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TACOMA

Annual Report 2025

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About WACT

The World Affairs Council of Tacoma (WACT) is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing global awareness, international understanding, and civic engagement in the South Sound region.



Through public programs, educational initiatives, and community partnerships, WACT creates spaces where global issues meet local perspectives. Our work brings together diplomats, scholars, immigrants, students, and engaged residents to explore how international events shape our shared future.

We believe informed dialogue is essential to a healthy democracy. By fostering thoughtful conversation and amplifying diverse voices, WACT helps Tacoma think globally and act locally.

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WACT Team – 2025

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President

Cindy Schaarschmidt, executive director for international education, Pierce College

Vice President

Arthur Delong, partner, Eisenhower Carlson, LLC

Treasurer

Mariam Anderson, yoga instructor and personal fitness coach

Marketing and Communications Committee

Brian Dirks, retired communications professional, State of Washington

Programs Committee

John Lucas, professor of political science, Pierce College

Fundraising Committee

Amy Pettigrew, development associate at Upaya Social Ventures

BOARD MEMBERS

Clare Petrich, chair, Tacoma Sister Cities

Ken Brown, social studies faculty, Bellarmine Preparatory School

Debbie Bingham, coordinator, Tacoma Sister Cities

Kristin Ang, commissioner, Port of Tacoma

Elizabeth Willis, honorary consul, Republic of Seychelles

Joan Waldrop, retired project manager

Faaluaina Pritchard, executive director, Asia Pacific Cultural Center

Mary L. Hanneman, professor, University of Washington Tacoma

Iuliia Didkivska, vice chair, City of Tacoma's Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Michael A. Fowler, senior trade consultant, World Trade Center Tacoma

J. David Snow, director of campaigns and planned giving, Wesley Community Foundation

Patrick Erwin, director of global education, Tacoma Public Schools

Syed Jamal, founder and CEO, Branta



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Join Our Board
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WACT Board President's Message

Dear Friends,

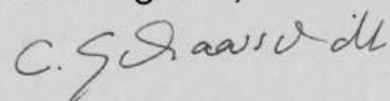
I'm pleased to share the World Affairs Council of Tacoma's 2025 Annual Report. As I look back on my second year as Board President, I remain deeply grateful for the generosity and collaborative spirit of this community. In a time of global uncertainty, we continue to create spaces where people can engage thoughtfully with international issues that shape our lives here at home.

Through our expert-led Speaker Series and the personal reflections highlighted in the Immigrant Stories Project, we affirm our commitment to dialogue grounded in respect, curiosity, and a genuine willingness to learn from one another. These programs reflect the core of our mission: strengthening global understanding and fostering meaningful connections across cultures.

This year also deepened our work with teachers and students across Tacoma-area schools. By bringing global issues into classrooms and creating opportunities for young people to participate in these conversations, we're helping the next generation build the knowledge and curiosity needed to navigate our interconnected world.

My sincere thanks go to our board members, volunteers, sponsors, speakers, and community partners for the energy and insight they contribute throughout the year. Together, we are helping build a Tacoma that is informed, inclusive, and engaged with the wider world. I look forward to continuing this work with all of you.

Kind regards,



Cindy Schaarschmidt
WACT Board President



SPEAKERS SERIES-2025

Tacoma: An Immigrant City

Michael Sean Sullivan, a public historian, explored Tacoma's patterns of immigration, how neighborhoods and institutions have been shaped by waves of newcomers and how journey stories have helped create the city's cultural backstory and history.



"With Intent to Destroy": The Birth of the Concept of Genocide

Genocide, though morally charged, is a relatively recent concept in law and politics. Professor Ben Meiches traced its origins in Raphaël Lemkin's work and examined its evolving role in global politics, human rights, and theories of violence.

The Ukraine Crisis And The Collapse of The Post-WWII World Order

Thomas Preston, a Washington State University C. O. Johnson distinguished professor, described the impacts of President Trump's radical shift away from support of Ukraine, and the entire structure of the post-WWII alliances with Europe and NATO.



