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**CELEBRATING
A RICH HISTORY OF
CLIMATE CHANGE
EXPERTISE**



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Letter from the Dean

For the past eight years, I have had the privilege of serving as the Dean of SIPA. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional life and an important part of my long affiliation with Columbia University. But as I announced this summer, the time has come for me to step down so that I may focus on teaching, conducting research, and engaging with the world as a member of the faculty, as I have done for the past 27 years.

SIPA is a special place, filled with passionate and accomplished students, a world-renowned faculty, deeply dedicated staff, and a global alumni network that is second to none. I am grateful to have worked with and learned from so many members of our community, and I am immeasurably proud of all that we have accomplished together.

This issue of *SIPA Magazine* provides a glimpse of just a few of our achievements over the past academic year, which build upon eight years of investments and would not have been possible without the active engagement and contributions of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni, even in the midst of a global health crisis.

This year, from our comprehensive response to the pandemic, to our research and programs on climate change as well as monetary policy, to our new faculty publications and student activities, to our hundreds of virtual discussions and convenings with key figures, to our focus on increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion, we have been true to SIPA's mission. In the pages that follow, I hope you enjoy learning about our remarkable community and our extraordinary year.

As we return to in-person instruction and activities this fall at SIPA, we do so with a sense of excitement and renewed purpose, though also being mindful of the ongoing global consequences of the pandemic. I thank you for your support of me and of SIPA over these many years, and most particularly the year that has just passed.

With appreciation,

Merit E. Janow
Dean, School of International and Public Affairs



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IN BRIEF

SIPA Alumni Join the Biden-Harris Administration

Congratulations to the SIPA alumni who have joined the new Biden-Harris administration in a variety of roles. We couldn't be prouder that they are taking their expertise to Washington, DC, to serve under a new president.

Alice Albright MIA '85 was nominated to serve as CEO of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

Caroline Baxter MIA '09 was sworn in as deputy assistant secretary of defense for force education and training.

Amit Bose MIA '95 is the new deputy administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration. On April 22 he was nominated to be the agency's administrator.

Asha Castleberry-Hernandez MIA '12 is a new senior adviser in the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.

Raphael Chavez-Fernandez MPA '19 was appointed deputy assistant secretary for intergovernmental affairs at the US Department of Veteran Affairs.

Julie Chung MIA '96 was nominated to serve as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Ambassador Jeffrey DeLaurentis MIA '78 serves as acting representative for special political affairs for the US Mission to the United Nations.

Chris DeRusha MIA '09, IF '09, the former top cybersecurity official for the Biden campaign, serves as the federal government's chief information security officer.

Kevin Fashola MIA '17 serves as special assistant to the assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs.

Mayor Eric Garcetti MIA '95 of Los Angeles was nominated to serve as ambassador to India.

Lindsay Hamilton MIA '07 serves as associate administrator for public affairs at the Environmental Protection Agency.

Karine Jean-Pierre MPA '03 was named White House principal deputy press secretary, after serving as senior adviser to now President Biden and chief of staff to now Vice President Harris during the campaign.

Krystal Laymon MPA-ESP '12 serves as deputy director for climate resilience at the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

Ambassador Nancy McEldowney MIA '86 serves as national security adviser to Vice President Harris.

Patrick Meyers MPA '15 is now a researcher in the White House Office of Presidential Personnel following service on the Biden-Harris transition team.

Shara Mohtadi MIA '15 was appointed chief of staff in the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at the US Department of Energy.

Anne Neuberger MIA '05 was appointed deputy national security adviser for cyber and emerging technology on the National Security Council.

Michael Raynor MIA '86 was nominated to serve as ambassador to both the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Jocelyn Samuels IF '81 was designated vice chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Daniel E. White MPA '20 serves as special assistant to the assistant secretary of defense for strategy, plans, and capabilities.

This is a partial list reflecting information received by press time. For an updated list, visit bit.ly/sipa-biden.



DID YOU KNOW?

In March SIPA was once again ranked as the No. 1 International Global Policy School by U.S. News & World Report in its 2022 Best Graduate Schools rankings.



HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

SIPA Welcomes Asaad Hanna MIA '22 and Erick Rozo Silva MPA-DP '22

In fall 2020 SIPA welcomed the latest Scholarship for Displaced Students recipients: **Asaad Hanna MIA '22** (Syria) and **Erick Rozo Silva MPA-DP '22** (Venezuela).

Hanna concentrates in International Security Policy and was recently a programs manager with the Washington, DC-based Syrian Emergency Task Force, which works on human rights and genocide prevention. He is currently a strategic adviser for the Lobo Institute, which works on disarming children and deradicalization.

Rozo Silva is an MPA in Development Practice candidate who also organizes for the Venezuelan diaspora in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, serving as a liaison for diverse initiatives and organizing demonstrations and forums to raise awareness of Venezuela's ongoing economic and political crisis.

Each of our Scholarship for Displaced Students grantees has traveled a unique journey to this moment and overcome tremendous adversity and will undoubtedly leverage their Columbia education to give back to their communities and to the world.

PROMOTIONS

María José Abud MPA '15 was appointed undersecretary of Chile's Ministry of Women and Gender Equality.

Diego Andres Molano Aponte (née Diego Molano) MPA '00 was named the defense minister for Colombia.

Juan Sebastián Betancur MPA-EPM '19 was appointed chief economist of Colombia's Ministry of Finance and Public Credit.

Christine Gould MPA '03 was appointed to the Advisory Committee for the United Nations 2021 Food Systems Summit.

Nabeeha Kazi Hutchins MIA '04 joined PAI, a global health and reproductive rights organization, as its new president and CEO.

Sara Jacobs MIA '12 was elected to represent California's 35th Congressional District in the US House of Representatives.

C. Andrew "Andy" McGadney MPA '06 was named the 20th president of Knox College.

Jo Christine Miles MIA '17 was chosen to lead Principal Financial Group's community relations and the Principal Foundation, overseeing philanthropic giving, social investments, and employee and community engagement across all of Principal's domestic and international markets.

Lt. Col. Adam Scher MPA '13 was promoted to the rank of US Army lieutenant colonel and now serves as the executive officer to the senior adviser to the secretary of defense for COVID-19.

Elissa Slotkin MIA '03 was elected to Congress for a second term representing Michigan's Eighth District.

Suzanna Valdez Wolfe MPA '04 joined the Taproot Foundation as the organization's first chief impact officer.

TECH AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

SIPA Alumnae Among Columbia's Entrepreneurs of the Year



Congratulations to **Alice Bosley MIA '17** and **Patricia Letayf MPA '17**, who were named among Columbia University Entrepreneurship's 2021 Entrepreneurs of the Year.

In 2017 Bosley joined with classmate Letayf to form Five One Labs, a network and incubator of innovators and fellow entrepreneurs with access

to the support, skills, and connections necessary to make positive change in their local economies and communities. The idea tied for first place in the 2017 SIPA Dean's Public Policy Challenge Grant competition, and today their enterprise runs startup incubators and coworking spaces in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq that help talented entrepreneurs in conflict-affected areas launch and grow their businesses. Since launching their first incubator in Iraq in 2017, Bosley and Letayf have provided training and funding to over 90 scalable startups in their incubation programs, reaching thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs across Iraq and Syria.



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Columbia University Adjusts Fossil Fuel Investment Policies

In January the University announced that it no longer holds any direct investments in publicly traded oil and gas companies and is formalizing this policy of non-investment for the foreseeable future.

Ruby Khan MPA '21, a member of Columbia's Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing (ACSRI), sat on the fossil fuel subcommittee that was entrusted with formalizing and fine-tuning this recommendation over the past year after the ACSRI received a divestment proposal from Columbia's Extinction Rebellion student group in December 2019.

The fossil fuel subcommittee's final recommendation was unanimously accepted by the ACSRI, leading to an announcement by President Bollinger.

KUDOS

Robert Abad MIA '98's new book titled *MOMENT*, published in collaboration with his wife, **Monica Mitrani MIA '97**, and their two daughters, Sofia and Ariella, won the gold medal in the Multicultural Nonfiction (Juvenile/Young Adult) category of the 25th Annual Independent Publisher Book Awards.

Peter Annin MIA '88 was among six winners of the Great Lakes Protection Fund's Great Lakes Leadership Award for Communications Excellence.

Erika Banuelos MIA '21 and **Danielle Murad Waiss MIA '21** were among the winners of the Financial Services Information Sharing and Analysis Center (FS-ISAC) 2020 women in cybersecurity scholarship (Americas).

Angelo Benny Bertagnini IV MPA '21, **Erifili Draklellis MPA-ESP '20**, **Jonas Goldman MPA-ESP '20**, and **Kristin Adina Klein MPA '21** finished second in the 2020 Engineering for Change (E4C) global competition.

Shawn Bush MIA '17 and **Rashima Kwatra MPA '16** were named among the Atlantic Council's 2020-21 LGBTI in Foreign Affairs Fellows.

Daphne Ewing Chow MIA '01 was named among the Top 50 Influential Caribbean American Entrepreneurs 2020 by Carib Biz Network.

Cori Fain MPA-DP '19 received a Birmingham Business Journal NextGen: Education and Workforce Development award for her work at BhamStrong, a public-private partnership formed to strengthen Birmingham's COVID-19 response.

Jeffrey Golden IF '78, '78LAW was recognized for lifetime achievement at the Legal Week Innovation Awards 2020.

SIPA Students Receive Racial Justice Mini-Grants from University Life

Two SIPA-led working groups were among the recipients of Columbia's Office of University Life's inaugural Racial Justice Mini-Grants.

The new program provides grants to recipients whose projects create opportunities to understand and unlearn racism, understand the intersectional dynamics of oppression, and strengthen our campus culture of inclusion and belonging.

SPEAK UP!—**Sameea Butt MPA '22**, **Gabrielle Hayes MPA-DP '21**, **Zachey Kliger MPA '22**, **Vincent Tang MPA-DP '22**, **Chris Tingley MPA '22**, and **Leselle Vincent MPA-DP '22**—led conversations this spring on issues of race and anti-Black racism's prevalence in both policy development and the classroom. The workshop was facilitated by the SIPA student organization Race, Income, Solidarity, and Economics (RISE).

The Intersections of Blackness: An Anti-Racism Project—facilitated by **Travis Nelson MPA '22** and **Lexi Young '21CC**—will offer interactive virtual workshops, roundtables, and crash courses to engage Columbia students in conversation and action around Black issues and the long-term effects of anti-Black racism in our own communities and across the diaspora.



Clockwise from top left: Leselle Vincent MPA-DP '22, Gabrielle Hayes MPA-DP '21, Travis Nelson MPA '22, Vincent Tang MPA-DP '22, Chris Tingley MPA '22, Zachey Kliger MPA '22, Lexi Young '21CC, Sameea Butt MPA '22

Rosarin Hataiseree MPA '21 won second place in the Henry Owen Memorial Award essay contest hosted by the Bretton Woods Committee.

Mark Jamias MIA '18, **Andrew Lohsen MIA '15**, and **Leyth Swidan MPA '18** were named to Out in National Security and New America's National Security & Foreign Policy LGBTQIA+ 2021 Out Leaders List.

Ryan Kaminski MIA '11 and **Tyrik McKeiver MIA '13** were named to Out in National Security and New America's 2020 LGBTQIA+ Out in National Security Leadership List.

Alyson King MIA '99 was honored with the Order of the British Empire for services to British foreign policy.

Moises Mendoza MIA '16 received the Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad.

Allia Mohamed MIA '18 and **Srujan Routhu MPA '18** launched openigloo, "a platform that allows NYC tenants to share their rental experiences with others and gain invaluable insights into their buildings and landlords."

Alfredo Romano MPA-EPM '18 was recognized among 10 outstanding young leaders by JCI (Junior Chamber International). Romano is a cofounder of Fundación El Potrero, which supports youth in vulnerable neighborhoods.

Fariel Salahuddin MPA '08, founder of Goats for Water, was selected as a TED Fellow, joining a class of 20 individuals who received a 2021 TED Fellowship.

Daniel E. White MPA '20 was selected as a nonresident fellow at the Modern War Institute at West Point. He will be conducting research on race in civil-military relations and US grand strategy.

Carol Wise MPA '82 was awarded the Luciano Tommassini Honorable Mention Prize from the Latin American Studies Association for her book *Dragonomics: How Latin America Is Maximizing (or Missing Out) on China's International Development Strategy* (Yale University Press, 2020).

FACULTY BRIEFS

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Robert Jervis Joins the Ranks of the National Academy of Sciences



Robert Jervis, the Adlai E. Stevenson Professor and professor of international and public affairs, has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences for contributions to the study of international politics. Jervis specializes in international politics and security policy, decision-making, and theories of conflict and cooperation. He has written numerous books, serves on the boards of nine scholarly journals, and has authored over 100 publications.

Faculty and Scholars Join the Biden-Harris Administration

Sohini Chatterjee serves as a senior policy adviser to the US ambassador to the United Nations.

Avril Haines was confirmed as director of national intelligence on January 20.

Alexander Hertel-Fernandez was appointed chief evaluation officer at the Department of Labor.

Noah Kaufman serves as a senior economist for the White House Council of Economic Advisers.

Varun Sivaram serves as a senior adviser to the former secretary of state John F. Kerry, who is now a special presidential envoy for climate.

Jessica Stern was appointed US special envoy to advance the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons at the Department of State.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Faculty Discuss Multidisciplinary Responses to COVID-19

In fall 2020 professors **Scott Barrett**, **Yanis Ben Amor**, and **Jeffrey Sachs** hosted a weekly webinar discussion, COVID 19: Policymaking in the Throes of a Global Crisis, on multidisciplinary responses to the pandemic. Among the guests were SIPA's **Dean Merit E. Janow**, **Robert Shapiro**, and **Joseph E. Stiglitz**.



Clockwise from top left: Jeffrey Sachs, Scott Barrett, Yanis Ben Amor, Joseph E. Stiglitz

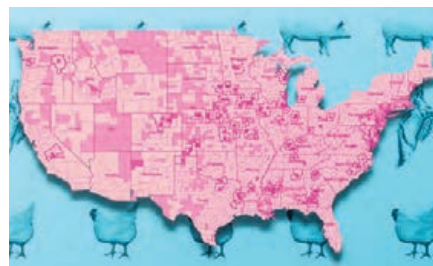
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Keren Yarhi-Milo Wins ISA Book Award



Keren Yarhi-Milo won the Biennial Best Foreign Policy Book Award from the International Studies Association (ISA) for *Who Fights*

for Reputation: The Psychology of Leaders in International Conflict. The award was presented at the 2021 ISA Annual Convention in April.



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Study on Livestock-Plant Safety Has Policy Implications

A new study on COVID-19 from SIPA professor **Douglas Almond** and PhD candidate **Charles A. Taylor** (with Christopher Boulos of the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business), published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, suggests that, among essential industries, livestock processing poses a particular public health risk extending far beyond meatpacking companies and their employees. Mindful of the trade-offs inherent in public policy, the authors note that "ensuring both public health and robust essential supply chains may require an increase in meatpacking oversight and potentially a shift toward more decentralized, smaller-scale meat production."

GLOBAL URBAN AND SOCIAL POLICY

Letitia James Joins the SIPA Faculty



Letitia James, attorney general of New York, joined SIPA as the inaugural holder of the William S. Beinecke Visiting Professorship and delivered the William S. Beinecke lecture on March 29. James, who became the attorney general in January 2019 after 15 years as an elected official in New York City, co-taught a new course, Rethinking Policing in the 21st Century, in partnership with longtime SIPA adjunct faculty member **Basil Smikle Jr. MPA '96**.

GLOBAL URBAN AND SOCIAL POLICY

Hisham Aidi Named Soros Equality Fellow



Senior lecturer **Hisham Aidi** was among the 13 named to the 2020 class of Soros Equality Fellows. The program is designed to help incubate innovators and risk-takers striving to create and develop new ways of addressing the systemic causes and symptoms of racial disparity and discrimination. Aidi will create a web documentary series and book project to study the rise of Afro-Arab and Amazigh migration and activism in the United States over the last 25 years.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Tamar Mitts Awarded Junior Faculty Grant



Each year, Columbia's provost recognizes outstanding junior faculty who contribute to the University's diversity goals through their research, teaching, and mentoring activities. Congratulations to **Tamar Mitts**, one of eight grant recipients for the fall 2020 semester, recognized for her research "More than Meets the Eye: Stereotype Activation and Protest Mobilization in the Digital Age."

GLOBAL URBAN AND SOCIAL POLICY

Fuchs and Holloway Lead COVID-19 Small Business Recovery Report



SIPA's **Ester Fuchs** and **Sarah Holloway**, with Noémie Elhadad of Columbia's Department of Biomedical Informatics, coauthored the report *Communities Speak: Rebuilding NYC Small Business After the Pandemic*. Based on a survey of New York City small businesses in fall 2020, the findings, Fuchs says, "make it clear that the city must get this money out quickly and design programs that reflect the actual needs of small businesses."

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Economist **Sandra Black** was ranked 60th among 200 education scholars honored for their research and work shaping educational practice and policy in Education Week's 2021 RHSU Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings.

SIPA's 2021 Faculty Graduation Awards recognized senior lecturer **Andrea Bubula** for Macroeconomic Analysis for International and Public Affairs (large course) and lecturer **Norman Bartczak** for Accounting for International and Public Affairs (small course).

SIPA lecturer **Frederic de Mariz** and alumna **Pauline Deschryver MPA-DP '20** coauthored the chapter "The Role of Transition Finance Instruments in Bridging the Climate Finance Gap" in *Global Handbook of Impact Investing: Solving Global Problems via Smarter Capital Markets Towards a More Sustainable Society*.

The Center on Global Energy Policy released *Energizing America: A Roadmap to Launch a National Energy Innovation Mission*, a detailed guide for federal policy-makers to raise energy innovation as a core national priority. Coauthored with scholars from the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF), *Energizing America* is the first in a series of volumes to kick-start a US clean energy policy agenda.

Ambassador Christopher Hill, who served for 33 years in the US foreign service and led the University of Denver's school of international affairs for another 7 years, joined SIPA's faculty as the George W. Ball Adjunct Professor for the spring 2021 semester.

SIPA adjunct professor and advisory board member **Lynn Thoman** launched the podcast *3 Takeaways*, which features short, memorable conversations with leaders in a variety of fields focusing on three takeaways they've learned over their lives and careers.

Paola Valenti began a new part-time role as chief economist in the office of New York attorney general Letitia James.

SCHOOLNEWS

Forced Apart by COVID, Members of the SIPA Community Grew Closer

As the University resumes in-person operations this fall, we reflect on our resilience in difficult circumstances and the successes that will endure beyond the pandemic.

In March 2020 as Columbia moved to remote instruction, SIPA's Information Technology (IT) and Academic Affairs offices jumped into action to provide Zoom access to faculty, staff, and students, as well as hardware, support, and training (in person and virtually).

To facilitate the new hybrid instructional environment planned for the 2020–21 academic year, IT staff developed and implemented a hybrid flexible, or HyFlex, design in 18 International Affairs Building (IAB) classrooms during July and August of 2020—a significant challenge given short staffing, supply-chain shortages for equipment, and a constantly shifting technology landscape. By fall, though, all the classrooms were upgraded with cameras, projectors, ceiling microphones, lavalier microphones for instructors, ceiling speakers, touch-screen podium monitors, and large monitors to allow for student-faculty Zoom interaction.

During the 2020–21 academic year, SIPA offered a slate of 565 course sections (including 33 new courses), 25 percent of which were offered in the hybrid format.

In addition to teaching online and in person, faculty lent their expertise to help address the global crisis and expand understanding of the policy implications of the pandemic (see Faculty Briefs, pages 6–7).

Students also availed themselves of more than 430 remote career events, including 137 employer information sessions. According to SIPA's Career Advancement Center, more than 2,200 students from 57 countries have signed up for online career events since March 2020. Across those events, 185 alumni joined as panelists or employee representatives.

Students facing unexpected and severe financial hardships were eligible for emergency funds from both SIPA and the federal government. Since the beginning of the pandemic, SIPA has distributed 423 awards totaling \$514,810 to students. In addition, SIPA



Photo by Eileen Barroso

granted \$1,000 awards to 407 continuing students in the MIA, MPA, and MPA-DP programs to assist with expenses they may have incurred during the summer.

Safety was the focus of the University's Facilities and Operations team, who installed nearly 300 social distancing decals and signs, touchless faucets in every restroom, hand sanitizer stations, and water bottle fillers throughout the IAB. While many worked from the comfort of their homes during the worst of the pandemic, Facilities and Operations staff maintained a cleaning regime that surpassed CDC standards.

As faculty and students grappled with a new hybrid academic reality and Facilities and Operations safely maintained our physical space, SIPA continued its mission of convening policy leaders from across disciplines and time zones. Although the move to fully virtual events posed some challenges, it also offered the opportunity to connect with members of the SIPA community who would have been unable to attend events in Morningside Heights: nearly 725 alumni from 73 countries attended online events during the past academic year.

From an ongoing series that investigated central bank responses to COVID-19 to pre- and postelection panels, participants enjoyed interacting with distinguished guests, as well as attending the occasional Zoom happy hour or story slam. The School also staged virtually its two annual signature events, SIPA graduation (for two consecutive years) and the 20th Annual Global Leadership Awards Gala (see Event Highlights, pages 44–45).

In the coming months, life will fully return to the IAB. SIPA's rich culture of academics, scholarship, and convenings will adapt to address the policy challenges of a post-pandemic world, and our global community—brought even closer by distance—will continue to connect in new, hybrid formats.

Fostering Greater Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) at SIPA

A self-assessment and a steering committee are among new efforts to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive School.

In summer 2020, with Americans nationwide conducting #BlackLivesMatter protests in the wake of George Floyd's murder even as communities of color suffered a disproportionate impact from COVID-19, the SIPA community reflected on what needs to be done to challenge the persistence of racism in the United States and around the world—and, specifically, how SIPA can contribute to that crucial task while becoming a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive School.

Building on previous efforts, and in coordination with the SIPA Diversity Committee, students, faculty, and staff, Dean Merit E. Janow announced a set of new DEI initiatives in July 2020, including a Schoolwide self-assessment, new programming and conversations, new courses and Capstone workshops, student programming and support, and new faculty hiring.

