

The Bartels World Affairs Fellowship Program: Bringing the Internationally Distinguished to Cornell

Dr. Heike Michelsen,¹ April 29, 2022

Peeking out of the Green Room, I cannot see an empty seat left in the Statler Auditorium. Colleagues guard the doors, photographers are ready, the lights dimmed, and participants talk in high anticipation. Cornell President Hunter Rawlings and Fareed Zakaria, host of CNN's GPS series, enter the stage. During the next 90 minutes, Fareed shares his insights and knowledge on international affairs addressing political, military, financial, and economic developments. He also signs an endless number of books and addresses many students and faculty in more intimate settings before and after his lecture. Fareed Zakaria was the 2011 Bartels World Affairs Fellow.

Since 1985 thousands of students and faculty from across the campus have attended the annual public lecture of the Bartels Fellow to gain first-hand insights on important global issues. It became one of the most memorable times of being at Cornell for many students and faculty after their face-to-face meetings with Nobel Laureates, presidents, leading UN-officials, religious leaders, and other distinguished global thinkers.

As Cornell does not offer any honorary degrees, the Bartels fellowship program is regarded among the university's highest awards. It has become a flagship program of the Einaudi Center. The list of Bartels speakers, their professional titles and the topic of their lectures is more than impressive (see Table 1 below). Since the beginning, the Center has named 41 Bartels Fellows and organized 39 major public Bartels lectures as well as hundreds of seminars and meetings on campus. Previous Bartels Fellows included His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former leaders of countries including Nigeria, Brazil, Venezuela, and Chile; leaders of international institutions such as UN agencies, World Bank, IMF and UNICEF; members of the diplomatic core in the U.S. and other countries; academic leaders; distinguished journalists and writers; leaders of U.S. institutions; and politicians. What they have in common was not only their outstanding reputation and exceptional international careers, but also their dedication to public service and to addressing major issues of global concern.

It was President Frank H.T. Rhodes in the early 1980s who wanted an international perspective to become a key element of education, particularly for undergraduate students, to encourage a sensitivity to world-wide needs and views. "Great Universities, according to him, should be campus-rooted but internationally oriented ... and cosmopolitan in character. Their curricula, the makeup of their graduate and undergraduate student bodies, and the research and teaching of their faculty should be conspicuously international."²

It was recognized that Cornell's institutional diversity made it rather difficult to focus attention on a singular set of themes and its remote location presented a unique challenge to offer a program that will focus the attention of the entire campus community on the pressing social issues of our time. Accordingly, the Center for International Studies (renamed after its founder, Mario Einaudi, Goldwin Smith Professor

¹ Director of Programming (2008-2015) and Associate Director for Academic Programming (2016-2018) at the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies.

² Glenn C. Altschuler and Isaac Kramnick, 2014, p.327

of Government Emeritus, in 1991) developed a proposal for a lecture series and related activities that would “create a stronger awareness of a particular international topic, provide an open forum for discussion of these issues, and familiarize all segments of the university population with the vital social issues that may influence the future of mankind.”³

Henry E. and Nancy Horton Bartels '48 supported the proposal and endowed the Bartels World Affairs Fellowship program. “Nancy and I feel that the world is getting smaller all the time. As a result, in order to make a mark in this world, our young people will need to consider the international perspectives of their actions. Having the opportunity to meet and listen to people who are internationally prominent will broaden their horizons. Further, the lecture will give the whole Cornell community a chance to see and hear people of international importance whom they have recently read about or seen in the news media.”⁴

In collaboration with university leadership, departments, programs, faculty and students across the campus, the Einaudi Center annually selects the topic and speaker and develops and organizes the program. Bartels Fellows deliver a major public lecture for the entire university and spend about two days on campus in close interaction with faculty and students, especially undergraduates. In classes, seminars, and informal gatherings, each Bartels Fellow discusses major issues of global concern as well as their own personal international experience and careers. The Bartels World Affairs Fellowship thus provides students with the extraordinary opportunity to learn about global issues from a leader with international stature and to appreciate the opportunities and constraints of an international career.

Selected Bartels Fellows

Four Bartels fellows are highlighted to exemplify the caliber of those who contributed to the Cornell community: Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, President of Chile Michele Bachelet, and Nobel Laureate Svetlana Alexievich.

