PUBLIC AFFAIRS CAREERS

Career development is an integral part of the La Follette School experience, and data show extremely high percentages of employment three to six months post-graduation. The Career Services Office offers:

- Visits with local employers as well as regular trips to Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Milwaukee
- Networking opportunities
- Career development seminars with public affairs professionals
- Connections with alumni mentors

The career services coordinator works with students one-on-one to develop essential skills, such as interviewing, writing strong cover letters and resumes, and researching internships and permanent employment. During the first semester course Professional Development Workshop, students also create an individual plan and portfolio that help them proactively move toward their academic and career goals.

La Follette School alumni work in all levels of government, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector. Popular positions include policy analyst, consultant, executive director, research analyst, project manager, and government liaison. MPA alumni have held positions with these agencies, organizations, and businesses:

- Congressional Research Service
- Deloitte
- Duke Margolis Health Policy Center
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Grant Thornton
- National Council on Crime and Delinquency
- Oregon Legislative Fiscal Office
- UW-Madison Center for Education Research
- U.S. Government Accountability Office
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau

APPLYING FOR ADMISSION

Students are selected for the Master of Public Affairs Program on the basis of their academic records, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, work experience, and evidence of commitment to a public affairs career. Applicants whose native language is not English must present the equivalent of 92 or greater on the computer-based TOEFL test to be considered for admission.

PREREQUISITES

- Introduction to microeconomics
- Introduction to statistics or calculus
- American government

Candidates who have taken these courses before enrolling will be better prepared for the graduate program.

www.lafollette.wisc.edu/admissions

“I chose the La Follette School because it was highly ranked (particularly in social policy), affordable (particularly with the fellowship), practitioner-focused, and evidence-based. Moreover, I liked the small, community feel of the program set within the larger context of the university and all of its resources. And, though I didn’t know it when I applied, Madison is a lovely city that would have been enough of a draw on its own.”

— Max Pardo, MPA ’17
Research Associate, American Institutes for Research
LA FOLLETTE SCHOOL MASTER OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM

The Master of Public Affairs (MPA) Program provides education in public management and policy analysis that prepares students for careers in public policy and administration within the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

LA FOLLETTE SCHOOL FACULTY

The award-winning La Follette School faculty includes economists, political scientists, sociologists, and public affairs scholars who teach the skills and tools needed for a career in public affairs. They are experts in social policy, health policy and management, public management administration, public policy analysis, environmental policy and management, poverty, and tax policy and government finance.

The school admits about 50 students per year to the MPA Program and the Master of International Public Affairs Program. The small class size enables the faculty to know, advise, and mentor students.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Students must complete 42 credits, including six core courses, a one-credit professional development seminar, plus eight elective courses. An internship can count for up to three elective credits. The program generally takes two years.

CORE COURSES

- Introduction to Statistical Methods for Public Policy Analysis develops competence with analytical tools for studying public affairs.
- Microeconomic Policy Analysis explores how to evaluate the implications of policies for efficiency and equity, and to employ statistical methods for interpreting and presenting quantitative data.
- Microeconomic Policy Analysis explores how to evaluate the implications of policies for efficiency and equity, and to employ statistical methods for interpreting and presenting quantitative data.
- Introduction to Policy Analysis focuses on defining policy problems, determining goals, designing policy alternatives, and assessing trade-offs to make recommendations.
- Policymaking Process examines the political processes that shape U.S. public policy.
- Introduction to Public Management introduces key theories of how public organizations work, the relationship between democracy and management, and critical public management issues such as accountability and policy implementation.
- Workshop in Public Affairs, the capstone course taken in the final semester, gives students experience working in teams with a faculty supervisor on a real-world policy project. They apply conceptual and analytical tools to issues their clients face in the public, nonprofit, and private sectors.

ELECTIVE COURSES

Students build proficiency beyond the core requirements through elective courses, including:

- Public Program Evaluation
- Cost-Benefit Analysis
- Politics of Poverty, Inequality, and Social Policy
- State and Local Government Finance
- Performance Management

Students also may take courses from other highly regarded UW–Madison graduate programs, such as economics, political science, public health, urban and regional planning, social work, law, business, educational leadership and policy analysis, sociology, and environmental studies.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMBINED DEGREES AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Some students earn additional credentials while they work toward their public affairs degrees. The following combined degree and certificate programs are available:

- Law (Juris Doctorate)
- Master of Public Health
- Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning
- Doctorate in Neuroscience
- Energy Analysis and Policy Certificate
- Business certificates

“Coming into the program, I had very little idea about where I was going. The courses led me to realize what I wanted most from a career. The career development seminars, travel opportunities, and networking events opened up rewarding career possibilities. It is also comforting to know that I have supportive advisors to help me articulate and ultimately achieve my career goals.”

— Karina Virrueta, MPA ’17
Grants Specialist—Advanced, Wisconsin Department of Justice

MADISON, WISCONSIN

Beyond campus, the city of Madison, as the state capital, provides a wealth of opportunities for La Follette School students to participate in outreach and acquire practical experience as professional project assistants or interns with public and private entities. Students benefit from the strong relationships that La Follette School faculty have with these organizations, in keeping with the Wisconsin Idea of public service. This includes the Family Impact Seminar and Committee Connect – opportunities that use evidence-based research to inform policymakers and improve public policy.
Career development is an integral part of the La Follette School experience, and data show extremely high percentages of employment three to six months post-graduation. The Career Services Office offers:

- Visits with local employers as well as regular trips to Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Milwaukee
- Networking opportunities
- Career development seminars with public affairs professionals
- Connections with alumni mentors

The career services coordinator works with students one-on-one to develop essential skills, such as interviewing, writing strong cover letters and resumes, and researching internships and permanent employment. During the first semester course Professional Development Workshop, students also create an individual plan and portfolio that help them proactively move toward their academic and career goals.

La Follette School alumni have held positions with these agencies, organizations, and businesses:

- American Red Cross
- Aspen Institute
- CARE in Afghanistan
- Congressional-Executive Commission on China
- Deloitte
- Governments of Chile, Japan, and Korea
- Peace Corps
- United Nations Development Programme
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- U.S. Central Intelligence Agency
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- U.S. Department of State

Students are selected for the Master of International Public Affairs Program on the basis of their academic records, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, work experience, and evidence of commitment to a public affairs career. Applicants whose native language is not English must present the equivalent of 92 or greater on the computer-based TOEFL test to be considered for admission.

