



**SOPA NEWSLETTER  
SPRING/SUMMER 2021**

# **BARBARA JORDAN-MICKEY LELAND SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

We had successful activities and events during the Spring and Summer 2021 sessions. Thanks everyone for all your hard work.

## **MISSION:**

The mission of the School of Public Affairs is to serve as an urban focused community of learning dedicated to educating professionals who will plan and administer environmentally healthy and sustainable communities at the local, state, national and international levels of society.

**IN THIS ISSUE**

Houston Endowment Awards Grant to the Robert Bullard Center.....3  
Center for Justice Research Received Grant from the Houston Endowment .....3  
Two BJ-ML SOPA Students Received National Fellowships.....3  
BJ-ML SOPA Recognizes Its Honor Roll Students.....4  
BJ-ML SOPA Faculty and Students Honored for Publications..... 4  
BJ-ML SOPA Holds Inaugural Awards and Recognition Program.....4-5  
Research Showcased in the *SOPA Research Forum*.....5  
BJ-ML SOPA Sponsors Roundtable .....5  
Faculty Spotlight.....6  
BJ-ML SOPA School of Public Affairs Launches Fundraising Campaign.....7  
Journal Articles.....7  
Book Chapters.....7  
Papers Presented at Professional Conferences.....7  
Panels Served on at Professional Conferences.....8  
Grants.....8  
Collaborations.....8



**HOUSTON ENDOWMENT AWARDS GRANT TO ESTABLISH THE ROBERT BULLARD CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE**

The Houston Endowment awarded a grant of \$ 1.25 million to establish the Robert D. Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice at Texas Southern University. The Center will be named in honor of Dr. Robert D. Bullard, University Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Justice. In addition, Dr. Bullard will serve as the Executive Director of the Center. The establishment of the Center is in recognition of Dr. Bullard’s invaluable contributions to both knowledge production and praxis about environmental and climate justice.

As part of its mission, the new Center will engage in research, education and civic engagement, especially in underrepresented and marginalized communities, for the purpose of helping to build resilient and sustainable communities, amid the existential threats that are posed by climate change and environmental degradation. Similarly, faith-based organizations and institutions that are committed to the advocacy for equity, and racial and social justice in the era of climate and environmental challenges will receive guidance from the Center in their quest to educate and advocate for policies that promote climate and environmental justice.

**CENTER FOR JUSTICE RESEARCH RECEIVED GRANT FROM THE HOUSTON ENDOWMENT**

The Center for Justice Research was awarded a grant of \$1.5 million by the Houston Endowment to continue its work on policy relevant research on various aspects of the criminal justice system in the Metro Houston area as well as across the United States. The Center has become a go to research entity to produce policy-relevant recommendations that are designed to help address the major challenges in the criminal justice system, including racial injustice.

**TWO BJ-ML SOPA STUDENTS RECEIVED NATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS**

Two BJ-M SOPA students received two prestigious national fellowships: Mr. Dexter Maryland, a junior majoring in Political Science, received the White House 2021 HBCU Scholar Award for 2021. Mr. Maryland is one of 86 scholars chosen nation-wide from various HBCUs for their accomplishments in academics, leadership, and civic engagement, among others.

Ms. Janiya Chapman, a junior majoring in Political Science, received the “Porter Hedges LLP Scholarship” for 2021. Ms. Chapman was selected for the award because of her academic achievements, among others.

## **BJ-ML SOPA RECOGNIZES ITS HONOR ROLL STUDENTS**

BJ-ML School of Public Affairs held a recognition program on April 28, 2021, for its “Honor Roll Majors,” who earned GPAs of 3.00 or higher during the Spring semester 2020 and Fall semester 2020. For the Spring 2020 semester, 286 students earned “honor roll” distinction as follow:

Administration of Justice: 198 Majors  
Emergency Management and Homeland Security: 11 Majors  
Political Science: 71 Majors  
Public Affairs: 16 Majors

During the Fall 2020 semester, 260 students earned “honor roll” distinction as follow:

Administration of Justice: 175 Majors  
Emergency Management and Homeland Security: 8 Majors  
Political Science: 61 Majors  
Public Affairs: 16 Majors

Each “honor roll” major received a medallion and a certificate.

## **BJ-ML SOPA FACULTY AND STUDENTS HONORED FOR PUBLICATIONS**

BJ-ML School of Public Affairs held its inaugural *Authors’ Recognition Program* on March 25, 2021, to celebrate the publication successes of faculty and students. Several faculty members and students from the school’s various academic departments and programs were honored for publishing monographs, book chapters and journal articles. Each honoree received a medallion and a certificate.

