

# June 2024 Newsletter

## Welcome from the Director

Dear Public Policy community,

The end of the semester and academic year have arrived, and with graduation upon us, it feels like a joyful yet bittersweet time. Faculty interact with students so much over the course of the students' degree programs, that it feels like we really get to know them. It goes without saying that our graduating M.P.P.'s and Ph.D.'s will be missed immensely, but we also can't wait to see what their next chapter holds.

This year, I am especially grateful for our alumni, the ranks of which these graduates will soon join. At the School of Public Policy, we pride ourselves on our robust and diverse alumni network - proving that you really can use a public policy degree in any career, in any location. However, I believe our network is unique in that our alumni *stay in touch*. Not only do they stay in touch and send us updates on their careers, research, and lives, but they stay involved. If you've been keeping up with our [past newsletters](#), you'll notice that our alumni frequently return to teach courses, facilitate workshops, participate in panels, and connect with current students seeking jobs or mentorships. We indeed have some very notable alumni who have risen to the ranks of academia, industry, government, and non-profits, but it seems they always seem to find time to return to UMBC and connect with us.

While we'll miss our graduates, we know they are in excellent company, joining a network of peers. Students, faculty, alumni, staff, and friends: I wish you all a wonderful summer!

*Nancy A. Miller, Ph.D.*

Director, School of Public Policy



**\*\*Congratulations\*\* to our  
May 2024 graduates!**

Daniel Douglas, M.P.P.  
Lauren Negrete, M.P.P.  
Umesh Sharma, M.P.P.  
Roy Varghese, M.P.P.  
Mone Warren, M.P.P.  
Erik Wikane, M.P.P.

Mark Boward, Ph.D.  
Wendy Dunaway, Ph.D.  
Stephanie Harshman, Ph.D.  
James Kitchin, Ph.D.  
David Sears, Ph.D.



## Introducing the RDRC

We are thrilled to introduce the Retirement and Disability Research Consortium. The School of Public Policy, in collaboration with the [Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University](#), the [University of Baltimore](#), and [Westat](#), has been awarded a five year cooperative agreement from the Social Security Administration through its Retirement and Disability Research Consortium (RDRC) program.

[This RDRC](#) – *Promoting Equity in Retirement, Disability and Health*, is one of six RDRCs funded nationally. Public Policy will support the RDRC through completion and dissemination of research, evaluation, and data development; and training and education on retirement and disability policy, with first year funding of almost \$2.5 million, of which \$2.36 million is federal funding.

The research focus will cover three main themes: equity in access to Social Security retirement for under recognized and underserved segments of society, the intersection of health and access to healthcare and equitable SSI/DI program participation, and disparities in SSI/DI program access and participation.



## Student highlights

In February, **May 2024 Ph.D. graduate Dr. Stephanie Harshman** traveled to Italy as part of her Leadership Development Travel Fellowship, sponsored by the Mangione Foundation. During her time, she researched overlapping problems with elder care in Italy and the US. She was hosted

by Dr. Francesco Benvenuti, the creator of the Adaptive Physical Activity (APA) program, who spoke about his preventative health model at an event Public Policy hosted in 2023.



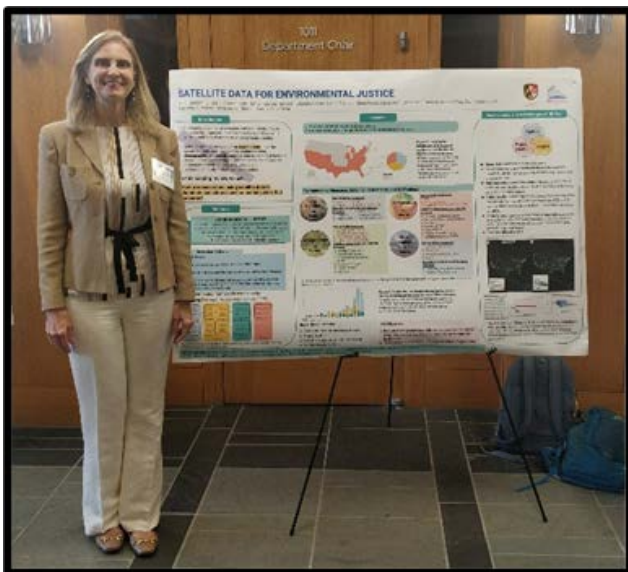
**Dr. Stephanie Harshman**

In April, **Ph.D. student Taylor West** helped plan and participated in the Earth Day Symposium, which rounded out the full month of student-led activities. UMBC partnered with Goddard Earth Sciences Technology and Research (GESTAR) II, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and United States Geological Survey (USGS) to host 15 activities over the month, which was named Earth Month to celebrate sustainability and environmental activism as a sustained movement, not just a single day.

