The Schar School of Policy and Government capped an academic year of unprecedented activity with a May 16 Degree Celebration at EagleBank Arena. Nearly 2,000 family members and guests came to cheer—and did they ever—for the 365 green-gowned PhD, Master’s, and undergraduates who crossed the stage with their diplomas in hand. The keynote speaker was one of our own, Vice Admiral Bruce H. Lindsey, deputy commander of the U.S. Fleet Forces Command, who earned his PhD from the Schar School in 2005. See inside for more photos, a montage of meaningful mortarboards, and how we surprised the vice admiral.
For many, summer is a season of temporarily disconnecting from the normal routine in order to recharge and refresh for the challenges that loom ahead. Typically, that means a week or two visiting a foreign destination, unwinding at the beach, exploring mountain trails, or simply remaining at home enjoying a “staycation.”

The popular image of university faculty members, on the other hand, is one of...well, sloth isn’t the right word, but it gets the idea across. This is grossly incorrect. It’s true many professors are paid for only 10 months, giving them two months of the year to do what they please, and while the temptation to kick back at the shore for most of the summer is tempting, I can tell you the faculty members of the Schar School are not spending their summer months idle.

If they are not teaching summer courses—and we thank them for that; summer courses are vital to helping our students achieve their goals—they are traveling the world, representing the Schar School in particular and George Mason University at large, as they deliver papers, participate on panels, and teach global study classes.

A quick survey of faculty activity this summer made me want to stick pins in a world map to see where Schar School professors are working. We truly are spanning the globe.

Trevor Thrall, for instance, is teaching an undergraduate course in Switzerland, before heading to Kazakhstan to speak at a conference. Mariely López-Santana is attending an international conference in Madrid where she will present thoughts on Spanish politics. Zoltan Acs is earning frequent flyer miles with meetings in Sweden, Hungary, France, and Boston. Sita Slavov, whose research on Social Security retirement timing has gone viral, will be at a pensions conference in Paris while Louise Shelley is headed to Norway. Michael Hunzeker and two PhD students are in Rome running a simulation they built for the NATO Defense College. Eric McGlinchey is explaining Kyrgyzstani property rights at the University of Exeter in England. Stefan Toepler will have meetings in Muenster and Berlin before delivering a paper in Basel, Switzerland. After San Francisco, Anh Pham will venture to Beijing and Scotland for conferences. Tojo Thatchenkery will be in Warsaw, Madrid, and Bangkok. Justin Gest is headed, in this order, to Singapore, Berlin, Paris, Madrid, and Brussels. Alan Shark is in Venice and Ankara and Jeremy Mayer will visit England and Spain.

Our border security expert, Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera, is traveling the entire length of the U.S.-Mexico border by car with a journalist, a remarkable journey that will no doubt enrich her future research. This, in addition to presenting a paper in France and delivering a keynote speech in Mexico.

Not to be outdone, Robert Deitz is delivering four lectures aboard the RMS Queen Mary 2 during a transatlantic voyage from Southampton, England, to New York City.

Closer to home, Phillip Mink is headed to Boston for the Northeast Association of Pre-Law Advisors conference where he will be installed as second vice president. Andrew Light, who accompanied Ellen Laipson, Todd...
LaPorte, Ming Wan and I in South Korea, will go to Boulder, Colo., for a working session on solar geoengineering for the National Academies of Science. Jennifer Victor bounces from south to north for conferences at Duke University and MIT. James Olds is headed to the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Mass. David Hart is presenting in Nashville, while Jack Goldstone will find time to attend a workshop in New York City while preparing for several seminars this fall.

Even our emeritus professors continue to wave the Schar School flag: Kingsley Haynes is venturing to deliver papers in Italy then Bangkok then France. Daniel Druckman is on a panel in San Diego and then heading to Ireland, Belgium, and Denmark, before returning stateside to a workshop at Harvard Law.

As for me, after our climate change symposium in South Korea, I delivered a lecture at Ajou University, south of Seoul. I attended meetings and lectured in Beijing and I followed that, finally, with some down time in the Gobi Desert, of all places. Even deans have to kick back on occasion.

Mark J. Rozell
Dean, Schar School of Policy and Government
Ruth D. and John T. Hazel Chair in Public Policy
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Hats off to the new Schar School graduates!
While U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) held a campaign rally across the campus for 1,000, more than 2,000 graduating students and their friends and families enjoyed a raucous caucus of their own. The May 16 Schar School of Policy and Government Degree Celebration, held at EagleBank Arena on George Mason University's Fairfax Campus, featured keynote speaker Vice Admiral Bruce H. Lindsey (Public Policy PhD '05), deputy commander of the U.S. Fleet Forces Command, who gave a rousing speech. He reminded the newly minted graduates that they possessed the Navy’s core values of honor, courage, and commitment, as demonstrated by the hard work needed to complete their degrees.

Little did the naval flight officer know, three members of his impressive PhD study group were flown in to share the dais during the ceremony: Chief Information Officer of the Department of Homeland Security John Zangardi, Public Policy PhD '05; Public Policy Professor and Assistant Provost at the University of Texas-Dallas Sarah Maxwell, Public Policy PhD '04; and Kevin “Kip” Thomas, Sociology/Economics PhD ’08, Director and Principal Investigator at the Laboratory for Human Neurobiology at the Boston University School of Medicine.

