

May 2023 Newsletter

Welcome from the Director

Dear Public Policy Community,

It's that time of the year again - the close of the Spring semester, where some students graduate and others transition to summer internships and projects. This year, we celebrated a large number of M.P.P. and Ph.D. graduates at a beautiful graduation ceremony featuring our new UMBC president, Dr. Valerie Sheares Ashby.

Graduates, we celebrate YOU and the immense contributions we know you will continue to make to the public policy field!

We are also celebrating the return of the Public Policy Symposium in April, and student, faculty, and alumni publications, media appearances, and participation in conferences and competitions.

On a bittersweet note, we are also celebrating the retirement of **Professor John Rennie Short**, a faculty member of UMBC for over 20 years. Dr. Short is known for his internationally recognized research and writing on cities, geopolitics, cartography, and environmental policy. He is a prolific author, media contributor, and world traveler.

As summer approaches, I hope our students and faculty will take a much-deserved rest from the academic world, and hopefully our hard-working alumni get to pause as well.

I look forward to seeing you in August, and I'm sure we will have lots to share!



Nancy A. Miller, Ph.D.

Director, School of Public Policy

Congratulations to our Spring graduates!

Michele Berry, M.P.P.

Alejandro Hurtado, M.P.P.

Ian Klein, M.P.P.

David Koenigsburg, M.P.P.

Alex Marsh, M.P.P.

Melody Afrane Pinamang, M.P.P.

Zane Poffenberger, M.P.P.

Smitha Prabhu, M.P.P.

Caroline Sargent, M.P.P.

Michael D. Suica, M.P.P.

Taylor West, M.P.P.

Lauren Hall, Ph.D.

Shawana Lachir, Ph.D.

Kiki Malomo-Paris, Ph.D.

Nate Pritchard, Ph.D.

Geraldine Robbins, Ph.D.

School News

In May, the School hosted a Public Policy Symposium: International Translation of the Adaptive Physical Activity Program, featuring the work and research of Italian public health researcher, Dr. Francesco Benvenuti. As our keynote speaker, Dr. Benvenuti discussed his research on the impact of implementing community-based exercise for the elderly and people with disabilities. His research focused on Tuscany, Italy, but the model has been implemented widely, including in Maryland. During the symposium, we also heard from presenters on additional applications of this model, including faculty member **Dr. Lauren Henderson**.

We also had the honor of presenting Leadership Awards to Dr. Benvenuti, for his research; Lou Grimmel (CEO of Lorien Health Services), for adopting best practices in nursing facilities and assisted living; and Starr Sowers (Howard County Department of Aging and Independence), for being instrumental in translating the Italian model to application in Maryland.

In the the final part of the program, Public Policy Director **Dr. Nancy Miller** announced the Leadership Development Student Travel Fellowship to Italy. We are very thankful for the support the School of Public Policy received for our symposium and the student travel fellowship from Dr. Mary Stuart, Dr. Michael Wienrich, and the Mangione Foundation.

Previously, Public Policy alumni **Salar Khaleghzadegan (M.P.P.)**, **Darci Graves (M.P.P.)**, **Stacey Bouchet (Ph.D.)**, and **Jessica Skopac (Ph.D.)** traveled to Europe as part of Dr. Mary Stuart's student travel program to study this model.

Photos to the right (top to bottom): Francesco Benvenuti; awardees and presenters Brock Beamer, Starr Sowers, Lou Grimmel, Mary Stuart, Pandora Wilson, Katie Birger, and Francesco Benvenuti; Nancy Miller)



U.S .News announced its **2023-24 Best Graduate School rankings**, highlighting [UMBC graduate programs](#) in a broad range of fields, including Public Policy.

Join us on LinkedIn. We have a new LinkedIn page where we share the most recent news and publications from students, faculty, and alumni. [Connect with us!](#)



Student Highlights

Ph.D. student Kendra Lyons was featured on UMBC's Mic'd Up Podcast where she shared a glimpse into the daily life of an IO Psychology professional. Lyons is a UMBC M.P.S. IO Psychology alumna ('09).

Ph.D. student Ridwan Islam Sifat published an editorial in the *Annals of Biomedical Engineering* on the future of ChatGPT in policymaking from a health policy analysis perspective.

Ph.D. student Sandya Venugopal interned at the Office of Translational Research within the Office of National Drug Control Policy at the White House during the spring, and will continue over the summer.



