

# ABOUT THE ZUCKERMAN FELLOWS PROGRAM

The challenges we face in our public schools and public health systems, as well as in government at all levels, are too complicated to be solved without the insight and commitment of leaders with the highest quality professional training. But for many who have a strong aptitude for public service, the opportunity costs associated with acquiring the necessary training are too high.

In response to this problem, the Zuckerman Fellows Program makes it possible for individuals from the fields of medicine, law, and business to pursue public service degrees at Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, or Harvard Kennedy School, and thus become leaders for the common good. The Zuckerman Fellowship provides recipients with full tuition and health insurance fees plus a stipend for one year.

Zuckerman Fellows are selected on the basis of commitment to public service, leadership abilities, and intellectual and academic achievement.

In addition to their formal coursework, Zuckerman Fellows participate in a yearlong co-curricular program that includes small-group discussions with members of the Harvard faculty as well as other leading academics and practitioners, personal and professional skill-building workshops, and a field experience trip. Taken together, these interdisciplinary activities help the fellows integrate classroom learning with their individual career plans and interests.



## ABOUT MORTIMER ZUCKERMAN

Mortimer B. Zuckerman is the Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of *U.S. News & World Report* and the co-founder and Chairman Emeritus of Boston Properties Inc.

He is a trustee of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, a member of the Bank of America Global Wealth & Investment Management Committee, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Washington Institute for Near East Studies, and the Vice Chair and Treasurer of the International Peace Institute. He is a sponsor of the Harvard Kennedy School, a former Associate Professor of City and Regional Planning at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, a former lecturer of City and Regional Planning at Yale University, a past president of the Board of Trustees of the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, and the former Chairman of the Principal's International Advisory Board of McGill University. He is a former trustee of New York University and the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton. He is a former Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and served as President of the America-Israel Friendship League.

Mr. Zuckerman is a graduate of McGill University in Montreal where he received an undergraduate degree in 1957 with first class honors, a degree in law in 1961, and an honorary LLD in 2011. He received an MBA with distinction from the Wharton Graduate School, University of Pennsylvania, in 1961 and an LLM from Harvard University in 1962.

He has received honorary degrees from Colby College, Southampton College, Hebrew College, Berkeley College, the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Tel Aviv University, and Hebrew University and an honorary Doctorate of Laws from McGill University and Columbia University. Mr. Zuckerman was awarded the Commandeur De L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the government of France, the Lifetime Achievement Award from Guild Hall, the Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architecture in New York, the Sy Syms Humanitarian award from Yeshiva University, and a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal from the Canadian government.

# AZEEM AHMED

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Business School, MBA  
Candidate, 2021

Auburn University, BS in Finance  
and Pre-Medicine with Highest  
Honors, Minor in Sustainability,  
2014

Clinton Global Hunger Leadership  
Award, 2014

Harry S. Truman Scholar, 2013

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Millennium Challenge Corporation:  
Program Officer, Finance Investment  
and Trade Team, Sri Lanka,  
Mongolia, Burkina Faso, Zambia,  
and Nepal

U.S. Department of Health and  
Human Services, Office of the  
Assistant Secretary for Planning  
and Evaluation: Truman-Albright  
Fellow, Office of Health Policy

CityFirst Enterprise: Truman Fellow,  
DC Affordable Housing

International Center for Diarrheal  
Disease Research, Bangladesh:  
Public Health Researcher, Child and  
Adolescent Health Unit

United Nations World Food  
Program, Egypt Country Office:  
Nutrition Intern

## NARRATIVE

In 2011, despite travel warnings and ongoing threats of violence, I arrived in Cairo in the midst of the Arab Spring to work for the United Nations World Food Program (WFP). WFP had engineered a method to fortify rice by adding vitamins A and B, successfully reducing malnutrition-related illnesses, including blindness in children, by over fifty percent. After months of assurances and explanations—and many cups of shai—we convinced over sixty rice mills to partner with us and produce over a quarter million tons of fortified rice, enough to feed nearly fourteen million people. But the thrill of accomplishment was tempered by questions I could not answer: How could we ensure the program's longevity? Did we address underlying issues or simply patch over a systemic problem? How would this actually disrupt a cycle of poverty or lack of opportunity?

Questions like this brought me to the Millennium Challenge Corporation, where I helped design infrastructure and policy reforms to catalyze economic opportunity for vulnerable populations. Leading interventions in Burkina Faso, Mongolia, and Sri Lanka, I quickly recognized the critical role of the private sector in alleviating poverty. I also saw firsthand the dire need for policy makers, activists, and investors with the technical skills and the political savvy to address the complex structural causes of poverty. I want to serve in this vanguard. I believe it is critical to create social and economic policies that are both pro-business and pro-poor.