The ceremony included presentations of awards by Dean Mark J. Rozell. Associate Professor Bonnie Stabile received the Outstanding Teaching Award; Professor Jack A. Goldstone received the Outstanding Scholar Award; and Human Resources and Operations Specialist Christopher Anclien took home the Dean's Service Award. The evening celebration included a new recording of The Schar School Processional March, originally written by retired professor Jean Paelinck and newly transcribed by Mason senior Kendell Haywood. Photos by Caitlin Scott/GreattScott Photography.

—Buzz McClain
Three hundred days after the last Pentagon press briefing, the Michael V. Hayden Center for Intelligence, Policy, and International Security convened a panel of distinguished correspondents at Washington, D.C.’s National Press Club to discuss the state of intelligence coverage in today’s political climate.

It was the final event of the Accountability of Intelligence series entitled “Breaking News! U.S. Intelligence and the Press.” The discussion featured NBC News Chief Foreign Affairs Correspondent Andrea Mitchell, The Cipher Brief CEO and publisher Suzanne Kelly, and two veterans from the Washington Post: Intelligence columnist David Ignatius and national security editor Peter Finn. Hayden Center Senior Fellow and former Acting Director of the CIA Michael Morell moderated.

The event drew close to 400 guests, including current Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence Ellen McCarthy, and public affairs officers from across the intelligence community.

One theme of the discussion was the professional similarity between journalists and intelligence officers. Ignatius, who said it was a “traumatic time for those covering the intelligence industry,” noted that both jobs require hard-won trust with sources to seek the truth, and both struggle to avoid being manipulated by political agendas. Difficult to do, he suggested, when the news cycle moves at its current pace.

Finn, who offered that “tension with the government is a daily fact of life for us,” pointed out a popular illusion that “some wonderful source walks up to reporters” with a big intelligence story. “That’s not the way it works,” he said flatly.

Kelly described her job as focusing on intelligence issues that do not always get appropriate context, such as
enhanced interrogation and NSA surveillance. Weighing in on WikiLeaks, she cautioned that “so many people are calling themselves journalists” today without having the ethics and reputation of correspondents of her colleagues on the panel.

The Post’s Finn added that he doesn’t “want to decide who is a journalist and who is not,” particularly in Julian Assange’s 2010 hacking case.

On the hot topic of government leaks, Mitchell said it was a myth that they all come from Capitol Hill. “Leaks of pending policy decisions are much less valuable now in the world of Donald Trump” when “there really is no interagency process.”

Morell and the panel concluded with warnings, noting the fate of Venezuela’s Fourth Estate after Hugo Chávez’s rise to power: When the media became the opposition, it “lost all its credibility with the Venezuelan people.” Kelly said that “the minute that you as a journalist lose sight of your mission and your goal, it’s gone forever.”

**National Security Lessons Learned from the Battle of Gettysburg**

A brisk mid-spring wind greeted 40 Schar School of Policy and Government students and faculty members as they arrived at the Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania. They made the two-hour drive from Arlington’s Schar School on a blustery Saturday in April to learn details about the successes and failures of the deadliest battle in the Civil War. The tour was facilitated by the Schar School’s Center for Security Policy Studies.

Although the Battle of Gettysburg took place 156 years ago, the national security and strategic decisions leading up to a three-day fight that took some 8,000 lives continue to resonate. “We come to Gettysburg, because the story comes alive in so many dimensions,” said center director Ellen Laipson. “It’s a story of genius and folly. It’s a human drama and a political story in the U.S.”

The eight-hour event was led by Rob Abbott, a longtime tour guide. Abbott focused on the succession of command, strategy, and the failures and successes of each Union and Confederate leader in the battle. The tour was constructed chronologically, from the first day of battle to Abraham Lincoln’s famous Gettysburg Address.

“A failure on both sides of this battle was keeping subordinates informed and prepared,” said Abbott. “A good leader gives clear and concise orders and encourages questions from subordinates.”

For many Union and Confederate leaders, the refusal to heed orders from superiors led to the demise of a large number of soldiers, Abbott said. “Expect what you inspect,” he said. “If I give orders, I am going to make sure they follow through.”

—Dixie Downing
Mason Recognizes Schar School’s Jennifer Victor with Teaching Award

George Mason University’s Office of the Provost and the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning presented Schar School Associate Professor of Political Science Jennifer N. Victor with one of the year’s highest academic honors. In a “Celebration of Teaching Excellence” ceremony held in April, Provost S. David Wu recognized Victor’s “exemplary dedication to general education and commitment to educational excellence” with a Teaching Excellence Award.

“I’m tremendously honored to be recognized by the Mason community for my teaching accomplishments,” Victor said. “It’s rewarding to work at an institution of higher education that genuinely values teaching and research. Mason truly recognizes the mutually reinforcing roles these activities play in education and scholarship.”


Associate Professor Ahsan Butt interviewed 112 people from a variety of backgrounds for his book, Secession and Security: Explaining State Strategy Against Separatists (Cornell University Press), but the effort was worth it. The book was named by the International Studies Association (ISA) as the 2019 International Security Studies Section Best Book of the Year. The Connecticut-based ISA represents more than 100 countries and is dedicated to enhancing knowledge and understanding about a wide range of international security issues.

In speaking with the interview subjects, the professor learned about himself as well: “I found my worldview being challenged by talking to people I wouldn’t normally interact with, such as Kashmiri Pandits regarding the war in Kashmir in the 1990s, or Israeli analysts regarding the Oslo agreements,” he said. “I was able to see the gray and have some sort of synthesis.”
Undergrad Research Poster Competition Takes on the World’s Wicked Problems

An exhibition of 33 posters and 10 PowerPoint presentations created by Schar School undergraduates revealed a wide range of research interests by some 70 students who participated in the Undergraduate Research Assistant Program (URAP). Topics spanned the world and included terrorism, organ trafficking, girls and MS-13, “shadow elites,” military innovation, populism, and suffragettes in Edwardian England.