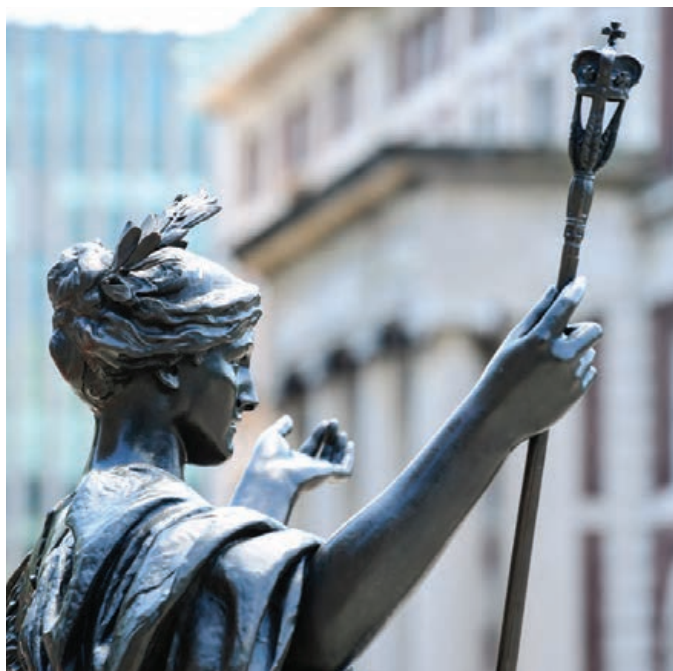


Photo by Chris Taggart

“Over the past year, all of us have been challenged to think about racism and injustice, including the societal and institutional structures that too often perpetuate it,” Janow said this past July in a message to the community. “At SIPA we have engaged in a thorough process of analysis and self-examination—to consider where we have made progress to achieve our DEI goals, identify gaps in our work and prioritize future actions, and, importantly, to hear from our community so that we better understand and address its concerns, particularly those of underrepresented minorities and persons of color.”

Here are some of the concrete steps taken over the past year.

FACULTY AND COURSES

SIPA added five new part-time faculty teaching new courses in the spring semester on issues related to race, policy, inequality, and social justice, including Rethinking Policing in the 21st Century, co-taught by New York attorney general Letitia James, the William S. Beinecke Visiting Professor, and political strategist and policy adviser Basil Smikle Jr. MPA '96. The Harlem Community Engagement Practicum, taught by Barbara Askins, president and CEO of the 125th Street Business Improvement District, explored the Harlem community by immersing students in conversation with community members who represent diverse organizations and interests.

CAPSTONE PROJECTS

SIPA's Capstone program, which organizes more than 80 workshops, was bolstered by five new offerings focused on race and social justice, including several that partnered directly with the Harlem and broader NYC communities. The new Capstone workshops foster collaborations with clients like the Harlem Children's Zone (From Cradle to College—Measuring Success and Program Development) and the Center for Popular Democracy (Health Care Is a Human Right—Barriers to Access with a Race and Gender Lens), among others.

DEI STEERING COMMITTEE

In November SIPA established a DEI Steering Committee, cochaired by professors Eugenia “Jenny” McGill and Suresh Naidu, comprising students, faculty, and staff to help guide its DEI initiative. The committee reviewed past and ongoing efforts to promote DEI at SIPA, identified areas for improvement, and developed a set of concrete recommendations. To support its work, the committee engaged an independent DEI consultancy to assist with a comprehensive Schoolwide assessment that engaged more than 1,000 SIPA students, faculty, staff, and alumni through surveys, focus groups, and interviews.

In July the DEI Steering Committee provided its initial findings and recommendations, drawing on the consultant's report to recommend a multidimensional strategy over the short and longer terms to advance SIPA's long-standing goal to be diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

To stay up to date on SIPA's ongoing DEI efforts, visit bit.ly/sipa-dei. [🔗](#)

Facing the Future of Contemporary Conflict

Launched in 2019, SIPA's Kent Global Leadership Program on Conflict Resolution seeks to address the complexities of global conflict.

BY AASTHA UPRETY MPA '21

Gender-based violence, forced displacement, armed conflict, and climate change—these are among the complex problems the world expects to face over the next several decades. One of SIPA's newest initiatives, the Kent Global Leadership Program on Conflict Resolution, seeks to address these very challenges.

The Kent Program was established in December 2019 to help prepare the next generation of practitioners for the increasingly difficult challenges posed by contemporary conflict. Through training sessions, campus events, a visiting professorship, and fellowships for students, the program seeks to equip the peacemakers of tomorrow with a broad array of skills.

"SIPA is designed around key challenges in the world," Dean Merit E. Janow said during the program's ceremonial launch in December 2020. The Kent Program, she added, reflects SIPA's commitment to prioritizing issues of global conflict as a significant aspect of teaching and research.

The program's launch was made possible by a \$6 million gift from Muhtar Kent, former chairman and CEO of the Coca-Cola Company. "I had this notion ... that perhaps I could very marginally improve the solving of conflict and the prevention of conflict around the world, because I saw so much of it in the last 10 years," Kent said at the program's December launch event. "When I speak about conflict, I'm referring not only to political or armed conflict but also social, educational, religious, urban, economic, financial, business, [and] family conflict." Along with recognizing the various dimensions of conflict, the Kent Program's guiding principle is the importance of the golden triangle—collaboration between

government, civil society, and the public, private, and nonprofit sectors—in solving global problems.

Jean-Marie Guéhenno became director of the Kent Program in March, agreeing to serve after the death of the founding director, Professor Edward C. Luck. Guéhenno is the Arnold A. Saltzman Professor of Practice in International and Public Affairs and director of SIPA's specialization in International Conflict Resolution (ICR). A former faculty member, Guéhenno had returned to SIPA in January as the inaugural Kent Visiting Professor of Conflict Resolution. He is a member of the UN's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation and served as president and CEO of the International Crisis Group from 2014 to 2017. Previously, he was the UN under-secretary-general for peacekeeping operations.

Luck was a leading expert in international conflict and the United Nations. Most notably in recent years, Luck was known for his work on the UN's Responsibility to Protect, a doctrine that aims to prevent genocide and other atrocities. The scholar and practitioner taught classes and ran SIPA's specialization in ICR until his death in February after a

battle with cancer (see In Memoriam, page 47). The Kent Program aims to carry on Luck's legacy and vision through a commitment to humanitarianism.

FOSTERING DIALOGUE AMONG PRACTITIONERS

Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, the Kent Program hosted multiple virtual events in its first official year. These included its inaugural weeklong seminar for conflict resolution professionals.

The Executive Seminar on Conflict Resolution, organized by Guéhenno and ICR specialization coordinator Brit Felsen-Parsons, focused on how to involve the private sector in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

The five-day event took place from June 28 to July 2 and featured discussions on private-sector engagement, social impact investing, and the future of conflict resolution. Two of the days were devoted to case studies from Colombia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). For the Colombian case study, government ministers, journalists, and former members

"I think it's part of the DNA of SIPA to bring practitioners and to confront them with academic discussions. ... It's a dialogue between people who have their feet in the mud and people who have the time and distance to reflect."

JEAN-MARIE GUÉHENNO

of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) gathered to discuss lessons learned from that country's peace process. Discussion of the second case study was devoted to the role of natural resources in conflict and as an asset in the DRC and featured conversations between mining executives, government officials, and researchers.

The week closed with a conversation with Juan Manuel Santos, former president of Colombia and a Nobel Peace Prize winner. Seminar participants—who were mid- and senior-level diplomats, including ambassadors to the UN, and hailed from over 15 countries—also took part in group discussions throughout the week to talk about the lessons learned from the panels.

"I think it's part of the DNA of SIPA to bring practitioners and to confront them with academic discussions," Guéhenno says. He wants the Kent Program to have a strong practical and policy-oriented dimension, and the executive seminar aims to do just that. "Sometimes [practitioners] don't have the time to reflect on what they're doing," he says. "It's a dialogue between people who have their feet in the mud and people who have the time and distance to reflect."

THE PROGRAM'S YEAR IN REVIEW

In October the Kent program hosted a conversation with Peter Maurer, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), about the future of conflict resolution in a changing global landscape. Maurer discussed some of the most striking trends in the past several years, including the growing number of non-state armed groups in conflict situations. He also noted the urbanization of warfare and how the increased prevalence of conflict in cities can have significant negative impacts on civilian populations.

The Kent Program's ceremonial launch took place in December. The event featured a discussion, moderated by Luck, among leading experts in the field, who shared insights from their respective sectors.

Lakhdar Brahimi, a former UN diplomat, reflected on areas in which the UN can improve when handling conflict. He said peacebuilders should be more informed

about local contexts, and countries should be empowered to establish the rule of law themselves instead of having to rely on foreign organizations.

Former senator Sam Nunn, who cochairs the Nuclear Threat Initiative, spoke about the importance of nuclear dialogue and identified cyber warfare as a new and increasingly dangerous form of conflict.

David Miliband, president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee, raised the issue of the growing numbers of displaced peoples as a result of violence. Dina Kavar, Jordanian ambassador to the United States, highlighted key issues in the Middle East, from Syria and Yemen to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Rosemary DiCarlo, UN under-secretary-general for political and peacebuilding affairs, stressed the important role of civil society in resolving conflict.

In March Guéhenno delivered a lecture in his capacity as visiting professor about the complexities of modern conflict. In his discussion, he explored the vulnerabilities of global connectivity and interdependence, as evidenced by the pandemic as well as the climate crisis, which has already begun to drive mass migration.

A FORCE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

The Kent Program also provides fellowships to SIPA students to pursue degrees with a specialization in conflict resolution or related fields, including international security, human rights, and humanitarian assistance. This year the program supported two students: Galeela Michael MIA '22 and Michael Thomson MIA '22.

Galeela Michael is concentrating in Economic and Political Development, with a regional specialization in Africa. She hopes to pursue a career that creatively leverages technology to support people in emergency situations, specifically in the Horn of Africa.

Thomson is concentrating in International Security Policy and specializing in International Conflict Resolution as well as International Organization and United Nations Studies. After SIPA he intends to pursue a career in international peacemaking, either in supporting peace processes or in conflict analysis research.



From top: Jean-Marie Guéhenno, director of the Kent Global Leadership Program on Conflict Resolution; Kent Fellows Galeela Michael MIA '22 and Michael Thomson MIA '22

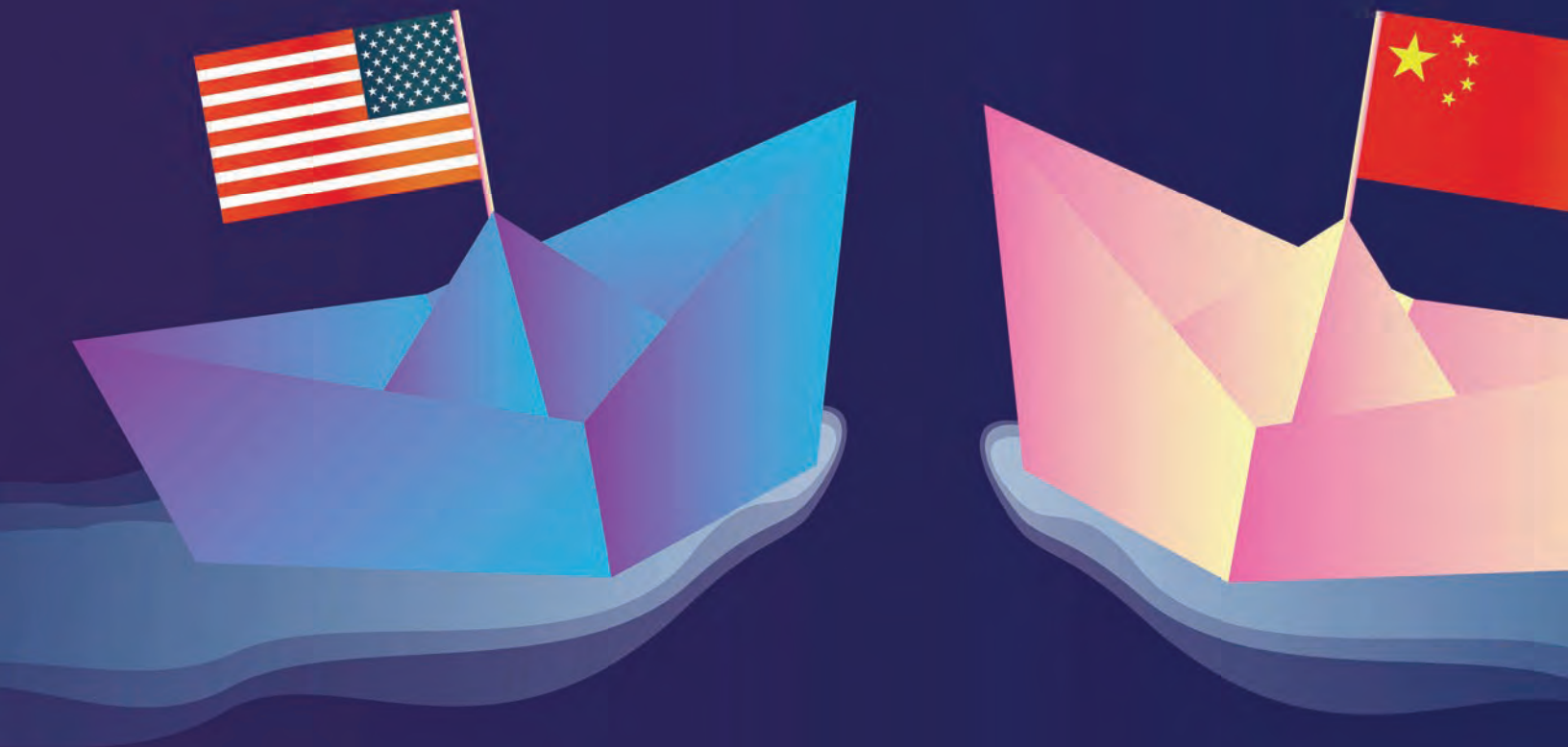
Over the coming years, the Kent Program will develop a global network of alumni, instructors, scholars, and practitioners devoted to advancing a collective understanding of ways to enhance conflict resolution.

"We must always look for ways to make positive change in the world, no matter how daunting the challenge," Muhtar Kent said upon the launch of the program in 2019. "I believe this innovative program will play a vital role in furthering this important work." [🔗](#)

US-CHINA RELATIONS IN A POST-COVID-19 WORLD

China scholar Thomas Christensen discusses the Biden administration's China strategy and the role of the Columbia-Harvard China and the World program during unprecedented times.

BY JEENHO HAHM MPA '19



THOMAS CHRISTENSEN, a scholar of international relations and China in particular, joined SIPA as a professor of international and public affairs in fall 2018. He has taught at MIT, Cornell, and Princeton, and from mid-2006 to mid-2008 he served as deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs. His most recent book, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power*, was an editors' choice at the *New York Times Book Review*.

Christensen is also codirector of the Columbia-Harvard China and the World program, which supports newly minted PhDs whose work bridges China studies and international relations and brings them together with recognized scholars and practitioners in these fields.

Christensen spoke with Jeenho Hahm MPA '19 in late June. The conversation has been condensed and edited for clarity.

Q How do you assess the Biden administration's policy toward China in the first six months?

It is hard to tell because my sense is that the Biden administration has a phased approach to China. First, I think the new US strategy is to patch up relations with the allies and partners in Asia and Europe before approaching China. I don't think bilateral engagement with China has been a priority, because the new administration wants to bolster relationships with others first so as to approach China from a position of strength.

Second, I don't think adjusting the aspects of the Trump administration's China policy is a priority for the Biden administration, because they have so many big fish to fry, from the COVID-19 pandemic to infrastructure projects. We haven't yet seen the Biden administration's approach to China in its full form.

Third, the US can't avoid dealing with China on certain issues. There's always talk in Washington—on both sides of the aisle—about abandoning the old engagement policy with China because it was a failure. I think that's pretty much all nonsense and that any administration has a particular set of issues on which China has to be engaged if we are to resolve them. One of them is climate change. The other one is nuclear nonproliferation. China is by far the biggest economic partner of North Korea and Iran. You just can't deal with nuclear proliferation issues in a non-kinetic way without dealing with China.

And other issues will come up over the next year or so. In particular, the fallout from

the COVID-19 pandemic in the developing world, I think, is going to be a big issue in 2022. As the pandemic impacts their economies and they cannot repay their debts, engaging China will be necessary because it is a significant lender in the developing world. The idea that engagement was wrong or stupid doesn't make sense.

Q You once drew a stark contrast between the case of the United States and the Soviet Union's successful cooperation on the elimination of smallpox during the Cold War with the recent failure of the United States and China to cooperate on COVID-19. What lessons can the US and China draw from history to work together on global issues even during competition?

I said in the spring of 2020, when the pandemic was new, that the United States and China should be able to cooperate on vaccine distribution and health infrastructure around the world. It's a tragedy that the US and China can't do it. And I offered reasons why both are to blame, not just one.

We can have a competition. But if you want to compete, let's see who can do more for the developing world in distributing vaccines. The US and advanced democracies can do well in helping the developing world with vaccines. It is impressive how private industry in the US produces better vaccines—and produces them faster than others. I hope we remember that the strongest part of the US's competitive power is the private sector. I'd prefer we work with China because they have specific skill sets that we don't have regarding health conditions in the developing world. We should be able to work together in a very productive way, it seems to me. But we have not.

Scientists tell us that unless everybody's vaccinated, none of us are safe over the long run because variants will form in places without vaccines and defeat the type of vaccine we have now. It's in our self-interest to vaccinate the whole world.

The analogy I'd use here is kids in the US with their little orange boxes at Halloween competing to raise money for UNICEF. If you raise a bunch of money, that's great, but it's even better if someone raises more

money, right? It's a kind of competition that could produce very positive outcomes if it mobilizes both countries to do the right thing. It shouldn't have to be a zero-sum competition.

Q Do you believe that China will engage less in security and human rights issues over time, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic?

I think China has been more assertive for several years, especially on sovereignty disputes and human rights, as it has lashed out at countries that criticize it. And China has been much more assertive in a way that has made the country much less popular in multiple countries around the world. This was true even before the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, I think China wants to return to the dialogues and has signaled that to the United States, but the Biden administration hasn't been so eager, for the reasons I mentioned earlier.

As I said before, I reject this idea that somehow engagement was wrongheaded. That's based on the idea that engagement is all about being friendly and accommodating. We've been competing with China in the military sphere for decades, and we've pushed back when China behaved in abrasive or aggressive ways. That should continue, and I'm sure it will. We've also been engaging China as necessary because its footprint is so large that it would be counterproductive to leave China out of discussions. I think no matter who's in charge, you're going to have that combination of competition and pursuit of cooperation on global issues.

I think that the trade war set a tone for China to be less willing to engage on other issues, which is kind of a natural response. On the other hand, a lot of China's "wolf warrior" diplomacy is also really counterproductive, which shows a combination of insecurity and overconfidence. I'd argue that has been destructive to China's diplomatic portfolio.

But I do not think we are going to see something like a US-Soviet Cold War in our relations with China. There are three critical missing factors in the Cold War analogy. I think it's probably better to look at my publications on this topic, but,

first, I don't believe that China is trying to export its political model. Second, 8 out of China's top 10 economic partners are the US and its allies, which means that today's economic integration is different from the economic separation in the Cold War. Lastly, the previous two factors lead to the lack of the cleanly defined and opposing alliance blocs that we saw during the Cold War.

That doesn't mean there's not a great power competition. Still, suppose the United States adopts policies consistent with a Cold War situation when it's not a Cold War. In that case, the US will end up alienating its allies and partners, which I believe are the greatest source of comparative strength that the US has in its competition with China. China lacks serious alliance relationships like we have around the world. My test of an alliance sets a very high bar. Can you imagine China fighting alongside Russia in its disputes in eastern Europe? Or can you imagine Russia fighting alongside China across the Taiwan Strait or against Japan? My answer to that is still no.

Q How would you respond to the calls for limiting the number of Chinese students studying in the US, especially on STEM subjects, which could concede the long-term advantage to China?

I think it's in the US's interest to have an economic exchange with China in both directions. I think it's important for Americans to go over to China and understand the place better. I hope that the US will get over some of its allergies to immigration and make it very desirable for citizens of all countries, including China, who want to stay in America after getting their education to stay here because I think that's one of the greatest sources of strength in American history.

Even if the two countries are in a hostile relationship, it's better to understand each other than not to understand each other because it avoids at least one source of unnecessary conflict, which is mutual misperception.

In terms of artificial intelligence, lasers, and other weapons-related technologies, that's something that the United States should be careful about sharing with inter-

national students. From a policy perspective, I support the effort by experts in those fields to figure out where those lines are, but I would encourage people not to go so far as to exclude Chinese students in general science.

I also taught at MIT, and the school benefited greatly from having Chinese graduate students and postdocs who were expert staff in the laboratories. The MIT model, as I understood it and as someone else put it quite well, was to have "high fences around small yards." The small yards to be protected are the weapons-related technologies; but we should not build fences around the entire scientific community, because that will make America weaker in the end. That kind of model is probably the best.

Q What is the role of the Columbia-Harvard China and the World program (CWP) during unprecedented times?

CWP provides services that I think are very important to Columbia in two ways. First, our postdoctoral fellows teach one class on China's foreign relations in either SIPA or the Political Science Department. Those classes have been very well received, and you have a force multiplier that provides three or four courses related to the subject in any given year.

The second is our speaker series, where students can attend lectures by leading scholars and public officials addressing issues related to China's foreign relations. I'd prefer to have meetings in person, but we've had record attendance on Zoom because physical rooms have limited capacity but Zoom's limit is 300. We hit that limit a couple of times this year.

The primary purpose of CWP is to nurture the careers of young recently minted PhDs to encourage them to land good jobs and stay in academia to teach. We want to keep people in the classroom to educate the next generation of citizens worldwide about this really important topic of China's rise. And we're proud that we've had over 50 fellows, and now 90 percent of them are in tenure-track positions, and some even have chaired professorships.

Q What are the key takeaways for students studying US-China relations now?

I learned that one of the great things about teaching is that you learn from your students. And what I've been taking away from the program is that in a situation where US-China relations are very tense, it's harder to get research opportunities. It's harder for Chinese experts to visit the US because they run into visa and security problems. It's also harder for US experts to get over to China to do their field research.

