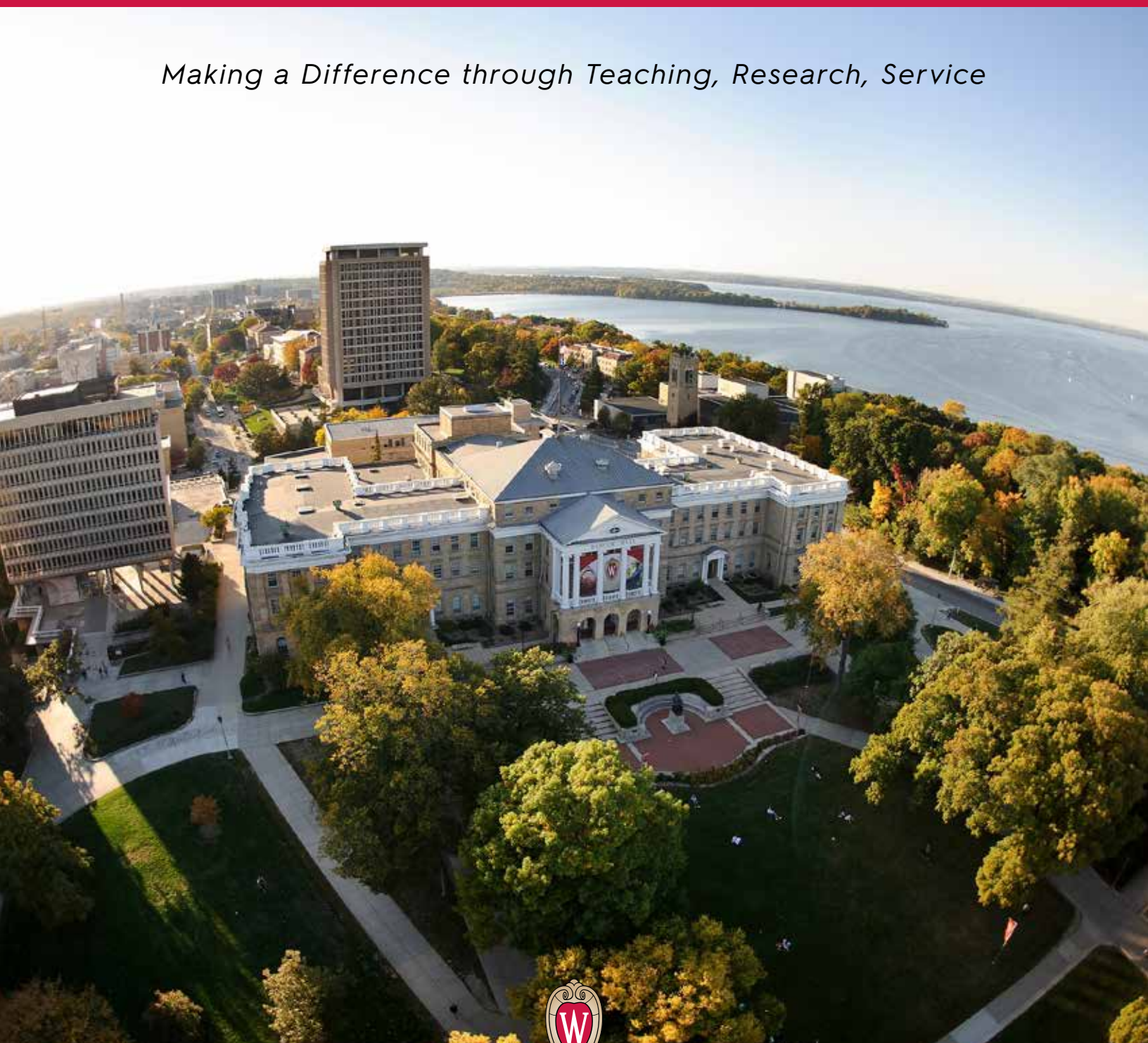


UW-Madison La Follette School of Public Affairs

2017-18 HIGHLIGHTS

Making a Difference through Teaching, Research, Service



Robert M. La Follette
School of Public Affairs
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Faculty

Susan Webb Yackee

Director and Professor, Public Affairs and Political Science

Steve Kulig (MPA '14)

Associate Director

Rebecca M. Blank

UW-Madison Chancellor

Maria Cancian

Professor, Public Affairs and Social Work

Menzie Chinn

Professor, Public Affairs and Economics

J. Michael Collins

Associate Professor, Public Affairs and Human Ecology

Mark Copelovitch

Professor, Public Affairs and Political Science

Jason Fletcher

Professor, Public Affairs and Sociology

Lindsay Jacobs

Assistant Professor, Public Affairs

Gregory Nemet

Professor, Public Affairs and Environmental Studies

Rourke O'Brien

Assistant Professor, Public Affairs

Robyn Rowe

Visiting Assistant Professor, Public Affairs

Timothy Smeeding

Professor, Public Affairs and Economics

Emilia Tjernström

Assistant Professor, Public Affairs and Agricultural and Applied Economics

Geoffrey Wallace

Associate Professor, Public Affairs and Economics

Yang Wang (MIPA '03)

