



World Affairs Council
of Western Michigan

Great Decisions Global Discussions

March 19th: “South Africa at a Crossroads: Implications for U.S.-South Africa Relations”
Desirée Cormier, Senior Director, Africa Practice, Albright Stonebridge Group (ASG)

Recession and unemployment. Accusations of corruption. Internal divisions and public frustrations. Major issues threaten to bring down the African National Congress (ANC), the party that has governed South Africa since the end of apartheid in 1994. What are the implications for the country and for U.S. foreign policy in the region?

Ms. Cormier is Senior Director of ASG's Africa Practice, where she advises and assists clients on growth strategies across the African continent. Prior to joining ASG, she was a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State. In this role, she served in Tijuana, Mexico; Pretoria, South Africa; and Washington, D.C. From 2014 to 2015, she was the African Union and Multilateral Affairs Officer in the Bureau of African Affairs, where she focused on facilitating engagement with partner countries and organizations on areas of mutual concern.

From 2012 until 2014, Ms. Cormier served as Staff Assistant to the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy Pretoria, South Africa, where she coordinated various mission-wide priorities and strategic plans, including the U.S.-South Africa Strategic Dialogue, the annual Mission Resource Request, and the joint State-USAID Integrated Country Strategy.

Ms. Cormier is the recipient of four Department of State Meritorious Honor Awards and the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Undergraduate Fellowship. She was chosen to participate in the 2015 International Career Advancement Program sponsored by the Aspen Institute and the University of Denver for highly promising mid-career professionals in foreign policy.

Ms. Cormier currently serves on the Advisory Council of Global Kids, an educational non-profit aimed to inspire underserved youth to pursue careers in public policy and global affairs.

Ms. Cormier holds a B.A. in Political Science and Psychology from Stanford University and a M.A. in Public Policy from John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

She is fluent in Spanish and French.

Two options to attend:

12-1 p.m.: Recital Hall in the Covenant Fine Arts Center at Calvin College

6-7:15 p.m.: Aquinas College Performing Arts Center

\$10 admission per discussion; a new topic and speaker each week.

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