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### **2019-2020 White House Fellows**



**Rita Avila** is from Charleston, South Carolina. After graduating from The Citadel with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice, she joined the Charleston County Sheriff's Office in 2003, and was assigned to the Patrol Division. She became a detective in 2007, specializing in crimes against children, vulnerable adults, and sexual assaults. She provided training to community agencies and law enforcement personnel in child abuse and sexual assault investigations. In 2011, Rita was promoted to sergeant. During the next two years, she supervised the Special Victims Unit and the Metro Narcotics Unit, and she served in the Office of Professional Standards. In 2014, she was promoted to lieutenant and assigned to the Patrol Division as the shift commander. The next year, she was transferred to the Community Affairs Office. Her duties include organizing community outreach programs to ensure a strong relationship between the Sheriff's Office and the community. She is also tasked with leading the Recruiting and School Resource Officer divisions. Rita is the assistant public information officer, handling media contacts and requests for agency information. She is the team commander of Crisis Negotiation Team, a crisis intervention instructor, and a member of the Peer Support Team. **Placement:** Department of Veterans Affairs



**Jermon Bafaty** is a Government Contracting executive with more than 17 years of industry experience. He currently serves as the Federal Sector Growth Leader for General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT). In this role, Jermon leads the team responsible for the development and execution of the growth strategy that results annually in new business awards of more than \$2 billion. Prior to GDIT, Jermon held increasingly responsible leadership positions in business development, engineering, and general management for Lockheed Martin and Leidos Corporation. He uses his platform to increase community

engagement in local initiatives and is the immediate Past President of the Alexandria Boys and Girls Club. Although born in Kingston, Jamaica, Jermon considers Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, his hometown. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Central Florida and a Masters of Science in Management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Jermon resides in Alexandria, Virginia, with his wife, Denise, and son, Jay. **Placement:** Department of Energy



**Mark Bicket** is a physician, investigator, and educator specializing in pain medicine and focusing on the opioid crisis. He analyzes and implements methods to address the opioid crisis, teaches the next generation of pain medicine leaders, and cares for patients with pain, all to transform individual and population pain care. His research has led to the growing appreciation that surgical prescribing contributes to the broader opioid crisis, work that has shaped clinical practice and influenced policy makers. He recently led Johns Hopkins in creating a new system-wide pain management policy, impacting millions of patients receiving care there every year. He also directs the nationally recognized Pain Medicine Fellowship Program and Pain Medicine Quality and Safety at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, where he trains and mentors fellows, residents, and medical students while treating patients in East Baltimore. Mark speaks with communities across the Nation about the opioid crisis and serves on committees for the National Academy of Medicine, the Delaware Division of Public Health, and numerous professional organizations. Mark received a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics summa cum laude from the University of Oklahoma and an M.D. and a Ph.D. in Clinical Investigation from Johns Hopkins University. **Placement:** Office of Science and Technology Policy



**Marshall Boyd** is a Commander (select) in the United States Navy. As a Navy SEAL and former member of the National Mission Force, he spent the last 15 years leading in the various levels of combat and managing organizations that conducted counter insurgency, counter terrorism, and other special operations. Most notably, Marshall served as the Executive Officer of a SEAL Squadron at Naval Special Warfare Development Group, a highly selective military command that executes the Nation's most sensitive missions. He has conducted multiple overseas deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, Eastern Africa, and the Arabian Peninsula, receiving various awards and decorations, including five Bronze Star Medals (four with valor). Most recently, he earned a Master of Public Policy in International Relations from Princeton University. Marshall received his Bachelor of Science in Systems Engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy and was an active member of the men's swimming and diving team, serving as captain his senior year. He is married to the former Michelle Tremont of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and in 2018, they welcomed their first child, a beautiful, curious, and spunky daughter, Vivian. **Placement:** White House Office of Management and Budget



**Elizabeth Daitz Lombardo** is the New York City Police Department's inaugural Executive Director, Civil Litigation. Elizabeth conceptualized, developed and leads an NYPD command designed to ensure just results in civil litigation challenging police action, and to use litigation data to improve the quality of police service to the community. During her tenure with the NYPD, new lawsuits challenging police action have declined by 50 percent, contributing to almost \$100 million in taxpayer savings in the last fiscal year. Elizabeth is a 2005 graduate of St. John's University School of Law, and a 2002 graduate of the Honors College at Adelphi University. She began her legal career

as a litigator at the Office of the Corporation Counsel of the City of New York, where she handled multiple high profile Federal civil rights cases in the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York. Elizabeth is an avid runner and a proud military spouse. She often travels the country with her husband, a Command Sergeant Major in the United States Army Reserve, in support of the Army's family readiness mission. **Placement:** White House Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy



**Brandon Dues** is a Major in the United States Air Force. He serves as the Military Assistant to the Deputy Chairman of the Military Committee, NATO's highest military authority. In this capacity, he provides politically informed, unfettered military advice to defend one billion citizens in the 29-nation Alliance. As a special operations pilot, Brandon led various units throughout his career executing counterterrorism and counter-insurgency missions to support presidential taskings. He recently served as the Assistant Director of Operations where he helped lead a \$20 million flying program that produced 15,000 combat flying hours, the most at the Air Force's most deployed base. As an Evaluator

Pilot on the U-28 aircraft, Brandon flew 299 special operations combat missions, commanding more than 150, in support of multiple operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa. He received a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from the U.S. Air Force Academy, where he was the top graduate of all U.S. Air Force commissioning programs, and a Master of Philosophy and Ph.D. in Public Policy Analysis from the Pardee RAND Graduate School. Brandon received the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal for his volunteer work, which includes building affordable homes and raising funds for cleft-lip surgeries and microloans in developing countries. **Placement:** Export Import Bank





**Max Ferguson** is from New Rochelle, New York, and is a Major in the United States Army. As an Infantry Officer, Max deployed five times to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Western Africa in both conventional and Special Operations units. He led Soldiers in Baghdad, Iraq, and deployed three times to Afghanistan, leading Soldiers in Kandahar Province and later as a commander in the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment. Max most recently deployed as a Task Force commander to Northern Cameroon, working closely with the United States Ambassador, host nation military and regional government leaders, and United States and foreign agencies in support of regional security and stabilization initiatives. Max

currently works for the Chief of Staff of the United States Army. Max volunteers for numerous wounded veteran, educational, and community outreach organizations. An avid outdoorsman himself, Max enjoys introducing fishing and paddling as therapeutic activities for wounded soldiers and organizing outdoors events for youth groups. Max's service awards include two Bronze Star medals and the Purple Heart. He holds a Bachelor of Science from the United States Military Academy at West Point and graduated with highest distinction while earning a master's degree from United States Naval War College. **Placement:** Department of State



**Jeffrey Howard** is a proud native of Appalachian Kentucky. Despite the challenges of his youth, including parents who suffered from opioid addiction, Jeff attended Union College, where he graduated in 2010 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and became a first-generation college graduate. During his undergraduate career, Jeff served the local community by volunteering more than 1,000 hours. Due to his passion for the sciences and serving others, Jeff went on to medical school at the University of Louisville, where he graduated in 2014. Subsequently, he remained in Louisville to train in general surgery. He currently is on a brief sabbatical from his surgical

training, during which time he has served his home state of Kentucky as Commissioner of Public Health and Chief Medical Officer. In this role, he manages the State's public health system, which includes more than 2,000 employees and a \$500 million budget. Dr. Howard's primary focus has been the opioid crisis, adverse childhood events, leading a bold transformation project, and emphasizing local health priorities. While serving in this role, he has simultaneously completed a Master of Public Health at Harvard University and a Master of Business Administration at Northern Kentucky University. **Placement:** Office of the Vice President



**Heidi Overton** is from Gallup, New Mexico, and is a proud graduate of the University of New Mexico (UNM) Combined BA/MD program. She is a general surgery resident at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and is currently doing a postdoctoral research fellowship. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in Clinical Investigation from the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, and her dissertation work on post-operative opioid prescribing has gained national attention, including foundation grants and private business research partnerships. She concurrently studies appropriateness of medical care through the innovative Improving Wisely program, where she leads quality metric development. Heidi holds national leadership positions as the Resident and Associate Society Liaison Representative to the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer and the resident member of the Surgical Outcomes Club Board of Directors. During medical school, Heidi was appointed by Governor Susana Martinez to serve on the UNM Board of Regents. This two-year term encompassed fiduciary and full-voting responsibilities for all business and clinical operations of the university and health system. Heidi graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Health, Medicine, and Human Values from UNM and received her medical degree from the UNM School of Medicine. **Placement:** White House Office of American Innovation



**Alberto Ramos** is a Lieutenant in the United States Navy. He currently serves as an active duty submarine warfare officer serving as the flag aide and recent speechwriter to Vice Admiral Ted Carter, Superintendent of the United States Naval Academy. He completed multiple deployments aboard the fast attack boat USS *CITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI* (SSN-705) and qualified as a Department of Energy Nuclear Engineer. During this time, Alberto was responsible for the successful planning and execution of all ship's tasking; including several missions vital to national security, complex multilateral naval exercises, and transits through some of the most challenging straits in the world. Alberto earned a Master of Public Policy from the University of Chicago and a Bachelor of Science with Distinction in Political Science from the United States Naval Academy. He was selected as a 2018 Next Generation National Security Fellow with the Center for a New American Security. He is also a lifetime member of the Naval Submarine League and was the youngest member elected to its Advisory Council. He has volunteered extensively for a myriad of organizations throughout Las Vegas, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. Alberto is a proud native of Las Vegas and currently resides in Washington, D.C. with his wife, Kennedy. **Placement:** U.S. International Development Finance Corporation



