



USCPrice

Sol Price School
of Public Policy

Annual Report 2026–2027



Table of Contents

3	About the USC Price School
4	Message From the Dean
6	Academic Departments, Research Centers, and Groups
12	Faculty Stories
16	Student Stories
20	Alumni Stories
24	Research Highlights
27	Research Spending and Publication Record
30	Members of National Academies
32	Featured Op-Eds
33	In the News
42	Events
46	Faculty Directory
46	Faculty Achievements





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

724

Undergraduate

815

Master

73

Doctoral

12% International

921 Scholarships awarded

36% First-generation

59% Students of color

>93% Graduate employment rate

FACULTY

60

Tenured and tenure-track;
research and teaching

3

Nobel
laureates

19

Memberships in
National Academies

Message From the Dean

As I reflect on my first 18 months as dean of the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy, I am grateful for the resilience and dedication of our community. Together, we navigated significant challenges while remaining focused on our inspiring mission: *to improve quality of life for people and their communities, here and abroad*. The school's future is bright.

This year, we bid farewell to several distinguished faculty members whose scholarship, teaching, and service have left an enduring legacy. I thank them for their extraordinary contributions to our school.

As you'll see later in this report, we have already hired three new faculty members and more are on the way. I am inspired by the ideas and expertise these new faculty members will bring to the Price School.

Looking ahead, we are preparing to celebrate the Price School's centennial in 2029. As we honor our first century, we are building for another century of excellence through a campaign to raise \$100 million in new resources. Our priorities include:

- endowing scholarships and fellowships
- expanding professional and executive education
- launching the Price Undergraduate Research Experience



- amplifying experiential learning opportunities in the U.S. and abroad
- expanding career services for students and alumni
- strengthening our academic departments
- supporting groundbreaking research centers and initiatives
- endowing faculty chairs and professorships
- investing in research infrastructure and technological innovation.

I am genuinely excited about the possibilities before us. Working with our extensive network of friends and supporters, we will leverage our proud history and strive for continued excellence, ensuring the Price School educates leaders and advances solutions that improve lives and strengthen communities around the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Boone', with a stylized, flowing script.

Christopher Boone

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

WHY PRICE?

More California city managers come from USC Price than any other California university



A recent survey by Claremont McKenna College's Rose Institute of State and Local Government found that, if you're a city manager in California, there's a good chance you earned a degree at the USC Price School.

More city managers in California earned their highest degree from the USC Price School than any other institution of higher learning in the state.

The Rose Institute survey found that 30 city managers in California earned their highest degree from USC. That's more than from any other single institution.

Perhaps more significantly, all but three of those 30 USC alumni earned either a master's or doctorate in urban planning or public administration from the Price School. USC was the only private university among the top 15 institutions, the report stated.

"The Price School has a legacy of training more city managers in California than any other school, and our former students are now leading cities across Southern California

and beyond," said Professor David Brady. "Our students get the essential training they need to become city managers. We're very proud of the fact that city managers across California and beyond came from our Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Master of Public Policy (MPP) programs."

The survey is the latest evidence that a graduate degree from the USC Price School advances the careers of public sector professionals.

- *U.S. News & World Report* ranked the USC Price School No. 5 among the nation's best public affairs schools for the 2026-2027 period, marking the 10th straight year that the school has earned a spot in the top 5.
- *The Washington Post* reported that MPA degrees are among the top five graduate degrees for return on investment.
- The National Bureau of Economic Research found that the return on investment for MPAs was similar to those for MBA and civil engineering degrees.



A constellation of related disciplines to power education, research, and community involvement.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 Leonard D. Schaeffer Institute for Public Policy & Government Service

Develops evidence-based solutions to address pressing policy challenges. Committed to supporting a better-functioning democracy, grounded in facts and informed citizenship.

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.

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

Facilitates public policy and leadership to address complex, multi-jurisdictional security and governance challenges.





Schaeffer Institute expands research into social science and politics with two new centers

The USC Schaeffer Institute for Public Policy & Government Service, one of several centers and institutes aligned with the Price School, launched two new complementary centers that broaden the Institute's reach into social science and political research.

The Center for Economic and Social Research (CESR) joined the Schaeffer Institute and the USC Price School in April 2026.

CESR is a leader in generating data to better understand health, economic security, and well-being. The integration combines CESR's extensive expertise in social welfare data with the Schaeffer Institute's policy focus, further augmenting Schaeffer's robust data core. It also extends the institute's work beyond its historic strengths in health policy to encompass a wider range of societal issues, linking data on individuals' experiences with decisions at the local, state, and federal level.

For USC Price, CESR broadens the interdisciplinary research that is at the heart of the school, from global insights on aging and economic security trends to local analysis of housing costs and affordability.

"CESR brings world-class expertise in

measuring how people live, work and make decisions in real time — strengthening our ability to deliver evidence that policymakers can act upon," Schaeffer Institute Founding Director Dana Goldman said. "The Schaeffer Institute is a laboratory for social science at USC — where we not only generate knowledge but also translate it into real-world policy solutions that improve lives in communities across the country." Goldman is a University Professor of Public Policy, Pharmacy, and Economics.

CESR's work dovetails with that of another new Schaeffer Institute organization, the Center for Civic Society, which was established in 2025. Chaired by the Right Honourable Gordon Brown, former prime minister of the United Kingdom, the center is dedicated to bridging political, social, and economic divides through evidence-based research that informs and promotes better public policy.

"At a time when many democracies are being pulled apart by the politics of division, this center will stand for something different: the rigorous pursuit of understanding," Brown said. "Our research will not only expose the roots of polarization but help illuminate the path to renewed civic trust."



DR. VERNA AND PETER DAUTERIVE HALL

DR. VERNA AND PETER DAUTERIVE HALL

635

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





Schaeffer research helps reshape federal oversight of pharmacy benefit managers

Recent federal actions marked a policy turning point for pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), one that closely aligns with the evidence-based research led by scholars from the Schaeffer Institute for Public Policy & Government Service.

What happened:

- **President Trump** signed legislation reforming PBM practices.
- **The Department of Labor** issued a proposal to require new PBM fee transparency.
- **And the Federal Trade Commission** reached a landmark settlement with Express Scripts, one of the nation's largest PBMs, over the use of rebates in drug pricing.

What they're saying: "A decade ago, before analysts could accurately measure actual drug prices, we undertook a fulsome examination of the entire pharmaceutical distribution system," said Dana Goldman, University Professor and founding director of the USC Schaeffer Institute. "Since then, our researchers continued to follow the data to identify the drivers of drug spending. What they uncovered — misaligned incentives and broken markets — is now being addressed through reform and enforcement."



Texas' controversial migrant busing program helped Trump in 2024 election

Texas busing programs that transported newly arrived immigrants to Democratic-led cities boosted President Donald Trump's vote share by more than 3 percentage points in affected counties during the 2024 election, according to a study co-authored by USC Price School Professor David Brady.

- **Published in the journal *Sociological Science***, the study quantifies the political impact of a policy that brought a unique migration shock to places far from the U.S.-Mexico border. From 2022 to 2024, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) transported more than 100,000 migrants to six cities that were led by Democratic mayors and had enacted "sanctuary" policies that

protected undocumented immigrants.

- **The findings highlight** the growing role of state- and city-led immigration policies, as well as the enduring power of perceived threats from racial minorities, researchers said.

What they're saying: "Abbott and President Trump were able to activate and mobilize anti-immigrant sentiments that had a measurable impact on the outcome of the presidential election," Brady said. "Given the overwhelming evidence that immigration is associated with lower crime, voters should be particularly skeptical when politicians try to falsely link immigration and crime."



Price professor brings big data insights to big cities

Geoff Boeing had an unusual hobby as a kid. Growing up against the foothills of Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., Boeing bicycled around town with a notepad, mapping out his hometown. He sketched out streets and city landmarks, canals that carried storm water, bridle paths for horses, and habitats filled with frogs.

