

Bridging the Gap: How Scholarship Can Inform Foreign Policy for Better Outcomes



A Report From



Written by
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– **Stephen del Rosso**, Senior Program Director, International Peace and Security
Carnegie Corporation of New York

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In November 2022, local civilians awaited food distribution following the withdrawal of Russian troops in Kherson City, Ukraine. Months before Russia invaded Ukraine, an interagency “tiger team” organized by the National Security Council at the White House and led by alumni of Corporation-funded Bridging the Gap programs planned for a variety of possible war scenarios. This early planning allowed the United States, Japan, and Western allies to pre-position and quickly provide humanitarian aid supplies to Ukrainians, freeze Russian international bank assets, and remain “ready for a range of contingencies” as the war continues, according to a National Security Council report.

PREFACE

The International Peace and Security program at Carnegie Corporation of New York is motivated by the belief that good policy is informed by good ideas – and good ideas are not formed in a vacuum. With the support of the Corporation’s twelfth president, Vartan Gregorian, and the foundation’s board of trustees, the program’s Bridging the Gap subprogram has long sought to provide scholars and policymakers with opportunities to share their knowledge and positively influence foreign policy decision-making.

While most U.S. foundations that support academic research are interested in addressing real-world challenges, the Corporation is among the very few primarily focused on political science and the subfield of international relations. Since 2006, the Corporation has provided \$33.5 million to 18 institutions with the aim of connecting policy and academic communities through professional networks, training, publishing opportunities, research, and fellowships that place academics in government roles.

The Corporation’s investments in these areas have made a difference, including by promoting changes in incentive structures within higher education to favor policy relevance and engagement and by supporting media platforms that disseminate academic insights in an accessible form to policymakers and the public.

On a general level, our grantmaking has expanded and strengthened a network of policy-oriented scholars who are moving into positions of influence in higher education, think tanks, and government. Within higher education, our grantees have reported a gradual shift toward a culture more amenable to rewarding policy-oriented research. Participants in our programs have not only attained tenure-track positions in diverse faculties across the country but also gradually assumed positions on hiring, tenure, and promotion committees that give greater prominence to policy-relevant scholarship and public service. Still, practical barriers remain, hindering broader change at the systems level.

We commissioned this report, *Bridging the Gap: How Scholarship Can Inform Foreign Policy for Better Outcomes*, to assess what has been achieved to date and offer recommendations for the future, as funders look across sectors to connect rigorous and relevant research to policy and practice. We hope that our Bridging the Gap subprogram provides an exemplar for leaders, organizations, and grantmakers in fields beyond international relations as they work to advance institutional change and introduce policy-relevant ideas, reforms, and research to help solve problems across disciplines and around the world.

Stephen Del Rosso

Senior Program Director,
International Peace and Security
Carnegie Corporation of New York

INTRODUCTION

For nearly two decades, Carnegie Corporation of New York has invested in a series of interrelated initiatives as part of its Bridging the Gap subprogram to connect academic expertise in international affairs with policy decision-making by government leaders. Spanning 18 institutions and \$33.5 million in support, Bridging the Gap grantmaking has created networks of scholar-practitioners and opportunities for public and policy engagement at all stages of their careers. Corporation grantmaking supports university-based centers for academic-policy exchange, outlets that publish and disseminate policy-relevant scholarship and analysis, sabbatical-year fellowships that place tenured academics in government roles, professional incentives to encourage policy engagement, and the development of ethical norms.

This report provides an overview and assessment of the impact of Bridging the Gap funding to date. It examines the origins and growth of this grantmaking against three strategic priorities: advancing academic-policy exchange, strengthening the capacity of scholars to engage with policymakers, and encouraging changes in academic incentives to produce policy-relevant scholars. It is the culmination of an independent six-month review, which included Corporation and grantee records, publications and media reports, public records regarding foreign policymaking, and interviews with more than two dozen grantees and alumni of Corporation-supported programs.

The Bridging the Gap subprogram formally began in 2006 with the support of the Corporation's twelfth president, Vartan Gregorian, and the foundation's board of trustees. But the impetus and inspiration to bridge the academia-policy gap have a much longer history. Trends in the social sciences during the latter decades of the 20th century that continued into the new millennium saw subfield specialization and mathematical modeling supplant more policy-friendly scholarship, and the number of academics working alongside policymakers fall in tandem.

In the iconic 1993 book *Bridging the Gap: Theory and Practice in Foreign Policy*, Alexander George urged knowledge-seeking theorists and action-oriented policymakers to focus on their shared interest in policy-relevant knowledge. It was an argument familiar to Stephen Del Rosso, the Corporation's senior program director for International Peace and Security and a former career diplomat who earned a PhD after leaving the U.S. Foreign Service.

“For years, I would walk through aisles of academic books at the annual International Studies Association conventions and think, where are these ideas going?” said Del Rosso. “There were theoretical underpinnings to policymaking, but the very practitioners who were engaged in that work could not articulate them. When I was a foreign service officer, I was not aware of the academic research that had an impact on the work that I was doing.”