When Nelson Mandela was elected as President in South Africa, he appointed **Archbishop Desmond Tutu** in 1995 to chair the newly formed Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Tutu had been one of the leading figures in changing South Africa's inherently racist paradigm and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his contribution to racial justice. Tutu came to Cornell in 2000 and his lecture was so in demand that it was moved from the Statler Auditorium to the Newman Arena (Bartels Hall) where he was welcomed with a standing ovation of more than 1,500 people. Tutu shared unbelievable testimonies of murders, abductions and lynchings under apartheid. But instead of prosecutions, amnesty was granted to those who came forward with information about their crimes. Tutu conveyed a message of forgiveness and reconciliation. “We have seen the potent power of truth to help people heal....We want a new kind of society that is gentle and caring, transparent and open.”

Tutu thanked students at Cornell and across the country for their tireless effort to support the fight against apartheid. As part of the national divestment movement, students and faculty demanded that Cornell's Board of Trustees stop investing university funds in companies doing business in South Africa beginning in the late 70s. It included the construction of “shantytowns” on campus and mass arrests in the mid-80s.⁵

³ Proposal for a lecture series in the Center for International Studies at Cornell University, 1984, p. 1

⁴ Cornell University, Communiqué Fall/Winter 1984

⁵ For a detailed description of the divestment movement at Cornell see Altschuler and Kramnick, p. 332 ff.

For students and faculty, Tutu's visit was an inspiring and memorable experience to carry through life. "It was a very powerful and effective message," said student Kameelah Benjamin-Fuller'01, "because it was not something you really hear from leaders."

In 2006, **Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi**, former special envoy for Afghanistan and adviser to the UN Secretary General, gave a sobering analysis of the situation in Iraq, predicting escalating tensions. Brahimi is highly respected throughout the world as a statesman and for his skills as a negotiator. He noted that the peace process aiming at the rebuilding of the Iraqi State did not seem to be working. "The new Constitution and the security forces being trained under U.S. and British leadership are not producing the national institutions that can bring peace back and keep the country together." As we know now, he got it right.

Brahimi's insights and wide experiences in international diplomacy and the Middle East were deeply appreciated. He returned several times to campus as an AD White Professor and Diplomat-in-Residence at the Einaudi Center. During his residency he offered a course on conflict and conflict resolution focusing on Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, the Arab Spring, Sudan, and South Sudan. It culminated in an unforgettable visit to the UN in New York City where students and faculty directly interacted with the Permanent Representatives of the Russian Federation and Brazil to the United Nations, the President of the General Assembly, and other leaders of the UN.

A group of Chilean students asked the Einaudi Center in early 2012 to invite **Michele Bachelet**, the former President of Chile and head of the newly created UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). She was known as one of the most popular presidents of Chile (who was returned to office when allowed to run again) and a champion of women's rights. "There is a raising awareness that we cannot solve the great challenges of our time unless we unleash the potential of full and equal participation of women." Bachelet noted the groundbreaking role of Cornell on the empowerment of women. For it was at Cornell that the first woman, Emma Eastman, matriculated in 1873; 47 years before American women had the right to vote. Bachelet called for a new development paradigm to implement policies and reforms that promote gender equality. "That the right of a woman to decide if and when and how many children she wants to have is still up for debate is a sign of the work that still lies ahead of us."