Now, more than ever, I strive with the utmost care, creativity, and expertise to advocate for those pushed aside by society. This commitment was born during my childhood in rural Alabama and honed in far corners of the world. I feel a deep connection to the people I work with and for. Helping to uplift them, to share their stories, and to empower their communities is the most meaningful and rewarding pursuit I have undertaken. Supported by a community of Zuckerman Fellows and armed with the skills that only Harvard Kennedy School can provide, I hope to forge new frontiers in the creation of economic opportunity and social mobility for our world's most vulnerable.



# ASHLEY BACH

HARVARD T.H. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH CANDIDATE, 2019

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

University of California, San Francisco,  
MD Candidate, 2020

Harvard College, AB in Neurobiology  
with Highest Honors, Mind Brain  
Behavior Track with Minor in Global  
Health and Health Policy, *magna cum  
laude*, 2014

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Albert Schweitzer Fellowship Program:  
San Francisco Bay Area Fellow

UCSF School of Medicine: Short-  
Term Dean's Prize for Research and  
Scholarship

Child Neurology Foundation:  
Neurodevelopmental Disabilities  
Summer Research Scholarship

Harvard Department of Global Health  
and Health Policy: Cordeiro Research  
Fellow

Center on the Developing Child  
at Harvard University: Frontiers of  
Innovation Intern

Harvard Global Health Institute:  
International Summer Undergraduate  
Research Fellow

Peer Health Exchange: Harvard  
College Leadership Council

## NARRATIVE

My passion for public service and health stems from high school, when I volunteered at a public pediatric asthma clinic and helped establish a medical-legal partnership to meet patients' socioeconomic and legal needs. This early experience exposed me to the myriad of social factors that affect health, and sparked my desire to work for underserved communities.

Since then, health-related public service has remained a priority that has permeated my life. As an undergraduate, I taught weekly health workshops in public high schools, studied the effect of nutrient supplementation on malaria risk during pregnancy in Tanzania, and led a service trip to increase clean water access in rural Bolivia. As a neurobiology major, I developed parallel interests in health disparity reduction and brain development. I brought these together through my internship at the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University and my work as a Cordeiro Research Fellow to reduce neural tube defects caused by maternal folic acid deficiency in Nicaragua. In medical school, I have had the opportunity to design and carry out a year-long service project in partnership with a community organization through the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship. My project aimed to support healthy early childhood development among low-income and homeless families, to improve health and educational outcomes for underserved children.

I am committed to applying what I have learned from these experiences to solve public service challenges. Childhood health and developmental disparity is a significant public service issue with broad repercussions in education and socioeconomic inequality that will require a highly interdisciplinary approach to address. As a physician, I hope to not only serve individual patients but also address such multifactorial challenges that systematically impact children's health. I view the Zuckerman Fellowship as an opportunity to develop leadership skills and collaborate with others across disciplines to find solutions to complex public service problems. I hope that this fellowship, alongside my MPH program in Quantitative Methods, will enable me to become a better physician as well as a leader in the public sector capable of improving children's health outcomes on a population level.



# ROSA BAUM

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Law School, JD Candidate, 2021

Colorado College, BA in International Political Economy with Honors, *magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa, Boettcher Scholar, Rhodes Scholarship Finalist, 2015

Thesis: *Child Migration from Central America to the United States: Policy Opportunities Amid the Politics of Crisis*

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The White House, Office of Communication: Hispanic Media Intern

Sin Fronteras, Mexico City: Legal Clinic Senior Fellow

Human Rights Watch: Field Researcher

Harvard Immigration Project, Removal Defense Project: Co-Director

## NARRATIVE

My parents and I moved to a Mexican village when I was five. I slept in piles of corn husks and learned to suck the sweet flesh off a ripe coffee bean. We played a hide-and-seek-style game we innocently called *Migra y Mojados*—Border Patrol and “wetbacks.” One friend’s big brother, Javo, commanded our gaggle of kids with tender, laughing authority.

I remember my friend’s father less well; most were *allá*—over there—in the U.S. Javo took his turn. And when he came home, his laughter was harsh. He drank. And when he picked me up and stumbled on the cobblestones, he scared me. It was only later that I came to understand the way a migrant—beloved at home—can be reduced to anonymous hands and muscle in a strange culture.

Back in Mexico in 2018, David sat across from me. He had arrived in the U.S. at two years old, and when authorities removed the shackles and he walked the bridge south across the Rio Grande it was like tumbling into a black hole. Tears came when he spoke of his wife and children—U.S. citizens—who depended on his paycheck and needed his love back in Texas. The profiles and report we produced at Human Rights Watch acknowledged the right of states to enforce borders, but what David and the many deportees taught us in tragically vivid detail was the importance of the right of family unity, a principle violated time and again in a broken immigration system. It has been my privilege to learn repeatedly, firsthand, about the complex tangle of laws that enable and ensnare migrant laborers and refugees fleeing violence.

