

## Heller Alumni Association Board Biographies 2020-2021



**Nicole Rodriguez, MPP'14, President**, is Research Director for New Jersey Policy Perspective, a think tank that drives policy change to advance economic justice and prosperity for all New Jerseyans through evidence-based, independent research, analysis and advocacy. She is an experienced public policy advocate who researches and advocates for state policy solutions that centers the needs of communities. She is skilled in policy analysis, research, writing, communication, and nonprofit organization and management. Her research interests include labor and economic policy at the intersection of work and family. Before joining New Jersey Policy Perspective, Nicole was a Senior Researcher at Community Labor United (CLU), an organization that brings together community and labor partners to speak in one voice on issues that impact working-class families throughout Greater Boston. Specifically, Nicole drove strategic campaigns forward with rigorous research and leadership that stabilize and strengthen low-income families and communities of color. Prior to that, Nicole worked as a Senior Policy Analyst at the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, an independent research organization that produces non-partisan policy research, analysis, and data-driven recommendations focused on improving the lives of low- and middle-income children and adults, strengthening our state's economy, and enhancing the quality of life in Massachusetts. Nicole has authored numerous reports focusing on family economic security and the state budget. She has also worked for foundations, non-profits, and state and local governments in Massachusetts. She holds a Master's degree in Public Policy from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University and a Bachelor of Arts' degree in Political Science from Villanova University.



**Thomas Quinn, MBA'10, Vice President**, is a Senior Partner at Witt/Kieffer, specializing in all aspects of executive search for healthcare and not-for-profit clients. Based in Boston, Tom has a particular interest in career counseling and helping healthcare executives advance at each professional level. He combines his strong networking skills with extensive experience when recruiting top financial, clinical and operational leaders, as well as leading CEO searches for hospitals and health plans. Tom has also developed a regional practice for recruiting senior leaders in physician group practices, hospitals and health plans and consults with clients on talent management, succession planning and organizational development, compensation and on-boarding. Previously, Tom was a healthcare associate for an international executive search firm in Boston and a consultant for a Boston-based boutique executive search firm. Tom started his career as a credit analyst for Boston Scientific Corporation, which sparked his interest in working closely with providers and health plans. He also has a BA in Journalism from the University of Massachusetts.



**Ali Al Jundi, MA SID'14**, is a Syrian civil activist and development practitioner with diverse experience and knowledge of the Syrian conflict and humanitarian crisis. Ali has worked as a Syria Project Officer at Oxfam America since April 2015. His work includes networking and strengthening capacities of Syrian humanitarian diaspora organizations in the United States and advocating for the Syrian humanitarian crisis. Ali has presented and participated in many panel discussions about the Syrian humanitarian crisis at MIT, Harvard University, United Nations Association of Greater Boston, Microsoft Center in Cambridge and the Classy Award Conference. Before leaving Syria in August 2012, Ali focused on youth employment and career development through his work as a Senior Career Development Coordinator at the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA). Ali has worked in grant writing, micro-finance, rural development and women's empowerment in his capacity as a Marketing Development Officer at Aga Khan

Foundation. He helped to establish a local NGO in his home district in 2006 and contributed to writing grants' proposals, projects management and monitoring and evaluation as the Association's Development Coordinator. In addition to his Heller degree, he has a Bachelor's degree of Economics from Damascus University.



**Jacqueline Daniels Braunthal, MMHS'84**, has 30+ years of experience and training in healthcare management. Since 2014, Jackie launched and operates out of Connecticut, as the Principal and CEO of a consulting practice, Health and Human Services Management Solutions, LLC, serving seniors and people with disabilities. Jackie leverages her industry knowledge, management experience and clinical skills when evaluating the needs and services of a client. Early on, she promoted best practices in provider management by creating solutions for clinical and administrative staff that had quality of care challenges with Medicare, Medicaid, State Licensure and JCAHO. Jackie served as the compliance expert for a large hospital corporation and as a hospital consultant for the State of Florida-Health Quality department. More recently, Jackie branded a regional start up that specialized in private-pay pediatric and geriatric home staffing. She created a large referral network of clinical, financial and legal professionals involved in healthcare delivery. Jackie also created a database of senior choices for residential care in Greater New York. Jackie holds a Master's degree in Non Profit Management and Health Policy from Brandeis University and a B.A. in Psychology from Ithaca College.