**PREREQUISITES**

- Introduction to microeconomics
- Introduction to macroeconomics
- Introduction to statistics or calculus
- Comparative politics or international relations
- Three semesters of foreign language study or a year or more of experience living outside the United States

Candidates who have taken these courses before enrolling will be better prepared for the graduate program.

www.lafollette.wisc.edu/admissions

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"La Follette School courses have solidified a foundation of skills that I feel would be useful as an analyst, administrator, or Foreign Service officer. La Follette coursework has helped me grasp a new way of looking at policy issues and how to approach projects. I also have been introduced to new potential employment opportunities through La Follette. I would not have applied to the GAO if we hadn't stopped there during last year's La Follette in D.C. career development program."

— Kirsten Jacobson, MIPA ’17
Associate—Public Sector, Grant Thornton
LA FOLLETTE SCHOOL MASTER OF INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM

The Master of International Public Affairs (MIPA) Program prepares students from the United States and around the world to work in government, in businesses engaged with the global economy, for non-governmental organizations, or with consulting firms analyzing international policies.

LA FOLLETTE SCHOOL FACULTY

The award-winning La Follette School faculty includes economists, political scientists, sociologists, and public affairs scholars who teach the skills and tools needed for a career in public affairs. They are experts in social policy, health policy and management, public administration, public policy analysis, environmental policy, poverty, and tax policy and government finance.

The school admits about 50 students per year to the MIPA Program and the Master of Public Affairs Program. The small class size enables the faculty to know, advise, and mentor students.

DEGREE PROGRAM

Students must complete 42 credits, including six core courses, a one-credit professional development seminar, plus eight elective courses. An internship can count for up to three elective credits. The program generally takes two years.

CORE COURSES

- Introduction to Statistical Methods for Public Policy Analysis develops competence with analytical tools for studying public affairs.
- Microeconomic Policy Analysis explores how to evaluate the implications of policies for efficiency and equity, and to employ statistical methods for interpreting and presenting quantitative data.
- International Governance provides students with the substantive framework for studying public affairs in the context of globalization.
- *Macroeconomic Policy and International Financial Regulation surveys international macroeconomics, with special reference to international monetary policy and international financial market architecture.
- *Trade, Competition, and Governance in a Global Economy provides students with an understanding of international trade theory, rules, politics, and institutions, and the major policy issues facing the global trading system.
- Introduction to Policy Analysis focuses on defining policy problems, determining goals, designing policy alternatives, and assessing trade-offs to make recommendations.
- Workshop in International Public Affairs, the capstone course taken in the final semester, gives students experience working in teams with a faculty supervisor on a real-world policy project. They apply conceptual and analytical tools to issues their clients face in public, private, and nonprofit sectors around the world.
- Students choose one of these electives in the MIPA program.*

ELECTIVE COURSES

Students build proficiency beyond the core requirements through elective courses, including:

- Global Environmental Governance
- Cost-Benefit Analysis
- Comparative and National Social Policy
- International Program Evaluation
- International Development Policy

Students also may take courses from other highly regarded UW-Madison graduate programs, such as economics, political science, public health, urban and regional planning, social work, law, business, educational leadership and policy analysis, sociology, and environmental studies.

REGIONAL FOCUS FIELDS

Students can develop broad expertise in a geographic region by clustering courses, including language courses, across several disciplines, typically emphasizing courses in the social sciences. In building regional focus fields, MIPA students take advantage of UW-Madison’s strong area studies centers, including:

- East African Studies
- Asian Studies
- European Studies
- Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies
- Middle East Studies
- Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies
- South Asian Studies
- Southeast Asian Studies

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMBINED DEGREES AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Some students earn additional credentials while they work toward their public affairs degrees. The following combined degree and certificate programs are available:

- Law (Juris Doctorate)
- Master of Public Health
- Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning
- Doctorate in Neuroscience
- Energy Analysis and Policy Certificate
- Business certificates
- Certificates from area studies programs

*I chose the La Follette School for the emphasis on policy-making skills (quantitative analysis courses and in-depth policy analysis), the quality of instruction in economics/political science, and the flexibility to tailor a program that best suits me with electives in the MIPA program."

Matthew Smalley, MIPA ’17
Foreign Area Officer, U.S. Army

MADISON, WISCONSIN

Beyond campus, the city of Madison, as the state capital, provides a wealth of opportunities for La Follette School students to participate in outreach and acquire practical experience as professional project assistants or interns with public and private entities. Students benefit from the strong relationships that La Follette School faculty have with these organizations, in keeping with the Wisconsin Idea of public service. This includes the Family Impact Seminar and Committee Connect — opportunities that use evidence-based research to inform policymakers and improve public policy.

"I chose the La Follette School for the emphasis on policy-making skills (quantitative analysis courses and in-depth policy analysis), the quality of instruction in economics/political science, and the flexibility to tailor a program that best suits me with electives in the MIPA program."

Matthew Smalley, MIPA ’17
Foreign Area Officer, U.S. Army
Making a Difference through Teaching, Research, Service
DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

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

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

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

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

On, Wisconsin!

Susan Webb Yackee
Director and Professor

Faculty

Susan Webb Yackee
Director and Professor, Public Affairs and Political Science
Steve Kulig (MPA ’14)
Associate Director
Rebecca M. Blank
UW–Madison Chancellor
Maria Cancian
Professor, Public Affairs and Social Work
Menzie Chinn
Professor, Public Affairs and Economics
J. Michael Collins
Associate Professor, Public Affairs and Human Ecology
Mark Copelovitch
Professor, Public Affairs and Political Science
Jason Fletcher
Professor, Public Affairs and Sociology
Lindsay Jacobs
Assistant Professor, Public Affairs
Gregory Nemet
Professor, Public Affairs and Environmental Studies
Rourke O’Brien
Assistant Professor, Public Affairs
Robyn Rowe
Visiting Assistant Professor, Public Affairs
Timothy Smeeding
Professor, Public Affairs and Economics
Emilia Tjernström
Assistant Professor, Public Affairs and Agricultural and Applied Economics
Geoffrey Wallace
Associate Professor, Public Affairs and Economics
Yang Wang (MPA ’03)
Assistant Professor, Public Affairs and Business
David Weimer
Professor, Public Affairs and Political Science
Barbara (Bobbi) Wolfe
Professor, Public Affairs, Economics, and Population Health Sciences
Yang Wang (MIPA ’03)
Assistant Professor, Public Affairs and Business