Strengthened by the resources and inspiration from the Zuckerman community, I aspire to participate in the discussions that address the global crises forcing migrations and to help craft measures that seek to better the conditions of those uprooted by economic need or violence. To me, immigration policy is a matter of both head and heart. I intend to help those who cannot go back—and those who must follow wages across borders—go forward.



# SAGAR DESAI

HARVARD T.H. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH CANDIDATE, 2019

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

University of California, San Francisco, MD Candidate, UC Regents Scholar, 2020

Dominican University, Alternative Teaching License in Education, 2013

University of California, Los Angeles, BS in Biology, *magna cum laude*, 2012

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Teach For America: Chicago Public High School Physics Teacher, Amgen Fellow, Head Varsity Men's Basketball Coach

HealthLink Mentorship Program: Coordinator, University of California, San Francisco

GlobeMed at UCLA: Co-President, Global Health Education Coordinator, Campaign Coordinator

UCLA Mobile Clinic Homeless Health Project: Social Caseworker

## NARRATIVE

My interest in public health first began as an undergraduate at UCLA. I spent four years as a part of GlobeMed, a public health organization that partnered undergraduate students with NGOs around the world to work on grassroots level efforts to improve the health of communities. This is when I first began to understand the importance of one's community and environment in determining one's life trajectory.

My interest in public health continued after college, when I joined Teach For America.

Teaching high school physics at an under-resourced school in south-side Chicago was the most challenging and rewarding experience of my life. I saw firsthand the differences in opportunity afforded my students relative to their wealthier counterparts just a few miles north of them. I also saw the potential that quality leadership had in making a difference in their achievement. My students did the most difficult work—internalizing abstract physics concepts while using self-reflection to drive personal growth—yet this was possible only when I established deliberate structures that allowed them to flourish. At the end of my second year of teaching, my students had made two years of science skills growth in a single year, and more impressively, each one of them became a better person during the process—as did I. Teaching taught me that effective leadership is not an inherent quality, but a learnable and practiced skill that cannot be mastered without relentless cycles of trial, error, reflection, and improvement.

My passion for public health, education, leadership, and science coalesced with my decision to pursue a medical degree at the University of California, San Francisco. As a future Emergency Medicine physician, I will learn to diagnose and treat disease at the individual level while understanding that maintaining healthy communities requires “a village.” My time as a Zuckerman Fellow and MPH candidate will provide me the valuable space to continue refining my leadership principles while learning to navigate healthcare systems and structures. I envision my future as a healthcare administrator in a county hospital setting, where I will continue serving as a physician-leader for the most vulnerable members of society.



# DAVID HARRIS

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MID-CAREER MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE, 2019

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Georgetown University Law Center,  
JD Candidate, 2022

United States Naval Academy, BS in  
Political Science with Honors and  
Merit, 2007

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

United States Senate: National  
Security Fellow to Senator Tom  
Cotton

United States Marine Corps  
Reserve: Major, Operations Officer  
in Force Reconnaissance

United States Marine Corps: Major,  
Company Commander in Marine  
Special Operations and Marine  
Reconnaissance; deployed to  
East Asia, Southeast Asia, and  
Afghanistan

United States Naval Academy:  
Brigade Honor Chairman; Class of  
1950 Award for Leadership

Military freefall parachutist and  
combatant diver

## NARRATIVE

The initial phase of my professional life was influenced by the September 11th attacks. Inspired to serve my country and follow in the footsteps of family members before me, I enrolled in the Naval Academy and graduated as a Marine officer. Over the decade that followed, I served alongside a diverse generation of Americans throughout the United States and around the world. From those men and women, I learned that the most critical part of leadership is empowering and serving those you lead, and I developed a deeper commitment to public service. Having now transitioned from active duty, I intend to carry that same commitment into a career in law and public policy through the Zuckerman Fellows Program.

After receiving a firsthand view of our foreign policy during multiple deployments, I became inspired to make a greater contribution to national security policymaking. To that end, I went on to serve as a National Security Fellow in the United States Senate. As I begin the next phase of my professional life pursuing this interest, I plan to develop skills in analysis, leadership, and decision-making from the extraordinary community of fellows and faculty at Harvard Kennedy School's Center for Public Leadership.

Upon completion of my year at Cambridge, I will attend Georgetown's law school, after which I plan to pursue a career in public policy as an attorney — drawing upon my education and experiences to better serve others. I am committed to applying what I have learned in the military and what I will learn as a Zuckerman Fellow to further a career in public service.



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# NIKU JAFARNIA

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2020

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Law School, JD Candidate, 2020

University of California, Berkeley, BA in Political Science, Minor in City & Regional Planning, 2014

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Fulbright Scholar, Turkey: 2014-2016

International Refugee Assistance Project: Legal Intern

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: Legal Intern

Harvard Law School: Cravath International Fellow

Human Care Syria: Grant Writer

HIAS: Volunteer Caseworker

Amnesty International: Intern

## NARRATIVE

I spent my time between undergraduate and graduate school living in a small Turkish city called Denizli, which happened to be home to many Afghan and Iranian refugees. While these communities provided me with a certain sense of home, given my Iranian heritage and Farsi-speaking upbringing, my new neighbors viewed me with some confusion. Friends routinely asked why I had chosen to live in Denizli, as many only hoped to immigrate to the United States.

