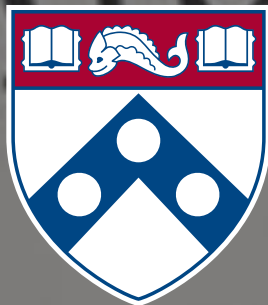


University of
Pennsylvania
School of Social
Policy & Practice

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Alumni Hall of Fame



Penn
Social Policy & Practice

UNIVERSITY *of* PENNSYLVANIA

| ABOUT SP2 |

The School of Social Policy & Practice contributes to the advancement of more effective, efficient, and humane human services through education, research, and civic engagement. In pursuit of this mission, our theory-based masters and doctoral programs in social work, social welfare, nonprofit leadership, and social policy encourage students to think and work across disciplinary lines and cultures as well as across national and international boundaries. The pursuit of social justice is at the heart of the School's knowledge-building activities. Our innovative educational and research programs reinforce our vision of active student engagement in their own learning as well as that of social agencies and larger social collectivities organized at the local, national, and international levels.



| A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN |



At Penn's School of Policy & Practice (SP2), our proudest legacy lies in training exemplary social work, social policy, and nonprofit leaders who orient their life's work toward advancing impact, innovation, and inclusion.

The annual SP2 Alumni Hall of Fame honors the achievements of outstanding change agents and practitioners who took up the calling to elevate social justice and equity, right here at our School. Whether through providing expertise and guidance on social policies, helping nonprofits maximize their social impact, training teachers and students in philanthropic education, advancing the use of evidence to inform health practice and policy decisions, or providing leading scholarship and education in the areas of race, racism, social and cultural identity, and social justice, this year's inductees are proof of the tremendous impact that our alumni continue to make, locally and worldwide.

Please join me in congratulating and thanking each of the 2020 SP2 Alumni Hall of Fame inductees—**CHÉRÈSE NOVELLE GODWIN, ELIZABETH ABEL, CHULHEE KANG, PATRICIA REID-MERRITT, and RACHEL DUNGAN**—for their ardent dedication and service. As you read about the many accomplishments of these remarkable alumni and learn about the issues that matter most to them, I have no doubt that you, too, will feel inspired to help make a difference in your community.

Sara S. Bachman, PhD
Dean

| MEET THE INDUCTEES |

CHÉRÉSE NOVELLE GODWIN, MSW '09

Dr. Cherése Novelle Godwin obtained her Master's in Social Work from the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania at 23 years old. Upon graduating, Dr. Godwin began working on a UN short term countrywide consultancy project on Ending Violence Against Women in the Caribbean, focused in the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis. After successfully completing the consultancy and establishing a model that has been used throughout the Caribbean and Latin America, she worked in Washington, DC providing community support to individuals suffering from mental illness.

Thereafter, the onset of her career as a professor began, lecturing on sociology and race and ethnic relations. She went on to obtain her PhD in Social Policy, Planning, Administration, and Social Sciences from the Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work at Clark Atlanta University, where she was also a Contributing Professor of Master of Social Work Department. Post-graduating with her published dissertation on A Study of the Relationship Between Incarceration, Birth Rate, and Racial Disparities Among African Americans Since the Passing of the Violent Crime Control & Law Enforcement Act of 1994, she took on a position as Chair & Associate Professor of a BSW program and began teaching as a contributing faculty member for Walden University's MSW program. Dr. Godwin and her students put on a Community Anti-Violence Awareness Day as an act of their research class, after defining a problem and then coming up with a solution. Dr. Godwin later moved to Saint Kitts and Nevis and opened her consultancy firm, providing social policy writing and advising to countries and advising businesses on people, culture, and mental health, while she performed the monitoring and evaluation of UN programs across the entire Caribbean.



Dr. Godwin is a UNESCO Public Speaker on Humanities and represented the entire Eastern Caribbean at the World Humanities Conference with a published paper. She was asked by the St. Kitts and Nevis Chamber of Industry and Commerce after winning the Woman in Leadership of the Year Award from the International Labour Organisation, to represent all employers as a Social Security Board Director and served her three-year term in that appointment. Dr. Godwin also took on the role of the first Psychologist/Social Worker of National Security in the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, advising the Prime Minister, Commissioner of Police, and other National Security heads. She took on a similar role, working directly with the Governor and HR of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, the monetary council for eight countries, as their Wellness Consultant, advising on policy, culture, and people.