Staff

Lisa Hildebrand
Senior University Relations Specialist
Andrew Lambert
Information Technology Specialist
Katie Lorenze (MPA ’14)
Administrator and Career Services Coordinator
Cindy Manthe
Financial Specialist
Marjorie Matthews
University Services Associate
Heidi Normandin (MA ’98)
Senior Outreach Specialist
Mo O’Connor
Senior Student Services Coordinator
Bridget Carr Pirsch
Senior Outreach Specialist
David Wright-Racette
Student Services Associate

Board of Visitors

Curt S. Culver
Michael W. Grebe
Michael Hamertlik
Carolyn Heinrich
Leslie Ann Howard
Senator Herb Kohl
Bob Lang
Sheldon B. Lubar
Katharine C. Lyall
Chuck Pruitt
Eric Schutt
Daniel Speckhard (MA ’82)
Michael Youngman (MA ’82)
OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, AN AVERAGE OF 95% OF LA FOLLETTE SCHOOL GRADUATES HAVE FOUND EMPLOYMENT IN THEIR FIELD WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF GRADUATION.

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

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

“Graduate school has been incredible in helping me find new areas of interest and connecting me with professionals and peers who have been instrumental in setting me on a path that I am confident about.”
— Mikhaila Calice
MPA and Energy Analysis student

“...The La Follette School has helped me develop a vocabulary for understanding policy issues as both a future policymaker and an informed consumer.”
— Signe Janoska-Bedi
MIPA student

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

THROUGH ITS LEGISLATIVE OUTREACH, LA FOLLETTE SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS ENGAGED WITH 65 OF WISCONSIN’S 132 LEGISLATIVE OFFICES.
The La Follette School pursues teaching and learning in an active, collaborative environment where students, faculty, and practitioners interact closely and draw upon UW-Madison’s outstanding scholarly resources. In addition to traditional coursework, students have numerous opportunities to develop their skills, deepen their knowledge, and learn about career opportunities.

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

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


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

— John Winters (MIPA ’18), far left, with Matthew Burr, Cassie Frankel, Atiya Siddiqi, and Sarah Dalgleish
Students, employers benefit from project assistantships

Project assistantships with La Follette School and UW-Madison faculty members and with off-campus partners contribute deeply to students’ learning. Thanks in large part to increasing financial resources, more and more students gain immensely rewarding experience as project assistants (PAs).

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

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

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

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

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

— Jamey Kane
MIPA student

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

— Elgin Karl (MPA ’18)

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

— Ben Dederich
MPA student

Campuswide opportunities

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

For example, students in Professor Menzie Chinn’s Trade, Competition, and Governance in a Global Economy course discussed current domestic and international topics with David Brancaccio in March 2018. The host and senior editor of American Public Media’s Marketplace Morning Report was on campus as UW-Madison’s Business Journalist in Residence.
La Follette School Student Association Officers, 2018–19

Jennifer Johnson  
President

Mike Wieczorek  
Vice President

Hannah Stephens  
Treasurer

Claire Zautke  
Secretary

Nathaniel Haack  
Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Chris Webb  
Community Service & Outreach Coordinator

Amanda Hejna  
Social Coordinator

Nikolai Kapustin  
Graduation Coordinator

Kyle Stanley  
Fundraising Coordinator

Paying it forward

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

— Jennifer Johnson  
MPA student

2017 ENTERING COHORT

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

51  
TOTAL ENROLLMENT

24  
AVERAGE AGE

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

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

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

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

“We hope that this will show our dedication to sharing our community with others,” said Karls, who served as LSSA secretary and helped organize the Trivia events.
Faculty, students, alumni, and staff at the La Follette School exemplify the Wisconsin Idea, the century-old principle that education should influence people’s lives beyond the classroom. This is evident in the School’s partnerships with public, nonprofit, and private organizations that serve as clients for students’ project-based learning and its numerous community events.

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

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

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

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

Community partnership recognized

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

From left are Bridget Pirsch, Kara Kratowicz, Chancellor Blank, Susan Webb Yackee, Deb Erwin, Rebecca Ballweg, and Dennis Dresang.
The La Follette School reached nearly half (65) of the 132 state legislative offices through the Family Impact Seminars, Committee Connect, and Office Hours at the Capitol during the 2017–18 academic year. True to its bipartisan principles, the School worked with an equal number of Democratic and Republican legislative offices.

**Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars**

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

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

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

**Committee Connect**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Office Hours at the Capitol

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

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

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

Office Hours topics & faculty

fall 2017

Criminal Justice and Corrections
Cecelia Klingele, Law School
Mike Massoglia, Sociology

Economic and Workforce Development
Gary Green, Community and Environmental Sociology and UW–Extension
Matt Hora, Liberal Arts and Applied Studies

spring 2018

Adolescent Brain Development and Juvenile Offender Treatment
Michael Caldwell, Psychology

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

Public Benefits for Low-Income Families
Tim Smeeding, Public Affairs and Economics
KOHL RESEARCH COMPETITION

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

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

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

2018 AWARD RECIPIENTS

HOW ARE REAL AND PERCEIVED HEALTH CARE OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS IMPACTING FAMILIES IN WISCONSIN?
J. Michael Collins
Associate Professor of Public Affairs and Human Ecology

IN UTERO CONDITIONS, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH POLICIES AND LIFE COURSE OUTCOMES
Jason Fletcher
Professor of Public Affairs, Sociology, Population Health, and Applied Economics

SURGEON LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENTS IN CARDIAC SURGERY OUTCOMES: IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUME THRESHOLD POLICIES
Lindsay Jacobs
Assistant Professor of Public Affairs
Dave Weimer
Professor of Public Affairs and Political Science

Kohl Award Impact

3 YEARS
11 AWARDS
12 FACULTY
9 STUDENTS
11 OUTREACH EVENTS
>1.6K EVENT PARTICIPANTS

“Hands-on research experiences, like those supported by the Kohl Research Competition, are a crucial component of what makes the La Follette School special.”
— Emilia Tjernström
Assistant Professor

“The skills I developed and lessons I learned as Emilia Tjernström’s project assistant have empowered me to ask difficult questions and relentlessly pursue the information needed to inform evidence-based solutions.”
— Chris Stassel (MIPA ’17)
Minimum Wages and Immigrants’ Health
Assistant Professor Yang Wang

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

— Mitchell Running (MPA/MPH ’17)
Contract and Policy Monitor, Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Regulatory Review & Policy Change
Director and Professor Susan Webb Yackee

