



TENNESSEE
WORLD
AFFAIRS
COUNCIL

January 2026 Newsletter



Dr. Liane Hentschke
Executive Director

From the Executive Director

Happy New Year and warm greetings from the Tennessee World Affairs Council!

As we welcome 2026, TNWAC is pleased to share an exciting lineup of Distinguished Speakers and programs for the Winter–Spring season. We are deeply grateful to our members, donors, and partners whose continued support allows us to bring timely and meaningful global conversations to Tennessee.

Our season begins on January 21, featuring Mr. Terrence Burns, who will explore the power of the Olympic brand and the geopolitics of global sport. Throughout the spring, our programs will address critical international issues shaping the world—and influencing the daily lives of Americans.

In February, we will welcome Ambassador Michael McKinley, who will examine U.S. engagement with Latin America, and Ms. Chidima Blyden, who will discuss Africa's growing economic and strategic importance.

Continuing our focus on global economic trends, Seth Bernstein, President and CEO of AllianceBernstein will join former Mayor Karl Dean in March for a follow-up conversation on the U.S. and global economy. We are also pleased to continue our partnership with the Center for Global Engagement at the University of Tennessee and the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce for these upcoming events.

Earlier this year, TNWAC launched its first webinar of 2026 with Miroslav and Emejdi, featuring a compelling discussion with Mark Reese on China's expanding influence in Serbia and its implications for Western security. Additional Global Eats programs, celebrating international culture and cuisine, will be announced soon.

We thank you for your continued engagement and look forward to welcoming you to our upcoming events.

Explore International Careers

GLOBAL HEALTH / INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM OFFICER

In this role, you will support and manage programs addressing global health challenges, including disease prevention, maternal and child health, and health system strengthening. You will work with governments, NGOs, and multilateral organizations to design, monitor, and evaluate initiatives that improve health outcomes in low and middle-income countries.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE / ECONOMIC POLICY SPECIALIST

As an International Trade / Economic Policy Specialist, you'll analyze global markets, trade agreements, and economic trends. You'll support policy development related to trade, investment, and economic cooperation, helping governments and international organizations promote sustainable growth and fair participation in the global economy.

Volunteer Spotlight:



Sebastian Trevino Lopez

Meet Sebastian Trevino Lopez, a TNWAC marketing volunteer driven by a strong sense of purpose and global responsibility.

An International Business student at Belmont University, Sebastian was born and raised in Austin, Texas, where his passion for sustainability and impact-driven work took shape. He brings a thoughtful, business-minded approach to TNWAC's marketing efforts, helping amplify conversations on global affairs while focusing on long-term, sustainable solutions.

Sebastian's dedication to using business as a force for good reflects the next generation of leaders we are proud to support and engage through our work.

Did You Know?

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading UN agency on migration and works in over



175 countries to support migrants and governments. IOM promotes safe, orderly, and regular migration while providing humanitarian assistance to displaced populations and people affected by crises.

Sponsor Highlight

We are grateful to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Center for Global Development, for its support and valued partnership. UT Knoxville's commitment to academic excellence, civic engagement, and global learning strengthens our mission to expand educational opportunities and prepare students to succeed in an increasingly interconnected global environment.

Thank you for your support!



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

CENTER FOR GLOBAL
ENGAGEMENT



Board Member Highlight: **Sabrina Miller**

This month, we're proud to highlight Sabrina Miller, a valued TNWAC Board member and Senior VP at Pinnacle Bank, where she provides expert guidance to commercial and private banking clients in Nashville. Before joining Pinnacle, Miller was a senior vice president at Truist, where she worked for nearly 10 years, serving for-profit and not-for-profit clients. Originally from Brazil, Sabrina came to the U.S. on a Division I tennis scholarship and went on to build a global career in finance. Her international perspective and commitment to community service embody TNWAC's mission. We're beyond grateful for her leadership and global insight!

Guest Columnist

On January 1, 1892, 134 years ago, an Irish teenager named Annie Moore, accompanied by her younger brothers Anthony and Phillip, disembarked onto the brand-new Ellis Island Inspection Station in New York Harbor. The three youngsters planning to reunite with their parents were the pilot experiments for the Immigration Act of 1891. This act of Congress intended to federalize and regulate what had been up to that point an ad hoc and ultimately unsustainable immigration system. While Annie Moore endured a largely undistinguished existence, her legacy lives on with the approximately 40 percent of Americans whose lineage traces directly to 1 or more of the 12 million immigrants who were also processed on this tiny artificial island in New York Harbor.

