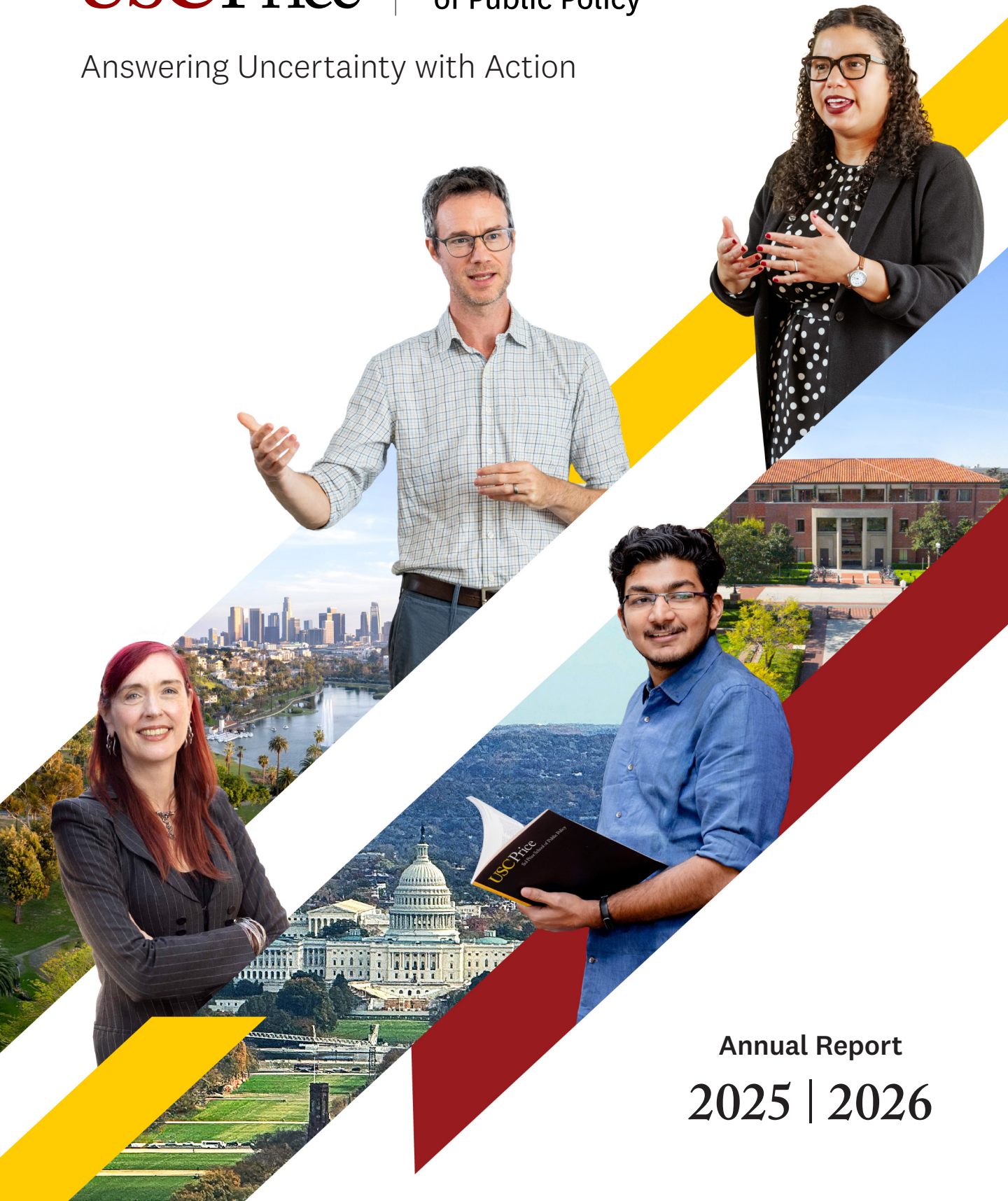


USCPrice

Sol Price School
of Public Policy

Answering Uncertainty with Action



Annual Report
2025 | 2026



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A Legacy of Service



The USC Price School's history dates back nearly a century, to the opening of the School of Citizenship and Public Administration in 1929. The name by which the school is known today was made possible in 2011 by a \$50 million gift from the Price Family Charitable Fund (now known as the Price Philanthropies Foundation). This generous gift honors the life and legacy of USC alumnus Sol Price, a visionary entrepreneur who founded the Price Club. Sol Price's desire to help the less fortunate is reflected in his namesake school's mission: to improve the quality of life for people and their communities worldwide.

ACADEMIC DEGREES

4

Bachelor's

14

Master's

3

Doctoral

ROTC PROGRAMS

Air Force
Army
Navy

ENROLLMENT

763

Bachelor

765

Master

81

Doctoral

14% International

37% First-generation

>95% Graduate employment rate

705 Scholarships awarded

54% Students of color

FACULTY

68

Tenured and tenure-track;
research and teaching

3

Nobel
laureates

20

Memberships in
National Academies

Message from the Dean

I invite you delve into this report to explore how our faculty, students and alumni are putting ideas into action to benefit communities worldwide.

At a time when the value of higher education is under scrutiny, this report highlights the enduring importance of research, education, and community engagement.

The stories and accomplishments within these pages demonstrate how knowledge and education remain essential tools for creating meaningful change.

While some calls for change in higher education are justified, a vast majority of Americans continue to recognize that colleges and universities play a vital role in preparing students for success in life. A recent poll conducted by the nonpartisan think tank New America affirms that a college degree is still seen as a valuable investment.

As the dean of the Price School, my top priority is ensuring that our students realize the full value of their education. Their investment in a USC Price degree pays dividends — not just in professional success, but in the lasting satisfaction of living a purposeful life.



Equally important is our commitment to advancing research and discovery.

Many of the transformative ideas and innovations that society relies on today exist because of academic research. The future will be no different.

Yes, we face unprecedented challenges. But I am optimistic. With Americans understanding the critical role played by research universities such as USC, we can continue to dream big, take bold action, and deliver solutions that advance the common good.

Christopher Boone

*Dean, USC Sol Price School of Public Policy;
C. Erwin and Ione L. Piper Chair*



A Research Powerhouse

The USC Sol Price School of Public Policy combines evidence-based research and rigorous education to improve the quality of life in communities worldwide.

Consistently ranked among the top five schools of its kind in the nation, the USC Price School pursues its mission through four departments, augmented by a mosaic of research centers and institutes that focus on specific topics. Together, these resources give the school unmatched power to explore and develop solutions to society's most pressing issues.

Our research has informed everything from policies related to vaccination, mask wearing, and the environment, to issues involving traffic safety, and voting rights. It also informs our pedagogy. The USC Price School provides students with enormous opportunities to engage in research — a vital tool in teaching critical thinking. This abundance of research and educational opportunities helps explain why so many of our alumni have built rewarding careers in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

Academic Departments

Department of Public Policy and Management

Shapes governance, policy, leadership, and nonprofit management through fact-based research; ranked among the nation's top-five public affairs programs.

Department of Health Policy and Management

Promotes health and value in healthcare delivery through innovative research, which has been featured in the annual economic reports of the past three U.S. presidents.

Wilbur H. Smith III Department of Real Estate Development

Examines development from multiple perspectives to help create communities with distinct identities and lasting value.

Research Centers and Groups

Bedrosian Center on Governance

Through public discourse, examines pressing issues facing society and integrates new knowledge and ideas gleaned from this discourse into civic education — the key to strong communities.

Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events

Develops models and tools to evaluate risks, costs, and consequences of threats, and assesses strategies to mitigate risk and respond to emergencies.

Center for Inclusive Democracy

Focuses on nonpartisan research related to elections, voting behaviors, and electoral and political participation.

METRANS Transportation Consortium

Addresses transportation problems of large metropolitan regions through interdisciplinary research, education, and outreach.

Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy

Promotes effective philanthropy and strengthens the nonprofit sector through research that informs philanthropic decision-making and public policy.

USC Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics

Measurably improves value in healthcare through evidence-based policy solutions, research excellence, and private- and public-sector engagement.

USC Schwarzenegger Institute for State and Global Policy

Advances post-partisanship to encourage leaders to work together to find solutions that benefit the people they serve.

Center for Sustainability Solutions

Develops policy, technological, and behavioral solutions to the pressing sustainability problems in Southern California and the world.

USC

Department of Urban Planning and Spatial Analysis

Engages in thoughtful planning — driven by data — that creates more livable and socially just communities. One of the top-ranked programs in the country.

Lusk Center for Real Estate

Advances real estate knowledge, informs business practices, and addresses timely issues affecting the real estate industry, the urban economy, and public policy.



USCPrice

Center for Health Financing, Policy, and Management

Contributes to improving health and healthcare in local communities, California, the U.S., and internationally.

The Center on National Defense and Public Safety

Advances multi-jurisdictional governance for security and resilience.

Education

BACHELOR'S

Bachelor of Science in Public Policy
Bachelor of Science in Urban Studies and Planning
Bachelor of Science in Real Estate Development
Bachelor of Science in Real Estate Finance and Development

MASTER'S

Master of Health Administration
Master of Public Administration
Master of Public Policy
Master of Urban Planning
Master of Nonprofit Leadership and Management
Master of Science in Public Policy and Data Science
Dollinger Master of Real Estate Development
Master of International Public Policy and Management
Master of Public Administration – Online
Executive Master of Health Administration – Online

PROGRESSIVE

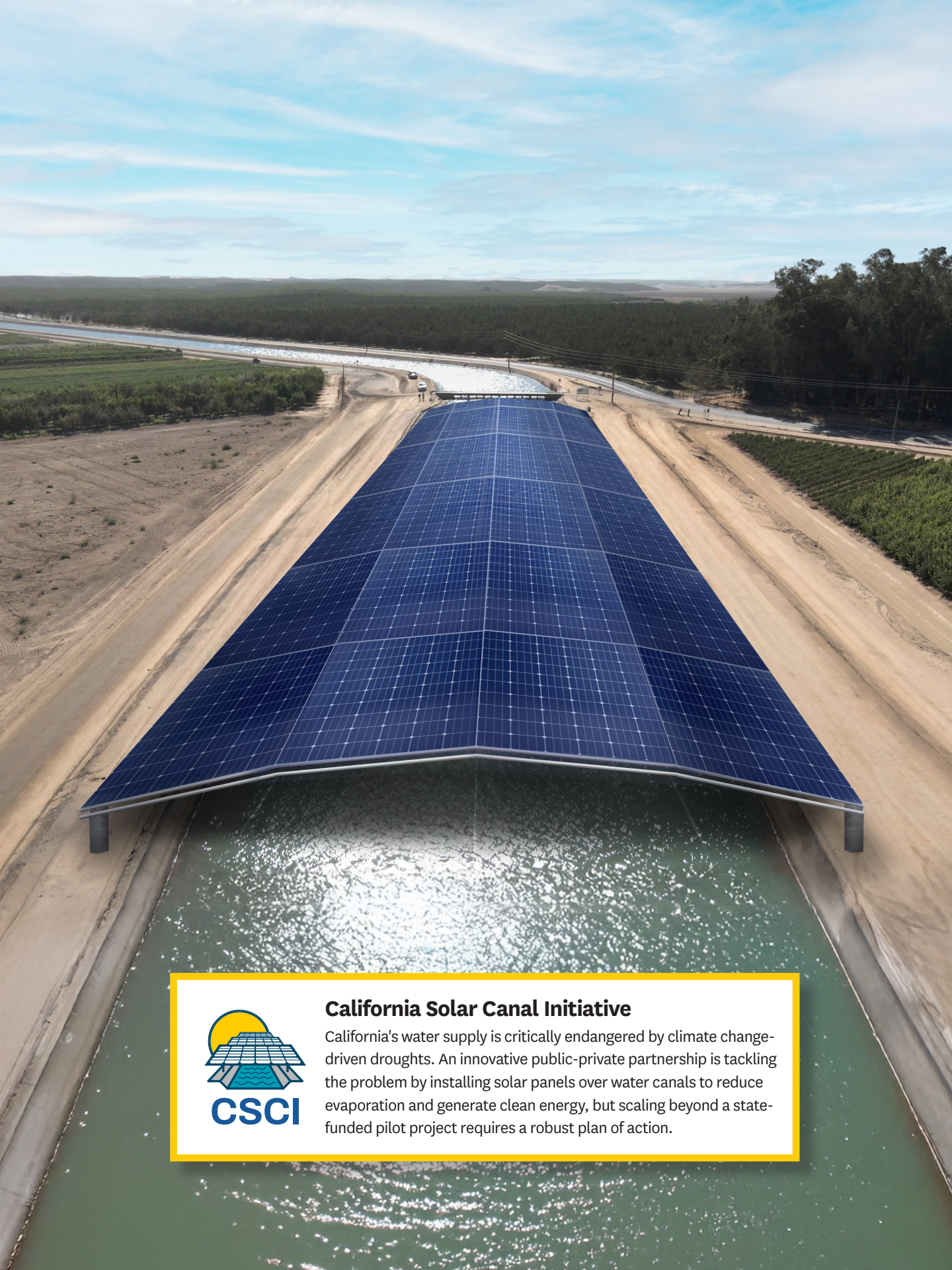
Master of Health Administration
Master of Public Administration
Master of Public Policy
Master of Urban Planning