The competitive poster project (there were $100 prizes for the top three), “taught me to keep going, especially if something doesn’t pop up on your initial research,” said Government and International Politics major Hadiyyah Abdul-Jalaal. Her poster was a study of organ trafficking in Latin America.

The 2019 URAP poster competition winners:

◆ “When do Members of Congress Get Along?” [faculty advisor: Professor Jennifer Victor]—Kelsey Gaudette, Molly Harnish, Molly Reed;

◆ “Data Collection for Research on Congressional Cooperation” [faculty advisor: Professor Jennifer Victor]—Melissa Alberto, Camden Layton, Sai Pethe; and

How Do Immigrants Fare in Entrepreneurship, Innovation?

By Buzz McClain

A Schar School study released earlier this year drew national attention, and for good reason: The research examined the rates of innovation by immigrants in the U.S. and found that native-born entrepreneurs were, in effect, being demolished by their immigrant-owned competition.

The study, Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Innovation in the U.S. High-Tech Sector, was compiled by Schar School Professor of Public Policy John S. Earle, PhD student Mee Jung Kim, and Kyung Min Lee (’19 Public Policy PhD), along with J. David Brown of the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The working paper was delivered under the auspices of the National Bureau of Economic Research in Washington, D.C.

“We were interested both in entrepreneurship and in immigrants, and this paper brought the two interests together,” Earle said. “Regarding entrepreneurship, we had written a paper arguing that much of the research on ‘high-growth firms’ misses the most important source of growth, which comes from entry of new businesses and their early development.

“Concerning immigration, we noticed that while there has been a lot of research on the effects of immigration on native worker wages—and generally fails to find any substantial negative effect—there was a comparative dearth of analysis of immigrants as entrepreneurs.”

While anecdotal evidence of the innovations of immigrants to the U.S. are easy to find, Earle said there were few studies beyond those measuring firm size and growth. Using a new federal database of 11,000 owners of 7,400 high-tech employer businesses, the study found that businesses owned by immigrants performed at uniformly higher rates of innovation in 15 of 16 innovation measures.

“In other words,” concluded Forbes columnist Simon Constable, “the foreigners are more innovative on more than 93 percent of the metrics that the researchers used to evaluate the different groups.”

“It was surprising how consistent the results are, in that immigrant entrepreneurs engage in more innovation activities, research and development, and patenting—across a host of innovation measures,” Earle added.

As for the contribution of the students, “Mee Jung and Min were crucial members of the team,” Earle said. “We had many enjoyable sessions discussing hypotheses, devising econometric strategies, and looking over and interpreting the statistical estimates. This paper is one of several we are doing together, two of which are already accepted for publication. It’s intellectually exciting, and it’s fun!”
Annette Prieto discovered tweets pushing anti-vaccination speech have many more replies contradicting them.

Photo by Dixie Downing/Schar School

Biodefense Master’s Student Asks: Is Social Media Spreading Anti-Vax Attitudes?

By Dixie Downing

Are the effects of anti-vaccination attitudes perpetuated by social media platforms? For her capstone as a Master’s in Biodefense student, Annette Prieto set out to determine whether online speech increases fears of vaccines, causing “the viral spread of anti-vaccination attitudes on social media, specifically Twitter.”

Prieto, who graduated in May, collected original tweets and analyzed the reactions in Twitter replies. She used sophisticated social media tracking software to create a data set of tweets and organized the data based on whether the tweet-author viewed vaccines in a positive or negative light.

While studying microbiology and immunology in her hometown of Miami, Fla., the first-generation Cuban immigrant found herself wanting to learn more about biodefense. “I became interested in biodefense once I heard about infectious diseases being used in terror attacks,” she said. “I chose to continue my education at the Schar School because the program offered biodefense, security studies, and global health security. The classes cover accidental biothreats, natural events, and intentional acts of bioterrorism.”

And what has she discovered in her anti-vax research? “So far, it looks like Twitter is not spreading rhetoric as significantly as expected,” she said. “One tweet pushing anti-vaccination speech has many more replies contradicting them [than supporting them].”

Now that she’s graduated, Prieto plans to spend a few years working in biosecurity before returning to the Schar School for a PhD in Biodefense or a related field.
A Study, with Recommendations, on Making Art ‘Relevant and Sustainable’

By Buzz McClain

Author and Schar School professor of International Commerce and Policy J.P. Singh presented the report — “Culture and International Development: Towards an Interdisciplinary Methodology” — at the British Embassy in Washington, D.C.

The study was commissioned by the British Council, the U.K.’s international organization for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

Singh began work on the study at the University of Edinburgh where he held the chair in Culture and Political Economy before moving to the Schar School in 2018.
Patrick Grady: ‘I try to get a diversity of experiences to inform my own opinions and my understanding of how things work.’

Photo by Lathan Goumas/Strategic Communications

International Politics Major Patrick Grady Wins Prestigious Truman Scholarship

By Damian Cristodero

Patrick Grady does not play favorites when it comes to gathering experiences and knowledge. That is why, after his Capitol Hill internship last year in the office of Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, Grady interned with Maine’s Democratic Party.

“I try to get a diversity of experiences to inform my own opinions and my understanding of how things work,” said the rising senior from Kennebunkport, Maine. “That’s really valuable today when so many people seem to be so polarized about certain issues.”

