The past year has been an eventful one in international relations: horrific civil wars in Yemen and Syria; ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya in Myanmar; nuclear taunts between the U.S. president and Kim Jong Un of North Korea.

Fortunately at the USC Dornsife School of International Relations, some things do not change. Our faculty members continue to produce cutting-edge research and garner honors and awards. Our doctoral students are likewise producing, presenting and publishing, and producing, presenting and publishing. Our undergraduate students continue to make the most of the unique opportunities that SIR offers, not just on the USC campus but in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. They win recognition for themselves and for SIR, this year including a Marshall Scholarship. And, as always, our alumni are all around the world making a difference, in every profession and field of service.

As my colleague Steve Lamy likes to say, “Fight On — for something that matters!”

Wayne Sandholtz
John A. McCone Chair in International Relations
Director, School of International Relations
2.22 ROBERT ENGLISH, Environmental Studies and Literature, and Slavic Languages of International Relations, joined the program’s staff and current students held in the Capitol Alumni event co-hosted the annual Washington D.C. Program and SIR.

5.15 SIR’s Washington D.C./Singapore course began. The aim of this Maymester course, taught by Associate Professor of International Relations KARL KATZER in partnership with Singapore Management University, is to evaluate the post-pivot U.S. policies towards Southeast Asia as the U.S. has strive to maintain stable regional governance in collaboration with the area’s leaders and the governments.

5.25 Students departed to Brusque, Bolivia, for the SIR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM. The Brusque Program focuses on European governance and security issues in the east of the European Union and NATO. Students are also assigned as an internship in an IR-related organization to complement their coursework.

7.8 Students, faculty and staff came together to celebrate the remarkable life of GERALD “JERRY” BINDER with his family and friends. For more see page 54.

8.33 With support from the Center for International Studies and the U.S.–China institute, the USC Dornsife School of International Relations (SIR) hosted a panel discussion in the days following the inauguration. “Outlook for Trump Administration” featured professors DAVID KANG, LOWENTHAL, LAURIE BRAND, RUSSELL ENGLISH, DAVID KANG, and DANIEL LYNCH.

9.9 At the annual SIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT DINNER, members of the SIR community came together to recognize the accomplishments of our outstanding graduates.

10.10 In Fall 2017, the SIR and Delta Phi Epsilon (DPE) launched a speaker series, for students to learn key concepts, follow groundbreaking research and discuss current events. In “Becoming the Complete IR Student,” Associate Professor of the Practice of International Relations JEFFREY FIELDS discussed methods for students to take full advantage of their time at USC to maximize their intellectual and professional development outside the classroom, as well.

11.15 PhD candidate JOSEPH HUGELSTON joined Assistant Professor of International Relations PABLO BARBÁRÉ-ARAGUENA to lead a discussion on nationalism, separatism and the future of Spain.

11.18 The SIR and the John A. McCone Chair in International Relations hosted LUÍS ALMAGRO, secretary general of the Organization of American States. For more, see page 6.

11.18 A look at USC Dornsife School of International Relations highlights from 2017.

2017/2018 Issue
Diplomacy In Latin America

Secretary General of the Organization of American States sheds light on the state of democracy and justice in Latin America. By Michelle Boston

"In the Americas we have created a community of states that is grounded in the shared values of democracy, universal freedoms, human rights and the rule of law. These ideas are inextricably intertwined," said Luis Almagro, secretary general of the Organization of American States, speaking to a standing-room only audience.

Almagro presented his vision for democracy in the Americas and the current state of justice in Latin America at a Nov. 8 lecture hosted by the USC Dornsife School of International Relations.

Almagro on the main tenets of democracy and its biggest challenge:

"The rule of law is a protection of the individual rights of people. Human rights do not exist in societies where the rule of law does not exist and there's no rule of law in societies where human rights are not protected. In turn, individual citizens must have the full freedom to participate in the decision-making processes that determine the laws that govern them. It is through universal suffrage that citizens are guaranteed the rights and the possibility at the very heart of democracy. Each idea is dependent on the other. The worst impediment to development and democracy is inequality. And the worst inequality is that which results from the failure to protect rights."

On the Organization of American State’s commitment to uphold democracy in the Americas and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which outlines the authority and responsibility of the organization to act in situations where there is a threat to democracy in member states:

"...the people of the Americas have the right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it. Those elected to lead assume the responsibility to protect these rights. If they do not, they lose the legitimacy of the Democratic Charter defines the essential elements of representative democracy as a respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, rule of law, periodic free and fair elections based on a universal suffrage, a pluralistic system of political parties as well as a separation of power and a dependence of branches of government. Democracy was clearly defined as well as the situations where member states might cooperate and support one another."

On the role the organization has played in working to uphold democracy in Venezuela, where tensions are mounting as many see the government moving toward a dictatorship:

"Over the past few years we have witnessed democratic institutions in Venezuela, the rule of law and semblance of government all dismantled piece by piece. The tragedy that has unfolded is a clear example of the cost of when democracy fails."

"In June 2016, I executed my responsibility as secretary general by invoking Article 20 of the Democratic Charter. In a comprehensive report, I have detailed the humanitarian, social, economic and democratic collapse in the country. ..."

"... The tragedy [in Venezuela] is not only a warning for the entire hemisphere that degradation of democracy represents a threat to peace and security in the entire hemisphere, insecurity created by the complete elimination by the rule of law not only creates instability and violence within Venezuela borders, but it allows organized crime to grow unchecked, in some cases aided by the regime, resulting in criminal activities throughout the region."

On the challenges he sees going forward in Latin America:

"I think the most serious crisis that we are facing is about immigration. These problems reduce the life expectancy of our citizens in the Americas, so these are the priority. ... The causes of immigration are very serious, too. Narcotrafficking, violence, organized crime are issues that need to be addressed in the continent. Corruption is the worst ... disease that democracy has in the continent. If we don’t raise the standards in order to investigate and to judge corruption then our democracies will face a lot of trouble in the future."
Opportunities Abound for Students

As one of the largest programs in USC Dornsife, the School of International Relations has a vibrant student body and is proud to support a variety of student groups.