**Dakota Roberson** is an Assistant Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Idaho, where he is an Associate of the Center for Advanced Energy Studies. Dakota leads an interdisciplinary research team studying electrical grid stability and security and is an appointed Nuclear Engineering Affiliate Faculty. He has collaborated with numerous national laboratories, electric utilities, private stakeholders, and universities to mitigate 21st century energy system threats; his engineering courses are likewise structured to prepare students for careers in this area. Before joining the University of Idaho, he was with Sandia National Laboratories. To better serve his region, Dakota

promotes STEM education through secondary school outreach and public speaking engagements to spark the curiosity of young scientists. He also volunteers as an advisor to regional energy infrastructure programs and a tech startup. Dakota was awarded the Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering with a Graduate Minor in Statistics at the University of Wyoming, where he won the Fisher Innovation Challenge for contributions to energy storage control. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering, Minor Mathematics, from the same institution. In his free time, he is an outdoorsman and motorcyclist and can be found playing guitar or painting during the winter months. **Placement:** Department of Defense



**Amit Sachdev** is an interventional gastroenterologist focused on developing novel approaches to fight obesity. He completed his training at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School and is one of the only fellowship-trained bariatric endoscopists in the world. Amit is passionate about healthcare improvement and innovation and has led one of the largest social media campaigns against colorectal cancer. He has won numerous awards for his community outreach initiatives and had the honor of being spotlighted at the largest professional meeting within his field. His work has been published in peer-reviewed literature and has been presented both nationally and internationally. Amit has

worked in diverse clinical settings, including leading academic centers such as Harvard, county hospitals like Bellevue and LA County, and several veterans' hospitals, which gives him a unique perspective of the health system. At the Rockefeller University, he had the privilege of studying cell signaling with Gunter Blobel, winner of the Nobel Prize in Medicine. Amit is committed to serving the underserved and has volunteered in many international settings, including missions in Tanzania and India. Amit was a Presidential Honors Scholar and received his Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Economics and his M.D. from New York University. **Placement:** Department of Health and Human Services



**Adam Scher** is a Major in the United States Army. He was born and raised in New York City and currently serves as the Aide-de-Camp to General Scott Miller, the commander of all NATO and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan. As an Infantry Officer, he has led Soldiers in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, serving in the 101st Airborne Division, the 82nd Airborne Division, and in Germany. Adam previously served as an Assistant Professor and Debate Coach in the Department of Social Sciences at West Point, where he taught courses on American politics and participated in debates with the Bard Prison Initiative. He continues to volunteer with the Fire Department of New York, where he has interned as

a member of its Center for Counterterrorism and Disaster Preparedness and guest lectured at an annual seminar on crisis leadership and the dangers of terrorism in megacities. Adam is a Council on Foreign Relations Term Member and an Advisory Board Member to the American Democracy Month Council. He received a Bachelor of Science in Political Science with a concentration in American Government from the United States Military Academy at West Point and a Master of Public Administration with a specialization in International Security Policy from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. **Placement:** White House Office of Management and Budget



**Ryan Tauriainen** is from Grants Pass, Oregon. Most recently, Ryan directed charter school Early Childhood Strategy in Washington, D.C. In that role, he created and led programming that produced the highest performing schools in the district. Ryan's work helped multiple local education agencies meet Federal requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act. Ryan began his career in Hawaii, with Teach For America, where his classroom became the top performing in the state. In 2012, Ryan became the youngest principal in the United States at the age of 26. His leadership pushed student proficiency scores to over 90%. Ryan was twice named "Most Outstanding Principal"

by the DC Association of Chartered Public Schools and was The Washington Post's "Principal of the Year" in 2016. In 2017, Ryan founded his consultancy "KinderProgress" to assist families in finding education programs for their children and to provide free resources for teachers across the Nation. As a leader, Ryan has won national awards from Leading For Children, the Council for Exceptional Children, and the National Council of Teachers of English. He is the author of five books. Ryan received a Bachelor of Arts from Middlebury College on a National Merit Scholarship and received a Master of Education from Chaminade University of Honolulu. **Placement:** Department Education





**Donald Williams** is an active-duty Major in the United States Air Force in combat aviation. He is a graduate of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, Oklahoma State University with a Master of Science in Engineering and Technology Management, and has a Ph.D. in Global Leadership student at the Indiana Institute of Technology. Donald has planned and deployed in multinational counterdrug operations, and in combat missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He directed a \$22 million annual bilateral operations program for the largest combat wing in the Air Force, and has commanded missions in the senior

United States Command and Control agency in Japan. He is an Executive Officer, responsible for strategic-level coordination for 26 organizations, with \$3 billion military assets, serving over 26,000 joint military personnel and families in Okinawa, Japan. Donald has completed community building events in over 10 countries and has led more than 2,000 volunteers in 10 years. He created an orphanage volunteer partnership in the Netherlands Antilles, taught math and English in a rural community in Ghana, led global disaster relief efforts, and is founder and director of an outreach organization in Japan. **Placement:** Department of Housing and Urban Development