I've discovered through the research of some of my fellows that it's still very fruitful and possible to research China's policies toward third countries that impact the strategic competition with the United States. We have fellows from around the world who study China. They study China's policy toward multiple countries, and those policies have a significant impact on US strategy. We've had fellows who study China's use of economic diplomacy, like the Belt and Road Initiative, and China's relations with Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

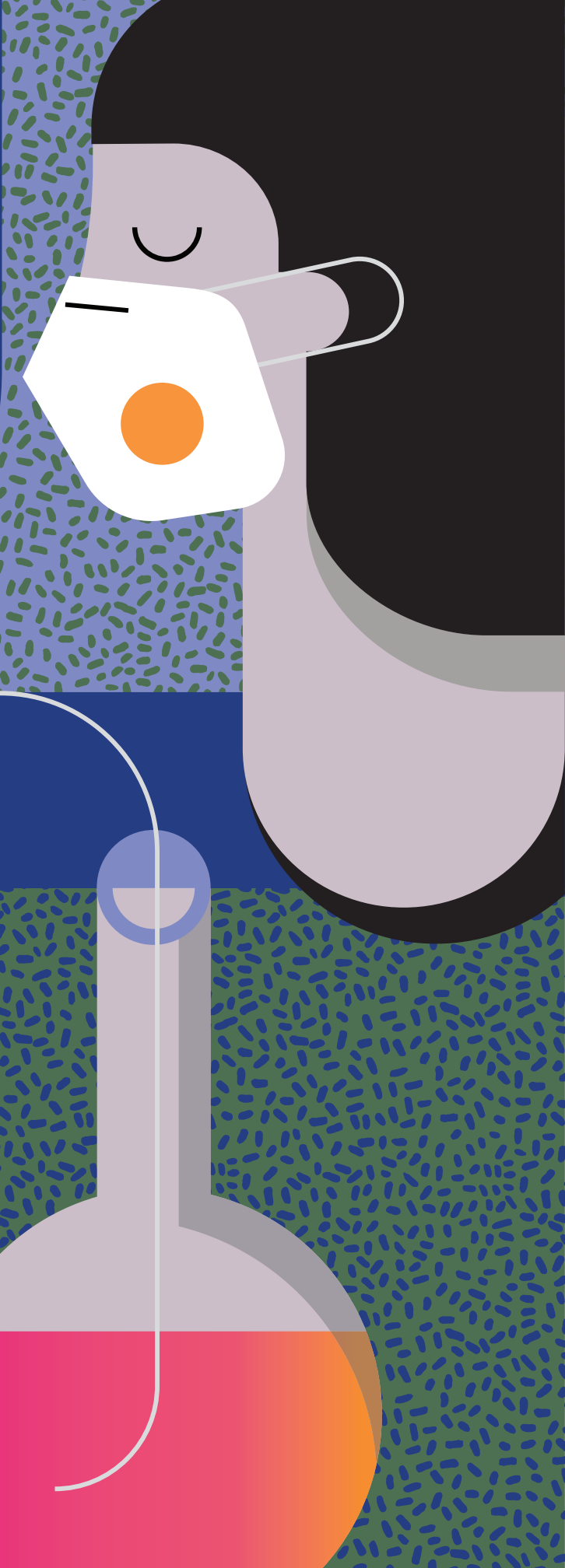
You can travel to third countries and study these topics without being subject to the same restrictions that exist now in studying relations between the United States and China. In studying bilateral US-China relations, it is harder to have the kind of robust dialogues that we've had in the past because people feel constrained. So it is sometimes easier and more fruitful to research Chinese foreign policy toward third countries, and many of our fellows have been doing that in the last several years to produce excellent work that I think is also useful for the United States. [👑](#)



“I think it’s in the US’s interest to have an economic exchange with China in both directions. I think it’s important for Americans to go over to China and understand the place better.”

Photo by Brian Miller





ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A POLICY TOOL IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

BY CHRISTINA SEWELL MPA '21
WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM AASTHA UPRETY MPA '21

SIPA STUDENTS CAME TOGETHER DURING A PANDEMIC TO SOLVE CRITICAL GLOBAL CHALLENGES.

Despite the incredibly challenging circumstances wrought upon the global community in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, several groups of SIPA students, rather than remain dispirited, came together to engineer innovative and entrepreneurial ways to solve some of the world's biggest policy issues.

For 2020–21's SIPA Dean's Public Policy Challenge Grant, COVID-19 Response Challenge, and Global Public Policy Network (GPPN) competition, students were encouraged to develop digital technology ventures using information and communications technology solutions (ICTs) and data analytics to improve society practically, with a special focus on addressing COVID-19's impact.

Student groups submitted impressive ideas spanning solutions for gaps in health-care access, educational opportunities, women's empowerment, gender-based violence, and more. They included a mix of market-based and publicly and philanthropically supported projects. Ultimately, eight semifinalist teams were chosen to compete in the Dean's Public Policy Challenge, five top concepts were picked for the COVID-19 Response Challenge, and three teams were selected to present their policy proposals at the GPPN Annual Conference.

While all of these student groups demonstrated a deep understanding of policy issues and potential solutions, the competitions' winning ideas best exemplified innovative entrepreneurship's ability to empower communities around the world.



SIPA DEAN'S PUBLIC POLICY CHALLENGE GRANT

In fall 2020 Dean Merit E. Janow announced the Dean's Public Policy Challenge Grant's eighth annual competition, inviting student teams to consider aspects of COVID-19 in their venture ideas. The entrepreneurship competition was launched in 2014 to support innovative student projects that leverage digital technologies and data to develop practical solutions to problems.

"I WANTED TO BUILD A TELEMEDICINE PLATFORM WHERE AMERICAN DOCTORS FROM DIFFERENT ETHNICITIES AND LANGUAGES COULD HELP THE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES AS WELL AS VOLUNTEER TO SERVE IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS LIKE DHEISHEH REFUGEE CAMP."

ETIZAZ SHAH MIA '21
FOUNDER AND CEO
EZ HEALTH

The winning project, EZ Health, was born from concern regarding the 50 percent decline in in-person doctor visits by Americans for whom English is not their primary language. During the same period, telemedicine solutions increased by 8,336 percent nationally, taking over the medicine landscape, yet the vast majority of health-care platforms were only providing services in English.

EZ Health proposed addressing this emerging communications and health-access gap through the development of technology that directly connects patients with health-care providers (such as doctors and psychologists) who speak the same language or share a similar ethnic background.

"During my visit to Palestine in January 2020, I visited Dheisheh, a one-square-kilometer refugee camp with a population of 17,000," says Etizaz Shah MIA '21, founder and CEO of EZ Health. "The entire camp had only one clinic with two doctors, one of whom died."

Shah's experience made him realize the potential of digital technology to help patients living anywhere in the world, especially during the pandemic. "I wanted to build a telemedicine platform," he says, "where American doctors from different ethnicities and languages could help the immigrant communities within the United States as well as volunteer to serve in conflict-affected areas like Dheisheh Refugee Camp."

Together with SIPA students from around the world—Amanda Papir MPA '21, Nami Patel MPA '21, Sebastian Rositano MIA '21, and Lifeng Zhang MPA '21—Shah worked with his team to develop a platform directly connecting patients with doctors who spoke their language.

EZ Health's pilot proved successful, and after months of concept and financial-startup-plan development, the group was named the winner of the Dean's Public Policy Challenge in April. The idea has also won the Columbia Engineering campus-wide annual elevator pitch competition and several other non-SIPA-related grant competitions since then.

EZ Health's telemedicine system is now on its way to serving those in need around the world.

COVID-19 RESPONSE CHALLENGE

Sparked by a desire to help communities, governments, nonprofits, multilaterals, and other entities address the enormous consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in New York City and around the world, SIPA students were also invited to enter the School's COVID-19 Response Challenge. The competition aimed at generating bold and innovative policies and programs urgently needed to address short- and long-term responses to the pandemic.

A semifinalist group in both the Dean's Public Policy Challenge and the COVID-19 Response Challenge, Ekatra Life was one such student group working to redesign and rebuild capacity in response to the crisis.

The group, composed of Aparna Arora MPA '21, Raghuram Guda MPA '21, Shruti Kedia MPA '21, and Lavanya Lal MPA '21, grew concerned as women's unemployment in India significantly worsened due to COVID-19, particularly for artisans residing in the most vulnerable communities.

"We realized that women artisans in India lost their jobs overnight [due to the pandemic]," says Kedia, cofounder of Ekatra Life. "We saw there was a need to connect nonprofits working with women artisans to corporate buyers in order to establish a platform for these artisans where their craft and skill could be fully recognized."

The digital marketplace platform developed by Kedia and her teammates now provides alternative income mechanisms for these artisans and connects nonprofits with governments and large corporations, enabling a critical sales

channel. Through Ekatra Life, artisans' products ranging from PPE to fashion items can be purchased, host organizations are updated about changing policies and market trends, and women artisans residing in vulnerable areas of India are continually trained in new skills and technologies specific to a changing world.

GLOBAL PUBLIC POLICY NETWORK COMPETITION

In March the Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of Tokyo hosted this year's GPPN conference, convening students and deans from member schools around the world to discuss and address today's most pressing policy challenges. Institutions participating in the GPPN since its founding in 2005 are SIPA, the London School of Economics, the School of Public Affairs at Sciences Po, the Hertie School of Governance, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, the Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of Tokyo, and the Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV) at the Escola de Administração de Empresas.

In this year's virtual conference, three SIPA student teams competed to develop the most effective policy solutions around the conference theme of "The Crisis of Globalization as We Know It." All projects proposed solutions to enhance regional and international cooperation in the wake of COVID-19 that could mitigate growing sources of economic, social, and political friction around the world. Of SIPA's three teams, two were awarded first- and second-place prizes.

"The GPPN conference provides a wonderful opportunity for SIPA and other policy students to come up with creative solutions to problems they care about," says Dean Merit E. Janow, who served on the judging panel. "It is also a chance for deans from all of these leading schools to exchange ideas about our changing world."

The first-place team, Tech2Protect—whose project also earned runner-up honors in the Dean's Public Policy Challenge—proposed a learning platform to address sexual and gender-based violence.

"Child abuse is a hidden pandemic happening alongside COVID-19," says Marjorie Tolsdorf MPA-DP '21. As the pandemic has forced children to attend school from home, away from the watchful eyes of teachers, "there has been a decrease in reporting despite a spike in rates of abuse."

Tolsdorf, Madeleine Dejean MPA-DP '21, Minji Ko MPA-DP '21, Saiful Salihudin MIA '21, and Julia Vieira de Andrade Dias MPA '21 plan to develop a technological tool, Athena, that would empower educators to monitor and respond to child sexual abuse. The platform would provide learning tools for children, intervention resources for teachers, and data for policy advocates to share best practices on abuse prevention.

Tech2Protect won the conference prize for Best Presentation. "Representing SIPA was the highlight of the experience," Tolsdorf says, "particularly because SIPA has so graciously provided us with the resources and support needed to launch such a tremendous and complex endeavor." The team is currently testing a prototype.

A second SIPA team focused on the human rights concerns surrounding privacy and data protection in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The inherent tension between contact tracing methods deployed to keep communities safe from disease and the need for data protection inspired this team to propose a digital tool and set of assessment principles to guide global policymakers. A Guidance on Privacy Protection and Digital Contact Tracing allows the team to evaluate different countries' contact tracing methods and provides governments with a framework to ensure data privacy and human rights in the process.

The group—Haejo Kang MIA '22, Jianing Joanne Li MIA '22, Danielle Murad Waiss MIA '21, Andrea Rojas Perez Palma MPA '22, and Hanako Sasaki MIA '22—won runner-up for Best Presentation.

"It was an absolute pleasure to work with this group of amazing women," Murad Waiss says. "We all came to this project with different backgrounds and nationalities, and we had all been living through the pandemic in different countries. It was an honor to represent SIPA and participate alongside students from around the world."

Congratulations to all the 2020–21 academic year's competition winners, and thank you to SIPA's students and faculty who participated. Particularly in the face of a rapidly changing world, our community's unwavering ingenuity and dedication personify the spirit and mission of the School and are what make SIPA a global leader in solving the world's most critical challenges. [!\[\]\(9c2e8d1b5bd77cb5c9f83b7a9cff79fd_img.jpg\)](#)

ENDING HUNGER,

SHEILA GRUDEM MIA '94 REFLECTS ON HER TWO-DECADE CAREER WITH THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME, WHICH WON THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IN 2020.

Grudem (*right*) participates in a ceremony on a local water source that was conserved and improved as part of WFP's restoration of lives and homes displaced by violence program in Ayacucho, Peru, in March 2016.



Grudem visits a bamboo plant in the Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

FOSTERING PEACE

BY AASTHA UPRETY MPA '21

Cox's Bazar, known locally as Panowa, is a coastal town in south-eastern Bangladesh, about 15 miles from neighboring Myanmar. (The town's English name is a relic of Britain's colonial regime.) It's a fishing center and one of the country's top tourist destinations, drawing throngs to its 93 unbroken miles of sandy beaches dotted with colorful umbrellas.

The continuous stretch of beach, one of the longest anywhere on earth, is a marvel. But in recent years Cox's Bazar has also become known for another distinction: the city is now home to the Kutupalong refugee camp, the world's largest.

Today the camp is mostly inhabited by Rohingya refugees, who are fleeing ethnic and religious persecution in Rakhine state, just across the Myanmar border. It was here that Sheila Grudem MIA '94 arrived in July 2020, just as COVID-19 lockdown restrictions were beginning to lift. The World Food Programme's office, of which Grudem is in charge, is responsible for feeding over 850,000 refugees every day, three times a day.

It may seem like a daunting task, but Grudem, WFP's senior emergency coordinator and head of field office in Cox's Bazar, has worked for more than 25 years in development and humanitarian aid. She's had diverse experiences around the world, spending the majority of her career with the organization.

As of 2020, she could also add Nobel Prize winner to her résumé: the organization received the Nobel Peace Prize last October.



Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Grudem visits a family that received assistance as part of WFP's restoration of lives and homes displaced by violence program in Ayacucho, Peru, in March 2016.



Originally from Anaheim, California, Grudem has been interested in refugee issues for a long time. After studying international relations at the University of the Pacific in her home state, one of her first experiences abroad was as a Peace Corps volunteer in Belize, where she worked with refugees from Guatemala and El Salvador. “That’s what really solidified my desire to go to SIPA,” Grudem says.

At the School, Grudem focused on human rights and economic development in refugee communities. She also seized an opportunity to travel to Colombia to work on a project involving public-private partnerships, which were just gaining steam at the time. “I realized strengths that I didn’t know I necessarily had,” Grudem says.

After graduating from SIPA, Grudem sent her résumé to every organization she could think of. (“I had school loans to pay!” she notes.) She found her first position in Angola, which was then in the midst of a 27-year civil war. “So you dropped a girl from Disneyland in the middle of a war in Angola,” she says. “That’s how I started.”

Grudem had joined the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and worked mostly with people displaced by the war. She was also in charge of working with national NGOs, a role that forced her to learn Portuguese. “It was jumping in with both feet and a high learning curve,” she says.

But she recommends the same kind of introduction to any student seeking a similar career path. “You learn fast, and you also learn quickly whether or not you like to do the work,” she says. “You don’t waste time.”

It was also in Angola that Grudem first worked with UN colleagues in WFP and started to like what the organization does.

Grudem’s career has taken her to both long-term posts and short-term duties around the globe: helping out with cyclone relief in Mozambique, working with refugees in Ethiopia, conducting policy work at WFP’s headquarters in Rome, serving as deputy country director in Tanzania. From 2013 to 2016, she worked as a country director in Peru, where she supported the development of nutrition programs, such as promoting recipes for dishes made with iron-rich chicken blood.

Moving from country to country, Grudem often found herself switching between development work and emergency relief work, distinct competencies that, she says, call for different but overlapping skills. For Grudem, development work is slower-paced and requires intellectually sound expertise and analysis. Emergency relief work, on the other hand, gets her adrenaline pumping—it involves making quick decisions in high-pressure situations with imperfect information.

In a conversation with *SIPA Magazine*, Grudem offered a few pieces of advice for students seeking a career in the humanitarian sector.

She underscored that teamwork is critical, especially in emergency work, other high-stress situations, and anywhere you don’t know the local language. “Be respectful to your colleagues,” she says, and “always remember to take deep breaths.”

Attitude is another key to Grudem’s success in the field. She encourages students to be willing to learn and feel out of place and to not set your sights on just one organization—there’s value in gaining experience at many different places. Be open to pursuing what interests you and what makes you feel like you have a purpose, Grudem says.

She also says to get to know both the people you assist and the people you work with. Finding the right fit is about knowing not only what job but also what community will make you enjoy going to work every day. “I wanted to work with the World Food Programme,” Grudem says, “because I liked the people working for WFP the most.”



Grudem at a food and nutritional safety fair in the town of Ventanilla, Peru, in July 2016.

"IF YOU WANT TO END FOOD INSECURITY, END CONFLICT AND WORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE."



When it recognized WFP last year, the Nobel committee cited the organization “for its efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas, and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict.”

“It feels humbling,” Grudem says. “And it’s an honor. I’ve worked for WFP for 20 years, so it really feels like I’m part of that.”

Hunger had skyrocketed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so the Nobel represented a welcome recognition in a difficult year. For Grudem, it was also heartening to see the Nobel committee acknowledge the link between food assistance and peace. “I tell people, if you want to end food insecurity, end conflict,” she says. “And work on climate change,” she adds, noting that Bangladesh is especially vulnerable to the looming threat of climate disaster.

At Grudem’s current post, WFP works on a number of local environmental initiatives. When the Rohingya first started coming over, the Cox’s Bazar area was a national forest susceptible to landslides. WFP used rapidly deployable methods like cement and culverts to stabilize the land, and deforestation made way for temporary homes. Eventually, “there was one tree left,” Grudem says. “The famous one tree.” But recent reforestation efforts have created a cooler and more appealing environment for refugees and locals, and trees serve as a more natural means of stabilizing the landslide-prone terrain.

To handle the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP implemented safety measures like remote monitoring and cutting back on the number of staff visiting the camps. In addition, the office’s recently redesigned ways of providing food assistance helped mitigate the impacts of the pandemic.

Cox’s Bazar has been at the forefront of innovation for a while, Grudem says. Instead of directly providing food assistance, WFP gives out cash, a system that hasn’t been implemented on such a large

scale before. Recipients can then choose and purchase their own food in a grocery store–like experience. WFP partners with local traders and farmers to provide this food, which includes fresh produce on top of traditional dry goods like rice, beans, and wheat.

In addition, the operation uses blockchain technology for its electronic payment system, which makes food distribution more efficient and secure. This is a huge leap from just 5 to 10 years ago, when Excel sheets and even paper logs were the norm. “It really is kind of the future of humanitarian assistance,” Grudem says.

These innovations also help to recognize the dignity of refugees and create a better environment to live in. Grudem says that the trauma of refugees and their need for social support have been more widely acknowledged in recent times.

“When refugees first come over, it’s tragic,” she says. “These people are crossing the border, they’re fleeing conflict—they’re trying to stay alive.” After a few years, fatigue can set in. In the future, besides the need for diplomacy and broader political change in the region, Grudem foresees the challenge of keeping donors and funders engaged so that WFP can continue operations.

Along with providing daily meals to the refugee camp and working on environmental projects, the WFP office in Cox’s Bazar helps provide school lunches in Bangladesh, supports alternative livelihoods throughout the country, and even hosts a surfing club for local children.

Growing up, Grudem never expected to live abroad for quite so long. But she has now worked in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Europe and says that the Middle East is still on her list.

“I always thought I would move back to the US,” Grudem says, “but I’ve continued to live overseas this entire time because I keep having fun.” [!\[\]\(7d1d6890825e83a6a4a51febe2dcc7f3_img.jpg\)](#)



At the Heart of Driving Out Hate

Margaret Huang MIA '95 is one of the newest residents of Montgomery, Alabama. Though she began her tenure as CEO and president of the civil rights advocacy organization the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in April 2020, Huang only recently moved from Washington, DC, to the SPLC's home in Alabama after more than a year of remote work. At the helm of the SPLC, Huang leads the organization's efforts in combating racial injustice and white supremacy in the South and in strengthening human rights across the country.

MARGARET HUANG MIA '95 OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER IS ON A MISSION TO DISMANTLE WHITE SUPREMACY AND EXTREMISM.

By Christina Sewell MPA '21

Though she may be new to Alabama, Huang is no stranger to the South. While she was growing up as a mixed-race Chinese American girl in the 1970s and '80s, Huang's family was one of very few ethnically Asian or people of color households in their East Tennessee town. That lived experience is a significant reason why the SPLC's mission has long resonated with her.

"It wasn't necessarily explicit racism that I experienced growing up so much as it was ignorance and subtle discrimination," she explains. "A lot of the kids at school didn't understand how to engage with me or why I lived there."

Now Huang has returned to the South to tackle the roots of race-based hate and extremism across these fragmented United States.

America Gasps for Air

The overlapping crises of 2020 laid bare the United States' racial and economic disparities. CDC data revealed that communities of color and other vulnerable populations experienced much higher rates of infection, hospitalization, and death due to COVID-19, while Black Americans continued to be killed disproportionately by police officers. According to a recent study from Harvard's T. H. Chan School of Public Health, Black Americans are 3.23 times more likely than white Americans to be killed by police.

In May 2020 the nation watched in disbelief as Minneapolis resident George Floyd gasped for air in between the words "I can't breathe" as a white police officer knelt on his neck for over nine minutes. After the murders of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor in the South, a wave of collective outrage and humanity drew citizens into the streets despite social distancing guidelines, and the summer of 2020 saw the United States' largest protests for racial justice and civil rights in a generation.

“We saw people across the country acknowledging, ‘Yeah, there is something really, really wrong,’” Huang says. “It’s not just the targeted community of young Black men and women but the whole country acknowledging it.”

Intensifying race relations further, the year also saw alarming spikes across the country of hate crimes targeting the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, particularly Asian American seniors and women. Recent research released by the reporting forum Stop AAPI Hate revealed that nearly 3,800 incidents were reported over the course of roughly a year during the pandemic.

“The spate of violent crimes targeting members of the Asian American Pacific Islander community are yet another demonstration of how hate speech and disinformation have incredibly dangerous consequences,” Huang says. “No individual or community should live in fear of being targeted for who they are.”

She recognizes that the wide range of civil rights issues affecting the country today—including hate speech and violence, immigrant justice, criminal justice reform, voting rights, climate justice, and poverty—are connected to the country’s long legacy of structural racism.

“There’s a history here that goes back long before any of us, but it continues to shape all of our most pressing issues today,” she says. “Under President Trump’s tenure, we actually saw a significant increase in the engagement and recruitment of hate groups and a growing hostility of the court system to civil rights challenges.” These are trends that make Huang all the more dedicated to righting the wrongs of our past—and present.

Looking Inward to Change the World

A steely dedication to civil rights was forged in Huang’s early childhood. As the daughter of professors who enjoyed summers off from teaching, she was regularly exposed to life beyond the mountains of her Tennessee hometown. She recalls the family’s cross-country adventures to California and visits to Taiwan and mainland China.