Subscribe for Events
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Tariffs: How do they work, who pays for them, and what impact will they have on our nation?

Andreas Udbye, a professor logistics at Tacoma Community College, Deborah LI, the Vice President of Sales for Mode Imports , and Emma Perruccio, an Account Executive for Kintetsu World Express gave an explanation of tariffs and an overview of the research on their impact.

**Securing Machine Communications:
From AI Sensing to Machine Learning to Post-Quantum**

Professor Sang-Yoon Chang, Associate Professor of Computer Science at the University of Colorado gave a presentation on the latest challenges facing cybersecurity.



Universal Basic Income: An Idea Whose Time Has Come?

Dr. Peter Grosvenor, an Associate Professor of Sociology and Global Studies at Pacific Lutheran University explained UBI and examined the major arguments for and against it.

Peace in Practice: Transforming Lives in Rural Guatemala

Indigenous women in rural Guatemala spend six to eight hours every day cooking on indoor open fires, resulting in life threatening respiratory issues and other illnesses from the toxic smoke, especially among children. Brian Dirks and David Snow explained what the Hands for Peacemaking Foundation is doing in one corner of Guatemala to improve conditions there.



Tacoma Immigrant Stories Project – 2025

The Immigrant Stories Project documents the lived experiences of Tacoma residents who have journeyed from around the world. These personal narratives reflect resilience, identity, and the human dimensions of global migration.

Stories shared in 2025 include voices from Iran, Germany, and England, each adding depth to Tacoma's collective history.



Kate Haas
from
England



Henry Haas
from
Germany



Shadyar Omrani
from
Iran

Share Your Story

Are you an immigrant with a story to tell?

We would love to hear from you.

Contact: administrator@wactacoma.com

Consular Association Reception – 2025

The annual Consular Association Reception celebrates international diplomacy and strengthens connections between Tacoma and the global community. The event brings together consular officials, civic leaders, educators, and residents to honor cross-cultural collaboration.



Our Oct. 23 program at the Tacoma Museum of Glass featured a question-and-answer session with The Honorable Gary Locke, former governor of Washington, U.S. Secretary of Commerce and U.S. Ambassador to China. The session was moderated by Julie Anderson, former three-term auditor for Pierce County and a past member of the Tacoma City Council.

We're grateful to our consular partners, community leaders, students, sponsors, and guests for making the evening a meaningful celebration of diplomacy and international engagement.

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Support international engagement and diplomacy in Tacoma.

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WACT's Book Club– 2025



WACT's Book Club offers a space for thoughtful discussion of global literature, history, and contemporary issues. Each session brings together readers from diverse backgrounds to explore ideas across cultures and borders.

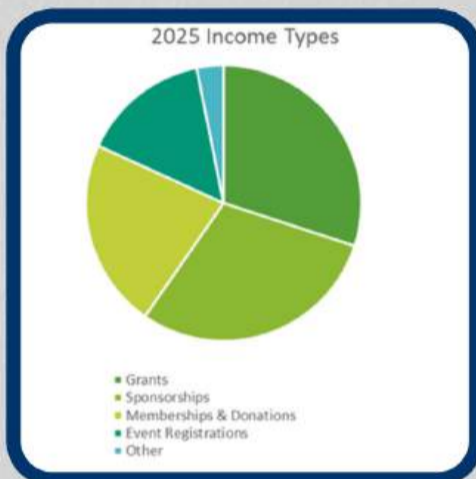
In 2025, Wact's Book Club read the following books:

- The Greatest Beer Run Ever, John "Chick" Donohue & J.T. Molloy
- The Faithful Spy, Alex Berenson
- Scaramouche, Rafael Sabatini
- Three Hours in Paris, Cara Black
- The Man Who Would Be King, Rudyard Kipling
- Eye of the Needle, Ken Follett
- Out of Africa, Isak Dinesen
- The Spy and the Traitor, Ben Macintyre
- My First Summer in the Sierra, John Muir
- The Riddle of the Sands, Erskine Childers

Our events are free to attend but not free to produce. If you value these conversations, please consider supporting our mission by making a donation through our Support Our Work page.

