The Schar School Celebrates Second ‘Degree Celebration’ Ceremony

Distinguished Visiting Professor Terry McAuliffe Makes Debut

About 500 Schar School graduates and 2,000 friends and family members turned out on May 17 for the second ‘Degree Celebration’ at EagleBank Arena on the Fairfax Campus. The joyous ceremony was highlighted by recognition of achievements and the speaking debut of former Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe as Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Schar School.

For more information, see page 6.
A Letter from Dean Mark J. Rozell

As we complete our second full year as the Schar School of Policy and Government, we recognize the many accomplishments of our faculty, students, staff, and alumni.

Faculty members have received honors and produced an impressive number of scholarly articles and books. Our students are among the most active in the University, as student leaders, as interns in and around Washington, D.C., and as ambassadors for the Schar School. This past year the undergraduate and graduate student presidents at Mason were Schar School students. Our professional staff is recognized as among the best in the University at providing core student services. We are fortunate to have an incredibly engaged alumni association that contributes in numerous ways to the quality of the Schar School.

This past year the alumni association announced a campaign to raise $500,000 for student scholarships and I committed to matching every dollar they raise. They are working tirelessly and I am pleased to report that the progress at this early stage is impressive. I am confident we will reach the announced goal!

Students recognize the high academic quality of the School, with its emphasis on core theory and practice, and thus the Schar School is growing, with undergraduate enrollments in particular climbing steadily. For instance, our master’s program in International Security has doubled in size in just three years.

The Schar School is expanding its reputation externally as well.

◆ This year, we opened the Michael V. Hayden Center for Intelligence, Policy, and International Security. The Center already has hosted five events, the most recent of which is highlighted in this issue of The Pulse.

◆ Professor Louise Shelley’s Terrorism, Transnational Crime, and Corruption Center (TraCCC) hosted or participated in nearly a dozen different events and, with David Williams, director of the School’s Center for Organizational Performance and Intelligence (COPI), has expanded its areas of expertise into the opioid crisis. These events were highlighted in the previous issue of The Pulse (available on the Schar School website).

◆ Professors Bassam Haddad and Peter Mandaville have been involved in research and events that focus on the politics of the Middle East.

◆ A Schar School faculty delegation including professors Ellen Laipson, Greg Koblentz, Sonia Ben-Ougrham Gormley, Mike Hunzeker, and myself spent a week lecturing and leading forums on international security issues, held in Seoul and Song-do, South Korea, just prior to the Singapore Summit. The delegation’s academic symposium at Mason Korea and several other events were widely covered in South Korea media.
And of course, the Schar School’s relationship with the Washington Post (also highlighted in the previous issue of The Pulse) has been an important measure of political efforts at the regional and national levels. This relationship will continue to grow as the 2018 elections loom.

Most recently, Ty Cobb, who retired from being President Trump’s attorney, highlighted a day of presentations by well-known political, corporate, and public relations leaders discussing Truth on Trial. These are but several examples of how the Schar School is growing externally.

With our growth and successes, we are adding new professors – some are replacing those who have left us, and some are new positions. This coming year, we plan to continue to hire new professors; watch for their introductions in upcoming issues of The Pulse.

Our professors also are expanding their reach to those outside the University. These include, but are not limited to, Professor Michael V. Hayden, who has published two New York Times best-sellers in the past three years; Justin Gest’s 2016 book, The New Minority: White Working Class Politics in an Age of Immigration and Inequality, made him a much sought-after speaker and his upcoming book on worldwide immigration is sure to do the same; and Bill Schneider, whose new book on American populism, Standoff: How America Became Ungovernable, has him traveling the country on a book tour.

This combination of external and internal growth has added to the reputation of the School. Over the last year, we have been named a top school for Public Administration (ShanghaiRankings ranked the School No. 46 worldwide and No. 18 in the U.S.), Political Science (ShanghaiRankings rated us in the top 75 worldwide), and Homeland/National Security and Emergency Management (U.S. News & World Report ranked us No. 3 in the country for best graduate programs concentrations in these areas). We also recently were named a “top 50 most innovative” school and made it to Kiplinger’s “top 100 values in education” list.

In all, this has been an exciting year for us, culminating in a large degree ceremony for our newly-minted undergraduate and graduate students. The keynote speaker, former Governor Terry McAuliffe (and now a Schar School Distinguished Visiting Professor), encouraged students to find and pursue a passion and not fear failure. We could not agree more! We wish the best for our new graduates, our new and continuing faculty and staff, and to the School as a whole.

Mark J. Rozell
Dean, Schar School of Policy and Government
Ruth D. and John T. Hazel Chair in Public Policy
Scenes from the Degree Celebration
About 2,000 family members and friends joined some 500 newly minted Schar School of Policy and Government graduates on the evening of May 17 for the 2018 Degree Celebration at EagleBank Arena on the Fairfax Campus.

Congratulating the class of 2018, Dean Mark J. Rozell said, “This evening celebrates both a triumphant completion and the start of an exciting new chapter for you. As you graduate, you will become alumni of the Schar School chapter that boasts of more than 16,000 members.”