Dr. Godwin has such an appreciation for her alumni school, SP2. She is elated to be lecturing her first semester in the MSSP program, assisting students to act on social issues and bring change to life, through the Data for Equitable Justice Lab. She believes this is a great opportunity for students to obtain the practical skills needed in the working world, and it also parachutes students to become an expert in their field of interest. Dr. Godwin is honored to be selected as an inductee into the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy & Practice Hall of Fame.

Q&A

1. How would you describe the impact of your time at SP2, earning your MSW degree?

The impact of my time at SP2 while obtaining my MSW, was life changing. Not only was it educationally challenging, it made me step up and meet my potential. I became a better writer and critical thinker, and I held myself accountable and became fully responsible, as I knew in order to meet and surpass the standards, I had to fully be aware of myself, my actions, my abilities, and my skillset. When I entered into the MSW program, I was 21 years old, I had just completed college at Clark Atlanta University and matriculated to UPenn. I attended a historical black university where I was the majority and when I entered into the MSW program at SP2, I was one of five other black students out of over 100 students in my class. Even though I grew up in a very diverse township of Piscataway, NJ, it was still an education and culture shock. I was now the minority. I recognized this, and I knew I had to be my best to be seen, heard, and valued. My time at SP2 made me into a full-fledged adult, into the ultimate professional. I carried everything I learned with me along the way and impacted

others. To me, time is the greatest commodity, and my time spent at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy and Practice was a time well spent.

2. What social justice issues have been most important to you throughout your education and career?

By far, I have always been interested in the social justice for African American and Black people. I have always been taught to stand up and advocate for yourself and others, to be a servant leader. My cousin, the late Honorable Constance Baker Motley (CBM), was the only female lawyer for the civil rights movement, fighting alongside Martin Luther King. She was the legal aid for Thurgood Marshall in the Brown v Board of Education case and many other segregation cases in the south. My passion for the rights of Black people has been one since I was a child, and CBM justified that for me. I have always believed in human rights and human dignity. I wrote my dissertation in 2014 on Mass Incarceration, Birthrates, and Racial Disparities since the passing of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 after learning years earlier at UPenn about the public health issue of mass incarceration of Black and Latino men and women. I am also passionate about the social justice issues of women's rights, safety, and equity. I have worked on many countrywide projects internationally on gender sensitization, equity, reproductive health equity policy, for gender affairs in various countries, and for UN-based projects. I have also engaged in many public speaking engagements on women's rights.

3. Could you describe the work that you are doing now?

I recently obtained an opportunity to lecture at SP2, a dream of mine. I am currently an adjunct, in hopes of one day becoming a full-time faculty member. I recently moved back to the USA after working overseas where I served a three-year term as a Social Security Board Director, responsible for all employers and policy, I served as Chief Psychologist over National Security for the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, advising the permanent secretary and Prime Minister, and providing support, policy recommendations, and contingency plans. I have my own international consulting firm where we write policies, create programs, and provide public speaking engagements to countries and organizations. I chaired a Bachelor of Social Work department and I have lectured in higher education for ten years.

4. How do you envision the future of the social work profession?

The future of the social work profession is strong and is imperative for the social contract and the multifaceted demands and changes of and to society, which then

affect not only the community, but groups and the individual. It's important to first truly understand what social work is. Social work is a practice-based profession that promotes social change, development, cohesion and the empowerment of people and communities. Social work practice involves the understanding of human development, behavior and the social, economic and cultural institutions and interactions, policy, data, and research.

I envision the future of the social work profession to be more highly valued and understood, for it to be a prerequisite for all disciplines. Social work is a very broad profession and goes far beyond case management. I envision social work collaborating with every profession to promote growth, the change process, and bolster deeply needed humanity, dignity, diversity and inclusion. I envision a shift in the current collaborations, where social work is more of a dominant than an underlying supportive factor. I envision integrating technology and innovation. I envision higher salaries because of the demand of work society currently needs and will need in the future and for more entrepreneurs in the field of social work.