DOCTORAL

Ph.D. in Public Policy and Management
Ph.D. in Urban Planning and Development
Doctor of Policy, Planning and Development







California Solar Canal Initiative

California's water supply is critically endangered by climate change-driven droughts. An innovative public-private partnership is tackling the problem by installing solar panels over water canals to reduce evaporation and generate clean energy, but scaling beyond a state-funded pilot project requires a robust plan of action.

FACULTY

Faculty sustain solid record of impactful research

From sustainability to politics to urban planning to healthcare, USC Price scholars shine as national thought leaders.

Faculty members from the USC Price School of Public Policy continue to engage in academic endeavors that pack a big punch. And over the past year, they've especially shined in the field of sustainability — the expertise of new Dean Chris Boone.

Talk about going big.

In one of the most ambitious academic research projects in California history, two USC Price researchers are leading an effort to examine a possible solution to conserving water while generating clean energy.

Professor Detlof von Winterfeldt and Assistant Professor Santana Contreras are part of a seven-university research effort to analyze the viability of covering large sections of California's 4,000 miles of exposed canals with solar panels.

The California Solar Canal Initiative (CSCI), which is directed by the USC Dornsife Public Exchange, aims to identify not only the best locations for solar canals, but also the locations where solar panels don't make sense.

"This project embodies a truly holistic approach, carefully balancing economic, environmental and community considerations to achieve sustainable and equitable outcomes," Winterfeldt says. "It's a blueprint for turning complex challenges into actionable solutions."

In addition to participating in the CSCI, USC Price



faculty members were active, as usual, in other aspects of sustainability.

For example, a study co-authored by a USC Price professor found that generating electricity with wind turbines off the California coast is an even more attractive option than it was at the beginning of the decade — until the Trump administration put a temporary halt to new leases for offshore wind on all areas of the continental shelf, including those off the Golden State.

"Offshore wind (OSW) is a major untapped resource that holds significant economic and environmental promise, especially in California," said the study's lead author, Adam Rose, Professor (Research). "A prudent strategy to meet our



Assistant Professor Santana Contreras is studying how solar panels installed over water canals will impact underserved and disadvantaged communities.



Adam Rose, Professor (Research), studies the economics of energy and climate change policies as well as the economics of disasters.

energy and environmental goals at the lowest possible cost is to diversify our portfolio of renewable energy options to include OSW.”

Another study by faculty and graduate students found that trucking companies that carry cargo on short trips for the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are going to have a tough time switching to zero-emission trucks to meet state regulatory requirements by 2035.

The transition is unlikely to happen on time without significant regulatory changes and improvements to address challenges such as the lack of an infrastructure needed to comply with the timeline, the study found. However, if the companies can make the transition, it would be another milestone in California’s goal of net-zero carbon pollution by 2045.

In addition to tackling big environmental challenges, USC Price faculty members over the past year continued burnishing their reputations as thought leaders on a wide range of topics, from the nation’s highly divisive political climate to health-care and housing. Our faculty are among the most prolific researchers in the country, with research from the Price School’s Department of Urban Planning and Spatial Analysis having the highest number of median citations, according to ScholarMetrics, a website that tracks urban planning scholarship.

The housing crisis

Decades of policy missteps fueled today’s U.S. housing crisis, a USC Price study concluded, and the problem will only worsen as more natural disasters wipe out entire communities.

Dowell Myers, Professor of Policy, Planning and Demography, wrote a study published in *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* that traces the origins of the housing crisis to the early 2000s, when easy access to credit for



young adults fueled a historic housing bubble.

When the bubble burst in 2008 and led to the Great Recession, policymakers overcorrected by tightening mortgage lending standards and limiting funds for new construction.

The nation now faces a shortage of 4.5 million or more homes.

“These measures came at the worst possible time — just as millennials, the largest generation in 30 years, entered the housing market,” said Myers, who directs the Population Dynamics Research Group at USC Price. “Young home seekers were welcomed with the lowest construction in more than 60 years.”

To address the ongoing housing crisis, Myers and other researchers who worked on the study offer two key solutions: first, shortening the lag time between rising demand and supply by anticipating housing needs over the next five years, and second, standardizing the practice of tracking both population growth and housing availability together, rather than in isolation.

Corrosion and division

USC Price faculty had plenty to say about the importance of ethics and selflessness in public service and what can be done to combat corruption.

Abuse of power corrodes trust in government,



Dowell Myers, Professor of Policy, Planning and Demography, identified solutions for the nation’s housing shortage.



Assistant Professor Mindy Romero’s research seeks to explain voting patterns and political underrepresentation.

and the U.S. political system puts a lot of pressure on even the most ethical politicians, according to Assistant Professor Mindy Romero, Founder and Director of the Center for Inclusive Democracy.

“People are incentivized to put their own survival first,” Romero said. “So, we’ve already got a structure that requires elected officials to compromise often their own beliefs and policies and how they should be serving their voters.”

Despite all the noise coming from the fire hose of 24/7 news coverage, the U.S. is one of the least politically corrupt countries in the world, ranking 28 out of 180 nations, according to Transparency International, a global leader in anti-corruption efforts.

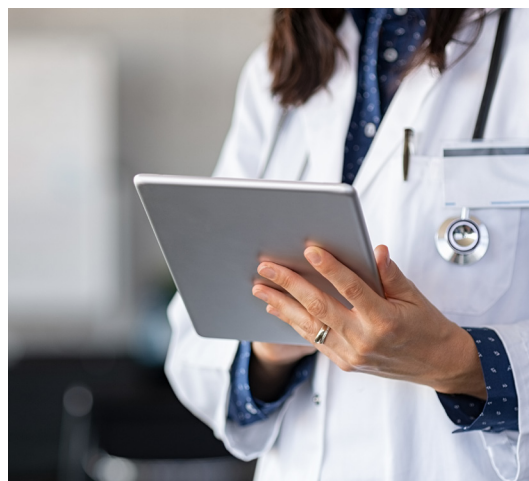
Sharp political divisions in America are nothing new, noted Professor Jeffery A. Jenkins.

“The rule in the United States is for polarization and intense partisanship,” said Jenkins, Provost Professor of Public Policy, Political Science and Law. “That has been what we normally have.”

Several factors fueling current polarization include political primaries and the rise of partisan cable news channels, the decline of local newspapers, and the proliferation of online misinformation, according to Jenkins and other faculty members.



Professor Jeffery A. Jenkins studies the history of Congress, illuminating fresh insights into today’s politics.



Patient privacy concerns

Meanwhile, like many industries, healthcare has seized on the promising tool of artificial intelligence, but healthcare systems need to be more careful protecting patient privacy. Many doctors now use ChatGPT to organize notes, produce medical records, and write letters to health insurers.

By doing so, however, they may be unknowingly violating HIPAA, the federal law that protects patient health information from being disclosed without the patient’s permission, according to Genevieve Kanter, an Associate Professor of Public Policy.

Kanter, who is also Senior Scholar at the Leonard D. Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics, a partner organization of the USC Price School, co-authored an article explaining the emerging issue in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

She said healthcare systems need to provide more rigorous training on chatbot risks to ensure that protected patient health information remains internal to the health system and doesn’t sit on OpenAI servers, which are not HIPAA compliant.



Associate Professor Genevieve Kanter studies the FDA and regulatory issues related to financial conflicts of interest, among other topics.

STUDENTS

The world is their lab

USC Price students venture near and far to explore ways to change people's lives for the better.

Get outside.

For years, USC Price School of Public Policy students have taken that mandate to heart, venturing out into Los Angeles and beyond to apply the lessons they've learned in the classroom to change people's lives for the better.

This past year, students were veritable globetrotters, visiting not only other states and Canada but also Europe and Asia. The goal was to learn how cities tackle issues in areas such as housing, urban planning, and green spaces.

Closer to home, USC Price students this past year strengthened partnerships with nonprofits that work to improve people's lives through better pay and job benefits and improved access to mental health services.

Lessons learned via lectures and textbooks are

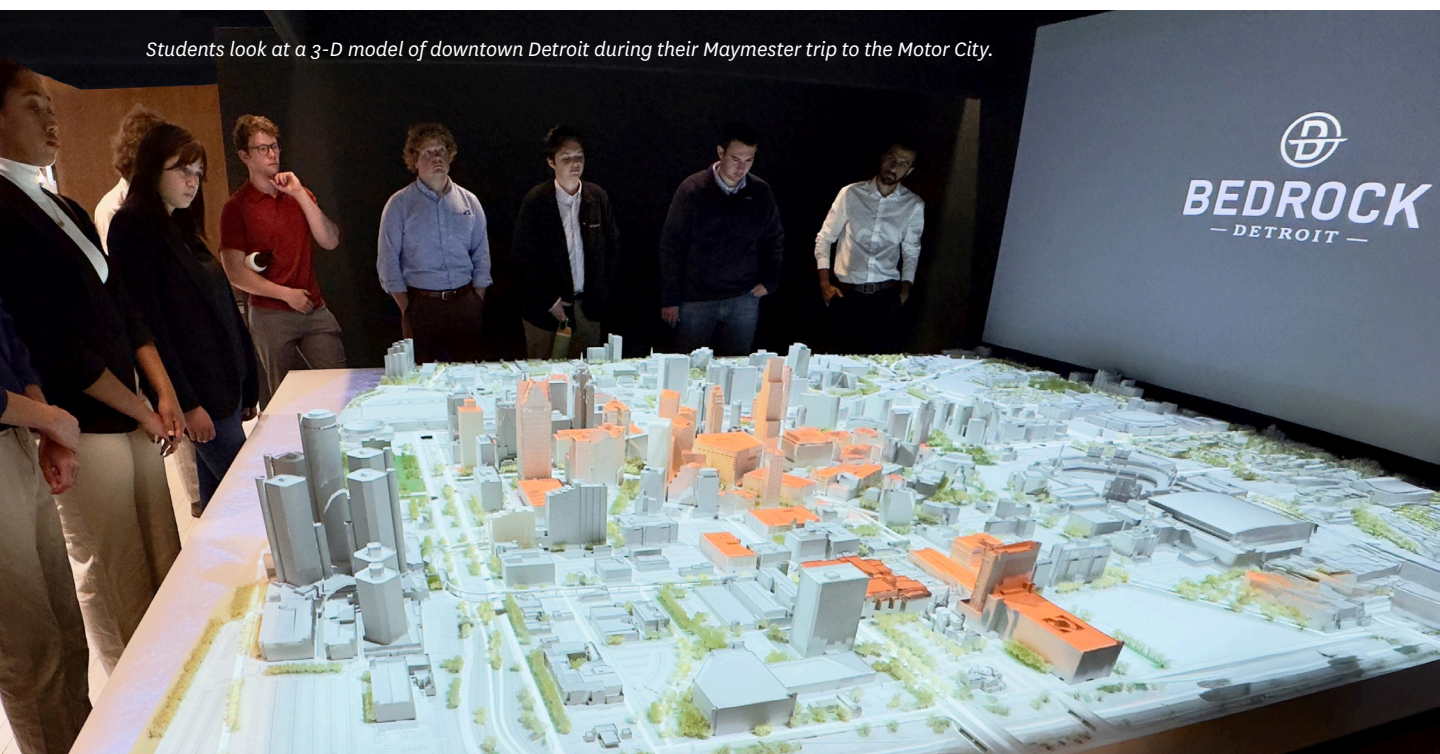
invaluable. But just as vital are these immersive field trips that allow students to experience first-hand how policies play out in the real world — for better or worse.

