UMBC

THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

Fall 2026 Newsletter

Welcome from the Director

Dear School of Public Policy friends,

I hope your Fall semester is going well so far! With the official end of summer behind us, faculty and students in the School of Public Policy are settling into the routine of teaching or taking classes, getting events rolling, and continuing with work on internships. Back-to-School season always feels a bit special, and it has been wonderful to see the crowds of students back on campus and filling our classrooms for the past month and a half.

As classes started, we welcomed a new group of Masters and Ph.D. students with an incredibly impressive body of work and background. We can't wait to see what they bring to the program!

Upcoming this semester is the our annual **Judith A. Shinogle Memorial Award Lecture** on the evening of **Thursday, November 12.**
This year, we celebrate awardee **Elizabeth Carey,** who will present her research at the lecture. We welcome you to attend on campus or via Webex, and we will have more details to come. This annual event celebrates the memory of
Dr. Judith Ann "Judy" Shinogle, Senior Research Scientist and Adjunct Associate Professor of Public Policy, who passed away in May 2012. It also celebrates the accomplishments of one doctoral student whose work in health policy exemplifies Judy's scholarship.

Now, please explore some of the highlights of our summer, and have a great rest of the Fall semester!

Loren Henderson, Ph.D.
Director and Professor, School of Public Policy



****Congratulations** to our August 2026 graduates!**



Student highlights

Ph.D. student and M.P.P. alumnus Demetrie Garner shared his story with UMBC's Catalina Sofia Dansberger Duque. Read more about how overcoming substance abuse led him to his public health policy path and work helping others.



Photo courtesy of Demetrie Garner.

Ph.D. candidate and M.P.P. alumnus Ridwan Islam Sifat published an article in the journal *NEW SOLUTIONS: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy*. In the article, Sifat examines the impact of AI integration into academia on faculty well-being.

Ph.D. candidate Liran Laor published an article on how a Montgomery County, Maryland program helped Afghan refugee women enter the early childcare workforce, addressing a gap in child care availability and helping to stabilize refugee families. Read the article in *Exchange Magazine*, a publication of Exchange Press, which promotes the work of early childhood education and care professionals. -

Ph.D. student Shabib Raihan participated in the June performance of Your Story Belongs Here! A live storytelling show featuring stories about finding community on UMBC's campus. You can see his performance during minutes 25:30 - 32:20 in this video.



Shabib Rauhan

Faculty highlights

Professor Jane A. Lincove attended the State Policy Academy on Early Childhood Governance July 15-17, 2026, in Nashville. The academy brought together legislators, governor's staff, and state agency leaders from eight states across the nation (AK, AZ, CA, HI, KY, MD, NC, and NJ), along with partners from philanthropy, academia, and the nonprofit sector, to examine how governance structures can improve outcomes for children and families during the prenatal-to-3 period.



Maryland State Policy team.
Dr. Jane Lincove at far left.

Professors Mir Usman Ali and Lauren Hamilton Edwards published a report for the Baltimore County Equitable Policing Work Group, which updates the County's 2023 Deep Dive report on traffic stop data.

Alumni highlights

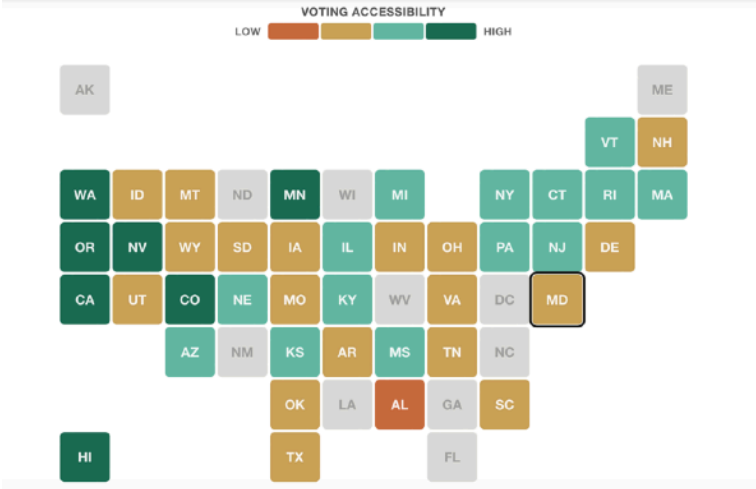
The organization **Friends Of Tonga Inc.**, co-founded and led by School of Public Policy alumnus, **Michael Hassett, Ph.D. '19**, won the Environmental Stewardship category in the 2026 .ORG Impact Awards by Public Interest Registry (PIR), the people behind the .ORG domain. Friends of Tonga is one of 7 awardees selected from over 4,000 mission driven, innovative, change-maker applicants across 145 countries. The .ORG Impact Awards recognize outstanding mission-driven individuals and organizations from around the world for their positive contributions to society. This video was featured at the award ceremony in October, and highlights the work of Friends of Tonga. Learn more about Dr. Hassett's work.

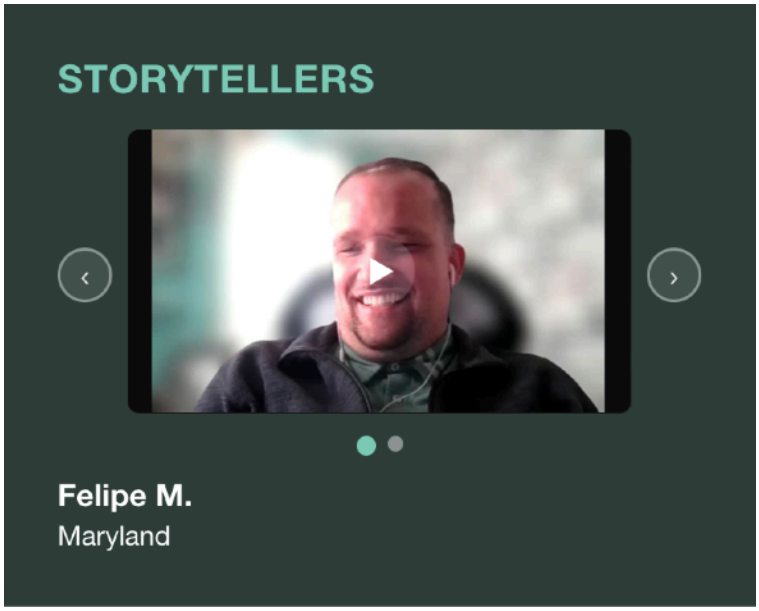
Alumna Catherine Mata (Ph.D. '22) has coauthored a new article, published in the journal *Economics of Education Review*. In the article, Dr. Mata and her coauthors examine the use of non-generative AI chatbots to message students enrolled in online undergraduate classes. The study found a positive impact of chatbot communication on student engagement and performance.

Alumnus Collin Sullivan (M.P.P. ' 21) published an article on micro-credentialing with UMBC Global Studies Director Felipe Filomeno. The article "From Campus to Career: Multi-Modal Micro-credential Integration Across Academic, Co-Curricular, and Community Pathways at UMBC" was published in the journal *Research Issues in Contemporary Education*. Sullivan is the first Program Director for Digital Credential Innovation at UMBC.

The Maryland State Board of Education voted unanimously to re-elect **alumnus Joshua Michael** (Ph.D. '22) as President. Congratulations to Dr. Michael!

Alumnus **Felipe Millan (M.P.P. '20)** was interviewed by the Center for American Progress as part of their "Mapping Disabled Americans' Access to Democracy" project. View the video with his contribution, which can be found by selecting the state of Maryland on the interactive map.





Source: Center for American Progress

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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