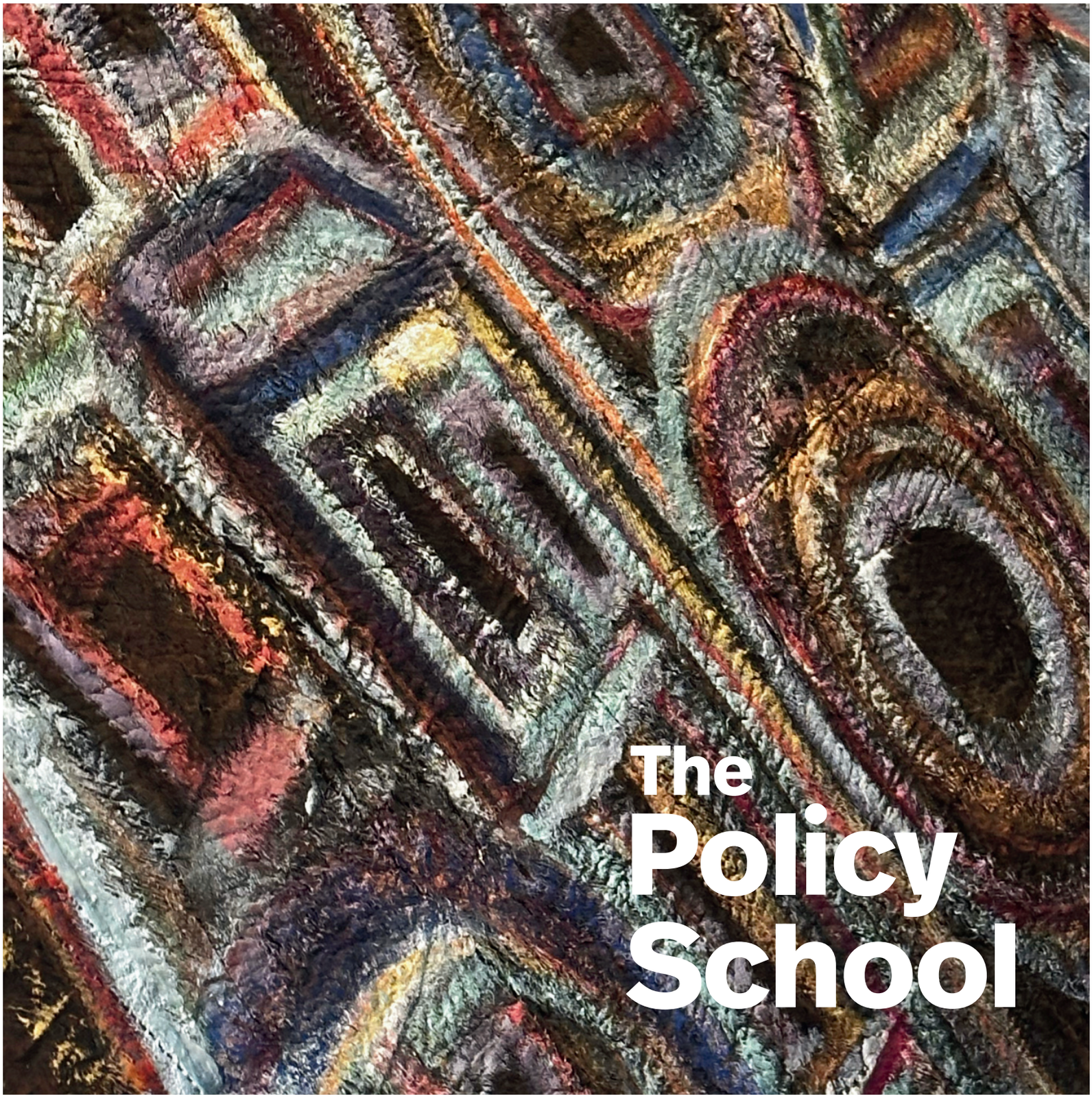
Northeastern University
School of Public Policy
and Urban Affairs



The Policy School

IMPACT REPORT
2025

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME



> ***Through research, service, and practice, collaboration is our compass.***

At the School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs, we bring together ***doers*** and ***dreamers*** who think and act locally and globally. For two decades, we have advanced interdisciplinary research, delivered policy-relevant professional education, and deepened community engagement.

OUR VISION

We are becoming a global leader in public policy and urban affairs education, research, and impact. We create changemakers who transcend boundaries, bridge disciplines, and connect concepts with action from local neighborhoods to the global stage. Our commitment to inclusion ensures that every voice has a place in our work: on campus, in classrooms, and in communities.

Our foundation is strong. Grounded in interdisciplinary scholarship and experiential learning, we inform, innovate, and inspire. Our faculty and students shape policy conversations by tackling challenges in environmental protection, urban innovation, economic development, and social resilience. We are a school that evolves with the times. We foster partnerships across disciplines, sectors, and borders. We cultivate a culture that values shared knowledge and diverse perspectives. Through research, service, and practice, collaboration is our compass.

ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

We pursue scholarship with purpose. Faculty and students amplify their impact by generating knowledge that drives societal transformation. Our research, ideas, and actions extend beyond academia to create change at every level, from neighborhoods to nations.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

We prepare the next generation of policy changemakers through immersing students in the complexity of the real world. Our graduates leave with more than a degree. They carry a strong sense of belonging and purpose. They enter the workforce equipped with the tools, networks, and experiences essential for professional growth and productive careers.

LOCAL ACTION TO GLOBAL IMPACT

We work across scales and engage with city halls, national parliaments, and international organizations. Our scholarship is rigorous, accessible, and actionable. Our curriculum integrates theoretical insights with practical applications. We connect the local to the global, and back again.

Together, we are building a more just, resilient, and sustainable world.



Maria Ivanova
Director, The Policy School

engaged scholarship

My fellowship provided me with a key understanding:
Don't admire the problem. Find a solution.
And with most problems, improving policy is the first step towards change.

MOLLIE PING '26, MS IN URBAN PLANNING AND POLICY

WHAT WILL YOUR HANDPRINT BE?

The Policy School is redefining public service. We need more momentum around creating positive handprints and less focus on the negative footprints we leave behind. Collaborative public servants bridge the gap between knowledge and action to meet challenging moments with urgency.

Students and scholars work alongside communities facing real dilemmas and test solutions in actual policy environments. This year, our research has influenced billion-dollar climate investments at the World Bank, shaped global environmental treaties, established anti-discrimination policies that protect Boston residents, and pioneered digital tools that put communities at the center of urban planning. Policy School students hone their vision and skills by navigating complex systems and engaging directly in the craft of changemaking.

We do not just study policy, we shape it.

INNOCENT NKURUNZIZA



COVER ART | "Inspired by a Bus" by Innocent Nkurunziza
A Rwandan artist inspired by his community, Nkurunziza captures the wisdom of the collective journey—the power of connecting a diverse group of individuals all on the same bus traveling toward shared horizons.

RESEARCH FOCUS AREAS:

- Urban Innovation
- Environment & Sustainability
- Policy & The Arts
- Thriving Communities

Nothing enhances learning as much as real-world experience. Policy School students work across a range of contexts beyond classrooms, from local community organizations to the United Nations.

CENTERS & LABS

Boston Area Research Initiative (BARI)
Director: Dan O'Brien

Center for International Affairs and World Cultures
Director: Mai'a Cross

Community to Community (C2C) Impact Engine
Director: Alicia Modestino

Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy
Director: Alicia Modestino

NULab for Digital Humanities and Computational Social Science
Co-Director: Moira Zellner

The Plastics Center
Co-Directors: Maria Ivanova, Aron Stubbins

Social Impact Lab
Director: Rebecca Riccio

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MODELS

Co-op: Students complete full-time, six-month research and work experiences in the non-profit, public, or private sectors. They are placed in surrounding communities, across the United States and around the globe, where they can actively participate in policymaking.

The Policy Capstone: Integrating their skills and knowledge in research, policy, and practice, students support local, community-led initiatives. This gives these public service and non-profit partners the capacity to push innovative, real-world projects forward.

Real-World Research: Students and faculty seek out opportunities to engage with community partners to address complex problems.

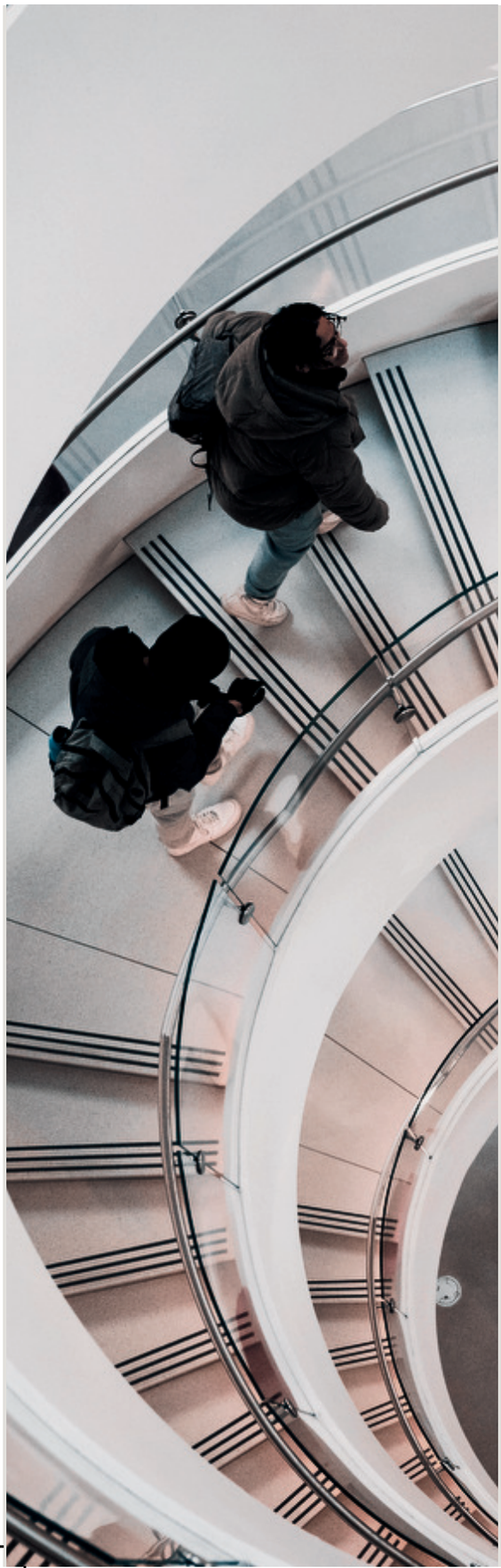
Open Classroom: Thought leaders and students engage in dialogues investigating intersections of policy and practice.

Dialogues of Civilizations: Faculty-led study abroad programs immerse students in locations around the world, exploring region-specific topics while examining critical issues on local and global scales.

experiential learning



The Policy School



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2024-2025
Academic Year



One person's local is another's global, weaving a tapestry of connection.

At the Policy School our work spans continents, fostering real change in communities worldwide.

This is scholarship in action.

OUR CAMPUSES

The Policy School at Northeastern is active on three campuses:

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

OUR STUDENTS

The Policy School is home to:

471 students from
38 U.S. states and
36 countries

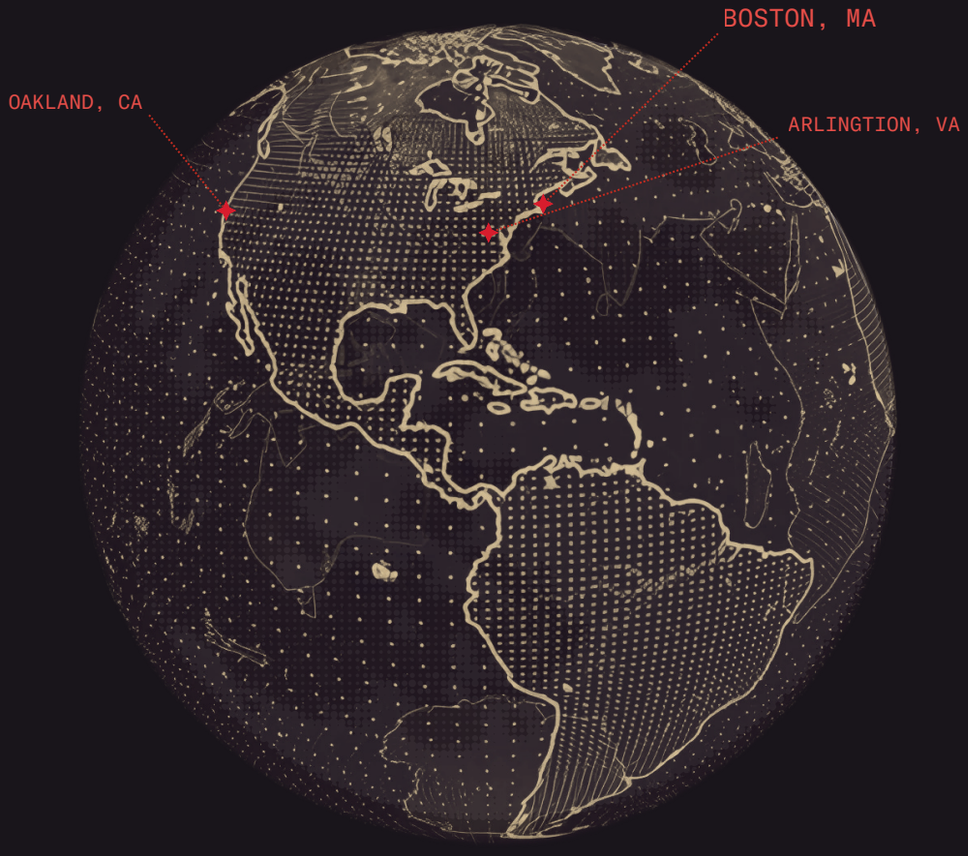
OUR FACULTY

47 full-time faculty

30 of whom are jointly appointed with another department and/or college

local action

THREE U.S. CAMPUSES





Addressing affordable housing access
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Creating sustainable food systems in the South
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Developing early childhood research connections
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Planning resilient transit
UNITED STATES
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Building policy bridges
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Developing arts-based training
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Negotiating key plastics treaty
SOUTH KOREA
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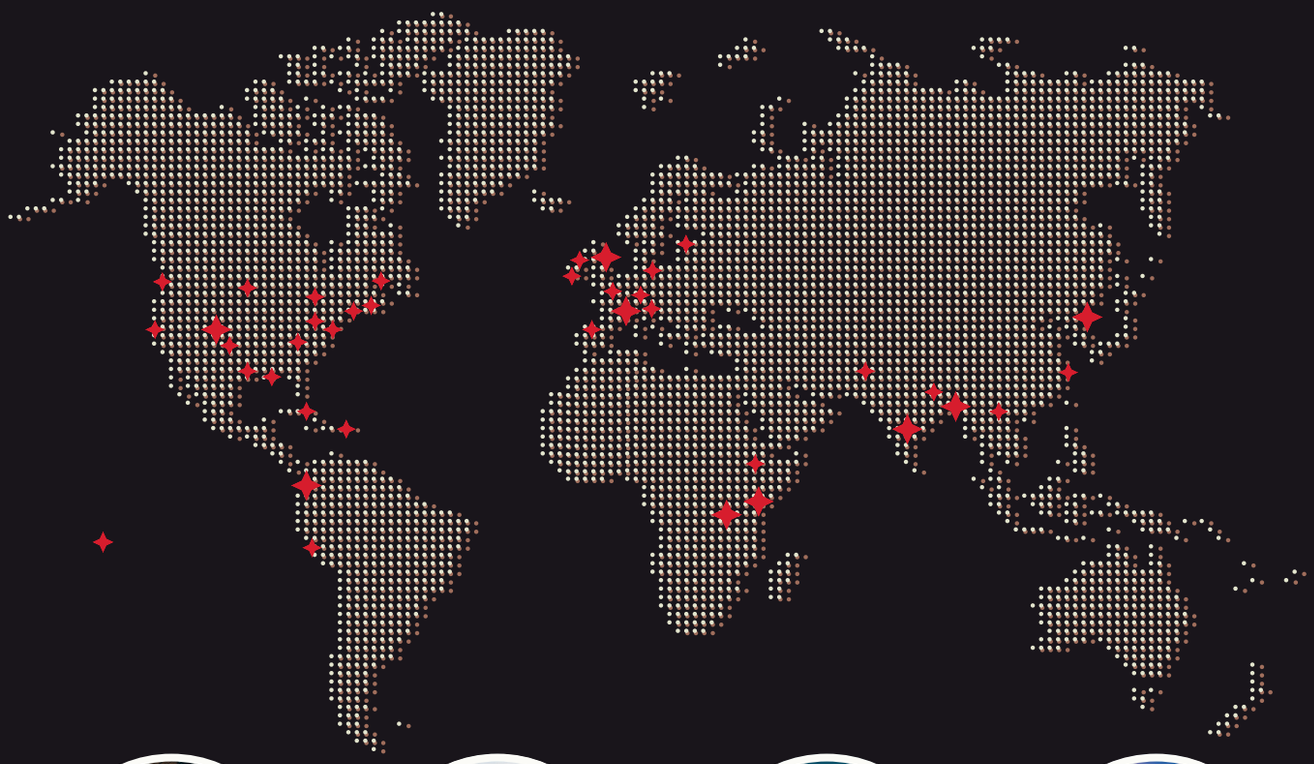



Protecting biodiversity
COLOMBIA
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Promoting global governance
RWANDA
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Elevating youth voices
KENYA
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Confronting climate change
BANGLADESH
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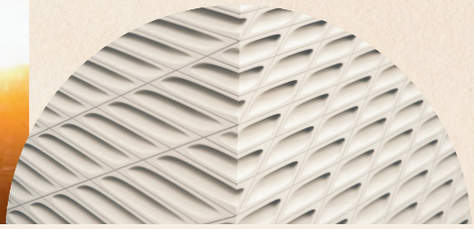
global impact

CAPSTONE

RESEARCH IN PRACTICE:

- Engaged Scholarship
- Experiential Learning
- Local Action to Global Impact







COMMUNITIES FACING REAL DILEMMAS

The Capstone course is the pinnacle of the Policy School master's degree programs. Graduating students collaborate with public service and non-profit partners to create meaningful policies and practices that strengthen local communities.

2024 - 2025 PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- City of Boston
- Asian Community Development Corporation
- Boston Children's Hospital
- Boston City Council
- Boston Housing Authority
- Boston Public Library
- Caribbean Integration Community Development
- Chinatown Community Land Trust
- Control Risk
- Fenway Community Development Corporation
- Food Rescue US
- Greater Grove Hall Main Street
- Greater Malden Asian American Coalition
- MASS Ave Coalition
- MA Cannabis Control Commission
- MA Office of the State Auditor
- NU Climate & Sustainability Hub
- Rethink ai
- Technologists for the Public Good

The anti-discrimination guidebook was a labor of love, dedication, and collaboration. This resource addresses a real challenge and will serve all residents facing harassment and discrimination.

KIMBERLY RHOTEN, DIRECTOR OF LGBTQ+ POLICY AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AT MOLA

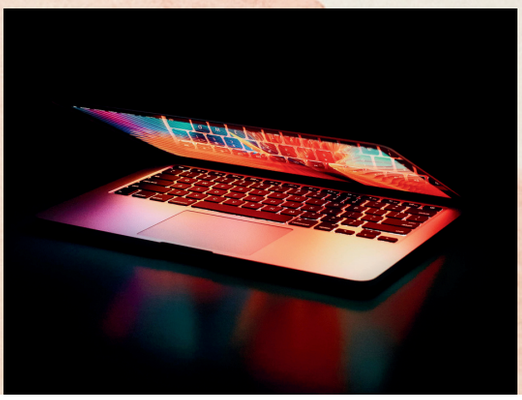


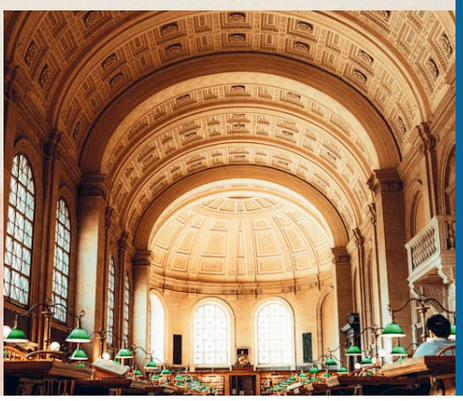
PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

City of Boston - Mayor's Office of LGBTQIA2s+ Advancement (MOLA) & MA Commission Against Discrimination

Resource guidebook, co-created as a Northeastern Capstone project, receives mayoral citation









REAL SOLUTIONS *in the community*



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Food Rescue US - Boston

$10k grant investment in pilot program as a result of Capstone student involvement

2025 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

From preserving cultural heritage through the South End Jazz Oral History project, to designing community-centered art installations in Boston's Chinatown, to tackling educational inequities impacting young people in Boston Housing Authority settings, to developing green retrofit strategies in Mattapan, Policy School students have addressed critical needs spanning housing, education, healthcare, and community development.

Projects have ranged from hyper-local initiatives such as creating an Asian American Cultural Community Center in Malden and supporting rent control campaigns in the Fenway, to broader systemic reforms such as modernizing Massachusetts's public benefits enrollment process and improving municipal liquor licensing systems.

Whether developing GIS mapping tools for community organizations, crafting advocacy strategies for healthcare legislation, evaluating municipal policies for LGBTQ+ advancement, or investigating public sector technology hiring practices in Chicago, these Capstone projects showcase students' ability to deliver academic rigor with real-world impact.

Students are so valuable as partners because they're not constrained by years of industry experience telling them what's 'impossible.'

They bring fresh perspectives and aren't afraid to propose bold, unconventional ideas. They look at our food system and ask fundamental questions like: 'Why don't we have a robust public sector approach to food security?'

I firmly believe we can innovate transformative solutions. These solutions exist; we just haven't discovered them yet. And I'd rather invest the time to develop those breakthrough ideas with students than settle for incremental improvements.

That's how real change happens.

CHARLIE BURNS, SITE DIRECTOR, FOOD RESCUE BOSTON





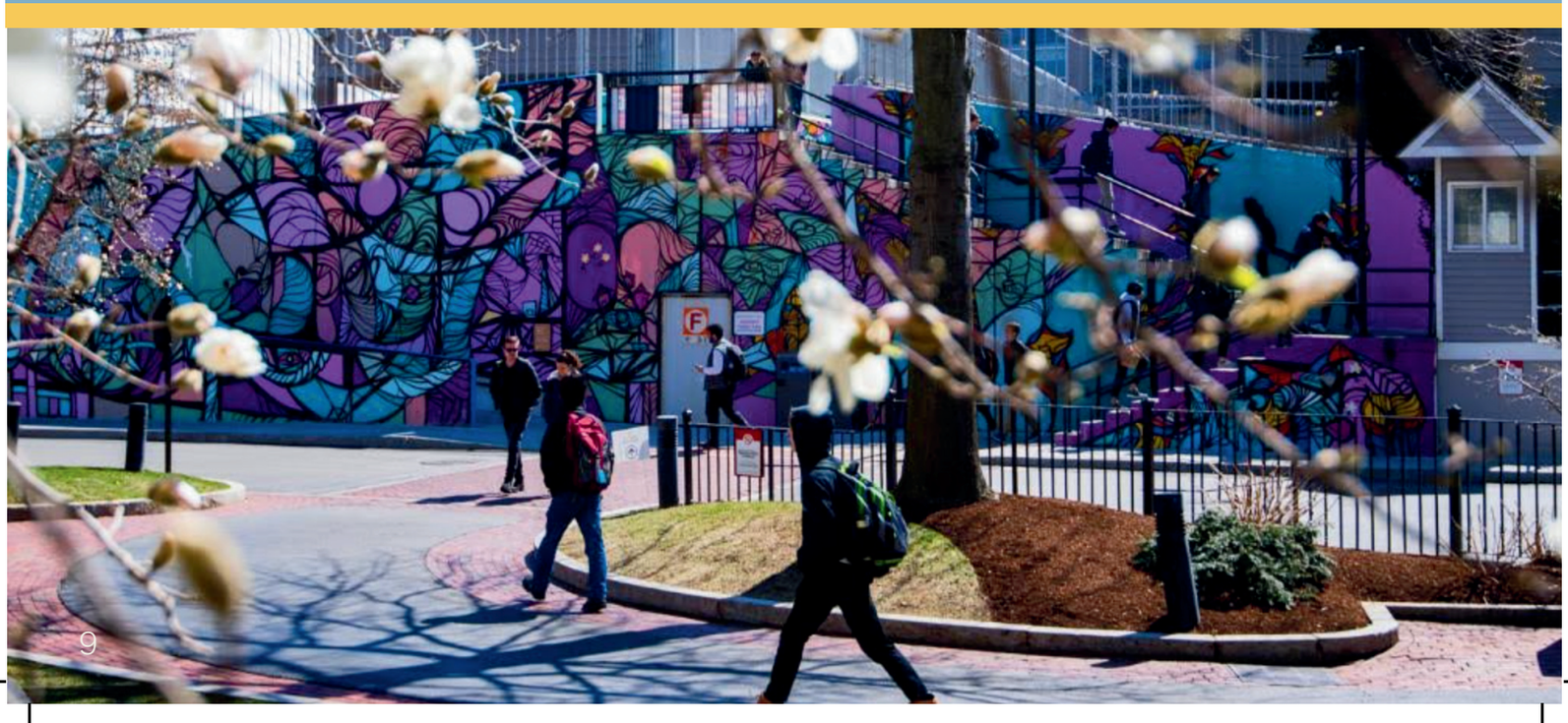


URBAN INNOVATION

Policy is the bridge between urban landscapes and the people who bring them to life. At the Policy School, our scholars engage in and with communities, making urban planning research tangible. We ***build resilience in the systems*** that animate city spaces: transportation, housing, health, education, and economic development.

We explore innovative technology solutions while ensuring that community voices always lead the way. Our students present findings at government agencies, our faculty brief legislators, and our partnerships span from local neighborhoods to international consortiums. ***Breakthrough research leads to breakthrough impact.***

our spaces



Realizing economic potential of green infrastructure



Transforming green infrastructure planning

The NULab for Digital Humanities and Computational Social Science, co-directed by Prof. Moira Zellner, transforms policy research by enabling deeper understanding of public attitudes. Prof. Zellner's community-led digital twin technology revolutionizes urban planning by centering residents in green infrastructure decisions. Through computational and digital tools, the lab develops solutions addressing key policy questions while creating more equitable outcomes for communities. NULab's 8th annual interdisciplinary conference explored topics including digital community archive projects, participatory modeling methods, collaborative algorithm development, and digital resources for collaboration and learning.