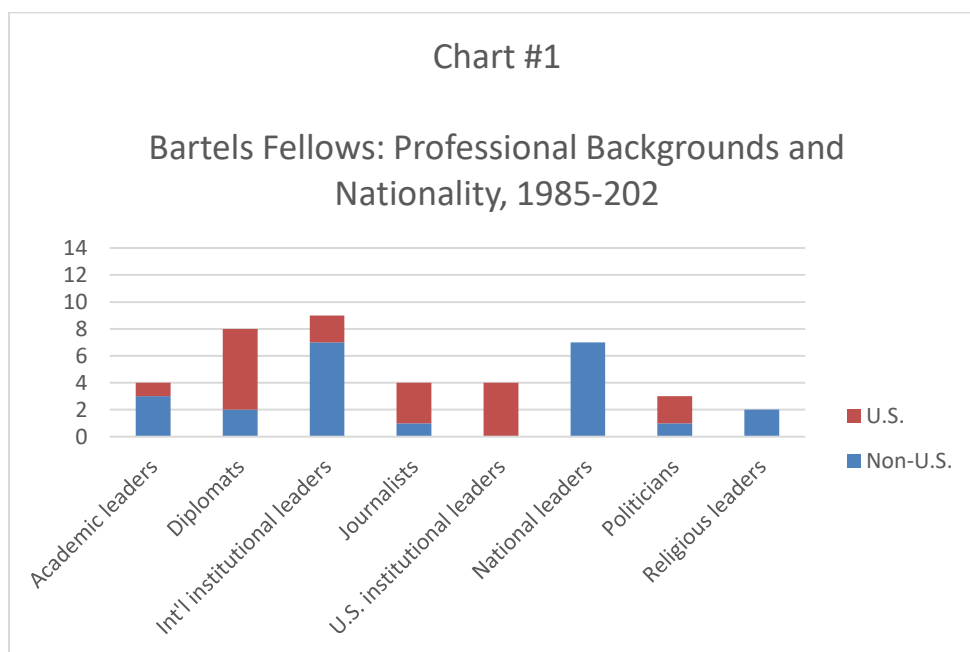
Many faculty and students attended informal meetings with Bachelet. Inspired by her visit, students revived the old Chilean Association at Cornell (CHAS) and presented her with a drawing of the 'chinita chilena' and the 'gaucho chileno.' Patricio Winckler Grez '15 (PhD. in Civil Engineering) submitted an article about her visit "Un buen tinto y Michelle" for publication in the Chilean Fulbright newsletter. Felipe Aron '14 (PhD in Geological Sciences), CHAS president, praised the Einaudi Center as follows: "Thank you for all what you did for this very successful event. I can't describe with my keyboard how happy I feel."

A faculty group nominated **Svetlana Alexievich**, the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2015 and former resident of the Gothenburg City of Refuge, to become the 2016 Bartels Fellow. Born in Ukraine and growing up in Belarus, she became a teacher, journalist, and writer in the Russian language. She had chronicled the Soviet Union for over 30 years, a history of the rise and fall of the Russian-Soviet dream told by the people themselves during conversations about life. "I learned how to listen, how to turn myself into one big ear." The packed auditorium in Statler Hall gave Alexievich a spontaneous round of applause when she stated, in reference to war: "Ideas should be killed, not people."

During her stay, Alexievich also met with two undergraduate classes including a first-year writing seminar attended by Hassan Saleem '20 (CALs). In an online article, he reflected upon her visit and wrote: "If art can inspire change in the world, perhaps Svetlana Alexievich could be a catalyst, in her works and in her words. Despite the darkness she has experienced, she has somehow brought forth some of the most enlightening literature the world has known. Her final piece of advice for us was never to settle for remaining average, and always to strive to be the best. That is the sort of thing that successful people always tell students, but I think her meaning was deeper. 'Only one who stays above the water,' she said, 'avoids being swept away by the waves.'"

Overview of Fellows and Topics

Chart 1 shows the professional background and nationality of the 41 Bartels Fellows. Eighteen (44%) of the Bartels Fellows were U.S. nationals with an international career and 23 (56%) were from other countries. Most Bartels Fellows were leaders of international institutions such as UN agencies, World Bank, IMF (9 or 22%), members of the diplomatic core in the U.S. and other countries (8, 20%) and leaders of other countries including Chile, Nigeria, and Germany (7, 17%). Others were academic leaders (4, 10%), distinguished journalists and writers (4, 10%), leaders of U.S. institutions (4, 10%), politicians (3, 7%) and religious leaders (2, 5%).