Former Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, now a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Schar School, delivered a characteristically upbeat and positive message. He implored the students to “always think big, take chances and don’t be afraid to fail... Stay engaged, be optimistic, people want to be with winners not whiners, and sleep when you’re dead. Sleep is overrated.”

During the ceremony, Rozell recognized members of the faculty for significant contributions to the Schar School and for the success of the class of 2018.

- The Don Lavoie Teaching Award for outstanding teaching evaluations and student mentoring was presented to Associate Professor Jeremy Mayer. Presenting him with the award, Rozell said, “Dr. Mayer is described by students as an outstanding professor whose courses bring real insight. And perhaps the strongest accolade: ‘A teacher who actually makes statistics interesting.’ That is no small feat!”

- John Earle, professor and director of the Center for Micro-Economic Policy Research, received the Outstanding Scholar Award for demonstrating significant scholarly contributions. “John Earle’s work speaks to both scholars and practitioners,” Rozell said. “He also has published over 50 articles in refereed academic journals and four books, as well as policy papers and reports for decision-makers. His active research agenda has also supported doctoral students.”

- The Dean’s Service Award was presented to Shannon Williams, director of PhD Student Services. Rozell said, “Since joining the Schar School in 2010, Shannon Williams has helped our doctoral students navigate their studies, advising them on everything from curricular requirements to work-life balance. “Shannon is a collaborative colleague, one who brings creativity and enthusiasm to every task, whose skill set is as strong as it is broad. The Schar School is fortunate to have her serving its students in this critical role.”
When Number Three Is Number One

U.S. News Ranks Schar School as Best Public University in Homeland/National Security and Emergency Management

U.S. News & World Report’s 2018 ranking of the nation’s universities has the Schar School at No. 3 in graduate degree concentrations in Homeland/National Security and Emergency Management, behind the Naval Academy’s postgraduate school and Harvard University. This ranking places the Schar School as the No. 1 public university in the category.

The ranking is compiled from multiple indicators of academic excellence as well as academic peer assessment. Three of the Schar School’s master’s programs contributed to the ranking: The Master of Public Administration (MPA), the Master’s in Biodefense, and the Master’s in International Security, all of which have coursework that focuses on today’s pressing issues in emergency management and national security. The Master’s in International Security — the newest master’s degree at the Schar School — has almost doubled the number of students participating—44 to 84—since it launched in the spring 2016 semester. The PhD in Biodefense and the Emergency Management and Homeland Security Certificate program also were contributing factors to the ranking.

“We’re equipping students for the challenges they will face in the future, so in the hope that they can make a positive contribution to trying to solve many of the complex problems emerging around the world,” said Mark J. Rozell, dean of the Schar School.

“Our students are well-suited to go into careers in everything from the nonprofit sector to the federal government,” said Ellen Laipson, director of the Schar School’s Center for Security Policy Studies and program director of the Master’s in International Security. “And in the federal government there is quite a wide range of agencies these programs would equip them for: intelligence, homeland security, diplomacy, as well as civilian and military positions in the defense establishment.

“What is distinctive,” Laipson added about the Schar School’s graduate programs, “is the rich balance of full-time faculty who are established scholars in the world of ideas, alongside former practitioners from the policy world.”

“Our students are well-suited to go into careers in everything from the nonprofit sector to the federal government.”

- Ellen Laipson, Director
Master’s in International Security

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Graduate Programs Solve Big Problems

The Schar School offers both master’s and PhD programs in biodefense that employ interdisciplinary approaches to science and policy that address natural and man-made biological threats.

As one of the largest Master of Public Administration programs in the country, the Schar School prepares the next generation of public policymakers with the future-built leadership skills necessary for government effectiveness.

Additionally, in order to navigate the infinitely complex and ever-evolving frontier of today’s international security threats, the Master’s in International Security tackles relevant questions on modern human security. As the fastest growing among the Schar School’s professional degree programs, the international security program provides candidates with an ethical and public-service based foundation of problem-solving methods in order to approach this new landscape of economic, political, environmental, and technology-driven issues such as drones, transnational crime, proliferation of emerging technologies and weapons of mass destruction, civil war, and ethnic conflict.

The majority of the Schar School’s master’s and doctoral programs are offered in the prime location of Arlington, Va., mere miles from downtown Washington, D.C., giving students unparalleled access to one-of-a-kind professional opportunities in the heart of U.S. policy.

The Schar School also offers graduate certificates that offer specialized education and a competitive edge for working professionals.

From the dynamically modern curriculum to the remarkable faculty, students of the Schar School of Policy and Government are invited to take full advantage of the brightest minds in one of the world’s centers for policymaking.
Schar School’s Hayden Center Hosts Forum for Cast, Producers of ‘Homeland’

The idea for the final program of the first year of the Michael V. Hayden Center for Intelligence, Policy, and International Security’s “Truth Tellers in the Bunker” series was to do something a little more light-hearted than the previous, very serious programs that examined the timely theme.

Hayden, the former head of the NSA and the CIA who is now a distinguished visiting professor at the Schar School invited the cast and producers of the Showtime network’s hit show “Homeland” to talk about espionage in popular culture.