- **“It was about understanding how the world worked,”** explained Boeing, Associate Professor at the USC Price School. “To me, the way that manifested itself was in how the world was laid out.”
- **Now, Boeing helps planners** design real cities around the world. He recently

won a prestigious Nobel Sustainability Trust award for his work on the Global Observatory for Healthy and Sustainable Cities, which helps cities around the world measure their progress toward becoming healthier and more sustainable.

- **“What I like about city planning** is that it teaches us to never take for granted how the world is,” Boeing said. “It’s not just ‘how the world is.’ It’s not the passive voice. It’s planners. There is an active agent who chose the layout of those streets. There were real estate developers who built buildings shaped by those planning regulations.”





Why do so many apartment buildings look the same?

If you think every new apartment complex looks the same these days, you aren't alone. Boxy mid-rise structures have cropped up in cities across the country, drawing the ire of neighbors and some architecture critics who find the buildings bland or downright ugly.

- **Why do so many of these “podium” apartments** — so named for the way that residential floors are stacked over a base of parking or retail — look the same?
- **And does that even matter** during a housing crisis when more units are needed?

To answer these questions, we spoke with Professor Liz Falletta, an architect and author of *By-Right, By-Design*, an interdisciplinary study of significant Los Angeles housing design precedents and their related development types.



Scan the QR code to watch USC professor Liz Falletta explain why “podium” apartment buildings are so common.

STUDENTS

After summiting Everest, Price student researches the mountains she climbs

Lucy Westlake, the youngest American woman to reach the top of Mount Everest, has climbed glaciated mountains since she was 11 years old.

- **Over the years**, she's seen them change. Glaciers melted, exposing more rock underneath the snow.
- **Making an impact:** Now, the USC Price School senior is researching what she's witnessed.
- **For her senior thesis**, Westlake is studying the impact of light-absorbing particles, such as black carbon and microplastics, on glaciers. She plans to make policy recommendations once the research is complete.
- **She's collected samples** from every mountain she's climbed since the end of freshman year, including K2, the second tallest mountain in the world.
- **Westlake credits** the USC Price School with giving her the tools she needs to combine her longheld love for mountain climbing with her newly discovered passion for data and research.

In her own words: "I think statistics is probably the most valuable skill you could have going into any career. This world is made up of data," Westlake said. "Being able to read data and digest research is so valuable. These classes have given me literacy for that."





USC student wins \$4M California State Parks grant to build San Bernardino park and wellness center

Jorge Zatarain has spent nearly his entire life in San Bernardino. But it was not until he left his home city for an out-of-state job that he came to appreciate the town that he had taken for granted for so many years.

- **Zatarain's first job out of college** took him to 35 different U.S. states, where he helped Chevrolet market cars at sports venues and major events. Seeing so many other cities made Zatarain realize that San Bernardino, despite its economic and public safety challenges, had much untapped potential in its arts and cultural offerings, as well as its scenic mountain backdrop.

That epiphany sparked a career that has largely focused on helping San Bernardino

communities. Now, the Master of Nonprofit of Leadership & Management (MNLN) student is overseeing an ambitious project that could help his home city fulfill its potential.

- **As Director of Operations** at the nonprofit El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center, Zatarain oversees development of a 20,000-square-foot park and wellness center in San Bernardino.
- **Plans include** a playground, community garden, basketball courts, a game room, library, and other amenities.
- **The project won a \$4.25 million grant** from California State Parks and \$250,000 from the City of San Bernardino.

STUDENTS

Price real estate grad helps redevelop L.A. County General Hospital

Eddie Pech grew up in Boyle Heights, not far from the Los Angeles County General Hospital. Built in 1933, the Art Deco landmark was damaged during the 1994 Northridge earthquake and then mothballed in 2008 following the opening of a new county hospital nearby.

- **Having recently completed his Bachelor of Science in Real Estate Development (BRED)**, Pech landed his first job as an assistant project manager for a firm charged with redeveloping the historic General Hospital building and the adjoining area known as West Campus into a sprawling, mixed-use residential and office complex over the next 10 to 15 years.

- **Pech, a first-generation college student**, is working for Primestor, a Culver City, Calif., development company that specializes in urban infill and community-focused projects. Pech began working on the former general hospital project a year ago, when Primestor hired him as an intern.

“I was immediately interested in the internship because it aligned with my own desire to have a positive impact on communities and to spread positivity,” Pech recalls.

- **Initially planning to pursue physical therapy or business administration**, Pech fell in love with real estate development



after taking an introductory course.

“In the first few weeks of my first class with Eddie, he invited me to attend a community workshop that he was co-hosting with his colleagues on the future of the Los Angeles County General Hospital. It was great to see him working so hard on this landmark redevelopment project in the community where he grew up,” said Kate Nelischer, Assistant Professor (Teaching) in the Wilbur H. Smith III Department of Real Estate Development and the Department of Urban Planning and Spatial Analysis, both at USC Price.

Price student's marathon — and TikTok videos — honor Sandy Hook shooting victims



When Kaitlyn McQuown crossed the finish line of the New York City Marathon in November 2025, she carried the memories of 26 people whose lives were tragically cut short in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. McQuown dedicated each of the marathon's 26 miles to a victim of the shooting.

- **As she began each mile**, she recorded herself naming one of the victims as she jogged through the streets of New York, then posted the video on TikTok. "Mile 5 is for Josephine Gay," she said in the video, which amassed 1.8 million views and reached celebrities and even family members of the victims.
- **The success of the video** is also testament to the power of storytelling, which McQuown believes is an important tool in the realm of public policy.
- **McQuown, a Master of Public Policy (MPP) student**, ultimately raised \$10,000 for Sandy Hook Promise, a nonprofit led by several family members of those killed at Sandy Hook Elementary.
- **McQuown said:** "I think in this country, everyone's tired of seeing these headlines. Everyone's exhausted by the amount of loss to gun violence."

