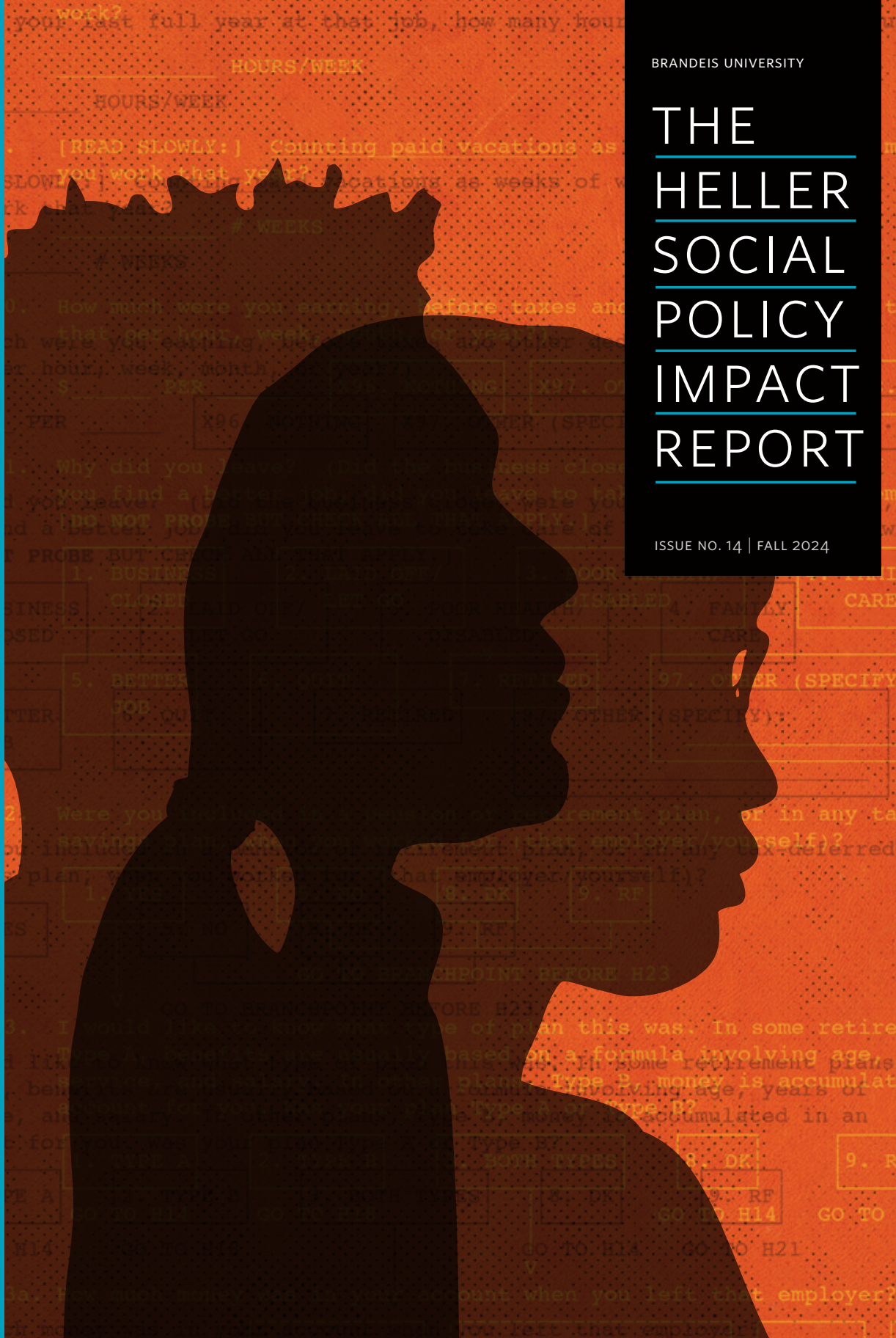

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

THE HELLER SOCIAL POLICY IMPACT REPORT

ISSUE NO. 14 | FALL 2024

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THE HELLER SOCIAL POLICY IMPACT REPORT

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2024 HELLER SOCIAL POLICY IMPACT REPORT

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When social inequities cause health inequities

RAJAN SONIK'S RESEARCH EXAMINES THE IMPACT OF SNAP BENEFITS ON HEALTH

BY SARAH LIPPERT

THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE Program (SNAP) is the largest anti-hunger program in the United States, serving nearly 2 million Americans in 2022 alone. Despite its proven success in reducing food hardships among recipients, the decades-old program has not been immune to ongoing debates around eligibility criteria and benefit amounts.

Given the strong evidence correlating food hardships to unfavorable, high-cost health care outcomes like emergency department visits and hospitalizations, the results of these debates may have significant implications for health care systems.

"It's hard to think of a social inequity that doesn't lead to a health inequity," Rajan Sonik, PhD'17, associate research professor at Heller, says. "Health care outcomes are also really critical, because they are an understandable, costly consequence of these inequities. That creates the opportunity to inform policy changes that a broader swath of stakeholders, beyond just the highest-level policymakers, will care about."

Sonik has spent the bulk of his career pursuing a practical understanding of how social policies operate to influence health care outcomes and disparities. He currently leads three ongoing research studies funded by the National Institutes of Health that examine these inequities and their potential implications. The studies take advantage of unique policy changes that allow deep inferences into the impact of increasing and decreasing SNAP amounts. More specifically, Sonik is analyzing the disproportionate impact of the program on racial and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

Sonik's longest-running study began in 2020 and continues to evaluate the effects of the wrongful loss of SNAP benefits on individuals and families. A SNAP system error led to a "natural experiment" that mistakenly and arbitrarily terminated SNAP for over 200,000 people, despite the recipients still being eligible for the support. For this project, Sonik is using SNAP data that has been linked with medical claims data, allowing him and his collaborators to assess the effects of these SNAP losses on preventive health care utilization, adverse clinical events, and health care expenditures.

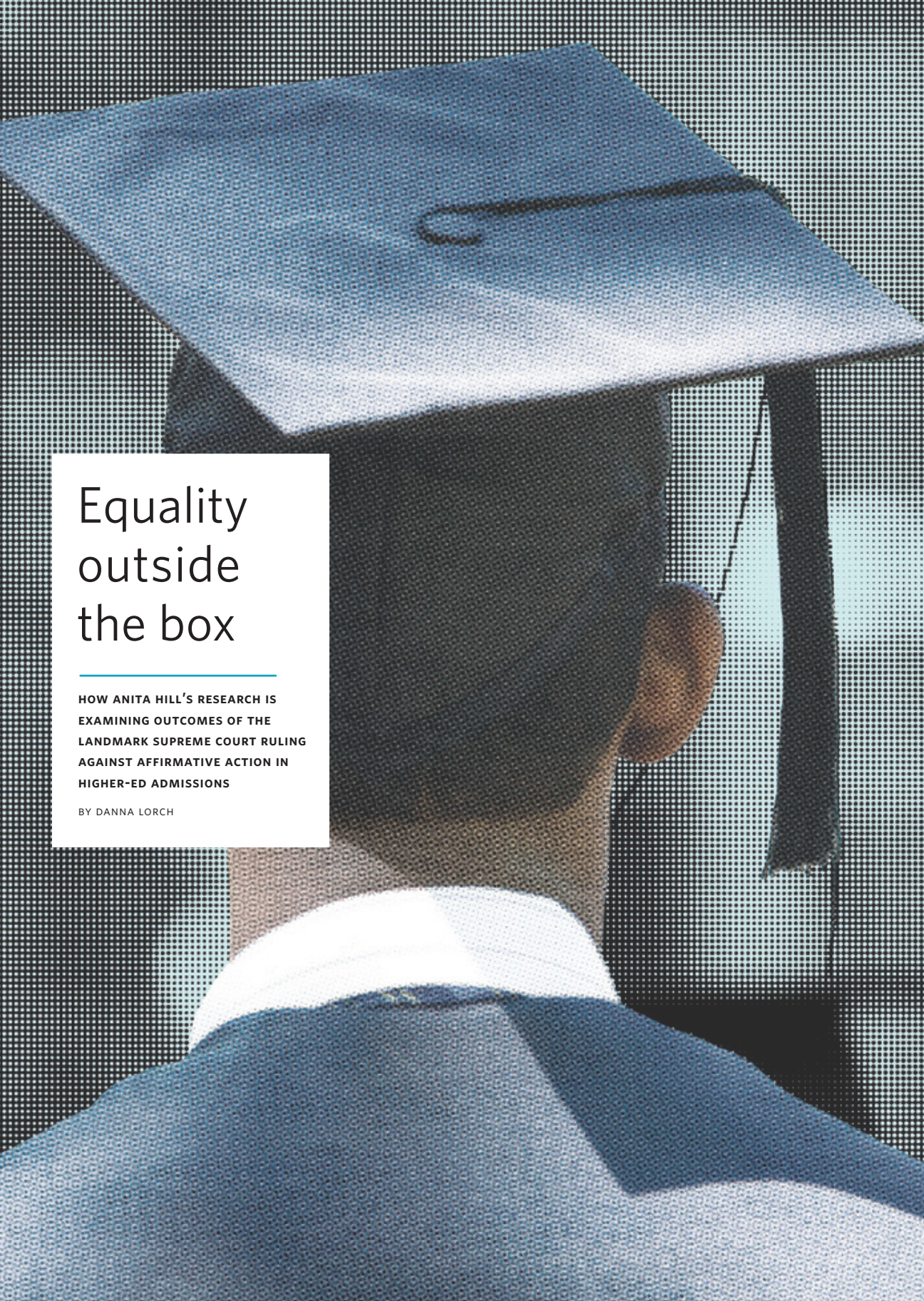
Concluding in 2028, the second and third studies will each investigate the effects of pandemic-related changes to SNAP and other social welfare programs. One leverages recipient-level differences in how the Families First Coronavirus Response Act increased benefits during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. The other leverages state-level variation in state-specific approaches to unwinding these benefit increases.

Sonik shares that preliminary data from all three studies suggest his initial hypothesis will be confirmed: SNAP losses are associated with worse health care outcomes, plus elevated disparities for racial and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

Another initial finding relates to how the effects of adding versus taking away benefits differ. "Giving more support appears to have measurable benefits, but the harm of removing benefits has been noticeably larger," Sonik says. "When somebody is living at a level of poverty to be eligible for these programs, pulling one thread like food support can unravel everything quickly, whereas undoing the damage of living with limited resources is likely a longer process."

Sonik's studies have potential implications at the local, state, and national levels in the short and long term. "One hope for this sort of research is for it to inform estimates of the financial impacts of proposed policy changes," Sonik says. "It can allow for informed analyses that do not simply assume 'giving fewer benefits saves money.' Instead, we will have rigorous data on how failing to address social ills like hunger will reverberate beyond the four corners of welfare programs — including in areas like health care costs and economic productivity."

Photo: Lindsey Nicholson/UCG/Universal Images Group via Getty Images



Equality outside the box

HOW ANITA HILL'S RESEARCH IS EXAMINING OUTCOMES OF THE LANDMARK SUPREME COURT RULING AGAINST AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN HIGHER-ED ADMISSIONS

BY DANNA LORCH

WHEN ANITA HILL RECEIVED A GRANT FROM THE Ford Foundation in 2019, she could not have imagined how higher education would radically shift in 2023. The award, titled Imagining Equality for the 21st Century, supported her work relating to the formation of independent working groups, the development of a related PhD-level seminar, and follow-up research.

"From the beginning, the idea was that 20th-century higher education has kept ideas about equality inside a box," Hill says. "Typically, equality issues in higher ed are only dealt with in terms of law. In addition to being a legal concept, equality is also a cultural concept, incorporating aspects of sociology and economic thought." Hill, University Professor of Social Policy; Law; and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and David R. Pokross Professor of Law and Social Policy at Heller, wanted to be able to teach about and research equality issues from a spectrum of intellectual perspectives.

For the first two years of the grant, Hill, a noted expert on gender, race, social policy, and legal history, ran the Social Welfare Tutorial, two graduate-level working groups with master's and PhD students. In 2020, with professor of politics Dan Kryder, she co-taught a Graduate School of Arts and Sciences-Heller PhD-level Social Justice and Democracy Seminar focused on combating gender-based violence through politics.

The course requirements began with a summer internship. Students gained impactful work experience at grassroots, community, and civil society organizations, including Survivors' Agenda and the Victim Rights Law Center. Of the cohort of six students, some wrote PhD dissertations related to the seminar's topic. Hill says, "Seeing students apply their research skills to the internships, engage with these topics in the classroom, and then go on to write their dissertations, was an effective way to keep people thinking about these issues."

The landmark June 29, 2023, Supreme Court ruling Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College and Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina et al. sent a shock wave not only through Hill's research focus but also through the wider higher education community. While the decision that affirmative action in college admissions was unconstitutional according to the Fourteenth Amendment intrinsically changed admissions, the wider applications of what became known simply as SFFA were arguably even more dramatic.