More than 600 spectators crowded into the ballroom at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., to hear stars Claire Danes and Mandy Patinkin, as well as director Lesli Linka Glatter and co-creator and executive producer Howard Gordon, discuss the characters and the context of the show in the larger scheme of pop entertainment and contemporary politics.

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‘Homeland’ creator Howard Gordon tells Michael Hayden the show’s story is informed by the turmoil of current events.

Gordon agreed that season seven is informed by the turmoil of the 2016 presidential election and the specter of Russian meddling.

“We’re all fictionally tilling the soil of the world we’re living in,” he said, to which Danes added, “I don’t think we [in the fictional world] can compete with reality.”

Patinkin said he spends time with real intelligence officers to develop his character, Saul Berenson.

“I’m looking for the heartbeat of those individuals,” he said. “I look for their human nature…And we owe it to our audience to say something poetic at the end of the day.”

Patinkin said the latest season’s finale was special for him.

“Our writers have given us an extraordinary moral at the end of our ‘novel’ for the season,” he said. “And I was so grateful for it.”

Hayden, who is a consultant on the show, said he is proud that the fictional show is built on authenticity, despite the occasional bending of the rules to conform to fictional needs.

“Everything in the foreground might not be quite right,” he said, “but everything in the background, it’s right.”

“I don’t think we can compete with reality.”
- Claire Danes on the plots of ‘Homeland’

“We owe it to our audience to say something poetic at the end of the day.”
- Mandy Patinkin
Leading scholars and education policy practitioners from George Mason University’s Schar School of Policy and Government and College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) will help students understand how education policy is debated, created, and implemented.

The graduate-level emphasis area, Education Policy, is offered within the Schar School’s Master of Public Policy (MPP) degree program and is spearheaded by CEHD associate professor Spiros Protopsaltis, a former deputy assistant secretary in the Department of Education and former senior Senate aide, and former Virginia Secretary of Education Anne Holton, now a visiting professor at the Schar School and CEHD.

“Education is a third of every state and local government, and a major influence in the private sector as well, with education think tanks, non-profit and for-profit companies playing increasing roles,” said Holton. “When we get education right, we get economic development right, as well as equity and fairness.”

“Among the most important responsibilities of government is to provide for the education of their citizens,” CEHD Dean Mark Ginsberg said. “This innovative new graduate focus will provide students with the background and skills to form and influence education policy, a critical issue for our society. I am truly excited about our partnership with the Schar School and confident that this will be highly valued by our students and graduates, as well as those who employ education policy professionals.”

The coursework will provide the knowledge and skills needed to achieve professional goals or pursue doctoral studies.

“Students will learn how to analyze problems, develop solutions, advocate, engage with and advise policymakers, and overall have a positive impact in improving education for all,” Protopsaltis said.

“We’re excited to offer this new opportunity to public policy students, combining the expertise of both the Schar School and the College of Education and Human Development faculties,” said Mark J. Rozell, dean of the Schar School. “This is a model of collaborative academic initiatives that leverage the skills of faculty members across relevant academic units.”

The focus on education policy should appeal both to students who already have experience in education policy and policy analysis as well as to those who want to enter the field. It was designed to provide a strong foundation in education policy, which can be useful to students working in this area who wish to dive deeper, expand their skill set, and advance professionally.
“But it also prepares students without prior knowledge or experience to pursue careers in this area,” Protopsaltis added.

Students will receive the necessary academic grounding for pursuing a doctoral degree, such as the PhD in Public Policy offered by the Schar School or the PhD in Education with an education policy specialization offered by CEHD.

“Our effort capitalizes on the unique strengths and advantages of Mason, the Schar School, and CEHD,” said Protopsaltis, noting that the faculty includes both accomplished scholars and former education policy makers.

All courses will be offered on Mason’s Arlington Campus, which provides convenient access to jobs, internships, and networking opportunities unique to the Washington, D.C. area, Protopsaltis said.

“There is a very strong demand for professionals who have the knowledge and skills to think critically and creatively about today’s pressing challenges facing our education system, from preschool through college,” he added.

“This program is a model of collaborative academic initiatives that leverage the skills of faculty members across relevant academic units.”

Mark J. Rozell
Dean of the Schar School
Mason Employee of the Month:
Matt Green

“There’s nothing like seeing a student you’ve been helping for four years get their diploma,” said Matt Green, an attitude that was rewarded this May with the George Mason University Employee of the Month Award. The award is given by Mason’s Human Resources and Payroll Office and is presented by President Ángel Cabrera.

Green is assistant director of undergraduate student services for the Schar School, which means he’s in a position to guide them to success as undergrads and prepare them for post-graduation life. Being an undergraduate at Mason is something Green happens to be familiar with since his days as a Patriot with a double major in 2008—psychology and English, with a concentration in creative writing.

He went on to complete his master’s degree in social work in 2011 and is now in the Writing and Rhetoric PhD program in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Green has been working with the Schar School since 2011.

In his position, Green provides logistical support for several academic initiatives at Mason, including the undergraduate research program, and he teaches in the bachelor of individualized study program.

While studying for his master’s degree in social work, Green was asked to help with advising by English Department advisor Laura Scott. Green found it rewarding, joined the National Academic Advising Association, and applied for jobs nationwide.