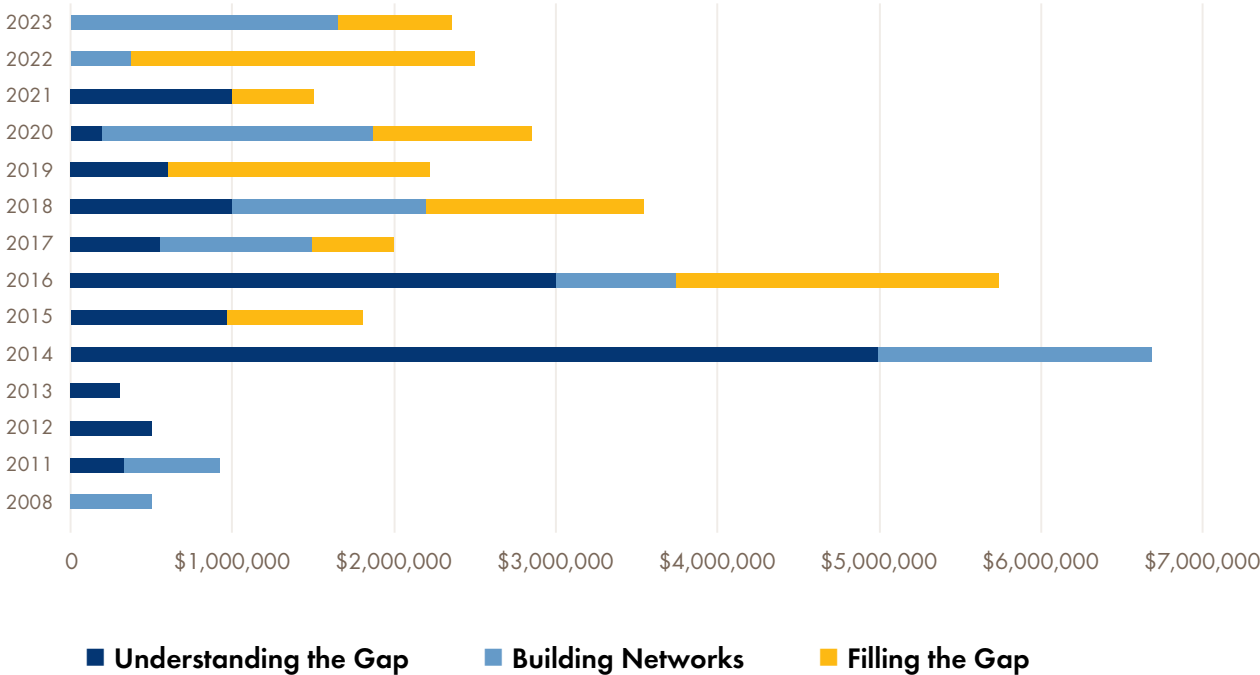
In 2005, the Corporation awarded a \$350,000 grant to University of California, Berkeley, to support a joint project with Duke University on global strategic challenges and foreign policy. “It had a bridging the gap dimension to it that seemed promising,” Del Rosso recalled — a workshop for graduate students interested in careers spanning academia and policy.

That workshop became an annual event and, as the subprogram began, subsequent grants to Duke, American University, and the University of Denver helped it grow into the Bridging the Gap Project. The project has been operating continuously ever since, with about 480 alumni from its workshops for PhD candidates and faculty. Today, Bridging the Gap Project alumni are well-represented in tenured academic roles and at government agencies, including the White House and Departments of State and Defense.

At the same time, the scope of Bridging the Gap grantmaking has grown far beyond the namesake professional-development program. Corporation funding supports research about policymakers’ needs, intellectual centers and institutes where academics and policymakers can exchange ideas, dissemination outlets for public-facing scholarship, research and guidance on ethical policy engagement, and the inclusion of public engagement as a consideration in tenure and promotion decisions.

“That first grant had a particular focus on the supply side of the equation,” said Del Rosso. “But it was clear to me then as the responsible program lead that this was a multifaceted challenge that required pushing on a lot of doors in hopes that some would open.”

Bridging the Gap Grantmaking to Date



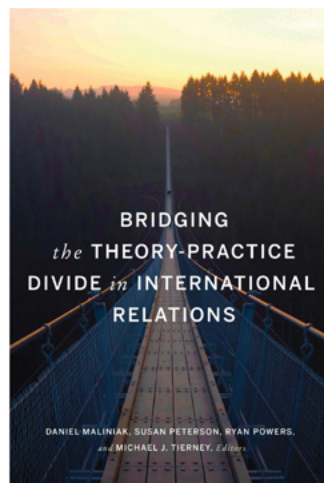
Carnegie Corporation of New York has awarded \$33.5 million in Bridging the Gap grants to support and disseminate policy-relevant research and prepare international relations scholars to engage with policymakers.

UNDERSTANDING THE GAP

In a 2008 speech, then U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates called on national security and higher education communities to work together to inform policy, declaring that “we must again embrace eggheads and ideas.” Bridging the Gap grantmaking has promoted access to both, by challenging institutions to place more value on public-facing scholarship, exploring the supply and demand for policy-relevant research, and contributing research and analysis on emerging policy challenges.

“It’s projects like Carnegie’s that underscore the importance of not assuming that good ideas will be picked up from the ether. They have to be placed in front of the right eyes at the right time. And we shouldn’t be shy about trying to do that.”

— Eileen Babbitt, professor of practice of international conflict management at The Fletcher School of Global Affairs, Tufts University



Grantees at the University of Notre Dame and the College of William & Mary have surveyed policymakers and scholars and written extensively about the academic and policymaking divide, including *Cult of the Irrelevant* (2019) and *Bridging the Theory-Practice Divide in International Relations* (2020).

The Carnegie Policy Relevance Project

The **Carnegie Policy Relevance Project at the University of Notre Dame** has challenged traditional measures of scholarly excellence by ranking the top 50 political science departments in the United States based on measures of policy engagement and impact. The project received \$839,500 in grants between 2011 and 2019.

In its relevance rankings, institutions were rated based on measures of policy engagement by their faculty and the impact of academic books. “We made the point that if you start taking indices of relevance more seriously, the totem pole of institutions changes dramatically,” said Michael Desch, who oversaw the rankings and is director of the Notre Dame International Security Center. “Deans, provosts, and boards of trustees are very interested in rankings and metrics. Rankings of relevance were a way to pique their interest in seeing their institutions improve in that area.”

The Carnegie Policy Relevance Project also has quantified demand for policy-relevant scholarship in partnership with the **College of William & Mary**, which received \$2.9 million in Bridging the Gap grants between 2013 and 2021. Scholars from both institutions collaborated on a 2011 survey of policymakers, which found that national security officials follow academic literature but are skeptical about its utility. A second survey in 2017–18 found that practitioners seek out academic insights and shift their views based on research, but the abstract and quantitative nature of disciplinary writing hampers its utility in daily policy work. Findings from these studies were published in *International Studies Quarterly* in 2014 and 2022, respectively, and have been featured in *Foreign Policy* and widely read political science blogs, such as the *Duck of Minerva*. In his own research, Desch has critiqued social science’s historically strong focus on theory and precision over applied research, including in a 2015 essay in *Perspectives on Politics* and in a 2019 book, *Cult of the Irrelevant*, published by Princeton University Press.