My own parents shared their confusion—having left Iran due to the Iranian Revolution, they were perplexed as to why I would choose to leave the life they had built in California and return to this region.

My journey here, and the path that led me to work with displaced communities, began much earlier in life. As one of the only students of Middle Eastern descent throughout my K-12 education, I often felt obligated to be a spokesperson for a community about which I knew little. To better grapple with these conversations, I felt compelled to learn more about my heritage and the politics and history of the region.

Over time, these experiences developed into a deep interest in immigrants' rights and in the Middle East, which in turn prompted me to study Middle Eastern politics and to begin working with asylum-seekers during my time at UC Berkeley. Later, this became the impetus for my move to Turkey, and ultimately for my decision to pursue a joint JD-MPP, in hopes of gaining the tools I need to become a more effective advocate for these communities.

My background and heritage allow me to see the Middle Eastern refugee crisis through a unique lens—the clients I have worked with often look and feel like distant relatives, in spite of the different paths our lives have taken. The Zuckerman Fellowship, as well as my education and the privileges I have had in my life, will provide me with the community and the tools necessary to empower refugees in the rebuilding of their lives.



# PHILLIP JONES

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE, 2021

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Business School, MBA  
Candidate, 2021

United States Naval Academy, BS in  
History, 2012

Marine Corps Burke Scholar

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

United States Marine Corps: Infantry  
Officer

G-MEO China: Strategic Advisory  
Summer Associate

Ironbound Boxing Academy: Advisory  
Board Member

## NARRATIVE

As the son of two Air Force pilots, I had the unique opportunity to grow up across the globe and experience the life of an expatriate from an early age. Additionally, when I was twelve years old my parents became missionaries and I was blessed to develop friendships that extended across cultures, religions, and creeds and defined my ever-evolving worldview as I entered the military service.

At the Naval Academy, it was my duty to influence the next generation of Midshipmen, a responsibility that I cherished. I was selected by the Superintendent to serve as the second black Brigade Sergeant Major in the Academy's 166-year history and used my platform to help impact the lives of over 4,000 students on a daily basis. At Annapolis, I learned that a team is more than just the sum of its parts and that channeled diversity has the ability to tap into new solutions to resolve critical issues.

Post college, I served in the Marine Corps as an infantry officer and had the distinct privilege to lead men across multiple continents in support of America's foreign policy. It was during this time that I saw how civilian leaders had the ability to influence people and military procedures on a macroscale. I witnessed the integration of women into previously closed assignments, the acceptance of Afrocentric hair regulations, and the disannulment of discriminatory social regulations. The positive effects of these changes will reverberate for generations and I want to help write the next chapter.

My aim is to serve in a position that taps into my deep passion for the welfare of American troops. My long-term goal is to serve in a management role where I can help direct resources and implement policy for the Navy and Marine Corps.

As I shift the scope of my service, I know that the joint degree program and the Zuckerman Fellowship will help hone my passions, fuel my intellectual endeavors, and redefine my global view, so that one day I can be a servant-leader who drives significant change across our military.



# MICHAEL KOCHIS

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MASTER OF EDUCATION CANDIDATE, 2019

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Medical School, MD  
Candidate, 2020

Princeton University, AB in  
Molecular Biology, Certificate in  
Global Health and Health Policy,  
*summa cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa,  
2015

George Khoury '65 Senior Prize for  
Academic Excellence

Princeton Center for Health and  
Wellbeing: Global Health Scholar

Princeton Institute for International  
and Regional Studies:  
Undergraduate Fellow

Shapiro Prize for Academic  
Excellence

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Massachusetts General Hospital  
Surgery Education Research Group:  
Member

Harvard Medical School  
"Pathways": Curriculum Consultant

Harvard Medical School First-  
Year Educational Adventure Trip:  
Program Coordinator, Trip Leader

Princeton Student Health Advisory  
Board: President

Princeton First Aid and Rescue  
Squad: Volunteer EMT

## NARRATIVE

I was fourteen when I decided I would become a doctor, and having finished my third year at Harvard Medical School, I feel tremendously blessed to have found my vocation. I am constantly reminded how much of a privilege it is to care for those in need. As exciting as it is to be starting my career in an era when trends like technological advances and the industrialization of healthcare are revolutionizing how medicine is practiced, I recognize they also pose a significant challenge to the doctor-patient relationship. My greatest career aspiration is to ensure the value of that bond is not lost.

