A Dynamic Education for an Evolving World

Conversations. As you can imagine, we have a lot of conversations at the Schar School of Policy and Government. The scholars, experts, and practitioners you see above, as well as the ones included in this edition of The Pulse, represent just a few of the guests we have hosted in recent public forums. The diversity of experiences, insights, and opinions they offer have enlightened and enriched our Schar School community. To see who is speaking, turn to Page 3.
In Praise of Program Directors

The rewards of running a successful academic program—to see students flourish and the program continue to be self-sustaining—are most gratifying, professionally and personally, for all professors. It also means a great deal to me that some have taken on the responsibility for a significant role in the management of the Schar School, and for that, I thank them.

While representing the school is a team effort by all faculty and staff, the leadership of the 10 program directors is essential in keeping the energy flowing in the right direction. Without their enthusiasm, we easily could lose the focus on our mission, and our overall momentum could waver. But one look at the important work we have done in recent months, and what we already have on the schedule for spring, tells me our program directors are guiding their units with creativity and passion.

Program directors, and our program directors in particular, are required to possess skills and perform duties that go above and beyond the classroom. They are asked to be the “face of the program,” and many of them go to extraordinary lengths to represent their programs in copious public forums and in countless private consultations.

Program directors are charged with community outreach, relationship-building, and event planning. They need to be versed in the university’s financial aid and enrollment policies, not always an easy task, and they need to serve as one counselor to students who may be uncertain of the pathway that best gets them to their goal.

One of a program director’s most crucial duties is to run roughshod over the curriculum and to develop the programming that accomplishes the mission—while pushing the boundaries of the status quo that keeps pace with the rapidly evolving fields of policy, government, public administration, international security, and others.

It’s a pace that seems to speed up each day.

Here are this year’s Schar School program directors.

**MASTER’S**
- Biodefense: Greg Koblentz
- International Commerce & Policy: Ken Reinert
- International Security: Ellen Laipson
- Organization Development & Knowledge Management: Tojo Thatchenkery
- Political Science: Mariely Lopez-Santana
- Public Administration: Jim Burroughs (acting)
- Public Policy: Bonnie Stabile
- Transportation Policy, Operations & Logistics: Laurie Schintler

**UNDERGRAD**
- Government & International Politics: Robert J. McGrath
- Public Administration: Robert J. McGrath

**PhD**
- Biodefense: Greg Koblentz
- Political Science: Mariely Lopez-Santana
- Public Policy: Sita Slavov

Mark J. Rozell
Dean, Schar School of Policy and Government
Ruth D. and John T. Hazel Chair in Public Policy
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Credit where credit is due

From the Cover:
Top row: Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson, professor of Transatlantic History and Culture at the University of Augsburg in Bavaria; Pulitzer Prize-winning Yale Law School professor James Foreman Jr.; Hubert Humphrey Fellow Lazare Sebitereko Rukundwa, founder of the Eben-Ezer University of Minembwe in Congo; ‘Homeland’ actress Claire Danes; former president of Poland and founder of the Solidarity Movement Lech Walesa; two-time Pulitzer winner and Washington Post reporter Greg Miller.
Third row: Anne-Marie Slaughter, political scientist and president and C.E.O. of New America; former White House Counsel Ty Cobb; Northern Virginia developer and philanthropist Til Hazel; Republican political strategist Michael Caputo.
Fourth row: Donald Graham, chairman of Graham Holdings and former publisher of the Washington Post; first woman Democratic Caucus Chair of the Virginia House of Delegates Charniele Herring (BA, Economics, ’93); former South Dakota senator Tom Daschle (D); Virginia Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn (D), the first woman to serve as Virginia House Minority Leader; Lisa Osborne Ross, President of Edelman Washington D.C.; Robert Kadlec, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the Department of Health and Human Services.
Some 95,000 Jewish refugees fled Hitler’s Germany and Austria in the late 1930s to the U.S., only to discover a different kind of persecution when many of them settled in the South: Jim Crow laws.

Having fled their homes because of increasingly brutal segregation, the German Jews became allies of the African-Americans who were the targets of similarly vile, if legal, discrimination.

This little-known chapter of transnational civil rights history was the topic of an enthralling 90-minute presentation in December by visiting scholar Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson. The talk was called “From Swastika to Jim Crow.” Waldschmidt-Nelson is the professor of Transatlantic History and Culture at the University of Augsburg in Bavaria. The lecture was sponsored by the Schar School’s Center for the Study of Social Change, Institutions, and Policy and hosted by SCIP director, public policy professor Jack Goldstone.

Waldschmidt-Nelson illustrated her discussion with three case histories of German Jewish refugees who became academics in the U.S., teaching at the South’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Once the academics saw the frequent lynchings, brazen fire bombings of churches, and cruel methods of segregation—Hitler modeled some of his ideas on Jim Crow laws, the professor pointed out—they were shocked.

The scholars joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other organizations sympathetic to the cause of equality among races and offered support in whatever form they had available. “Their commitment to fight racism absolutely contributed to the destabilization of the system,” she said.

Did You Know…?

The Schar School’s security studies program is ranked No. 2 in the nation according to U.S. News & World Report. The Schar School moved up in the March survey from the No. 3 position in last year’s rankings.

“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. “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.”
Spywatchers: An Often-Prickly Relationship Between the Spies and Their Watchers Discussed in Morell’s Debut

Congressional oversight committees, whistleblowers, inspectors general, and lawyers—so many lawyers—were the topics of conversation in December when the Michael V. Hayden Center for Intelligence, Policy, and International Security presented a panel of former justice and intelligence veterans, and one attorney who specializes in suing the government, who dished on those who were charged with keeping them in check.

An audience of 200 attended the Hayden Center discussion, called Spywatchers: Governing Intelligence in an Imperfect World, at the National Press Club ballroom.