This past September, the USC Chapter of the John Quincy Adams Society was founded with the vision to create a strong discussion on United States foreign policy by inviting experts and academics to raise interest and encourage and challenge Southern California students. In February 2018, the USC Chapter is collaborating with SIR to host events with John Mearsheimer and Ambassador Robert Gallucci, marking the beginning of a long series of "Discussions on U.S. Foreign Policy."

In fall 2016, Delta Phi Epsilon, a co-educational fraternal organization that brings together students from various majors with interests in foreign affairs and global politics, was reinstated by SIR students at USC Dornsife. A little more than a year later, the Delta chapter has grown to more than 60 members and offers professional, academic and personal development opportunities to students. In addition to an ongoing speaker series featuring SIR faculty, they hosted Robert Malley, who served in President Barack Obama’s administration as special assistant to the president, for a lecture and talks in February 2018.

Student-run Glimpse from the Globe, an online publication dedicated to providing timely and timeless analysis of international affairs, is composed of 25 diverse student members at USC and one member from the University of California Los Angeles. In fall 2017, Glimpse from the Globe had a record-breaking 5,700 page views and is creating a podcast series to be aired weekly on their website.

Model United Nations (MUN) at USC was recently ranked in the Top 25 MUN Teams in North America and has received a variety of awards for both individual delegates and the group, including the award for "Outstanding Large Delegation" at the Santa Barbara Intercollegiate Model United Nations. In summer 2017, they hosted over 400 delegates for the Southern California Model United Nations Conference, the organization’s gathering for high school and middle school students. They are also continuing their partnership with the L.A. City Youth Ambassador Program, bringing local students from low socio-economic backgrounds to the conference at no cost.

Managed by students, Southern California International Review is a global undergraduate international studies journal published biannually and funded by SIR. Article topics range from economic and political issues to cultural and social themes. In fall 2017, the staff examined more than 60 submissions to find and publish the best of the best.

Staff Recognition

This past summer, Luda Spilewsky retired after a 54-year career with the Leonard D. Schaeffer Fellows Program, a government service experience. As a junior, she was a finalist for the prestigious Harry S. Truman Scholarship and she was recently selected for the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress Presidential Fellows Program. Kwong joins a prestigious cohort of 43 other recipients of this year’s scholarship, a competitive honor that enables top American undergraduate students to pursue fully funded graduate studies at British universities.

Senior Jamie Kwong was with her mother, waiting in line at a restaurant to order lunch, when she got the big news via email. While Kwong described herself as "speechless" in that moment, her mother burst into happy tears. The international relations major at USC Dornsife, who is concurrently pursuing a master’s in public diplomacy from USC Dornsife and USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, learned she had just been awarded a prestigious 2018 Marshall Scholarship.

The Pasadena, Calif., native will use the scholarship to build on her academic studies in nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament with specialized training at King’s College London, where she will pursue a Ph.D. in war studies.

Kwong envisions a future career with the U.S. Departments of State and Energy, think tanks and nongovernmental organizations, where she can employ her skills to mobilize efforts toward nuclear disarmament and play a critical role in developing public policy to support it.

Kwong currently serves as a USC Dornsife Korean Studies Institute Fellow, conducting her own research on North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. It’s a timely subject, and one that is constantly changing.

"At USC, I’m not making the big decisions of where we’re sending troops and diplomats, but having this protected environment where I can kind of explore those thoughts … and learn how to adapt and be flexible has been really critical," she said.

"Having the real-world pressure right there has been an invaluable lesson." Kwong joins a prestigious cohort of 43 other recipients of this year’s scholarship, a competitive honor that enables top American undergraduate students to pursue fully funded graduate studies at British universities.

As a sophomore at USC, Kwong was selected for the inaugural cohort of the USC Warren Bennis Scholars Program, which she called an incredible experience. She was also among 40 undergraduates designated nationally as participants in the Leonard D. Schaeffer Fellows Program, a government service experience. As a junior, she was a finalist for the prestigious Harry S. Truman Scholarship and she was recently selected for the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress Presidential Fellows Program.

Kwong secured an internship for herself with the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific. She also interned with the U.S. Department of State for the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation in the Office of Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism.

Now, she’s excited to graduate and start her doctoral program in England, meeting even more experts.

"As a nuclear weapons state, Britain has made some of the greatest unilateral advances towards disarmament," she said.

"I’m looking forward to engaging with policy makers and nonproliferation experts there while I’m crafting my dissertation."
Activist and Kentucky native Kayla Soren heads a global group focusing on climate change.

When Kayla Soren tries to pinpoint when the environment became a big deal to her, she thinks back to growing up in Kentucky.

Her family would often pile in the car and make the three-hour trek from their house in Louisville to the Appalachian Mountains for some hiking. But over the years, she could spot bulldozers stripping the mountaintops of resources, making way for coal mining.

“Each time we would go [hiking], it got harder and harder to find the trails we wanted to go on,” said Soren, a USC sophomore. “It would lack in beauty and wasn’t the same. Now the places we used to go, you can’t hike anymore.”

In high school, Soren got involved with an organization called the Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition, which connected environmentally conscious students at her campus with others around the state — mobilizing campaigns that involved concerns such as increasing awareness about the jobs available in alternative and renewable energies.

That led her to opportunities with the U.S. State Department, including trips to Panama to map climate change effects and to the East Coast to study social entrepreneurship.

Sharing Ideas

All this led to where she is now — at USC as a student who also manages an international organization.

ISEC, the International Student Environmental Coalition, was modeled after the Kentucky coalition, except on a much larger scale. ISEC was born out of a conference Soren put together last year, with other young people she met through the State Department programs.

“I had this idea to start an international organization but didn’t really know what to do,” she said. “I spent all my senior year — instead of working...
Like ISEC’s mission, I try to live an adaptable life without too much long-term planning. I find this is how the most ambitious and impactful projects come to fruition,” she said. “Having an idea and running with it — that’s what I see in my future.” And the environment will likely play a big part in whatever she does. “It is the only global problem that affects every single individual,” she said. “Without the environment, nothing else matters.”
Alexis Dale-Huang focused her undergraduate scholarship in East Asia and security studies, garnering both a Boren Scholarship and a Carnegie Junior Fellowship to deepen her engagement with China.