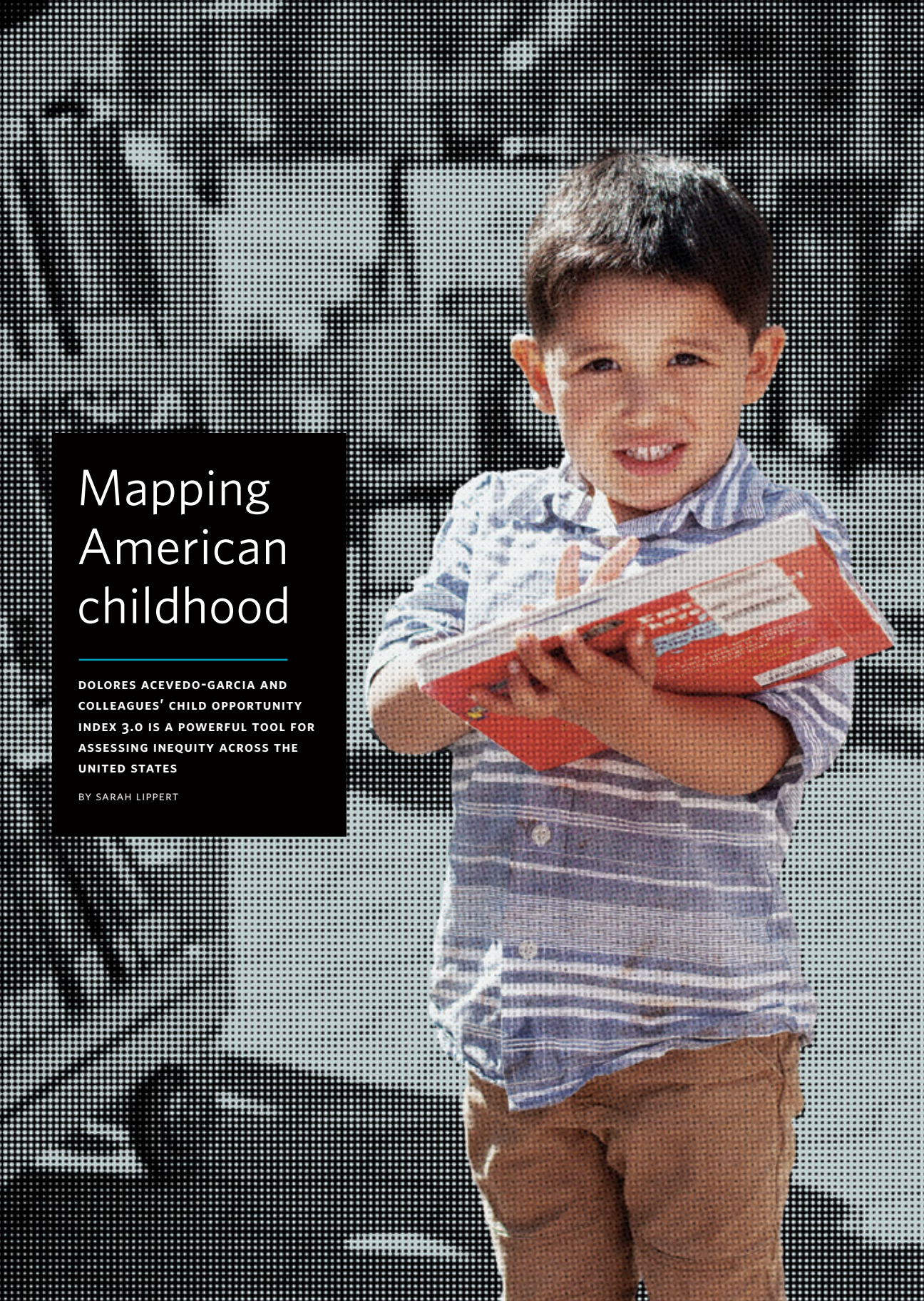
In fact, the topic of Heller's annual Joshua A. Guberman Lecture in 2024, which honored Hill as the speaker, was affirmative action and the future of education. Her talk shared initial research findings from her Ford Foundation grant (which by that point had received an extension through 2024).

She says, "I made a pivot as I was coming close to the end of this grant to start looking specifically at some outcomes triggered by the case becoming legislative policy at state levels and how that affected the day-to-day lives of ordinary people in colleges throughout the country."

Hill is currently examining how SFFA implementation will vary on a state level and whether it will in fact create a dual system of education. She speaks in detail to the case study of Texas and its decades-long legacy of discrimination in higher education institutions, most recently through Gov. Greg Abbott's signature on Senate Bill 17. The bill interprets the SFFA ruling to "prohibit state colleges and universities from practicing [any] forms of DEI," which has included campus affinity groups, diversity training, and related academic research.

"We have a whole generation of Black and brown people, as well as those who identify as women and LGBTQ folks, who have brought knowledge to universities that may very well now be banned," Hill says. "I'll monitor that shift for what it says about our educational system and the kinds of knowledge that students are graduating with and then taking out into our very diverse world, as well as for the impact the shift has on careers of scholars who produce the knowledge."

Photo: kickstand/Getty Images



Mapping American childhood

DOLORES ACEVEDO-GARCIA AND COLLEAGUES' CHILD OPPORTUNITY INDEX 3.0 IS A POWERFUL TOOL FOR ASSESSING INEQUITY ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

BY SARAH LIPPERT

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO A SAFE HOME, QUALITY education, and healthy food can change the trajectory of a child's life. These resources — plus others like air quality, economic opportunities, and a social safety net — help to foster comprehensive development more likely to result in healthy, productive adults.

Measuring and mapping the quality of these resources and conditions in neighborhoods across the U.S. for a decade, the Child Opportunity Index (COI) continues to be a powerful tool helping local and national organizations and governments evaluate children's access to these resources, as well as the inequities in their regions, and address the gaps head-on.

Dolores Acevedo-Garcia, the Samuel F. and Rose B. Gingold Professor of Human Development and Social Policy and director of the Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy (ICYFP) at Heller, spearheads diversitydatakids.org, an equity-focused research initiative dedicated to filling the gap in community-level data on social determinants of health and home of the COI. Acevedo-Garcia and her team of more than a dozen ICYFP and Heller colleagues released the first COI in 2014 and have just issued COI 3.0.

"The main driver of releasing new versions of the COI has been the incredible demand we've had from users of the index," says Acevedo-Garcia. "As organizations have begun to rely on the COI to guide their work and analyze their impact, the need for more comprehensive and current data has grown, and we're excited to be releasing new versions annually going forward."

The COI 3.0 includes critical new metrics, like access to broadband internet and prevalence of nonprofits. The importance of access to these two resources was underscored by the COVID-19 pandemic, when work and education became home-based and dependent on a functioning internet, and community resources from nonprofits became paramount.

Another key addition to diversitydatakids.org is the inclusion of historical data from the racist 1930s Home Owners' Loan Corporation neighborhood ratings, what has become known as redlining. These data illustrate the development of racially segregated neighborhoods and disinvestment in predominantly minority neighborhoods from nearly a century ago, and allow users to map and see correlations between those historic borders and the conditions in today's neighborhoods as measured by the COI.

"What we're seeing is that neighborhoods redlined in the 1930s tend to have much lower child opportunity and life expectancy, even today," says Acevedo-Garcia. "This reinforces our previous findings that the patterns of inequities that the COI highlight have been driven by racist policy decisions, and that we have to continue to raise awareness about the extent of the inequities children are facing."

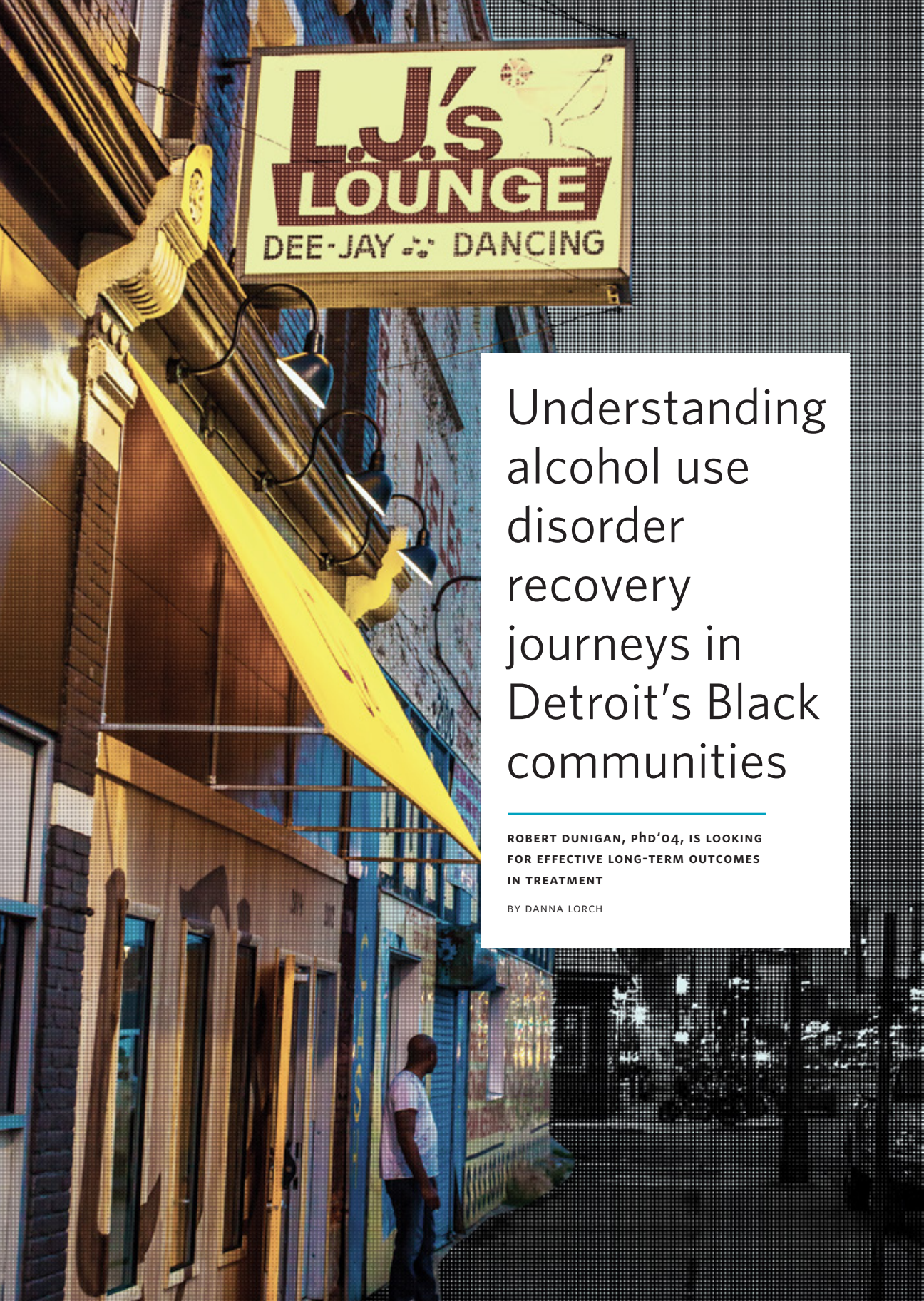
The extent of interest and wide range of applications of the COI are exciting outcomes that Acevedo-Garcia couldn't have predicted a decade ago. Users include large-scale organizations such as the Chicago Department of Public Health, the Children's Hospital Association (representing 220 children's hospitals across the country), and local organizations utilizing the data to drive impact.

The Little Read Wagon, a literacy initiative from the San Antonio Public Library, uses COI data to identify which neighborhoods to visit for its "Let's Play" events. These events allow young children to pick out new books to keep.

These utilization successes have led to the first state bill that "names the COI explicitly in the legislation." Passed in California in 2022, the bill prioritizes racial equity and economic justice in the expansion of early childhood programs and uses the COI as one of the neighborhood-level evaluation tools.

For Acevedo-Garcia, who has spent decades studying the ways that structural racial inequality impacts inequities in place-based social determinants of health, the widespread use of COI 3.0 is a testament to her commitment and that of her colleagues to this important work.

Photo: Poudre Libraries/Flickr



Understanding alcohol use disorder recovery journeys in Detroit's Black communities

ROBERT DUNIGAN, PHD'04, IS LOOKING FOR EFFECTIVE LONG-TERM OUTCOMES IN TREATMENT

BY DANNA LORCH

MORE THAN 4.5% OF AFRICAN AMERICANS grapple with alcohol use disorder, an addiction that tears apart their lives and sense of self-worth. Yet their recovery trajectories have rarely been researched in depth, and the few studies that do exist compare small samples of Black people to larger samples of white people, and provide little insight into the experiences of African Americans involved with substance use and recovery.