ALUMNI

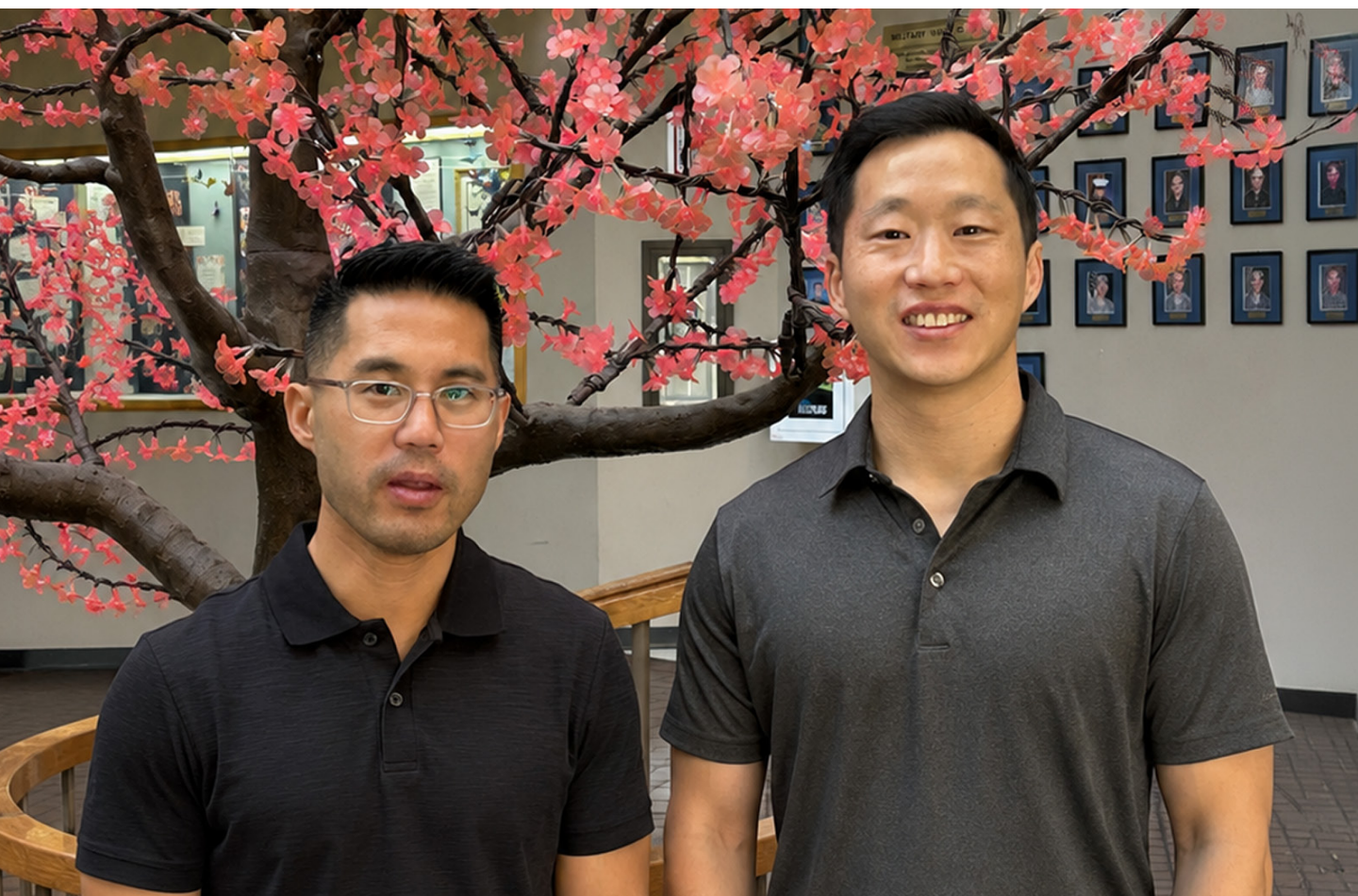
After Monterey Park shooting, Price MPA grads help a shattered city heal

On the night of Jan. 21, 2023, a 72-year-old man armed with an illegal semiautomatic pistol walked into a dance studio in Monterey Park and killed 11 people. Another nine were seriously wounded. It remains the deadliest mass shooting in Los Angeles County history.

- **Nearly three years later,** two graduates of the USC Price School are working to heal the community's collective trauma.
- **Monterey Park** City Councilmember Thomas Wong and Parks and Recreation

Commission Chair Paul Lee have joined with fellow city officials and nonprofit organizations to hold events that foster a sense of community and promote peaceful coexistence among Monterey Park residents.

- **Access to mental health services** has increased, including the provision of counseling at community events. And Wong and Lee are collaborating with officials from other cities and agencies on ways to prevent mass shootings.



An MPA alum's journey from Mexican immigrant to Irvine City Council



More than 30 years ago, Betty Martinez Franco crossed the U.S.-Mexico border without authorization, beginning an American odyssey that would turn her into the unlikeliest of politicians.

- **Her journey took her to Los Angeles**, where her then-husband couldn't find work. She then moved to Washington state, where she climbed ladders to pick apples while pregnant.
- **She is a domestic violence survivor** who raised two kids while moving from shelter to shelter, in hiding from an abusive ex-husband.
- **She babysat and cleaned hotel rooms** at Disney's Grand Californian Hotel, eventually becoming a U.S. citizen in 2016.
- **Determined to better herself**, Martinez Franco earned an Online Master of Public Administration at the USC Price School in 2023.

Now, she is the first Latina and Mexican immigrant elected to the Irvine City Council.

- **In her own words:** "Every day that I come here to City Hall, I feel like the luckiest person alive," Martinez Franco said. "I never in my life imagined that I was going to be here."

ALUMNI

MUP alum turns Disney imagination into real-life architecture

The person most proud of Manarbek Toleu's career is likely his 6-year-old daughter.

- **That's because Toleu**, a USC Price School alumnus, has designed a castle straight out of a fairy tale. He's created a spaceship control panel fit for a galaxy from far, far away. He's made master plans for snack stands that look like giant traffic cones.
- **And Toleu's daughter**, Mia, is eager to talk about her dad's cool job. "She tells everybody, 'My dad works at Disney,'" Toleu said. "That gives me a lot of joy and pride."

Toleu, who earned a Master of Urban Planning (MUP) in 2023, is an architectural designer

for Walt Disney Imagineering, the creative team behind the immersive experiences at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif. Toleu develops master plans and architectural drawings for the theme park, working on projects ranging from a monorail station cafe to a 50-foot sculpture of a princess castle, commemorating the park's 70th anniversary.

- **In his own words:** "Disneyland is very iconic and a cherished place," Toleu said. "I always wanted to see how the magic attractions and hotels and all these experiences get created, and I had no idea that someday I might actually get to participate in the projects."



Newsom appoints two graduates of the Price School to key California posts

California Gov. Gavin Newsom recently named two Price School alums to key positions overseeing state parks and taxation.



David Galaviz, a Master of Public Administration alum who serves as USC's Associate Vice President for Community & Local Government Partnerships, was appointed to the California Park and Recreation Commission.

- **In the new role**, he will help oversee the management of California's 280 state parks, which include more than 340 miles of coastline and 5,200 miles of trails.

Gentian Droboniku, a Master of Public Policy alum and Adjunct Professor at the Price School, was named Chief Deputy Director of the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration.

- **Droboniku helps lead** a department that collects and distributes close to \$100 billion every year to California's state government, cities, and counties.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



Black-owned homes are undervalued, regardless of appraiser's race

Racial disparities in home valuations persist even when minority homeowners and appraisers share the same racial and ethnic background, according to a study co-authored by Associate Professor Moussa Diop.

- **What they researched:** Diop and colleagues examined racial bias in property appraisals using a national sample of refinanced mortgages from 2000 to 2007. The data allowed them to observe the race of the appraiser and homeowner.
- **What they found:** Black-owned homes, and to a lesser extent Hispanic- and Asian-owned homes, are under-appraised. Researchers found no evidence that the undervaluations lessen when the homeowner and appraiser share the same race, suggesting that implicit bias is not solely attributable to white appraisers. The study also showed that the undervaluations are not driven by a small subset of appraisers; rather, they are widespread.
- **Why it matters:** Discrimination against racial minorities in several stages of the home purchase process has resulted in lower homeownership rates for those groups. This study of individual appraiser behavior suggests that the average appraisal bias is not simply caused by a few outliers but rather is more systemic.



Provider misperceptions, not knowledge or profit, drive inappropriate antibiotic prescribing in India

Most Indian clinicians overprescribe antibiotics for pediatric diarrhea not because they lack knowledge, but because they mistakenly believe patients expect antibiotics, according to a study co-authored by Professor Neeraj Sood.

- **What they researched:** Sood and colleagues combined clinician knowledge assessments with data from more than 2,000 anonymous standardized patient visits across 253 towns in India to investigate why private healthcare providers overprescribe antibiotics for pediatric diarrhea.
- **What they found:** Seventy percent of providers inappropriately prescribed antibiotics for likely viral diarrhea cases. Among those who knew antibiotics were inappropriate, 62% still prescribed them to standardized patients. Randomized experiments showed that this gap between research-proven knowledge and real-world practice was driven by providers' beliefs about patient preferences. The study found that closing the know-do gap could reduce inappropriate antibiotic use by roughly 30 percentage points.
- **Why it matters:** Overuse of antibiotics can lead to drug-resistant bacteria, "a problem for the whole world, not just India," Sood noted.



Disadvantaged neighborhoods face barriers to cultural institutions

Less educated people and lower-income neighborhoods are consistently farther away from cultural institutions — such as elite universities, museums, and theaters — that can help advance one’s social mobility, according to a study co-authored by Professor Elizabeth Currid-Halkett.