TRIP and the Global Research Institute

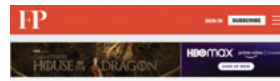
At the **Teaching, Research & International Policy (TRIP) project** based at William & Mary, researchers survey international relations scholars for their insights on pressing security threats, approaches to teaching and research, and engagement with policymakers, think tanks, and nongovernmental organizations. TRIP has published seven surveys and 17 shorter “snap polls” and frequently publishes articles about the results in *Foreign Policy*. Most recently, TRIP researchers surveyed scholars as well as policymakers and think-tank researchers about the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and found strong support for NATO expansion in both the “faculty” and “beltway” groups. More than 100 scholarly articles have cited data from TRIP, which has received about \$1.9 million in Corporation support since 2013.

TRIP data also formed the basis of a 2020 book, *Bridging the Theory-Practice Divide in International Relations*, published by Georgetown University Press, which examined the size of the scholar-practitioner gap, reasons for its existence, variations across substantive issue areas, and impact of scholarly input on particular policy challenges.

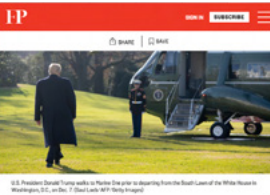
TRIP is one of 10 research labs at William & Mary’s **Global Research Institute**, which conducts multidisciplinary applied research. The Corporation also supports its largest lab, **AidData**, where postdoctoral fellows, faculty, and students analyze granular financial data to track the impacts of international policies and investments. In 2021, a Corporation grant of \$1 million involved a commitment by William & Mary’s provost’s office to continue the Global Research Institute postdoctoral program for at least two years after the Corporation’s support ends. The current grant period concludes in late 2024.

AidData researchers have used open-source data-collection methods to build in-depth datasets about

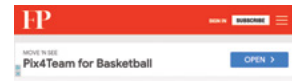
Sharing Scholars’ Views



Poll: What Is the Likelihood of War Over Taiwan?
Despite recent escalations, IR scholars think the chance of conflict hasn't increased in the last year.



Snap Poll: What Experts Make of Trump's Foreign Policy
International relations scholars evaluate two years of U.S. foreign policy.

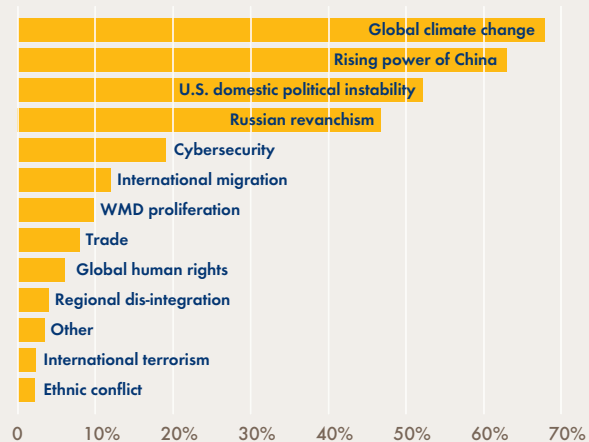


Snap Poll: Is a Soccer Scandal More Scandalous if It Involves Putin?
We asked scholars about the FIFA indictments, how Europe is managing its migration crisis, and if it's time to give up on Greece.

Despite the ongoing war against the Islamic State, the civil war raging in Yemen and Syria, and continuing negotiations on a nuclear deal with Iran, international news has been dominated by other issues, like the politics of recent migration, trade, and monetary policy. The latest Snap Poll of international relations (IR) scholars, conducted by the Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) project at the College of William & Mary, in collaboration with Foreign Policy, asked IR scholars what they think about these wide-ranging international issues in the news. This poll is the sixth in the series and includes responses from 656 of all 4,954 IR scholars at colleges and universities throughout the United States. Read the complete TRIP Snap Poll

Through the Corporation-supported TRIP project, researchers regularly poll international relations scholars on timely topics and publish the results in *Foreign Policy*.

What are the three most important foreign policy issues facing the United States today?



Data from the 2022-23 Teaching, Research and International Policy Faculty Survey funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York

Chinese development finance, which have been featured by the *Financial Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the Associated Press, and the BBC and have informed briefings at the White House, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Departments of Treasury and State.

The datasets were especially useful during the run-up to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As the U.S. and its allies debated possible economic sanctions, AidData researchers "spent a lot of time briefing the Treasury Department, members of the National Security Council, and the British government, and those briefings had a direct impact on the choices that the United States made in its sanctions policy," said Michael Tierney, who is cofounder of AidData, director of the Global Research Institute, and helps lead the TRIP project.

"The U.S. government was thinking about what sanctions to put in place that would not have negative unintended consequences," said Tierney. "For example, it really matters whether the loans China gives to Russia are dollar-denominated, and thus subject to secondary sanctions, or denominated in rubles or yuan" — an increasingly important topic as the war in Ukraine continues.

"Global Research Institute researchers were able to have a huge direct impact in real time," said Tierney. "And none of that is possible if we didn't already have the basic research done that could inform policymakers."

The Rigor and Relevance Initiative

The **Rigor and Relevance Initiative**, launched in 2014 through a request for proposals, challenged the 22 American members of the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs to propose new approaches to bridging the gap between academia and policy. It also included an attempt to require that recipient institutions adjust tenure rules to value public engagement, which Del Rosso discussed with several deans of schools of international affairs.

"Almost to a person, they came back to me and said that it's really important that Carnegie put a marker down on this, but making it a requirement would be a bridge too far," Del Rosso recalled. The guidance was scaled back to give special funding consideration to universities that count policy-relevant activities in promotion and tenure reviews and encourage periods of immersion in policy work by extending tenure deadlines. The supported international affairs schools were eventually able to modify their tenure and promotion processes in various ways, according to Del Rosso. "Sometimes changes in norms and practices need a little external encouragement," he said.

Five schools won grants of approximately \$1 million each: **Columbia University**, to launch a global hub studying cyber policy at the School of International and Public Affairs; **Syracuse University**, to enlist scholars to develop academic and policy-relevant graduate work at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs; **Tufts University**, for research regarding legitimacy in fragile states at the Fletcher School; the **University of Denver**, to research the peacebuilding role of nonviolent, nonstate actors at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies; and the **University of Washington**, to research cybersecurity and the Arctic at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies.