“I had this incredible privilege to visit parts of the world that my friends and my parents’ colleagues had never dreamed of visiting,” she says. “And it really opened my eyes very early to the ways people across the country and around the world live and struggle.”

Her desire to make the world a more just and equitable place would eventually lead her to SIPA, where she immersed herself in the examination of complex international human rights issues.

“Those two years at SIPA were some of the best experiences I had, certainly in preparing me for my career,” she says. “There’s no question that the human rights concentration was small but mighty. My former concentration adviser, Paul Martin, who ran the Center for the Study of Human Rights back then, continues to be a mentor and strong supporter of me and all of my fellow colleagues.”

Those SIPA colleagues include her current friends working in the United Nations, the federal government, and the foundation world and across many other sectors, all of whom Huang credits for making her human rights work stronger today.

She’s grateful, too, for the more unlikely game changers at SIPA. “I took this amazing course on managing nonprofits, and I still use the materials from the course all the time!” she says. “It’s funny, because most of us get into our careers, not because we want to run the organizations, but because we want to have some impact or we share a vision. But classes like that point out all the routine things like

the HR policies or the budgetary constraints that you must consider as a leader. It’s been so helpful as I’ve taken on more and more responsibility in my career.”

After graduation Huang went on to work for the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights, the Asia Foundation, and Amnesty International. Across these esteemed human rights groups, she rose up the ranks to lead campaigns protecting refugees, victims of gun violence, and a range of activist protesters across the globe.

Her focus turned inward, however, following September 11, 2001. “I’d never considered human rights here in the United States before then, but suddenly things I believed were sacred—like a commitment not to torture or use arbitrary detention and surveillance—went out the window,” she says. “That same year, I had the birth of my first child and realized that I didn’t want to be traveling around the world all the time.”

After several years tackling unjust practices in almost every corner of the world except the United States, Huang decided it was time to pivot to a career in domestic issues. Her vast experiences in the field have now propelled her to collaborate with her colleagues at the SPLC to push for the biggest impact on human rights that the organization can achieve.

Hate Will Not Be Overlooked

Huang’s first order of business at the SPLC has been the development of a strategic plan—the first of its kind for the organization—reflecting the group’s new mission, vision, and impact statements. This strategic direction, she says, will help her team better define their highest-level priorities. Their mission is now officially defined as “being a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people.” It’s a tall order, one that Huang smiles with excitement about achieving.

Perhaps the foremost way to get there is by tracking—and shutting down—the activities of hate and extremist groups across the country. The SPLC has helped to stop some of the nation’s most violent groups in recent decades by suing them and winning huge damages that put them out of business. Yet there are still nearly 1,400 groups across the country whose activities have been reenergized in recent years. These include white nationalist groups such as the neo-Nazis and neo-Confederates as well as anti-government militias.

“The two categories are distinct,” Huang explains. “The latter are seeking to overthrow the government, whereas white nationalists aim to influence policies and legislation to advance their ideological interests. The January 6 armed insurrection saw the two come together as one, both very much encouraged by former president Trump.”

High numbers of racist and hate activities across the country are historically more typical during Democratic presidential administrations, yet trends around the mobilization of hate groups are evolving with the rise of social media. It led the SPLC to reconsider how it measures the scale and scope of hate in the United States and to put increased pressure on social media giants like Facebook and Twitter for more monitoring and removal of dangerous content on their platforms.

“So far we’ve largely been ignored, along with every other non-profit that’s been advocating this, but January 6th was a wake-up call

“There’s a history here that goes back long before any of us, but it continues to shape all of our most pressing issues today.”

for much of the tech world,” she says. “That’s when we finally saw the de-platforming of Trump. But it can’t end there.” If the social media platforms don’t commit to more serious and aggressive monitoring and removal of hate speech soon, Huang says that her team will advocate for increased government regulation of the industry.

She’s already championing the effort to better track the racist and violent activities in another important sector—and finally making progress after the storming of the US Capitol. For three decades the SPLC has urged the secretary of defense and Pentagon officials to reconsider their criteria for who is able to join their ranks and to better monitor the activities of all service members in uniform.

“Time and again we’ve seen an uncomfortable margin of military members involved with white nationalist and other extremist groups,” Huang says. As of early June, current or former military members and police officers made up about 11 percent of total arrests stemming from the January 6 Capitol riot.

In response, the Biden administration and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin—the first Black person to hold that office—ordered a military-wide stand-down in an effort to better address white nationalism and other extremism in the US military’s ranks, pausing regular activity to tackle the issue. This is only the first step in a long overdue accountability process, says Huang, and one not unique to the armed forces. A similar effort, she says, will be required at the FBI, state and local law enforcement agencies, and all security agencies.

There is reason for optimism following the unprecedented arrests and prosecutions of military members following the insurrection.

“The accountability we are seeing today,” Huang says, “sets a new tone that the activities of everyone involved in hate, no matter your service affiliations, will no longer be overlooked.”

Pursuing Large-Scale Change

In addition to tracking hate and rooting it out wherever it festers, Huang recognizes that fundamentally eliminating structural racism and historical inequalities requires a proactive repairing of the symptoms of divisiveness seen across the country.

“We have always done some work to address challenges of poverty, particularly in our states in the South,” she says. “But as part of the SPLC’s new strategic direction, we’re actually making this one of our top priorities. We’re setting up what I hope is a big goal of lifting two million people out of poverty in the South over the next five years.”

The effort is critical in the fight against the United States’ growing wealth and income inequality, now the highest it has been in the country’s history, according to recent Pew Research Center data. While the productivity of American workers has increased 70 percent since the late 1970s, their average hourly pay has risen less than 12 percent in that same time period. This dismal outcome inspired Huang to set the goal for the SPLC to lift two million out of poverty.

“This goal requires us to think differently about strategic interventions that can have a really big impact—not just for a few families or a few children or a community here or there, but for the potential to leverage really big change,” Huang explains. “We aren’t sure how we’re going to do it all yet, but it will definitely involve litigation, communications, narrative development, educational curricula, and public engagement, as well as partnerships with local governments, corporations, and other communities on the ground who have ideas about how to do this. This is something we should and must do together.”

The effort also requires federal- and state-level policy engagement, an area underdeveloped before Huang joined the organization. To better protect civil liberties in the South and supplement the SPLC’s legal work, she recently expanded the team’s policy efforts to strategically engage with government officials and agencies at all levels.


Much of the impact of the policy efforts will be scaled through building alliances with other organizations, both in the South and across the country, including the NAACP and the ACLU. The SPLC will work shoulder to shoulder with these groups and local community organizations to mobilize voters, protect voting rights, pursue electoral policy reforms, and bring litigation to challenge unconstitutional and discriminatory voting practices.

“There’s a recognition that this legal and policy work is needed now in the South more than ever,” Huang says. But their work won’t stop with southern states. She’s confident that the group’s vision for human dignity and respect for everyone will spread across the United States.

Huang’s North Star is a quote by scholar and civil rights activist W. E. B. Du Bois, who famously wrote: “As the South goes, so goes the nation.” His words suggested the region’s key role in the fight against the violent suppression of Black people during America’s infamous Jim Crow era.

Those words still ring true today, particularly as the South’s citizenry is the country’s fastest growing and arguably most rapidly changing in terms of racial demographics. On issues spanning racial inequality, voting rights, poverty, environmental justice, and more, battles fought there set the tone for the rest of the country and have the potential to shift our trajectory significantly.

“I believe that with the level of activism and grassroots organizing happening here, this is an extraordinary time to lend our efforts to all these social justice movements taking place on issues of poverty, incarceration, white supremacy, infringement on voting rights, and more,” Huang says. “We have to start seeing and supporting the solution in the South, because I know we can show the rest of the country what good governance and progressive realization of human rights can look like.”

Huang’s whole life has prepared her to lead this transformation. Now, with her new community members by her side, she has never been more determined to win this fight. 





Celebrating a Rich History of

CLIMATE CHANGE EXPERTISE

By Kathrin Havrilla-Sanchez • Illustration by Mario Wagner



In June of 1988, climate change became big news when the then director of NASA's Institute for Space Studies, James Hansen, testified before the US Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee that global warming was affecting the earth's climate. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was also established in 1988 and was charged with the task of preparing a comprehensive review of the science and impacts of climate change.

One year earlier, SIPA created its first environmental concentration aimed at giving policy students a foundation in environmental science to better inform their work in this newly burgeoning regulatory field. SIPA, it seems, was ahead of the pack in its understanding of and dedication to climate change policy—a trend that continues to this day.

'A SCIENCE CURRICULUM FOR POLICY PEOPLE'

Columbia's first full program dedicated to the intersection of policy and the environment was the Master of Public Administration in Environmental Science and Policy (MPA-ESP) degree, which seeks to prepare students to become sustainability professionals in government, business, and the nonprofit sector. Initially funded by the Earth Institute, the program was started in 2002 under the advisement of

Steven Cohen, professor in the practice of public affairs, director for the Research Program on Sustainability Policy and Management at the Earth Institute, and director of the MPA-ESP program.

"The program came out of my experience working with the Environmental Protection Agency in the late '70s," Cohen says. "I realized that the people making policy had very little environmental science background and the people doing the science didn't really know how the policy worked. We needed to bridge that gap with a science curriculum for policy people."

The concentrated program is packed into a cohort experience of three semesters, with core courses on topics including management, economics, and statistics—all with a sustainability focus—taught alongside more-scientific courses in environmental chemistry, hydrology, climate change, toxicology, and more.

"I was excited about a program that blended science and policy; the MPA-ESP is very unique at that intersection," says Leah C. Stokes MPA-ESP '09, an associate professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara. "In addition to the core SIPA classes, you could also take electives from all over Columbia, so I got to learn about carbon capture and sequestration and corporate social responsibility from world experts and even spent time working in a think tank."

Now Stokes's research focus is on renewable energy policy and clean energy laws. Her book, *Short Circuiting Policy: Interest Groups and the Battle Over Clean Energy and Climate Policy in the American States*, was awarded Best Energy Book in 2020 by the American Energy Society.

REAL-WORLD IMPACT FROM SIPA STUDENTS

A hallmark of the SIPA experience for students in the MPA-ESP, MIA, and MPA programs is their Capstone workshop. These live consulting projects provide external clients with innovative analysis and practical recommendations on real-world problems.

Many students collaborate with organizations on environmentally focused issues, from using smart-charging vehicle-to-grid technologies in electric bus fleets to analyzing how leading global economies support a higher penetration of renewables.

One such project in 2021 was for Equinor, a multinational energy company that is working to become net-zero by 2050.

"Our Capstone was to analyze how carbon sinks can be used to offset emissions from Equinor's operations and products to reach their goal," says team member Francisco Galtieri MPA '21, who started his program at SIPA after working in the oil and gas sector and wanting to improve the industry to lessen its negative impact on the climate. "We did simulations and modeling and gave them nature- and tech-based solutions on how they can move toward success."

Galtieri and the rest of the team — Qinying Liang MPA '21, Laura Pulecio Duarte MPA '21, Diego Recinos MPA '21, Bastian Stroemsheim MIA '21, and Hiroyuki Yamagata MIA '21 — presented their findings to the executive team at Equinor. They

have been asked to give the presentation multiple times for different leadership groups from the company, indicating not only the quality of the research but also the significance of the net-zero goal to Equinor.

"The Capstone team did a great job, and they won SIPA's Isaac Anderson Rauch Award for Excellence," says Jason Bordoff, professor of professional practice in the faculty of international and public affairs, founding director of SIPA's Center on Global Energy Policy (CGEP), and the team's adviser. "Equinor is one of the leaders in the gas industry, and it's exciting to have our students helping them think about how to meet their commitment to the environment."

FUNDING FOR BIG IDEAS

Another School-wide initiative that often results in world-changing climate ideas is the SIPA Dean's Public Policy Challenge Grant, which seeks proposals from students for innovative projects that use digital technology and data to improve the global urban environment. The program runs annually, with \$25,000 awarded to the winning team.


In 2016 the winning team of the Dean's Public Policy Challenge was Easy Solar, a social impact venture to reduce energy poverty in urban and peri-urban areas of West Africa, particularly Sierra Leone. Cofounded by Nthabiseng Mosia MPA '16, Eric Silverman MPA '16, and Alexandre Tourre MPA '16, Easy Solar was also recognized by the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship and the World Economic Forum as leaders in social innovation.

Five years later Easy Solar is still working in Sierra Leone to make renewable energy accessible and affordable for all, offering a range of products such as solar lanterns, home lighting systems, appliances, and cookstoves with affordable financing plans.

The 2019 Dean's Public Policy Challenge winning project was Data Analytics for Sustainable Herding (DASH), which was created by Jessica Arnold MIA '19, Alonso Flores MPA '19, Nigora Isamiddinova MPA-DP '19, Nitasha Nair MPA '19, and Ji Qi MPA-DP '19. Using data from satellites, mobile telecommunications, and GPS-enabled systems in the African Sahel region, DASH seeks to understand the interplay of climate change, human mobility, and violent conflict between pastoralists and farmers over increasingly scarce natural resources.

The student team, whose members were all Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Fellows, also won the 2018 Geneva Challenge, a competition among graduate students that focused on social and economic development in the context of challenges posed by climate change.

"DASH is an unforgettable journey, and I brag about it with my colleagues at work," Qi says. "What we learned at SIPA definitely greatly informed the project. The SDG Fellows program and participation in the Geneva Challenge and Dean's Challenge are all enriching experiences and have become valuable assets for our professional and personal lives."



"I was excited about a program that blended science and policy; the MPA-ESP is very unique at that intersection."

Leah C. Stokes MPA-ESP '09

'ECONOMICS MEETS NATURAL SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING'

John Mutter, professor of earth and environmental sciences and of international and public affairs, is director of SIPA's PhD in Sustainable Development, another academic program the School offers for up-and-coming environmental and climate change specialists in a range of industries. "Through the PhD program," Mutter says, "we make sure that students get a grounding in both physical science and social science because we believe that the world's big problems—like climate change—lie at the nexus of those two areas."

Douglas Almond, professor of international and public affairs and of economics, was one of the original faculty hires for the PhD program when it began in 2004. Almond previously served as a staff economist at the Council of Economic Advisers during the Clinton administration and studied the health effects of air pollution in China as a Fulbright Scholar.

"I can't say enough positive things about the PhD program and its very specific lens of economics meets natural sciences and engineering," Almond says. "That combination is targeted to these big, existential questions that society just isn't doing enough about. To have these students be so strong in science and math and still maintain their creativity and innovation is really exciting to see."

Graduates of the PhD in Sustainable Development program are a diverse and motivated bunch, from teaching in public policy and economics at the University of Chicago and University of California, Berkeley, to working at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Both during and after their program, graduates like Sandra Aguilar-Gómez PhD '21 are also conducting in-depth research on climate change around the world. Her work seeks to better understand the economic impact from policies surrounding poor air-quality warnings in the densely populated and heavily polluted metropolis of Mexico City.

"There is established evidence of how one day of very bad pollution can have massive health impacts," she says. "So one day of pollution changes the rate of hospitalization, changes the rate of overall mortality, and specific mortality on cardio and respiratory diseases."

Aguilar-Gómez's research demonstrates that perhaps rather than short-run policies meant to protect citizens on very poor air-quality days, the Mexican government would see greater impact from regulating high-pollution industries like refineries and thermoelectric plants.

"Right now I'm centered around Mexico City, but I would like to use satellite data to measure pollution to extend these analyses to other regions," she says. "Environmental justice is a topic that is gaining traction in the US, but in my view, it is still neglected in other parts of the continent that also present large historical inequalities in exposure to pollution and other forms of environmental degradation."

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH FOR THE GOOD OF THE PLANET

Like Almond, Wolfram Schlenker, professor of international and public affairs and vice dean for academic affairs at SIPA as of July 1, joined SIPA when the PhD program started. The two now codirect SIPA's Center for Environmental Economics and Policy (CEEP), which was founded in 2019 and is actively connected to the PhD program as a way to disseminate research by faculty and students affiliated with the center. CEEP focuses on the causes and consequences of environmental change and how policy can be used to ensure sustainable development around the globe.

"SIPA is a key player in the environmental space because we are doing first-rate research but also discuss implications for policy," Schlenker says. "At CEEP we're engaged in everything from the health effects of pesticide use in agriculture to the impacts of climate on ecosystems as well as various sectors of the economy."

Schlenker's recent research examined the link between climate and migration. Coauthored with Anouch Missirian PhD '20 and published in the journal *Science*, the study links random year-to-year weather shocks over agricultural growing areas in the countries of origin to asylum applications to the European Union. "Though poorer countries in hotter regions are most vulnerable to climate change," Schlenker says, "our findings highlight the extent to which countries are interlinked."


In another study that is forthcoming in the *Journal of Financial Economics*, PhD candidate Charles Taylor and Schlenker show how financial markets account for warming temperatures. The Chicago Mercantile Exchange offers future contracts whose payouts are dependent on future weather outcomes—for example, the amount of heat in July in New York City. The authors show how the prices of such contracts have been trending upward over the last two decades: Schlenker notes that "market participants already price in climate model projections, which have been predicting warming trends that are very close to what we have been observing over US cities."

In an effort to lower emissions in China, Almond works with PhD students on research to compare on-the-ground reporting of pollution levels with satellite imagery of pollution levels and then marry those analyses to real-world regulations to show linkages between policy and reality.

Mutter, a CEEP faculty member, investigates the role of natural disasters in constraining development opportunities for poor and emerging societies. "When you think of the number of people who perished because of Hurricane Sandy, it is quite small compared to the density of the area, simply because evacuation was done effectively," he says. "That can be harder to do in a place like Bangladesh, with no big highways to escape on. We have to think a little differently in less developed areas to make sure more people are saved, and part of that is needing to know which places are likely to be impacted by extreme weather."

As part of his work, Mutter has also delved into how climate change affects the prevalence and power of natural disasters. For example, current modeling suggests that as water temperatures continue to rise, hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean may not form as frequently, but they will track farther north and become more intense—and dangerous to coastal populations.

CEEP highlighted some of its alumni and student work representing the center's four focus areas—climate change, ecosystem services, health, and policy design—at its inaugural conference in 2019. After a pause because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Schlenker and Almond are now planning their second conference for spring 2022.



“Students are stimulated to think about why we haven’t been as successful as we could have been over the last 30 years.”

Scott Barrett

POLICY STUDENTS TAILORING THEIR DEGREE TO BENEFIT THE CLIMATE

The popular Energy and Environment (EE) concentration, which provides MIA and MPA students with advanced knowledge on global energy and environmental issues and how governments, businesses, and civil society can lead effective action, is codirected by Almond and David Sandalow, senior research scholar and the inaugural research fellow at CGEP. The EE concentration gives students a combination of analytical skills, fundamental science courses, and real-world policy experience, taking advantage of the many SIPA faculty with impressive and diverse firsthand knowledge.

Scott Barrett, former vice dean at SIPA and the Lenfest-Earth Institute Professor of Natural Resource Economics, is one such faculty member, having worked on climate change for more than 30 years as a researcher, adviser, and educator. He is a leading scholar on transnational and global challenges as varied as climate change and disease eradication. His research focuses on how institutions like customary law and treaties can be used to promote international cooperation.

His book *Environment and Statecraft* addressed a theory of treaty design, explaining the success of the 1987 Montreal Protocol in reducing ozone emissions. A second book, *Why Cooperate?*, showed how international cooperation, institutional

design, and the use of incentives can help to combat threats like climate change.

Barrett was a lead author of the second assessment report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1995, which was the first time the IPCC incorporated considerations of policy in its assessment. (Joseph E. Stiglitz, University Professor, was also a lead author of that assessment; Professors Geoffrey Heal and Benjamin Orlove have been lead authors on subsequent IPCC assessments or special reports.)

He also teaches a course on sustainable development for SIPA’s PhD students, as well as several courses for EE students, including Climate Change Policy. “It’s a mistake to look at climate change in isolation,” Barrett says. “This class gives students a holistic perspective on the entire problem, including aspects of science, engineering, economics, ethics, politics, policies, and treaties. By gaining a complete understanding of all the parts and how to connect them, students are stimulated to think about why we haven’t been as successful as we could have been over the last 30 years and how we can do better.”

The EE concentration was a chief reason student Eduarda Zoghbi MPA ’22 chose SIPA. “One of the things I love is that you can get policy-driven classes as your core and couple that with the EE concentration and work with a group of students who are really dedicated to this area,” she says. “People have the opportunity to conduct practicum

research to gain experience on the ground. I have friends that developed an energy access project in Uganda and others that focused on electric vehicles in California.”

Zoghbi hopes to use her degree to make a major impact in the government of her home country of Brazil by one day becoming its minister of energy. For now, she’s leading the expansion of CGEP’s Women in Energy program—another major reason she chose SIPA—into Brazil in collaboration with Columbia Global Centers | Rio de Janeiro.

COLUMBIA CLIMATE SCHOOL WILL WORK IN TANDEM WITH SIPA

In July 2020 the Columbia Climate School became the first new school at the University in 25 years. Created to meet the global and multifaceted challenges of climate change, the Climate School is building its capacity from Columbia’s many world-class research centers and interdisciplinary faculty, including climate change and environmental policy expertise from SIPA.

Assuming the role of cofounding dean at the Climate School is Bordoff, who joined SIPA in 2013 as CGEP’s founding director. In announcing the school’s leadership this past April, President Lee Bollinger indicated that it would also be co-led by Alex Halliday, director of the Earth Institute; Ruth DeFries, University Professor and Denning Family Professor of Sustainable Development in the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology; and Maureen Raymo, director of the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and the G. Unger Vetlesen Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences. Among the Climate School faculty is James Hansen, adjunct professor at the Earth Institute, whose 1988 testimony had kick-started the climate change discussion.

“The Climate School is pursuing a hub-and-spoke approach to bring together the extraordinary capabilities of Columbia, with SIPA playing a core part,” Bordoff says. “For decades, Columbia has been a leader in climate science with a big focus on finding solutions through foreign and economic policy. As a leading school in international and public affairs, SIPA has many of the experts needed to understand and innovate in everything from economic develop-

ment in emerging markets, to geopolitical issues as we move away from fossil fuels, to national security in foreign policy.”

As Bordoff helps to lead the Climate School, he will continue to teach at SIPA and run CGEP. Before coming to Columbia, it was his experience in energy policymaking while working with the Clinton and Obama administrations that led him to conceive of the need for a place like CGEP. During that time, he had wished there was an objective, rigorous, analytical resource for leaders in the public and private sectors to help them understand all aspects of the environment in a format and time frame that worked for them.