The panel was moderated by Michael Morell, former acting director and deputy director of the CIA and now a Senior Fellow at the Schar School, who was substituting for Michael Hayden as he recovers from a recent illness. Morell kept the pace brisk as the panelists, perhaps unshackled at last by secrecy oaths and possible retribution, recalled their experiences dealing with oversight commissions, blue ribbon panels, and those in power who might have competing views.

Oversight of secretive agencies is necessary, Morell said at the outset, because they operate in a democracy. “The ‘secret’ part of that makes it difficult to convince the public—the ‘democracy’ part of it—that the intelligence community is operating within the bounds of the Constitution and that it’s actually doing the job it’s supposed to do, and that it’s actually protecting the country and doing it in a way with the taxpayers’ money that makes sense.”

“The reason we have oversight is that over time, legal, regulatory, and policy requirements have increased,” said Lisa Monaco, former assistant to the President for Homeland Security and chief of staff for Robert Mueller when he led the FBI. “It’s healthy to have an apparatus within the executive branch to make sure the intelligence community are adhering to those requirements.”
High-Profile Cohort

Even top achievers have stories about how their PhD programs challenged their time management skills, their personal relationships, and sometimes, even their sanity. But just as many, if not more, acknowledge the sense of self-esteem that arises from completing a doctoral program, of adding useful knowledge to a field about which they are passionate, and from the intellectual rewards that come from such a significant academic accomplishment.

In 1997, four students began coursework in the PhD program in what is now the Schar School of Policy and Government. Three of them were ambitious Naval officers, one developed her thirst for knowledge after managing federal programs for a large nonprofit. Each has advanced in their careers to impressive degrees, but more importantly, they each confirm that the skills and methodologies they learned at the Schar School come into practice nearly every day.

Honor and Integrity

The characteristics it takes to earn a PhD are the same it takes to assume a role of major responsibility in a company or organization, said John A. Zangardi.

He should know: He earned his PhD in Public Policy in 2005 and now, as Chief Information Officer of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, he manages a department of more than 400 federal workers and an annual budget of $590 million.

“I have the responsibility for the department’s information technology and communications networks,” he said. “As the information technology authority for the department I have the responsibility for the security of the network and how we modernize it; I’m responsible for the maintenance and the innovation for our information technology and communications platforms.”

The DHS information technology department is a key and vital component to the nation’s security, to be sure, and Zangardi believes the work he put in for his advanced degree helped him understand more than the topic of his thesis (for the record, it was on the regulation of top-level internet domain names).

“The most important things to getting to a position of responsibility are having honor and integrity, working hard, and being persistent,” he said. “And those are traits you need to have in place to pursue a PhD. A PhD provides the analytic ways to look at things, but honor and integrity are crucial to succeeding.

“If you have the integrity and the work ethic and the persistence, everything comes together.”

Zangardi said earning the PhD was important for him as an active duty Naval officer not necessarily to advance in rank but “to pursue knowledge. That was my primary motivating factor,” he said.

It also helped that the Schar School’s administration was flexible and accommodating to a busy part-time PhD student. “That was a big deal for me,” he said. “I valued my educational experience at Mason a tremendous amount.”

John A. Zangardi
Chief Information Officer,
Department of Homeland Security

Honor and Integrity
Helped Me Refine My Thinking

The PhD was Bruce “Birdie” Lindsey’s wife’s idea. It was she who cut out the newspaper advertisement of a PhD prospective student open house and gave it to Lindsey, a Navy officer with a master’s degree in strategic studies from the Navy War College.

He took the hint, attended the open house, and applied for the PhD in Public Policy program.

Fourteen years after earning his degree in 2005, Lindsey is now Vice Admiral and the Deputy Commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command in Norfolk, Va. He’s No. 2 in charge of all the surface, subsurface, and Navy aviation assets on the Atlantic side of the country, serving under Admiral Christopher W. Grady and accounting for 125 ships, 1,000 aircraft, and 103,000 active duty service members and government employees. He manages a budget of more than $11.4 billion.

Needless to say, it’s a huge job. Did a PhD make a difference in his career?

“I would say ‘yes,’ and I tell people that,” he said by phone from his office in the command’s headquarters building. “I think the academic rigor that George Mason and [now] the Schar School presented helped me refine my thinking processes, especially at the strategic level. The rigor and the multiple disciplinary approach they have there is important.”

Lindsey said he still applies much of what he learned during his studies on a daily basis, particularly as the Navy increases its development of uses for big data.

“I learned statistical methods that I use to this day,” he said. “Basic data mining and going into regression analysis to develop a model and using statistics to see if that model is valid. And then if you want to get into causation, you try to do a path-wise regression with data coefficients. Yes, I actually bring that to my work.”

The application of frameworks is another tool that has remained useful for Lindsey, a lesson acquired by taking a course with Francis Fukuyama, now a senior fellow at Stanford University who taught at the Schar School for several years.

“I continue to this day to use one of Francis Fukuyama’s ideas—that ideology changes practice. Institutions, structures, culture—they all interact together,” Lindsey said. “I’ve applied that framework to many of the big problems we have in the Navy and it helps me take apart a problem and find a solution and understand how it’s going to work.”

Frameworks, Fukuyama agreed, are important to advanced degrees, and for advancing in careers.

“Doctoral programs are important to people coming out of practical jobs in the policy world by giving them a conceptual framework in which to understand what they are doing, so they can balance theory and practice,” Fukuyama said.

As for the degree itself, said Fukuyama, “I would say that the importance of getting a PhD is often less in the specific knowledge you acquire, but rather in the conceptual frameworks that are useful in organizing the way you perceive the world and think about it.”
In addition to the coursework and the research for Lindsey’s dissertation—“The Effect of Computers on Mathematical Achievement of American Fourth Graders”—the program was punctuated with field trips to Capitol Hill to see Congress at work. “That was very helpful,” Lindsey said.

Bottom line: The PhD paid off.

