

2016

AFSA ANNUAL REPORT





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ABOUT AFSA

The American Foreign Service Association, established in 1924, is both professional association and exclusive representative for the U.S. Foreign Service. AFSA's more than 16,500 members include active-duty and retired Foreign Service officers and specialists at the Department of State, as well as members of the Foreign Service from the U.S. Agency for International Development, Foreign Agricultural Service, Foreign Commercial Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Broadcasting Board of Governors.



MISSION

AFSA is both the principal advocate for the long-term institutional wellbeing of the professional career Foreign Service and responsible for safeguarding the interests of AFSA members. AFSA also seeks to increase understanding among the American people about the vital role of the U.S. Foreign Service in sustaining American global leadership.

WHO WE SERVE

AFSA exists to support the United States Foreign Service, which deploys worldwide to protect and serve America's people, interests and values. The Foreign Service is the only U.S. government entity that is globally deployed with an enduring physical presence in almost every country in the world, creating an enormous competitive advantage for America and for Americans from all walks of life.

NEARLY **80%**

**of active-duty members of the Foreign Service
choose to join AFSA, the voice of the Foreign Service.**

AFSA's members are career professionals who volunteer to live and work abroad for roughly two-thirds of their careers—usually serving abroad with their families, but sometimes unable to—representing America to the people and leaders of other countries.



**Members of the
Foreign Service are
posted to more than**

270 U.S. EMBASSIES, CONSULATES AND OTHER MISSIONS
**that are scattered across the globe—most in difficult
and many in dangerous environments.**

Members of the Foreign Service are famously reticent about tooting their own horns. After all, American diplomats pride themselves on coaxing a partner abroad to say “yes” without leaving a trace of their advocacy efforts. What works so well abroad, however, can be a handicap at home, where fellow Americans often know little about the Foreign Service. Those who know the Foreign Service best, such as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, are not so reticent with their praise, calling the Foreign Service *“one of the most skilled, loyal, and motivated workforces of any organization on the planet. Our foreign affairs and development professionals are truly among the most dedicated of our public servants, on the front lines safeguarding our nation’s security.”*

The Foreign Service Act of 1980, the legal foundation for the Foreign Service, opens by declaring that “a career Foreign Service, characterized by excellence and professionalism, is essential in the national interest.” AFSA speaks for its members individually, ensuring that the law is upheld and due process followed, but also, crucially, for the long-term health and vigor of the Foreign Service as an institution, certain in the conviction that a career Foreign Service, characterized by excellence and professionalism, is in America’s national interest. ●



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ambassador Barbara Stephenson

I am pleased to report that 2016 was a very productive year for the American Foreign Service Association. AFSA reached new records for membership as we increasingly aligned AFSA's professional staff behind the strategic vision of the Governing Board and made important strides in improving the Association's governance.

The Governing Board's strategic vision provides the organizing principle for this annual report, which describes the Association's work through the lens of the three pillars, or work streams, that structure AFSA's efforts on behalf of the Foreign Service:

Outreach to create a constituency for the Foreign Service by telling our proud story to the American people.

Workforce planning to ensure a healthy, attractive career path that guarantees a steady stream of top-flight new members and a deep bench of experienced senior leaders 20 years later.

Inreach to develop a nuanced understanding of members' aspirations and concerns so that AFSA can best serve our members' interests.

I remain convinced, a year and a half into my two-year tenure as president, that a strong professional career Foreign Service is in the national interest. Like nine in ten Americans, I support strong American global leadership, and I know, as a career Foreign Service officer myself, that such leadership rests largely on the shoulders of a strong professional career Foreign Service. And I believe that AFSA plays an indispensable role as the principal advocate for the long-term wellbeing of the Foreign Service as an institution.

A few highlights from our work this year:

Improving governance. Working under the guidance of a professional registered Parliamentarian and AFSA's Governance Committee, and building on the work of the previous Governing Board, the Governing Board systematically reviewed AFSA's committee structure to bring it more closely into line with AFSA's bylaws and with established best practices, which call for close alignment between committees and the Governing Board.

The Governing Board is increasingly able to delegate complex, time-consuming tasks to properly constituted committees that report back to the Governing Board with recommendations to be debated and approved or rejected. As AFSA hews ever more closely to our bylaws, we reduce risk and increase accountability, which, as the bylaws make clear, rests with the Governing Board elected by the membership.

Establishing a Professional Policy Issues directorate charged with leading the association's analysis, development and articulation of policies; conducting research on workforce issues affecting the Foreign Service; and fortifying AFSA's reputation in policy circles.

With the creation of PPI, we established a home base at AFSA for workforce planning, enabling the organization to respond instantly and authoritatively to proposals that affect the institutional strength of the Foreign Service. Examples include marshaling arguments against lateral entry into the (already full) Foreign Service mid-ranks at State and working to expand the Consular Fellows Program to address the current consular adjudicator gap while providing entry-level officers greater opportunity for in-cone experience early in their careers.

PPI also laid the foundations for AFSA to shape a longer-term agenda driven by a nuanced understanding of members' aspirations and concerns. One key new initiative: Structured conversations to allow us to hear directly from members. Over the course of 18 lunches with small groups, I heard members describe their careers in the Foreign Service. The good: the mission of the Foreign Service and the caliber of colleagues. The bad—and even the ugly: bureaucratic processes that make even harder the wear and tear of packing everything and everyone up every few years to deploy globally, as our mission requires.

As we have worked internally at AFSA to improve governance and clean up our processes, so AFSA has worked on behalf of members to improve the processes that affect them, their ability to do their jobs well, and, crucially, their families.

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Now that we have established a continuous feedback loop to talk to a broad swath of members, AFSA is in a strong position as the Voice of the Foreign Service to identify pain points and work constructively to address them so that the Foreign Service, operating at the top of its game, can deliver the strong global leadership that Americans want and the world needs. ●

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Ambassador (ret.) Charles A. Ford

I am pleased to report that the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) is in excellent financial health. We expanded our very strong membership base while initiating a strategic re-alignment of our resources to advance the over-arching vision set by our President Barbara Stephenson and the Governing Board. As we enter 2017, our financial health will allow us both to take advantage of new opportunities while also respond to serious challenges to our core mission as the voice of the Foreign Service.

We end 2016 with
16,601
MEMBERS

Our staffing level now stands
at 32 staff supported by a
\$4.5million
OPERATING BUDGET

We have a
\$2.8million **RESERVE**
dedicated to support for the operating budget
for unanticipated emergencies and capital
maintenance expenditures.

We also have
\$8million
in a restricted reserve to support
our Scholarship program.

In addition, we own debt-free our headquarters building. This year we were able to pay off a loan from our Scholarship fund that allowed us to finance the renovation of our building ten years ago. By paying off this below market rate loan three years in advance, we created important new room for priority activities in our operating budget. Impressive achievements given the lack of a dues increase in 2016.