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

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

Children in Poverty
Professor Barbara (Bobbi) Wolfe

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Research targets financial behavior**

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

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

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

**Collaboration aids faculty, students**

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

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

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

**Jason Gerlach**  
**Quantitative skills aided career transition to finance**

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

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

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

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

**Ruanda McFerren**  
**Living a real-world version of grad school group work**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Daniel Speckhard**  
**Ambassador, worldwide nonprofit leader relies on La Follette education**

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

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

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

**Alexis MacDonald**  
**Commitment to public service at GAO, as Honor Flight volunteer**

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

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

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

“It’s by far the most rewarding volunteer work I’ve ever done,” MacDonald said. “I’ve learned a lot—about history, sacrifice, and overcoming adversity—from the veterans I’ve met along the way.”
Over the past three years, the La Follette School’s six-month postgraduate placement rate (number of graduates entering the workforce who have secured jobs or internships in their field—the standard measure in the industry) has been above 90 percent (97 percent in 2016; 98 percent in 2015; and 93 percent in 2014).

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

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

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

— Eric La Nguyen (MPA ’18)

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

— Casey Hutchison (MIPA ’18)

2018 Graduation Awards

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

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

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

Class of 2017

Six-month postgraduation career statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NONPROFIT/EDUCATION</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample of where graduates are working

13%: FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
• US House of Representatives
• US Government Accountability Office
• US Army

42%: STATE GOVERNMENT
• Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection
• Department of Corrections
• Department of Health Services
• Department of Public Instruction
• Department of Transportation
• Department of Justice
• Legislative Audit Bureau
• State Legislature

32%: NONPROFIT/EDUCATION
• Americans for Immigration Justice
• CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity
• Government Finance Officers Association
• National Endowment for Democracy
• UW–Madison Population Health Institute
• Wisconsin Council on Medical Education and Workforce

10%: PRIVATE SECTOR
• Grant Thornton LLP
• Booz Allen Hamilton

3% LOCAL GOVERNMENT
• Verona City Council
Your Contributions Matter!

The La Follette School is extremely grateful to the many alumni and friends who contribute their TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES to our success.

Thank you for:

► Providing financial support for student scholarships, research, and career-development visits to Chicago, Milwaukee, and Washington, DC
► Participating on policy, career, and other panel discussions
► Assisting students with fellowship and employment applications
► Serving as mentors, mock interviewers, and networking partners.

TO DONATE
Visit www.supportuw.org, click Give Now, and enter Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs Fund-132549080, or call 800-443-6162

Looking Ahead

Thursday, February 7
Madison Alumni & Friends Reception

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

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

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

Contact us
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Of 49 La Follette School 2019 graduates, 44 entered the workforce and 4 sought additional degrees. 95% of those entering the workforce (42 out 44 graduates) reported that they had secured employment in their fields by December 2019. Of those who secured employment, 93% of graduates found jobs focused on domestic policy and management and 7% found jobs focused on international policy and management.

Where 2019 graduates are working:

**Federal Government Sector**
- Government Accountability Office
- Congressional Research Service
- US House of Representatives
- US Dept of Transportation

**State Government Sector**
- Port Authority of NY and NJ
- Montana Legislative Audit Division
- Colorado Springs Dept of Corrections
- Michigan Dept of Labor and Economic Opportunity
- WI Legislative Audit Bureau
- WI Legislative Reference Bureau
- WI Dept. of Transportation
- WI Dept. of Health Services
- WI Dept. of Children and Families

**Local Government**
- Mayor's Office (city of LA)
- City of Fitchburg WI
- Chicago Public Schools
- Higher Expectations for Racine County

**Nonprofit/Education Sectors**
- Urban Institute
- Citizen Action of Wisconsin
- End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin
- Education Analytics
- Cordis
- Uplift Education

**Private Sector**
- Phoenix Pharmacy Wholesale
- Grant Thornton
- Price Waterhouse Coopers
- Graphika Inc
- Agricultural Bank of China
Of 52 La Follette School 2018 graduates, 48 entered the workforce, and 4 sought additional degrees. Nearly 96 percent of those entering the workforce (46 out 48 graduates) reported that they had secured employment in their fields by December 2018.

Where 2018 graduates are working:

**Federal Government Sector**
- Government Accountability Office
- Millennium Challenge Corporation
- US Department of Justice

**State Government Sector**
- California Public Utilities Commission
- Texas Legislative Budget Board
- WI Dept. of Children and Families
- WI Dept. of Health Services
- WI Dept. of Public Instruction
- WI Dept. of Revenue
- WI Dept. of Transportation
- WI Legislative Audit Bureau
- WI Legislative Fiscal Bureau
- WI Legislative Reference Bureau

**Local Government**
- City of Davenport (IA)
- City of Kansas City (MO)
- Ramsey County (MN)
- Skagit County (WA)
- Milwaukee County

**Nonprofit/Education Sectors**
- Clean Wisconsin
- Council of State Governments
- United Way Minnesota
- Wisconsin Policy Forum
- Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

**Private Sector**
- Grant Thornton LLP
- ICF International, Inc.
Graduate Student Funding Information

The La Follette School offers fellowships and scholarships to incoming students each year. Unfortunately, due to limited funding, not all well-deserving students will receive funding offers. This handout provides funding information about opportunities outside of the La Follette School.

Students are highly encouraged to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) [https://fafsa.ed.gov/] by December 1 or as soon as possible. UW–Madison’s school code is 003895. Applicants for most types of financial aid must be a U.S. citizen, permanent resident, or other eligible non-citizen.

Most first-year La Follette Public Affairs students fund their education through unsubsidized loans and personal resources. Many students find teaching assistant and project assistant positions through other UW-Madison departments. This year about half of second-year students work as project assistants (PAs) or as teaching assistants (TAs) either on campus or through off-campus organizations. To look for positions that match your qualifications visit the UW job website: [http://www.jobs.wisc.edu/].

The following academic departments and research centers have recently hired a La Follette student:

- Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education (WISCAPE) [https://wiscape.wisc.edu/]
- Wisconsin Center for Research on Education (WCER) [http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/]
- School of Medicine and Public Health [http://www.med.wisc.edu/]
- Center for Financial Security (CFS) [https://cfs.wisc.edu/]
- Center for Nonprofits, School of Human Ecology Department [https://sohe.wisc.edu/research-development/centers-of-excellence/uw-center-for-nonprofits/]
- Center on Wisconsin Strategy: [http://www.cows.org/]
- Institute for Research on Poverty: [https://www.irp.wisc.edu/]

Other Project Assistant Positions:
Some project assistant positions are not advertised on the UW website. The student services office will send information on project assistantships with local non-university organizations as the information is received. In addition, La Follette Faculty will occasionally advertise for project assistantships tied to grants. These notices are sent to current students and incoming students by email.