Assistant Professor, Public Affairs and Business

David Weimer

Professor, Public Affairs and Political Science

Barbara (Bobbi) Wolfe

Professor, Public Affairs, Economics, and Population Health Sciences

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



From the growth in legislative outreach to increasing student research opportunities, the La Follette School had numerous reasons for celebration during the 2017–18 academic year. Many of these achievements were possible because our alumni and friends have shared their time, talent, and treasures. Thank you!

We are extremely proud of these accomplishments, and this document highlights a small sample of our brilliant faculty, our outstanding students, and our impressive alumni—all of whom embrace the call to public service.

La Follette School faculty, students, staff, and alumni also have demonstrated their commitment to making the School the best it can be. For example, all have enthusiastically embraced our expanded focus on diversity, knowing that diversity enhances creativity, educational outcomes, and mutual understanding.

I hope you enjoy reading about our 2017–18 achievements as much we have enjoyed watching them happen.

On, Wisconsin!

Susan Webb Yackee

Director and Professor

Staff

Lisa Hildebrand

Senior University Relations Specialist

Andrew Lambert

Information Technology Specialist

Katie Lorenze (MIPA '14)

Administrator and Career Services Coordinator

Cindy Manthe

Financial Specialist

Marjorie Matthews

University Services Associate

Heidi Normandin (MA '98)

Senior Outreach Specialist

Mo O'Connor

Senior Student Services Coordinator

Bridget Carr Pirsch

Senior Outreach Specialist

David Wright-Racette

Student Services Associate

Board of Visitors

Curt S. Culver

Michael W. Grebe

Michael Hamerlik

Carolyn Heinrich

Leslie Ann Howard

Senator Herb Kohl

Bob Lang

Sheldon B. Lubar

Katharine C. Lyall

Chuck Pruitt

Eric Schutt

Daniel Speckhard (MA '82)

Michael Youngman (MA '82)

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

4.9

OBJECTIVITY RATING
OF 2018 FAMILY IMPACT
SEMINAR, AS RATED BY
LEGISLATORS (1=poor, 5=excellent)

5TH

BEST GRADUATE SCHOOL
FOR SOCIAL POLICY
US News & World Report

13TH

FACULTY PAPERS
IN PUBLICATIONS WITH A
SCImage JOURNAL RANK
ABOVE THE 99TH
PERCENTILE

*Ash, Elliott and Urquiola, Miguel S.,
A Research-Based Ranking of Public
Policy Schools (January 5, 2018)*

1ST

**UW-MADISON PROVOST
FELLOW**

*Director and Professor
Susan Webb Yackee*



OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, AN AVERAGE
OF **95% OF LA FOLLETTE SCHOOL GRADUATES**
HAVE FOUND EMPLOYMENT IN THEIR FIELD
WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF GRADUATION.

IN 2017, LA FOLLETTE SCHOOL FACULTY MEMBERS **RECEIVED AWARDS**
IN 2 OF UW-MADISON'S 5 MAJOR RESEARCH COMPETITIONS.



Associate Professor J. Michael Collins, H.I. Romnes Faculty Fellowship
Professor Maria Cancian, Kellett Mid-Career Award



"Graduate school has been incredible in helping me find new areas of interest and connecting me with professionals and peers who have been instrumental in setting me on a path that I am confident about."

— **Mikhaila Calice**
MPA and Energy Analysis student



"The La Follette School has helped me develop a vocabulary for understanding policy issues as both a future policymaker and an informed consumer."

— **Signe Janoska-Bedi**
MIPA student



230+ LA FOLLETTE SCHOOL
ALUMNI AND FRIENDS SHARED
THEIR TIME AND TALENTS
WITH STUDENTS AS MENTORS,
SPEAKERS, EMPLOYER-VISIT
HOSTS, AND MOCK
INTERVIEWERS.



THROUGH ITS LEGISLATIVE
OUTREACH, LA FOLLETTE
SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS
ENGAGED WITH 65
OF WISCONSIN'S 132
LEGISLATIVE OFFICES.

TEACHING & LEARNING



Isabelle Selep, Zach Petersen, Cody Oltmans, and Mia Nafziger present their Workshop report for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Same-Race Teachers and Students in Wisconsin: Exploring Academic Achievement and Disciplinary Outcomes, to La Follette School faculty, students, and staff.

