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Georgia  
Tech



School of  
Public Policy

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Developing Policy Leaders for Our Technology-Driven World

**The Georgia Institute of Technology School of Public Policy is highly ranked in Policy Analysis, Environmental Policy Management, and Information Technology Management. We invite you to explore our website at [spp.gatech.edu](http://spp.gatech.edu).**



**New Interim Department Chair for the School of Public Policy, Dr. Marilyn Brown**

Brown has taken on the role of interim chair as the previous chair Kaye

Husbands Fealing has transitioned to dean of the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts on June 1. Brown will serve in this interim role until the start date of a new school chair. The College anticipates launching an international search for the next Public Policy school chair during the academic year 2020-2021, subject to approval by the Provost.

Marilyn A. Brown is a Regents and Brook Byers Professor of Sustainable Systems in the School of Public Policy (SPP) at the Georgia Institute of Technology. She joined Georgia Tech in 2006 following a 22-year career at the U.S. Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) where she held various leadership positions and led several national climate change mitigation studies. Prior to ORNL, she was a tenured associate professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Illinois where her teaching and research focused on the diffusion of advanced energy technologies.

Brown's teaching and research at Georgia Tech examines the design and impact of carbon reduction policies using data analytics and energy-engineering models in the context of the global transition to an advanced energy economy. She currently has leadership roles in the Climate and Energy Policy Lab (CEPL), the new SPP Masters and Certificate in Sustainable Energy and Environmental Management (SEEM), and the Drawdown Georgia project in partnership with colleagues across Georgia Tech, Emory University, the University of Georgia, and Georgia State University.

From 2010-2018, Brown served two terms as a presidential appointee to the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority. She has held various advisory positions, written six books, and is a co-Nobel Laureate for her work with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In 2020, she was elected to both the National Academy of Engineering and the National Academy of Sciences. She is married to Frank Southworth who is an adjunct in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering. They have a daughter, Katie Southworth, who practices environmental law in Nashville, Tennessee.

[Read more about Dr. Brown](#)

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**Policy Analysis**



## Linda Ho Makes the Most of the Interdisciplinary Nature of Public Policy

In the course of her undergraduate studies as molecular cell and developmental biology major at UCLA, [Linda Ho](#) made an interesting discovery. She loved doing science, sure, but what she really loved was talking to people about science.

Ho worked on the *UCLA Undergraduate Science Journal*, advancing to co-editor in chief, and along the way developed a key interest in the applications of science to policy. When she started looking around at graduate programs, the interdisciplinary nature of Georgia Tech's [School of Public Policy](#) appealed to her immediately.

"It's the only (program) that has a really broad emphasis on science, and I think it's really unique, because it's a policy school that's in a large engineering school," Ho said. "You don't really get that anywhere else."

Ho has taken full advantage of the opportunity to work with scientific fields at Georgia Tech, exploring the policy dimensions of innovative medical procedures under the mentorship of Associate Professor Aaron Levine. Ho graduated in the spring, and she's set to head to Bethesda, Maryland to work at the National Institutes of Health as part of the prestigious Presidential Management Fellow (PMF) program.

Ho has explored a number of other interests at Tech, including regulatory policy in a class taught by Richard Barke and, in another CMaT project, analysis of workforce development in the emerging cell and gene therapy industry. [Read](#)

[more.](#)

## Environmental Policy and Management



### School of Public Policy Study: No Agricultural ‘Threshold Effect’

In the study, [Emanuele Massetti](#), an assistant professor at Georgia Tech, and co-author Robert Mendelsohn of Yale University sought to assess the validity of models that have tried, but failed, to identify a temperature threshold beyond which crops would suffer a sudden and precipitous decline as a result of climate change.

Their study used 30 years of daily temperature data in a model that allowed Massetti and Mendelsohn to evaluate the impact of numerous temperature ranges on productivity in a more flexible way than models used by some other researchers.

They found that while warming certainly will result in significant losses in productivity, as measured by land values, the decline will be gradual.

