Christine Durrance
Associate Professor of Public Affairs

Education
PhD, Economics, University of Florida
MA, Economics, University of Florida
BA, Economics, Emory University

Research areas
Health economics/policy, applied microeconomics, public economics, antitrust/competition policy/industrial organization

Christine Piette Durrance is an applied microeconomist concentrating in health economics and policy. Her work includes a focus on maternal, infant, and reproductive health; risky behavior (e.g., substance use and violence); and the legal and policy environment. For the past 13 years, she served on the faculty of the Department of Public Policy at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Her research has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals, including Health Services Research, Contemporary Economic Policy, JAMA Pediatrics, and American Journal of Health Economics.

Morgan Edwards
Assistant Professor of Public Affairs

Education
PhD, Institute for Data, Systems, and Society, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
SM, Technology and Policy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
BS, Environmental Science and Economics, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Research areas
Energy sources, energy systems

Morgan Edwards most recently served as a University of Maryland President’s Postdoctoral Fellow and an affiliated fellow at the Joint Global Change Research Institute. Her research combines integrated modeling, data analytics, and qualitative methods to address policy challenges in deeply decarbonizing energy systems. She focuses on energy sources whose impacts vary significantly across space and over time, including natural gas pipelines, coal power plants, and bioenergy systems.
Denia Garcia
Assistant Professor of Public Affairs

Education
PhD, Sociology, Princeton University
MA, Sociology, Princeton University
BA, Sociology and Psychology, Northwestern University

Research areas
Race/ethnicity, spatial inequalities, organizations, social policy, qualitative methods

Denia Garcia recently completed postdoctoral work at Indiana University’s Department of Sociology and Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society. Garcia’s work examines the role of space and organizations in shaping how inequalities are experienced and reproduced. Garcia also studies participatory budgeting, race, and skin color in the United States and Latin America, and access to public benefits among urban families using quantitative methods. The National Science Foundation and the Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy have supported her work.

Tana Johnson
Associate Professor of Public Affairs

Education
PhD, Public Policy, University of Chicago
BA, International and Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Research areas
Operations and design of international institutions, particularly those affiliated with the United Nations system, policy areas, and global governance structures

Tana Johnson’s work is driven by big puzzles in international relations and by important problems in the real world. In global affairs, what makes delegation and institutional design so challenging? Why do nation-states delegate to international institutions in spite of the challenges? And how could we get things to work better? Johnson’s book, Organizational Progeny: Why Governments are Losing Control over the Proliferating Structures of Global Governance, won the International Studies Association’s Alger Prize for the best book on international organization and multilateralism.
Philipp Koellinger
Professor of Public Affairs

Education
PhD, Economics and Management Science, Humboldt-University Berlin
MSc, Economics and Management Science, Humboldt-University Berlin
Undergraduate Studies, Economics, Freie Universität Berlin

Research areas
Social science genetics, economics, neuroscience, statistics, big data

Philipp Koellinger’s research investigates how genes influence economic behavior and how insights into the genetic architecture of behavioral outcomes can inform social and medical research. Some of his work also explores how the brain mediates relationships between genes and human behavior. He is one of the principal investigators and co-founders of the Social Science Genetic Association Consortium, the BIG BEAR Consortium, and the Externalizing Consortium.

Reed Lei
Assistant Professor of Public Affairs and Political Science

Education
PhD Candidate, Comparative Politics and Political Economy, New York University (expected May 2020)
MA, Economics, University of Southern California
MPA, Sol Price School of Public Policy, University of Southern California
BA, English Language and Literature, China Foreign Affairs University
BE, International Economics and Trade, China Foreign Affairs University

Research areas
Infrastructure investment, public finance, bureaucratic incentive schemes, resource allocation, state-business relations, political centralization, and Chinese political economy

Reed Lei studies comparative political economy with a regional focus on China. While at New York University, he co-founded the Quantitative China Studies Seminar, an annual workshop of Chinese political economy. His research has been published in the Journal of Comparative Economics, and he has several papers under review.
Ross Milton
Assistant Professor of Public Affairs

Education
PhD, Economics, Cornell University
MA, Economics, Cornell University
BA, Economics & Political Science, Macalester College

Research areas
Political economy, public finance of state and local taxes, tax limitation policies, alternative revenue sources

For the past four years, Ross Milton has been an assistant professor of economics at Kansas State University. His research focuses on the political economy and public finance of state and local taxes and includes studies of tax limitation policies and the effects of local taxes on alternative revenue sources. He holds a PhD and MA in economics from Cornell University and a BA in Economics and Political Science from Macalester College. His research has been published in the Journal of Public Economics, and he has several other papers under review, including two on local education funding.

Sam Trejo
Assistant Professor of Public Affairs and Sociology

Education
PhD, Sociology & Education, Economics & Education, Stanford University
MA, Sociology, Stanford University
MA, Economics, Stanford University
BA, Economics, University of Texas at Austin

Research areas
Social science genomics, social demography, education and health policy, causal inference, human development, and quantitative methods

Sam Trejo’s research explores how social, environmental, and genetic factors combine to shape human development and the implications for public policy. He specializes in a wide range of quantitative tools, including quasi-experimental, computational, and biosocial methods. He is particularly interested in the reciprocal relationship between education and health across the life-course. His research has been funded by the National Science Foundation and the Institute of Education Sciences.
New faculty joining us in 2021-22

Mariel Barnes
Assistant Professor of Public Affairs

Education
PhD, Government, Comparative Politics, and International Relations, Cornell University
MA, International Relations, University of Chicago
BA, Politics and International Relations, and History, University of New South Wales

Research areas
Violence against women, social welfare

Mariel Barnes is a PhD candidate in the Department of Government at Cornell University and a predoctoral fellow at the Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. Her research examines the interaction between everyday violence against women and the social welfare state, particularly the state’s implementation and promotion of the “universal breadwinning model.”

UW–Madison faculty joining us in 2020

In fall 2020, two highly regarded UW–Madison faculty members will be moving 25% of their appointment to the La Follette School.

Jon Pevehouse
Professor of Political Science and Public Affairs

Education
PhD, Political Science, Ohio State University
Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research Summer Program in Quantitative Methods
BA, Political Science, University of Kansas

Jon Pevehouse’s research interests lie in international relations, international political economy, U.S. foreign policy, international organizations, and political methodology. Professor Pevehouse’s work examines the relationship between domestic and international politics. He is the author, with Joshua Goldstein, of International Relations, the leading textbook on international politics.

Sarah Halpern-Meekin
Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Studies, and of Public Affairs

Education
PhD, Sociology and Social Policy, Harvard University
BA, Politics, Brandeis University

Sarah Halpern-Meekin uses qualitative and quantitative methods to study romantic relationships and low-income families’ finances, as well as government policies directed at these areas. Her research includes examining how social poverty shapes people’s wellbeing and decisions; understanding the lives of prime-age men who are out of the labor force; studying the role of on-again/off-again relationships in the lives of parents and their children; and longitudinally following how poor mothers of babies experience a program that provides them with monthly unconditional cash gifts.