Grady’s eclectic academic pursuits—he is a Government and International Politics major with minors in criminology, law and society, and legal studies—as well as his vision for the future were rewarded with a Truman Scholarship. The prestigious award pays $30,000 for graduate school to students who plan a career in public service.

Grady, one of just 62 awardees out of 840 applicants this year, and a member of George Mason University’s Honors College, said he plans to attend law school and earn a public health master’s degree.

Continued on Page 14
“He’s interested in solving real-world problems, and that drives him to do well in class,” said Robert J. McGrath, an associate professor and director of the Schar School’s undergraduate programs. “He’s very smart, engaged, and asks a lot of questions. If I had the power to give a Truman Scholarship, he’d be in the top 1 percent on my list.”

The path to a Truman Scholarship is arduous and requires faculty recommendations, an application with 14 essay questions, an academic transcript, and a policy proposal.

Grady’s policy proposal sets up what he called a “safe consumption service” in his home state, where people can use drugs in a safe space with available medical personnel. The idea is to reduce overdose deaths and offer drug users counseling and treatment to help them overcome addictions. Such facilities are common in other countries, Grady said. His interest began several years ago after his cousin died of a drug overdose.

“It woke me up to the [drug] problem,” Grady said. “It made it from something I saw on the news to something that was real for me.”

Grady, who said he wants to one day run for political office, wants to change drug laws to emphasize treatment rather than criminalization, to “give drug users more humanity and recognize the disease aspect of it, not as a social deficiency.”

How an Investment in an International Security Master’s Degree Opens Doors

By Dixie Downing

“If you want to make a career move into the security field, this program is the way to go,” said Rebecca Ames. Some people think it’s impossible to juggle a full-time job, a part-time school schedule, and a research fellowship. Because of her hard work and dedication, Ames is living proof that it is truly possible. The Master’s in International Security student at the Schar School has used her degree to turn her career around in a big way.

Ames started her career in information technology, but her true passion was international relations, grand strategy, and reducing the costs and risks of conflict. Looking back on her studies in political science and international affairs at Boise State University, Ames decided to pursue a master’s degree that combined her interest in public service and global security. This led her to the Schar School—recently ranked as one of the best security studies schools in the country, earning the coveted No. 2 spot in U.S. News & World Report’s 2019 rankings in homeland security-focused programs.
Since beginning her graduate studies, Ames has changed jobs, moving from a consulting position with the Department of Veterans Affairs to joining a prestigious management consulting firm that works with the Department of Homeland Security.

“Because I had Master’s in International Security on my resume, I was able to get a job consulting for DHS while still in school,” she said. “My classes overlap with work all the time, and I am able to communicate more effectively with DHS officials because of what I learned in school.”

Ames participated in an independent study paper with John Gordon, Schar School adjunct professor and senior researcher at the global policy think tank RAND Corporation.

“Rebecca is an example of an exceptional student who came into this program with little military knowledge, and despite a very steep learning curve, is leaving the program well-versed in the language of national security,” said Gordon.

As a student fellow at the Schar School’s Center for Security Policy Studies (CSPS), led by Master’s in International Security program director Ellen Laipson, Ames has had the opportunity to create and execute crisis simulations for students and faculty.

“The international security program has forced me to put things together in new ways,” said Ames. “By combining practical application with theory, students are able to obtain the knowledge needed to work in the security field.”

Ames, who graduated in May, is continuing to advance her career in security. “Because I am able to take what I learn in the classroom to work every day, so many doors have been opened,” she said.
From the Campaign Trail to the Classroom, Public Policy Master’s Student Ready to Make a Difference

By Dixie Downing

The daughter of Somali immigrants has found her niche in American politics. Born and raised in Fairfax, Va., Najma Mohamud has served on numerous local and state government election campaigns. She received her bachelor’s degree in Conflict Resolution from George Mason University, but the Northern Virginia native knew she wanted to take her education further at the Schar School.

The current Master’s in Public Policy student began working on the campaign of former governor and Schar School Distinguished Visiting Professor, Terry McAuliffe, at the age of 18.

“I saw a poster requesting volunteers, applied, and was brought on as an intern,” she said. “They ended up hiring me on as the Deputy Field Organizer for the Mason District in Annandale, Virginia.”

Mohamud was the youngest person with a paid job on the campaign, and she managed about a dozen intern employees. In addition, she represented the campaign at public hearings to better understand the concerns of people in her district.

“The campaign taught me how to bridge barriers with those who have different political views,” she said. “I was able to engage in civil discourse with people from a variety of backgrounds. In order to make a real difference, it’s important to get a diverse range of perspectives.”

Her passion for public service started on the campaign trail, but she hopes to use her public policy degree to work in international development or politics.

“I draw inspiration from my mom,” said Mohamud. “She builds primary schools in Somalia, and she inspires me to do more and give back every day.”

Mohamud is studying public policy to make a difference in the lives of people around the world.

“I think it’s important to study public policy, because it teaches people how to make an impact,” she said. “I hope to pursue a career in international development and eventually create policy to improve the lives of refugees, women, and marginalized people in the United States.

“Through understanding the policy processes and a wide range of perspectives, I feel this degree will give me the best chance to enact positive change,” Mohamud said. ✦
Elijah Nichols has used spoken-word to encourage action on issues such as gun violence and LGBTQ rights since high school in Muskegon, Mich.

The rising sophomore Government and International Politics major at the Schar School keeps a hectic schedule as a senator on the student council, a co-founder of Mason’s chapter of Students Demand Action, and an inaugural winner of a highly competitive Giffords Courage Fellowship.