“In the global warming literature, there is significant debate on whether climate change will have non-linear impacts on the economy,” Massetti said. “This study shows that for agriculture, at least, it will not.” [Read more.](#)



### Tech in the News: Georgia Institute of Technology-led Study Looks at Impacts of Woody Biomass Demand

A study by Alice Favero, academic professional and associate director of graduate studies in the School of Public Policy, was mentioned in "Forests: Carbon sequestration, biomass energy, or both?" in Science Advances on



March 25, 2020.

The study evaluated the consequences of varying policy environments based on controlling carbon emissions and found that those that go beyond simple carbon taxes can promote the "protection of natural forests by valuing the standing stock."

[Read the full article here.](#)



## Georgia Tech Leads Team Effort to Reduce Georgia's Carbon Footprint

Researchers from the Georgia Institute of Technology are leading a first-in-the-nation effort to help identify solutions to help reduce Georgia's carbon footprint in economically justifiable ways.

Drawdown Georgia is an initiative to identify high-impact practical and economically sustainable solutions to reduce the state's carbon footprint by 2030. When completed, this Georgia group led by university researchers will be the first in the nation to produce this sort of comprehensive framework to reduce a state's carbon emissions. The term, Drawdown, refers to the tipping point when climate-warming gasses in the atmosphere begin to decline.

"This effort benefits from a diverse team of talented researchers at Georgia Tech, the University of Georgia, Emory University, and Georgia State. We are developing a platform of solutions for addressing the climate crisis in Georgia in ways that are achievable, impactful, and economically appealing," said [Marilyn Brown](#), Regents Professor and Brook Byers Professor of Sustainable Systems in Georgia Tech's School of Public Policy. Brown is the principal investigator of the project. [Read more.](#)

## Information and Technology Management



### Georgia Tech Team Uses Machine Learning to Drive Electric Vehicle Policy Findings

A new study from the Georgia Institute of Technology School of Public Policy harnesses machine learning techniques to provide the best insight yet into the attitudes of electric vehicle (EV) drivers towards the existing charger network. The study findings could help policymakers focus their efforts.

In the paper, published in the June 2020 issue in *Nature Sustainability*, a team led by Assistant Professor Omar Isaac Asensio trained a machine learning algorithm to analyze unstructured consumer data from 12,270 electric vehicle charging stations across the United States.

The study demonstrates how machine learning tools can be used to quickly analyze streaming data for policy evaluation in near real-time (see [sidebar](#)). Streaming data refers to data that comes in a feed, continuously, such as user reviews from an app. The study also revealed surprising findings about how EV drivers feel about charging stations.

For instance, it turns out that the conventional wisdom that drivers prefer private stations to public ones appears to be wrong. The study also finds potential problems with charging stations in the bigger cities, presaging challenges yet to come in creating a robust charging system that meets drivers' needs.

“Based on evidence from consumer data, we argue that it is not enough to just invest money into increasing the quantity of stations, it is also important to invest in the quality of the charging experience,” [Asensio](#) wrote. [Read more.](#)



## Tech in the News: Patent Filings, Litigation May Shift in Economic Crisis

[Alan Marco](#), associate professor in the School of Public Policy, was quoted in "Patent Filings, Litigation May Shift in Economic Crisis," published April 21 in Bloomberg Law.

The economic downturn caused by the coronavirus pandemic could affect patent applications and the market for trademarks in ways that are still being manifested, and Marco, a former chief economist with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, spoke to the potential effect of business failures on the market.

[Read the full article here.](#)



## John Walsh Study Ranks Among the 100 Most-Discussed Research Papers of 2019

More than 2.7 million research outputs were tracked in 2019 by Altmetric. The firm highlights a handful of those outputs – the most discussed research papers of the year – in its [Top 100](#).

Among the top-performing articles in 2019 was Georgia Tech School of Public Policy Professor [John Walsh](#)'s "Changing demographics of scientific careers: The rise of the temporary workforce."