"Medical humanism," which emphasizes compassionate and patient-centered care, has far more consequences than just improving patients' subjective experiences: it benefits patients, providers, and the system at large. Physician empathy is actually associated with better care, including greater patient adherence to recommendations, fewer complications, and shorter hospitalization times. Humanistic physicians experience fewer malpractice claims, greater job satisfaction, and less burnout.

These issues will need to be addressed from multiple and complimentary approaches, but the way I plan to make my mark is through medical education. I have always valued mentorship experiences, and the continual training of medical students, residents, and fellows is a prime opportunity to impact culture from the bottom up, ultimately affecting numerous institutions for years to come. Within my desired specialty of surgery, teaching has traditionally focused on hands-on skills like knot-tying, but studies have shown that empathy can be taught too.

Pursuing an EdM from the Harvard Graduate School of Education is a critical step to make my goal happen. Beyond providing an opportunity to learn both the theory and the skills necessary for a career in teaching, educational research, and curriculum development, the Specialized Studies Program also affords the flexibility to explore my interests at the other Harvard graduate schools. Furthermore, the Zuckerman Fellowship Program's leadership development curriculum will inspire and teach me how to think broadly about instigating change with other aspiring leaders.



# IVANLEY NOISETTE

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MASTER OF EDUCATION CANDIDATE, 2019

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Georgetown University Law Center,  
JD, 2018

University of Ulster, LLM in Human  
Rights Law and Transitional Justice,  
2012

Villanova University, BA in Political  
Science, 2008

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

George J. Mitchell Scholar

Villanova University Young Alumni  
Medallion Award

KIPP DuBois Collegiate Academy:  
Founding Dean of Culture

Georgetown Black Law Students  
Association: Alumni Affairs Chair

Anseye Pou Ayiti: Board Member  
and Co-Founder

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights  
Under Law: Education Team Legal  
Intern

NAACP Legal Defense and  
Educational Fund: Legal Intern

Institute for Justice and Democracy  
in Haiti: Summer Legal Fellow

## NARRATIVE

I am committed to socioeconomic equity and social inclusion for all communities. I believe that an equitable education system is the most effective antidote to structural and socioeconomic inequity, and the most powerful catalyst for human flourishing. Further, I conceive of education as a human right, as recognized by most of the world's countries through the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, its foundational covenants, and Convention on the Rights of the Child. Working to improve the U.S. education system will not only foster greater equity at home but also contribute to greater global solidarity and the common interest in ensuring that all people have their human right to an equitable education realized.

My academic, professional, and life experiences both at home and abroad have contributed to my macro-level understanding of why inequity is so pervasive in education. While my understanding has grown, my curiosity and commitment have also expanded. I am ready to "dig deeper" and craft more effective "systems change" strategies for structural reform by applying a social entrepreneurial approach to solution-oriented public interest work. By partnering with local institutions and communities, I hope to leverage innovative legal tools, effective capacity building practices, and policy advocacy to shift narratives from the dictates of dependence or cynicism, to the inspiration of collaboration and possibility.

The Education Policy and Management master's program will equip me with the research and evaluation, management, and quantitative skills that social entrepreneurship, institutional leadership, and policy formulation demand. The Zuckerman Fellowship program will provide the multidisciplinary leadership training needed to find common solutions to the common challenges facing the communities each program member serves. I am humbled to be a fellow and I look forward to growing as a professional and public servant.



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# MARY PEELER

HARVARD T.H. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH CANDIDATE, 2019

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, MD Candidate, 2020

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, BSPH in Health Policy and Management, *summa cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa, 2015

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

University of North Carolina: Morehead-Cain Scholar

Baltimore City Health Department: Preventing Substance Exposed Pregnancies Program Intern

Pregnancy in Prison Statistics Study: Research Assistant

Johns Hopkins Student Outreach Resource Center: Student Governing Board Member

Centre Nationale de la Santé Reproductrice, Morocco: Intern

The AIDS Support Organization, Uganda: Summer Intern

## NARRATIVE

In my hometown, Memphis, Tennessee, there is a potter's field with the horrifying nickname "Babyland" that serves as the final resting place for thousands of infants who died before their first birthday. For the majority of my childhood, zip codes in Memphis had the highest infant mortality rate in the nation, disproportionately affecting black mothers and their babies. Seeing this tragic result of Memphis' racial and economic disparities inspired my career goal of improving care for women through a combination of clinical medicine and public health.

In my undergraduate years at UNC and in medical school at Johns Hopkins, I have sought to understand the connection between public policy and maternal health outcomes. My research interests in undergrad explored many angles of women's health including the impact of expanding women's rights in Morocco, the success of the Swedish prenatal care system, and barriers preventing African American women from receiving quality prenatal care. I spent time working directly with pregnant women at the time of their deliveries as a doula at UNC Women's Hospital. In Baltimore, I have again been confronted with stark health disparities which fall along racial and economic lines. As a medical student at Johns Hopkins, I have seen firsthand the effects of unequal access to reproductive education and healthcare. My research projects have focused on the incredibly vulnerable and overlapping populations of incarcerated women and women with substance use disorder.