We not only have social ills, but major social issues like climate change, and social work is at the forefront of the conversation, deepening it and providing solutions to social challenges. There will be more of a scientific study, data driven, and evidence-based practice solutions for everything. For example, I am working on a shift in the profession; many professional athletes obtain wealth, but due to many factors, lose that wealth. This is where social workers come in at the very beginning and provide a holistic approach and a biopsychoreligious and social model, linking each player with the proper resources to succeed. Social work will no longer be for the poor, disenfranchised, and needy where case management is concerned. This is my vision for the profession moving forward.

The profession is limitless.

| MEET THE INDUCTEES |

ELIZABETH ABEL, NPL '13

Elizabeth has dedicated her career to helping nonprofits fulfill their missions—working with them to elevate philanthropy, plan strategically for their futures, and maximize their social impact.

She is a Corporate Vice President at CCS Fundraising, a leading strategic consulting and fundraising management firm to nonprofit organizations worldwide. Since joining CCS in 2013, Elizabeth has partnered with institutions in the education, arts and culture, religion, and advocacy sectors to plan and implement transformational fundraising campaigns with revenue goals ranging from \$4 million to \$100 million. In this role, she provides counsel on strategic planning, principal and major gifts fundraising, and volunteer engagement. Elizabeth has also directed campaign planning studies, served in interim development roles, and managed annual campaigns and special fundraising events.



Elizabeth is an Instructor at the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania where she serves on the Board of the Nonprofit Leadership Program Alumni Association. She is also a Board Member of the American Jewish Committee ACCESS New York Region.

Elizabeth holds a Masters in Nonprofit Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania and a Bachelor of Arts from Tufts University. An avid traveler, she enjoys exploring new places and spending time outdoors. Elizabeth resides in Manhattan with her husband and daughter.

1. What influenced your decision to enroll in the NPL program at SP2?

I enrolled in the Nonprofit Leadership Program because of its unique focus on social impact. I valued the emphasis on cultivating future thought leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators to address complex social challenges through rigorous academics, thought-provoking dialogue, and an on-site practicum experience in the Philadelphia community. My academic background was in International Relations and Peace and Justice Studies, and I was passionate about working with organizations on the frontlines of the most pressing social issues of our time. I believed the NPL program would equip me with the hard and soft skills to lead with courage, compassion, and conviction while making the greatest impact.

My experiences as an NPL graduate student positioned me for a successful career in fundraising consulting for nonprofit organizations and reaffirmed my commitment to social good. The engaging coursework and conversations with fellow students prepared me to think strategically, ask sophisticated questions, and grow my entrepreneurial spirit.

Looking back, the NPL program served as a catalyst to my current role at CCS Fundraising. I use my “NPL Toolbox” and key lessons from courses such as Strategic Management with Kat Rosqueta, Social Entrepreneurship with Peter Frumkin, and Philanthropy and Fundraising with Eileen Heisman daily. Now an SP2 Instructor myself, I believe it is a privilege to educate future leaders in the nonprofit sector and inspire incoming NPL cohorts to elevate philanthropy at their respective organizations.

I am proud of the unwavering commitment of NPL students, faculty, and alumni to work towards a more just and equitable society for all and am humbled to be a part of this extraordinary community.

2. What social justice issues have been most important to you throughout your education and career?

As a Jewish woman, I believe deeply in *Tikkun Olam*, the philosophy of “repairing the world” through education, *tzedakah* (charity), and social action. My longstanding

commitment to *Tikkun Olam* has inspired my professional focus on social impact and has shaped the woman I am today.

Holocaust and genocide education has always been at the heart of my commitment to create a more just, inclusive, and meaningful society for all. During my undergraduate experience at Tufts, I led several initiatives to invite Holocaust and Cambodian and Rwandan genocide survivors to campus to share their stories and raise awareness of these historic atrocities. I also facilitated discussions with students of all backgrounds on the importance of raising a moral voice in the face of injustice and hate. Sadly, as anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. are indisputably on the rise, the need for comprehensive Holocaust education has never been greater. Furthermore, as anti-Semitism often leads to other forms of intolerance such as racism, homophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiments, the social justice issue of bigotry and hate extends beyond the Jewish community to the general American population.