**Alissa Brooks, MBA/MPP'15**, is the Project Manager for the Pay for Success Program with Jewish Vocational Service (JVS Boston), a nationally recognized leader in workforce development. As the previous Marketing and Development Associate for JVS, she managed marketing and branding and implemented an organizational rebranding and launched a new website. Her ongoing responsibilities include digital content creation, fundraising collateral, and press relations. Her previous work experience includes positions with the Mayor's Office in Lawrence, Boston After School & Beyond, and the YMCA of Central Ohio. In addition to her Master's degrees, she holds Bachelor's degrees in Theology and English Literature from Walsh University (Ohio).



**Isaac Cudjoe, MA COEX'18**, currently serves as the Chief of Staff, Office of the President for Walden University. As immediate past Manager of Operations, he continues to provide day-to-day management on critical governance, communication, and policy issues in support of the Office of the President. He received an MA in Conflict Resolution & Coexistence from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management and is a candidate for a PhD in Public Policy and Administration. Isaac is an alum of both the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and the African Middle Eastern Leadership Project in which he has received training on strategic partnership, community activism, and story-telling. In the past two years, Isaac has latched two community action groups; the ReTurn Movement and Brothers With Books. The ReTurn Movement, a Heller born initiative, is a collaborative group that seeks to mobilize migrants (The Diaspora) to reconnect with the places they have traced their lineages, empower them to reclaim their sense of identity, and unite them with locals living in the places they reconnected with to build more inclusive societies. Brothers With Books, a Maryland based action group, promotes equity, access, and literature by engaging with youth and teachers. Both initiatives have helped Isaac gained experience working with multi-stakeholder partnerships including multi-lateral agencies, developing countries, and civil society organizations. Isaac hopes to bring people of all backgrounds together to fight for a world where we all win.



**Jessica Pacheco-Estevez, MM'98**, has passionately invested her service and expertise in empowering and developing inclusive leadership and management for thousands of nonprofit, K-12, higher education and corporate audiences. For over 20 years she has created, developed and implemented educational and organizational capacity building initiatives that foster equitable spaces and facilitate thriving communities, locally and internationally. As the current vice-president of Estrategia Group, she uses her collaborative management skills to help the consulting firm provide ideas, strategies and solutions to non-profits, educational institutions and busi-

nesses. Previous employers include the Institute for Community and Justice at Greenville College; the W.K. Kellogg Foundation as a national fellow for its Community Leadership Network; and the Community Tampa Bay programs director. The United Nations Intergovernmental Working Group, invited her to present on the nonprofit's trademarked "ANYTOWN" program in Geneva, Switzerland. Jessica's efforts earned her the USA Network Characters Unite Award in 2010. She's also a certified trainer for the Points of Light Youth Leadership Institute and a certified strength coach for the Gallup School of Management. Born in New York and raised in the Dominican Republic, she has earned her Heller degree and a Bachelors of Arts from Mount Holyoke College, where she graduated at the age of 19. Her husband Edwin Estévez and daughters Taina and Natalia share residence in IL and FL.



**Sheldon Gelman, PhD'73**, Dean Emeritus, is a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers and a Fellow of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) and the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM). He has held office and served on national commissions of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), including the board of directors and Commission on Accreditation, the National Association of Social Work Deans (NADD), the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The author of more than 100 professional articles and book chapters, he has served as a consultant to many social welfare organizations, presented testimony before legislative bodies and served as an expert witness in more than a dozen cases. He was named a "Social Work Pioneer" by NASW in 2009.



**Shirley Girouard, PhD'88, RN, FAAN** is Professor and Associate Dean for Research and Innovations at the College of Nursing at SUNY Downstate since 2014. She holds a PhD in health & social policy from the Heller School, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, a master of science in nursing from Yale University, New Haven, CT, a master of arts in medical sociology from the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, a bachelor of arts with a major in sociology from Eastern Connecticut State University, Willimantic, CT and a diploma in nursing from Hartford Hospital School of Nursing, Hartford, CT. Her present research activities are related to both research and evidence-based practice: to improve patient care transitions; exploring the organization and delivery of stroke services across the continuum of care; support persons with chronic conditions and their caregivers; adverse childhood experiences among health care providers and their related educational needs; and, promoting innovations in nursing education. Her research and professional experience inform her policy and advocacy work including her present work on the State Of Connecticut's Practice Transformation Task Force, a committee of the CMS initiative to develop state level healthcare improvement models. In addition, she is a member of the Packard Foundation funded national advisory board project to engage families to improve quality and outcomes of CSHCN and the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement advisory committee. Dr. Girouard's professional career has included clinical practice in a variety of settings including work as an advanced practice nurse. She has held positions in philanthropy, public service (elected & appointed), management and administration in professional organizations, healthcare and education. Her scholarly work has focused on the nursing workforce, evaluation, public policy and nursing education through publications, grantsmanship, service on several editorial boards and professional speaking. Serving on national, state and local committees, reviewing for several nursing and health journals, and engaging in education and advocacy, Dr. Girouard is committed to improving health and healthcare and advancing the profession of nursing.



