Thanks to a Schar School study, New York City will spend $55 million over the next two years to increase its investment in a pioneering program that diverts felons and “high utilizer” misdemeanor criminals from spending costly time in jail. Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Office of Criminal Justice also announced additional hiring of trained professional providers who support program participants.

See page 6.
A new year, a new administration, a new tone in our political discourse. The events of the previous four years, and those of the coming four, will give professors, pollsters, and practitioners such as those at the Schar School plenty to ponder for the foreseeable future.

And we relish it. As you can see from our cover story, examining and explaining the world around us in the form of translational research is a cornerstone of the Schar School, as vital to our mission as are providing a high-caliber academic education and meaningful real-life opportunities to our students.

Speaking of the students, this year the annual giving campaign has a refined focus: While in years past the funds have contributed to our programming as well as our students, this year—given the grave consequences of the pandemic—the funds we raise will benefit students who may be struggling with unforeseen challenges, particularly those who are first-generation college students or are from underserved communities. Of course, we have made it possible to earmark any contribution to benefit the Schar School interest of your choice through this link: https://bit.ly/ScharCampaign.

Finally, you will see on Page 7 highlights from our ambitious three-year strategic plan. The near future will see an expansion of many of the aspects that make up the foundation of our top-ranked school, from increased student enrollment at all levels, additional faculty and support staff, and, significantly, an emphasis on studying and resolving the social reckoning that has gripped the nation.

Fittingly, our strategic plan closes in 2024, just as the Biden-Harris administration winds up its current term of office. I can’t wait to see what the next four years give us to study.

Mark J. Rozell
Dean, Schar School of Policy and Government
The Big Number

87%

Despite a challenging job market, 87 percent of Schar School winter 2019 and spring 2020 master’s degree graduates hold full-time employment.
On any given day, numerous Schar School scholars are asked to share their expertise and commentary in media outlets around the world. In addition to being quoted by journalists, they publish op-eds and essays that inspire and add insight to a global conversation. Clockwise from top left, Michael Hayden discusses intelligence on CNN; Louise Shelley explains the research that went into her new book on C-SPAN’s BookTV; Judith Wilde reviews Florida university presidential salaries for Tampa Bay audiences; Gregory Koblentz streams on CBS News; and Ed Rhodes explains the U.S.-Arab-Israel treaty to a Swiss TV news magazine.

—Buzz McClain
A virtual NOVA Leadership Dinner was the final event of an autumn-long series of policy-focused webinars for the region’s elected officials, including those elected in early November. It is the third year the Schar School’s Regional Elected Leaders Initiative (RELI) has provided support and education to area representatives in an effort to create cross-border collaboration and innovative policy development.

The capstone of the dinner was the presentation of the second annual Regional Leadership Awards. This year’s recipients include Delegate Vivian Watts (D-39th), who in 2017 became the longest-serving woman in Virginia’s statehouse; Virginia Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine introduced Watts by recalling her history of improving transportation throughout the state. The second award winner, Loudoun County District Supervisor Matthew Letourneau (R-Dulles), was introduced by Kate Mattice, executive director of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission.

The virtual award “dinner” began with an hour-long question-and-answer session with Virginia House Majority Leader Charniele Herring—a 1993 graduate from George Mason—and Virginia Senate Majority Leader Dick Saslaw. Schar School Dean Mark J. Rozell hosted the session.

Throughout the fall in a series of exclusive webinars, representatives from a number of organizations provided detailed information to elected leaders about major public policy issues that face the region, including transportation, energy, the environment, affordable housing, and economic development.

The Schar School’s RELI bipartisan efforts to bring new perspectives and build consensus on vital regional issues is important said RELI’s Mary Hynes. Hynes and former Arlington County Board member Jay Fisette are RELI’s coordinators.

“Regionalism doesn’t just happen,” said Hynes, also a former Arlington County Board member. “At RELI we use the Schar School’s unique thought-leader position to foster regionalism by bringing all of Northern Virginia’s elected legislative-body leaders together. Our hope is that our webinars and Regional Leadership Awards prompt learning, conversation, and coordinated local actions focused on our shared challenges.”
Continued from the cover

The program is called the Alternative to Incarceration—ATI for short—and the new expansions of funding and employees is intended to help more people stay out of jail, “both during their participation in ATI programming and going forward,” the office said.

ATI is the result of specialized study by researchers at the Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence!—known with the exclamation mark ACE!—at the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University.

“We used the ‘Risk-Need-Responsivity’ Simulation Tool methods which allowed us to better understand the needs of clients,” said the center’s founding director and Schar School professor Faye Taxman. “The New York City Office of Criminal Justice wanted to expand services in meaningful ways, and our tools helped them do so. This is the best of science, helping people solve problems.”

While educating future generations of leaders with the skills to tackle the world’s major problems is central to the mission of the Schar School, research is also vital. Professors who perform sponsored research are more up-to-date on developments in their field, and they become better instructors when they bring new knowledge to the classroom. Research encourages investment by a range of public and private entities that benefit from the work, and alumni are activated out of institutional pride. Students who collaborate with research faculty see their education—not to mention their resumés—enriched beyond expectations and are often inspired to perform their own studies.

At the moment, the Schar School has $25 million in active grants from a number of funders, including the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Carnegie Corporation, the Department of State, the World Wildlife Fund, and nearly every branch of the U.S. military, among others sources. The Schar School is a significant contributor to Mason’s status as one of the country’s top-ranked Tier 1 Research universities.

The work those funds sponsor translates to information that can be applied immediately to real-world scenarios in a surprisingly wide array of fields. The Schar School is home to more than a dozen research centers and institutes, representing disciplines including, among others, international and national security, biodefense, micro-economic policy, energy science, and terrorism and human trafficking, as well as the aforementioned corrections-related work.