LAB SPOTLIGHT:
NULab for Digital Humanities and Computational Social Science
The NULab bridges technology, humanities, and social science to explore critical social and cultural challenges, with a focus on social justice, ethics, and equity. *Co-director: Moira Zellner*

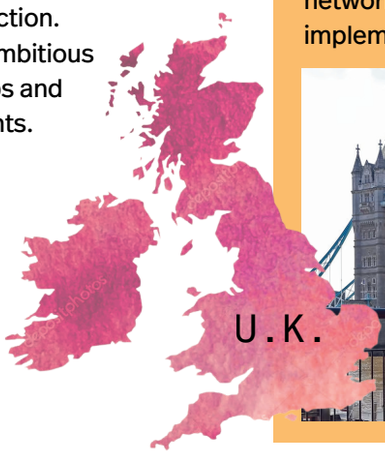
Powering Boston's Green New Deal opportunities

The City of Boston hosted representatives from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and six European cities with each city sharing insights on its initiatives. Prof. Joan Fitzgerald presented research from Northeastern's C2C and Dukakis Center identifying the specific occupational and skill requirements needed for climate action. The research advances the city's ambitious environmental goals create real jobs and economic opportunities for residents.



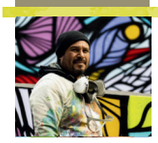
Expanding global green economy networks from Boston to London

When cities across continents share green economy strategies, real change accelerates. Prof. Joan Fitzgerald's dialogue with the Greater London Authority and Lewisham Council has created a knowledge network that helps local governments worldwide implement more effective environmental policies.

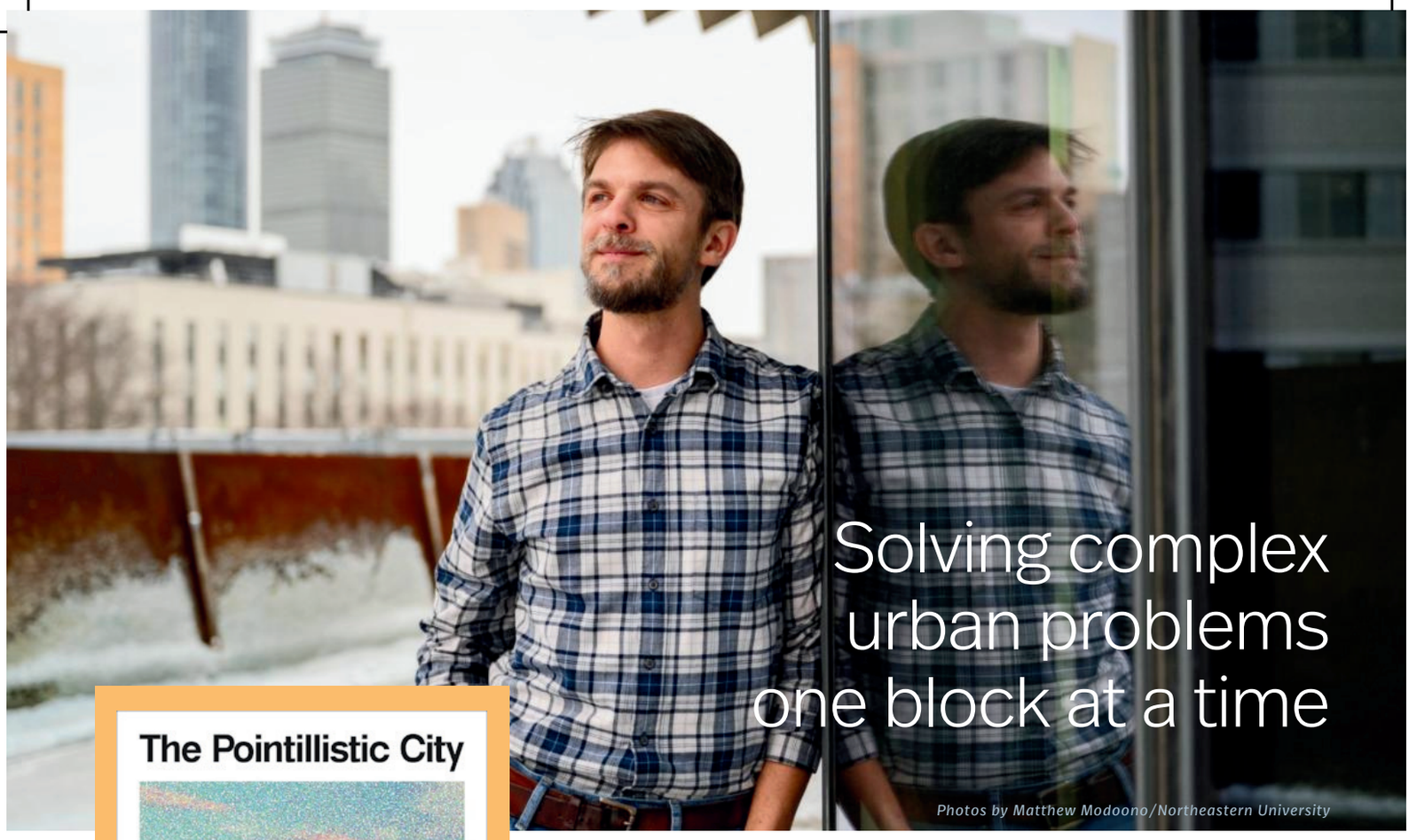




DANIEL ANGUILU

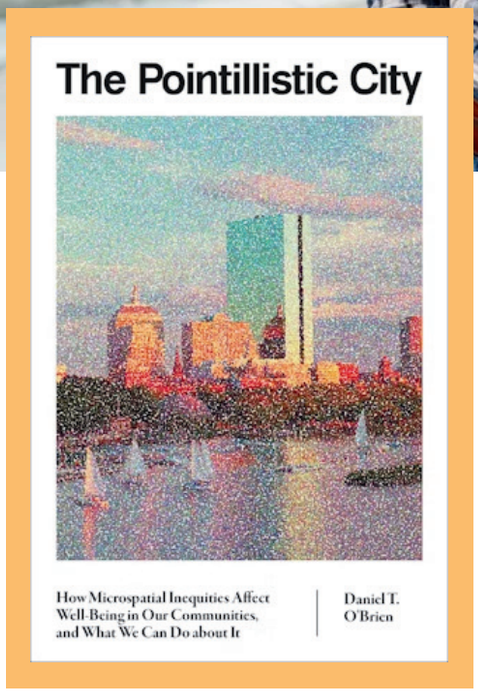


OPPOSITE PAGE | Section of "100 Years of Solitude" mural by Daniel Anguilu
Graffiti artist Daniel Anguilu's mural formally kicked off Northeastern's Public Art Program in 2014 and was expanded nearly a decade later when the artist was invited back. Anguilu's style of magical realism incorporates abstract shapes, animal imagery, and vibrant color to create works rooted both in Mexican indigenous art and street art.



Solving complex urban problems one block at a time

Photos by Matthew Modoono/Northeastern University



***The Pointillistic City* (MIT Press)**
Daniel T. O'Brien

Connecting the dots in urban systems

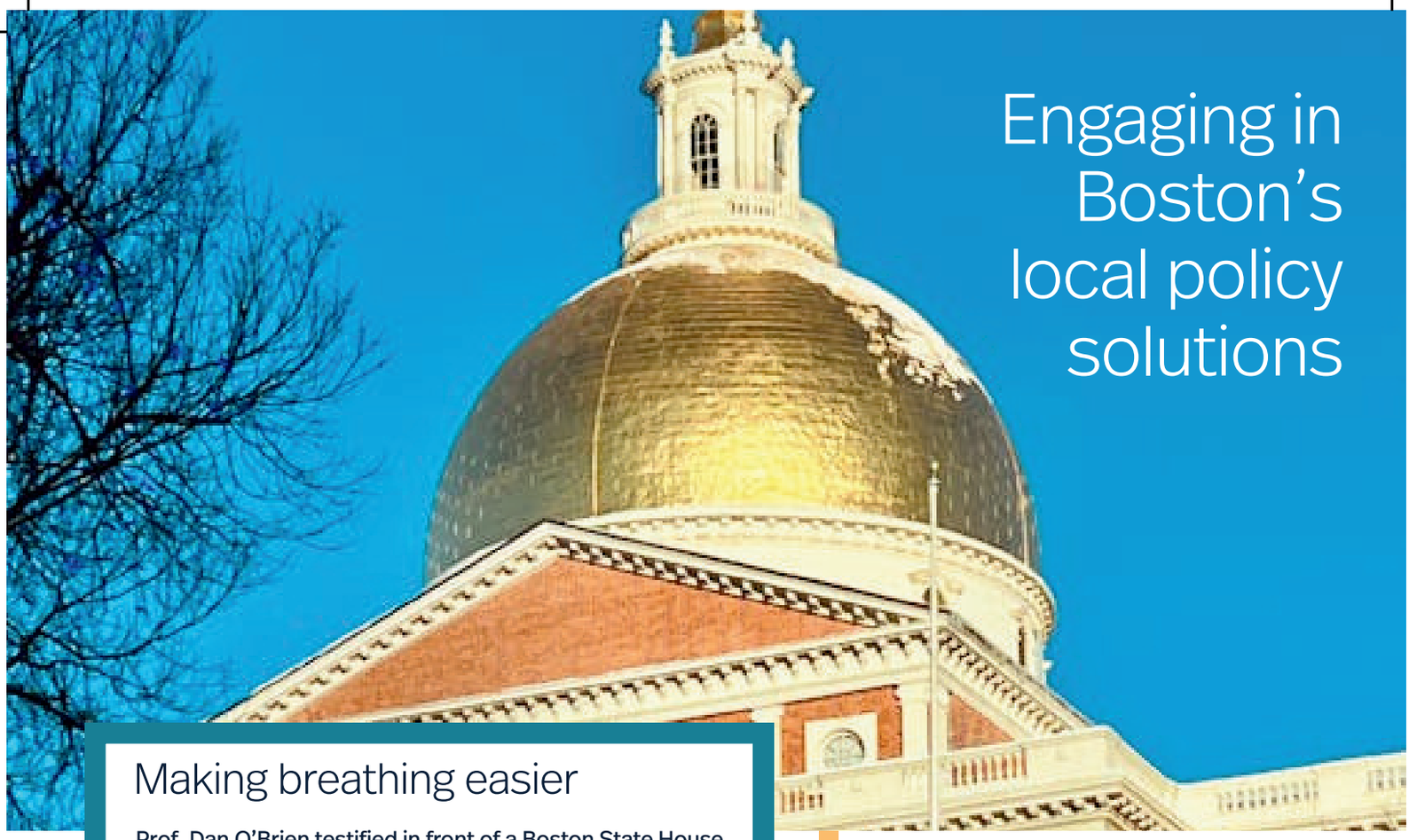
Prof. Dan O'Brien's new book extends the classic observation that "where you live matters" for health and well-being. He presents the case that we need to pay more attention to all geographic scales, including streets within neighborhoods and even properties within streets, and how they each affect us. This is analogous to a pointillistic painting, which is similarly organized into dots within objects that reveals a complete image.

This "pointillistic perspective" surfaces microspatial inequities, or disparities between people living in the same neighborhood, as a pressing, overlooked concern for science, policy, and practice. The book illustrates this through two civic research projects: one on the impact of problem properties on public safety; and the other on the pertinence of "urban heat islets" and other hyperlocal hazards to environmental justice. It offers guidance for designing policies and practices that address microspatial inequities, with an emphasis on putting cutting-edge data in the hands of communities.



Partnering with the Massachusetts state legislature

The groundbreaking work of Boston Area Research Institute (BARI) included receiving a prestigious PIT-UN Network Challenge Grant to develop community- and youth-led public interest AI frameworks, organizing civic technology workshops for low-income and BIPOC youth in Boston Public Schools, and creating civic technologist internships. The initiative's research has delivered measurable environmental impact; it helped reduce methane emissions from gas leaks by 46% between 2021 and 2024, evaluated Salem's $685,000 Guaranteed Basic Income pilot program affecting 100 low-income residents, and developed new financial tools to accelerate affordable housing production for moderate-income homeowners. Through the Boston Data Portal, community consultation services, and annual conferences that bring together researchers, policymakers, and community leaders, BARI drives real-world solutions to urban challenges while building a more equitable and sustainable region.



Engaging in Boston's local policy solutions

Making breathing easier

Prof. Dan O'Brien testified in front of a Boston State House legislative briefing, which featured firsthand testimony and expert opinions on the importance of indoor and outdoor air quality and healthy living spaces, particularly in environmental justice communities.

> ***There's an old saying that you can't fix what you don't measure. We need to collect more data on air pollution in the Commonwealth, especially who is impacted the most and why, so we can develop targeted strategies for improving the environmental health of our communities.***
>
> PROF. DAN O'BRIEN TESTIMONY TO THE BOSTON LEGISLATURE



RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT:
Boston Area Research Initiative (BARI)
A statewide initiative, BARI partnership positions the university at the forefront of civic research that directly transforms policy and communities across Greater Boston. *Director: Dan O'Brien*

Leading on early childhood education policy research

Prof. Kimberly D. Lucas and colleagues launched the first-ever MA Early Childhood Policy Research Summit, which brought together more than 100 researchers, policymakers, practitioners, students, and funders to think about ways to support young children, families, and early educators across the Commonwealth. Prof. Lucas spoke to the importance of "creating spaces for other people to surprise you," inviting area experts to co-create the kind of research, data, and design infrastructure that would best support the Commonwealth's youngest learners, their families, and their early educators for bright futures.