The La Follette School pursues teaching and learning in an active, collaborative environment where students, faculty, and practitioners interact closely and draw upon UW-Madison's outstanding scholarly resources. In addition to traditional coursework, students have numerous opportunities to develop their skills, deepen their knowledge, and learn about career opportunities.

Several courses, including the culminating Workshop course, provide students with practical experience through client-based projects. Working in teams, students produce research-based, analytical, evaluative, and prescriptive reports for municipal government offices, international development organizations, and other clients.

In 2018, donor funding supported a research trip to an isolated area of Honduras for a group of students in the Master of International Public Affairs (MIPA) program. The five students conducted fieldwork for their Workshop project client, the Board of World Mission of the Moravian Church in North America, which requested a sustainability plan for the region's only medical clinic.

Other Workshop clients in 2018 included the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, United Nations Children's Fund, US Department of Treasury, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and Wisconsin Medical Society. Students in Cost-Benefit Analysis and Performance Management also completed client-based projects.



"While I enjoyed the coursework and opportunities on campus, my most lasting experience will undoubtedly be my Workshop project for a small clinic in rural Honduras," said John Winters (MIPA '18). "We saw firsthand the immense challenges facing the region, witnessed the medical staff's incredible work, and came away with a permanently changed perspective."

— John Winters (MIPA '18), far left, with Matthew Burr, Cassie Frankel, Atiya Siddiqi, and Sarah Dalgleish

Students, employers benefit from project assistantships



Project assistantships with La Follette School and UW-Madison faculty members and with off-campus partners contribute

deeply to students' learning. Thanks in large part to increasing financial resources, more and more students gain immensely rewarding experience as project assistants (PAs).

For example, **Mike Hamerlik**, a member of the School's Board of Visitors, established a project assistantship at WPS Health Solutions, where he serves as president and chief executive officer.

"WPS Health Solutions is proud to participate in the Project Assistant program. It gives students an opportunity to apply their coursework and expand their skills in a real-world work environment," said Hamerlik.

Kelsey (Mueller) Vincent (MPA '18), a service efficacy analyst for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, said her WPS PAship was a great practical complement to the La Follette School's policy coursework.

"I observed how state and federal health policy impacted WPS and learned how to collaborate with elected officials and stakeholder groups," she said.



"The La Follette School has had a big impact on how I think about international policy and in broadening my horizons. I'm much more aware of and comfortable with the aspects of policy that require economic or quantitative analysis."

— **Jamey Kane**
MIPA student



"The La Follette School has taught me to think differently, to be critical and skeptical when evaluating new information and data, and to craft information for a policy audience."

— **Elgin Karls** (MPA '18)



"My PAship at Education Analytics has been a fantastic complement to my MPA experience. While topics like program evaluation and econometrics can seem abstract in a classroom, I can go to EA and get direct exposure to evaluating a K-3 literacy program or running complex models to support school district decision-making."

— **Ben Dederich**
MPA student

Campuswide opportunities

As a world-class research university, UW-Madison provides La Follette School students with immense learning opportunities.

For example, students in Professor Menzie Chinn's Trade, Competition, and Governance in a Global Economy course discussed current domestic and international topics with David Brancaccio in March 2018. The host and senior editor of American Public Media's Marketplace Morning Report was on campus as UW-Madison's Business Journalist in Residence.



La Follette School Student Association Officers, 2018–19

Jennifer Johnson
President

Mike Wieczorek
Vice President

Hannah Stephens
Treasurer

Claire Zautke
Secretary

Nathaniel Haack
Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Chris Webb
Community Service & Outreach Coordinator