“Who would have thought,” he said, “in 1997 when I started [the PhD program] that the education I received would help me now? But I have to say, it’s played a big role.” ☞

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**It Made Me a Scientist**

When Kevin “Kip” Thomas enrolled in the PhD in Public Policy program, he was a decorated Navy Lieutenant Commander stationed at the Pentagon and serving on the military staff of the Secretary of the Navy.

These days, 11 years after earning his doctoral degree in 2008, Thomas is the Director and Principal Investigator at the Laboratory for Human Neurobiology at the Boston University School of Medicine, one of the largest labs of human testing on the east coast. He’s also director of the School’s Master’s of Science in Healthcare Emergency Management Program and co-director of the Master’s in Science in Bioimaging Program.

If Thomas’ career path seems wildly divergent—and Thomas agrees it is—it’s the result of the Schar School’s PhD program.

“It made me a scientist,” he said.

Some of his duties at the Pentagon included work on antiterrorism and issues related to homeland defense. At one point he realized that “the healthcare space was not engaged well for emergency management.” With an MBA from Mason already in hand, he enrolled in the public policy PhD program to, as he said, “understand people’s preferences…the ideas of psychological and economic constructs” that create useful policies.

“It made sense to understand how people deal with preferences and where perception happens in the brain.”

As it happened, Thomas also was exposed to Francis Fukuyama, whose dual track coursework—addressing social and cultural aspects of thinking—“forced me to look at the psychological components of risk.” His PhD dissertation was on “unwanted infrastructure that people believed had significant risk to it, such as cell towers…Understanding how people dealt with risks.”

Even the first course offered in Thomas’ PhD program made as much of an impression as those he took with Fukuyama.

“It was Logic,” he said. “And I learned how to really perform critical analysis—how to think—which aids in critical writing. I became a scientist.” ☞
Surrounded by Influential and Deep Thinkers

Growing up in the Washington, D.C., area, Sarah Maxwell knew little about what was then a small public university on the rise in Fairfax, Va. But George Mason University’s School of Public Policy—now the Schar School of Policy and Government—had on its faculty a professor she admired: Public Policy Professor Seymour Martin Lipset.

In 1996 Lipset, who died in 2006, gained notoriety for his book American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword, in which he popularized the term “exceptionalism,” describing the country’s unique characteristics as a democracy.

“He was famous, and he had such an incredible mind,” Maxwell said of Lipset. “I was drawn to the school because he was there.”

Maxwell began her public policy PhD program with Lipset as one of her professors.

Since earning her degree in 2004, Maxwell has risen through the ranks of academia. She is now an associate professor of public policy at the University of Texas-Dallas. Last year, she was named Assistant Provost for the School.

The Schar School’s proximity to Washington, D.C., affords opportunities that other schools do not enjoy, Maxwell said, such as having a former U.S. Attorney General make an unannounced appearance in the classroom.

“There really is no school like it,” she said. “I mean, you walk into class one day and the Honorable Edwin Meese is at the head of the classroom. I had goosebumps for an hour. You were surrounded by influential and deep thinkers and people who are really engaged in public policy.” (At the time, Meese was a member of Mason’s Board of Visitors and later served as Rector.)

But it wasn’t only the professors and their guests who inspired the doctoral students: “The level of discourse was just so high, and the students who were there were distinguished in their own right, they weren’t students who were there just to check a box, they were coming from high level positions in government. Everything about the program was constantly stimulating and engaging.”

And sometimes intimidating, she added, particularly since she gave birth to two children during the program.

“The level of both the faculty and the students was so high I always wondered if I was good enough to be there,” she said.

“I had an underlying level of consciousness that these people were so distinguished in their careers, even though it was always a positive peer culture. I never wanted to let anybody down. I was studying constantly not because I felt pressure but because I loved it. It was so much fun to be around that kind of intellectual stimulation.”

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For 32 years the Almanac of Virginia Politics, a comprehensive compendium of the Commonwealth of Virginia’s legislative actions, has been available in print only. Last month, the Schar School released a long-awaited digital version of the encyclopedic anthology, thanks to the tireless efforts of a team of graduate research assistants, undergraduate students in state and local government courses, and a tenacious professor.

For decades the printed Almanac of Virginia Politics has been a reliable resource for legislators, lobbyists, libraries, civic activists, students, and researchers who need information—historic and contemporary—about Virginia legislative politics. The online version will increase access and heighten awareness, say the editors.

“It’s the go-to site for Virginia politics,” said managing editor Matthew Sardone, a student in the Schar School’s Master’s in Public Administration program and an alumnus of the Bachelor of Arts in Government and International Politics program.

“The Almanac is the best guide to current and past legislation,” added Toni-Michelle Travis, a professor of political science at the Schar School and founder of the innovative digital version of the Almanac project. “It’s a handy guide to the legislature. The Almanac provides current and historical information for the citizen, the researcher, and the press.”
Sardone was assisted by public administration major Iman Abebe, the assistant editor who supervised the team of undergraduate researchers.

The digital version of the book, first compiled for print in 1977 by Mason graduate and equal rights activist Flora Crater, includes records for the 2019 General Assembly session to 2011 (more years will be added). Crater, who graduated in 1981 from Mason at age 67 with a bachelor’s degree in Government and Politics, died in 2009. Travis was a longtime associate of Crater.

Raw data available in the Almanac include current and past budgets, economic outlook and revenue forecasts, unaudited general fund annual reports, and the Joint Legislative Audit Review Commission’s comparisons of Virginia’s budget to other states’ finances.

“A section on “Women in the Virginia General Assembly” eventually will include information on every woman elected to the statehouse, from 1920 to the present. Future versions will highlight contributions by other minority members.

Accessing the Almanac is free of charge, said Sardone, who continues to input data into the work-in-progress. “The move to the digital medium makes it significantly easier for anyone who wants to access the information,” he said.

Being in the Schar School’s MPA program has changed Sardone’s thoughts about his future.

“I know I want to work at some level of government, and I’ve always been interested in federal,” he said. “But as an MPA student, state and local government have become a lot more attractive to me. I never recognized the opportunities.”
Erik Truong: ‘This experience made me realize that it doesn’t take lots of money or power to spur change—all it takes are passionate people ready for a better future.’