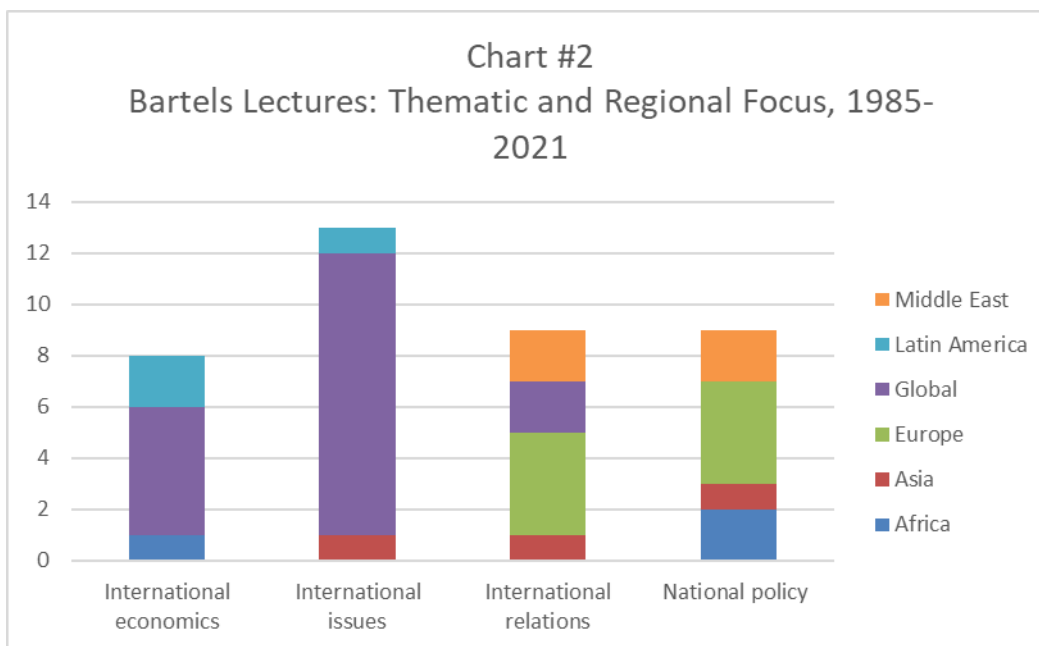


The thematic focus of the public lectures has intentionally been very broad from the international debt crisis and challenges to democracy, to the post-American world and cyber diplomacy. The lectures have attracted huge audiences over the years from across campus. Chart 2 shows the four thematic foci of the lectures:

- About a third of the lectures (13, 33%) related to international issues such as global environment, global health, the role of religion, the role of UN agencies, new development paradigms, new world order, fact-based world view, cyber diplomacy, and gender issues.
- International relations (9, 23%) included transatlantic alliance, cold war, U.S. foreign policies vis-à-vis Russia, the Middle East, Asia etc.

- National policies (9, 23%) included challenges to democracy, human rights, institutional changes, economic reforms, structural adjustment programs, good governance, human capital development, reconciliation, and peace negotiations.
- International economics (8, 21%) included the global financial and debt crisis, globalization, trade policies, international investments, and the roles of central banks, the World Bank, and IMF.

About half of the lectures addressed multiregional or global issues (18, 46%) and another half (21, 54%) focused on specific world regions. Twenty percent (8) focused on Europe or European relationships, ten percent (4) on the Middle East, and about eight percent (3) each on Latin America, Asia, and Africa.



Impact of Bartels Program

While it is not possible to measure the full impact of the fellowship on the Cornell community, the feedback received from students and faculty was always very positive and continues to justify the organizational efforts. Some testimonials were:

- Rochi Gupte '10 with a minor in international relations wrote: "For students to be able to attend a speaker event with the world's leading thinkers is, in itself, remarkable and inspiring... A highlight of my undergraduate experience at Cornell. The speaker events were really a way for the academic curriculum taught in class to jump to life and become relevant outside of the lecture hall."
- Andrew Key '15 (ILR), who attended a lunch meeting with Fareed Zakaria in 2011, exclaimed: "Absolutely incredible experience today. I give my greatest appreciations to you for the opportunity and my deepest congratulations to all of the individuals at the Einaudi Center who made this event the success that it was."
- Youyi Zhang '19 (PhD. In Political Sciences), who attended a lunch with Michael McFaul in 2015, reflected: "Thanks very much! I really appreciated the opportunity and hear about his life stories. I sincerely hope that we could have similar opportunities in the future to have informal discussion with the speakers. Thanks again for your organizing!"

- Debra A. Castillo, Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellow, Emerson Hinchliff Professor of Hispanic Studies and Professor of Comparative Literature wrote in a letter to former Brazilian President Cardoso, the 2010 Bartels fellow: “It is certainly unusual in academic discussions for the speaker to be mobbed as if he were a rock star! No rock star, however entertaining, has left us with such a rich and complex message, such a tremendous combination of modesty and wisdom, such a grounded analysis of national realities and global vision. We are greatly in your debt.”

