

Mayor's Office of Trade & International Affairs



Christopher Olson
Director of Trade & International Affairs

Christopher comes to the City having previously held positions as a military officer, business consultant, and diplomat. With the U.S. Department of State, Christopher had diplomatic postings in Albania and Afghanistan, worked as a department program manager in Washington, D.C, where he supervised programs in Africa, and Middle East and Central Asia, and advised business leaders about a variety of international economic and political issues. From 2003 to 2005, Christopher was a business consultant in the private sector. During his Navy service from 1996 to 2003, he was a surface warfare officer leading large, cross functional teams. Christopher's service included a tour in the Pentagon as an anti-terrorism staff officer after September 11, 2001, where he coordinated a multi-billion-dollar security program.

Christopher graduated from Northwestern University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and political science. He earned a Master of Arts degree in security studies from Georgetown University and a certificate in economics and trade relations from the University of Antwerp, Belgium. Most recently, Christopher earned an MBA from Rice University Business School, where he was recognized as a Jones Scholar for academic and leadership excellence.

This year, Olson completed his executive Master of Business Administration degree at Rice University, where he was recognized as a Jones Scholar for highest academic and leadership honors.



Paul Cuclis
Global Business Manager
Mayor's Office of Trade & International Affairs

As Global Business Manager, Paul oversees international business development for the Mayor's Office. His duties extend to planning and executing Mayoral Trade Missions, coordinating international focused events, and maintaining communications between local and international office partners. In addition to serving in his capacity as Global Business Manager, Paul serves as Special Advisor on Chinese Affairs.

Prior to joining the Office in 2015, Paul Cuclis held positions as an Coordinator for the World Energy Cities Partnership Secretariat, an LNG Market Analyst for China Gas Inc., and a journalist for The World of Chinese Magazine. He graduated Trinity University with a BA in English Literature, and is conversationally fluent in Mandarin Chinese.

Mazda Denon
Global Engagement Manager
Mayor's Office of trade & International Affairs



As Global Engagement Manager, Mazda is in charge of developing outreach strategies for engaging international governments, businesses and communities. His duties extend to managing office finances, planning and executing Mayoral Trade Missions, coordinating international focused events, and organizing the Mayor's international business advisory council.

In addition to serving in his capacity as Global Engagement Manager, Mazda serves as a Special Advisor on African Affairs and is responsible for overseeing all diplomatic, business, and cultural exchanges between the City of Houston and the continent of Africa.



Deanea LeFlore
Chief of Protocol
Mayor's Office of Trade & International Affairs

Deanea develops international government relations strategies to achieve Houston's diplomatic, trade and development objectives. Daily, she liaises with members of Houston's consular corps and international partners to bring economic, cultural, and educational opportunities to Houston. Since 2001, she has overseen the visits of 30 heads of state and over 2,000 cabinet members and ambassadors, connecting these distinguished guests to Houston-area leaders and organizations.

Deanea serves on the board of Casa Cultural de las Americas and is a past board member of Protocol & Diplomacy International. She speaks fluent Spanish and is a student of Arabic. Deanea has a BA in Spanish and International Studies and is a certified protocol consultant

Niké (Beltran) Luqman
International Partners and Agreements Manager
Mayor's Office of Trade & International Affairs



Nike joined the Mayor's Office of Trade and International Affairs in February 2013. She serves as the consular affairs and international partnerships manager.

Nike is a native Spaniard who's made Houston her home and the United States her country. She is fluent in Spanish and English. She graduated from Baylor University and has travelled and lived in many parts of the world, developing lasting friendships. She finds Houston and her position in the Mayor's office an extension of her passion in discovering and connecting with national and international communities.



Jessica Ngo
Liaison to the Sister Cities
Mayor's Office of Trade & International Affairs

Jessica joined the office in 2018. She serves as key liaison between the mayor's office and representatives of Sister Cities International and the Sister Cities of Houston. Her work includes developing business and trade proposals, and coordinating delegation visits, cultural events, and the Sister Cities International Annual Conference.

Jessica graduated from the University of Houston with Bachelor of Arts degree in Corporate Communications and Marketing. She had worked for reputable nonprofits organizations, art institutions, and international marketing firm. Through her lens, she aims to capture her passion for art at community events, and shares the beauty of cultures with audiences from around the world.

Location

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