the Fellows Office

- ◆ We would like to thank our Spring 2015 interns, Marlee Burns and Joe Nelson. They were instrumental in supporting our application efforts. We will miss them!
- ◆ We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Mary and Jeff Zients for hosting two incredible dinners for the Fellows.
- ◆ We are grateful to Ambassador Schapiro, his wife Tamar Newberger, and the U.S. Embassy staff for their incredible generosity throughout the Fellows' international policy trip to Prague.
- ◆ This spring we have had many generous White House Fellows alumni host reading groups in cities around the country. We would like to thank the following alumni for their participation and continued commitment to the White House Fellows program:

- ◇ 1/31 — **Washington, DC**
  - Debra Kurshan
- ◇ 2/7 — **Sarasota, FL**
  - Jim Padilla
- ◇ 2/7 — **San Mateo, CA**
  - Chris Moore and George Drysdale
- ◇ 2/7 — **Malibu, CA**
  - Douglas Kmiec and Dennis Murphy
- ◇ 2/14 — **Washington, DC**
  - Cara LaPointe
- ◇ 2/14 — **Foxborough, MA**
  - Scott Berns
- ◇ 2/21 — **Seattle, WA**
  - Nelson Dong and Steve Hill
- ◇ 2/21 — **Chicago, IL**
  - Anne Cohn Donnelly, David Iglesias, Jeff Kang
- ◇ 2/21 — **Miami, FL**
  - Willy Ferrer
- ◇ 2/21 — **New York, NY**
  - Eugene Huang
- ◇ 2/28 — **Washington, DC**
  - Zaid Haider



## About the WHF Program

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

**Please send any comments, questions, or other newsletter related communication to:** [whitehousefellows@whf.eop.gov](mailto:whitehousefellows@whf.eop.gov)