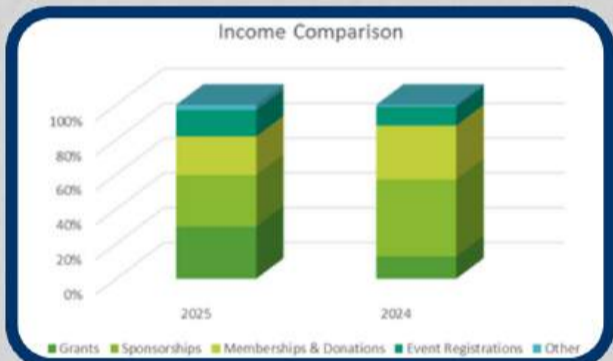
2025 Financial Overview

WACT remains committed to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and directing resources toward mission-driven programming.

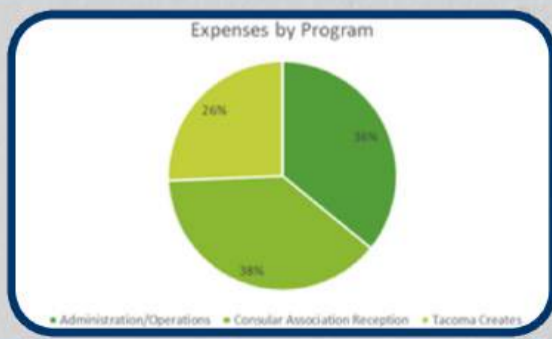


Summarized income comparison

	2025	2024
Grants	14,381.50	9,549.00
Sponsorships	14,200.00	33,225.00
Memberships & Donations	10,606.00	23,143.00
Event Registrations	7,206.34	8,096.12
Other	1,500.00	820



	Administration /Operations	Consular Association	Tacoma Creates	TOTAL
Total Income	1,746.00	31,566.34	14,581.50	47,893.84
Total Expenses	19,127.88	20,490.12	13,672.11	53,290.11



Get Involved

- Donate
- Become a Member
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2026 Events

Speaker Series - 2026

- Tacoma's Lost Neighborhoods, Michael Sullivan
- SANKOFA CALLING: Roots, Reconciliation & the Journey to Liberation, Melannie Cunningham
- Socio-Cultural Change In Germany, Dr. Johann J Reusch
- From Regional Dominance To Global Power: As US policy shifts, is China ready to lead globally?, Rob Modarelli
- Education That Transforms Communities: Lessons from Nepal, the U.S., and Beyond, Shailendra Jha
- And More...

Community Dialogues & Educational Partnerships



Expanded Immigrant Stories Programming



Book Club - 2026

- Full Tilt: Ireland to India with a Bicycle, Dervla Murphy
- Karla's Choice, Nick Harkaway
- Into Thin Air, Jon Krakauer
- Our Woman in Moscow, Beatriz Williams
- A Moveable Feast, Ernest Hemingway
- A Woman of No Importance, Sonia Purnell
- Full Tilt: Ireland to India with a Bicycle, Dervla Murphy
- The Spy and the Traitor, Ben Macintyre
- Out of Africa, Isak Dinesen
- And More..

For More Information

visit our website:
WACTACOMA.COM

News & Highlights - 2025

November 22nd Named in Honor of Lua Pritchard: WACT Celebrates Its Board Member

The World Affairs Council of Tacoma proudly congratulates Fa'aluaina "Lua" Pritchard, a valued WACT board member, on the celebration of her 70th birthday and the extraordinary recognition she received from the City of Tacoma. In honor of her decades of leadership, advocacy, and service to the community—particularly within the Pacific Islander community—Mayor Victoria Woodards presented an official proclamation declaring November 22nd as "Lua Pritchard Day."

We celebrate Lua not only as a pillar of Tacoma, but also as a dedicated leader whose lifelong commitment to uplifting others continues to inspire our city and our work at WACT.



Join Our Board

**WACT welcomes individuals
passionate about global affairs,
education, and community
leadership.**

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