In search of lessons

Continuing the Maymester programs — learning experiences applied to real-world policy issues — a cohort of 11 students visited Detroit to observe challenges facing the Motor City that also plague other large municipalities, including transportation challenges, high levels of poverty, and struggling school systems.

Detroit is considering reparations programs based on a USC Price student's report detailing, for example, how a freeway divided a historically Black community. Other students advised a non-

Students look at a 3-D model of downtown Detroit during their Maymester trip to the Motor City.



profit on rehabilitating single-family housing.

One student visited the nearby Canadian city of Windsor, where she noted the differences between the neighboring American and Canadian municipalities. Windsor, for example, built more housing in its downtown, while Detroit had fewer residential buildings in its economic center.

Maybe there's a lesson there.

Teaching through joy

Lorne Green spent his earliest years in Philadelphia, where many of his Jewish friends attended Hebrew school.

"I didn't know what that was," Green said. "They told me it was a place where they learned about their culture and history, and I immediately wondered if Black folks could have that too. That question has lived in the back of my mind ever since."

As he graduated in 2025 with a Master in Nonprofit Leadership and Management, Green said he is now prepared to realize his idea of opening Sankofa Sukuu: The Black Heritage School.

"'Sankofa' is a West African word that means to go back and get something you need," Green said. "'Sukuu' means education. I want to create a place where Black kids can find confidence and meaning by learning about their heritage. And I want them to learn it in the most joyful way possible — with games, questions, stories, and art."



Lorne Green plans to launch a school to teach Black history "in the most joyful way possible."



Ernesto Corona (left) discovered a museum exhibit honoring his father while working on his capstone project.

'More than an assignment'

Forging partnerships with local businesses and nonprofit organizations continues to be a hallmark of USC Price capstone projects, in which students tackle real-world policy challenges as part of their degree requirements.

One student, Ernesto Corona, who earned his Master of Nonprofit Leadership and Management, was part of a student team that helped a Smithsonian-affiliated museum in Los Angeles create a plan for collecting data to make informed decisions.

While working on the project for LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, Corona enjoyed the bonus of stumbling upon a museum exhibit honoring his father, a noted Mexican American activist in the mid-20th century.

As Nicole Esparza, USC Price School Associate Professor and faculty adviser for the project, put it: "It was more than just an assignment."

Her statement could apply to the impact many USC Price students are making through research and community partnerships.

Take, for example, Jose Ayon, who's pursuing a Master in Public Administration and is a U.S. Army Reserve captain. He is lobbying lawmakers on Capitol Hill in an effort to expand eligibility for the GI Bill.

Ayon noted that the GI Bill, which helps veterans pay for school or job training, is limited to those who served at least 90 days on active duty. Such a requirement excludes many of Ayon's fellow Reserve members who are never activated, as well



Jose Ayon, a U.S. Army Reserve captain, advocates for his fellow GIs while pursuing an MPA.

as members of state-based National Guard units.

Ayon — who was deployed to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain — is pressing lawmakers to address this inequity in military education benefits.

“Taking care of people, taking care of service members is what I’m passionate about,” Ayon says.

A passion for making change

Passion also explains another USC Price student’s area of focus: ending homelessness.

When he was 19, Elijah Dow noticed his community grappling with the rising problem of homelessness. He felt that Salt Lake City’s proposed solution — simply pushing people who were unhoused to a location outside of the city — was wrong.

“Community groups were advocating for the Salt Lake City Council to bus those experiencing homelessness to a remote area on the other side of the Great Salt Lake,” Dow said. “That fired me up and motivated me to learn more about this issue.”

That passion brought him to USC, where he was a Graduate Research Assistant at the Homelessness Policy Research Institute. He researched chronic homelessness in Los Angeles and the barriers that Black Angelenos who experience homelessness face when returning to work. He also worked on a research paper evaluating the effectiveness of programs providing universal basic income and guaranteed basic income.

Now, Dow has an ambitious, long-term career goal: He wants to return home, run for local office, and use what he’s learned about public policy at USC to help the community where he grew up.

“I’ve always had this passion for making change in my own community,” Dow said.

Elijah Dow intends to run for office to tackle homelessness.



A bright future

For Gianna Marino, the issue of healthcare disparities is personal.

Growing up in the San Francisco Bay area, Marino noticed differences between herself and her more wealthy friends. Her family sometimes visited free dental clinics and often waited weeks or months to see a doctor due to gaps in their health insurance. Marino's friends, meanwhile, received healthcare right away.

"Seeing those divides just between myself and my friends and learning more throughout school, I came to realize there's a lot of fractures and brokenness in the healthcare system," Marino said.

Marino, who graduated with a Master of Health Administration from the USC Price School, now has the chance to help the sickest of patients access healthcare. She's landed an administrative fellowship at Mayo Clinic, considered by some to be the best hospital system in the world. Mayo Clinic's Administrative Fellowship Program is a prestigious two-year program designed to fast-track top graduate students into management positions.

Marino credits the USC Price School for turning her passion for public health into a viable career.

"No other program lets you get that hands-on work experience and sets you up with a job quite like USC does," Marino said. "And coupled with the professors, I think it's an unparalleled experience."



Gianna Marino landed an administrative fellowship at Mayo Clinic designed to fast-track top graduate students into management positions.

The Simple Things

Painting pavement with colors that absorb heat and planting trees. Sometimes, the simplest of things can be done to make communities more sustainable.

Such concepts are some of the reasons why two new courses were launched in Fall 2024. The goal is to better prepare students for problems posed by climate change by allowing them to see how things are being done in Los Angeles concerning the environment and extreme weather.

Students pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Public Policy now can enroll in the Urban Environmental and Sustainability Policy Track, which exposes them to local and global perspectives on environmental policy.

The second new course — Sustainable Communities, Policy, and Planning — introduces students to how policies and planning at the local level are being implemented to address climate change. The class takes advantage of its location in one of the most innovative cities in the world by examining efforts in L.A. and the surrounding region and comparing them with measures taken in other cities and metropolitan areas in an effort to identify best practices.



ALUMNI

The ties that bind

USC Price alumni tap old connections to forge new partnerships.



Cindy Lee, who earned her Master in Public Policy in 2020, is Legislative and Government Affairs Specialist at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

How far will a USC Price alum go to make an impact?

How about 34.7 million miles?

Cindy Lee, who earned her Master in Public Policy in 2020, hasn't actually traveled to Mars. But the self-described "space advocate" specializes in familiarizing lawmakers here on Earth with the work that NASA does — from the agency's missions to Mars to research into the moons of Jupiter.

And much of the research Lee shares with them is down-to-earth stuff aimed at helping the environment.

Lee, for example, works with cities on sharing Earth science data. She's helped elected officials

and staffers connect with subject-matter experts to understand the data collected by NASA's satellites and spacecraft, and how that data could help cities track various sustainability goals.

"Every climate issue you can think of," Lee says, "there's likely a current mission in space or data and research going on about that issue."

Lee's work is one example of the many ways USC Price alumni continue to strive to improve society while maintaining close ties to the Price School community. Lee volunteers her time for the mentorship program run by the Price School's Office of Career Services, helping

students apply for internships, improve their resumes, or make professional connections. For Lee, the program has come full circle.

“I joined that program my first year at Price, and I am still in contact with my mentor,” Lee said. “We built a relationship.”



Working with cities

USC Price graduates have identified ways for the city of Rancho Cucamonga to electrify its fleet of vehicles to cut emissions, save money, and comply with state climate regulations.

Lindsay McElwain, a Management Analyst in Rancho Cucamonga's Public Works department, tapped into her network of USC Price contacts to recruit a team of five recent graduates. McElwain earned her Master of Public Administration in 2021.

The students produced for Rancho Cucamonga and fire district officials a report identifying obstacles that might get in the way of switching roughly 200 gas-powered vehicles to electric vehicles, as well as best practices for undertaking such a transition. That report is now guiding city leaders as they procure EVs.

Perhaps the biggest contribution from the graduates was helping the city prioritize which vehicles needed to be powered by electricity. To accomplish this, the USC Price team sought answers to a number of questions. Does the city have too many or too few vehicles? Do vehicles often sit idle? Do some vehicles cost more to maintain than to replace?

A life-changing encounter

A casual conversation at a tailgate party yielded another fruitful relationship that is spawning many more productive ones.

In 2022, Ryan Phong, then a graduate student at USC Price, met and chatted with Price alumnus John Keisler, the CEO of investment and consultancy firm Sunstone Management.

Keisler hired Phong on a fellowship that eventually led to a full-time job.

Phong now is an Associate Project Manager, overseeing Sunstone's consulting contracts with local governments. Meanwhile, several other Price students are consulting with cities on a variety of issues as part of the Sunstone Economic Development Challenge, which Phong helped create. The annual competition tasks USC Price students with helping local governments create jobs in their communities. The city of San Bernardino, for example, got some advice from Price students on ways to support startups.

Now in its third year, the Sunstone Challenge is part of a growing connection between Sunstone and USC Price. To date, more than 100 students have worked with 13 cities in the creation of economic development plans.



Ryan Phong landed a full-time job with Sunstone Management thanks to a chat with the company's CEO.

The importance of community

Dr. Karthik Narayan is building India's largest chain of senior care centers to address a fundamental need: companionship.

Returning to his homeland a few years after earning his Master of Public Health Administration from USC Price in 2013, Narayan launched Athulya Senior Care, which has grown into his native country's largest assisted-living company.

Narayan said loneliness is an acute problem among the elderly in India and has been caused in part by the emigration of many of its young people seeking careers outside of their home country.

"The biggest solution long-term care organizations work towards is providing that companionship and community for them to really age in a very dignified manner, versus staying alone at home and really struggling to figure out their day-to-day activities."

Narayan's appreciation for the importance of community was shaped in part by his experience at the USC Price School.

"One of my classes to remember was with Professor (LaVonna) Lewis where we spoke about

policy advocacy and, more importantly, community engagement. That sometimes is not taught. I feel it was something very different here, where how important it is for an individual to work with the community to drive change," Narayan said.

Rebuilding communities

Entire communities were wiped out by the devastating wildfires that tore through parts of Los Angeles County in early 2025. Thousands of people remain on the long road to recovery.

As one of the nation's leading experts on wildfire disaster recovery, Jennifer Gray Thompson, who earned her Master of Public Administration in 2013, is trying to make that journey a little easier.