The most significant decision with regard to resources taken this year, however, was the creation for the first time of separate operating budgets for our two 501(c)(3) entities – the Scholarship Fund and the Fund for American Diplomacy (FAD). With \$100,000 of funds from the operating reserve injected into the initial new FAD budget, the Fund is positioned in 2017 to develop a fundraising program and to begin to execute activities that enhance our outreach and the promotion of diplomacy.

This new budget and its potential to expand our fundraising totals will be vital to our ability to build-out our program to advance the understanding of the American public and our key stakeholders of the importance of diplomacy and the Foreign Service. Our strong financial position as we start the new year gives us the resources to continue our long-standing work in support of workforce planning and the union while opening up new programs to advance the mission of our professional association. ●



STATE VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Angie Bryan

2016 has been a busy year for AFSA's Labor-Management team. Since their caseload includes the MSI and OCP cohort grievances, I won't cover those issues in my report. Instead, this report focuses on the various policy issues we've been working hard to advance.

6/8 Rule Changes:

In the past, people who served overseas but were unable to complete their tours, even for reasons beyond their control, ended up having to count that overseas time as D.C. time when it came to the 6/8 rule. In other words, someone who served five years in D.C. and then went overseas, only to have to be medically curtailed before the end of his or her tour, ended up having that overseas time added to his or her D.C. time clock. While AFSA agreed that the overseas time should not necessarily count as overseas time in cases where people did not complete the majority of their tours, we had long argued that such time should be considered as neutral, counting as neither overseas nor D.C. time. This year CDA agreed and changed the way they calculate D.C. time in such cases.

Assignment Restrictions:

In 2015 then-State VP Matthew Asada launched a major effort to compel the Department to formalize in writing its policies and procedures with regard to assignment restrictions. Diplomatic Security can place an assignment restriction on an employee's security clearance

whereby the employee may not serve at certain posts in order to prevent potential targeting and harassment by foreign intelligence services as well as to lessen foreign influence and/or foreign preference security concerns. After extended discussions and multiple meetings, Diplomatic Security and AFSA finally agreed not only on a process, but also on the precise wording of an entirely new FAM section outlining it. As a result, dozens of affected employees now have a much better understanding of the process, as well as a way forward should they wish to have their situation reviewed.

Bidding Reform:

AFSA has long looked for ways to improve the bidding process, one of the biggest "pain points" for our member. After consultations with and input from AFSA, this year the Department not only released the promotion lists before bidding began, but also shortened and simplified the bidding process. AFSA continues to provide feedback to the Department on how the 2017 season can be even better.

Charleston:

In November I traveled to Charleston to meet with CGFS, HR Shared Services, and Charleston-based FS employees. We discussed what CGFS is doing to reduce their backlog, learned about common mistakes that get employees into trouble and how to prevent them, and clarified some important issues with regard to the Department's shared leave programs.

Consular Staffing:

AFSA has long been concerned about the visa adjudicator gap and its potential impact on the ELO career path. Specifically, we did NOT want to ELOs to do two or more 100% consular tours in a row with no opportunity to work in-cone. AFSA embraced the Department's Consular Fellows program, contributing multiple suggestions as to how the Department could increase recruitment to the program, including through making it easier for family members to participate.

Couriers:

After several years of lobbying by AFSA, the Department increased the TIC for FS-4 Couriers from 15 to 20 years. AFSA had been pressing for this change because the very low promotion rate (an average of 5% or less) from FS-04 to FS-03 resulted in mandatory retirement for many before they became eligible for any kind of an annuity, as well as needlessly getting rid of many experienced and valuable employees.

EFM Employment:

For years AFSA has been arguing that EFM employment (or the difficulty/lack thereof) is one of the biggest complaints our members have, especially when it came to the non-portability of security clearances. Consequently, we were delighted when the Department finally announced the creation of the Foreign Service Family Reserve Corps, a mechanism which will allow EFMs to maintain their security clearance when they transfer.

Employee Organizations and Affinity Groups:

AFSA continues to work closely with and rely heavily on several employee organizations and affinity groups, and was delighted to welcome two new ones (one focused on tandem couples and one focused on parents of children with special needs) in 2016. AFSA co-hosted a panel on assignment restrictions with AAFAA, frequently consulted with GLIFAA on issues of relevance to its members, pushed hard for the Department to

respond to proposals suggested via AFSA by Balancing Act to improve conditions for new parents, and lobbied the Department to address issues of concern to Working in Tandem and (separately) the Foreign Service Families with Disabilities Alliance. When the shortened bidding season made it more difficult for families awaiting post clearances for medical issues, AFSA stepped in and brought the issue to the attention of Department officials in a position to help.

FSI Rosslyn Annex:

As soon as it learned of the Department's plans to open an FSI annex in Rosslyn, AFSA began advocating on behalf of future students, particularly with regard to ensuring that those students had access to the same childcare, lactation, parking, and transportation options as their NFATC colleagues. When a temporary problem occurred during the first month of operations, AFSA stepped in and the problem was resolved overnight.

Labor Relations Course:

AFSA's LM team collaborated with HR/PC and FSI to create an online Labor Management Course that is scheduled to launch in the spring of 2017. The course will include the nuts and bolts of labor management relations, information on employee, management and union rights and obligations as well as some historical information on AFSA's formation as the exclusive representative and professional organization of the Foreign Service.

Linked Assignments:

This year, AFSA agreed to a cap of 110 linked assignments available to eligible bidders who agreed to serve in positions advertised in the 2017 Priority Staffing Post (PSP) Cycle. We also agreed that, if the 110 links were filled by December 15, 2016, the number of links could be increased to 150. In addition, in an attempt to encourage lower-level bidders, a limit of 50 links was set for Officers and Specialists at FS-02 and above. We also

obtained agreement from the Department to finalize the 2017 linked assignments agreement much earlier in the year.

MSIs:

In 2016 the Department initiated formal negotiations over a new pilot process for awarding MSIs in 2017 and beyond. Throughout the negotiations, AFSA successfully enshrined several protections for our members, such as explicitly stating a percentage of MSIs the Department must award per year with a safeguard provision that requires the Department to renegotiate any proposed decreases of this percentage in the event of a severe budget crisis. The new MSI process not only maintains the integrity of the rank order system used by the promotion boards, but also maintains bidding privileges for the top group of employees who are recommended but not reached for promotion. An additional highlight of the new process is the ability of employees temporarily removed from the list of MSI recipients due to low rankings and/or discipline cases to receive retroactive MSIs if their case is successfully overturned, with no restriction on timeframe.

Shared Leave Programs:

The Department established a Leave Bank in 2015 to provide a second shared leave program in addition to the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program. In 2016, with the strong support of AFSA, the Leave Bank Board increased the cap limitations for the annual leave from 80 to 160 hours and the lifetime maximum from 240 to 480 hours.