Walsh co-authored the article with colleagues [Staša Milojevic](#) and [Filippo Radicchi](#) from the [School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering at Indiana University](#). It was published in the prestigious journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* in December 2018.

The study examined how, increasingly, "critical scientific work is taking place in teams, and there are people who are building their careers supporting these teams. These supporting scientists are here to stay as a part of our scientific workforce, but we don't really have a career system that accounts for and

recognizes the contributions they make,” according to Walsh.

Altmetric says that its Top 100 "highlights research published in the last 12 months that has generated significant international online attention and discussion" across many platforms, "from patents and public policy documents to mainstream media, blogs, Wikipedia, and social media platforms." [Read more.](#)

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## Information and Communication Technology Policy



### Tech in the News: The US-China Cold War in Cyberspace

Milton Mueller, professor in the School of Public Policy, contributed the article "The US-China War in Cyberspace" to *CircleID* on April 22, 2020.

Mueller, a renowned cybersecurity expert, analyzes the United State's recent antagonistic stance toward China and that translates to cyberspace.

[Read the full article here.](#)

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## Social Policy and Health



### School of Public Policy Professor Proposes Statistical Model for COVID-19 Reopening Decisions



One of the sharpest controversies of the COVID-19 pandemic has centered on when it is safe to reopen state economies following outbreak-induced shutdowns. Scott Ganz, an assistant professor in the School of Public Policy, has proposed a solution to help answer that question in a working paper for the American Enterprise Institute, where he is on leave from the Georgia Institute of Technology as a research fellow.

In the weeks prior to most U.S. states beginning to reopen their economies, public health officials frequently cited the need for 14 days of declining COVID-19 cases as one benchmark for deciding when to ease restrictions introduced to slow the spread of the disease. But determining whether that threshold had been met proved difficult in many states.

“One reason the ‘sustained reduction’ criterion has so far proven difficult to interpret is the simple fact that the daily data on COVID-19 can be noisy,” Ganz wrote in his paper. “An isolated outbreak at a nursing home, a change in weather, or simple sampling variability can result in spikes or valleys in documented cases.” Such “noise” in the data can result in a premature decision to open or a decision to stay shut down for too long, Ganz said.

Instead of simply waiting for 14 consecutive days of declining case counts, Ganz proposes that officials use a series of statistical tests to evaluate models based on theories about trends in coronavirus infections in their states over the previous 14 days. Models that significantly diverge from the data are eliminated through a series of tests until only models that largely mirror the data remain. Reopening would be supported by models that accurately “predicted” past trends and display what Ganz calls a “monotonic decrease,” or a consistent downward stepping pattern.

While most states have already begun the reopening process, Ganz’ framework could be put to use in the future. Many public health experts expect another wave of COVID-19 cases as economies reopen, or during cooler fall and winter weather when respiratory infections tend to be more common. [Read more.](#)



## **Tech in the News: Researchers Highlight Risks for Children in Terms of Abuse and Neglect During Pandemic**

[Lindsey Bullinger](#), assistant professor in the School of Public Policy, was mentioned in the article "Researchers Highlight Risks for Children in Terms of Abuse and Neglect During Pandemic," published April 28, 2020 in The Sector.

Bullinger, whose research has focused on child and family welfare, was part of a research group that has raised the alarm for the potential negative consequences of the coronavirus pandemic on "vulnerable" populations worldwide.

[Read the full article here.](#)

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## Faculty, Staff, Students, and Alumni

### Faculty and Staff Honors



### Public Policy Professor Wins the 2020 Ivan Allen Jr. Faculty Legacy Award

Dr. Richard Barke, an Associate Professor in the School of Public Policy, was this year's winner of the Ivan Allen Jr. Faculty Legacy Award. The Ivan Allen Jr. Legacy Awards honor faculty and students whose lives and work embody the spirit of Georgia Tech alumnus Ivan Allen Jr. (Commerce 1934). As stewards of Mayor Allen's legacy, the College champions research, teaching, and service that encompass Mayor Allen's visionary urban policies and his values of social courage, social justice, and ethical action.