At the final symposium, West presented her research on air quality and drought in the Pacific northwest to inform public health responses.

**Ph.D. candidate Liran Labor** will join the 2024-2025 cohort for the [Integrated Research & Policy Fellowship program](#), run by the National Early Care and Education Workforce Center. This 10-month program is designed to support the leadership development of early care and education (ECE) professionals.

**Ph.D. student Tanya Kreutzer Sayyed** and **Public Policy Professor Yusuke Kuwayama** were part of a team of 15 experts who co-authored the article “Satellite data for environmental justice: A scoping review of the literature in the United States” which was published in Environmental Research Letters. In addition, Tanya was a co-trainer for NASA’s Applied Remote Sensing Training (ARSET) program “Satellite Data for Air Quality Environmental Justice and Equity Applications”. She attended and presented at the Health and Air Quality Science Team (HAQAST) conference in St. Louis, Missouri, displaying their co-authored work during a poster session. Their scoping review demonstrates that integrating satellite data with socioeconomic and health data is useful for advancing policies and government agency applications related to environmental justice and public health. Studies summarized in the scoping review found that populations who are non-white, and/or those who experience lower-income or lower-socioeconomic status have the largest inequities in exposure to environmental hazards, such as air pollution and/or high temperatures, and the least access to green space. This causes such populations to be more vulnerable to health risks and mortality.



**Tanya Kreutzer Sayyed**

Congrats to **Ph.D. student Sundiata “Sunji” Jangha** for receiving the Teresa Lupinek Endowment Award at the 2024 UMBC Presidential Faculty & Staff Awards! Sunji is also a UMBC employee, serving as Director of Pipeline Programs, Upward Bound Mathematics and Science Center, Graduate School, Office of Academic Opportunity Programs.



**Sundiata “Sunji” Jangha**

**Ph.D. Student Ridwan Islam Sifat** has been selected for the 2024 Phi Kappa Phi Chapter 22 UMBC Marilyn Demorest Love of Learning Award based on academic excellence and active participation within the university and the broader community. His research paper on the Rohingya refugee crisis and human rights perspective has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work* (Springer). His ongoing research has been accepted for presentation at the University of Michigan Global Health Summer Institute, which he has received a scholarship to attend.



June 2024

**Ph.D. student Loretta Tillery**, CPM was named the 2023 recipient of the Kenneth K. Henning Award - the American Academy of Certified Public Managers' highest award which recognizes professional excellence in public service. Ms. Tillery currently serves as the Deputy Chief of Staff for the Prince George's County Department of Social Services.

## Faculty highlights

In 2023, **Professors Mir Usman Ali and Dr. Lauren Edwards** worked with the Baltimore County Work Group on Equitable Policing to perform a study on racial disparities in traffic stops. In this study, they analyzed traffic stops in Baltimore County to determine if there was evidence of racial bias, and also if there such racial bias in post-stop actions (searches, warnings, citations, and arrests). The report was published in December 2023. They also coauthored a new article in *The American Review of Public Administration*. The article examines the impact of state control over implementing and accessing firearm background check data on intimate partner violence involving firearms.

Additionally, **Dr. Ali** published an article in *The American Review of Public Administration* exploring the impact of citizen oversight on racial disparities in policing when combined with use of body-worn cameras by officers.

**Professor Susan Sterett** facilitated two panel discussions this spring on climate change and climate justice.

The first event held at Red Emma's Bookstore Coffeehouse in Baltimore in March explored a just transition to a better climate future and the role Baltimore residents can play.

The second event occurred on Earth Day in April at UMBC, and also featured Public Policy's **Dr. Yusuke Kuwayama**, along with UMBC GES faculty, UMBC alumni, and non-profit representatives.

**Professor Jane Lincove** has been awarded a grant by the US Dept. of Education's Institute of Education Sciences under the Using Longitudinal Data to Support State Education Policymaking competition. Through this grant program, the National Center for Education Research supports state agencies' use of their state's education longitudinal data systems (SLDS) to provide evidence for their own program and policy decisions, and those of their local education agencies. Dr. Lincove's project will use Maryland's SLDS to strengthen and diversify the teacher pipeline, and make the necessary training needed to become a teacher more accessible and affordable for Maryland students.

