Greetings from the Director

Dear Stanford GSE Community,

Now that I have been in the role of Director of Leadership Degree Programs for just over two years, I have decided it is time to show you what we have been doing and to share our aspirations for the future. In this inaugural issue of the Leadership Degree Programs Newsletter you will learn about the new cohorts of students, how the POLS Project has evolved, alumni post-cards, and an alumni event coming up in January 2016 that brings current POLS students and LDP alumni together for the POLS Challenge. I hope you enjoy the newsletter and stay connected.

Sincerely,

Evolution of the POLS Project

The POLS Project is the capstone of the POLS academic experience. Started in 2009 under then Faculty Director, Debra Meyerson, and Program Director, Nereyda Salinas, as an optional POLS Showcase, it was originally conceived as a way for students to synthesize what they learned in their courses and to create a richer, unifying experience. In 2012-2013, Emi Kuboyama served as Acting Director and instituted the POLS Talk, a Ted Talk-style presentation that tested students' oral communication skills and facilitated collaborative engagement with the greater community. Starting in 2013-2014, we broadened the scope of the POLS Project to make it field-based action research informed by relevant published research. Now when we speak of POLS Project sites, we're talking about the
This year’s class is the largest we have seen in the past few years—40. They are also more diverse with nearly 20 percent students of color and/or first-generation higher education students. Five students enrolled in the joint MA/MPP program, now in its third year. The cohort enthusiastically jumped into our new full-day orientation in September and they have been going strong ever since. Their POLS Project sites (see “Evolution of the POLS Project”) are starting to fall into place, ranging from highly diverse high schools to non-profits working with foster youth to units within Stanford and other higher education institutions.

Our emphasis on addressing real-world challenges through the POLS Project has created some exciting opportunities. Mike Kirst talked with David Brazer one day about struggles school districts were having with the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), part of the reform of California education finance initiated by Governor Jerry Brown. David told Mike that the previous spring we had a POLS Project that investigated one large district’s work with LCAP and the challenges they were facing. Mike asked to read it. He was so impressed that he forwarded it to the rest of the State Board of Education. This is an inspiring example of the potential impact of well-targeted, carefully prepared POLS Projects.

Anthony Medina POLS Project

"Increasing Degree Completion in Oregon Through the Lens of the Higher Education Agency"
**POLS Challenge**

In our search for engaging ways to bring together current students and alumni, Jessica Wheeler, MA/MBA class of 2015, suggested that we borrow from the GSB’s concept behind their Executive Challenge. With help from Shannon Birk Jibaja, POLS 2013, we are designing an experience in which POLS students will work in teams to propose a means to transform education pre-K – 16. Alumni will serve as coaches to current POLS teams and as panels that will determine which teams would get funded and which not. (Unfortunately, we do not have actual dollars available.) We look forward to this event that takes place January 22, 2016 from 8:30 a.m. through lunch. If are an alum and you are interested in participating, please complete the questionnaire located [here](#).
Frank Kobayashi POLS 2003
Two years ago, I was honored to be selected as the Dean of the American River College Natomas Education Center. The Natomas Education Center serves over 3,700 students per semester. As the Dean, I oversee all aspects of the Center, including Instruction, Student Services, and Administrative Services. I provide leadership to over 130 faculty, 10 staff, and 40 student employees. I am particularly excited about being part of the leadership team responsible for developing the California Early College Academy (CECA). CECA is a partnership between Inderkum High School and American River College (ARC). Students in the program have the opportunity to take classes at the ARC Natomas Center during their junior and senior years. Students who participate in CECA have the ability to prepare for post-secondary options in an academy format that maintains the high academic standards for graduation from high school with college credits. Currently, 180 high school freshman, sophomores, and juniors are enrolled in the program.

Elena Tindall, POLS 2006
I am lucky enough to still be living in Palo Alto, putting my POLS systems transformation education to good use. Having worked in community education before coming to the POLS program, these past six years I have worked for Santa Clara County as the Project Manager for Primary Care Behavioral Health Integration, I shepherded this system to exceed the milestones of a five-year, $42M Delivery System Reform plan in our county. This project brings depression screening to the underserved, in multiple languages, and connects them to clinically and culturally appropriate behavioral health (BH) services—which include mental health, substance use issues as well as some chronic health conditions like diabetes. I’ve been blessed to work across nine clinic sites with over 50 BH Professionals (Licensed Therapists and Psychiatrists) and their numerous Primary Care colleagues. We provide BH services to over 4,200 individuals who would otherwise not have had access to these services, and who would likely not have accepted BH Services in a specialty clinic setting due to stigma. It is challenging and very exciting to be at the nexus of the Affordable Care Act, and the revolution of bringing the mind and body back together again, focusing on prevention and early intervention.
Joel Constable POLS 2006
I lead People Development at Pinterest where I focus on developing world-class leaders and helping scale learning and development with the rapid growth of the company. I am excited about working with smart, motivated people who are trying to build an amazing product and company.