Transit Subsidies:

Shortly after receiving a letter from AFSA asking the Department to increase the transit subsidy to the new amount authorized by Congress in December 2015, the Department agreed to do so, resulting in additional savings for Department employees using the program.

Vance Memo:

After several months of negotiations between AFSA and DS/OSI, in June 2016 OSI began recording interviews conducted in the U.S. of employees under investigation. While OSI is not required to inform or remind employees of their right to representation at the beginning of each interview, AFSA did manage to get them to agree to notify employees verbally that they are being recorded prior to the start of every interview. OSI also agreed to let AFSA review the recordings from initial interviews, and to provide AFSA and the employee a private consultation space when needed.

Of course, in addition to all of the above, we worked through our quarterly meetings with CDA, DS, FLO, HR/PE, IRM, and MED, as well as through our every-other-week collaboration meetings with the HR PDAS to resolve a variety of issues affecting our members.

As always, should you have an issue or a concern you wish for us to consider addressing, please reach out at afsa@state.gov and let us know about it. If you prefer not to contact us directly, feel free to reach out to your AFSA Post Rep instead. Many of the above policy changes were the direct result of members letting us know about problems affecting them. We can't fix everything, but we certainly can't fix what we don't know is broken. ●



USAID VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sharon Wayne

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Together we are making a difference. 2016 has been a pivotal year at USAID and words like “transformation” and “redesign” have served as the rallying cry.

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AFSA's persistent illumination of the issues members identify as compromising to morale and the integrity of the Foreign Service career is showing results. As your AFSA VP, I have worked to uphold a strong, competitively hired, continuously trained, career Foreign Service managed under a transparent personnel system in accordance with the Foreign Service Act of 1980. The majority of these activities fall under Human Capital and Talent Management. The USAID performance management system has been a top member concern for years and I have stressed that employee involvement in developing a new system is not optional if it is to be successful.

USAID has been fortunate to have leadership who

appreciated that the weaknesses in HCTM were compromising the health of the entire Agency. The call for a complete overhaul of HCTM and the involvement of Foreign Service Officers throughout the process has been commendable. AFSA is currently negotiating the proposed redesigned performance management system. Last year's initiation of a USAID AFSA member standing committee has proven invaluable in serving our member's needs. Everyone deserves to be heard and continued member engagement with AFSA regarding the proposed changes posted on the HCTM website and continued participation in Agency webinars, surveys, focus groups and mock pilots will better ensure that the result is successful.

Our members are dedicated and wise and it shows in your feedback. I want to personally thank all who've participated in various ways for their passion for USAID's mission and the integrity of the Foreign Service career and to congratulate USAID FSO, William Hansen on his appointment to the Foreign Service Impasse Dispute Panel.

Over the past year AFSA has continued to press the Agency to address staffing challenges in a way that delivers on the long-term goal of fostering a strong and resilient Foreign Service, upholding the law enacted by the FSA of 1980. When the Agency moved to initiate hiring health officers at the midlevel, AFSA filed a negotiability appeal.

AFSA withdrew this appeal in February 2016 when the Agency agreed to halt its midlevel hiring and to focus on workforce planning in the HCTM Transformation. This was an appropriate response. The next appropriate response is an increase in entry level health officer hiring and appropriate promotions within the ranks. USAID acknowledged that workforce data and planning had not kept up with Agency needs and was insufficient to serve as an effective tool. USAID has made significant strides in this area and has named clean data and proper workforce planning as a top goal to be completed in 2017. This data will then serve as the sound foundation for addressing many of our concerns.

USAID has put a hold on AFSA requests such as a long-term lodging program and per diem for new hires in training due primarily to lack of adequate workforce data to justify program demand and the lack of a known overseas assignment at point of hire, respectively. Furthermore, adequate workforce planning will provide the needed justification for additional FSO hiring, development of FSO careers and lessening the over-reliance on auxiliary hiring mechanisms.

As USAID met its FSO hiring ceiling of 1,850 this year, AFSA will continue to call for the Agency to evaluate its

hiring needs especially in light of appropriately determining career FSO requirements and true limited-term needs.

With the goal of providing a forum for members to have candid discussions with the AFSA President and AFSA USAID VP regarding their careers and to gain feedback on how AFSA can better support its members, AFSA hosted its first “structured conversations” at USAID in 2016. Attendance was full and both sessions were well received and provided valuable feedback.

AFSA’s consistent call to reinstate the student loan repayment program saw movement this year with plans set in gear to offer the SLRP in 2017. Agency leadership is also placing increased emphasis on addressing member concerns around staff care needs such as PTSD, bullying and leadership training.

Each year brings new challenges and opportunities. As 2017 ushers in new faces with the change of Administration, I look forward to upholding our mandate and keeping the momentum of these much needed advancements moving forward. ●



FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Steve Morrison

The year began and ended with a frank discussion about the need to hire replacement officers if we are to avoid “back-sliding” or a return to a time when the Commercial Service had too few officers covering too many parts of the globe. The point was made throughout the year by AFSA that we are an “up-or-out” system that needs replacement officers just to stay even. In between, we had a healthy discussion with Management regarding priorities and why so much power, influence, and resources continue to flow to Washington/headquarters when we are primarily a field, client-facing organization. In an interesting development, the 2017-2018 Commercial Service Strategic Plan was finalized on November 10, immediately after the election and roughly two months before the incoming Trump Administration.

2016 saw some other key developments. Promotions increased year-over year - for the third straight year. MSIs and performance awards stayed roughly the same. Management, meanwhile, succeeded in bringing on board only one-half dozen new commercial officers, roughly half the size of the prior two classes.

That has us up to a rough steady-state complement of 255 officers. This is down somewhat from our high-water mark of 265 officers from only two years ago but still very good given historical standards (as low at 195 in 2008) and given the many challenges facing the country and newly-remonikered Commercial Service.

Headquarters travel and spending generated a lot of debate, questions and comments from the field, and puzzled looks. The fact that the Commercial Service – through appropriated funds and user fees – effectively pays roughly three-quarters of these expenses generated considerable discussion. Finally, the fact that the cost to remain physically in the Herbert Hoover building was going up faster than any other cost category – faster than security or ICASS – was a source of concern and one that will have to be watched closely if we are going to make it through tough, turbulent budget days ahead.