Senior research associate and lecturer Robert Dunigan, PhD'04, has built his academic career on changing that dynamic by developing strong relationships with institutions and organizations serving primarily people of color. Previously, Dunigan was a social worker who supported adults profoundly affected by mental illness and addiction. "I was serving a very diverse population and fell in love with them and the work," he says.

Dunigan initially entered the MSW program at Boston College, aspiring to have a leadership role in his job but unexpectedly discovering a propensity and a passion for research, which led him to the Heller PhD program. He is currently a co-investigator on Understanding Pathways to Wellness and Alcohol Recovery in Detroit, known as the UPWARD study.

Funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, UPWARD is a partnership between Heller's Institute for Behavioral Health and the Detroit Recovery Project, a nonprofit providing Black-majority populations with outpatient recovery-support services for substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders.

The study aims to define what recovery means to Black communities, how it can be measured, and how to advance recovery journeys. From the very beginning, the Detroit Recovery Project staff were included as UPWARD co-investigators, and the populations they serve were briefed on the project through a community advisory board and regular briefings.

Many previous studies on polysubstance use and recovery reduce those struggling with substance use down to their addictions rather than taking a whole-person perspective. The initial phase of the UPWARD study involved 37 in-depth interviews that took a qualitative-first approach.

Dunigan explains, "We interviewed an all-African American population, asking individuals about not only their backgrounds but also what engaged them and retained them in recovery. In other words, which methods and factors work."

While Dunigan and his colleagues went into the study with the assumption that they would hear about more polysubstance use with drugs rather than alcohol, the interviews revealed otherwise: The majority of their participants' entry substance was alcohol.

"I was surprised by how many folks talked about beginning alcohol use at an early age," Dunigan says. "It had a lot to do with availability. The corner liquor store. Access to alcohol within the home. A lot had to do with dealing with issues around poverty, trauma, and colorism."

For example, one young woman described how when she was in middle school, she was looked down on by her peers for the color of her skin and her figure. "She didn't have the phenotype associated with attractiveness. She used alcohol to numb the pain beginning in junior high school," Dunigan notes.

He and his Heller colleagues, including principal investigator Sharon Reif, PhD'02, with whom he's collaborated since their graduate school days, as well as a team of research associates, presented their findings at three conferences in 2024. They shared their initial results on a poster at the National Conference on Addiction Recovery Science.

Launching in fall 2024, phase two of the UPWARD study will analyze the interviews to identify different groups based on their pathways through recovery, letting the qualitative analysis guide the quantitative, reviewing respondents' experiences, and looking for emerging trends and patterns in long-term outcomes.

Photo: Thomas Hawk/Flickr

Included in the conversation

TWO NEW PATIENT-CENTERED RESEARCH INITIATIVES LED BY KAREN DONELAN EXAMINE WAYS TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR AMERICA'S AGING POPULATION

BY SARAH LIPPERT

IN 2022, PEOPLE AGE 65 AND OLDER REPRESENTED 17% of the American population. By 2040, that number is expected to grow to 22%, or 78 million Americans. Addressing the needs of older Americans means more than just studying the hospitals and long-term care facilities that serve them; it also means including their families and caregivers as part of the process. Ironically, one facet is often overlooked: patients' individual opinions and wishes.

"As people age, they often feel like everyone wants to make the decisions for them and no one wants to listen to them. They feel disrespected because they move, talk, or process things more slowly," says Karen Donelan, Stuart H. Altman Chair in U.S. Health Policy at Heller. "The majority of people served by our health care systems and hospitals are older adults, but they're largely cared for by people who are younger."

Donelan, along with Heller researchers Jennifer Perloff, PhD'06, and Carie Michael, and a team of experts and graduate students, is co-directing two multiyear studies at Brandeis funded by the Washington, D.C.-based Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute.

The first study, the Evaluating Novel Healthcare Approaches to Nurturing and Caring for Hospitalized Elders (ENHANCE) trial, led by researchers at Hebrew SeniorLife and the University of Michigan, began in March 2023. It introduces an additional element to engaging families and caregivers in the prevention and treatment of delirium, a sudden change in mental status marked by confusion and lack of awareness of one's surroundings, commonly experienced by older adults. ENHANCE compares the standard implementation of the Hospital Elder Life Program, an effective and established clinical protocol whose overall goal is to prevent falls, shorten hospital stays, and decrease the need for nursing home care after discharge, with an adapted version in which family members and caregivers help to implement some of the program's components.

"The study will be introducing more structure during family and caregiver visits," says Donelan. "In terms of outcomes, we are measuring both the symptoms of delirium in the patient and the caregiver's experience."

The second study, Supporting Practices in Respecting Elders (SPIRE), is a collaboration with Massachusetts General Hospital, and takes a comparative look at what happens when an intervention is introduced to an existing primary care delivery model for older adults. SPIRE will partner with accountable care organizations' primary care practices across the country to evaluate the impact of adding the Geriatric Resources for Assessment and Care of Elders model to Medicare annual wellness visits, including at-home assessments by nurse practitioners and social workers.

In keeping with the idea of improving results for those giving and receiving care, SPIRE will not only measure patient-related outcomes, like preventing hospitalizations and enhancing the patient experience in primary care, but also include surveying caregivers and primary care practices to assess whether the at-home model decreases the overall strain placed on caregivers in the medical system.

"We are consciously embedding these studies within systems and engaging all the players who have a stake in the outcome. When you include people in the conversation, you're already having an impact," Donelan says.

Research staff members work with stakeholders throughout both studies — allowing for real-time adjustments to improve processes — to provide support, particularly for patients and caregivers, to be heard, seen, and understood. The national SPIRE team will meet in late 2024 on the Brandeis campus to share their findings.

Donelan and her team hope for the outcomes of ENHANCE and SPIRE to reach far beyond gathering data and interpreting it; ultimately, she believes that "health policy needs to follow our humanity, not the other way around."

Photo: Jason Armond/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images

Building the next generation of scholars

LISA LYNCH IS CO-DIRECTING A REMARKABLE MULTI-INSTITUTION COLLABORATION PROMOTING EQUITY IN RETIREMENT, DISABILITY, AND HEALTH

BY DANNA LORCH

"AT BRANDEIS, WE SUCCEED WHEN WE collaborate," says Lisa Lynch, Maurice B. Hexter Professor of Social and Economic Policy at Heller.

Though it just celebrated its first anniversary, the Retirement and Disability Research Consortium center (one of six national entities), which Lynch co-directs, is already making an impact in the field.

The center supports interdisciplinary research, evaluation, data development, and training and education on retirement and disability policy. Funded by the Social Security Administration with a renewable five-year cooperative agreement, it is a true collaboration among four institutions: Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management; the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; the University of Baltimore; and the employee-owned consulting firm Westat.

"Both of our university partners are minority-serving institutions," Lynch explains. "As an R1 institution, Brandeis brings the ability to secure large government grants, and they bring a true partnership with a more diverse group of collaborators and researchers."

By providing an innovative, transdisciplinary, multisite training and education collaboration, the center is dedicated to developing the next generation of scholars who focus on retirement and disability, working on a wide array of topics and applying different methodological approaches.

"We are trying to build a more representative population of scholars. The discourse is different when you change who is in the room having that conversation in the first place," Lynch explains.

That begins with making graduate work financially accessible. In August, the center announced its first round of dissertation grants for doctoral candidates researching retirement, health, and disability-related issues. Four of these awards went to Heller doctoral students.

In the summer of 2024, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and the University of Baltimore offered a program to their undergraduates that concentrated on recent research on retirement and disability policy. "These research areas might not be something that organically comes to mind for a young person. We hope that programs like this will expand and change who enters the graduate student pipeline," Lynch says.

The center has also launched nine research studies in the past year, five of which are based at the Heller School. Although still in the preliminary phases, technical working papers presenting initial findings will be forthcoming in the fall of 2024. The five Heller-based projects include principal investigators Cindy Thomas, PhD'00; Alexandra Piñeros-Shields, PhD'07; Sangeeta Tyagi, PhD'93, and Marji Warfield, PhD'91; Miriam Heyman and Monika Mitra; and Lisa Lynch and Monica Galizzi.

"An overarching theme of our Heller projects is a focus on the inequities experienced by minorities and other marginalized populations in SSA's retirement and disability programs," Lynch says. "In my project with UMass Lowell professor Galizzi, we are exploring how vulnerable workers use Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance, and how contingent work and workplace injuries are associated with disparities in retirement preparedness."

In addition to launching a quarterly newsletter to share updates and findings, the center is also building a community advisory panel that includes people who represent the groups being researched.

"All of these stakeholders will broaden the discourse when it comes to how the research is imagined," Lynch says. "We have experience taking our research and putting it into policy. The structure of the Retirement and Disability Research Consortium centers is such that we are in dialogue with the Social Security Administration to ensure that the research we produce is of use and accessible to policymakers, researchers, stakeholder organizations, and the general public."

Photo: Bianca Jordan/Unsplash

RESEARCH IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Antisemitism on campus: New studies reveal the state of perception

When the Israel-Hamas war first began to stir up complex feelings around the globe, college campuses throughout the U.S. quickly became glaring hot spots of debate, clashing viewpoints, and increasingly antisemitic rhetoric. Now, two studies from the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies — "In the Shadow of War" and "Drawing the Line" — illuminate perceptions of the roiling atmosphere of antisemitism found across America's higher education landscape.

"Both studies showed huge cross-campus variation in Jewish students' perceptions of hostility," says author and associate research scientist Graham Wright, MPP'15, PhD'16, adding that Jewish students' perceptions of hostility on campus were much higher in 2023 than they were in 2016. "They saw much more hostility at some campuses than others, and in many cases the campuses where they perceived high levels of hostility in 2023 were the same ones where they perceived higher hostility in 2016."

The research — co-authored with Leonard Saxe, Klutznick Professor of Contemporary Jewish Studies and director of the Cohen Center — emphasizes the importance of understanding Jewish students' perspectives on antisemitism, as variations in those perspectives make defining antisemitism a moving target, especially in this heated environment. The research emphasizes that while most Jewish students view certain anti-Israel statements as antisemitic, they maintain a capacity for nuanced criticism of Israeli policies, demonstrating the need for careful consideration in campus debate.

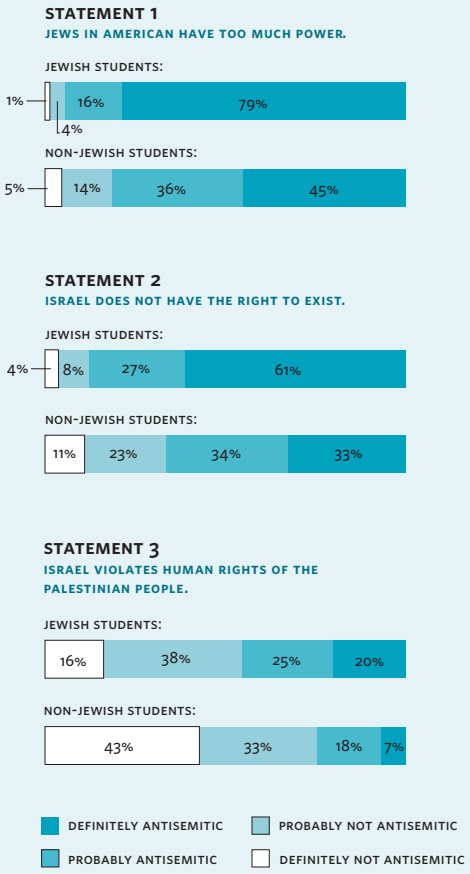
"Having this information can help faculty or administrators understand how Jewish students are likely to respond to different events or ideas," says Wright, "or allow them to facilitate productive discussions about why Jewish students feel this way."

Wright advocates for a measured approach to these challenging topics: "We shouldn't be afraid to admit that we don't know all the answers, that there might be shades of nuance we don't yet appreciate, and that we might have something to learn from those who think differently." ■

FROM "IN THE SHADOW OF WAR"

What students think about antisemitism

To understand the context of anti-Jewish hostility on the 60 campuses included in the study, all respondents were shown statements about Jews and Israel and asked whether or not they felt the statements were antisemitic. The spring 2024 findings suggest that Jewish and non-Jewish students have a relatively nuanced understanding of when and how statements about Israel "cross the line" into antisemitism.



Innovative approaches to HIV prevention and resource allocation in Africa

Heller School researchers are developing a groundbreaking method for studying the links between HIV prevention and treatment, and the disease's economic impact in Africa, with potential applications for the United States.

Allyala Krishna Nandakumar, director of the Institute for Global Health and Development at Heller, and William Crown, a distinguished research scientist, along with senior research scientist Gary Gaumer, have recently published three papers on the approach, which stems from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy-President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the world's largest program addressing the HIV pandemic.

"There is a relatively small literature that has examined the economic impacts of HIV treatment and prevention," says Crown, adding that much of the literature has focused on the impact of HIV interventions on mortality. "And almost no studies have examined PEPFAR's specific impacts on public health and economic outcomes."