Schar School research has influence that inspires action. In 2019, a week after the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC) hosted a first-ever conference on trade-based money laundering, the U.S. Senate approved $2 million to study “America’s biggest national security threat that almost no one is paying attention to,” according to Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.), who spoke at the conference. He added the conference was crucial in “elevating the issue.”

Last fall, TraCCC was awarded a major five-year grant by the National Science Foundation to study the illicit online trade of narcotics and counterfeit drugs. Not only will the work contribute to disrupting malicious activities around the world, but it allows the Schar School to employ several graduate students and post-doctoral fellows to assist in the study. TraCCC’s work also addresses antiquities smuggling, human trafficking, and wildlife and natural resource poaching. The center also prepares a Congressionally-mandated annual report for the Department of State on international terrorism based on tracking by the center’s Global Terrorism Trends and Analysis Center.

Several of the research centers at the Schar School are routinely counted on by policy-makers to provide the granular data only a dedicated institute can
create. The Center for Regional Analysis, for example, has long been a provider of economic data and specialized forecasts that Washington, D.C., business and government executives need to create policy to spur and protect economic growth and development. Similarly, the Stephen S. Fuller Institute delivers highly detailed reports, indexes, charts, and graphs that further inform region-wide and national decision-makers on macro and micro developments.

The National Intelligence Council, the agency that provides the intelligence community with information to help guide long-term national strategies, relies on the Center for the Study of Social Change, Institutions, and Policy (SCIP) for forecasts vital to international security issues. The center’s director, 2020 Carnegie Fellow Jack A. Goldstone, is a frequent contributor to global conversations regarding political demography.

Continued on Page 8

Annual Giving Campaign: It’s for the Students

The Schar School’s Annual Giving Campaign, underway now until June 30, will benefit students who have been financially challenged by the pandemic lockdown. Funds raised during the campaign will support scholarships at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, with first-generation students and those from underserved communities as priorities.

“We have long been known as a school that is deeply invested in the success and well-being of our students. Faculty and staff have continued to demonstrate this, even when working remotely,” said dean of the Schar School, Mark J. Rozell. “Our student-based approach helps to explain why students are flocking to us. For instance, we enjoyed a 48 percent increase in applications to our master’s programs this fall, and we just welcomed a record-breaking incoming class.

“Still, we know many of our students are struggling, and we want to do everything we can to support them.”

Those who wish to make a contribution to the annual giving campaign—or to the program or initiative of their choice—are invited to use this link: https://bit.ly/ScharCampaign.
Sometimes the Schar School’s research crosses into unexpected disciplines. In 2020, professors applied their expertise to studying not only policy issues regarding the novel coronavirus outbreak, but also its medical implications. For example, director of research and Professor Naoru Koizumi, working with colleagues at other Mason units, led a study on how the novel coronavirus is transmitted in large crowds. Associate Professor Philip Auserswald made headlines with the conclusion of his study regarding covid-related home healthcare vs. hospitalization: It’s safer to recover at home, but significant barriers need to be removed. University Professor James Olds led work that linked prior nicotine exposure to covid-19 brain and cardiopulmonary vulnerability.

Late last year Assistant Professor Fengxiu Zhang and Associate Professor John Marvel received funding to advance the understanding about covid-19’s effects on Black communities, the population suffering the most severe consequences of the virus.

The list of Schar School “research, with consequences” grows each semester. For updates, see “Faculty & Research” at www.Schar.gmu.edu.

They Said It at the Schar School

“I left my little makeshift command center. I went out to see the SEALs and they were around a fire pit… I knew exactly what needed to be said: ‘Since 9/11, all of you guys have dreamed about being the man that goes on the mission to get bin Laden. Well, this is the mission, and you are the men.’”

- Admiral (ret.) William McRaven

—Admiral (ret.) William McRaven, bottom center, during a September Hayden Center event, The Road to Abbottabad: Ten Years After, a breakdown of the mission to capture Osama bin Laden. Former acting CIA chief Michael Morell, now a distinguished visiting professor, was also on the panel; CBS News’ Olivia Gazis moderated. Morell called the raid “the best-kept secret I’ve ever been involved with in government.”
“We still have not passed effective policy addressing the spread of disinformation or the ethics of gathering online information on people,” said Priscilla Regan. “If we could address information privacy, I believe we could mitigate disinformation and greater ethics issues.”

For the past 40 years, Schar School professor Regan has studied the dynamic world of technological change and the policies that accompany it. She’s lived it first-hand: “I wrote my dissertation in long-hand and lived in the library, because that is where all of the information was,” she said. “We went from writing on these chunky computers to having an incredible amount of knowledge at our fingertips within a very short time. Because of easy access to information and composing ideas, everything is vastly different.”

Before becoming a professor at the Schar School, Regan provided insights to Congress as a senior analyst in the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) between 1984 to 1989. However, her true passion was teaching and research.

“In 1989, [George Mason University] was a much smaller place,” said Regan. “Yet, there was this undeniable need within the state for a major university in the Northern Virginia area...When I came in, there was an uptick in faculty who were interested in research. There was quickly an increase in the overall profile of the university and the quality of graduate programs.”

Regan has seen issues within the realm of technology change dramatically over the past 40 years. Her work will continue to evolve as technology—and the world—continue to advance.

While technology is a familiar topic of research, the nonprofit world is less so. Schar School professor Alan Abramson has been breaking new ground in nonprofit research since 1980.

“I started studying nonprofits during the Reagan administration,” said Abramson. “At the time, government policy was centered around making huge [federal] budget cuts, and there was this idea that nonprofits would make up for the cuts.” That’s when Abramson discovered that the budget cuts would be far more than what the nonprofit sector could take on. The scholar was hooked.

