

September 2021 Newsletter

Welcome from the Director

Dear Public Policy community,

Welcome to the Fall 2021 semester! We are thrilled to be able to safely teach courses in person once again, while continuing to offer hybrid and online options. I am inspired by the resiliency Public Policy and UMBC have demonstrated over the last 18 months, and while I anticipate more hurdles sprung by the pandemic, I know we are up for the challenge with our adaptability and dedication to students' learning.

Public Policy has exciting developments this semester. For one, enrollment in our degree programs is trending upward, and we are continuing to offer more information sessions for prospective students than ever before. While the pandemic has taken our faculty and staff out of their physical offices, we have found virtual graduate fairs and information sessions to be a great way to connect with prospective students from all over the world.

We are excited to partner once again with other USM universities and the Maryland General Assembly Department of Legislative Services (DLS) to recruit students to participate in their Fellowship program, following the success of last year's inaugural class. We are also continuing to celebrate the generous contributions of Dr. Renato DiPentima and the Yarmolinsky family, both which have allowed us to offer students support through their academic journey.

In close, while the academic world has been on summer break, our faculty, students, and alumni have not stopped moving forward. I hope you will read on to see what our community members have been up to, and help us congratulate them on their fantastic accomplishments.



Nancy A. Miller, Ph.D.

Director
School of Public Policy

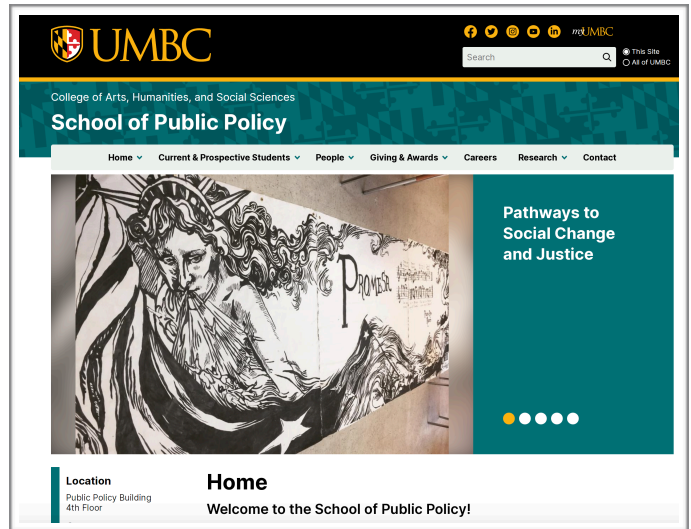
****Congratulations** to our
August 2021 graduates!**

Amanda Koch, Ph.D.
Jeevan Lohani, Ph.D.

Department News

Introducing: a new website layout featuring a slideshow of research highlights and spotlights on alumni, faculty, and students!

If you haven't had a chance to explore our [new website](#), take a look. All important information is still in its place, with easy access quicklinks to the most popular pages on the home page.



In June, the School of Public Policy cosponsored the National Academy of Public Administration's (NAPA) 20th Annual [Social Equity Leadership Conference](#). Along with other USM schools, we sponsored the conference track focused on Artificial Intelligence. During the conference, faculty member **Professor Zoë McLaren** and Ph.D. student **Tom Gower** participated in a panel on Equity, AI and Healthcare. Ph.D. student **Poulomi Banerjee** participated in the Inclusive Participation & Equitable Engagement: The Implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) panel.



Maryland State House in Annapolis

Congratulations to our
Fall 2021 Renato DiPentima Fellows:

Smitha Mahesh
Felipe Munoz Castillo
Jo-Ann M. Kriebel

All Ph.D. students are eligible to apply for the fellowship, which is offered twice a year.

Learn more about the Renato DiPentima Fellowship [here](#).

For the second year, the School is engaged with the General Assembly of Maryland/Department of Legislative Services **Legislative Fellowship Program**, to help recruit Public Policy students interested in working with the state legislature. Fellows work with nonpartisan legal, fiscal, and committee staff in a variety of policy areas during the legislative session. Last year, **Alison Knowles (Dec '20 M.P.P.)** was a fellow with the Education Workgroup.