In whatever spare time he has, Nichols is a regular speaker at spoken-word open mic nights at Epicure Cafe in Fairfax, Va. (As it happens, Schar School director of PhD Student Services Shannon Williams is the emcee of the monthly showcase at Epicure Café.)

“What got me into activism and writing was my own personal experience with gun violence and being a queer man realizing the systematic barriers in place,” he said. “I think that is what has inspired me to not only get involved but also make changes.”

For example, the piece “02-01-2006” is based on “the timeline given from the court case of my uncle, Frank Sibson, and his death,” said Nichols. “This piece truly comes from the angle of the law having no empathy, thus no way of humanizing the incident. And that is something that I truly believe we need to fit in to the system of law in the United States.

“I want people to understand that there is value in youth voices,” he said. “There is a place for conversations and pragmatic solutions on college campuses.”

Not long after arriving at the university, Nichols realized there was no student organization on campus working on gun violence prevention, so he filled the need.

“During my time as the direct-action co-lead of Students Demand Action, we have lobbied over 30 members of Congress on gun violence prevention,” he said.
“We worked with Letters for Change and March for Our Lives International to send 146 letters to [Virginia Senators] Tim Kaine and Mark Warner.”

His work in gun control efforts led to his winning one of 28 inaugural “Courage Fellowships” presented by the Giffords: Courage to Fight Gun Violence organization, founded by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, a gun violence survivor.

“Elijah is the type of student every professor wants in their class: curious, enthusiastic, hard-working, and courageous,” said Associate Professor of Political Science Jennifer N. Victor. “He asks smart questions and his enthusiasm is infectious to his peers, providing a lasting impact on an excellent classroom environment.”

Nichols came to the Schar School to be near the place where policies and decisions are made. “The immediate draw was the proximity to [Washington,] D.C.,” he said. “Also, the professors understand a student’s role in society.”

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35 New Graduate Students Join the Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration

The newest members of the Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society are flanked by chapter founding professor James Burroughs, left, and professor Bonnie Stabile, right. Photo by Paul Nooney/Schar School

The Schar School’s chapter of the Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society inducted 35 new members in May. PAA is the National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration, accepting students with cumulative grade point averages of 3.8 or higher.

“I think it’s important that we recognize the students who excel,” said Paul Nooney, organizer of the ceremony and associate director of student services. “It’s a way that we can honor them, and it’s an honor that they can take with them beyond the Schar School.”
On a blustery, gray day in February, 60 people learned how to “color their personal brand.” That was the theme for the Spring 2019 Learning Community, an event that challenges Organization Development and Knowledge Management master’s students to become instructors for a day. Here is ODKM student Katya Davydova’s account of the personal branding session.

As part of a capstone for the master’s in Organization Development and Knowledge Management program, my team and I led a full-day workshop at Founders Hall in Arlington to help participants discover how they see themselves and how the world mirrors them back.

So what is personal brand, exactly? The way we termed it, based on an amalgamation of research from authors like Dorie Clark and Hubert Rampersand, is this: “Personal branding is about taking the time to understand our internal and external influences and then living strategically and authentically so that the world sees you in your best light. It’s what other people say about you when you leave the room.”

To satisfy some of the math-inclined folks, we created the following equation to hone it in: Internal Exploration + External Feedback = Personal Brand.

With each of our six team members dressed in each color of the rainbow, representing the six subsections of personal branding, this was truly a colorful journey.

The first part of the day focused on “exploring our internal influences”: understanding our values, learning how to show up authentically, and how to discover our purpose in life. This portion culminated in drawing individual and group vision boards (which research posits offer a 42 percent greater likelihood in completing goals), as well as crafting personal brand statements.

After a catered lunch, we invited participants to seek feedback from their crafted “feedback communities.” Clarifying how others see us helps to shape our personal brand so that we can portray a consistent and powerful image. We equipped them with tools of how to ask the appropriate questions in order to extract feedback, and how to navigate the information they would collect from their circle of confidants.

By the end of the eight-hour workshop, participants came away with their completed workbook, action steps to further propagate their self-discovery, and an understanding of how to color their personal brand.
Schar School Distinguished Visiting Professor Anne Holton was named interim president of George Mason University, effective August 1. Holton, who said she is not a candidate for the permanent role, is assuming leadership of the university in the wake of the departure of Ángel Cabrera, who has served for seven years. Cabrera will be the president of Georgia Tech starting September 1.

Holton will continue to teach her master’s level education policy class at the Schar School during her interim appointment. She is also a visiting professor at Mason’s College of Education and Human Development, a position she has held since 2017.

Holton is Mason’s first female president. She served as Virginia’s Secretary of Education from 2014-2016 and as Virginia’s First Lady when her husband, U.S. Senator Tim Kaine, served as governor from 2006-2010. She also is the daughter of former Gov. A. Linwood Holton, Jr. She earned a B.A. from Princeton University and a J.D. from Harvard University.

“Her knowledge of state government and her leadership in statewide higher education, where she was instrumental in bolstering the Commonwealth’s talent pipeline, will be particularly useful as Mason strives to grow programs to meet the talent and innovation opportunities generated by Amazon’s arrival in Northern Virginia,” said Mason Rector Tom Davis.

Her connection to Mason is deep. She is a visiting faculty member, and her father in 1972 signed legislation that granted Mason its independence from the University of Virginia. Gov. Holton also received the Mason Medal in 2010 and was an early champion of civil rights and inclusion who, with his family, helped to desegregate Virginia public schools. In 2016, Mason named a plaza next to the Center for the Arts in recognition of his contribution to Mason and the Commonwealth.