- **What they researched:** The study is the first to quantify the geographic barriers that may prevent lower-income and less-educated households from accessing the types of “cultural capital,” such as knowledge, skills and education, that enables greater social mobility.
- **What they found:** Communities with high levels of education are systematically closer to all eight representative sources of cultural capital, compared to their counterpart communities. The tracts with the highest incomes are, on average, significantly closer to all forms of cultural capital than those with the lowest incomes, when distances are measured by expected travel times.
- **Why it matters:** “We’ve increasingly realized that our cultural capital can dictate future outcomes,” Currid-Halkett said. “You start to look at where cultural capital shows up in a place, and you realize it’s really physically and spatially out of reach for less educated and less well-off residents.”



TV news coverage of severe weather can boost support for climate action across the political aisle

Television news stories about severe weather can increase people’s concern about climate change and their support for policies that protect against extreme weather, according to a study co-authored by Provost Professor Wändi Bruine de Bruin.

- **What they researched:** Bruine de Bruin and colleagues surveyed 3,095 U.S. adults who were randomly assigned to watch short TV news reports about severe weather events, such as heat waves or wildfires. Some reports used the phrase “climate change,” some recommended actions to protect against severe weather events, and some included both.
- **What they found:** TV news stories that used the term “climate change” increased viewers’ climate-change concerns. Reports about severe weather events bolstered viewers’ willingness to support policies that protect against severe weather events. Viewers across the political aisle responded to the TV reports.
- **Why it matters:** Even brief local TV news segments about severe weather can increase concern about climate change and support for protective policies among audiences across the United States, independent of their political affiliation.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



Teen cannabis use doubles risk for psychotic and bipolar disorders

Teenage cannabis use is linked to a higher risk of developing psychiatric disorders in adolescence and young adulthood, according to a massive study co-authored by Professor Rosalie Liccardo Pacula.

- **What they researched:** Pacula and colleagues examined a cohort of 463,396 adolescents in a Northern Californian health system over 10 years. The teenagers were screened for past-year cannabis use and followed through about age 26 to see if cannabis use was associated with new diagnoses of psychotic, bipolar, depressive, or anxiety disorders.
- **What they found:** Adolescents reporting past-year cannabis use had about double the risk of being diagnosed later with psychotic and bipolar disorders, even after controlling for other substance use and prior disruptive disorders, as well as increased risk for depressive and anxiety disorders.
- **Why it matters:** With cannabis becoming more legally available and socially accepted, there are growing concerns about its potential impact on adolescent mental health. While effects on adults may differ from those studied here, adolescent brains are still developing and hence are more vulnerable to negative outcomes.

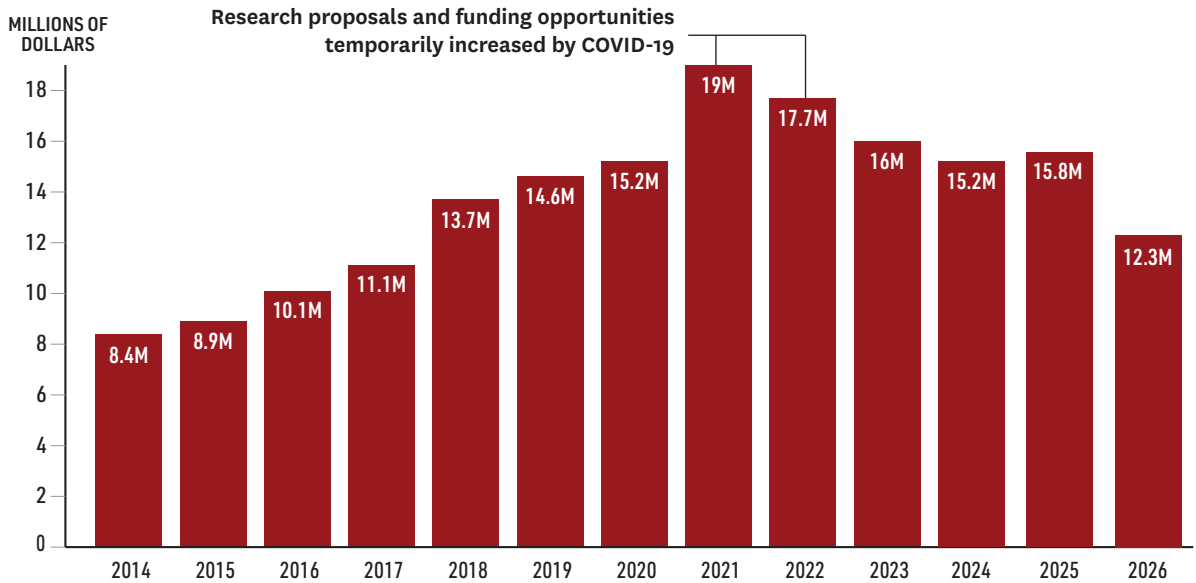


Urban-rural divide in ecology is challenged

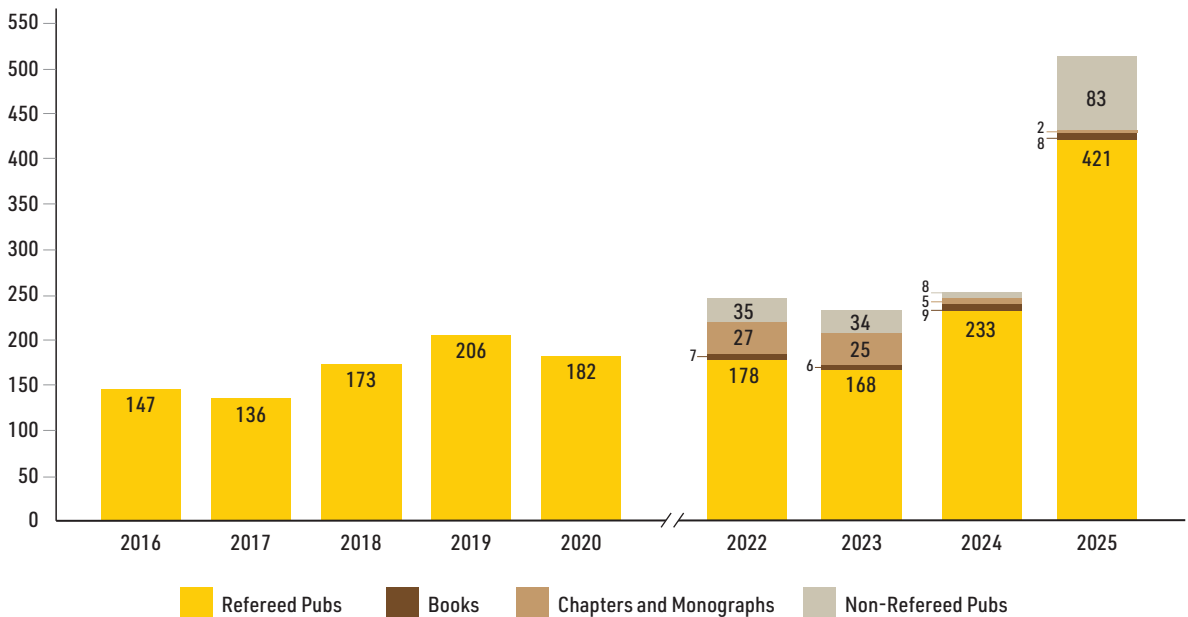
A study published in the journal *npj Urban Sustainability*, co-authored by Christopher Boone, Dean and C. Erwin and Ione L. Piper Chair of the USC Price School, proposes that many modern landscapes can be managed more holistically when they are understood as a mixture of urban, rural, and wild features.