The founder and CEO of After The Fire USA, a nonprofit that supports wildfire survivors and advocates for them on Capitol Hill, Thompson says that every policymaker at every level — local, state, regional, and federal — has a role to play.

"I cannot express enough that this is a time for really brave leadership," Thompson says. "It's important to be nonpartisan about this. Figure out how you can listen to people."



Dr. Karthik Narayan used the skills he acquired while earning a Master of Health Administration to build India's largest chain of senior care centers.



*Through her nonprofit, After the Fire USA, alumna **Jennifer Gray Thompson** has played a major role in supporting wildfire survivors.*

Doing such can lead to making a big impact — something scores of USC Price alums continue to be passionate about long after they’ve graduated.

Managing a city

When federal budget cuts threatened the future of a national park visitor center in Twentynine Palms — potentially harming the finances of the small California city — Stone James had to think quickly.

James, the City Manager of Twentynine Palms, came up with a creative solution: The city would transfer the visitor center’s lease from the national park to a local nonprofit organization with the ability to keep the facility open regardless of federal budget cuts.

It’s one of a string of examples of how James — like many other city managers — needs to think on his feet to keep his city functioning.

From unexpected floods to building proposals — some viable, some not — James encounters a relentless stream of challenges.

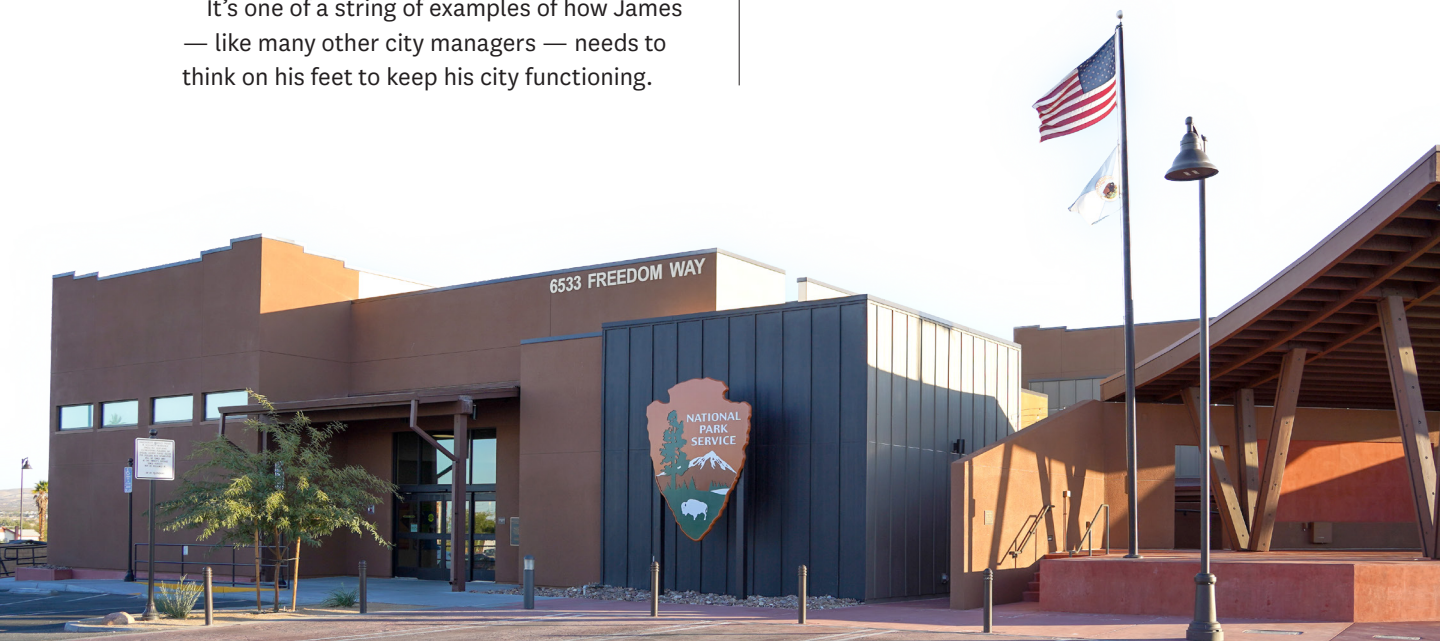


*USC grads **Steven Bilderain**, left, and **Stone James** are the Mayor and City Manager, respectively, of Twentynine Palms, California.*

“Success in these situations, I think it comes down to having high integrity, a sound moral compass,” he said.

It doesn’t hurt that James is also highly educated, with a Dollinger Master of Real Estate Development and a Doctor of Policy, Planning, and Development — both earned at the USC Price School.

“It opened doors that were previously closed and also opened doors that I didn’t know existed,” he said.



ENVIRONMENT



Reducing emissions doesn't mean shocking electricity prices

Countries that pursued more aggressive electricity decarbonization are not more vulnerable to natural gas price shocks, according to a study co-authored by Professor Antonio Bento.

- **What they researched:** Bento and colleagues developed a country-specific vulnerability metric and applied it to estimate how natural gas price shocks are reflected in electricity prices in Europe.
- **What they found:** Countries with more aggressive decarbonization were not more vulnerable to natural gas price shocks. However, countries with a higher share of intermittent renewable energy generation — such as that from wind and solar — are slightly more vulnerable, potentially due to the complementarity of these technologies with natural gas generation.
- **Why it matters:** The results emphasize that decarbonization goals can still be achieved without risking vulnerability, which is critical for maintaining stable electricity prices, energy security and public trust in the energy transition.



Want to raise concern about climate change? Tell someone's story

Indirect experience with severe weather drives public concern about climate change around the world, according to a study co-written by Provost Professor Wändi Bruine de Bruin.

- **What they found:** People are more likely to worry about climate change if they know someone who has been harmed by severe weather, even if they themselves have not been harmed. Concern is a precursor to action to curb and adapt to climate change. Education and being personally harmed by extreme weather also increase concern.
- **Who are we talking about?** The study, which was published in the *Journal of Risk Research*, analyzed survey data collected in 121 countries for the 2021 Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll.
- **What they're saying:** "Knowing someone who has been harmed by severe weather makes climate impacts concrete, even if you haven't been impacted yourself," said Bruine de Bruin. "Climate communicators should tell the stories of people who are impacted by climate change."

HEALTHCARE



Study: U.S. dementia costs to exceed \$780B in 2025

The total economic burden of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in the U.S. will reach \$781 billion this year, according to the first in an annual series of national estimates.

- **What they analyzed:** Beyond the cost of care, the research model accounts for lost earnings from patients and care partners who cut back work hours or leave jobs, as well as the diminished quality of life experienced by millions of patients and their families.
- **How the study was conducted:** The study was funded by a multi-year agreement with the National Institute on Aging, which is part of the National Institutes of Health.
- **What they're saying:** "Having a better understanding of who bears these costs and how they change over time can inform evidence-based policies that may ultimately reduce the financial impact of dementia," said Julie Zissimopoulos, Co-Director of the Aging and Cognition program at the USC Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics and Professor at the USC Price School of Public Policy.



Basic income for the elderly helps retired self-employed workers

Retired, self-employed workers in Mexico saw health gains from basic income — a non-contributory pension program — according to a study led by Associate Professor Emma Aguila.

- **What they researched:** Aguila and colleagues explored how basic income for the elderly affects the health of retired workers who were self-employed or salaried workers. The study provided supplemental incomes to adults aged 70 or older in two towns in the state of Yucatan.
- **What they found:** Self-employed workers saw health gains from basic income, including less anemia and better exhalation. In contrast, the program did not lead to significant health changes for salaried workers.
- **Why it matters:** Self-employment may be associated with specific health risks that need targeted policy interventions.

HEALTHCARE



Medicare Part D networks may boost pharmacy closures

Excluding pharmacies from preferred pharmacy networks within Medicare Part D contributes to pharmacy closures, which could deepen inequities in healthcare access, according to a study co-authored by Associate Professor Genevieve Kanter.

- **What they researched:** Researchers examined nearly 88,000 U.S. pharmacies over a 10-year span to determine how inclusion in Medicare Part D-preferred pharmacy networks influenced pharmacy closures, especially among independent pharmacies and those in underserved communities.
- **What they found:** Pharmacies excluded from most preferred networks were up to 4.5 times more likely to close, with independent pharmacies in low-income, Black, and Latinx neighborhoods less likely to be preferred by most Part D plans than chains and pharmacies in other neighborhoods.
- **Why it matters:** These findings suggest that federal and state policymakers should consider Medicare Part D payment and delivery reforms that ensure that preferred pharmacy networks do not disproportionately exclude pharmacies in low-income, Black, and Latinx neighborhoods.



Liberalized cannabis policies unlikely to help reduce drug deaths

Liberalizing cannabis policy is unlikely to help reduce cannabis or opioid involvement in suicides and deaths of undetermined intent, according to a study co-authored by Professor Rosalie Liccardo Pacula.

- **What they researched:** Pacula and colleagues researched the relationships between changing cannabis policies and cannabis-involved and opioid-involved suicide deaths.
- **What they found:** The prevalence of cannabis involvement in opioid-involved suicide deaths steadily increased from 2003 to 2018, when many states liberalized their policies. However, states that did not liberalize or weaken their regulations experienced declines in cannabis-related deaths with or without opioids, while states that loosened regulations toward cannabis experienced increases in both.
- **Why it matters:** These findings do not support the idea that cannabis policy liberalization and/or cannabis use are likely to be useful strategies to reduce cannabis or opioid involvement in deaths of suicide or undetermined intent.

ECONOMY



New research method provides deeper insights into the cost of power outages

Power companies and regulators aiming to prevent or mitigate major blackouts can now make better-informed choices thanks to research led by the USC Price School of Public Policy, Boston University and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

- **What they studied:** Led by Professor Adam Rose, a team of researchers evaluated indirect costs from actions businesses and people take to adapt during long blackouts. Known as “resilience tactics,” these indirect costs include expenses such as obtaining and operating a portable generator, and hotel stays and meals for those who evacuate.
- **What they found:** Resilience tactics have a far bigger economic impact than the direct costs of a blackout: A two-week outage could cause a hit to the gross domestic product of the greater Chicago metropolitan area as high as \$17.1 billion, with more than 70% of those costs coming from resilience tactics.



Economic growth in America's heartland

Emerging evidence is contradicting the prevailing narrative that rural communities are mired in a state of socioeconomic decay, unable to break the vicious cycle kicked off by deindustrialization and sustained by brain drain.

- **What they studied:** To assess economic development in the nation's heartland, researchers examined 1991-2020 employment data for various sectors in metropolitan and rural areas.
- **What they found:** Doctoral student Marley Randazzo and Professor Elizabeth Currid-Halkett found surprising job growth rates in knowledge industries more typically associated with cities and urban agglomerations. Their study also strengthened existing findings showing that the way in which metropolitan areas are classified erodes rural economic vitality and contributes to pervasive “left behind” narratives.

POLITICS

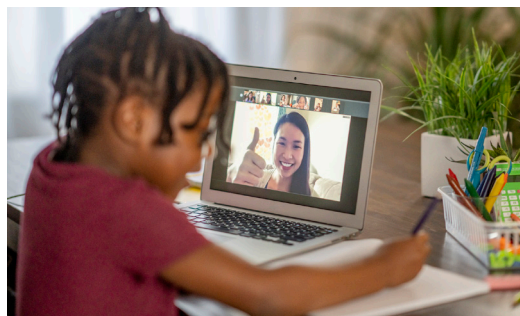


Study: U.S. presidents funnel federal grants to preferred mayoral candidates

Presidents from both parties strategically use federal funds to assist mayoral candidates who share their political affiliation and aims.