“George Mason University is a special place for me and my family, and I look forward to serving the institution during this interim period.”
—Anne Holton

“George Mason University is a special place for me and my family, and I look forward to serving the institution during this interim period,” Holton said. “The university has made tremendous strides for such a young institution, and it’s my privilege to continue that momentum and ensure a smooth transition to the next president.”

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Anne Holton: ‘It’s my privilege to continue [the university’s] momentum and ensure a smooth transition to the next president.’ Photo by Creative Services/George Mason University
For 20 years, Stefan Toepler has been a professor of nonprofit studies at the Schar School. This year, he takes on an additional role, that of director of the Master’s in Public Administration program.

“We’ll be taking a deep look at the structure of things and updating the program to better suit the needs of the changing market,” he said.

Not surprisingly, given his expertise, one of Toepler’s goals for the MPA program is to strengthen its nonprofit focus, emphasizing how the roles of nonprofit institutions have merged with those of government public administration agencies.

“Twenty years ago, public administration had nothing to do with nonprofits, and now nearly every program has some kind of nonprofit track,” Toepler said. “Nonprofits are such a big part of the public service workforce today. In most cities, most of the big employers are nonprofits or government agencies. And they increasingly cooperate. Public administration cannot ignore nonprofit any longer.”

This development is one “about public service,” he said. “Serving the public in different ways. And nonprofits are more diverse and more flexible in the way they can approach their clients and populations. It’s challenging in many ways, but the nonprofit-government partnership is a vital partnership.

“I’ve seen the evolution of the field, and I find it exciting,” he added.

Nonprofit Management and Public and Nonprofit Finance are two of the 11 concentrations available to Master’s in Public Administration students. Other popular MPA program concentrations include Emergency Management and Homeland Security (which contributes to the Schar School’s U.S. News and World Report ranking as the No. 2 best school in the U.S. for security studies programs), Human Resource Management, Public Management, and State and Local Government. Additionally, MPA students have the opportunity to design their own concentration, with approval from their advisor.

Toepler is assuming the leadership of the No. 40 ranked MPA program in the world, and No. 13 among U.S. universities, according to the Academic Ranking of World Universities, also known as the Shanghai Ranking. Thanks to the quality and rigor of the degree, the Schar School’s MPA program is accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA).
By Dixie Downing

During her time as a Government and International Politics major at the Schar School, Virginia Beach native Bria Reel has found professors who share her passion for the culture, religion, and politics of the Middle East. She also found an opportunity to travel there.

The aspiring ambassador was awarded a fellowship in Qatar with George Mason University’s chapter of the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations. In an action-packed week, she visited the site of the 2022 Soccer World Cup, the Qatar Financial Center, and the International Affairs Ministry.

“It was an indescribable experience,” she said. “The Qatari people were open to answering questions about the treatment of migrant workers and the fast pace of development in the country.”

She was equally impressed with the education, science, and community development programs sponsored by the Qatari government. “We had the opportunity to visit Qatar’s Education City with the presence of American schools,” she said. “I loved seeing Qatar welcome a wide array of knowledge. It’s a side to the Middle East that is rarely seen.”

Reel’s fellowship in Qatar helped her better understand the organization of Middle Eastern governments. The opportunity to learn inside and outside of the classroom has broadened her knowledge of the Middle East, she said.

Heba F. El Shazli, assistant professor of international relations theory, is Reel’s role model and mentor.

“When I think of Bria, I think joy of learning and discovery,” said El-Shazli. “She has a keen interest in exploration, discovery, and learning, plus—and most importantly—sharing. She loves sharing knowledge with others.”

That, combined with “an infectious smile that brings comfort,” the professor said, “having her in class was always a delight.”

Reel, who graduated in May, has a long-range ambition to earn a master’s degree in Arab Studies or International Policy, with a focus on the Arab world.

From the Schar School to Qatar — and Beyond

Aspiring ambassador Bria Reel studied in Qatar.

Photo by Dixie Downing/Schar School
“Spring Break in Mexico” conjures images of sun-drenched beaches and bustling nightlife, but for a cadre of Schar School graduate and undergraduate students, their week-long adventure in and around Mexico City had a decidedly different purpose—one with lasting results.

The study abroad program had a timely title: “The Future of U.S.-Mexico Relations: Walls or Bridges in an Era of Populisms and Nationalisms.” The packed itinerary exposed the 11 students to high-ranking officials, veteran journalists, and well-known professors in a variety of security, immigration, military, and policy fields.

Said Master’s in Public Policy student Cody Bowles, “What I want to do with my career has changed because of this trip.”

Another Master’s in Public Policy student, Jenifer Miguel Canton, who was born and raised in Spain, appreciated the way the trip was designed by Schar School Director of External Programs Michal McElwain Malur. “It showed both sides of the government spectrum…The amount of thought and work that was dedicated to this program is very impressive.”

—Buzz McClain
May commencement ceremonies are behind us and a new alumni class has joined the Schar School of Policy and Government’s alumni community, now more than 16,000 strong.