“I was lucky enough to end up right back where I started, here at Mason, working for the unit that would become the Schar School,” Green said. “The congeniality among faculty, staff, and students here at Schar has really helped to set me up for success.”

Schar School assistant director of undergraduate student services Matt Green receives his Employee of the Month Award from George Mason University President Ángel Cabrera.
Some 185 attendees from around the academic world attended the 11th Annual Political Networks Conference and Workshops. Co-sponsored by the Schar School, the American Political Science Association’s Political Networks Section, and the National Science Foundation, the conference was held on the Arlington Campus in early June.

The four-day event, hosted by Schar School Associate Professor Jennifer N. Victor, brought in experts who presented in talks, panel discussions, poster exhibitions, and workshops on network analysis and theory, big data, network visualization, latent factor models, and exponential random graph models, among other cutting-edge topics.

Victor said this year’s conference set attendance records for women (36 percent) and people of color (more than 30 percent). Above, keynote speaker and pioneering network scientist Albert-László Barabási illustrates what success looks like on a big data network scale.
The Schar School was front and center at this year’s annual American Society for Public Administration meeting, held in Denver in March. More than a dozen faculty members and students presented in panels and workshops on several well-received topics, such as education policy, third party governance, and integrated emergency operation.

As a sponsor of the conference, the Schar School hosted several key events. During the President’s Reception, held at the Hyatt Regency’s Peaks Lounge, faculty member Tonya Neaves was awarded the Chester Newland Presidential Citation of Merit for her efforts in fundraising and serving as this year’s program co-chair, responsible for reviewing all proposal submissions and organizing accepted proposals into a series of nearly 150 panels.

Neaves also organized a high-level Presidential Panel entitled “He Gave Us So Much: Reflections on Paul L. Posner” to celebrate the life and many accomplishments of a recently departed fellow Schar School faculty member.

Paul Posner, who passed away in July 2017, was a past president of ASPA. His career touched countless individuals—he was a mentor, a statesman, and a “pracademic,” a term he coined nearly two decades ago.

During the panel, Posner’s legacy was honored by the presentation of the prestigious Elmer Staats Lifetime Achievement Award for Distinguished Public Service. The award was presented by fellow panelist and Schar School faculty member Timothy Conlan. During the panel, #ASPAlovesPaul was circulated to express overwhelming sentiment of Posner’s influence among his many friends and colleagues.

Conlan, along with Posner and another Schar School faculty member, Priscilla Regan, won the best book award for “Governing Under Stress: The Implementation of Obama’s Economic Stimulus Program from the Section on Public Administration Research.”

Additionally, recent MPA graduate Blanca Rand was selected as a Founders Fellow, a program aimed at supporting the next generation of public service leaders through a series of professional development opportunities.

Other participants from the Schar School included Terry Clower, Ashley Raphael, Nicole Decker, Caroline Egli, Matthew Sardone, Michael Sweigart, Fleciah Mburu, Wendy Chen, and Caroline Powers.
The Schar School simulation participants: from left, Fleciah Mburu, Justin Hurt, Alexandra Williams, Stephen Taylor, Annette Prieto, Ryan Kennedy, Biodefense Graduate Program Director Gregory Koblentz

Schar School Students Qualify for the Final Round of NASPAA Pandemic Crisis Simulation Competition

If the data were correct, the initial 100 victims of the new influenza outbreak could become 100,000 in just a few days—a pandemic of disastrous proportions. Alexandra Williams and her team had to make difficult policy decisions, and they had to do it quickly. Should the sick be quarantined? If so, for how long? And what if isolation didn’t work to contain the disease? Were there enough hospital beds, medical staff, and countermeasures to treat hundreds, if not thousands, of seriously ill people?

Fortunately for Williams—not to mention the probable patients—the scenario was a simulation organized as part of a global competition in April by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). But Williams and other students from the Schar School’s biodefense master’s and PhD programs still had to deal with the reality of the crisis and formulate a plan of action to contain the spread of the disease.

Williams’ team, and another team that included Biodefense PhD student Justin Hurt, beat out two other teams at the Washington site of the simulation to advance to the final round of 16 for a chance at winning the $10,000 grand prize.

A team from San Jose State eventually won, but the Schar School contestants said the experience was valuable in advancing their academic and professional careers.

“The simulation is an especially valuable experience for the biodefense students since the pandemic crisis provided students with complex problems like those that they will tackle in their professional careers,” said director of the Schar School’s biodefense graduate program, Gregory Koblentz. “These exercises also test the students’ ability to bridge the gap between the science and policy-making, a key goal of the biodefense programs.”
Teams that participated at the Washington site were held responsible for the well-being and safety of approximately 336 million imaginary individuals in four imaginary countries facing the threat of pandemic influenza. Students learned how to work with new teams, conduct negotiations, accomplish key goals under tight deadlines, and create thoughtful presentations and reports.

The simulation was highly realistic and challenging both analytically and practically.

“You are fictitiously placed in the shoes of policymakers and decision-makers and the reality of all these situations happening simultaneously smacks you in the face and helps you realize the sheer chaos that pandemics create,” said Williams, a biodefense master’s student at the Schar School.