To fill that gap, Nandakumar and Crown's research has produced a comprehensive model that links individual behavioral responses to HIV interventions with demographic projections and economic impacts while evaluating the effects of PEPFAR on all-cause mortality, maternal and child health, as well as economic and educational outcomes. By simulating these responses and their cumulative effects at the national level, the model provides a more nuanced and accurate picture of the impact of public health initiatives like PEPFAR, with implications beyond Africa — and possibly beyond HIV.

"Even though Africa and the U.S. are very different in the epidemiology of HIV disease transmission, as well as their economic systems, our approach of linking a simulation model of behavioral response to public health interventions with demographic projections and economic impacts is very general," Crown says. "In fact, the approach should translate to the evaluation of almost any public health intervention. Perhaps if we had had such a capability with COVID-19, we could have reduced many of the significant negative impacts of policy responses on our educational systems and the economy." ■

... shifting the mentoring model in medical schools from a hierarchical, one-on-one format to a peer-based group setting could help improve the well-being of medical faculty.

LINDA POLOLI
INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC AND RACIAL EQUITY

➤ Improving vitality among medical school faculty

Medical school faculty occupy some of the most sought-after positions in academia, but research shows that an alarming number of them feel burned-out, overstressed, and disconnected from their colleagues. It's a problem with far-reaching consequences, says Linda Pololi, a distinguished research scientist at Heller's Institute for Economic and Racial Equity, because these faculty members are responsible for training the next generation of doctors, conducting research that leads to medical breakthroughs, and providing patient care. When they leave academia, "it impacts our whole health care system," she says.

Pololi, who founded Brandeis' National Initiative on Gender, Culture, and Leadership in Medicine (known as C-Change) in 2006, has spent her career developing ways to reverse this trend. A survey she developed with C-Change, now considered by many the gold standard by which institutional culture and inclusion are measured at medical schools, has been administered to more than 46,000 faculty across 116 organizations. This past year, the National Institutes of Health adopted the survey for its nationwide initiative to improve both morale and diversity among the academic and research workforce.

Pololi has long believed that shifting the mentoring model in medical schools from a hierarchical, one-on-one format to a peer-based group setting could help improve the well-being of medical faculty. Through the C-Change Mentoring and Leadership Institute, she embarked on a five-year, NIH-funded study that brought diverse peer groups together for highly structured, facilitated sessions focused on relationship-building, values-alignment, and self-reflection. Pololi and her colleagues published the initial results of the study this spring, in which participants reported the benefits of the sessions, including improved vitality (a term that encompasses both motivation and enthusiasm), as well as a heightened appreciation for ethnic, racial, and gender diversity.

"Traditional mentoring is hard to find and variable in results, whereas we've found that the group peer model is reliably effective for almost everybody," says Pololi. "It works because it meets people's humanistic needs, and we all have those." ■

"We still have too many Americans who are uninsured, the cost of health care is too high, and the access to care is uneven around the country."

STUART ALTMAN
SCHNEIDER INSTITUTES FOR HEALTH POLICY AND RESEARCH

➤ Three decades of transforming U.S. health policy

THE PRINCETON CONFERENCE, LED BY RENOWNED EXPERT STUART ALTMAN, CONTINUES TO MAKE MAJOR IMPACT

From the expansion of Medicaid to key tenets of the Affordable Care Act to the concept of Accountable Care Organizations, some of the most significant ideas in U.S. health policy have emerged from one place: the Princeton Conference.

That's thanks to the leadership of Stuart Altman, the Heller School's Sol C. Chaikin Professor of National Health Policy and co-director of the Schneider Institutes for Health Policy and Research, who has advised five U.S. presidents.

"Stuart's reputation precedes him," says conference director and associate dean for academics Michael Doonan, PhD'02. "He brings together the sharpest minds on the latest, most innovative policy in the health field."

Founded 30 years ago by the late Princeton University professor Uwe Reinhardt to analyze then-president Bill Clinton's health reform plan, the conference was turned over to Altman in 1996 by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the founding sponsor. "It was an exciting opportunity," Altman says.

The invitation-only conference draws some 150 participants, including researchers and analysts from universities and research organizations, state and federal officials, and health care industry leaders. Speakers have ranged from U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy to Heller graduates like Audrey Shelto, MMHS'82, president and CEO of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation.

"What separates it from other conferences is that anyone in the audience could be a presenter — and probably has been," says Doonan. "That's what makes people want to go."

Discussion topics include the benefits and drawbacks of Medicare Advantage programs and the shortage of providers for mental health and primary care. Many publications have come out of the conference, including *Health Affairs* pieces on prescription drug pricing, hospital consolidation, and alternative payment systems.

In an era of rampant partisanship, the conference draws from both sides of the aisle. "It's important that different voices be heard," Altman says.

He's proud of what the conference has achieved — but he knows more work remains.

"We still have too many Americans who are uninsured, the cost of health care is too high, and the access to care is uneven around the country," says Altman. "The Princeton Conference is as important today as it was in 1994." ■

➤ Creating new paths for addiction care

MASSACHUSETTS MOBILE PROGRAM TO TREAT OPIOID USE DISORDER IS SUCCESSFUL, EVALUATION FINDS

For the 2.3 million people in the United States who have opioid use disorder (OUD), finding safe, stigma-free, evidence-based treatments isn't easy, especially when many also struggle with housing insecurity, lack of health insurance, and unreliable transportation.

Enter the Mobile Addiction Services Program, funded by the commonwealth's Bureau of Substance Addiction Services and the Kraft Center for Community Health at Massachusetts General Hospital, which sends clinical providers and harm reduction specialists in vans into some of the hardest-hit communities across Massachusetts.

"There's a huge treatment gap for OUD, and this could be a way to reach people outside the brick-and-mortar system," says professor Dominic Hodgkin, who led the Heller School team that evaluated this four-year program, an expansion of a 2018 pilot called Community Care in Reach.

Deployed to Boston, Fall River, Worcester, and Springfield, the vans parked near pharmacies so the providers could prescribe buprenorphine or naltrexone and patients could quickly fill their prescriptions. The mobile units also offered primary care services such as wound care, vaccinations, and health screenings.

The mobile units logged more than 30,000 visits between January 2022 and April 2024, an average of nearly three encounters each service hour, a remarkably high rate, says research scientist Cynthia Tschampl, PhD'15. Even when vans broke down, providers borrowed vehicles or offered services on foot. "The dedication of these teams cannot be overstated," she says.

Research scientist Margot Davis, PhD'08, led qualitative interviews and observations of the clinical staff, who reported safety and burnout concerns due to the nature of the work in high-risk areas. Staff members also said they hope to get full-time drivers so they can focus on treatment as well as easier ways to enter data and prescribe medication.

The Mobile Addiction Services Program has been renewed and expanded for another three years. Looking forward, the Heller team hopes to examine the program's financial viability as well as the feasibility of "graduating" patients to traditional medical offices for their care.

Overall, the effort has been "really, really successful," says Davis. "There's no wrong door to treatment. The more options there are available, the more likely people are to access them at some point." ■

2.3
MILLION

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➤ Using community-generated indicators to inform peacebuilding and social justice initiatives

For people across the globe who are experiencing the devastating consequences of violence, international aid can be a lifesaving way to respond to conflict and achieve peacebuilding and reconciliation goals. To determine the effectiveness of such aid, Everyday Peace Indicators (EPI), an initiative co-founded by Heller associate professor Pamina Firchow, utilizes mixed-methods research to collect data and investigate alternative, bottom-up measures of peace in local communities affected by conflict. These everyday indicators reveal local priorities, and can increase the impact of program and policy design, monitoring, and evaluation for civil society organizations and government agencies.

With over 17,000 indicators collected from nine countries, EPI's database has been used to inform more than 35 publications and influence national and international discussions. EPI's partners and funders, including the United Nations, United States Agency for International Development, National Science Foundation, United States Institute of Peace (USIP), and Humanity United, reflect the widespread adoption and impact of "everyday peace." Search for Common Ground, one of the world's largest dedicated peacebuilding organizations, currently uses EPI to form the basis of the first pillar of the organization's "Peace Impact Framework." In 2019, the United States Institute of Peace awarded EPI the biggest grant in USIP's history for carrying out research on the local reception of transitional justice institutions in Colombia after the signing of the 2016 peace accord.

"By leveraging the everyday peace indicators methodology, we are able to emphasize local understandings and practices of peace, capturing nuanced, everyday experiences that standard indicators often overlook," says Firchow. "This method promotes inclusivity and a deeper, more authentic understanding of peace and conflict dynamics within and across specific communities." ■

WITH OVER

17,000

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9

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35

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... people with disabilities were more likely to drink at problematic levels than people without disabilities.

SHARON REIF, PhD'02
INSTITUTE FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

➤ Investigating the intersection of disability and alcohol use

Over the past two decades, the United States has seen a concerning increase in alcohol-related harms and mortality, yet addiction research has generally overlooked people with disabilities, a significant health disparity population. To address this gap in knowledge, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism has awarded the Institute for Behavioral Health (IBH) at Heller and the Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) a $3.4 million grant to investigate alcohol use, health consequences, and access to treatment among people with disabilities compared to those without disabilities. Insights from the study will be leveraged to improve access and quality of addiction treatment based on a more comprehensive understanding of how the disability community is affected by alcohol-related problems.

IBH professor Sharon Reif, PhD'02, and longtime collaborator Rachel Sayko Adams, PhD'13, research associate professor at BUSPH, are the principal investigators on this project. Reif and Adams previously collaborated, along with researchers at IBH and the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy at Heller, on the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research-funded study — Intersecting Research on Opioid Misuse, Addiction, and Disability Services (INROADS) — which set the foundation for this work.

During the first INROADS study, Reif and Adams led research publications that revealed that while people with disabilities were more likely to abstain from alcohol, among current drinkers, people with disabilities were more likely to drink at problematic levels than people without disabilities. They also found that experiencing a traumatic brain injury made people more vulnerable to prescription opioid misuse and opioid-related consequences.

Reif says, "Our goal is not only to enhance care and treatment options for people with disabilities at risk for addiction but to reduce stigma and discrimination around the intersection of disability and addiction. This grant offers an important opportunity to reduce disparities in addiction treatment and, ultimately, result in fewer people with disabilities experiencing harms related to alcohol use." ■

Using DEA to investigate efficiency in coronary artery bypass surgery

In the United States, cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death and disability as well as a major economic burden. One of the most common and successful treatments, coronary artery bypass graft, also happens to be one of the most profitable hospital procedures. To examine the efficiency and efficacy of these programs and procedures, the late Heller professor Jon Chilingerian and Mitchell Glavin, PhD'01, co-authored the retrospective and exploratory study, "Evaluating Cardiac Surgeon Performance," published in 2024 by *International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology.*

Using 2003-04 data that built upon earlier work with 1994-95 statistics, these researchers demonstrated the consistency and stability of Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) efficiency scores across consecutive years at the individual surgeon level. The results indicated factors associated with higher efficiency of surgeons, including the percentage of physicians paid via salary and admissions for open-heart surgeries/ total admissions at the surgeon's primary hospital. The results support the benefits of including enhanced organizational capabilities, strategic focus or product specialization, physician-hospital alignment, continuing education for physicians, and experience in future research work.

"Jon was a global thought leader in employing DEA, particularly in regard to assessing the efficiency and performance of the providers of health care services," says Glavin. "The results of this study were the culmination of research efforts, and suggest both tighter hospital-physician relationships and a stronger focus on cardiac surgery in a hospital promote higher efficiency."

Chilingerian, who passed away in 2023, also co-edited "The New Science of Medicine and Management: A Comprehensive, Case-Based Guide for Clinical Leaders," published posthumously by Springer Nature later that year. The book of case studies was developed out of the Heller Executive MBA for Physicians program, which Chilingerian founded, and serves as an exploration of what physician leaders need to know and do to fix problems and improve efficiency in complex health care environments. ■

"There are so many interesting ways of engaging and connecting with people that honor their backgrounds, cultural characteristics, and preferences."

JOANNE NICHOLSON
INSTITUTE FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Bridging the gap between researchers and mothers with behavioral health issues

For mothers of all ages and backgrounds, being pregnant and giving birth can bring about or worsen mental health challenges like anxiety or depression, or substance use disorders that put their health, and the health of their families, at risk. As the co-creator of the Maternal Mental Health Research Collaborative (MMHRC) at Heller's Institute for Behavioral Health, psychologist and professor Joanne Nicholson is helping researchers understand these issues by engaging mothers more effectively in their work.

With funding from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, Nicholson has built a diverse community of mothers experiencing difficulties, including mental health conditions, substance misuse, and intellectual and developmental disabilities, and engaged them in open conversations around research priorities and practices. Her findings have helped increasing numbers of mothers feel confident in their ability to contribute to research studies while simultaneously forming the basis for a community engagement tool kit and practices that are now being used by researchers around the world.