While he teaches both graduate and undergraduate classes in government, politics, and nonprofit management at the Schar School, Abramson directs the Center for Nonprofit Management, Philanthropy, and Policy. He is an elected fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, and he has been named among the 50 most influential leaders in the U.S. non-profit sector.

“Nonprofits are at the cutting edge of research,” said Abramson. “The growth in research is because of public service-minded students wanting to work for nonprofits and connect with folks who are trying to make the world a better place.”

Abramson’s research follows a diverse spectrum of ideas with the goal of advancing the common good. He is developing an index for measuring the health of the nonprofit sector in a timely manner for the Independent Sector, a national membership organization bringing together the charitable community. “It is like a Dow Jones Index for the nonprofit sector,” he said.

With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Abramson is studying how the nonprofit sector advocates for itself in public policy. “I am figuring out how nonprofits fare against business,” he said. “It struggles to have influence in Congress and the White House.”

A Passion for Research: Pris Regan and Alan Abramson
Webinars Abound, Guests Galore; Call It Our Zoom Boom!

By Buzz McClain

Like other institutions of higher learning—and no doubt just about every institution of any kind—the Schar School was compelled to move its public speakers and panel discussions to an online format. You know it as Zoom.

Since March 2020, when our beloved auditoriums and multipurpose rooms were shuttered by the pandemic lockdown, we have brought a record number of guest speakers to our virtual stage. In fact, we have hosted so many multi-episode webinar series, we feel a bit like a cable television network. We saw frequent-host dean Mark J. Rozell’s living room so often we felt like we should pay him rent. But it’s all good!

The caliber of speakers attending these sessions was singular. Doug Goldstein, senior associate dean for administration, was quoted in a university news story as admitting, “To be honest, I can barely keep up with the number of amazing speakers that are coming to our virtual events.” None of us could, Doug. But we tried.

We had an election-campaign series called First Tuesday and a semester-long entertainment series called First Friday. We fed hungry viewers a thoughtful nine-part Power Lunch each Friday. We learned how to debrief the president on intelligence matters, examined the state of espionage, discovered how Osama bin Laden was hunted, explored intelligence’s role in COVID-19 and voter security, and learned what may happen in national security in the next administration.
U.S. Rep. Jennifer Wexton (D-Va.) described what it's like to be the public face of a political campaign during a First Tuesday discussion with professor Steven Pearlstein.

Screenshot by Audrey Butler/Honors College

In December, former CIA director Leon Panetta, right, gave a rare public interview with Larry Pfeiffer, director of the Michael V. Hayden Center for Intelligence, Policy, and International Security.

Screenshot by Buzz McClain/Schar School of Policy and Government

A first-ever partnership with the Museum of Public Relations, joined by the Schar School and Washington, D.C.-based communications firm LEVICK, and New York-based CommPRO, asked the question: 'What public institutions can we trust?' Trust on Trial featured, clockwise from top left, Schar School professors Jennifer Victor and Andrew McCabe, moderator Richard Levick, Michael Fauntroy, Michael Zeldin, and Alice Stewart.

Screenshot by Judith Wilde/Schar School of Policy and Government

And in a university first, we co-sponsored a talk by author Robert Putnam with Mason’s School of Business’ Business for a Better World Center, the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Some 400 viewers listened in.

Here is a small selection of screenshots of the speakers from the fall semester. If you missed them, recordings of most of the events are at schar.gmu.edu/news-and-events/latest-news. Or, you know, Google us. 🌟
A Schar School study shows that live-donor reimbursement by government or nongovernment entities increases the living donation rate of kidneys by 17 percent. The findings could improve live-donor kidney donations around the world.

The study, called *The Impact of Country Reimbursement Programs on Living Kidney Donations*, was published in the journal BMJ Global Health.

In addition, improved access to legally donated kidneys reduces the sales of illicitly harvested organs, said principal researcher Naoru Koizumi, a professor of public policy. Black market kidneys range from $2,000 to $50,000, depending on the country.

Living-donor kidney transplants are vital to those with end-stage kidney disease. But the cost of donating a kidney prevents many viable donors from donating. A typical kidney transplant “package” ranges from $70,000 to $160,000 in the U.S. The study looked at 23 countries that have reimbursement programs and 86 other countries that do not.

“In countries that do not reimburse, they do not enjoy this increasing rate of living donation that results from the reimbursement program,” said Siddique Abu Bakkar Siddique, a PhD in Public Policy student at the Schar School who assisted on the study. “Therefore, we recommend these countries to introduce this program to minimize their shortage of kidney supply.”

—Buzz McClain

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**Analyzing North Korea’s Nuclear Threat**

By Mason Goad

After a military career in the Air Force and a civilian career with the Department of Defense, George Hutchinson decided to apply his experience to earning a PhD in Public Policy at the Schar School. More than that, Hutchinson is a visiting scholar at Mason’s Korea Campus in Songdo, South Korea, where he supports the Center for Security Policy Studies-Korea (CSPS-K). He is also a fellow at the stateside CSPS, as well as serving as the managing editor of the International Journal of Korean Studies.

“My dissertation looks at factors that have shaped North Korea’s decisions to develop nuclear weapons and the strategies used to advance and maneuver its nuclear program through periods of negotiation with the U.S.,” he said.

“My research should be helpful for policymakers, strategists, and other practitioners since the issue of North Korean denuclearization is still on the table and will likely be one of the Biden administration’s major foreign policy challenges.”
What Slows Down Innovation in Government Technology?