Columbia, Tufts, the University of Denver, and the University of Washington were awarded additional funds to continue their work beyond the first two years of their grants. Syracuse University also received additional funding for its project while it transitioned to Johns Hopkins University.

At Tufts University's Fletcher School, which received \$2 million between 2014 and 2016, researchers assessed the degree to which on-the-ground research about migration and perceptions of state legitimacy influenced development and aid policies in the United States and European Union.

"The main finding of our work was that the people who appreciated and were in a position to take up the findings of the research were not the people at the top of decision-making structures," said Eileen Babbitt, a conflict analysis expert who was the director of the Fletcher School's Henry J. Leir Institute for Migration and Human Security from 2014 to 2020. "The place to change the system is at the second tier, the people who put together the documents, statements, and briefing points. Those people are more open to ideas about change and have the ears of decision-makers. They most often are not political appointees, so they can actually take some risks."

A second round of research focused on migration policy and practice, which is echoed in ongoing work on the U.S.-Mexico border and in Central America, where Fletcher researchers have mapped migrant communities and convened Mexican government officials and nonprofit leaders in Tijuana and Monterrey and followed the financial journeys of people moving through the Darien Gap.

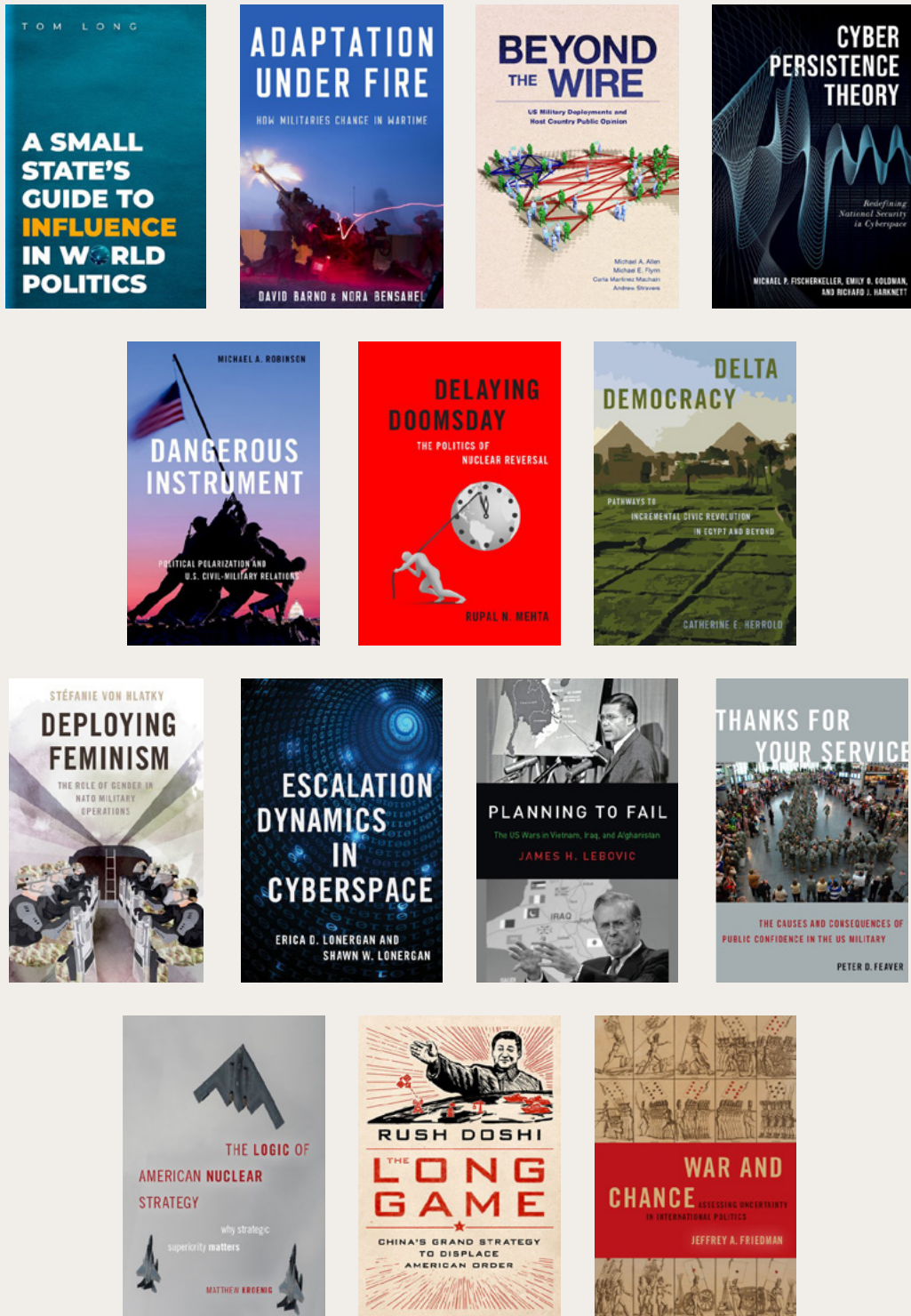
"That's where some of our research people and students are making a real difference," said Babbitt. "How do you design a robust research project in collaboration with the people you want to benefit from that research and

eventually implement something for policy impact based on the findings?"

In Seattle, the University of Washington established the International Policy Institute within the Jackson School, which serves as a hub for policy-engaged research and intellectual exchange. The institute, which received \$2.2 million in funding between 2014 and 2020, launched several programs that built on the school's research strengths and location in the Pacific Northwest.

Through the institute, students and researchers have produced forward-looking analyses for Microsoft on rising data powers in the global economy and extremists' use of information and communications technology. They also have convened leaders from indigenous communities in Canada to discuss policy and climate change in the Arctic. Corporation funding supports the institute's Cybersecurity Fellows program, which supports about 20 students each year to conduct and publish policy-relevant research. For example, a recent project on information warfare detailed Russian-attributed cyber actions in 85 countries between 2018 and early 2020.