Sandya Venugopal (right) and Rahul Gupta, Director of National Drug Control Policy

As a student, May **Ph.D. graduate Dr. Shawana Lachir** studied police and policing practice through a critical lens and the impact on legal cynicism. In particular, she examined how School Resource Officers/police presence in schools influences students' perceptions and attitudes of the legal system. In March 2023, she gave a presentation on her research as part of UMBC's AOK Library and Gallery SPOTLIGHT! Guest Instructor Workshop series.

Ph.D. student **Smitha Prabhu** was a panel discussant for two panels at the Pi Sigma Alpha Conference at George Washington University.



Smitha Prabhu (far right) and fellow panelists.

M.P.P. student Zane Poffenberger was on the winning team for the NASPAA-Batten Student Simulation Competition at James Madison University. This year's competition took place at sites around the world over three weekends in February and March, and centered around a wildfire mitigation challenge.



Zane Poffenberger (far left) and his team.

Faculty Highlights

Professor Jane A. Lincove and **Ph.D. alumna Dr. Catherine Mata** published a new article in the *International Journal of Educational Development*, "How context shapes the relationship between school autonomy and test-scores. An explanatory analysis using PISA 2015."

Dr. Lincove spoke about their research at the Maryland Longitudinal Data Service Center Research Series Virtual Brown Bag in March.

Professor Zoë M. McLaren published an article on vaccine lottery efficacy in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*. In the article, she discusses how vaccine lotteries can cost-effectively increase COVID-19 booster vaccination rates.

Professor Mir Usman Ali published a new article in the *Policy Studies Journal*: "The adoption of culturally contentious innovations: The case of citizen oversight of police."

In February, **Dr. Ali** presented oral and written testimony to the Maryland Senate's Judicial Proceedings Committee in support of Senate Bill 285 which allows county governments to grant their police accountability boards the authority to independently investigate allegations of police misconduct. Dr. Ali's research directly speaks to the impact that investigative oversight agencies have on racial disparities in policing outcomes. He was asked by the MD ACLU and a local non-profit (Silver Spring Justice Coalition) to share his research findings in the testimony. You can watch his testimony from minute 6:47:15 to 6:49:20.

Professors Mir Usman Ali and Pamela R. Bennett were among those selected to receive Center for Social Science Scholarship 2023 Summer Fellowships. These awards provide a summer stipend to tenure-track and tenured UMBC faculty doing social science research.



Professor Loren Henderson published a new book: *Race, Ethnicity, and the COVID-19 Pandemic*, a collection of essays that examine the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 and how it disproportionately affected Black, Latino, and Native American populations in the US. In March, she was featured on NPR's *All Things Considered* where she discussed her research on how hyper-segregation affects the health of single Black mothers. Dr. Henderson and her colleagues focused their research on Chicago's South Side. She also wrote about this in an article in *The Conversation*.



Professor Pamela R. Bennett's book *Parenting in Privilege or Peril: How Social Inequality Enables or Derails the American Dream* was featured in an Author-Meets-Critics session at the 2023 annual meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society held this February in Baltimore. She also discussed her book and underlying research on the Center for Social Science Scholarship podcast *Retrieving the Social Sciences*.



Professor Emeritus George R. La Noue published an article in *Academic Questions*, a journal of the National Association of Scholars. His article "Courts versus Campuses: The Struggle to Protect Free Speech" discusses freedom of speech on academic campuses. It reviews the history of the period of concurrence between courts and campuses over free speech to the current period where there is considerable disagreement. In a similar vein, Dr. La Noue's book *Silenced Stages* was cited by a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article as the impetus behind a recent Florida law that requires state universities to establish an office to oversee speaker events and ensure diversity of speakers.

Dr. La Noue is also working with Houston Community College as part of a team designing and implementing a procurement disparity study.

After over 20 years at UMBC, **Professor John Rennie Short** is retiring. Congratulations Dr. Short, and we wish you the best of luck in retirement - we can't wait to see pictures from your travels!



Alumni Highlights

Alumnus Joshua Michael (Ph.D. '22) has been appointed to the Maryland State Board of Education, and was confirmed by the State Senate in April. Dr. Michael is the Executive Director of the Sherman Family Foundation and a former teacher.

Alumnus and 2021 UMBC Alumni Awardee **Michael Hassett (M.P.P. '17, Ph.D. '19)** recently published two articles in the *Fed Smith*, and a letter to the editor in the *Washington Post*, about recruitment and retention of federal employees.

Alumnus and 2022 UMBC Alumni Awardee **Keith Elder (Ph.D. '02, Policy Sciences)** was the 2023 UMBC undergraduate commencement speaker. You can watch his speech at minute 52:24.



Keep in touch

We want to hear from you!

Do you have an achievement or event you would like to share with the 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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