Associate Professor Alan Shark, who studies IT governance and cybersecurity policy, among other subjects, interviewed nine government technology executives to understand how innovations come about in government—and what inhibits that process.

The study is called Innovation and Emerging Technologies in Government: Keys to Success and was published by IBM’s Center for the Business of Government.

“The research project was as much a journey as it was an important study,” Shark said. “There were many twists and turns in learning from each subject. The most surprising aspect of the research was the absolute dedication towards public service of each of the nine [executives].”

While each executive was uniquely different, he said, “they shared some key common characteristics, such as entrepreneurship, a collaborative mindset, adaptive mastery of emerging technologies, and imaginative leadership.” Those characteristics, Shark said, are the true keys to innovative success.

“Despite all the hostility and hyper-partisanship that exists today,” Shark observed, “it is good to know that beneath the political layer there exists a group of highly resourceful and dedicated individuals that focus on serving the public, and has spanned many administrations over the years.”

—Mason Goad

The Fate of Water

By Dixie Downing

“I chose to study water sources, because I found the idea to be somewhat novel,” said associate professor Todd La Porte. “It’s been interesting to see how all of these different aspects of climate change interact with one another and how the various effects reverberate through society.”

La Porte addresses climate change through the lens of community. To do that, he is studying climate change adaption policy inside and outside of the classroom—and he’s taking his undergraduate and graduate students with him to discover the effects of climate change from those directly affected by it. Students will create an “atlas” of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

“The climate atlas is a way to reach people,” said La Porte. “We spend too much time looking at data that other people collect. It’s not wrong, but it misses a big part of these issues.”
New Book Examines Flint Water Crisis as Public Policy Failure

In 2014, the city managers of Flint, Michigan, switched the water supply from Detroit’s system to the Flint River. The cost-saving change created one of the greatest environmental catastrophes in recent history as the foul-smelling, discolored, and off-tasting water supply to the 96,000 residents—whose years-long complaints of skin rashes, hair loss, and other ailments were ignored—was found to be contaminated with dangerous levels of lead and harboring Legionnaires’ disease. Charges of systemic racism continue.

A new book of essays, *Managing Challenges for the Flint Water Crisis* (Westphalia Press), examines the crisis as a failure of municipal management. The book was commissioned by Schar School associate professor Bonnie Stabile, editor of the *World Medical & Health Policy* journal, and edited by assistant professor Tonya E. Thornton, graduate research assistant Katherine M. Simon, assistant professor of environmental science and policy Jennifer F. Sklarew, and public works expert Andrew D. Williams.

The disaster, said Thornton, who coordinates the Schar School’s top-ranked Emergency Management and Homeland Security program, failed her “4C’s model.” “That is, there was a lack of communication that led to a disconnect in coordination and cooperation, which, in turn, did not produce meaningful collaboration,” she said. “When this model is not adhered to, even in the simplest of terms, it will result in weakened social capital and fractured political trust.”

—Buzz McClain

The Big Numbers

Schar School undergraduate enrollments rose 66 percent between the years 2016 and 2019. Master’s applications in every program rose by 48 percent between Fall ’19 and Fall ’20.
Home Healthcare Should Be Easier. Here’s How.

“The last place you usually want to be when you’re sick is a hospital or outpatient clinic because you don’t want to risk infection,” said associate professor Philip Auerswald. “Home healthcare makes sense.”

But there are severe obstacles that inhibit the development of home healthcare technology and restrict job growth—issues which are a result of government regulation. Auerswald’s study of those obstacles, Healthcare to the Home: Enabling Distributed Health Service Delivery by Removing Barriers to Entrepreneurial Exploration, was published this fall by Mason’s Mercatus Center.

Among Auerswald’s findings, legislators need to reduce the complexity of the laws regarding licensing and privacy and make them consistent across the nation; federal and state authorities need to streamline data-sharing and set standards for doing so; and policymakers need to reduce barriers and ease the deployment of broadband services on which the home healthcare industry is reliant.

The bottom line for consumers, he concluded, is that they have access to safe and reliable healthcare, which is not always guaranteed in a hospital-setting.

—Mason Goad

Mexican Corruption Under the Microscope

By Mason Goad

Little did associate professor Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera know in November of 2017 that the high-ranking Mexican government official she was interviewing for a book on that country’s drug war would three years later be arrested in the U.S. for taking millions of dollars in bribes from the villainous Sinola drug cartel.

The dramatic downfall of Mexico’s former secretary of public security is now a new book, Las Cinco Vidas de Genario García Luna (The Five Lives of General García Luna; El Colegio de México), written by Correa-Cabrera and Rice University’s Tony Payan. The book traces Luna’s path leading to his downfall as well as looking at the security issues in Mexico today.

Correa-Cabrera interviewed Luna over the course of three days in 2017, two years before his arrest. He freely gave his perspectives on security issues in Mexico—a bitter irony, considering how his tenure came to an end. Meanwhile, drug violence continues: “The situation in Mexico is worse than it was before they declared a war on drugs,” Correa-Cabrera said. “The cartels have grown very powerful—and very murderous.”
Kingsley Haynes Presented with Higano Award

University Professor Emeritus Kingsley E. Haynes, one of the founders of Mason’s School of Public Policy—now the Schar School of Policy and Government—was presented with the 2020 Higano Award by the Pacific Regional Science Conference Organization (PRSCO) for his contributions to development in the Pacific region. The PRSCO is part of the global Regional Science Association International (RSAI), founded in 1954 to enhance the exchange of research information in the field of regional science among its members. Haynes, a former president of RSAI, became an honorary member of the Japan Section of the RSAI in 2016, one of only four foreigners to be honored. Haynes’ work examines the effects of high-speed rail on the Chinese economy.