Taken together, all of my experiences have brought me back to my same childhood goal of improving care for women and their babies. The two fields of medicine and public health offer a complementary approach to solving the most complex and ingrained health problems, like those that caused Babyland. At a time when healthcare for women is under attack, I hope that my experience as a Zuckerman Fellow pursuing an MPH at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health will help me to become an advocate for my patients to improve access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare.



# VERONICA POLIN

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION/INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CANDIDATE, 2021

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Business School, MBA  
Candidate, 2021

Stanford University, BA in Economics  
& International Relations, Phi Beta  
Kappa, 2014

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

IDinsight: Senior Associate

Evidence for Policy Design: Research  
Fellow

Inter-American Development Bank:  
Research Assistant

International Rescue Committee:  
Program Volunteer

Institute of Business Advisors  
Southern Africa: Member and Certified  
Advisor

## NARRATIVE

I grew up in a multicultural family of immigrants and entrepreneurs from humble beginnings. My parents' tenacity through challenges and eventual business success showed me the potential for the private sector to lift families out of poverty, but also gave me a deep sense of duty to help those who had not been as fortunate. Growing up with multiple—and sometimes conflicting—ethnic identities also endowed me with a robust interest in other cultures and countries. As I grew older, I became passionate about finding ways business and policy could be used to create economic opportunities for the poor.

Working in international development, I have realized how hard it is to design social sector programs that create real, sustainable impact. I spent several challenging years leading the evaluation team for a public-private partnership in Uganda and Mozambique, experiencing some wins but also many failures. But I have also been motivated by successes such as in Zambia, where I had the opportunity to improve the implementation of a large sanitation infrastructure project, leading to better service delivery in peri-urban compounds. While I have been encouraged by the potential I have seen for cross-sector initiatives to solve global challenges, I have also been regularly frustrated by the way good intentions can fail when differing incentives and perspectives are not aligned.

Through a joint MBA and MPA/ID at Harvard, I hope to address this challenge by learning to speak the languages of business and policy, approaching development through multiple lenses. Ultimately, I want to lead organizations that can integrate the perspectives of governments, nonprofits, and entrepreneurs to design better products and policy serving the needs of the poor. As a Zuckerman Fellow, I feel privileged to have the opportunity to learn and grow with other passionate individuals from different disciplines, as I believe collaboration across sectors is the key to alleviating poverty. I look forward to building the skills and relationships in the coming years that will shape me into an impactful leader in the social sector.



# KELLY JO POPKIN

HARVARD T.H. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH CANDIDATE, 2019

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Harvard Law School, JD, 2017

Harvard College, AB in Visual and Environmental Studies, *cum laude*, 2011

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Planned Parenthood Federation of America: Public Policy and Law Litigation Fellow

Public Service Venture Fund: Fellow

Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court: Pro Bono Honor Roll Member

Harvard Law School: Vorenberg Equal Justice Summer Fellow

Dean's Scholar Award, Reproductive Rights and Justice

Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation: Student Attorney

## NARRATIVE

Because healthcare is commoditized in America, access to healthcare is all but determined by two numbers—income and zip code. I am a public interest attorney working in healthcare policy and litigation. I have witnessed indigent women of color, undocumented families, LGBT individuals, and the people with disabilities bear the brunt of both economic barriers to care and legislative restrictions. These restrictions are part and parcel of the systemic injustices that contribute to health disparities along race, gender, and socioeconomic lines.

It was through my experience working in social services where I first witnessed the overwhelming impact of psychosocial determinants on the health of women and their families. Prior to law school, I worked for four direct service nonprofits in New York City, advocating for indigent women and children who had survived instances of rape, abuse, and domestic violence. During intake, I provided referrals for many women with unaddressed psychological and physical illnesses. Whether seeking child support modifications, custody, or orders of protection, every single woman walking through my door lacked adequate resources to address unpaid hospital bills and unmet medical needs. As a practicing attorney, my focus has since shifted to upstream health policy interventions and impact litigation in order to address poor health outcomes at their systemic roots rather than their individual consequences. I seek to address gender-based violence—and gender inequality more broadly—from a public health perspective.

If I am to continue my pursuit of health equity, I must fully comprehend the challenges that must be overcome as we progress toward this goal. As a Zuckerman Fellow, I can exchange innovative ideas with a diverse group of doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and other advocates all united by a universal passion for public service and social justice. With a multidisciplinary framework, I will be better equipped to comprehensively address gender-based health disparities in all of their manifestations. I believe that quality healthcare is a human right and I intend to use the opportunity afforded me through the Zuckerman Fellowship to do my part in making this right a reality.