The simulations also can become more complex when students are presented with ethical dilemmas. “For example, the state may have a limited supply of post-exposure medical treatments, so you are then faced with the decision of who receives treatment and who does not receive treatment,” she said.

Despite the challenges, Schar School students felt prepared—but there are always new lessons to be learned.

“Having the comprehensive spectrum of learning experiences provided a solid background for addressing what turned out to be a multi-faceted and challenging simulation, and not rely on just traditional countermeasures against pandemics,” said Hurt. “It reiterated the importance of networking to learn from other potential future leaders in the global health and biodefense realm.”

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Stephen Fuller Receives Two Awards for Research Contributions to Regional Development

Stephen S. Fuller, director of the Stephen S. Fuller Institute for Research on the Washington Region’s Economic Future and the Dwight C. Schar Endowed Faculty Chair at the Schar School, was honored twice this spring for his longtime contributions to the economic development of the Washington, D.C., region.

In May, Fuller received the Earle C. Williams Medal Award for Excellence in Social Impact, presented by George Mason University in honor of the late defense contractor who was a longtime supporter of higher education, particularly of George Mason and Northern Virginia Community College.

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In June, Fuller was presented with the 2018 NOVAForward Award, given by the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce for his contributions to the economic well-being of the Northern Virginia region.

**Earle C. Williams Medal**

It’s not every day one wins an award named for someone they knew. But when you have been one of the Washington, D.C., region’s leading economists for as long as Fuller has, the odds get exponentially better.

Fuller and Earle Williams worked together in the 1980s and ‘90s “when he was very active on the Greater Washington Board of Trade and the Potomac Conference,” Fuller said. “He was one of the significant regional leaders working to address the Washington region’s challenges by fostering collaboration among business leaders and public officials. He was outspoken on the need for the Washington region and Northern Virginia to strengthen their competitive advantages in the increasingly national and global economies.”

Fuller, who came to Mason in 1994, has been conducting research on the region’s economy for more than 40 years. Since then he has held key positions at Mason that include directing the PhD program in public policy and, in 2001, directing the Center for Regional Analysis. His research institute, launched in 2017, publishes the Economy Watch, a monthly report on the Washington region’s economy and maintains data on the economic, housing, and population trends in the Washington Metro area.

**2018 NOVAForward Award**

Since moving to the Washington, D.C., area more than 40 years ago, Fuller has built a career researching the region’s economy. “There was a need to understand the region’s dependency on the federal government and how the region’s economy performed as it doubled in size over this period,” he said.

Described by the Washingtonian Magazine as “the area’s most influential voice on [economic] matters,” Fuller has authored more than 800 articles, papers and reports, and for decades has published a monthly newsletter on the performance and near-term outlook of the Washington region’s economy. It is for this legacy that the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce presented him with their top individual award.

“Receipt of this award acknowledges and validates the value of my four decades of research on the Washington region’s economy and my efforts to assist local business leaders and government officials in making more informed decisions regarding the future directions off their local economies,” said Fuller.

“It is gratifying to know that my life’s work has been of value.”
Faculty Spotlight: Jennifer Victor

When Jennifer Victor was in elementary school, she created a student petition to ask the school administration to paint more hopscotch courts—something she felt should be addressed on behalf of the students. Before she even knew the term for it, this first-hand experience may be what set her on a course to pursue a career in legislative and congressional politics.

“It took two years, but eventually the policy change I sought came to fruition,” she said. “Unfortunately, hopscotch was no longer cool in the sixth grade.”

The Associate Professor of Political Science at the Schar School added, “I’ve always had the idea that people could use government to create social change in a way that made people’s lives better.”

She went on to earn a bachelor’s in political science from University of California, San Diego, and a master’s and doctorate in political science from Washington University in St. Louis.

The self-described “nerdy politics kid” observes that politics is a tool for solving complex social problems. “Legislative politics is the root of policy creation, and policy creation is how people try to solve problems,” she explained.

In addition to being a tenured associate professor, she serves as director of undergraduate programs in Government and International Politics and Public Administration. These two programs bring together students from diverse backgrounds, races, ages, and genders.

“[This] is an incredible added value to an educational opportunity because it expands the viewpoints, and perspectives brought into any classroom conversation,” said Victor.

In 2015, Victor started the Undergraduate Research Assistant Program (URAP) at the Schar School to create opportunities for undergraduate students to get hands-on experience with social science research. By pairing students with professors on specific research projects, URAP “provides an opportunity for them to apply the theories and skills they learn in their Schar School classes to ‘real’ social science research projects,” Victor said. “Students who participate in the program have an opportunity to develop individualized working professional relationships with faculty.”

Regan Copple, a rising junior government and international politics major from Des Moines, Iowa, can attest to this. She worked with Schar School Associate Professor Michael Hunzeker this past spring to develop background information on country packets for use in the international securities program.
Hunzeker, she said, “has written several letters of recommendation and has introduced me to guest lecturers so I can make networking connections later on when I start looking for jobs.”

When she is not blogging on Vox.com’s *Mischiefs of Faction*, the political science blog she cofounded, Victor is involved in networks science research.