“Policymakers deal with complex issues and have quick expectations, and often they don’t have the time to gain all the knowledge they need about a subject matter,” Bordoff says. “Academia is extraordinarily powerful in the new knowledge it creates and the depth of its expertise, but they can take a lot of time to process it; think tanks are fast and efficient, but they don’t have the depth of research capability that Columbia does. My goal with CGEP was to connect that capacity for knowledge creation with efficient turnaround times and get it to the people who are making those big decisions about our energy policy.”

RESEARCH AT CGEP

CGEP focuses its research on climate change problems in which Columbia has a unique capability and expertise to make an impact, such as regulatory and policy-design issues around carbon capture and removal technology.

Sandalow had an extensive career in the US government before joining SIPA in 2013, serving in senior positions at the White House, State Department, and Department of Energy. CGEP provides him with an excellent base to research a range of climate change topics, particularly for his work with China.

He visited China for the first time in 1981—under an exchange program through Columbia Law School, coincidentally—and has spent years working on Chinese energy and climate policy. At SIPA his work spans issues including ways to decarbonize China’s energy sector to how to make the Belt and Road initiative greener, and his research involves many of SIPA’s Chinese students. He has an appointment as a distinguished

visiting professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing and is the author of the *Guide to Chinese Climate Policy*, an authoritative resource for researchers and practitioners.

His latest research is on the effect of the entire food system—from land clearing to farming to transportation to disposal—on climate change. Together with partners from Columbia’s Earth Institute, NYU, and others, he and his team have formed the Food Climate Partnership, a collaborative research effort to develop better data and policies that can effectively combat the climate crisis.

STAYING AHEAD OF THE CURVE

With Bordoff’s leadership, SIPA’s collaboration with the new Climate School will seek to foster solutions to the climate crisis while also enhancing the School’s

substantial expertise and degree programs in areas such as sustainability, energy, and the environment.

“SIPA is unique in that we’re willing to learn by teaching,” Mutter says. “We see an interesting problem in the world and say, ‘Let’s teach a course on that,’ instead of waiting for it to be solved first. There’s a desire to be on top of things here, and SIPA brings in the expertise to understand if there’s a physical phenomenon to be understood as part of a social phenomenon.”

Looking ahead to SIPA’s future collaborations with the Climate School, Bordoff says, “I think that SIPA is an interesting place because it has depth across so many disciplines. It’s important to create action in climate change by bringing in knowledge from other fields, and a purely climate-focused school can’t accomplish that.” [🔗](#)

MORE FACULTY RESEARCH ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Geoffrey Heal, a professor at SIPA and the Donald C. Waite III Professor of Social Enterprise at Columbia Business School, has made substantial contributions in the field of environmental economics. He has contributed significantly to the understanding of the economic value of ecosystems and the complex, uncertain risks posed by the changing climate.

Benjamin Orlove, professor of international and public affairs, focuses on climate change adaptation, environmental anthropology, human response to glacier retreat in mountain regions, water management and governance, natural hazards and disaster risk reduction, and urban sustainability.

Jeffrey Shrader, assistant professor of international and public affairs, examines the role of expectations and forecasts in helping individuals prepare for changing environmental and economic conditions, which helps policymakers understand the benefits and limitations of information-based policy interventions and sheds light on the total economic costs of environmental changes.

In Crises, a Source of Strength

During financial crises, SIPA's community of policy experts help keep the economy afloat—and mentor the next generation of leaders.

BY STEPHEN KURCZY



When the pandemic-induced global economic crisis hit in 2020, Lacey Robbins MPA '15 found herself on the frontline response—not in a blue hospital gown, but in helping oversee the world's supply of greenbacks.

In downtown Manhattan at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Robbins was working in Global Currency Services, which focused on shipping US banknotes all over the world. Foreign governments and banks were rushing to get hold of dollars—similar to how households were stockpiling toilet paper—and Robbins was on the lookout for trouble spots.

She was familiar with previous market crises from studying at SIPA with Professor Guillermo Calvo, a former chief economist of the Inter-American Development Bank dubbed the “prophet of financial doom” for predicting Mexico’s 1994 peso crisis. Such courses had also given Robbins an understanding of what central bank levers might be pulled to alleviate the economic pain from COVID-19 as the world went into lockdown, plane flights were grounded, and global logistics for the hard currency that the Fed paid out to customers were disrupted.

“There are so many aspects that play off of each other,” says Robbins, who had wanted to work for America’s central bank ever since she read *Maestro: Greenspan’s Fed and the American Boom* as a high schooler. Without what she learned at SIPA, she adds, “I would be lost in these discussions.”

‘The day after the crisis, who walks in?’

At the beginning of this century, economic crises were considered a thing of the past in advanced economies. It was thought that the United States and other developed nations had implemented policy frameworks that protected them from financial meltdowns.

“Not only have individual financial institutions become less vulnerable to shocks from underlying risk factors, but also the financial system as a whole has become more resilient,” said Alan Greenspan, who served as chair of the Federal Reserve Board for two decades, in 2004.

That presumption has been overturned. Between 2007 and 2020, global economic crises twice ground markets to a halt, causing tens of millions of job losses and trillions of dollars in damage. Global gross domestic product declined by \$9 trillion in the fallout from COVID-19—the equivalent of having the combined economies of Japan and Germany erased.

The financial turmoil has required an all-hands-on-deck response from governments and policymakers, with central banks and finance officials exercising extraordinary powers. In response to the 2007–09 crisis, the Federal Reserve lent \$1.2 trillion and purchased over

\$3 trillion in US Treasury and agency securities, actions widely called unprecedented. During the pandemic the Fed, like other central banks around the world, massively expanded its balance sheet again, underscoring how central banks have become more influential, prominent, and active, with SIPA faculty taking on key roles. For one, Richard H. Clarida, the C. Lowell Harriss Professor of Economics and professor of international and public affairs, is the No. 2 official at the Federal Reserve.

These crises have in turn made the profession of central banking all the more important. To meet that new reality, SIPA has bolstered its curriculum, adding courses and hosting high-level events with academics, policy-makers, financial professionals, and practitioners serving on the economic front lines. In 2015 Dean Merit E. Janow spearheaded an initiative on central banking and financial policy, tapping Patricia C. Mosser as its director. The initiative brings together thought leaders from around the world in a unique collaborative effort to shed new light on how central banks and policy institutions can improve the functioning and stability of the global financial system.

“The day after the crisis, who walks in?” asks Mosser, who also directs SIPA’s MPA in Economic Policy Management program. “Which institution decides to lend huge amounts to the financial system, not only in the US but also to the rest of the world? When the financial crisis hits and the economy goes crazy, the central banker’s tools, such as lender of last resort and asset purchases, are already sitting there.”

‘A major innovative part of the curriculum’

When Mosser joined SIPA in 2015, she helped create eight new courses on financial policy and regulation, including her own, Unconventional Monetary Policy, which analyzes how central banks respond to economic crises. Whereas traditional monetary policy mainly uses interest rates to target inflation, unconventional policy in times of crisis includes quantitative easing, purchasing private assets, and negative interest rates—all tactics employed by various governments in response to COVID-19.

Mosser also launched the annual SIPA Bank Regulation Research Conference and a monetary policy workshop cosponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, though the latter was canceled in 2020 because of the pandemic. In its place Mosser, together with Professor Takatoshi Ito, organized the webinar series Central Banking in the COVID-19 Era, which included a discussion between former Fed chair Janet Yellen (now secretary of the US Treasury and a SIPA Global Leadership Award recipient in 2018) and Haruhiko Kuroda, governor of the Bank of Japan. Other webinar speakers included the current or former governors or deputy governors of the

central banks of Brazil, Cyprus, India, Malaysia, Thailand, the UK, and the US, as well as senior financial regulators, speaking in real time about the world's response to COVID-19.

"The fact is that we've had two completely different global financial crises [this century] with extraordinary central bank policy actions, so better understanding of those actions is absolutely critical to understanding how monetary policy on the whole works and how to design better policies," says Mosser. "Those kinds of analyses will be a major innovative part of the curriculum."

Many SIPA faculty bring their real-world experience into these discussions. Ito, a former deputy minister of finance for Japan who also served on the prime minister's Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy in the 2000s, was an informal spokesman for Abenomics, the policy of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to combat stagflation and make the economy more competitive. José Antonio Ocampo was finance minister of Colombia in the 1990s, then led the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and recently served on the board of directors of Colombia's Banco de la República, the country's central bank.

Then there's Willem Buiter, a special economic adviser to Citigroup who was previously on the monetary policy committee of the Bank of England. Richard Robb, director of the International Finance and Economic Policy concentration, is CEO of the investment management firm Christofferson, Robb & Company. And one of America's most prominent voices on progressive economics is Joseph E. Stiglitz, University Professor, a Nobel laureate, former chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, and former chief economist at the World Bank. The author of more than 600 papers and books, Stiglitz has been a strong critic of America's rising income inequality, on stark display in the pandemic's disproportionate impact on poor communities. He has also been a key backer of the Green New Deal, a sweeping plan for the US to reduce fossil fuel consumption and invest in clean energy.

Mosser's own background informed how she helped build out SIPA's curriculum. In 2007 she was a senior manager at the New York Fed overseeing market analysis and monetary policy implementation when financial markets and commercial banks came under pressure from the subprime mortgage collapse. Mosser was responsible for setting up and operating swap lines with more than a dozen central banks around the world—something never done before—allowing other central banks to pump hundreds of billions of dollars into the global economy. The move highlighted how, as she would later write, the Fed "is ultimately the only entity with the ability

and the mandate to provide essentially unlimited emergency [US dollar] liquidity when the financial system is under extreme pressure."^{*}

To bring such real-world experience into the classroom, visiting professor Jacob J. Lew, for one, tries to put students in the shoes of policymakers. Lew, who served as secretary of the US Treasury as well as White House chief of staff and director of the Office of Management and Budget, introduces case studies (such as the Puerto Rican financial crisis) on which students must quickly get up to speed. They then present a policy brief, which requires deep analysis, effective communication, and action in the face of incomplete information.

"In a perfect world, we would know everything and have a complete analysis," Lew says. "In the real world, you have to make decisions when you have to make decisions. You have to do the very best with what you have."

And doesn't that encapsulate the challenge in responding to a crisis like COVID-19?

'My quota of patriotism'

Faculty have also played crucial roles in the response to the latest economic crisis. Richard H. Clarida, who has taught at SIPA for more than three decades, is on leave while serving as vice chair of the Federal Reserve Board, responding to what he has described as "the most severe blow to the US economy since the Great Depression."[†] A respected scholar with market experience as a global strategic adviser for the investment giant Pimco, Clarida is part of the troika that leads US monetary policy, alongside the Fed chair and the New York Fed president.

Also active is adjunct professor Augusto de la Torre, who was governor of Ecuador's central bank in the 1990s and later the World Bank's chief economist for Latin America and the Caribbean. He advised the Ecuadorian government on restructuring its debt in 2020, when the oil-exporting country was slammed by both COVID-19 and plummeting energy prices. One of de la Torre's students, Bernardo Orellana Heredia MPA-EPM '18, was recently named vice minister for the Ecuadorian Ministry of Economy and Finance—underscoring how alumni are also playing important roles in the world's economic recovery from COVID-19. He is trying to bring higher standards of transparency and accountability to the department.

"It's inspiring to think that we can really change how history goes for this country," says Orellana, who took a pay cut in leaving the private sector to work for the government. "I see it as my quota of patriotism."

One of Orellana's favorite courses at SIPA was taught by adjunct professor Gray Newman, a former chief Latin America economist at Morgan Stanley who closely followed the region's fiscal turmoil in the 1990s. In the classroom Newman walked Orellana through those crises, instilling lessons that guide him today.



Orellana remains in touch with SIPA faculty and alumni, sometimes unexpectedly encountering them across the table. “In a couple of cases, I have met with people in the IMF and World Bank, and some people have come from SIPA,” Orellana says. “It’s a good starting point when you know the other person in a professional relationship.” With nearly 300 SIPA alumni in more than 50 countries working in central banking, including many at the Federal Reserve, these types of professional interactions are not uncommon.

The network is strengthened by SIPA’s Center on Global Economic Governance (CGEG), founded by Jan Svejnar, the James T. Shotwell Professor of Global Political Economy, who organizes an annual roundtable of central bank governors. CGEG also hosts an annual summit with the World Bank to discuss the draft of the *World Development Report* before it is published.

Svejnar himself was part of the COVID-19 response in his native Czech Republic, advising the government on economic policy, urging the central bank to lower interest rates, and pushing for tax forbearances. One of Svejnar’s concerns has been how to prevent the pandemic from widening the wealth gap, an ongoing focus of his research.

“What we saw during the pandemic is that the distribution of wealth became even more uneven,” says Svejnar, coauthor of a widely cited 2015 study that found ultra-wealthy individuals aren’t good for a country’s economic growth.[‡] “There were a lot of people who lost, and the ones who gained were at the upper distribution of income and wealth.”

Whereas past economic crises from Puerto Rico to Ukraine were assumed to include widespread financial pain, the response to COVID-19 has shifted the emphasis to alleviating the pain for those hit hardest on the margins, notes former Treasury secretary Lew.

“How do you ensure that you take considerations of economic equity into account as you’re making policies?” he asks. Lew hopes this question of equity will play a growing role in policymaking.

‘A source of strength’

How do you teach crisis response to an international student body when every economic crisis, almost by definition, is different and every government responds differently?

“If every crisis is different and they only happen every so many years, you can’t just pull out a playbook,” Mosser says. “You have to look carefully at the details to understand why and how central banks made the decisions they made. Why was it right or wrong? Why was it good or bad public policy? What could have been better? How do you do the best public policy you can do given the tools that you have?”

NOTES

* William B. English and Patricia C. Mosser, “The Use and Effectiveness of Conventional Liquidity Tools Early in the Financial Crisis,” in *First Responders: Inside the U.S. Strategy for Fighting the 2007–2009 Global Financial Crisis*, ed. Ben S. Bernanke, Timothy F. Geithner, and Henry M. Paulson, Jr., with J. Nellie Liang (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020), 49.

† Richard H. Clarida, Burcu Duygan-Bump, and Chiara Scotti, “The COVID-19 Crisis and the Federal Reserve’s Policy Response” (working paper, Finance and Economics Discussion Series 2021-035, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Washington, DC, 2021).

‡ Sutirtha Bagchia and Jan Svejnar, “Does Wealth Inequality Matter for Growth? The Effect of Billionaire Wealth, Income Distribution, and Poverty,” *Journal of Comparative Economics* 43, no. 3 (August 2015): 505–530.

§ Stefan Walter and Florian Narring, “How Can Supervisors and Banks Promote a Culture of Strong Governance and Ethical Behaviour?,” *Journal of Risk Management in Financial Institutions* 13, no. 2 (Spring 2020): 145–154.


That ability to synthesize information, think creatively, and work with people from different backgrounds—hallmark traits of SIPA graduates—is vital for central bankers, says Stefan Walter MIA ’91, director general of the European Central Bank, where he oversees risk monitoring of the 120 largest banks in Europe. Previously, Walter was secretary-general of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision that passed the Basel III reforms, credited with helping prevent the COVID-19 recession from escalating into a yearslong economic depression. Skills he absorbed at SIPA pertaining to power negotiation and political dynamics helped him navigate the complex Basel process, Walter says.

“In hindsight, we were so lucky that we had the financial crisis of ’08–’09,” he says. “Had we gone into COVID with the banking and financial system of ’08–’09, we could have ended up in a Great Depression. It’s unimaginable.”

“Banks were a source of strength in this crisis,” Walter adds, though he notes that there’s room for improvement in governance, risk management, and banking culture.[§]

Mosser points out that many central banks, including the Federal Reserve, referred to the playbook from the 2007–09 financial crisis to recreate lending programs to address the speed and severity of the economic fallout from COVID-19. “The fact that we had a shock like COVID and the global financial system is still running,” she says, “shows that the post-2007–09 reforms worked.”

Not that it’s necessarily clear skies ahead. In Svejnar’s words, it’s “a nonzero probability” that we’re in for more economic turbulence.

“Nobody is able to easily foresee these kinds of issues and problems arising,” Svejnar says. “To the extent that we can have policies that would be effective in a particular situation, we should train students and prepare ourselves for that.” 



THE
RAPHAEL
SMITH
MEMORIAL
PRIZE
2021

BACK TO *BARBARI*— AND BACKGAMMON

BY SARAH A. SAKHA MIA '21

Last week, I got to go back to Iran.

I hastily hopped onto the 1 from West Harlem, rode 17 stops south, and ran up the stairs; my feet barely touched the ground as I ran down 14th Street—just as I'd fly down *Khiaban-e Darya-e Noor* (literally “Ocean of Light” in Farsi) in Tehran—to the local cafe where fresh *barbari* bread, a traditional Iranian bread, awaited me. The kind lady behind the counter had stowed away two for me; I think she had sensed the urgency in my voice when I'd called as soon as I'd seen an Iranian woman who bakes the bread locally post about it on her Instagram. I had one hour before my Capstone meeting to make it there and back. But unlike the local *nanvaae* (bread bakery) in Tehran, there was no wall of impatient Iranians who I would have to elbow to get to the counter. I strode to the counter, my gaze fixed on the *barbari* up front. Instead of paying with rials, I tapped my credit card and clutched the two pieces to my chest the entire journey home.

I practiced admirable self-restraint and did not touch the bread until I got home; pre-pandemic, of course, during summers back in Tehran, I was far less patient. I would tear off chunks of fresh, warm *barbari* right after buying it, almost burning my fingers each time but not caring whatsoever as I gleefully stuffed it into my mouth.

Once back in West Harlem—which my parents had likened to Rasht, Iran, with elderly folks vivaciously gossiping in Spanish on folding lawn chairs in the middle of the sidewalk—I undo the twist tie of one of the pieces of *barbari* bread. The smell of fresh *barbari* hits me, and my body succumbs to sobs. I brace myself by clutching on to the granite island of my kitchen with both hands; the memories of my grandparents, and mornings in their apartment in Tehran, all felt too real. I miss my *bababozorg* (grandfather) and sharing simultaneously solemn and spirited breakfasts with him, or hurling Turkish swear words at each other, or coaxing him into a round (five rounds) of backgammon.

“*Do o chehar, gol ast o behar*. (Two and four, it's flowers and spring.)”

“*Shesh o besh*. (Six and five, in Turkish though, not Farsi.)”



Top, *Barbari* with *labneh* and *morabay-e albaloo*; bottom right, Sarah with *barbari*, fresh from the bakery; bottom left, *Shahnameh* manuscripts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photos courtesy of Sarah A. Sakha MIA '21

ABOUT THE RAPHAEL SMITH MEMORIAL PRIZE

The Raphael Smith Memorial Prize is given in memory of Raphael Smith, a member of the Class of 1994 who died in a motorcycle accident while retracing his stepfather's adventure of motorcycling from Paris to Tokyo. The prize, established by his family and friends, is awarded annually to two second-year SIPA students for travel articles that exemplify the adventurism and spirit of SIPA. During this extraordinary year, the scope of the essays was expanded to examine the notion of travel during a global pandemic. The winners of this year's contest are Ricardo García Coyne MPA-DP '21 and Sarah A. Sakha MIA '21.

So would go the familiar cadence of backgammon with my grandfather; I still whisper the phrases under my breath when I play today, feeling him standing beside me, scrutinizing my every move. I think I'd make him proud.

The game will never lose its wonder for me, and each time I close the board, I look forward to the day I'll reopen it, along with my memories of *Bababozorg* and summers in Tehran. My grandpa passed the Friday night after orientation at SIPA; summers in beautiful Tehran passed after the summer of 2015. I have not been able to go back since.

Still, my eyes grow big with wonder and nostalgia every time I spot a backgammon set, though even the flamboyant set a friend purchased from the Museum of Modern Art pales in comparison to the two my grandparents owned in their apartment in Tehran. I'd carefully take out the backgammon set from its handwoven canvas case. It was approximately two feet by one and a half feet, with glossy, checkered caramel and mahogany wood on the outside, peppered with specks of ivory and black on the inside. I loved the feel of the smooth brown and beige wooden circular pieces, with soft velvet underneath, and the smoothest, tiniest ivory set of dice.

Soon, my mother will pass down that set, which is at home in Arizona. I called her to tell her about my *barbari* find. I meticulously cut off a piece to eat it with *labneh*—the closest substitute for *khamseh*

(cream)—and my mother's homemade *morabay-e albaloo* (sour cherry jam), a recipe passed down from my *mamanbozorg*. I gaze out at West Harlem and New Jersey right beyond the Hudson River, the sun coating the rooftops and river with gold. My mother jocularly reprimands me in Farsi about my audacity to eat *barbari* without her. She asks me if I'm listening to her; I reassure her. *Baleh*.

I sit back down at my computer to finish my writing assignment for Farsi class; our class at Columbia comprises mainly native speakers, and we spend the first hour of class in conversation, more often than not debating politics. It feels familiar—like home.

The second hour we focus on Iranian poetry—Rumi, Hafez, Saadi—which is the side of Iran now less often talked about. Visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Art in January 2021, I made a beeline for the Islamic Art collection and sat earnestly down on the wooden bench in front of the *Shahnameh* manuscripts. For the first time, I can read the lyrical poetry on the beautiful page.

I fight back tears. I sit on the bench, hunched over, until the guard ushers me out of the exhibit.

I pretended, once again, that I am back in Iran. I think *Bababozorg* would be proud. [👑](#)



THE RAPHAEL SMITH MEMORIAL PRIZE 2021

Photo of Hamilton Heights
by Ricardo García Coyne MPA-DP '21

AND YET WE TRAVEL

BY RICARDO GARCÍA COYNE MPA-DP '21

Colorful clothes hang out of the windows to dry. A short, kindly looking woman in a white-and-pink dress is chatting with her neighbor at the doorstep. The narrow alleyway of the lilong* is almost entirely blocked by parked cars, but my Shanghainese guide manages to zigzag his way around the obstacles. I can see the low-rise, century-old buildings that have survived the city's urban redevelopment. The crowded, labyrinthine streets that neighbors refuse to abandon. My guide walks in silence, focused on capturing the uneventful naturalness of a Tuesday afternoon. My espresso maker starts to hiss. I get up from the computer and refill my mug. A cool breeze and Latin rhythms flood my Washington Heights studio apartment through the open window.