"We are engaging in policymaking, but in a different way than the *other* Washington," said Reşat Kasaba, who founded the institute and was the director of the Jackson School from 2010 to 2020. "We are bringing these other voices into the conversation."



The Bridging the Gap Series with Oxford University Press provides a dissemination outlet for policy-relevant books and opportunities for up-and-coming academics to publish their work. The imprint was launched in 2018 and has published 14 books so far.

BUILDING NETWORKS FOR GAP-BRIDGING

The Corporation supports three major programs that address the lack of preparation in most PhD programs for policy-engaged work. This includes training, networking, and mentorship for PhD students and early-career faculty, statecraft training through historical simulations and counterfactual analysis, and a comprehensive effort to establish and promote an ethics of policy engagement.

The Bridging the Gap Project

The flagship initiative of Bridging the Gap grantmaking, the **Bridging the Gap Project** began after a 2006 meeting of scholars and graduate students at the University of California, Berkeley. That meeting, the New Era Foreign Policy Conference, was led by Steven Weber, then the director of Berkeley's Institute of International Studies, and Bruce Jentleson of Duke University, an academic who had also worked extensively in government, including as a senior policy advisor in the U.S. Department of State. It became an annual event and the cofounders were joined by James Goldgeier of American University, whose long career in the academy also included a stint on the National Security Council at the White House.

The Bridging the Gap Project moved to American University in Washington, D.C., where it received \$3.3 million in Corporation support from 2011 to 2022. Its program for PhD students was renamed the New Era Workshop, and the project also added the International Policy Summer Institute for postdocs and early-career faculty. About 480 scholars have attended these programs to date. Annual applications from PhD students have grown by nearly half since the program's start. The number of applications from postdocs and early-career faculty has more than tripled in the past decade.

In the New Era Workshop, PhD students participate in scenario-based workshops and hone skills like writing for a policy audience and fundraising to support policy-relevant research. In the International Policy Summer Institute, postdoctoral fellows and faculty members critique drafts of op-eds, receive media and ethics training, and attend panels with representatives from the U.S. government, think tanks, nongovernmental organizations, and the intelligence community.

These scholars become part of the Bridging the Gap Project network, which provides mentoring and robust alumni communications and promotes members' work on social media. In 2018, the cofounders launched the Bridging the Gap Series with Oxford University Press, providing a dissemination outlet for policy-relevant books and opportunities for up-and-coming academics to publish their work. The imprint has published 14 books so far.

Catherine Herrold, whose ethnographic research focuses on citizen groups and international development, was feeling intellectually isolated and stalled on a book-writing project when she stumbled on the Bridging the Gap project through Twitter.

"I thought, this is fantastic, and it's out of my league — these are hotshot political scientists," she said. "Fast-forward a couple of years, and I'm pitching my first book on democracy promotion in Egypt after the Arab Spring."

She attended the International Policy Summer Institute in 2019, shared her book idea with mentors, and sharpened it under review. *Delta Democracy: Pathways to Incremental Civic Revolution in Egypt and Beyond* was published as part of the Bridging the Gap Series in March 2020. Mentors also guided Herrold to successfully apply for an International Affairs Fellowship with the Council on Foreign Relations during the 2020–21 academic year, and then her current tenure-track job, which she began in 2022, as an associate professor at Syracuse University's Maxwell School.

Recently, while teaching and conducting research in Belgrade as a Fulbright scholar, Herrold met with a local U.S. diplomat and shared her research on foreign aid and nongovernmental organizations, leading to an in-depth discussion of how the embassy could better support civil society in Serbia.

“To be able to use my research in conversation with foreign policy actors is why I do what I do,” said Herrold. “In all aspects, my engagement with the Bridging the Gap group has been the most fulfilling and important part of my career. It gave me a community of publicly engaged peers, tools to better engage with policy, and direct connections to policymakers.”

Similar experiences are reflected in a 2021 survey of Bridging the Gap Project alumni, which found that 84 percent had participated in a policy engagement activity since completing the program. That survey also found that network connections endure: respondents identified cohort relationships as the most significant aspect of the training, and 77 percent consistently maintained connections with members of the network. In addition, a study examining the impact of faculty training in 2022 found increases in participants’ knowledge, preparedness, and confidence regarding policy and public engagement. Further, most alumni engage in these activities without falling off the tenure track. A 2020 alumni survey found that 71 percent were tenured or in tenure-track jobs.

A Growing Focus on Diversity

As the Bridging the Gap Project and its alumni have grown in visibility, there have been growing concerns about diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is an inherited challenge: federal data show that in 2017, 71 percent of political science doctoral degrees nationwide were earned by white students, compared with 10 percent by Black students, 8 percent by Asian students, and 5 percent by Hispanic or Latino students.

“The big challenge moving forward is, how do we continue to do this work in a way that isn’t just reifying the power structures that we have in our discipline and the grantmaking world?” said Bridging the Gap Project co-director Naazneen Barma, who is of Indian descent and identifies as a queer, gender nonconforming woman of color. “How do we do this in a way that expands access for voices that have been traditionally marginalized in these spaces?”

In 2021, the project held a virtual conference about race as a central issue in teaching and research in the international relations field. Recruitment and admissions decisions for both PhD and faculty programs now explicitly take cohort diversity into account and track gender, geography, and whether participants hail from top-ranked institutions. Project data show a marked increase in institutional representation. In previous graduate student cohorts, virtually all participants were from top-tier universities. In 2022, only half were from that small group of schools.

Bridging the Gap Project leaders also created a role for a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fellow, who leads efforts to engage a more diverse audience. Emmanuel Balogun, an Africa expert and assistant professor at Skidmore College, served in that role in 2021.

In addition to promoting broader representation among participants, Balogun noted that actively advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion will prompt fundamental questions about international relations scholarship and gap-bridging more generally. New voices can bring a critical lens to the past, hold scholars to account for assumptions about the present, and pose novel questions about engagement in an uncertain future.

“We need to ask, what is the value proposition of bridging the gap now that some goals have been achieved?” said Balogun, a first-generation Nigerian American who earned his PhD at the University of Delaware. “What are the new sets of questions that

need to be asked? We need scholars who are working on emerging nuclear technologies. That is very important. But we also need people who are working on structural racism in environmental and climate policy. That’s a gap that also needs to be bridged.”