- **What they studied:** The research, titled “Presidential Particularism and Mayoral Elections,” examined direct grant-making between presidents and mayors in local election years.
- **What they found:** The president, regardless of political party, distributed more block and project grants to swing cities with mayors of the same political party during mayoral election years. The study found a “significant increase” in the allocation of federal block and project grants during mayoral election years, with transportation and education grants leading the way.
- **What they’re saying:** “It’s the first study to look at presidential particularism beyond the federal level to see whether grant dollars distributed by the federal executive branch is causally related to the timing and co-partisanship of mayoral elections,” said Provost Professor Jeffery A. Jenkins, who co-authored the study with Heonuk Ha, his doctoral student from 2018 to 2024.

EDUCATION



New lessons learned from Covid-era online learning

Online learning during the Covid pandemic affected students in markedly different ways, with some benefitting and others suffering from use of the format.

- **What they studied:** Researchers, including first author Jared Schachner, Postdoctoral Research Associate at USC Price, analyzed the Chicago Public Schools’ pandemic-era online learning initiative to assess whether overall levels of, and equity in, educational engagement and achievement improved with increased access to technology.
- **What they found:** Participation in online classes boosted remote learning engagement and achievement for previously high-performing students but reduced engagement and achievement for low-performing pupils.
- **What they concluded:** Continued investments in expanding access to technology without complementary supports for vulnerable students may further widen pandemic-era educational inequities; counterbalancing the negative effects of technology for low-achieving students is thus imperative.

NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT



Price students advise Metallica's foundation

All Within my Hands, a foundation launched by the iconic rock band Metallica, tasked students with quantifying the return on investment for its Metallica Scholars Initiative, a program supporting trades education in 75 community colleges across the country and Guam.

- **What they found:** The Master of Public Administration students found that the return on investment was high across all MSI-supported programs. On average, the researchers found, MSI graduates can expect to earn 8.3 times the upfront cost of their program mid-career.
- **What they recommended:** They recommended that the foundation prioritize investments in high-growth career fields, particularly in industries with anticipated strong demand for labor and high relative salaries over the next decade.
- **What they're saying:** "The research conducted by USC Price is invaluable insight that helped quantify the value of supporting and expanding the trades, specifically within the Metallica Scholars Initiative," said Peter Delgrosso, the Executive Director at All Within My Hands. "We have been looking for this sort of empirical evidence since we started the program, and with the help of these hard-working USC students, we finally got there."

HOUSING

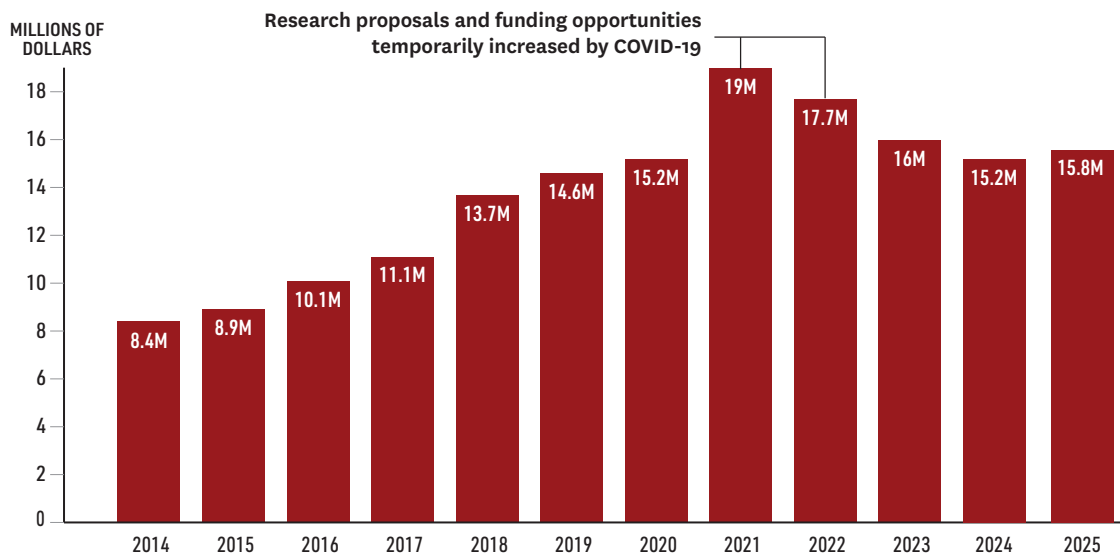


Report: L.A. housing demand increased despite population declines

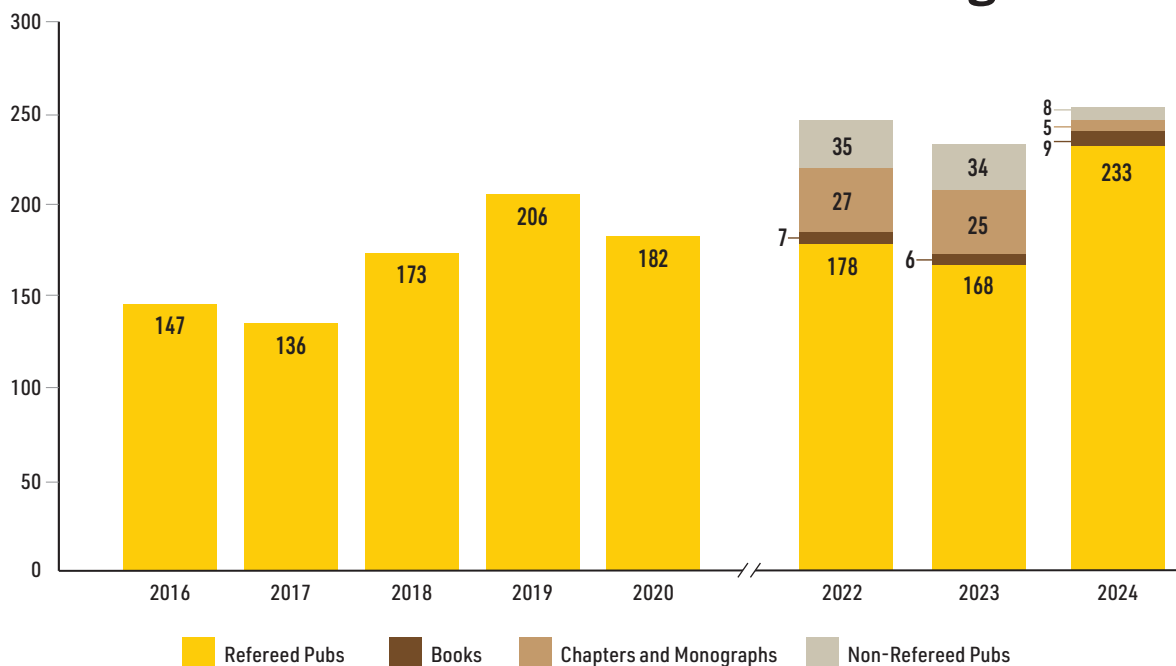
The inaugural State of Los Angeles County Housing and Neighborhoods report from the USC Lusk Center for Real Estate identified and quantified the challenges and recent shifts shaping the region's housing crisis.

- **What the report found:** Housing production in L.A. County has slowed dramatically over the decades, dropping from over 70,000 new units annually in the 1950s to roughly 30,000 in the 1970s and 1980s to less than 15,000 in the 2010s.
- **What's the paradox?** L.A. County's population fell by more than 500,000 over the past decade, but the number of households actually grew due largely to more single residences, especially in the City of Los Angeles. More households means more demand for housing at a time of decreased housing construction.
- **What they're saying:** "My biggest takeaway is that even the middle class — even what one might call the upper middle class here in Los Angeles — is seeing their home ownership opportunities fall. And I think we need to worry about that," said Richard Green, Director of the USC Lusk Center, a research center affiliated with the USC Price School of Public Policy.

2025 research expenditures expected to be on par with recent years



Publication record remains strong



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Dana P. Goldman

• National Academy of Medicine
• National Academy of Social Insurance
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Elizabeth Graddy

• National Academy of Public
Administration



Shaun Harper

• National Academy of Education



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of Engineering



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• National Academy of
Public Administration



Leonard D. Schaeffer

• National Academy of Medicine
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Insurance



Yan Tang

• National Academy of
Public Administration



Dora Kingsley Vertenten

• National Academy of
Public Administration



New research finds rural Americans don't live as long as city-dwellers

February 15, 2025 By Elizabeth Currid-Halkett, Bryan Tysinger and Jack Chapel

Rural Americans — particularly men — are expected to live significantly shorter, less healthy lives than their urban counterparts, according to our research, recently published in the *Journal of Rural Health*.

We found that a 60-year-old man living in a rural area is expected on average to live two fewer years than an urban man. For women, the rural-urban gap is six months.

A key reason is worse rates among rural people for smoking, obesity and chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and heart disease. These conditions are condemning millions to disability and shortened lives.

What's more, these same people live in areas where medical care is evaporating. Living in rural areas, with their relatively sparse populations, often means a shortage of doctors, longer travel distances for medical care and inadequate investments in public health, driven partly by declines in economic opportunities.

We describe the conditions that drive our results as “diseases of despair,” building off the landmark work of pioneering researchers who coined the now widely used term “deaths of despair.” They documented rising mortality among Americans without a college degree and related these deaths to declines in social and economic prospects.

The main causes of deaths of despair — drug overdoses, liver disease and suicide — have also

been called “diseases of despair.” But the conditions we study, such as heart disease, could similarly be influenced by social and economic prospects. And they can profoundly reduce quality of life.

We also found that if rural education levels were as high as in urban areas, this would eliminate almost half of the rural-urban life-expectancy gap. Our data shows 65 percent of urban 60-year-olds were educated beyond high school, compared with 53 percent of rural residents the same age.

The gap between urban and rural health outcomes has widened over recent decades. Yet the problem goes beyond disparities between urban and rural health: It also splits down some of the party lines and social divides that separate U.S. citizens, such as education and lifestyle.

Scholarship on the decline of rural America suggests that people living outside larger cities are resentful of the economic forces that may have eroded their economic power. The interplay between these forces and the health conditions we study are less appreciated.

Economic circumstances can contribute to health outcomes. For example, increased stress and sedentary lifestyle due to joblessness can contribute to chronic health issues such as cardiovascular disease. Declines in economic prospects due to automation and trade liberalization are linked to increases in mortality.



But health can also have a strong influence on economic outcomes. Hospitalizations cause high medical costs, loss of work and earnings, and increases in bankruptcy. The onset of chronic disease and disability can lead to long-lasting declines in income. Even health events experienced early in childhood can have economic consequences decades later.

In tandem, these health and economic trends might reinforce each other and help fuel inequality between rural and urban areas that produces a profoundly different quality of life.

It should be noted that our results, like many studies, are describing outcomes on average; the rural population is not a monolith. In fact, some of the most physically active and healthy people we know live in rural areas.

Just how much your location affects your health is an ongoing area of research. But as researchers begin to understand more, we can come up with strategies to promote health among all Americans, regardless of where they live.



Elizabeth Currid-Halkett is the James Irvine Chair in Urban and Regional Planning and Professor of Public Policy at the USC Price School.



Bryan Tysinger is a Research Associate Professor at the USC Price School and Director of Health Policy Microsimulation at the USC Schaeffer Center.



Jack Chapel is Research Assistant Professor at the USC Price School and a Scholar in Economics at the USC Schaeffer Institute.

USC PRICE SCHOOL FACULTY IN THE NEWS

TNL Tennessee Lookout

See what research at Tennessee universities was defunded in Trump's federal grant cuts

"Without the federal government funding academic research, it would drastically decrease what we can accomplish. When you stop that basic research, when you stop understanding how pandemics spread, how they impact our populations, when the next pandemic hits, we are not as prepared to address the issue."