"We old folk belong on the ground floor," explains a longtime lilong resident in a brown leather jacket. "We have good relations with our neighbors and offer a helping hand to each other if anything happens. People are not related in the high-rises. It is not convenient for us old people." I sip another cup of coffee while I listen to this interview from seven years ago. Dozens of tabs populate my upper screen: photos, videos, interviews with residents, essays from local writers, notes from a call with a Shanghainese colleague—an effort to look underneath the statistics, beyond the traditional voices most readily available for people researching from far away.

February 2021 (New York City). Travel is restricted. Having defined the next steps of our research on Timor-Leste's agricultural policies, I log off the NYC-Australia Zoom call. Time to focus on my other internship, drafting the interview protocol that we will use next week when we talk to an investment-approval officer in Tanzania. My research teams, like the SIPA community at large, are scattered around the world. We are an international community that exceeds any and all boundaries, and no pandemic can put a halt to our global disposition. We resist. We adapt. We feel together. We thrive together. We come back stronger. We are pushed to come up with different research and management tools, pushed to work around the issues that simply cannot be approximated remotely. Our drive to collaborate overcomes all barriers.

May 2018 (Mexico City). Travel is not restricted. After hours on the highway, I arrive in Pachuca, Mexico, and go straight to the Land Registry Office to meet with the general director. Our one-hour meeting is followed by interviews with several government officials. We then dive into their archives, analyzing building and land-use permits in a dusty and poorly lit basement. At 6 p.m. we go to the hotel to debrief, grab a bite at the hotel's restaurant, and head to our rooms to prepare the slide deck for the client. The next two days follow the same pattern. The trip is over, and we head back to Mexico City. I spent three days in Pachuca and yet have no idea what it is like to live in this city, the birthplace of football in Mexico. There was no adventure, no discovery—in essence, no real traveling.

Traveling, I came to realize, is more about the traveler's mindset and activities than it is about the place. It is a state of openness, a disposition to see and hear and feel outside of our daily routine.

January 2021 (New York City). Travel is restricted. I walk down the brownstone stairs and open the black metal gate that leads to the road, ready for some real traveling. My equipment: a flask of freshly brewed coffee, face mask and hand sanitizer, a fully charged phone with EpiCollect[†] and Shazam.[‡] It is a cold Thursday morning. Yesterday's snow lies on the pavement, now a mixture of ice and trash and slush and puddles. My mission: to portray the sounds and rhythms of Hamilton Heights.



“Traveling, I came to realize, is more about the traveler’s mindset and activities than it is about the place. It is a state of openness, a disposition to see and hear and feel outside of our daily routine.”

I head north. The 137th Street subway station is always bustling with people. “Bichota,” by Karol G, plays from the speaker of a guy selling shampoos and duvets and an old, battered lamp. A group of young people walk south, cracking jokes. Four men stand smoking outside of a deli, discussing someone's marital problems. “*A bailar, que la vida es pa’ gozarse, hermano* (Dance! Life is meant to be enjoyed, brother),” someone shouts and laughs.

Peláez Produce is the go-to place for affordable fruit and vegetables and reggaeton. Tomatoes, four for \$1; avocados, \$1 each; Lucas Perez, “La Curiosidad 2.” A couple of trucks and construction sites add some machinery to the soundscape, but not two blocks away a group of friends are relaxing outside Papasito Foodmarket, enjoying the rhythm of Raulín Rodríguez. I move on. I pass two carts selling *atole* and *tamales*, the spray paint murals of NYC birdlife, hair salons listing services in Spanish. A street vendor sells face masks featuring the Virgin of Guadalupe. A man lies asleep in front of a closed shop. A mother and her son hold hands while they walk. A Chinese-Mexican dollar store plays “El Baile del Perrito,” by Antony Santos. I see my own neighborhood with the eyes that are used to see places for the first time.

I head home after a two-hour walk around the neighborhood, loving this Latin microcosm in my adopted city. No flights or buses to leave the city, and yet we travel.

As Dr. Ian Malcom so eloquently put it: “If there’s one thing the history of evolution has taught us, it’s that life will not be contained. ... Life, uh, finds a way.” He may have said the same about traveling. After all, that’s what got him to Jurassic Park in the first place. [👑](#)

* A lilong is a uniquely Shanghainese type of residential development typically consisting of two- or three-story terrace houses centered around a lane or several interconnected lanes. It is derived from the combination of British planning traditions and construction methods with Chinese housing layouts.

† An app to gather geographic data.

‡ An app to identify music played around you.

1 CENTRAL BANKING IN THE COVID-19 ERA

The COVID-19 pandemic sparked extraordinary economic policy responses by central banks, financial regulators, and other financial policymakers around the world. Central Banking in the COVID-19 Era, a webinar series sponsored by the Central Banking and Financial Policy initiative, brought together current and former policymakers from central banks and regulators, as well as SIPA faculty and other scholars, to discuss the structure and impact of these changes.



2 2020 US ELECTION SERIES

In the days and weeks following Election Day 2020, SIPA hosted a number of panel discussions, roundtables, and other events that convened its own faculty, distinguished outside experts, students, and alumni to reflect on the recent US election and its impact on varied areas, including domestic and foreign policy, campaigning and organizing (*pictured*), managing presidential transitions, and race and inequality.



3 GREEN RECOVERY FROM COVID-19: PERSPECTIVES FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE

As part of Climate Week NYC's roster of awareness-raising events, Columbia's Center on Global Energy Policy hosted a candid and far-reaching discussion on a green recovery from COVID-19 with global leaders on September 22. The panel—which included **Mauricio Cárdenas**, **Mayor Eric Garcetti MIA '95** of Los Angeles, **Jason Bordoff**, and **Dean Merit E. Janow**—explored various governments' approaches to creating jobs and cutting emissions through elements such as clean energy transition funds, carbon taxes, and green infrastructure.

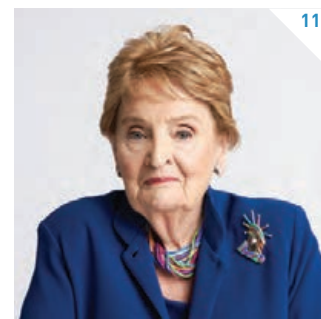
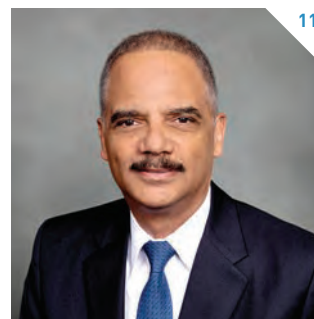
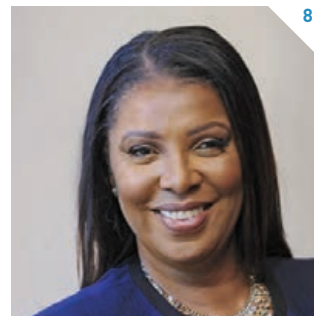


4 APSIA DEAN'S MEETING

In January **Dean Merit E. Janow** hosted the annual Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs' Deans Meeting with special guest **Jacob J. Lew**, SIPA visiting professor and former secretary of the Treasury. Created in 1989, APSIA brings together the leading graduate schools specializing in international affairs.

5 MAKING MONEY MORAL: HOW A NEW WAVE OF VISIONARIES IS LINKING PURPOSE AND PROFIT

On February 10 **Judith Rodin**, philanthropist and former president of the Rockefeller Foundation, joined SIPA to discuss how private capital can better link purpose and profit. She was joined in discussion by **Dean Merit E. Janow** and **Keiko Honda**, an adjunct professor and senior research scholar at SIPA who focuses on environmental, social, and corporate governance, known collectively as ESG.



6 A CONVERSATION WITH BILL GATES: HOW TO AVOID A CLIMATE DISASTER

Bill Gates, cofounder of Microsoft, spoke about his book *How to Avoid a Climate Disaster* at a February 23 event sponsored by the Center on Global Energy Policy.

7 THE FUTURE OF DIPLOMACY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Speaking on March 24, **Ambassador Christopher Hill** highlighted the greatest foreign policy challenges facing the United States and explored how diplomacy could be successful in navigating relationships with different nations in the semiannual lecture named in honor of George W. Ball.

8 A DISCUSSION ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM: THE WILLIAM S. BEINECKE LECTURE FEATURING LETITIA JAMES

Letitia James, attorney general of New York, reflected on the nationwide reckoning surrounding criminal justice reform in the inaugural William S. Beinecke lecture on March 29.

9 FIRESIDE CHAT WITH BRAD SMITH, PRESIDENT OF MICROSOFT

Brad Smith, president of Microsoft, spoke about his new book, *Tools and Weapons: The Promise and the Peril of the Digital Age*, as part of SIPA's annual Niejelow Rodin Global Digital Futures Policy Forum on March 31.

10 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

On April 10 **Dean Merit E. Janow** moderated a dynamic conversation with a distinguished panel of SIPA alumni—**Erin Banco MPA '15**, health care reporter for POLITICO; **Frederick Kempe IF '72, '72JRN**, president and CEO of the Atlantic Council; and **John Neuffer MIA '86**, president and CEO of the Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA)—on the domestic, international, and political impact of the new US administration and the public policy challenges and opportunities ahead.

11 VIRTUAL GRADUATION CEREMONY

On April 28 and 29 SIPA honored the 636 new graduates in its Class of 2021, who represent more than 70 countries around the world. The online festivities featured remarks from distinguished guests **Madeleine Albright** and **Eric Holder**.

12 TSINGHUA PBCSF ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE FORUM

On May 22 Tsinghua University PBC School of Finance and SIPA cohosted the Tsinghua PBCSF Annual Conference of Global Economic Governance Forum 2021. SIPA faculty **Dean Merit E. Janow**, **Patricia C. Mosser**, **Arvind Panagariya**, and **Jan Svejnar** participated, along with Columbia Business School's **Glenn Hubbard** and **Eli Noam** and the Columbia Data Science Institute's **Jeannette M. Wing**.



Global Leadership Awards Gala Honors Kristalina Georgieva, Vartan Gregorian as Remarkable Leaders

Annual celebration raises over \$650,000 to support financial aid for SIPA students from around the world.

“We can build a prosperous, post-pandemic world that is greener, smarter, and more inclusive. I pledge to do my part,” said Kristalina Georgieva, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, upon accepting this year’s SIPA Global Leadership Award.

Georgieva delivered these heartfelt remarks before an online audience of SIPA alumni, friends, and supporters at the School’s 20th Annual Global Leadership Awards Gala. The event, held virtually on May 11 and hosted by Dean Merit E. Janow, raised more than \$650,000, which will provide critical financial aid support for SIPA students from around the world.

Each year the celebration recognizes leaders who have made exceptional contributions to the public good. Honored this year were Georgieva and, in memoriam, the late Vartan Gregorian, who served as president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York for almost 24 years.

President Lee C. Bollinger of Columbia University kicked off the celebration by acknowledging the honorees and commending SIPA for its efforts to broaden our collective understanding of global problems and propose solutions. Janow served as master of ceremonies of the festivities, which featured recorded comments from both SIPA students and notable SIPA alumni, including Mayor Eric Garcetti MIA ’95 of Los Angeles and Jennifer Morris MIA ’97, CEO of the Nature Conservancy.

Georgieva was introduced by Robert Zoellick, former World Bank director and former deputy US secretary of state, who applauded her coalition-building skills and her longstanding commitment to helping the world’s most vulnerable. Georgieva later joined Janow for a conversation about the IMF’s efforts to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Georgieva, who became the IMF’s leader just months before the pandemic thrust the global economy into chaos, spoke about the unequal impact of the pandemic on different countries and how the disparity is affecting the global economy.

“We are coming out of the crisis with some countries doing much better than others,” she said. “As a world, we have to recognize how interdependent we are, that we are as strong as our weakest link, and make sure that we lift up everybody. Because if we don’t, we cannot bring the pandemic to a durable end. We will see mutations continuing to roll around the world, causing trouble even to the countries that are in the strongest position.”

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KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA

The celebration also featured a moving tribute to Gregorian, who died unexpectedly on April 15. Among the highlights were personal reflections shared by two trustees of the Carnegie Corporation—Caroline Kennedy, former US ambassador to Japan, and Jean-Marie Guéhenno, director of SIPA’s Kent Global Leadership Program



on Conflict Resolution and former UN under-secretary-general for peacekeeping operations.

Kennedy praised Gregorian for transforming American philanthropy into an agent for social change and intellectual excellence on a global scale and for “supporting those on the front lines of freedom, fairness, knowledge, and human dignity.”

Guéhenno also lauded Gregorian: “He had the same interest for human beings as he had for ideas. He had the gift of humanity, and that made him an incredibly generous man, intellectually and personally.”

Other highlights included uplifting performances by two world-renowned musicians, pianist Lang Lang and mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato. Both received an inaugural SIPA Global Inspiration Award for their outstanding accomplishments as cultural ambassadors.

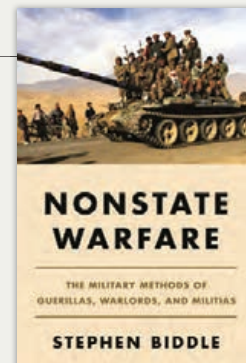
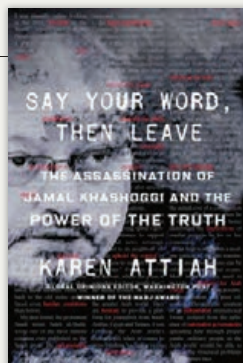
Senator Charles Schumer of New York delivered a special message to the SIPA community, calling upon members to join efforts to create a more prosperous, equitable economy and society.

“We can’t hope to do it without you: the students, faculty, and supporters,” he said. “You must have a seat at the table. With your education, your insight, and your experiences, we can one day build a nation truly worthy of its founding ideals.” [👑](#)



1. Dean Merit E. Janow
2. Kristalina Georgieva
3. Lang Lang
4. Joyce DiDonato
5. Mayor Eric Garcetti MIA '95

BOOKCASE



ALUMNI

BRIGETTE ALLEN MIA '07

(WITH CHRISTINE WONG)

Living without Plastic (Workman, 2020)

KAREN ATTIAH MIA '12

Say Your Word, Then Leave: The Assassination of Jamal Khashoggi and the Power of the Truth (HarperCollins, 2021)

LLONA (LEWYCKYJ) BANNISTER MIA '04

When I Ran Away (Doubleday, 2021)

NICHOLAS BARTLETT MIA '05

Recovering Histories: Life and Labor after Heroin in Reform-Era China (University of California Press, 2020)

LIONEL BEEHNER MIA '02

(EDITOR, WITH RISA BROOKS AND

DANIEL MAURER)

Reconsidering American Civil-Military Relations: The Military, Society, Politics, and Modern War (Oxford University Press, 2020)

DANIEL COMBS MIA '17

Until the World Shatters: Truth, Lies, and the Looting of Myanmar (Melville House, 2021)

JARED GREEN MIA '99, CERT '99

Good Energy: Renewable Power and the Design of Everyday Life (Princeton Architectural Press, 2021)

MEL GURTOV MIA '65

America in Retreat: Foreign Policy under Donald Trump (Rowman & Littlefield, 2020)

JAMIE HOLMES MIA '09

12 Seconds of Silence: How a Team of Inventors, Tinkerers, and Spies Took Down a Nazi Superweapon (HMH, 2021)

MARK JUERGENSMEYER IF '64

God at War: A Meditation on Religion and Warfare (Oxford University Press, 2020)

TIMOTHY LIM MIA '87

The Road to Multiculturalism in South Korea: Ideas, Discourse, and Institutional Change in a Homogeneous Nation-State (Routledge, 2021)

LEAH C. STOKES MPA-ESP '09

Short Circuiting Policy: Interest Groups and the Battle Over Clean Energy and Climate Policy in the American States (Oxford University Press, 2020)

ELIZABETH F. THOMPSON MIA '89, CERT '89

How the West Stole Democracy from the Arabs: The Syrian Congress of 1920 and the Destruction of Its Historic Liberal-Islamic Alliance (Grove Atlantic, 2021)

WESLEY B. TRUITT CERT '62

NATO Reconsidered: Is the Atlantic Alliance Still in America's Interest? (Praeger, 2020)

MICHELE WUCKER MIA '93

You Are What You Risk: The New Art and Science of Navigating an Uncertain World (Simon & Schuster, 2021)

MUNEVVER OLGUN YUKSEL MIA '97

In My Mosque (HarperCollins, 2021)

MOHAMED ZEESHAN MIA '18

Flying Blind: India's Quest for Global Leadership (Vintage, 2021)

FACULTY & SCHOLARS

SEVERINE AUTESSERRE MIA '00

The Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World (Oxford University Press, 2021)

STEPHEN BIDDLE

Nonstate Warfare: The Military Methods of Guerrillas, Warlords, and Militias (Princeton University Press, 2021)

VISHAKHA N. DESAI

World as Family: A Journey of Multi-Rooted Belongings (Columbia University Press, 2021)

TIMOTHY FRYE MIA '92

Weak Strongman: The Limits of Power in Putin's Russia (Princeton University Press, 2021)

ARVIND PANAGARIYA

My Father (HarperCollins India, 2021)

ANYA SCHIFFRIN (EDITOR)

Media Capture: How Money, Digital Platforms, and Governments Control the News (Columbia University Press, 2021)

RUMELA SEN

Farewell to Arms: How Rebels Retire Without Getting Killed (Oxford University Press, 2021)

JAN SVEJNAR

(EDITOR, WITH JUSTIN YIFU LIN)

China and the West (Edward Elgar, 2021)

INMEMORIAM

SIPA Remembers David N. Dinkins and Edward C. Luck



Longtime SIPA professor **David N. Dinkins**, who joined the faculty after making history as New York City's first Black mayor, died on November 23, 2020, at his home in Manhattan. He was 93.

Dinkins became a professor in the practice of public policy in spring 1994 at the invitation of then University president George Rupp and then SIPA dean John Ruggie. He had served as mayor from 1990 to 1993 but narrowly lost his reelection bid.

Aged 66 at the time, Dinkins would remain a faculty member for almost 27 years.

Beginning in 1995 the former mayor oversaw and hosted the annual David N. Dinkins Leadership & Public Policy Forum, which treated challenging issues such as education, criminal-justice reform and race, the environment, immigration, voting rights, and gun control. The forum welcomed as keynote speakers national figures like Vice President Al Gore, then senator Hillary Clinton, and Congressman John Lewis, the late civil rights icon.

For most of his tenure, Dinkins taught a pair of classes each year, Critical Issues in Urban Public Policy and Practical Problems in Urban Politics. He frequently welcomed municipal leaders and other guest lecturers to his classes—among them, Mayor Bill de Blasio MIA '87, who got his start in New York City government working for Dinkins and enjoyed visiting with the next generation of SIPA students.

It was in 2015, during de Blasio's first term, that the city named the Manhattan municipal building for Dinkins. Early the next year, the University celebrated the completion of the David N. Dinkins Archives and Oral History Project at Columbia University Libraries.

Around the same time SIPA created a professorship in Dinkins's honor. The inaugural David N. Dinkins Professor, former Philadelphia mayor Michael Nutter, recently completed his fifth year at SIPA.

Dinkins reduced his teaching load in 2017 and was slated to formally retire at the end of last year. In the interim he continued to oversee the annual Dinkins Forum. [👑](#)



Edward C. Luck MIA '72, the Arnold A. Saltzman Professor of International and Public Affairs and director of SIPA's degree specialization in International Conflict Resolution, died on February 16 after a battle with cancer.

Luck was among the world's foremost experts in the field of international conflict and the United Nations, particularly the UN Security Council. In recent years he became known for his work on Responsibility to Protect, a doctrine that aims to prevent and halt genocide and other mass atrocities.

"Professor Luck was a longtime colleague, mentor, and friend to so many in our community," said Dean Merit E. Janow of SIPA in a message to the SIPA community. "We will greatly miss his warmth, deep expertise, and intellect."

Luck first arrived at Columbia University some 50 years ago, earning an MIA degree at SIPA in 1972 and then a PhD in political science at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. He returned to SIPA as a faculty member in 2001, serving until 2010 as professor of professional practice in the faculty of international and public affairs and director of the UN Studies program. He rejoined the faculty in 2015 as the Saltzman Professor.

In 2008 Luck was appointed UN assistant secretary-general and special adviser to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. In that role, which he held until 2012, he was instrumental in conceptualizing and implementing the Responsibility to Protect, known as R2P.

Beyond his work at the UN, Luck served as senior vice president at the International Peace Institute and president and CEO of the United Nations Association of the USA. He was also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Century Association and served on the boards of several nonprofit organizations.

Most recently at SIPA, Luck led the Kent Global Leadership Program on Conflict Resolution, an initiative launched in 2020 that is designed to train a new generation of practitioners in conflict resolution and to advance scholarship in the understanding of contemporary conflict.

Luck was the author or editor of five books, including *UN Security Council: Practice and Promise*, and numerous articles. His professorial experience outside SIPA included posts at Sciences Po in Paris and Princeton University. [👑](#)

SIPA expresses its condolences to the families and friends of these alumni who have recently passed away.

Amal Al-Ashtal MPA '12	Sergio Rodriguez MPA '17
Jeremy "Jerry" Black MIA '98	Foday Sackor MIA '12
Humay Guliyeva MPA '09	Peter Sang MPA-EPM '10
Edward van Kleeck	Kristina "Kristi" Schober
Jaycox Jr. MIA '64	MIA '08

CLASS NOTES

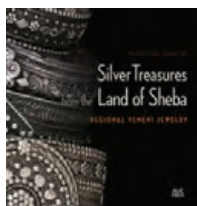
STAY IN TOUCH!

Have something to share with us and your fellow SIPA grads? We are always interested in hearing what SIPA alumni are up to. Please submit updates at bit.ly/SIPAClassNotes.

SIPA ALUMNI AWARDS

Nominations for the first ever SIPA Alumni Awards are open until October 15, 2021. The awards will be presented at SIPA's Alumni Day in spring 2022. For more details or to make a nomination, visit sipa.columbia.edu/alumni/awards.

1962



Margorie Ransom writes: "I studied at the Middle East Institute and received a master's in history and a certificate in Middle East studies in 1962. I

then joined the US Information Agency and served in Jordan and Mumbai. I rejoined in 1974, becoming part of the first Arabic-speaking tandem Foreign Service couple. We had joint assignments in Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, and Syria. I was minister counselor for public affairs in Egypt and deputy chief of mission in Syria and retired in 2000. I had collected traditional silver jewelry and, when David died suddenly in 2003, I moved to Yemen to research the craft. In 2014 the American University in Cairo Press published my book, *Silver Treasures from the Land of Sheba: Yemeni*

Regional Jewelry. My next book will be on the silversmiths and related subjects. Visit ransomsilverspeaks.com."

