



SIPA

MAGAZINE

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The Right Moment

New dean Keren Yarhi-Milo shares her ambitious vision for SIPA. **p. 18**



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2022 ISSUE

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**LETITIA JAMES**

In summer 2022 Letitia James (*pictured*), attorney general of New York, joined professor William Eimicke to co-teach the course Public Management Innovation.

Photo by David Dini MPA '14



InBrief

ALUMNI & STUDENTS

In May **Karine Jean-Pierre MPA '03** was promoted to White House press secretary. She is the first Black person and first openly gay person in the role.



Official White House photo by Cameron Smith



Chris DeRusha MIA '09 was named to the Cyber Safety Review Board, a public-private initiative established by the US Department of Homeland Security. He is the federal chief information security officer in the Office of Management and Budget.



Anisa Kamadoli Costa MIA '98 was named chief sustainability officer at Rivian, an electric vehicle automaker. Costa most recently held the position of chief sustainability officer at Tiffany & Co. and chairman and president of the Tiffany & Co. Foundation. She has been a member of the SIPA Advisory Board since 2017.



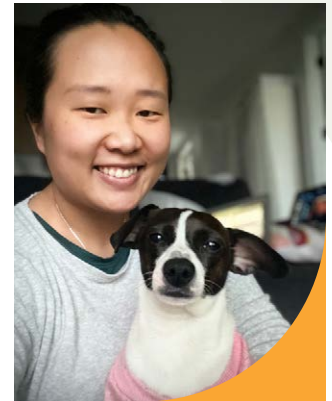
L-R: Professor Thomas J. Christensen, interim dean; Sourceable team members Lena Arkawi MIA '22 and Silvana Zapata-Ramirez MIA '23; and Tsuya Yee, associate dean for student affairs. *Not pictured: Namir Ahmad MPA-ESP '22. Photo by Danny Marquez*

In March a team of three SIPA students won top honors at a competition among representatives from the seven member schools of the Global Public Policy Network (GPPN). The winning project, known as Sourceable, would make it easier to document and verify human-rights violations that might otherwise be ignored, suppressed, or challenged.



Lorie K. Logan MPA '99 was named president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. In this role Logan represents the 11th Federal Reserve District on the Federal Open Market Committee in the formulation of US monetary policy and leads the 1,200 employees of the Dallas Fed.

In October 2021 **Phoebe Yung MPA '14** embarked on an accidental entrepreneurial journey, starting a business called Doggy Day, a social platform that connects dogs with dog-loving neighbors. "SIPA actually played a big part in my decision to take this leap of faith," she says. "A SIPA alum invited me to join a business plan contest he was organizing. The experience gave me the inspiration and confidence to take the first step in starting my own venture. Quite frankly, if it wasn't for the SIPA connection and consequently the contest, I would not be doing what I am doing today!"



In February **Laura Kavanagh MPA '21** became New York City's acting fire commissioner, making her the first woman to lead the Fire Department of the City of New York in its 157-year history. Among many accomplishments since joining the FDNY in 2014, Kavanagh directed a recruitment campaign that yielded the most diverse applicant pool in department history. She began her career as a community organizer, working with labor unions, nonprofits, and candidates for city, state, and federal office.

KUDOS

Amanda Abrom MIA '21 received recognition from the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) as an EE 30 Under 30.

Alexis Akagawa MPA '19 was named the 2022 NAFSA: Association of International Educators Advocate of the Year.

Washingtonian Magazine named **Bunmi Akinnusotu MPA '14**, **Catherine Feingold MPA '98**, and **William F. Wechsler MPA '93** among "Washington DC's 500 Most Influential People."

Chris Allieri MIA '00 founded the NYC Plover Project.

Jawaher Almheiri MIA '23 was named one of *Forbes Middle East's* 30 Under 30.

Cori Fain MPA-DP '19 was named among *Birmingham Business Journal's* 2021 Top 40 Under 40.

Carina Kaufman-Gutierrez MIA '19 was named among *City & State's* 2021 Labor 40 Under 40, recognizing her efforts to support street vendors and her organizing wins.

Rachana Kumar MPA '14 was named among "100 Women in Tech Leaders to Watch in 2022" by Chief in Tech.

Camille Laurente MIA '16's podcast *Finding Humanity* was a winner at the 26th Annual Webby Awards for Best Series in Public Service and Activism.

The VICE News documentary series *Transnational*, for which **Tony Lin MPA '17** was a producer and writer, won a Peabody Award.

Frank Reig MPA-ESP '13 was named among "Ones to Watch" in the Bloomberg 50.

Leselle Vincent MPA-DP '22 was named among 15 "Lions of Social Justice from the Class of 2022" by Columbia University.

Migration Working Group Mini-grant Winners Address Urgent Refugee Issues

Arianna Friedman MIA '23 and **Galy Kouyoumjian MIA '23** received a mini-grant from SIPA's Migration Working Group (MWG), a student organization that provides a platform for the School, University, and greater New York City communities to engage and collaborate around global migration issues.

Kouyoumjian, who is also pursuing an MPH from Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health, will use her grant money to interview Syrian refugees in Lebanon and the repatriated Syrian-American population in Armenia for her MPH thesis, "Mental Health and Economic and Social Integration of Syrian Refugees in Host Countries: 10 Years Later." Her research focuses on the Syrian populations in Lebanon, Turkey, and Armenia during their post-migration phase.

Friedman will use her grant money to continue work with the Aman Project, a nonprofit organization in Istanbul that advocates for displaced LGBTQ individuals from the Middle East.

"The way we look at who is a migrant is completely arbitrary—I was born in China, and I got US citizenship through adoption," Friedman says. "We don't really question the fact that the ability to move freely is a privilege, especially for people with a US passport."



Kyrgyzstan native **Aidai Masyllkanova MIA '09**, special assistant to the deputy special representative of the UN secretary-general in South Sudan, has been creating art inspired by Kyrgyzstan's local cultures and people. The Rowaq Art Foundation in Jordan invited her to participate in the exhibition hosted by Marriott Group in the Red Sea, and her paintings have also been displayed at the UN headquarters in New York as part of the Women in Art initiative.



The winning student team with Cyber 9/12 Challenge organizers. Photo by Lou Rocco

Columbia Student Team Wins Cyber 9/12 Strategy Challenge

Team Red Pill Brokers placed first in November's competitive Cyber 9/12 Strategy Challenge in New York, beating 31 other teams from universities around the world.

SIPA's **Will Mendonsa MIA '22**, **Danielle Netfin MIA '22**, and **Melissa Toman MPA '22** partnered with Newman Cheng from Columbia's SEAS to develop and present multiple rounds of intelligence analysis and policy briefings to US generals; senior experts from the cyber, national security, and energy sectors; and members of the press.

General John W. Raymond, chief of space operations for the United States Space Force, keyed the event (see Event Highlights, page 34).



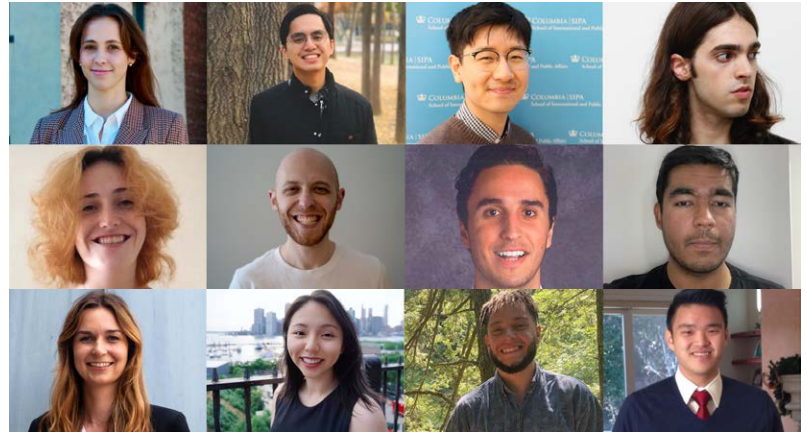
Did You Know?

SIPA established a new Master of Public Administration (MPA) in Global Leadership, a 10-month, full-time program for leaders with 10-plus years of experience who seek the skills to keep growing in their careers, enhance their leadership capacity, and create greater impact. SIPA will welcome its first cohort in 2023.



Photo courtesy of the MCC

The US Senate voted unanimously to confirm **Alice Albright MIA '85** (pictured, left) as the next CEO of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).



Congratulations to the 12 SIPA students and eight SIPA alumni selected to join the Presidential Management Fellows Class of 2022.

This year's SIPA-affiliated finalists included students **Margaret Andersen MPA '22**, **Sean Carlo Blanco MIA '22**, **Nicholas Chun MIA '22**, **Eli Clemens MIA '22**, **Anna Mahowald MPA-ESP '22**, **Nathan Marx MPA '22**, **Nicholas Mut-Tracy MIA '22**, **Govind Ramagopal MIA '22**, **Julia Saunier MPA '22**, **Elliot Tran MPA '22**, **Nicholas Venezia MPA-ESP '22**, and **Kevin Vu MPA-DP '22**.

They were joined by alumni **Elizabeth Anderson MIA '21**, **Hui Cao MPA '20**, **Hansol Chung MIA '21**, **Yvette Deane MIA '21**, **Sanskruti Majmudar MIA '21**, **Paul Schaffner MIA '21**, **Ariana Schrier MIA '21**, and **Alexander Schulz MIA '21**.

PROMOTIONS

Eduardo Ayala Fuentes, a current Executive MPA student, was named director of development for New York City's Queens Museum in April.

Cara Buckley MIA '00 joined the Climate desk at the *New York Times*.

Shanna Crumley MIA '18 was named director of impact data science at the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth.

Damian Fagon MPA '17 was named chief equity officer for New York State's Office of Cannabis Management.

Jennifer Hadayia MPA '98 was named executive director of Air Alliance Houston.

Navid Hanif MIA '91 was appointed assistant secretary-general for economic development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations.

In May President Biden nominated **Jonathan Henick MIA '93** to serve as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Constance Hunter MIA '94 was named executive vice president,

global head of strategy and ESG, at AIG.

Anesa "Nes" Parker MPA '10 became a principal at Deloitte Consulting in the Government and Public Services practice.

Basil Smikle MPA '96 was named director of the Public Policy Program at the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College.

Triada Stampas MPA '02 was appointed president and CEO of Fulfill Food Bank.

Andres Chong-Qui Torres MPA '19 is a Biden-Harris

administration appointee serving as director of the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the US Department of Commerce.

Shelley Welton MPA-ESP '06 joined Penn's Carey Law School as a presidential distinguished professor of law and energy policy and holds an affiliation with the Kleinman Center for Energy Policy.

Abibata Shanni Mahama Zakariah MPA '10 became CEO of the Microfinance and Small Loans Centre of the Government of Ghana.

InBrief

FACULTY & STAFF



Photo by Eileen Barroso

Celebrating the Legacy of Dean Merit E. Janow

Merit E. Janow stepped down in December 2021 after serving for eight-and-a-half years as SIPA's dean. Under Dean Janow's leadership, SIPA strengthened its faculty, created exciting new opportunities for students, pursued innovative research, and engaged with the world like never before. Janow, who received the honorary title dean emerita in recognition of her distinguished deanship, has returned to teaching, research, and engaging with the world as a member of the faculty, as she has done for the past 27 years.



Explore the website dedicated to Dean Janow's legacy of leadership.

Thank You, Interim Dean Thomas J. Christensen

The SIPA community is grateful to **Thomas J. Christensen**, the James T. Shotwell Professor of International Relations, who served as interim dean from January 1 to June 30. It was no easy task — Christensen deftly led SIPA through the uncertainty of a continuing pandemic, helped mobilize the School in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and presided over our first in-person graduation ceremonies since 2019. We wish Professor Christensen a more restful academic year pursuing his research, teaching, and leadership of the China and the World Program.



Professor Thomas J. Christensen, interim dean, congratulates Erik Rozo MPA-DP '22 at SIPA's Class Day. Photo by Bruce Gilbert



Study Confirms Influence of Russian Internet Trolls on 2016 Election

A study by **Douglas Almond** (*pictured*), PhD student **Xinming Du**, and **Alana Vogel MIA '20** examined the impact of Russian internet trolls on online betting markets, suggesting that the trolls' activity influenced the 2016 US presidential election in the direction of Donald Trump.

By analyzing betting market data for the 2016 election, researchers determined that market odds favoring Republicans hit their low point on Russian holidays — when trolls were shown to be less active — while odds favoring Democrats peaked at the same time. This empirical measurement backs the inference that Russian election interference hurt Democrats' chances of winning.



Photo by Ian DiSalvo

Caroline Flammer to Lead New Sustainable Investing Research Initiative

Caroline Flammer, an expert on sustainable finance and competitive strategy, will lead a new Sustainable Investing Research Initiative to foster scholarship, education, and dialogue focusing on the nexus between corporations, investors, policy, and system-level challenges.

“To promote and finance a more sustainable world, both private- and public-sector actors are increasingly incorporating environmental, social, and governance [ESG] considerations into their activities,” Flammer says. “While the growth of sustainable business and

investment practices is encouraging, we still face impediments in our efforts to mitigate climate change, preserve biodiversity, and address poverty and social inequalities.”

Flammer joined the SIPA faculty as a professor of international and public affairs in 2022. She is a faculty affiliate of SIPA's Center for Environmental Economics and Policy and a faculty associate at the Center on Global Economic Governance. She became president of the Alliance for Research on Corporate Sustainability in July.

SIPA at COP26 in Glasgow

SIPA's Center on Global Energy Policy (CGEP), led by founding director **Jason Bordoff**, partnered with the Obama Foundation to host former president Barack Obama for a roundtable with youth activists, SIPA student **Eduarda Zoghbi MPA '22** (*pictured, foreground*), and Obama Foundation Scholars Program alumni at COP26, October 31–November 13, 2021.

Bordoff, who is also the cofounding dean of the Columbia Climate School, was joined in Glasgow by CGEP experts **Julio Friedmann**, **Antoine Halff**, **Mary Nichols**, and **David Sandalow**.



Photo courtesy of the Obama Foundation

Jilliene Rodriguez Named Inaugural Associate Dean for Diversity and Community Engagement



Jilliene Rodriguez joined SIPA as associate dean for diversity and community engagement in August. Rodriguez will lead and coordinate the School's DEI efforts, working closely with senior

administrators, the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Climate, and Engagement (DEICE) committee, faculty, staff, and students.

Most recently, Rodriguez was director of diversity, engagement, and professional development at the University of Vermont, where she provided institutional leadership for issues of climate and diversity as chair of the university's Bias Response Program and oversaw professional development for 200 staff members. Earlier, she advocated for underserved communities and federal policy on Capitol Hill as a Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Education Fellow in the offices of Rep. Marcia L. Fudge (D-OH) and Senator Kay R. Hagan (D-NC).

Yasmine Ergas Receives Grant to Study Attacks on Gender Studies Programs, Scholars



Yasmine Ergas, senior lecturer and director of the Gender and Public Policy specialization, is among three inaugural fellows of the IIE-SRF Vartan Gregorian Research Grant.

"The rise of illiberal, autocratic governments has been associated with attacks on gender studies programs and scholars," says Ergas of her project, "Toward an Early Warning System for Attacks on the Gender Academy." "Scholars have lost jobs and livelihoods and have at times also been subjected to physical threats and exile."

Her project seeks to develop an early warning system that may help anticipate, forestall, and prepare for such attacks. She explains that "the hope is to go beyond ex post crisis management to crisis-prevention and mitigation strategies that can strengthen the resilience of the gender academy."

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Adjunct faculty member **Colin Ahern** was named New York State's first chief cyber officer.

Douglas Almond assumed the role of vice dean for academic affairs for the 2022-23 academic year.

Mauricio Cárdenas, a visiting senior research scholar at the Center on Global Energy Policy (CGEP), was named director of SIPA's new MPA in Global Leadership program.

Ester Fuchs, director of the Urban and Social Policy concentration, is an author of a new Global Cities, Inc., report, *Successfully Educating Tomorrow's Global Citizens*, which shares an original methodology to measure global learning by analyzing student dialogue on international discussion boards.

Merit E. Janow, dean emerita, was named the new chair of the board of Japan Society.

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken named CGEP senior research scholar **Richard Nephew** the first coordinator on global anti-corruption at the US Department of State.

José Antonio Ocampo was appointed Colombia's new minister of finance.

Robert Y. Shapiro was honored by the American Association for Public Opinion Research with its 2022 Award for Exceptionally Distinguished Achievement.

Visiting professor **Daniel M. Smith** received the 2022 Kenneth A. Shepsle Prize for his article, coauthored with economist Masataka Harada, "Distributive Politics and Crime." Harada and Smith's piece was recognized as the best article of 2021 in the *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy*.

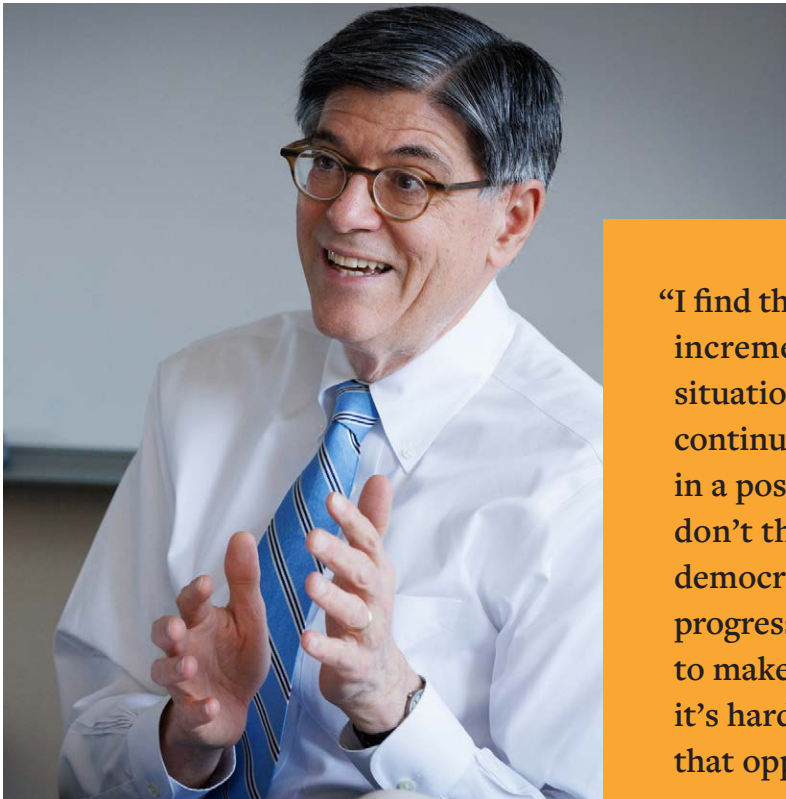


Photo by Sirin Samman



[Read a Q&A with Professor Lew.](#)

“I find the ability to almost always make incremental progress, even in a difficult situation — something that makes me continue to be hopeful about bigger change in a positive direction in the future. I don’t think the process ever ends. It’s a democracy, and policies are a work in progress. If you think that you have a chance to make a difference in your moment, it’s hard not to be optimistic about taking that opportunity.”

JACK LEW

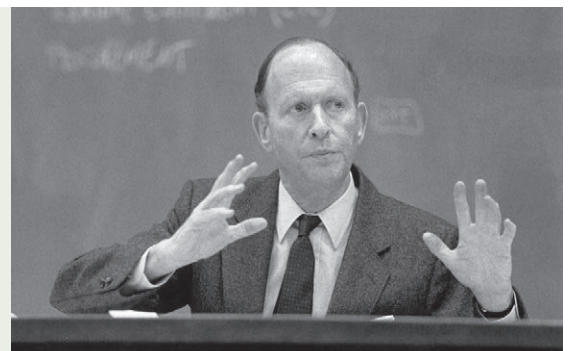
Jacob J. Lew Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

SIPA’s **Jacob J. Lew** was elected in April to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. A member of the SIPA faculty since 2017, the visiting professor — and former US Treasury secretary — joins accomplished leaders from academia, the arts, public policy, and other disciplines in one of the nation’s most prestigious honorary societies.

In the spring semester, Lew — who is widely known as Jack — taught *Democratic Institutions Under Stress*, which explored the core principles of constitutional democracy, beginning with a close reading of the United States’ founding documents and proceeding through the key institutions, from citizenship and elections to the branches of government, the role of the military, and a free press.

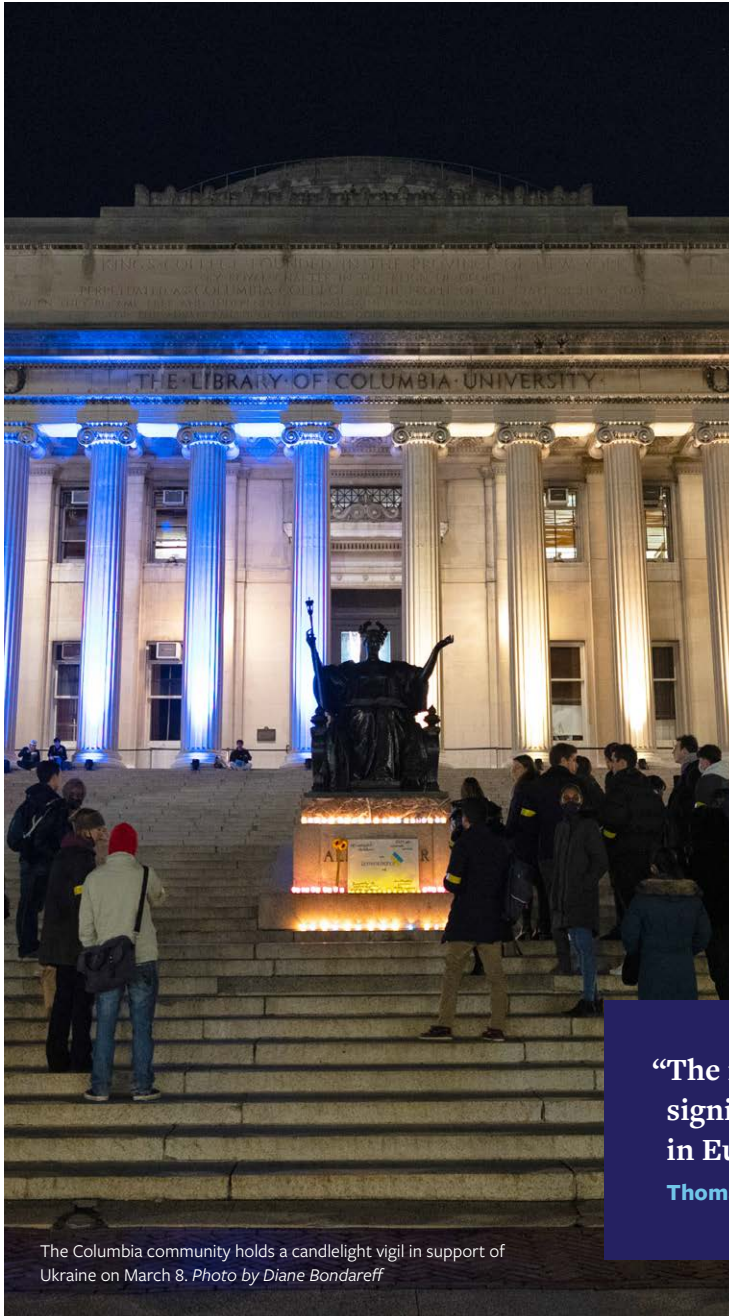
CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF RICHARD N. GARDNER

Deans and faculty from SIPA and Columbia Law School celebrated the late professor and diplomat **Richard N. Gardner** (*pictured*) at a December 17 event that formally commemorated the creation of a professorship in his name. Gardner, who died in February 2019, shaped foreign policy and the careers of generations of Columbia students over seven decades. SIPA’s **Jan Svejnar** is the inaugural holder of the Richard N. Gardner Professorship of Economics and International Affairs.





School News



The Columbia community holds a candlelight vigil in support of Ukraine on March 8. Photo by Diane Bondareff

SIPA Responds to Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine

Since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, SIPA and Columbia faculty have been prominent and prolific commentators, in the media and at Columbia University panel discussions. As the war has continued, so has their writing and commentary for varied news outlets. SIPA students and alumni have engaged in the war as activists, journalists, and more.



Watch all of SIPA's panel discussions on Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

“The invasion represents perhaps the most significant threat to peace and security in Europe since the end of the Cold War.”

Thomas J. Christensen, April 26



Yuliya Petsyk appears on “EU Talks” panel on May 23.

STUDENT YULIYA PETSYK IS VOICE ON UKRAINE

Yuliya Petsyk IF '21, MPA-DP '22, former monitoring and evaluation officer, UNDP Ukraine, appeared on a European Union Delegation to the United Nations “EU Talks” panel on May 23.



Watch the video of the panel.

Petsyk also participated in the SIPA panel “Russia’s War Against Ukraine: What Happened—and What Happens Next?” on April 26, which also featured moderator **Stephen Sestanovich**, the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Professor for the Practice of International Diplomacy and director of the International Fellows Program; **Timothy M. Frye MIA '91**, the Marshall D. Shulman Professor of Post-Soviet Foreign Policy, Columbia University; and **Joshua Yaffa MIA '08, IF '08**, a contributing writer at the *New Yorker* and author of *Between Two Fires: Truth, Ambition, and Compromise in Putin’s Russia*.

“It’s hard to imagine a president who has more in his bones a sense of what’s at stake in an issue like this than Biden, who has been the ultimate transatlanticist.”

Stephen Sestanovich, February 25

“The question about [Putin’s] motivation is not just a philosophical question, it’s one that we really have to wrestle with because it gives us clues as to what he might do next and how we could possibly end it.”

Keren Yarhi-Milo, March 8

UNIVERSITY PANEL DISCUSSION ON UKRAINE FEATURES SIPA FACULTY

On March 8 Columbia University convened a panel discussion on the war in Ukraine in Low Library. **Lisa Anderson**, the James T. Shotwell Professor Emerita of International Relations and a former dean of SIPA, moderated the discussion, which included panelists **Keren Yarhi-Milo** (now dean of SIPA), director of the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies and **Arnold A. Saltzman Professor of War and Peace Studies**, and **Valerii Kuchynskiy**, adjunct professor of international and public affairs and former permanent representative of Ukraine to the United Nations.

That same evening the Columbia community held a candlelight vigil on the steps of Low Library, with the front of the building lit yellow and blue in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.



Keren Yarhi-Milo speaks at Low Library on March 8. Photo by Diane Bondareff

STUDENT CONDUCTS HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS IN UKRAINE

Through her NGO, **NoirUnited International**, **Macire Aribot MIA '23** is working to help Black refugee students who have faced discrimination while fleeing the war. Aribot and her team traveled throughout Europe to meet and directly assist the refugee students and families, helping to raise over \$125,000 and coordinating the evacuation of 41 students from Kherson, Ukraine.



Macire Aribot (first row, left)

UKRAINIAN MINISTER DISCUSSES THE DIGITAL FRONT OF THE WAR

On April 6 the Picker Center for Executive Education’s Food for Thought lecture series welcomed **Alex Bornyakov MPA '19**, Ukraine’s deputy minister of digital transformation, for a discussion with SIPA adjunct professor **Matthew Murray MIA '88** called “Fighting the War in Ukraine on the Digital Technology Front.” (For more on Alex Bornyakov, see pages 24–29.)

“We thought we kind of knew Putin. Why is it that nobody in Kyiv, in Kharkiv, prepared for this? Why? Because it was inconceivable that a shrewd guy like Putin would actually do this and launch a massive invasion.”

Peter Clement, February 25

EBONYA WASHINGTON

Where Economics and Identity Intersect

INTERVIEW BY MARCUS TONTI

Economist Ebonya Washington joined the Columbia faculty in July 2022 as the Laurans A. and Arlene Mendelson Professor of Economics and a professor of international and public affairs.

Washington specializes in public finance and political economy; her research interests include the interplay of race, gender, and political representation, and her work has appeared in numerous publications. She is cochair of the American Economic Association's Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession (CSMGEP) and codirector of the National Bureau of Economic Research's Political Economy Program.

Washington comes to Morningside Heights after almost two decades at Yale. She earned her PhD in economics at MIT.

The following conversation with *SIPA Magazine* has been condensed and edited for clarity.

When you say your research and teaching address political economy, how do you define that term?

Broadly speaking, it means using economic tools to study political questions. In my political economy courses, I cover topics such as voting, representation, and political institutions. In my own work, I'm interested in how people use the political system to get their economic needs met. For instance, Elizabeth Cascio of Dartmouth and I quantified the extent to which enfranchisement under the 1965 Voting Rights Act increased state transfers [of public spending] to southern Black communities.

What is something interesting in this vein that you studied recently?

I have a working paper that's looking at the economic and political impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on the places that were most vulnerable to competition with Mexico.

Before NAFTA, in the most vulnerable communities, voters largely supported the Democratic Party. In individual data, we saw that those opposed to free trade were more likely to align with Democrats. But President Bill Clinton oversaw the final passage of NAFTA, and the Democrats were no longer seen as the party of trade protection.

In the immediate aftermath of NAFTA, a person's position on free trade no longer predicted party allegiance—until 2016, when the gap opened up in reverse. People who want trade protection now are more likely to be Republicans, and the gap is larger than when it was the other way before NAFTA.

Inasmuch as you study the interplay of race and gender and political representation, does that factor into the paper you just described?

Oh, absolutely. Who are the people who switched parties following NAFTA? They are largely white, male, and non-college-educated and hold more conservative views. What we show is that the economic impact interacted with social or identity issues. When we talk about this rise in populism, people ask whether it is driven by economics or identity, but it really seems to be both together. NAFTA was the economic push, but it tended to push people whose views on issues like abortion and gay rights were already more aligned with the Republican Party.

You've written explicitly on representation in the profession of economics, and you've advocated for diversity and inclusion programs within the American Economic Association. Can you tell us more about your work in this area?

Economics has a diversity problem. The fraction of economists who identify as Black, Latinx, or Native American is quite low. In fact, the fraction of new economics PhDs who are Black is no higher than 20 years

ago. In addition, we know from the AEA's [professional] climate survey and from interviews we conducted for a paper that the experience of underrepresented minorities in the profession is poor.

At this point in my career, I'm much less interested in striving to get a paper in a top journal than striving to ensure that the trend line of new Black economists doesn't remain flat. Improving both the numbers and the experience of minority economists is the lens I bring to all of my teaching, research, and administrative work.

What is your prescription so that 5 or 10 or 20 years from now, there's been real improvement?

We need more initiatives aimed, not at changing minority scholars to fit the economics profession, but at changing the economics profession to be more welcoming. Many minority economists are thinking about this issue. But our numbers are small. We need every economist to be involved for things to change. As we teach our classes, interact with students, edit journals, and especially as we hire, we have to understand that diversity means addressing diverse topics, diverse ways of thinking, and diverse views on committees, which will lead us down different paths because we have different people in the room. Some people claim they want diversity, but they also want people to be doing the exact same work in the same way and behaving the exact same way in the office. To make progress, we need to expand that mindset.

After so many years at Yale, how do you feel about coming to SIPA?

When I was an undergrad, I majored in public policy. In fact, I wanted to get a PhD in public policy at one point. So if you could go back and tell the 22-year-old me that I would one day work at a place like SIPA, she would be very happy. ●



Photo by Ian DiSalvo

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Finding the Absurdity in Geopolitics

Equal opportunity satirist Hagar Hajjar Chemali MIA '04 pokes fun at serious topics.

INTERVIEW AND PHOTOS BY IAN DISALVO | TEXT BY BRETT ESSLER

When Hagar Hajjar Chemali MIA '04 left government service—for 10 years, she had roles in the US Mission to the United Nations, the Treasury Department, and the National Security Council—she knew she would work in the media. High-profile spots as a foreign policy commentator for MSNBC, CNN, *BBC World News America*, and others soon followed, but Chemali sensed it was not her true calling.

“For me it was lacking the mission,” she says. “So I thought of a more fun, more accessible way to explain [geopolitics] in a fashion that the young generation wants to receive it.”

The result is *Oh My World!*, an award-winning “next generation news media brand” that finds Chemali breaking down world affairs in weekly, 10-minute YouTube videos, typically with six fast-paced, satirical segments filmed in her Connecticut living room turned television studio. Since launching in 2020, *Oh My World!* has steadily gained traction across social media.

“People want to laugh, and there’s so much absurdity in geopolitics,” Chemali says. “And in world news, it’s like free content on a daily basis—it’s easy for me to make fun of it. And I’m very sensitive when things are very serious or very upsetting, but there is still a lot there that we can poke fun at.”

Among *Oh My World!*’s most humorous segments are Chemali’s over-the-top impersonations—“I dress up like a lot of men with bad accents”—which are excerpted on her TikTok channel throughout the week. She notes that her presentation is “from an objective point of view. I am an equal opportunist when it comes to praising or criticizing.”

For Chemali, injecting levity into *Oh My World!*’s foreign policy analysis makes it more interesting. “If we don’t add humor to it, then it’s just one big depressing chunk of information—you’re going to want to walk away from it,” she says. “But these things are important. You can’t bury your head in the sand. And that’s why humor is so important.”

The child of Lebanese immigrant parents who fled their country’s civil war, Chemali “always felt that I wanted to fight against injustice,” she says. “I felt so strongly about public service and so lucky to be an American that I wanted to give back.”

After completing a five-year dual degree program at Barnard and SIPA, Chemali took on a variety of high-level policymaking and spokesperson roles, all of which inform her take on the news.

“All these different pieces of my background—my upbringing, my career, my academic record—ended up molding

and fitting into the media brand that I have now in *Oh My World!*,” she says.

Chemali can now add another accomplishment to her résumé: professor. She returned to SIPA in spring 2021 to teach Communications for Corporations and Nonprofits. Professor Chemali, who says she still feels like a student when she walks in the hallways of IAB, holds her office hours in the sixth-floor café to be more accessible to the students, with whom she’ll discuss anything that is on their minds.

“We really need a new generation that is studying issues of international and public affairs, and that’s what SIPA excels at,” she says. “For me personally, it’s so poetic that SIPA is where I started with that goal in mind. That is the mission of *Oh My World!*”

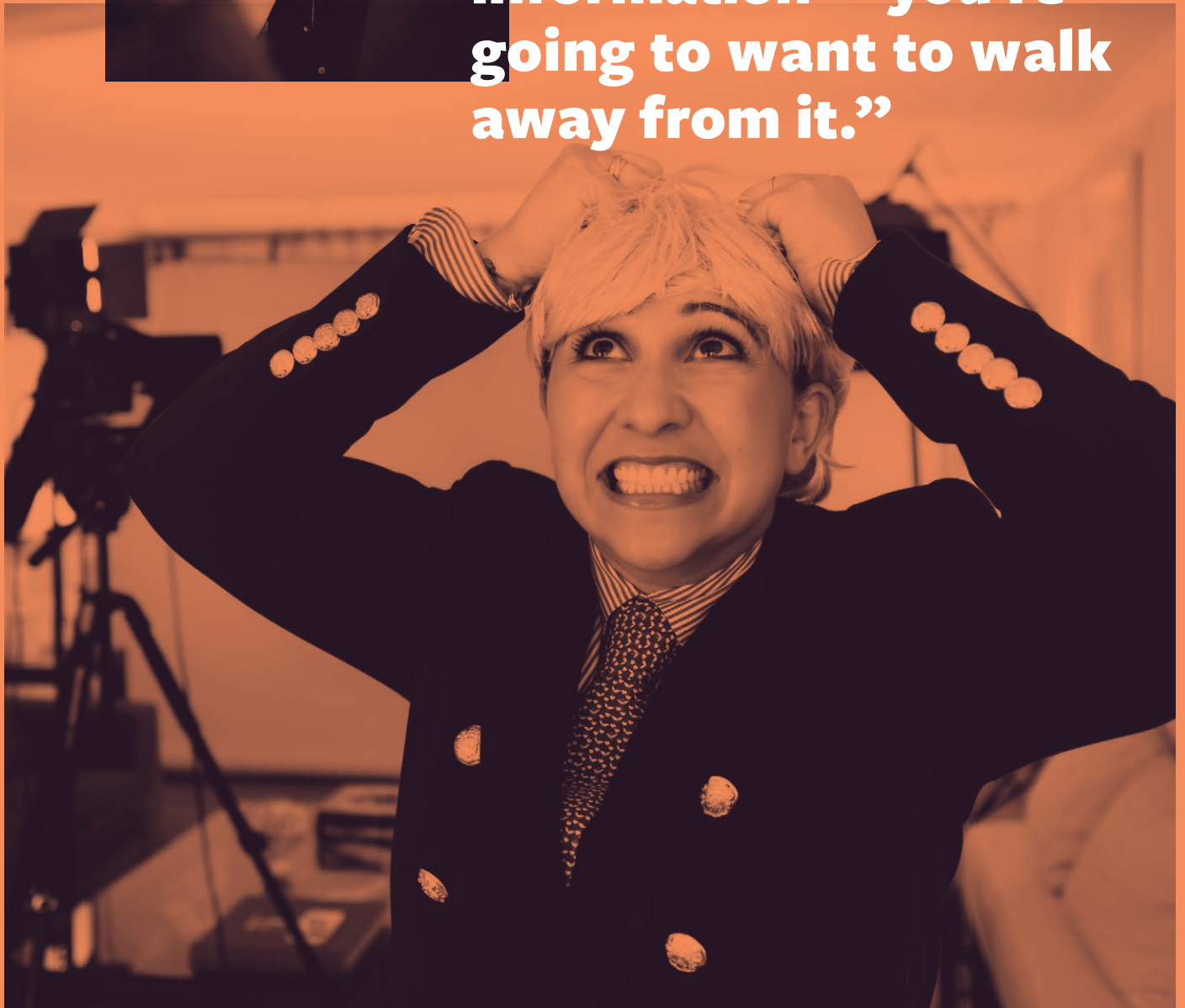
On the July day *SIPA Magazine* visited Chemali’s home, British prime minister Boris Johnson resigned, so the blonde wig she used to regularly impersonate him is now seeing less airtime. If her SIPA education and career in foreign policy have taught her anything, it’s that there will always be someone more absurd waiting in the wings of the world stage. ●



Go behind the scenes with *Oh My World!*



“If we don’t add humor to it, then it’s just one big depressing chunk of information — you’re going to want to walk away from it.”



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Nthabiseng Mosia MPA '16 Named 2022 Columbia Entrepreneur of the Year

The Easy Solar cofounder and chief commercial officer is transforming clean energy access in West Africa.

BY YVETTE MILLER, COLUMBIA ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Nthabiseng Mosia MPA '16 has been recognized as a trailblazing social entrepreneur with accolades from Bloomberg (2021 New Economy Catalyst) to *Forbes* (30 Under 30), but when she was a graduate student at SIPA, entrepreneurship was not yet on her mind.

After a few years in the management consulting space, Mosia was curious why the energy sector—a foundational part of the modern economy—was neglected in many of the areas she had visited in her work in sub-Saharan Africa.

“You can’t talk about economic development and industrialization in Africa without access to power,” she says.

With this in mind, she enrolled in SIPA to get some answers.

“I was always interested in the development question around energy, and so I took a course on solving the energy access problem,” Mosia says. The course, taught by adjunct professor Philip LaRocco, required drafting a hypothetical business plan for a company that would provide better energy access, a plan which she and classmates Eric Silverman MPA '16 and Alexandre Tourre MPA '16 then submitted to the SIPA Dean’s Public Policy Challenge Grant competition, part of the

Columbia Venture Competition. They won and received a \$30,000 prize in April 2016.

Earlier in the competition, Mosia, Silverman, and Tourre used available seed funding to “go from a concept on a piece of paper,” Mosia says, to piloting an on-the-ground survey of homes outside the Sierra Leone energy grid in December 2015.

“I had been to rural communities before, but this [energy access] was so far behind what I had seen before,” Mosia says of the site visits to homes. “In one of the houses, I went inside and saw that the house was using a kerosene lamp for light, and we couldn’t bear to be there because of the smoke the lamp gave off. I still have a picture of that lamp.

“You can conceptually understand injustice, but the contrast between what we saw in Sierra Leone and what we had as graduate students in New York City felt too much like a lottery. The emotional aspect of seeing what the bottom of that energy access pyramid means in a sensory way was a big turning point for me.”

With everything about the pilot pointing to a genuine need, Mosia says, “we leveraged every Columbia resource

to build this grad school baby into Easy Solar.”

Now Easy Solar is a leading distribution company in West Africa making energy services affordable and accessible. The team of 800 people has reached over 750,000 beneficiaries in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Easy Solar provides access to clean lighting and cooking solutions for off-grid and weak-grid environments, including things like solar lanterns, home kits, and backup battery generators. The company works through community agents by building relationships with trusted local authorities and makes the solutions affordable as a pay-as-you-go system. It also works with schools, hospitals, farms, local businesses, and NGOs on larger projects.

“When we all moved to Sierra Leone to work on this full time in July 2016, we didn’t have any security and we had student loans,” Mosia says about her Easy Solar team. “But when you find something you are passionate about and you see that you have a chance to do something important and meaningful to the world, there’s nothing that can really compare to acting on that opportunity.” ●

“When ... you see that you have a chance to do something important and meaningful to the world, there’s nothing that can really compare to acting on that opportunity.”



Right: Mosia helps install solar panels in the Bronx in 2015 as part of a SIPA Women in Energy initiative.



A photograph of a modern building's exterior staircase. A woman in a black dress is walking down the stairs on the left, and a man in a light blue shirt and grey trousers is walking up the stairs on the right. The scene is captured with a motion blur effect, suggesting a busy, active environment. The railing is made of dark wood and metal. Large windows are visible in the background, showing a glimpse of the city outside.

THE RIGHT MOMENT

NEW DEAN KEREN YARHI-MILO
SHARES HER AMBITIOUS VISION FOR SIPA.

Interview by Marcus Tonti • Photos by Linette and Kyle Kielinski



Keren Yarhi-Milo took office on July 1 as the new dean of SIPA. An expert in international security and conflict resolution, Yarhi-Milo joined the SIPA and Columbia faculties in 2019 after a decade at Princeton University. For the past two years, she also served as director of the Saltzman Institute for War and Peace Studies and as the Arnold A. Saltzman Professor of War and Peace Studies. She was recently named the Adlai E. Stevenson Professor of International Relations, a professorship last held by her mentor, the late Robert Jervis.

When President Lee C. Bollinger announced her appointment as dean on May 23, he emphasized Yarhi-Milo's extensive record of leadership and service at SIPA and across the University. The new dean, he wrote, is "a longstanding and devoted member of the Columbia community [and] a wonderful addition to University leadership."

Yarhi-Milo graduated from Columbia's School of General Studies in 2003 and earned her PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. In multiple conversations with *SIPA Magazine*, she talked about her vision for the School, her desire to be accessible to students, the importance of diversity and inclusion, challenges in the coming years, and more.

Those discussions have been abridged and edited for clarity.



Broadly speaking, where do you want to take SIPA as dean?

I'm a political scientist, and I know how important it is for me to consult closely—with our faculty, students, and staff—in formulating priorities as a new dean. That takes time, and teamwork, and those conversations are well underway. But I can also share a few observations now about the opportunities for SIPA as I see them.

Our students are preparing to be leaders in a world in flux—not just flux, really, but crisis. We are seeing, in many ways, the collapse of a world order that has sustained itself since the end of the Cold War and even since the end of World War II. As a leading policy school, we have a particular purpose: to generate new ideas, grounded in research, leading to new policies and new ways of engaging with partners on the ground.

So I have already been working with faculty on cross-cutting initiatives that take on some of the biggest challenges of the day, from climate and energy to the future of democracy. We are defining issues where SIPA can make the most difference: in our interdisciplinary research, in our teaching, and in our impact on policy. And we bring to these issues not just a desire to act but new ideas, and not just new ideas but a basis in rigorous research and an appreciation for complexity. That's how we can help leaders in government, corporations, and NGOs go beyond reacting to each crisis to also seeing the bigger picture and planning strategically for the future.

Remember, SIPA was established in the aftermath of World War II—when much of the world lay in ruins—to help prevent such a catastrophe from ever happening again. We build on that legacy today, with a stronger sense than ever of the importance of both sharing our interdisciplinary expertise and working *with* the world as partners, and of engaging with decision-makers and actors in every sector at every level to shape the best way forward. And we are teaching students to work that way too.

So that's a bit about where we are with the world. Here on campus, I plan to focus on creating a sense of community within the School. I want our students, in all their diversity, arriving from all over the world and across the US, to find a home here. That means providing opportunities for us to get to know each other, to engage in a genuine manner with one another, to learn together, and to celebrate one another's successes. I will measure my own success by our ability to do that.

How do you want to interact with students personally?

I hope students learn quickly that I'm accessible, that I'm informal, and that they are a big part of why I'm excited to be the dean. We'll be engaging through brown-bag lunches and other informal activities, but I also want them to know my door is open and I'm here for them.

Remember, I've *been* a student at Columbia—an international student working to improve her English-language skills, a first-generation student. I had dreamed about being at Columbia since I was 12 years old. My experience at the School of General Studies, my first class with Bob Jervis—they transformed my life and gave me opportunities that I never thought possible.

Helping students, inspiring them, making sure that they will always want to come back to Columbia because they will know this was a major turning point in their life—that's what drives me. I met with some student leaders earlier today, and as I told them, I accepted the role of dean because I saw an opportunity to make the Columbia experience as transformative for everybody as it was for me.

Do you have plans for increasing diversity and inclusiveness at the School?

Absolutely. We have made important progress—much of it inspired by our students and their activism—and I think we are all eager to see a SIPA that is even more inclusive and representative. I personally started this work at the Saltzman Institute with Emerging Voices and other programs, and now have the platform to do much more. It's not just about demographics; we want to open up our thinking, too, in various fields.

SIPA is still the most international of all policy schools, with students and faculty from 90 to 100 countries in a typical year. So we're continually creating a community that we learn from. The interaction with the students who are coming from other backgrounds and other places in the world challenges us to question our thinking. In my own field, it means opening up concepts

in international relations that have been very white and centered on great-power politics. We are in a constant push to engage more perspectives and be more empathetic in the way we talk about the world's problems. In many ways, greater inclusion is also being built into the curriculum and research agenda. It's ongoing.

Can you say more about using the Emerging Voices program as a model for SIPA as a whole?

Emerging Voices is about thinking seriously and acting creatively to build pipelines for students who have not traditionally been part of a certain discipline or career path. Within the field of international security, it is mainly about bringing in women and students of color because of how the field has been for years: “male, pale, and Yale,” as people say. So what we've done there is open up the ranks and inspire a group of people to come to feel that they belong—to feel that this is something that they can do because they keep seeing role models presenting to them again and again.

“SIPA’S ROLE IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT WHEN THE WORLD IS IN TURMOIL.”

There are some parts of SIPA that would really benefit from this type of approach, and other areas where we already see great representation of female, BIPOC, and first-generation students. As a policy school, we want to have pipelines in every field for students who will be the leaders of tomorrow. So this is about creating opportunities for students to research and understand those paths, with a focus on those who felt that maybe they did not have those opportunities before.

When you became director of the Saltzman Institute two years ago, you talked about expanding the conception of international security to embrace gender and climate and other fields.

Looking at SIPA as a whole, do you see opportunities to build cross-disciplinary connections in a similar vein?

As I mentioned earlier, initiatives tackling major world challenges will strengthen the connections across disciplines, and we have tremendous depth of expertise and experience within SIPA to draw on. Looking across Columbia, I see us working on issues around technology and innovation with the Law School, the Engineering School, the Data Science Institute, and others. There are lots of opportunities to work on climate and energy, including with the Climate School. Geopolitics and political economy seems to me like a fertile area to explore, as does inequality and the politics of redistribution.

We also need to pay more attention to keeping democracies strong and resilient. We've seen the erosion of civic norms and democratic institutions in the United States and elsewhere. We have scholars of our own who are studying disinformation [see pages 24–29] and other aspects of these trends, and the Law School has also done some very relevant work. Democracy is an area where SIPA has the possibility—I would say even the responsibility—of being a leader.



SIPA has done a great job of supporting faculty and students who pursue connections across program areas and initiatives. We look forward to building on SIPA's strengths on the inside and institutionalizing partnerships and collaboration on the outside. It's similar to what I'd been trying to do with the Saltzman Institute on issues of security: finding partners not just within SIPA but also elsewhere at Columbia and with other places around the world.

You are sharing an expansive vision for SIPA, but won't it be difficult to achieve growth in our current space?

Space is definitely a major constraint, and my administrative colleagues and I are in conversations exactly on this issue. We're looking at interesting ideas for what we can do here in the International Affairs Building and perhaps eventually on Columbia's Manhattanville campus. Not having space is such a significant impediment that it has to be a priority, both in our planning and in our fundraising.

I should emphasize that fundraising, both for the endowment and for space, is going to be a top priority for me. It's going to be challenging, we know, given what is happening in the economy right now, with inflation and market volatility. But gathering resources to support students, faculty, and the improved spaces



“BEING THE POLICY SCHOOL AT THE UNIVERSITY, WE ARE MUCH BETTER POSITIONED TO NOT JUST CONFRONT CHALLENGES BUT TO ANTICIPATE THEM TO HELP DECISION-MAKERS STAY TWO STEPS AHEAD.”

they share is too important to wait for better times. And we are already having encouraging conversations with people who understand the urgency and relevance of what SIPA is about.

In recent years we've seen these unprecedented events that impact how students view policy: the Black Lives Matter protests, the COVID pandemic, January 6 here in the United States, the invasion of Ukraine, gun violence, climate emergencies. How does SIPA respond—in its curriculum and in its faculty recruitment—to a world that feels unsettled in so many ways?

Being the policy school at the University, we are much better positioned to not just confront challenges but to anticipate them to help decision-makers stay two steps ahead. We're not a think tank that just responds to current events, but we do produce analysis that proves very relevant. And while we're an academic institution, we're doing more than engaging with academic literature: we're engaging with problems around the world while seeing comparative trends and patterns that help prepare us for what's next.

Take the war in Ukraine, as an example. For years, people came to me and said, “Your field is so irrelevant. You studied great-power politics, you studied nuclear weapons, all of that. That's not the world of security of today. We don't have great-power wars. We don't have those kinds of concerns. So this is irrelevant. You guys are like dinosaurs.”

And then the war in Ukraine happened, and all of a sudden the demand for our expertise was through the roof. I got calls from the *New York Times* to come and present to the editorial board, calls from the intelligence community, from private-sector people. They wanted to hear what we had to say. Thankfully, we've had the Saltzman Institute as a place where we study this.

At SIPA you have expertise that is very current and relevant to the world and the problems of today, and you have deep expertise that will allow you to look at the context. Part of our job is to respond, part of our job is to anticipate, and part of our

job is to reflect and learn. And we can do so with an appreciation for nuance and complexity that leaders, in a time of crisis, often can't. So SIPA's role is especially important when the world is in turmoil and there are so many things happening.

In a recent interview with *Columbia College Today*, you said that balancing service and scholarship is a challenge. Are you going to continue to teach and pursue scholarly work while you're dean?

Yes. I worked really hard for many years to establish myself as a scholar, and I don't want to give that up. For a variety of reasons, it's still very much my passion. I lost my mentor, Bob Jervis, this year. [The long-time SIPA and Columbia professor died in December; see page 40.] He became almost like a second father to me, and the kind of work that I do—on decision-making in foreign policy, among other topics—is very similar to the kind of work that he had done. And I promised him and I promised myself that my way of keeping his legacy alive is continuing to publish. So the desire to publish is deeply rooted in me.

Being the dean of SIPA and pursuing an ambitious agenda is definitely going to be time-consuming. So I will have to learn to be even more efficient. My research is not something that I will compromise on, but my work as dean will take precedence and will take the vast majority of my time. As for teaching, I may not teach this year, but I will definitely teach next year.

I appreciate your candor in talking about wanting to learn and grow in your new role. As a well-known scholar in your field who has become dean, do you see opportunities to have greater visibility with audiences outside Columbia that might also bring SIPA more visibility?

Absolutely. A big part of my agenda is for SIPA to communicate and engage more closely with outside actors. I think we need to have a larger presence in DC during the year. I think we have to engage more significantly with organizations, agencies, and companies here in New York. There are alums that are eager to work with us, and we



Speaking with the Latvian delegation in March. Photo by Sirin Samman

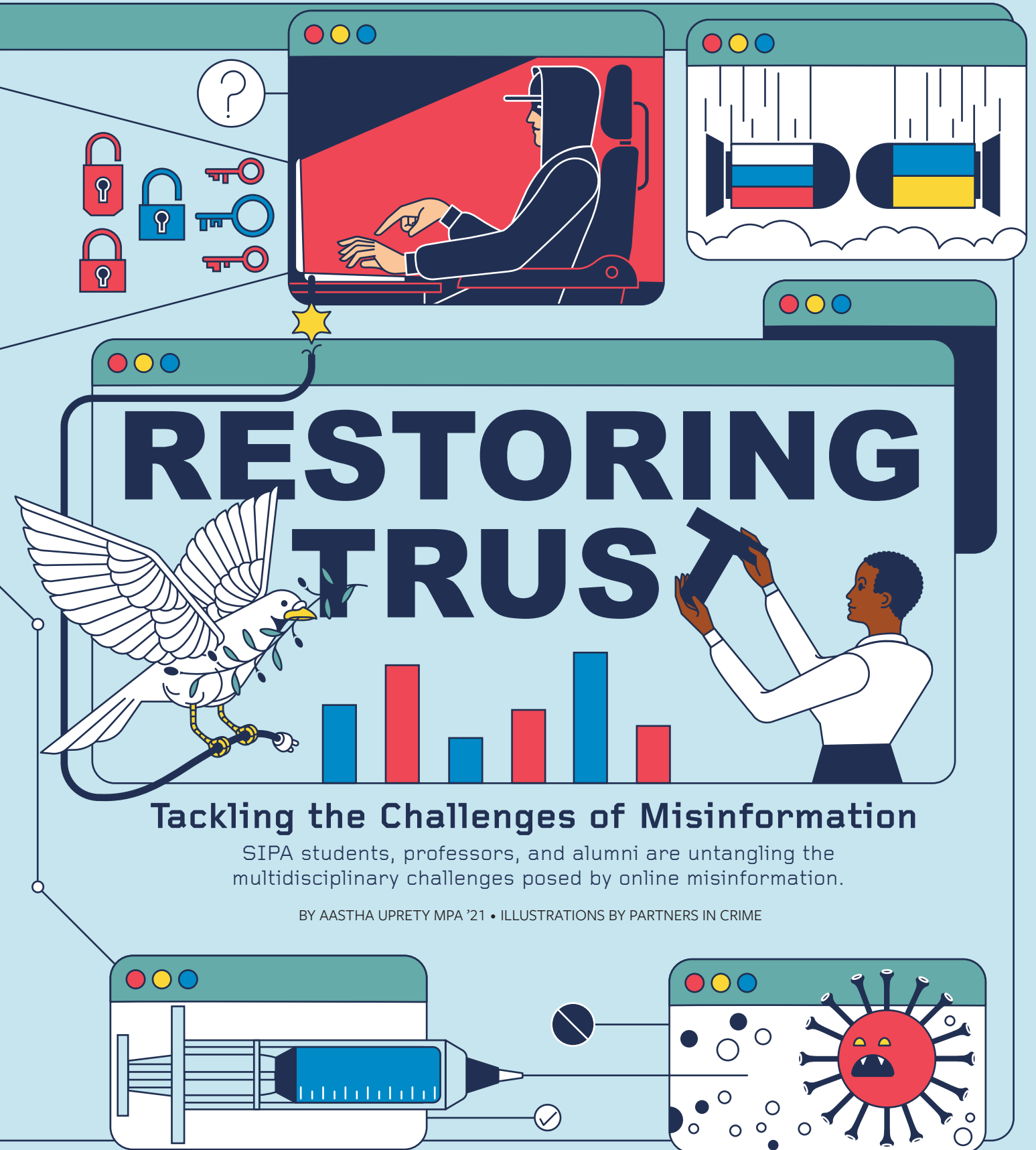
want to figure out the best way to partner with them and use their expertise. And I've already received so many calls from people interested in learning more about what SIPA does and how we can partner with them. I'm very energized, and I hope to bring this energy and enthusiasm to take SIPA to the next level. And I feel that I can do this right now because of the work of Merit [Janow] and Tom [Christensen] and all the other SIPA deans who came before me. This is the right moment. It's an exciting time for SIPA.

You joined the SIPA faculty just a few years ago, but of course you're not really a newcomer to Columbia.

No, not at all. In fact, I consider myself a product of Columbia. My engagement with the University started in 2000 when I came as an undergraduate to the School of General Studies. And I graduated in 2003, but I never really left: As a PhD student at UPenn, as a postdoc at Harvard, and over 10 years on the faculty at Princeton, I would come to Columbia at least once a month, and sometimes more frequently. I spent a sabbatical here, a full year at the Saltzman Institute. And I did all that because Bob Jervis and my other professors were here, and friends, and so on. Throughout the years I kept up with what was happening at Columbia. I knew the ins and outs of the department and SIPA and the politics.

So I'm especially excited to lead SIPA—because of Columbia's deep commitment to engaging with the world, and the international makeup of our students and faculty, and for many other reasons. Columbia is where it started for me, and coming to Columbia was also coming home. ●



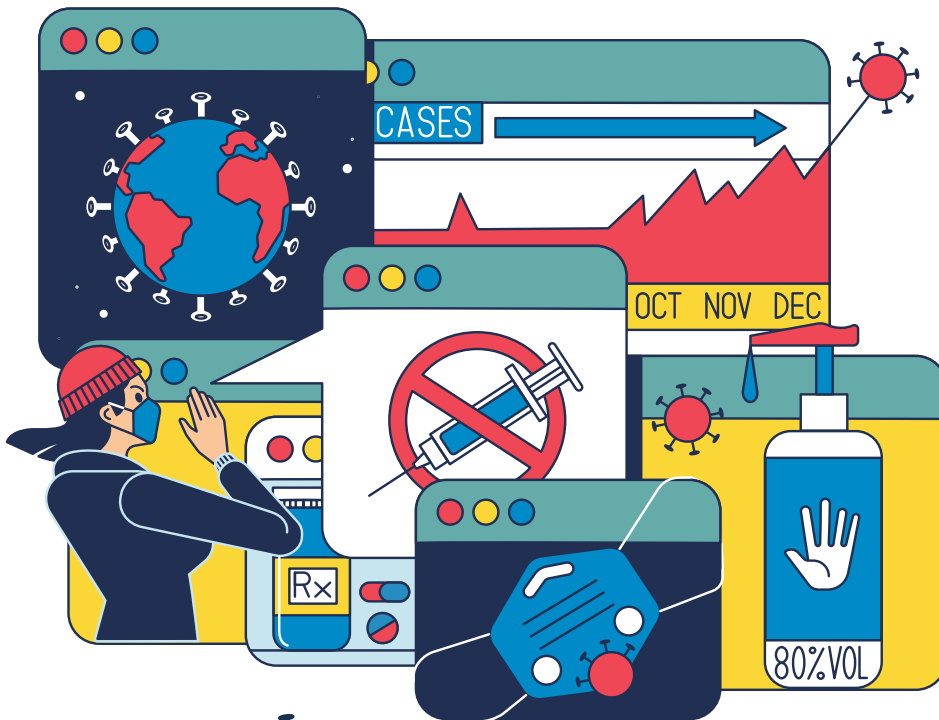


RESTORING TRUST

Tackling the Challenges of Misinformation

SIPA students, professors, and alumni are untangling the multidisciplinary challenges posed by online misinformation.

BY AASTHA UPRETY MPA '21 • ILLUSTRATIONS BY PARTNERS IN CRIME



From vaccine-related fearmongering on Facebook groups to advice from politicians that dubious medications could treat COVID-19, false and misleading information tore through society over the course of the pandemic. The news media was left to highlight the truth while keeping up with rapidly changing and occasionally conflicting scientific guidelines.

In spring 2020 Anya Schiffrin was teaching *Global Media: Innovation and Economic Development*, a course examining the challenges to sustaining a robust media infrastructure, including misinformation. She and her students had been following news about the virus, which would soon disrupt journalism and every other institution in society. “It was going to be a big mess, but we were ready for it,” says Schiffrin, director of SIPA’s Technology, Media, and Communications specialization.

On March 13, 2020, the United States declared a national emergency in response to the spread of the coronavirus. “I rewrote my syllabus overnight,” Schiffrin says.

“Misinformation” generally refers to false or out-of-context information that is presented as fact. “Disinformation,” a subcategory of

misinformation, is deliberately spread with the intent to deceive or mislead. While misinformation isn’t a new challenge—it has historically followed wherever the mass media leads—the digital revolution has expanded the problem into one that touches numerous new domains.

Misinformation is often discussed in relation to a diverse array of challenges—that emerge in the sectors of media and journalism; technology and social media; and geopolitics, cybersecurity, and national security. Solutions to these challenges require collaboration between the government, technology companies, and the media.

“We try to look at the problem from every side,” says Schiffrin, who has written extensively about the topic of misinformation. “The field moves so quickly.”

At SIPA, students, faculty, and alumni are untangling the challenges posed by online misinformation with the forward-looking and multidisciplinary approach that it necessitates.

‘We Were There from the Start’

Schiffrin came to SIPA nearly two decades ago, in 2003, and soon helmed what was then called the International Media concentration. She got to work developing new classes to modernize the curriculum. “I looked all around the city and found new experts to teach for us,” she says. At the turn of the decade, technology journalist Julia Angwin taught a course on social media, and academic Phil Howard instructed students about digital networks and democracy. Current SIPA instructors Alexis Wichowski and Peter Micek later brought expertise in digital government and internet governance.

“We were there from the start,” Schiffrin says. The story of misinformation in the digital era can’t be told without the stories of internet governance and social media, and for years SIPA offered courses in digital diplomacy and online activism. They were filled to capacity, especially after the social media-fueled democratic uprisings of the 2011 Arab Spring.

Online misinformation was launched into the mainstream consciousness with the 2016 US presidential election, when Russian-backed information campaigns on social media fre-

quently used bots or fake accounts to spread misleading, out-of-context information with the aim of influencing the outcome of the election. That same year the United Kingdom made its Brexit from the European Union following a heated national discourse that included rampant misinformation.

“The year 2016 was the wake-up call,” says Schiffrin. “The world’s awareness of how dangerous disinformation is shifted, and as a result, classes that we’d been offering for years became even more in demand.” Courses specific to misinformation were added to the growing list of SIPA’s offerings.

SIPA faculty research also addressed the role of misinformation in the 2016 US election.

A 2022 study conducted by Douglas Almond, professor of economics and international and public affairs, with Alana Vogel MIA ’20 and fifth-year PhD student Xinming Du examined the impact of Russian internet trolls on online betting markets, suggesting that the trolls’ activity influenced the 2016 US presidential election in the direction of Donald Trump. They found that the days with the least social media activity from Russian accounts corresponded with the lowest market odds for Republicans, indicating a positive correlation between Russian bot activity and expectations for Republican candidates.

Situated at the nexus of national security and social media disinformation, the 2016 election exemplified the far-reaching implications of online information challenges. “Propaganda and disinformation have always been a facet of geopolitics,” Camille François MIA ’13, a cyber conflict expert, told *SIPA News* in September 2021. But before 2016, she said, “influence operations on social media were a strategic blind spot for many in cybersecurity and national security.”

François is global director of trust and safety at Niantic Labs, an augmented reality software development company, where she helps protect user privacy and ensure a safe user experience. She also teaches Information Operations on Social Media, a new SIPA course exploring how foreign and

domestic actors use organized disinformation campaigns to manipulate public discourse.

‘A Contest of Narratives’

Virpratap Vikram Singh MIA ’20 is the coordinator for SIPA’s cybersecurity-related projects, including those led by Jason Healey, a senior research scholar and adjunct professor at SIPA focused on the strategic dynamics of cyber conflict. While a SIPA student, Vikram Singh signed up for nearly every cybersecurity-related class that was offered, including Technology, National Security, and the Citizen, a course taught by Wichowski, a top official at the New York City Office of Technology and Innovation. He noticed that misinformation came up frequently in student discussions. “The 2016 election was still on everyone’s minds,” he says.

SIPA has been expanding its cybersecurity focus to encompass the overlap of cyber warfare and information operations. Cybersecurity involves defending against threats like hacking or hijacking a technology system, while information operations focuses on the spread of false or misleading information meant to influence decision-making.

with external partners to help SIPA students get technical certifications and training.

Before attending SIPA, Vikram Singh worked in publications for a think tank in Mumbai. His background in media influences how he looks at the cyber and information operations space. “It’s really a contest of narratives and perspectives,” he says.

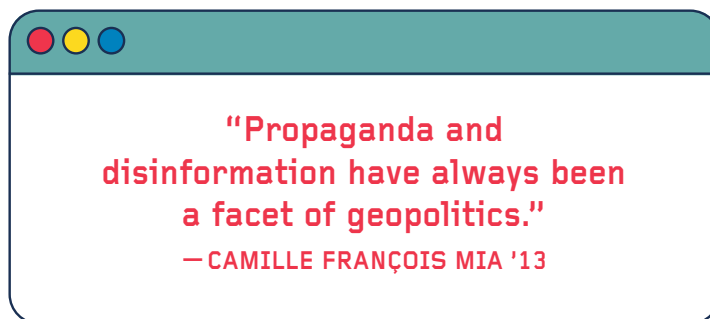
Narrative warfare can have huge impacts, especially when wielded by nations in the form of propaganda.

On February 24 Russia invaded Ukraine, an act of aggression leading to violence and destruction and displacing millions of people. Alexander Boryakov MPA ’19 is Ukraine’s deputy minister of digital transformation. Before the invasion the ministry was primarily focused on using technology for efficient governance. Now Boryakov is leading the charge against Russian state propaganda, launching Ukraine’s own state counternarratives with the aim of explaining its experience of the war to Russian citizens and encouraging them to protest their government’s actions. Along with spreading informative videos in Russian, the Ukrainian government asked Western technology companies, including Apple and PayPal, to cooperate by blocking their services in Russia.

This past spring adjunct assistant professor Robert McKenzie—who coedited *Exploring Hate: An Anthology* (Brookings Institution Press, 2022), a book about the growth of online hate and extremism—advised students in a Capstone workshop analyzing different aspects of China’s efforts to supplant US

global influence with its own, with a focus on online influence operations.

Given current events, student interest in misinformation and trust and safety is growing. Vikram Singh hopes that SIPA can respond by continuing to tap into its unique advantages. “New York City is where business is being done, and it’s where the United Nations is based,” he says. “Those two pillars are hugely influential and informative in regard to what needs to happen around cybersecurity and misinformation.”



“We live in a world where data and information are so important,” Vikram Singh says. “If you can steal that data, you can manipulate it for whatever kind of campaign you want.”

The realms of cybersecurity and information operations are bridged by trust and safety—the efforts led by teams within tech platforms to combat platform abuses and “inauthentic behavior,” such as spam and fake accounts. Vikram Singh says that in an effort to create a more diverse trust and safety workforce, SIPA’s cyber experts have worked

'It Has Real-World Implications'

By 2020 multiple questions of misinformation were rooted in domestic issues. The year spotlighted not only pandemic-related misinformation but also conspiracy theories based on unfounded claims of voter fraud that pushed the false idea that the US presidential election had been stolen. These theories eventually galvanized white nationalist groups to lead an attack on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Hate and extremism online are key dimensions of the misinformation challenge. Extremist groups often use misinformation, including in the form of conspiracy theories, to spread their beliefs. This can spiral into more violent, extremist speech and effect severe consequences like racist rhetoric inspiring mass shootings in churches and grocery stores in the United States and military-backed Islamophobia on Facebook targeting the Rohingya people in Myanmar.

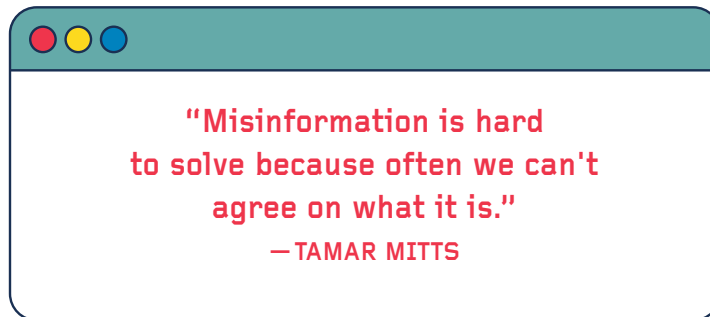
"It's clear that what's happening online is not limited to the online world," says Tamar Mitts, an assistant professor of international and public affairs at SIPA. "It has real-world implications."

Mitts's political science research, which explores how extremists use online platforms, began with a focus on terrorist groups like the Islamic State, which used social media to advance its cause in the early 2010s. "I was fascinated with the phenomenon," she says, "and how they used mainstream platforms to attract people from all around the world." Social media platforms act as intermediaries between the producers of content (the extremist groups) and the consumers of content (their potential recruits), Mitts explains. Through her research, she has found similarities in how different groups—for example, ISIS and the Proud Boys, a far-right US hate group known for storming the Capitol on January 6—use online platforms.

As a student, Nusrat Farooq MPA '21 worked as Mitts's lead research assistant. Farooq specialized in Data Analytics and

Quantitative Analysis, through which she took courses like Artificial Intelligence in Public Policy, taught by computer scientist Sameer Maskey, and Text as Data, with Mitts. Her term paper for Text as Data, a course focusing on the quantitative analysis of text, analyzed the print media's spread of anti-Muslim hate in India during the COVID-19 outbreak. Farooq's analysis later became the foundation of a chapter, coauthored with SIPA lecturer Rumela Sen, in the book *Covid-19 in India, Disease, Health and Culture: Can Wellness be Far Behind?* (Routledge, 2022).

In March Farooq began working as a technology and programs associate with the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), an organization founded in 2017 by Facebook (now Meta), Microsoft, Twitter, and YouTube that works with governments,



the tech industry, and civil society to combat terrorism and violent extremism online. While GIFCT's focus is violent extremism, not misinformation, Farooq says that it is difficult to draw a line exactly where misinformation turns into violent speech.

'No Golden Solution'

After the 2016 election, the public and private sectors dedicated considerable resources toward attempts to analyze and address online misinformation. Social media platforms implemented a patchwork of content moderation and platform transparency policies to mitigate the impact of influence operations, which constituted an unprecedented but still imperfect response.

Through ongoing experimentation, it has become apparent that no solution to online

information challenges is perfect on its own. For example, improvements in media literacy can help decrease profound educational inequities, but without other efforts, it could be seen as an individual-focused solution ignoring the role of technology companies and government in misinformation's spread. Also, some solutions are more easily conceptualized than implemented—it can be difficult to establish a credible, unbiased system of fact-checking, for example, and issuing corrections can increase distrust of the media among some audiences.

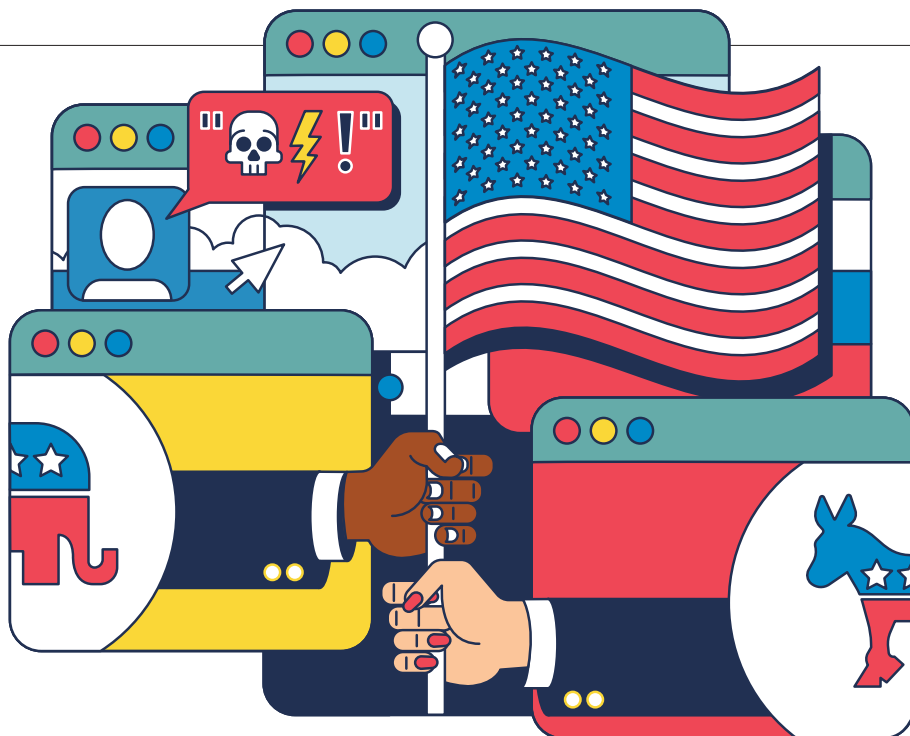
Further, while algorithms often do stem the flow of large quantities of misinformation, human moderators (who suffer from the traumatic content they see on the job) are still needed to detect cultural nuances. Content moderation itself can also clash with the ideals of free speech. Solutions that center around moderating content can be misapplied, Mitts explains. For example, she says, a policy banning hate speech could be wrongly used to stifle activist dissent against government atrocities.

"There's no golden solution," says Mitts, who is writing a book about content moderation policies. Through her research Mitts has examined how hate groups evade moderation and has discovered how banning or deplatforming them can backfire. In a recent study, she looked at how extremist groups, when deplatformed from mainstream websites like Twitter, will migrate to alternative outlets and intensify their hate speech on those platforms.

Even determining what is true and false can be relative and subject to ideological biases. "Misinformation is hard to solve," Mitts says, "because often we can't agree on what it is."

'Whenever I Teach, I Teach the Solution'

Still, there's no shortage of energy behind solving the problem of misinformation. SIPA's new dean, Keren Yarhi-Milo, plans to position the School to engage in research on how to empower students and citizens to recognize



misinformation when they confront it online. By promoting common-sense solutions like online literacy training, she hopes to help foster a more cordial and open online environment for all.

“Mis- and disinformation have emerged as major threats to democracy, civil society, and national security,” Yarhi-Milo says. “Much of the current focus on disinformation and misinformation has been on how to regulate social media and other online platforms, but of course there is the danger that significant restrictions could limit the freedom of speech that is crucial to a vibrant democratic society.”

Yarhi-Milo is exploring the creation of a new institute that would address the crisis in democracy, democratic norms, and institutions in the United States and globally. Part of the institute’s immediate research agenda would be to engage scholars from across the University to focus on both “supply-side and demand-side solutions,” a concept coined by Schiffrin.

Supply-side solutions tackle the production of information and include fixes like regulating big tech and strengthening the quality of journalism. Demand-side solutions focus on information consumers and include strategies like improved media literacy. Schiffrin recently coauthored a chapter in the book *Disinformation in the Global South* (Wiley-

Blackwell, 2022) examining the common fixes of fact-checking, media literacy, and regulation as they have been applied in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. The chapter argues for more robust efforts in all areas, but particularly tech-related regulations like algorithmic transparency and privacy protections.

“My rule is that whenever I teach, I teach the solution,” Schiffrin says. Along with Emily Bell, founding director of Columbia’s Tow Center for Digital Journalism, Schiffrin co-taught Policy Solutions for Online Mis/Disinformation, a class centered around the various ways society is trying to solve misinformation.

“I found most interesting the role of journalists in this puzzle,” says Anna Spitz MPA ’22, who took the course in fall 2021. “It’s journalists that are down in the trenches fighting day in and out on this one issue of making sure that the public gets the truth.”

Spitz took part in a term project about startups that use artificial intelligence to combat misinformation, which was also the subject of a Capstone project advised by Schiffrin this past spring. A team of seven SIPA students surveyed 20 companies and published the resulting findings about the market for tech-based solutions with the German Marshall Fund in July. Schiffrin also led a fall 2020 Capstone workshop comparing international governments’ public health messaging in response to COVID-19.

Mitts teaches Data Science for Public Policy—“my favorite class to teach!” she says. The course helps policy professionals understand data science methods, drawing examples from issues like the pandemic, elections, crime and policing, and machine bias. The vision for the course, which includes both SIPA students and Columbia students from programs like Data Science and Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences, is to bring together students from interdisciplinary backgrounds to mimic a real-world team environment.

“If you’re just a policy person, you can’t fully understand these issues without the technical expertise,” Mitts says. “And if you’re a data person, you need to understand the social aspect and policy behind it.”

Schiffrin echoes this idea and emphasizes the role government and informed policy experts play in tackling misinformation. “We can’t leave the conversation to Silicon Valley,” she says.

And so the conversation is happening at SIPA. At two events in March, experts discussed the European Union’s Digital Services Act, a law addressing illegal content on tech platforms that is expected to be put into effect in 2024. Panelists emphasized how the act protects free speech by focusing on demanding algorithmic accountability and transparency instead of content censorship from tech companies, which could make it a model for the United States.

In April, Schiffrin organized the Women in the Digital World conference, a two-day event with a sweeping agenda examining women’s speech online, digital violence, racial and gender bias in algorithms, big tech regulations, and disinformation in Russia’s war on Ukraine.

SIPA’s multifaceted approach to misinformation is a reminder that the staggering and varying challenges posed by distrust in institutions, a weakened press, violent extremism, the rise of big tech corporations, and geopolitical tension cannot be solved through the lens of technology alone—and that misinformation itself is only one dimension of those crises.

For Mitts, combating online information challenges requires holistic thinking. “Our lives are beyond social media,” she says. “Our lives are so much more than these platforms.” ●

THE RAPHAEL SMITH MEMORIAL PRIZE 2022

Project Bumi

BY NATHANIEL MAEKAWA MPA-DP '22

In 2020, after Columbia announced that courses were online, I bought a 2008 Honda Element and studied virtually from US national parks.

When I first told my friends I spoke delicately, testing the waters. What began as restrained consciousness—"I think I'm going to study from a car ..."—cascaded into certainty—"I'll begin in Maine and head south to follow the warmth." My heart had made a decision, and my friends and family echoed my excitement.

Equipped with camping supplies, a generator, and a plywood bed (built by my grandpa's and my hard work and confusion), I purchased the car, named it Bumi, and readied for departure.

I researched national parks and COVID regulations, I located campgrounds with Wi-Fi or "good connection," and I made a goal to live environmentally friendly. I pledged to reduce plastic consumption and to offset my travel-based emissions with donations to environmental organizations.

On September 6, "Project Bumi" began.

My campground internet crashed when visitors returned from their adventures. At night, I worked from bed in the dark of my car—lit by a lamp and my computer screen's glow, accompanied by the generator's hum. Plastic-free grocery shopping meant eggs, canned goods, produce, and more eggs. I snacked on banana chips from a jar. I gasped when I dropped my jar of coffee grounds, flinching as it shattered upon hitting the dirt.

As syllabuses were introduced, I was simultaneously oriented to my new life. In the eggs and shattered coffee glass, moments of awe anchored me to my goal. When classes ended, I ran into the Atlantic Ocean from a sandy cove. On Saturday at 3 a.m., I climbed Cadillac Mountain to witness the first rays of light that shine upon the continental United States.

Things made more sense as I got settled. I found a coffee shop whose Wi-Fi still reached the lawn after the shop closed. Although I felt odd while posted on the lawn furniture after hours, my concerns were eased when the owner brought me a warm tea and homemade granola bar. Securing an internet signal was a huge relief, and I worried less about the possibility of my journey and focused more on what was next. I decided that in Virginia, I would book an Airbnb for my class days and live from Bumi on nonclass days. I felt guilty. I feared that my journey's authenticity was in question by living out of my car part-time, but I reminded myself that education was the priority.

In Virginia, released from the stress of planning from which coffee shop's lawn I could stream microeconomic videos, my mind awakened to its surroundings.

At the peak of a mountain, I stood alone. Watching the sun fall on Appalachia, I was pulled to reality by voices approaching from the forest behind me.

"What's up, boss?" said the first man to summit.

My eyes skirted quickly from his MAGA hat and I returned a greeting, but my gaze lingered as he pulled out his phone. Rather than pointing his camera at the sunset, he directed it at the forest.

"What are you doing!" his friends exclaimed while emerging from the brush.

"I wanted to capture the look on your faces when you saw it," he replied, his friends' faces now beaming as they embraced the horizon's creamsicle colors.



Photos courtesy of Nathaniel Maekawa MPA-DP '22



**“At the peak of a mountain,
I stood alone. Watching
the sun fall on Appalachia,
I was pulled to reality
by voices approaching
from the forest behind me.”**



In this moment, I realized that living out of a car was not what defined my journey. Project Bumi was a quest to learn. As a historic presidential election approached and a pandemic re-defined normality, at the peak of a mountain, I thought about how appreciation for nature had connected me to people that are different from myself. I thought of how this innate commonality might heal division and inspire a better world.

I followed the Appalachian Mountains, crossed oil fields in west Texas, and listened on the radio to the president-elect's victory speech before pulling off in a windstorm that rocked me to sleep. By the end of the semester, I was writing a paper from Zion National Park's parking lot and in disbelief that my vision had come true. That night, as I looked through Bumi's moonroof at the stars, my thoughts drifted to California.

In January, to combat COVID-19, California restricted national parks travel. To continue forward, I evolved my goals for Project Bumi.

I identified three cities to stay for extended periods: San Diego, Sacramento, and Seattle. In my life, being mixed-race Asian American was something that I kept in my periphery. I struggled to engage with my identity because I didn't know where I belonged. These three cities presented an opportunity to explore in a new way.

In San Diego, before classes I walked to a

Chinese bakery to eat coconut bread like my mom used to order. I designed a Sacramento Mixed-Race Leadership Initiative for my course on development and went on runs through the city to envision my project's logistics. In Seattle, I boarded the ferry to Bainbridge Island and retraced the path of the first Japanese Americans forced to leave their homes during World War II. In retracing their steps, I took my first steps to learn about the history embedded in my Japanese American identity.

With time, California opened its parks and friends came to visit. The silent awe of elk at Point Reyes, the sharp inhale of fresh air while overlooking Yosemite Valley, and in Washington, the smell of earth in the Hoh Rain Forest. In reflection, I realized that companionship in these humbling moments had shown me the value of sharing these experiences. My growth and appreciation for the world did not need to be journeyed alone.

After 10 months, Bumi and I had traveled to 21 national parks and covered enough mileage to circumnavigate the Earth. Looking back, I think of the wonder that I felt each day and I think of how much I learned about my country and myself. Project Bumi taught me that while what's next is exciting, I must not forget to appreciate what is now. ●

ABOUT THE RAPHAEL SMITH MEMORIAL PRIZE

The Raphael Smith Memorial Prize is given in memory of Raphael Smith, a member of the Class of 1994 who died in a motorcycle accident while retracing his stepfather's adventure of motorcycling from Paris to Tokyo. The prize, established by his family and friends, is awarded annually to two second-year SIPA students for travel articles that exemplify the adventurism and spirit of SIPA. The winners of this year's contest are Nathaniel Maekawa MPA-DP '22 and Mohammad Salhut MIA '22.



Photo by Ian DiSalvo

“It was only when the man I grew up thinking was invincible acknowledged the inevitable that the reality seemed to hit us both.”

THE RAPHAEL SMITH MEMORIAL PRIZE 2022

Next Time in Jerusalem

BY MOHAMMAD SALHUT MIA '22

Allow me to rewind the clock to four years ago, the spring of 2018. My late father had been diagnosed with a terminal disease, glioblastoma, the most aggressive form of brain cancer in adults. His final days had a ruthless rhythm: I spent my days running the Bronx-based small business he built and my nights zipping through New York City to sit by his bedside, hoping to catch him before he fell asleep. One of those late nights with my dad was tougher than them all: when we had our first and last conversation about death.

“*Ya ibni, sahalt al mawt alayi.* (My son, you have made dying easier for me.)”

“*Yaba tihkeesh hayk, atrajak.* (Dad, don’t talk like this, please.)”

“*Ba’araf fi ghyabi, fi warai zalame, hatha altayeb; tinsash tarawihni ‘ind immi fil-Quds.* (I know in my absence there is a man, this fine one next to me; don’t forget to return me to my mother in Jerusalem.)”

So came the tears, rolling down his cheeks and mine. It was only when the man I grew up thinking was invincible acknowledged the inevitable that the reality seemed to hit us both. Two weeks later, at the end of May, my father passed. He spent his last breaths asking me to promise him that I

would continue my education and marry a nice Palestinian girl.

My sister and I took our father’s remains back to our homeland, present-day Israel. For reasons that I will chalk up to old-fashioned luck, the border control at Ben Gurion Airport spared us the usual humiliation of being hustled into a room reserved for Palestinian or Muslim travelers for “security screening.” Shortly after landing in Tel Aviv, I was in the back seat of a van speeding toward the city of my fathers, Jerusalem.

At my father’s *janazah* (Islamic funeral) at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, one stranger after another commented how beloved by Providence my father must have been—why else would his time have come during Ramadan, the holiest month of the year?

After the funeral came the period of mourning at my grandfather’s home, akin to a shiva in Judaism. I sat in my family’s *diwan* (court) clenching my fists until they were white, somehow finding the emotional capacity to reminisce on my time with my dad as Quranic verses were audible from a nearby minaret.

Evidently, the most salient memory my mind kept replaying was a time my dad and I were sitting in a mosque together, stateside, when I was a boy. The imam, as he did after every Friday prayer, was calling for donations. One Muslim gentleman after another, partaking in a seemingly wondrous but unannounced competition in piety, raised their hands to donate \$50, \$100, and sometimes \$500. My father told me to put my hand up; the imam called on me immediately. *Frozen but somehow still moving, I stood up.*

“Young man, how much can you contribute to help our brothers and sisters in need during this month of Ramadan?” the imam asked.

Intimidated and bewildered, I looked to my dad for guidance; he laughed. I had a few dollars in my pocket but nothing that would compare to the \$50 and \$100 bills that others were giving. A deer in the headlights, I said the highest number I could imagine when I was a kid: \$1,000.

“*Alfain* (Two thousand),” my dad whispered to me.

“Two thousand!” I yelled to the imam, who followed by saying, “Praise to Allah for this generosity, young brother!”

As if a slap in the face, it hit me in one moment all too many years later that my dad’s intent was as philanthropic as it was educational. Knowing him, *of course* it was. While teaching me about the substance religion can add to one’s life at a Friday prayer (coincidentally also during Ramadan), with one action he showed me the value of personal humility by donating without seeking acknowledgment, of loving charity in extending a hand in aid to people with whom we were not acquainted, and of the power of leading by example. Indeed, as I put the \$2,000 my father hurriedly stuffed in my pocket into a lockbox passed down to me, I overheard the imam thanking another man for matching my father’s donation, the highest sum of the day.

Just as the emotion of my dad’s thoughtfulness overwhelmed me, a tap on the shoulder by

one of the elder members of our Bedouin tribe brought me back to reality. He greeted me with traditional Arabic condolences and said a single word as he looked me sharply in the eyes: “*Dawrak* (Your turn).”

Over the next few days, I received several requests from Jewish friends of my dad (and some of my own) who lived in West Jerusalem and wished to visit my ancestral village in the city’s East, Jabal al-Mukaber, to pay their respects. The idea was summarily rejected by my relatives, who viewed such an exchange, however amicable, as treacherous.

Fast-forward four years later to the present. A few documents sit on my desk: an itinerary to Tel Aviv, my application for official graduation from SIPA, and a formal offer letter from a world-class financial institution.

As I prepare for my next trip to Jerusalem, the burden I feel is just as heavy as when I carried my dad’s casket on my shoulders at Al-Aqsa. The education I’ve been privileged to receive at Columbia inspires in me a distinct moral obligation to move the world in a direction where Jews from the city’s West and Palestinians from its East welcome one another and where, by remaining intellectually mindful of the need to lead by example, the paradigms of division that have long defined my homeland are supplanted by bonds of brotherhood.

Next time in Jerusalem, when I visit the cemetery where my dad is at rest, I will tell him as I was once told: “It’s my turn.” ●

“The education I’ve been privileged to receive at Columbia inspires in me a distinct moral obligation to move the world in a direction where Jews from the city’s West and Palestinians from its East welcome one another.”



Photo courtesy of Mohammad Salhut MIA '22

Notable Events

2021-22



01

Claudia López MPA '03, mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, visited SIPA on September 29, 2021 to lead the panel “Political and Economic Participation of Women in Latin America.”

02

SIPA students had the opportunity to hear firsthand from **Joseph Stiglitz**, University Professor (*pictured, left*), and **Gerard Ryle**, director of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), at the event “The Pandora Papers: Inequality and the Opportunity for Institutional Innovation,” cohosted by the MPA in Development Practice program and the Technology, Media, and Communications specialization on October 20, 2021.

03

On October 21, 2021, the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies inaugurated a pilot program, Emerging Voices in National Security and Intelligence, which draws on a generous gift from **Mila Tuttle '96CC, MIA '05** (*second from left*), who was joined by **Professor Keren Yarhi-Milo**, director of the Saltzman Institute (now dean of SIPA); **Dean Merit E. Janow** (now dean emerita); and **Peter Clement**, senior research scholar. The program will expand curricula at SIPA and Columbia and encourage female, BIPOC, and first-generation students to consider and pursue professional opportunities in national security and related fields.

04

General John W. Raymond, chief of space operations for the United States Space Force, keynoted the annual Cyber 9/12 Strategy Challenge in New York on November 4.

05

On April 21–22 the Technology, Media, and Communications specialization and Audencia in Nantes-Paris presented “Women in the Digital World,” featuring scholars and practitioners interested in the relationship between women and digital media. Panelists included **Karen Attiah MIA '12**, a columnist for the *Washington Post* (*pictured*), and **Camille François MIA '13**, global director of trust and safety at Niantic Labs.

Photos by Barbara Alper (6), Lena Arkawi MIA '22 (5), Diane Bondareff (8), Jacob Carmona (9), Bruce Gilbert (2), Lou Rocco (4), and Sirin Samman (1, 3, 10)



06



07



08



09



10

06

Juan Manuel Santos, the former president of Colombia and Nobel Peace Prize laureate for 2016, was SIPA's visiting George W. Ball Adjunct Professor in spring 2022. He taught the course Leadership Lessons for Important Battles and delivered the most recent Ball Lecture, titled "From Hawk to Dove," on April 27.

07

On February 3 **Sima Bahous** (pictured), executive director of UN Women, addressed 200 students, faculty, and guests in person and online. In conversation with SIPA professors **Yasmine Ergas** and **Daniel Naujoks**, Bahous elaborated on UN Women's work in the COVID-19 recovery process, the needs of an integrated UN system, UN reform processes, and domestic violence against women and girls.

08

On June 1–2 the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and SIPA cohosted the annual Monetary Policy Implementation and Digital Innovation workshop. Among the speakers was **Lorie K. Logan MPA '99** (pictured), who had just been named the next president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas (see In Brief, page 3).

09

From June 13 to June 17, the Kent Global Leadership Program on Conflict Resolution hosted a five-day Conflict Resolution Summer Training focused on the "Golden Triangle"—the potential for cooperation between stakeholders in government, civil society, and the private sector.

10

Mario Marcel (pictured), Chile's minister of finance, visited SIPA on July 19 for a discussion with adjunct professor **Gray Newman** called "Chile at Crossroads: Finding Its Path to Inclusive Development." The event was cosponsored by SIPA's new MPA in Global Leadership program.



After Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, SIPA faculty, alumni, and students participated in a number of panel discussions. See pages 10–11 to learn more.

Alumni News



01

Celebrating the SIPA Classes of 2020, 2021, and 2022

Everything old was new again as graduation and commencement exercises returned to campus after a two-year absence.

Faculty, family, and friends convened on Columbia University's South Lawn on May 15 to celebrate 597 new graduates in seven academic programs representing 51 countries at SIPA Class Day.

"You have faced a persistent, devastating global pandemic that has taken millions of lives," said Professor Thomas J. Christensen, interim dean, "and reminded all of us of the interconnectedness of our world and the need for sound leadership."

The featured speaker, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, US ambassador to the United Nations, called on the graduates to help address the world's pressing problems, including global public health, climate change, and an "unprovoked and brutal invasion" that has displaced millions from Ukraine.

"We need you," she said. "The world right now is facing some truly sobering challenges. And you are the ones who will have to take them on."

Three days later, the Class of 2022 again convened, along with colleagues from across Columbia, for the University Commencement ceremony, and on May 19, the University welcomed back recent alumni for a morning ceremony on the steps of Low Library.

The University's ceremony was followed by a SIPA Graduation Celebration for the Classes of 2020 and 2021. More than 1,200 people—including 400-plus recent SIPA graduates and their friends and families—gathered on a gorgeous spring afternoon on Ancell Plaza. **Claire Shipman MIA '94**; Merit E. Janow, dean emerita; and Christensen offered remarks. ●



01

SIPA Class Day featured speaker **Linda Thomas-Greenfield**, US ambassador to the United Nations.

02 & 03

SIPA Class Day speakers **Lily Ghebrai MPA '22** and **Xu Zhang MIA '22**.

04

Professor Thomas J. Christensen, interim dean, addresses graduates at SIPA Class Day on May 15.

05

Pavlo Illiaschenko MPA '22 and **Yuliya Petsyk MPA-DP '22** represent Ukraine while attending University Commencement on May 18.

06

SIPA graduates wave their home country flags during the University's Celebration for the Classes of 2020 and 2021 on May 19.

07

Professor Thomas J. Christensen, interim dean, congratulates **Jasmine McClam MPA '22**, who was among the winners of this year's Columbia Alumni Association (CAA) Campbell Award at SIPA Class Day.

08

Recent graduates reconnect at the SIPA Graduation Celebration for the Classes of 2020 and 2021 on May 19 on Ansell Plaza.

09

Graduates cheer on their classmates at SIPA Class Day.

10

L-R: **Merit E. Janow**, dean emerita; **Professor Thomas J. Christensen**, interim dean; and **Claire Shipman MIA '94** at the SIPA Graduation Celebration for the Classes of 2020 and 2021.

11

Aidan McKean MPA-ESP '22 (*with glasses*) and **Molly Freed MPA-ESP '22** (*reflected*) line up for the SIPA Class Day procession.

12

SIPA Class of 2022 graduates line up for University Commencement on May 18.

Photos by Barbara Alper (9), Eileen Barroso (5), Diane Bondareff (12), Bruce Gilbert (1-4, 6-7, 11), and Lou Rocco (8, 10)

SIPA Alumni Day Returns with Inaugural Awards, Panel on Climate

Sumant Sinha MIA '92 and Nicole Van Der Tuin MPA '12 are honored for their achievements, contributions to their communities, and service to SIPA.

BY MARCUS TONTI • PHOTOS BY LOU ROCCO

SIPA's Alumni Day returned after a two-year hiatus with a live presentation of the School's inaugural alumni awards and a virtual seminar on climate change. The in-person portion of the program, held at IAB on April 30, also featured conversations with honorees **Sumant Sinha MIA '92** and **Nicole Van Der Tuin MPA '12**.

Sinha, founder, chairman, and CEO of ReNew Power, received the first Distinguished Alumni Award, while Van Der Tuin, chief growth officer at Accion Opportunity Fund, was the first recipient of the Emerging Leader Award. (Van Der Tuin is also cofounder and former CEO of First Access, which she conceived while she was a student at SIPA.)

Brent Feigenbaum MIA '84, then chair of the Alumni Association, said the awards were created in 2021 "to honor alumni for their achievements and extraordinary contributions to improving their communities—

locally, nationally, and globally—and for service to SIPA."

Professor Thomas J. Christensen, interim dean, welcomed alumni to IAB and reviewed some of the highlights of recent months, including new faculty, progress on DEI initiatives, and the introduction of a new MPA program in global leadership. He also highlighted faculty expertise on Russia's invasion of Ukraine (see pages 10–11) and noted how SIPA was gradually resuming pre-COVID practices, including on-campus graduation ceremonies in May.

Christensen also saluted the award winners. "You inspire all of us," he said, "with your work and your commitment to positive change in the world."

Sinha and Van Der Tuin then took part in informal discussions with SIPA faculty members about their work and impact as entrepreneurs.

About 90 alumni and guests attended the

event in person, enjoying a boxed lunch and socializing in addition to the alumni awards.

Earlier in the day, faculty member David Sandalow hosted an online discussion featuring Professor Wolfram Schlenker; **Kerry Constabile MIA '06**, sustainability strategy and engagement lead at Google, and **Andrea Vivero MPA '10**, cofounder and managing partner of Meridio Consulting; and current student **Zizhu Zhang MPA '23**, a former environmental journalist. **Jennifer Morris MIA '97**, CEO of the Nature Conservancy, welcomed viewers.

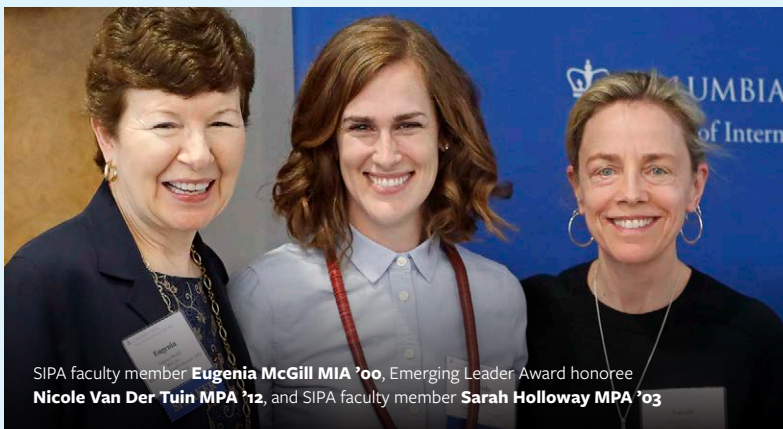
Participants in the conversation considered current trends and opportunities in climate change policy and work across different sectors where members of the SIPA community are making an impact.

"Alumni Day has long been a highlight of our calendar, and I'm just so pleased we were able to welcome alumni back in person," said Susan Storms, SIPA's director of alumni affairs. "I especially appreciate the chance to welcome some of our 2020 and 2021 graduates to the SIPA alumni community as well."

Next year's Alumni Day is slated for March 25, when organizers intend to once again host a full day of programming and a reunion dinner on campus. ●



Nominate a SIPA graduate for an alumni award.



SIPA faculty member **Eugenia McGill MIA '00**, Emerging Leader Award honoree **Nicole Van Der Tuin MPA '12**, and SIPA faculty member **Sarah Holloway MPA '03**



SIPA faculty member David Sandalow (left) and Distinguished Alumni Award honoree **Sumant Sinha MIA '92**



Bookcase

FACULTY AND SCHOLARS

Thomas J. Christensen (with John T. Downey and Jack Lee Downey)

Lost in the Cold War: The Story of Jack Downey, America's Longest-Held POW (Columbia University Press, 2022)

Steven Cohen (with Guo Dong)

The Sustainable City, Second Edition (Columbia University Press, 2021)

Frederic de Mariz MIA '05

Finance with a Purpose: Fintech, Development and Financial Inclusion in the Global Economy (World Scientific, 2022)

José Antonio Ocampo

Una historia del sistema financiero colombiano 1870–2021 [A history of the Colombian financial system] (Asociación Bancaria de Colombia and Bancóldex, 2021)

Arvind Panagariya

An Economist's Quest for Reforms: The Vajpayee and Singh Years (Harper Business, 2022)

Juan Manuel Santos

The Battle for Peace: The Long Road to Ending a War with the World's Oldest Guerrilla Army (University Press of Kansas, 2021)

David Siegel

Decide & Conquer: 44 Decisions That Will Make or Break All Leaders (HarperCollins Leadership, 2022)

Jack Snyder

Human Rights for Pragmatists: Social Power in Modern Times (Princeton University Press, 2022)

Diane Vaughan

Dead Reckoning: Air Traffic Control, System Effects, and Risk (University of Chicago Press, 2021)

ALUMNI

Jessamyn R. Abel MIA '97

Dream Super-Express: A Cultural History of the World's First Bullet Train (Stanford University Press, 2022)

Mark Baker MIA '86

Čas proměn [Time of changes] (Albatros Media, 2021)

Sarika Bansal MPA '12 (Editor)

Tread Brightly: Notes on Ethical Travel (BRIGHT, 2021)

John Starosta Galante MIA '08

On the Other Shore: The Atlantic Worlds of Italians in South America during the Great War (University of Nebraska Press, 2022)

Thomas W. Goodhue IF '75

Queen Ka'ahumanu of Hawaii: A Biography (McFarland, 2022)

Mel Gurtov MIA '66

Engaging China: Rebuilding Sino-American Relations (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022)

Christina Hawatmeh MIA '14 (with Nour Chamoun)

The Year Time Stopped: The Global Pandemic in Photos (HarperOne, 2022)

Spencer Jakab MIA '93

The Revolution That Wasn't: GameStop, Reddit, and the Fleecing of Small Investors (Portfolio/Penguin, 2022)

Cary Alan Johnson MIA '82

Desire Lines (Querelle Press, 2022)

Mark Juergensmeyer IF '64

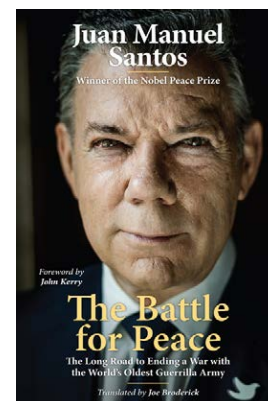
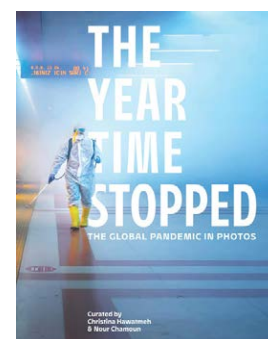
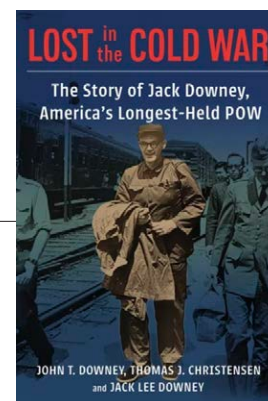
When God Stops Fighting: How Religious Violence Ends (University of California Press, 2022)

Laura McHale MIA '00

Neuroscience for Organizational Communication: A Guide for Communicators and Leaders (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022)

Joseph Ramos IF '64

Creer o no creer: El misterio de Dios a la luz de la razón [Belief or unbelief: The mystery of God in light of reason] (Paidós Chile, 2022)



Lawrence C. Reardon MIA '83

A Third Way: The Origins of China's Current Economic Development Strategy (Harvard University Press, 2021)

Suljuk Tarar MIA '06

All That Art (Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2021)

Shelly Tygielski MPA '99

Sit Down to Rise Up: How Radical Self-Care Can Change the World (New World Library, 2021)

In Memoriam

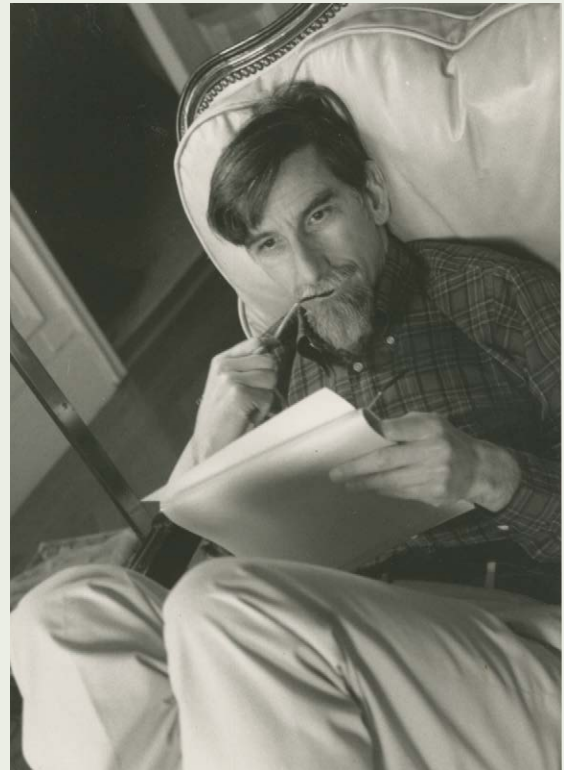
Robert Jervis

Professor Robert Jervis, a giant in the field of international relations who taught at SIPA and Columbia for more than four decades, died at his home in Manhattan on December 9 following a battle with lung cancer.

Jervis was the Adlai E. Stevenson Professor of International Politics in Columbia's Department of Political Science and at SIPA, where he was also a longtime member of the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies. His passing is mourned by generations of his mentees—countless Columbia students as well as hundreds of visiting international scholars—and by political science scholars across the globe.

“Professor Jervis was a member of the SIPA and Columbia University community for more than 40 years, and by any estimation, one of the most consequential and groundbreaking scholars of international relations theory, security policy, and decision-making in the modern era,” said then dean Merit E. Janow. “He was an incredibly generous teacher and mentor to generations of his students and a treasured colleague, member of SIPA’s executive committee, and trusted and wise adviser to numerous deans, including myself.”

Jervis’s published literature has been immensely influential in redefining the field of international relations and national security. His scholarship continues to define the field to this day, and two of his seminal books, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (1970) and *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (1976), are as relevant and influential today as they were when they were first published. Jervis’s writing received many awards and honors throughout his career in recognition of his landmark contributions to the field. His *System Effects: Complexity in Political Life* (1997) was a co-winner of the American Political Science Association



Robert Jervis at his home in 1980. Photo courtesy of the Jervis family

tion (APSA) Psychology Section’s best book award, and *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (1989) won the Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order.

Besides his membership in the Saltzman Institute, Jervis was president of APSA in 2000–01 and received the National Academy of Sciences’ award for behavioral sciences contributions to avoiding nuclear war. He was also a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Philosophical Society, the National Academy of Sciences, and the British Academy. Jervis chaired the Historical Review Panel for the Central Intelligence Agency for 10 years and served as an intelligence community associate.



Madeleine Albright

SIPA remembers groundbreaking alumna **Madeleine Albright CERT '68**, the first woman to serve as US secretary of state, who died on March 23.

A professor, author, diplomat, and business executive, Albright earned a certificate from the then SIA-affiliated* Russian Institute and her PhD from Columbia. She was a longtime member of the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies and in 2004–05 served as SIPA's inaugural Saltzman visiting fellow. Albright visited the University frequently and was a featured speaker at SIPA's graduation ceremony in May 2021.

As secretary of state from January 1997 through January 2001, Albright was, at that time, the highest-ranking woman in the history of the US government. She had previously served, from 1993 to 1997, as the US permanent representative to the United Nations and was a member of the president's cabinet.

In 2012 Albright was chosen by President Obama to receive the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in recognition of her contributions to international peace and democracy.

*At the time, SIPA was still known as the School of International Affairs, or SIA.



John G. Ruggie

SIPA remembers **John G. Ruggie**, a political scientist who served as the School's dean from 1991 to 1996 and went on to lead a seminal United Nations effort to definitively establish the responsibilities of countries and companies alike with respect to human rights. He died September 16, 2021.

As a scholar of international relations, Ruggie became known for his characterization of the post-World War II global economic order as one of "embedded liberalism," in which capitalist states maintained an openness in trade and finance alongside a domestic welfare state. Colleagues praised his essays on this subject and others, including multilateralism and territoriality, for deep thinking and farsighted vision informed by extensive knowledge.

Such essential scholarship, frequently cited, secured Ruggie's significant and enduring influence in academia. But he will be remembered equally, if not more so, for his later work at the United Nations, where he developed the landmark set of guidelines concerning states, businesses, and human rights that are widely referred to as the Ruggie Principles. ●

We express our condolences to the families and friends of these members of the SIPA community who have recently passed away.

Frank W. Brecher MIA '58

Linda Carlisle MPA '81

Doug Chalmers
(*professor and former acting dean*)

Joe Chartier
(*longtime staff member*)

Jacqueline Escobar MIA '10

Jeffrey Escoffier MIA '66

Norman Han MPA '98

Larry Heinzerling
(*adjunct professor*)

Maria Jacobson MIA '60

David A. Kay MIA '64

Frances McCall Rosenbluth MIA '83

ClassNotes



What's your SIPA story?

Submit your SIPA milestones, achievements, and experiences for a chance to be featured in the School's social media, website, and publications. Class notes are published annually in *SIPA Magazine*.

Save the Date—SIPA Alumni Day and Reunion Dinner Saturday, March 25, 2023

All alumni are invited to join fellow graduates, friends, and classmates from around the world as we celebrate this annual event on campus with a day of guest speakers, panel discussions, and networking opportunities, followed by a celebratory all-class reunion dinner in the evening.

1964

JOSEPH RAMOS was elected Economist of the Year in 2021 by *El Mercurio* in Chile. His new book on the existence of God, *Creer o no creer: El misterio de Dios a la luz de la razón [Belief or unbelief: The mystery of God in light of reason]*, was published in May by Paidós Chile.

1974

PETER PODBIELSKI contributed the chapter "On Developing a Diplomatic Mindset" in *Culture Shock: Leadership Lessons from the Military's Diplomatic Corps*, published by the Foreign Area Officer Association Press.

1975

SRIDHAR KHATRI began his term as the Nepalese ambassador to the US in March.

1977



ALLAN GRAFMAN was elected to the board of directors of IDW Media Holdings, a public

entertainment company listed on the NYSE. He also serves as chair of the audit committee.

1980



RUTH DREESSEN is chairman of Gevo, a producer of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) and other low-carbon transportation fuels and a leader in the world's energy transition.



DOUG WAKE has worked in various roles with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) since 2009, after having served for over 28 years as a US Foreign Service officer. Most recently, he headed the Election Observation Mission deployed by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) for Serbia's 2022 presidential and parliamentary elections. Wake taught a SIPA seminar on the Baltic States while at Columbia on a midcareer State Department fellowship in 1998 and served as a professor of national security studies at the US Army War College in 2008–09. He plans to remain active in international activities including election observation and educational programs while dividing his time between residences in Vienna, Austria, and Arlington, VA.

1984



MIKE FAIRBANKS spent his career in economic development and biotechnology. He founded Akagera Medicines in 2018 to eradicate tuberculosis and other neglected diseases. The

company has achieved preclinical proof of concept in drug-resistant tuberculosis, MRSA, and all variants of COVID-19. In 2022 the company plans to announce a partnership with a public pharmaceutical company, dates for its Phase 1 trials, and a large infusion of capital from a European institution.

1985



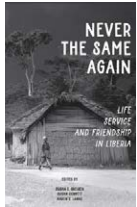
THOMAS P. DAVIS was promoted to assistant teaching professor at Rutgers, where he teaches public administration, public health, and writing for professionals. He is also a licensed and certified community-planning consultant.

1986

FRED BURKE writes: "Semiretired, I'm transitioning to a new chapter in life, still mainly in Vietnam. Currently involved with other Columbia alums in Vietnam to plan a conference highlighting the University in July. Still involved in policy work through the Vietnam Business Forum and other channels."

NICHOLAS N. GOUEDE is an award-winning bilingual journalist, communications expert, and consultant in international development who lives in New York City. A former Dag Hammarskjöld Fellow of the United Nations Correspondents Association and a graduate of Columbia Journalism School as well as SIPA, Gouede has produced a notable journalistic collection of writings on sustainable development. The articles are available at ngnyc-communications.com.

JUDY SCHROEDER writes: "In my international development career, I served as a Peace Corps volunteer



in Liberia, assistant country director for CARE in Peru and India, country director for Pact in Peru, and consultant for the Bill & Melinda

Gates Foundation and DanChurchAid in India. I am a contributing author and photographer for the newly released *Never the Same Again: Life, Service, and Friendship in Liberia* (Sidekick Press, 2022), an anthology of short stories, poems, and photographs celebrating the history of the Peace Corps in Liberia. My son Jay will be joining Columbia Engineering's Class of 2024 this fall. Email me at judyschroeder@hotmail.com."

1990

RANDOLPH BAXTER presented his paper "Florinsky's Ghost: The Soviet 'Pervert Purge' of 1934 as Prelude to Stalin's Terror" at a panel sponsored by the Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History at the American Historical Association annual meeting in New Orleans in January.



ANUJ DESAI writes: "I am a law professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School, where I

teach courses in freedom of speech, cyberlaw, intellectual freedom, and legislation and regulation. Although I am based in the US, I have taken my SIPA international affairs education to heart. Since graduating I have lived in the Netherlands, Germany, South Africa, China, and Taiwan. I have also worked in the US federal government off and on. I will be returning to the federal government for a year, starting in September 2022, where I will be working in

the General Counsel's Office at the Office of Management and Budget. I have been in touch with a few SIPA friends, including **BARBARA POPE** and **PAULA SMITH**, and look forward to hearing from others."



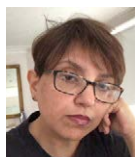
DIANE HIRSHBERG was appointed director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). She is an 18-year veteran of UAA and ISER and has served in leadership roles such as president of UAA's faculty senate and adviser to the chancellor on Arctic research and education. She was the founding director of the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research and is vice president academic at the University of the Arctic.



ANTON MIFSUD-BONNICI is serving on the commission appointed to review the Voluntary Principles

on Security and Human Rights, a multi-stakeholder initiative that promotes the implementation of a set of principles that guide companies on providing security for their operations while respecting human rights.

1991



NAUSHEEN ANWAR has been busy teaching, writing, consulting, and establishing a lab in Karachi, Pakistan,

for research on urban and climate change issues. She is a professor of city and regional planning at the



1990

SALMA HASAN ALI writes: "My international storytelling platform, which brings together people of all faiths or none around personal stories and themes that we all share in common, is now a beautifully handmade book and journal, *30 Days: Stories of Gratitude, Traditions, and Wisdom*—featured by NPR's *Morning Edition* and *NowThis News* and launched around the world. My storytelling is on Instagram @salma.hasan.ali, and the books are available through my website: salmahasanali.com."

Institute of Business Administration (IBA) in Karachi and a senior fellow at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex in England. Anwar is married with twin sons, Aleem and Suleyman.

1992



DARYL MUNDIS writes: "After spending six years in the US Navy JAG Corps, stationed in Philadelphia

and London, I went to work in The Hague as a legal adviser and then senior prosecuting trial attorney at the

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, where I served from 1998 to 2009. I then joined the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) as the chief of prosecutions. In July 2013 I was appointed by the UN secretary-general as the registrar at the STL. I served in that role until retiring on March 1, 2021. I have six wonderful children, aged from 8 to 24, and I keep very busy and active with fathering them and with my hobbies."

ELIZABETH ROWLEY writes: "This spring marked 30 years since SIPA's 1992 Economic and Political Development cohort graduated and launched themselves into a variety of

careers with the EPD Workshop experience, camaraderie, and optimism in hand. We were a group of 35 young EPDers back then, and this February, 28 of us reunited for a happy reunion via Zoom that stretched from the US West Coast around the world to Japan. We were very happy to be joined by former EPD program director Deborah Bräutigam and to share updates and memories together. Although our lives and careers are richly varied, we have all pursued careers of service and interests that are in keeping with the underlying goals of the EPD concentration. Some of us have focused on helping develop our communities, academic scholarship, and business and policy arenas in our home countries, while many of us have pursued careers overseas at different points in our careers. The EPD bonds remain strong, and there are plans afoot for an in-person reunion in October—looking forward!”

1994



SANDRA BRAMWELL writes: “As director of Versan Educational Services, I created a franchise on the island of Jamaica, processing over 14,000 students from 1994 to present. I also organized school fairs across the Caribbean and served as an educational consultant to the minister of education Ronnie Thwaites in Jamaica.”

1995



RAMENDRA BASAK writes: “When I participated in the second cohort of PEPM in 1993, I was a sec-

ond secretary in the National Board of Revenue (NBR) of the government of Bangladesh. After PEPM I rejoined NBR, and I retired from the service in 2016 as commissioner of taxes after serving 34 years.”

1996

BASIL SMIKLE, a longtime SIPA adjunct faculty member, was named director of the Public Policy Program at the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College. He will work and engage with Hunter College students and faculty to create public programs on policy issues. He was also named a trustee of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library. In spring 2021 he co-taught Rethinking Policing in the 21st Century with Letitia James, New York State’s attorney general.

BEN WARD writes: “This year I celebrate 21 years at Human Rights Watch. I began work at the organization in 1997 as a researcher documenting war crimes in the former Yugoslavia and since then served in a variety of roles, including as UK director and in the Legal and Policy office. My current role is deputy director of the Europe and Central Asia division, where I oversee research on the European Union, UK, and Western Balkans. SIPA gave me foundational training in human rights both as a theoretical framework and as a profession, and it was where I first encountered Human Rights Watch. I was one of the first students to benefit from the dedicated human rights concentration, and like many, I benefited from the guidance of Paul Martin.”

1997

ERIN GORE returned to the University of California as senior vice chancellor of finance and administration at UC San Francisco.

1998



PRISCILLA STEPHAN writes: “I finally found my calling, helping conscious entrepreneurs and

leaders to create businesses that support the greater good by unlocking their innate leadership gifts and talents. In my first book, published in February, *The Souffluent® Leadership Business Guide*, I guide entrepreneurs to honor who they really are and to do business in a way that feels real and true for them by identifying their Souffluent Leadership Archetype. Get your copy at priscillastephan.com/book.”

1999

ALYSON KING was honored with the Order of the British Empire for her services to British foreign policy. She is the deputy head of mission at the British Embassy in Beirut and led the mission through the aftermath of the August 4, 2020, port explosion. She previously served in several roles for the UK government, including as legal adviser in the UK’s Permanent Representation to the EU and as Arabic spokesperson.

AMI THAKKAR, senior director of the Governance and Youth Economic Opportunities Division at RTI International, was named among *Washington Business Journal’s* 2021 Women Who Mean Business.

2000



MARYBETH CORAZZINI is an operations and grants manager at the Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans.

2002

KEVIN KOVALYCSIK was appointed chief of staff at Allegheny College in October 2021.



AZUSA KUBOTA is heading UNDP’s program and operations in Bhutan supporting a wide variety of environ-

mental and economic efforts. Previously, she served as country manager and head of the UN Joint Presence Office in the Solomon Islands for UNDP, UNICEF, and UNWOMEN, leading the implementation of UN joint programs in support of peacebuilding, social cohesion, and elections before and after withdrawal of the Regional Assistance Mission in Solomon Islands (RAMSI). Kubota was also with the UNDP Evaluation Office in New York, where she led country-level evaluations of UNDP’s contribution in Ghana, Guyana, Indonesia, the Philippines, Somalia, and Tunisia.



BREMLEY LYNGDOH is a climate change and sustainable development professional with 20 years’ experience working with governments, IGOs, NGOs, and the private sector. He has developed projects in Asia, Africa, and South America to reduce rural poverty and generate sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable local communities. Previously, he worked with the UN and the World Bank in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, gaining expertise in the monitoring and evaluation of field-based programs. Lyngdoh founded the Worldview Impact Foundation in the UK in 2008 and developed climate change

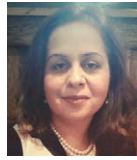
adaptation projects in Asia and Africa combining integrated agroforestry, regenerative farming, sustainable tourism, and renewable-energy technologies. He also established Spring Valley Farm in Shillong, Meghalaya, to honor his father's legacy by supporting organic farmers in northeast India. He joined Earthbanc in 2019 as director of natural capital development and has been working on nature-based solutions to address climate change.



DANA MORTENSON is cofounder, alongside **MEDIHA MURSHED**, and CEO of World Savvy, a national education nonprofit working to educate and engage youth as responsible global citizens. World Savvy supports change agents in K-12 education to create more inclusive, adaptive schools that ensure all young people can develop the skills and dispositions needed to thrive in a more

diverse, interconnected world. Since 2002 Mortenson has led the organization through significant national expansion, reaching over 800,000 students and nearly 7,000 teachers across 45 US states and 32 countries from offices based in Minneapolis, San Francisco, and New York.

2003



SONAL PATNEY writes: “My last consulting assignment was truly a great experience working for the Australian private company BQ Media Lab on financings for innovative technologies, such as AI, blockchain, and random number generator (RNG). Currently in transition but a banker by profession, I live in Great Neck, NY, and my extracurricular activities include pro bono work on small businesses with the nonprofit SCORE and involvement with the international finance professionals organizations the Financial Executives Networking Group, the Financial Women’s Association, and Ellevate.”



MARIA VIRGINIA SANCHEZ writes: “After more than 10 years working in several Wall Street firms in NYC and Chicago, I am proud to announce that I have joined Fidelity Investments as a relationship manager in Boca Raton, FL, in charge of developing and implementing client-relationships strategies to maintain, build, and expand the customer base of the firm. I would be happy to assist you with your retirement and planning needs.”

2004



NEGIN FARSAD was named one of the 50 Funniest Women by the *Huffington Post* and one of the 10 Best Feminist Comedians by *Paper Magazine*. She is a TED Fellow and gave a TED talk on social justice comedy seen by millions, a regular on NPR’s *Wait Wait ... Don’t Tell Me!* and Neil deGrasse Tyson’s *StarTalk*, the author of the Thurber Prize-nominated *How to Make White*

People Laugh, and the host of the podcast *Fake the Nation*. She can be seen in HBO’s *High Maintenance* and Hulu’s upcoming *Not Okay* and is starring in HBOMax’s *Birdgirl*. She has written for the *Guardian*, *Oprah Magazine*, and the *New York Times*. Farsad once sued the MTA for the right to put up funny posters about Muslims—and won.

2005



PENNY ABEYWARDENA (pictured, third from left, with her husband, Daniel Schaefer, and son) was appointed by French president Emmanuel Macron to the rank of Knight in France’s National Order of Merit for her global leadership on diplomacy, human rights, and sustainability.



SONAL PANDE writes: “Having completed a seven-year stint at NYU, I am excited to return to campus to assume the role of associate dean for alumni relations and development at Columbia University’s School of Professional Studies. I am responsible for leading the strategic growth of the domestic and global alumni-outreach programs and fundraising pipeline for the school. Within the first few weeks of assuming the role, I was fortunate enough to address the SPS Class of 2022 at the graduation ceremony outside Butler Library and to attend the Commencement ceremony. Watching the sea of blue gowns certainly brought back memories from



2000

LAURA MCHALE’s first book, *Neuroscience for Organizational Communication: A Guide for Communicators and Leaders*, was published in January by Palgrave Macmillan. The book is the first to apply neuroscience to the practice of organizational communication, with a particular emphasis on leadership communication. It is an academic book but is written for communications practitioners and business leaders, as well as graduate students in management, psychology, communication, journalism, and international affairs. Related to the book, McHale offers “Neuro for Comms,” a neuroscience training for business leaders and corporate communications teams. Learn more at www.conduitconsultants.com.

my own graduation in 2005! From 2006 to 2015, I was based in London and held positions as the head of major giving for Prostate Cancer UK and as a major gifts officer for Royal National Institute of Blind People in London. Since 2015 I have resided in New York City with my husband and two children.”

2006

MRIDULA PALAT-BECKER, founder of Women Ask for More and host of the *This is 40!* podcast, spoke at the WomenTech Global Conference along with other female leaders from Tesla, Amazon, Microsoft, and the Space Foundation. Her talk addressed the barriers to negotiating and achieving financial equality that women face every day. She has also been invited to speak on behalf of female business owners at receptions hosted by the American ambassador to France. Through Women Ask for More, Palat-Becker coaches women to negotiate and ask for what they are worth using principles from the Harvard Program on Negotiation and her past work experience in negotiations. She is passionate about helping women-owned businesses turn profitable. Her podcast *This is 40!* celebrates its viral growth in 60 countries and 450 cities globally. The show plans to include stories from guests of all ages, as wisdom and coming into your own can happen at any time. If you would like to participate, please get in touch at podcastthisis40@gmail.com.



ELIZABETH ROSSIELLO, CEO and founder of AZA Finance, was named by Bloomberg among its inaugural class of New Economy Catalysts. In March she announced a major partnership with the global digital

currency exchange FTX to expand digital currencies and Web3 in Africa.

SULJUK TARAR is serving as Pakistan’s ambassador to The Hague. His book on Pakistani art and artists around the world, *All That Art*, was published in June 2021 by Sang-e-Meel Publications.

2007

AIMEE KELI’I BARNES was nominated for the Hawaii State Land Board by Governor David Ige.



MARYUM SAIFEE writes: “After graduating from SIPA, I became a Foreign Service officer at the US

Department of State. I have been posted to Cairo, Baghdad, Erbil, and Lahore. In Washington, I served as a senior policy adviser in the Secretary’s Office of Global Women’s Issues and Secretary’s Office of Religion and Global Affairs. I am now posted in a new office, launched last year, supporting the State Department’s first stand-alone chief diversity and inclusion officer. I took a sabbatical during which I was a Council on Foreign Relations international affairs fellow and a senior visiting fellow at the Truman Center for National Policy, where I led a 30-person task force on State Department reform. I also wrote a piece published in the January/February issue of the *Foreign Service Journal* making the case for establishing an office of subnational diplomacy at the State Department.”

2009

MONICA LYNN MILLER, senior counsel with the American Humanist Association and a consulting attorney with the Nonhuman Rights Project, made history on May 18 when she

argued the first case seeking a right for an animal in the New York Court of Appeals on behalf of Happy, a 51-year-old Asian elephant at the Bronx Zoo. Miller was advocating for Happy’s right to bodily liberty.

KENNETH SCHEFFLER left social impact consulting to cofound Family Empowerment Media (FEM), a non-profit organization that aims to eliminate maternal deaths and other health burdens due to unintended pregnancies. FEM produces and broadcasts educational radio shows and ads that reduce myths and misconceptions surrounding contraception. FEM is now reaching 6 million people in Nigeria and is looking to further scale its work. Learn more at familyempowermentmedia.org.