First-Hand Political Lobbying Experience in Richmond

It was an early departure—7 a.m.—and the late January weather was cold and icy—in fact, the rest of the university was on a delayed opening until 11 a.m. But still, some 40 George Mason University undergraduate students, including many Schar School government and international politics majors, piled into a chartered bus and departed the Fairfax Campus for the two-hour journey to Richmond.

The annual Mason Lobbies Day, sponsored by Mason Student Government, found those students taking meetings as teams in 28 different offices in the state capital to advocate for various issues facing the Commonwealth’s higher education system.

“Students argued for the 2019 State Legislative Priorities for Mason, which include funding requests for teacher pay, financial aid, research funding, general funding, and upgrades to telecommunications infrastructure,” said Tim O’Shea, the executive secretary for government and community relations for Mason Student Government. “Every student had three meetings with legislators.”
“In total we visited 29 state legislators, with students broken into groups and taking different meetings at different times.”

The students did not go into the day cold. Mason’s Office of Government and Community Relations, led by Executive Director of State Relations Mark Smith, prepared the lobbyists-for-the-day from top to bottom, from what to wear and carrying Mason-branded business card holders to the hard facts of legislative priorities.

“This was my first Mason Lobbies Day, and I was pleasantly surprised how receptive the legislators and their staff were to our concerns,” said senior Erik Truong. “This experience made me realize that it doesn’t take lots of money or power to spur change—all it takes are passionate people ready for a better future.”
Late last year, a major new poll of more than 2,000 active and veteran U.S. military personnel surveying attitudes on a range of cultural, political, and sexual issues, including transgender and immigrant soldiers, was created by a team of Schar School graduate students, led by political science professor Delton Daigle and conducted in partnership with Smithsonian Magazine and the Stars and Stripes military newspaper.

Stars and Stripes provided the list of 23,000 possible respondents while Smithsonian Magazine coordinated and financed the effort. The Schar School team, said Terry Monmaney, deputy editor of the Smithsonian Magazine, “did everything in between.”

“We knew what questions we wanted to ask, but we didn’t know how to ask them,” Monmaney said. “Delton [Daigle] did.”

Daigle is a specialist in public opinions polls. His team included political science PhD candidate Erica Seng-White, political science PhD student Jordan Cohen, and first-year master’s of political science student Josephine Neulen, who recently graduated with honors from the Schar School’s bachelor of arts in government and international politics program.
The Schar School team created the questions in collaboration with Smithsonian Magazine, compiled and analyzed the data, and wrote summaries of the findings. In all, the effort took about two months, Daigle said.

The students learned the delicate craft of creating poll questions and how to use sophisticated research and analytic tools for a national survey. The results, they said, were sometimes surprising.

“One of the most interesting findings was the role that gender played in shaping the experiences and perceptions of military personnel,” said Seng-White. “One example of this is that non-males in the survey—42 percent—were more likely to have witnessed sexual harassment.” Seventeen percent of males said they had witnessed sexual assault or harassment.

“To me, the most interesting finding was the different views from officers and those who are enlisted,” said Cohen. Officers and enlisted personnel differed widely on views about social media, discrimination, the continuation of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and their thoughts on “the greatest threats to the United States.”

“The issues we asked about in the survey are generally topics people are very passionate about, and it was fascinating to be able to track people’s opinions about certain things,” said Neulen, who handled the survey questions.

For Daigle, the exercise was an example of the Schar School’s diverse strengths.

“I love that the expertise of our faculty and graduate students at the Schar School continue to be tapped for finding answers to important and topical questions—not just by the typical ‘Beltway’ groups, but by organizations with a national and international reach,” Daigle said. “Our partnership with Stars and Stripes and Smithsonian Magazine is another fine example of this.”

“I thought this was a very successful collaboration,” Smithsonian Magazine’s Monmaney said. “I’d love to do it again sometime.”
“Drugs are not the problem,” said Bill Hazel. “Addiction is the problem.”

Hazel, a former orthopedic surgeon and Virginia Secretary for Health and Human Resources, launched a day-long, 10-speaker addiction symposium in December, with observations on the changes and challenges of prescription and illegal drug use that he has studied throughout his career.

The forum, “Eradicating Addiction: World Medical & Health Policy Symposium Issue Panel,” took place at the Historic Quaker Meeting House in Washington, D.C., and was organized and moderated by Schar School Professor Bonnie Stabile, director of the Master’s in Public Policy program and co-editor of the World Medical & Health Policy Journal. The event was part of the 11th Dupont Summit, hosted by academic publisher, the Policy Studies Organization.

Hazel joined the university last year as senior advisor for Strategic Initiatives and Policy in the multidisciplinary Institute for Biohealth Innovation. The initial focus of the institute is to spearhead initiatives to combat the national opioid epidemic as it affects Northern Virginia and elsewhere.
His presentation focusing on policy issues set the tone for a day that examined the opioid crisis from a wide variety of angles, including the increase in scale of scope of the epidemic, trafficking, criminal justice, treatment, and using yoga and other alternative therapies as a rehabilitative and preventative practice.

Schar School professors who presented their findings on opioid-related issues included Distinguished Research Professor Arnaud Nicogossian, director of the Center for the Study of International Medical Policies and Practices, who elaborated on the scale of opioid addiction on a global scale, and Associate Professor Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera, who detailed illicit drug trafficking and interventions.

The idea of the conference, said Stabile, was to bring together specialists studying various aspects of the crisis and creating a network for them to continue their efforts, perhaps by joining forces or benefitting from hearing new ideas.

The good news, said Hazel, is that opioid abuse is “treatable and preventable.” He urged a crucial change in culture: “The cost of doing nothing is that we all pay for it,” he said.