1964

John Garrard writes: "Harvard has been archiving my research since 2014, and in April 2020, the *Crimson* featured one of my collections in a photo essay, 'Treasure Hunting in Harvard Libraries.' Each of Harvard's 14 libraries got to pick one 'treasure' to depict. The librarian for the Davis Center for Russian Studies' Fung Collection picked the Soviet knockoff of the British-French Concorde. Each of the 14 engineering models I gave Harvard had been done in secret Soviet military laboratories in the 1970s. The planes demonstrate that the GRU had the plans of all Western advances in both military and civilian aviation; each is a triumph of Soviet spying and tells an undertreated story of the space race and the Cold War.

I was given the planes by a Soviet engineer who requested lifetime anonymity. I'm glad that now students can study them. Visit thecrimson.com/article/2020/4/30/collections-photo-essay/."

Robert Pons writes: "Following retirement from the Department of State in 2005, I served in the department's retirement program on assignment in Copenhagen; Dili, Timor-Leste; and Washington, DC, at State and the Passport Office. For several years I worked with Elderhostel Travel as a tour leader assigned to programs in Southeast Asia. I also travel whenever possible, although these days it is indefinitely on hold. Since retirement, I divide my time between Virginia and Southeast Asia."



Allen Young writes: "I was in the International Fellows Program during my time at Columbia Journalism School (1963-64), and I

write about my interesting experiences with the program in my recent autobiography, *Left, Gay & Green: A Writer's Life*. Several other fellows are mentioned. There are chapters about my years in South America (1964-67), my antiwar activities in the 1960s, and my shift from being an avid supporter of the Cuban Revolution to a harsh critic."

1965

Roger Choate is working with an environmental project in India to promote a cleanup of the Ganges River.

1967

Loren Stephens writes: "I am president of Write Wisdom and Bright Star Memoirs, Los Angeles-based ghostwriters, with seven talented journalists on my team. My debut novel, *All Sorrows Can Be Borne* (RareBird, 2021), is available on Amazon, as well as through the publisher."



Franklin Apfel

1969

Franklin Apfel writes: "Greetings. This is the first time in 50 years I am communicating with my Columbia International Fellows Program colleagues and the School. I attended Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons '71 and the IFP '69 during the time of Columbia student leadership in SDS and anti-war activities. I recall we confronted Walt Rostow and others on our trip to Washington, asking how he was able to sleep at night. Would love to reflect on those days with others. I have put my medical and international affairs education into action as head of communications at the WHO Regional Office for Europe and work with a variety of other intergovernmental agencies, like the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and as founder and managing director of World Health Communication Associates (WHCA). Read our newsletter at cccovid19.org/corona_virus, and send us links to include. Ensuring vaccines for all is really humanity's ultimate salvation here. This means moving beyond patents, sharing technologies, and supporting the self-sufficiency of all countries. Let's make our voices heard. Stay well and safe."

1973

John K. Bleimaier writes: "The international Lutheran journal *Christian News*

published my article, 'Heroes Are Not Subject to Cancellation' [59, no. 5 [Feb. 2021]: 8-9]. This is a dispassionate analysis of the problems associated with the current fashion to efface the legacy of historical figures whose personal lives may have fallen short of present-day perceptions of moral probity. My analysis concludes that 'we must inspire the young by holding up heroes who are not impossibly perfect, but rather who are fully human, while being admirable and worthy of emulation in important aspects.' This represents a thoughtful critique of the so-called cancellation culture."

1976

Jeffrey (Shinji) Kashida writes: "I am based in Torrance, CA. I have my own company that manufactures and distributes collectible toys and products under licensing with entertainment companies including Warner Brothers, Marvel, Disney, and DC Comics, as well as others overseas. Three kids: the first son and daughter are IT engineers in California, and the second son is an owner-chef in New York City. I am trying to expand my businesses in Nepal and Southeast Asia."

1977

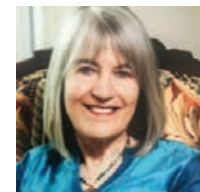
Allan Grafman was elected to the board of directors of Happy Nest, a mobile app providing access to commercial real estate investments. He also serves as board director of IDW Media and chairs its audit committee. He continues as CEO of All Media Ventures and managing director of an investment bank raising capital.

1978

Susan Aaronson conceived of, fundraised for, and directs the Digital Trade and Data Governance Hub, which educates policymakers and the public on data-driven change, digital trade, and data governance. Aaronson is also a senior fellow

at the Canadian think tank the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), where she writes on AI as a global public good; the wicked problem of disinformation and the role of trade; digital protectionism; and human rights and data. Aaronson still studies dance and is an increasingly slow triathlete. She welcomes questions from colleagues; email her at saaronso@gwu.edu.

David Berish writes: "After passing the Foreign Service written and oral tests, I did not join the State Department. Instead, I went to work for Salomon Brothers on January 4, 1978, as a bond trader. On January 4, 1982, I resigned from Salomon, proposed to Laura Reinhardt, and moved to London, where I traded bonds for 17 more years. I was a vice president at Salomon Brothers, a senior vice president at Lehman Brothers, and a director at Kleinwort Benson and West Merchant Bank. In 2002 Laura and our son Patrick and I moved back to the United States, where we now reside in Loudoun County, VA. I was an independent trader until 2013, when I founded the Dienekes Corporation, an independent registered investment adviser that I still own and run."

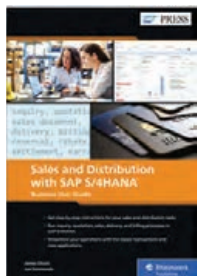


Trudy Bower writes: "After a 30-year career with CARE and the UN World Food Programme working in South Asia, Africa, and

Rome HQ, I retired to the US in St. Petersburg, FL, in 2016. I am writing my memoirs and mentoring CEOs of nonprofits working in human trafficking. Happy to reconnect with SIPA alumni; email me at trudybower003@gmail.com."

1983

Paul Christensen writes: "A big 'hello' to my former classmates. The past 38 years have flown by! Hope you are all happy and doing well."



James Olcott writes: “I am pleased to announce my new book, *Sales and Distribution with SAP S/4HANA: Business User Guide*, was published in May. It’s a technical manual from SAP Press,

so the potential audience will be limited to those in the SAP software ecosystem. Still, I had fun writing this over the COVID summer, fall, and winter.”

1985



Richard Mei writes: “Forty years after first coming to Japan as a Monbusho English Fellow (sponsored by Japan’s Ministry of

Education), I returned to the same region as the US consul general—Osaka-Kobe. My career has come full circle, a wonderful sense of satisfaction! The COVID pandemic has curtailed many of our activities, but we continue to look after the interests of the US and US citizens with great pride.”

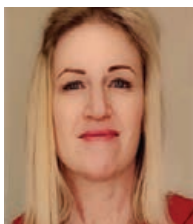


Paul Mooney writes: “In March I moved back to the United States after spending some 35 years working in Asia as a journalist. Most recently, my wife and I lived in Hanoi for 30 months, including a six-month backpacking trip around Vietnam. While in Vietnam, I gathered a good deal of informa-

tion about the country, took a lot of notes, and did many interviews with Vietnamese and foreign friends. Now settled back in the US, I plan to spend the coming months writing articles, and possibly a book, based on my time in the country. I’ll also resume writing about China, where I worked as a journalist for 18 years.”

1986

Pete Biesada writes: “Hopefully emerging from COVID restrictions, with almost the entire family now vaccinated. Oldest of three sons, Owen, finishing his junior year at Texas Christian University. Middle son completing his second year at Middle Tennessee on track for a professional pilot aviation degree. Youngest son, Robert, graduating from virtual high school and planning a gap year, since who would want to start college under COVID? We have had Merrill outnumbered for 21-plus years now. Interested in any **Pamela Cunningham** (also Class of 1986) sightings.”



Hilary Claggett is launching a new publishing program in global business at Georgetown University Press. For the third consecutive year, she was

among the alumni judges of the undergraduate entrepreneurship contest known as the Columbia Venture Challenge. In 2021 she was reelected treasurer of the Columbia University Club of Chicago, a volunteer role she has held since 2013. After a year without in-person racing, she is looking forward to getting back into running, with two half-marathons on the calendar for this fall. She has completed more than 200 races, including 15 marathons and 45 half-marathons, since 2009.

1987



Gail Emrick writes: “As a Columbia alum, I continually use the skills and experiences acquired during my joint degrees from Mailman

(public health) and SIPA (Latin American economic and political development). Serving as director of a nonprofit on the US-Mexico border, we address issues of health equity and promote social justice. I share my documentary, *A Story of Migration: My Tale of Two Cities* (available on YouTube), about root causes of migration and the role that the US has historically played in shaping migration. As the political horizon looks more hopeful, we must continue to work to make our world a more just and healthier place for all to reside.”

Blaine Pope writes: “I was in the US and British press the week of May 3. The topic: COVID-19 and mask-wearing. I was featured in the *Los Angeles Times* (‘Column: He Went to Pick Up His Daughter. He Ended Up Debating Anti-Maskers’) and the *Independent* (‘Girl Puts Protesters in Their Place After They Compare Masks to Slavery Outside Her School’).”

1988



Matthew Murray writes: “I am very pleased to be back at Columbia teaching as an adjunct at SIPA and the Harriman Institute

since 2018. I teach the seminar Systemic Corruption in Post-Soviet Nations: Causes and Solutions. Together with the Harriman Institute and Columbia Law School’s Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity, I cofounded the New Directions in Anti-Kleptocracy Forum.”

1989



Lena Papalexopoulou was reelected vice president of the nonprofit foundation Desmos, a pioneering hub for charitable giving. She conceived

and, through Desmos, helped develop and implement “I Care and Act,” an educational program that empowers youth to become civic-minded. After five years of successful implementation in 681 schools, the Greek Ministry of Education decided to include this program in its skills development initiative, making it available to all primary and middle school students in the country as of September.

1990

After serving as the deputy administrator and COO of the US Agency for International Development, **Bonnie Glick** became a fellow at Harvard University’s Institute of Politics and a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.



Diane Hirshberg writes: “I was appointed vice president academic for the University of the Arctic in January 2021. UArctic is a

network of over 200 universities, research institutes, and other organizations concerned with education and research in and about the north. I am responsible for fostering new academic collaborations and building North American engagement. I also serve on the board of the Arctic Research Consortium of the United States (ARCUS). At the University of Alaska Anchorage, I helped develop our new MPP program and am conducting research on the role of education in sustainable development in the Arctic and on building energy sustainability and sovereignty through renewable energy in remote Arctic communities.”

1991

Tamar Krongrad writes: “Greetings! I have been practicing corporate and commercial law in Tel Aviv for the past 25 years while also raising my two sons (and dog). I welcome contact from any Columbia grads! Email me at tamar@tadmor-levy.com.”

1992

Daryl Mundis writes: “After 23 years of service, I took early retirement from the United Nations in The Hague. I spent 11 years at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), including five years as a senior trial attorney with the Office of the Prosecutor. I left the ICTY in 2009 to become the chief of prosecutions at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL). In July 2013 the UN secretary-general appointed me registrar [assistant secretary-general] of the STL, the position I held until retiring at the end of February. I look forward to spending more time with my wife and kids.”

Greg Victor writes: “Please visit ifep.io to learn about the International Free Expression Project. We soon will launch an international competition to design a work of public art symbolizing free expression—one that can be programmed from anywhere to appear as almost anything. We also are about to choose an architect to design a ‘marketplace of ideas’ in the vast, ink-stained former pressroom of a historic newspaper. The marketplace will be full of food, drink, educational activities, art, artist studios, performance, and discussion—it will explode with expression. And every element will have an educational purpose.”

1993

John Penney writes: “It’s so wonderful to keep crossing paths with SIPA alums in my private-sector life on the business side of media. A native New Yorker, I have been living in Santa Monica for the last 12 years and enjoy the outdoors and the access to Northern California and Asia. After working for

years at the intersection of technology and content, as of July I am attending Berkeley Haas to pursue an executive MBA. My goal is to focus on prosocial entrepreneurship over the coming years. Please feel free to be in touch if you ever are in the area; email me at jbpenney@gmail.com.”

Mary Sweere founded a company in 2009 investing in alternative energies and material recovery companies in Europe, where greenhouse gases and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) are the focus.

1994

Mitch Lench and **Lisa Scali ’96** traded in their international-focused careers to build a seaweed business in Maine called Ocean’s Balance, which is at the cutting edge of the seaweed farming trend. Seaweed absorbs large volumes of carbon and is restorative to the ocean. It is also one of the only zero-input crops. Ocean’s Balance’s innovative kelp products are found in supermarkets and online. They are also creating seaweed products for other industries, including pet health, fertilizers, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals. While the day-to-day work is very local, their SIPA backgrounds have made them comfortable collaborating with other seaweed companies in Europe and Asia.



Vaishali Nigam Sinha, chair of the ReNew Foundation and chief sustainability officer of ReNew Power, led a delegation of women leaders as chair of South Asian Women in Energy for a roundtable discussion on women leaders and their role in energy transition in April at the US Embassy in New Delhi. The roundtable

hosted Secretary John Kerry, US special presidential envoy for climate. The discussions highlighted the role of women leaders as the agents of change at the core of climate action and the energy transition journey. Centered around the US-India 2030 agenda for clean and green technologies, the discussion led to several new ideas: building a sustainability framework between the two countries; encouraging the US and India to collaborate; increasing funding opportunities for industry-academia partnerships; and fostering innovation to achieve the 450-gigawatt target for the renewable-energy sector in India.

1996

Kevin Cheok writes: "I am Singapore's ambassador to Thailand, resident in Bangkok. Happy to connect with any SIPA alums who might be in Bangkok; email me at kcheokster@gmail.com."

1997

Jonah Kaplan works at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), an independent federal agency created to protect consumers. He serves in the Research, Markets & Regulations Division as the program manager running the Consumer Reporting Markets Program, covering big data and risk analytics markets. He is the author of the CFPB's 2021 *List of Consumer Reporting Companies*, which helps consumers understand and act on the data that consumer reporting companies collect about them, and *Payment Amount Furnishing & Consumer Reporting*, a 2020 report that explores the prevalence of actual payment information in consumer credit reports.

Sandhya Nankani writes: "I could not have imagined where my SIPA degree, with a focus on media and communications, would have taken me. These past 20-plus years, I've developed multimedia and literacy programs for kids and families in the US, South Asia, and West Africa. I also launched my children's media studio and agency,

Literary Safari. We produce inclusive and equitable media for kids and families and were busy this past year developing culturally responsive instructional lessons for K-6 teachers for McGraw Hill's Wonders literacy program and Stride Learning Solutions. In March 2020 we also launched the *Story Seeds Podcast*, which matches beloved authors with children to help them grow their story ideas. My goal in creating the podcast was to showcase, model, and celebrate deep listening, collaboration, and imagination. It comes with a companion activity book, *Imagination Lab: Experiments in Creativity*, and this summer we hosted a virtual podcasting camp and classes for kids while we explored additional production opportunities. Hope to have some kids of SIPA alumni join us! Visit storyseedspodcast.com and email me at sandhya@literarysafari.com."

1998

Erin Kotheimer writes: "I moved overseas this summer for my next Foreign Service assignment as economic counselor at the US embassy in Paris. I look forward to seeing my SIPA friends living in France!"

Teresa Turiera-Puigbò is glad to share the documentary *There's Still Someone in the Woods*, which presents reflections by women who were raped during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina—when systematic rape was used as a weapon of war—and by the children born of these forced relationships. The documentary is a project of Culture and Conflict. Visit culturalconflict.org/documentary-eng.

1999

John Leahy writes: "I work for New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), a state agency that provides safe and affordable housing for New Yorkers with low incomes using federal HUD and NYS funds. I review funding applications for environmental regulatory compliance. My job requires a combination of skill sets

including technical knowledge of environmental protection, environmental regulations, and government practices. My SIPA degree in public administration, combined with my academic and field-experience background, gave me the skills to function in this career."

Michelle "Mimi" Murphy was appointed director of development at the Whittier Street Health Center, based in Roxbury, MA. Whittier, established in 1933 as a well-baby clinic, serves 30,000 patients in its eight primary care of excellence clinics while simultaneously meeting the needs of its community through four mobile vaccine clinics. Murphy was also accepted into the Tufts MPH program in Population Health Promotion.

Shelly Tygielski was featured in December on *CNN Heroes* for her work founding the global, grassroots, volunteer-led mutual aid movement Pandemic of Love. President Joe Biden has recognized her work as "saving lives ... and giving people hope." She has been featured in over 100 mainstream media outlets, including *Forbes*, the *Kelly Clarkson Show*, and the *Washington Post*. Tygielski's first book, *Sit Down to Rise Up: How Radical Self-Care Can Change the World* (New World Library), with a foreword by award-winning comedian and author Chelsea Handler, is due on October 12.

Greg Wallace participated in the NC IDEA LABS customer discovery program in fall 2020 to work on an impact business idea he'd been considering for several years. After 35 customer interviews that helped refine the concept, in December he launched consciencecart.com to help people easily find and shop at businesses that verifiably operate ethically and sustainably. Each included business has a detailed page with a ranking on ethics and sustainability, a short description of how it achieves the rating, and links to Conscience Cart's sources.

2000

Maurice Perkins writes: "I am a husband and father of three daughters."

Bernard Schneider writes: "I was appointed senior lecturer (associate professor) in international tax law at the Centre for Commercial Law Studies at Queen Mary University of London, where I am academic director of the Institute of Tax Law and director of the International Tax Law LLM. Two of my main areas of research and teaching are the Chinese tax system and taxation in emerging and developing economies, both of which build on my studies at SIPA; I was a dual concentrator in East Asian Studies and Asian Business and Finance and was awarded a certificate in Chinese Studies by the East Asian Institute."

2001



June Young Bae writes: "I have been a member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea since 2020. As a spokesperson for the nation's main opposition party, I am making intensive efforts to monitor the current government and maintain it in check. I am also a member of the National Assembly's Education Committee and Special Committee on Budget and Accounts."

Todd Bristol writes: "In addition to my role as associate dean for administration, finance, and planning at Princeton's School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA!), I am serving as interim associate dean for public affairs and communications as the university searches for a new dean of SPIA. Our former dean, Cecilia Rouse, was appointed chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers."

Tony Lynch writes: "After a brief stint as a lecturer at Auburn University, I have accepted a tenure-track position as an assistant professor of supply chain management at Penn State beginning this fall."

2002

Bremley Lyngdoh writes: "Well, 2020 was a difficult year for all of us. I was stuck in Meghalaya in northeast India planting 200,000 trees to restore cloud forests in remote villages near the Bangladesh border. I was invited to join the Hill Farmers' Union (HFU) as senior adviser and drove 10,000 kilometers in seven months, visiting 300 villages and training and recruiting 100,000 small farmers to join the HFU and lobby the government for policy changes to protect their livelihoods during the pandemic. I have also been working with Earthbanc, supporting 23,000 farmers in West Bengal who are using our microfinance platform to plant 785,000 mangroves and other erosion-control trees in the Sundarbans, a process which is sequestering 800,000 tons of carbon."

Christine Turner was named senior vice president at Boundary Stone Partners, a government affairs and strategic communications firm focused on accelerating transformative ideas and technologies. Her portfolio focuses on the intersection of national security and foreign policy challenges and accelerating the transition to clean energy and a decarbonized economy.

Damon Isiah Turner has been serving as a consultant in the areas of program and project management, grant writing, facilitation, organizational strategy, and the occasional political campaign with Know Agenda Consulting. He is also with the Know Agenda Foundation, a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose programming includes a focus on providing fiscal sponsorship for underserved groups, state nonprofit organizations (without 501(c)(3) status), communities, and collaboratives with public service or social service missions.

Ibrahim Ulusal moved from New York City to London about seven years ago and is now living in Kent with his wife and two children and working in London.

2003

Lauren Hadi writes: "After a decade at Room to Read, I joined the Schott Foundation for Public Education as senior vice president of advancement. Schott is a national public fund focused on racial justice in public education. My husband, **Mohammed Hadi**, is the news director of the *New York Times* business section. We live in Westchester County, NY, with our two daughters, a dog, a hedgehog, and some goldfish."

Dae Levine writes: "I live in Los Angeles with my husband, two daughters, and two dogs and serve as director of communications for **Mayor Eric Garcetti '95**. It has been a difficult time to work in city government, and I have drawn on all of the knowledge (and many of the relationships!) gained while at SIPA in order to get through the toughest professional challenge of my life thus far."



Vanessa Pino Lockel is the new executive director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County (CCE Suffolk), a 501(c)(3) dedicated to sustainability on Long

Island in the areas of agriculture, marine, 4-H youth development, and community education. Lockel's expertise in community engagement and government relations parallels CCE Suffolk's mission. She believes in inclusive collaboration, public engagement, transparency, and responsiveness in tending to the needs of Suffolk County. Visit ccesuffolk.org.

After publishing the first voluntary local review (VLR) in Taiwan in 2019, which successfully raised the public's awareness of SDGs and won the German iF Design

Award, **Chingyu Yao**, New Taipei City's director-general, continues her commitment to SDGs. An international webinar on Earth Day took place, and Mayor Hou Yu-ih announced that the second VLR would soon be released and set a goal of net-zero carbon for New Taipei City by 2050. Participants in the webinar included host Kent Larson, principal research scientist and director of MIT Media Lab's City Science group; Nigel Jacob, cochair of the Boston Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics; and **Penny Abeywardena '05**, New York City's commissioner for international affairs.

Manav Sachdeva is chief international officer for McCann in Kyiv, Ukraine. He also has been consulting with UNDP Guyana on redesigning a system for collecting data on violence against women and girls. He produces original poetry through the Mr Urdu Poetry channel on YouTube and at mrurdupoetry.com, and he published a book, *The Sufi's Garland*, and has a second one in the works.

2004

Hagar Chemali writes: "I had a fortunate 2020, during which I like to say I had two babies! I launched a weekly world news show on YouTube called *Oh My World*, where I cover the top world news stories in a fun and digestible way and with an approach that explains why these issues matter to a young American viewer, all in 10 minutes or less. And I also had a baby girl, Emma Victoria—my third after two boys (Alexander, 7, and Benjamin, 5)."

Jenna Mandel-Ricci writes: "Throughout the COVID-19 response it has been my privilege to support hospitals across the tristate region as they have responded and adapted to this crisis, saving the lives of thousands. In my role at the Greater New York Hospital Association, I have served as a bridge between our 160 hospital members and the dozens of city, state, and federal agencies with which they interact, working on issues as diverse as patient surge and alternate care sites, data

collection, fatality management, PPE and resource allocation, and health-care worker health and well-being. With vaccination rates increasing and hospitalizations declining, I am now shifting my focus to ensure that the painful lessons learned can lead to better systems, processes, and policies for future emergencies."

