



Northwestern | INSTITUTE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

YEAR IN REVIEW
2022-23

www.ipr.northwestern.edu





Photo by Elizabeth Folger

I've only sat in the IPR director's chair since September, so I'm still a little in awe of just how busy and amazing our community really is—an awe that only grows as I look back over its formidable accomplishments across 2022–23.

Our faculty produced some incredibly impactful research that not only made its way into top-notch journals, but also into city and state halls. Their breakthrough findings have shown what works to overcome pandemic learning losses and tamp down gun violence, detailed the pernicious effects of COVID on kids and teens, and traced the history of Native American tribal constitutions.

Beyond their superb scholarship over the year, IPR faculty shared their expertise in the U.S. and beyond: Economist **Kirabo Jackson** joined the President's Council of Economic Advisers. Anthropologist **Sera Young** traveled around the world to discuss water insecurity and co-lead development of an easy-to-use at-home test for lead in water. IPR research professor **Soledad McGrath**, executive director of CORNERS, served on a transition subcommittee for the new Chicago mayor.

IPR fellows and associates also received many honors—too many to list them all. **Larry Hedges** received the José Vasconcelos World Award of Education. **Linda Teplin** was elected to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. **Eli Finkel** became our first Morton O. Schapiro Fellow. And nearly one-fifth of our faculty were in the top 2% of cited researchers over their careers.

None of the above would have occurred without our incredible staff, postdoctoral fellows, and student research assistants, and we thank them for their efforts.

Last, IPR is as devoted to vibrant policy dialogue as it is to vibrant policy research, with our best conversations occurring in our Monday colloquia. Feel free to stop by—and if you can't join us then, you can always read about our latest research and activities at www.ipr.northwestern.edu.

I am very excited about the coming year, and I look forward to sharing our achievements with you then.

Andrew V. Papachristos
IPR Director and John G. Searle Professor

On the cover, clockwise from top left:

CORNERS Executive Director **Soledad Adrianzén McGrath** speaks during a symposium focused on community violence intervention research and practices on Dec. 15, 2022.
Photo by Laura McDermott

IPR economist **Kirabo Jackson** attends the American Academy of Arts & Sciences induction ceremony on Sept. 30, 2023.
Photo from the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

IPR's Executive Committee (EC) meets on Sept. 7, 2023. Shown here (clockwise from left) are EC members and IPR fellows **Ofer Malamud, Laurel Harbridge-Yong, Andrew Papachristos, Elizabeth Tipton, Emma Adam, James Druckman, and Mesmin Destin**.
Photo by Rob Hart

IPR developmental psychologist **Terri Sabol** meets with Northwestern undergraduate student Amelia Vasquez, who participated in IPR's Summer Undergraduate Research Assistants Program (SURA) on Sept. 7, 2023.
Photo by Rob Hart

IPR statistician **Larry Hedges** receives the José Vasconcelos World Award of Education from the World Cultural Council at the University of Helsinki on Nov. 3, 2023.
Photo by Veikko Somerpuro

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Institute for Policy Research

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RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

MORE THAN HALF OF IPR
FELLOWS PUBLISHED IN THE

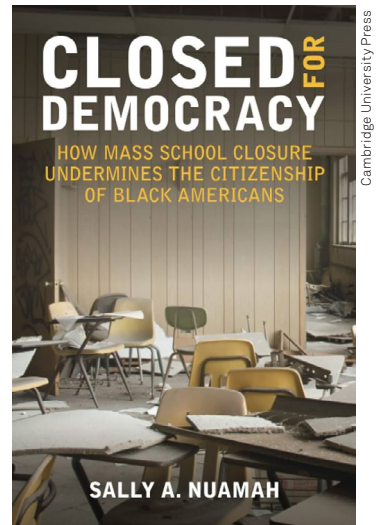
TOP 5%

OF SCHOLARLY JOURNALS
IN THE PREVIOUS ACADEMIC
YEAR, INCLUDING:

AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW
AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST
CHILD DEVELOPMENT
HEALTH AFFAIRS
JAMA
NATURE COMMUNICATIONS
NATURE HUMAN BEHAVIOUR
SCIENCE ADVANCES

CLOSED FOR SCHOOL, CLOSED FOR DEMOCRACY

IPR social policy expert **Sally Nuamah** grew up in Chicago's Near North neighborhood and watched area schools lose students after residents moved when public housing closed. The population changes raised questions about what to do with low-enrollment schools, and she began to see Chicagoans make connections between keeping schools open and their political participation. In her new book *Closed for Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), Nuamah investigates mass school closings in Chicago and Philadelphia in 2013 and how Black citizens who were affected by these closings mobilized politically to keep their schools open. She shows that ultimately the lack of response to their needs—either through closing schools or lack of investment in their schools—led to disillusionment with the government.



ARE VOTERS BIASED AGAINST WOMEN CANDIDATES?

Since the 1990s, the partisan gender gap between female elected officials has increased as more Democratic women win seats in state legislatures and Congress, while the number of Republican women elected remains flat. In a study published in *Political Behavior*, IPR political scientist **Mary McGrath** and Sara Saltzer (BA 2019), explore why a partisan gap exists and what role voter bias may play. In addition to the fact that fewer Republican women run for elected office, they show the gap is due in part to partisan voters' choices at the primary election stage. They find that Democratic voters show a greater preference for female candidates than Republican voters.

“The extent to which that bias is reduced suggests that voters are using candidate gender to make inferences about politically relevant factors, like which candidate holds views closer to your own.”

—Mary McGrath



IMMIGRATION AND CRIME

In recently published research, IPR economist **Elisa Jácome** and her colleagues compare the incarceration rates of immigrants to those of the U.S.-born starting in 1850 through today. They show that before 1960, immigrants' incarceration rates were nearly identical to White U.S.-born men, but since 1960, immigrants as a group are less likely to be incarcerated. Today, immigrants are 30% less likely to be imprisoned than U.S.-born men.



AN INTERDISCIPLINARY MODEL TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH

Approximately one billion people, or one in seven, worldwide suffer from a mental health condition, but little progress has been made in developing effective treatments. To address these growing mental health issues, IPR psychologist **Robin Nusslock** and his colleagues wrote a perspective in the inaugural issue of *Nature Mental Health* laying out a model for addressing mental health on a global scale that is targeted, personalized, and scalable. The researchers developed an approach they call the “circuits-to-communities model,” which aligns six disciplines to create targeted and personalized mental health interventions.

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS INFORM KEY POLICY CONVERSATIONS

Over 2022–23, IPR welcomed four distinguished speakers to Northwestern, confirming the Institute's role as a nexus on campus and beyond for conversations on critical policy issues.

At an October 2022 lecture, **Raphael Bostic**, president and chief executive officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, outlined the reasons behind the nation's surging inflation, how to combat it, and the Federal Reserve's efforts to build an economy that works for everyone.

A few weeks later in November, Brookings Institution scholar **Richard Reeves** discussed his new book *Of Boys and Men*. Reeves argues that boys and men are falling behind in the U.S. and outlined several policies to support them in schools and the workplace.

Harvard economist **Raj Chetty** discussed his research to trace “the dramatic fading of the American Dream” by pairing big data with innovative models and methodology during a



Yale's Jennifer Richeson speaks at Northwestern in May.

lecture in February. He said solutions to promote upward mobility include reducing segregation, investing in places, and recognizing the role that universities and colleges can play.

In May, Yale social psychologist and IPR faculty adjunct **Jennifer Richeson** discussed her research examining how the myth of linear, natural, automatic racial progress over time in the U.S. distorts our perceptions and influences our expectations. To make progress, she said, the country must consider reality and possibility.



IPR ECONOMIST JOINS PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS

In August, President Joe Biden appointed IPR economist **Kirabo Jackson** as a senior member of his Council of Economic Advisers (CEA).

"Being granted the privilege to serve as an adviser to President Biden is both an incredible honor and a great opportunity," Jackson said. He is the Abraham Harris Professor of Education and Social Policy and professor of economics at Northwestern University.