3. Can you describe the work that you are doing now?

I am a Corporate Vice President at CCS Fundraising, a leading strategic consulting and fundraising management firm to nonprofit organizations worldwide. In this role, I partner with executive leadership to plan and implement transformational fundraising campaigns that equip institutions with the tools, talent, and technology to effectively pursue their mission and have a greater social impact. Specifically, I manage all aspects of a client's capital, endowment, or annual campaign including developing high-level goals, refining the campaign vision, and implementing a dynamic fundraising strategy to secure maximum revenue.

Over the course of my tenure with CCS, I have had the privilege of working with organizations that pioneer innovative solutions to the most pressing issues of our time—from transforming healthcare facilities to provide unsurpassed patient care, to combating anti-Semitism and white supremacy, and to empowering the next generation of female leaders. It's incredibly meaningful to know that the projects I've led have enabled organizations to plan strategically for their future and increase their financial resources, allowing them to have an even greater impact on the communities they serve.

4. How do you envision the future of nonprofit leadership?

My response to this question today is vastly different from what it would have been one year ago. COVID-19 has dramatically impacted the nonprofit landscape. Most

organizations have had to recalibrate and reimagine their programmatic, operational, and philanthropic activity in response to the pandemic—leveraging technology to navigate a rapidly changing environment, pivoting activity to meet the diverse needs of their communities, and developing innovative pathways to fundraise. Navigating this uncharted territory requires forward-thinking, visionary leaders that can galvanize support and momentum around their organization’s mission, activate their community, and innovate in the face of uncertainty. While COVID-19 has brought unforeseen and unprecedented challenges, the leaders that look to the future, develop new tactics, and find opportunities to reimagine their vision will position their organization to respond to and thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

At the same time, there is a movement to diversify nonprofit leadership to better reflect our multicultural society. Many nonprofit executives have recognized the need for their staff, leadership teams, and boards to better represent the diverse racial and ethnic communities the organization seeks to serve. Furthermore, nonprofit leaders need to make a continuous, sustained effort toward helping diverse teams feel engaged, empowered, accepted, and valued. The most effective leaders know that bringing diverse perspectives and talent to the table leads to more creativity and innovative ideas, and ultimately, a greater impact.

| MEET THE INDUCTEES |

CHULHEE KANG, PhD '94

Dr. Chulhee Kang is a Dean and Professor at the School of Social Welfare at Yonsei University in South Korea. He also serves as a President of the Korean Academy of Social Welfare, which represents all professors and researchers in the field of social welfare.

Dr. Kang served as the editor of leading social welfare journals in Korea and is an editorial board member of NVSQ (*Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly*). He designed Giving Korea (a national survey on giving and volunteering), Community Chest of Korea (the largest public charity organization in Korea), and the Honor Society (the largest major donor club in Korea). In addition, Dr. Kang served as a board member of United Way Worldwide (the largest public charity organization in the world), as well as Community Chest Korea and many independent foundations in Korea.



Currently, he leads philanthropy education for young students as a founder of the Philanthropy Education Forum of Korea, which makes textbooks and trains teachers for philanthropy education. Dr. Kang has been a leader in institutionalizing new philanthropic institutions, as well as philanthropic study in Korea. He has published more than 110 research papers in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) and in top Korean journals. His research includes a wide range of topics related to charity, philanthropy, and nonprofit organization management.

1. What influenced your decision to enroll in the PhD program at SP2?

I joined SP2 in 1989 because of its academic excellence, tradition, and multi-disciplinary approach. I could find respected professors at SP2 and other departments who could upgrade my intellectual and research capacity.

2. What have been your primary areas of research interest throughout your education and career?

I have studied charity and philanthropy as an institution and related organizations. At Penn, I studied public charity organizations like United Way and the governance of human service organizations. Based on my study at Penn, I have continued studying diverse actors' giving behaviors: individual citizens, profit organizations like companies, and religious organizations like churches. Simultaneously, to broaden and deepen our field's knowledge base, I have researched human service organizations' managerial and leadership behaviors and charity organizations' same topics. I have made a continuous effort to apply more appropriate research methods for my research. I recently like to use text mining approaches such as topic modeling on journal articles such as *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly* and *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*.