Coursework in international relations and East Asian area studies — plus prestigious Boren and Carnegie Junior Scholarships — have led Alexis Dale-Huang around the world.

By Laura Paisley

It was late evening and Alexis Dale-Huang had just arrived in Beijing. After a long day of travel, she was settling in to her dorm room. All she wanted was to take a hot shower, but a towel was nowhere to be found.

Dale-Huang had come to China as a junior for an intensive language program, committed to speaking no English for a month. She knew she needed to deploy her rusty language skills.

“I had to go out and ask someone where I could get a towel, so I had to learn how to say ‘towel’ in Mandarin,” the graduating senior recounted, laughing. “I then went to go find the security guard outside the gates and asked, ‘How do I get to this grocery store?’ But I couldn’t understand him, because his accent was really heavy. That was the moment when I realized, this is going to be a real challenge.”

But she wasn’t deterred. Her enthusiasm for her studies at USC Dornsife — she has a double major in international relations and East Asian area studies with a focus on China — was a great motivation to improve her command of Mandarin.

She had learned some of the language growing up. Her father, who is from Taiwan, and her mother, an American, are both fluent in Mandarin. Her mother especially encouraged Dale-Huang to learn the language and culture, celebrating Chinese holidays in their home in Millbrae, Calif.

Dale-Huang attended a predominately Asian and Asian-American high school, so as a teenager, she had further incentive to learn Chinese: She wanted to understand what her peers were talking about between classes.

By the time she came to USC and chose concentrations in East Asia and security studies, however, she wanted a stronger grasp on the language to help her academically.
TURNING AN INTEREST INTO AN OPPORTUNITY
Learning about various scholarship opportunities with the help of Professor of International Relations Steven Lam, Dale-Huang applied to travel to China on a Boren Scholarship. To her surprise, she won the prestigious award. The scholarship, administered by the National Security Education Program, sends undergraduates from the United States overseas to learn languages in regions critical to U.S. security interests.

Per Boren Scholarship guidelines, Dale-Huang spent nine months in China as a junior, with the time divided into three parts. After the intensive language program in Beijing, she attended the semester-long USC Shanghai program followed by another language-intensive session in Kunming that summer.

“I loved [the language programs] because they really emphasized cultural immersion,” she said. “We lived with Chinese roommates, and even had a language pledge where you could not speak English, or else you’d be kicked out of the program.”

TRAVELS WITH USC DORNSIFE
Back at USC, Dale-Huang found plenty of other educational travel opportunities. She adored Professor Saori Katada’s Maymester international relations course in Singapore, “America’s Pacific Century,” which brought together a group of Singaporean and USC students.

“We traveled around with them to D.C., Singapore and Los Angeles, interviewing scholars and policymakers to get their recommendations on how the U.S. could improve its ‘pivot’ to East Asia policy,” she said, referring to then-President Barack Obama’s foreign policy strategy for the region.

She also participated in USC Dornsife’s Washington, D.C. Program, spending a semester in the nation’s capital to study and work in an area tailored to her interest. There she met David Livingston ’10, who was leading one of the courses and encouraged her to apply for the Carnegie Junior Fellows program. In 2010, Livingston was USC’s first student to earn the Carnegie Junior Fellow for China. This fall she will begin her post in Washington, D.C., where she will research Chinese foreign security policy, U.S.-China relations and strategic development for East Asia.

I look forward to taking what I have learned from my time at USC abroad, and applying it to my work in D.C.”

Dale-Huang was able to participate in academic programs in Washington, D.C., Singapore and three major cities in China. This past fall she began her post in the nation’s capital as the Carnegie Junior Fellow for China.

Why did you decide to major in international relations and East Asian area studies?

“I decided to major in IR when I was a freshman in high school and I had just finished reading The Kite Runner for a class assignment, and at that point I hadn’t really understood cultures or the histories of any countries outside of the United States so it was just so fascinating to me. Originally I wanted to be a Middle Eastern Studies major because of other classes I took in high school, such as US History, European History, and I was trying to study Arabic on my own, too, and I really got into that. I chose IR because it seemed to really do a good job of combining all my interests in history, politics, writing, languages, area studies. However, I ended up deciding to major in EAAS as well after I took a Chinese history course my freshmen year.

And that changed everything! My mother is actually a Chinese historian, and I just took the course because I wanted to know what she was talking about half the time.”
A born storyteller, Kimberley Lovato ’90 has published a mouthwatering guide to her beloved adoptive city’s most intriguing restaurants, markets and artisanal food shops. By Susan Bell

Want to taste the prize-winning pie of a 12-time World Pizza Champion? Eat your homework at America’s only independent cheese school? Track down the home of the Mission-style burrito?

This is the exhortation — appetite- and curiosity-whetting in equal measure — that appears on the back cover of alumna Kimberley Lovato’s new book, Unique Eats and Eateries of San Francisco (Reedy Press, 2017). Lovato, a food-lover by nature and a San Franciscan by choice, says that when the opportunity came along to write a food guide to her beloved adoptive city, she didn’t hesitate.

“What intrigued me about this project was that it was not a review of restaurants,” she said. “It’s really about the stories behind the restaurants, the anecdotes or memories of the chefs and owners who created them.”

The result is a nontraditional restaurant and travel guide that features a feast of delectable tidbits about the city’s most celebrated eateries, as well as many of its more secret culinary destinations. Lovato has succeeded in marinating these diverse ingredients to create a delicious smorgasbord of “90 palate-pleasing bites” of San Francisco food lore.

TRAVELING WITH A KNIFE AND FORK

Food, she believes, is an important stepping stone to gaining a deeper understanding of the history and culture of a place.

She describes her first book, Walnut Wine and Truffle Groves: Culinary Adventures in the Dordogne (Running Press, 2010), as a way to introduce readers to the people behind the kitchen door by sharing a meal with them. “I love to travel with a knife and fork at the ready,” she says.