## **BJ-ML SOPA HOLDS INAUGURAL AWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM**

On April 29, 2021, BJ-ML School of Public Affairs held its inaugural *Awards and Recognition Program* to recognize the achievements of faculty, staff and members of the community, who have contributed to the advancement of BJ-ML SOPA’s mission. The recipients of the various awards were as follow:

*Outstanding Faculty Research Award:* Dr. Bum Seok Chun, Assistant Professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy.

*Outstanding Staff Award:* Ms. Kaelynne Mason, Program Coordinator, Executive Master of Administration of Justice Program.

*Outstanding Community Person Award:*

Dr. Denise Adjei, President of Protocol International

Dr. Robert Ford, Leader of the Herman Park Rotary Club

Retired Judge Bill Littlejohn, Founder, Sustainable Agriculture Innovation Liberia

Mr. Val Thompson, President and Chief Executive Office, Houston International Chamber of Trade

*Distinguished Service Award:*

Mr. Michael Berkley, Custodian, Public Affairs Building

Mr. James Harbrook, Custodian, Public Affairs Building

Ms. Richelle Jones, Director of Student Support Services and Assessment, BJ-ML SOPA

Dr. Chantel Link, Former Assistant Provost, Texas Southern University

Ms. Jamesa Prophet, Custodian Public Affairs Building

Ms. Maria Sagastegui, Retired Custodian, Public Affairs Building

Mr. Chad Sebastien, Senior Administrative Assistant, Department of Political Science, BJ-ML School of Public Affairs

Dr. Lalita Sen, Professor Emeritus of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy, BJ-ML SOPA

Mrs. Marilyn Square, Retired Registrar, Texas Southern University

**RESEARCH SHOWCASED IN THE SOPA RESEARCH FORUM**

The Research Committee of BJ-ML SOPA organized two sessions under the *SOPA Research Forum* during the spring semester 2021, as part of the efforts to showcase the research of faculty and students in the school:

On April 12, 2021, the *SOPA Research Forum* focused on the topic “I am Not My Hair: The Criminalization of Black Hair.” The presenters were Administration of Justice doctoral students: Jennifer Bourgeois, Denise Brown, Elycia Daniel, Melissa Kwende and Demeka Simmons, Alumnus Angelica Olunkwa (Administration of Justice Graduate), and Dr. Robin Jackson, Assistant Professor, Prairie View A&M University.

On April 20, 2021, the *SOPA Research Forum* focused on the topic “The American Political Culture, Democracy and the 2020 Presidential Election.” The presenter was Dr. George Klay Kieh, Jr., Dean of SOPA and Professor of Political Science. The presentation is part of Dr. Kieh’s current book project on “*Democracy and Authoritarianism in the United States: Lessons from the Trump Era and Beyond.*”

**BJ-ML SOPA SPONSORS ROUNDTABLE**

On April 22, 2021, BJ-ML SOPA organized a session of the SOPA Roundtable on *Political Violence: The Case of the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election*. The panelists were:

Dr. David Baker, Interim Chair of the Department of the Administration of Justice  
and Associate Professor of the Administration of Justice

Dr. George Klay Kieh, Jr., Dean of the BJ-ML School of Public Affairs  
and Professor of Political Science

Dr. Declan I. Onwudiwe, Professor of the Administration of Justice

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, Member of the U.S. House of Representative, was the Special Guest at the Roundtable. Rep. Jackson Lee offered an eye-witness account of the January 6, 2021 insurrection and resulting violence at the U.S. Capitol.



## **FACULTY SPOTLIGHT**

Several faculty members in the BJ-ML School of Public Affairs earned national recognition for their outstanding contributions to their respective fields. Hence, the spotlight is on the following:

Dr. Robert Bullard, University Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy:

- Appointed to serve on the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council.
- The establishment of the Robert Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice in recognition of his invaluable scholarly contributions to environmental and climate justice that have earned him national and international stature.

Dr. Jasmine Drake, Associate Professor of the Administration of Justice and Coordinator of the Forensic Science Lab:

- Appointed by Governor Greg Abbott to the Texas Forensic Science Commission.

Dr. Howard Henderson, Professor of the Administration of Justice and Director of the Center for Justice Research:

- Appointed a Non-Resident Senior Fellow of the Brookings Institution.
- Appointed a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, University of Virginia.
- Appointed to the Houston Recovery Center's Board of Directors by Mayor Sylvester Turner.
- Appointed to the Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement Project, Georgetown University's School of Law.
- Appointed to the Texas George Floyd Research Team, 2021 Session of the Texas State Legislature.
- Appointed a member of the Reimagining Public Safety Working Group, Policing Project at the New York University's School of Law and the Justice Collaboratory of the Yale University Law School.
- Appointed to the Vera Institute's Rural Jail Research Network.
- Gave expert testimony before a subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Dr. Jeffery Lowe, Associate Professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy was appointed Chair of the Presidential Task Force on Anti-Racism of the American Collegiate Schools of Planning.