3. Can you describe the work that you are doing now?

I believe that our work should have a balance between knowledge development and practical application for social change. So, I have made a continuous effort to achieve that balance. In addition to my research, I have always attempted to contribute to our community and society. I designed the establishment of Community Chest Korea (the second-largest United Way in the world) and Center on Philanthropy (producer of annual 'Giving Korea') under the Beautiful Foundation (the first community foundation in Korea). Recently, I established two nonprofit organizations: New Solution (which provides innovative solutions for NPOs) and Philanthropy Education Forum of Korea (which leads philanthropy education for young students with developing textbooks and training teachers.) Still, I remember an evaluative statement on social welfare (work) by a sociology professor at Penn: "It contributes to change our society beyond knowledge development."

4. What advice do you have for students who are considering pursuing a PhD at SP2?

At SP2, you can have diverse opportunities to actualize your expectations if you have a solid study mission and strong aspiration. SP2 is a very supportive educational institution that willingly collaborates with you to promote and strengthen your intellectual capacity. Notably, its multi-disciplinary approach will upgrade your quality as an educator and researcher. At SP2, you will experience your expected transformation.

| MEET THE INDUCTEES |

PATRICIA REID-MERRITT, DSW '84

Dr. Patricia Reid-Merritt – author, educator, scholar, community activist and performing artist - is the Distinguished Professor of Africana Studies and Social Work at Stockton University in Galloway, New Jersey. Dr. Reid-Merritt received the Doctorate of Social Work in Race, Law and Social Policy (University of Pennsylvania); the Master of Social Work (Temple University); and the Bachelor of Arts in psychology and social science (Cabrini College). She served as



Coordinator of the Africana Studies Program (2003-2016), spearheaded the University's annual Fannie Lou Hamer Human and Civil Rights Symposiums ((2004-2015), and chaired the National Fannie Lou Hamer Statue Committee (2012).

Dr. Reid-Merritt is also the Founder and Artistic/Executive Director of Afro-One Dance, Drama and Drum Theatre, Inc., a community-based cultural and performing arts organization currently celebrating its 47th year of operation. Afro-One has been described as "the cultural magnet" for African American youth, families and the community in southern New Jersey

Dr. Reid-Merritt is the author of numerous publications, including: the national Blackboard best-seller, *Sister Power: How Phenomenal Black Women Are Rising to the Top*; *Sister Wisdom: Seven Pathways to a Satisfying Life for Soulful Black Women*; *Righteous Self-Determination: The Black Social Work Movement in*

America; Race in America: How a Pseudo-Scientific Concept Shaped Human Interaction; Tarnished Legacy: A Reluctant Memoir; A State by State History of Race and Racism in the United States; and, Race and Identity in Hispanic America: The White, the Black and the Brown.

A resident of Hamilton, NJ, Dr. Reid-Merritt is a well-known scholar and lecturer. She has presented scholarly papers and keynote addresses at numerous national and international conferences, including Kenya, Brazil, Egypt, France, South Africa, England, and Venezuela. She spent four weeks at the University of Ghana as a Ford Fellow with the National Council for Black Studies. She was the founding President of the Association of Black Women in Higher Education, Philadelphia Chapter, having served previously on the National Board of Directors. Dr. Reid-Merritt served as the founding President of the Burlington County Black Business and Professional Association, and as founding president of the National Association of Black Social Workers, South Jersey Chapter. From 1993-2011, she served on the Board of Directors for the National Council for Black Studies. Additionally, she is a consultant on arts and culture to communities throughout the State of New Jersey.

Dr. Reid-Merritt is the recipient of numerous honors/awards including: University of Pennsylvania, School of Policy and Practice Hall of Fame, Cabrini College Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award; Temple University, Alumni Society Certificate of Honor; NAACP Freedom Award; Stockton University's Council of Black Faculty and Staff Annual Achievement Award and Lifetime Achievement Award; National Council for Black Studies' Presidential Award, and Mary McLeod Bethune and Carter G. Woodson Award for the most significant contribution to the promotion of Africana Studies. She has been honored by the NJ State Council of Black Social Workers as Social Worker of the Year, the NJ State Legislature, and named by *City News* as one of New Jersey's 100 Most Influential Citizens. She is listed in *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who among Black Americans* and *2000 Notable American Women*.