Amanda Hejna
Social Coordinator

Nikolai Kapustin
Graduation Coordinator

Kyle Stanley
Fundraising Coordinator

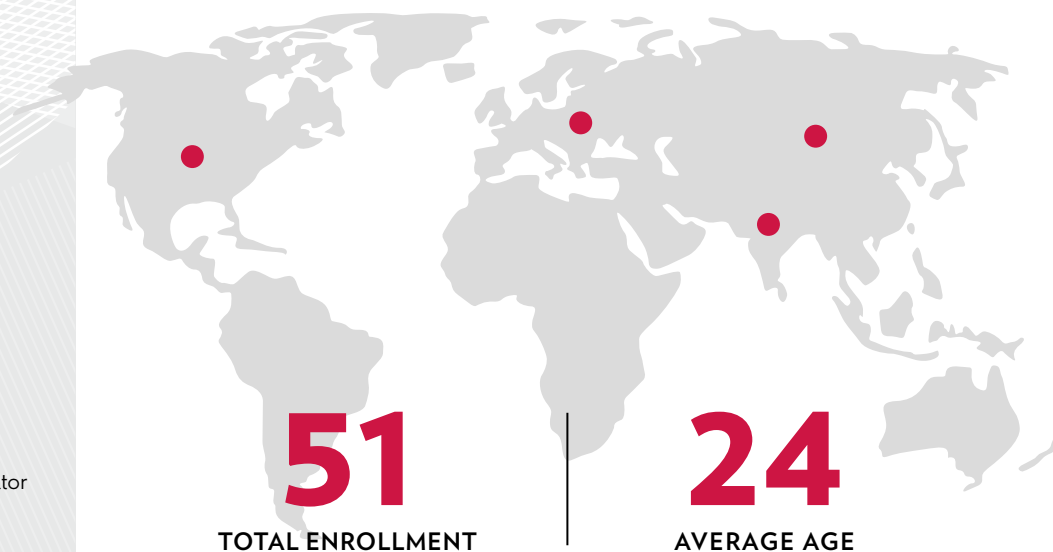


"As president of the La Follette School Student Association, I look forward to working alongside my fellow student leaders to foster an inclusive environment for all students, provide opportunities to engage with the UW-Madison and greater Madison community, and strengthen collaboration among students, staff, and faculty."

— **Jennifer Johnson**
MPA student

2017 ENTERING COHORT

9 STATES, AND 4 COUNTRIES (US, CZECH REPUBLIC, CHINA, & INDIA)



38: MPA, 13: MIPA,
12: STUDENTS IN DUAL, DOUBLE, OR CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS,
9: ACCELERATED STUDENTS

Paying it forward



As part of a schoolwide focus on diversity and inclusion, the La Follette School Student Association (LSSA) led efforts to help defray the costs of attending Visit Day for several admitted students from underrepresented communities.

"The La Follette School has cultivated an unmatched, tight knit community, and we were excited to help make the School even more welcoming and inclusive," said **Elgin Karls** (MPA '18).

After two highly successful Trivia Fundraisers, LSSA decided to use some of the proceeds to help bring future La Follette School students to campus for Visit Day.

"We hope that this will show our dedication to sharing our community with others," said Karls, who served as LSSA secretary and helped organize the Trivia events.

OUTREACH & THE WISCONSIN IDEA



Following his September 2017 public presentation at UW-Madison's Discovery Building, Milwaukee talk radio host and author Charlie Sykes spoke with La Follette School students.



Curt Culver

Faculty, students, alumni, and staff at the La Follette School exemplify the Wisconsin Idea, the century-old principle that education should influence people's lives beyond the classroom. This is evident in the School's partnerships with public, nonprofit, and private organizations that serve as clients for students' project-based learning and its numerous community events.

During the 2017-18 academic year, the La Follette School hosted and cosponsored numerous public events, including three Public Affairs Journalists in Residence, a lecture by **Curt Culver** about purposeful leadership, and the Paul Offner Lecture by health economist **Katherine Baicker**.

Sarah Stillman of The New Yorker, **Matthew Yglesias** of Vox Media, and Milwaukee radio show host **Charlie Sykes** shared their insights on immigration and other significant policy and administrative changes during President Trump's first year in office, conservatism, and key policy issues through the Journalist in Residence program.

"Each Thursday evening, first-semester La Follette School students discuss the significance of the intersection of policy and storytelling in their Policy Making Process class, and Stillman's career is a testament to the power and necessity of this work," said MPA student **Elizabeth Janeczko**.

Baicker, dean of the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy, discussed Medicaid Spending, Health, and Well-Being to a standing-room-only audience in November. Culver's presentation, with financial support from University Lectures Fitch Fund, drew a large audience as well. A member of the La Follette School's Board of Visitors, Culver spoke about his 40-year career in the mortgage insurance business.

27

DOMESTIC AND
INTERNATIONAL
CLIENTS BENEFITTED
FROM STUDENT
RESEARCH AND
ANALYSIS, 2017-18



Community partnership recognized

UW-Madison Chancellor **Rebecca Blank** presented the La Follette School and Wisconsin Women in Government (WWIG) with a Community-University Partnership Award in June 2018. The award recognizes the School's long-time collaboration with WWIG in providing leadership training for women who work in or interact with local, state, and federal government.

From left are Bridget Pirsch, Kara Kratowicz, Chancellor Blank, Susan Webb Yackee, Deb Erwin, Rebecca Ballweg, and Dennis Dresang.

LEGISLATIVE OUTREACH

The La Follette School reached nearly half (65) of the 132 state legislative offices through the Family Impact Seminars, Committee Connect, and Office Hours at the Capitol during the 2017-18 academic year. True to its bipartisan principles, the School worked with an equal number of Democratic and Republican legislative offices.



Tessa Conroy, assistant professor of agricultural and applied economics at UW-Madison, was one of the three speakers for the 36th Wisconsin Family Impact Seminar.