Alexandra Graddy-Reed,
Associate Professor

BBC BBC

What should Democrats do now?
Everyone has a different answer

"It is completely normal when a party loses, especially the presidency, for there to be this period of soul searching and asking, 'What's next?'"



Christian Grose, Professor
of Political Science and
Public Policy

LA Times Los Angeles Times

Behind the staggering economic toll of the L.A. wildfires

"Although the fires will spur a massive regional rebuilding effort, 'you don't want to conclude that disasters are good for the economy. As a whole, disasters are a drain.'"



Adam Rose,
Professor (Research)

THE CONVERSATION

Schools and communities can help children bounce back after distressing disasters like the LA wildfires

April 2, 2025 By Rita V. Burke and Santana Contreras

The 2025 Los Angeles wildfires reduced more than 15,000 structures to ash in a matter of days. Among the devastation were 11 public and private schools and 30 child care facilities. In all, the fires disrupted the education and daily lives of over 700,000 students.

In the immediate aftermath of this disaster, much of the focus has been, rightfully, on lives lost, homes damaged or destroyed, and the ability to maintain livelihoods. But noticeably missing from most media coverage have been the consequences of the wildfires for children and discussion of the unique challenges they face surrounding disasters.

We are currently studying the effect of wildfires on families and what factors help children recover faster and lead to more resilient lives.

The importance of schools

School districts across the region closed their doors due to dangerous air quality and structural damage. Some schools were destroyed, while others were left with hazardous conditions, including toxic ash from burned homes. Even when schools reopened, many parents and caregivers were worried about sending their children back into classrooms that might not be safe.

This disruption in education extends beyond a

few lost school days. Research shows that prolonged school closures can significantly affect children's learning, mental health and sense of security. After major disasters, students often experience academic setbacks, increased anxiety, and emotional distress.

Learning from past disasters

After the 2020 Slater Fire in Happy Camp, California, a rural town about 25 miles south of the Oregon border, we conducted focus groups with children who had lost homes and schools.

Our study found that despite experiencing profound loss, many of the children expressed gratitude for their communities and an eagerness to rebuild. Their perspectives revealed both resilience and critical gaps in disaster response – gaps that we see unfolding in Los Angeles today.

One of the biggest lessons from the Slater Fire and other disasters is that children recover best when they are given a sense of stability and normalcy as quickly as possible. The faster children can return to a routine, the better their emotional and academic outcomes tend to be. Schools, child care facilities and structured activities all play a crucial role in this process.

Helping children cope with stress

To assist parents and caregivers in navigating

difficult conversations after a natural disaster, substantial research has explored how to talk to kids about disasters.

For families navigating the emotional toll of this disaster, open conversations are key. Avoiding the topic in an attempt to protect children can make them more anxious. Instead, caregivers should create space for children to express their emotions and ask questions. Children's responses to trauma vary based on their age and experiences, but common reactions may include anxiety about future wildfires, trouble sleeping, and withdrawing from activities they once enjoyed.

Children may react differently, and it is important to be on the lookout for signs of stress. Younger children between ages 1 and 5 may become more irritable and may exhibit signs of developmental regression.

Older children between the ages of 14 and 18 may begin to show signs of depression or isolate themselves. They may also begin to act out or engage in risk-taking behaviors. Strategies that can help children process the experience include maintaining routines, keeping an open line of communication, encouraging creative outlets and modeling desired behaviors.

Caring for our children after a disaster

Organizations such as Project:Camp, a nonprofit that provides pop-up camps for children affected by disasters, have stepped in to offer immediate child care relief in Eagle Rock, California, about 8 miles from Altadena. These programs not only support children's mental health by offering structured, trauma-informed care in a fun environment, but they also give caregivers the time and space necessary to begin rebuilding their lives.

The services provided by these sorts of programs can serve as models that can be incorporated into the planning process for cities and counties.



Rita V. Burke is Associate Professor of Clinical Population and Public Health Sciences at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.



Santina Contreras is Assistant Professor of Urban Planning and Spatial Analysis at the USC Price School.

USC PRICE SCHOOL FACULTY IN THE NEWS



Tech Xplore

People like renewable energy but not necessarily its power lines. Here's why

"People have real concerns about energy infrastructure. These negative public perceptions can turn into opposition, which may then prevent new energy infrastructure from being implemented."



Wändi Bruine de Bruin,
Provost Professor of Public
Policy, Psychology, and
Behavioral Science



Orange County Register

Fewer OC voters cast ballots in 2024 than in 2020, with one side of the aisle most likely to sit

"While we saw voter turnout gains in the 2020 elections, especially among California's voters of color, this new study confirms a reversal of that progress. Sadly, participation in our democracy continues to be low and disparate across the board, and even more significant for voters of color and youth voters."



Mindy Romero, Assistant
Professor (Research)



The New York Times

Immigrant Population in U.S. Drops for the First Time in Decades

"We have more and more people over 65 and not in the work force. A new baby won't help us for 20 years, but a young immigrant helps us immediately. If you take a sledgehammer to the labor force by cutting immigrant flows, we are all going to be seeing the consequences in our everyday lives."



Dowell Myers, Professor
and Director, Population
Dynamics Group

The Washington Post

A missed chance to make America healthier and richer

Covering anti-obesity medications under Medicare and Medicaid holds enormous value for society.

April 7, 2025 By Alison Sexton Ward and Dana Goldman

Too bad the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services decided on Friday not to broadly cover new anti-obesity medications. For the moment, at least, the Trump administration has missed a chance to achieve a spectacular return on investment — try 13% a year.

Medicare administrators said they might revisit the rule in the future, and let's hope they do. The weight-loss drugs are so effective that they can halt, then reverse, the progression of obesity, which today affects 42% of American adults. Obesity is the second-leading cause of preventable deaths and costs the health-care system \$173 billion annually.

Medicare and Medicaid coverage could shake loose the market for GLP-1 drugs, which today are mostly prescribed for diabetes. As of last year, about a quarter of private insurers covered these medications for weight loss, and only about 2% of Affordable Care Act plans covered GLP-1 drugs for obesity.

If CMS administrators reconsider the policy — and we believe they should — Medicare and Medicaid should require manufacturers to deliver savings as a condition of coverage. Given the earnings potential, the drugmakers would proba-

bly be eager to accept.

Using a microsimulation model, we and our colleagues at the University of Southern California's Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics found that widespread access to the drugs would have extraordinary benefits to society. People who begin treatment between the ages of 25 and 34 could gain as much as 1.8 years of life, spend nearly six fewer years with diabetes, and reduce the risk of hypertension, heart disease, stroke and cancer. Even those who start treatment later in life, between 65 and 74, could expect to live about six months longer and experience reduced time living with diabetes.

The health benefits would pour through the economy. When accounting for all costs and benefits — including medication expenses, medical cost offsets, disability expenditure savings, and the value of improved quality and length of life — the social return on investment would exceed 13% annually for all groups with obesity, outperforming the S&P 500's annualized return of nearly 8% since 2000. The net social value from treating all currently eligible adults would total nearly \$10.1 trillion — equivalent to about 6% of all U.S. household wealth.



Our previous research indicates that Medicare coverage of weight-loss therapies could save federal taxpayers as much as \$245 billion in the first decade through reduced medical spending.

It would particularly benefit working-class Americans, who disproportionately struggle with obesity and its complications, yet often lack access to effective treatments.

Rather than continuing to pay the escalating costs of treating preventable obesity-related diseases, the country should invest in prevention and early intervention.



Alison Sexton Ward is Scholar in Economics at the USC Schaeffer Center.



Dana Goldman is Founding Director of the USC Schaeffer Institute and University Professor of Public Policy, Pharmacy, and Economics at USC.

USC PRICE SCHOOL FACULTY IN THE NEWS

T TIME

The Biggest Clean Energy Impacts from Trump's Tariffs

"To the extent that we have tariffs from countries from which we depend on for energy inputs, even if we shift towards fossil fuels, we're still going to pay the price of the tariffs through those fossil fuels."



Antonio Bento, Professor of Public Policy and Economics



McKnight's Senior Living

Dementia is costing the US \$781 billion, and 30 percent of that cost is medical and long-term care

"Having a better understanding of who bears these costs and how they change over time can inform evidence-based policies that may ultimately reduce the financial impact of dementia."



Julie Zissimopoulos, Co-Director, Aging and Cognition Program, USC Schaeffer Center



The New York Times

The Race for All-Powerful Pot

"When companies make unproven health claims about their products, it can put consumers at risk. And consumers who are exposed to more potent cannabis are more likely to experience serious health effects."



Rosalie Liccardo Pacula, Elizabeth Garrett Endowed Chair in Health Policy, Economics, and LawManagement & Policy

STAT

What RFK Jr. Gets Wrong About Conflicts of Interest

June 12, 2025 By Genevieve P. Kanter

If Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. wants to “clean up the corruption and conflicts” at HHS, he is going about it the wrong way.

I study conflicts of interest at federal agencies. While industry influence is a widely shared concern, Kennedy’s dismissal of all the members of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention vaccine advisory committee, and the rapid hiring of eight replacements, could easily misfire.

The purpose of an advisory committee is to have external experts offer independent advice to the government on technical and scientific issues. These experts are typically faculty or researchers at universities and scientific institutes. A wholesale purge may remove members with industry ties, but it is not a costless get-out-of-jail card.

Studies show that committee members with industry relationships tend to publish more and higher-impact articles, suggesting they can bring more expertise to the table. And in therapeutic areas where there are few researchers, such as rare diseases, it takes much more time and effort to find qualified people without financial conflicts. This results in delays in government decisions and ultimately patient access.

In studying conflicts of interest on FDA advisory committees, I found that, perhaps as expected, members with financial ties to the company with the drug under review were more likely to vote in

ways favorable to the company.

What was surprising was that members with ties to both the sponsoring company and a competitor voted, on average, the same way as members who had no industry ties. Multiple financial ties didn’t necessarily make members more biased. It made them less biased, likely because of the counterweight introduced by competition.

The type of financial relationship also mattered. Being an advisory board member for a drug company was associated with a lot of bias, but other kinds of ties, like some kinds of research support, were not.

If Kennedy really wants to limit industry influence in health policy and the health care system, the most impactful thing he could do is to roll back the funding cuts at the National Institutes of Health. Cutting-edge medical research at universities is supported by grants, predominantly from NIH and the federal government. If researchers cannot find research funding from NIH, they will go elsewhere. Some may seek grants from foundations, but foundations don’t have nearly the budgets needed to replace NIH funding.

Who does have the money and is willing to spend it? Drug companies. Don’t be surprised if Kennedy’s NIH cuts lead to an epic shift of medical research toward Big Pharma funding — precisely the opposite of what he says he wants.

And if the secretary wants to restore public



trust in and maintain the integrity of health agencies, he should immediately make good on his “radical transparency” pledge and apply it to all health advisory committees, including the newly constituted vaccines advisory committee. The public should know how the members were recruited, who was recruited but declined, how members were selected, and of course, any financial relationships with potentially affected parties. This includes ties to not only vaccine, drug, and device manufacturers, but also companies offering alternative therapies and other services that are competitors or complements to the products under review.

Prior to each meeting, the agency should release financial disclosures for all members attending and voting, as well as for those who are excluded from voting because of conflicts. If the agency does not, the members themselves should release their disclosures or waivers.

Ridding the government of industry interests need not rely on the indiscriminate wielding of axes. Scalpels and sunshine — and a genuine commitment to a holistic approach — can buttress public trust in our health agencies and our health care system.



Genevieve Kanter is Associate Professor of Health Policy at the USC Price School.