Arnauld Nicogossian Added to National Air and Space Museum’s Wall of Honor

The name of Schar School Distinguished Research Professor Arnauld Nicogossian, M.D., joins those of the Wright brothers, Amelia Earhart, Neil Armstrong, John Glenn, and other aviation pioneers and enthusiasts on the Wall of Honor at the entrance of the popular Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Va.

Nicogossian edited, among writing others, the award-winning book *Space Physiology and Medicine: From Evidence to Practice* (Springer) describing medical procedures to ensure the health of astronauts in space environments. His name was engraved on the Wall of Honor “in recognition of your contribution to our aviation and space exploration heritage...as a permanent testament to your commitment to and passion for flight,” according to the announcement.

Nicogossian joined the Schar School in 2003 after serving 30 years with NASA.

—Buzz McClain

Kingsley E. Haynes

Arnauld Nicogossian
Louise Giesey White, a longtime professor in George Mason University’s Department of Public and International Affairs (PIA, now part of the Schar School of Policy and Government), passed away in Darlington, S.C., on December 26. Her family announced the cause of death as complications from the novel coronavirus. She was 88.

Dr. White was the chair of PIA as well as director of the university’s International Institute from 1991 to 1998. She also served as director of the public administration doctoral program. In 1997, Mason awarded her its first International Educator of the Year award. Her book, *Political Analysis: Theory and Practice*, “was a standard text for thousands of students over the years,” said dean Mark J. Rozell.

“I worked with Louise for two years after I arrived at Mason in 1987,” said Timothy Conlan, professor emeritus at the Schar School. “She was a careful, thoughtful, efficient, and effective chair of our department. Even more important, she was a wonderful human being. The world was a better place because Louise White was a part of it.”

Dr. White is survived by her husband, Ed, her five children, 12 grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter. A memorial service will be planned for later, when friends and family can safely gather. Memorials may be made to Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church to support the ministries that were meaningful to her.

—Buzz McClain

Guest of Honor

You never know who is going to show up for class. U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-Va.) dropped into Professor Anne Holton’s Master’s in Public Policy class to explain the role of the federal government in education. It doesn’t hurt that the senator and the professor, who returned to the classroom after serving a year as Mason’s interim president, are married.
Faculty Searches...

Dean Mark J. Rozell announced that the Schar School will conduct three tenure-line faculty searches a year for the next four years, dependent on budgetary fluctuations, beginning in 2021. The school is fully committed to recruiting diverse faculty and ensuring an inclusive and welcoming community.

Going...

Frank Shafroth: It took 11 years, but the U.S. municipal bankruptcy law finally passed in 1988, and Frank Shafroth could not have been prouder. As the director of federal relations of the National League of Cities at the time, Shafroth was instrumental in writing the law and shepherding it through Congress. “The greatest day of my life,” he said, pointing to the remarkable recovery of Detroit as an example of how good public policy should work. Shafroth, who retired in December, came to the Schar School as an adjunct during a career that found him working in leadership positions in local, state, and federal outposts, including the Senate and the House. He departs as longtime director of the Schar School’s Center for State and Local Government Leadership and author of the weekly eGnus, an essential newsletter for government leaders that reports actions and court decisions that affect the nation’s policy-makers.

D.R. Butler: D.R. Butler (’92, DPA) entered Texas’ Prairie View A&M at age 16, joined the campus ROTC program, and entered the Army after receiving his degree in mathematics. After a military career of flying helicopters—including a stint in the Vietnam war—and an office at the Pentagon, he retired as colonel in 1985 and came to George Mason in 1992. He taught two undergraduate government classes a year for 20 years, before finishing his career in academia in December 2020. In 2010, Butler established the Butler Family Endowment in Women’s Athletics, which now totals more than $125,000. As a benefactor and a mentor, Butler often passes on his father’s example: “The best helping hand you will ever find in life is at the end of your own arm.”

Terry McAuliffe: The moment former Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe declared his candidacy to run again for governor, his time as Distinguished Visiting Professor came to an end. The voluble, high-energy federal and state government veteran made innumerable appearances in Schar School classrooms, panel discussions, and on Zoom calls since his appointment in 2018, always enriching the conversation with his experience and self-effacing humor.
Coming…

**Faye Taxman:** University Professor Faye S. Taxman, a health service criminologist and founding director of the Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence! (ACE!), joined the Schar School in October. Taxman has been at the university since 2007 and is recognized for her work in the development of “seamless systems-of-care models” that link the criminal justice system with healthcare and other services. She also studies how to reengineer probation and parole supervision services and reforming justice agencies. She most recently received funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse’s Justice Community Opioid Innovation Center Network—JCOIN—to advance the justice system as a provider of services, particularly for those with opioid use disorders.

**David Priess:** The former CIA officer and intelligence briefer to presidents comes aboard as a Visiting Professor and Senior Fellow at the Michael V. Hayden Center for Intelligence, Policy, and International Security. He will teach intelligence courses, including intelligence analysis, in the top-ranked security studies programs. He also will act as moderator for some Hayden Center events. Priess is the chief operating officer of the Washington, D.C.-based Lawfare Institute and a prolific writer and speaker on intelligence and the presidency.

**Mirae Kim:** Originally an English major at Seoul National University, Mirae Kim discovered a passion for making a difference in the arts but was not an artist herself. She became interested in the role of nonprofit organizations in the arts after curating a rare book exhibit that explored philanthropy in medieval times. Kim is now an associate professor in nonprofit studies at the Schar School, joining the already robust staff of the Center for Nonprofit Management, Philanthropy, and Policy. Kim serves as an associate editor of the Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs (JPNA) and has served with the International Review of Public Administration (IRPA) as an associate editor.