Teaching Assistant Positions:
Some academic departments post Teaching Assistant (TA) openings on the UW job site. In the past 3 years, these academic departments hired a public affairs student.

- German, Nordic, and Slavic Department
- History Department
- School of Business
- School of Human Ecology
- Social Work
- Spanish and French
- Political Science
- Letters and Science Integrated Studies
- Gender and Women’s Studies
PAs and TA’s earn tuition remission, health insurance, and a stipend for their appointments. The stipend depends on the time commitment of the position. All graduate assistants pay for student fees. Please see this site for on-campus assistantship details: https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/

Foreign Language and Area Studies Scholarship (FLAS)

Academic-year FLAS fellowships are awarded for a full academic year to graduate students engaged in a formal overseas or domestic program of full-time language and area studies coursework. The deadline has passed to apply for this year, but several MIPA students have funded their second year of school through the FLAS. Summer FLAS fellowships are also available and intended to help students gain the equivalent of a year's worth of college level language study.

The Foreign Language and Area Studies Scholarship, FLAS, is offered through these centers: The African Studies Program, Center for East Asian Studies, Center for European Studies, Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian Studies Program, Center for Russia, East Europe and Central Asia, Center for South Asia, Center for South East Asian Studies, and Global Studies. The application is due in early February each year. Specific requirements may vary depending on the language. Please consult the relevant area studies program or the following website for further details and application forms: http://flas.wisc.edu/

Other Funding Information and Resources

- Cost of Attendance Information: http://www.finaid.wisc.edu/cost-of-attendance.htm
- Financial Wellness Program: https://financialaid.wisc.edu/free-to-uw-madison-students-salt/
- Graduate School Funding Information: https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/
- Institute for Regional and International Studies (IRIS) Funding Opportunities: https://iris.wisc.edu/funding/
- UW-Madison Scholarships: https://scholarships.wisc.edu/Scholarships/
- Outside UW Scholarship Information: https://www.reviews.com/best-scholarship-search-platforms/
- Funding and Scholarships for International Students: https://iss.wisc.edu/students/new-students/funding/scholarships/
- Current UW-Madison students are encouraged to review the link below to a PPT about funding ideas from a workshop recently hosted by the Graduate School:
  - https://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/grantsgraduates/GrantsForEducation
  - Additionally, Ellen Jacks ellen.jacks@wisc.edu, the Grants and Reference Librarian at Memorial Library, hosts go.wisc.edu/grants and can help you learn about databases you have access to as a current UW-Madison student.
- On-campus jobs open to public: http://www.ohr.wisc.edu/employment/employ.html
- University of Wisconsin-Madison Financial Aid Office: http://www.finaid.wisc.edu/graduate-and-professional.htm
- Outside UW Scholarship Opportunities for Minority Students: https://collegestats.org/resources/best-scholarships-minorities/
- Cost of living in Madison, WI: https://www.expatistan.com/cost-of-living/madison
- Private Fellowships and Scholarships Search (FastWeb): http://www.fastweb.com
- The Best Private Student Loans of 2020: https://loans.usnews.com/student-loans
- Federal Loan Forgiveness Program: http://www.finaid.org/loans/publicservice.phtml
HIGH-IMPACT TEACHING & LEARNING

The La Follette School creates an active, collaborative environment where students, faculty, and practitioners interact closely and draw upon the outstanding scholarly resources of UW–Madison.

SERVICE-LEARNING

- Students in the required Workshop courses collaborated with local, national, and international clients to produce research-based, analytical, evaluative, and prescriptive reports on challenging issues.
  - At the request of the Moravian Church of North America, five students evaluated the sustainability of a clinic in Honduras, including the creation of a questionnaire they administered during a week-long visit to the remote region. They offered administrative, operational, and fundraising recommendations to help sustain the clinic.
  - Students assisted the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Division of Medicaid Services with its evaluation of the FoodShare Employment and Training program and offered short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations.
  - Cost-Benefit Analysis students applied the tools of political, economic, and statistical analysis for public, nonprofit, and private clients, including a study of 3D imaging technology as a crime scene investigation tool for the Living Environments Lab at the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 27 students visited potential employers, networked with La Follette School alumni and friends, and learned what it is like to live and work in Washington, DC, during the school’s two-day La Follette in DC program.
- 14 students and two prospective students participated in the second La Follette in Milwaukee program. The day-long program featured panel discussions with staff from the city of Milwaukee and policy professionals as well as a tour of the Kinnickinnic River Rehabilitation and Neighborhood Plan.
- 96 percent of 2018 graduates secured employment in their field within six months of graduation.

PROJECT ASSISTANTSHIPS & INTERNSHIPS

- During the 2017–18 academic year, more than half of La Follette School students served as interns or project assistants with on- and off-campus entities.
  - One second-year student immersed herself in health care policy as a project assistant for WPS Health Solutions, a not-for-profit insurer with federal contracts to provide Medicare and other benefits.
  - Five students served as project assistants for La Follette School faculty members who received funding from the Herb Kohl Public Service Research Competition.
  - Master of International Public Affairs student Ryan LeCloux collaborated with Professor Menzie Chinn on a paper discussing the challenges to assessing the economic outlook at the state level.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES & HONORS

- The Society of Benefit Cost Analysis honored Professor Dave Weimer with its Outstanding Achievement Award.
- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson answered wide-ranging questions from students on topics such as gun violence, drug use and addiction, immigration, and data privacy regulation.
- With support from the William Fitch Fund, Board of Visitors member Curt Culver spoke about his career in the mortgage insurance business and his philosophy for making a difference through leadership in the workplace.
HIGH-IMPACT OUTREACH

La Follette School faculty, students, and staff take great pride in the Wisconsin Idea – the principle that education should influence people’s lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom – and practice it throughout the state and the world.

FAMILY IMPACT SEMINARS & COMMITTEE CONNECT

- During the 2017–18 academic year, La Follette School staff members engaged with 65 of Wisconsin’s 132 legislative offices, including matching 43 legislators with 37 UW–Madison researchers through Committee Connect.
- Legislators gave the 2018 Family Impact Seminar on strengthening Wisconsin’s workforce an objectivity rating of 4.9 (1=poor, 5=excellent).
- Since 2015, Committee Connect has brought together 63 legislators with 92 UW–Madison researchers.