And it is an active community, now more than ever. We kicked off our 2018-2019 events program with the summer Happy Hour at Don Tito’s in Arlington in August; we swiftly stepped into September with a comical “roast” of Professor Bob Deitz; we began our second annual Mentorship Program with the Mentorship Reception; we sponsored the America’s Adopt-a-Soldier 5K/10K Run at Lake Accotink; held the first of our policy panels with Acting Deputy Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, Carl Burleson, to discuss “Aviation, Artificial Intelligence and Commercial Space Travel”; and we capped that month with an excellent “Best of Lecture” with our own Professor Jack Goldstone.
October was just as engaging: In conjunction with the Volgeneau School of Engineering, we sponsored “Whiskey, Widgets, and Wonks” with an impressive display of robotics and held our annual wine tasting event, featuring the Georgian Ambassador David Bakradze and wine from the country of Georgia. Meanwhile, Professor Robert Rogowsky spoke at our Policy Brunch at Teaism in Washington, D.C., about “Trade Wars in the Trump Era.”

In December, the Chapter cohosted, with Associate Professor Gregory Koblentz and the Biodefense Program, a discussion with the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response at Health and Human Services, Robert Kadlec. We feted the end of 2018 with our Winter Holiday Bash at District ChopHouse & Brewery, with special appearances from Dean Mark Rozell, as well as professors Bonnie Stabile and Goldstone.

In March, through the efforts of Veterans Committee members Tony Luberto, Peace Operations ‘13, and J.J. Stakem, ODKM ‘12, of our Veterans Committee, the Chapter sponsored a career day at the Department of State for U.S. military veterans who are current Schar School students. We joined forces that same month with the Mason Alumni Association, hosting a “Capitals Night” at the CapitalOne Arena to watch our Stanley Cup champions, followed by our second Policy Panel event featuring U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Ambassador Kurt Volker, Ambassador Paula J. Dobriansky, and several other prominent specialists on the conflict in Crimea.

To close off the academic year, we held our annual gala May 15 with the Deputy Chief of Mission from the Georgian Embassy Giorgi Tsikolia and Ambassador Richard Kauzlarich, with Professor Ellen Laipson as moderator. The evening was a capstone event for our programming as we celebrated our Rising Star Award for alumnus India Adams, PUAD ‘12, and the Distinguished Graduate of the Year, Carol Hart Metzger, ODKM ’01.

We’ve complemented or worked with the alumni in strengthening engagement with the student body. The co-chairs of our Student Support Committee, Emily Mark, MPA ’09, and Laura Gouge, ICP ’15, sponsored donuts at exam nights, donated BlueBooks, and contacted current students to inform them of what we do to serve our community.

As we move into summer, the Chapter will hold job networking events and sponsor receptions with USAID and the State Department as well as with groups such as the Small Business Association for International Companies. Keep an eye on our events calendar as we roll out our new program for an excellent 2019-2020 season!

Colin R. Hart

’93, Master’s in International Commerce and Policy
President, Schar School Alumni Chapter
Rose Previte arrived in Washington, D.C., ready to change the world through politics, or open a restaurant, whichever came first. “I didn’t see a way to make it [in restaurants] at the time,” she said. But her other option—“changing the world and fixing it”—required additional education, which led her to the Master of Public Policy program at the Schar School. She completed the degree as a full-time student in two years, finishing in 2007.

Flash forward: Previte’s award-winning Washington restaurant, Compass Rose, is on national “best restaurant” lists, noted as much for its impossible-to-reserve tables as for its global “street food” theme. She collected the recipes on travels to more than 30 countries with her husband David Greene, a correspondent for National Public Radio.

As for the icing on the cake, Previte is the host of WETA-TV’s “Check, Please!,” a lively and frank half-hour discussion on public television about dining in Washington with a panel of guests who each ate at restaurants recommended by the other panelists.

“I’ve been sitting around a table and talking about food my entire life,” she said of her qualifications for the new venture. Her Lebanese mother ran a catering company in Ohio; her Sicilian father operated a food truck and was involved in local politics, which is where she gained her affinity for campaigning and advocacy.

While at the Schar School, she traveled to New Orleans to work on an independent study to analyze the city’s recovery from Hurricane Katrina. She also interned for Washington City Council member Jack Evans, who was leading the effort to fund a new Major League Baseball stadium for the Washington Nationals.
“All these projects made me want to go on and work in local government after graduate school,” she said. “City and local policy issues have always been my favorite. It’s exciting to see the results of your work in your community not long after doing the work.”

The degree comes in handy in restaurants, too.

“I say if you open a restaurant in D.C. you probably should have a Master’s in Public Policy because in D.C. you do your own permitting and liquor licensing,” she said. “It was some of the hardest stuff I’ve ever done in my life, but the degree really helps. I was able to do it because of my public policy degree.”

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**Schar School Military Veterans Get ‘Speed Mentored’ at State Department**

The session was based on the practice of “speed dating,” wherein couples impart as much pertinent information about themselves as possible in a short span of time to see if they are a good match. But in this case, it was “speed mentoring,” not dating, between U.S. military veterans and Schar School veteran students at the State Department in early March.

The Friday morning session brought together seven Schar School students, both graduate and undergraduate, to meet for five-or-so minutes with some 13 veterans, members of Veterans@State, who had volunteered their time to assist fellow veterans in early career decisions. The session, the first of its kind drawing veterans from a university, was held in a conference room at the State Department’s Marshall Center in Washington, D.C. The event was sponsored by the Schar School Alumni Chapter Veterans Committee.

By the end, as students rotated clockwise after each timed conversation, every Schar School student had been counselled by all 13 volunteers.

Michael Williams, a non-degree graduate student at the Schar School and Marine veteran with leanings toward homeland security, wanted to hear “different perspectives from different departments” at the State Department.

Political Science master’s student Ali Nayyef, an infantryman in the Virginia Army National Guard and a 2018 Pat Tillman Foundation scholarship recipient, wanted to learn more about the State Department and the differences between the diplomatic corps and the foreign service. Did he gain insight?