**Modeling Political Action**

“For too long scientists borrowed theories from economists and thought of political actors as consumers or firms,” she said. “Politics is about relationships, and the subfield of political networks that I’m involved in takes this to heart and models politics as interactions between individuals or units.”

This spring Victor hosted 185 scholars, industry experts, and students at the 11th Annual Political Networks Conference. The event was cosponsored by the Schar School, the National Science Foundation, and the American Political Science Association. Victor is past-president of the APSA’s Political Networks section.

Of all the challenges that come with such a busy schedule, Victor finds emails to be the most challenging.

“The number of email conversations and communications I get related to teaching, research projects, administration of programs, committee work, blogging, field press calls, events, invitations, journal editors and reviews, conferences—it’s never ending and sometimes suffocating,” she said.

With such a hectic schedule, how does she unwind?

“I enjoy running and yoga. They both keep me fit and help me to manage my stress levels,” she said.

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**Maurice Kugler Joins the Schar School’s Public Policy Program**

Why is there a growing backlash against international economic integration and trade partnerships?

That is one of the questions that newly appointed professor of public policy, Maurice Kugler, will be exploring in his global macroeconomics graduate course this fall.

“We’re in a moment of backlash against international trade in many countries, not just the U.S.,” said Kugler, whose extensive research on the impact of economic policies on the growth of the global economy and labor markets has been published widely and recognized through awards, grants, and prizes.

His current research explores “how international trade capital flows and immigration interact with each other to generate effects of globalization that can favor some groups and hurt others,” he said.
“Economic integration should be beneficial in society, but not everyone is affected in the same way,” he added.

Kugler joins the Schar School from the World Bank where he was a consultant. Prior to that, he held senior positions at strategic consultancy IMPAQ International and the United Nations Development Fund. In 2008 to 2009 he was a visiting professor of public policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University as well as working as a research fellow at Harvard’s Growth Lab of the Center for International Development from 2006 to 2010.

His appointment to the Schar School marks a return to academia for the career economist, who was ranked in the top 5 percent of economists worldwide by the bibliographic database IDEAS/RePEc.

“In terms of intellectual freedom and the ability to set your own research agenda, academia has no rival,” he said.

At the same time, “the experience I gained by going out of academia has been useful to give me a different point of view.”

Before venturing into the private sector and international organizations, Kugler spent 12 years in the academic world. He began his career at the Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia, as an assistant professor. He then spent time at the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom, Stanford University, and Harvard University (twice). He was the CIGI Chair of International Public Policy and a full professor at the Wilfrid Laurier University in Canada.

Kugler received a doctorate in economics from University of California, Berkeley, and both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in economics from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Kugler is looking forward to making the Schar School his new academic base, he said. “The Schar School brings together policy analysts, policy makers, and those who have been in the trenches. That combination makes the Schar School unique.”

As for what students should expect to get out of his course, Kugler said, “I’m aiming for a very interactive class, very hands-on, with lots of real life events.

“I will use my experience in international organizations and the private sector so that the students can relate to the theoretical models with relevance to real life issues,” he said.

Kugler begins teaching in the fall.

“The Schar School brings together policy analysts, policy makers, and those who have been in the trenches. That combination makes the Schar School unique.”

- Maurice Kugler
Professors Addleson, Balint, and Hughes Hallett Retire from the Schar School Faculty

About 120 current and former students, fellow faculty members, and staff members celebrated the retirements of three long-time Schar School professors with speeches, gifts, and a buffet in the Founders Hall multipurpose room on Monday, May 14.

Mark Addleson, who came to George Mason University in 1994, and Andrew Hughes Hallett, who arrived in 2006, addressed the crowd after reminiscences on their behalf by Schar School professor Tojo Thatchenkery, also the event’s host, and former dean Kingsley E. Haynes, respectively. Professor Priscilla Regan spoke for Peter Balint, who began his career at the Schar School in 2002. Balint was called away by a death in the family.

In his opening remarks, Dean Mark J. Rozell said the event was “bittersweet but inevitable” and extended an invitation to the professors to continue their relationships with Schar School students and fellow faculty.

Post-Schar Retirement Plans

Addleson: “My wife and I have both been academics and both were born and raised in South Africa. We have an opportunity to teach in South Africa on a voluntary basis—kind of like a ‘mission’ without a church affiliation—and to do something that we hope will benefit others. At the moment we are planning on spending quite a bit of time there. In South Africa, we will stay in Western Cape, close to the Southern-most tip of Africa, where both ocean and mountains are in close proximity and in the middle of wine country. If the wine doesn’t get me, I also plan on doing some writing, possibly another book, but we’ll see how things work out.”

Balint: Peter and his wife departed in early June for a Peace Corps posting in Mexico. During their two-week break they will visit grandchildren in the U.S.

Hughes Hallett: “I shall continue work with the European Parliament, University of Copenhagen on pension policy under worsening dynamics, and Kings College [University of London] on productivity dynamics. I still have four PhD students at Mason and elsewhere, to add to my 50-plus in academic and policy positions. Since arriving at Mason I have published two books and 59 refereed journal papers. If I can maintain even part of that performance, I shall not get bored. And if I do, there is always Brexit and the new IMF for Europe.”
We need to know each other.