Lovato, who earned a bachelor’s in international relations with a French minor, said her USC Dornsife education has helped her career as a writer. “I had a fairly sheltered upbringing, and going to USC opened my eyes to people from all over the world — different cultures, food, music.”

Coconut curry, a recipe she learned in India, is one of the dishes in her book. “It’s a dish that’s easy to make and doesn’t require a lot of ingredients,” she said. “I love to share recipes that are simple and flavorful.”

AUTHENTIC DINING

For her latest book, she said she wanted to include classics, as well as places that were a surprise to her too.

While researching the book, she stumbled upon the Hang Ah Tea Room, the country’s oldest dim sum restaurant, in a Chinatown alleyway, far from the beaten tourist track. “The sign is missing a letter and it’s kind of dark and you think, ‘Hmm, I’m not sure I want to go in there,’ but it’s delicious.”

Lovato’s book traces how fortune cookies — originally a Japanese creation — came to America via San Francisco. She writes about the curiously named San Francisco delicacy hang-town fry — an oyster and bacon omelet that first became popular during the Gold Rush — so called because of the hangings that took place in Placerville, its town of origin.

“Hangtown fry is a rare treat in San Francisco today, but can still be found on a few menus, like that of Tadich Grill,” Lovato said. “If you visit San Francisco and order cioppino or hang-town fry, you’re really trying an authentic San Francisco dish.”

Lovato was inspired to write her new book when she was invited to a dinner at the city’s famous Fairmont Hotel. “I was struck by how much food influenced my personal history and culture,” she said. “I wanted to capture that in my book.”

The book is a moveable feast, a portable collection of mouthwatering tales that can be savored equally by visitors or long-time residents.

For Lovato, San Francisco is a place where food and memory are inextricably linked. “It’s hard not to be hypnotized by a city that buzzes at this level of culinary velocity,” she wrote. As one key to understanding the city, she cites cioppino, a fisherman’s stew loaded with crab, clams, fish and sometimes shrimp, that is the city’s signature dish. “It actually goes back to a time when Italian immigrants working on the waterfront would throw leftover scraps into a pot with tomatoes and boil it up.”

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After graduating, Lovato took a job with a small electronics manufacturer, but she realized five years later that corporate America wasn’t for her. “Instead I focused on doing what I love — writing — and took a job with a local newspaper,” she said.

Coincidentally, one of her first assignments involved interviewing a Greek chef, thereby setting the groundwork for her future career.

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Alex Melnik visited Prambanan, a 9th-century Hindu temple and UNESCO World Heritage Site in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Alex Melnik offers a first-person account of his Boren Scholarship experience that took him from the streets of Los Angeles to the volcano rims of Indonesia. Melnik is a junior at USC Dornsife pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in international relations and a progressive master’s degree in public administration. He will spend the spring 2018 semester in Scotland taking classes at the University of Edinburgh and interning at the Scottish Parliament.

“Anyone could write this.” Associate Professor (Teaching) of International Relations Nina Rathburn glanced over at my rough draft. It was harsh—but true. At that time, I was applying for the Boren Scholarship, a federal award that funds the study of critical languages abroad for six months to one year. Boren recipients must then fulfill a service requirement—employment with a security-related federal agency for a year—within three years of graduating.

I was applying to study the Bahasa Indonesian language in a country I had never visited, knew little about, and whose language I did not know. Professor Rathbun’s comment came during my Boren Screening interview at USC. I sat in front of a three-person panel: Rathbun, who works closely with international relations students applying for fellowships; Peter Hilton, associate director of the Overseas Studies Office; and Katie Capra, associate director of Academic Honors and Fellowships. Suffice it to say, I was fairly nervous.

“Should I start my essay over?” I asked anxiously, unsure of how to respond to Rathbun’s comment.

“Yes, you should,” Rathbun replied, calmly. At that moment, I considered simply giving up.

Boren requires two 800-word essays. Essay One requires you to explain the significance of your proposed country and its language for U.S. national security. You must then describe how the study of this language and country and your program will help you achieve your career goals and fulfill your service requirement. You must be specific, concise and persuasive. Essay Two is about your specific study abroad program. Boren provides funding but does not administer specific language programs. Rather, you must find and apply for the them yourself.

Each panelist inquired about my reasons for choosing Indonesia, what type of federal employment I was looking for, and why I thought the study of Indonesian would be useful for national security. I ticked off reasons. Indonesia is the third largest democracy. Indonesia is the fourth most populous country. Indonesia is the largest Muslim-majority country. While all these facts were interesting and true, they weren’t specific.

I want to work for the State Department. So did the majority of Boren applicants. So when Rathbun told me that anyone could have written my essay, my ego was a little hurt, but I knew she was right.
I discussed how despite being the largest Muslim-majority country, Indonesia has maintained moderate relations with terrorism and extremism. However, the recent resurgence of extremism is concerning.

I talked about how public diplomacy campaigns, such as social media and public relations, could be used to shift Indonesia's public opinion regarding the U.S. and reduce extremism. Indonesia is well-suited for social media engagement in particular as it has one of the largest Twitter, Facebook and Instagram user bases in the world.

My time in Indonesia, I argued, would provide me with both the hard and soft skills necessary to work on public diplomacy campaigns in the future.

I will never forget that morning in mid-April when I got the email from Boren informing me that I had received the scholarship and would be spending two semesters in Indonesia.

While people always say they never expect to receive something, this is truly how I felt. It did not feel like this was really happening until I stepped off my plane in Indonesia four months later.

Finding a program in Indonesia for Boren was not easy. Boren requires programs to be completely language-intensive. This meant that all classes taken needed to be in Indonesian, whether they were language-learning classes or academic subjects. While there are several study abroad programs at major universities in Indonesia, the majority are geared towards people looking to take classes in English.

However, I did manage to find one program that was solely language-based. The program was organized by American Councils, a study abroad provider, and Universitas Negeri Malang, a university that specializes in Indonesian language education. The city is located in Malang, a city in East Java that is moderate in size and rich in culture, food and natural beauty.

I distinctly remember my first few moments in Indonesia. I recall hopping on an airport shuttle and trying to figure out which terminal I needed. Unfortunately, I didn't even know how to say “one,” “two” or “three” in Indonesian and had to use my fingers. But by the time I left Indonesia nine months later, I could present information about HIV, debate censorship and travel around independently.

My typical week consisted of language classes from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. I was placed in a class with students from Thailand, Vietnam and Madagascar, none of whom spoke English. This meant that even if I wanted to speak English in class, it would be pointless.

Naturally, the first few weeks were extremely hard. At times I felt depressed, isolated, confused and dumb. I would stumble over certain words, make countless faux pas, and misunderstand simple questions.

But over time, things got easier. While the pure immersive environment had created an extremely steep learning curve, it also made progress quicker and more rewarding. In only a few weeks, I could hold conversations. Every day, I learned more — I was speaking in the classroom, on the streets, at home. I could feel my vocabulary expanding daily.

Living with a host family helped, as well. They spoke almost no English and were fairly strict in fact, I had a curfew, predetermined breakfast and dinner times, and sometimes felt like a child. But I was also treated like a member of their family. I was brought to a wedding, lectured about corruption and cared for when ill.

I enjoyed my time in Malang so much that I ended up spending an extra two months there, participating in the Critical Language Scholarship Program, a summer language program run by the State Department that also happened to take place in Malang.

LOOKING BACK
Despite the initial cultural and linguistic barriers, I quickly fell in love with Indonesia. Everything that was hard about my time also made it more rewarding and interesting. Each day was a new experience, whether it was talking to a random street vendor who asked why I wasn’t married, trying fried chicken that turned out to be liver, or being asked to be on a TV show.

Some of my highlights were visiting Komodo Island, where wild Komodo dragons live, hiking Mount Bromo, climbing down Ijen Crater to see blue fire, watching a bullfight in Tana Toraja, or standing at the top of Monas, the national monument in Jakarta. There are dozens of stories that I could go on and on about, but I’ll have to save that for another time.
Amid escalating bilateral tensions, USC Dornsife experts discuss the risk of nuclear war with North Korea and evaluate deterrents.

A major problem with the United States’ view of North Korea is the tendency to caricature its leader, Kim Jong Un.

“This is a real leader that we need to take seriously,” said David Kang, director of USC Dornsife’s Korean Studies Institute. “It’s very clear [Kim] knows how to rule. The question of whether he’s crazy, or a joke, misses the point.”

Kang was speaking to a packed audience during “Nuclear War with North Korea?,” the latest in the Dornsife Dialogues event series.

Petraeus, Judge Widney Professor at the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy, is a former CIA director.

Kang, professor of international relations and East Asian languages and cultures, is director of USC Dornsife’s Center for International Studies.
Kang and Petraeus agreed that President Donald Trump’s recent tour of Asia had been successful. Kang said the U.S. President had hit all the right notes when talking about North Korea in Japan and South Korea.

“The message I hear from President Trump, even though it’s a little more flamboyant … remains a deterrence message [of] … ‘If you attack us first, we will hit back,’ which is what every American president has said since I can remember,” noted Kang, who holds a joint appointment at USC Marshall School of Business.

**CHINA’S KEY ROLE**

With China controlling 90 percent of the trade to and from North Korea, the U.S.-China relationship depends on how successfully China is able to pressure the Hermit Kingdom to halt missile testing, Petraeus said.

“By and large, the saber-rattling, all these discussions of military options … this is not aimed at Kim Jong Un,” Petraeus said. “I don’t think people think they can influence him. This is aimed at President Xi Jinping and China and getting China to do more to bring a halt to testing is aimed at President Xi Jinping,” Petraeus said. “I don’t think that you’re a madman, because they’ll think that you’ve already taken the slack out of the trigger,” Petraeus said.

“Everything I know about North Korea is if we hit them, they will hit us back,” Kang said. “… So we can threaten a little bit, but I think we start to go down a very dangerous path if somebody starts shooting.”

To view event video visit dornsife.usc.edu/dornsife-dialogues-korea/

**SANCTIONS VERSUS A LIMITED MILITARY OPTION**

Could the U.S. get away with a limited surgical strike?

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Petraeus said that while a limited option is possible, the challenge is whether it will remain limited. It’s also unlikely that South Korea, a key ally, will approve such a move as its capital, Seoul, is within range of Pyongyang, which is also believed to have biological and chemical weapons.

Kang does not see North Korea backing down as a result of economic sanctions and believes they may in fact cause the country to double down. However, secondary sanctions on banks to try to stop them from dealing with North Korea in an effort to prevent it obtaining components for its nuclear programs may be more successful, he thought.

**THE VIEW FROM AMERICA**

Kang and Petraeus agreed that President Donald Trump’s recent tour of Asia had been successful. Kang said the U.S. President had hit all the right notes when talking about North Korea in Japan and South Korea.

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**READ THE RHETORIC**

Petraeus warned of the dangers of the so-called “madman theory” of deterrence associated with former President Richard Nixon and now with Trump. The concept operates by encouraging leaders of hostile nations to believe the U.S. president is volatile and irrational so those leaders will avoid provoking the U.S. for fear it might do something untoward.

“The problem with that concept is that if you do get into a crisis, even inadvertently, … suddenly the last thing you want is for the other side to think that you’re a madman, because they’ll think you’ve already taken the slack out of the trigger,” Petraeus said.

Kang stressed that while North Korea also uses flamboyant rhetoric, their message is consistently one of deterrence: “If you attack us first, we will hit you back.” Both North Korea and the U.S. are thus essentially saying the same thing, Kang noted.

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Petraeus was more optimistic about sanctions, especially if China enforces United Nations Security Council sanctions. Secondary sanctions on Chinese banks could put pressure on China to do this, he said.

“China could literally turn the lights out in Pyongyang if it wants to,” Petraeus said. “It won’t, probably because it wants to … bring Kim Jong Un to his senses, but not to his knees. They don’t want North Korea to collapse. Their three red lines are no hostile power in Pyongyang, no reunification of the Korean peninsula and no wave of refugees across the Yalu River into China.”

**THE BIG QUESTION**

Is Kim Jong Un deterrable?

That, Petraeus noted, depends on whether or not he’s suicidal.

“The analyses … for a number of years in the intelligence community, have been that he’s not suicidal,” Petraeus said. Kang agreed.

“I’m quite sure that if we don’t start a war, North Korea is not going to start it first,” he said.

“… I don’t think that North Korea is a problem to be solved. I think it’s a country we have to live with.”
Brett Crosby worked as Google’s director of product marketing for nearly a decade. He majored in international relations and political science at USC Dornsife.

Brett Crosby ‘95 has ridden the wave of information technology for almost 20 years, originating Google Analytics and launching a startup that aims to improve communities through investing in real estate-backed loans.

By Laura Paisley

In May 1995, as graduation approached for international relations and political science double major Brett Crosby, the inevitable question kept coming up among his friends: ‘So what are you going to do now?’

Some were applying to graduate school, some were researching companies and applying for their first big job. Crosby saw it a little differently. Someone started those companies, he reasoned. Let’s be those guys.

“Even though I knew very little about starting companies,” Crosby said, “I thought it was a much more interesting path.”

Though his first venture out of college didn’t pan out, his entrepreneurial spirit helped fuel a small company called Urchin Software Corporation, which he co-founded in 1997 with his brother Scott, fellow USC graduate Jack Ancone ’95 and a childhood friend. Urchin became so adept at analyzing web statistics that it caught the attention of Google, which scooped up the company in 2005, when Crosby was 32. Urchin’s statistical software became the basis of Google Analytics.

PLAYING IN THE BIG LEAGUES

“My head of sales at the time said, ‘It was like we were playing triple A baseball and the Yankees called and said, ‘Hey, we’re going to be in the World Series, do you guys know how to pitch?’ It did feel like that because we suddenly went from the backwaters of a small company to center stage at one of the largest and most important companies in the world.”

Crosby stayed on for close to a decade as Google’s director of product marketing, working on everything from the mobile advertising product to Google+, Chrome, Gmail, Docs and Drive. He watched the company grow from 2,500 people, when it had just gone public, to upwards of 100,000 employees when he left in 2014.

Crosby has moved on to FinTech (Financial Technologies) as chief operating officer and co-founder (along with USC Dornsife alumnus Brew Johnson ’97 and Alex Perelman) of the startup PeerStreet, an online platform for investing in real estate debt that harnesses the power of big data analytics.

Back when Crosby was at Urchin, he started

BIG DATA

BIG SUCCESS
working with Johnson, his USC fraternity brother and fellow international relations major. They found many similarities, including a shared curiosity about the world and a passion for questioning things intellectually.

“That’s what I think led us to not only work really well together, but — here at PeerStreet — to be willing to take on an industry and build something that no one has ever really thought about or attempted to do, as far as we’ve seen,” Crosby said. “Neither of us sees the world as being a static thing that can’t change. Rather, things are very much in motion and small companies have the chance to become massive companies. I think a lot of that is baked into our experiences.”

Peer Street helps investors buy loans from existing lenders after carefully vetting both the lender and the loans, Crosby explained. Lenders are usually small and private, as opposed to big banks. Historically, about 90 percent of the real estate investments have been single-family residential. “We connect these lenders with the global capital markets on the other side of our platform,” he said. “It’s like a stock market for investing in real estate debt, and by doing that, all of a sudden lenders are able to double and triple their business without raising additional capital. Secondary markets like this end up being very, very important and allow industries to really flourish in ways they couldn’t before.”

COMING FULL CIRCLE AT USC
Crosby remembers how much his college and study abroad experiences opened up his mind. As a sophomore he participated in a Semester at Sea, which he said helped set his direction after exposing him to the rest of the world. At USC, Professor of International Relations Steven Lamy made a particular impression on him as an educator and mentor.

“Professor Lamy was one of my favorite professors by far,” he said. “The way he thinks about the world and the paradigms he taught me — how to think about things and understand different people’s points of view — is something that to this day is very helpful for me, in trying to get in the head of business partnerships or understanding global politics or any of those things.”

Crosby remembers when he was a 210-class with Lamy, who on the first day asked his class of more than 200 students to write their names on a paper sign placed in front of them.

“I came up to him after class around the third day and asked him a question,” Crosby said. “He started answering and he says, ‘It’s Brett, right?’ and I was like ‘What?’”

While Lamy was lecturing, Crosby learned, he was going around the room memorizing the faces and names of his students.

“Crosby, who now lives in Manhattan Beach, Calif., with his wife and two daughters, speaks at USC often. He has spoken to classes in USC Dornsife’s Department of Economics as well as others in the USC Marshall School of Business and Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies. The experience of speaking to students has been personally rewarding, he said, and has resulted in hiring USC alumni. It’s also led Crosby to expand mentorship opportunities. One class visit inspired a USC Dornsife economics major to approach Crosby to suggest he develop an internship program at PeerStreet. In 2016, the company did.

ENTREPRENEURISM IN LOS ANGELES
Crosby emphasizes to undergraduates that the entrepreneurial environment, particularly in L.A., has never been better. The city has venture capitalist firms that are competing with the Silicon Valley firms in a real way now, he said. Then there are all the feeder funds that are backing entrepreneurs inside and outside of USC.

“The level of innovation and startup culture that is happening in L.A. is very exciting to me, and should be exciting for students that are getting close to graduating and thinking about what they want to do next. In my view, there’s never been a better time to be an entrepreneur in L.A.,” he said.

As an undergraduate, Crosby assumed that changing the world was done through protesting or politics. But he later came to the realization that if you really want to impact society, you should just go out there and — echoing Gandhi — make the change you want to see in the world.

“You don’t have to be an entrepreneur-student to become an entrepreneur or do something disruptive,” he said. “You don’t have to work for 30 years and become a special- sialist in a specific field. You just have to have ambition and awareness in looking for areas to improve society.”

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PEER STREET AND CHASING THE AMERICAN DREAM
With such meteoric success at his back, where does Crosby hope to steer his career in the years ahead? Mainly, he said, he’d like to see PeerStreet continue to grow and succeed.

“And it’s not just for my own personal success or even necessarily the success of our investors or employees — it’s more that I believe in the mission behind what we’re trying to do. I really believe, generally, that companies should have missions that actually matter and can impact a broad number of people.”

Within the U.S. housing stock today, the average home is more than 40 years old, Crosby explained, and many homes are deteriorating and not getting reinvestment. There’s no government program to encourage people to reinvest in homes and fix up neighborhoods, so it’s left to individuals or small businesses to step in.

In large part, the borrowers PeerStreet serves are entrepreneurs that buy properties, fix them up and then sell them or make them into rentals. Right now, the company is working with over a hundred lenders with thousands of borrowers across 45 states.

“So imagine this impact compounded. That’s the interesting thing: More liquidity means more capital to more entrepreneurs and small businesses, who in turn hire more people, improve more neighborhoods and change more communities for the better. Even nonparticipants benefit from what we’re building.”

After becoming experts in how mortgage finance works, Crosby and his colleagues have come to believe how critical secondary markets are. This is because they create a system in which more money flows through to more borrowers, giving more people access to capital.

“If we can stimulate the rebuilding of the American housing infrastructure — and do it without taking over new green space — everyone wins in that scenario,” he said. “More people can chase the American dream.”

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JONATHAN MARKOWITZ is assistant professor of international relations. His research focuses on power projection and grand strategy as well as the political implications of climate change and competition.

In May 2017, he launched a Maymester course focusing on climate change, conflict, and natural resources. He had the opportunity to experience field research first-hand at the University of California Natural Reserve at Sedgwick, located in the mountains of Santa Barbara.

Professor of International Relations and Political Science GERARDO MUNCK’s research focuses on international regimes, democracy, methodology, and Latin America. He participated in a number of international relations events on “Democracy and Justice in Latin America” with Secretaries-General of the Organization of American States.

JOHN ODELL is a Center for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) scholar. He is also a member of the Council of Foreign Relations. His article on the impact of President Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement was published in International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development.

BRIAN RATHBUN is professor of international relations. His research interests include European politics and international integration. He recently co-authored an article with student Efigenia Saltinis and Kathleen E. Powers for The Washington Post titled “This new pop show that politicians don’t stem from people’s economic distress.”

NIÑA SRIRAVINSA RATHBUN, associate professor (Teaching) of International Relations (2015-2018), teaches courses on U.S. foreign policy, foreign policy of Eastern Europe, global governance, and research design and methods. She serves as the director of undergraduate studies and faculty research and fellowships advisor for undergraduates, mentorship of students on academic and career choices in international relations and political science.

WAYNE SANDHOLTZ is a John A. McCone Chair in International Relations and professor of international relations and law as well as director of the USC Dornsife School of International Relations. His research projects center on the development and effects of international norms, law and institutions.

MARY SAROTTE is Dean’s Professor of History and professor of international relations. Foreign Policy published her article on whether German unification could happen today in academic year 2017-18. Sarotte is a research associate at the Center for European Studies at Harvard University.

Associate Professor (Teaching) of International Relations WAYNE SANDHOLTZ RATHBUN, associate professor (Teaching) of International Relations (2015-2018), teaches courses on U.S. foreign policy, foreign policy of Eastern Europe, global governance, and research design and methods. She serves as the director of undergraduate studies and faculty research and fellowships advisor for undergraduates, mentorship of students on academic and career choices in international relations and political science.

Professor Emerita of International Relations J. ANN TICKNER received the Ole R. Wylöst Distinguished Scholar Award at the 2017 ISA Annual West Conference in recognition of her exceptional scholarlyship, teaching and mentorship record. She is also Distinguished Scholar in Residence at the American University.

Professor of the Practice of International Relations GREGORY TREVERTON joined the School of International Relations in 2017 after stepping down as chair of the National Intelligence Council. He was recently included in Security Magazine’s “Most Influential People in Security” and has developed a new course on “America and the Future of Geopolitics” at USC. He was elected to receive the Intelligence Studies Section Distinguished Scholar Award at the 2018 ISMAS meeting.

CAROL WISE is associate professor of international relations. Her most recent publications include The Political Economy of China-Latin American Relations in the New Millennium (Routledge, 2016), co-edited with Margaret Myers, and “Playing both sides of the Pacific: Latin America’s Free Trade Agreements with China,” Pacific Affairs (2016).

ALUMNI NEWS

RYAN ADKINS (B.A., ’13) is a financial management analyst in the Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

A former Commander with the U.S. Naval Reserve, JAMES “JAMIE” BALDWIN (B.A., ’74) is an adjunct associate professor at the University of Maryland College Park, teaching business law and business ethics online. He is also a visiting lecturer at the University of Westminster in London and Emirates Aviation University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

SAMUEL BAZZI (B.A., ’03) assistant professor of economics at Boston University, was awarded the Kiel Institute’s Excellence Award in Global Economic Affairs for being among the top three economists under 35 working on global economic issues.

STEPHEN HUBER (B.A., ’79) a deputy chief of mission for the other Guidance, is acting deputy chief of mission for the other Mission and Acts as a Quick Response Force deployed by Sallyport Global as an exception to the U.S. Foreign Policy.

TIMOTHY JOHNSON (B.A., ’10; B.A., music-violin, ’11) was appointed to the U.S. Foreign Service and will serve as a diplomatic officer within the U.S. Department of State.

ADRIANA KAHAANE (B.A., ’94) is founder and president of Dream Foods International LLC, a food company specializing in organic citrus products imported from Italy.

ANNE KENNEDY (B.A., ’06) is a brand specialist for Amazon’s toys division. She recently completed her Fulbright year in Laos where she raised $2.5 million to help local students continue their schooling.

MELISSA MONTALVO (B.A., ’13) completed a Fulbright English teaching assistantship in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

As a foreign service officer with the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand, EKATERINA “KATE” IMAYEYN (B.A., ’14) a former international fellow, received her Federal government mentorship at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok and consular general in Dusseldorf, Germany.

GARY GEIPEL (B.A., ’84) is responsible for providing communications at Ultragenyx, a Bay Area biotechnology company. He co-authored an article in the Nuclear Review for a New Age, in Strategic Studies Quarterly (Fall 2017).

HEIDI HARDT (B.A., ’05), professor of political science at the University of California, Irvine, received a National Science Foundation award for her research into gender representation in political science graduate education.

GIOVANNI BOMBOLO, a brand specialist of Amazon’s toys division. She recently completed her Fulbright year in Laos where she raised $2.5 million to help local students continue their schooling.

SALLY ROEVER (B.A., ’94) has been named a National Security Magazine’s “Most Influential People in Global Economic Affairs” at USC. She recently completed a Fulbright English teaching assistantship in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

MICHAEL MONTALVO (B.A., ’13) completed a Fulbright English teaching assistantship in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

TIM SCHANDORN (B.A., ’93) is founder of Code Gauchos, a coding school located in Lake Forest, CA, offering courses for K-12 students.

REBEKAH SICK OLIKOWSKI (B.A., ’09) and Gary Olikowski welcomed a son, Robin Alexander, on Nov. 26, 2016.

CHRISTIAN DANIEL OLLAR (B.A., ’97) is appointed as national vice president of communities by s.Bs, a wireless technology company specializing in wireless technology.

PETER WINTER (B.A., ’01; M.P. ’03) is a service officer with U.S. Department of State, is serving as special assistant for public affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad.

ALEXANDRA WROBLEWSKI (B.A., ’14) is an under-graduate student advisor for the East Asian Studies Center at USC.

We encourage our alumni to contribute news regarding their educational and career progress, published articles, books, and op-ed pieces, for possible inclusion in future issues.
In Memorium

The Activist Scholar

An activist and scholar who taught at USC Dornsife for more than three decades, "Jerry" Bender traveled to and wrote extensively about southern Africa. By Laura Paisley

Jerry Bender was born on Nov. 27, 1941, in Minneapolis. As a sophomore at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, he applied for a summer research grant to study community development in Nigeria, which led to his first trip to the African continent in 1962.

After earning his undergraduate degree in political science, Jerry Bender attended UCLA for his master's and doctoral degrees in the same subject. He taught at a few universities in Southern California before coming to USC Dornsife in 1979.

Bender was an activist and scholar who taught at USC Dornsife for more than three decades, "Jerry" Bender traveled to and wrote extensively about southern Africa. By Laura Paisley

Bender served as a consultant for over 4 a.m.

"For decades he kept returning, maintaining those contacts," Odell said. "Because of his remarkable expertise, Congress called on him to testify. He was proud of his contribution to Angola's peace deal led to the independent nation's first elections in 1992.

"Jerry" Bender, an Africanist who was considered one of the leading experts on Angola, died on May 22, 2017 in Los Angeles from emphysema. He was 75.

Associate Professor Emeritus of International Relations Gerald "Jerry" Bender, an Africanist who was considered one of the leading experts on Angola, died on May 22, 2017 in Los Angeles from emphysema. He was 75.

Bender's career was dedicated to the study of the politics, languages and culture of Angola and southern Africa generally, with a particular interest in United States foreign policy toward the region. He traveled to Africa nearly 100 times and served as a passionate advocate for Angola and its people back in the U.S.

"Jerry Bender liked to say that he was an activist scholar," said Professor Emeritus of International Relations John Odell. "He wanted to intervene in U.S. foreign policy to make it better as well as teach and study the subject."

While Bender was completing dissertation research in the mid-70s in Angola, then a Portuguese colony, civil war broke out. He met the leaders of the revolutionary movement, who eventually became the top leaders of the independent country.

"For decades he kept returning, maintaining those contacts," Odell said. "Because of his remarkable expertise, Congress called on him to testify. He was proud of his contribution to Angola's peace deal led to the independent nation's first elections in 1992.

"Jerry only slept two or three hours a night," Aronson said. "This allowed one Angola desk officer at the State Department to call him to discuss daily developments in his "country every morning at around 4 a.m."

"For his students, he went well beyond lecturing and grading their papers," he said. "He used his contacts in Africa to help them get internships, study-abroad opportunities and jobs."

Over the years, Bender served as a consultant for the U.S. State Department, United Nations, World Bank, National Security Council, think tanks and several multinational corporations. He also worked with oil companies like Conoco, encouraging their investment in Angola, and mediated arguments among different African politicians and parties. Bender was the author of the Tunney amendment (named for California U.S. Senator John Tunney) that prohibited covert CIA activity in southern Africa in the '70s.

Bender received seven teaching awards during his career, including the USC Associates Award for Excellence in Teaching — the USC faculty's highest honor for intellectual and artistic achievement and outstanding teaching — in 1985. A former international relations doctoral student, Witney Schneidman '87 recalled his experience as Bender's advisor.

"Jerry gave me the space to inquire and to grow intellectually. He helped me win a grant from the Gulbenkian Foundation to study in Portugal. I had always wanted to make policy for Africa, and Jerry helped me achieve that goal."

"Jerry was a pioneer," said another of Bender's former doctoral students, James Moore. "He went to study Angola before 99 percent of the globe's population could have even found it on a map. And while Jerry was a political scientist by training, he was an anthropologist and humanist by nature. If ever a new form of research methodology were to be recognized by the academy, Jerry's 'research by friendship' should be it."

The Activist Scholar

important is to be able to observe and network in the real world. Fortunately, in my career, I managed 602 present -

A Mindful Mentor

Mahmood Sarrollgham (M.A., '82; Ph.D., '89), professor of international relations at Shahid Beheshti University, adjunct professor at USC, and a former graduate of Gerald Bender, reflects on the impact his mentor had on his life.

Jerry Bender was the first IR faculty with whom I consulted in March 1980. I knocked on his door, VKC 309, and asked if I could inquire about the field of international relations. He welcomed me. I took a seat and was about to pose my first question.

In that one hour, the future direction of my professional life was sealed. I immediately finalized my application in the IR master's program and ended up completing a Ph.D. by May 1987. Professor Bender served as my advisor in both the master's and Ph.D. committees.

Being a student of Jerry Bender over a span of seven years, I learned and later tried to apply five lessons in my professional life.

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