Prospective applicants can find more information and [apply here](#) by **September 24, 2021**.

Student Highlights

Ph.D. candidate **Catherine Mata Hidalgo** shared her research with **Professor Jane Lincove** at the 2021 NCES STATS-DC Data Conference in a talk titled "Building a Bridge to Graduation: Testing the Effects of an Alternative Pathway for Students who Fail Exit Exams." She will also present her research at the APPAM Fall Research Conference in Austin, Texas, which was rescheduled from November 2021 to March 2022.

Ph.D. student **Becca Scharf** was selected to receive the 2021 APPAM Equity & Inclusion Student Fellowship to attend the research conference in Austin. The fellowship supports the travel and participation of students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds at the APPAM Fall Research Conference. Becca's dissertation work focuses on emergency medical services system innovation and performance measurement.



Becca Scharf, Ph.D. student

Ph.D. student **Wendy Prudencio** has been awarded the 2021 VADM Conard C. Lautenbacher, Jr. Public Service Scholarship by the NOAA Center for Earth System Sciences and Remote Sensing Technologies (CESSRST). Wendy works with advisor **Professor Fernando Tormos-Aponte** on research pertaining to social justice in communities at the frontlines of environmental and atmospheric hazards. Wendy is using her scholarship to work with the Potomac Riverkeeper Network (PRK) and Ocean Conservancy.

Judith A. Shinogle Memorial Lecture

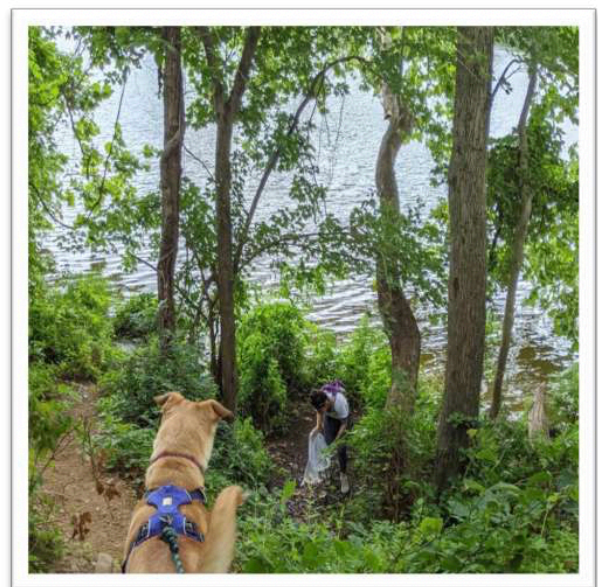
November 11, 2021
5:30pm EST
A virtual event.

Featuring Ph.D. candidate **Zippora Kiptanui**
"Evidence-base for Novel Drug Approval,
Coverage and Cost-Control Strategies"

[Join via Webex.](#)

Ph.D. student **Rudy de Leon Dinglas** recently accepted a new role at the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Government Excellence. Rudy will be the center's Data and Performance Practice Manager.

Ph.D. student **Jeff Richardson** won a Staff Excellence Award for "Impact" for his work with George Washington's School of Nursing.



Wendy Prudencio Volunteering for Ocean Conservancy. Photo courtesy of NOAA-CESSRST.

Faculty Highlights

Professor Mir Usman Ali was featured in a news segment in which he was interviewed about his research on citizen oversight of police. The story comes from Fox47 in East Lansing, MI where they recently established such a police oversight commission.

Professor Yusuke Kuwayama has coauthored a new article about socio-environmental systems research, and has continued to author a series of explainers that for the VALUABLES Consortium (for which he serves as Director), a partnership between Resources For the Future and NASA. The partnership seeks to measure how satellite information benefits people and the environment when it is used to make policy decisions.