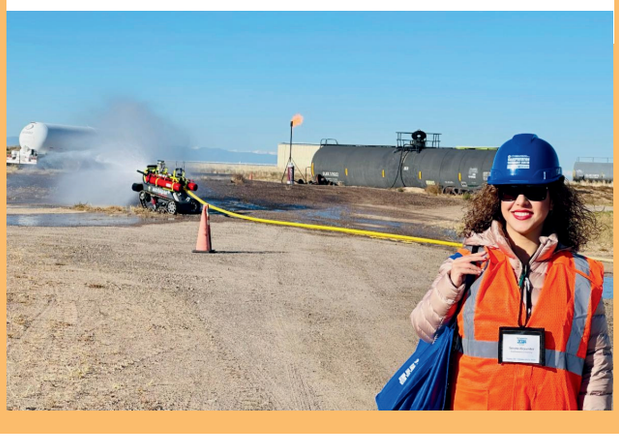
Photo credit: Strategies for Children



Building interdisciplinary research partnerships

Planning resilient transit systems at the federal level

Prof. Serena Alexander and PhD student Carmella Uwineza are strengthening America's freight and rail infrastructure through their resilience planning research cunducted directly with the Federal Railroad Administration at the Transportation Technology Center in Pueblo, Colorado. Their research helps the nation's critical transportation networks better withstand climate challenges and economic disruptions.





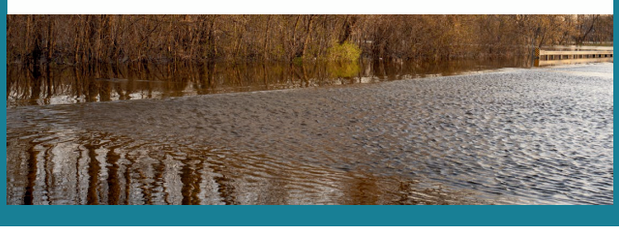


Leveraging data science to optimize mobility

PhD student Josh Rosen's collaboration with the University of Houston reveals how digital rideshare services reshape urban development. This research helps cities understand and plan for the changing ways people move through metropolitan areas.

Reducing flood risk in Maine

Prof. Damon Hall along with engineering and science professors Samuel Muñoz, James Dennedy-Frank, and Geoffrey C. Trussell partnered directly with flood-prone communities to create breakthrough decision-support tools that predict local flooding risks and guide resilience planning. By combining community knowledge with cutting-edge earth system science they protect lives and infrastructure from increasingly severe flood events.





Influencing electric vehicle supply chains policy discussions

PhD student Maddie Craig-Scheckman presented "Driving the Future: Leveraging Regional Cooperation for Inclusive, Sustainable, and Resilient Electric Vehicle Battery Supply Chains" at the Third Senior Officials Meeting (SOM3) and Automotive Dialogue in Lima, Peru, directly shaping dialogue on equitable clean transportation infrastructure across the Americas.



Addressing urban displacement via community-engaged architecture

Prof. Lily Song's course ARCH 5115: Anti-Displacement Studio partnered with the Chinatown Community Land Trust to engage architecture students directly with Boston's Chinatown community in developing practical solutions to gentrification and displacement. Through hands-on fieldwork, community meetings, and data-driven visual presentations, students analyzed how immigrant communities respond to being priced out while working alongside longtime residents like organizer Suzanne Lee to preserve the neighborhood's cultural identity amid rising rents that now average $3,615 monthly–83% above the national average. This innovative course demonstrated how architecture education can serve community needs by teaching students to prioritize resident voices over isolated design concepts. Student projects received direct feedback from community partners and contributed to sustainable development models that support rather than displace existing businesses and residents.

Boston's Youth Literary Advisory Board students physically deconstructed printed Boston maps and reassembled the fragments to create a collaborative composition that emphasized neighborhoods where they spent the most time while allowing less-traveled areas to recede into the background.

STUDENT-LED PROGRAM

Tackling the housing accessibility conundrum in the U.S.

In collaboration with Northeastern Association of Public Policy Students (NAPPS), the Policy School launched the Housing Policy Hour to address the pressing issue of housing in the United States. The inaugural session explored how state and municipal leaders can develop creative strategies to tackle homelessness, affordability, and housing equity. Director of Innovation and Research at the Boston Housing Authority and Northeastern lecturer Nick Kelly, a distinguished researcher and expert in fair housing and urban politics, offered his insights and guided a collaborative discussion. In these forums, real-world policy challenges inform the curriculum, while the innovative solutions raised by student practitioners shape the next generation of solutions.

> ***The Policy Hour bridged classroom learning with lived challenges, because as policy students, we're not just studying ideas, we're shaping the conversations that drive justice in our communities. My hope is that this was just the first of many student-led initiatives.***

VARTIKA GOVIL '26 (MPP), HOUSING ADVOCATE AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES AT THE SOMERVILLE OFFICE OF HOUSING STABILITY

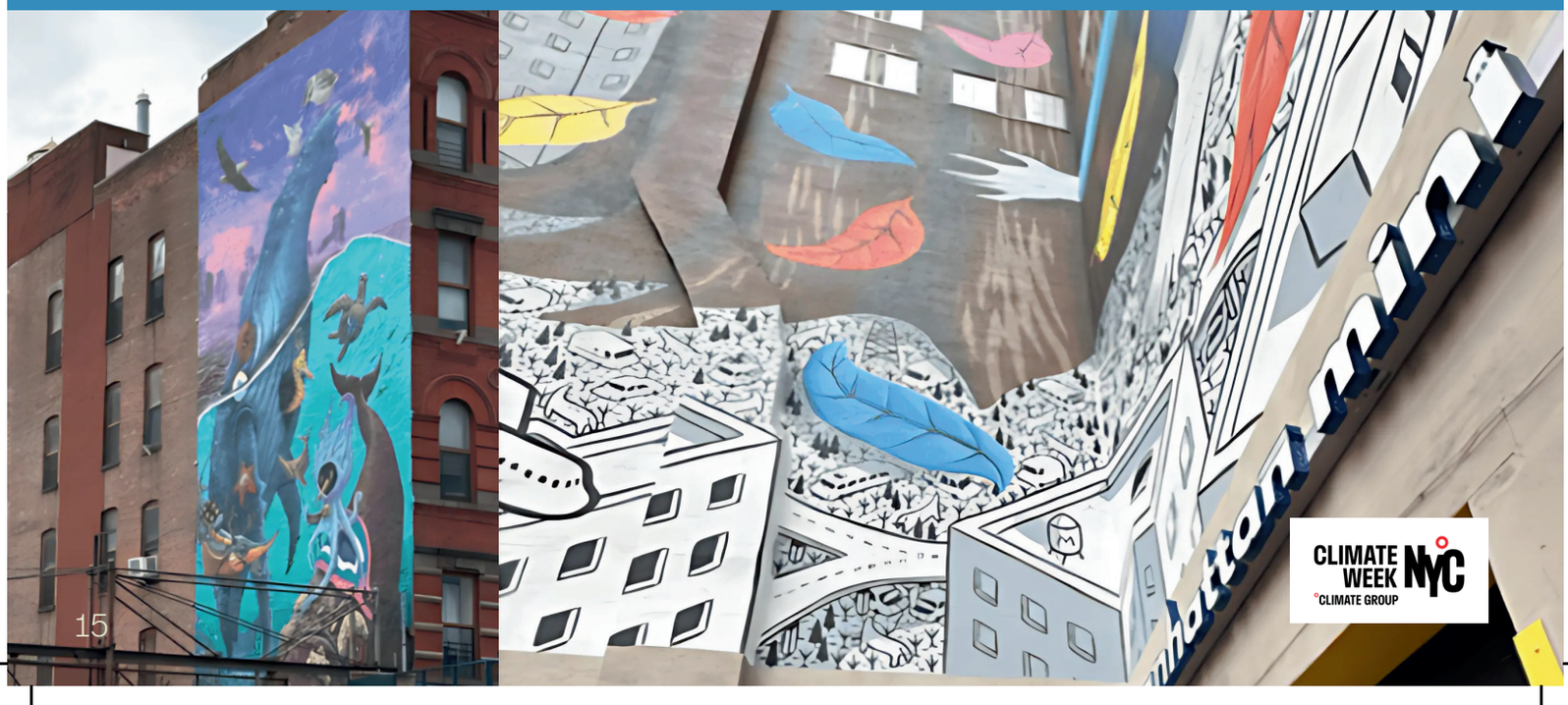
ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Policy is the catalyst that transforms complex environmental challenges into actionable solutions.

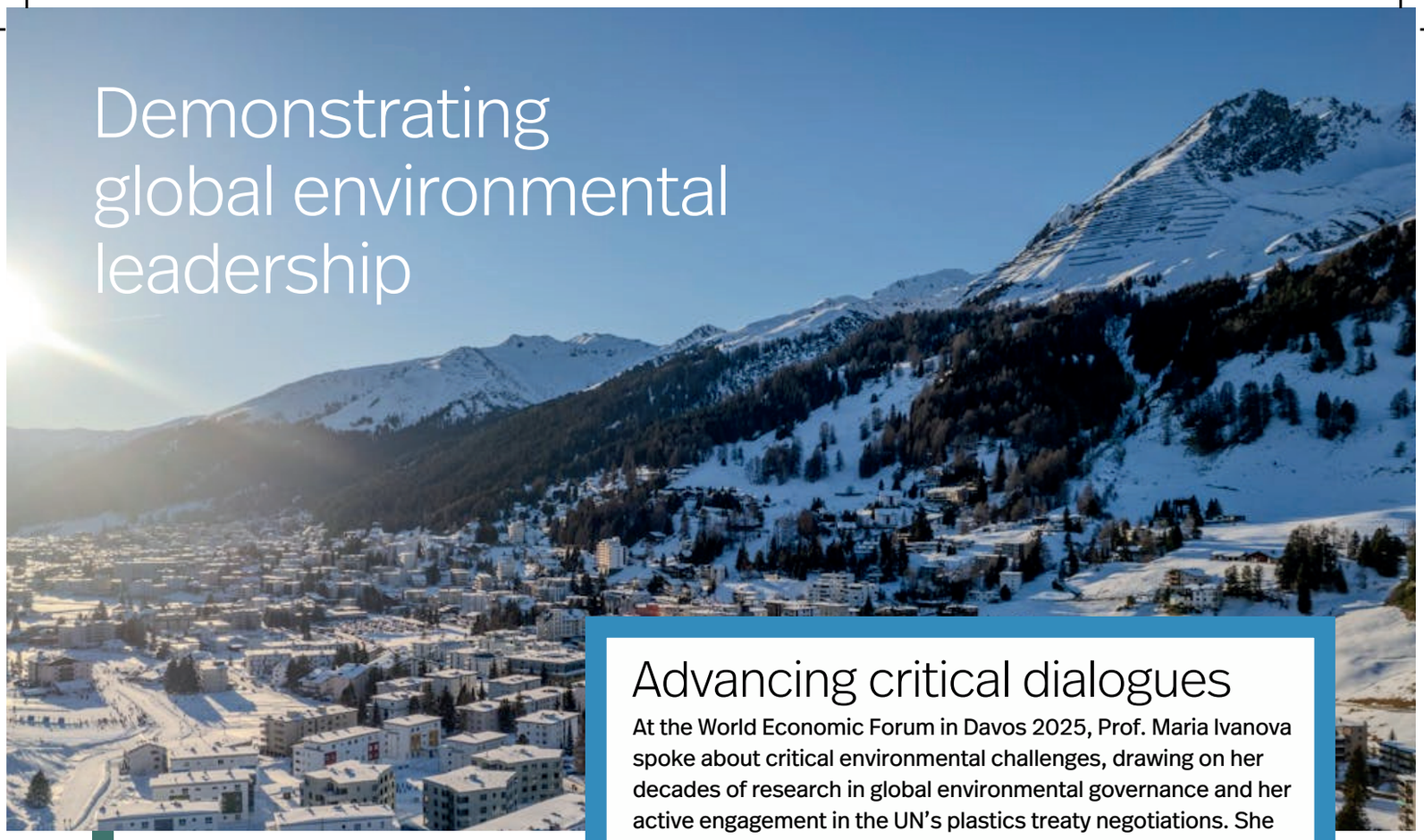
The Policy School scholars shape international agreements that unlock billions in climate financing, then ***ensure that those resources reach local communities*** to implement. By creating direct pathways from community networks to UN negotiation tables, we are crafting effective policy at every level where change happens.

Our research ***breaks down the silos*** between global institutions and grassroots movements, amplifying local wisdom. We develop ***technology-centered approaches*** that influence how cities design green infrastructure, how states craft environmental policy, and how international bodies rethink climate solutions. We pioneer community-led resilience innovations that scale from ***neighborhoods to nations***.

our planet



Demonstrating global environmental leadership



Advancing critical dialogues

At the World Economic Forum in Davos 2025, Prof. Maria Ivanova spoke about critical environmental challenges, drawing on her decades of research in global environmental governance and her active engagement in the UN's plastics treaty negotiations. She brought the perspective of both a scholar and a practitioner, showing how collective action, informed by science and anchored in institutions, can drive transformative global agreements. By connecting academic insight with policy practice, Prof. Ivanova underscored how universities can shape solutions with the potential to eliminate plastic pollution.

Accelerating global commitments at NYC Climate Week and the UN Summit of the Future

Northeastern's Global Environmental Governance Project (GEG), led by Policy School Director Maria Ivanova, engaged in multiple spaces during Climate Week 2024 in New York City including the Green Schools Conference, Street Art for Mankind, the Climate Action Outdoor Museum, and the UN Global Compact Leaders Summit.

The Policy School and the GEG team hosted an official side event at the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the UN during the UN Summit of the Future and Action Days to engage in discussions and discuss solutions for deepening and accelerating global commitments.