The Schar School Alumni Chapter now represents more than 16,000 members in a thriving, active, global community. Our members work for national and international organizations, essential governments, and important companies around the globe. They are found on Capitol Hill, at the African Development Bank, the Central Intelligence Agency, the World Bank, the Inter-American Bank, and Northrop Grumman, to name just a few. The U.S. Department of State alone employs 522 active-duty Mason alumni who serve in Washington, D.C., and at United States embassies abroad. But we need to know each other.

When we are familiar with other Schar School graduates, employment opportunities open up, business prospects blossom, and social lives get more interesting. The Alumni Chapter is here to help you get to know one another.

The Alumni Chapter acts as your gateway to a network of policy practitioners who can give you that critical opening to a career of your choice. Throughout the year the Schar Alumni Chapter Board strives to provide interesting events and engaging ways for you to find and meet fellow alumni. Already on the calendar are the Arlington Happy Hour at Don Tito’s Rooftop on August 29 and a faculty roast on September 7 featuring the Schar School’s Robert Deitz, former senior counsel to the director of the CIA and general counsel at the NSA. A “Best of Lecture” on September 29 will feature a fascinating talk by professor and global historian Jack Goldstone. If sampling a nice wine while meeting alumni is more your style, join us for the ever-popular annual “Wine with a Wonk” wine tasting event on October 18. See all our events at www.schar.gmu.edu/alumni.

While Schar School alumni gain much from being a part of the Chapter’s community, we also fulfill an important role in giving back. The Alumni Mentoring Program was established last year and proved to be an extremely popular program. It enables alumni to pair with one another to stay connected, expand their networks, find resources, and build professionally beneficial relationships. Let us know if you are interested in acting as a mentor or being a mentee this year.

Perhaps the most important way alumni can give back is by supporting current students. With this year’s launch of the Schar School Alumni Chapter Scholarship Fund, alumni are able to support deserving students for their leadership, academic achievement, and contributions to the field of public service. In a gesture of true generosity, the Schar School will provide matching funds for every dollar raised by alumni, ensuring that the fund is able to provide financial means to deserving students long into the future.

If you are interested in learning more about the Schar School Alumni Scholarship Fund or would like to know how you can become more involved with the Schar School Alumni Chapter, please feel free to contact me directly at colin@freedomcapllc.com or Zavin R. Smith, Director of Development and Alumni Relations, at zsmith@gmu.edu.

Colin R. Hart
President, Schar School Alumni Chapter
A Call for Schar School Mentors

Are you a Schar School graduate looking for ways to give back to the school and grow your professional network? Join the Schar School Alumni Mentoring Program as a new participant or return as a seasoned mentor or mentee.

The goal of the mentor program is to bring together alumni and current students in purposeful and mutually rewarding relationships in an effort to bridge the gap between the classroom and the professional world.

The primary focus is on partnering established alumni with recent graduates to help them build a successful career. The program also offers networking events to make further connections within the Schar School alumni community. Mentors regularly meet with their mentees either face-to-face, over the phone, or via email, and can cover a range of professional development topics from women in the workplace to leadership development, networking skills, and more.

Last year the Schar School Alumni Chapter revamped the alumni mentorship program and doubled the enrollment rates over their targeted numbers. In a satisfaction survey, the participants ranked the program as very rewarding, including additional noteworthy responses such as those listed below.

◆ “Direct and consistent communication by both mentor and mentee.”
◆ “I am so glad the Alumni Chapter organized this as it shows a great way for alumni to engage with one another as well as the enduring resource Mason may be for my career.”
◆ “Thank you for this program.”

If you’re looking to learn from Schar professionals or to guide and inspire the next generation of Schar School alumni, this is the program for you. Applications for participation will be coming to all alumni inboxes mid-summer. Mentors and mentees do not need to reside in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area to participate.

In the meantime, for any questions about how to get involved as an alumni volunteer, or if you need to update your email address, please visit https://schar.gmu.edu/alumni-and-giving or feel free to contact the alumni leadership team at ScharAlumni@gmu.edu.

Alumni News
Research Tools, Advising, and ‘Wonderful Professors’ Prepared Alumna St-Amant for a Challenging PhD Program

When Michele St-Amant decided to pursue a graduate degree in political science, she chose the Schar School’s political science master’s program for the wide range of faculty expertise, the rigorous research training, and the course flexibility it offered.

“A lot of master’s programs have a very set-in-stone schedule of courses that students must take, which leaves little room for exploration,” the 2017 graduate said. “While there are required courses in the political science master’s program at the Schar School, students have the ability to customize their degree to fit their interests and ambitions because of the wide range of electives.”

St-Amant, who is currently a first-year PhD student at the University of Toronto, took advantage of this flexibility by studying abroad with the Schar School in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in her first year and opting for a year-long thesis in her second year.

Her thesis research on “the empirical assessment of U.S. treatment of state failure in the developing world” grew out of her undergraduate honors thesis at Hofstra University. She credits her professors and faculty advisors at the Schar School for guiding her throughout her two years of study, including during her PhD application process.