The researchers from the Schar School, the University of California-Berkeley, and the Harvard Business School for the first time have studied reported instances of sexually predatory and discriminatory behavior at venture capital and private equity firms going back more than two decades. The study compared fund performance against comparable funds where no instances of harassment or discrimination had been reported.

The findings could be important for business leaders: Funds with instances of discrimination or harassment behavior have an average 15 percent lower return over a typical 10-year fund lifespan.

“This research has the potential to change the definition of responsibility for institutional investors,” said co-author Philip Auerswald, an Associate Professor of Public Policy and one of the study’s authors. “The implications for asset allocation could be significant.”

The researchers developed the Predatory Behavior Index (PBI) that measures 10 different discriminatory and harassing behaviors that have the most common occurrences in the private equity and venture capital industry. The behaviors — ranging from enabling discriminatory behavior to rape and assault — are ranked according to severity. The authors will update the index and track the performance of funds on an ongoing basis.

Continued on Page 18
Ahoy! ODKM Master’s Students Take ‘LeaderSHIP’ Roles in Public Seminar

Master’s students became facilitators for a day in mid-November when a metaphorical “ship” docked at Founders Hall for the Master’s in Organization Development and Knowledge Management capstone event, the ODKM “Learning Community.”

The research can be found in the working paper, *Predators in the Board Room? Relating Sexually Predatory, Discriminatory Behavior to Private Capital Performance*, written by Imogen Rose Smith, Investment Fellow with the University of California; Gitanjali Swamy, Research Fellow and Director of Special Projects at the Private Capital Research Institute at Harvard Business School; and the Schar School’s Auerswald.

“Investors can now see that these inappropriate behaviors have an impact on financial results,” said Swamy. “Addressing this type of behavior is not just a moral imperative, it is close to a fiduciary duty for investors.”

ODKM Learning Community facilitators: From left, Lauren Green, Wynsome Hay, Katlyn Egan, Kyle Ruske, Ayla Peacock, Anna Pastukh, Jacquelyn Ingros, and Ajibade Da Silva-Olaghere
The title of this semester's nautical-themed forum, attended by more than 65 participants, was “Developing the LeaderSHIP You Seek” and featured a day of exploring various aspects of leadership through a series of engaging talks and challenging exercises.

Each facilitator donned a captain's cap and took command of topics ranging from “courageous leadership” and “authentic leadership” to “how to lead generational workforces” and understanding leadership practices borrowed from East Asian culture.

The master’s students, many of them employed in various consulting and government roles, were tasked with every aspect of preparing and delivering the content for the Learning Community. During the day, Class of 2016 ODKM graduate and “graphic facilitator” Lauren Green illustrated the discussion concepts.

“The Learning Community is the ‘walk the talk’ version of what the students are learning in the program,” said professor Tojo Thatchenkery, director of the Organization Development and Knowledge Management master's degree program. “The group planning the event chose the topic of leadership and spent four months working on designing a learning-rich experiential day incorporating the latest developments in leadership research.”

The student leaders were assigned their discussion topics based on their own “unique gifts and skills to create an engaging and powerful learning experience,” said associate professor Jessica Srikantia.

A highlight, said Srikantia, was the presentation by ODKM student and director of strategy and logistics for the District of Columbia Public Schools Ajibade Da Silva-Olaghere.

“With courage, grace, poise, and compassion, he initiated a vital and transformative conversation on racism in the U.S., grounded in his own first-hand experiences as an African-American facing police targeting and brutality towards himself and others...His presentation brought alive the realities he has lived, connected hearts around our oneness as human beings, and made the vital need for justice an experiential not just a notional truth.”

“Students, alumni, and visitors attending the event said that hearing the personal stories of courage and vulnerability from the leadership group was most touching and left them with plenty of takeaways,” Thatchenkery added.

“Leadership doesn’t just eliminate chaos: Effective leadership anticipates the next step and helps others to take it.”

“Leadership has its own gravitational pull,” said participant Anthony Willett, a senior speechwriter at the Federal Aviation Administration. “The panel pointed out pretty clearly that leadership doesn’t just eliminate chaos: Effective leadership anticipates the next step and helps others to take it.

“If you’re going to be that kind of leader, you’ve got to be much more than a subject matter expert. You’ve got to be a people expert. Knowing yourself is a big part of that.”

“Students, alumni, and visitors attending the event said that hearing the personal stories of courage and vulnerability from the leadership group was most touching and left them with plenty of takeaways,” Thatchenkery added.
Horrified to learn about Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, Schar School international security professor A. Trevor Thrall was intrigued when he met John Fuisz, cofounder of SSR Industries, and learned that his company had developed a new strategy for finding social media attacks online.

A few weeks later the two collaborated and Thrall brought 27 undergraduate student volunteers on board to study whether foreign interference could be at play in the 2018 U.S. Senate race, too.

Each student monitored a Twitter account that SSR Industries identified as suspicious. They found odd behaviors that likely were meant to influence the Missouri Senate race, and among them, a pricey new development: more than $200,000 in illegitimate GoFundMe campaigns driven by the accounts.

“We had the students go through each tweet, read the tweet, and code it for certain elements to see what kind of trolling [the account users] were doing,” said Thrall. Thrall and Fuisz met the students weekly for mentoring and to discuss their findings.
“[Discovering the GoFundMe accounts] was a unique contribution that the [Schar School] students made to this project,” Thrall continued.

SSR Industries contacted GoFundMe to alert the company to the activity. “They hadn’t known it was happening, so now they’re monitoring this stuff as well,” said Thrall. SSR Industries also plans to use the findings as part of their knowledge base for future investigations.

For students, working on the project felt like a way to help defend U.S. democracy and taught them about the effects of a divided nation.

“The goal of election interference isn’t to get specific candidates elected,” said Keelin Coltrane Wolfe, a junior studying government and international politics. “It’s to cause divisions within democratic societies to destabilize them, and by extension, the international order.”

The hands-on nature of the work also proved to be a resume-worthy experience for the student cohort.

