

# September 2020 Newsletter

## Welcome from the Director

Dear School of Public Policy community,

Welcome to the Fall 2020 semester.

While this semester is opening like none before, we are excited to welcome new and returning faculty, students, and staff to the School of Public Policy.

Faculty and staff at UMBC and the School of Public Policy have been working hard this summer to develop curricula and creative instruction methods that allow us to offer the same top-tier public policy training in a hybrid and online setting as in person. This includes faculty participating in specialized training to help them transition their course materials to an online platform. As the new semester begins, we are ready to support students through their coursework and whatever challenges they will face.

University-wide updates on UMBC's work to start the school year safely and effectively can be found on the [Retriever Ready website](#).

Over the summer, faculty, students, and alumni have contributed solutions and research in multiple public policy crisis areas, including racial inequity, economic uncertainty, and of course, the COVID-19 pandemic. You can read more about their contributions to these topics and other public policy areas in this newsletter.

As the semester begins, we welcome three new faculty members to our core faculty team: Dr. Mir Usman Ali, Dr. Yusuke Kuwayama, and Dr. Fernando Tormos-Aponte. You can learn more about their backgrounds and research interests (and those of all of our faculty) [here](#). After celebrating Dr. Tim Brennan's transition to Professor Emeritus in July, we welcomed Dr. Jane Arnold Lincove as the new Graduate Program Director. As GPD, she will continue to support students as a professor, and in an advisory role.

Finally, I'd like to introduce myself as the new Director of the School of Public Policy. I have been a member of the School's faculty for over two decades. My research foci lie in health policy, disability and

long-term services and supports, health disparities, and aging policy. I teach health policy courses and advise students in the health policy specialization. I am also an Affiliate Professor with the Doctoral Program in Gerontology offered by UMBC and the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

As Director, I am excited to help foster the School of Public Policy's growth and continued excellence in educating current and future public policy leaders.

Again, welcome and please stay in touch.

*Nancy A. Miller, Ph.D.*

Director

School of Public Policy



## Up First

**\*\*Congratulations\*\*** to our August 2020 graduates!

***Xiaobei Dong, Ph.D.***

***Faizah Carr, Ph.D.***

***Monica Mean, Ph.D.***

***Daryl Dutrow, Ph.D.***

**We are thrilled to announce the new Renny DiPentima Fund to support doctoral student success!**



Thanks to a generous contribution by UMBC's first Public Policy Ph.D. alumnus and External Advisory Board member Dr. Renato DiPentima, we are able to introduce a new scholarship for doctoral students.

Cheers to the first batch of student awardees:

***Nate Pritchard***

***Jeevan Lohani***

***Rudy de Leon Dinglas***

***Stephani Blaher***

## Student Highlights

Public Policy Ph.D. candidate (and M.P.P. '14 alumnus) **Jim Kruger** was recently profiled in a [Kiplinger](#) article about his inspiring return to school after retirement. After retiring, Kruger worked his way through community college to a BA from UMBC, a Masters of Public Policy, and will likely finish his Ph.D. within a year. His journey back to school was also featured in a [UMBC Magazine](#) article earlier this year.

Ph.D. student **Laura Mateczun** and Professor Emeritus **Don Norris** released a new [white paper](#) on cybersecurity resources for local government officials. Read this white paper, and explore other research by Public Policy faculty and students on our [webpage](#).

In June, Ph.D. student **Doha Chibani** co-authored an article in the [Journal of Psychotherapy Integration](#) on best practices for tele-psychotherapy, during COVID-19 pandemic, with youth at risk for psychosis. She later published an op-ed in [The Baltimore Sun](#) about using police to respond to mental health crises. She co-wrote this piece as a member of Social Welfare Action Alliance — Baltimore, an intentional learning group of social workers committed to the process of dismantling institutional racism.



**Jim and Kathy Kruger**

Picture by Marlayna Desmond, courtesy of UMBC

**Matthew A. Clark**, M.P.P. student, has left his role as Chief of Staff for Governor Larry Hogan and [taken the position](#) of senior vice president of marketing and communications at the University of Maryland Medical System.

Ph.D. Student **Mandi Koch** has been awarded the UMBC Graduate School Dissertation Fellowship for Fall 2020. This highly competitive fellowship program provides support to promising doctoral candidates to devote the necessary concentration and attention towards finishing the writing of their dissertations. Ms. Koch's dissertation focuses on Title IX policies and enabling conditions for sexual assault prevention on college campuses.

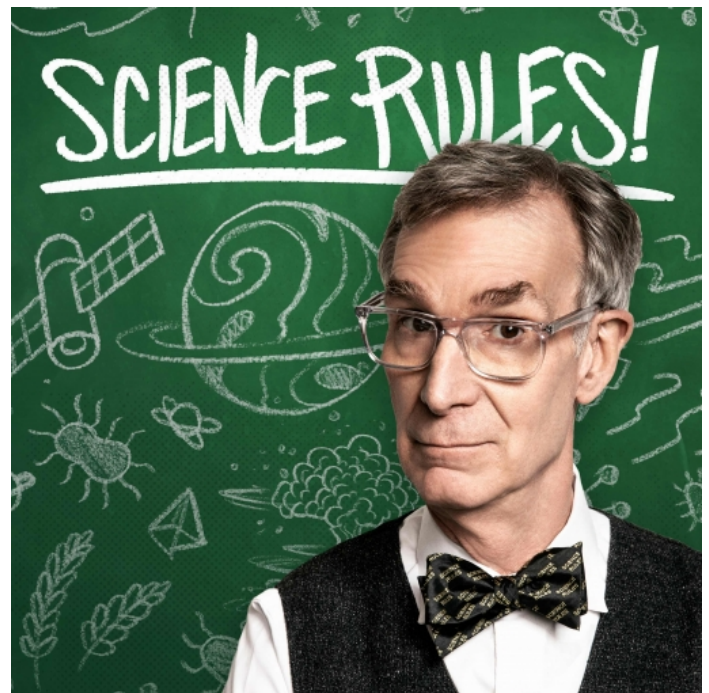
## Faculty Highlights

Professor **Pamela R. Bennett** published an article in [Ethnic Studies Review](#) examining the impact of state bans on affirmative action in college admissions and talent loss among Black and Latinx students in higher education.