“Absolutely,” he said. “I feel I really did have an inside look at the inner workings of the departments and how there are so many diverse opportunities in the State Department as a veteran, as a student, and as a scholar.”

The “speed” aspect of the session was not a drawback, he said.

“I feel like it was a benefit because it forces you to give that ‘elevator pitch,’ summarizing who you are and where you want to be, and having that ability to communicate that with people who don’t know your background can really be an asset,” he said.
By Buzz McClain

The scope of John Salamone’s job as the Chief of Human Resources for the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) at the U.S. House of Representatives is as vast as it is vital: 700 people support 12,000 staffers on Capitol Hill and elsewhere around the country, including the 435 elected representatives themselves.

Salamone’s team provides strategic and operational programs for CAO employees, including recruiting, hiring, performance management, diversity, privacy, personnel security, employee relations, and workforce planning. But his team also provides direct services to Member offices and committees through the Wounded Warrior Fellowship Program, Employee Assistance, and the newly created Wellness Program for the House.

Salamone came to the position after several years in various capacities on the Hill, in the Executive Branch, and in private industry. But, he said, a turning point in his career arrived after earning his Master’s in Public Administration degree in 1998 at what is now the Schar School of Policy and Government.

After completing the PMI program, Salamone stayed at the Office of Personnel Management for another year and returned to the Senate to serve as a professional staffer on the Oversight of Government Management Subcommittee for Senator George Voinovich. During that time, he intensified his relationship with Schar School professor Paul L. Posner, then the director of the public administration program and leader of the University’s Centers on the Public Service.

“Paul Posner was instrumental in my career,” he said, adding it was Posner who helped him win acceptance as a Fellow at the National Academy of Public Administration in 2014. Posner passed away in 2017; an appreciation appeared in the Spring 2018 edition of The Pulse.

“Without my [MPA] degree I would not have been able to get into the PMI program, and without the
Grads and Undergrads Pitch In to Help Out

Two teams of Schar School representatives—undergraduates and alumni—recently demonstrated how students and former students stay engaged with the community by volunteering to help local nonprofits. In early April, the Schar School Alumni Board, left, volunteered to help at the Arlington Food Assistance Center, which for 31 years has provided access to supplemental groceries to thousands of families in Arlington, Va. (From left, Emily Mark, Laura Gouge, Colin Hart, Jenny Walters, Tom Bradley, and Spencer Caldwell. Photo by Aaron O’Brien.)

In late March, members of the Schar School Undergraduate Student Organization spent three hours picking up trash in Loudoun County, Va., as part of the “Keep Loudoun Beautiful: Cascades Trash Bash Community Cleanup Campaign.” (From left, Merrill Rabinovsky, Petro Zinchenko, Ameen Karim, and Victoria Vogrinic.)
The Schar School’s Public Administration program is the No. 22 program in the global ShanghaiRankings survey of 1,700 universities in the world. The independent ranking service put the program at No. 11 in the U.S. and No. 1 in the Washington, D.C., region. On top of that, the residential Master’s in Public Administration program is the 16th best value in the country according to Value Colleges. The ranking is based on U.S. News & World Report rankings, niche student reviews, costs, and average alumni salary.

The Schar School’s security studies program is ranked No. 2 in the nation according to the 2019 U.S. News & World Report survey. This is a move up from the No. 3 position in 2018. “We continue to do what we do well, which is deliver a classroom experience grounded in both theory and practice in the field,” said Dean Mark J. Rozell.

“We continue to do what we do well, which is deliver a classroom experience grounded in both theory and practice in the field.”

—Dean Mark J. Rozell
“Our program is made up of full-time faculty who are both scholars and practitioners. Students see that investment by the school in their success.”

The Schar School employs approximately 90 full-time faculty members across a wide range of disciplines, including political science, public administration, international relations, intelligence, international security, economics, management, geography, security, engineering, sociology, anthropology, and law. Campuses include Arlington and Fairfax, Va., and Songdo, South Korea.

—Buzz McClain

The Malawer-Paden ICP Founders Scholarship: Financial Assistance for Scholars

The International Commerce and Policy program at the Schar School has been helping masters-level students meet their professional and personal goals for over a quarter century. A new scholarship to be awarded annually to a deserving student in the ICP program is named for Stuart Malawer and John Paden, two of the founders of the program whose vision and ethos will be represented in the essay submitted by scholarship candidates and judged by a panel of Schar School faculty members.

“Their original vision for the program was as a multidisciplinary study of the commercial and trade aspects of global integration and transactions, spanning across law, business, economics, international relations, culture, and technology,” said Professor of Public Policy Kenneth Reinert, director of the program. “Their vision also included support for students who hope to pursue global career options in the role of policy analysts and leaders in both the public and private sector.”

A campaign is underway to fund the Malawer-Paden ICP Founders scholarship. “I’m hoping graduates of the program who were helped along their professional pathway or personal development will consider supporting an opportunity for a future fellow International Commerce and Policy graduate,” Reinert said.

Those interested in contributing to the Malawer-Paden ICP Founders fund may contact Zavin Smith, director of development and alumni relations at the Schar School at zsmith@gmu.edu or 703-993-4035.
Once again our graduating students let their hair down by decorating their mortarboards with messages public and private at the May 16 Degree Celebration. Each hat makes a very personal statement of accomplishment and a vision for the future. And that goes double for the beard.

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 unequalled, as is access to archives and museums, policymakers and think tanks, and diverse career opportunities. With 80 full-time faculty, we offer 13 degree programs across undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels.

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