“What I like best about my experience here at Mason is the opportunities I have gotten by being so close to [Washington,] D.C.,” said Wolfe. “[Because I want] to work in the State Department in International Security, having the opportunities to work in the related field is amazing. This project helped positively contribute by giving me more experience and giving me the opportunity to work with students who are like-minded and want to work in this field.”

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Tracking TraCCC’s Activity

November was typically busy for the Schar School’s Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center. TraCCC presented its research on countering the looting of antiquities in Syria and Iraq in the last of a series of forums; the early November panel discussion included archeologists, terror finance specialists, and other practitioners who have been involved in the State Department-funded CLASI project.

Later in the month, with a critical vote on the leadership of INTERPOL dominating intelligence headlines, TraCCC and the Antonin Scalia Law School’s National Security Institute presented a conference focusing on the abuse of judicial processes by Russia and authoritarian states and the exploitation of INTERPOL “red notices.”

Meanwhile, TraCCC founding director Louise Shelley released her well-received book, Dark Commerce: How a New Illicit Economy Is Threatening Our Future (Princeton University Press), which documents “how the exponential growth of illicit trade is risking human and planetary well-being” (Natural Resources Defense Council).
How It Feels to Write a Law: A Legislative Loss, but a Winning Experience for Sophomore

Legislation introduced in the Virginia General Assembly this year, which would have directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study reinstating discretionary parole in the commonwealth, died in subcommittee in January.

It was bad news for Ashley Stewart, but the sophomore reported it with a smile. After all, it was her policy memo on the subject that had been picked up and introduced as bill HJ644 by Virginia delegate Vivian Watts, D-District 39.

“It was an amazing process,” said Stewart, who is from Yorktown, Va., and is majoring in government and international politics at the Government and conflict analysis and resolution.

“Criminal justice reform is something I’ve always been passionate about because I see myself as a very privileged person,” Stewart said. “I see a lot of people who are disadvantaged compared to me suffer at the hands of our criminal justice system.”

Stewart said researching and composing policy memos for the Roosevelt Institute has made her a better writer and sharper thinker.

“You have to learn how to craft arguments,” she said. “That’s something that you can easily apply to writing an essay for a regular class or learning skills of persuasion when lobbying.”

Stewart, who hopes to work in politics crafting policy, did plenty of persuading in January, when Roosevelt Institute members traveled to Richmond, to lobby for her bill.
“We had 13 meetings with legislators and staff to lobby for my bill and other bills we were supporting,” she said.

“I love politics,” Stewart added. And the Schar School “is the place to be when it comes to furthering your career in a political field or government in general. This is the place to be if that’s where you want to go with your life.”

A Vietnam Visit: Historic Sites While Learning About Southeast Asia’s Economic Future

While other students spent the middle of January combating the worst of winter weather and dealing with post-holiday blahs, a cadre of 12 Schar School students basked in the dry sunshine of Vietnam for eight days and learned about the country’s fate in a rapidly changing Southeast Asia.

“The purpose of the trip was to learn about the opportunities and challenges facing the region, including regional security and economic policy,” said Nicole Decker, a Master’s in Public Administration student. “We certainly received a wide scope of information from our lecturers including details on Vietnam’s position regarding the ‘East Sea’ and the history and struggles of a one-party government.”

Students who enrolled in the winter study abroad trip to Vietnam received three academic credits and a certificate of completion from Vietnam National University in Hanoi. Students heard lectures on development policies and environmental concerns, among other issues facing the region.
Shells rained down in the Donbass region of Eastern Ukraine four years ago when a war broke out between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian armies. Ukrainian scholar Ararat Osipian escaped the war zone after two months, moving to Western Ukraine and Bucharest until his city, Kramatorsk, was taken back by the Ukrainian Army.

But when he returned to his home in Eastern Ukraine—just 15 miles from the front line—he knew he needed to flee again.

“‘There was a missile strike in 2015 at which 20 people died and several dozen were wounded,’ Osipian said. ‘Although the city was already controlled by the Ukrainian Army, it’s within the reach of all kinds of weaponry. It’s a risky place.”

What made it riskier is Osipian’s field of study: corruption.

The Schar School has provided a haven for Osipian, who is the first “endangered scholar” the university is hosting through its membership in the New University in Exile Consortium.

“I have been doing research on corruption for 20 years,” said Osipian, who described his home country as teeming with corrupt authorities and practices. “The Ukrainian authorities are not necessarily comfortable having someone who does corruption [research] and is published widely in the West.”

But the door was wide open at the Schar School.

“Supporting academic freedom is fundamental to our purpose,” said Dean Mark J. Rozell. “It is easy for us in the U.S. to forget how precious it is to have intellectual freedom from fear of sanction or punishment.

“In supporting this program, we can make a small positive contribution to our fellow scholars internationally who are endangered because of their academic work.”

While at the Schar School, Osipian will continue his research at the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC). His most recent project looks at corruption in doctoral education in Ukraine, including sales and bribery used to obtain PhDs.

He will also teach two classes in the fall of 2019 and contribute to the school’s scholarly work.
“[Osipian’s] insights and experience will bring a unique perspective to our students,” said TraCCC director Louise Shelley, who added she’s known of Osipian’s pathbreaking research for years and is thrilled he’ll have the opportunity to publish more with TraCCC.

Despite the risks of speaking out against corruption in books and lectures, it’s something that must be done so countries and governments around the world can act more responsibly, Osipian said.

“In order to resist corruption, you have to learn about it,” he said.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

School Swag

The inventory of Schar School-branded apparel and novelties continues to grow. The new Schar School hats are a hit, but as mid-terms and finals season draw closer, professors and students alike may find a new Schar School coffee mug handy. The green matte “kettle mug” holds 14 ounces of welcome and necessary caffeinated beverages to help power you through those papers, whether writing them or grading them.
The El-Shazli family was packed for a move to Washington, D.C., in 1967 where Heba F. El-Shazli’s father was to be stationed as a diplomat in the Egyptian embassy. But the U.S.’s support for Israel in the Arab-Israeli War of that year caused the embassy to be shut down; the El-Shazlis went to London instead. Another possible move to the U.S. was stymied by a subsequent war in 1973.