- **Potential solutions:** The researchers proposed a new framework that emphasizes the many connections among urban, rural, and wild places that can create a blend of these features in a given area. Research fields are frequently separated by urban and rural frameworks. But any city dweller who's seen a coyote wander down their alley knows that urban and rural landscapes overlap. As so should research.
- **Four areas of focus:** The authors outlined four main areas of life where urban, rural, and wild influence could potentially be measured:
 - **Livelihood:** How do people in this community support themselves? People who own or work on farms, for example, will likely experience more rural influence.
 - **Lifestyle:** How do people identify socially? Who do they consider part of their community?
 - **Connectivity:** How are different parts of the region connected, and how well are they connected?
 - **Location:** What is the specific geography where livelihood, lifestyle, and connectivity interact?

Research funding dipped ...



... but research publications surged.



Three new faculty members join USC Price

The faculty members are the first of several new hires expected this academic year.



The USC Price School of Public Policy welcomed three new faculty members for the fall 2026 semester. The new hires strengthen the school's already renowned group of scholars across public policy, urban planning, health management and real estate development.

The school expects to continue adding new faculty later this year.

The new faculty members include:

- **Ji Hyeun Hong**, Assistant Professor in the Public Policy and Management Department;
- **Ruochen Sun**, Research Assistant Professor in the Health Policy and Management Department. Sun is also a scholar at the Schaeffer Institute for Public Policy & Government Service, which is aligned with the USC Price School;
- **Jared Schachner**, Research Assistant Professor in the Wilbur H. Smith III Department of Real Estate Development, working with the USC Lusk Center for Real Estate.

“We are delighted to welcome these talented new faculty members,” said Christopher Boone, Dean of the USC Price School and C. Erwin and Ione L. Piper Chair. “Their expertise and innovative approaches will lead to important new contributions to their fields and ensure our students are learning from leading-edge teacher-scholars.”

“And we’re just getting started: We plan to announce additional faculty hires in the months ahead.”

Hong earned her Master of Public Administration from Seoul National University and her Ph.D. in Public Administration from the University of Georgia. Her research focuses on how organizational design and management shape the performance of public organizations. Her areas of expertise include public administration, organizational theory, government performance, and digital governance.

Sun earned her Master of Public Health from the Yale University School of Public Health and her Ph.D. in Applied Economics and Managerial Science from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. Her research examines how government policy and market design can be leveraged to improve access and efficiency in healthcare, especially for low-income populations. Her areas of expertise include health economics, public finance, and Medicaid.

Schachner earned his Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Policy at Harvard University. His research uses 21st-century Los Angeles as an empirical case to examine how transformations in urban social infrastructure reshape — and often reproduce — inequalities along the lines of race/ethnicity, class, cognitive skills, and socioemotional health. In addition to the Lusk Center for Real Estate, a USC Price center, Schachner is also affiliated with the Homelessness Policy Research Initiative, another USC Price affiliate.





MEMBERS OF NATIONAL ACADEMIES

Christopher Boone, Dean of the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy and C. Erwin and Ione L. Piper Chair, was elected to the 2025 Class of Academy Fellows in the National Academy of Public Administration. NAPA was chartered by Congress to provide nonpartisan expert advice and is dedicated to helping government leaders build more effective, efficient, accountable, and transparent organizations.

Darius Lakdawalla, Professor of Pharmaceutical Economics and Public Policy, Chief Scientific Officer at the USC Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics and Quintiles Chair of Pharmaceutical Development and Regulatory Innovation at the USC Mann School, was elected to the National Academy of Medicine.



Christopher Boone

- National Academy of Public Administration



Wändi Bruine de Bruin

- Academy of Social Sciences (United Kingdom)



Sir Angus Deaton

- National Academy of Sciences
- American Academy of Arts & Sciences



Jim Ferris

- National Academy of Public Administration



Paul B. Ginsburg

- National Academy of Medicine
- National Academy of Social Insurance



Dana P. Goldman

- National Academy of Medicine
- National Academy of Social Insurance
- National Academy of Public Administration



Elizabeth Graddy

- National Academy of Public Administration



Shaun Harper

- National Academy of Education



Darius Lakdawalla

- National Academy of Medicine



Daniel McFadden

- National Academy of Sciences
- American Academy of Arts & Sciences



Leonard D. Schaeffer

- National Academy of Medicine
- National Academy of Social Insurance



Yan Tang

- National Academy of Public Administration



Dora Kingsley Vertenten

- National Academy of Public Administration

THE HILL

Why Medicaid has drifted from its mission — and how to fix It

February 21, 2026 By Virat Agrawal and Neeraj Sood

As the Trump administration intensifies oversight of Medicaid spending to curb fraud, waste and abuse, policymakers should look beyond enrollment and address a deeper structural shift — Medicaid’s “mission creep” into housing.

Medicaid was created in 1965 as a federal-state partnership to ensure that the poor had access to essential health care. Since then, its scale has exploded, with spending hitting \$914 billion in fiscal 2024, consuming nearly 9 percent of the federal budget and 30 percent of state budgets.

Rising health care expenditures are one culprit. But the program increasingly diverts billions from its original mission into housing initiatives. The spending, incentivized by federal matching funds, flows through an opaque system under the dubious proposition that health care bureaucrats can fix housing problems that plague low-income Americans, and thereby improve their health outlook.

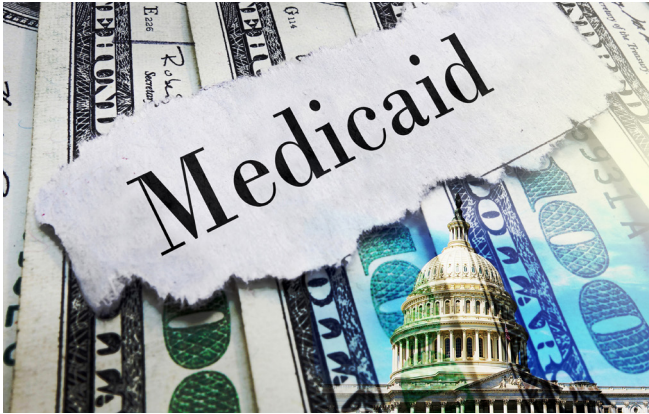
Any dollar spent by a state in Medicaid generates more than a dollar in federal matching funds — with no cap on those federal dollars. In theory, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services caps non-health care spending, including housing, at 3 percent of Medicaid’s budget, which would put it at about \$30 billion. But the actual spending could be much higher. It is impossible to know for sure because states typically bundle both health care and non-health care services into contracts with Medicaid Managed Care Organizations that

do not report transparently by service category and impose no caps on non-clinical spending.

Section 1115 waivers allow the Department of Health and Human Services to grant a state flexibility to address local priorities as long as the waiver is “budget neutral,” meaning that federal spending with the waiver will be no higher than the “projected” federal spending without it. But a recent Government Accountability Office report states that “CMS has rendered the assessment of budget neutrality a hollow exercise.”

The Biden administration allowed states to use outdated historical spending projections and hypothetical spending on housing and other social supports — money the state did not actually spend, but could have spent — in the base year, inflating projections. This let states increase waiver spending by tens of billions of dollars in additional federal spending. As of August 2025, 31 states have waivers to fund housing-related supports from rental aid to medical respite.

Advocates argue that investments in housing pay for themselves by reducing health costs. Their evidence is ambiguous at best. For example, the official evaluation of California’s Whole Person Care program — which implemented housing and other social supports for high-need populations — claimed annual health care savings of \$383 per enrollee. But closer inspection reveals that costs for enrollees declined by only 15 percent over five



years, compared to a 32 percent cost reduction among control-group beneficiaries. Importantly, these analyses do not account for administrative or pilot implementation costs.

A review by the National Academies notes that rigorously conducted randomized controlled trials have failed to demonstrate significant savings or improved outcomes. Similarly, a RAND evaluation of managed care-sponsored permanent supportive housing found no evidence of long-term Medicaid savings.

The Department of Health and Human Services is already restricting the use of waivers, but Medicaid's "mission drift" needs broader reforms to reduce perverse incentives for states to inflate non-medical spending.