Lisa Subeck



Patrick Snyder

Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars

The 36th Wisconsin Family Impact Seminar, Opportunities for Strengthening Wisconsin's Workforce, attracted 81 participants (including 13 legislators, 19 legislative aides, and 24 state agency representatives) on January 31, 2018. Legislators rated the seminar's objectivity an impressive 4.9 on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

A follow-up discussion in April gave legislators the opportunity to speak with UW-Madison faculty members and each other about the seminar topic. Legislators reported the discussion helped them get a handle on this complex topic, rating it a 4.5 on a scale of 1 (not at all useful) to 5 (very useful).

To date, 73 current legislators have personally attended at least one seminar and 17 additional offices have sent an aide. Thus, the Family Impact Seminars have reached 68 percent of the 132 legislative offices.

Committee Connect

Since 2015, Committee Connect has brought together 63 legislators with 92 UW-Madison faculty and staff researchers. During the 2017-18 academic year, this program matched 43 legislators with 37 UW-Madison researchers. The La Follette School is working with 12 (27 percent) of the 44 Assembly committees and eight (42 percent) of the 19 Senate committees, as well as about half of the interim study committees.

Legislators requested information from researchers about groundwater quality and quantity, economic and workforce development, criminal justice and corrections, addiction and substance abuse treatment, and many other topics.

"Committee Connect is a great way to get experts and research connected to those of us making policy here at the Capitol," said Rep. Lisa Subeck.

Rep. Patrick Snyder concurred: "UW-Madison researchers come from all over the country and world, so each one brings a unique perspective to share. [Committee Connect] is an invaluable resource for legislators," he said.



La Follette School Director and Professor Susan Webb Yackee discusses rulemaking at the state and national level during the final session of the Professional Development Training in Public Affairs for Wisconsin Legislative Staffers in June 2018.

Faculty provide legislative staff training

A bipartisan group of 23 legislative staff of the Wisconsin Assembly completed a certificate in public affairs in June through a four-day professional development course. The La Follette School offered the training in partnership with Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, Assembly Democratic Leader Gordon Hintz (MPA, '01), and the UW-Madison Chancellor's Office.

Participants developed skills in researching and analyzing public policy and understanding public management. Eight La Follette faculty and affiliate faculty covered a range of topics, including policy analysis, how to be an effective research consumer, social policy, tax and finance, criminal justice, performance management, and rulemaking.

Office Hours at the Capitol

Using insights from the Family Impact Seminars and Committee Connect, the La Follette School created Office Hours at the Capitol, an hour-and-a-half drop-in event for legislators, legislative and gubernatorial staff, and legislative service agency staff.

The first two Office Hours—in September 2017 and May 2018—attracted an average of 34 participants, including five to seven legislators and more than 20 legislative aides.

Each event featured four UW-Madison and UW-Extension faculty members with expertise in high-priority issues, including transportation infrastructure and decision-making, adolescent brain development and juvenile offender treatment, and public benefits for low-income families.

Office Hours topics & faculty fall 2017

Criminal Justice and Corrections

Cecelia Klingele, Law School
Mike Massoglia, Sociology

Economic and Workforce Development

Gary Green, Community and Environmental
Sociology and UW-Extension
Matt Hora, Liberal Arts and Applied Studies

Office Hours topics & faculty spring 2018

Adolescent Brain Development and Juvenile Offender Treatment

Michael Caldwell, Psychology

Economic and Workforce Development

Yunji Kim, Urban and Regional Planning and
UW-Extension
Matt Kures, Center for Community and
Economic Development, UW-Extension

Public Benefits for Low-Income Families

Tim Smeeding, Public Affairs and Economics

KOHL RESEARCH COMPETITION

The Herb Kohl Public Service Research Competition serves the La Follette School's education, research, and outreach missions, and it embodies the Wisconsin Idea.

Created in 2016 with a five-year \$1.5 million pledge, the Kohl Competition supports nonpartisan faculty-led research that informs critical public policy and governance debates and advances evidence-based decision-making.

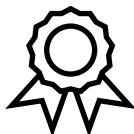
Importantly, the competition also provides learning opportunities for students who work alongside faculty as project assistants and expands the La Follette School's outreach activities.

Kohl Award Impact



3

YEARS



11

AWARDS



12

FACULTY



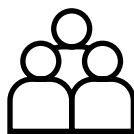
9

STUDENTS



11

OUTREACH
EVENTS



>1.6K

EVENT PARTICIPANTS

2018 AWARD RECIPIENTS



HOW ARE REAL AND PERCEIVED HEALTH CARE OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS IMPACTING FAMILIES IN WISCONSIN?