STREET ART FOR MANKIND



OPPOSITE PAGE | "Climate Action Outdoor Museum" from Street Art For Mankind

A non-profit organization working with prominent street artists to create large murals all around the world, aiming to raise awareness on social justice and environmental issues, and to give the public the means to become actors of change.

Left: "Ocean Ecosystem Restoration Mural" *by @dulk1 | Right:* "Urban Ecosystem Restoration Mural" *by @Millo*



Leading interdisciplinary science and policy dialogue

Launching The Plastics Center

Policy School Director Maria Ivanova and Prof. Aron Stubbins from the Colleges of Science and Engineering have launched The Plastics Center, an impactful initiative at Northeastern University. Bringing together expertise from the sciences, engineering, policy, and the arts, the Center will serve as a hub for interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty, students, industry leaders, and policymakers. Its mission is to develop sustainable, systems-based solutions for plastic production, use, and disposal, ensuring that plastics can continue to serve society's needs while minimizing their negative impacts on the environment and public health. Plastics are integral to modern life, yet their widespread use and disposal pose a threat to both human health and the environment.

CENTER SPOTLIGHT:

The Plastics Center

Northeastern's new interdisciplinary research center will serve as a global leader in the fight against plastic pollution and offers a new model where the Policy School's diplomatic relationships create space for meaningful global governance participation. *Directors: Maria Ivanova, Aron Stubbins.*



Working together to make plastics safer throughout the lifecycle

Building the infrastructure for small state leadership

The strategic Ambuli Dialogues focused on small state leadership in multilateral governance and laid the groundwork for meaningful participation in global plastics treaty negotiations. Conversations in Washington D.C. and at the Rwandan Mission to the U.N. brought together experts, students, and practitioners to explore how smaller nations can effectively engage in complex multilateral processes. This preparatory work proved instrumental at INC 5 and 5.2, where the Northeastern delegation demonstrated the power of stakeholder engagement. These efforts, extending from the Summit of the Future through multiple UN events, culminated in the creation of the Plastics Center, transforming dialogue into tangible policy infrastructure.





Reflecting on the plastics paradox



Engaging in global negotiations

Policy School Director Maria Ivanova led the Northeastern delegation's participation at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee's fifth session (INC-5.1), which sought to create a legally binding global treaty on plastics. Eight faculty and students traveled to Busan, South Korea, to engage in these historic global negotiations. They hosted a side event on the importance of disclosure and reporting in the new agreement in collaboration with CDP Worldwide, a think tank in the UK.







Tackling the leadership equity gap through intergenerational dialogue

Adjacent to the negotiations, Policy School students Alexandra Carlotto, Marcello Fischer, Clara Copp-LaRocque, and Olga Skaredina collaborated with College of Arts, Media, and Design's Kylee Hendrie '25, and College of Science's Nicole Vandale to host *Beyond Promises: Delivering on Plastics Commitments, Leadership from the Middle-Out*. Under the leadership of Profs. Maria Ivanova and Aron Stubbins, diverse voices explored the transformative role of non-state actors in advancing plastics policy.

Speaking at TEDxBoston

At the Planet Action 2024 summit held on the MIT campus, Policy School Director Maria Ivanova delivered a TEDx talk on "The Plastic Paradox." In addition to examining our growing plastic footprint, Prof. Ivanova underlined the hazards microplastics pose to both human and planetary health and the role of art in raising awareness, She urged cities, companies, and campuses to lead the change that urgently needs to happen.



Plastic bottles generate enough waste annually to fill a line of 40-ton trucks stretching from New York to Bangkok and 91 percent of plastics is never recycled. We need collective action.

PROF. MARIA IVANOVA, POLICY SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Exploring global impacts



Confronting climate change in Bangladesh

Prof. Laura Kuhl spent February in Bangladesh as a visiting researcher with the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), exploring synergies and research collaborations on locally-led adaptation and loss and damage. She met with government officials, academics, and NGO and think tank leaders, and joined ICCCAD teams for fieldwork across the country. She also provided capacity-building sessions and lectures for students and researchers.





Exploring climate finance complexities

PhD student Istiakh Ahmed gave a talk on "Powering Justice: Climate Finance for Change in Tumultuous Times" at the *Environmental Joy: Roadmaps for Resistance, Resilience, and Thriving* conference at Yale University.



Unveiling human-environment digital narratives

PhD student Vaishali Kushwaha launched a pilot workshop aimed at integrating digital proficiencies into environmental education and education for sustainable development through collaboration with community members.



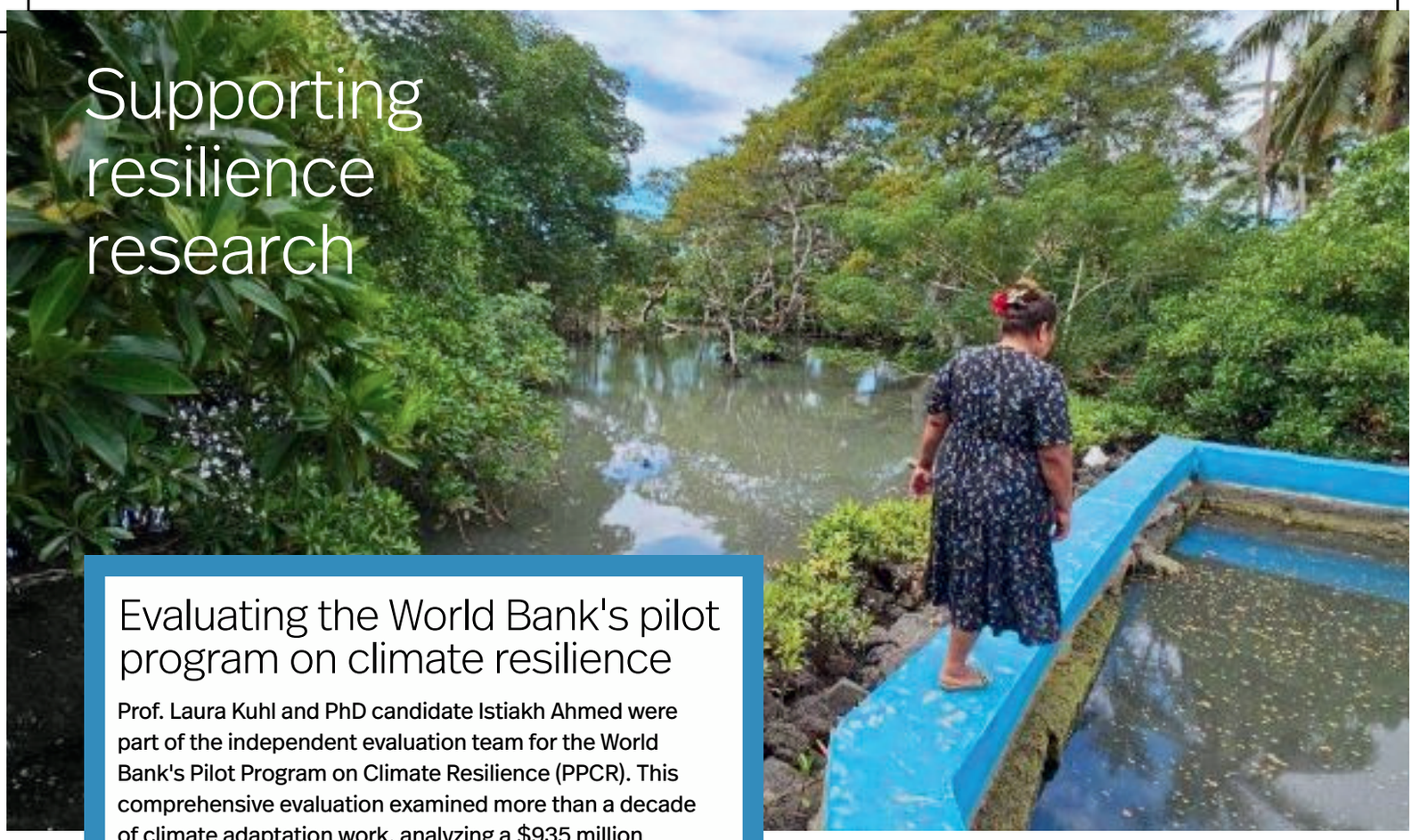
Photo credit: Northeastern Global News

Considering AI's role in sustainability solutions

Prof. Moira Zellner, speaking at a keynote panel on "AI and the Future of Climate Innovation" during Northeastern's Sustainability Week, emphasized the importance of placing computational science within a humanities framework and engaging people in the computations so that humans and AI together generate solutions.

> ***Technology alone will not save us, if technology just keeps perpetuating the exploitation of resources, of other humans.***
>
> PROF. MOIRA ZELLNER

Supporting resilience research

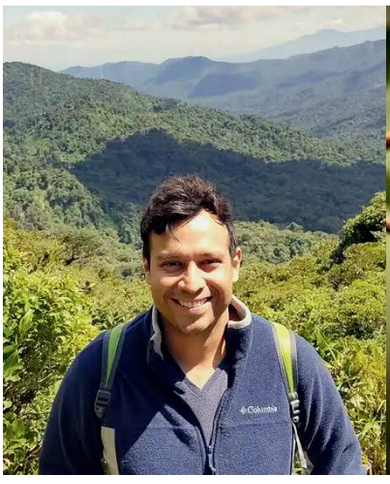


Evaluating the World Bank's pilot program on climate resilience

Prof. Laura Kuhl and PhD candidate Istiakh Ahmed were part of the independent evaluation team for the World Bank's Pilot Program on Climate Resilience (PPCR). This comprehensive evaluation examined more than a decade of climate adaptation work, analyzing a $935 million portfolio spanning 64 projects across 18 countries and two regions (the Caribbean and the Pacific).

Linking climate change and biodiversity

PhD student Johan Arango-Quiroga traveled to Cali, Colombia to attend the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 16). He focused on environmental action led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and observed negotiations seeking to strengthen the linkages between climate change and biodiversity.







STUDENT-LED PROGRAM

Simulating urban sustainability

The Northeastern Association for Public Policy Students (NAPPS) hosted its first Urban Sustainability Simulation. organized by Tayte Adderley '25 (MPP). Student teams competed in a game scenario focused on an urban water crisis occurring in fictional Freeport City. Participants were charged, as the Freeport Water Task Force's policy analysts, to implement policies that would bring about water sustainability in the city.

> ***I think each student that participated learned something new for facing multifaceted issues in our world.***
>
> TAYTE ADDERLEY '25 (MPP)

POLICY & THE ARTS

Policy is connecting human stories to systemic change.

The Policy School harnesses creative expression to move policy action forward in ways that traditional approaches alone cannot. ***The most effective policies emerge when communities can see themselves in the solutions***, when complex data becomes compelling storytelling, and when civic imagination expands beyond conventional frameworks.

When we blend cultural expression with policy innovation, we transform how solutions are conveyed, weighed, and discussed. We are opening dialogues that fundamentally expand who participates, showing what becomes possible ***when creativity activates civic engagement***.

our stories



Artwork: Innocent Nkurunziza

Connecting policy and the arts

Makers & Shakers: an Arts and Policy Gathering showcased how the Policy School integrates creativity with policy innovation to drive meaningful social impact. Co-hosted with the Berklee College of Music, the evening featured live performances from Berklee musicians. We showcased works by Rwandan artist and environmental advocate Innocent Nkurunziza, who harvests his own paints from nature and uses sustainably sourced tree bark in place of canvas.



Pictured right: Dr. Krystal Prime Banfield, Vice President for Education Outreach, Social Entrepreneurship at Berklee College of Music with Policy School Director Maria Ivanova
Pictured below: Berklee musicians Anibal Cruz and Yandy Garcia of C & B Productions







Viewing global energy access through a community lens

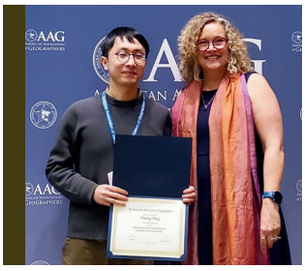
Prof. Laura Kuhl co-created photography exhibits with community partners as part of her Sloan-funded project on energy equity. Through a study of energy landscapes in Puerto Rico, West Virginia, and Massachusetts, this project explores community visions of energy futures. Using the participatory research method Photovoice, local participants took photographs in response to the prompt:

What are the challenges with the energy system in your community and what are your visions for the future, especially given the major federal investments in the energy system?

Communities shared and discussed their photos in focus groups. The photos and group feedback were then displayed together with the energy futures perspectives in a dialogue to spark broader conversation.







Capturing cultural geographies on camera

At the American Association of Geographers (AAG) annual meeting in Detroit, PhD student Yimeng Yang placed as a runner-up in the AAG Best Papers in Geography and Entrepreneurship Award. He also received Honorable Mention in the Urban Geography Group's Student Paper Award and was a Judge's Choice Winner in a photography competition of the Cultural Geography Group. Yimeng's photo will be published in the *Journal of Material Culture*.



Staging civic stories

Data Theatre Collaborative awarded Mellon Foundation grant

Prof. Moira Zellner is part of the interdisciplinary Northeastern team behind the Data Theatre Collective, led by Prof. Dani Snyder-Young. The initiative was awarded a Higher Learning Open Call grant from the Mellon Foundation, the nation's largest funder of the arts, culture, and humanities. The team received a grant funding for their project on Data Theatre for Civic Deliberation, to translate quantitative data into embodied storytelling through data theatre workshops and participatory performance events. This engaged community stakeholders in decision-making about local issues like gentrification and urban green space development.