USC PRICE SCHOOL FACULTY IN THE NEWS



How Medicaid cuts could affect healthcare workers

“You have a very profound effect on hospitals and physicians because some [Medicaid patients] might not be able to pay at all. Hospitals will lose these paying customers ... particularly rural hospitals, which in many areas, are struggling financially. This could lead to them closing, and that’s affecting a much broader population in those areas than those eligible for Medicaid.”



Paul Ginsburg, Professor of the Practice of Health Policy and Management



Newsom's podcast criticized by Democrats for platforming Trump allies, saying it's not 'the right strategy'

“There is a concern among Democratic voters nationally that the leaders aren’t really reacting enough. Newsom says he’s going to bring in people who are on the left and on the right. He’s trying to broaden the Democrats’ reach in terms of the conversation. [His podcast] gives Newsom a chance to maybe make some inroads into places that he’s not necessarily been as popular, that are dominated by Republicans.”



Christian Grose, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy

USC PRICE SCHOOL FACULTY IN THE NEWS



CapRadio

Californians support civics education, but not above other aspects of school, according to a new report

"We can't just be educated and informed. We can't just know about our constitution, although [that is] very important. A robust, stable, enduring, and representative democracy requires that people are actually participating, and I would argue beyond voting."



Mindy Romero, Assistant Professor (Research)



The Guardian

Hush over Hollywood: why has it become so hard to make films in L.A.?

"Film incentives, like those for other industries, are hard to resist: they allow politicians to give away taxpayer money (not their own, of course) and label themselves a 'job creator.' Couple that with intense lobbying from the industry, unions, and some bureaucrats, and it's a foregone conclusion that politicians will continue to waste money on these things."



Michael Thom, Associate Professor (Teaching)



BBC

Trump's order on US drug prices: What's in it, and will it work?

"Shifting to a European (drug) pricing model in the US would lead to shorter, less healthy lives for Americans."



Darius Lakdawalla, Professor of Pharmaceutical Economics and Public Policy



Los Angeles Business Journal

Order Mandates VA to House 6K Vets

"It's easy to put out an executive order saying, 'build this much in this amount of time,' but the reality is it takes a while to build things, especially in California. Everything in Los Angeles takes a long time to get done, and I think that reflects a series of problems that would be no different in the process of trying to build housing for unsheltered veterans."



Richard Green, Director of the Lusk Center for Real Estate at the USC Price School



Marketplace

How accurate are recession indicators based on culture?

"Culture has a really powerful impact on society and the economy. It's very hard to pin down and pinpoint, but we know it to be true."



Elizabeth Currid-Halkett, Professor



WBUR

Why do so many new apartment buildings look the same? And is that a problem?

"Number one ... we need to be building a lot of housing. Number two, I think our built environment needs to respond to climate change. So, we need to be building more densely in transit-rich, infill urban locations. I think we can have a conversation about whether they [mixed-use apartment buildings] should look the way that they do. But nobody's come up with an alternative."



Liz Faletta, Professor (Teaching) and Program Director, Urban Planning Programs

A Fond Farewell to Two Seminal Figures at the USC Price School



Jim McDonnell, former Director of USC Price's Safe Communities Institute, is now Chief of the LAPD.



Wil Smith, a member of the USC Price Board of Councilors and a USC trustee, with **Sonia Savoulian**.

They were polar opposites in terms of their longevity at the USC Price School.

Jim McDonnell joined the school in 2023 but departed a year later after being called to higher office.

Sonia Savoulian came to USC as a freshman in 1978 and remained until her retirement in 2025.

But both will be remembered long past their departure dates.

McDonnell left the USC Price School in October 2024, when Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass named him chief of the city's police department. Right away, it was literally a trial by fire.

The LAPD played a major role in keeping the peace in the aftermath of the LA County fires that claimed more than 16,000 structures and 31 lives in January 2025.

Just a few months later, McDonnell, who earned his Master of Public Administration from the USC Price School in 1989, took on the politically delicate role of lead spokesperson and strategist for the LAPD's response to civil disturbances that followed immigration raids by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE.

While at USC, McDonnell, who previously served as the Los Angeles County sheriff, led the Safe Communities Institute, which advanced public safety strategies, policies, and programs. (The institute is now called the Center on National Defense and Public Safety.) A large conference room near his office was frequently filled with law enforcement personnel honing their skills under McDonnell's leadership.

Savoulian served as Associate Director of real estate programs for 39 years before transitioning to a part-time position as a senior advisor to former Dean Dana Goldman.

During her time at USC, she helped shepherd some 3,000 students through programs in urban planning and real estate development.

"Sonia eats, drinks, and sleeps these programs, and cares deeply about our students — even long after they've graduated," Richard Green, Director and Chair of the USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, said in an article that chronicled her transition to a part-time position.

People invariably move on from their jobs, either to take another or to retire. In the cases of Savoulian and McDonnell, both made a positive and lasting impact on the USC Price School.

EVENTS



Oct. 22, 2024

The George Washington Leadership Lecture

Foreign Election Interference Has a Long History

The deeply divisive 2024 U.S. presidential election featured evidence of foreign influence from American adversaries. But such propaganda targeting U.S. voters is hardly new, according to panelists at the 11th George Washington Leadership Lecture Series, an event co-hosted by the USC Price School. Foreign interference in U.S. presidential elections goes back to the early 1800s and even decades before then.



Jan. 23, 2025

Why Californians are Pessimistic About the Economy

Mark Baldassare, Senior Fellow at the USC Price School's Bedrosian Center on Governance, detailed the findings of his recent poll of Californians about the economy. The poll, conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California, found many residents are pessimistic about the economic future.



Feb. 28, 2025

Celebrating Black History Month

The USC Price Safe Communities Institute honored the rich legacy and ongoing contributions of Black leaders. Compton Mayor Emma Sharif discussed the importance of recognizing Black leaders who pave the way for progress and change.



March 3, 2025

Nonprofit Leaders Explore Solutions

Hosted by USC Price's Master of Nonprofit Leadership and Management program, this event carried on a long tradition of thought leadership by bringing together key thinkers and decision-makers from philanthropy, nonprofits, government, business, and the academic community to explore strategies to drive impact in improving lives and communities.



March 5, 2025

Women in Real Estate Luncheon

More than 170 women are pursuing a degree in real estate at the USC Price School of Public Policy, and the school's real estate alumnae total more than 2,000. A panel of real estate alumnae shared their insights about forging a career in this highly competitive field during this annual event.



March 11, 2025

100th PIPE Collaborative Workshop

The PIPE Collaborative convenes faculty and graduate students with common interests in various aspects of political institutions and political economy. The workshop on March 11 featured a presentation by UCLA Assistant Professor Jonathan Homola about how mandatory voter ID reduces turnout.



March 18, 2025

USC Price Policy Perspectives: Navigating AI in American Governance

USC Price Associate Professor William Resh moderated a lively panel discussion about the role of artificial intelligence in American governance and how it is shaping policymaking, public administration, and ethical decision-making.

EVENTS



March 25, 2025

The George Washington Leadership Lecture

Creating Presidential Precedents: The Foundations of the Republic

One of two annual events from the George Washington Leadership Lecture Series, this event featured USC Price Professor David Sloane and Lindsay M. Chervinsky, the Executive Director of the George Washington Presidential Library, discussing how the presidencies of George Washington and John Adams defined the office and ensured the survival of our American republic.



March 26, 2025

Women Leading the Way: Empowerment Panel

In honor of Women's History Month, the USC Price Safe Communities Institute hosted a discussion spotlighting women in public safety. These extraordinary women shared their experiences of breaking barriers and advancing in traditionally male-dominated fields while discussing the challenges they have faced within their careers.



April 1, 2025

Public Spaces & Arts-Based Recovery in the Aftermath of Wildfires

The USC Price Department of Urban Planning and Spatial Analysis hosted an engaging presentation about how, following wildfires and other disasters, artistic projects that take place in public spaces can enhance the recovery processes of affected communities.

(Artwork: Holly Ahern and Eden Crawford-Harriman)



April 9-11, 2025

International Urban Freight Conference

The METRANS Transportation Consortium hosted its 10th biannual conference, drawing more than 200 attendees from 15 countries to explore the complexities, challenges, and opportunities involved in moving freight.

Price Presents

Price Presents is the USC Price School's premier webinar series about issues confronting society. Each webinar features experts from the USC Price School and across USC, as well as from other universities, government agencies, the business sector, and nonprofits.



How to Rebuild L.A.

Within a few weeks of the outbreak of fires that devastated Los Angeles County in January 2025, faculty experts on housing, sustainability, and the history of fire confronted the complexities of rebuilding thousands of homes and businesses.



The First 100 Days

Featuring two leading presidential scholars from USC Price, this Price Presents webinar examined the sweeping changes initiated during President Trump's first 100 days in office. The speakers focused on the extensive use of executive orders and their impact on American governance and society and whether the Trump Administration is a temporary shift or the emergence of a new political era.

A photograph of Daniel McFadden, an older man with white hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and red tie. He is standing behind a wooden podium, speaking into a microphone. The podium features a large circular seal of the Department of Health & Human Services, USA. The background is a dark red curtain.

May 27, 2025

A Fireside Chat with Nobel Laureate Daniel McFadden

USC Schaeffer Institute Distinguished Scholar Daniel McFadden, whose groundbreaking work in choice modeling earned him the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, discussed the evolution of his pioneering work and what the future holds for how we study and understand human choice.

FACULTY DIRECTORY

Emma Aguila

Associate Professor

Economics of aging, health economics, applied econometrics

Grace Bahng

Professor (Teaching); Program Director, Bachelor of Science in Public Policy

Policy analysis, experiential learning, community development, international development

Antonio M. Bento

Professor of Public Policy and Economics

Environmental and energy economics, urban economics, public economics, transportation policy, climate policy, environmental regulation

Tara Blanc

Professor (Teaching)

Civic engagement, leadership, public service ethics, political behavior

Marlon Boarnet

Professor; Director, METRANS Transportation Center

Transportation, travel behavior, urban growth patterns, regional science, urban economics

Geoffrey Boeing

Professor; Program Director, PhD Programs (Fall 2025)

Transportation networks, urban form, data science, urban informatics

Mary Lynne Boorn

Professor (Teaching); Program Director, Real Estate Development Programs

Principles of real estate, real estate finance, real estate development

David Brady

Professor; Chair, Public Policy and Management

Poverty, racial inequality, social policy, health, and immigration

Wändi Bruine de Bruin

Provost Professor of Public Policy, Psychology, and Behavioral Science; Director, Behavioral Science & Policy Initiative, USC Schaeffer Institute

Psychology of risk perception and communication, behavior change interventions, social science of science communication, age differences in decision-making and well-being

Jack Chapel

Assistant Professor (Research)

Aging, public health

Alice Chen

Associate Professor; Vice Dean for Research (Fall 2025); Director, Value of Life Sciences Innovation, USC Schaeffer Center

Health economics, labor economics, applied microeconomics

Santina Contreras

Assistant Professor

Environmental planning, natural hazards, community engagement, international development, engineering for development

Spencer Coutts

Assistant Professor

Alternative investments, commercial real estate finance, institutional investment

Elizabeth Currid-Halkett

Professor; James Irvine Chair in Urban and Regional Planning

Economic development, the arts, cultural economy, social networks, urban growth, economic geography

Phil Dalton

Professor of the Practice of Health Services Administration and Policy

Health policy and management, community health needs, national healthcare delivery, strategic planning, mergers and acquisitions

ACHIEVEMENT



Professor Elizabeth Currid-Halkett, James Irvine Chair in Urban and Regional Planning, is awarded the Ida Beam Visiting Distinguished Professorship at the University of Iowa for the 2025-2026 academic year.