1. How would you describe the impact of your time at SP2, earning your DSW?

It was challenging. I was a wife and a mother, a full-time student, with a full-time job. I remember a professor telling me that I could have two roles, not three. Something would have to give. What I remember most was my life being a delicate balancing act between the professional and the personal for the six years in which I was enrolled in the program. Academically, I felt prepared for the challenge. I received a BA degree from Cabrini University and an MSW from Temple. I was an assistant professor at Stockton University. Penn was an adjustment to the Ivy League.

2. What social justice issues have been most important to you throughout your education and career?

Understanding the social ramifications of American race and racism and engaging in progressive actions to eliminate its harmful effects. This was my focus from the very beginning. When asked what would be my specific area of focus, it was determined to be "Race, Law and Social Policy." This was officially listed as my area of concentration.

3. Could you describe the work that you are doing now?

For the past 45 years, I have been a faculty member at Stockton University. I've taught courses in both the Social Work and Africana Studies Programs. In this past year, I made a full-time commitment to Africana Studies. I am the Distinguished Professor of Africana Studies and Social Work, focusing most of my scholarship on questions surrounding race, racism, social and cultural identity, and social justice issues.

4. How do you envision the future of the social work profession?

One in which its commitment to social action and social change again becomes the primary thrust of the profession.

| MEET THE INDUCTEES |

RACHEL DUNGAN, MSSP '13

As a Director at AcademyHealth, Rachel Dungan works to advance the field of health policy and systems research (HPSR). Rachel oversees a work portfolio focused on studying the effective and ethical engagement of diverse stakeholders in health research and policymaking activities. She also contributes to AcademyHealth's Paradigm Project, which uses human-centered design approaches to invite creative, innovative thinking about ways the health research enterprise might change - to return on its promise for real-world impact. Rachel also helps to cultivate AcademyHealth's Global Health portfolio, and to support other projects promoting the use of evidence to inform health research, policy, and practice decision-making. Having been awarded a 2019 Fulbright Public Policy Fellowship, Rachel



recently spent several months living in Cote d'Ivoire and working with the country's Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene; she simultaneously conducted independent research on stakeholder engagement in national health policymaking efforts.

Rachel previously worked for a National Institutes of Health (NIH) Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) grant awardee, leading development of products and programs designed to increase health equity, access, and education for underserved populations. Rachel also worked as an independent strategy consultant and project manager for Music2Life, JustRojgar, and Johnson & Johnson's TEDxJNJ initiative. She completed professional internships with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women), Think Local First DC, the Future of Music Coalition, and Poverty Resolutions.

Rachel holds a Master of Science in Social Policy from the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice. She also completed an Executive Certificate, through the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Social Impact Strategy (CSIS). She earned Bachelors degrees in Biobehavioral Health (Civic & Community Engagement) and in Music, from the Pennsylvania State University Schreyer Honors College. There, she served as a Teaching Assistant with the University's Department of Health Policy & Administration. Her research focused on global health equity, social justice advocacy, and eliminating avoidable disparities in health. Beyond her work, Rachel also participates actively in the vision research and patient engagement advocacy communities. She has spoken at related conferences and Congressional Briefings; she has also been featured in the SparkVision Millennial Voices series, and on other platforms.

Q&A

1. How would you describe the impact of your time at SP2, earning your MSSP degree?

My experience at Penn provided the scaffolding needed to activate my education – integrating my studies and rendering them useful, meaningful, and relevant. I knew graduate school would help me to build on my established interests at the intersection of global public health, strategic diplomacy, and civic/community engagement. I was eager, though, to understand how I could apply valuable academic learnings in real-world contexts. Having considered numerous programs, I chose to join the SP2 community during a campus visit marked by poignant and authentic conversations. Feeling an immediate sense of belonging, I anticipated that Penn's community would cultivate my interest in doing informed and purpose-driven work – while also rooting me in awareness of the broader contexts and communities this work might serve.

