In light of the coronavirus outbreak, Presidential Fellows from across the country and around the world connected digitally to discuss the 2020 elections and the global response to the pandemic.

Last week, the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress hosted the Spring Presidential Fellows Leadership Conference. In order to ensure the safety and well-being of our Fellows in light of the COVID-19 epidemic, CSPC transitioned the conference to a digital experience. Presidential Fellows based in the United States, Canada, Japan, Panama, France, and Mexico joined us for two days of policy discussions focused on the 2020 U.S. elections.

Given the state of current events, the impact of the coronavirus situation permeated discussions throughout the conference. As part of our conversation on "Healthcare and the 2020 Elections," we were lucky enough to hear from Dr. Aamir Hussain, a physician currently working on the frontlines of the epidemic in New York City and an alumnus of the Fellows program. In addition, participants heard from experts on climate change, higher education, and the economy as we examined how each of these issues...
would be impacted by the outcome of the elections. Despite the changes to the conference format, our Fellows proved to be resilient and rose to the occasion with nearly full participation. They eagerly engaged with speakers and their peers, taking advantage of the connectivity options provided by technology.

All of the Fellows have recently completed their independent research projects which is the hallmark of the Presidential Fellows program. Their research covered a wide range of topics including the digital divide between urban and rural communities, the legislative capacity of the U.S. Congress, and the development of America’s drone warfare policies. During the conference, participants shared the findings of their research papers with their peers in small break-out group sessions.

In addition to the policy discussions, Fellows participated in an op-ed writing workshop led by Senior CSPC Advisor Michael Stecher. They learned the basic principles of writing and pitching an op-ed and discussed strategies for transforming their 15 page research projects into succinct 800-word op-eds.

While the conference had to be altered to support a digital format, we are extremely proud of the experience we curated for the Presidential Fellows, and above all we are grateful to all of these students who are navigating turbulent times for their commitment to this program and to finishing their Fellowship year strong. As we close out this Fellowship year, we look forward to welcoming the 50th class of the Presidential Fellows program in the fall.

**AWARD WINNERS**

*Each year, CSPC recognizes the best paper in a series of five categories. Award winners will have their papers published in the 2019-2020 Fellows Review and will receive a $1,000 prize.*

- David M. Abshire Award for Most Outstanding Paper by an International Fellow: **Uma Kalkar, University of Toronto**
- Robert A. Kilmarx Award for Best Military, Intelligence, or National Security Strategic Analysis: **Dean LaGuttuta, West Point**
- Donald B. Marron Award for the Best Historical Analysis: **Ross Snyder, Georgetown University**
- James R. Moffett Award for the Most Original Paper on the Modern Presidency or Congress: **Zach Hollander, George Washington University**
- The Richard H. Solomon Award for the Most Original Paper on Foreign Policy or Diplomacy: **Maya Ungar, University of Arkansas**