

The Heller School

FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Heller Alumni Association Board Biographies 2017-2018



Sarah K. Emond (President), MPP'09, currently serves as the Chief Operating Officer at the Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER), an independent non-profit dedicated to conducting and implementing comparative effectiveness research. As COO, Sarah uses her experience in the business and policy of healthcare to execute the strategic planning and operations of ICER. Previously, she was Principal at SKE Communications, a health policy consultancy, and was Manager of Corporate Communications at Oscient Pharmaceuticals. She also held positions at Feinstein Kean Healthcare and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. Sarah is a graduate of Smith College (biological sciences). A resident of Walpole, Sarah recently learned to ski and enjoys taking her dog for walks around her neighborhood.



Danielle Thompson (Vice President), MPP'12, is a health policy and government relations professional. She is passionate about improving health outcomes for underserved populations through the promotion of public policies that protect the rights of consumers, improve access to quality care, and emphasize wellness and prevention. Danielle has over ten years of experience at the state and federal levels, working in a variety of non-profit, public sector and hospital-based settings. She has expertise in designing and implementing new programs including a wellness program for state employees and a financial assistance program for cancer patients. Danielle is currently a Program Specialist for School Nutrition Programs at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in Boston, MA. She previously completed a post-graduate fellowship in government relations at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Prior to graduate school, she spent three years working on employee wellness policy at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services. She serves on the Executive Committee for Boston Young Healthcare Professionals. She received a Bachelor of Arts in history from Hollins University.



Kelly Axtell, MBA'05, was a Property Manager for Project-based section 8/tax credit housing for elders and people with disabilities in Boston during her time at Heller. After graduating and concentrating in Elders and People with Disabilities, she went back into the assisted living industry and expanded her knowledge and experience through various management roles. These roles included Assisted Living Manager, Dementia Neighborhood Manager and Marketing Director. Kelly has been Assistant Director of Senior Services for the town of Lexington since August 2012. In addition, she is involved in the strategic planning for a (potential) new community center for the town as well as strengthening the senior services team of the human services department through improving customer service, implementing best practices and creating a policy/procedure manual. Kelly lives in Bedford, MA with her husband, Rich, and their two children, Kaylee (6) and Mason (3). In her spare time, Kelly enjoys creating jewelry and spending time with her family.



Alissa Brooks, MBA/MPP'15, manages marketing and branding as the Marketing and Development Associate for Jewish Vocational Service (JVS Boston), a nationally recognized leader in workforce development. In this role, she has 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).



Pem Brown, MA/MPP'11, is a Senior Strategist at M+R where he works with progressive non-profits like the Union of Concerned Scientists, SEIU, and PETA to develop and implement innovative online fundraising and online advocacy campaigns. Pem joined M+R after working for NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts for five years, where he managed their fundraising and online communications programs. In addition, he has worked with a range of progressive candidates and issue advocacy organizations. Pem majored in French and European Studies at Amherst College, and received joint degrees from Brandeis, including the MPP in social policy and an MA in women's and gender studies.



Ev Evnen, MBA/MPP'14, throughout graduate school, was involved in a number of social justice initiatives, including work on the Heller Diversity Steering Committee. Currently, they are a Partner and the Senior Data Nerd for MaeBright Group, an LGBTQ policy, training, and consulting firm. MaeBright works with companies, non-profits, and state agencies to assess, improve, and evaluate the climate and services for LGBTQ employees and clients. Ev has a scruffy dog named Max whose unreasonable under bite charms them everyday, and is a diehard Nebraska Cornhusker Football fan. In addition to their Heller degree, Ev also received a BA in American Studies from Wesleyan University.



Calvin Harris, MPP'10, is 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 oversees 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 StudentsFirst, 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. He lives in the Brookland neighborhood of Washington, DC with his wife Dea.



John Hunsaker, MPP, MBA'10, now serves as Director of Continuous Quality Improvement at the San Francisco Community Clinic Consortium (SFCCC), a network of 9 community health centers. He provides leadership in, and is responsible for, 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 began working for SFCCC in 2011, and became Director of QI in 2013. Prior to joining SFCCC, John worked in health care policy and human services provision for eight years. 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.



Isabella Jean, MA COEX'06, is Adjunct Lecturer in the Coexistence and Conflict Program at the Heller School. Her research focuses on International aid effectiveness and conflict-sensitivity, participatory program design, monitoring and evaluation methods, and peacebuilding. At CDA, she serves as Director of Evaluation and Learning, and leads field research efforts involving international peace and development practitioners in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Isabella co-authored a book on cumulative impacts of international assistance, "Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid." She consulted with Coexistence International and conducted policy research on issues of conflict, coexistence, democracy and education in multi-ethnic societies. Earlier, she conducted evaluation and training at a national non-profit focused on education policy, school reform and community organizing. As a Watson Fellow, she conducted field research on youth coexistence initiatives in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. In addition to her Heller degree, she holds a BA in International Relations and Anthropology from Bowdoin College.



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.