**Dr. Lincove** also published an article in *American Education Research Journal*. The article "The Effects of Unified School Enrollment Systems on School Demographics and Outcomes: Evidence from New Orleans' Transition to a Centralized School Lottery" explores the impact of a Unified Enrollment system on racial segregation, using a subset of charter schools in New Orleans as a case study.



UMBC  
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**Bringing Global Change Down to Earth:  
An Earth Day Panel**

**FACILITATED BY:**

- Dr. Susan Sterett, Professor, School of Public Policy, UMBC

**PANELISTS:**

- Chris Blume, Doctoral student, UMBC ICARE alumnus
- Dr. Erle Ellis, Professor, Geography & Environmental Systems, UMBC
- Dr. Yusuke Kuwayama, Assistant Professor, School of Public Policy, UMBC
- Laura Todd, Senior Green Infrastructure Projects Manager, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

📅 April 22, 2024 🕒 12:00pm **Lower Flat Tuesdays 1st FI, UMBC Commons**

Reception with light refreshments to follow.

**Emeritus Professor George R. La Noue**

published a law review article titled "Racial Preferences in Economic Benefits: From Widely Accepted to Legally Indefensible" in the April 10, 2024 edition of the *Federalist Society Law Review* (Vol. 25). In this article, La Noue traces the evolution of these policies in federal, state, and local governments from the 1970s to 2023. In the twenty pivotal cases discussed, La Noue was trial expert in nine.

**Emeritus Professor John Rennie Short** published two articles in *The Conversation*. One [article](#) focuses on congestion pricing in New York City and how its toll plan is expected to improve traffic, air quality, and public transit. In the other [article](#), Dr. Short discusses the future of shopping malls, led by China's recent developments in these large-scale retail spaces.

**Dr. Short** also published the [book](#) *Insurrection: What the January 6 Assault on the Capitol Reveals about America and Democracy* in March. *Insurrection* explores the factors underlying the January 6, 2021 invasion of the U.S. Capitol, and how the related political and social climate ties into the 2024 presidential election.

## Alumni highlights

**Alumna Miriam "Mindy" Lehman (M.P.P. '08)** was promoted to chief government program development, affairs and policy officer at [TEDCO](#), which provides funding and resources to Maryland tech and life sciences start-ups.

**Alumna Dr. Catherine Mata (Ph.D. '22)** has published a new [article](#) in the *The World Bank Economic Review*. In the article, she examines the impact of national child care policy in Costa Rica on women's allocation of time, including women's participation in the workforce, educational enrollment, and amount of unpaid carework. She compares the effects of two different agencies implementing the policy.

**Alumnus Dr. Keith Elder (Ph.D. policy sciences '02)** was named the [21st president](#) of Saint Xavier University (SXU) in Chicago, Illinois. He previously served as Provost and Executive Vice President of Mississippi College, appointed in 2020, and has over 20 years of service in higher education. In October 2022, Dr. Elder was awarded "Outstanding Alumnus" for Social & Behavioral Sciences at the 2022 UMBC Alumni Awards Ceremony and Reception. His work focused on healthy policy during his time at UMBC, where he received the National Institutes of Health Minority Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, and he has led a long career in public health.



**Dr. Nancy Miller and Dr. Keith Elder**

**Alumna Mike Suica (M.P.P. '23)** formerly the Assistant Director of Recruitment and Admissions, was named the new Director of Recruitment and Admissions. Mike has served in many roles at the Graduate School from a Recruitment Specialist to Manager and Assistant Director, and has been with the Graduate School for more than 10 years.

## Alumni highlights continued

**Alumnus Dr. Thomas J. Vicino (M.P.P. '04 and Ph.D '06)** was began his role as Dean of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. Dr. Vicino previously served as Associate Dean at Boston's Northeastern University, and was a professor in their Department of Political Science and the School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs. When pursuing his Masters and Ph.D. in Public Policy at UMBC, he focused on urban policy and worked closely with Emeritus Professors Don Norris and John Rennie Short.



**Dr. Thomas J. Vicino**

**Alumnus Dr. Rob Horner (Ph.D. '22)** transitioned from civilian federal government service, with 19 years of service with the Depts. of Defense and Navy, to the private sector, joining CACI International in Oct 2023. In this role, he supports the Defense Department as a Project Manager and Data analyst in the IT/Knowledge Management field while also supporting contract management. He also joined York College of Pennsylvania as an Adjunct Faculty Member with the MPPA (Master of Public Policy and Administration) for the Spring term. He is teaching the MPPA 591 course providing instruction, guidance, and advising to a graduate students working on their Capstone Research Project.

## 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](mailto:myriam@umbc.edu)) to keep in touch and be featured in an upcoming newsletter.



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