Jackson's work on the economics of education, some of which examines public school funding, has been published in his field's top journals.

"Kirabo Jackson is a brilliant example of the positive impact and influence Northwestern's faculty have on the world around us," Northwestern President Michael Schill said.

Jackson, 43, is one of the youngest members to have been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Education. In 2020, he received the David N. Kershaw Award from the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, recognizing his contributions to the field of public policy analysis and management.

A FEW KEY FIGURES

5,679

NATIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL
MEDIA MENTIONS

291

IPR FACULTY,
STAFF, AND
STUDENTS

38

FACULTY IN THE TOP
2% OF MOST-CITED
RESEARCHERS

IN THEIR CAREERS/FIELDS FOR 2022

15

CARNEGIE, GUGGENHEIM,
MACARTHUR, AND MAJOR
PRIZE AWARD WINNERS*

2010 – 2023

41

NATIONAL
ACADEMY
MEMBERSHIPS

139

PEER-REVIEWED
ARTICLES BY FELLOWS

2022 – 2023

441

IPR WORKING
PAPERS

2010 – 2023

105

BOOKS
PUBLISHED

2010 – 2023

Figures are as of September 2023 for faculty, unless indicated otherwise above.

**Includes the Yidan Prize, José Vasconcelos World Award of Education, and J. S. and H. F. Guggenheim awards.*

AT-HOME TEST TO ASSESS WATER QUALITY RECEIVES \$3 MILLION GRANT

This year, 350 Chicago-area households received hand-held, easy-to-use test kits to assess their home water quality.

Developed by Northwestern University researchers, the tests use cell-free biosensors and a single-drop water sample to provide an easy-to-read positive or negative result for a variety of contaminants. In August, the National Science Foundation awarded the study a \$3 million grant.

The pilot study will follow a phased roll-out. The test for lead is already available and will be distributed later this year, followed by tests for copper and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS, which will be distributed a few years into the study.

The pilot study is co-led by husband-wife team Julius Lucks, a professor of chemical and biological engineering, and IPR anthropologist **Sera Young**.



“The end goal is to empower people with knowledge: The knowledge of whether or not lead is in their water,” Young, a water insecurity expert, said. “Information is power, and these tests make invisible issues visible.”

To distribute the test kits, the researchers have consulted and intend to partner with community-area groups and the city of Chicago. Residents will measure the levels of contaminant in their household water, and later receive laboratory results.

IPR RESEARCH PROGRAM PREPARES UNDERGRADUATES FOR CAREERS



Emma Adam (left) meets with Amelia Montagnino (right).

For 25 years, IPR’s Summer Undergraduate Research Assistants Program (SURA) has given undergraduate students the opportunity to work alongside its faculty, providing them with social science research experience.

Over the summer, 41 students participated as IPR undergraduate research assistants and contributed to research projects focusing on important social issues like trends in adolescent depression and anxiety and COVID-19 mortality and how efficient early vaccine rollouts were.

“The program allows them to be part of the research process and contribute in meaningful ways to IPR’s mission of producing rigorous research with policy impact,” said IPR sociologist **Christine Percheski**, who directed the program.

Weinberg senior Amelia Montagnino, majoring in psychology, global health, and mathematics, said working with IPR developmental psychobiologist **Emma Adam** throughout the summer gave her a glimpse of possible next steps.

Montagnino helped organize and code qualitative data from the Biology, Identity, and Opportunity study at the Contexts of Adolescent Stress and Thriving (COAST) Lab, which Adam leads, that investigates how racial and ethnic stressors affect the biological stress measures of high school students.

She also searched through academic articles to capture recent trends in adolescent depression and anxiety, during and after the pandemic.

“This program helped give me a better idea of what working in a lab may look like after life at Northwestern,” she said.

ANDREW PAPACHRISTOS BECOMES IPR'S EIGHTH DIRECTOR

Northwestern University appointed prominent sociologist **Andrew V. Papachristos** director of the Institute for Policy Research (IPR) and the John G. Searle Professor of Sociology on Sept. 1.