Jessie Arora POLS 2008
I've spent the past year building Embark Labs, an education program that teaches elementary and middle school kids design and computational thinking in a hands-on, collaborative way. We offer a complete cross-curricular STEM program. I'm excited about empowering educators to bring more hands-on learning opportunities to their classrooms. We have worked with 500+ students through our courses at Google, Cisco and the Computer History Museum. We ran multiple weeks of summer programs (June-Aug 2015) and are partnering with several K8 schools to offer our programs during/after the school day. You can get a sense of our programs from these pictures and videos on our YouTube Channel. Given our passion for getting more girls interested in computer science, Embark Labs was featured in this brief documentary, The Coding Generation, about how to increase diversity in the tech industry. If you know any K8 educators or schools who want to bring this type of learning experience to their students, please contact me (jessie@embarklabs.com)!

Anna Stone POLS 2008
I have been happily employed at Stanford since graduating from the higher education POLS track in 2008. After nearly 6 years working in the Student Life Office at the Graduate School of Business, I am now the Assistant Director of New Student Programs in Undergraduate Advising and Research. My primary responsibilities are managing New Student Orientation for 1700 incoming freshmen each September, and advising Frosh Council—the student government for the freshman class. My job is extremely fulfilling; I love supporting students' transition into college. I also got married in June to Mike, my college sweetheart of 12 years!
Lara Fox POLS 2009
In November I’ll reach my two-year anniversary as founding Executive Director of uAspire Bay Area. I’ve had an amazing experience partnering with our founding Program Director, board, and funders to build the local chapter of a high-impact national non-profit that works to remove the financial barriers to college access and success. We are currently empowering 1,165 12th graders from low- and moderate-income homes in San Francisco, Oakland, and Hayward with one-on-one college affordability advising. We’re also launching exciting plans to grow around the Bay Area and state. And I’m really excited about uAspire’s new commitment to, in addition to helping students and family navigate the complicated existing system of affording college, working to improve that system as well. When not working, I continue to enjoy hiking the foothills, writing creatively, and spending time with people I love.

Rachel Rosen POLS 2011
I currently work at the National Equity Project (NEP), an educational non-profit in Oakland. NEP’s mission is to dramatically improve educational experiences, outcomes, and life options for students and families who have been historically underserved by their schools and districts. As an Associate at NEP, I provide leadership coaching and professional development to leaders, principals, teachers, and school teams. Prior to joining NEP, I worked in Oakland Unified School District for nine years. I started my teaching career at Castlemont High School in 2006. After teaching four and a half years, I deepened my understanding of the educational landscape in the POLS program at Stanford in 2010. After POLS, I became an Administrator at Elmhurst Community Prep (in OUSD), and was there for four years. At Elmhurst, I held a school change vision, and my work was deeply informed by these core values: social justice, positive school culture, high expectations, collaboration, and family involvement. I believe education is a civil right, and consider it a great honor to partner with leaders making good on that promise.
Kate McKinney POLS 2011
I loved my experience at the GSE so much that I decided not to leave! I’m working at the GSE as the Doctoral Programs Officer, which primarily involves advising PhD students on University policy, managing doctoral student funding, and overseeing student degree progress. I also work with postdocs at the GSE, and work together with the rest of the Academic Services team to plan GSE events such as commencement, orientation, and admitted students days. I really enjoy forming relationships with and serving as a resource for the students, and I love the fact that I’m still very connected with the GSE Community and Stanford as a whole.

Angela Wu POLS 2013
I’m just over five months into my job as Assistant Director of Arts and Cultural Programming at the Davis Center at Williams College. The Davis Center is Williams College’s social justice and identity center, and I get to wear many hats as assistant director, including having conversations with faculty and staff about how to make learning opportunities for students more equitable. I also work with students on identity and/or leadership development. I’m particularly excited about some of the initiatives that I’ve been working on to get students more face time with artists who have exhibitions at the Williams College museum or at the nearby Mass MoCA, one of the largest museums for contemporary art in the country. There are still a lot of barriers as to why many students may feel that it is impossible to pursue a life in the arts, but I’m happy to do my part in chipping away those barriers. I’d love to hear what POLS 2013 is up to, so shoot me a text so we can catch up! And let me know if you’re ever in the Western MA area.