**Calvin Harris, MPP'10**, is currently Senior Advisor at Pine Street Strategies in addition to Regional Communications Director in New York for Michael Bloomberg's Presidential Campaign. He was previously the Senior Manager of Public Affairs for the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC), a DC-based nonprofit that combines the best ideas from both parties to promote health, security, and opportunity for all Americans. He oversaw media strategy for the organization's senior fellows and national campaigns. Prior to joining BPC, Calvin was a communications strategist for the Council on Foundations, the country's largest membership association of grant making foundations and corporations. Calvin also served as press secretary and speechwriter for Stu-

dentsFirst, a lobbying group founded by education reform advocate Michelle Rhee. Calvin began his professional career in the Washington, D.C. office of SKDKnickerbocker. As a senior associate at SKDKnickerbocker, Calvin prepared and executed contingency plans for Fortune 100 companies and large nonprofits. Calvin managed national rollouts and announcements for various clients, most notably the release of the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission report in 2011. Calvin is a graduate of Morehouse College.



**John Hunsaker, MPP, MBA'10**, is the Manager of the Quality Incentives Program at Partnership HealthPlan of California. He was previously the Director of Continuous Quality Improvement at the San Francisco Community Clinic Consortium (SFCCC), a network of 9 community health centers. He provided leadership in all aspects of the development and execution of the SFCCC Quality Improvement (QI) and QI Plan and works closely with SFCCC's partners to enhance their ability to deliver high quality, low cost health care to their patients. John has worked for over a decade in health care policy and human services provisions. In addition to his Heller degree, he received a BA from Guilford College in Greensboro, NC and a Masters in Public Policy from American University in Washington, DC.



**Shayna Jones, MPP'18**, hails from Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Her commitment to racial equity, social emotional learning and transformative justice has guided her scholarship and work. This commitment propelled Shayna at The Heller School where she led workshops on equity, through collective power building and facilitation, and served on the search committee for the school's newly formed Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Shayna Jones has spent the last three years organizing in the Cambridge and Boston area, fighting alongside communities for affordable housing and an end to police brutality. She is dedicated to exploring ways communities heal from generational trauma and the impacts of white-supremacy culture in the U.S. and beyond, through the creation of alternative spaces for learning and being in community. Shayna is a proud auntie and has learned from her niece's and nephew's the importance of joy, resilience, and dance.



**Parisa Kharazi, MS'13**, is a public health professional specializing in health information technology. She currently works as a Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor at Jhpiego, a leading NGO on global maternal and child health affiliated with Johns Hopkins University. She has been a key player in the business plan development, communications, and deployment of the organization's centralized reporting health database. Parisa's interest in global health led her to serve as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer in Botswana, where she worked with vulnerable youth, faith-based groups, and local community leaders on HIV/AIDS prevention projects. Her experience living and working in a remote village in Africa shaped her career in public health. She has over two years' experience in low- and middle-income countries (Ghana, Botswana, Mozambique, Kenya). After graduating from Heller, she was selected as a USAID HIV/AIDS Care and Support Fellow with the Global Health Fellows Program II/The Public Health Institute. She also has a passion for working with students interested in health care. She is a teaching assistant for an online graduate course on the design of healthcare informatics systems at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She is also a mentor with the National Peace Corps Association in which she helps Returned Peace Corps Volunteers with professional networking, future career planning, transitioning from serving abroad to serving at home, and sharing her Peace Corps experience with students of all ages. Parisa currently serves on the Executive Board of American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP), a national nonprofit organization focused on professional development, health education centered on the unique needs of American-Muslims, and advocacy for minorities and underserved communities. While at Heller, she served as class representative for the MS class and was a recipient of the Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Scholarship. In addition to her Heller degree, she also holds an MBA Certificate in the Business of Healthcare from Johns Hopkins University, and a BS in Public Health and Middle Eastern Studies from Rutgers University.