Factors of Success

Many factors led to the continued success of the Bartels Program. The Einaudi Center with a mandate to explore, exchange, debate, and expand understanding of global and international issues, has provided a sustainable institutional home for the Bartels program. The Center has a vast faculty and student network across campus. While the Center’s director and staff coordinate all components of the Bartels program, it also receives significant institutional support. Given the broad range of stakeholders, it has been very important to not only clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of each person involved, but also to regularly communicate to keep them actively engaged.

The funding for this fellowship has been secured by an endowment from the Bartels family, thus guaranteeing a regular annual income to the Einaudi Center to cover the main expenses related to the program, including travel, security, honorarium, catering, gifts, and administration, far into the future. In today’s world dominated by speaker bureaus, it is key to be able to offer a significant honorarium not only to attract distinguished speakers to come to Cornell, but also for them to spend more than a few hours on campus. Available funding for organizing events with the speakers also differentiates the Bartels speaker series from others at Cornell given it the flair of being very special.

Each of these high-level visits to the Ithaca campus, involving so many constituencies, required long-term and meticulous planning and preparations from the identification of the speakers and the visit to the post evaluation of events. It can take more than one year from sending an invitation to the actual visit in Ithaca. It demands detailed briefings of the university leadership who introduce the speaker at the public lecture as well as faculty and students invited to specific events. Many Bartels speakers require special security, others special preparations for their presentations. For example, Svetlana’s lecture was in Russian and required simultaneous translation and Hans Rosling used over 400 hand-held clickers to conduct a multi-choice questionnaire to test the audience’s knowledge of certain facts. Communications before, during and after the event are key to mobilize and inform the campus and the local community. Many videos of lectures are featured on CornellCast and several transcripts were published and are available through Cornell’s library.

Last but not least, it has been critically important to identify distinguished international leaders who can attract, entice, and motivate a broad constituency, provide unique and complementary academic contributions on relevant and current topics with insights about global issues in their broadest topical, geographical, and disciplinary dimensions. Speakers need to dedicate enough time to closely interact with students and faculty.

There is no question that the goals of the Fellowship remain as relevant today as they were over 40 years ago. Students and others benefit from the extraordinary opportunity to interact directly with leaders of international stature to learn about global issues and facets of an international career.

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Table 1: Bartels World Affairs Fellows and Lectures: 1985 to 2021

Year	Name	Professional Title	Title of lecture
1985	Arkady Schevchenko	Former USSR ambassador to the United Nations	A View from the Kremlin
1986	Charles Percy	Former US Senator, former chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee	The Challenges We Face: The U.S. and the Trade Deficit
1987	Pierre Salinger	Writer and Journalist, ABC News international correspondent	The Dangerous Realities of America's Misperceptions of the World
1988	Halfdan Mahler	Director-General of the World Health Organization	AIDS: Connecting Science and Public Policy
	Samuel Thier	President, Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences	
	David Axelrod	New York State, Commissioner of Health	
1988	Bruce Laingen	Former US Chief of Mission to Iran	The Middle East: A Former Hostage Examines U.S. Foreign Policy
1989	Carlos Andrés Pérez	President of Venezuela	The Latin American Debt Crisis
1990	Frank Press	President of the National Academy of Sciences	Global Environment Change: What Should We Do About It?
1990	Mark Palmer	Former US Ambassador to Hungary	From Communism to Democracy: The Way Ahead
1991	Dalai Lama	The Dalai Lama of Tibet, His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso	Overcoming Differences
1992	Barber Conable, Jr.	Former President of the World Bank Group	Global Change
1992	Olusegun Obasanjo	Former Head of State of Nigeria	Africa in a Changing World
1993	Luigi R. Einaudi	US ambassador to the Organization of American States	Does the Western Hemisphere Have a Future?
1994	Sir John Burgh	President of Trinity College, Oxford	The Thatcher Decade
1994	Michael Manley	Former Prime Minister of Jamaica	The Search for Development Paradigms in the New World Order
1995	Hanan Ashrawi	Founder of the Palestine Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights	The Middle East Peace Process: A Personal Account
1996	Jessica Matthews	Journalist, senior fellow at the Council of Foreign Relations	New Actors in a New World Order
1996	George Mitchell	Former US Senator	American Foreign Policy in the Next Century: From Bosnia and Burundi to Beirut and Belfast
1997	Haris Silajdzic	Co-Chair of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 21st Century
2000	Desmond Tutu	Archbishop of South Africa, former head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission	Truth and Reconciliation: Toward a Just Society

