The Fletcher School is at the forefront of understanding and interpreting the complex challenges facing the globe. For nearly a century, Fletcher has led the study and practice of international affairs — defining the field, pushing its frontiers, and deepening and broadening its scope.

Today’s world is vastly different from the one at the time of Fletcher’s founding. Global, digital, flatter, hotter, safer, and more prosperous — yet unequal. Old wars have been fought, but the causes of conflict remain. New rivalries are emerging. And in addition, we face a suite of new threats, some of which are existential. Threats stemming from nationalism spurred the School’s founding, and they continue to ricochet around the world today. International cooperation is as critical as ever, and to achieve peace, there must be justice.

Fletcher’s founding was spurred by the need for international cooperation in the face of rising insularity and nationalism. Nationalism continues to pose threats today, making effective international cooperation as essential today as it was almost 90 years ago. Building and operating that cooperation, from the myriad of vantage points a leader secures with a Fletcher education, and which our scholarship illuminates, remains our purpose. Both our opportunity and responsibility are to carry forward the Fletcher tradition of innovation and courageous leadership.

Similarly, since our founding, professional education has constantly changed. Today, it is more global, digital, and open to all, remote as well as in person, yet too expensive and inaccessible to many. These trends, discernible for several years, have become more apparent and the pace of change quickened by COVID-19’s disruption. Our students’ needs are different too. An increasingly global and interconnected community, they are keenly aware that they must develop both the deep analytical capability and knowledge for which Fletcher is traditionally known, and greater facility with essential “know-how,” such as those skills associated with data science. As the original school of law and diplomacy, Fletcher has set the bar for other institutions that now offer competing credentials. In this more competitive and dynamic educational landscape, we pursue our mission to educate students, prepared to lead on a fast-moving, fast-changing, and increasingly uncertain global stage.

The next generation of leaders will need to be equipped to build new architectures of international cooperation using new technologies and leveraging new kinds of partnerships — many of which have yet to be imagined. They will need to lead and manage problem-solving for challenges that demand collaboration between public and private sectors and where the institutions, rules, and norms on which the world has relied for most of Fletcher’s history need to be reformed, retired, or replaced. They will need the courage and vision to seek new ways to build security by protecting others in order to protect us all. They will need to find ways to make peace with nature if we are to be at peace with each other.
The Fletcher School: Shaping the Future

To ensure that Fletcher continues to graduate agile, resourceful, and committed leaders, we will invest in our school’s unique integrated educational offering and approach to research across a focused set of fields of study. We will build on Fletcher’s track record by doubling down on what makes Fletcher, Fletcher:

**A faculty of global experts** who are not siloed in departments but who are supported to build links between fields of study. Attracted by and producing interdisciplinary solutions, they deepen and broaden their fields of study from technology policy to international law, development economics to climate change, gender analysis to negotiation and conflict resolution, security studies and human security. They probe the interdisciplinary spaces between our fields of study to find solutions to cyber threats and pandemic disease, nuclear proliferation, biological threats, climate change, energy, food and finance system transitions, and the intersectionality at the heart of social justice everywhere. Our faculty actively contributes to the work of the Bretton Woods Institutions, the United Nations, and the World Trade Organization. They advise the foreign affairs departments of multiple governments, their military and defense establishments and international finance, aid, humanitarian and trade mechanisms. They are experts to the G7 and G20 and other institutions of international governance. They advise negotiators and design processes of negotiation. They advise business and financial institutions from start-ups to global brands. They are engaged in initiatives around the world to form and build new institutions and new ways of cooperation.

**An exceptional international student body** that boasts greater global diversity than our U.S. peers. Our remarkable student body allows Fletcher to move beyond the transactional understanding of “international affairs” to an immersion in the study, research, and practice of global affairs and a globalist view. They are drawn to our interdisciplinarity, our unparalleled culture of community, and our commitment to supporting their careers as they traverse government, private sector, NGOs, and international organizations. Whether our students are studying in our buildings, or from locations around the world, Fletcher equips them to tackle complex global problems through multiple lenses, collaborating with like-minded community-oriented change agents.

**A category-of-one alumni network** with ties that are revered and relied on throughout and beyond one’s career. Students and alumni choose Fletcher because of the vitality of our community’s engagement and the power of its camaraderie that begins in the student experience, permeating classrooms, hallways, and now zoom rooms, and extends for life. Uncommonly committed and connected, our alumni share a great pride of belonging to the Fletcher community.
The Fletcher School: Shaping the Future

These distinctions enable Fletcher to deliver a uniquely effective education with practical skills that our graduates carry with them for life. To secure our school as the destination of choice for scholarship and teaching for those who wish to design, influence, and lead in this fast-changing world, we will build on Fletcher’s essential elements in the following ways:

For Excellence and Relevance

We will anchor each of our eleven fields of study with world-class scholarship and leading faculty practitioners of the field. Having streamlined our study areas, we will invest in them, developing our faculty and fortifying our applied research. We will add new scholars, consolidate research centers, and expand our Ph.D. program. Equal commitment will be made to securing field depth and to working across fields of study.