Leveraging the arts to empower adolescents

In an ongoing project in India, Prof. Shantanu Khanna, together with Prof. Nishith Prakash and others, is examining how a novel and multifaceted curriculum using a theatre-centered pedagogy impacts middle school students' acquisition of crucial foundational skills to navigate their personal, social, and academic lives.



Tapping expressive arts interventions to fight gender-based violence in India

Prof. Nishith Prakash's initiated a study evaluating a novel, theatre-based training intervention designed to reduce gender bias and improve gender-based-violence response among police officers in Bihar, India. The intervention was delivered to more than 1,800 officers across 217 treatment police stations in a randomized controlled trial covering 42 million people.

INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT:
Global Action for Policy (GAP)
An interdisciplinary initiative that partners with government, NGOs, and other stakeholders to design, test, and scale evidence-based solutions to complex policy challenges, emphasizing long-term collaborations.
Director: Nishith Prakash, Silvia Prina.

Engaging with art to shift policy



> ***"People don't change their minds because of facts. They do because of feelings. And this is where I think art is absolutely critical to shift the needle on policy."***
>
> PROF. MARIA IVANOVA
>
> *As quoted in AP News, August 2025*

Building partnerships for sustainable solutions

> ***This isn't just a waste issue. It's a health issue. And the burden isn't just ours, it's one we pass on.***
>
> BENJAMIN VON WONG, ARTIST

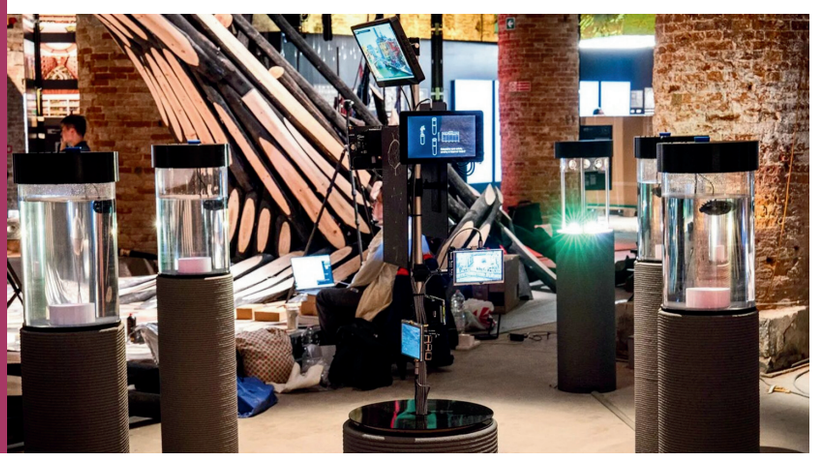
At the plastics negotiations, INC-5.2, in Geneva, governments failed to agree on a global treaty, but Northeastern's delegation underscored the critical role of academia in tackling global challenges. Led by Prof. Maria Ivanova, the delegation engaged UN officials, business leaders, NGOs, and US congressional staff to share their interdisciplinary vision for eliminating plastic pollution. The delegation included Nicole Vandale, Prof. Aron Stubbins, Prof. Maria Ivanova, Olga Skaredina, Prof. Kirsten Rodine-Hardy, and Davis Bookhart. The team left with renewed urgency and momentum, building partnerships to position the Plastics Center at Northeastern as a catalyst for lasting solutions.





Turning the tide on climate change

Prof. Dietmar Offenhuber and his team created a project that makes otherwise imperceptible climate impacts visible by conceiving the city of Venice itself "as a computer, as an environment that processes information." The water computer installation was presented at the *Biennale Architecttura* in Venice, the largest festival of its kind.



> ***We can look at environmental processes on a much broader scale. If you look at these slow changes, you can't really perceive them. We can harness environmental systems to make those changes more apparent.***
>
> PROF. DIETMAR OFFENHUBER

THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Policy is building resilience from the ground up.

The Policy School helps communities flourish through deep partnerships, constructive reflection, and an unwavering commitment to fairness. Our approach to community-building recognizes lasting change requires confronting difficult histories while simultaneously ***creating new pathways for civic participation***. We expand engagement in knowledge creation while ensuring that ***academic excellence serves the social good***.

Through our cutting-edge scholarship and our community-engaged science outreach, we amplify grassroots voices and evidence-based strategies. When we engage with deeply-knotted civic challenges, we demonstrate that university partnerships build more resilient, sustainable, and just places to live. ***We model how policy serves people.***

our systems





> ***This is the kind of meaningful work that good university-government partnerships can—and do—produce.***
>
> KELLEE TSAI, DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THE HUMANITIES

Earning a Mayoral citation for an anti-discrimination guidebook

Making resources accessible

Policy School 2025 alumni Lucas Sensius (MPA), Alexandria Bethune (MPA), Alyson Mullings (MPA), and Marie Stephens (MPP) received a Mayoral Citation from Boston Mayor Michelle Wu. They received the citation during the June LGBTQ+ Pride flag raising and celebration at City Hall Plaza. The honor recognized their Capstone project, a comprehensive guidebook on navigating discrimination in Massachusetts, developed in partnership with the Mayor's Office of LGBTQIA2S+ Advancement (MOLA) and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD). The resource embodies the Policy School mission of conducting civic research for the greater good. This guidebook will serve not just the LGBTQ+ community but all residents facing harassment and discrimination based on their identity.







SILVIA LOPEZ CHAVEZ



OPPOSITE PAGE | “Wild Scape” mural, Google, SILVIA LOPEZ CHAVEZ

Silvia López Chavez is a Dominican-American visual artist whose community-centered murals form connections across disciplines and cultural boundaries. She uses joy as an act of resistance and celebration through her vibrant work worldwide.

Reflecting on Boston's history

Photo: Prof. Ted Landsmark, Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, and Arnold Arboretum Director William (Ned) Friedman



Honoring a legacy

Prof. Ted Landsmark joined Boston Mayor Michelle Wu in a moment of restorative justice and reconciliation as the city renamed Flora Way in honor of an 18th-century Black woman who was enslaved in Boston. The ceremony highlighted the importance of acknowledging and commemorating Boston's complex history.



Deconstructing desegregation's legacy in the Boston Public Schools

On the 50th anniversary of the court-ordered decision that mandated busing, a panel brought together community members, practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to reflect on educational equity. Prof. Ted Landsmark joined the MIT Blueprint Labs-curated conversation "50 years after Garrity: School integration and performance in Boston Public Schools."



Collaborating on family child care report

In Spring 2024, Prof. Kimberly D. Lucas teamed up with students Khaing May Oo '26 (MPP), Zoe Madu '25 (MPP), and Innocentia Ashai '25 (MA International Affairs) to co-author a report titled "Understanding 'Post-Pandemic' Family Child Care Providers: Why New Providers Entered the Field and Why Others Left." The project, conducted in partnership with Dr. Wendy Wagner Robeson and her undergraduate team at the Wellesley Centers for Women, sheds light on the motivations and challenges faced by family child care providers in the aftermath of the pandemic.



Creating spaces for dialogue and discourse

Reappraising Boston's history of Black property value disparity

MUPP student Maria Salim and Prof. Lily Song jointly presented their research at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) 2024 Annual Conference in Seattle. The title of their presentation was "Unsettled Accounts: Participatory research on Black property ownership and unjust takings in Boston."



CENTER SPOTLIGHT:

The Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy
The Center's collaborative research and problem-solving model uses powerful data analysis, multidisciplinary research and evaluation techniques, and a policy-driven perspective to address critical challenges facing urban areas. *Director: Alicia Modestino*

> ***Because we have a basis in experiential learning, we can teach people the reality, the vicissitudes, of being an ethical and empathetic public servant.***

PROF. TED LANDSMARK

Advancing global decolonial geography research

Prof. Cara Michell presented cutting-edge research at the prestigious Royal Geographical Society conference in London. Prof. Michell shared her ongoing participatory mapping work at the Flatbush African Burial Ground with Shanna Sabio of Grow House Community and Urban Development on the panel "Intellectual Gaslighting: Mapping the Decolonial Erasures and Recovery of Global Black Geographies in Europe". This work was generously funded by a C2C Policy Fellowship.





Enhancing public safety and global security

COLLABORATION SPOTLIGHT:
Global Resilience Institute
Driving innovative solutions to strengthen resilience across communities, infrastructure, and systems through interdisciplinary expertise and collaboration. *Co-Directors: Daniel Aldrich, Stephen Flynn*



Addressing gender-based violence in India

In collaboration with the Hyderabad City Police, Prof. Nishith Prakash evaluated the effectiveness of their Safety, Health, and Environment (SHE) Teams in combating sexual harassment in public spaces. His paper on this topic was accepted for publication in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Redefining crisis response

Prof. Daniel Aldrich's groundbreaking research reveals how interconnected global crises from pandemics to climate disasters to geopolitical conflicts are creating unprecedented "polycrises." These demand transformative "polysolutions," fundamentally reshaping how institutions and decision-makers must approach systemic resilience in an increasingly complex world.

> ***We're in a new era of disasters and shocks and the old terminology that we've been using until now doesn't really capture the degree to which we've really shifted.***
>
> PROF. DANIEL ALDRICH



Altering the aftermath of violent crimes

Prof. Matthew Ross, Criminal Justice Research Fellow at Arnold Ventures, is collaborating with leading experts at the Urban Institute to develop breakthrough strategies that strengthen support systems for victims and transform how the justice system responds to violent crimes.



Feeding communities effectively

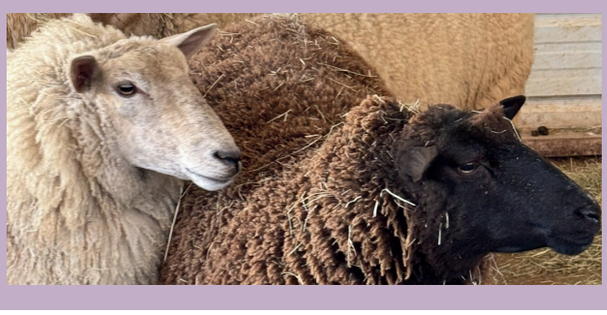


Prioritizing farmworker health and safety

Prof. Kaitlyn Alvarez Noli launched the Worker Protection Lab, a new initiative within the Social Science and Environmental Health Research Institute (SSEHRI). It focuses on occupational health in agriculture by studying the structural and regulatory conditions that shape pesticide safety and influence the health of immigrant farmworkers. This new lab addresses critical gaps in occupational health protection by studying how structural and regulatory conditions affect worker safety. Generating evidence to inform policies could protect thousands of agricultural workers nationwide and improve food system equity.

Creating sustainable food systems in the South

PhD student David Jefferson engaged at SOWTH 2025, a conference bringing together farmers, ranchers, researchers, advocates, and producers from across the Southeast to discuss the future of agriculture and food systems. David's work explores agroecological practices to build more sustainable and equitable food systems in the region. He toured High Hog Farm, a space deeply rooted in Black Agrarianism and ancestral arts, reflecting on regenerative farming practices, rotational livestock grazing, and the cultivation of food, fibers, and natural dyes from heritage breeds and heirloom seeds.



> ***Attending SOWTH 2025 was a powerful reminder of how deeply food policy shapes the health and resilience of our communities.***
>
> ***The workshop sessions and farm tours were rooted in the realities of Black food sovereignty, agricultural resistance, and the ongoing fight for access to land, equitable treatment under the law, and financial resources. These are not abstract policy goals. Rather, they are urgent, place-based demands echoed across rural, urban, and regional landscapes.***
>
> ***Food policy must be recognized as a frontline issue everywhere. It holds the power to either reinforce systems of dispossession or actively dismantle them. Food is power, and when reclaimed by our communities, it becomes a radical act of resistance, empowerment, and liberation.***
>
> DAVID JEFFERSON, PHD STUDENT

ENGAGED NETWORK

Policy is shaped by the people in the conversation.

The Policy School is the only policy education institution in direct partnership with the United Nations. Our faculty and students have seats at the tables where international frameworks are crafted. Our research translates directly into policy tools that governments use and fellowship opportunities that ***place our scholars in decision-making roles.***

This network spans from local government appointments and community partnerships to international research collaborations and global policy forums. Lasting change requires ***presence, participation, and the credibility*** that comes from time-tested impact.

our reach



Policy School in partnership with the United Nations



UN leaders visited Northeastern to sign a memorandum of understanding formalizing the School's partnership with the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR) Left to right: Policy School Director Maria Ivanova, Northeastern President Joseph E. Aoun, UNU Rector and UN Under-Secretary-General Tshilidzi Marwala, and UNU-CPR Director and Director of the Global Governance Innovation Platform David Passarelli on March 31, 2025

Collaborating on global governance solutions

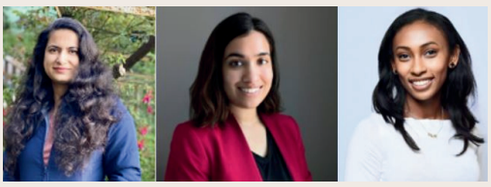
The United Nations University Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR) partnership harnesses advanced data visualization and other areas of expertise to promote global governance solutions and address growing pressures on the multilateral system. The collaboration focuses on a new multi-year initiative managed by UNU-CPR – the Global Governance Innovation Platform – which will identify and visualize innovative governance practices, serving as templates for new multilateral institutions and platforms or inspiring reforms to existing ones.



United Nations Co-ops

Three students worked at the United Nations: Manushi Sharma and Nidhi Polekar at the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR) in New York and Daniella Tesfaye at the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

These UN co-op opportunities were made possible through the generous support of the Policy School Advisory Council.