In fact, the family did not make it to the U.S. until 1975, when relations resumed and the embassy reopened.

“My life has very much been governed by wars,” said El-Shazli, explaining the circuitous route she took to her present position as an assistant professor of political science, specializing in Middle East studies.

She was hired first by the AFL-CIO’s Solidarity Center and then the National Democratic Institute, a core grantee of the National Endowment for Democracy, to “plant seeds,” she said, in Lebanon, Morocco, Algeria, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and other countries.

After 28 years, she got a fellowship to teach at the Virginia Military Institute and discovered an affinity for sharing knowledge. A master’s degree from Georgetown University and a PhD from Virginia Tech fulfilled her academic credentials, and she was enlisted to come to the Schar School in 2013 by professors she knew during her career as a practitioner: Peter Mandaville and Bassam Haddad, directors of the Ali Vural Ak Center for Global Islamic Studies at George Mason University. She is now an affiliate faculty of the center.
“She has been a powerhouse in the classroom, in all senses of the word,” said Haddad. “Knowledgeable, empowering, impeccably dedicated, and focused on the pedagogical needs of our students. We cannot ask for more devotion to both the students and the profession in the classroom.”

“In 2016, El-Shazli received the Schar School’s Outstanding Teacher Award as well as the Global Excellence ‘Rookie of the Year Award’ for leadership in the study abroad program at Mason.”

“I love it,” she says of her burgeoning second career. “I am here to teach and I can’t wait to get up every morning and get to the classroom. I’m having a great time.”

Did You Know…?

The Schar School is a major research unit of the university and received approximately $3.79 million in new sponsored funding in fiscal year 2018.

The Schar School employs approximately 80 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.
Have you ever asked the question, “What am I going to do with my life?”

I know I have, several times, and at several points in my career. Discussing this all-important question and the ones around it—How do I make a living with my education? Where do I want to live? Who will hire me?—is critical to making the right decisions about your future.

Many of us tend to make life-changing decisions without seeking the opinion of people who have substantial experience in our field of interest. Some of us may not discuss our choice with anyone at all, even those closest to us. Perhaps you think it is an easy decision, or one too personal to discuss, or a weakness not to be exposed. These are false assumptions, and the truth is there is absolutely nothing lost—and everything to be gained—in asking for sage advice. Most people like to be asked for advice. What you are telling them is that they are smart, and that you respect them. It is a compliment to be asked for advice.

With these thoughts in mind, the Alumni Chapter of the Schar School of Policy and Government established the Alumni Mentoring Program. The program provides a way to connect Schar School alumni and students with mentors for guidance and experienced, thoughtful, advice.

The Alumni Mentorship program does more than serve as a way to gain greater knowledge to make better decisions. It creates opportunities for the participants to connect with the professional network best suited to their career interests and goals, expanding the resources of the mentee, and even the mentor.

“I could not have gotten where I am in my career without mentors guiding me throughout every step of my career,” 2009 MPA grad Emily Mark told us. “The Schar School mentoring program was created to build trusting, caring, and meaningful relationships amongst the Schar School alumni community.”

Participants such as Emily benefit by staying connected to the school and its considerable resources, expanding their professional networks, finding resources they had no idea about, and, in short, building beneficial relationships.

Each September, after completing a simple application process, approximately 80 people are matched by the Alumni Student Support Committee and the Schar School Development Office. A reception is then held at the Schar School to allow mentors and mentees to mingle, learn about the ground rules, and ask questions of the program directors and co-chairs of the Student Support Committee, mentors Laura Gouge and Emily.

“I love meeting with the mentors and mentees,” said Laura, who graduated in 2015 from the Master’s in International Commerce and Policy program and is now special projects coordinator for the American Sugar Alliance. “It is so rewarding to hear their successes and the impact that the program has had on their lives.”
Throughout the mentorship process, mentees work toward goals and professional growth, while mentors support them through next-level career decisions and engagements. Mentors and mentees meet either face-to-face, on the phone, or through frequent e-communication each month.

The next class of alumni volunteers and student participants will be sought in Summer 2019. We’d be glad to have you join it!

Colin R. Hart
’93, Master’s in International Commerce and Policy
President, Schar School Alumni Chapter

MPP Alumna Finds Herself in Hot Water

Sheena Saydam admits she didn’t see herself in real estate while studying national security policy at the Schar School. Nor did the 2009 Master of Public Policy graduate imagine that she would be helping to support a modified trailer that dispenses free showers to the homeless in Baltimore.

But she is. Saydam, managing partner of the Maryland-based Saydam Properties Group, is also a principal investor in Generosity Shower, a five-stall, mobile shower trailer with a mission to help the homeless “move from a place of crisis to self-sufficiency,” according to the website. The truck launched in April.

The truck is an offshoot of charitable work with Generosity Global, a nonprofit founded by Rich and Erika Akwo, friends of Saydam and her husband Han. In addition to being a major funder of the project, a past client of the Saydams’ real estate business, a design architect, provided pro bono services for the interior of the truck. The Saydams’ loan officer managed to secure 1,000 towels for the truck. “It’s taken a village,” Saydam said of the launch.

Now that she thinks about it, Saydam said veering from policy to real estate “was a natural change in direction. National security policy encourages us to be curious, and to build a successful real estate team in one of the most competitive markets in the world, this piece is critical—and we are always learning and looking for ways to multiply our mission of doing the most good wherever we can.”
Rondene Grinam’s list of undergraduate degrees is impressive: A major in communication with a concentration in public relations, and minors in global affairs and journalism. Which sounds great if you want to be, say, a foreign correspondent.

“But I decided I wanted to go into international marketing,” she said.

