



*Central Asia-Caucasus Institute
Silk Road Studies Program*

RUMSFELD FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Rumsfeld Fellowship Program was launched in 2008 as a partnership between the Rumsfeld Foundation and the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. The Program brings rising young leaders from Central Asia, the Caucasus, Afghanistan and Mongolia to the United States to promote better understanding and stronger relations between the United States and this important region, as well as among the people of the ten countries of the region. The Fellowship Program fosters dialogue and an exchange of ideas among these exceptional young professionals working across all sectors in their countries and encourages improved collaboration and development throughout the region.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Over a period of six weeks, Fellows will attend a series of high-level meetings where they will have an opportunity to meet and directly engage with top policy-makers, business leaders, journalists, academics, military personnel, non-governmental organizations, and regional experts. These meetings expose the Fellows to inside perspectives on how opinion making, decision making, policy making and policy implementation processes work in Washington, D.C. The Program also incorporates opportunities for professional development through sessions on leadership and management, as well as opportunities for professional networking through receptions and events with young leaders in the United States. In addition to scheduled group programming, the Program staff assists Fellows in arranging individual meetings to conduct additional research for independent projects or studies.

Fellows will also spend the fourth week of the Fellowship Program traveling to two major U.S. cities for meetings with local businesses and governments, providing them a view of the United States beyond Washington, D.C. The first city visit is organized in partnership with the Open World Leadership Center. The Open World Program coordinates with local host organizations to show Fellows how local government and institutions work with businesses, civil organizations, and individuals to bring benefits to the economy and society. During this period of travel, Fellows are hosted in the homes of local families. The second city visit is organized by the Program staff and focuses on the major institutions of large metropolitan cities, often centers of finance, industry, innovation, technology or trade.

In the final weeks of the Fellowship Program, Fellows collaborate on and complete a group presentation on a topic of their choice at a Central Asia-Caucasus Institute public forum. Their presentation serves as a platform for the Fellows to present their thoughts and engage with representatives from local embassies, businesses, universities, media, and others interested in the region.

Within four weeks of each Fellowship Program's completion, Fellows are required to submit a paper of approximately 1,500 words to the Program staff, reflecting insights gained from the Program. Their paper discusses and analyzes a policy issue relevant to their country or the region as a whole. This paper will be distributed among the alumni network and may be eligible for publication.

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES:

- Afghanistan
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Georgia
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Mongolia
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan

NOMINATION PROCESS:

The Fellowship Program hosts a spring session and fall session each year. The selection process is based on a nomination system in which candidates are nominated by invited institutions and individuals including U.S. Embassies, Embassies of the 10 program countries in the United States, government agencies, Chambers of Commerce, Business Councils and Associations, think tanks, academic institutions, business leaders, and other invited organizations and individuals, as well as the Rumsfeld Fellowship Alumni. The Program also accepts outside applications of interested candidates if they fulfill applicant requirements.

APPLICATION INFORMATION:

We are seeking applications from exceptionally qualified young professionals who, still early in their careers, have already demonstrated outstanding capacities of judgment, commitment, integrity, and leadership potential within their professional fields and within their larger community. Applicants may include business leaders, government officials, military personnel, academics, policy experts, journalists, non-profit leaders and other professionals. Successful candidates must also demonstrate a desire to gain experience in the United States, an interest in regional cooperation, as well as willingness to become an active participant and contributor within the Fellowship alumni network. It should be understood by all candidates that participation in the alumni network includes, but is not limited to, attendance and participation in the annual alumni meetings and CAMCA Regional Forums, a key initiative of the Fellowship alumni.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY:

Applicants must:

- Be between 27 and 40 years of age.
- Be a citizen of one of the 10 countries listed above AND currently reside in one of those countries.
- Be highly proficient in the English language with the ability to participate in substantive discussions in English.
- Possess an undergraduate degree. A Master's degree or equivalent is highly desirable.
- May only apply for this program if they will be able to participate in the Fellowship Program in full and receive any required permission from their employer for work leave, if applicable.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

Application due dates are set for each Fellowship session and will be communicated to interested candidates. To be considered for the Fellowship Program, interested candidates should submit electronic copies of the following materials to Mr. David Soumbadze (contact information below.) Note that applications that are not complete or within the proper format and limits at the time of the deadline will not be considered.

- Candidate Questionnaire
- Current CV of no more than two pages
- A Statement of Purpose of no more than 500 words indicating why the applicant is interested in participating, how they think this Program will help them to develop their personal and professional skills, and how the Program can benefit from their participation
- A brief paper of no more than 1,000 words discussing a topic of interest relevant to economic and political developments and/or policies relevant to the Central Asia- Caucasus region.

The paper should also include reflections on how the topic relates to regional cooperation and connectivity among the countries of the region.

SELECTION PROCESS:

- The selection process is highly competitive. The initial processing of all applications is handled by the Director of the Rumsfeld Fellowship Program at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, and the Executive Director and Director of Programs of the Rumsfeld Foundation, who review applications thoroughly and narrow down applicants to a smaller pool of candidates.
- These applications are reviewed by a broader selection committee of distinguished experts who bring high levels of familiarity and expertise on the region, as well as senior staff and Board members of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Rumsfeld Foundation.
- The top 10-13 applicants are selected as finalists and are invited, via e-mail, to participate in the Rumsfeld Fellowship Program for their respective session.
- Selection is merit based. However, the selection committee seeks to bring a group of Fellows with diverse educational and professional backgrounds.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The Program will cover the principal costs of the selected Fellows including their visa application fees, round trip airfare to Washington, D.C., and local travel, housing, and a per diem during Program activities.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

David Soumbadze
Director, Rumsfeld Fellowship Program
509 C Street NE
Washington, DC 20002
Tel: 301-257-5753
E-mail: soumbadze@afpc.org

Sarah Conant
Executive Director, Rumsfeld Foundation
1030 15th Street, N.W., B1, #366
Washington, D.C. 20005
Tel: 202-944-1304
E-mail: s.j.conant@dhrlc.net