2001	Michel Camdessus	Former director of the International Monetary Fund	The IMF in World Affairs: Balancing Economic, Political and Social Objectives
2002	Carol Bellamy	Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Challenges for Children in Today's World
2003	Mary Robinson	Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, former President of Ireland	Human Rights and Ethical Globalization
2004	Donald Gregg	Former US Ambassador to South Korea and Chair of Korea Society	Is North Korea the Last Outpost of the Axis of Evil?
2005	Dennis Ross	Former US Ambassador and Middle East coordinator	Finding the Missing Peace? The Middle East in 2005
2006	Lakhdar Brahimi	Former UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary General, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria	Iraq: The Present Crisis and its Implications for Stability in the Middle East
2007	Joschka Fischer	German Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1998-2005	Redefining the US-Europe Relationship After 9/11
2008	Louise Arbour	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2004-2008	Human Rights for All: Beyond our Reach?
2009	Mo Ibrahim	Founder of Celtel, Founder and Chair of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation	Africa Works with Good Governance, Investment, and a Little Help from our Friends
2010	Fernando Henrique Cardoso	President of Brazil, 1995-2002	Beyond the Global Financial Crisis: Politics, Economics, and Culture
2011	Fareed Zakaria	Writer, Journalist, Host of CNN's GPS, Editor-at-Large of TIME Magazine	The Rise of the Rest: The Post-American World
2012	Michelle Bachelet	Under-Secretary-General of the UN; Executive Director of UN Women; President of Chile, 2006-10	Women and the New Development Paradigm
2013	Kishore Mahbubani	Former Singapore Ambassador to the UN and President of the UN Security Council	The Great Convergence: Asia, the West, and the Logic of One World
2014	Hans Rosling	Professor of International Health at the Karolinska Institute	Upgrade to a Fact-Based World View
2015	Michael McFaul	U.S. Ambassador to Russia, 2012-2014; Director of the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University	A New Cold War: Explaining Russia's New Confrontation with the West
2016	Alan Blinder	Gordon S. Rentschler Memorial Professor of Economics and Public Affairs at Princeton University	The Evolving Political Economy of Central Banking
2016	Svetlana Alexievich	Writer and Journalist, 2015 Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature	Voices From the People: The Rise and Fall of the Russian-Soviet Dream
2017	Christopher Painter '80	Coordinator for Cyber Issues, U.S. Department of State (2011-2017)	Cyber Diplomacy: New tools in the fight against hackers, attackers, and other threats
2019	Sri Mulyani Indrawati	The Republic of Indonesia's minister of finance, Managing Director of the World Bank Group (2010-16)	Industrial Evolution: How Developing Countries Can Build Human Capital
2021	Amartya Sen	1998 Nobel Laureate in Economics, Thomas W. Lamont University Professor at Harvard University	Attacks on Democracy



The 1991 Bartels Fellow, the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, here together with President Frank H.T. Rhodes in front of Olin Library, attracted over 12,000 people.

Source: Cornell University Photography



The Bartels family with the 2000 Bartels Fellow Desmond Tutu, Archbishop of South Africa (from right to left: Henry, Nancy, granddaughter Katie, and son Philip).

Source: Cornell University Photography



Joschka Fischer, German Minister for Foreign Affairs from 1998-2005, member of the Green Party, and 2017 Bartels fellow, addressed the dangers of the unilateral foreign path of the U.S. after 9/11.

Source: Cornell University Photography



The 2008 Bartels fellow, Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2004-2008) and former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda greeting students before a meeting.

Source: Cornell University Photography



Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President of Brazil (1995-2002), after his 2010 Bartels lecture in which he addressed the Global Financial Crisis.

Source: Shai Photography



Fareed Zakaria, Writer, Host of CNN's GPS, signing books after his 2011 Bartels lecture in the Statler Auditorium.

Source: Shai Photography



In 2012 students presenting a drawing of the "chinita chilena" and the "gaucho chileno" to honor Michele Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women, and President of Chile (2006-10).

Source: Cornell University Photography



The 2014 Bartels fellow, pioneering trend spotter and statistician, Professor Hans Rosling, teaching about data visualization as part of the class “Perspectives on International Agriculture and Rural Development”.

Source: Cornell University Photography



The 2016 Bartels fellow, Svetlana Alexievich, Writer, Journalist, and 2015 Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, during a luncheon with students.

Source: Shai Photography