Papachristos is widely recognized for his pioneering and policy-relevant research deploying network science in rigorous and interdisciplinary examinations of police misconduct, gun violence, and neighborhood inequality in urban America.

"We are extremely pleased that Andrew Papachristos will bring his exemplary leadership to IPR, where he already has made a major contribution as a faculty member," Provost Kathleen Hagerty said.

He follows **Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach**, an economist who served from 2017 until this July, as IPR's eighth director. He praised her for elevating IPR's profile and building a research infrastructure that encourages cross-field engagement.

"Diane has left us such a great team and framework to build on," he said. "Her legacy will have a long-term impact for IPR."

Papachristos' work has appeared in top-shelf journals and garnered national recognition and



L. McDermott

awards. News outlets, including the BBC, Chicago Tribune, and Washington Post, have covered his studies and sought out his expertise.

In 2019, he launched what is now known as CORNERS: the Center for Neighborhood Engaged Research & Science at IPR, which uses network analysis in studying neighborhood inequality.

"I'm truly honored to be a part of IPR's history of using research to help build safe, healthier, and more equitable communities and developing new directions for the Institute's and Northwestern's work in this and other exciting new areas," Papachristos said.

THE PAST AND FUTURE: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June that Harvard University and the University of North Carolina (UNC) violated the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection by using race as a factor in college admission. Some colleges and universities use race as a factor in admissions, along with other factors like athletics and activities, to create a diverse student body. Now, they must find other ways to ensure diversity in new classes.

Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA), which brought the cases, argued that Harvard's practice

violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by discriminating against Asian American applicants, and claimed that UNC violated the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause.

IPR sociologist **Anthony Chen**, an expert on affirmative action in higher education, is currently finishing a book with New York University's Lisa Stulberg that traces the history of affirmative action in college admissions. Based on their research, they learned that affirmative action was created in the 1960s.

"It was, in a way, a product of the Civil Rights Movement," said Chen.

With the overturning of the ruling, Chen speculates that schools will turn to "race-neutral" alternatives to racial consideration, such as income or the racial composition of an applicant's high school as a proxy for race.

"Many schools will probably redouble their recruitment efforts," said Chen. "But whether these steps will lead to similar levels of diversity as before is questionable."



Unsplash

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A. Estrella Mejia

Mesmin Destin shares his research examining how identity-building messages can impact young people at TEDxChicago in 2022.

IPR EXPERTS TURN RESEARCH EXCELLENCE INTO POLICY IMPACT

Each year, the White House Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) releases the “Economic Report of the President” to Congress. The 2023 report cited research by seven IPR faculty 14 times across the 507-page report.

For example, it cited several studies co-written by IPR economist **Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach**, who stepped down as IPR director in July, including one on the benefits of increasing low-income families’ access to food stamps—and another by economist **Ofer Malamud** showing that four-year colleges do have clear benefits, but college might not be best for everyone.

While a CEA report is likely one of the highest-profile research-driven reports in policymaking in the United States, IPR research also frequently finds its way into school districts and state legislatures, national agencies, and international NGOs, as well as on center stage.

In September 2022, IPR social psychologist **Mesmin Destin** took to the TEDxChicago stage to share his personal experiences in education and

how they went on to shape his research as an academic. He detailed what his work showed about how receiving identity-building messages at key moments can have powerful effects for children.

“It’s the specific connection between [a person’s] identity and those strengths that’s especially powerful,” Destin said.

IPR political scientist **Daniel Galvin** examines wage theft, or when employers pay employees less than the minimum wage. A report that he wrote for New Jersey served as a guidepost as it overhauled its enforcement of workers’ earnings and benefits in 2022.

In March 2023, IPR anthropologist **Christopher Kuzawa** penned an op-ed in the LA Times following his 2022 testimony about race-based health inequality before California’s Task Force on Reparations. In it, he wrote, “Because the racial health gap is not genetic, we can reverse it. Health improves when we reduce stressors—and when families have access to adequate resources.”