Professor (Teaching) LaVonna Lewis, Vice Dean for Student Success, received the Distinguished Faculty Service Award from USC's Academic Senate, which honors faculty service to the university that goes

beyond normal research, administrative, clinical, and teaching responsibilities.



Shaun Harper, University Professor and Provost Professor of Education, Business, and Public Policy, is ranked Nation's Top Education Policy Scholar: #1 in the Government and Policy subfield and #8 in the overall 2025 rankings by Education Week.

FACULTY DIRECTORY

Jorge De la Roca

Associate Professor

Urban economics, labor economics, economic geography, urban migration

Angus Deaton

Nobel Laureate; Presidential Scholar; Distinguished Scholar, USC Schaeffer Institute

Poverty and inequality, international affairs, determinants of health, economic development, randomized controlled trials

Moussa Diop

Associate Professor

Rental markets, real estate finance, mortgage securitization, corporate real estate, international real estate investment

Jason Doctor

Professor; Norman Topping National Medical Enterprise Chair in Medicine; Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs

Physician behavior and psychology, behavioral economics and health, patient choice and decision-making, health policy and implementation, treatment preferences, prescriptions, health informatics

Erin Duffy

Assistant Professor (Research)

Healthcare markets

Nicolas Duquette

Associate Professor

Nonprofit economics, public finance, economic history

Nicole E. Esparza

Associate Professor

Nonprofit organizations, networks, philanthropy, urban inequality

Liz Falletta

Professor (Teaching); Program Director, Urban Planning Programs

Architecture, urban design, design criticism

James M. Ferris

Emery Evans Olson Chair in Nonprofit Entrepreneurship and Public Policy; Director, Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy

Philanthropy, nonprofit economics, public finance, public policy, institutional analysis

Paul B. Ginsburg

Professor of the Practice of Health Policy and Management; Senior Scholar, USC Schaeffer Institute

Health policy, healthcare financing and delivery, healthcare markets

Genevieve Giuliano

Distinguished Professor; Margaret and John Ferraro Chair in Effective Local Government

Transportation policy, metropolitan spatial structure, travel demand, urban transportation

Dana P. Goldman

University Professor of Public Policy, Pharmacy, and Economics; Founding Director of Leonard D. Schaeffer Institute for Public Policy & Government Service; Special Advisor, USC Provost

Health economics and finance, health policy, the role of prevention in healthcare, healthcare reform, pharmaceutical regulation and innovation, precision medicine, value of delayed aging

Elizabeth Graddy

Professor; Jeffrey J. Miller Chair in Government, Business, and the Economy

Institutional economics, governance, nonprofit organizations, industry structure

Alexandra Graddy-Reed

Associate Professor

Public economics, philanthropy and nonprofits, social innovation, science and innovation policy, research and development

Richard K. Green

Professor; Director and Chair, USC Lusk Center for Real Estate; Chair, Wilbur H. Smith III Department of Real Estate Development

Economics, housing markets, housing policy, tax policy, transportation, mortgage finance, urban growth

Howard Greenwald

Professor

Health service delivery, organizational behavior, survey design

Jane Harman

Presidential Scholar-in-Residence; Former U.S. Representative, California's 36th Congressional District

Distinguished Fellow and President Emerita of Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Shaun Harper

University Professor and Provost Professor of Education, Business, and Public Policy; Clifford and Betty Allen Chair in Urban Leadership; Founder and Executive Director, USC Race and Equity Center

Race in K-12, Higher Education and Corporate Contexts, Urban Education, Boys and Men of Color, College Student Success, Intercollegiate Athletics

Michael E. Harris

Professor of the Practice of Health Services Administration and Policy; Program Director, Executive Master of Health Administration

Healthcare contracting, healthcare policy and reform, emerging healthcare delivery business models, healthcare innovation and its impact on healthcare delivery systems, healthcare prevention, wellness, patient access

ACHIEVEMENT



Associate Professor Geoff Boeing was appointed to the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning's artificial intelligence task force. He also won the 2025 Zephyr Foundation Exceptional Technical Achievement Award in the same month.



Professor Howard Greenwald is named President of the Martin Family Foundation, which is dedicated to supporting students transferring from community colleges to four-year, bachelor's degree-awarding

institutions. Over the past 35 years, the foundation has awarded almost 100 full tuition scholarships.



Professor Richard Green is appointed to serve as alternate to Kathryn Barger, Chair of the Board, Supervisor, Fifth District, on the Los Angeles County Affordable Housing Solutions Agency.

FACULTY DIRECTORY

James Heckman

Nobel Laureate; USC Presidential Scholar-in-Residence

Economics of human development, skill formation, inequality, social mobility

Eric Heikkila

Professor

Urban development, economic development, East Asian cities, urban economics, urban information systems

Jeffery A. Jenkins

Provost Professor of Public Policy, Political Science, and Law; Maria B. Crutcher Professor of Citizenship and Democratic Values; Director, Political Institutions and Political Economy (PIPE) Collaborative

American political institutions and development, U.S. Congress, political parties, lawmaking, separation of powers, political economy

Genevieve P. Kanter

Associate Professor

Health economics and policy, conflicts of interest, physician-industry relationships, medical ethics

Rym Kaki

Professor (Teaching); Program Director, International Master of Public Policy and Management

Public and nonprofit organizations management, public policy analysis, urban poverty policy, social entrepreneurship, institutional design, program evaluation and social impact assessment

Annette M. Kim

Associate Professor; Director, Spatial Analysis Lab

Housing and land use; international development planning; East Asian urbanization; race, arts, and placemaking; critical mapping and urban analytics

Geraldine Knatz**Professor of the Practice of Policy and Engineering**

Seaport policy and management, maritime transportation, international trade, seaport sustainability, environmental impact analysis

Darius Lakdawalla**Professor of Pharmaceutical Economics and Public Policy; Quintiles Chair in Pharmaceutical Development and Regulatory Innovation; Chief Scientific Officer, USC Schaeffer Center**

Economics of health risks, value and determinants of medical innovation, economics of health insurance markets

William D. Leach**Professor (Teaching)**

Collaborative governance, planning, social policy, environmental policy, health policy, marine aquaculture

LaVonna B. Lewis**Professor (Teaching); Vice Dean for Student Success**

American politics, public policy (most notably health policy), interest groups, federal programs

Danyao Li**Assistant Professor**

Public management, representation and diversity, bureaucratic decision-making, social equity and justice, law enforcement

John Loper**Professor (Teaching)**

Real estate development, real estate finance, urban and suburban development, master planned communities, urban design

Pamela McCann**Associate Professor; Program Director, Master of Public Administration and Master of Public Policy**

American political institutions, bureaucratic delegation, intergovernmental politics, legislative behavior, public policy, policy diffusion

T.J. McCarthy**Professor (Teaching)**

Labor economics, health economics, economics of education, public economics, program evaluation

Daniel McFadden**Nobel Laureate; Presidential Professor of Health Economics; Distinguished Scholar, USC Schaeffer Institute**

Health economics, economic theory and mathematical economics, environmental economics, econometrics

Glenn Melnick**Professor; Blue Cross of California Chair in Health Care Finance**

Health economics, health finance, healthcare systems, managed care

Juliet Ann Musso**Associate Professor**

State and local governance, federalism, urban political economy, fiscal policy, community governance, government performance

Dowell Myers**Professor; Director, Population Dynamics Research Group**

Demographic change, future of California, housing impacts, workforce and education, immigration and assimilation, communication for consensus about change

FACULTY DIRECTORY

Deborah J. Natoli

Professor (Teaching)

Adult development and learning, leadership, human behavior and organizations, depth psychology and psychoanalysis

Kate Nelischer

Assistant Professor (Teaching)

Participatory planning and design, public-private partnerships, urban governance, gender and planning

Rosalie Pacula

Professor; Elizabeth Garrett Chair in Health Policy, Economics, and Law

Economics of addiction, addiction policy, delivery and financing of addiction treatment, cannabis and opioid policy

Mark Phillips

Professor (Teaching)

Public finance, tax compliance, policy salience, applied microeconomics

Jane Pisano

Professor

International relations, public administration, civic engagement

Kelly Rawlings

Associate Professor (Teaching)

Civic engagement and public participation, organizational behavior, nonprofit leadership and management, transformational leadership and change

Christian L. Redfearn

Associate Professor

Public policy, urban economics, housing markets, real estate finance

Mindy Romero

Assistant Professor (Research); Founder and Director of the Center for Inclusive Democracy

Political sociology, voting rights and electoral participation, Latino political behavior, collective political behavior, youth civic engagement, identity and political movements, social stratification, new technologies and civic engagement

John A. Romley

Associate Professor of Public Policy and Pharmaceutical & Health Economics; Vice Dean for Research and Program Director, PhD Programs (Spring 2026)

Hospital industry, healthcare productivity/efficiency, environmental health disparities

Adam Rose

Professor (Research)

Energy and environmental economics, public policy, natural hazards and terrorism, regional science, applied general equilibrium modeling

Leonard D. Schaeffer

Judge Robert Maclay Widney Chair; Former CEO, Wellpoint, and former administrator, U.S. Health Care Financing Administration

Arnold Schwarzenegger

Former Governor of California; Governor Downey Professor of State and Local Policy; Chairman, USC Schwarzenegger Institute for State and Global Policy

Extremism, climate change policy, good governance, gerrymandering, infrastructure

David C. Sloane

Professor; Chair, Department of Urban Planning and Spatial Analysis

Urban history, community health planning, health disparities, cultural landscapes

Neeraj Sood**Professor**

Infectious diseases, healthcare costs, global health, economic epidemiology, health insurance, markets and benefits design, medical innovation and regulatory policy, Medicare and aging

Erroll G. Southers**Professor of the Practice in National and Homeland Security; Associate Senior Vice President, Safety and Risk Assurance**

Counterterrorism, homegrown violent extremism, school violence prevention

Shui Yan Tang**Professor; Frances R. and John J. Duggan Professor in Public Administration**

Institutional analysis and design, collaborative governance, local and community-based governance, common-pool resource governance, environmental politics and policy, microfinance

Michael Thom**Professor (Teaching); Program Director, Doctorate of Policy, Planning, and Development**

Taxation, public finance, regulatory policy, public policy analysis, political philosophy

Bryan Tysinger**Associate Professor (Research); Director of Health Policy Simulation, USC Schaeffer Center**

Modeling health and economic outcomes over the life course, dynamic microsimulation modeling, valuing the burden of disease, medical innovation and disease prevention, international comparisons of health policy solutions, Alzheimer's disease and related dementias

Matthew Unrath**Assistant Professor**

Labor economics, public economics, social policy

Dora Kingsley Vertenten**Professor (Teaching); Coordinator, Master of Public Administration -Online**

Public policy, intergovernmental management, non-profit management, strategic planning, social media and information technologies useful in collaborative and participatory democracy

Detlof von Winterfeldt**Professor of Industrial & Systems Engineering and Policy, Planning, and Development; J.A. Tiberti Chair in Ethics and Decision Making; Director, Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Threats and Emergencies**

Decision analysis, risk analysis, environmental policy, behavioral decision research, homeland security

Frank V. Zerunyan**Professor of the Practice of Governance; Director, Executive Education Programs; Director, Center for National Defense and Public Safety; Director, ROTC Programs**

Local governments, administrative law, public private partnerships, leadership, negotiation, executive education

Julie M. Zissimopoulos**Professor; Chair, Department of Health Policy and Management; Co-Director, Aging and Cognition Program, USC Schaeffer Center**

Economics of aging, economics of the family, labor economics, health economics



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***Cecilia Rouse**, President of the Brookings Institution, delivered the keynote address at the USC Price School's 2025 commencement ceremony. A former Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, Rouse was the latest in a long line of distinguished commencement speakers.*