The end of the year saw the Director General formally hand in his resignation for January 20 at noon, but not before cataloging the many accomplishments of the Obama Administration trade team. That followed an important win in its own right as AFSA and FCS Management signed an MOU to settle an Implementation Dispute filed by AFSA. The disagreement was over Management’s unilateral decision to suspend officer participation in FSI’s pre-retirement training courses. As an indication of the popularity of these courses, 15 percent of commercial officers participated in one form of pre-retirement training or another in FY 2016. With the signing of this agreement and restoration of officer long-term language training back in September, we are back to where we started the year facing a difficult year ahead. ●



FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mark Petry

The Foreign Agricultural Service is growing stronger and strengthening our footprint overseas with:

140 Foreign Service officers
(and counting)

assigned to
93 overseas offices helping to link
U.S. agriculture to markets

in more than
171
countries

Positive budget environments in 2015 and 2016 allowed the American Foreign Service Association to positively engage FAS management about addressing long-term staffing challenges caused by years of short-term personnel fixes used to weather temporary budget constraints. Specifically, AFSA redoubled efforts to raise awareness of the critical need for succession planning. Our push led management to take concrete and measurable steps, yielding the largest incoming classes of officers ever. This process also led to the successful

and likely irrevocable adoption of a new competitive officer intake system that now includes outside hires.

However, FAS still faces many challenges in the medium term as the large new officer class slowly moves up. In the meantime, our middle and senior officer ranks will suffer from too few officers to fill all the available slots. While it will present opportunities for those looking for challenging stretch assignments, many officers will see constant overseas assignments and be stretched to the limit. Continuous engagement on succession planning and resource allocation will remain critical.

AFSA still has a lot to do on behalf of FAS FSOs in 2017. Meaningful succession planning for all levels and advances in training and education opportunities will remain top priorities. The second priority will be to make progress with management in negotiating new and robust performance management standards.

Overall, I remain optimistic about FAS's prospects for 2017. Regardless of the change in leadership with the new Administration, FAS's focus on the American economy, strengthening the contribution of exports to rural income, and close collaboration with a broad range of U.S. agricultural interests should continue to make for a winning combination. ●



RETIREE VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ambassador (ret.) Thomas Boyatt

My activities and the work of the staff persons associated with retiree matters fall into three categories.

First is individual service to retired members who have problems with our complicated retirement system or with other elements of the government. My colleagues Janet Hedrick and Todd Thurwachter do the heavy lifting here, helping hundreds of retirees through a range of challenges from explaining how to get the most out of their retirement benefits, resolving annuity and benefits problems, supporting surviving spouses at a difficult time, to the perennial complains about the idiosyncratic functioning of the WAE system. Although we can't "win them all," feedback from satisfied retirees confirms that our batting average is pretty high.

Second, we work to preserve retiree benefits at the institutional level, both in the legislative and executive spheres. The major challenge in this area during 2016 was the dramatic and OPM-sanctioned increases (averaging about 85%) in the long term care premiums in government sponsored programs. The policies are underwritten by John Hancock. We made common cause with AFGE and NARFE, whose impacted members were in the thousands and whose financial and legal resources dwarfed ours. We would have given serious consideration to joining either organization in a legal challenge but both decided that legal challenges would not prosper.

Accordingly, we concentrated on helping nearly

100 individual AFSA members deal constructively with the problem spikes, even arranging one-on-one counseling with the authorized representatives of the Federal LTC program, to find the best option for each enrollee.

AFSA also made every effort to educate members about the structure and functioning of the insurance industry in the current unique circumstances of extremely low interest rates which have lasted for a decade. Both the long-term care and health care industries continue to be under financial stress and we see no rapid improvements near term.

Finally, the Retiree Vice President is an officer of AFSA and has responsibilities as such. He/she is a member of the executive, finance/management/audit, and governance committees, and is expected to contribute to their work and perform other tasks assigned by the AFSA President or the board. During the past year I was involved in the following:

- Took the lead in asserting AFSA's statutory right to name members (not just approve management's nominees) of the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board (FSLRB) and the Foreign Service Grievance Board (FSGB). A distinguished retired Career Ambassador recently

became one of three members of the FSLRB, ensuring that that body will have a Foreign Service perspective, and AFSA's first two appointees became members of the FSGB in late 2016.

- During 2016 I advised the AFSA State Vice President on AFSA's response to the Department's appeal to overturn AFSA's victory in the 2013 MSI case. I helped draft the introduction and other sections of our response. The FSLRB upheld AFSA's victory in the first instance and rejected the Department's effort to overturn. The most important element in AFSA's victory is that it is

now settled law that the Secretary does not have the "unilateral, exclusive and unfettered" authority to grant MSIs, but can only do so under procedures negotiated with the Union.

- In mid-November I filed a request with the FSLRB to render an "information and guidance" determination on the Department's utilization of Section 1018 of the Foreign Service Act to justify its elimination of AFSA dues collection for retiring AFSA members. The FSLRB has docketed the Case as FS-PS-0002. We hope to have a finding in the first half of 2017. ●





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ian Houston

A VIBRANT ORGANIZATION

AFSA celebrated its 92nd anniversary this year, and in that rich tapestry we find multiple examples of how the organization has advanced the dual mission of AFSA as a union and professional association for the Foreign Service.

It is always a sincere privilege for me in my role as executive director to have moments with individuals who have been members of AFSA for over 50 years or more. These conversations remind me that effective leaders must see themselves as modest stewards, and always be respectful of that which has preceded them. Those tasked with helping lead organizations must also view respecting the past as affording nourishment for a healthy organizational future. If not, there is the genuine risk of allowing tradition or the thinking of “we have always done it that way” to dampen the spark of innovation that leads to necessary organizational change.

Speaking from the perspective of years of experience here at AFSA, I can report that your professional association and union is confident at this moment in addressing difficult questions that have gone unaddressed or unresolved.

AFSA is financially sound with a well-managed budget of

\$4.5m

AFSA also has a solid operating investment reserve of

\$2.8m

One particularly proud AFSA moment this year was that we paid off early an existing debt on a substantial renovation of the AFSA headquarters building that was completed 8 years ago.

Certainly very few organizations of our size and mission can say that they fully own the asset of a building in such a prime location in Washington, D.C. Moreover, this building is the spiritual home of the Foreign Service – owned by you as members. Additionally, AFSA again achieved a clean financial audit for 2016. This is an important outside assurance to obtain, but we are continually looking to improve. For example, at the end of 2016 we laid the foundation to complete an expert outside review of our scholarship fund in 2017. This review will help ensure that we are employing best practices. AFSA will make adjustments where appropriate in an effort to foster quality oversight of this sizable fund.

One of AFSA's most important resources and assets is the professional staff that supports the elected AFSA Governing Board in carrying out a vision on behalf of the membership. From the outset of the elected board's term which began in 2015, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, who chairs the board, and fellow

board members developed a clear and unencumbered strategic vision. This activity was effectively linked with the AFSA budget process in 2015 and 2016, which was overseen by AFSA Treasurer Ambassador Charles Ford and the Finance, Audit, and Management Committee. The fruit of this strategy has impacted the AFSA operational structure so that we are aligning resources with the fundamentals of the vision. These shifts are difficult, and take time to fully operationalize, but AFSA has taken significant and responsibly bold steps to enhance

capacity, eliminate waste, and realign. As we have aligned limited resources to further our goals in 2016, we have had the business sense to modify activities where it was strategically necessary to do so.