Established in 2004 through the support of Ivan Allen Workspace, the awards have been generously underwritten since 2009 by Col. Stephen C. Hall, USAF (ret.) (IM 1967) and Mrs. Pamela Hall. Recipients are selected from nominees considered by the Legacy Awards Committee led by Associate Dean Dr. David Shook.

### Omar Acensio Receives NSF CAREER Award



[Omar Asensio](#), assistant professor in the School of Public Policy, has been named recipient of a 2020 National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER Award, a prestigious recognition honoring top junior faculty. The award, given as part of the NSF's Faculty Early Career Development Program, recognizes faculty "who have the potential to serve as academic role models in research and education and to lead advances in the mission of their department or organization." [Read more.](#)



## **Leslie Ross wins Ivan Allen College 2020 Buzz Award**

The School of Public Policy congratulates our very own [Leslie Ross](#) for being selected as one of this year's winners of the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts 2020 [Buzz Awards](#). The Buzz Awards are given annually by the Dean's office to recognize excellent service by IAC staff. Leslie was one of eleven staff members to receive this year's award.

Leslie Ross, an academic program manager I, has worked in the School of Public Policy since 2011. She was nominated by multiple Georgia Tech faculty and students for her kindness, service excellence, problem-solving, and above-and-beyond service. Leslie handles the advising of all undergraduate public policy students, as well as those enrolled in the five-year BS/MS Public Policy degree program. Popular with students for her daily whiteboard messages of encouragement and undergraduate [award-winning](#) advising, she was recently also awarded a Spring 2020 Public Policy Student Association superlative award of "Best Advisor". [Read more.](#)

## **Marilyn Brown Elected to National Academy of Sciences and a Second 3-year Term as**



## Regents Professor

Marilyn Brown, Regents Professor and Brook Byers Professor of Sustainable Systems in the School of Public Policy, has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). Her election to the prestigious organization, announced April 27, comes less than three months after her election to the National Academy of Engineering (NAE). [Brown](#) becomes just one of four Georgia Institute of Technology faculty members elected to the NAS, and one of two with membership in both academies. [Read More](#).

Brown, who has held a three-year appointment as Regents Professor, has been reappointed for another three years. Brown, a professor in the School of Public Policy and a Brook Byers Professor of Sustainable Systems at Georgia Tech was [named Regents Professor](#) in 2017. This year, she was [elected to both the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering](#), one of just two Georgia Tech faculty with membership in both academies.

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## Student Honors

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**The School of Public Policy congratulates our  
Spring 2020 Graduates!**

### Ph.D. in Public Policy

Dr. Evan Mistur

Dr. Alexander Smith

### M.S. in Public Policy



Cecil Barker  
Katelyn Benson  
Talia Capozzoli  
Gabriel Carter  
Rodney Funk  
Linda Ho  
Katherine Martin  
Pamela Rizkallah  
Richa Singhanian

**CSEEM**

Mary Hickey

**MSCSEC-PUBP**

Colin Kiernan  
Kristen Wells  
Jenna White

**B.S. in Public Policy:**

Emily Anderson  
Elizabeth Baliano  
Jenna Cliatt  
Jessica Copenhaver  
Charlotte Densmore  
Andrea Glaze  
Elisia Hamm  
Elizabeth Krakovski  
Nisha Lee  
Averie Lico  
Sydney Little  
Kathleen McDougal  
Audra Murphey  
Lindsay Peterson  
Joshua Wall  
Rachel Wexler

**School of Public Policy Student is  
Elected to Georgia Tech's Student  
Government Association**



## Executive Board

Congratulations to Public Policy student Kyle Smith! He has been elected by the undergraduate student body to serve as the next [Executive Vice President](#) of GT's Student Government Association.