**Fengxiu Zhang:** Fengxiu Zhang joined the Schar School as an assistant professor in August. She is also a core faculty member at Mason’s Center for Resilient and Sustainable Communities. She received her PhD in Public Administration and Policy from Arizona State University in 2020, where she also won multiple awards for her research. Zhang’s interests include decision-making under risk and uncertainty, adaptation and resilience in public organizations and communities, climate adaptation, technology in government, and transportation management. Much of her research focuses on integrating the sociopolitical, institutional, and behavioral perspectives to advance understanding of public organization and community adaptation to increased risks in the physical and technical environments.

**Angela Warren:** Angela Warren is the Schar School’s new senior research administrator, providing post-award fiscal oversight and support. Her primary client is the Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence! (ACE!), with a secondary emphasis on additional Schar School grants. Warren was recruited from Columbia University where, since 2018, she served as research administrator in the Department of Dermatology. She’s filled similar roles at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Mount Sinai Beth Israel. She is a graduate of the University Missouri-Columbia and earned her MBA at Temple University.♥
First Fridays: Getting to Know You

When you only know your professor through a Zoom screen, it’s not always easy to perceive their personality—it’s not like you can hang behind after class and chat with them about their hobbies and home lives. To that end, we created First Fridays, a monthly program (on the first Friday, duh) of virtual sessions showcasing the off-campus talents of faculty members. We had no idea who could do what when we put out the call for showoffs, but we were pleased with the variety.

—Buzz McClain

Associate Professor Todd M. La Porte made soft, yeasty challah ahead of Hanukkah. The recipe went to those who registered so they could follow along. Those with foresight let the dough rise ahead of time.

Director of the Centers on the Public Service Tonya E. Thornton not only demonstrated how to make a French 75 cocktail—a potent concoction containing Champagne, gin, lemon juice, and sugar—but she also managed to balance six spoons on her face. “Ears first, then cheeks, then chin, then nose.” Now you know.

Professor John Earle, barefoot at the piano, and cardiologist Carolyn Wu played a program of movements from sonatas by Beethoven that, said Earle, shows “the many aspects of Beethoven—brilliance, verve, passion, anger, joy, tragedy, and humor.” It was a preview of their performance for the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic.

Associate Professor Jeremy Mayer put a new spin on tavern trivia contests with an original take he called “Headgames.” Questions ranged from pop culture to politics to sports as teams attempted to figure out what didn’t belong in the list of answers. Sadly, not everyone could help themselves to not answer in the chat box.

Who knew that Louise Shelley, director of the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center, has for years been involved with a Washington, D.C., wine and cheese club? For her wine tasting evening she began at the beginning, with a corkscrew.
“When you experience it yourself, when you’re sitting at home with the lights off out of fear of being killed—well, it really affected me,” said Elina Jioeva, recounting her experience as a young adult when the Russian Federation invaded Georgia, her native country, in 2008.

“If you don’t experience it for yourself you can’t understand completely what it means,” she said. “You did not do anything and you’re just sitting in your home—and another country just decided to change your reality. And you just can’t do anything about that.”

But Jioeva did not intend to keep that feeling of helplessness going forward.

Now, 12 years later, Jioeva is pursuing a degree in the Master’s in International Security program at the Schar School.

“I always wanted to have this U.S. perspective about international relations and about Eastern Europe—and Russia relations, and all the security issues that are going on now,” she said. “I really enjoy some of the classes, like International Security with Ellen Laipson, because we analyze different cases of U.S. decisions, such as with Cuba. It just gives me a different perspective, and how the U.S. came to this point in history—through what kinds of challenges and decisions.” Laipson, it should be noted, is the former vice chair of the National Intelligence Council.

After completing her undergraduate program in Tbilisi, Georgia’s capital, she began working for Georgia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, planning training programs at the Diplomatic Training Center, and working alongside international partners such as the German Marshall Fund for International Security. Jioeva then studied at the Estonian School of Diplomacy, before moving to the United States in January, 2019.

She currently works remotely as an analyst for the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, located in Helsinki, tracking human rights abuses throughout the former Soviet Union. She said she would like to use her master’s degree education to branch out and work on strategic and security policy. Some possible career opportunities of interest are at the National Endowment for Democracy, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Woodrow Wilson Center, and the Eurasia Foundation.

“I have always had it in my mind, that whatever I do, even if I’m abroad, I will help Georgia, and the world, somehow.”
From Zimbabwe to the Schar School: A Journey of Resilience

By Mason Goad

“In Zimbabwe, I lost my freedom of speech. In America, I regained it,” said Pearl Matibe, a freshman government and international politics major at the Schar School.

Matibe left Zimbabwe due to the ruthless regime of Robert Mugabe. She wrote about her experiences leaving Zimbabwe in her critically acclaimed autobiography, Defining Pearl.

“My home was burned by militia—youths led by former combatants of the liberation war [against the British], with implicit approval of Robert Mugabe—and the farmland seized by the government,” she said.

Matibe fled Zimbabwe and eventually made her way to the United States. “I left Zimbabwe’s still-violent places filled with atrocities, because the autocratic government targeted me for belonging to a pro-democracy group. It was the stuff of nightmares,” she said.

Once Matibe arrived in the United States, she began looking for work. “My resilience did not evaporate,” she said. She completed a hotel-management certificate program at Cornell University and was working as a reporter when she decided to study government and politics at the Schar School.

“I am experiencing a place where I can stretch my understanding and where my intellectual curiosity can explore challenging and complex international relations questions,” Matibe said.