OTHER LEGISLATOR & POLICYMAKER OUTREACH

- Office Hours at the Capitol, a new drop-in event for legislators and legislative, gubernatorial, and legislative service agency staff. Eight UW–Madison faculty members shared their expertise on three high-priority issues.
- Legislative Staff Professional Development Training in Public Affairs for 23 Wisconsin Assembly aides
- Evidence-Based Health Policy Project, led by Sam Austin (MIPA ’08)

CAMPUS & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Director and Professor Susan Yackee moderated Town Hall discussions about key issues during the 2018 midterm elections with six La Follette School faculty members, in Madison and Milwaukee.
- Associate Professor J. Michael Collins and former Associate Director Hilary Shager (MPA ’05, PhD ’12) are among the leaders of the Alliance for the American Dream: DreamUp Wisconsin, a new community-university collaboration aimed at promoting shared prosperity and increasing American competitiveness.
- The Wisconsin Women in Government organization received a Community-University Award in June 2018 because of its 20-year partnership with the La Follette School.
- Twenty-seven organizations benefitted from student research and analysis during the 2017–18 academic year.
- The La Follette School brought more than 400 people to campus through the:
  - Public Affairs Journalist in Residence program, featuring Matthew Yglesias of Vox Media, and Sarah Stillman of the New Yorker;
  - Wisconsin Journalist in Residence program, which hosted former radio host Charlie Sykes, who gave an impassioned and thoughtful account of how the conservative movement in the U.S. has changed over time; and
  - Annual Paul Offner Lecture, which featured Katherine Baicker, dean of the University of Chicago’s Harris School of Public Policy, who discussed the evidence and implications for Medicaid reform.

ENGAGEMENT WITH ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

- More than 70 alumni and friends participated in mock interviews and speed networking with first-year students as part of the required Professional Development Workshop.
- The Wisconsin Alumni Association honored alumnus Raul Leon (MIPA ’07) with a Forward Under 40 award for his efforts to improve educational policy and student experiences.
- Led by Director Susan Webb Yackee, the La Follette School Board of Visitors has grown to 15 members.

Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs
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HIGH-IMPACT RESEARCH

Each year, La Follette School faculty members receive accolades for their research while the school and the broader UW–Madison campus place high in several world rankings.

AWARD-WINNING FACULTY


- Over the past two years, six faculty members have received awards from UW–Madison's five major research competitions, including Associate Professor J. Michael Collins in 2018.

- Assistant Professor Emilia Tjernstrom received a 40 for 40 Fellowship from the Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM).

RESEARCH IN TOP JOURNALS

- In a research-based ranking of U.S. public policy schools, the La Follette School ranked 13th for papers in publications with a SciVal Journal Rank above the 99th percentile.

- Assistant Professor Rourke O’Brien presented his paper about the impact of FICO score knowledge on financial behavior at the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Research Conference.

- Professors Jason Fletcher and Barbara (Bobbi) Wolfe led a discussion about research into the human microbiome, a person’s genetic makeup, and the human brain for the school’s 2018 spring symposium.

RESEARCH INITIATIVES

- The Center for Financial Security, led by Associate Professor J. Michael Collins, received a five-year cooperative agreement with the Social Security Administration’s Retirement and Disability Research Consortium.

- Professor Greg Nemet participated in an international consortium of researchers that found a major gap in climate change dialogue about the lack of policy discussions about negative emission technologies, which aim to remove carbon dioxide, the major driver of manmade climate change, from the atmosphere.

- With funding from the Herb Kohl Public Service Research Competition, faculty are pursuing nonpartisan research that informs public policy and governance debates and advances evidence-based decision-making, including:
  - Professor Barbara (Bobbi) Wolfe, who gave several presentations to community leaders in Madison and Milwaukee with the goal of improving the lives of children in families with low incomes, and
  - Professor Susan Webb Yackee, who hosted more than a dozen of the nation’s top scholars on regulatory review for the interdisciplinary workshop New Frontiers in the Empirical Study of Agency Policymaking.
Director’s Perspective

Faculty, students gain from research collaboration

The La Follette School takes great pride in the many opportunities for students and faculty members to collaborate on research. Each year, funding for faculty research supports numerous students as project assistants (PAs).

This Policy Report highlights one such collaboration – research by Professor Menzie Chinn and Ryan LeCloux (MIPA ’18). Chinn and LeCloux investigated the usefulness of quarterly state-level gross domestic product (GDP) measures, which began in 2014.

For faculty, project assistantships have proven invaluable to research. LeCloux, now a research assistant for the Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, said the experience greatly developed his data analysis skills and allowed him to utilize skills from his statistics course in a real-world setting.

Since 2016, the Herb Kohl Public Service Research Competition has expanded project assistant opportunities for students. Working closely with our outstanding students is one of the most rewarding and enjoyable aspects of serving on the La Follette School faculty.

The Kohl Research Competition also has elevated the status of faculty members’ external funding applications. For example, Professor Greg Nemet was honored with a prestigious 2017 Carnegie Foundation Fellowship for his research on solar energy, which earlier received Kohl funding.

External and internal research support not only provides financial resources, it also raises the profile of the La Follette School and our exemplary faculty and students. For Nemet, the funding allowed him to more closely focus on his book project about solar energy, which is previewed on page 5.

La Follette School students benefit tremendously from our faculty’s research, whether it’s from project assistantships or from the impact on the content we’re teaching. Our research demonstrates the La Follette School’s deep commitment to making the world a better place for everyone – no matter their party affiliation, economic status, heritage, gender, or religious beliefs.

As director of the La Follette School of Public Affairs, I am honored to carry on this rich tradition and encourage you to visit our website to learn more about our research, teaching, and outreach – all embodied in the Wisconsin Idea.

Susan S. Wente
Director

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Allocating Indivisible Life-Saving Goods with Both Intrinsic and Relational Quality

The allocation of deceased-donor kidneys to patients with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) poses a wicked rationing problem. In 2014, the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) implemented a new allocation system that more explicitly accounts for the intrinsic quality of these life-saving organs.

The new allocation rules take much greater account of intrinsic quality to increase efficiency in the use of the limited supply of deceased-donor kidneys by better matching expected graft life with expected longevity to reduce the need for second transplants and wasted graft life. In this paper, David Weimer and his co-author focus on the process that led to this non-incremental revision of allocation rules by OPTN.