PhD student Olga Skaredina, leader of the inaugural ACUNS Youth Track

Strategically positioning youth voices

PhD student Olga Skaredina put youth voices at the center of global environmental governance through her leadership at the UN Summit of the Future Youth Forum, co-organizing the Youth Assembly ahead of the INC-5.1 plastic pollution negotiations in Busan, and pioneering the inaugural Youth Track at the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS) Annual Meeting in Nairobi. Her work emphasized the understanding that effective environmental solutions require intergenerational collaboration, as young people who will inherit climate and pollution challenges must have structured opportunities to influence the policies that will shape their futures.



Policy School Director Maria Ivanova co-chairing the ACUNS conference

The Policy School

An engaged community of doers and dreamers

Transformative policy emerges from the intersection of lived experience and global perspective. For nearly two decades, the Policy School community has championed a distinctive approach: co-creating solutions with local participants while drawing on worldwide insights to generate positive impact in the communities we serve.

Effective policy cannot be crafted in isolation. Our groundbreaking research, deep community partnerships, and unwavering dedication to public service values create a more just, resilient, and sustainable world *one policy, one partnership, one community at a time*.



Policy School PhD students and faculty participated in the American Association of Geographers (AAG) conference in Detroit



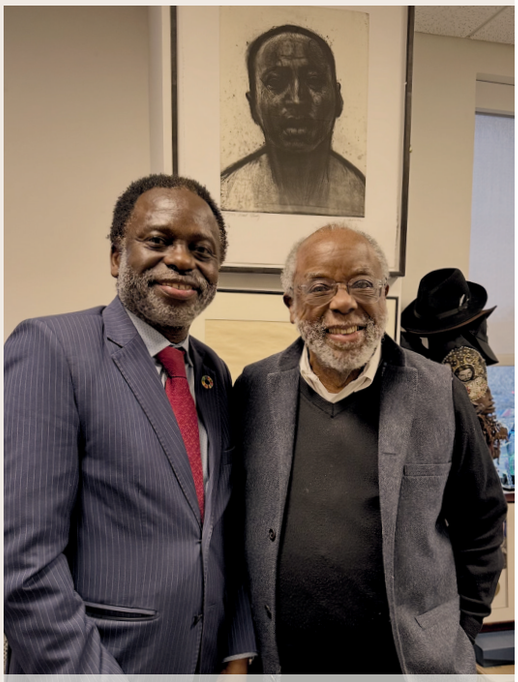
Students at a MUPP Town Hall event



Manushi Sharma '25 (MPP) receiving inaugural Laurel and Scroll 100 distinguished honor

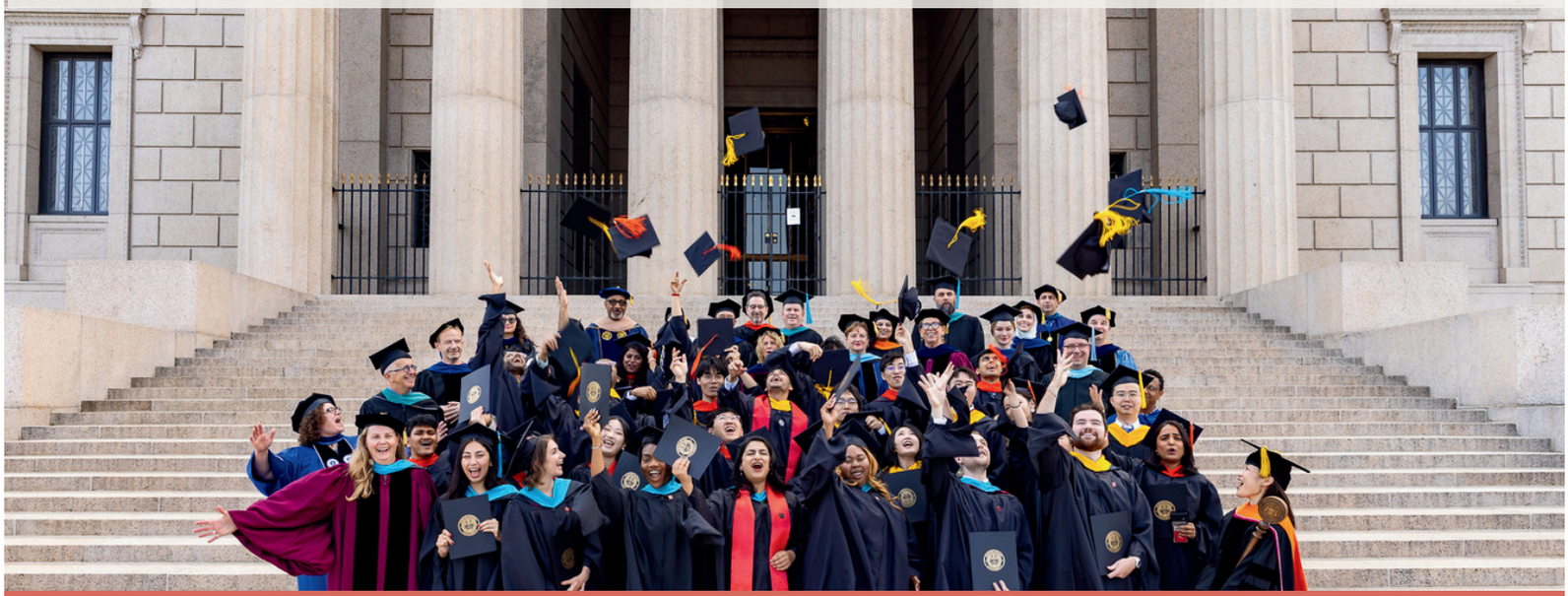
> ***Northeastern really is the school of 'Yes.'***
>
> *BELLA WOOD, '26 (MPA)*

We are researchers, practitioners, students, and community members united by a shared commitment to social justice, sustainable development, and public service. Our work reverberates across neighborhoods and nations, proof that rigorous scholarship and community engagement can drive lasting change.



Prof. Ted Landsmark at the Policy School with United Nations University (UNU) Rector Tshilidzi Marwala

Arlington, VA campus commencement



AWARDS



Engaged Scholar Award
International Studies Association



FULBRIGHT Scholar Program

Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award
2025-2026



Global Educator Award
Northeastern Academic Honors

Maria Ivanova | Engaged Scholar Award - International Studies Association

Policy School Director Maria Ivanova was recognized by the Environmental Studies Section of the International Studies Association's (ISA) for shaping environmental governnance, convening global leaders, developing impactful tools, bridging research and practice, and building meaningful partnerships with governments.

Lily Song | Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award for 2025-2026
Excellence in Teaching Award - Northeastern College of Arts, Media, and Design

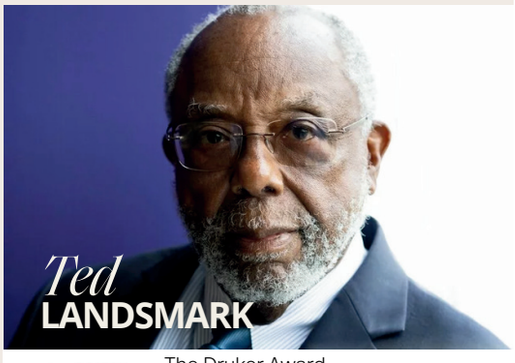
Prof. Song will conduct groundbreaking research in Estonia and Germany advancing her book project on reparative planning and design. Her research explores how spatial planning and design can expose, confront, and heal historical injustices in cities. The work centers the experiences of most-impacted communities while developing reparative methods that can create more equitable and just futures for all. Prof. Song also received the Excellence in Teaching award, which recognizes educators who demonstrate deep expertise in their field, provide rigorous content in their courses, and inspire their students.

Lori Gardinier | Global Educator Award - Northeastern Academic Honors

Prof. Gardinier, Director and Teaching Professor of Human Services, received this award for her contributions to students' global learning through high-quality teaching that is engaging, supportive, inclusive, interculturally competent and appropriately challenging.

Ted Landsmark | The Druker Award - Boston Public Library

Prof. Ted Landsmark received this award for his outstanding and important contributions to the world of urban art, architecture, and design In recognition of his legacy as a civic planner, educator, and civil rights advocate.



BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Druker Award –
Boston Public Library



APPOINTMENTS & FELLOWSHIPS



Kim Lucas | Massachusetts Board of Early Education and Care

Prof. Lucas was appointed by Gov. Maura Healey to the group that sets policies and regulations related to the state's early education and care programs and services. Prof. Lucas will serve as an expert in the evaluation and assessment of successful preschool education programs.



Cara Michell | 2025-2026 Humanities Center Global Fellow

Prof. Michell was named a fellow for her project entitled "Atlas of Black Psychogeographies." This year's theme focused on "unsettling" as a creative and resistant act that opens up possibilities for social change, trade-offs and synergies between risk mitigation and restoration decisions.

GRANTS



Stupski Foundation
& City of Boston



Mellon Foundation
& The National Science Foundation



Climate Change and Extreme Events Training and Research (CCEETR)





Higher Learning Open Call Grant | Mellon Foundation

An interdisciplinary Northeastern team led by Prof. Dani Snyder-Young with Prof. Moira Zellner was awarded a Mellon Foundation grant for Data Theatre Collaborative, a project translating quantitative data into embodied storytelling through theatre workshops and participatory performance events.

Moira Zellner | The National Science Foundation (NSF)

Prof. Zellner was awarded a $386,964 grant for "Understanding cascading feedbacks between human decision making and delta morphodynamics with community-engaged modeling," a project in collaboration with Andrew Moodie (PI) at Texas A&M University and Paola Passalacqua at ETH Zurich, and in partnership with the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), for a total of $986,688. The goal is to develop methods to incorporate human behavior into morphodynamic models through knowledge co-production and participatory modeling to assess the complex trade-offs and synergies between risk mitigation and restoration decisions.

Serena Alexander | Rail System Sustainability

Prof. Alexander was awarded a $339,000 grant titled "Planning for Sustainable and Resilient Rail and Freight: Developing a Novel Tool for Analysis of Climate Adaptation and Resilience Strategies in State and Regional Rail and Freight Plans" from the CCEETR Program.

Alicia Modestino | Advancing Youth Employment

The C2C Summer Youth Jobs Program was awarded a $25,000 grant from the Stupski Foundation. Prof. Modestino's multi-year research-practice partnership with the City of Boston to advance summer youth employment was awarded $350K. Additionally, C2C launched a new cohort of funded scholars, including six new policy fellows and ten seed grant winners from Boston, Oakland, Portland, and Toronto.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE



Damon Hall | National Science Foundation (NSF)

Prof. Hall and Northeastern colleagues Samuel E. Muñoz, P. James Dennedy-Frank, and Geoff Trussell have been awarded a grant to work closely with Kennebec and Penobscot river communities in Maine on flood-risk reduction and resilience planning using long-range climate and atmospheric predictive flood inundation models.

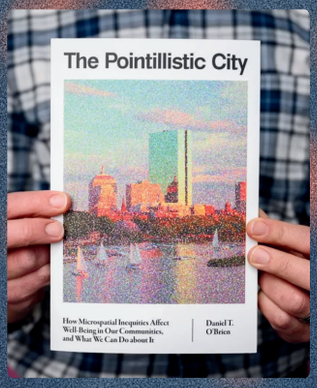


Gabriela Garcia | Excellence in Ecology (EEE) Scholar -The Ecological Society of America (ESA)

Prof. Garcia was selected for this prestigious scholarship that celebrates and supports outstanding ecologists from traditionally underrepresented groups in science and includes a $5,000 grant.

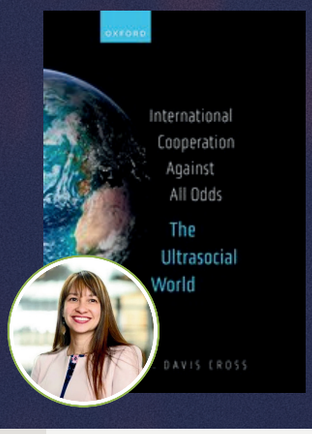
BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS





The Pointillistic City (MIT Press)
Daniel T. O'Brien

The book illustrates this perspective through two civic research projects: one on the impact of problem properties on public safety; and the other on the pertinence of "urban heat islets" and other hyperlocal hazards to environmental justice. It offers guidance for designing policies and practices that address microspatial inequities, with an emphasis on putting cutting-edge data in the hands of communities.



Charting global cooperation

Prof. Mai'a Cross delivered the annual plenary lecture at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin on the topic of her recent book *International Cooperation Against All Odds: The Ultrasocial World*.



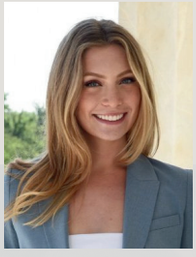
Changing universities for good

Former Policy School Director Jennie C. Stephens joined a *Coffee & Conversations* session to discuss ideas from her latest book *Climate Justice and the University*, in which she explores reclaiming the public good mission of higher education and restructuring universities for transformative climate justice.



Managing river resources

PhD student Gerardo Gentil conducted field research throughout the Missouri River valley and co-authored with Prof. Damon Hall a paper in *Environmental Management* on local perceptions of flooding and river management in the Lower Missouri River Basin. He co-authored a book chapter on transboundary water. The book is part of the *World Scientific Handbook of Transboundary Water Management*. The chapter is titled "Transboundary Water Organizations: Mechanisms and Challenges for Managing Evolving Disputes" and explores the role of binational institutions in managing shared bodies of water and resolving transboundary water conflicts.





Improving disaster response

PhD student Maddie Craig-Scheckman co-authored, together with Prof. Daniel Aldrich and Mikio Ishiwatari, an article "State, Market, or Community? Exploring Public Perceptions of Disaster Management Strategies" in *Natural Hazards Research*.