J. Michael Collins

Associate Professor of Public Affairs and Human Ecology



IN UTERO CONDITIONS, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH POLICIES AND LIFE COURSE OUTCOMES

Jason Fletcher

Professor of Public Affairs, Sociology, Population Health, and Applied Economics



SURGEON LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENTS IN CARDIAC SURGERY OUTCOMES: IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUME THRESHOLD POLICIES

Lindsay Jacobs

Assistant Professor of Public Affairs



Dave Weimer

Professor of Public Affairs and Political Science



"Hands-on research experiences, like those supported by the Kohl Research Competition, are a crucial component of what makes the La Follette School special."

— **Emilia Tjernström**
Assistant Professor



"The skills I developed and lessons I learned as Emilia Tjernström's project assistant have empowered me to ask difficult questions and relentlessly pursue the information needed to inform evidence-based solutions."

— **Chris Stassel (MIPA '17)**

Minimum Wages and Immigrants' Health

Assistant Professor Yang Wang

"I am sure the wide range of experiences during my project assistantship with Assistant Professor Yang Wang will be critical as I seek to improve health care in rural areas of Wisconsin."

— **Mitchell Running (MPA/MPH '17)**

Contract and Policy Monitor, Wisconsin
Department of Health Services



Regulatory Review & Policy Change

Director and Professor Susan Webb Yackee

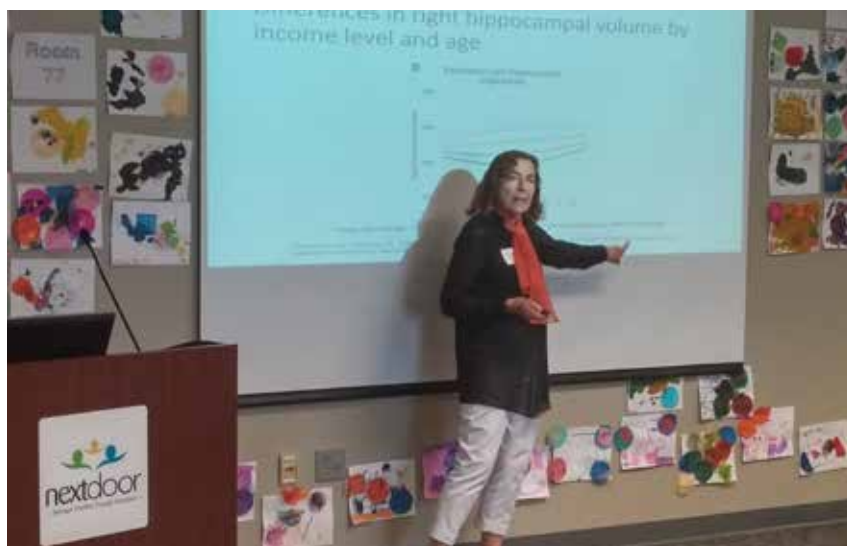
"I'm certain that, like me, the participants left the conference with a renewed appreciation for the importance of rule-making as a focus for serious inquiry and the direction, quality, and significant work underway."

— **Neil Kerwin** (seventh person from right),
President Emeritus and Professor of Public
Administration and Policy, American University

Children in Poverty

Professor Barbara (Bobbi) Wolfe

Outreach is a major component of several Kohl Award projects, including Professor Barbara (Bobbi) Wolfe's research about how living in poverty influences critical areas of children's brains. She has given several presentations to local leaders in Madison and Milwaukee with the goal of improving the lives of children in families with low incomes.



INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

The La Follette School and UW-Madison rank highly in several studies using objective indicators of research quality, such as publication in top-ranked journals and citation rates.

One study in 2018 used bibliographic databases to gather measures of the quality and quantity of publication output for faculty at 44 of the top US policy schools, including the La Follette School. Based on the most prestigious journals, the La Follette School ranked:

4th for public administration • 13th for general political science • 14th for economics • 15th for natural science

The La Follette School's prolific researchers include Professor Jason Fletcher, whose most recent work explores the integration of sociology and genetics, the responsible use of genetic data, the biological factors that make a difference in human behavior, and the efficacy of policies directed to shape that behavior.

During the 2017-18 academic year, Fletcher shared his research at numerous public presentations in Wisconsin and elsewhere, including the La Follette School's 2018 Symposium.

The symposium highlighted research about the human microbiome, a person's genetic makeup, and the human brain. La Follette School Professors Barbara (Bobbi) Wolfe and Pam Herd also shared their research along with faculty affiliates Katherine Magnuson (social work) and Alta Charo (law and bioethics), and with Dan Belsky, an assistant professor in Duke University's Department of Medicine, Division of Geriatrics.



Professor Jason Fletcher presented his social genomics research to groups on and off campus during the 2017-18 academic year.