They trace the evolution of the new allocation system with particular attention to the role of evidence and the ways that concerns about equity were solicited, assessed, and taken into account in modifying the original proposal. These deliberations show the potential for stakeholder rulemaking to integrate evidence and values.

Extending over more than a decade, the process involved extensive modeling by the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR) and the tacit knowledge of transplant professionals to predict the consequences of rule changes as well as extensive consultation with stakeholders to value these consequences. Perhaps more than any other area of medical governance, the process demonstrates the application of evidence-based medicine to improve health outcomes.

The authors conclude that a similarly beneficial change may have resulted through agency rulemaking; however, the process would almost certainly have been less transparent and involved a much less systematic and continuous involvement of stakeholders, and therefore, would likely have followed a different path to a different outcome. Stakeholder rulemaking may be worthy of consideration as an alternative to agency regulation in policy areas in which important stakeholders with tacit knowledge can be induced by sufficient stakes to engage in transparent policy development.

In addition, the authors explore the complexities of the allocation of scarce goods with heterogeneous quality. Although the medical ethics literature abounds with discussions of allocating scarce indivisible goods such as transplant organs, little attention has been given to the implications of quality differences within the stock of the scarce resource.

The authors introduce a distinction between relational quality, in which the value of the good depends on both its characteristics and characteristics of potential recipients, and intrinsic quality, in which the value of the good would be higher for all feasible potential recipients than would be the value of an alternative good of lower quality.

The Authors

David Weimer is the Edward E. Witte Professor of Political Economy, University of Wisconsin–Madison. Laura Wilk is a juris doctor candidate at the University of Texas School of Law.

Read More


Impact and Implications

No collective choice institution is perfect, including the stakeholder rulemaking that produced the new kidney allocation system. Nonetheless, the process vigorously employed evidence-based medicine within a context involving conflicting interests and values that make incremental change difficult and radical change truly surprising, at least from the perspective of U.S. rulemaking.
The Politics of Rulemaking in the United States

Despite the importance of government rulemaking, many people have only a foggy understanding of what a government rule is. Every year, U.S. agencies issue rules governing such critical policy topics as air quality, financial markets, highways, foreign aid, food stamps, power production, and toxic chemicals.

In this paper, Susan Webb Yackee reviews several recurring themes in the rulemaking literature, providing contextual, background, and further definitional information. She also draws highlights from the literature across two major themes: political accountability and public participation.

The writing of government rules is a key step in the public policymaking process. It is at this stage when public agency officials “fill up the details,” in the words of the Supreme Court, of what may be incomplete or even purposefully vague statutes passed by Congress and signed by the president.

Agency policy decision making is often idealized as providing technocratic, scientific, and/or expert-based solutions to policy problems. In fact, one of the primary reasons—if not the primary reason—why legislatures delegate policymaking authority to administrative agencies is to harness agency expertise in addressing complex policy topics. Yet, agency policymaking also takes place within a political context.

The rulemaking process established in the 1946 Administrative Procedure Act (APA) has evolved significantly, with the president and legislature passing new procedures that require additional analysis of select rules. The courts also have heightened the scrutiny on agency decision making across the rulemaking process. Taken together, these efforts by political principals have complicated the relatively straightforward APA notice and comment process.

The public participation component of notice and comment rulemaking has been heralded by some observers as a way to open lawmaking to public scrutiny and to address the “democratic deficit” that is often attached to policymaking by unelected bureaucrats. In reality, interest group representatives are the main “public” participants.

Two factors help drive this relationship. Few citizens have the expertise to monitor bureaucratic policymaking and to know how and when to participate, and citizen lobbying may require resources and technical expertise for it to be influential during rulemaking.

In conclusion, it may seem as if rulemaking is becoming more political. However, rulemaking has been political since 1946. Given this history and its importance to governance, public policy, business, and modern society, Yackee calls for more research—especially quantitative research—to unpack and understand the politics of U.S. rulemaking.

She suggests three complementary opportunities for future scholarly research and inquiry: the influence of agency autonomy on rulemaking processes, outputs, and outcomes; the collection of new data to advance the empirical understanding of rulemaking; and the use of agency guidance documents to increase the systematic understanding of agency policymaking tools.

The Author

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Impact and Implications

The concentration of this article is on quantitative studies of notice and comment rulemaking, and how rulemaking may provide points of entry for political factors. It suggests many complementary opportunities for future scholarly research and inquiry, including agency autonomy, data and methods, and agency guidance documents.
The Effect of Housing Assistance on Student Achievement: Evidence from Wisconsin

Each year thousands of low-income families receive government-funded housing assistance in the form of a Section 8 housing voucher (to find housing in the private rental market) or access to public housing (ranging from single-family homes to high-rise apartment buildings). This assistance is intended to improve the stability and quality of the family's housing, with some families moving across school attendance boundaries to settle in a long-term residence. These changes in housing and school environment have the potential to shape children's academic trajectories by improving financial and social resources, access to higher achieving classrooms, and the quality of neighborhood.

This study examined the effect of a family's receipt of housing assistance on children's academic achievement. Drawing from a unique data set, the authors linked the housing assistance status of all Wisconsin households receiving means-tested benefits (e.g., SNAP or Food Stamps) with the standardized test scores of public school students in those households. Two comparison groups were used: (1) children in households that received housing assistance four years after the treatment group, and (2) low-income students whose families did not receive housing assistance.

The results suggest that housing assistance leads to small increases in math scores in the range of 0.02-0.03 standard deviations. Although small, it should be noted this change is produced by an intervention that does not specifically target education. Large-scale, education-specific interventions often result in effect sizes only somewhat larger. Looking at each type of housing assistance separately, vouchers are associated with increasing math scores while public housing is associated with decreasing math scores. Noting the limits of their data, the authors do not draw a strong causal conclusion about this difference.

There were no significant changes in reading scores, which is consistent with research showing that reading improvements are more closely related to home life and math skills are primarily learned in the classroom. While differences between boys and girls were not statistically significant, the authors find some evidence that math gains are concentrated among black students instead of white students. This could be due to black students moving out of comparatively lower-resourced neighborhoods than white students. That is, they had more room for improvement when moving to a new residence and school.

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Impact and Implications
The results of this study are consistent with a body of research finding housing assistance to have relatively limited effects on student achievement. This study builds on previous research in several important ways. First, the data were drawn from a geographically diverse state rather than only from a large urban area. Second, the analysis compared vouchers against public housing, and compared housing assistance receipt to no housing assistance. Third, student test scores were used as the measure of educational outcome.