Dealing with business on a global scale required higher education than a bachelor’s degree, and as Grinam searched the graduate school landscape to find a good fit for her experience and ambition, she discovered the Master’s in International Commerce and Policy program at the Schar School.
“I saw the international commerce and policy program and thought it was so cool because it was basically a mixture of international relations degrees and business — how the two intersect,” the 2018 graduate said. “I think that’s really valuable in the world we live in today.”

The program is also flexible, she added, allowing students to tailor the master’s degree to fit their own goals.

While the Schar School’s Master’s in International Commerce and Policy program boasts some of the top professors in the field — including many past and current practitioners at key agencies and commissions — program director Kenneth Reinert suggests classroom learning needs to be supplemented with travel abroad.

“The Schar School study abroad program has always been an important aspect of the international commerce degree,” said Reinert. “Being able to spend time in other countries, talking to educators, politicians, and business people, opens up an important ‘real-world’ window not always available in the classroom.

“Many of our students and instructors are from other countries, but visiting those countries in an educational capacity is an invaluable addition to the degree.”

Grinam, a native of Jamaica, chose to enroll in one of the Schar School’s most lauded short-term study abroad programs — the one-week Oxford Entrepreneurial Leadership for the Global Marketplace, offered in the summer at Oxford University in the United Kingdom.

“Many of our students and instructors are from other countries, but visiting those countries in an educational capacity is an invaluable addition to the degree.”

During her time in England, Grinam was exposed to “the importance of cultural considerations, social and political aspects, what you can and cannot say, and what will resonate with the people you are marketing to in another country and another culture.

“It’s basically why I was in the international commerce graduate program, to learn things like that. That’s really where my passion lies.”

The trip lived up to its promise.

“The focus was on international business, marketing, and branding,” she said. “There were speakers who had built their own start-ups, branding agencies, communications agency gurus. I really appreciated meeting people who started their own businesses from the ground up because I want to start my agency someday. I was taking it all in and connecting with all of them.

“It was very useful to get an international perspective on how to build a globally-focused company.”
U.S. Biodefense Leader Kadlec Praises Schar School Program, Students at 15th Anniversary Lecture

The guest of honor for the December celebration of the 15th anniversary of the biodefense program at the Schar School in December was Robert Kadlec, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. About 130 guests attended the event that was hosted by the Biodefense Graduate Program and the Schar School Alumni Chapter.

“Biology is the science of the 21st century; it’s going to revolutionize everything,” Kadlec said in advance of his lecture entitled Preventing Pandemics and Bioterrorism: Past, Present, and Future.

“Biology makes our world a better, safer place, but it could also end the world. The key is understanding the opportunities, risks, and considerations for what we need to do in security.”

Kadlec’s hour-long examination of the history and future of biodefense and homeland security concluded with a discussion of current U.S. policy. Pointing out that the country has a $7 billion stockpile of biodefense vaccines and other drugs, Kadlec indicated that developing modern defenses against biological threats was more than just the government’s responsibility.

“This not a government problem, but a public-private partnership” that requires cooperation on an epic scale, he said.

Before the program, Kadlec agreed that biodefense and biosecurity are growth industries and that programs such as the Schar School’s were vital.

“For students in the field, “the bio-economy is an extraordinary opportunity,” he said. “What Greg Koblentz [director of the Schar School biodefense program] has done is an incredible effort. I understand he has 300 graduates, 60-plus students this year—that’s a testimony not only to Greg and his counterparts on the faculty but also to the interest and recognition of how important a topic this is.”

Robert Kadlec
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

“Biology makes our world a better, safer place, but it could also end the world. The key is understanding the opportunities, risks, and considerations for what we need to do in security.”
Inspired by a Revolution, International Student Finds His Passion

Seong Jae Shin was a sophomore in high school when he watched first-hand the protests in Egypt that defined what came to be known as the Arab Spring in 2010. The South Korea native was living close to the eruption, in Egypt, necessitated by his father’s work.

The experience of witnessing a violent rebellion stayed with him when he returned to South Korea and took up studies at George Mason University’s Mason Korea Campus following two years of compulsory military service. While he declared a major in conflict analysis and resolution, Shin was equally fascinated by diplomacy and international security.

His interest increased when he met Schar School assistant professor of government Soyoung Kwon, who was launching the Mason Korea satellite branch of the Center for Security Policy Studies, a two-year-old center created by the Schar School’s director of international security Ellen Laipson. The center works to create multidisciplinary research in partnerships with government, military, think tank, and private sector experts and to publish policy-relevant monographs and literature.

“International security has been my interest from high school,” Shin said. “Being raised in the region where there are terrorist activities and being born in a separated country made me want to study international security. It is the field that can help search for the most realistic way to manage or even resolve global challenges.”

Among other things, Shin assisted Kwon in preparing last summer for a delegation of Schar School professors who participated in forums in Song-do and Seoul, delivering research on international security.

“[Shin’s] strengths, to name a few, are his global experience and knowledge, passion for learning, good work ethic and leadership,” said Kwon.

Like many Mason Korea students, Shin spent two semesters at Mason’s Fairfax, Va., campus, and graduated from Mason in December 2018. He’s been accepted for post-graduate studies at the Paris Institute of Political Studies.

“After that, I hope to work for a relevant [intergovernmental organization] or find a government job in Korea,” he said. ✩
Sitting and Former Elected Leaders Share Experiences With Schar School Audiences

In late November, a pair of Schar School Distinguished Visiting Professors—former Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe (D) and former seven-term U.S. Representative Tom Davis (R), also rector of George Mason—discussed local leadership with newly elected politicians and officials. Dean Mark J. Rozell moderated a 90-minute conversation that emphasized civility, bipartisanship, and remaining true to campaign promises.

In mid-December, Virginia Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine (both D) discussed the regional economic outlook with business leaders and elected officials. NBC4 Northern Virginia Bureau Chief Julie Carey moderated the breakfast discussion, hosted by the Schar School and sponsored by the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, that ranged from paying for infrastructure maintenance to educating the local workforce to the arrival of Amazon’s HQ2 to nearby Crystal City.

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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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