Takasama Nakajima writes: "Serving as a senior official in the Hokuriku region in Japan, one of my responsibilities is promoting the region's sake industry, which produces many premium sakes, including Kokuryu and Tengumai. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the industry, but sake lovers around the globe do not let the industry down easily—sake exports have increased for 11 consecutive years despite the pandemic. Rooted in rice cultivation dating back to more than 2,000 years ago, sake is an integral part of the Japanese culture and society. I want the world to know about this rice-origin, more-complex-than-winemaking, and delicate-tasting beverage unique to Japan."

Francisco Pineda writes: "I am a faculty member at Columbia and academic director at the School of Professional Studies for the MS in Construction Administration program. I also wanted to share that over 2020 I served on President Biden's Infrastructure Policy Committee, where we helped develop the current American Jobs Plan that is being called the infrastructure bill. My graduate work at SIPA and what I learned from professors Bill Eimicke and Steve Cohen were instrumental in my success."

2005

After six years building the We Mean Business coalition, a nonprofit working with the world's largest companies and policymakers worldwide to drive toward net zero, **Heather McGeory** has gone to APCO Worldwide to build and lead its climate and sustainability practice for business, investors, and governments. She would love to hear from fellow SIPA alumni on ways to collaborate; email her at Hmcgeory@apcoworldwide.com.

2006

Amit Saraogi writes: "Oorja, the social enterprise I lead, launched Oonnayan, India's first decentralized pay-as-you-go cooling-as-a-service for marginal farmers. We have deployed a five-metric-ton solar-powered cold storage in Muzaffarpur district, Bihar, for use by 40 to 50 farmers. They will be able to store perishable horticulture produce at the market gate and pay on a per crate per day basis, without paying the high upfront cost of technology acquisition. It will help them extend the shelf life of their produce and realize higher prices, increasing their incomes. This integrated postharvest service being delivered through an inclusive and customer-centric model will build resilience, enhance food security, and improve livelihoods."

2007



Pamela Ayuso, CEO and cofounder of Celaque, a real estate development company, released her book *Heptagram: The 7-Pillar Business*

Design System for the 21st Century, on May 1 through Amazon. *Heptagram* guides readers on developing an organization from the ground up, combining timeless principles with contemporary concepts using seven pillars: structure, processes, information systems, metrics, trust, self-learning, and plasticity. Ayuso is also a writer who offers practical business and self-development insights for entrepreneurs and leaders on her blog and LinkedIn. She published her first book, aimed at young children and titled *Alicia and Bunnie Paint a Mural*, in 2019.

Ali El Idrissi writes: "After several years at J.P. Morgan setting up the bank's impact investing practice, I took the jump to start UpChoose, a San Francisco-based company with a mission to reimagine consumption and help accelerate the transition to a

more sustainable consumption model. We launched an open investment campaign for UpChoose on Republic, raising over four times our initial goal in the first month alone: republic.co/upchoose.”

Sandra (Hernandez) Noonan joined the US restaurant chain Just Salad as chief sustainability officer. She leads the company’s carbon-labeling initiative, reusable bowl program, and other waste-reduction efforts. Her article “Enabling Climate-Smart Eating: Lessons from Our Carbon-Labeling Journey” is available at sustainablebrands.com.

Anmol Vanamali writes: “After several years of working in climate change and clean energy finance post-SIPA, I took on the role of director of sustainable finance at Winrock International, a global nonprofit whose mission is to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources. I look forward to engaging with my SIPA brothers and sisters in the course of my work. Please email me at anmol.vanamali@winrock.org should you wish to connect!”

2008

Kurkrit Chaisirikul graduated in May from the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand with a doctor of business administration degree in management. He also was appointed director of the Control Division of Phuket Customs House.



2009

Celina Lee cofounded Zindi (zindi.africa), a virtual data science talent and solutions marketplace, three years ago. Zindi now hosts a community of over 26,000 data scientists from across 140 countries, solving some of the world’s most pressing business and social challenges, from predicting customer churn to combating climate change. Zindi runs online competitions to crowdsource top machine-learning and artificial-intelligence solutions for companies and helps connect data scientists with employment opportunities. Lee lives in Cape Town, South Africa, with her husband and two kids.



Erin Sikorsky writes: “After serving for a little over a decade in the US intelligence community as a senior analyst and manager, I moved on to the nonprofit sector. I am the director of the Center for Climate and Security (CCS) and the director of the International Military Council on Climate and Security (IMCCS). CCS and IMCCS envision a climate-resilient world which recognizes that climate-change threats to security are already significant and unprecedented, and acts to address those threats in a manner that is commensurate with their scale, consequence, and probability.”

2010



Waqar Ahmad is responsible for leading institutional networking and engagement for public policy and business advocacy with governments, multilaterals, industry associates, and nonprofits at Nestlé in Pakistan and Afghanistan. As sustainability champion, he ensures that Nestlé is embedding the UN’s SDGs into its operations. He also acts as the company’s chief spokesperson. Ahmad was recently elected vice president

of the UN Global Compact Local Network in Pakistan and appointed CEO of CoRe, Pakistan’s first ever packaging alliance to promote a circular economy.

2011

J. Nathan Bullock was appointed dean for extended studies at Southeast Missouri State University in February 2020. In this new role, he oversees four regional campuses, online degree programs, workforce development, and early college programs for high school students.

Nigora Sachdeva joined the United Nations as head of the Kramatorsk Field Office for the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine in January 2020 after having served as minority rights adviser for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

2013

Deanielle Dawra writes: “After relocating to Lebanon, I was astonished by the high youth unemployment despite so many having graduate degrees and being trilingual. When the October 17 revolution took off, I knew it was time to bring decent job opportunities to the often overlooked and highly vulnerable North Lebanon and Akkar regions. And that’s how digiTAL was born. As a 100 percent remote social enterprise, we hire freelancers across Lebanon to work on virtual projects for foreign clients—from data entry to mobile app development. Throughout the pandemic, economic crisis, and even the Beirut blasts, our company and passion have only grown!”



Denika Torres is a director at Citi, leading growth and key business transformation initiatives in her role as North America head of market management for a Treasury and Trade Solutions (TTS) division. During 2020, she led her team through a platform migra-

tion that successfully upgraded the payment architecture for over six million Citi clients and more than 600 corporations. Torres is one of 18 business-diversity leads within Citi's Institutional Clients Group. In this role, she supports firm-wide efforts to foster diversity, employee retention, and promotion of key talent through partnerships between important affinity groups and Citi leadership. She enjoys serving in community leadership roles in Harlem and mentoring the next generation of rising Latinx women and serves on a non-for-profit board on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

2014

Christopher Eshleman joined Deloitte as a data scientist serving public-sector clients in April following seven years in local and state government.



Carolina Lima Perlingiere writes: "I cofounded Rio Ethical Fashion (REF), the first international sustainable-fashion forum in Brazil, in 2019. Our mission is to promote change in the fashion sector, placing the planet and people first. We aim to stimulate courage and resilience among the industry players in order to find solutions for our current model of overproduction and exhausted consumption. Visit rioethicalfashion.com."

2015

Angel Vasquez writes: "Excited to share that I have been making excellent use of my concentration in Urban and Social Policy. After graduating, I first worked for the New York State Senate as a policy analyst responsible for negotiating the New York State K-12 and higher education budgets, drafting and negotiating state legislation, and writing reports with policy recommendations. In 2017 I moved into the role of chief of staff to a state senator before occupying my current role, where I colead the union's state and city advocacy efforts, help direct the union's political engagement, and have managed other campaigns, including Census 2020 participation and Carbon Free and Healthy Schools."

Raffi Wartanian writes: "I'm reaching out on behalf of Letters for Peace, a workshop I founded at the intersection of creative writing and conflict transformation with the mission of fostering constructive dialogue between youth in Armenia and Azerbaijan. In 2018 and 2019, we ran six workshops in Yerevan and Baku with 54 youth (ages 16-32), who exchanged letters articulating the possibilities and desire for a peaceful future. The letters, along with our program video, are now live at our website and will soon be published in a limited-edition book. To read the letters, watch the video, and learn more, please visit lettersforpeace.org."

2016

Anuli Isichei writes: "In December I was recognized by UNFPA, WHO, and WGH as one of 100 global women nurse leaders for my commitment to the profession and equipping nurses across Nigeria and Africa to influence policy and sit at the decision-making table. As one of the only nurses in my cohort during my time at SIPA, I sometimes felt a bit out of place, but my experience at SIPA really prepared me for the role that I am in now by teaching me the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration

to develop effective health-care policy and preparing me to assume a leadership role. I am extremely grateful."

2017

Zoraida Arias is serving as the U visa/T visa program manager for the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) in Washington State. The U visa and T visa are two forms of immigration relief for survivors of crimes such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, among others. In addition to expanding the U visa/T visa program's services as well as community engagement, Arias is working on recommending and implementing projects to enhance trust and fairness for King County immigrant communities. These projects include increasing the KCSO's language access and updating policies to demonstrate current work that directly impacts immigrant and refugee communities.

Ignazio Bellini writes: "With a background in management engineering, a degree I obtained at the Polytechnic University of Milan, I pursued an MIA with a concentration in Economic and Political Development at SIPA. I first worked as a consultant for a couple of years with international organizations, NGOs, and think tanks, undertaking assignments and field missions on corporate social responsibility, energy access, disaster risk response, and impact evaluation. In 2017 I decided to take a deep dive into the project management space and joined AECOM, an infrastructure consulting company, where I worked as a PM, first in New York and then in the UK and Ireland for a total of three years, managing complex multidisciplinary capital projects in transportation, aviation, and commercial development. I then decided to join the energy company Eni in its Sustainability Department and moved back to Italy. This career change was a way for me to keep driving socioeconomic development from within the private sector by applying the skills I had developed at AECOM and abroad to sustainability initiatives and local development projects in the different regions of the world where Eni is present."

Megan Decker and her husband, Michael Decker, welcomed their firstborn child, Frank Arthur Decker, on November 29, 2020.

2018

Gabriel Guggisberg writes: “In the hardest times of lockdown, **Andres Alegria '19** and I put together the Foro Columbia. This initiative aimed to gather the most active alumni in the country to discuss during six months the most relevant policies for Chile. The project received 13 notifications of interest, and the group carried out an exciting journey of political and moral debates. We discussed green recovery, gender parity, and a constitutional convention, among other topics. No ‘key speaker’ was allowed, but each of us—as very well educated citizens—contributed. What if each country promotes a national *foro* (forum)? We are here to change the world!”

Christina Huguet writes: “Eurasia Group has been ramping up its S part of ESG analysis, focusing on the political factors driving issues around human rights, diversity and inclusion, and social equity and how this is vital for companies’ reputation and branding. At SIPA we often studied social issues but often as a silo to businesses. Now, with the pandemic raising attention on the treatment of workers, and as one of the only analysts covering this, it’s great to be working with companies who see tackling these S issues as vital to their bottom line.”

Lobsang Salaka writes: “The Executive Master of Public Administration degree gave me the tools to adjust my life to the public space after retiring from military service and provided motivation and purpose to continue to serve. SIPA not only prepared me to pivot my professional life but also set me up for academic success. I am a doctoral candidate in law and policy at Northeastern University and serve as the program specialist at the Office of Retailers Operations and Compliances in the US Department of Agriculture.”

2019

Arisha Salman writes: “In August 2020 I started working as an analyst with the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), which is housed at the World Bank in Washington, DC. My research is focused on how data and new business models (digital banks, platforms, fintechs) can be leveraged to enhance the reach and potential of financial services for individuals with low incomes, especially women. An important aspect of my research is to unpack how financial services help to create economic opportunities and enhance the resilience of individuals with low incomes. I work in collaboration with policymakers, regulators, financial services providers, and technology providers across low- and middle-income markets.”

2020



Ray Herras returned to public service in a senior civilian role at the US Department of Defense based in the Baltimore-Washington, DC, metro area. He provides engineering support to the Defense Enterprise Office Solution program manager at the Defense Information Systems Agency. Herras is a decorated military veteran and first-generation Filipino American and has a career of over 18 years in defense and security.



Michelle Meza writes: “Only a few months into the pandemic, our cohort was the first to face the virtuality of a rapidly changing world and shrinking job mar-

kets. Before this context, I am thankful for all the resources SIPA afforded us—from the OCS to our notable alumni community. These were instrumental in my joining the Biden campaign as an organizing staffer and, most recently, becoming hired as a scheduler and special assistant in the US House of Representatives. Proud to be part of this community. And roar, Lions!”

Edriss Riffat writes: “I have achieved a lifelong experience by studying at SIPA—the knowledge and wisdom, the interaction and engagement, and the friendship with fellow students are among my key takeaways, which have helped me become a well-rounded midcareer professional. Columbia instilled in me a sense of curiosity that I will continue in my journey of learning beyond graduation—as is often said: ‘the future belongs to the curious.’”



Kyoko Thompson serves as content lead for Nivi, a rapidly expanding tech startup delivering sexual and reproductive health information and services to India, Kenya,

Nigeria, and South Africa. Like other former HRHP students, her passion for human rights and gender equity continues to drive her research, writing, and advocacy efforts both in and outside the office. In May her op-ed on the role of sexism in police brutality, titled “Police in the US Have a Toxic Masculinity Problem,” was published in the *Baltimore Sun*. [👉](#)

Looking back on the career of adjunct professor Ambassador William Luers

BY KATHRIN HAVRILLA-SANCHEZ

Staying Connected through the Classroom

Luers's career with the US government was remarkable, in part, because of his experiences with the important historical figures he worked with and befriended—from smoking cigars with the Cuban deputy foreign minister, Pelegrin Torras, after negotiating an agreement in 1977 on opening a US Interests Section in Havana to giving neckties to Václav Havel on the eve of his inauguration as the first president of the free Czechoslovakia after the fall of communism.

During his time in the US Foreign Service, Luers also began his teaching career as a visiting lecturer at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University (now the Princeton

TALKING

The entire SIPA community wishes a fond farewell to Ambassador William Luers, a renowned adjunct professor at Columbia for the past decade, who is retiring following an illustrious career spanning nearly 70 years.

Luers's first experience with SIPA began in 1957, when he started his graduate studies following an undergraduate education at Hamilton College and a five-year stint serving as an officer in the US Navy. At SIPA he launched his career as an internationalist, taking his first course on international affairs at age 27.

"SIPA is where I learned about the world and began my professional life; Columbia's Russian Institute and School of International Affairs launched my career," Luers says. "My admiration for the many professors who nurtured this complete neophyte has stuck with me."

After graduating from SIPA, Luers took his knowledge of and queries about the challenges of diplomacy and began what would become a 31-year career in foreign service. He served as US ambassador to both Czechoslovakia and Venezuela and held various posts in Italy, Germany, and the Soviet Union. At the Department of State, he was deputy assistant secretary of state for Europe and for inter-American affairs. In 1986 he was named president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; he held that position in New York City for 13 years. He then became president of the United Nations Association of the USA in 1999 and held that position for 10 years.

School of Public and International Affairs), George Washington University in Washington, DC, and the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University.

"Teaching regularly has been life enhancing for me since I first started as an adjunct teaching a course on the Soviet political system at SAIS in Washington in the 1960s," Luers says. "Nothing has kept me better connected than those teaching and learning experiences."

The course he taught at SIPA was Talking with the Enemy, which was based on his extensive professional experience as a Foreign Service officer (FSO). Luers used real-world case studies of past US presidents and their relationships with adversary states and leaders—important political conflicts that, in many cases, he had experienced directly, such as the thaw in US-Soviet relations during the 1960s.

"Diplomacy is primarily about finding ways to work with people you disagree with," Luers says. "You have to learn as much as you can about their weaknesses, strengths, and motivations so you can develop a strategy for reducing conflict. You want to make your adversary feel like they're getting what they want—without sacrificing what you want. I've applied that to diplomacy in my own life, and I tried to bring those experiences into class."

Nancy Talamante MIA '20, a Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellow at SIPA and now an FSO, took Talking with the Enemy in spring 2019 as part of her journey to joining the Foreign Service.

“Ambassador Luers really created an experiential-learning environment, using lots of role play and debates around decisions that presidents like Nixon and Kennedy made and whether we would enter into conflict or diplomacy in the same situation,” Talamante says. “He had met a lot of the key players in the case studies we examined and could tell us more about them as people, which helped us understand their decision-making process. Talking with the Enemy was one of the most engaging and interactive classes I’ve taken in my entire education.”

Luers invited Talamante to be his teaching assistant for the course in spring 2020, which would turn out to be his final semester teaching the class. “Ambassador Luers innovated the



with the ENEMY

class according to present-day issues—it wasn’t a one-size-fits-all approach,” says Talamante, who is going to Malaysia for her first tour as an FSO this fall. “As a first-generation student of color, I considered him an important mentor for me and very accessible to all of his students. He offered us such a wealth of experience and knowledge.”



Deep Gratitude for William Luers

SIPA students and alumni have certainly appreciated Luers for all of his knowledge, counsel, and hard work. Besides Talamante, a number of his former students are working in impactful careers around the world, including Laura Daniels MPA ’15, an FSO in conflict and stabilization operations in Europe, and Myrian Smith MIA ’18, a surface warfare officer in the US Navy.

Beyond the student community, SIPA faculty, staff, and administrators also recognize Luers’s contributions to the School’s reputation for teaching and learning dedicated to making a difference in the world.

“I thank Bill and applaud him for his years of teaching at SIPA and his incredible contributions to foreign policy,” Dean Merit E. Janow says. “I am grateful to know him as a person and am deeply appreciative of his expertise and commitment to SIPA.”

With his retirement at 92 years old, Luers will now focus on writing a book summarizing his career experiences and outlook on diplomacy. He is also the director of the Iran Project, which has been conducting Track II, or back-channel, diplomatic efforts for 20 years to improve official communications between Iran and the United States. Luers says he also looks forward to spending time with his wife, Wendy Woods Luers, founder and president of the Foundation for Civil Society, as well as his 3 children, 2 stepchildren, and 10 grandchildren. [!\[\]\(c50c8b7b2cc2cf9ff925edec0ee94c0d_img.jpg\)](#)

DONOR PROFILE

ROMITA SHETTY MIA '89

Romita Shetty MIA '89 is a partner at DA Management LP, which makes public and private investments globally. Shetty began her career at Standard & Poor's in 1990 and held senior management roles with J.P. Morgan, RBS Greenwich Capital, and Lehman Brothers.

A member of SIPA's Advisory Board since 2009, she also serves on other nonprofit and public company boards. She and her husband support fellowships at SIPA, establishing the Romita Shetty and Nasser Ahmad Fellowship and supporting the recently created SIPA Opportunity Fellowship Fund, which provides matching funds for SIPA's Access and Opportunity Challenge. An initiative to support financial aid for exceptional students from historically under-represented groups, the Challenge matches endowed gifts to establish new fellowships, helping to motivate other donors to participate.

Shetty spoke with *SIPA Magazine* about her commitment to supporting financial aid to encourage greater student diversity. The conversation has been condensed and edited for clarity.

How have you stayed engaged with the SIPA network through the years?

My first decade or so out of school, I primarily stayed involved through friends. As a SIPA student, I collaborated with a group of other Columbia women to start the first South Asian Violence Against Women organization in New York City. The group has celebrated 30-plus years and has had multiple generations of leadership, through which I have formed many close associations with other Columbia and SIPA alumni.

My more formal engagement with the School really began in 2009 when Dean John Coatsworth asked if I would consider joining the SIPA Advisory Board. I reacquainted myself with SIPA, really seeing its strengths and the many ways it had evolved to keep up with the changing needs of the world and its students. It's been a very rewarding experience—the School has fantastic researchers and professors doing interesting work, and seeing how the student body has changed and how the School integrates with the University as a whole has been very fulfilling.

Why is it important for alumni to stay involved with SIPA?

There is a tendency to move on to the next phase of your life and put your two years at SIPA in its box. What has become apparent



Photo by Ian DiSalvo

to me over the years is that your alma mater is a living institution and alumni engagement is vital to keeping it alive and vibrant. The other reason to stay involved is the availability of so much cutting-edge thinking and research. It is intellectually rewarding to stay current on how the world is thinking about things in new, different, and more connected ways.

What motivates you to support fellowships at SIPA?

The original fellowship that I funded was related to making sure that a SIPA education stayed available to international students, especially students from South Asia. Through my service on the SIPA Advisory Board and my work with other educational organizations, I realized that higher education in this country is facing its own challenges regarding the lack of opportunities for students who want to pursue higher education, especially if they do not have the economic means to do so. The University's and SIPA's recent efforts to increase student diversity and financial support inspired me to modify my own fellowship to attract a pipeline of diverse Columbia College students to do a five-year, dual-degree program with SIPA in a time- and cost-effective way. Similarly, my support of the SIPA Opportunity Fellowship Fund will increase financial aid for minority students, opening up opportunities and making a SIPA education possible for those who might not otherwise be able to afford it.

As schools like SIPA think about how they're going to stay relevant and meaningful to the next generation of students, being able to offer funding to keep the student body diverse and highly qualified is very important.

How do you see SIPA's role in the world today?


SIPA is unique in a few ways. Obviously, its location at Columbia in New York City—one of the leading cities in the world—is very helpful and useful.

SIPA's interdisciplinary approach is so important for real-world problem-solving, which is what leaders and professionals need to do. It makes the School uniquely and exceptionally qualified to graduate students with the tools needed to succeed: analytical skills, historical perspective, rigorous economic thinking, and understanding of legal institutions.

In addition, SIPA attracts such a diverse student body. Very few institutions in the world are as diverse in terms of where students come from—an exceptional strength that is important to preserve. [🔗](#)

In light of improving conditions, Columbia University welcomed almost 200 new SIPA graduates, including Kaoru Nagasawa MPA '21 (*pictured*), to the University's Butler Lawn on April 29 to mark the occasion in person. Photo by Bruce Gilbert



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I'm passionate about environmental issues because they are the most complex ones facing humanity. After graduation I intend to work in the field of climate change policy. I'm grateful to receive a SIPA scholarship, which allows me to attend my dream school and develop deep knowledge in this sector.

Rishika Surya MIA '22

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For 75 years SIPA has been equipping students with the skills needed to transform the world. Support our diverse and committed students like Rishika by giving to student financial aid today at sipa.columbia.edu/annualfund.