“In the classroom, from critical analysis of significant theories of international relations to understanding how geopolitical and global pressures impact international politics to increasing my ability to articulate and apply aspects of political philosophy and social theories rooted in science, I am gaining a solid basis of knowledge in different theories to understand international relations,” she said. “I am increasing my critical reasoning of complicated moral challenges in the concept of democracy—how you create it, how you defend it, and how you sustain it.

“I am able to do all this on the backdrop of Washington, D.C., and take advantage of the active political environment of this city,” she said.
Government and international politics senior Ryan Flake wants to know why Americans seem to have trouble estimating the correct size of LGBTQ populations. To find an answer, Flake has been awarded a Mason grant to research his proposal on the topic of Queer Numeracy.

“The average American estimated the gay and lesbian populations to be five times the size of what traditional polls have found,” the Arizona native said, referencing previous studies. “There seems to be a significant gap between the estimated queer population size and the true population size of queer individuals in the U.S.”

What those previous studies have failed to achieve, Flake said, was to be comprehensive enough to explain why the average American has such an inflated view of the overall queer population. “As a person’s ‘queer proximity’ increases, their innumeracy of queer populations will decrease,” Flake hypothesizes. “Understanding these factors can also help us recognize casual relationships that impact a person’s perceptions of queer individuals. And [these factors] can be used to identify other factors that lead to more inclusion and acceptance of sexual and gender minorities everywhere.”

Flake’s conclusions could have significant impact once his findings are reviewed. “If we can think about health, inclusion, education policies, and other issues with better information, politicians can be more responsive to the needs of this group,” said Schar School associate professor Mariely López-Santana. “His answers matter because if we have more and better information about the size of this population, then politicians and policy-makers can create better policy. They can better respond to the needs of this community.”

Grandmother’s Piano Goes Viral After Beirut Explosion

After the massive August 4 explosion that devastated Beirut, May Abboud Melki played a heartfelt version of “Auld Lang Syne” on her piano amid the rubble of her shattered apartment. The touching video was broadcast on television and social media throughout the world.

“I’m just so proud that she was the one to carry that message [of hope] and remind people that even in your darkest, most desperate times, we will be able to rebuild,” said May’s granddaughter Amy Melki. Amy is a 2020 Master’s in Global Affairs graduate from Mason; in June she joined the Schar School’s Global Terrorist Trends and Analysis Center at the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC).

—Mariam Aburdeineh
Despite Life’s Daunting Challenges, a Senior Finds Friends and Purpose

By Mariam Aburdeineh

Cassidy Whitehurst didn’t know if or how life would ever get better. The senior from Chesapeake, Virginia, said she grew up with parents who were addicted to drugs and alcohol, and from fourth to eighth grade, she was living in hotels and cars.

“I was doing really bad in school and wasn’t involved,” Whitehurst said. “I kind of gave up because my homelife was so stressful.”

But a moment of introspection inspired her to take control of the future.

“I moved in with my aunt in seventh grade, and around that time I started realizing that I didn’t want to live this lifestyle anymore,” the government and international politics major said. “It gave me a lot of hope thinking about the future and how I could change the situation.”

It also inspired her to want to go to college and become a lawyer.

“[In middle school] I saw my mom go to jail when she really just needed help,” said Whitehurst, who added that her parents have since been doing better. “I thought she was treated wrong and think addiction is treated wrong. That sparked me to be interested in criminal justice reform.”

Whitehurst said she decided to go to George Mason after a campus tour filled her with excitement for the campus experience. Now that she’s here, she’s been making the most of her education in classes, and as the Speaker of the Student Senate, as a Mason Ambassador giving tours to prospective students, and as a Virtual Learning Community mentor.

Before she graduates this spring, Whitehurst will be an undergraduate research assistant working with Schar School professors Robert McGrath and Lucas Núñez to create a database of legislation passed in the Virginia General Assembly. The work is for the ongoing Almanac of Virginia Politics, a massive tool that collects raw data regarding the Commonwealth’s legislative history.

“I love being involved with Student Government because I get to help people within the George Mason community,” Whitehurst said, adding that she also serves on the Student Advisory Committee for the State Council for Higher Education for Virginia.

The opportunities Mason and the Schar School have provided, along with the friends Whitehurst has made along the way, have been her favorite parts of her college experience, she said.
We have a lot to look forward to in 2021—a new president, a new Congress, new opportunities for government to use innovative policies to shape current and future challenges. More than any other year in recent memory there are many government and policy issues at the forefront of the national debate. We have more public policy issues to address in the next six months than our country sometimes faces across multiple years.

During this time, I have been reminded of our resilience and ability to persevere as a university, community, and nation. As Schar School alumni, we provide an important “reserve tank” and continuity across so many areas. As a unified alumni chapter, we are focused on supporting our alumni community and our school through various activities and initiatives.

To name a few ways we’ve been serving, we have been helping our current students navigate this challenging time with our mentoring program, which has become a model for the university; our military veterans committee is developing new programing to support this important group of students and alumni, focusing on creating new ways to engage and support military spouses.

The events committee is creating new programing to unpack a wide variety of issues before us. To help us manage this work, we have been fortunate to recruit two new members to the alumni chapter board, Christina Fullmer (’05, GVIP; ’13, MPP) and Ajay Narayanan (’20, ODKM), who have already provided leadership in many areas.

It takes considerable resources to keep the Schar School and the alumni chapter “reserve tank” full. It requires financial support, obviously, but volunteered expertise is just as valuable. For those who are fortunate enough to be able to give—either the gift of funding or of time and talent—do not hesitate to reach out to Brian Bar (bbar@gmu.edu), assistant director of career development and alumni relations, or follow this link to make a contribution: bit.ly/ScharGiving.