2011



KRIS CLARK leads the Supply Chain Assurance organization at Dell Technologies. In this role, he oversees Dell’s efforts to deliver a trusted, responsible, and resilient global supply chain for its customers and workers alike. Before joining Dell, Clark focused the balance of his career on foreign policy and national security issues, including serving as director for Africa on the National Security Council, where he was responsible for conceptualizing, coordinating, and executing technology policy, diplomatic agreements, and strategic competition frameworks for the United States on the continent. He continues to serve as a lieutenant commander in the US Navy Reserve.



MI WANG received her PhD in pharmacology and molecular signaling and was

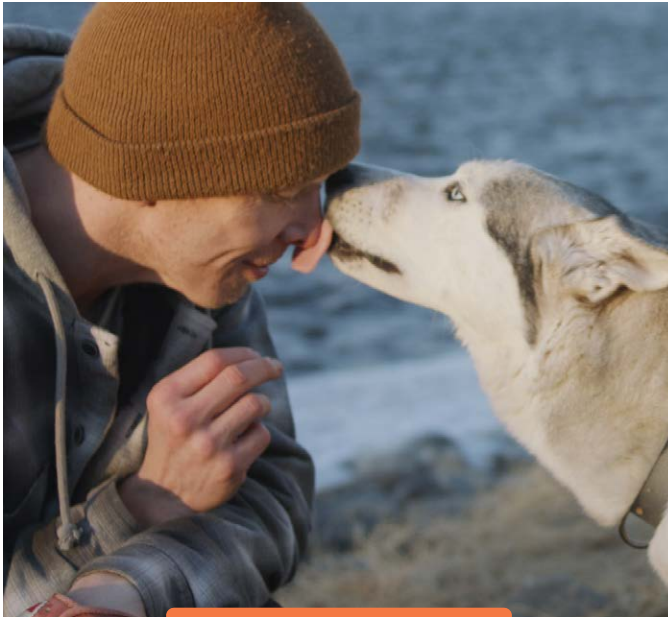
a participant in SIPA’s International Fellows Program during her study at Columbia University. After a career in management consulting serving clients in the health-care industry, her passion for innovation and global impact led her to join the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, where she leads a team to control the TB and HIV epidemics with innovative biomedical interventions.

2012

JENNIFER BRUNO started a private practice as an executive and leadership coach, continuing her career dedicated to transformation. As a coach, she facilitates individual growth and development for emerging and senior executives. She supports her clients to reimagine and design their lives and careers in alignment with their deepest life purpose and values, remove what’s keeping them stuck, and confidently step into new ways of being. Bruno is a certified professional co-active coach (CPCC), gestalt professional certified coach (GPCC), and Institute for Integrative Nutrition (IIN) certified health coach. Visit her website at jennifertbruno.com to learn more and schedule a complimentary consultation.



CHRISTOPHER REEVE writes: “This spring in Los Angeles, my team and I launched Mamey Mami, a Miami-themed kitchen. We are only in Phase 1, as Mamey Mami is a social enterprise and benefit corporation in the making. We are developing a culinary training program for individuals in transition (homelessness,



2011

ROB GRABOW wrote, directed, and starred in an upcoming feature film, *The Year of the Dog*, a poignant movie about an alcoholic man struggling to maintain sobriety and a stray dog with an unusual athletic gift.

Grabow says that despite everything they were up against, the movie turned out really well, and the success is in part a testament to collaborative skills he learned at SIPA: “We were always collaborating, often with people who had different points of view and life experiences from our own, but my time at SIPA further instilled in me the ability to understand the power and benefit of diverse thinking and diverse living. I learned to focus, with comity, seemingly juxtaposing perspectives in a way that benefited all those involved in positive ways. And with something as complex as making a movie, where you have artists and technicians and a wide array of personalities viewing the same things but viewing them all differently, those skills I acquired at SIPA proved invaluable. I will always be thankful to SIPA for the friendships I made and the way my experiences there broadened my thinking.”

Grabow also notes that **DAVID LAVIN** wrote a song that features prominently in the film. “He is a veteran musician,” Grabow says, “and was involved in scoring multiple videos at our 2011 Follies.”

Pictures from the shoot, cast and crew information, and trailers and information about upcoming screenings are available on the film’s website and social media: theyearofthedogmovie.com and [@theyearofthedogmovie](https://twitter.com/theyearofthedogmovie).

post foster care, etc.) who want to work in food, and will codify our prioritization of team members—shareholders, guests, and the environment over profits. We are on an exciting and tasty path!”



SALINTHIP TANGPANJAPON serves as a volunteer health and education programs technical researcher for the UK charity Karen Hilltribes Trust with the program in Mae Hong Son, Thailand. Before this, she was part of the Bangkok-based Asia Pacific Regional Office of FHI 360 in the Business Development and Diversification unit.

2014



PAVINA ADUNRATANASEE was named among LinkedIn’s Top Green Voices for Earth Day 2022. Passionate about commercializing clean technologies in the energy and mobility space, she posts about the gap between global climate finance needs and its availability, as well as democratizing access to capital for female entrepreneurs. She also

delivered the TEDx talk “Democratizing Capital Can Get Us to Net-Zero” as part of the climate countdown in 2021.

LEANDRO JORGE is cofounder and CEO of LV Farms, an agro-processing company in Umbeluzi-Boane in Mozambique’s Maputo Province that was founded in 2018 with the goal of creating jobs, supporting small-holder farmers, and fighting child malnutrition in rural areas. It works with rural communities to source locally grown produce to make jams and tomato pasta sauce, creating jobs for rural women and allowing the company to raise revenue for its long-term sustainability. Simultaneously, as part of its corporate social responsibility, LV Farms is working to increase access to preschool education and fight chronic malnutrition in children under 5. Since 2019 it has provided nutritious meals (made from orange-flesh sweet potato, rich in vitamin A) to about 400 children twice a week and sponsored 75 children who are enrolled in about four community preschools in the Boane region.



WARDAH KHALID started a new job at the US Department of Health and Human Services in the Office of Refugee Resettlement working on Afghan family reunification.

JAMIE S. REYES was recognized in *City & State NY*’s 2021 Albany 40 Under 40 Rising Stars. The list features exceptional individuals who are making an impact in New York state politics. Reyes is director of compliance and enterprise risk management at the City University of New York, where she communicates with different constituencies to plan and develop initiatives.

2016

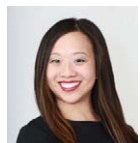
JENNIFER KIM was appointed associate administrator for the US Small Business Administration in the Biden-Harris administration.

VINCENT QUAN was appointed co-executive director at J-PAL North America.

2017



IGNAZIO BELLINI is the sustainability manager for Eni in Côte d'Ivoire. The Baleine project will be the first net-zero emission development (Scope 1 and Scope 2) in Africa.



CHRISTY GRACE PROVINES is founder and president of the MPOWER Project (MPOWERproject.org). As a storyteller, creative solution builder, and messaging strategist, she promotes a human-centric approach and trauma-informed lens to develop cognitive resilience against extremist narratives and coercive messaging. Provines has more than 18 years of experience as a brand-digital marketer and now works as group

account director at SwellShark, an independent media agency in New York City, where she specializes in sustainability-focused brands. She was invited to serve on the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism's Independent Advisory Committee in the role of secretariat.

2018

GRETCHEN BALDWIN started a job at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in May. She is a researcher with SIPRI's Peace Operations and Conflict Management Programme, focusing on gender and peace operations.

CHRISTINA HUGUET is the lead for human rights in business and its impact on reputational risk and corporate strategy at Eurasia Group, the leading political-risk consultancy based in New York City. Although human rights previously were not a focus area for Eurasia Group, Huguet felt that it was nearly impossible to advise corporations on best practices and geopolitical risks without highlighting the human rights vulnerabilities in their supply chains, especially given new legislation coming out of the US and the EU. In parallel, companies are faced with unprecedented pressure by consumers and

investors to speak up on social and cultural issues. This year with the Supreme Court reversal on *Roe v. Wade*, the Olympics in Beijing, and the war in Ukraine, there is an expectation that corporations use their influence to prevent human rights abuses as well as speak up on their positions related to them.

ASHER ZLOTNIK joined New York City Council member Linda Lee as her chief of staff and is attending the NYU School of Law beginning this fall. Before assuming this role, Zlotnik worked as Lee's campaign manager and previously served as then congressman Max Rose's senior policy adviser.

2019

ALEXIS AKAGAWA, senior international student adviser at Columbia's International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO), was named the 2022 NAFSA: Association of International Educators Advocate of the Year. This award recognizes an international education advocate who has excelled in grassroots advocacy and inspires others to promote policies that create a more globally engaged United States.

ANNIE JACOBS writes: "I was lucky enough to get hired straight out of

a SIPA seminar and apply my policy knowledge, writing skills, and Capstone experience to the private sector, where I work in a sanctions advisory role at a global financial institution. The job was based in New York, the pandemic sent us all home for two years, and now I've returned to the office at our HQ in Tokyo! If any Seeples find themselves in Japan over the next two years, give me a shout."

2020



HAEYOON KIM works as an economic affairs researcher at the Korean Embassy in Washington, DC. Before joining the embassy, she worked as an English editor for the 2021 Seoul United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Preparatory Secretariat and as a political affairs researcher at the Korean Consulate General in New York. She also worked for the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympics as an interpreter, translator, and communication manager. Kim was awarded



2019

EVAN HILL coproduced *Day of Rage: How Trump Supporters Took the U.S. Capitol*, a *New York Times* documentary short film, which won a 2022 duPont-Columbia Award.

Hill also won a shared Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting on May 9 for his work exposing how the final US drone strike of the 20-year war in Afghanistan killed a civilian worker for a US-based aid group. The story catalyzed a series of investigations into serious flaws in the US air war and led to the Defense Department offering an unprecedented admission of error and initiating reforms and investigations.

This is Hill's second shared Pulitzer Prize. The first was in 2020 for an investigation proving the Russian bombing of hospitals in rebel-held Syria.

a global grant scholarship by the Rotary Foundation with a focus area in peace and conflict prevention/resolution in 2020 and was named a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) Youth Group research fellow in 2021.

STEVE MAROTI writes: “My now wife and I moved just outside of New York City and recently welcomed our first child. It’s been an interesting and exciting couple of years adapting to the pandemic plus postgrad life, not to mention these uncertain times in global affairs, but I constantly draw upon my SIPA experience, and the network of friends and classmates has been a great anchor.”



MICHELLE MEZA

joined the Biden-Harris administration as a political appointee.

After working for President Biden’s campaign in Wisconsin during the 2020 election and spending a full year on the Hill managing Representative Nanette Diaz Barragán’s political and legislative agendas, Meza was appointed to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and joined the scheduling and advance team for the EPA’s administrator in April. “As a first-generation American and Latina with most of my family living in Peru, serving in President Biden’s administration is not only the honor of a lifetime but a dream which I once thought impossible to achieve,” she writes. “I am proud to work for an administration that looks like America and leads by the example of diversity. And as a Peruvian-American, I am eager to continue opening doors once thought impossible to open for a Latina like me.”

JONATHAN RUBIN started researching sustainable agriculture while ob-



taining his MPA-ESP degree. Following school he took his knowledge to build an indoor vertical hydroponic farm. Fresh Florida Farms serves produce distributors, food banks, and supermarket chains. Growing using these methods enables year-round production, minimizing the toll on the environment and the overall carbon footprint. This creates a more sustainable growth process.

2021



MAHAK AGRAWAL

was nominated by the UNLEASH Global Innovation Lab for the Goalkeepers Global

Goals Award 2021, awarded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, for her achievements in accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals in India through public health initiatives. This past November she delivered a TEDx talk on mining value from waste and decarbonizing waste management systems.



NUSRAT FAROOQ started a full-time position in March as a global counter-terrorism and counter-extremism professional at one of the industry’s leading organizations, the Global Internet Forum to Counter

Terrorism (GIFCT). It was founded by four big tech giants—Meta (then Facebook), Microsoft, YouTube, and Twitter—to prevent terrorists and violent extremists from exploiting digital spaces.

BREN FLANIGAN was a Fulbright Scholar in Niger, where he studied the impact of droughts and floods on the informal economy. He interviewed 100 vendors and clients from Niamey’s marketplaces in French to understand how these water-related problems were altering their profits and business operations. Flanigan presented his final research at the US Embassy’s American Corner in Niamey. In attendance were officials from Niger’s flagship university and Nigerien civil and private-sector leaders. He completed his Fulbright in June and is returning to the United States to join the Department of State as a Foreign Service officer in public diplomacy.

SHAINDL KESHEN and STEVEN

LAZICKAS wrote the article “Non-Refoulement: A Human Rights Perspective on Environmental Migration from Small Island Developing States,” which was published in the Fall/Winter 2022 issue of the *Journal of International Affairs*.

2022



LISA GARCIA represented her native country of Guatemala at the 66th session of the UN Commission on

the Status of Women (CSW), occupying a seat on the floor of the UN General Assembly chamber. The CSW is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

DANIELLE NEFTIN wrote a piece published in the *Daily Beast* in November about Russian spy Maria Butina’s appointment to the Russian parliament the month before. Neftin also started a new position in June as senior associate, cyber and tech policy and partnerships, at JPMorgan Chase.

VALENTINA SUAREZ

coauthored “Teacher Professional Identity: How to Develop and Support It in Times of Change,” which was featured in the OECD Education Working Papers series in February. The paper is the result of her research conducted during her internship at the Directorate for Education and Skills at the OECD in summer 2021.

EDUARDA ZOGHBI is a political scientist who concentrated in Energy and Environment at SIPA. While in the MPA program, she was president of the SIPA Energy Association, finalist in the Dean’s Public Policy Challenge and GPPN Conference, and the only student among the University’s delegation to COP26 in Glasgow, where she joined a roundtable with former president Barack Obama (see page 7). Today she spearheads the expansion of Columbia’s Center on Global Energy Policy’s Women in Energy program to Brazil. Her goal is to increase female representation in the energy sector, highlighting women’s work and promoting knowledge exchange between the US and Brazil.



Constance Hunter MIA '94

Constance Hunter MIA '94, an expert in macro-economic analysis and forecasting, joined American International Group (AIG) in February as executive vice president, global head of strategy and ESG. Before AIG, she worked at KPMG, where she served as chief economist since 2013 and as a member of the Growth and Strategy leadership team since 2020. Earlier, she served as deputy chief investment officer at AXA Investment Managers.

Hunter was among the first economists to forecast such pivotal economic events as the impacts of COVID-19 on the US and other global economies, the 2007 real estate and credit crisis, the 2001 burst of the dot-com bubble, and the Russian ruble devaluation in 1998. In addition to her SIPA MIA, Hunter holds a BA in economics and sociology from New York University and the Certified Business Economist certification.

In your role as global head of strategy at AIG, how do you incorporate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) concerns into your strategy?

As an insurer, we need to appropriately calibrate and price risk so that we are there when our clients need us most. ESG factors impact many aspects of risk, so it is not wise to have ESG cordoned off to one side of the business. It's useful to have an economist ask the big questions about the energy transition; the success or failure will depend upon market structure and how to solve vital collective-action problems, such as getting the world's highest polluters to all lower emissions. Otherwise, we will not achieve climate goals and we are likely to see catastrophic events continue to rise in frequency and cost.

I find the SIPA degree invaluable—I just became a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and every one of my letter writers was in some way connected to SIPA. As I think about my remit at AIG, joining an organization like the council and being part of the global conversation is vital. Without attending SIPA, I would not have as many tools to help me answer the big questions.

How have you seen SIPA's curriculum, research, and approach to the issue of sustainability, and the reaction to climate in general, change since you were a student?

When I was in school, we were thinking about how we



could improve people's lives, but we weren't thinking much about the environment or greenhouse-gas emissions, although we should have been.

The energy transition is the most important economic event of the century. The research coming out of SIPA's Center on Global Energy Policy has been a valuable contribution to thinking about this transition, and the center's events and conferences have been very useful in terms of thought leadership, connections, and conversations. And if you look across the curriculum, you've seen increasing recognition that there are significant problems we need to solve. SIPA's strength is addressing these problems in a global cross-disciplinary manner.

How have you stayed connected with SIPA?

When I first graduated, I helped organize monthly SIPA happy hours in New York City. Then one of my classmates, **Mayada El-Zoghbi MIA '94**, and I proposed that we have a 10-year reunion for the Class of '94—the first-ever SIPA reunion. The annual SIPA Alumni Day that we have today is the outgrowth of that. In recent years I've been able to buy tables to help sponsor SIPA's annual gala and bring other people into the fold to engage.

What would you say to alumni who are less engaged with the community?

Come to SIPA Alumni Day! It's such a rewarding and touching way to spend a day. From a personal perspective, it's about reconnecting with like-minded people and seeing your friends and fellow SIPA alumni. From a business perspective, it's great networking and a fantastic way to turbocharge what you're doing, whether it's seeking specific information or making connections. ●

Building Bridges

Yifan Li MPA '22 was 10 years old when his home city of Beijing welcomed the world to its door.

“In 2008 we had the Beijing Olympics,” he says. “And before that I lived in Beijing, and the air pollution was pretty bad. But it was hugely improved for the Olympics.” The change made Li curious about environmental policy. In May he graduated from SIPA with a concentration in Energy and Environment.

Li believes, strongly, that students who gain a global perspective by studying abroad can make a big difference when they go back to their home countries. Indeed, it's why he came to SIPA in the first place.

“It could be a very big advantage,”
Li says, “because we can serve as
a bridge.”



[Read more about Yifan.](#)

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SUPPORT STUDENTS WHO CHANGE THE WORLD

“As I start the next chapter in my journey serving in the US Foreign Service, I am reflecting on my SIPA experience and all that it taught me. I am forever grateful for the scholarship funding I received. My SIPA experience would not have been possible without essential financial support from the SIPA community.”

JASMINE MCCLAM MPA '22



For more than 75 years, SIPA has been equipping students with the skills needed to transform the world. Support our outstanding graduates like Jasmine by giving to student financial aid today.



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