Medicaid remains vital, serving millions of Americans who rely on its safety net. But as spending balloons and the program wanders from its health care mission, policymakers must choose: maintain discipline and transparency, or allow Medicaid's inefficiencies to crowd out other priorities. The solution lies in smarter, targeted spending — anchored in Medicaid's original vision, evidence-based, and transparent for all.



Virat Agrawal is a scholar at the USC Schaeffer Institute for Public Policy and Government Service.



Neeraj Sood is Professor at the USC Price School and a senior scholar at the USC Schaeffer Institute for Public Policy and Government Service.

USC PRICE SCHOOL FACULTY IN THE NEWS

M *Medscape*

The results, published just four months later in *JAMA*, concluded that while ACIP (Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices) conflicts of interest were quite high in the early 2000s, present among 43% of members, they had dropped to 6.2% since, likely due to increased awareness and regulatory changes. Fewer than 1% involved personal income.

"If the main justification for terminating these appointments was that the (ACIP) committee was rife with conflicts of interest, this does not appear to be the case. "I certainly didn't think we would ever have to fact-check the secretary of HHS. But here we are."



Genevieve Kanter,
Associate Professor

M *MedPage Today*

"When I think about high (healthcare) costs in the United States, I think one of the most useful things to do is to compare the United States with other high-income countries. And those comparisons make it very clear that prices are the reason that the United States spends so much more as a percentage of its gross domestic product on healthcare. We have high prices throughout the system. I think the main reason is that we don't have a single negotiator or regulator setting prices. Our prices are set in a somewhat competitive way, but in markets that don't work very well — often because it's healthcare."



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

The Washington Times

Examine Box 12 on your W-2; it tells a story of rising health care costs

March 4, 2026 By Glenn Melnick

As tax season approaches, I encourage every American worker to look at one number on their W-2 form that often goes unnoticed: Box 12, code DD.

It may be one of the largest numbers on your form. It shows the total cost of your employer-sponsored health insurance, including medical, dental and vision coverage.

For the average American family, that number is now nearly \$27,000 per year. Many people assume this is a “free benefit” paid by their employer. It isn’t.

Employers treat health insurance as part of your total compensation. When insurance costs rise, something else often gives, usually wage growth.

Research shows that rising premiums have contributed to slowed wage growth, particularly for lower- and middle-income workers. One academic study found that from 1988 to 2019, the typical U.S. family with employer-sponsored insurance lost about \$125,000 in cumulative earnings because of rising health care premiums.

That money could have gone toward housing, retirement or everyday expenses.

The burden of rising health care costs falls hardest on those least able to absorb it. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 50% of the 154 million workers in America earned \$23.80 or less per hour in 2024.

For these 77 million workers, the math of a “pay

raise” has become a zero-sum game. Because these workers are often in industries with thin margins (retail, hospitality, health care support), employers are most likely to offset rising insurance premiums by capping hourly raises.

When their health insurance costs rise, the “employer contribution” acts as a sponge, soaking up funds that would have otherwise gone toward a larger paycheck.

So why do premiums keep rising?

Rising hospital prices are a major driver of rising premiums. In 2024, spending on hospital care accounted for nearly one-third (31%) of national health care spending. From 2023 to 2024, hospital price inflation (6.9%) was more than double medical price inflation (3.3%).

Private insurance plans already pay hospitals much more than either Medicaid or Medicare. For example, in 2022, hospitals charged commercially insured patients and their health plans, on average, 267% what they received from Medicare for the same services.

In simple terms, employers and working families with private coverage are paying far more than government programs for hospital care, and that gap is likely to widen. Recent and proposed changes to Medicare and Medicaid are designed to slow growth in payments to hospitals.

History suggests hospitals will respond by



increasing prices further for private insurers, who then pass those costs on to employers and workers in the form of higher premiums.

Multiple states, including California, have recognized that allowing unconstrained health care cost growth is unsustainable. For example, California's newly established Office of Health Care Affordability set spending growth targets at 3.5% per year, based on the median household income growth over the past 20 years, to help slow growth and increase affordability.

It's an important step because health care costs do not rise in isolation. They affect premiums, paychecks, hiring decisions and the broader economy.

When employers devote more resources to health insurance, they have fewer resources to invest in wages and job growth.

That is why Box 12 on your W-2 matters.



Glenn Melnick is Professor at the USC Price School and a senior scholar at the USC Schaeffer Institute for Public Policy and Government Service.

USC PRICE SCHOOL FACULTY IN THE NEWS

Las Vegas Sun

"Let's have a serious and reasoned conversation about what drugs are worth here in America, and let's develop an American system for aligning prices with value as we perceive it, rather than trying to take a shortcut, which ultimately doesn't benefit American patients and their families."



Darius Lakdawalla, Professor of Pharmaceutical Economics and Public Policy

International Business Times

"We have annual out-of-pocket limits on most commercial healthcare health plan products in the U.S., but the plan year beginning and ending dates are arbitrary. When episodic care lasts several months — like maternity care — and occurs within one plan year versus two, there can be big differences in cost-sharing for the same set of services."



Erin Duffy, Research Assistant Professor

The New York Times

"We need water, food and shelter. But beyond that? It is impossible to have a coherent definition of needs that does not reflect our culture, our values, our norms, our expectations, given the societies we live in."



David Brady, Professor

RealClear Health

Why Widespread Testing for Alzheimer's Is Essential

April 3, 2026 By Dana Goldman

It's a standout among "senior moment" jokes: A patient goes to the doctor and says, "Doc, I'm really worried. I keep forgetting where I put my keys." The doctor responds, "That's normal at your age. You only need to worry when you find your keys but can't remember what they're for."

Patients have heard some version of that rejoiner forever. Many family physicians considered memory loss a normal consequence of aging. Doctors lacked the tools to diagnose — let alone treat — memory loss.

But those days are far behind us. My colleagues at the USC Schaeffer Institute and I have been studying the doleful impact of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia on society for decades, and have never seen a time that is more ripe to push for widespread early detection.

Almost quietly, we have made tremendous scientific progress in cognitive disease. Definitive blood tests are now available, early treatments show promise, and importantly, patients deserve to know what their future holds.

Ideally, all Medicare beneficiaries should be given a cognitive assessment test at each annual wellness visit.

If results from the assessment raise concerns, the patient should be a candidate for one of the blood tests approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration last year that can indicate

the presence of amyloid plaques in the brain, a hallmark sign of Alzheimer's disease. The blood results might trigger further tests, including a neurological exam and a brain scan, that can lead to a diagnosis of Alzheimer's.

Along the way, the anxious patient and family may receive reassuring news. Maybe the dementia-like symptoms stemmed from issues such as untreated sleep apnea, thyroid problems, or vitamin deficiencies. It also could be side effects from all the medications older patients take today.

If the tests result in an early detection of Alzheimer's, the patient today is in a far better position to chart a positive path forward.

FDA-approved medicines that help symptoms have now been joined by treatments that remove amyloid and have shown significant slowing of the disease. In some cases, treatments applied early enough have proven remarkably restorative.

For too long, clinical trial recruitment has been a bottleneck to innovation. Medicare should offer modest reimbursement for referral to clinical trials to jump start discovery — an investment that would likely pay substantial dividends.

Early detection is the key to reducing the staggering burden of dementia in the U.S. The Schaeffer Center estimates the total cost of dementia to society is around \$800 billion, including diminished quality of life for patients and caregivers in



addition to medical and informal care. Delaying the onset of Alzheimer's by five years adds about 2.7 years of life for patients.

Unfortunately, barriers are strewn in the way of early detection. Physicians are not paid well enough--and may not be well enough equipped — to administer cognitive assessments. Medicare does not enforce the requirement for detecting cognitive impairment at annual wellness visits in part because of long held beliefs that diagnosis without a cure is not worthwhile. And patients themselves can be reluctant to seek a diagnosis.