"There are so many interesting ways of engaging and connecting with people that honor their backgrounds, cultural characteristics, and preferences," says Nicholson. "While it might make some researchers uncomfortable by engaging with and understanding what outcomes matter to people, you're more likely to be proposing feasible studies and coming up with findings that are relevant, meaningful, and can make a real difference."

Recently, MMHRC partnered with the Institute for Exceptional Care (IEC) to identify preferred health outcomes among people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with the goal of developing new quality metrics for insurance companies to use when assessing health care providers. The project relied upon effective community engagement to develop solutions that are "practical, respectful of people, and that make work easier for health care professionals," says IEC president and CEO Dr. Mai Pham. "Joanne and the MMHRC are so deeply experienced in methods of engagement — the project would not have been nearly as impactful without their partnership." ■

PUBLICATIONS

Thomas Shapiro, Sylvia Stewart, MPP'18, Irma J. Zamarripa '21, MPP'23, Tauren Nelson, Moriah King, and **Lisa Thorn, MPP'23,** contributed to "Tending Repair: Pigford Farmers, Justice, and the Future of Farming." The report, published in April 2024, details findings from The Pigford Project, a research initiative between the Institute for Economic and Racial Equity and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives. In "Tending Repair," claimants and descendants of the landmark 1997 *Pigford v. Glickman* class-action lawsuit share their stories and vision for a just future in agriculture.

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Friedmann, P.D., Jawa, R., Wilson, D., Ramsey, S.E., Hoskinson, R. Jr, McKenzie, M., Walley, A.Y., **Green, T.C.,** Bratberg, J., and Rich, J.D. (2023). "Prescribe to Save Lives: An Intervention to Increase Naloxone Prescribing Among HIV Clinicians." *Journal of Addiction Medicine.* 17(5), pp. 598-603.

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GRANTS

Pamela Joshi, PhD'01, and PhD candidate **Elizabeth Wong** have been awarded an Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Head Start Dissertation Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. The grant program supports dissertation research that will inform policy and practice for low-income children and families. Joshi and Wong are serving as co-principal investigators on their research study, "Providing Child Care in a 24/7 Economy: A Mixed-Methods Study of the Supply of Nontraditional Hour Care in the Child Care Subsidy System."

Dolores Acevedo-Garcia (PI) "diversitydatakids.org: Transforming Data Systems to Increase Equity"; Funder: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Ilhom Akobirshoev (PI) "Evaluation and Quality Control Within the National Core Indicators"; Funder: Human Services Research Institute; subcontract to Brandeis from National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services

Mary Brolin (PI), Gail Strickler, Mindy D'Ippolito, Robert Dunigan, Meelee Kim, Margaret Lee, Cynthia Tschampl, Jennifer Wicks "CSAT Umbrella Evaluation Contract Program Evaluation"; Funder: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); subcontract to Brandeis from Eagle Technologies, Inc.

Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld (PI) "Heller Social Impact Case Collection"; Funder: Doris Duke Foundation

Karen Donelan (PI) "Advancing Gender and Income Equity in Financial Planning for Women as They Age"; Funder: Jewish Healthcare Foundation

Robert Dunigan (PI) "First Responders — Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act Grant Evaluation"; Funder: SAMHSA; subcontract to Brandeis from Plymouth County District Attorney's Office, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Pamina Firchow (PI) "Colombia Peacebuilding Impact Evaluation Services for the Inter-American Foundation"; Funder: Bureau of the Fiscal Service

Traci Green (PI) "Network One: New England Community Drug Checking Innovations Network"; Funder: RIZE Massachusetts

Pamela Joshi (PI) "Developing Strategies to Increase Hispanic Workers' Access to and Use of Paid Family Medical Leave"; Funder: WorkRise

Meelee Kim (PI) "LifeBridge National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative Evaluation"; Funder: SAMHSA; subcontract to Brandeis from LifeBridge Community Services, Inc.

Andrew Kolodny (PI) "The Impact of Pharmaceutical Industry Messaging on the Opioid Crisis Among U.S. Military Veterans"; Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; subcontract to Brandeis from NDRI-USA, Inc.

Lisa Lynch (PI) "Promoting Equity in Social Security Programs Across the Lifespan: A Research Consortium on Promoting Equity in Retirement, Disability, and Health"; Funder: Social Security Administration; subcontract to Brandeis from University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Joanne Nicholson (PI) "Building Bridges With Mothers With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Behavioral Health Conditions"; Funder: Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)

Jennifer Perloff (PI), Christine Bishop, Michael Vetter "3iHome — Assessing the Return on Investment for Enhanced Case Management"; Funder: 3i Housing of Maine

Jennifer Perloff (PI), Karen Donelan "Annual Wellness Visits vs. GRACE-Augmented Annual Wellness Visits for Older Adults With High Health Needs"; Funder: PCORI; subcontract to Brandeis from Massachusetts General Hospital/Partners

Kate Giapponi Schneider (PI) "2023 Coordinated Evaluations of Child Care and Development Fund Policies and Initiatives"; Funder: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; subcontract to Brandeis from Boston University

Thomas Shapiro (PI) "Scaling Children's Savings Accounts"; Funder: Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Donald Shepard (PI) "Vermont Center on Behavior and Health"; Funder: National Institutes of Health (NIH); subcontract to Brandeis from University of Vermont

Rajan Sonik (PI) "Effects of Income Supplements on 30-Day Readmissions for Vulnerable Older Adults"; Funder: NIH; subcontract to Brandeis from University of Southern California

Rajan Sonik (PI) "Effects of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program on Racial/Ethnic and Disability-Based Healthcare Disparities"; Funder: NIH

Rajan Sonik (PI) "Unwinding Pandemic-Era Social Programs: Effects on Health Care Outcomes and Disparities"; Funder: NIH

Cynthia Tschampl (PI) "Berkshire Post-Overdose Program Evaluation"; Funder: U.S. Department of Justice; subcontract to Brandeis from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Cynthia Tschampl (PI) "Pharmacy Dispensing of Methadone Business Models"; Funder: Pew Charitable Trusts

Sangeeta Tyagi (PI) "Institutional Capacity Development Support for Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions"; Funder: USAID Bureau for Global Health; subcontract to Brandeis from Amref Health Africa

Anne Valentine (PI) "Evaluation of Disabled Persons Protection Commission Adult Protective Services"; Funder: Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTATIONS

In March 2024, **Andrew Kolodny** gave a presentation on "Increasing Trends in Opioid Prescribing and Opioid-Related Public Health Harms in Northern, Western, and Central Europe" at the 67th Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna, Austria. His presentation included a discussion of factors that have contributed to increases in opioid prescribing in Europe and lessons that can be learned from the North American opioid crisis.

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

Assan, J.K. "Institutionalization of Evaluation in Ghana: Evaluation Utilization in Policymaking for Sustainable Development." Keynote presented at panel, "Evaluation Utilization in Policymaking," Annual Conference of Evaluation in the Global South, College of Public Policy, King Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar, November 2023.

Hill, A. "Believing: The First Step to Change." Jing Lyman Lecture. Sponsored by Clayman Institute for Gender Research, Stanford University, Stanford, California, January 2024.

Joshi, P. "Closing the Opportunity Gap for Young Children." Keynote presented to the American Institutes for Research, May 2024.

Kolodny, A. "Responding to the Opioid Crisis." Keynote presented at Regional Overdose Prevention Symposium, Touro University, Vallejo, California, December 2023.

Mitra, M. "Reproductive and Prenatal Health of Women With Disabilities: A Call to Action." Keynote presented at Seventh National Conference on Disability, Accessibility, Inclusion, and Well-Being, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India, December 2023.

Nicholson, J. Keynote welcoming address presented at the 2024 Prato International Research Collaborative for Change in Parent and Child Mental Health, Prato, Italy, May 2024.

Sampath, R. "Interreligious Coexistence From a Deconstructive Perspective." Keynote presented at Interreligious Coexistence for Societal Transformation, Yerusha Academy Institute for Deep Ecumenism, Lafayette, Colorado, March 2024.

Weil, D. "Just Work: Choices and Options at This Critical Moment." Keynote address, Modern Work and Workers' Voices Virtual Conference, California Labor Lab/Center for Occupational and Environmental Health, University of California, Berkeley, May 2024.

HIGH-IMPACT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (ACADEMIC OR PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION)

Bishop, C. Symposium Chair, "Economics of Long-Term Services and Supports: Production, Demand, and Costs." Symposium sponsored by the Economics of Aging Interest Group, presented at the Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting, Tampa, Florida, November 2023.

Brolin, M., Kim, M., Dunigan, R., and **Strickler, G.** "Insights on Implementation of the CCBHC Model for Integrated Care." Presented at Addiction Health Services Research Annual Meeting, New York City, October 2023.

Chilingerian, J., and **Glavin, M.** "Use of Data Envelopment Analysis for the Measurement of Absorptive Capacity and Technological Change in Health Care." Presented at DEA45: International Conference on Data Envelopment Analysis, University of Surrey, Guildford, U.K., September 2023.

Donelan, K. Panel Chair, "The Paid and Family Dementia Workforce in the COVID-19 Pandemic Era." Panel presented at Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting, Tampa, Florida, November 2023.

Elkasabany, R., Estrada, Y., **Green, T.C.,** Medina, A., Tobias, S., and Washington, K. "Will Drug Checking Save Us?" Presented at the International Drug Policy Reform Conference, Phoenix, October 2023.

Firchow, P. Panelist, "Intergroup Relations After Violent Conflict: Insights From Research and Practice." Conference sponsored by the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, October 2023.

Firchow, P. "Why Are You Interested in Measuring Peace?" Presented at Everyday Peace Indicators Workshop, Geneva Peace Week, Geneva, Switzerland, October 2023.

Glavin, M. "Remembering Jon Chilingerian." Presented at DEA45: International Conference on Data Envelopment Analysis, University of Surrey, Guildford, U.K., September 2023.

Green, T.C. "Cutting-Edge: Community-Engaged Research on Harm Reduction Housing and Drug Checking." Presented at "Together for Hope: Boston Addiction Conference 2024," sponsored by the Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center, Boston, March 2024.

Green, T.C. "Mitigating Risks From Human Xylazine Exposure: Current Landscape and Epidemiological Trends." Presented at Reagan Udall Foundation for the Food and Drug Administration, Washington, D.C., October 2023.

Green, T.C., Silcox, J., Boggis, J., Floyd, A., Irwin, A., Hansen, R.N., **Zaragoza, S.,** and Bratberg, J. "Secret Shopping to Assess Real-World Access to Over-the-Counter Naloxone in Community Pharmacies." Presented at the College on Problems of Drug Dependence 86th Annual Scientific Meeting, Montreal, Canada, June 2024.

Hu, L. "Empowering Future: Employment Experiences of Chinese Disabled Women." Presented to Qitu Accessibility, a disabled persons' organization based in Nanjing, China, January 2024.

Hughto, J., Kelly, P., **Silcox, J., Rapisarda, S.,** Palacios, W., Stopka, T.J., Case, P., and **Green, T.C.** "Makeshift Medicine: Addressing Social Determinants in Practice." Presentation at Medical Care Section, "Self-Treatment of Injection-Related

Infections in the Age of Fentanyl and Xylazine: An Application of the Makeshift Medicine Framework," American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, November 2023.

Joshi, P. "Integrating Racial/Ethnic Equity Into Policy Assessments: Application to Child Care Subsidy Policy." Presented at "Building Evidence Through Equity Assessments in Human Services," Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency, sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families/Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C., May 2024.

Joshi, P., and **Jurado, D.** "Improving Hispanic and Immigrant Workers' Utilization of State PFML Programs." Presented at Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Fall Research Conference, "Policy That Matters: Making Public Services Work for All," Atlanta, November 2023.

Joshi, P., Walters, A.N., Wong, E., and **Acevedo-Garcia, D.** "Job Quality Metrics to Inform Good Jobs Policies: What's Available, What's Missing, and How to Fill Data Gaps." Presented at "Ensuring Decent Work in Times of Uncertainty," Eighth Regulating for Decent Work Conference, sponsored by the International Labour Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, July 2023.

Lynch, L. Panel Speaker, "Financial Management Challenges in Higher Education: Labor Market Challenges for Higher Education." Financing Higher Education Conference sponsored by National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, Massachusetts, April 2024.

Madison, M., Tefera, E.K., and **Ridley, J.** "Racial Justice Technology Policy, RJxTP, The Past and Future of Education in America." Poster presented at "Transforming STEM Higher Education Conference," sponsored by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, Arlington, Virginia, November 2023.

Mechanic, R. "Specialist Engagement in Accountable Care Organizations: Federal Policy and Future Episode Payment Models." Presented at National Association of ACOs 2023 Fall Conference, Washington, D.C., September 2023.

Meschede, T. "Transforming STEM Outcomes: Results From the 10-Year Follow-up Study of an Afterschool Robotics Program." Presented at Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Fall Research Conference, Atlanta, November 2023.