**David Korenthal, MA/MBA'16 (Heller-Hornstein)**, is from outside of Chicago, Illinois and graduated from Ithaca College in 2010 with a BA in History. Upon graduation, David spent time living in Cairo, Egypt, and then a year living, working, and volunteering in Israel as a fellow on OTZMA 26. He then worked as the Engagement Associate at UChicago Hillel, where he designed and executed the engagement and recruitment strategies around campus Birthright Israel trips. While there, he also served on the MASA Alumni Committee of Chicago. David also spent 14 summers as a camper, counselor, and unit head at Camp Interlaken JCC in Eagle River, Wisconsin. He is a 2016 graduate of the Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership program at Brandeis University, where he completed dual MBA and MA degrees. While in graduate school, he worked with The iCenter for Israel Education on the Birthright Israel Fellows seminar. Shortly after graduation, he began work at Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Greater Boston's Jewish Federation, as the IACT National Program Officer. He helped campuses around the country improve their recruitment, pre-trip, and post-trip Birthright Israel programming and strategy. His is currently working as the Associate Director of Talent Acquisition at Hillel International.



**Simone LaPray, MBA/MA SID'15**, currently serves as the Executive Director for TiE-Boston where she oversees an accelerator for growth stage companies and a leadership program for high school youth in the Boston area. She is passionate about supporting startups to scale and promoting the innovation ecosystem in the Boston area. She also served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ukraine from 2006-2011 where she worked in small business development, education, youth empowerment and HIV/AIDS awareness. She is mentor for BUILD Boston, a member of Net Impact and serves on the Board for the Boston Network for International Development (BNID).



**Gabriel Malseptic, MBA'13**, is a Program Director for Utilization Review at HMS International Fabrics, Inc. He was previously the Program Officer for the CHART Program at the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission where he managed a portfolio of community hospitals that have received grants to transform care delivery for the Commonwealth's most at-risk populations. He also co-founded and served as Chief Operating Officer of SQ Technologies Inc., a health technology startup that creates health education programming and platforms for higher education institutions. Previously, he was a Project Manager for RC Analytics Inc., a measurement and consulting firm founded on the theory of Relational Coordination. He has also held analyst and research positions at UMass Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School's Judge Baker Children's Center. He is also a graduate of the University of Rochester (anthropology and cognitive sciences).



**Ty Michelsohn-Leisey, MA COEX/MA SID'17**, is a systems thinker with a focus on the intersection of power dynamics and social justice, a perspective he relied on throughout his graduate career. While at the Heller School, Ty was a member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Steering Committee, Co-Chair of the Anti-Oppression Working Group, and recipient of the Barbara Wakefield Memorial Award. He has experience planning and leading anti-oppression workshops in small and large settings and spearheaded the first completely student-created and -run Heller Anti-Oppression Community Day for incoming students in the fall of 2015. Ty also researched and compiled *Inclusivity and Social Cohesion* at the Heller School, a report and tool shared widely with Heller students, faculty, staff, and Brandeis administration, and co-wrote his Master's Thesis, *Historical Trauma, Power, and an Argument for Collective Healing Practices* with fellow alum Phoenicia Lewis, which includes a guide to help practitioners incorporate a Historical Trauma lens in their own community work. While at Heller, Ty interned with fellow alum Ev Evnen at MaeBright Group, where he partnered with community stakeholders in Boston, MA to design and implement a legal name change clinic for transgender and gender nonconforming residents. More recently, Ty worked as a grassroots fundraiser, raising over \$5000 in small monthly gifts for international development organizations, as well as recruiting, coaching, and consulting within leadership circles of the organization to strengthen both the Boston and New York City offices. In addition to his graduate degrees, Ty received a Bachelor's in Liberal Studies in Peace and Intercultural Relations with a concentration in Sub-Saharan Africa from Salem State

University. He recently moved to Austin, Texas with his partner and wife Deac. He worked recently as a Litigation Specialist in a local family law firm. He is now the Teen Advocacy Specialist with CASA of Travis County.



**Ryan Mishler, MPP'18**, is an alum who is passionate about policy analysis and advocacy for the LGBTQIA community. During their time at Heller, they co-founded the first campus-wide LGBT graduate student organization and received the Barbara Wakefield Award in May 2018. They also received the Sylvia Rivera Graduate Student award from the Brandeis Gender and Sexuality Center in April 2018. After graduation, they served as the Program Administrator for the Brandeis Gender and Sexuality Center until January 2019. Prior to arriving at the Heller School, Ryan served for a year and a half in the AmeriCorps VISTA program in Sacramento, California. They graduated with a Bachelor in Arts degree in Community Leadership and Civic Engagement from Northern Illinois University in 2013.