Balogun’s positive interactions with program leaders inspired his fellowship application and also prompted him to encourage a PhD classmate, Faith Okpotor, to apply for the International Policy Summer Institute. Both Balogun and Okpotor have since won International Affairs Fellowships to work on Africa policy, with Balogun at the U.S. Department of State and Okpotor at the Department of Defense. Okpotor also has been granted tenure at Moravian University, and her book, *Post-Election Violence in Africa*, is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press.

“I had always dreamed of getting an International Affairs Fellowship, and the International Policy Summer Institute put me in direct proximity to former fellows who became mentors and were instrumental in my application,” said Okpotor. “These programs were, for a long time, just the same sets of people and the same kinds of people. I had it on my radar, but had someone not reached out to me and said, ‘you should apply,’ I probably would not have.”

The Next Generation of the Bridging the Gap Project

In 2023, the Bridging the Gap Project moved to the University of Denver amid a change in leadership, with a grant of \$1.1 million from the Corporation. The founders now serve as senior advisors, and the program is led by two of the original four graduate student organizers, who have been closely involved in the years since — Barma, director of the Scrivner Institute of Public Policy at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver, and Brent Durbin, a professor at Smith College — as well as by Jordan Tama, a professor at American University’s School of International Service. The other original organizers are Ely Ratner, who is

currently assistant secretary of defense for Indo-Pacific security affairs at the U.S. Department of Defense, and Matthew Kroenig, a professor at Georgetown University who has worked in the Pentagon and intelligence communities during the George W. Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations.

Barma noted a “generational shift” among early-career academics since the program began, which has inspired a new aspect of Bridging the Gap Project training: workshops on ethical engagement, in partnership with the Responsible Public Engagement initiative at Korbel’s Sié Chéou-Kang Center for International Security.

“There are many more students in PhD programs who have done something in the policy world or policy-adjacent space,” Barma said. “And you see people at early stages of their careers deliberately working to disseminate their research in public outlets. When I’m looking at job candidates for the Korbel School, everyone is doing the sort of public writing in a way that just wasn’t the case 10 years ago, let alone 20 years ago.”

In a 2022 essay, “How Not to Bridge the Gap in International Relations,” published in *International Affairs*, Barma and Goldgeier propose a set of standards for successful and relevant engagement by scholars, such as asking questions likely to have influence, choosing the correct interlocutors, maintaining academic integrity, and including the diverse experiences of underrepresented populations.

“There’s been an evolution in how we describe ourselves, from policy-relevant scholars to publicly engaged scholars,” said Barma. “It’s not about changing one person’s mind who is going to put a policy in place. It’s about changing the way that we as a public think about things.”

A 'New Era' Workshop and New Career Path

After four years of active duty as an intelligence officer in the United States Air Force, **Erik Lin-Greenberg** was ready for his next challenge: graduate school. He began a PhD program in political science, eager to explore the ideas that had shaped his experiences in the military.

Yet instead of “reading *Foreign Affairs* and thinking great things about the world,” Lin-Greenberg found himself doing what felt like math homework. His early years of scholarly life were spent focused on the academic study of political science grounded in precise methodology.

“I seriously considered dropping out of school,” said Lin-Greenberg – until he attended the New Era Foreign Policy Workshop in Washington, D.C., part of the Bridging the Gap Project, then at American University. Over three days during the spring of 2015, he and two dozen other PhD candidates analyzed pressing challenges in international relations by asking “what if” questions, heard from government insiders and foreign policy experts, and workshoped dissertation ideas.

“I thought, these are my people. This is the kind of work that I want to be doing – policy-relevant questions informed by rigorous research. That experience changed my whole perspective,



Erik Lin-Greenberg (right) and graduate students from the Security Studies Program at MIT visit the U.S. Army's National Training Center in California. “I want to make sure the folks on the academic supply side have an understanding of what's on the military demand side,” he said.

both my outlook on graduate school and the profession of academia more broadly,” he said.

Lin-Greenberg finished his degree, won an elite academic prize for the nation's top political science dissertation from the American Political Science Association, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Perry World House at the University of Pennsylvania in 2019–20. He is now an assistant professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a political and military planner for the Joint Chiefs of Staff as an Air Force reservist.

In late 2023, Lin-Greenberg will become the director of operations of the 718th Intelligence Squadron at Joint Base Langley-Eustis. He will continue to teach at MIT, where he brings his graduate students to meet with senior leaders at military bases during school breaks. He also remains involved with the Bridging the Gap Project, leading policy workshops and a collaboration with the Air Force's strategic studies group to think through possible war-fighting threats. As a researcher, Lin-Greenberg is focused on how emerging technologies like drones and artificial intelligence influence military conflict.

“Bridge building is so important, and so is being willing to cross back and forth, both leveraging academic experience in government and bringing those insights back to academia. That way, we train our students to talk to senior decision-makers and help our senior leaders have information that is both rigorous and systematic,” said Lin-Greenberg, who has coauthored journal articles with several Bridging the Gap Project alumni. “I have participated in the whole cycle and really benefited from Bridging the Gap.”

“Bridging the Gap instilled this notion in me that we should be doing work that has policy-relevant implications, and I found there is a massive network of scholars who are engaged in this kind of work – not only senior people but a robust group of scholars my age.”

– **Erik Lin-Greenberg**, assistant professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and U.S. Air Force reservist

Responsible Public Engagement

The **Responsible Public Engagement** initiative was developed to explore the ethical dilemmas posed by gap-bridging, including through research, training, and direct support for scholars. It is based at the Sié Chéou-Kang Center at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver, which has received \$1.7 million from the Corporation since 2018 for this work.

The Sié Center’s current goal is to identify ethical best practices and educate academics about how to engage responsibly with policymaking. Researchers have gathered case studies exploring examples of moral challenges in this arena, such as ambiguous evidence and power dynamics. Those case studies are set to be published as an edited volume by Oxford University Press and have formed the basis of a curriculum and training sessions for academics. These were featured in a two-day virtual Responsible Public Engagement Institute in 2021, the 2022 meeting of the International Studies Association, and recent Bridging the Gap Project workshops, where there was also cross-grantee collaboration.