Dr. Sheri Smith, Interim Chair and Associate Professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy completed her term as a member of the Committee on the Academy of the American Collegiate Schools of Planning.

**BJ-ML SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS LAUNCHES FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN**

The Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs has launched a five-year fundraising campaign (2021-2026) with the goal of raising \$5 million. The fundraising campaign was officially launched on August 6, 2021. The funds raised from the campaign will be used to support student success initiatives—scholarships, tutoring program, among others—and professional development activities for faculty, students, and staff. The campaign is co-chaired by Mrs. Georgia Provost, Commissioner Ron Ellis, and Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee.

**JOURNAL ARTICLES:**

Chun, B., Hur, M., and Won, J. Impacts of thermal environments on health risk: A case study of Harris County, Texas. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 18(11), 5531-5546, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18115531>.

Nance, Earthea. Monitoring air pollution variability during disasters. *Atmosphere*, 12(4), 1-30, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.14293/S2199-1006.1.SOR-.PPNBBAG.v1>.

**BOOK CHAPTERS:**

Ewoh, Andrew I.E. (2021). From Unfree Labor to Neo-Colonial Extraction in Sao Tome & Principe. In Emmanuel O. Oritsejafor and Allan D. Cooper (eds.), *Africa and the Global System of Capital Accumulation* (pp.90-100). New York, NY: Routledge.

Kieh, George, K. (2021). Capital Accumulation in Liberia's Rubber and Iron Ore Sectors. In Emmanuel O. Oritsejafor and Allan D. Cooper (eds.), *Africa and the Global System of Capital Accumulation* (pp.54-69). New York, NY: Routledge.

**PAPERS PRESENTED AT PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES:**

Ewoh, Andrew I.E., and Justina U. Ewoh. 2021. Approaches to Containing COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria: Public Policy Responses, Challenges and Lessons Learned. Paper presented at the 82<sup>nd</sup> American Society for Public Administration Virtual Conference, Panel on Fighting COVID-19 the African Way: Policy Responses & Lessons Learned, April 9-15.

Ewoh, Andrew and Mercy Umeri. 2021. Leading in an Era of Uncertainty: Lessons and Challenges from Education Administration. Paper presented at the 50th Annual Conference of Minority Public Administrators, COMPA Virtual Conference, February 26-28, 2021.

Kieh, George. 2021. State Fragility in Post-Civil War Liberia. Paper presented at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Liberian Studies Association, April 22-24, 2021, held virtually and hosted by Cornell University.

**PANELS SERVED ON AT PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES:**

Ewoh, Andrew: Served on the Presidents' Panel on COMPA @ 50: Reinforcing the Case for Diversity, equity & Inclusion in Public Service. A pre-conference event at the 50th COMPA Virtual Conference, February 25, 2021.

Kieh, George: Served on “Law and Society in Liberia,” a panel at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Liberian Studies Association, held virtually on April 22-24, 2021, and hosted by Cornell University.

Kieh, George: Served on Monograph on Development, (Dual) Citizenship, and its Discontents: The Political Economy of Belonging in Liberia. A panel at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Liberian Studies Association, held virtually on April 22-24, 2021, and hosted by Cornell University.

**GRANTS:**

Bullard, Robert (Principal Investigator) Multi-Hazard Communication Project, funded by Houston Endowment for \$250,000.00 from July 2020-June 22, 2022.

Bullard, Robert (Principal Investigator) Urban Institute-Climate Migration Project, funded by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine for \$263,585.00 from July 2019-June 2022.

Bullard, Robert (Principal Investigator) Environmental Career Worker Training Program, funded by the NIEHS for \$1,250,000.00 from August 2020-May 2025.

Bullard, Robert (Principal Investigator) Maternal and Infant Environmental Health Riskcape Research Center, funded by the NIEHS/NIMHD for \$760,145.00 from July 2020-March 2025.

King, Denaë (Principal Investigator) Exploring Civic Engagement During COVID, funded by Corporation for national and Community Service for \$13,000.00 from October 2020-September 2022.

Nance, Earthea (Principal Investigator) Gulf Coast Resilience Initiative, funded by Institute for Sustainable Communities for \$349,141.00 from July 2019-June 2022.

**COLLABORATIONS**

Kieh, George co-directed a research project on “Civil Conflicts in Africa” with Kelechi A. Kalu, Department of Political Science, University of California Riverside. The project included researchers from universities in the United States, Cameroon, Ghana, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Uganda. The research project will produce four books on *Peacebuilding in Africa*, *Civil Wars in Africa*, *Military Coups and Democratization in Africa*, and *Insurgency, Terrorism, and Counter-terrorism in Africa*, to be published by Lexington Books.

Compiled by Glenda Higgins, Senior Administrative Assistant, and copy edited by Dr. Andrew Ewoh.