# ANGEL ROSARIO

HARVARD T.H. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH CANDIDATE, 2019

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

University of California, San Francisco, PRIME Program, MD Candidate, 2020

State University of New York at Buffalo, BS in Psychology and Biomedical Science, *magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa, Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence, 2009

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Latino Medical Student Association: Co-Chair

Youth Creating Change: Student Program Coordinator

University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) White Coats for Black Lives: Organizer

UCSF Program in Medical Education for the Urban Underserved: Participant

AltaMed Health Services: Ryan White Part D Program Manager, Clinic Administrator I, Clinic Testing Supervisor

AmeriCorps: Community Health Corps Member

Orange County HIV Planning Council: Appointed Councilmember

Orange County HIV Prevention Council: Co-Chair

## NARRATIVE

My identity as a gay, Afro-Latinx, cis-gender man has provided me with a unique insight into disparity. As a child, I quickly became aware of the socioeconomic differences spanning across communities when I would leave my home in one of Harlem's projects for daily schooling in the Upper West Side of Manhattan. As a child of poor immigrants from the Dominican Republic, this notion was further amplified. The differences in our neighborhoods' resources, education, drug and gang violence, and opportunity were irreconcilable despite being separated by only one mile.

When I volunteered in Uganda in 2008, it became clear that disease was not merely normal physiological processes gone awry, but the physical and mental condensation of socioeconomic maladies. Recognizing this in my own identities, I yearned to learn more about the micro and macro level contributors to wellness and disease for marginalized communities in the United States. I joined AmeriCorps in East Los Angeles and worked closely with underserved patients as a health educator for AltaMed Health Services. There, I gained an appreciation of how healthcare infrastructure influenced health outcomes. In 2011, I was hired by AltaMed to implement routine HIV testing policies and learned how devastating stigma and fear were as barriers in eradicating the disease. Later, as a Clinic Administrator of AltaMed's HIV and Primary Care Clinic, I continued tackling healthcare inequities, realizing that we must leverage local community, schools, government, and business to address health disparities. Through these experiences, I was inspired to become a physician, functioning as a healer of the individual and society at large.

As a prospective director of a public health department or community health center, my goal is to close the health outcome gaps that our vulnerable communities face. As a Zuckerman Fellow, I am humbled and excited to work alongside a diverse group of peers, as I understand that our collective knowledge is required to achieve social justice. I look forward to gaining the leadership skills, mentorship, and long-term network and community that will assist me in helping to dismantle and rewrite the systems that prevent health and social equity.



# JONATHAN SCLARSIC

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MID-CAREER MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE, 2019

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Cornell Law School, JD, 2008

Cornell Journal of Law & Public Policy: Executive Editor

Cuccia Cup Moot Court Competition Winner, 2007

Brandeis University, BA in Politics with Minors in Economics and Social Justice and Social Policy, Vice-President of the Student Body, 2003

Harry S. Truman Scholar for Massachusetts, 2002

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Massachusetts Attorney General's Office: Assistant Attorney General and Director of the Division of Open Government,

Suffolk County District Attorney's Office: Special Assistant District Attorney

Goodwin Procter LLP: Litigation Associate

Young Democrats of Massachusetts: President

Martha Coakley for US Senate: Director of Operations

Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action: Vice-President and Board Member

## NARRATIVE

Commitment to public service has long been a deeply-rooted part of my identity. From internships in Congressional offices to participating in and managing political campaigns to eventually working in state government, I have developed an unshakeable faith in the ability of government to improve people's lives. But for the government to successfully enact bold programs, the public must have faith that its leaders are honest and transparent.

As an Assistant Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Director of the Division of Open Government, I have worked to build and implement a state-wide program to ensure the transparency and accountability of government actors. The Division has become the principal resource for the public, the government, and the press regarding the Open Meeting Law, and played a significant role in enforcing the Public Records Law.

Despite my efforts to improve government accountability, I feel that we are facing an oncoming wave of misguided nationalism that paints the very backbone of our civic society as poisonous. Government accountability is under assault by those who hold no reverence for its fundamental importance. In seeking an MPA, I am looking to have an even broader impact. I hope to work with other government leaders as the nation faces rapidly changing demographics, technologies, and environmental and energy landscapes. In doing so, I will continue to support transparent and accountable government, while helping build a national movement to empower government leaders to be bolder in their efforts to enact positive change and pursue social and economic justice. This must happen if our nation is to find unity and purpose to address our most difficult challenges.

With the help of the Zuckerman Fellowship, and through the Center for Public Leadership, I hope to eventually lead a public agency, empowered to enact audacious programs while ensuring that government acts with unimpeachable integrity. I hope to build a network of fellow public-sector leaders from across disciplines who are equally committed to bringing positive change through public service. Collectively, we will challenge the toxic narrative that is eroding faith in government.