The initiative involves a robust [Ethics of Engagement website](#), which gives detailed examples of scholarly work involving fast-moving and consequential public policy and features a digital question box where academics can anonymously pose questions about their work.

“The idea of responsible engagement is that it is not simply to get academic ideas into the policy realm,” said Deborah Avant, who oversees the initiative and is distinguished university professor and Sié Chéou-Kang Chair for International Security and Diplomacy. “We really need to reflect on how we are engaging and not just assume that we have all of the answers and can push things forward.”

“A lot of our efforts are to get people to think about uncertainty and complexity — about what they know and what they don’t know,” she said. “Hopefully, we can generate a different approach to thinking about what science can and cannot tell us.”

“If you look at the ranks of the Pentagon, here at the White House and National Security Council, you see many different beneficiaries of Bridging the Gap programs. There is now a pretty strong cadre of accomplished academics who have come into government and are doing important work, which very much reflects the influence of Carnegie’s Bridging the Gap work.”

— **Rebecca Lissner**, deputy national security advisor to Vice President Kamala Harris and alumnus of Corporation-funded Bridging the Gap programs

Bringing Brittney Griner Home

On February 17, 2022, WNBA all-star Brittney Griner landed at Sheremetyevo International Airport near Moscow. It was a familiar journey – she had spent her offseasons playing in Russia since 2015 and helped win four EuroLeague championships. But the two-time Olympic gold medalist never made it to her team.

After police dogs sniffed hashish oil in her luggage, Griner was detained, convicted of large-scale drug smuggling, and sentenced to nine years in prison. In early May, the U.S. government declared she was “wrongfully detained.”

A longstanding U.S. position bars negotiation with terrorist organizations. But what if the detained American is held by an autocratic state under the pretext of some illegal act? As kidnapping scholar **Danielle Gilbert** explained in a widely read essay in the Corporation-supported *Washington Post* blog *The Monkey Cage*, the “wrongfully detained” designation empowered the U.S. to negotiate for Griner’s release as a political hostage.



WNBA All-Star and two-time Olympic gold medalist Brittney Griner, who was detained at an airport near Moscow and charged with illegal possession of cannabis, leaves a courtroom after a Russian court found her guilty of smuggling and storing narcotics on August 4, 2022.

Given Griner’s high profile, the blog post opened the door to a new role for Gilbert: sought-after narrator to the public and trusted interlocutor of the White House, the State Department, the WNBA, and Griner’s management. During the player’s 10-month detention, Gilbert explained hostage diplomacy and Griner’s possible paths to release to outlets including NPR, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New Yorker*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. She wrote for *USA Today* and the *Washington Post* and appeared on ABC, NBC, CNN, C-SPAN, Al Jazeera, and ESPN.

“I thought it was important to participate and address different kinds of audiences because if I didn’t say yes to an interview, maybe someone else would, and I can only control what I say or bring to the table,” Gilbert said.

Gilbert, a postdoctoral fellow at Dartmouth University who will become an assistant professor at Northwestern University in fall 2023, credited her public engagement work to the support and preparation she received from programs funded by the Corporation. She participated in the New Era Foreign Policy Workshop in 2014, the Responsible Public Engagement Institute in 2021, and the International Policy Summer Institute during Griner’s detention in 2022.

Crucially, the 2022 institute included a media training component that gave Gilbert on-camera practice time, feedback, and concrete tips on how to speak clearly and effectively on camera. That same week, she put her training to use in an interview with *Good Morning America*. In addition, a meeting with a *Foreign Affairs* editor at the conference led to her publishing an influential essay on hostage-taking later that summer.

“That article has opened up many doors with the hostage recovery enterprise in the United States government, and they are thinking very seriously about and engaging with the arguments I made in that piece,” said Gilbert. Her engagement with the White House included a closed-door brainstorming session with policymakers before Griner was released in a prisoner swap in December 2022. More recently, Gilbert briefed the *Wall Street Journal* on strategies to free Evan Gershkovich, a



During a CNN interview, Danielle Gilbert, an alumna of the Corporation’s Bridging the Gap programs, discusses the dynamics of hostage taking in international politics amid ongoing attempts by the U.S. government to secure the release of Brittney Griner.

Moscow-based correspondent who was arrested and charged with espionage in March 2023 and has been declared wrongfully detained by the U.S. government.

“The Responsible Public Engagement training became so important to me as I thought through what ethical engagement would look like in this process. How much should I be focused on the truth versus being helpful? How much does it matter that the White House and Brittney Griner’s community and other entities are happy with or unhappy with what I am saying?” she said. “The outlet of *The Monkey Cage*, the training of the Responsible Public Engagement Institute, the training of the International Policy Summer Institute have all worked together to make me as prepared as I could have been.”

“At the foundational level, being part of this network and having the training has instilled in me that I don’t want to just write scholarship and speak to people in the scholarly community. I believe that it is not just good, but crucial, to communicate findings to a broader audience.”

– **Danielle Gilbert**, assistant professor, Northwestern University

International Policy Scholars Consortium and Network

Learning how to evaluate and make decisions in the face of uncertainty amid complex, interdependent, and pressing challenges is a central feature of the **International Policy Scholars Consortium and Network (IPSCON)**, based at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies. The program trains scholars in the art of conducting state affairs, referred to as statecraft. Since it began in 2014, IPSCON has trained more than 100 PhD students from a number of disciplines and received \$2.8 million in support from Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Each year, about 15 PhD candidates participate in a summer retreat at Syracuse University, monthly videoconference seminars, and a two-day scenario-based workshop in Washington, D.C. Mentored by senior academics from a dozen universities, including those who have served in high-ranking foreign policy positions in both Republican and Democratic administrations, participants build professional networks of junior and senior scholars and gain familiarity with the inner workings of foreign policymaking inside the Beltway.