Professor **Mir Usman Ali**, one of Public Policy's recent hires, published an article in [Public Performance & Management Review](#) about the impact of citizen oversight on the violent crime rate and line-of-duty homicides of police officers. Dr. Ali was also awarded the [2020 Best Article Award](#) for the Public and Nonprofit division of the Academy of Management for his co-authored article "Social Accountability and Institutional Change: The Case of Citizen Oversight of Police."

Professor **Fernando Tormos-Aponte**, who was recently promoted to Assistant Professor, published an [op-ed in Scientific American](#) encouraging academic institutions and scientific organizations to embrace collective action for racial justice. He was also featured on [St. Louis Public Radio](#) where he discussed similarities between the Black Lives Matter movement and climate activism. More recently, Dr. Tormos-Aponte wrote a blog post for the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#) about science-related advocacy, and for [Jacobin Magazine](#) about Puerto Rican collective action driving political and social change.

Professor **Susan M. Sterett** and Professor William Blake of Political Science wrote for the *Washington Post's* "[Monkey Cage](#)" analysis section over the summer about liability and other challenges universities face with students returning to campuses in the fall.



Professor **Zoë McLaren**, who was recently awarded tenure, has been a frequent media presence and source of analysis on COVID-19 spread, testing, and vaccines. She has written multiple pieces for *The Conversation*, and was featured on Bill Nye's podcast "[Science Rules!](#)" where she discussed the importance of rapid tests in driving down COVID-19 transmission rates. You can track her publications and media appearances on the Center for Social Science Scholarship's "[COVID-19: UMBC Social Scientists in the News](#)" webpage.

## Faculty Highlights, *continued*

Professor **John Rennie Short** has been selected as a [Fulbright U.S. Scholar](#) for the 2020-2021 academic year. As a Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Short will conduct research on the geopolitics of the South China Sea, based out of both the Asian Center at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Philippines, and the Centre for ASEAN Regionalism in the Asia-Europe Institute of the University of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In July, Dr. Short also published [an article in The Conversation](#) explaining how street vendors make cities livelier, safer and fairer, and why they belong on the post-COVID-19 urban scene.



**Street vendor selling produce in Washington, DC**  
Image courtesy of John Rennie Short

Professor Emeritus **David Salkever** wrote a new [policy brief](#) tracking trends in household economic well-being and its disparities among Black, Hispanic, and

White Americans. You can read his latest brief and our [full collection](#) of policy briefs on our website. Dr. Salkever also wrote two articles for *The Conversation*: the [first article](#) explains how financial stress Americans face could make COVID-19 harder to contain, and the [second article](#) argues for keeping the \$600 unemployment benefits supplement for people out of work.

## Alumni Highlights

**Xiaobei Dong**, Ph.D. '20, a recent August graduate, is now a Post-doctoral Fellow in the Department of Clinical Pharmacy and Translational Science at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center.

**Yu (Sunny) Kang**, M.P.P. '06; Ph.D. '09 (Doctoral Program in Gerontology) was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure at the School of Health and Human Services, University of Baltimore.

**Ben Lloyd**, M.P.P. '05 was named acting director of administration for Harford County in July. He faces confirmation for by the County Council later this month before he assumes the permanent role. Previously, Lloyd served as Senior Budget Analyst for the County.

**Kiptyn Jones**, M.P.P. '20 has received a [Fulbright U.S. Student](#) Program award for 2020-2021. She will travel to Jordan to teach English.

## Alumni Highlights, *continued*

**Keith Elder**, Ph.D. '02 has been promoted to provost and executive vice president at Mississippi College. He previously served as dean of Samford University's School of Public Health. During his doctoral work in Public Policy at UMBC, Dr. Elder received the National Institutes of Health Minority Pre-doctoral fellowship.

**Elyse Grossman**, M.P.P. '08; Ph.D. '14 has been working on a study on how stress is related to alcohol consumption during COVID-19. She is working with Dr. Susan Sonnenschein of UMBC's Psychology Department. They were recently interviewed by Baltimore's local CBS news about one piece of the study -- the relation between the stress from distance learning and alcohol consumption. They also published an article in *The Conversation* on the topic.



**Dr. Susan Sonnenschein and Dr. Elyse Grossman**  
Image courtesy of WJZ CBS Baltimore



**Keith Elder**  
Photo courtesy of Mississippi College

Rear Admiral **Sylvia Trent-Adams**, Ph.D. '06 was named Technologist of the Year ahead of the Women of Color STEM Conference. Each year the Women of Color Conference gathers an audience of the nation's respected leaders in science, technology, engineering, math, and medicine from Fortune 500 companies to government entities and colleges and universities to recognize the achievements of women from diverse backgrounds who create innovation and inspiration. RADM Trent-Adams became the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health in January 2019.

# Keep in touch

We want to hear from you!

Do you have an achievement or event you would like to share with UMBC public policy community?

Send highlights and news to Myriam Ralston (myriam@umbc.edu) to keep in touch and be featured in an upcoming newsletter.



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