Research targets financial behavior Collaboration aids faculty, students

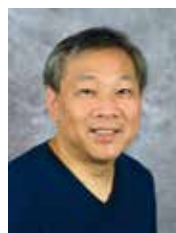


Rourke O'Brien

Assistant Professor Rourke O'Brien presented his paper about the impact of FICO score knowledge on financial behavior at the US Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Research Conference in May 2018.

O'Brien and colleagues conducted a study with more than 400,000 Sallie Mae student loan borrowers to test the impact of a person viewing their FICO Score on a range of financial outcomes.

Through a multiyear randomized control trial, they found that student loan borrowers nudged to view their FICO Score had on average fewer past due accounts and a higher FICO Score one year later. The study is the first to demonstrate that viewing one's FICO Score has a positive effect on financial behaviors.



Menzie Chinn

Faculty-student collaboration is a key component of the La Follette School's research. For example, Professor Menzie Chinn and Ryan LeCloux (MIPA '18), Chinn's 2017-18 project assistant, studied the challenges to assessing the economic outlook at the state level.



Ryan LeCloux

In their working paper, *Tracking the State Economies at High Frequency: A Primer*, they reviewed sources of high frequency data and found that the recently introduced quarterly gross domestic product (GDP) series allows analysts to examine business cycle developments in state-level economies better than previously possible.

"My assistantship taught me that while data and metrics are useful tools for analyzing issues such as economic prosperity, they are by no means perfect measures and should be viewed with some skepticism," said LeCloux, a research analyst for the Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau.

ALUMNI IN ACTION



Jason Gerlach

Quantitative skills aided career transition to finance

Jason Gerlach (MA, JD '96) credits much of his success to the quantitative skills he learned at the La Follette School of Public Affairs.

"It is unlikely that I would have been as successful in my current career field of finance and even possible that I would not have been able to transition from law to finance at all had I not attended the La Follette School," said Gerlach, CEO and managing partner of Sunrise Capital Partners and cofounder and president of the California Alternative Investments Association.

Originally from Milwaukee, Gerlach said his analytical skills from a quantitative standpoint were "almost nil" when he came to the La Follette School in 1993.

"From the very first day at La Follette, I was taught that data mattered and that most arguments weren't remotely worthwhile if they couldn't be backed up with statistical evidence," said Gerlach.



Ruanda McFerren

Living a real-world version of grad school group work

Two aspects of the La Follette School stand out to Ruanda McFerren (MPA, MS '18): academic rigor and wonderful people.

"I was challenged throughout my La Follette courses, and the professors do a really good job of communicating how the classroom knowledge corresponds to the real-world application," said McFerren, a Cookingham-Noll Management Fellow in the City Manager's Office in Kansas City, Missouri. "On a nearly daily basis, I am in meetings that relate to a real-world version of grad school group work."

She said her studies allowed her to take a deep dive into housing and see the planning and land-use decision-making, while also learning about how political and organizational decisions are made and how difficult it is to create change.



Michael Rodriguez

Urbanist excels in fiscal, economic impacts of real estate, infrastructure projects

Client-based projects for his master's degrees in public affairs and in urban planning laid the groundwork for Michael Rodriguez's success.

In early 2018, Rodriguez (MPA, MS '09) joined CBRE, a Fortune 500 company, as the greater DC area leader of market research and analysis. He previously was director of research at Smart Growth America/George Washington University, where he serves as visiting research director.

"Assessing a major public policy question such as the role of walkability in decisions about the built environment is a core skill that the La Follette School and the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture prepares students for," said Rodriguez, who combines his deep policy knowledge with expertise in economic development, real estate, and national urbanism issues.

In 2016, Rodriguez coauthored Foot Traffic Ahead 2016, which ranks the country's top 30 metropolitan areas based on the amount of commercial development in walkable urban places. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and has a certificate in applied econometrics from the National Association of Business Economics.



Raul Leon

Improving educational policy and student experiences

For Raul Leon (MIPA '07), his La Follette School experiences helped shift his focus from government service to higher education. He received his doctorate in educational leadership and policy analysis at UW-Madison, and now serves as an associate professor of higher education and student affairs at Eastern Michigan University (EMU).

At EMU, Leon helped create the Brother-HOOD Initiative, a living and learning community that engages first-year underrepresented male students of color. The award-winning program has helped foster a welcoming campus climate and boost retention rates, and it inspired The SisterHOOD, a similar program for female students.

"The foundation of my skills to tackle issues was built at the La Follette School," said Leon, who received a 2018 Forward under 40 award from the Wisconsin Alumni Association. "This is where we had opportunities to address real scenarios in the policy world, think about context, come together to imagine creative solutions, and always remember that policy decisions can have a deep impact in the livelihood of entire groups."