“I had the pleasure of working with some really wonderful professors that served both as mentors and advisors and helped me with my PhD application process. I owe a lot of my success now to the guidance that these professors provided,” she said.

The up-and-coming scholar attributes her academic success to the rigorous training she received at the Schar School. “I was able to pack a diverse set of courses and training that has allowed me to get ahead in my PhD program—and waive a lot of courses in order to focus on courses relevant to my research.

“The methods training, for example, is one of the things that has helped me the most. Because I received such superb and advanced methods training at the Schar School I now have a leg up in my PhD program in terms of the range of courses I qualify for.”

On her decision to pursue an academic career in political science, she explained, “I became interested in political science after taking a random elective course in my undergraduate degree. I am particularly interested in studying state failure and third-party interventions in the developing world. There are a lot of things we do not yet know about the dynamics of state failure, and I am passionate about identifying those gaps in the literature so that real-world policy solutions can be developed more effectively.”

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St-Amant said she chose the Schar School’s master’s in political science program over offers from a number of other master’s programs—including two PhD programs.

Looking back, she said, “This was the best decision I’ve ever made. After spending two years at the Schar School I realized that I was not intellectually prepared to start my PhD two years prior. The training and mentoring I received at the Schar School helped me to narrow down my interests in political science and solidified my determination that I wanted to obtain a PhD.

“I am now at one of the most well-known political science programs, and it would not have been possible without the training I received at the Schar School. The professional and personal relationships I developed and everything I learned from working with the faculty at the Schar School is something I will carry throughout the rest of my career.”

Alumni Gala Honors Graduates Who Are ‘Changing the World’

About 130 Schar School alumni, faculty and staff members, students, and guests enjoyed an evening of dinner and dancing to live music on May 10 during the Annual Alumni Awards Gala at Founders Hall on the Arlington Campus. The room was bathed in peacock blue light, representing the academic regalia color of Government, Foreign Service, Public Administration, and Public Service—primary pillars of the Schar School’s mission.

In his welcoming remarks, Dean Mark J. Rozell emphasized how vital the alumni community is to the continuing success of the Schar School and how proud he is of the graduates and “what an inspiration they are to our [current] students. Their involvement through their time and talent have not gone unnoticed.”

Those graduates, said Rozell, “are changing the world. From advocacy, public service, and international commerce, to business, military services, and entrepreneurship, we have many incredible alumni who are making a positive impact locally and globally. I am proud to be a part of an exciting time at the Schar School as we continue to move in an upward trajectory.”

One of those graduates is Varun K. Nikore, recipient of the 2018 Distinguished Graduate of the Year Award. Nikore, who earned his degree in 1993, recalled being part of the first cohort of masters students in what was then called International Transactions, but now is known as International Commerce and Policy.
“The conception of this master’s degree quite accurately predicted that Washington, D.C., needed more thought-leadership in the intersecting areas of business, global economy, and public policy. This turned out to be one of the best investments in my career that I ever made,” he said. “This is really, to me, a sentimental and meaningful honor.”

Nikore has spent close to three decades as an expert in government, policy, and international trade. Among his many notable achievements are his 1999 appointment as Special Assistant to the U.S. Department of Education by President Bill Clinton and serving as Budget Coordinator for Al Gore’s presidential campaign in 2000.

In 2015 he was appointed by Governor Terry McAuliffe, now a Schar School Distinguished Visiting Professor, to the boards of the Virginia Commercial Spaceflight Authority and the Virginia Offshore Wind Development Authority.

Nikore understands only too well the benefits of the Mason alumni network. “When I was just getting out of graduate school, I needed to not only maintain my existing networks but expand them as well,” he said, a sentiment echoed in the remarks by Paul I. Franklin.

Franklin, the 2009 Master of Public Policy graduate who received the Rising Star Award, said, “Getting involved [in the alumni] is very important for two reasons: To give back to the community that invested its time in your education and to network and establish a solid foundation of friends and potential business partners.”

Franklin, former vice president of the Schar School alumni chapter, added, “My time at Mason both as a student and as a member of the alumni board were very gratifying. I’m very proud to be a Mason alum and am extremely flattered to be given this award.”

Franklin started his career in financial services at New York Life, one of the largest life insurance companies in the U.S. and is currently principal of Franklin Capital Strategies, a full-service financial planning firm.

Graduating seniors Danielle Melton and Rebecca Dooley received the inaugural Gender and Policy Leadership awards for their work in the Gender and Politics Initiative, led by Schar School professors Bonnie Stabile and Toni-Michelle Travis. Melton and Dooley founded the Mason Women’s Leadership Conference and the Women’s Leaders Luncheon, in addition to mentoring female students and professors in an effort to raise the profile of female leadership on campus.

The keynote speaker, investigative journalist Dan E. Moldea, delivered a spellbinding speech called “Lost in Lies: Fact Finding in the Social Media Era,” peppering his talk with first-person anecdotes involving political corruption investigations and organized crime activity. During his remarks he correctly predicted the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling on legalized sports gambling and the public policy behind it.
Hats Off to the New Schar School Graduates!

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 80 full-time faculty, we offer 13 degree programs across undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels.