

ANNUAL REPORT **2022 - 2023**

Progress through Partnerships



University of
Pittsburgh
Institute of Politics

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The mission of the Institute of Politics is to deliver timely information about the major issues affecting our region to elected officials and community leaders—and the public whom they serve—and provide a non-partisan forum where diverse viewpoints are shared, synthesized, and applied to the goal of promoting an improved quality of life, government efficiency, and economic vitality in Western Pennsylvania.

iop.pitt.edu



Dear Friends of the IOP:

We are moving to a report schedule that more aptly mirrors the academic calendar. This allows us to provide you with a thorough overview of our policy efforts, educational forums, and student civic engagement programming. Most importantly, this design provides us with a better opportunity to highlight our community partners.



Working with community leaders and academic experts is a privilege that we hold in the highest regard. One of the greatest rewards of this work is the opportunity to observe the creation of new collaborations and nonpartisan approaches to addressing this region's most entrenched issues.

Over the past eighteen months, we have delved into complex subject material engaging content experts, public and elected officials, and community leaders on subjects ranging from post-secondary education, racial disparities within Allegheny County's criminal justice system, gun violence prevention, family caregiving, local government, and creative approaches in workforce development. Together with our partners, we have crafted recommendations on these subjects that have the power to shape innovative practices and public policy. Through our partnerships, the IOP has also produced thought-provoking educational programs on issues of the day including misinformation, infrastructure, and broadband. And our student civic engagement programming continues to grow!

One exciting example of this growth is a new program called *All Angles*, a student-facing speaker and discussion program developed by the IOP in partnership with the University's Office of the Chancellor. This program was shaped with the input of over 1,400 students and is designed to demonstrate the value and utility of civil discourse on tough topics. Each session offers students a chance to hear from leading experts who hold divergent political perspectives on the topic. Thus far we have had national experts speak on the topics of socio-economic mobility, global energy demand and our environment, and U.S. relations with China. We heard from the former President of the American Enterprise Institute, the Bloomberg Professor of Public Leadership at Harvard and best-selling author, Arthur Brooks who discussed his book, *Love Your Enemies*. Student attendance at these sessions is unprecedented, and we believe it shows that students want access to opportunities that model this communication style.

As we all move forward into what is going to be a politically volatile year, we believe that partnerships and civil discourse will be more important than ever. We look forward to the year ahead and hope to have an opportunity to work with you soon.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samantha Balbier". The script is fluid and cursive.

Samantha Balbier
Director, Institute of Politics
Director, Elsie Hillman Civic Forum



Board of Fellows Strengthening Regional Collaboration

The Institute of Politics Board of Fellows met virtually in September 2022 and in May 2023 to review the past year's policy work and identify future IOP policy priorities.

The Institute's projects and programs were organized around three key pillars:

**Fostering
Economic
Mobility**

**Supporting
Healthy and
Resilient
Communities**

**Preserving
Democracy**

The Institute added the following leaders to its Board of Fellows in 2022 and 2023:



Erin Dalton
Director, Allegheny
County Department
of Human Services
Class of 2022



Laurel Randi
Executive Director,
McCune Foundation
Class of 2022



Jennifer Beer
President and
CEO, Leadership
Pittsburgh, Inc.
Class of 2023



Rosamaria Cristello
Founder and
Executive Director,
Latino Community
Center
Class of 2023



Majestic Lane
Chief Equity Officer,
Allegheny Conference
on Community
Development
Class of 2023



Gregg Behr
Executive Director,
The Grable Foundation
Class of 2023



Issues identified as critical to the region include:

- Retention of people and population growth
- Racial and socio-economic inequality
- Equitable access to high-quality education
- Affordable housing
- The mismatch between population and infrastructure
- Gun violence
- The growing wealth inequality gap
- Maternal mortality and postpartum care
- Health disparities in communities of color
- Homelessness
- Family caregiving
- Downtown vibrancy
- High-quality child care
- After school programs
- Workforce development
- Improved public transit

Staff Announcements

Welcome to the IOP!



Dr. Tasha Peacock is the Institute of Politics' Assistant Director of Student Programs and Community Outreach and has served in this role since May 2022. Tasha is deeply connected to the Pitt student body and, over the course of her career, has demonstrated equally strong connections with the regional community. She currently manages nine programs under the Elsie Hillman Civic Forum. Tasha is the recipient of the 2022 Chancellor's Staff Award for Community Engagement.



Kay Schachner (they/them/theirs) is the Student Program Coordinator for the Institute of Politics. Kay brings a diverse skill set to the team, with experience amplifying Youth voice as a gender studies graduate assistant, teaching artist, and music therapist in both medical and community settings. Kay holds a BA in Music, is in the thesis stage of receiving a Master of Music Therapy from Slippery Rock University and plans to pursue doctoral study in the social sciences in the future. A strong passion for social justice advocacy, mental health promotion, and community building shines through in their work.



Halen Sav joined the IOP as a Policy Analyst. She graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a dual degree in Political Science and Economics. Since then, she has held a variety of positions within the PA House of Representatives, working as a research analyst, then committee staff for the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, and finally with the Allegheny County delegation of House members. She brings expertise in an array of issues, including health and human services, insurance, local government, and municipal services, and she recently helped to establish the bipartisan, bicameral Crime Prevention Caucus within the legislature.

Patti Rice is the Administrative Manager of the Institute of Politics. While a native of Johnstown, Patti spent most of her adult life in Birmingham, Alabama. In 1998 she co-founded Hands on Birmingham, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to connect willing volunteers to various needs throughout the greater Birmingham metropolitan area. Patti was recognized as one of Birmingham's "Top 40 under 40" in 2000. She also received the Community Service Award from the Procter & Gamble Global Alumni Association and the President's Volunteer Service Award. In 2015, Patti was one of ten women honored with the United Way of Central Alabama DIVAS (Developing Initiatives and Values Among Sisters) Bold Move awards. She also served as Director of the MBA Program at The University of Alabama.



Patti holds a Bachelor's degree in Marketing from The University of Alabama and an MBA from the Harvard Graduate School of Business. Her two young-adult children are Patti's greatest pride and joy. She is thrilled to be a part of the Institute of Politics team.



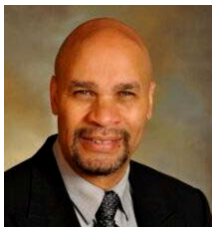
PARTNERING TO ADVANCE PUBLIC POLICY

Pathways to Opportunity: Dual Enrollment and Pre-apprenticeships in Pennsylvania



In December 2022, the Institute of Politics Task Force on Equity in Dual Enrollment and Pre-apprenticeship Programming released its final report, *Pathways to Opportunity: Expanding and Aligning College and Career Readiness Opportunities in Pennsylvania*.

Led by co-chairs Dr. Stan Thompson, formerly of the Heinz Endowments, and Pennsylvania State Senator Camera Bartolotta, the task force met throughout 2021 and into 2022 with facilitation from national consultant Alex Perry from the College in High School Alliance to examine equitable dual enrollment policy across states and make Pennsylvania-specific recommendations.



Dr. Stan Thompson



Sen. Camera Bartolotta



Alex Perry

As this work started during the COVID-19 pandemic, the task force met virtually throughout its lifespan. This enabled the Institute to form new partnerships and engage with statewide entities like the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges. Representatives from these organizations paired their considerable policy expertise alongside on-the-ground practitioners at the secondary and postsecondary levels. The resulting report provides eleven policy recommendations that articulate a vision for state-level support for expanding access to and equity in dual enrollment programming.



[VIEW REPORT](#)

Recommendations

- 1 Launch a state-supported task force to develop principles for Pennsylvania's dual enrollment system
- 2 Continue to expand public reporting of dual enrollment data
- 3 Create a formal dual enrollment advisory council to provide input on developing statewide policy & appoint staff at PDE to manage it
- 4 Encourage NACEP accreditation for concurrent enrollment programs
- 5 Establish a model partnership agreement for PA dual enrollment programs
- 6 Create a dual enrollment scholarship
- 7 Require school districts to inform students annually about advanced coursework opportunities
- 8 Survey Pennsylvania high schools to understand instructor capacity issues
- 9 Work with the Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators and career and technical educators to determine a streamlined path for career professionals who are interested in becoming educators
- 10 Create a statewide landing page for interested dual enrollment students and families
- 11 Develop explainer resources for school counselors to improve dual enrollment awareness

The report also provides an update on the role of pre-apprenticeships in Pennsylvania in providing career exploration, training, and, in some cases, credit-earning opportunities for high school students. Expansion of these programs can provide new pathways for individuals to family-sustaining careers while filling critical gaps in Pennsylvania's workforce.

When done well and systematically, dual enrollment has demonstrated benefits for students including a greater likelihood of graduating high school, enrolling in postsecondary education, and persisting in postsecondary education. These benefits are even greater for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, underrepresented populations, and those who would be first generation college students, making it even more powerful of a tool for schools looking to increase equity in academic achievement.

While these recommendations are an important first step, Pennsylvania has a long way to go on the journey to establishing state policy that supports these programs, and the Institute will continue to work with regional, state, and national partners to educate stakeholders around the need for these systemic reforms.

Over the summer, the PA General Assembly passed Act 55 of 2022, an omnibus education bill that required all public high schools in Pennsylvania to form an agreement with at least one postsecondary institution to provide dual enrollment for their students. While a step towards increasing access for students, the law does not provide for the additional elements necessary to ensure equitable access for all students and provides the impetus for the IOP to continue its work in this area. The IOP continues to work with state legislators and stakeholders from the Task Force and beyond to inform discussions about legislative and administrative changes affecting Pennsylvania's dual enrollment programming.

Pennsylvania Task Force on Equity in Dual Enrollment and Pre-apprenticeship Programs

The Honorable Camera Bartolotta*

Caucus Secretary
Pennsylvania Senate

Ms. Jamie Baxter

Executive Director
Allies for Children

Dr. Quintin Bullock

President
Community College of Allegheny County

Ms. Elizabeth Bolden

Former President & CEO
Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges

Ms. Lisa Campbell

Dean of Workforce Development
Butler County Community College

Ms. Melanie Claxton

Senior Program Officer
Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation

Mr. Michael Dotts

Higher Education Specialist
PA Department of Education

Ms. Ami Gatts

President
Washington-Greene County Job Training Agency

Dr. Michael Giazzoni

Director, College in High School program
University of Pittsburgh

Dr. John Goberish

Dean — Workforce Development
and Continuing Education
Community College of Beaver County

Dr. Gabriella Gonzalez

Program Officer
Richard King Mellon Foundation

Dr. Vera Krekanova

Chief Research Officer
Allegheny Conference on Community Development

Dr. Jeffrie Mallory

Executive Vice President and COO
Saint Vincent College

Dr. Esohe Osai

Assistant Professor of Practice, School of Education,
University of Pittsburgh, and Program Director,
Justice Scholars Institute

Dr. Stanley Thompson*

Former Senior Program Director, Education and
Executive Director, Pittsburgh Readiness Institute
The Heinz Endowments

Mr. John Tkach

Executive Director
Keystone Development Partnership

Dr. Jason Watkins

Assistant Director/Principal
A.W. Beattie Career Center

The Honorable Lindsey Williams

Democratic Chair, Education Committee
Senate of Pennsylvania

Sister Linda Yankoski

Chief Executive Officer
Holy Family Institute

**committee co-chair*

Advancing College and Career Readiness in Pennsylvania through Equitable Dual Enrollment Policy, Practice, and Research

Sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics Task Force on Equity in Dual Enrollment and Pre-apprenticeship Programming

Monday, March 27, 2023

University Club, Ballroom B

PROGRAM AGENDA

Welcome and introductions

- Briana Mihok, Assistant Director of Policy Programs, Institute of Politics

Pathways to Opportunity: Policy opportunities for dual enrollment in Pennsylvania

- Dr. Stan Thompson, Senior Program Director, Education, The Heinz Endowments and Creator of and Executive Advisor to the Readiness Institute
- Mr. Alex Perry, Policy Advisor, College in High School Alliance and Foresight Law + Policy

Best Practices in Dual Enrollment: Secondary perspectives

- Dr. Nathan Forbes, Dean of Academics, Jeannette City School District
- Dr. Jeff Ingel, Assistant Principal, Greater Latrobe Senior High School
- Dr. Katharine Roche, Academic Principal, West Allegheny High School

Best Practices in Dual Enrollment: Postsecondary perspectives

- Dr. Michael Giazzoni, Director, College in High School, University of Pittsburgh
- Dr. Esohe Osai, Program Director, Justice Scholars Institute and Assistant Professor, University of Pittsburgh School of Education
- Ms. Karina Chavez, Executive Director, Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education

Workshop: Opportunities and Challenges in Dual Enrollment Program Design and Implementation

Preparing for the Future: A research agenda for advancing dual enrollment

- Mr. Alex Perry, Policy Advisor, College in High School Alliance and Foresight Law + Policy
- Dr. Gregory Kienzl, Director of Data & Impact Measurement, Office of Engagement and Community Affairs, University of Pittsburgh

Closing Remarks

Dual Enrollment Promising Practices Research Project Q & A Session



Greg Kienzl and Alex Perry with Sara Innamorato



Secondary Panel — Nathan Forbes, Jeff Ingel, and Katharine Roche



Postsecondary Panel — Mike Giazzoni, Esohe Osai, and Karina Chavez



Stephanie Lewis, Director of Relationships, Remake Learning

In early spring, approximately 100 professionals from K-12 and higher education and the nonprofit community gathered in Oakland to learn from experts and each other about how to equitably advance dual enrollment programming in Pennsylvania. The program, hosted by the Institute of Politics Task Force on Equitable Dual Enrollment and Pre-apprenticeship Programming, served as the next step in the Institute's five-year journey examining and seeking ways to address deficiencies in the state's system of support for dual enrollment and followed the release of the Task Force report, that provided policy recommendations for creating such a system within Pennsylvania. [VIEW THE REPORT](#)

Because of the complexity of dual enrollment — it doesn't fit cleanly into secondary or postsecondary education, making elements like funding, program standards, and transferability challenging — more research is needed to determine what effective programming looks like in different conditions. To discuss research needs and opportunities for the future, Perry joined Pitt staff member and researcher Gregory Kienzl for a conversation about how to move the research agenda forward.

The program closed with the announcement of a special opportunity for school districts in SWPA to participate in ground-level research on effective practices to expand access to and equity in dual enrollment.

[Read more about this project below.](#)



Alex Perry

As the consultant who facilitated the work of the Task Force, keynote speaker Alex Perry provided an overview of the report recommendations and how they aligned with national best practices

identified by his organization, the College in High School Alliance. Next, panelists from both secondary and postsecondary education shared their experiences with dual enrollment, from the implementation of successful programs to the challenges faced in expanding access to underrepresented populations.

This event also marked the retirement of long-time board member and Task Force chair Stan Thompson. Throughout his career, Thompson served as the co-chair of the Education Policy Committee, later assuming the role of Task Force co-chair as well with Senator Camera Bartolotta. The Institute is grateful to Thompson for his years of service and leadership.

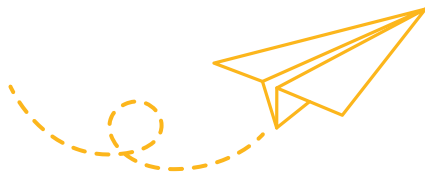


Stan Thompson

Dual Enrollment Promising Practices Pilot Program

In May 2023, a specially convened group of experts selected three local school districts to participate in a pilot project that expands an existing dual enrollment program within the district to include a previously underrepresented group of students. To qualify, school districts had to provide a theory of change that they believed would result in expanded access within their district, and also demonstrate that they had access to data that would enable the measurement of progress towards their identified goal. Financial support for these initiatives and for the research is provided by the

Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation. The three districts participating are **Charleroi Area** (Washington County), **Franklin Regional** (Westmoreland County), and **Northgate** (Allegheny County). Dr. Jen Iriti of the University of Pittsburgh Learning Research and Development Center is leading the research, which is currently underway. A report detailing the findings of this pilot project, expected in December 2024, will be used to inform dual enrollment policy at the state level and assist other districts in determining how to develop their own programs equitably.



PARTNERING TO ADVANCE PUBLIC POLICY

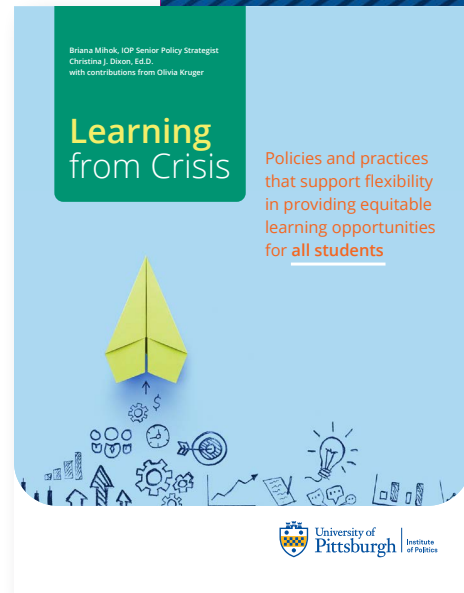
Developing More Flexible and Equitable K-12 Education Systems through Personalized Learning Policy and Practice

When the COVID-19 pandemic upended traditional K-12 education in 2020, the Institute of Politics Education Policy Committee examined the response of school districts to the necessary transitions in instructional practices.

Based on the practices of schools who transitioned quickly and effectively during the crisis, the committee developed recommendations for changes to state and local policies that would increase flexibility for school districts to better meet the needs of all students. These recommendations, released along with a report in July 2021, were framed through principles of personalized learning.

[READ THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE FULL REPORT HERE.](#) 

Throughout 2022 and 2023, the Institute continued to provide education and support around this issue, visiting Harrisburg in October 2022 and meeting with key House and Senate members and staff to discuss the report's recommendations. The IOP also continued to partner with Remake Learning and KnowledgeWorks on their efforts to expand personalized learning practices and policy on the ground, primarily through education of school-based personnel. IOP staff also participate in the Personalized Learning Working Group, established by Remake Learning and supported by KnowledgeWorks, which is tasked with charting a path for personalized learning in the southwestern PA region, from the development of ambassadors and storytellers at the community level to the establishment of relationships with legislators who are invested in ensuring all students in Pennsylvania are given the support they need to thrive.



Keeping Students at the Center Post-COVID

On May 19, 2022, the Institute of Politics Education Policy Committee collaborated with KnowledgeWorks and Remake Learning to host “**Keeping Students at the Center Post-COVID,**” an event designed to bring legislators together with school administrators and education advocates to discuss the future of learning.

The program featured:

- A discussion of the policy recommendations from the Education Policy Committee report *Learning from Crisis*
- Perspectives on the future of learning from legislators and school superintendents featured in the report
- Remarks from Anne Olson, director of state advocacy for KnowledgeWorks, and Tyler Samstag, director of Remake Learning, who provided direction for the work moving forward
- Tabletop conversations around how legislators and school administrators can work together in the future to better support students post-pandemic

Key objectives for the program included encouraging relationship building between legislators and key education leaders in southwestern Pennsylvania and developing a shared understanding of personalized learning among stakeholders.



Anne Olson, KnowledgeWorks



State Representatives Lori Mizgorski and Valerie Gaydos



State Representative Aerion Abney



Former ARIN IU director Jim Wagner with Niki Collins, legislative assistant for Rep. Marci Mustello; Dr. Brian White, superintendent, Butler Area School District; and Tyler Samstag, director, Remake Learning



State Representative Dan Miller



Dr. Stan Thompson (right) with Dr. Jeff Hadley, superintendent, Avonworth School District



PARTNERING TO ADVANCE PUBLIC POLICY

Criminal Justice Reform



Progress Panel

Alfred Blumstein

J. Erik Jonsson University Professor of Urban Systems and Operations Research, Emeritus
Carnegie Mellon University

Kenya Boswell

Senior Vice President of Community Affairs
Highmark Health

Quintin Bullock

President
Community College of Allegheny County

Leon Ford

Survivor and Activist
Leon Ford Speaks

Anna Hollis

Executive Director
Amachi Pittsburgh

Mark Nordenberg*

Chair of the Institute of Politics and Chancellor Emeritus
University of Pittsburgh

Matt Smith

President
Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce

Fred Thieman*

Former U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania
Former President, Buhl Foundation

Taili Thompson

Director of Violence Prevention Initiative
Operation Better Block

Michael Yonas

Vice President for Community Partnerships & Learning
The Pittsburgh Foundation

**Progress Panel co-chair*

Since 2015, the IOP has worked with the leadership of Allegheny County on criminal justice reform.

The goal remains to create a culture of improvement to foster a more equitable and cost-effective system without sacrificing public safety. Through this collaboration, the County has made improvements including increasing the provision of representation in preliminary arraignments, improved case disposition time, and the creation of more robust crisis services.

Throughout 2022, the Institute focused on engaging the newly elected administration of Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey and his chief of staff, former PA Representative Jake Wheatley, in the IOP efforts to understand the drivers of racial disparities throughout the system. With the new administration’s support and encouragement, the IOP is proud to say that the research involves an examination of law enforcement, pretrial detention, sentencing, courts, and probation and parole data, which have been made available to the RAND Corporation who is conducting the quantitative analysis. This project involves a multi-layered engagement strategy involving several working groups of internal stakeholders along with a Community Progress Panel. The final report will be submitted to the IOP by the end of 2023, and the IOP looks forward to sharing the actionable policy and procedural recommendations that will be developed to make positive improvements throughout the system.



Partnering to Protect Children from Gun Violence

In 2020, amid a year of unprecedented events, firearms surpassed motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of death among children for the first time in United States history. This harrowing development in the gun violence epidemic served as the impetus for the Institute of Politics to find ways in which we can affect positive change in this fraught policy landscape.

As part of this desire to act, the IOP partnered with The Pittsburgh Foundation and the United Way of Southwestern PA (UWSWPA), two other civic organizations historically dedicated to finding non-partisan solutions to regional problems. Throughout 2022-23, the organizations worked to develop a series of forums designed to enhance the community's understanding of the issue and mobilize a collaborative response.

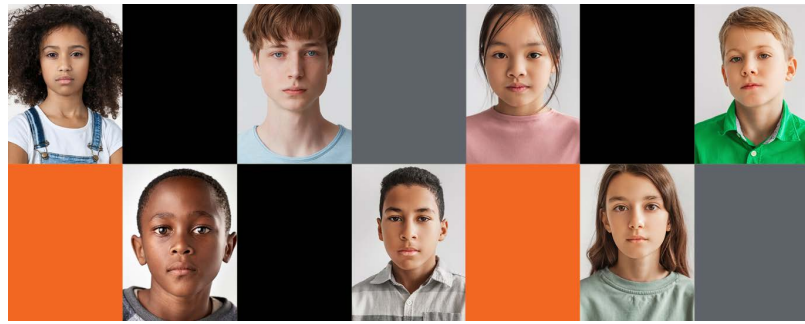


Forum guest

The first of these forums, entitled "Invisible Wounds: Identifying and Addressing the Trauma that Gun Violence Inflicts on our Children," was presented by The Pittsburgh Foundation in collaboration with Pittsburgh Arts and Lectures on Tuesday, November 15th, 2022. This forum was led by John Woodrow Cox, a Washington Post reporter and author of *Children*

Under Fire, a book of intimate reporting on the trauma inflicted on children who have been deeply impacted by gun violence. Three panelists also provided a local perspective and context for the trauma firearm violence has inflicted on children across the Southwestern Pennsylvania region, and the ways in which communities are mobilizing to address this trauma.

[More information on The Pittsburgh Foundation's November 2022 event can be found here.](#)



The subsequent forums, held in 2023 and presented by the IOP and UWSWPA, respectively, brought together nationally respected researchers, leading pediatric and public health practitioners, civic leaders, and community-based non-profit organizations to discuss policies and practices that can reduce fatalities, serious injuries, and emotional trauma among children that are caused by gun violence.

The IOP's forum, entitled "Saving our Children from the Epidemic of Gun Violence," was held on April 18, 2023, in the Museum Lab space within the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh. This location heightened the message of protecting future generations from what has become the nation's leading public health crisis facing children and youth. While the statistics regarding gun death are alarming, keynote speakers Dr. Moira Szilagyi, immediate past president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and Dr. Rosanna Smart, coleader of RAND's Gun Policy in America initiative, reflected in their remarks that this problem can be addressed through both a public health approach and by enacting evidence-based policy reforms. Dr. Szilagyi identified several steps that parents and health care providers could take in preventing gun violence, including asking caregivers and neighbors if guns are kept in the home and how they are stored. This strategy was echoed by Dr. Smart, who indicated in her remarks that safe storage laws were some of the most effective in terms of preventing gun deaths among children. Other policies that have demonstrated effectiveness on gun violence, according to data



Dr. Moira Szilagyi



Dr. Rosanna Smart

analyzed through RAND's gun policy initiative, include raising the minimum age to purchase a firearm and mandatory waiting periods for gun purchases.

[View the IOP's April 2023 forum here.](#)



Pastor Tim Smith

The keynote speakers were joined by a panel of community representatives whose work has been shaped by gun violence in various ways. Dr. Liz Miller, a pediatrician and researcher affiliated with UPMC Children's Hospital, reflected on the propensity of gun violence to occur within populations afflicted by other negative social determinants of health and encouraged the community to think broadly and holistically about how to provide safe, nurturing environments for children. Rev Tim Smith, who leads Hazelwood's Center of Life, seeks to do that through the out-of-school time and community-based programming that his Center offers. He noted that, as a pastor, he has presided over too many funerals for young people who were robbed of their futures because of guns, and offered a solution based on building trust and positive relationships within and between communities. Dr. Jamil Bey, founder and CEO of the UrbanKind Institute, stressed the importance of recognizing gun violence as everyone's problem, one that is not unique to particular zip codes or neighborhoods. The trauma and fear of gun violence

perpetuates society and our families as a whole, making the public health approach and response applicable.

In response to this program, the Institute will seek opportunities to address gun violence through the framework of public health by bringing together those working on this issue at the University of Pittsburgh and elsewhere in the region.

In June 2023, the United Way presented the third program in this series, "Mobilizing Communities for Action: How Organizations Can Come Together to Prevent Gun Violence," at the Tower at PNC Plaza in downtown Pittsburgh. This event highlighted the ways in which community organizations, government entities, businesses, and individual citizens could partner to address gun violence. Keynote speakers Ed Gainey, Mayor, City of Pittsburgh; Anthony Smith, Executive Director, Cities United; Sean Garrett, CEO, United Way of Metro Chicago, and Josh Fleitman, Campaign Director, CeaseFirePA participated in a discussion moderated by Anna Hollis Kander, who serves as the executive director of Amachi Pittsburgh, an organization dedicated to helping children who have one or both parents incarcerated thrive through mentorship and other supports.

[View the United Way's June 2023 event online here.](#)

All three organizations have committed to continuing this conversation going forward. More information about future efforts will be coming soon.

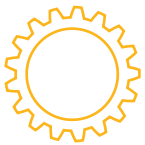
Pennsylvania Broadband Symposium



On April 22, 2022, the Institute of Politics collaborated with a number of other University of Pittsburgh departments as well as external regional partners to shed light on both the technological divides made visible and exacerbated by the pandemic and the opportunities present to address them through expanded and more equitable access to broadband. The half-day virtual symposium featured remarks from policy makers at the federal, state, and local levels; representatives from organizations involved in the deployment of broadband; and individuals from higher education.

A primary goal of the symposium was to establish a baseline of information for attendees around expansion of broadband in Pennsylvania and prepare the region to move forward. IOP Chair Mark Nordenberg facilitated a discussion called "Policy Solutions for the Digital Divide," with panelists Kyle Kopko, Executive Director, Center for Rural Pennsylvania; (former) State Representative Pam Snyder; and Erin Wachter, Deputy Secretary for Policy and Planning, Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

 [VIEW THE SESSION](#)



25th Annual IOP Elected Officials Retreat: **Marshaling Regional Assets to Build Shared Opportunities for Growth**



Dr. Esohe Osai, University of Pittsburgh School of Education; Tim Smith, Center of Life; and Tamara Collier, Office of the U.S. Attorney, Western District of Pennsylvania

The Institute of Politics 25th Annual Elected Officials Retreat was a return to the traditional in-person gathering, bringing together elected officials, public agency leaders, and non-profit and business decision-makers.

This year's retreat theme reflected the belief that our region is most effective when all of us work together. Over the course of two days, over 150 civic leaders, including the IOP's Board of Fellows members, policy committee members, and elected officials, were joined by national, state, and local experts to discuss regional priorities related to education and workforce development, inclusive economic development and community resiliency, and the advancement of equitable broadband across the Commonwealth.



Butler County Commissioner Kevin Boozel, Venango County Commissioner Chip Abramovic, and Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald



Growing Fairly: How to Build Opportunity and Equity in Workforce Development



Stephen Goldsmith, *Derek Bok Professor of the Practice of Urban Policy, Harvard Kennedy School of Government*

Kate Markin Coleman, *Principal and Founder, ias Advising, LLC; retired executive vice president, chief strategy and advancement officer, YMCA of the USA*

Stephen Goldsmith and Kate Markin Coleman shared their journey of approaching the issue of workforce development with the belief that political labels do not apply to growing a workforce equitably.

Citing the research they conducted that would later serve as the basis for their book, *Growing Fairly*, Goldsmith and Markin Coleman explained how contradictions embedded in the United States economy and widespread misalignment in the labor market require policymakers and leaders to think more expansively about what defines “skills.”

They set out on a search to find workforce policies and programs that work and, following hundreds of conversations with the directors, staff, and participants of these programs, developed the following recommendations:

1. Think expansively about skills and players.
2. Apply lessons from high performing programs.
3. Adopt skills as a medium of exchange and build necessary scaffolding.
4. Rethink the definition of scale, focusing more on collaboration than resources.
5. Rewrite conventional narratives.

Goldsmith and Markin Coleman emphasized that the inequities embedded in the current workforce development system necessitate new approaches that use different language and definitions and are sensitive to the backgrounds and experiences of their potential workforce, so that people can overcome barriers and access opportunities throughout the region.

Pathways to Prosperity and a Stronger Democracy



John C. Austin, *Director, Michigan Economic Center and Nonresident Senior Fellow, Brookings Institute*

John Austin began his keynote by illustrating the shared values that have shaped the Upper Midwest region throughout history, including education, free labor, civil rights, religious freedom, local government, and tremendous natural resources. This foundation, he explained, is the key to understanding how the region has transformed in the wake of globalization, competition, industrial decline, and population loss.

This historical “Rust Belt” that once dominated the agro-industrial era has slowly morphed into a “Tech Belt” that, while beneficial for many cities including

Pittsburgh, has essentially created two Midwests. Where industrial and manufacturing communities have turned an economic corner, the residents are optimistic and forward-looking. But where once-mighty industrial communities remain in decline, residents are anxious and responsive to polarizing political messages from both ends of the political spectrum.

Comparing this reality to similar stories from Northern England and Northern France, Austin stressed that the economic transformation of America’s industrial heartlands can and must be accelerated to reach more places and provide more people with renewed economic opportunity. To do so, it is vital that each part of the region leverage its own unique assets in order to become more resilient to demographic and economic change and embrace the future.

Coordinating State and Local Efforts to Ensure Broadband Access for All



Andy Berke, Administrator for Rural Utility Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, formerly Special Representative for Broadband, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

Andy Berke spoke about the Rural Utilities Service Communications Programs and their shared goals of connecting rural communities and spurring economic growth in an equitable manner.

Building on his experience as the former mayor of Chattanooga, Tennessee, he explained that simply having high-speed internet connection is not enough if nothing is being done with it. More importantly, the connections and devices need to be available and utilized by entire families to ensure fairness and participation across the region. In order to capitalize on the benefits of high-speed internet, digital equity in access, resources and skills, and devices must be a top priority.

Finally, Berke highlighted the historic and transformative funding that the federal government has begun to invest in broadband expansion, such as \$14 billion toward affordable connectivity, \$2.75 billion for digital equity, and other grants targeting distance learning and telemedicine, all of which will compel Pennsylvania to further prioritize and implement a broadband expansion and digital equity agenda. To take advantage of this funding, municipal governments in the commonwealth will need to address capacity and fragmentation issues.



University of Pittsburgh Chancellor Pat Gallagher (pictured here with **Chatham University President David Finegold**) provided closing remarks following the Thursday afternoon session.

Envisioning Pittsburgh's Future



Ed Gainey, Mayor, City of Pittsburgh

The second day of the retreat began with an address from Pittsburgh Mayor, Ed Gainey, who provided insight into the challenges and initiatives from his first year in office.

Echoing the priorities cited in his inaugural budget address, Mayor Gainey reiterated the need for critical investments in infrastructure, transportation, and public safety to create opportunity and improve the quality of life for all Pittsburgh residents. Speaking on his administration's holistic approach to violence reduction and prevention, the mayor highlighted the importance of partnering with communities and developing a robust system of trauma-informed services to support victims of crime and contain violence before it spreads.

Mayor Gainey also pointed to workforce development and job creation as the key to prosperity for many vulnerable and marginalized residents. Building on his experience in public service and community development, the mayor stressed the need for equity in all of the city's policy endeavors to ensure a seat at the table for our communities and neighbors who have been left out of the conversation for far too long.

Local Solutions: Specialized Sessions

Session #1: Redesigning Education and Workforce Systems in PA to Meet the Needs of Tomorrow's Students

MODERATOR:

Jackie Foor, Executive Director,
Consortium for Public Education

PANELISTS:

The Honorable Jay Costa, Democratic
Leader, Pennsylvania Senate

The Honorable Jason Ortitay, Chair,
Special Education Subcommittee,
and Member, Pennsylvania House of
Representatives

Dr. Brian White, Superintendent,
Butler Area School District

Building from remarks made by the keynote speakers from the first day of the retreat, this specialized session discussed the current education and workforce landscape, the challenges facing policymakers and school districts, and the need for a system that values skills, prepares students for the modern workforce, and utilizes hard data to inform education strategies.

In his opening remarks, Representative Ortitay spoke about the education initiatives he has pursued at the state level, including investments in early literacy, providing online course catalogues, funding mental health services for students, and ensuring that schools focus on career development.

Dr. White outlined several Butler School District initiatives that, if properly scaled, could address some of the education and workforce challenges across the commonwealth. These include dual enrollment programs that enable students to obtain college credits while in high school and pre-apprenticeship programs that expose students to the workforce in a supportive way.

Senator Costa echoed Rep. Ortitay's call for increased funding for mental health supports, and emphasized the need for greater student exposure to future workforce opportunities. He also stressed the need for equity in education initiatives and ensuring that vital resources are available to all school districts.

Jackie Foor asked the panelists for examples of concrete steps that can be taken at the state and local levels to improve Pennsylvania's workforce development systems. Rep. Ortitay cited the importance of early literacy as the foundation of quality education, and Dr. White spoke to the need for better training programs and higher teacher salaries to retain quality instructors. Sen. Costa agreed with his fellow panelists,

stressing the need to invest in early education, address the teacher shortage, and work more closely with community partners when developing plans and measures.

All three panelists agreed that a crucial next step in the process of improving the education and workforce system in Pennsylvania is to bring locally developed plans to state legislators to build a coalition for support and action.



*Sen. Jay Costa, Dr. Brian White,
and Rep. Jason Ortitay*

Local Solutions: Specialized Sessions

Session #2: Effectively and Fairly Meeting Diverse Regional Needs

MODERATOR:

Mark Nordenberg, Chancellor Emeritus and Institute of Politics Chair, University of Pittsburgh

PANELISTS:

Jen Giovannitti, President, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation

Tim White, Senior Vice President, Business Development & Strategy, RIDC

Davitt Woodwell, President, Pennsylvania Environmental Council

Corresponding to John C. Austin’s keynote presentation, this session highlighted the need for equity and collaboration among diverse community partners as our region continues to evolve from a “rust belt” to a “tech belt.”

Tim White shared data on regional economic trends, particularly the continued loss of manufacturing jobs, a lack of outside industrial investment, and Pennsylvania underperforming against neighboring states. He also noted the decades-long decline in state economic development funding as one of the reasons the Commonwealth has fallen behind its peers.

Next, Jen Giovannitti outlined the work that the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation is undertaking to ensure that rural communities are included in regional economic development initiatives. Citing the fact that rural communities are systematically awarded less money from grants and face many obstacles when competing for federal dollars, she went on to explain the role that philanthropic institutions can play in uplifting rural regions and ensuring they have the resources needed to benefit from public investment.



Speaking from his experience at the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Davitt Woodwell emphasized the importance of respecting environmental, rural, and diversity needs when capitalizing on state and federal funding opportunities. Doing so, he explained, would also ensure that we are taking advantage of Pennsylvania’s many resources, such as our skilled workforce and outdoor recreation economy.



Davitt Woodwell

The theme of building on the region’s historical and existing assets was present throughout the discussion moderated by Mark Nordenberg, particularly when it comes to driving innovation in the region. The panelists acknowledged that one of the greatest barriers to regional economic development is our fractured government structure and longstanding infrastructure deficits. They all agreed that greater social cohesion and inclusivity will be necessary to overcome these deep-rooted challenges.

Local Solutions: Specialized Sessions

Session #3: Shoring Up the PA Plan for Broadband to Support Economic Opportunities for All Pennsylvanians

MODERATOR:

Angela Siefer, Executive Director, National Digital Inclusion Alliance

PANELISTS:

Brandon Carson, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority

Kyle Kopko, Executive Director, Center for Rural Pennsylvania

Heidi Norman, Director of Innovation, City of Pittsburgh

Expanding on Andy Berke's broadband presentation from the previous day, this specialized session provided an outline of high-speed internet connectivity as it exists in Pennsylvania today, laid out the challenges and opportunities for improving this connectivity, and discussed a framework for capitalizing on historic broadband investments in a way that also meets our diverse regional needs.

Brandon Carson began by providing background on the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority and its mission to foster and create equitable, affordable, and robust high-speed broadband internet infrastructure and services that connects all Pennsylvanians for the 21st century and beyond. He also laid out four core challenges facing our ability to access broadband, including inadequate infrastructure, insufficient access to devices and technology, digital equity and affordability, and digital literacy. Finally, he provided an overview of the authority's next steps for utilizing federal dollars to implement a statewide broadband expansion plan.

Speaking from a more local perspective, Heidi Norman discussed digital access in the urban environment and the ways in which digital equity extends beyond immediate access to broadband internet. She stated that identifying and closing significant digital equity gaps will not only make Pittsburgh and the surrounding region more economically competitive, but ensure that digital inclusion efforts are sustainable for generations to come as well.

Shifting to a rural context, Kyle Kopko presented data from research conducted by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania and provided background on the

center's legislative mandate to administer grants and maintain a database on rural conditions and needs. With regards to broadband connectivity in Pennsylvania, he stressed that availability does not equal access and that, while the percentage of rural households with internet access is increasing, there is still a significant digital gap between rural and urban Pennsylvania. He also stressed that while broadband expansion is a priority across the region, it is important to consider the unique obstacles facing rural communities especially for the elderly and people with disabilities, even when funding and technical assistance are available.

Given her experience at the national level, moderator Angela Siefer asked the panelists about strategies for deploying the dollars being invested at the state and federal levels. The panelists acknowledged that successful implementation will require collaboration from coalitions of diverse stakeholders and that coordinating broadband expansion strategies needs to be a regional effort. The panelists reiterated the need to consider equity in digital inclusion strategies as closing the digital gaps in Pennsylvania will give marginalized communities equal footing to succeed in today's economy. Echoing the challenges mentioned in the other specialized sessions, the panelists cited local government capacity issues, fragmentation, and infrastructure deficits as major obstacles to equitable broadband expansion in Pennsylvania. Norman also challenged the commonwealth's "anti-muni" laws as a basis for limiting competition. She encouraged attendees to consider the long-term sustainability of broadband and the role of the public sector in ensuring equitable access.

Brandon Carson





Elsie Hillman Civic Forum

The Elsie Hillman Civic Forum (Elsie Forum) advances the ideals of social responsibility and public service by providing educational programs, research projects, and civic engagement and leadership development opportunities to students and community leaders. The academic and public engagement activities of the Elsie Forum align with the planned goals of the University of Pittsburgh to strengthen our community through service-oriented scholarship and mindful collaborations with strategic community partners.

[!\[\]\(eafc244b53721dd1ec133f0772f70fc7_img.jpg\) FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ELSIE HILLMAN CIVIC FORUM](#)

All Angles

[All Angles](#) is a speaker and discussion series that offers students an out-of-classroom opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of contemporary public policy issues and the variety of perspectives about those issues that coexist along today's political spectrum. The IOP has hosted sessions on topics such as climate change, economic opportunities, and civil discourse, and student participation in these programs continues to grow.



All Angles speakers and topics

February 2022

Missing in Plain Sight

A closer look at the people we overlook and misunderstand in our culture and the surprising common traits we all share.



Salena Zito
National Political Reporter



Manu Meel
CEO, Bridge USA



March 2022

Understanding Economic Opportunity/Equality

Students were presented with a thoughtful examination of progressive, moderate, and conservative points of view on the subject of economic equality and mobility featuring leading experts in the field of economics.



MODERATOR:

Dr. Kevin Kearns

Professor of Public and Nonprofit Management; Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA); University of Pittsburgh



SPEAKER:

Dr. Darrick Hamilton

Henry Cohen Professor of Economics and Urban Policy; The New School Milano



SPEAKER:

Dr. Scott Winship

Senior Fellow and Director of Poverty Studies; American Enterprise Institute

September 2022

Gain Strength from Our Differences

Dr. Arthur C. Brooks

Harvard Professor; Bestselling Author; and The Atlantic Columnist

Recognizing the passion that individuals bring to discussions of critical issues that impact those who we love and our communities. In preparation for the upcoming election season and the campaigns that are designed to divide, create acrimony, and further deepen political polarization, Brooks seeks to help readers get through this with self-care and respect for their fellow citizens. Arthur Brooks joined University of Pittsburgh students to discuss his book, *Love Your Enemies*, and his most recent work called *Live a Better Happier Life*. Through ancient wisdom and cutting-edge behavioral science, Brooks provided a roadmap to the prosperity that comes from choosing love and gaining strength from differences.





October 2022

The Global Demand for Energy and our Environment

The discussion for this program centered around how the global demand for energy is impacting our environment. Each speaker provided a brief overview of their work and roles in the fields of energy and sustainability. The speakers also offered their own professional perspectives while addressing student's concerns about climate change, energy demand, and the environment.



MODERATOR:
Dr. Aurora Sharrard
Executive Director of Sustainability; University of Pittsburgh



SPEAKER:
Dr. Paulina Jaramillo
Professor, Engineering and Public Policy, and Co-Director, Green Design Institute, Carnegie Mellon University



SPEAKER:
Dr. Scott Tinker
Director of the Bureau of Economic Geology, State Geologist of Texas; Professor holding the Allday Endowed Chair in the Jackson School of Geosciences at The University of Texas at Austin

April 2023

Managing the U.S. Relationship with China to Achieve Global Goals

Pitt students identified foreign policy as a key issue of interest, and the challenges that the U.S. government faces in developing foreign policy with relation to China are some of the most geopolitically complex. Human rights issues both within and outside of its borders are coupled with the deeply intertwined economies of the two nations. Students heard from experts who examined this issue from multiple perspectives.



MODERATOR:
Julia Santucci
Senior Lecturer in Intelligence Studies; Director, Johnson Institute for Responsible Leadership & the Frances Hesselbein Leadership Forum



SPEAKER:
Dr. Aaron L. Friedberg
Professor of Politics and International Affairs; Co-Director, Center for International Security Studies; Princeton University



SPEAKER:
Dr. Susan Shirk
Research Professor, Global Policy and Strategy; Director Emeritus, 21st Century China Center; University of California San Diego

Never a Spectator

The Never a Spectator Civic Engagement Forum is a unique opportunity for Pitt students to network with some of the region's most prominent leaders from government and politics, foundations, and the nonprofit and business community. Students join these visionaries and mentors for an evening and dinner reception devoted to sharing a vision for public service, inspiring action, and developing the pipeline of leadership needed to foster sustainable growth and regional transformation as Pittsburgh continues to evolve as one of America's premier cities.

During the event, students learn about the incredible legacy of Elsie Hillman and engage in small group discussions with the mentors at their tables to learn how they can jumpstart their own community involvement and make a positive impact in the region.

Driving Change Through Public Service and Social Entrepreneurism

Friday, November 11, 2022 | University Club

Keynote: Taking Big Leaps One Step at a Time with Leah Lizarondo, CEO and Co-Founder of 412 Food Rescue

Leah Lizarondo is the CEO and Co-Founder of 412 Food Rescue, a social enterprise with a technology, logistics, and civic engagement model that aims to fight hunger and promote sustainability by preventing perfectly good food from entering the waste stream and directly distributing to organizations that benefit those who are food insecure.



2022 Community Mentors

Samantha Balbier, *Director, University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics and Elsie Hillman Civic Forum*

Olivia Bennett, *Member, Allegheny County Council, District 13*

Carlos Carter, *President & CEO, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh*

Cara Ciminillo, *Executive Director, Trying Together*

Jo Clark, *Vice President, Value Based Care, Highmark Health*

Sloane Davidson, *Founder & CEO, Hello Neighbor*

John Denny, *Founder and Principal, Denny Civic Solutions*

Angela Garcia, *Executive Director, Global Links*

Christopher C. Heck, *President & CEO, Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce*

Elizabeth Heft, *Vice President of Operations, Adagio Health*

Kirk Holbrook, *Program Director - Gizmology, Deeplocal*

Shenay Jeffrey, *Director, Pittserves, University of Pittsburgh*

Emily Kinkead, *Member, PA House of Representatives, 20th District*

Sabrina Saunders Mosby, *President & CEO, Vibrant Pittsburgh*

Anette Nance, MSW, *Former Office Director, PA House of Representatives, 24th District*

Mark A Nordenberg, *Chancellor Emeritus, University of Pittsburgh*

Heidi Norman, *CIO & Director, Department of Innovation & Performance, City of Pittsburgh*

Michelle Pagano-Heck, *President & Owner, Nonprofit Talent*

Ken Regal, *Executive Director, Just Harvest*

Dr. Angela M. Reynolds, *CEO, YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh*

Dr. Kendra Janelle Ross, *Head of Social Impact, Duolingo*

Dr. David Sanchez, *Associate Director, Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation, University of Pittsburgh*

Beth Schwanke, JD, *Executive Director, Institute for Cyber Law, Policy, and Security, University of Pittsburgh*

Michelle Stewart, *Director, University of Pittsburgh Community Engagement Center (CEC)*

Erika Strassburger, *Member, Pittsburgh City Council, 8th District*

DaVaughn M. Vincent-Bryan, *Inaugural Director of Involvement and Student Unions, University of Pittsburgh*

Doris Carson Williams, *President & CEO, African American Chamber of Commerce*

Colleen Young, *Director of Government Affairs, Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank*

Internship and Seminar

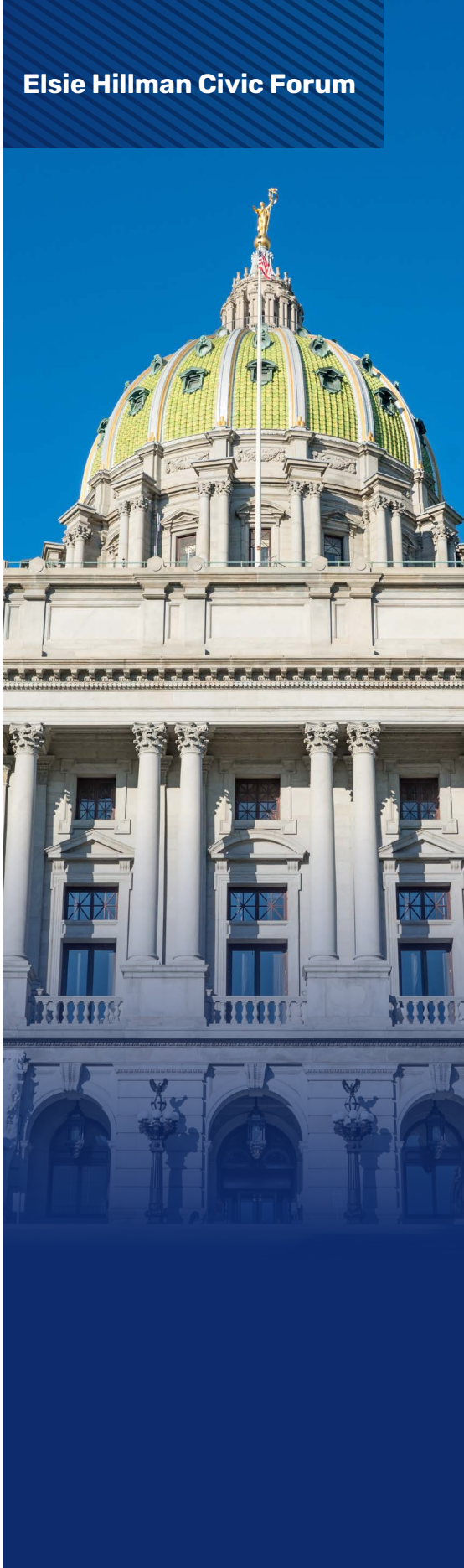
The internship and seminar course allows students to gain political experience while working with elected officials. The accompanying weekly seminar course is taught by two experienced government affairs professionals: Nello Giorgetti and Dennis McManus. The students earn four credits from Pitt’s Department of Political Science within the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences or the College of General Studies’ Public Service major.



The Fall 2022 Internship and Seminar class

Spring 2022 Student Placements

- Isaac Appel Pittsburgh City Councilman Bruce Kraus
- Stefan Bordeianu Congressman Conor Lamb
- Eleanor Forshaw State Representative Dan Frankel
- Michelle Furmanský Pittsburgh City Councilmember Deb Gross
- Claire Getz Pittsburgh City Councilman Daniel LaVelle
- Madelynn Lederer State Representative Emily Kinkead
- Alexandra Marvelous State Senator Lindsey Williams
- Tristan McClelland State Representative Austin Davis
- Drew Saglimben Congressman Mike Doyle
- Thomas Schmidt Pittsburgh City Councilman Bobby Wilson
- Sophia Shaprio State Senator Jay Costa
- Caleb Shook Pittsburgh City Councilman Corey O’Connor
- Vidya Surti U.S. Senator Bob Casey
- Fatema Traore State Representative Nick Pisciotano
- Dominic Victoria State Representative Dan Deasy



Dykstra awardees

The Dykstra Award was established to memorialize the contributions of Dr. Dykstra as one of the founders of the program and co-instructor for the first 15 years of the program's existence. Each semester, one student from the internship and seminar class is selected for this prestigious honor. The student is one who, in the instructors' evaluation, best demonstrates the qualities that distinguished Dr. Dykstra as a scholar and government affairs professional.



Delaney Lindberg is a Communication Rhetoric major with a minor in Political Science. She interned with Senator Jay Costa in the Internship & Seminar course, where she assisted with social media, press releases, and other office communications. The instructors cited Delaney's exceptional writing skills as one of the reasons she received the Dykstra award.



Matthew Moore is a Politics and Philosophy major who has served on the Pitt Student Government Board. He interned with State Representative Dan Deasy on the West End in the Internship & Seminar course, where

he helped constituents navigate community concerns. Matthew's ultimate goal is to become a prosecutor within a district attorney's office.



Madelynn Lederer is pursuing a dual major in Public and Professional Writing and Political Science at Pitt. She served as vice-chair of the Student Government Board and is also a member of the Blue

and Gold Society. After graduation, she hopes to attend law school. During the Spring 2022 semester, she interned with State Representative Emily Kinkead.

Fall 2022 Student Placements

Nithya Achanta	State Representative Dan Frankel
William Allen	State Representative Valerie Gaydos
Julianna Asuncion	State Representative Nick Pisciotano
Justin Bouthillette	Pittsburgh City Councilman Corey O'Connor
Charles Burke	Mayor Ed Gainey
Tristan Cavaness	State Representative Sara Innamorato
Dalton Coppola	State Senator Jay Costa
Alexander Hodge	State Senator Lindsey Williams
Andrew Kocs	State Representative Emily Kinkead
Ciara Markoski	Venkat for State Representative (campaign)
Lili Martin	Caliguiri Group
Nathan McLaughlin	Pittsburgh City Councilmember Deb Gross
Matthew Moore	State Representative Dan Deasy
Jordan Thompson	State Representative Aerion Abney
Frances Troiano	Pittsburgh City Councilmember Erika Strassburger
Yitian Wang	Pittsburgh City Councilman Bruce Kraus
Meghan Whooley	Pittsburgh City Councilman Tony Coghill

Spring 2023 Student Placements

Sarah Barnes	State Representative Nick Pisciotano
Joe Breslin	Rachel Heisler for City Controller campaign
James Burn	State Representative Sara Innamorato
Gabriel Falo	State Representative Dan Deasy
Jannah Farag	Pittsburgh City Councilman Tony Coghill
Jada Graham	State Representative Emily Kinkead
Jean Kim	Caliguiri Group
Aastha Ladani	State Representative Dan Frankel
Cara Lagattuta	State Representative Dan Miller
Delaney Lindberg	Pittsburgh City Councilmember Deb Gross
Daniel Temmallo	State Representative Anita Kulik
Linda Washburn	State Senator Jay Costa
Emilie Yonan	Pittsburgh City Councilmember Erika Straussburger

Legislator for a Day

On February 27th, 2023, IOP staff and twelve exemplary University of Pittsburgh undergraduate students departed from Pitt's campus and travelled to Harrisburg for an overnight stay in preparation for an early arrival at the Capitol on February 28th. Throughout the morning and afternoon of the 28th, each student followed their legislator throughout various meetings and hearings. Students placed with PA House members witnessed the historic swearing in of Joanna McClinton as PA's new Speaker of the House, and students shadowing senators were recognized on the Senate floor during session. Some students and staff participated in a tour of the Capitol building, learning about the history of the building and its various works of art.

The goal of this annual program is to provide students with exposure to careers in state-level elected office and public policy, and to learn more about the specifics of the legislative process in Pennsylvania.



As part of their visit to the Capitol, some of the students met newly sworn in PA House Speaker Joanna McClinton.

“We got to see history being made, and offices are at once as formal, more formal, and less formal than I thought.”