Kyle J. Smith is a rising third-year Public Policy major and international affairs minor from Waldorf, Maryland. This past year, Kyle served as co-chair of SGA's Cultural and Diversity Affairs Committee where he had the chance to lead a variety of campus diversity and inclusion initiatives like the Menstrual Product Program and host discussions on topics like Black mental health and environmental racism. He also served as the Public Policy Representative in the Undergraduate House of Representatives. Outside of SGA, Kyle has served as a member of the Allocations Committee in the Georgia Tech Student Foundation, a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Council for the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts, and as an undergraduate peer mentor in the School of Public Policy. This year, he is also excited to chair the African American Student Union's Black Leadership Conference. Academically, Kyle has pursued research in areas including U.S. immigration policy, Black maternal health disparities, and juvenile justice inequities. He eagerly looks forward to continuing to support and empower students.

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## Student Highlights

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Each year, The Georgia Tech Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) celebrates the contributions to teaching excellence at Georgia Tech made by graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants. CTL asked all schools/departments to conduct an internal competition for several TA awards. The School of Public Policy is happy to announce our school's Spring 2020 winners:

**Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor - *Camila Apablaza***

**Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant - *Karim Farhat***

**Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Assistant – *Madeline Bruning***

***Camila Apablaza***

Camila came to the Ph.D. program in Public Policy four years ago on a Fulbright scholarship. Her research focuses on the decarbonization of transportation, particularly on the adoption of electric vehicles and other alternative fuel technologies. She has been involved several teaching activities such as teaching the summer Math Camp that prepares new graduate students for classes in the SPP and holding the teaching assistant position for the

Microeconomics and Economics of Environmental Policy classes. While at Georgia Tech, she has participated in numerous initiatives such as the Sam Nunn Security and the LEAD Leadership Fellows programs. Camila also served as president of the Fulbright Student Association at Georgia Tech during the 2019-2020 year.

### ***Karim Farhat***

Karim Farhat is a Ph.D. student in the School of Public policy, with a concentration in information and communication technology policy. Karim recently published a [new cyber policy blog](#) as a part of the School of Public Policy's Internet Governance Project. In March of 2020, he presented a forthcoming paper with a fellow School of Public Policy Ph.D. student, Karl Grindal, at the Student Symposium in Cybersecurity Policy at Tufts University. Karim was also selected as a Sam Nunn Security Program Fellow for 2018-2019.

### ***Madeline Bruning***

Madeline Bruning is a third-year public policy major. She was a TA for Dr. Richard Barke's Fall 2019 PUBP 2010 course on Political Processes. She was vital in the course's goal of teaching students to write succinct professional policy memos. In previous semesters, Madeline Bruning has been involved in many extracurricular activities, competing in several Model United Nations conferences and working on the Stacey Abrams gubernatorial campaign. She currently is a part of Georgia Tech's nationally-ranked [Mock Trial team](#) and has competed in multiple competitions as an attorney. She has interned with an Atlanta-based nonprofit called WildArk, and she has been an exchange student at Sciences-Po, a prestigious social sciences university in Paris, France.

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## **Georgia Tech School of Public Policy**





The Georgia Tech School of Public Policy is a multidisciplinary school offering bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. degrees. In addition to our cross-cutting focus on data analytics and sound research design, our policy areas include:

- [Science, Technology, and Innovation \(STI\) Policy](#)
- [Environmental Policy and Management](#)
- [Information and Communication Technology Policy/Cybersecurity Policy](#)
- [Ethics and Philosophy of Science and Technology](#)
- [Public Management and Leadership](#)
- [Urban and Regional Economic Development/Smart Cities](#)
- [Science and Engineering Organizations, Education, Careers, and Workforce](#)

I invite you to explore our website ([spp.gatech.edu](http://spp.gatech.edu)) to learn more about how we are creating leaders who drive solutions at the intersection of technology and public policy.

- Marilyn Brown  
*Professor and Interim Chair*

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## Affiliated Interdisciplinary Centers and Labs

[Center for Advanced Communications Policy \(CACP\)](#)

- Center for Ethics and Technology (CET)
- Climate and Energy Policy Lab (CEPL)
- Internet Governance Project (IGP)
- Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP)
- Technology Policy and Assessment Center (TPAC)
- The Center for the Study of Women, Science and Technology (WST)

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