We also have made substantial strides on governance and parliamentary procedure, improved human resources practices, enhanced technological tools, focused fundraising goals, and have developed new management oversight mechanisms for work flow. ●

In short, AFSA has been a vibrant, healthy, and energetic organization that has made an impact in 2016. As an organization, AFSA is transforming and continuing to modernize, and we are laying the groundwork for the future. It is an exciting moment. I hope this report affords you a window into what we have achieved and where AFSA is headed.



The AFSA
Governing Board.

OUTREACH

CREATING A CONSTITUENCY FOR THE FOREIGN SERVICE



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson throws out the ceremonial first pitch during Foreign Service Night at Nationals Park.

INTRODUCING THE FOREIGN SERVICE TO AMERICA

AFSA's outreach efforts all contain an element of explaining to our fellow citizens what the Foreign Service is and why its work matters.



AFSA members being honored during Foreign Service Night at Nationals Park.

We took a large step in this direction on September 30, when the Washington Nationals baseball team celebrated Foreign Service Night at Nationals Park. During the pre-game festivities, in front of 40,000 fans in the stadium and countless tens of thousands watching on TV, Foreign Service members were honored for their service during the 'Spirit Awards' ceremony and Ambassador Barbara Stephenson threw out the ceremonial first pitch. She was introduced with these words: "Tonight she represents the 450 members of the United States Foreign Service joining us for the game as well as the 16,000 individuals serving America's people, interests and values around the world."

ENHANCING PARTNERSHIPS

As AFSA's strategic pillars were solidified at the end of 2015, our efforts refocused to reflect the new vision. On the communications side, public outreach and education became the overall focus and resources were realigned accordingly. Thanks to a new partnership with the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, we added a new part-time position whose sole focus is outreach and strategic partnerships. Consequently, AFSA has forged new connections with natural partners with national networks. These allow the association to amplify its message around the country down to the local level, connecting Foreign Service experts and volunteers with members of the public in all 50 states.

We have used our new capacity to build some very strong and meaningful strategic partnerships. AFSA has worked with these partners to combine forces and sync messaging, amplify our voice, leverage their existing networks, and work together to support America's global leadership role—which polling shows is backed by nine out of ten Americans. We work with these strategic partners to back up that leadership by, among other means, promoting a strong professional U.S. Foreign Service, a pillar of American global leadership. Our strategic partners are the U.S. Institute of Peace, Global Ties U.S., and the World Affairs Councils. In 2017, AFSA will build on our work in 2016 to cement a closer strategic partnership with the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, whose extensive network of public and private members is an ideal amplifier for AFSA's messages on the importance of the Foreign Service.

In addition, AFSA has embarked on a series of outreach partnerships with a variety of organizations; these relationships allow us to ensure that the Foreign Service viewpoint is represented and understood within these organizations and among their members. The list of such partners is significant and growing, and includes the American University, Road Scholar, the UN Association, Semester at Sea, the National Student Leadership Conference, Smithsonian Associates, Delta Phi Epsilon, Rotary International, Sister Cities International, the National Model UN, 4-H, and the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC).

Our 20-year-old partnership with the Road Scholar (formerly Elderhostel) organization keeps bringing us new opportunities for educating regular Americans about the Foreign Service, and our new connection with Smithsonian Associates will grow from one program to five in 2017. As part of this effort, new strategic thought was given to AFSA's existing 501(c)(3) organization, the Fund for American Diplomacy. The FAD will now become AFSA's dedicated vehicle for outreach, and we are working on enhancing its capacity and professionalizing its structure and fundraising mechanisms. ●



SPEAKERS BUREAU: CONNECTING WITH AMERICANS LOCALLY

Alongside this new outreach push, we have reinvigorated our Speakers Bureau, which now has more participants and scheduled events than ever before - specifically,

18% more speakers and 57% more events.



Ambassador Stephenson with student attendees at the 2016 National Model UN Conference.

**As of January 1, 2017,
AFSA's Speakers
Bureau had 375
members across 40
states, territories
and countries.**

They have engaged more than 4,500 members of the American public in discussing the importance of American diplomacy and the Foreign Service. In, 2016

84 individual speakers

(22% of all bureau members) were involved in 108 events in 15 states and D.C.

In 2016 Speakers Bureau events took place in Maryland, Virginia, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Ohio, Texas, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, California, Oregon, Alaska, and Washington, D.C. ●

ENGAGING STUDENTS

High school students are a significant part of our public outreach – to create fans of the Foreign Service, it is important to reach them early in order to make the case for America’s global leadership and the foundational role of the Foreign Service in maintaining that leadership. We have partnered with the World Affairs Councils, the National Model UN and 4-H to reach these audiences. AFSA’s highly successful essay contest continues to engage students, with a record number of submissions—over 700—this year and new or ongoing partnerships with the U.S. Institute of Peace, Semester at Sea and the National Student Leadership Conference.

Our university outreach also continues to gather steam. Our existing partnerships with schools such as American University bring us into contact with intelligent and enthusiastic young people. Our innovative diplomatic benchmarking project with graduate students at the University of Texas – Austin brings AFSA further into this space (see page 28). This year, AFSA also made a significant effort to reach out to and collaborate with Diplomats in Residence. To that end, our first reception for the DIRs in July was very successful and we expect to make that an annual event. ●



CONGRESSIONAL OUTREACH

In 2016, AFSA met with numerous members of Congress and their staffs in both the House and Senate, and were encouraged to find robust support on both sides of the aisle for maintaining strong American global leadership and appreciation for the critical role that the Foreign Service plays in that effort. AFSA's top legislative priorities included protecting the integrity of the Foreign Service personnel system, supporting Foreign Service families, ensuring members of the Foreign Service have the resources and support to carry out their duties in a reasonably safe and secure manner, and preserving a balanced and fair system of payment and benefits.

For the first time since 2002, the Congress passed a State authorization bill, the FY17 Department of State Authorities Act, which contained many provisions on which AFSA had direct input. While there were some items that we would have preferred to have more time and a better process to work out with Congress, there were many positive elements, including, among many, provisions related to diversity and inclusion, challenges to career opportunities pertaining to tandem couples as well as couples for whom only one spouse is in the Foreign Service, and best value contracting for local security guard forces.

AFSA also endeavored to work with the Senate and House Subcommittees on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs on workforce issues, such as maintaining a healthy flow through of Foreign Service personnel by ensuring stable and predictable hiring, protecting due process rights, and improving security processes.

To aid us in our advocacy outreach, AFSA established the Ambassadorial Advisory Council—a group comprised of well-regarded, retired career ambassadors who are the face of AFSA's advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill and serve as a sounding board for AFSA in its development of policy positions.