— Legislator for a Day participant

Thank you to the following legislators who participated in the 2023 program:

Sen. Camera Bartolotta (R – Washington)
 Rep. Emily Kinkead (D – Allegheny)
 Rep. Sara Innamorato (D - Allegheny)
 Rep. Aerion Abney (D – Allegheny)
 Rep. Nick Pisciotto (D – Allegheny)
 Sen. Jay Costa (D – Allegheny)
 Rep. Dan Deasy (D – Allegheny)
 Rep. Rob Mercuri (R – Allegheny)
 Rep. Dan Frankel (D – Allegheny)
 Sen. Wayne Fontana (D – Allegheny)
 Rep. James Struzzi (R – Indiana)
 Rep. Arvind Venkat (D – Allegheny)

Participating students:

Nicole Sanna
 Jannah Farrag
 James Burn
 Michael Akinsola
 Caroline Guo
 Airi Tilley
 Michael Scotto
 Ammar Allaboodi
 Tri Raynes
 Caleb Loughrin
 Christian Luevano
 Madison Sheridan

Elsie Hillman Honors Scholars

The Elsie Hillman Honors Scholars Program connects entrepreneurial and creative students with regional community partners to join an existing project or develop a student and agency-led project that addresses issues important to the organization and reflects the social commitment of Elsie Hillman. Through a structured and collaborative process, the student works closely with their community agency and mentor to develop a project, product, or conduct research. Scholars earn two credit hours from Pitt’s Honors College. Beginning with the 2023-24 academic year, students will earn three credit hours from the Honors College.

This immersive program fosters experiential learning in affiliated community organizations where students develop and practice their leadership skills, project management skills, and further understand political, social, and economic factors that influence their organization’s community and/or client population.



2021-2022 Honors Scholars reception

2021-2022 Scholars

(Projects concluded in the spring of 2022)

Scholar

Luis Cantu
Danielle Floyd
Gwyneth Meek
Elizabeth Shunk
Sarah Vizz
Hosea Wah

Organization

Amachi Pittsburgh
Steel Smiling
Adagio Health
Literacy Pittsburgh
Neighborhood Allies
Allegheny Intermediate Unit

2022-2023 Scholars

(Projects concluded in the spring of 2023)



2022-2023 Honors Scholars

Scholar

Delphie Backs
Erikah Cudjoe

Arjun Kumar
Livia LaMarca

Kim Le
Madelynn Lederer

Margie Lynch
Vishnu Maddipatla

Nina Mennies

Lauren Posey
Ritika Segireddy
Ryan Yeager

Organization

The Consortium for Public Education
City of Pittsburgh – Department of Innovation and Performance
The Pittsburgh Promise
Jewish Women’s Foundation of Greater Pittsburgh
Jewish Family and Community Services
Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Catholic Charities
Remake Learning and KnowledgeWorks
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
Women for a Healthy Environment
Adagio Health
Auberle

Ambassadors for Civic Engagement (ACE) Fellowship

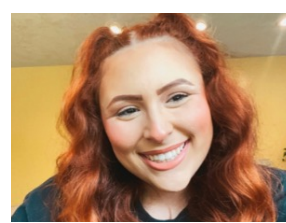
The Ambassadors for Civic Engagement (ACE) Fellowship provides an opportunity for graduate students to apply their education and skills to contribute to and improve the quality of life of people living in the Pittsburgh region through a long-term experiential fellowship with a community partner that works in public policy, governance, community organizing and activism, or philanthropy.

Throughout the 2022-23 academic year, ACE Fellows partnered with the Homeless Children’s Education Fund to:

- Investigate a critical issue affecting students experiencing homelessness in Southwestern PA
- Identify a potential policy solution around which to convene public officials
- Design and convene a legislative luncheon (hosted in May 2023) for key public officials who could play a role in enacting policy solutions



PROJECT MENTOR:
Brian Knight
Manager of Community Engagement, Homeless Children’s Education Fund



FELLOW:
Madison Bredice
Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (Major: Human Security)



FELLOW:
Arvin Sequeira
School of Pharmacy



Congressman James G. Fulton (2nd from left) visits the Marshall Space Flight Center, March 9, 1962

James G. Fulton Award

The Elsie Hillman Civic Forum is pleased to announce that, beginning in fall 2023, internship and seminar students who are originally from Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Westmoreland, Butler, and/or Washington counties will be eligible to receive a \$2,000 stipend. Up to four students per semester (eight students per year) can receive the award, provided by The Pittsburgh Foundation in honor of James G. Fulton, a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives who represented the region in Congress from 1945 until his death in 1971.

Cherna Fellowship



The Cherna Fellows program is an exclusive opportunity for students pursuing graduate degrees in the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work. Jointly administered by the School of Social Work and the Institute of Politics, Cherna Fellows will embark on experiential learning opportunities within Allegheny County. These experiences will address the core competencies in social work while placing a heavy emphasis on developing knowledge and practice in public policy analysis, development, and advocacy.

The inaugural Cherna Fellow is **Jessie Neal**. She is passionate about improving access to quality mental and behavioral health care for underserved populations, advocating for human rights, and promoting social justice. Jessie's academic and professional interests are shaping policy in a positive direction and addressing present inequalities through human services.



Internal Interns



Jack Ruotolo

Jack Ruotolo served as the Elsie Hillman Civic Engagement Intern for 2022-23. Jack is an undergraduate at the University of Pittsburgh and is enrolled in the Dietrich School of

Arts and Science and the Frederick Honors College. He is currently pursuing a degree in Politics and Philosophy, with minors in Economics and History. Aside from academics, Jack is also the President of the Pittsburgh Chapter of BridgeUSA, which has garnered widespread engagement and was awarded BridgeUSA Chapter of the Year in 2022.



Hattie Lindey

Hattie Lindey is the undergraduate policy intern at the IOP. She is a junior at the University of Pittsburgh studying Politics & Philosophy with a minor in English Literature

and Museum Studies. She is particularly interested in education and labor, with a focus on public education and expanding equitable resources to rural communities. During her internship, Hattie worked with the Assistant Director of Policy Programs on dual enrollment policy research, assisted with the 2022 Elected Officials Retreat, and drafted meeting and event summaries.

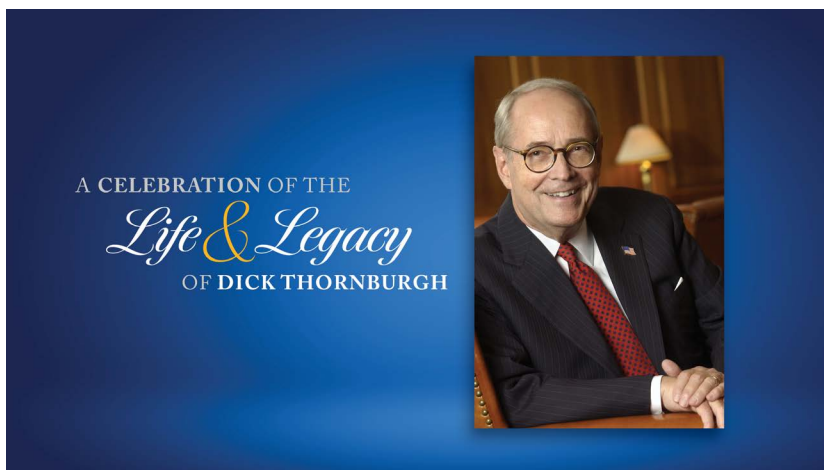
Pitt Civic Action Week

Civic Action Week took place on October 17, 2022, and the theme of the program centered on Joy and Liberation. Tasha Peacock, Assistant Director of Student Programs & Community Outreach, moderated a one-hour session along with former Elsie Hillman Honor Scholars Danielle Floyd and Elizabeth Shunk as they discussed "Finding Joy by Helping Others."

Special Event: A Celebration of the Life and Legacy of Dick Thornburgh

On October 15, 2022, the University of Pittsburgh hosted a program in honor of the life and legacy of Dick Thornburgh, who passed away at the age of 88 on December 31, 2020.

Given his diverse roles as former governor, U.S. attorney general, and United Nations under-secretary general, the celebratory program featured panel discussions with distinguished guests representing the breadth and scope of his career, including Andrew Card, former chief of staff to President George W. Bush, and to Chuck Rosenberg, former US Attorney. Speakers highlighted Governor Thornburgh's many accomplishments alongside his character traits that made his extraordinary personal and political achievements possible. Videos of the discussions can be viewed [on the event page](#) on the Thornburgh Forum site.



[▶ INTRODUCTION AND KEYNOTE](#)

[▶ PANEL SESSION I](#)

[▶ PANEL SESSION II](#)

The late Dick Thornburgh donated a magnificent archival collection of his personal papers to the University of Pittsburgh in 1988.



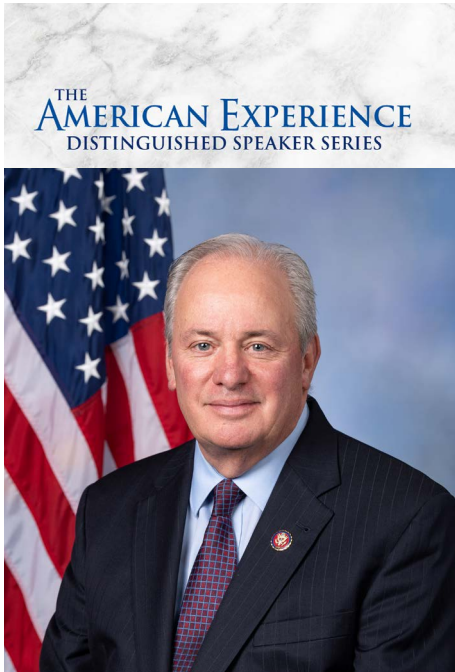
Photo credit: Dick Thornburgh Papers, 1932-2020, AIS.1998.30, Archives & Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Library System.