Piñeros-Shields, A. "Community-Engaged Research: Exploring the Foundations of Participatory Action Research Amidst Contemporary Challenges — Theory." Presented at the Association for Humanist Sociology Annual Conference, New Orleans, November 2023.

Piñeros-Shields, A. "Community-Engaged Research: Exploring the Foundations of Participatory Action Research Amidst Contemporary Challenges — Practice." Presented at the Association for Humanist Sociology Annual Conference, New Orleans, November 2023.

Pololi, L. "C-Change Faculty Survey of the 21 sites in the NIH Study, Elements of Inclusive Excellence, Preliminary Findings." Presented at NIH FIRST (Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation) Program Annual Grantees Conference, May 2024.

Rapisarda, S., Silcox, J., Case, P., Stopka, T.J., Palacios, W.R., Hughto, J., Shrestha, S., and **Green, T.C.** "Rapid Assessment of Consumer Knowledge Amid an Injection Drug Use-Driven HIV Outbreak in Lowell and Lawrence, Massachusetts: A Case Study." Poster presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, November 2023.

Shepard, D.S., Magee, A.S., Ekemezie, U.C., and BrooksLue, K.S. "Digital Financial Incentives and Artificial Intelligence to Strengthen Behavioral Approaches to Control Type 2

Diabetes in Jamaica: Modeled Benefit-Cost Analysis." Presented at Evidence-Based Health System Interventions Across Multiple Settings, AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting, Baltimore, June-July 2024.

Silcox, J., Rapisarda, S., Bolivar, D., Case, P., Vento, S., Hughto, J., Palacios, W.R., Shrestha, S., Stopka, T.J., and **Green, T.C.** "The Views and Experiences of Involuntary Civil Commitment in a Cross-Site Sample of People Who Use Drugs in Massachusetts." Presented at American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, November 2023.

Tschampl, C.A. Co-Chair, Stop TB Session, "Strategic Knowledge for Strategic Next Steps Toward TB Elimination." Plenary session presented at The Union — North American Region and National TB Conference co-located annual conferences, Baltimore, April 2024. Tschampl also served as an abstract reviewer for the session.

Tschampl, C.A., Tabata-Kelly, M., Lee, M., Barman, U., Raffoul, A., and Austin, S.B. "Cost-Effectiveness of a Public Health Policy Intervention to Reduce Eating Disorders Among Youth." Presented at the International Health Economics Association Congress, Cape Town, South Africa, July 2023.

Weil, D. Panelist, "The Rise of U.S. Child Labor, and How We Can Fight Back." Sponsored by the Economic Policy Institute, Virtual, December 2023.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Joshi, P., and **Vizcardo-Benites, A.** Presenters, "Equity in Implementation: Paid Leave Conference," sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, Washington, D.C., June 2024.

Piñeros-Shields, A. Panelist, "Coming Together Across Difference": Dialogue and Action in an Age of Divides series. Organized by Boston College, Boston University, Brandeis University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University, Tufts University, University of Massachusetts, and Wellesley College, Virtual, February 2024.

Sampath, R. Panelist, "Intergenerational South Asian Indian American Perspectives on Caste Upbringing." Presented at "Caste in the Diaspora," sponsored by Casteless Caucus, Harvard Kennedy School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, February 2024.

Smith-Gibbs, M. "Lynn BabySteps Awareness." Presented at BabySteps Lynn Info Session, sponsored by Massachusetts Office of Economic Empowerment, North Shore Community College, Lynn, Massachusetts, August 2023.

Soroui, S. "The DigLit Initiative: Equipping Adult Basic Education Programs With Tools and Capacity to Effectively Deliver Digital Literacy." Presented at the Coalition on Adult Basic Education National Conference, Virtual, March 2024.

TRAININGS AND WEBINARS

Green, T.C. "Implementing a Statewide Community Drug Checking Program: Opportunities, Challenges, and Successes." Webinar presentation sponsored by Louisiana Opioid Action Summit, July 2023.

Green, T.C., and Olson, R. "Community Drug Checking 101, Massachusetts Drug Supply Data Stream." Webinar presentation sponsored by CDC Foundation, August 2023.

Pololi, L. "Effective Group Peer Mentoring for Diverse Research Faculty in Academic Medicine." Webinar presentation sponsored by NIH Diversity Program Consortium, January 2024.

Tschampl, C.A. "Public Engagement: Making Your Communications Count." Training presented at the World TB Day 2024 Symposium, "Lessons From the Past and the Way Forward," sponsored by UCSF Center for Tuberculosis and the Curry International TB Center, San Francisco, March 2024.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Dolores Acevedo-Garcia has been appointed to a new National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Committee on Federal Policy Impacts on Child Poverty. The committee will conduct a consensus study to assess federal policies impacting child poverty, as required by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023.

APPOINTMENTS TO PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, JOURNAL EDITORIAL BOARDS, OR REVIEW COMMITTEES

Joseph Assan was invited to serve as a member of the African Studies Association Outstanding Service Awards Committee in January 2024.

Christine Bishop was invited to join the Moving Forward Coalition, a group convened to advance the recommendations of the National Academy of Medicine's recent report on nursing home quality. As a member of the quality metric group, she contributed to an interview protocol to investigate how the goals and preferences of individual residents are being elicited and included in care management to make nursing-home care more resident-centered.

Pamina Firchow was elected to serve in the following roles at the International Studies Association: At-large member, Women's Caucus; chair, Northcutt Award Committee; and member, WCIS Best Graduate Student Paper Award Committee.

Pamela Joshi, PhD'01, was appointed to the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's Community Development Research Advisory Council.

Pamela Joshi was appointed to the Program Committee of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management.

Robert Mechanic is an editorial board member of the *American Journal of Accountable Care.*

Robert Mechanic is a member of the Health Financing and Accountability Workstream of the Commission on Investment Imperatives for a Healthy Nation, National Academy of Medicine.

Joanne Nicholson has been appointed a National Advisory Group member for PCORI-funded projects, including "Black Women Consulting to Advance Addiction Research and Engagement," "Evaluating Lifelines4Moms," and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center Empowering Mothers.

Joanne Nicholson was appointed a member of the National Maternal Mental Health Task Force, 2023-27.

Cynthia Tschampl, PhD'15, took office as chair, Stop TB USA, in February 2024. She was elected in February 2022.

David Weil was appointed to the Academic Advisory Board of the Economic Policy Institute in fall 2023.

David Weil was appointed to the Advisory Board of Public Dollars for Public Good, Marguerite Casey Foundation, in fall 2023.

CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The organizers of the conference DEA45: International Conference on Data Envelopment Analysis, held Sept. 4-6, 2023, at the University of Surrey, Guildford, U.K., dedicated the Health and Hospital Efficiency Track of the conference to the memory of **Jon Chilingerian** for his major scholarly contributions in the application of data envelopment analysis.

Robyn Powell, PhD'20, received the 2023 New Investigator Award from the American Public Health Association's Disability Section.

FELLOWSHIPS

Joanne Nicholson is an invited faculty fellow and mentor at the Hispanic Mothers of New York Research Training Center at Mercy University in Dobbs Ferry, New York. The project is a five-year, Health Resources and Services Administration-funded initiative, secured by colleagues at Mercy University under the Maternal Health Research Network for Minority Serving Institutions. The fellowship runs from 2024 to 2029.

Kate Giapponi Schneider, PhD'16, and PhD candidate **Elizabeth Wong** were awarded a Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Regional and Community Outreach Visiting Fellowship for calendar year 2024.

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEES

Joseph Assan was invited to serve on the conference planning committee for the inaugural conference on "(Un)employment in Africa in Times of Global Political Economy Crisis: Lessons in Theory, Policy, and Practice," co-sponsored by the Heller School and the ACCESS project at Leipzig University, Germany. The virtual conference took place on Nov. 3, 2023.

Cynthia Tschampl, PhD'15, was one of only 15 people (and one of only four U.S. residents) chosen to represent the North American Region portion of the joint planning committee for The Union — North American Region and the National Tuberculosis Coalition of America National TB Conference, which took place in Baltimore in April 2024.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Teresa Nguyen, incoming Heller PhD student and director of the Community Living Equity Center within the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy, was invited to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris and Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg to commemorate the 33rd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 26, 2023. Nguyen and fellow disability-rights advocates discussed new actions to improve transportation accessibility and further integrate people with disabilities into the community.

OP-EDS

Lawrence Bailis, in his capacity as board chair of the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA), co-wrote, with JALSA president Cindy Rowe, a Feb. 9, 2024, op-ed for *CommonWealth Beacon*, titled "Book Bans Are Bad for Democracy."

Robert Kuttner published the following opinion pieces in *The American Prospect*:

- July 11, 2023, "Why Racial Remedy Still Matters," arguing the need to continue considering race in higher education, employment, and promotion decisions amid the Supreme Court's decision on affirmative action.
- April 1, 2024, "Georgia's Latest Attack on the Right to Vote," discussing the Georgia legislature's efforts to disqualify registered voters.
- June 13, 2024, "Fantasyland General," about how "impenetrable" hospital pricing leads to increased costs and profits.

HIGH-PROFILE MEDIA COVERAGE

USA Today covered the findings from the latest Child Opportunity Index, newly released by diversitydatakids.org**,** in a March 14, 2024, piece, "'A World Apart': How Racial Segregation Continues to Determine Opportunity for American Kids."

On a Jan. 3, 2024, segment on WGBH News, "Gardner Hospital Reopens Mental Health Unit After Years-Long Struggle to Hire Clinicians," associate dean for academics **Michael Doonan, PhD'02,** commented about mental health workforce shortages in Massachusetts.

Traci Green was quoted in the following:
- WBUR Boston, July 6, 2023, "Test Strips for the Dangerous Street Drug Xylazine Could Save Lives."
- *The Boston Globe,* Jan. 18, 2024, "Narcan Saves Lives, But Finding It Can Be Onerous in Massachusetts."

Anita Hill was interviewed for the following:
- Deadline.com, Jan. 11, 2024, "'Lack of Trust': Dr. Anita Hill On Hollywood Workers' Skepticism That Reporting Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Will Change Anything."
- The Today Show, March 30, 2024, "Three Decades After She Testified, Anita Hill Reflects on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace."
- PBS NewsHour, May 7, 2024, "Anita Hill Discusses Overturn of Weinstein's Rape Conviction."

Research by the **Institute for Economic and Racial Equity** was cited in an Aug. 11, 2023, editorial in *The Boston Globe,* "Baby Bonds Don't Help Enough Lower-Income Families Save for College."

Andrew Kolodny appeared on a July 2, 2023, NBC News Meet the Press panel, "To Address Fentanyl Crisis, 'We Need a Cultural Change.'"

Andrew Kolodny was quoted in an April 4, 2024, piece on WBGH News, "Scientists Blast FDA Approval of Genetic Test for Opioid Addiction."

Andrew Kolodny appeared at a special presentation in Washington, D.C., on April 29, 2024, of the documentary film, "Anonymous Sister," a young woman's firsthand account of what will become the deadliest man-made epidemic in United States history. Kolodny and Jamie Boyle, director of "Anonymous Sister," participated in a conversation moderated by Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Tatjana Meschede was quoted in a Jan. 15, 2024, *Wall Street Journal* article, "Black Investors Are the Biggest New Group of Stock Buyers."

Monika Mitra was quoted in a Nov. 13, 2023, article in *The New York Times* on long COVID, "Can't Think, Can't Remember: More Americans Say They're in a Cognitive Fog."

Cindy Thomas, PhD'00, was quoted in a Feb. 2, 2024, article in Marketplace, "How Are Companies Like GoodRx Able to Provide Drug Discounts?"

David Weil was quoted in the following:
- CNN Business, "Illegal Child Labor on the Rise in a Tight Job Market," July 30, 2023.
- *The New York Times Magazine,* "Why Can't We Stop Unauthorized Immigration? Because It Works," Oct. 1, 2023.
- Marketplace, "Temp Jobs Falling Usually Signal a Recession," Oct. 5, 2023.
- *The Washington Post,* "Millions of Gig Workers Could Qualify as Employees Under New Biden-Era Rule," Jan. 9, 2024.
- *The Washington Post,* "Fast-Food Franchises Overwork Teenagers, Driving America's Child Labor Crisis," Jan. 14, 2024.
- *The Los Angeles Times,* "A Trump Judge Eviscerates a Pro-Worker Regulation at the Request of Big Employers," March 13, 2024.

Research by **Graham Wright, MPP'15, PhD'16, Leonard Saxe,** and colleagues was quoted in:
- *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* "What Jewish College Students Have to Say About the Campus Climate," Dec. 14, 2023.
- Jewish News Syndicate, "Report: Antisemitism Varies Widely on American College Campuses," Dec. 18, 2023.

PODCASTS

Teresa Nguyen, director of the Community Living Equity Center at the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy, and **Natalie Chong,** PhD candidate, appeared on the July 11, 2023, episode of the Center for Rehabilitation Outcomes Research podcast, "INside the OUTcomes." The episode was titled "Unmet Needs and the Importance of Data in Home- and Community-Based Services."