The AAC is supported by the AFSA professional staff, who track legislative developments and prepare briefing papers on AFSA's advocacy positions. Those positions are shaped by member feedback gathered in AFSA's new structured conversations initiative (see page 30).

We've also sought to fortify our partnerships with champions of the U.S. foreign affairs budget, foreign assistance and international exchanges, including with the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, Global Ties U.S. and their affiliates across the U.S. These efforts will continue to be a focus in 2017. ●



(Top) Ambassador Stephenson with Denver Mayor Michael Hancock.



(Bottom) Ambassador Stephenson with Rep. Lois Frankel.

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

AFSA's flagship publication covering foreign affairs, the practice of diplomacy and the U.S. Foreign Service from an insider's perspective for almost 100 years broke new ground in 2016, helping foster new partnerships and raising critical issues for diplomacy.

The July-August focus on career diplomacy today offered a look at Foreign Service hiring, family member employment, tandem issues and a roadmap for new hires, as well as a guide to opportunities with the State Department for students. This issue was widely shared both inside and outside the Foreign Service community.

The September focus on AFSA awards featured an interview with the trailblazing Ambassador Ruth Davis—winner of AFSA's 2016 Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award. Her speech, also published in the Journal, and the interview, served as an outstanding illustration of the best of the Foreign Service.

Other highlights for the year were the March issue focus on "Women in the Foreign Service: Making Strides Through a Half Century," an April deep dive into humanitarian diplomacy, and a look at how to tackle corruption in June. December's comprehensive look at the new Russia 25 years after the fall of the Soviet Union sparked the largest Journal ever at 120 pages.

FOREIGN SERVICE BOOKS

AFSA's imprint and publishing division brings diplomacy to life by telling the stories of the Foreign Service to the American public, primarily through the popular introduction to the Foreign Service, *Inside a U.S. Embassy: Diplomacy at Work*. The 2011 (3rd) edition continues to be used widely by universities, the military and the State Department to help the American public understand the role and value of diplomacy. Revenue from book sales goes to support AFSA's Fund for American Diplomacy. The book is also used to help prepare individuals engaging in outreach efforts through the Speakers Bureau. ●





Where
in the
World?

WORKFORCE PLANNING

**A STRONG FOREIGN SERVICE AS A PILLAR OF STRONG
AMERICAN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP**



Members of the AFSA Governing Board with Dr. Beth Fisher-Yoshida following a discussion on 360 feedback in the Foreign Service.

WORKFORCE AND LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

AFSA is continually engaged in a constructive dialogue with State's Bureau of Human Resources and other key stakeholders on Foreign Service workforce issues.

This year AFSA weighed in on the Department of State's Five-Year Workforce and Leadership Succession Plan, 2016-2020, which the Department prepares every year in order to take stock of its human capital needs and to identify challenges and advances in the areas of recruiting, hiring, staffing and training. Working together, we strengthened the narrative by ensuring it clearly defined today's workforce challenges—the mid-level staffing bulge and consular adjudicator gap. AFSA also urged the Department to elaborate on how it plans to address deficits in diversity at the senior levels, keep a new generation engaged by assuring that entry-level officers have in-cone experience in one of their first two entry-level tours, and take into account leadership and management acumen during the chiefs of mission and deputy chiefs of mission/principal officer selection processes.

IMPROVING USAID'S HUMAN RESOURCES FUNCTION

AFSA and USAID have participated pre-decisionally in USAID's roll-out of its Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM) transformation as the agency seeks to improve efficiencies in customer service to better address the needs of its Foreign Service members. As a major component of that transformation, AFSA and the Agency began negotiations regarding the Agency's proposed Performance Redesign Initiative. Throughout 2016, AFSA continued to push the Agency to address the critical need for better workforce planning through the production of meaningful data. We called for USAID to



preserve and strengthen the Foreign Service career path through targeted FSO hiring and training and eliminate unnecessary damaging ad hoc hiring from outside the Agency. In that spirit, AFSA co-authored a letter to the Administrator with AFGE seeking an agreed framework for hiring decisions.

BEST PRACTICES BENCHMARKING STUDY

Over the summer, AFSA entered into a new partnership with the University of Texas at Austin's Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs to conduct a benchmarking study identifying best practices in the field of diplomacy. AFSA plans to use the findings from the year-long exercise to inform the agenda for its advocacy—on the Hill and with the Administration—of a strong professional Foreign Service that, for the sake of America's people, interests and values, must remain the most effective and influential diplomatic service in the world. Issues being explored include how other diplomatic services recruit, train, assign, develop and evaluate their people. The results of the study are expected in the spring of 2017.

ENSURING QUICK CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

One of AFSA's continued areas of concern is that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee schedule hearings for career Foreign Service nominees in an expeditious manner, and send those nominees and all Foreign Service tenure and promotion lists for a quick confirmation on the Senate floor. We are pleased to report that the progress on this in 2016 was excellent. Foreign Service lists flowed through the system smoothly with few exceptions, and career nominees for Ambassadorships and other senior positions rarely faced lengthy delays. AFSA values the positive relations with committee and personal staff members on the Hill that are important for this to continue.

WORKFORCE PLANNING IN FOCUS

Each issue of The Foreign Service Journal features articles that address career issues for AFSA members, and AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson has used her monthly column to zero in on the priorities for advancing workforce planning and soliciting input from AFSA members.

AFSA POST REPRESENTATIVES

Post Reps play a significant role not only in disseminating AFSA messaging at post, but also in bringing potential areas of concern to our attention. When we hear rumors of major problems at a specific post, the first person we turn to for more information is our Post Rep. Post Reps also serve as a conduit for members who prefer not to contact us directly, obtaining clarification for them from the Labor-Management office on Department policies such as compensatory and overtime pay. ●



ONGOING DEDICATION TO SERVING OUR MEMBERS



FOCUS ON MEMBER CONCERNS

In March, AFSA hosted a breakfast for some of the Foreign Service's most seasoned leaders during the annual Chiefs of Mission Conference.

*AFSA meets with
Pearson Fellows
on Capitol Hill.*



During the course of one action-packed hour, this dedicated group of Foreign Service members tackled the multifaceted issue of how to build a stronger Foreign Service equipped to lead America's foreign policy in the 21st century. The gathering marked the beginning of a new member inreach initiative designed to help AFSA fulfill its role as the voice of the Foreign Service by informing its advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill and with management. Over the course of the year, AFSA hosted 18 structured conversations with approximately 175 members of the Foreign Service who shared their stories and constructively contributed to AFSA's mission of promoting a strong professional career Foreign Service. Each session was limited to a specific Foreign Service cohort (FS-1, FS-2, OMS, DS, USAID, etc.). After an overwhelmingly positive response from membership, AFSA has institutionalized these structured conversations and plans to host these lunches again in 2017.