This collection provides a comprehensive record of Dick's life, from his community participation in the early 1960s, to his significant government positions at state, national and international levels. The collection of papers, photographs, videos, and memorabilia provides opportunities for scholars to research issues of leadership and public policy development.

The collection is held in the Archives & Special Collections, within the University Library System. The collection is unrestricted and available for research in the Archive Service Center Reading Room. The online archive website provides a guide to content, search capability, and significant online text, photographs, and A/V items.

LEARN MORE @
thornburgh.library.pitt.edu ▶

Infrastructure – An Essential Investment in our Future



Congressman Mike Doyle spoke with the IOP and Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law and Public Policy about infrastructure as part of the *American Experience Distinguished Lecture Series* on April 12, 2022.

Congressman Doyle focused on the history of infrastructure in Western Pennsylvania, specifically in the city of Pittsburgh, before discussing the present infrastructure needs of the community. Plainly, Doyle stated that much of the region’s infrastructure is outdated or obsolete, saying “It’s important to understand that many of our public works are simply worn out. They’re crumbling away before our eyes and are in desperate need of repair, and in many cases replacement.” He also highlighted how the nation has failed to adequately address the infrastructure needs of communities more broadly. Congressman Doyle then outlined the steps currently being taken to address the United States’ infrastructure needs, in particular the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Specifically, the bill provides funding for broadband expansion, battery processing, clean hydrogen hubs, and a wide range of other projects that will impact Pennsylvania (including investments in the state’s roads, bridges, public transportation, drinking water, and climate change initiatives). While this legislation represents an historic investment into the United States’ infrastructure development and repair, Congressman Doyle admits that it represents only a start in the efforts to counteract decades of underfunding.



**VIEW THE DISCUSSION
IN ITS ENTIRETY [HERE.](#)**

Disinformation, Disruption, and the Destabilization of Democracies

Dr. Michael Colaresi, the William S. Dietrich II Chair of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh, the Research and Academic Director of Pitt Cyber, and the director of the Pitt Disinformation Lab, spoke with the IOP and the Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law and Public Policy on May 9, 2022 as part of the *Preserving Democracy* lecture series.



In his remarks, Dr. Colaresi discussed disinformation, which is intentionally misleading messages and statements, and its role on the internet in spreading and perpetuating false content. He also highlighted the dangers of “dataveillance”, a term used to describe how users of the internet are exploited by companies and organizations who track and analyze their data, often without their knowledge. Dr. Colaresi explained how dataveillance allows companies to see and track data to promote ads and institute other techniques that draw users to the company’s own products or business. As he noted during the lecture, dataveillance is “the idea that we’re not just users of social media and the internet, we’re used by it.” One of the more dangerous aspects of dataveillance is the power it gives to foreign governments and agencies when dispersing information on the internet. Dr. Colaresi discussed how autocratic governments use disinformation to disrupt and influence public opinions and beliefs, giving significant power to organizations with access to user data to spread false information across a wide range of users. Another way that disinformation and dataveillance affect the experiences of internet users is by sowing distrust in public figures and experts. Dr. Colaresi used the COVID-19 pandemic as an example, demonstrating how the internet bred a significant distrust in public health officials and politicians. Dr. Colaresi highlighted how the process of publishing a rebuttal, a common and effective way to address disinformation in previous forms of media, is virtually impossible in the digital realm, because hundreds of thousands of false claims are disseminated across a variety of different platforms on the internet every day. In terms of reform, Dr. Colaresi pointed towards holding people accountable for what is communicated online and illustrating parallels

between the analog and digital worlds, noting that open source algorithms and user authentication will help society move forward in the fight against disinformation.

VIEW THE DISCUSSION
IN ITS ENTIRETY [HERE.](#)



March 20, 2023

The Invention of Miracles: Language, Power, and Alexander Graham Bell's Quest to End Deafness

Delivered by **Katie Booth, Author**

Moderated by **Dr. Kenneth DeHaan**

Professor and Director of the MA in Sign Language Education Program at Gallaudet University



Katie Booth's first book, *The Invention of Miracles: Language, Power, and Alexander Graham Bell's Quest to End Deafness*, was published by Simon & Schuster in 2021. Booth's biographical account of Alexander Graham Bell depicts a passionate and brilliant man who gained international fame racing to invent the telephone while he was also fixated on curing deafness by teaching the deaf to speak. Despite his good intentions, Bell had a profound and long-lasting negative impact on the language development and education of



the world's deaf community in the 19th and 20th centuries that can still be felt today.

As the story unfolds, Booth demonstrates that good intentions can easily be corrupted by the absence and the denial of scientific data. Her lecture reminded attendees of the following key principles:

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is essential for the advancement and protection of children and adults with any type of disability, including deafness. Disability rights are civil rights.
- The voices and insights of people with disabilities are essential in formulating disability programs and policies. As is often stated in the community: "Nothing about us without us."
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion should remain central considerations before, during, and after product and program innovation.

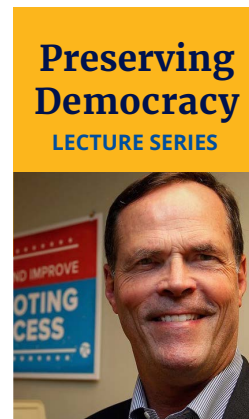
April 10, 2023

Repealing Closed Primaries: A Path to Better Government in Pennsylvania

Delivered by **David Thornburgh, Chair of the Committee of Seventy's Ballot Pa initiative and son of former PA Governor and U.S. Attorney General Dick Thornburgh**

Moderated by **Mark Nordenberg**

Chancellor Emeritus, University of Pittsburgh; Chair, Institute of Politics; and Director, Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law and Public Policy



David Thornburgh explains how an open primary system in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania would create a more representative election process while also diminishing the heightened polarization that currently threatens civility and our democracy. At a time when legislation to create open primaries in Pennsylvania is pending in both the House and the Senate, this timely discussion

highlighted the disparities that the commonwealth's current system of closed primaries creates. These include:

- The facilitation of a hyperpartisan political atmosphere, as candidates respond to the most committed voters in their own parties (i.e., those who vote in primary elections)
- The disenfranchisement of 1.1 million taxpaying voters who are registered as independent, which is the fastest-growing segment of voters in Pennsylvania and includes diverse populations such as veterans, Asian-Americans, and young people.

Pennsylvania continues to lag behind other states on this issue, as 41 other states currently permit independent voters to participate in primary elections. In closing, Thornburgh outlines a strategy that he hopes will lead to the passage of legislation to effectively address this issue this year.

[WATCH THE LECTURE HERE](#)

Awards

Congratulations to the following University of Pittsburgh students who received awards from the Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law and Public Policy in 2022 and 2023!

Dick Thornburgh Prize for Legal Service Award

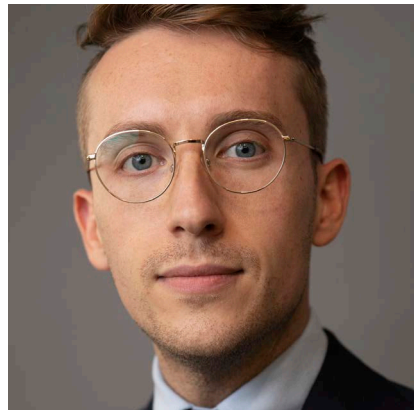
This award is granted to a graduating Pitt Law student who has provided legal assistance to low-income individuals through a legal services organization while in law school and intends to continue such service in practice.

2022 RECIPIENT:
Katherine Andrews



J. Evans Rose, Jr. Prize for Government Service Award

This award is granted to a graduating Pitt Law student whose goal is to pursue a career in government service at the local, county, state, federal or international level.



2022 RECIPIENT:
Alexander Dettwyler



2023 RECIPIENT:
Kaleigh Dryden



Congratulations to the 2022 Coleman Award Winners!

At the Coleman Award Dinner on December 8, 2022, community leaders **Karen Farmer White** and **Jack McGinley** received the 2022 Coleman Awards for Excellence in Community Service.

Over 100 guests attended the ceremony, which was held at the Sheraton Station Square in conjunction with the Institute's Elected Officials Retreat. Both awardees exemplify the high caliber of Coleman awardees, many of whom were in attendance at the dinner.

Karen Farmer White

Chair, Pennsylvania State Board of Education
Chair, Board of Trustees, Seton Hill University
President, Board of Directors, FISA Foundation

Nominated by:

Mary Finger, EdD, President, Seton Hill University

> See [Karen Farmer White's video tribute](#).

John R. McGinley, Jr.

Of Counsel, Eckert Seamans
Chair, Board of Directors, The Pittsburgh Foundation
Chair, Board of Directors, Duquesne University

Nominated by:

Lisa Schroeder, President and CEO, The Pittsburgh Foundation

> See [Jack McGinley's video tribute](#).

 [VIEW PAST COLEMAN AWARDEES AND THE 2023 AWARDEES](#)



Former Coleman Award winners Marc Cherna with Lisa Scales and Fred Thieman



Kenya Boswell and Yvonne Cook



Karen Farmer White with Doris Carson Williams



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Chair and Chancellor Emeritus