HOSTING A LARGE EVENT/CONFERENCE WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

In October 2023, the **Center for Global Development and Sustainability** presented its Conference on Law, Caste, and the Pursuit of Justice, the Sixth International Conference on the Unfinished Legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The Honorable Dr. Justice Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud, the Chief Justice of India, gave the keynote lecture. The conference was sponsored by Brandeis' open-access academic journal *CASTE: A Global Journal on Social Exclusion.*

The **Council on Healthcare Economics and Policy,** under the direction of chairman Stuart Altman, presented its 30th Princeton Conference, "Reshaping the Health Care System in a Post-Pandemic Era," in Boston, Oct. 2-4, 2023. The conference provided insight into the range of contemporary health care innovation challenges and opportunities. Panels addressed affordability, workforce shortage solutions, Medicare innovation, health care delivery system models for change, how system transformation could help create a sustainable, high-value system, innovations in health equity essential to achieve health and wellness, and megatrends, including artificial intelligence.

On Sept. 27, 2023, the **Heller School** and the **Brandeis African and African American Studies Department** co-sponsored "The Future of Affirmative Action," a discussion on the implications of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to end affirmative action in college admissions. The discussion was moderated by interim dean **Maria Madison,** and **Anita Hill** was one of the speakers.

The Joshua A. Guberman Lecture, held at Heller on April 4, 2024, featured **Anita Hill** speaking on "Law, Policy, and the Future of Social Justice: Lived Experience as Our Measure of Equality."

The **Massachusetts Health Policy Forum,** under the leadership of executive director **Michael Doonan, PhD'02,** presented the following events:

- "Youth Mental Health Roadmap for Western Massachusetts," the UMass Amherst Campus Center, Nov. 1, 2023.
- 2024 Student Forum, Boston, Jan. 8-9, 2024.

Events in the yearlong **Mellon Sawyer seminar series,** "Imperiled Bodies: Slavery, Colonialism, Citizenship, and the Logics of Gender-Based Violence," were sponsored by a prestigious John E. Sawyer Seminar grant from the Mellon Foundation led by PI **Anita Hill;** co-PI **Harleen Singh,** senior associate provost for academic and strategic initiatives; director of the Women's Studies Research Center; and associate professor of Literature and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; and **ChaeRan Freeze,** Frances and Max Elkon Chair in Modern Jewish History.

The **Schneider Institutes for Health Policy and Research** hosted the annual **Stanley Wallack Memorial Lecture,** "Mental Health in America: You Are Not Alone," with Dr. Ken Duckworth, chief medical officer of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, on March 26, 2024.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS TO A POLITICAL PLATFORM, POLICY PROPOSAL, OR GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE/COMMITTEE

Pamina Firchow is a senior consultant for the World Bank Group and a lead researcher for the Inter-American Foundation, Colombia.

Pamela Joshi, PhD'01, was invited to lead a research collaborative for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, focused on actionable equity assessments in early care and education.

Joanne Nicholson co-chairs the Data, Research, Quality Improvement, and Health Equity work group of the National Task Force on Maternal Mental Health with Dr. Dana Meaney Delman, chief of the Infant Outcomes Monitoring Research and Prevention Branch of the CDC. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services formed the task force in response to a directive from Congress to evaluate relevant federal programs, identify best practices, and make actionable

recommendations to coordinate and improve federal activities for addressing maternal mental health conditions and substance use disorders.

Rajesh Sampath was the lead author hired as a consultant by Amnesty International in 2023 to produce a global report on racism for its leadership.

CONGRESSIONAL OR LEGAL TESTIMONY

At the invitation of the Disability Law Center, **Christine Bishop** testified on March 8, 2024, before the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services concerning payment rates for continuous nursing services. The rates for these services affect children and adults who need substantial nursing care to continue residing at home with their families. Bishop proposed approaches to assure that new rates keep up with developments in the nursing labor market to meet the needs of these highly dependent patients.

On Oct. 24, 2023, **Pamela Joshi** delivered testimony at the Hearing Before the Massachusetts Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development in Support of an Act Relative to Improving the Massachusetts Paid Family Medical Leave Law H.1888 and S.1197, held at the Massachusetts Legislature 193rd General Court.

Rajesh Sampath was hired as an academic expert by a major law firm in California that represented the California State University system to defend its anti-caste discrimination policy in 2023.

Cynthia Tschampl, PhD'15, served on the organizing committee and participated in the April 15, 2024, TB Hill Day that brought 33 TB survivors, clinicians, and advocates to Washington, D.C. The group conducted 42 meetings with members of Congress and their staff regarding several policy and appropriations actions needed to address the 16% increase in TB cases in the U.S. in 2023.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Joseph Assan, senior lecturer and program director, MA in Sustainable International Development, hosted a delegation from Convoy of Hope at the Heller School on May 17, 2024. Convoy of Hope is an international development organization headquartered in Springfield, Missouri. The purpose of the visit was to explore areas of collaborative research and programmatic partnership as well as identify areas of mutual interest.

Susan Eaton, director of the Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy, was engaged with the Eighth Annual National Day of Racial Healing, Jan. 19, 2024, through her work with the National Collaborative for Health Equity. Her report, "Segregation Yesterday and Today," was featured in community-based events and a panel discussion sponsored by NCHE.

The Heller School established an academic exchange partnership with the **Graduate School of International Development (GSID) at Nagoya University,** Japan. Beginning in the 2024-25 academic year, Heller and Nagoya GSID will exchange faculty, administrative staff, researchers, and graduate students.

Walter Leutz, PhD'81, professor emeritus, continues his work with Waltham Connections for Healthy Aging, a community-based participatory action research initiative. Connections has received Title III funds to continue two initiatives that promote inclusion of low-income and immigrant older adults in Waltham:

- Connections' Spanish-speaking and Ugandan outreach workers serve immigrant older adults who had rarely accessed the Council on Aging service system in Waltham in the past.
- The Welcome to the Digital Age program provides free Chromebook computers and Wi-Fi — and training to use both — to Waltham older adults who cannot afford the technology.

The **Racial Justice x Technology Program** joined the Public Interest Technology University Network, which provides programming and funding for members to grow public interest technology on their campuses and in their communities.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

On April 3, 2024, Heller participated in the Freedom of Mobility Forum, sponsored by the Stellantis Corporation. **Amanda Yu, MBA'25,** was elected to represent the 10-person team from Heller who prepared research ahead of this debate. During the event, Yu and fellow student speakers discussed this year's topic, "How Will Our Planet Accommodate the Mobility Needs of 8 Billion People?" The other members of the Heller team were **Abby Despres, MBA/MPP'23, Mariama Fatajo, MA SID'24, Molly Finch, MPP'25, Meron Hagos, MBA'25, Daniela Jurado '23, MBA'24, Victoria Melbourne, MBA/MPP'25, Nneamaka Jennifer Omo, MA SID'24, Samuel Siaw, MA SID'25,** and **Oliver Torres '23, MBA'24.**

PUBLICATIONS

Abbas, M., Chua, I.S., **Tabata-Kelly, M.,** Bulger, A.L., Gershanik, E., Sheu, C., Kerr, E., Ruan, M., Dey, T., Lakin, J.R., and Bernacki, R.E. (2024). "Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Serious Illness Conversation Quality During the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management.* Published online May 21, 2024.

Andrews, C.M., Hinds, O.M., Lozano-Rojas, F., Besmann, W.L., Abraham, A.J., Grogan, C.M., and **Silverman, A.F.** (2023). "State Funding for Substance Use Disorder Treatment Declined in the Wake of Medicaid Expansion." *Health Affairs.* 42(7), pp. 981-990.

Chong, N., Caldwell, J., Kaye, H.S., and **Mitra, M.** (2024). "Outcomes of Person-Centered Planning in Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services." *The Gerontologist.* 64(6), gnae017.

Jarman, M.P., Ruan, M., **Tabata-Kelly, M.,** Perry, B.L., Lee, B., Boustani, M., and Cooper, Z. (2024). "Detecting Variation in Clinical Practice Patterns for Geriatric Trauma Care Using Social Network Analysis." *Annals of Surgery.* 279(2), pp. 353-360.

Salva, R.S. (2023). "The Non-Protesting Children in the 2018 Parkland School Shooting Protests and Their Freedom Not to Express Views in Child

Participation Spaces." *Children and Society.* 38, pp. 1250-1269. Published online Oct. 6, 2023.

Salva, R.S. (2023). "Red vs. Blue, Black vs. White, and Other State Factors in the 2018 Parkland School Shooting Protests in the USA." In Wright, K., and McLeod, J. (Eds.), "Childhood, Youth, and Activism: Demands for Rights and Justice From Young People and Their Advocates (Sociological Studies of Children and Youth, Vol. 33)." Leeds, U.K.: Emerald Publishing, pp. 147-172.

Silverman, A.F., Westlake, M.A., Hinds, O.M., Harris, S.J., Abraham, A.J., Grogan, C.M., and Andrews, C.M. (2024). "Substance Use Disorder Treatment Carve Outs in Medicaid Managed Care." *Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment.* 161, 209357.

Tabata-Kelly, M., Ruan, M., Dey, T., Sheu, C., Kerr, E., Kaafarani, H., Ornstein, K.A., Kelley, A., Gray, T.F., Salim, A., Joseph, B., and Cooper, Z. (2023). "Postdischarge Caregiver Burden Among Family Caregivers of Older Trauma Patients." *JAMA Surgery.* 158(9), pp. 945-952.

Vetter, M., Donelan, K., Guzikowski, S., **Michael, C.,** Ritchie, C.S., Vogeli, C., and Forester, B.P. (2023). "The Needs of Family Caregivers of Persons Living With Dementia Cared for in Primary Care Practices." *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice.* 29(8), pp. 1243-1246.

Zrubka, Z., Champion, A., Holtorf, A.P., Di Bidino, R., Earla, J.R., Boltyenkov, A., **Tabata-Kelly, M.,** Asche, C., and Burrell, A. (2024). "The PICOTS-ComTec Framework for Defining Digital Health Interventions: An ISPOR Special Interest Group Report." *Value in Health.* 27(4), pp. 383-396.

PRESENTATIONS

Daniels, E., Caldwell, J., and **Mitra, M.** "Psychotropic Utilization Among Adults With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Disparities Across Residence Types in Medicaid Long-Term Services and Supports." Poster presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, November 2023.

Moura, I. "Community Conversation: Algorithmic Bias and Disability." Presentation to the Disability Inclusion Fund DIF x Tech committee and grantees, November 2023.

Stober, K., Daniels, E., Caldwell, J., and **Mitra, M.** "Self-Advocacy Programming Among Adults With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A National Exploration of Access Disparities and Associated Subjective Well-Being Outcomes." Presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, November 2023.

Tabata-Kelly, M., Alberti, P., Bullock, K., **Crown, W.,** Dill, M., Fair, M., Hu, X., May, P., Ortega, P., and **Perloff, J.** "How Physician Engagement With Patients' Health-Related Social Needs Relates to Physician Burnout." Presented at the AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting, Baltimore, June-July 2024.

Vetter, M. Panelist, "The Paid and Family Dementia Workforce in the COVID-19 Pandemic Era." Presented at Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting, Tampa, Florida, November 2023.

Vose-O'Neal, A. "Exploring Stages in Recovery From Alcohol Use Disorder in a Black Community." Presented at "Together for Hope: Boston Addiction Conference 2024," sponsored by the Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center, Boston, March 2024.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Elad Daniels, PhD candidate, received the 2023 Career Enhancement Student Scholarship Award from the American Public Health Association Disability Section.

"If you've seen one Medicaid plan, you've seen one Medicaid plan. Don't assume that one plan in your state will look like another plan in your state, or that something will be covered even if you've seen it covered on the plan before."

PhD CANDIDATE ALLIE SILVERMAN, ADDRESSING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS IN PSYCHIATRY ONLINE

Five Heller students were selected for **Harvard Kennedy School Rappaport Institute Public Policy Summer Fellowships:**

- **Karen Alfaro,** PhD student
- **Anika Kumar,** PhD student
- **Calah McQuarters, MPP/MBA'25**
- **Shaakira Parker,** PhD student
- **Amanda Yu, MBA'25**

Shannon Horgan, MA SID/COEX'24, was one of 10 Brandeis students awarded a scholarship by the Fulbright U.S. Student Program.

PhD student **Janelle Ridley** was appointed chair of the Massachusetts Juvenile Justice Advisory Board.

Ashley Robinson, MBA/MA SID'24, was a 2023 Kapor Venture Capital Fellow. Fellows are placed with a partner investment fund and take part in a deep-dive summer project. She consulted with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on creating a $100 million venture capital fund to bolster Black venture capital fund managers.