Solutions begin with the assessment itself. It should be standardized and brief to alleviate burdens on primary care doctors and receive a new medical code to ensure adequate reimbursement. Medicare leaders need to recognize the enormous benefit that comes from delaying the onset of Alzheimer's. Meanwhile, there is a role for public health and thought leaders to normalize conversations about memory health and emphasize that Alzheimer's is a disease and not a personal failure.

Cardiovascular issues and cancer long ago got doctors' attention, leading to urgent searches for diagnoses. Screening is now routine and recommended. Memory issues are more than just lost keys, and we need to find a better way.



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



Memesita

"People are making impossible choices. They're rationing medication, skipping doctor's appointments, and foregoing preventative care because they simply can't afford it. This isn't just financially devastating; it's incredibly damaging to their health."



Neeraj Sood,
Professor



News: Medical, Life Sciences

"Even if you live in a wealthy country, if you lack access to clean drinking water, you are more likely to lack access to food."



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



The New York Times

In regard to the Trump administration's claim of \$109 billion in savings from weakening fuel standards, Bento said: "What the administration is doing is not calculating huge benefits that come from fuel economy savings. If you count only costs, of course you're going to have this massive number."



Antonio Bento, Professor of
Public Policy and Economics



City officials have a duty to stop the erosion of public trust

May 4, 2026 By Frank Zerunyan

I have always reflected on and described my 27 years of service to my community and state — 23 in elected office — as the greatest joy and honor of my life. Over the last 17 years, I have had the pleasure of teaching what I learned and know to the next generation of leaders at the University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy.

I always explain to my students that those of us elected to positions of power carry a profound responsibility to remain disciplined and resist corruption. Sadly, corruption in our public lives takes different shapes but always scales with power. Even the limited authority of a small city council member can begin to influence behavior. I have often said that a little power corrupts a little, and a lot of power corrupts a lot. Lord Acton said more eloquently and famously, “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

With greater authority often comes a sense of entitlement, arrogance, and reduced transparency and accountability: the antithesis of good governance. With partisanship, political discourse, and a media solely interested in controversy, our political leaders and executives have found fewer people willing to challenge them. Or at least challenge them only on the basis of politically motivated alignment rather than the

underlying corruption. Over time, this lack of proper resistance leads these individuals to even justify unethical actions. Unchecked power makes corruption feel normal and even necessary to retain power and control.

Those of us who ask and earn the votes of the people to exercise “reasonable power to govern” carry a profound responsibility to remain disciplined and resist all shapes of corruption. Unlike elected authority — which is earned in our democracy — power is taken. I often remind my colleagues in public office of the preamble of the Brown Act in California, “Public commissions, boards, councils, and other legislative bodies of local government agencies exist to aid in the conduct of the people’s business. The people do not yield their sovereignty to the bodies that serve them. The people insist on remaining informed to retain control over the legislative bodies they have created.”

Without discipline, even well-intentioned officials can begin to prioritize personal gain, political advantage, or loyalty to allies over the public’s needs and interests. The temptation to misuse power grows as influence and power increase, which is why strong moral character and clear boundaries are essential to serve in public office.

I warn my colleagues in public office that broader trends suggest we are sadly witnessing



a degradation of the public service many of us value and cherish. Scandals involving the misuse of campaign funds, sexism, racism, and misogyny illustrate how public trust can be weakened. This trend supports the thesis that corruption does not appear suddenly but develops over time, growing alongside power when discipline and accountability purposefully weaken. I have called this accumulated power effect “it will not happen to me” syndrome. If public service continues to degrade in this way, it risks undermining the very foundation of democratic systems, where trust and integrity are essential.

I conclude, as I wrote in my previous article about “The Value of Public Service” for *Western City* magazine: Public service is not about power or collecting a paycheck from the government. Helping or serving our communities and the people who elect us is an activity beyond self-interest. Recognizing this solemn responsibility is essential to preserving public trust, protecting our institutions, and ensuring that power serves only to advance service rather than corruption.



Frank Zerunyan is Professor of the Practice of Governance and Director of Center for National Defense and Public Safety at the USC Price School.

USC PRICE SCHOOL FACULTY IN THE NEWS



The Northlines

“Every other democracy has figured out that letting people choose between medication and groceries is political suicide. Republicans are running an experiment to see if American exceptionalism extends to voters tolerating their own immiseration. I suspect they’re about to get their answer.”



Dana Goldman, University Professor of Public Policy, Pharmacy, and Economics



Huffington Post

The term “blaccent” usually refers to someone who is not Black but who speaks in a way that mimics Black culture and African American Vernacular English (AAVE). (Jasmine) Crockett, though, is Black, which makes (Megyn) Kelly’s attacks all the more perplexing.

“Paradoxically, the absurd one-sidedness of this is the actual race hustle that aims to mock and discredit Crockett and other talented Black women. What qualifies Kelly and Carolla to be the arbiters of Black authenticity? Nothing. Crockett’s authenticity is one of numerous features that appeals her to Black voters. More importantly, they appreciate how fiercely she defends their rights and holds her congressional peers accountable for anti-Black policymaking,” he told HuffPost.



Shaun Harper, University Professor and Provost Professor of Education, Business, and Public Policy

USC PRICE SCHOOL FACULTY IN THE NEWS



Rheumatology Advisor

“Insomnia is a serious issue for many older adults, but regular use of sleep medication can pose real risks. Supporting physicians in reducing prescriptions and promoting safer, proven alternatives will ultimately benefit patients and society.”



Jason Doctor, *Professor*



Los Angeles Times

“We’ve been depending on immigrants all along to sort of backfill our (population) losses. As people move outward, they’re replaced by newcomers. If we had a continued drop in immigration for five years, it would be a major crisis. You can handle one or two years, but as long as the domestic migration is going out, you kind of need to replace those workers with somebody.”



Dowell Myers, *Professor Emeritus*



Marketplace

... the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage has been rising pretty much ever since, topping 6.5% this week and causing yet more trouble for the housing market. “When you’re buying a house, you’re not just asking yourself, ‘can I make the first payment on it? Am I going to be able to make payments in five years, in ten years?’ And I think people are feeling pretty insecure right now.”



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



The Real Deal

“To cover the (housing) shortfall nationally, we will need to increase supply by close to 25 percent to 30 percent annually. It’s not going to happen. We don’t know how to build housing that fast. We need to understand that this is all about regulations. We have regulated our cities and ourselves into this crisis, and the only way to solve this is by changing those regulations.”



Moussa Diop, *Associate Professor*



Los Angeles Times

... because a federal decision led to the hospital’s closure, it would make sense for the federal government to provide funds for the hospital’s reopening. “In an ideal world this [congressional] bill would have restored their status and made them whole, right? But failing that, you’re gonna have to look to the state.”



Glenn Melnick, *Professor*



Pharma Voice

“I worry about the quality of drugs that are going to be approved in the U.S., and I worry that more efforts are going to be aimed at lobbying or patronage as opposed to development. That’s a poor, inefficient use of resources.”



Genevieve Kanter, *Associate Professor*



NIH Director Jay Bhattacharaya gets candid about academic freedom

USC Price Professor Neeraj Sood hosted a conversation with National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Jay Bhattacharya about academic freedom, scientific integrity, and how universities can be a place of intellectual diversity.

Bhattacharya is a former professor of medicine at Stanford University who sparked controversy in 2020 when he was publicly critical of lockdowns and mask mandates as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He emphasized the importance of academic freedom, in which institutions do not persecute unpopular ideas and campus culture tolerates diverse viewpoints.

Bhattacharya's talk was part of the new USC Open Dialogue Project. The NIH director said that most university scholars “just want to be allowed to do their work without political interference, without being ostracized by their fellow community scholars.”

The Open Dialogue Project was launched in the fall of 2025 to foster a campus culture that embraces and embodies the principles of academic freedom, free expression, and open discourse.