Professor John Rennie Short published an article examining the impact of COVID-19 on city traffic. He also published a new book, *Geopolitics: Making Sense of a Changing World*, which provides an understanding of the basic themes of geopolitics and an overview of geopolitical issues around the globe. In light of the Olympic games this summer, Dr. Short was featured on an AlJazeera TV segment where he discussed the value of hosting the Olympics at one permanent site. Check out his comments at minute mark 21:00.

Professor Fernando Tormos-Aponte was the recipient of two new grants this summer: one from the William T. Grant Foundation, and one from the National Science Foundation-supported National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). The William T. Grant funding will support his research on the impact of Black Lives Matter protest on policing policy change and on the extent to which policing policy change reduces police violence against Black youth. The NCAR work will focus on identifying the political drivers of social vulnerability and on developing a new social vulnerability index. His team will also develop analyses aimed at identifying more efficient ways of distributing disaster recovery aid.

Dr. Tormos-Aponte also published an article on how to develop an understanding of structural racism in policy implementation, and was featured on the podcast Black and Highly Dangerous, where he discussed Black Lives Matter and social movements in Puerto Rico.



Artwork by @AgitArte, associated with Dr. Tormos-Aponte's grant from NCAR
"11 - Pagan Justos por Explotadores"
<https://agitarte.org/projects/countdown-to-maria/>

Professor Emeritus Tim Brennan published two opinion pieces: one criticizing the recent expansion of antitrust enforcement as a policy tool, and another about what policymakers can do to decrease science denial. He also wrote an article on Section 230 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which protects internet platforms from liability for users' content, a hot topic in the news this summer.

Professor Emeritus George R. La Noue published a new commentary piece on legal provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), particularly sections pertaining to the Restaurant Revitalization Fund and loan forgiveness for farmers and ranchers. He also published an essay on the interaction between Critical Race Theory and academic freedom and another about campus restrictions on student speech and assembly.

Professor Emeritus David Salkever coauthored two new journal articles: the first introduces the Supported Employment Demonstration (SED), a randomized controlled trial involving people who recently filed and were denied initial claims for Social Security disability, and the second aims to predict the likelihood of applicants denied disability benefits to enroll in the SED study.

Alumni Highlights

Ph.D. alumna Dr. Xiaobei Dong and professors **Dr. Tim Gindling** and **Dr. Nancy Miller** have published a new article in the *Disability and Health Journal*. The research, which was the focus of Dr. Dong's dissertation work at the School of Public Policy, examines the impact of Affordable Care Act Medicaid expansion on people with disabilities - including health insurance coverage, access, and service use for working-age adults with disabilities.

Masters and Ph.D. alumnus Dr. Dale Thomson's (Ph.D., 2001, MPS 1997) manuscript "Foundation Activism in Urban Revitalization: Effects on Institutions and Political Agency," has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Urban Affairs*. Through case studies of targeted interventions in two Pittsburgh neighborhoods, this study examines the extent to which activism by philanthropic foundations altered institutional environments, fostered political agency, and altered city policies towards urban revitalization.

M.P.P. alumna Mindy Lehman was recently promoted from Senior Vice President of Government Relations and Communications to Senior Vice President and Chief Advocacy Officer for the Maryland Bankers Association. She was also appointed to the Board of Directors of the Maryland Chamber of Commerce and to the Board of Directors for the American Red Cross Central Maryland Chapter. She serves on the Board of Directors for Leadership Maryland.

Michael Hassett, M.P.P. and Ph.D. alumnus and former Shriver Peaceworker, cofounded the organization Friends of Tonga as a Returned Peace Corps group dedicated to keeping relationships alive with Peace Corps communities in Tonga. Friends of Tonga has been previously recognized by the National Peace Corps Association, and was recently recognized as a Library of Congress Literacy Award Honoree. Honorees are recognized for their successful practices in literacy promotion.



Keep in touch

We want to hear from you!

Do you have an achievement or event you would like to share with UMBC public policy community?

Send highlights and news to Myriam Ralston (myriam@umbc.edu) to keep in touch and be featured in an upcoming newsletter.



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