**Flavia C. Peréa, PhD'09, MEd** is the Inaugural Director of the Mindich Program in Engaged Scholarship at Harvard College. Through her work she seeks to foster multi-sectorial partnerships, community-academic collaboration and student engagement in applied projects that link academics, inquiry, and action to advance equity. Previously, she was an Assistant Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine for six years. A former K-8 teacher and health and human services program administrator in NYC, she has been funded by the NIH, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and The Boston Foundation. In addition to her Heller degree (concentration in child, youth, and family policy), she has a Master's degree in Education from the Bank Street College of Education. She completed her postdoctoral research and training at Wellesley College on a T32 training grant from the NICHD. She and her family live in Somerville, MA.



**Miriam Rubin, MBA'15**, has an extensive professional experience in the youth development field. She has held several leadership roles in non-profit Organizations, including Program Director at Bottom Line, a college access and success organization in Boston, and Director of Programs at Big Sister Association, an organization focused on providing mentoring to girls. Miriam has developed skills in strategic and operations management as well as staff development, and is particularly strong in developing strategic partnerships with community stakeholders. She is currently the Director of Development and Partnerships with Boston Public Schools (BPS). She was the previous Manager of School-Community Partnerships, also with BPS, where she worked to increase equity, access to, and effectiveness of high quality partnership opportunities for schools, students and families throughout the district.



**Jeanette C. Takamura, PhD'85**, has held principal leadership positions at the national and state level and has been a higher education administrator and member of the faculty at several U.S. universities. She is currently dean emerita and professor of gerontology and social policy at Columbia University, where she was the 17th dean and the first female leader of its School of Social Work. During her 15 year tenure as dean, she instituted multidisciplinary global, national, and statewide education, research, and service programs and collaborations that engaged academic institutions and scholars worldwide and prioritized diversity as a cross-cutting academic initiative. She was assistant secretary for aging at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services from 1997 to 2001. There, she led the development and enactment of a modernized Older Americans Act and established the National Family Caregiver Support Program, the federal government's first formal recognition of the significant contributions and needs of family caregivers. She also spearheaded an initiative to lay the foundation for aging policy and program coordination and collaboration across executive branch departments and agencies for the first decade of the new millennium.

Early in her career, Jeanette was a practicing social worker serving youth and families. She held senior executive positions in the Hawaii state government and faculty and administrative appointments in higher education in Hawaii and California. She has served on numerous national and international boards, commissions, and working groups, is an elected fellow of the National

Academy on Social Insurance, the National Academy for Public Administration, the New York Academy of Medicine, and the Royal Society of Medicine, and has received numerous awards, among them the Lucy Stone Award from the White House for her advocacy on behalf of older women and the enactment of the National Family Caregiver Support Program. Dean Takamura was invited to serve on the Obama Transition Team, specifically for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In 2009, she was honored by the Japanese Government with The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, for contributions to the promotion of social welfare policies and programs and the status of Japanese Americans.

In addition to her Heller PhD degree, her bachelor's degree in political science and sociology and her master's degree in social work are from the University of Hawaii-Manoa. She received special training in gerontology at Harvard Medical School-Massachusetts General Hospital and the University of Southern California Ethel Percy Andrus Gerontology Center and is an invited featured speaker at national and international conferences on health, long term care, aging, women's issues, and higher education.



**Roberta Walsh, PhD'89**, joined Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) as a founding faculty member during the institution's inaugural year in 1997. She served as departmental chairperson for public administration and political science until 2006. She is credited with laying the foundation for the Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree program to receive the first professional accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration for an exclusively internet-based degree. Dr. Walsh earned Emeritus status at FGCU in 2009 for "...exemplary support of public affairs education...[and] a distinguished record of accomplishment both as an academic and public servant." She continued on-line graduate teaching and consulting in public administration for Norwich University, Northfield, Vermont and served as an adjunct online professor for the University of Virginia.

Prior to her FGCU appointment, she was a tenured associate professor at the University of Vermont and also held visiting professorships at Simmons College, The University of Texas at Austin and Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Scotland. Her undergraduate degree is from Framingham State University where she received the institution's Alumni Achievement Award in 1981 and Distinguished Alumni Award in 2019. She holds a master's degree in consumer economics with a minor in American Government from Cornell University. For her doctoral dissertation at the Heller School she conducted an inter-regional, inter-industry input-output analysis to estimate economic effects of energy savings in the federal Low-income Weatherization Assistance Program.

Dr. Walsh's career in public service began with anti-poverty programs in New York State. Later, she served with the Federal Trade Commission, U.S. Department of Energy, and Northeast Solar Energy Center, all in Boston, Massachusetts. She has authored over 50 publications and presentations in energy program evaluation, receiving the Aaron Wildavsky Book Award from the Policy Studies Organization in 1998.