We will support our students as they explore the intersections of disciplines critical for the real-world challenges of the coming decades. The curriculum will continue to evolve to support interdisciplinary approaches to issues while ensuring students graduate with the foundations of those disciplines essential to their chosen path. We will maximize students’ time at Fletcher to ensure they develop the skills critical to success in a digital world, regardless of their specific trajectory.

For Flexibility and Affordability

To train the students the world will need as its future leaders, we will make the Fletcher experience increasingly accessible to those from all backgrounds everywhere. We will mobilize resources to secure the financial aid needed to enroll qualified students and emerging scholars irrespective of their means, background or perspective. We will price our educational programs and offerings aggressively. We will support part-time, pay-as-you-go credentials and use the entire calendar year to support students and increase engagement opportunities for executive education students and others, including corporate and organizational partners.

The unique collaborative relationship between our faculty and students is a premium of the Fletcher in-person experience. We aim to replicate that special connection online and have done so successfully already. We will offer experiences blending digital technologies alongside in-person teaching, identifying the formula for optimal learning, collaboration and engagement. To ensure that a Fletcher education can be delivered to students wherever they find themselves in their career and in the world, we will offer flagship degrees, with flexibility, and re-imagine our mid-career and executive education formats.
The Fletcher School: Shaping the Future

For Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential for a complete understanding of international affairs. Our community must reflect the world for which we are training tomorrow’s leaders. We purposefully continue to strengthen the diversity of our student body. We have adopted hiring practices to ensure the diverse recruitment of faculty and staff. We are developing also a focused financial aid strategy to support greater diversity through mentoring, sponsorship, and internships. Fletcher will be known as a place where a curriculum that embraces diverse perspectives, taught by a diverse faculty — of both background and perspective — is explored by a diverse student body in the broadest sense of the word and is supported by a diverse staff. Diversity, equity, and inclusion in our student body, our staff and our faculty are essential to building a learning environment that will develop the leaders the world needs.

For Fletcher for Life

We will build on our commitment that Fletcher is “Fletcher for Life” with a portfolio of short-form, non-degree courses aligned with our fields of study designed for both individuals and groups. By growing our executive education programs, Fletcher will become the place for governments, international organizations, businesses, and civil society organizations, as well as our alumni, to refresh and augment their expertise and curate their careers to enhance and expand their impact. The content of our curriculum, the insights from our research, and the practitioner experience of many of our faculty mean that we may curate carefully designed experiences for leaders to explore and understand complexity in global affairs. By investing in new ways to engage with Fletcher, we will position ourselves as a destination of choice for those seeking to lead and influence at the highest levels of government, industry, and non-profits. Our executive education business platform and the sharpened focus of our mid-career degrees will make our scholarship and instruction available across the Fletcher community’s career span and to others who wish to access Fletcher later in life. We will offer a “home” of learning, enrichment, and community that alumni and first-time friends can return to again and again.

Each challenge the world faces today will be resolved only by cooperation between states and among states and non-state actors. Often this cooperation will take new forms. Messy, complex, and challenging, this world has already arrived, and requires dexterity and a principled commitment to pursuing engagement. Fletcher students must be comfortable with the evolving nature of leadership demands in this environment — managing experts across multiple domains. They must be leaders who can succeed in workforces where effectiveness is understood to come from diversity.
The Fletcher School: Shaping the Future

By focusing on skills development and know-how as well as knowledge and analytical capability, by engaging the world through more structured internships, practicums, and research partnerships, Fletcher brings what we know of the world’s challenges to shape the educational experience so that it works best for our students, regardless of their pursuit, background, or circumstance.

At Fletcher’s founding, amid growing isolationism resulting from the Great Depression and World War I, Tufts President John Cousens hoped that Fletcher would “deliver a practical service in a disorderly world.” Today’s practical service is as likely to be an NGO worker using digital tools to track the involuntary displacement of people as it is to be an ambassador. It is as likely to be a division head for a global energy company committed to access to energy as it is to be an analyst in an international organization. That practical service is as likely to be a military officer deployed with colleagues on a soft power initiative as it is in a combat role.

Whatever the leadership scenario for which Fletcher prepares our students, they are likely to meet fellow alumni across the negotiating table, as a technology partner, a commentator, or as an ally.

Fletcher has never observed history. Fletcher puts its hands on history. The Fletcher School is and must continue to be the gold standard of global affairs study and practice in the 21st Century — the essential, world-class provider of the knowledge, skills and network our students and their employers require in order to be the shapers of the future we need them to be. With a flatter, increasingly digital world convulsed by climate impacts, new great power rivalries, and severe risks of deepening inequality and weaponized extremisms, Fletcher and its community now need to redesign the forms of international cooperation for the future.

Fletcher has always understood that there must be justice to achieve peace. Therefore, we must invest in training an ever-more diverse group of students in the disciplines most critical to this world that is moving at warp speed. Fletcher graduates will continue to lead the way in securing a better world for everyone. I could not be more proud of our community’s commitment to the global leaders and leadership that the world needs now more than ever. As your Dean, I look forward to standing shoulder to shoulder with you for the benefit of us all and for the planet.