Daniel Speckhard

Ambassador, worldwide nonprofit leader relies on La Follette education

Daniel Speckhard (MA '82) has had a front-row seat to many of the world's greatest challenges. A former US ambassador and current leader of an international nonprofit organization, Speckhard told La Follette School students in November 2017 that, "the transitions that are happening are of historic proportions."

Speckhard, a former ambassador to Greece and Belarus, had a distinguished career in government service under Republican and Democratic administrations. In 2014, he joined Lutheran World Relief as president and chief executive officer.

"The La Follette School taught me the importance of understanding the role budgets and resources will always play in policy development," said Speckhard, the newest member of the La Follette School Board of Visitors. "If you want to affect policy, think about budgets, spend time studying budgets, spend time learning how appropriations work, make sure you have a good understanding about budget cycles."



Alexis MacDonald

Commitment to public service at GAO, as Honor Flight volunteer

As the lead analyst on numerous federal projects, Alexis MacDonald (MPA '08) works with small teams and manages audit and evaluation design, data collection and analysis, message and recommendation development, and report writing.

"My job is essentially one capstone project after another," said MacDonald, who has worked for the US Government Accountability Office in Washington, DC, since finishing her graduate degree.

MacDonald's primary focus is on evaluating the delivery of health care services by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Outside of the GAO, she extends her commitment to public service as a volunteer guide with Honor Flight, a national network of nonprofit organizations that fly military veterans to Washington, DC, to visit the memorials built in their honor.

"It's by far the most rewarding volunteer work I've ever done," MacDonald said. "I've learned a lot—about history, sacrifice, and overcoming adversity—from the veterans I've met along the way."

RECENT GRADUATES

Over the past three years, the La Follette School's six-month postgraduate placement rate (number of graduates entering the workforce who have secured jobs or internships in their field—the standard measure in the industry) has been above 90 percent (97 percent in 2016; 98 percent in 2015; and 93 percent in 2014).



"Cherish the knots that once restrained us from speaking and are now finally untangled because of our education and, more so, our experiences."

— **Razan Al-Dagher (MPA '18)**
Student speaker, 2018 graduation



"Learning the theories behind policymaking and public management has been really eye-opening. There were so many times in class where I thought to myself, 'Oh my gosh, that totally happened to me at my previous job in Washington, DC.'"

— **Eric La Nguyen (MPA '18)**



"I've always known that I wanted to work in government, and in my opinion, public affairs is the best way to make noticeable, lasting change."

— **Casey Hutchison (MIPA '18)**

2018 Graduation Awards



PENNIMAN PRIZE: Stephanie Rubin Murray (MPA) for her paper Combatting the US Opioid Epidemic



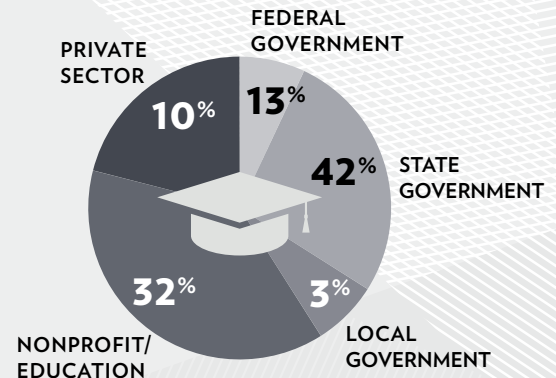
PIORE PRIZE: Alison Muscato Harrell (MPA) for her paper Regulation of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems in the US: Addressing Privacy Concerns, Exclusion of Foreign Firms, and Limited Commercial Potential



DIRECTOR'S AWARD: Ryan LeCloux (MIPA), Mia Nafziger (MPA) for their outstanding academic records and evidence of being outstanding public policy thinkers and communicators

Class of 2017

Six-month postgraduation career statistics



Sample of where graduates are working

13%: FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- US House of Representatives
- US Government Accountability Office
- US Army

42%: STATE GOVERNMENT

- Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Health Services
- Department of Public Instruction
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Justice
- Legislative Audit Bureau
- State Legislature

32%: NONPROFIT/EDUCATION

- Americans for Immigration Justice
- CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity
- Government Finance Officers Association
- National Endowment for Democracy
- UW–Madison Population Health Institute
- Wisconsin Council on Medical Education and Workforce

10%: PRIVATE SECTOR

- Grant Thornton LLP
- Booz Allen Hamilton

3%: LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Verona City Council



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School of Public Affairs**
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Looking Ahead

Thursday, February 7
Madison Alumni & Friends Reception

Wednesday, April 3
Symposium: Globalization and/
versus Disintegration, keynote
speaker Dani Rodrik, Harvard
University

Sunday, May 12
Class of 2019 Graduation, State
Capitol, Assembly Chamber

Watch for more exciting events:
www.lafollette.wisc.edu/calendar

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