# LIZ WEINGARTNER

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CANDIDATE, 2020

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

MIT Sloan School of Management,  
MBA Candidate, Enterprise  
Management Track, 2020

Washington University in St. Louis, BA  
in Anthropology with Honors, Lambda  
Alpha National Collegiate Honors  
Society for Anthropology, 2013

J. Stephen Fossett Pathfinder  
Fellowship in Environmental  
Sustainability

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Boston Consulting Group: Summer  
Consultant

Buffett Early Childhood Fund: Senior  
Program Associate

Clean Water Action: Field Organizer

## NARRATIVE

My career path began while completing an ethnography of Tibetan refugee orphans living in exile in Nepal. I was struck by the potential of these children but also the barriers they faced as a result of poverty, prejudice, and political unrest in the region. I saw dozens of organizations dedicated to helping these children overcome their challenges, but each struggled to scale their programs. Since my time in Nepal, I have seen that many of the same challenges facing children there also exist in some form in the United States. In response, I have dedicated my professional career to bridging the gap between program-level innovation and system-level impact.

I spent the past four years at the Buffet Early Childhood Fund, a philanthropic organization that makes long-term investments in early education practice, policy, and science to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children in America. As Senior Program Associate, I designed an educator leadership program, launched a shared services platform, and helped shape a national funder strategy to address the field's workforce crisis. I saw the role that philanthropy can play in fueling the engine of social innovation by supporting the development of cutting edge interventions. Yet I also saw the critical role of partnership with stakeholders across the social, private, and public sectors to scale programs to the level of state and federal policy. I have come to realize that lasting impact requires more than personal passion or drive; it requires the collaborative effort of unlikely partners and allies working together towards a common goal.

My time at the Harvard Kennedy School is a continuation of my journey to bridge the gap between sectors. Through the Zuckerman Fellowship, I have the opportunity to learn how my colleagues have addressed the challenges of their respective fields. Through my experience, I look forward to refining the skillset needed to advance my goals while contributing to my colleagues achieving their own. I am excited to continue my work to embed systemic change for young children and families in the structure of public life and unlock the potential in every human being.



# MARCELA ZHOU HUANG

HARVARD T.H. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH CANDIDATE, 2019

## ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

David Geffen School of Medicine  
at UCLA, PRIME Program, MD  
Candidate, 2020

University of California, San Diego,  
BS in Human Biology, 2012

## PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

UndocuMed at David Geffen School  
of Medicine at UCLA: Co-Founder  
and Policy/Advocacy Chair

Latino Medical Student Association,  
West Region: Director-Elect

University of California, San Diego  
(UCSD), Student-Run Free Clinic  
Project: Lead Spanish Interpreter

UCSD Linda Vista Health Fair:  
Student Leader

## NARRATIVE

Growing up in Mexico as a daughter of Chinese immigrants, I learned to appreciate cultural diversity but also experienced the challenges of an immigrant family facing linguistic and financial barriers when seeking healthcare. Personally experiencing and witnessing these health disparities elicited by socioeconomic barriers across both sides of the Mexican-American border has led me to a career in medicine with a special interest in policy. Through clinical work before and during medical school, I noticed a stark difference in health access and resource distribution across different communities. I became involved with the Health Physician Shortage Area research project and had a clearer understanding of the limitations that defined health access in the communities in which I grew up.

As a recipient of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), I also have a special interest in policies revolving around health access for immigrant communities and feel a responsibility to advocate for those who are denied the privilege and security to fight for themselves.

Over the years, it became apparent that many of these obstacles are driven by policies and management decisions. Clinical clerkships have furthered exposed me to the realities and limitations in our patients' lives that have inspired me to seek education beyond a medical degree. I look forward to taking the experiences and challenges I have witnessed into the upcoming year in which I will be pursuing a Master of Public Health (MPH) that will help me understand and address these socioeconomic factors. With the knowledge acquired from the MPH program with an emphasis in Policy, I will continue to advocate for legislations that will improve access to healthcare for patients. I hope to broaden my knowledge and skills to influence discussions that ultimately improve health conditions for the immigrant and underserved communities. As a Zuckerman Fellow, I look forward to the unique opportunity to collaborate with like-minded individuals across different disciplines and work together to grow and fulfill our desire to serve the public and our communities in our respective fields.



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“Now, more than ever, I strive with the utmost care, creativity, and expertise to advocate for those pushed aside by society. This commitment was born during my childhood in rural Alabama and honed in far corners of the world. I feel a deep connection to the people I work with and for. Helping to uplift them, to share their stories, and to empower their communities is the most meaningful and rewarding pursuit I have undertaken. Supported by a community of Zuckerman Fellows and armed with the skills that only Harvard Kennedy School can provide, I hope to forge new frontiers in the creation of economic opportunity and social mobility for our world’s most vulnerable.”

**Azeem Ahmed**  
Harvard Kennedy School  
Zuckerman Fellow  
*MPP/MBA Candidate*