CONNECTING WITH MEMBERS AROUND THE COUNTRY

As we move forward in cementing our strategic partnerships, an enhanced focus on travel by AFSA's leadership has provided opportunities for useful connections around the country. As part of these regular visits, meetings with our local Foreign Service retirees are always useful to get feedback on issues of concern and to encourage retirees to participate actively in outreach to raise awareness in their communities of the vital role the



*Ambassador
Stephenson with
Foreign Service
retirees in Austin,
Texas.*

Foreign Service plays in maintaining American global leadership. In 2016, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson met with retirees in Colorado, Virginia and Texas.

HONORING OUR BEST

As is the custom each year, AFSA honors members of the Foreign Service community for constructive dissent, exemplary performance, language ability, writing, and lifetime contributions to American diplomacy.

The inspiring speech by Ambassador Ruth Davis, the 2016 recipient of AFSA's highest award, was a good reminder of the importance of diplomacy, good leadership, diversity and mentoring. We commend it to our readers; you may experience it at www.afsa.org/video. AFSA's continued commitment to fostering a Foreign Service environment where dissent is not only tolerated but championed resulted in a new set of guidelines for dissent, which importantly also explain what does NOT constitute dissent. ●

REMEMBERING THE FALLEN


In May, we honored Steven L. Farley during our annual memorial ceremony on Foreign Service Day. This solemn tradition allows us to reflect on the inherent challenges and dangers of our profession – challenges we accept willingly, recognizing the unavoidable risk for those deployed worldwide to carry out a vital national security mission. Then-Secretary of State John Kerry honored us with his participation in the ceremony.






FOREIGN SERVICE DAY

ACTIVE DUTY MEMBERS BY AGENCY AND GRADE




GRADE	STATE	USAID	IBB	FCS	FAS	APHIS
SFS	851	156	1	32	16	3
FS1	1079	227	1	29	25	1
FS2	2255	313	4	35	28	5
FS3	2832	501	-	38	24	2
FS4	2757	294	-	80	14	-
FS5	614	85	-	-	-	-
FS6	356	6	-	-	-	-
FS7	49	0	-	-	-	-

MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION



	RETIREE	BBG	APHIS	STATE
AFSA MEMBERS	3710	6	11	10792
NON-MEMBERS	12173	15	23	3054
	23%	29%	32%	78%



	FAS	USAID	FCS
AFSA MEMBERS	107	1579	218
NON-MEMBERS	31	271	35
	78%	85%	86%

AFSA NEWS: THE OFFICIAL RECORD

The AFSA News section of The Foreign Service Journal includes monthly meeting decisions and actions of the AFSA Governing Board, as well as columns by elected constituency VPs on current Foreign Service issues. In 2016, AFSA News stories covered speaking events by AFSA officials and meetings with partners in Colorado, Texas, Florida and elsewhere. AFSA News also covered events held at association headquarters, profiled professional excellence in the Foreign Service, and reported on historic events, such as the first Foreign Service Night at Nationals Park, where members of the Foreign Service were recognized. A new 2016 feature in AFSA News, "Retiree Corner," highlights retirees who speak to students or community groups, sharing their stories and awakening a new generation to the work of the Foreign Service, and also provides useful information to retiree members.

ONLINE SERVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

AFSA's website continues to grow and improve; the addition of 99 years of Foreign Service Journal digital archives in early 2017 will make it an even more important resource not only for our members but academics, students, journalists and history buffs. We also continue to engage with our members and others through our various social media outlets – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr. Please follow AFSA on social media, so you never miss any of our updates.

A SPOTLIGHT ON PAIN POINTS

One way to spur conversation and seek solutions to common Foreign Service problems is to use the power of a Foreign Service Journal spotlight. The January-February issue took on the highly sensitive topic of mental health care in the Foreign Service, bringing in many voices to both explain the evolution of services over time, information about services and support today, as well as shining a spotlight on problems. That focus—and follow-up features on support for FS children with special needs—generated a lot of attention and has helped advance the conversation with the Bureau of Medical Services and other State Department offices in an effort to improve the situation. Another issue of the Journal that generated much attention and appreciation for its focus on a real-life problem was the October focus on "Living with Air Pollution" in the Foreign Service. ●



NETWORKING EVENTS

AFSA has also heard the message from members – they want more opportunities for social networking, professional discussions, exposure to diplomatic history and leaders in their field. To that end, we continue to offer panel discussion and author talks, and in 2016 offered a three-part series on professional issues. The last of those, an October discussion on 360 feedback in the Foreign Service, has prompted much discussion and serious re-thinking of the use of 360s for assignment purposes.

In October and November, we offered our first two in what we hope will be a regular series of networking happy hours for members of the Foreign Service. These well-attended events offer members and non-members alike an opportunity to reach out to Governing Board members, staff and to one another to share thoughts, suggestions and concerns. ●



AFSA COMMUNITY: A VIBRANT FORUM FOR EXCHANGING IDEAS

The online AFSA Community has exceeded growth expectations in 2016. This online discussion forum is a resource which allows members to share advice, interests and viewpoints on a wide variety of topics with other active duty and retired members. This collaboration tool has resulted in 1,000 lively discussions posts with nearly as many contributors on such diverse topics as insurance, the Thrift Savings Plan, the Foreign Service, healthcare, retirement issues and more. The online AFSA Community is a member-to-member venue which allows members to seek input and share their thoughts, advice and ultimately build relationships.

AN EYE ON BENEFITS

In May, AFSA hosted Paula Jakub from the American Foreign Service Protective Association (no affiliation with AFSA) to address a packed house on the critical topic of how to coordinate Medicare with FEHB benefits: Part B or not Part B remains the most critical Medicare question. In October, AFSA brought TSP's Randy Urban to present information on how to get the most out of one's Thrift Savings Plan, focusing on withdrawal strategies. Medicare and TSP continue to be the most popular retiree-related topics featured on AFSA's website. All presentations were recorded and are available online at www.afsa.org/video. ●



Ambassador Stephenson meets with Colorado Lieutenant Governor Donna Lynne.



Scholarship Committee chair Ambassador Lange Schermerhorn and Ambassador Stephenson with a few local scholarship recipients.