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Policymaking in energy always involves multiple objectives, including affordability, cleanliness, and reliability, and transitions from one energy carrier to another have historically occurred very slowly.

As a substantial global industry, solar energy has generated trade disputes among superpowers, threatened the solvency of large energy companies, and prompted serious reconsideration of utility regulation rooted in the 1930s. Solar not only produces clean and inexpensive energy, it provides several lessons for innovation in other technologies for addressing climate change.

The literature on solar is extensive, including analyses of increasingly detailed data sets; however, the question as to how solar became inexpensive and why it took so long remains unanswered. As a 2017 Andrew Carnegie Fellow, Professor Greg Nemet took a deep dive into these questions, drawing on new data sets, analyses, and a growing literature.

Nemet’s forthcoming book How Solar Energy Became Cheap: A Model for Low-Carbon Innovation provides a comprehensive and international explanation for how and why this happened. Flows of knowledge from one country to another—often embodied in equipment and as tacit knowledge of internationally mobile individuals—have been central to solar’s progress.

The payoff from understanding the reasons for solar’s success is not just to take full advantage of its potential. It also offers an opportunity for supporting other low-carbon technologies with analogous properties, including small modular nuclear reactors and direct air capture.

However, a key challenge in applying the solar model is in finding ways to speed up innovation. Nemet offers nine innovation accelerators — actions that would have sped the development of solar and that could be applied to new low-carbon technologies that fit the solar model.

**The Author**

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**Impact and Implications**

Increasing globalization has contributed extensively to solar’s success; however, solar is an inherently local venture, with installation accounting for 80 percent of the cost. Committed government action in multiple jurisdictions can enhance each of Nemet’s nine innovation accelerators and can stimulate improvement in and adoption of the broad set of technologies needed to address climate change.
Tracking State Economies at High Frequency: A Primer

Tracking the business cycle at the level of state economies and discerning the impact of policies on state economies has been hampered by limited data on a higher-than-annual frequency. In this paper, Menzie Chinn and his former project assistant review the data sources and series available for a cross section of states, with discussion of the associated advantages and disadvantages.

The paper identifies data available to researchers interested in evaluating the course of the economy, particularly in response to specific shocks. Until recently, though, gross domestic product (GDP) at the state level was released only at an annual frequency.

Since 2014, quarterly GDP reports provide state statistics in nominal and real terms. The GDP reports also include a sectoral breakdown of value added, making it possible to discern in an accounting sense the contributions to economic growth arising from given sectors.

After reviewing the sources of high frequency data, Chinn and LeCloux provide estimates of the correlation and co-movement of various indicators with state-level real GDP, and how different indicators define turning points in state economies. They also illustrate the usefulness of high frequency state-level GDP by evaluating whether a state economy is in line with expectations.

Additionally, the authors provide one example of how researchers use high frequency data to assess indirectly the impact of economic policies – 2012 legislation in Kansas that reduced the tax rate on pass-through corporations to zero and reduced other income tax rates.

Chinn and LeCloux conclude that the advent of quarterly GDP for the states has been a boon to those who want to track economic activity, broadly defined. However, the short span of data available (starting in 2005) and the sometimes substantial revisions in the series suggest that reliance solely on the quarterly GDP statistics is not desirable.

In general, though, outside observers are better equipped to assess the outlook for a state’s economy and the impact of policies on economic activity than they were in the past.

The Authors

Menzie Chinn is a Professor of Public Affairs and Economics at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Ryan LeCloux (MIPA ’18) was Chinn’s project assistant during the 2017–18 academic year and now is a legislative research analyst at the Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau.

Impact and Implications

These results suggest that state-level quarterly GDP data provide valuable information for discerning the impact of fiscal and regulatory policies – as well as nationwide policies – on state economies. However, the state-level reports are subject to greater (percentage) variability (from revisions) than the national counterpart, due in part to the smaller sample size.

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Tracking the State Economies at High Frequency: A Primer, La Follette School Working Paper,  https://go.wisc.edu/275mgc
Heterogeneous Impact Dynamics of a Rural Business Development Program in Nicaragua

With severe poverty concentrated in rural areas of the developing world, there have been numerous efforts to engage the rural poor as entrepreneurs. The hope is that with the right information, investment, and market connectivity, the poor can boost their incomes, invest in their children, and work their way out of poverty.

In 2007, the government in Nicaragua launched a rural business development program (RBD) in cooperation with the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the U.S. government foreign aid agency. The RBD was designed to boost the productivity and incomes of rural, poor farmers by enhancing their business knowledge and improving their access to markets and technologies. Participating farmers were part of the program for 24 months.

In measuring the effectiveness of such interventions, researchers face several challenges. It is often costly to gauge long-term impacts, especially if participants continue to experience benefits (or fall back to old behaviors) after a program ends. Additionally, when a program affects some types of participants differently, it can complicate the analysis. To address these challenges, the authors used a five-year roll-out design that randomized farmers’ exposure to the RBD program and allowed in-depth analysis of those who (eventually) enrolled in the program.

The authors found that on average the program boosted farmers’ income in targeted activities between $1,200 and $2,100 annually and increased agricultural investment by between $700 and $4,000. The investment impacts are much larger when the authors examine a longer period of time. Somewhat surprisingly, there are no impacts on the third outcome of interest—household expenditures. In fact, weak evidence suggests that the program reduced expenditures, as might be expected if households were investing more in their farm than on household expenses.

At a cost of $2,500 per enrolled farmer, the RBD appears to be a cost-effective instrument to boost the average income and assets of participating farmers. However, the effectiveness of similar programs to reduce rural poverty at scale crucially depends on its ability to produce impacts across a broader population. The authors found two groups that did not benefit from the RBD program: those that declined to participate (one-third of the original target population) and those that were on average slightly poorer at baseline. Among those who did participate, the impacts were actually greatest among those who had the greatest initial disadvantages.

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Patricia Toledo is an Assistant Professor of Economics, Ohio University.

Impact and Implications

Research shows that anti-poverty business development programs may exclude some farmers who are perhaps unwilling to assume the risk and effort involved with becoming more entrepreneurial. Among those opting to participate, the authors used multi-year panel data analysis and machine learning methods to shed light on this question. These results suggest that programs like the RBD should exercise caution when excluding farmers whose resources are thought to be too modest, as these households may have the most to gain from such interventions.

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