

Dr. Michael Sfraga

Dr. Michael Sfraga was the founding director of the Polar Institute and served as the director of the Global Risk and Resilience Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC. He currently serves as chair and distinguished fellow in the Polar Institute, where his scholarship and public speaking focus on Arctic policy.

An Alaskan and a geographer by training, his work focuses on the changing geography of the Arctic and Antarctic landscapes, Arctic policy, and the impacts and implications of a changing climate on political, social, economic, environmental, and security regimes in the Arctic.

Sfraga served as distinguished co-lead scholar for the U.S. Department of State's inaugural Fulbright Arctic Initiative from 2015 to 2017, a complementary program to the U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council; he held the same position from 2017 to 2019. He served as chair of the 2020 Committee of Visitors Review of the Section for Arctic Science (ARC), Office of Polar Programs, National Science Foundation, and currently serves on the Scientific Advisory Council of the Finnish Institute for International Affairs. Sfraga previously served in several academic, administrative, and executive positions, including vice chancellor, associate vice president, faculty member, department chair, and associate dean. Sfraga earned the first PhD in geography and northern studies from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.