Investigating waste-inducing behaviors

PhD alumna Gloria Schmitz '24 published a sole-authored article "Investigating the 'Stickiness' of Waste-Inducing Behaviors Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Massachusetts, USA: A Geospatial and Machine Learning Analysis" in the *Journal of Cleaner Production*.



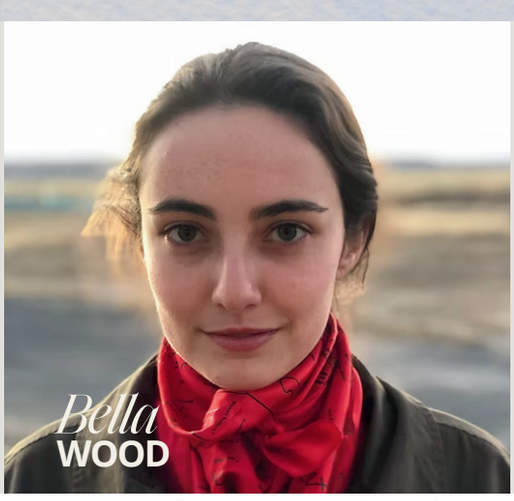
Intervening technology for climate impacts

PhD candidate Mohsin Khan published two studies addressing critical climate challenges in Pakistan, combining cutting-edge satellite technology with community-centered research to understand flood impacts and adaptation strategies.

"Assessing Agrometeorological Damage after the 2022 Pakistan Floods: Insights from Multi-Sensor Satellite Data" in Nature's Springer Earth Systems & Environment (IF 5.3). Khan et al. (2025)

"Smallholder perceptions of climate change in high-altitude farming: the influence of household characteristics and local knowledge on adaptation strategies in Nagar District, Pakistan" in Climate Services (IF 4.0). Co-authored with Ali et al. (2025)

STUDENT & ALUMNI HONORS



Women Who Empower Innovator Fellowship
Northeastern University

Bella Wood | Northeastern Women Who Empower Innovator Award

This award recognizes bold and creative changemakers in the university's entrepreneurial ecosystem by providing direct funding to the innovator. Bella Wood '26 (MPA) was honored for her organization Ranch Lab, which is co-creating living laboratories on ranches in the western U.S., where land stewardship and economic development bridge generations, academia, and community.

Ranch Lab stems from my admiration and love for the generations of women who have stewarded this land, our community, and our family for the last nine generations. The Innovator Award and Fellowship means joining a network of women who are focused on building their own brands while supporting one another.

BELLA WOOD '26 (MPA)



Luce Scholar
Henry Luce Foundation

Fatuma Mohamed | Luce Scholar

Policy School alumna Fatuma Mohamed '24 (MA in International Affairs) was named one of sixteen 2025-2026 Luce Scholars. Fatuma's experiences growing up in the Dadaab Refugee Camp in Kenya and resettling in the United States profoundly shaped her commitment to advocating for displaced and marginalized communities.

Stephane Labossiere | Rappaport Public Policy Summer Fellowship

PhD student Stephane Labossiere focuses on how migration-based inequities and structural determinants of disparities in health outcomes shape population health and sustainable programs serving immigrant communities. The fellowship marked a significant step toward his professional goal of becoming a leader in immigration and equity issues.



Rappaport Public Policy Summer Fellowship
Harvard Kennedy School of Government



PhD student Maddie Craig-Scheckman won a $50,000 National Bureau of Asian Research Chinese Language Fellowship to study Chinese in Taiwan from August 2025 to May 2026.



PhD student Istiakh Ahmed was awarded an American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS) fellowship, which supported the initial phase of his fieldwork in Bangladesh in Summer 2025.



Policy School students Natalie DeLaCruz '25, Sara Nyarangi '25, and former Policy School co-op student Kylee Hendrie '25 received Northeastern's Huntington 100 Award recognizing outstanding undergraduate students for achievements commensurate with the university's mission, ideals, and values.



Safiya Khalid '24 (MPP) placed in the highly competitive selection process in the Women Who Empower Innovator Awards Social Impact category for her "Community Organizing Alliance (COA)"—a civic engagement organization empowering youth to make their voices heard in their communities.

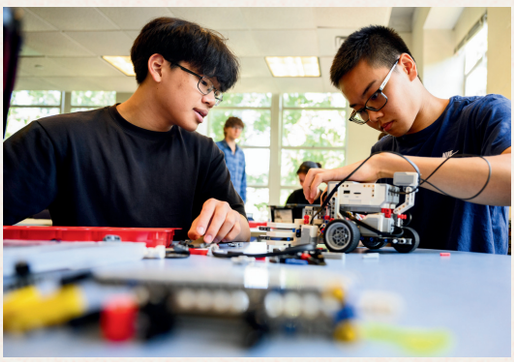


Manushi Sharma '25 (MPP) was one of 100 graduate and professional students inducted into the inaugural Laurel and Scroll 100 Society of Distinction honoring outstanding students for achievements aligning with Northeastern's mission, ideals, values and academic plan.

THE FUTURE *we design*

Transformation begins with leaders who can envision a different world. The Policy School is committed to nurturing the next generation of changemakers who will reshape the policy landscape from local communities to the global stage.

CREATING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT:
Community to Community: Policy Equity for All (C2C)
Using an"engage–think–do"model to lead transformative youth initiatives. *Director: Alicia Modestino*

C2C creates summer youth pathways such as Bridge to Calculus/Science, which supported more than 100 Boston Public Schools students in precalculus, robotics, and lab-based science learning, and Bridge to AI in Oakland, a hands-on introduction to artificial intelligence, ethics, and career readiness for 30 high school students.

C2C produced *Building Opportunity: A Research-Informed Manual for Summer Youth Employment*, drawing on a decade of evaluations across major U.S. cities to improve program quality. It was also recognized with the 2025 Data Champion Award from the National Youth Employment Coalition for its innovative use of data and partnerships to strengthen Boston's Summer Youth Employment Program.

RECOGNIZING YOUTH LEADERS

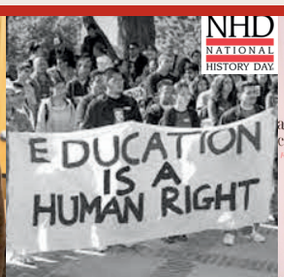
Getting into 'Good Trouble'

The 2025 winners of The Professor Ted Landsmark "Good Trouble" Award for the Massachusetts National History Day (NHD) Best Project in Civil Rights History were eighth-graders Adrianna Balderas and Sara Lay for their project "*Plyler v. Doe*: Securing the Constitutional Right to Education for Undocumented Children."

National History Day Special Prize Winner

Fourteen-year-old Sebastian Limpaecher was the 2025 recipient of the Massachusetts History Day Special Prize for Outstanding Project in Public Policy, Environmentalism, or Sustainability sponsored by the Policy School. Sebastian presented his project entitled "Conquering a Killer: How Smallpox Paved the Way for Modern Public Health" to faculty members. He also filed a patent for sustainably building watercraft using synthetic, lightweight rocks made from recycled glass for use in islands facing the effects of climate change and sea level rises.











Fostering student-led impact

The Civil Action Project (CAP) Fellows Program transforms graduate students into effective civic leaders through a 10-week summer experience. CAP combines paid policy internships with weekly roundtables featuring prominent policymakers, equipping students with the practical skills and professional networks essential for driving real change in public policy.

CAP FELLOWS PLACEMENTS

Sam Jackson '26 (MS ESP) → Office of Energy Transformation
Workforce development and community education on clean energy transition

Makiya Owens '26 (MPP) → Community Justice Support Centers
Diverse and equitable policymaking within the criminal justice system

Nathaniel Parker '25 (MPP) → Office of Senator Dylan Fernandes
Food policy research and initiatives

Cody York '26 (MPA) → Office of Mayor Mike Cahill
Forces driving legislative change and success

Mollie Ping '26 (MUPP) → CAP Research
Inclusive economic development



EDUCATING FUTURE PLANNERS

Prof. Gavin Shatkin, MS in Urban Planning and Policy Program (MUPP) students, along with representatives from planning schools across Massachusetts, attended the Third Annual Massachusetts Distinguished Planner Lecture featuring Gail Latimore, a leading voice in neighborhood planning in Boston for more than 25 years.

Empowering student connections

The Northeastern Association for Public Policy Students (NAPPS) is a dynamic organization that gives future policymakers hands-on leadership experience through event programming, faculty collaboration, and real-world project work. NAPPS creates a vibrant community where students build essential skills, forge meaningful connections with professionals and peers, and discover their voices as changemakers.

NAPPS has given me the unique privilege to lead, but even more importantly, to witness students grow into leaders who will shape tomorrow. NAPPS is a movement where students lead, inspire, and redefine what leadership looks like.

VAMINI JAIN '26 (MPA); VICE PRESIDENT-NAPPS

- *Outlet to establish community and connections for students who work full time*
- *Networking opportunities with Policy School alumni*
- *Research collaboration and sharing of ideas*

NAPPS SELECTED PROJECTS

Student-led programs included the inaugural NAPPS Policy Hour titled "Tackling the Housing Conundrum in the U.S." *(detail: page 14)* and "Simulating Urban Sustainability" *(detail: page 20)* as well as a student-centered Town Hall and Election Day dialogues.

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Master of Public Administration
Cristina Stanica

Master of Public Policy
Cristina Stanica

MA in International Affairs
Julie Garey

MS in Engineering and Public Policy
Matthew Eckelman

MS in Environmental Science and Policy
Damon Hall

MS in Urban Informatics
Moira Zellner

MS in Urban Planning and Policy
Gavin Shatkin
Serena Alexander (Acting Director)

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Bella Wood
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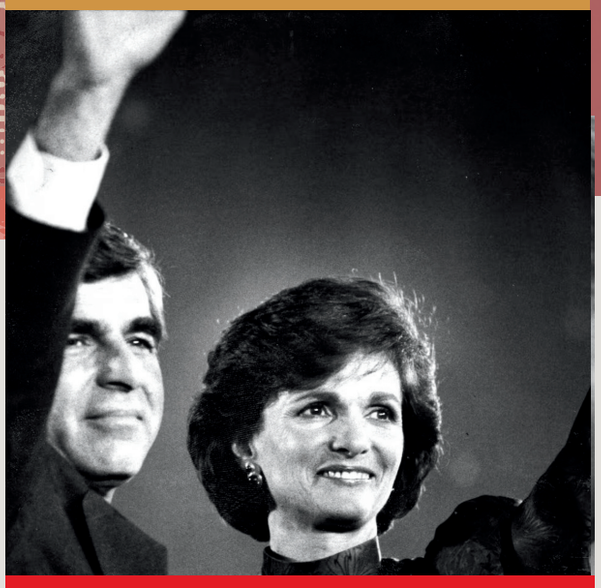
A VISIONARY *leadership legacy*

Honoring Kitty & Michael Dukakis



TIME



The New York Times

Kitty Dukakis, Activist Wife of 1988 Presidential Nominee, Dies at 88

Married to Gov. Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts, she became a proponent of electroshock therapy after unsuccessful treatments for alcoholism and depression.

Celebrating a life of public service

The Policy School community offered its condolences to the Dukakis family on the passing of Kitty Dukakis, a remarkable advocate, author, and public servant, who broke ground by speaking openly about her struggles and championed support for the homeless and political refugees. The Policy School hosts the Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy. Prof. Ted Landsmark directed the Center through 2025, after which Prof. Alicia Modestino assumed leadership. Governor Dukakis taught at Northeastern for more than 30 years and has inspired generations of students. The values espoused by Kitty Dukakis continue to shape the work of the Policy School.

"Kitty Dukakis brought honesty, compassion, and strength to public life. Her legacy is one of service, resilience, and truth-telling."

PROF. MARIA IVANOVA

"They have been truly effective change-makers on behalf of those in need of care and support"

PROF. TED LANDSMARK

As quoted in TIME Magazine, March 2025



Valuing democracy, integrity, and decency

"Democracy is a work in progress, a precious gift that needs constant nurturing," says former Massachusetts governor, presidential candidate, and retired Northeastern Distinguished Professor Emeritus Michael Dukakis in the documentary *Dukakis: Recipe for Democracy*. Gov. Dukakis was the guest of honor at a March screening at the Policy School of the 28-minute documentary, which takes viewers on a journey along Gov. Dukakis's long arc of leadership.



ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Gregory King, Vice-Chair

Nicholas P. Alexander

Michael N. Altman

Marina Campos

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Steve Farrell

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David Halbert

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John Millerick

ENVISIONING *a shared future*

The Advisory Council serves as a vital bridge between the Policy School and the broader community and plays an essential role in advancing the Policy School's mission, vision, research, and educational objectives. Its dedicated volunteer members serve as trusted representatives who can authentically communicate the School's core values and value proposition.

As **advisors**, they provide valuable insights and strategic guidance through regular meetings and ongoing engagement that help shape institutional priorities. As **ambassadors**, they represent the Policy School within their professional and personal networks, expanding awareness and building meaningful connections. As **advocates**, they champion the Policy School's mission and amplify its impact across diverse communities and sectors. As **contributors**, they provide financial support through annual giving and leverage their networks to secure additional resources that directly enhance the student experience. The Advisory Council transforms individual expertise and commitment into collective institutional strength, creating lasting impact that extends far beyond the campus boundaries.



keep dreaming and doing

"Our greatest strength comes not from what we possess, but from what we believe; not from what we have, but from who we are."

MICHAEL DUKAKIS

Retired Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Northeastern and former Massachusetts Governor


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