EVENTS



Sept. 18, 2025

USC event examines how sports can be a catalyst for social change

The USC Center on Philanthropy & Public Policy, which celebrated its 25th anniversary, convened leaders from sports, business, nonprofits, and philanthropy to discuss the impact that sports can have on civic pride, economic vitality, and community well-being.



Oct. 16, 2025

The George Washington Leadership Lecture

Why compromise is key to keep the U.S. government running

Consent and compromise are keys to repairing the damage. That was among the top takeaways from the fall 2025 George Washington Leadership Lecture Series at Mount Vernon in Virginia. The topic was the rule of law, how it was established in the U.S., why it is central to our republic, and how it has evolved.



Nov. 10, 2025

Building a resilient Los Angeles: Lesson from 2025 fires

The USC Price Center on National Defense and Public Safety convened senior public safety leaders to share lessons learned from various Southern California emergencies, among them ways to strengthen future resilience.

EVENTS



Dec. 4, 2025

Improving the U.S. clinical trial recruitment ecosystem for Alzheimer's disease

The USC Clinical Trial Recruitment Lab (CTRL), a collaboration between the Schaeffer Center and the Alzheimer's Therapeutic Research Institute, examined how new technologies and improved diagnostics can strengthen clinical trial recruitment, shed light on patient experiences in trials, and examined the urgent economic realities for patients and families affected by the disease.



March 5, 2026

Women leading the way: Panel highlights Women's History Month

The USC Price Center on National Defense and Public Safety hosted a discussion highlighting women leaders in public safety. Panelists discussed the evolving expectations placed on public safety executives and the importance of intentional leadership development in strengthening institutions and communities.



March 24, 2026

The George Washington Leadership Lecture

The greatest threats to free speech, from the government to social media

"Freedom of speech does not mean freedom from consequences," said 1st Amendment lawyer Ian Rosenberg, summing up the main point of the spring 2026 lecture. "But too often, I think we're letting the term 'cancel culture' be used for anything that someone doesn't like when they say something that is unpopular." The event was co-sponsored by the USC Open Dialogue Project.



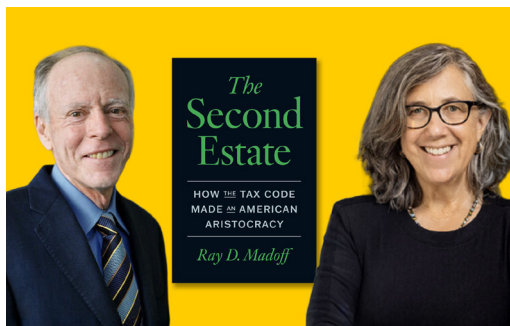
Price Presents is the USC Price School's premier webinar series about issues confronting society. Each webinar features experts from the USC Price School and across USC, as well as from other universities, government agencies, the business sector, and nonprofits.



Nov. 19, 2025

What's holding back affordable housing?

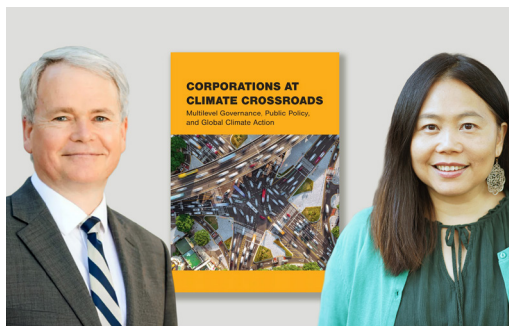
USC Price Professor Richard Green, Director and Chair of the USC Lusk Center for Real Estate and Chair of the Wilbur H. Smith III Department of Real Estate Development, spoke with two affordable housing developers about the structural and financial barriers that are preventing the construction of more affordable housing in Los Angeles.



Jan. 13, 2026

American aristocracy

Robert Price, the son of the USC Price School's namesake, interviewed tax professor Ray Madoff about how the tax code has been manipulated to benefit the ultra-wealthy. The crux of Madoff's argument is that the ultra-rich avoid paying taxes because they do not earn a traditional income.



Feb. 12, 2026

Corporations at a climate crossroads

USC Price Dean Christopher Boone interviewed Lily Hsueh, Associate Professor, School of Public Affairs, Arizona State University. Hsueh has uncovered compelling insights into how certain corporations and their leaders have become key players in the global effort to stem climate change — and why their participation is critical to addressing this challenge.

ACHIEVEMENT



Geoff Boeing, Associate Professor, as co-leader of a global research initiative, has won a prestigious Nobel Sustainability Trust (NST) Sustainability Award.



LA Commons and USC's Spatial Analysis Lab, headed by Professor Annette Kim, was awarded a Wallace Foundation Research Grant for Cultural

Placekeeping through 2028. The project explores how communities of color across Los Angeles are experimenting with creative property rights to protect cultural spaces, resist gentrification and displacement, and stay rooted in place.



For the second year in a row, the publication *Education Week* has named Shaun Harper, University Professor and Provost Professor of Education, Business, and

Public Policy, the nation's #1 scholar in the area of Government and Education Policy. He ranked #3 in the publication's overall rankings for 2026. Harper also has appointments at the USC Rossier School of Education and the USC Marshall School of Business.

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; Program Director, Master of Public Policy

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

Associate Professor; Chair, Department of Urban Planning and Spatial Analysis

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

Poverty, racial inequality, social policy, health, 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; 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

Associate 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

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; Program Director, Master of Nonprofit Leadership and Management

Nonprofit organizations, networks, philanthropy, urban inequality

Liz Falletta

Professor (Teaching); Program Director, Urban Planning Programs

Architecture, urban design, design criticism

ACHIEVEMENT



Professors Adam Rose, Wändi Bruine de Bruin, and Geoff Boeing were named among USC's Highly Ranked Scholars by ScholarGPS. The ranking is based on a combination of publication volume, citation impact, and quality (the "h-index".) ScholarGPS evaluated 30 million scholars from around the world, so ending up among the most highly ranked is a remarkable achievement!

Rose stood out in the category of economic impact analysis while Bruine de Bruin was highly ranked in the category of risk perception and Boeing was a standout in the urban area.



Richard Green, Director of the USC Lusk Center for Real Estate and Chair of the Wilbur H. Smith III Department of Real Estate Development, was presented with the George Bloom Award

by The American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association for his outstanding contributions to the field of real estate academics.

Green and colleagues were also awarded the Edwin Mills Best Paper Award for their paper, "*Is land-use deregulation enough to deliver housing? The case of institutional frictions in India.*" published in *Real Estate Economics* in 2025 by The American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association.

FACULTY DIRECTORY

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

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; Chair, Department of Public Policy and Management

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

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, Health Programs

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

James Heckman

Nobel Laureate; USC Presidential Scholar-in-Residence

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

Ji Hyeun Hong

Assistant Professor

Public Administration; Organizational Theory; Government Performance; Digital Governance

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

Darius Lakdawalla

University 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); Program Director, Master of Public Administration

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

FACULTY DIRECTORY

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

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

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; Chair, Department of Health Policy and Management

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

Christian L. Redfearn

Associate Professor

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

John A. Romley

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

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

Jared Schachner

Assistant Professor (Research)

Real estate business practices, the urban economy, public policy

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*

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*

Ruochen Sun

Assistant Professor (Research)

Health economics, public finance

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*

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; Co-Director, Aging and Cognition
Program, USC Schaeffer Center**

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





**USC Sol Price School
of Public Policy**

priceschool.usc.edu

Former Australian Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd**, Ph.D., was the keynote speaker at the 2026 Commencement ceremony for the USC Price School of Public Policy. Rudd, who is now the President and CEO of Asia Society, also served as Australia's Foreign Minister and, more recently, the country's Ambassador to the U.S. from March 2023 to April 2026. He was a Member of the Parliament of Australia from 1998 to 2013.