Simone LaPray, MBA/MA SID'15, currently serves as the Program Manager 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 Officer for the CHART Program at the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission where he manages 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 serves 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).



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.



Anna Perlmutter, MBA'12, is a Doctoral Student in Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management. Her research is focused on concepts of inter-organizational collaboration, leveraged infrastructure, shared resources, and support systems to improve positive organizational change. Prior to beginning her doctoral studies, Anna was a Research and Development Specialist at the Relational Coordination Research Collaborative (RCRC) as well as a Research Associate with the Center for Youth and Communities (CYC) at the Heller School. Anna has been a nonprofit capacity builder for more than a decade, focused on management support, research, technology, and community engagement in the mission-driven sector. She is passionate about advancing the knowledge and practice of cross-sector coordination and collaboration to help leaders, funders, and policy-makers make informed decisions in supporting resilient work. Anna also has a BA in Literature from the New College of Florida.



Thomas Quinn, MBA'10, 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.



Nicole Rodriguez, MPP'14, is a Senior Policy Analyst at the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center focusing on family economic security. Prior to joining MassBudget, Nicole was a Graduate Research Assistant for the Institute for Assets and Social Policy at Heller, where she assisted in researching Boston's asset development infrastructure. Prior to that, Nicole worked for foundations, non-profits, and state and local governments in Massachusetts. She holds a BA in Political Science from Villanova University and currently serves as a Board Member to the Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy.



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. Miriam's current role is with the Boston Public Schools as Manager of School-Community Partnerships, where she works to increase equity, access to, and effectiveness of high quality partnership opportunities for schools, students and families throughout the district.



Trilby Smith, MM'98, was born and raised in Vancouver, Canada. She is a lifelong activist and upon graduation from the University of British Columbia, moved to New York to become the Executive Director of a Jewish youth movement. This gave her a taste of what it was like to run an organization, but she realized she needed some more concrete skills. When she found the Heller School she knew she had found the perfect marriage of ideals and practical knowledge. Following graduation, she moved back to New York City to join her soon-to-be husband, and began working as a research and evaluation consultant at Metis Associates. This turned out to be her calling, and is what Trilby has been doing for the past 14 years. Two states, two children, and one dog later, she and her husband returned to live in Vancouver in the fall of 2011.



Linda Sprague Martinez, PhD'09, is an Assistant Professor of Macro Community Practice at the Boston University School of Social Work. Her work is focused on how assets can be recognized and leveraged by communities to improve living environments and health. She is specifically interested in examining culturally relevant strategies to tackle health inequities. Community and youth engaged research approaches are central to her work. Linda has expertise in urban health; community, student and youth engaged research; photovoice; community assessment and mobilization; and qualitative research methods and analyses.



Crystal Vitagliano, MA SID'14, is a Program Analyst for the eRulemaking Program at the US Environmental Protection Agency. eRulemaking is part of the ongoing open government and transparency initiative that allows agencies to accept public comments electronically on rulemaking materials. Rulemaking is a process by which over 170 government agencies issue regulations implementing statutes passed by Congress. She primarily supports these agencies and the content they publish on the public-facing site: Regulations.gov - where the public can comment on rules and proposed rules. She is currently working on a project to support the government's 2019 initiative to switch from paper to electronic records. In addition to her Heller degree, Crystal also has a BA in English Literature from Xavier University. With experience in the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps and the private sector, her position with the EPA blends her passion for public service and the environment - with her experience in business operations and information technology.



Clay Westrope, MA SID'11, is a research and non-profit management professional with ten years of experience managing field programming and liaison office operations for human rights and humanitarian organizations. Clay recently started his own international humanitarian and development research-consulting firm – Groundswell Global Research. His research centers on displacement and post-conflict contexts in the developing world, and his clients include multi-lateral UN agencies and international NGOs, among others. Previously, he served as the US Country Representative for ACTED USA, the US liaison office for the French humanitarian organization, ACTED. He was responsible for all operations, donor relations and institutional partnerships in the US. In addition to this work, Clay provided both remote and field technical support for REACH Initiative programs in the Horn of Africa, Middle East, and Asia, focused on humanitarian assessment and research. He also has served as press secretary for a US senator and as a government relations and media focal point for Amnesty International USA in Washington, DC. He also has a Bachelor's degree from Boston College.

At-Large Member Biographies 2017-2018



Rebecca Loya, PhD'12, is a Senior Research Associate at the Institute on Assets and Social Policy (IASP) at the Heller School. She conducts research on family economic stability and the gendered and racialized nature of economic inequalities in the U.S. Her recent work at IASP focuses on Children's Savings Account policies. She has worked on several other projects at IASP, including the Leveraging Mobility study; efforts to integrate asset building into human service work; the state asset learning cluster; and the Massachusetts Asset Development Commission. She has also studied the role of sexual violence in creating economic disadvantage and the protective effects of financial assets and social capital. Prior to joining the IASP staff, Rebecca spent two years as a Post-Doctoral Research Associate in Public Policy at Brown University. In addition to her Heller degree, Rebecca holds a Master's degree in Psychology from Stanford University.