I appreciated that the Master of Science in Social Policy (MSSP) program afforded students the flexibility to deepen policy content knowledge, while also cultivating concrete skills and application-based knowledge needed to “move” policy levers or mobilize stakeholders. I was drawn by the evident commitment to a curriculum that would teach us not only the study, but also the practice, of policy intervention. I also appreciated the program's obvious social justice orientation; I was impressed to see related values not only spoken about but also lived out in my SP2 cohort. I continue seeing these approaches, to work and to the world, embodied by the broader SP2 staff and alumni.

Even beyond graduation, this community continues exposing me to opportunities for personal and professional growth. This network inspired me to complete an Executive Certificate in Social Impact Strategy through the University, and introduced me to the Fulbright Public Policy Fellowship. Having earned this Fellowship award in 2019, I was invited to work in Côte d'Ivoire with the country's Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene. I was only aware of and equipped for, this opportunity (easily the most transformative experience of my life) as a direct result of my involvement with SP2.

In my work, I regularly encounter and celebrate the work of SP2 peers, alumni, and faculty making significant contributions to their respective fields. I find myself totally humbled by their example, and I consider myself lucky to learn among them. I can confidently say that the program equipped us to serve as informed contributors in our various roles, and to achieve an aspiration I believe we share: to live our legacy through work that matters.

2. What social justice/policy issues have been most important to you throughout your career?

I have long recognized the primacy of health as a fundamental human right, which motivates my commitment to the promotion of health equity and access. I believe avoidable injustices in health do not manifest in a vacuum; therefore, understanding the full picture of people's health involves accounting for non-health forces and factors. Health outcomes (as manifestations of lived experiences) reflect the many social, cultural, political, and environmental influences individuals face each day. Trying to address health concerns without accounting for people's non-health circumstances and characteristics ignores important "slices of life" that contribute both to their identities and their outcomes. As such, I believe that doing purposeful and productive work to address health disparities requires naming and responding to other related injustices: disproportionate opportunities for quality education or economic mobility; discriminatory policies and practices perpetuating structural racism or systemic classism; and failure to invite and equalize the voices of people who differ – based on age, gender, ability, ethnicity, orientation – but not in their rights to be heard, supported, or protected.

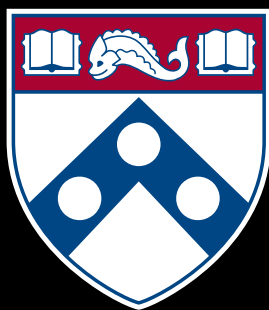
I hope to increasingly understand how to improve laws and policies, so that they enhance the lives and livelihoods of people they are designed to serve. I also hope to understand how strategic health diplomacy can be leveraged as a tool for improving population health outcomes, via creation of relationships and mitigation of conflicts.

3. Could you describe the work that you are doing now?

I currently work as a Director at AcademyHealth: an organization focused on increasing the use of evidence to inform health practice and policy decision-making. I oversee a programmatic portfolio demonstrating the value and impact of ethical, effective stakeholder engagement. We aim to promote and support inclusivity in the conduct of health research, so that resulting insights prove resonant and relevant to efforts aimed at improving health for all (including otherwise underserved or disenfranchised groups). Separately, for the Paradigm Project, I engage people in using human-centered design approaches to creatively consider how we might improve health research, so that it better meets emerging needs in our changing world. I have previously worked on projects to enhance the federal health data infrastructure, increase AcademyHealth's presence in the global community, and demonstrate the "return on investment" associated with public health spending.

4. How do you envision the future of social policy and social change?

Technological advancements continue increasing public access to information and misinformation. Unless navigated responsibly, this wealth of information can cause concern and controversy. Alternatively, it can prove advantageous, if knowledge sharing creates a sense of collective understanding regarding policies and practices. Armed with trustworthy and transparent information, stakeholders might seek to play more vocal, visible roles in shaping the decisions affecting their lives. Social policy professionals can shepherd this change, by dignifying and amplifying the perspectives of community partners – inviting them to exercise their agency. If successful, the resultant blend of "lived experience" and "learned expertise" reflected in multistakeholder collaborative teams could serve as a powerful vehicle for realizing social changes that directly respond to communities' own values and visions.



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