SCHOLARSHIPS: SUPPORTING FOREIGN SERVICE YOUTH

The AFSA Scholarship program has supported Foreign Service youth since 1926. Only children of AFSA members may apply for and receive an AFSA scholarship award. Thanks to generous individual and organization donors,

We were honored to receive additional contributions to seven existing scholarships, and establish three new scholarship funds. In addition, through a very generous bequest from the estate of retired FSO Louis Hebert, AFSA will establish several new scholarships to be given in the name of Mr. Hebert and his wife, Valeria. AFSA celebrated the milestone of having \$8 million in the fund by pivoting from a fundraising posture to a focus on effectively and efficiently administering these funds. ●

the AFSA Scholarship Fund

**grew to over
\$8 million**
this year



LABOR MANAGEMENT: DEFENDING OUR MEMBERS

AFSA's labor-management office provides support to the Vice Presidents and Representatives of AFSA's six bargaining units. The office also provides support to the AFSA President, Governing Board, Committees, and staff on a wide variety of issues and assistance to retirees. From January 1 to December 31, 2016, the office recorded 1,003 requests for assistance. During this same time period, 317 individual cases were opened. The total number of open individual cases currently recorded is 459, since many of these cases were opened in previous years. Grievances are the largest category of cases, followed by investigations and disciplinary action.

In 2016, AFSA's Labor Management office successfully negotiated implementation of an exception to the "Vance Memo" (which requires the State Department to obtain permission from employees prior to recording an interview) that had been granted to Diplomatic Security's Office of Special Investigation; a new process for awarding Meritorious Service Increases (MSIs) in 2017; 12 FAM regulations for appealing assignment restrictions; Procedural Precepts for Performance Pay; and an agreement on linked onward assignments for employees volunteering to serve at Priority Staffing Posts.

The office also continued to deal with a number of residual issues relating to the rate at which MSIs were conferred in 2013-2016 at the State Department. In April 2016, the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board (FSLRB) denied the Department's appeal of a 2015 decision by the Foreign Service Grievance Board which had ordered the Department to pay MSIs to over 550 employees who should have received MSIs in 2013. Following the FSLRB decision, the Department and AFSA entered into an agreement to pay the 2013 MSI in a fair and expeditious manner. By the end of 2016, all 2013 MSI recipients should have received their monetary awards plus interest and back pay. In 2016, the FSGB denied AFSA's implementation dispute relating to the 2014 MSIs, in which the Department awarded



MSIs to 5% (rather than 10%) of employees ranked but not reached for promotion. AFSA filed an appeal, which was successful, with the FSLRB. On December 5, the FSLRB remanded the case back to the Grievance Board. We expect a final decision sometime in early to mid-2017. The parties agreed to hold the 2015 MSI dispute in abeyance pending a final decision in the 2014 case and the 2016 MSI case currently is pending with the Department. The labor-management office also filed an Unfair Labor Practice against the Department for unilateral changes made to the polygraph regulations found in 12 FAM. The ULP is currently at the investigatory phase. AFSA filed a negotiability appeal when USAID refused to bargain over its proposal to hire 20 non-Foreign Service

employees at the mid-level. The appeal was settled when USAID agreed to withdraw its proposal. AFSA currently has an implementation dispute pending before the Foreign Agricultural Service regarding its implementation of the Agricultural Trade Office assignment policy. AFSA recently settled a dispute with Foreign Commercial Service regarding its unilateral decision to end a policy of permitting FCS employees to attend the retirement seminars and job search program at FSI. Finally, we are close to signing a collective bargaining agreement with APHIS that will govern our labor management relationship. Please see State Vice President Angie Bryan's report on page 7, which provides additional detail on labor-management issues in 2016. ●



1 Constructive
Dissent Award
Recipient



6 Exemplary
Performance
Award Recipients



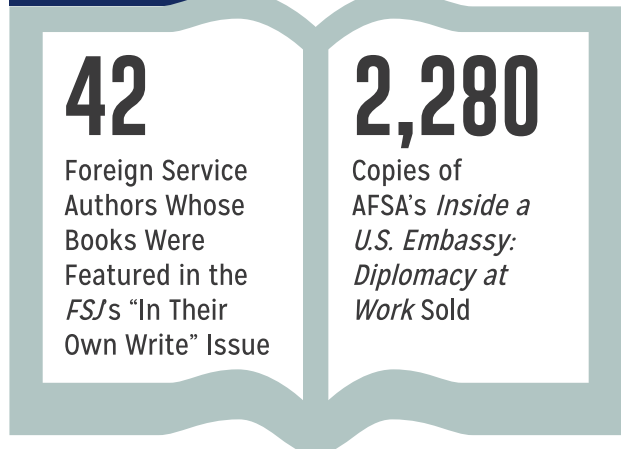
10 Sinclair
Language Award
Recipients



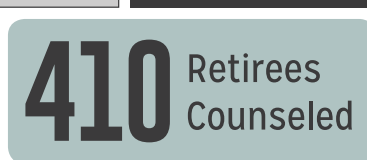
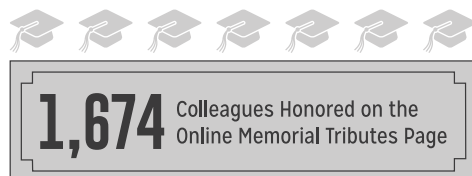
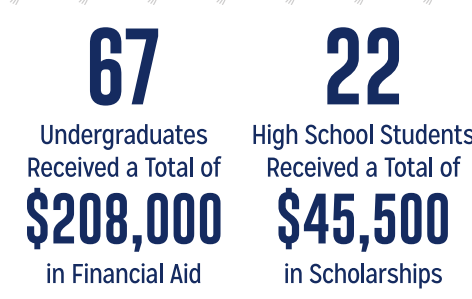
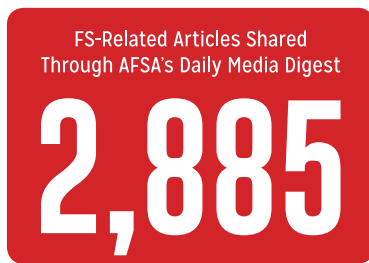
397,362 Unique Visits to the AFSA Website



700 National High
School Essay Contest
Submissions from 43
Different States and 7
Different Countries



AFSA BY THE NUMBERS



*And Growing - Data Current as of 12/31/16



SUPPORT THE FOREIGN SERVICE

- Make a charitable contribution to AFSA's Fund for American Diplomacy, which supports outreach to tell the proud story of the Foreign Service to the American people. The FAD's aim is to build a domestic constituency for the Foreign Service so that we have supporters, ideally in all 50 states, prepared to stand up for the Foreign Service and defend our vitally important mission. You can make a contribution at www.afsa.org/donate.
- Join the AFSA Speakers Bureau, and seek out opportunities for engaging with your fellow Americans in your community.
- Become an AFSA member, and encourage your colleagues and friends to do the same.
- Read Inside a U.S. Embassy or - even better - find opportunities to introduce it into high school and college curricula on international affairs.
- Stay current on issues impacting the Foreign Service by following AFSA on social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr) or subscribing to our Daily Media Digest emails.
- Tell high school students in your community about our National High School Essay Contest.
- And most importantly: Please stay in touch with AFSA! Let us know what you are concerned about and what AFSA can do to help.



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