PhD candidate **Masami Tabata-Kelly** and co-authors' paper, "Nurse-Led Serious Illness Conversations Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: Insights From Nurses and Equity Perspectives," received the Top Scoring Abstract Award from AcademyHealth's Interdisciplinary Research Group on Nursing Issues. This award recognizes an outstanding paper in health services research relevant to nursing practice, workforce, and education. The paper was presented at the AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting in Baltimore in June 2024.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Megan Madison, PhD'24, is the co-author of "First Conversations," a series of six award-winning books for young children on the topics of race, gender, consent, love, bodies, and grief. "Our Skin," the first in the series, is available wherever books are sold; in Spanish and Korean language translations; and in audiobook, picture book, board book, and Wonderbook formats. In 2021, Madison and her co-author were featured on CBS Mornings, talking with Gayle King about the importance of engaging in social justice with children from an early age. Two more titles — one on transformative justice and the other on disability — are in publication.

Ian Moura, PhD candidate, developed a 10-hour course on algorithmic bias for policymakers, agency leaders, and community organizers, titled "Exploring Algorithmic Bias as a Policy Issue: A Teach-Out," which reached over 500 enrollees in its first four months. The project was funded by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and produced in partnership with the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Teaching and Learning.

PhD candidate **Kumba Sennaar's** TEDx Talk, "Reducing Algorithmic Bias in AI," was released on YouTube in May 2024.

Allie Silverman, PhD candidate, was interviewed for a June 25, 2024, piece in Psychiatry Online, "Majority of Medicaid MCOs Delegate SUD Treatment Benefits," about her study published in the *Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment*.

Q&A

Making child care more equitable: Kate Giapponi Schneider, PhD'16

Kate Giapponi Schneider, PhD'16, is a research scientist at the Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy (ICYFP) and the 2024 recipient of Heller's Early Career Research Investigator Award. With nearly two decades of experience working with state and federal agencies to conduct research related to child care subsidy policy, she is committed to advancing the utility of research for program and policy application through her work on federal research grants.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH.

The vast majority of my work at ICYFP involves studying child care subsidy policy. In particular, I've studied changes in child care subsidy policies and practices, and their impact on low-income families' subsidy stability and access to care. I've studied the impact of changes in COVID-19-related policies on families' experiences with subsidy renewal. I've also conducted research investigating the factors influencing child care providers' decisions to participate in the subsidy system. This involved identifying barriers to participation that can limit the supply of subsidized care, and potential changes in policies and practices that could increase this supply. I've also conducted research on child care providers' perceptions of quality and investigated whether preschool absenteeism is associated with kindergarten absenteeism. The quality of child care programs can impact early educational outcomes for those children attending them, so understanding how we can improve the supply of high-quality care — especially for those using child care subsidies — is a major area of interest for me.

HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN CHILD CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION?

I've conducted research and consulting projects on child care and early education for nearly 20 years. Before I entered the Heller PhD program,

"I could see that affordable, accessible, high-quality child care is not only a linchpin for parental employment but also for healthy child development and, ultimately, the future workforce of this country."

KATE GIAPPONI SCHNEIDER, PHD'16

I worked in consulting for various state and local human services agencies. I worked on a range of projects, from conducting program evaluations and needs assessments, to business process reviews, to survey research for child welfare, juvenile justice, public assistance, and child care subsidy lead agencies. I started to home in on early education and child care subsidies because I could see that affordable, accessible, high-quality child care is not only a linchpin for parental employment but also for healthy child development and, ultimately, the future workforce of this country.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

I'm conducting research under two federal research grants that are offered through the U.S. Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation: a Child Care Policy Research Partnerships grant and a Coordinated Evaluations of Child Care and Development Fund Policies and Initiatives grant, for which I'm a co-principal investigator. Since 2013, we've partnered with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care to conduct research under these and similar grants, which has been wonderful because the research that we do can directly inform the policies and practices they implement. Our projects are primarily geared toward producing findings at the state level, but they also apply to other states and have implications for the federal government.

Elizabeth Wong, a Heller PhD candidate, and I were recently awarded a 2024 Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Visiting Fellowship to study factors associated with whether child care providers offer care during nontraditional work hours. Findings from our study will help identify potential policy levers and business practices that can increase the availability of child care that meets the needs of working families with nonstandard schedules.

WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU'D LIKE POLICYMAKERS TO UNDERSTAND?

As researchers, we try to control for as many variables as possible and provide the most rigorous research that we can, including conducting interviews and focus groups with child care providers, subsidy administrators, and families to understand what is happening on the ground. However, the research takes time and so we may not be able to provide evidence as quickly as we'd like. Finding the right balance between the rigor of the research and the timing of findings needed to impact policy can be challenging, but that's also why I love this work.

HOW DID HELLER PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR WORK AS A RESEARCHER?

Heller was the perfect place for me to pursue my interests because it's an applied research school and that's exactly what I wanted to be — an applied researcher. I had the opportunity to learn from and work alongside talented faculty and staff with amazing experience and connections to state and federal policymakers. My education at Heller has made a huge impact on my career today.

FACULTY

SPOT LIGHT

From knowledge to impact — turning insight into action for social justice: Professor Susan Curnan

Professor Susan Curnan held the inaugural Florence G. Heller Chair as Associate Professor of the Practice. She is also the co-founder of the

Center for Youth and Communities, for which she served as director from 1990 to 2023. The results of her work, and that of the center, have been used to inform national policy and improve programs that address the profound inequities in the distribution of opportunities and outcomes among our nation's youth.

HOW DID YOU FIRST BECOME INTERESTED IN EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT?

Prior to arriving at Brandeis in 1983, I led a national demonstration project in rural New England sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and private foundations to address the school dropout problem. We designed a program to award academic credit for work-based learning using a competency-based approach for students at risk of dropping out of high school. It worked! We replicated the program in New York City to test the viability in an urban environment where the young people in Harlem and the Lower East Side worked to replace windows in low-income housing during the energy crisis while their rural counterparts worked in natural resource conservation. And that worked, too. During this time, I was invited to contribute to Vice President Mondale's Youth Employment Task Force — the first time since FDR that the White House administration focused on this area in recognition of the growing crisis. It may be time again for such national focus.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH.

Like so much of the social science research conducted at the Heller School, my research, and that of the center, uses a mixed-methods approach that is community-engaged and focused on not only proving that something does or does not work but for whom and under what

"I thought then, and know now, that Brandeis would be a good platform for both discovery research and dissemination of best practices in policy and management."

SUSAN CURNAN

conditions, so that a policy or program can be improved. We believe results should be useful, usable, and timely for management and learning.

CAN YOU SHARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL IMPACT FROM YOUR PORTFOLIO OF WORK OVER THE YEARS?

During my tenure as director of the Center for Youth and Communities, we conducted hundreds of studies throughout the U.S. as well as globally. These were supported by more than $125 million of funding from public and private sources. We carried out studies for the U.S. Department of Labor, the United States Agency for International Development, the Corporation for National and Community Service, AmeriCorps, America's Promise, and privately funded studies on STEM, higher education, the future of work, and education.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the center conducted national and local studies of both the education and workforce systems, and helped identify and define the great "supply-and-demand mismatch," or the gap between youth preparation and the critical skills employers were demanding. This was a time of urgency and crisis, with high levels of youth unemployment; decline in academic test scores and high school graduation rates; low college aspiration and graduation rates; increased crime; the beginning of unprecedented demographic shifts; and technological innovations that would transform the world of work. I was interested in uncovering why these issues persisted and how they might be better addressed. I thought then, and know now, that Brandeis would be a good platform for both discovery research and dissemination of best practices in policy and management.

My research expanded into emerging technology, higher education-community college transitions, and service learning in the early 2000s. In the last decade in particular, I have conducted work at the global scale, including in Africa with universities, with FIRST Robotics in many countries, as well as efforts involving social-emotional learning and mental health.

HOW HAVE HELLER AND BRANDEIS SUPPORTED YOU IN YOUR WORK?

I always remind my students that Brandeis is a good place to be and to be from. That was true throughout the years. As an active "practitioner-scholar," I always had one foot in the academy and one foot in the community — bringing scholarship and best practices to the community, and a reality check to classrooms and research circles. Brandeis' storied reputation for academic excellence and Heller's mission of "knowledge advancing social justice" is a unique base for addressing inequities in education and employment, and welcomed by our partners in communities, philanthropy, and government. Having said that, I recognize that knowledge by itself does little; using that knowledge is critical to improving the conditions for all people to thrive. Our center's mantra, "enough is known for action," is a catalyst for making that knowledge productive.

HELLER RESEARCH BY THE NUMBERS

RESEARCH ACTIVITY
JULY 1, 2023 -
JUNE 30, 2024

TOTAL SPONSORED
RESEARCH ACTIVITY

$19.8

MILLION

217

ACTIVE PROJECTS

230

RESEARCH STAFF, FULL
AND PART TIME

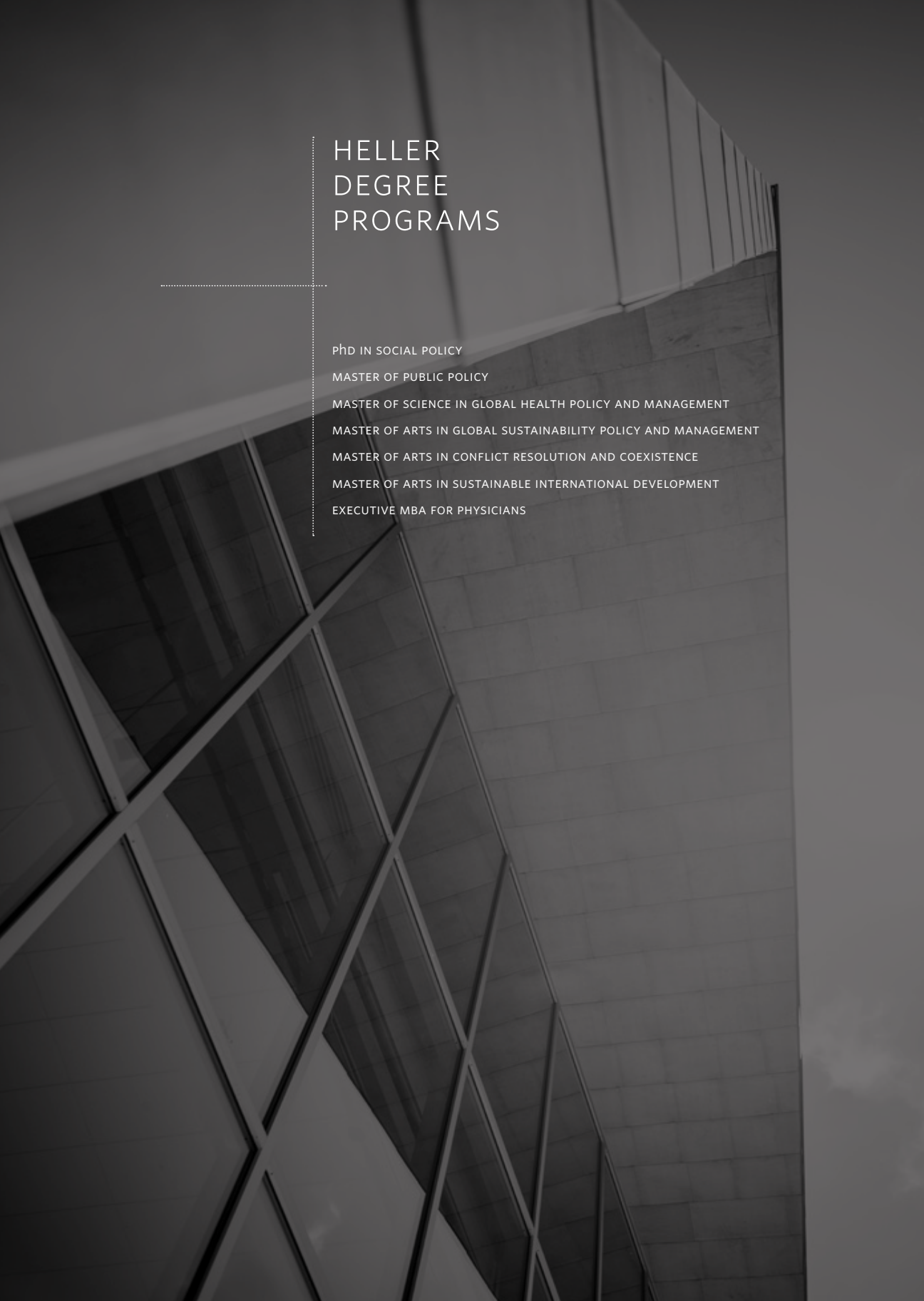
- 60+ STUDENTS
INVOLVED IN PAID
RESEARCH POSITIONS

80+

NEW PROPOSALS
SUBMITTED

48

NEW GRANTS
AWARDED,
TOTALING OVER
$17 MILLION



HELLER DEGREE PROGRAMS

PhD IN SOCIAL POLICY

MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

MASTER OF ARTS IN GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

MASTER OF ARTS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COEXISTENCE

MASTER OF ARTS IN SUSTAINABLE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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