These immigrants, primarily from Europe, had many reasons to permanently abandon their homelands and seek a brighter future on a new continent. Jews, both in the Russian Empire and also throughout Europe, had suffered centuries of persecution and were undeniably lured by America's constitutional guarantee of religious freedom. An even larger cohort of Catholic Italians, mostly from Southern Italy, and hampered by a lack of economic opportunity, also boarded ships bound for a new home with seemingly endless possibilities. They were joined by Poles, Greeks, Hungarians, Swedes— like my own Great-Great Grandparents— and more.

While each family had their own unique story, these largely impoverished Europeans knew they had no future in a repressive and rigidly hierarchical Europe. What was once a country predominantly descended from English Protestants was suddenly transformed into a melting pot. However, by the 1920s, American patience with these new arrivals was wearing thin. Public services and social cohesion in American cities had been stretched to the limit, to the point where an angry public demanded Congress act again. And in 1924, Congress did exactly that, passing the Johnson-Reed Act, which established quotas of 150,000 immigrants and put Ellis Island out of business for good, at least as an immigration processing facility. In 1965, following four decades of decay, President Lyndon Johnson incorporated Ellis Island into the Statue of Liberty National Monument until 1972 when it in New York Harbor was transitioned into its permanent status as the National Museum of Immigration. Now, as the United States grapples with a new variety of immigrant, hailing from faraway lands such as India, Iraq, and Ethiopia, let us not lose sight that our current immigration debate is nothing new, rather, it has been occurring since long before Annie Moore made her fateful disembarkation onto a tiny artificial island in New York Harbor.



Samuel Waite

Member of the Board of Directors

MEMBERSHIP 2026

Start the new year with a global perspective! By joining or renewing your Tennessee World Affairs Council membership for 2026, you're investing in a more informed and connected Tennessee.

Your support brings world-class speakers, educational programs, and international engagement opportunities to our community, right here in our own backyard.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- **Discounted Programming** – Enjoy a *35% discount* on TNWAC events and programs
- **Exclusive Event Invitations** – Receive invitations to members-only events featuring prominent speakers
- **Complimentary “Global Post” Newsletter** – Stay informed with curated insights on world affairs
- **Access to the National Conference of the World Affairs Councils of America (WACA)** – Engage with global thought leaders at this prestigious gathering
- **Free Webinars** – You can register for any webinar and attend for free

STUDENT

\$25

MILITARY

\$30

TEACHER

\$35

INDIVIDUAL

\$85

FAMILY

\$140

Whether you're a student, professional, or lifelong learner, your membership helps build bridges across borders and fosters the global awareness our state needs to thrive.

Stay curious. Stay connected.

Support global education in Tennessee by joining today!



JOIN NOW

TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES



CAMBODIA, VIETNAM, & THE MEKONG RIVER

Mar 2 - Mar 16



SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI RIVER VOYAGE

Mar 3 - Mar 11

REGISTER NOW



Support TNWAC

As a nonpartisan nonprofit organization, our mission is to **promote international awareness, understanding**, and connections to enhance the region's global stature and to prepare Tennesseans to thrive in our increasingly complex and interconnected world.

1

Bring a friend to one of our events and encourage them to join us as a member!

2

Introduce our team to an **expert in your network** to join us as a speaker in 2026!

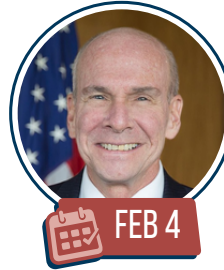
3

Encourage **businesses you love to join TNWAC** as a corporate member or sponsor!



JAN 21

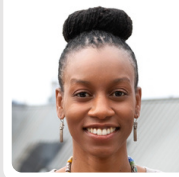
DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES
The power of the Olympic brand and the geopolitics of global sport
Terrence Burns, Chairman and Owner
T. Burns Sport Group, LLC



FEB 4

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES
Latin America in a Post-Liberal World
Ambassador Michael McKinley

SAVE THE DATE



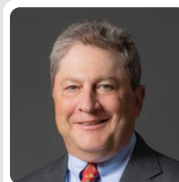
Chidi Blyden
February 18, 2026



Troy Stangarone
March 4, 2026



Major General Corey Martin
March 18, 2026



Seth Bernstein
March 25, 2026



Frank Lavin
April 2, 2026