J.J. Stakem
2012, Master’s in Organization Development and Knowledge Management
President, Schar School Alumni Chapter
Giving Hope to Single-Parent College Students—and Getting an Award from Kerry Washington

By Mariam Aburdeineh

Armed with a Master’s in Public Policy (2006), Nicole Lynn Lewis set out to fill a void in the Washington, D.C., nonprofit sphere by creating an organization that helps young parents earn their college degrees. The experience was familiar: As an undergraduate, she was a single mom who struggled to hold it all together.

She opened the doors to Generation Hope in 2010. Since then, the organization has reported helping more than 200 teen parents in college—and their children—with mentoring, emotional support, and financial resources, providing more than $800,000 in tuition assistance, and celebrating 93 college degrees.

Lewis was recently named one of 31 inaugural awardees of the Black Voices for Black Justice Fund, an initiative championed by actress Kerry Washington, among others, that draws on $10 million to invest in Black leaders across the United States working on issues of racial justice.

“It means everything to have someone say, ‘We see you and we honor the work that you’re doing and what your vision is for the world,’” Lewis said. “It’s a validation of [teen parents’] experiences and how important it is that we support their dreams for their futures, because that is so connected to the journey that we’re on as a country for racial equity and justice.”

‘Diversity & Culture Award’: Master’s in Public Policy 2018 Grad Rose Polar

By Buzz McClain

Schar School alumna Rose Polar’s 2020 Luminary Award from her employer, the private consultancy LMI, comes as no surprise to associate professor Bonnie Stabile. The award, after all, is for “Leadership: Diversity & Culture,” stemming from her work as a founding member of LMI’s Women’s Forum and Minority Ethnicities affinity groups.

“I could tell even in 2014 in my PUBP 503 Culture, Organization, and Technology class she had a particular interest in policy issues related to diversity and inclusion,” Stabile said. “Her work at LMI has borne this out.”

She graduated with a Master’s in Public Policy degree from the Schar School in 2018 when she was already a longtime LMI employee—she has been with the firm 21 years—and the degree, she added, “helped me gain additional knowledge, skills, and experience to help me in both my career and life in general.”
Memories and Guidance from an Award-Winning Alumna

By Amir Kazim

A 2004 trip to India exposed Carol Hart Metzker to the shocking reality of human trafficking, forced sex trade, and childhood slavery. Applying what she learned as a 2001 graduate of the Schar School’s Master’s in Organization Development and Knowledge Management program—ODKM, for short—she wrote the book Facing the Monster (Berrett-Koehler), revealing in the words of the victims the global and domestic hidden horrors of illicit human trafficking. In 2019 she was awarded the Schar School’s Distinguished Graduate of the Year Award. She is also the recipient of Rotary International’s highest honor, the Service Above Self Award. We asked this esteemed alumna for memories and advice.

Schar School: What is your favorite memory from your time at George Mason and the Schar School?

Carol Hart Metzker: I have lots of Mason memories, short, long, funny, motivating, and they’re everlasting. A funny memory: [Recently] I was cleaning out my book shelf and I found an outline of one of my papers from 20 years ago that fell out. I remember writing the outline of the paper while at Starbucks, and when I got home, I couldn’t find it...yet 20 years later here we are. This reminded me of the value of persistence and overcoming stress, which were part of the things I learned while at the Schar School.

My cohort broke into small groups to study one’s own behavior in a group dynamic. So I invited my study group to dinner at my house—I served salmon and potato salad—and then it shortly became a tradition where the group members would go to each other’s houses to discuss classwork over dinner. We ended up presenting the material over a mock dinner setup in front of the class—and brought food and snacks for everyone—and our presentation was very well received by other classmates and the professor.

SS: How has your time at the Schar School helped you professionally?

CHM: The ODKM program assisted me in answering the question of how do we come together and work, so that we can accomplish the goals we set out for ourselves? The program gave me a chance to explore what my purpose is, and what I want to accomplish in this world. I learned some crucial tools that helped me with survivors of human trafficking—one of them is “reframing,” changing the way you view yourself from being a victim to a survivor of human trafficking. This helps a survivor move past the trauma, and focus on building a life that you really want through accomplishments and achievements that they could be proud of.

I live on hope that we can change what is unjust. In order to have hope, I have to believe that all around me are people, resources, ideas, and creativity [moving toward] action for meaningful progress. I want to help build bridges between law enforcement and Black teens. I want to help teen vulnerabilities through best practices learned overtime and from Schar School teachings.

SS: How do you see yourself best continuing to volunteer with the university community?

CHM: I loved speaking to various classes and groups at [the Schar School]. Recently, I spoke at a summer conference organized by the ODKM program; being able to share stories with colleagues in that setting is rewarding and drives me to do more of that in the future.

SS: What is one piece of advice you’d give a college student today?

CHM: Connect with your fellow students, professors, anyone you meet—no matter how briefly. Treat every networking opportunity as a learning opportunity to better yourself and others. Every person is a walking book: If you discover one chapter or one page, you could learn something from them and you have an opportunity to share of your own story.

schar.gmu.edu | 27
Hats Off to Our 2020 Winter Graduates!

Just because a newly minted Schar School graduate can’t throw their mortarboard skyward at the end of the commencement ceremony—kind of hard to do when commencement is on Zoom—it doesn’t mean they can’t decorate their cap with a personal message. Using an online template, our grads responded with messages of heartfelt gratitude and whimsy. We truly hope for our next graduates the tassels are real.

— Buzz McClain

The Schar School offers classes at Mason's Fairfax and Arlington campuses in Virginia. Both campuses are located within the heart of a dynamic region and close to the nation's capital. Opportunities for internships, jobs, and research are unequaled, as is access to archives and museums, policymakers and think tanks, and diverse career opportunities. With 90 full-time faculty, we offer 13 degree programs across undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels.

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