IPSCON also challenges participants to understand the constraints and unknowns of real-time decision-making by participating in historical simulations. In these exercises, junior scholars closely analyze a policy choice and explore what might have happened if a different path had been followed. Most recently, teams of IPSCON scholars applied this type of counterfactual analysis to U.S. action in Afghanistan from 2001–21, advised by senior scholars who had served in key foreign policy roles in the George W. Bush, Obama, and Biden administrations during those years. Other IPSCON sessions have featured senior scholars working in the Pentagon, such as Kathleen Hicks, deputy secretary of defense, and Vipin Narang, principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for space policy.

“There is a natural tendency in academic teaching and writing to have what I might call outcome bias or retrospective bias — we know how the story turns out and we study it from there, and we have a binary opinion that a decision was either right or wrong,” said IPSCON cofounder Francis Gavin, the director of the Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs at Johns Hopkins. “Whereas policymakers, when they confront a problem *ex ante*, they are facing radical uncertainty about the future.”

The training “both assesses the decision that was made and examines the choices that decision-makers have and what’s actually possible,” said Gavin. “Our premise is that statecraft does involve a series of insights — maybe not quite laws, but trends, processes, and phenomena that can be studied and can improve our evaluation and implementation of policy.”

IPSCON was designed to “create a commons of support that is not defined by the university you are at but by our shared substantive interest and commitment to bridging the gap,” said cofounder James Steinberg, whose career has included top diplomatic and national security positions in the Clinton and Obama administrations, a stint at the Brookings Institution, and deanships of the public affairs schools at the University of Texas, Syracuse University, and now Johns Hopkins University. “The government is full of people who have master’s degrees, and they have their networks. But they don’t have the kind of intellectual leadership that the PhD students have. The PhDs have that, but they don’t have the networks.”

Rachel Myrick is a former Rhodes scholar whose dissertation won the nation’s top prize in international relations from the American Political Science Association. Now an assistant professor on the tenure track at Duke, she publishes frequently on a high-interest topic: the intersection of partisan politics and foreign policy. Yet she struggled to find logistical advice about building a “hybrid career, where you’re a serious

academic but also have a foot in the policy world in a serious way,” she said.

“At an institution like Duke, the tenure bar is very high, and the expectations for research and academic publication look very different than what you might do to have a foot in the policy world,” said Myrick. “IPSCON was one of the only places I could meet senior colleagues who had actually done both and talk to them about the logistics.”

These programs also have been influential for scholar-practitioners making the shift from government to academia. Naima Green-Riley, an assistant professor at Princeton University and IPSCON senior scholar, was a foreign service officer with postings in China and Egypt before pursuing a PhD at Harvard University.

“I was interested in applying the most up-to-date research methods in political science to questions of diplomacy and wanted to think more deeply about the applied work we were doing in the State Department,” Green-Riley said. When she participated in New Era Foreign Policy Workshop in 2016 and IPSCON in 2020, “I felt like I had really found my people.... Every time we had a conversation during the [IPSCON] Minnowbrook retreat, I walked out thinking about a new way I could apply something in my research to the policy world.”



IPSCON senior scholar Naima Green-Riley of Princeton University, a former foreign service officer with postings in China and Egypt, on the Great Wall in 2017.

A “Tiger Team” Plans for War in Ukraine

At the end of 2021, senior leaders in the United States and the Western world were working frantically toward an urgent goal: to dissuade Russia from invading Ukraine. At the same time, an interagency “tiger team” organized by the National Security Council engaged in a series of “what if” planning exercises, crafting robust plans for a range of potential scenarios, from cyberattacks to a full-scale, mass-casualty invasion.

This commitment to contingency planning was informed by the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021. Later that fall, as U.S. intelligence agencies tracked a troubling buildup of Russian troops on the Ukraine border, **Alexander Bick** and **Rebecca Lissner** cowrote a memo recommending that the U.S. actively plan for a variety of possible war scenarios. Both were then directors for strategic planning at the National Security Council and had participated in IPSCON, where senior scholars lead graduate students in team-based analyses of historic foreign-policy decisions at critical junctures. Lissner is now deputy national security advisor to Vice President Kamala Harris, and Bick is a senior advisor and member of the Policy Planning Staff at the U.S. Department of State.

“The way we approached the possible invasion was based in part on discussions we had at IPSCON about uncertainty, bureaucratic politics, and the way that people remain focused on the near term rather than thinking about the longer term,” said Bick.

In Afghanistan, “we had planned based largely on what we thought would happen, not on what might happen,” he said. “With Russia, the main effort was correctly focused on deterring Putin from invading Ukraine. But we couldn’t know if those efforts would succeed, and we did know that if they did not, the consequences would be enormous. Therefore, we laid out a number of scenarios of what might happen and then enumerated the policy questions that we would need to answer as an administration in the event that any of those scenarios took place sequentially.”

Bick was tasked with leading a team of experts from the Departments of Defense, Energy, Treasury, and Homeland Security, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development and the intelligence community. They probed a series of possible alternative conditions and outcomes, analyzed how these counterfactuals should inform policy, and weighed responses. Over the next several months, the team organized and conducted these “what if” planning simulations, including for cabinet officials, who weighed factors such as



Ukrainians and supporters mark the one-year anniversary of Russia’s invasion at a rally on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. on February 25, 2023.

the scale of the invasion, both sides’ willingness to fight, and international cooperation, and explored possible complementary actions through military, energy, and banking policy. President Biden reviewed the resulting playbook and was briefed on the team’s analysis.

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, the U.S., Western allies, and Japan moved quickly to freeze its international bank assets. Early scenario planning also informed efforts to draft public messaging that could dispel disinformation being circulated by Russia and allowed Western allies to pre-position humanitarian supplies in and around Ukraine.

“This process enabled us to have a deliberate planning process where we thought through a range of things that could happen, thought through what we would need to do, and began to put those things into motion,” Bick said. “Our readiness enabled us to mobilize a broad coalition of countries to support Ukraine at a critical moment. And it demonstrates the power of programs like IPSCON to bridge the gap, turning the latest academic research and training into better public policy.”

“Our experience in Afghanistan directly informed the Administration’s decision to set up a small group of experts (“tiger team”) for worst-case scenario planning on Ukraine — including simulation exercises — months ahead of Russia’s invasion. We were ultimately relieved that, due to the bravery of the Ukrainian people, the leadership of President Zelenskyy, and the rallying of support from allies and partners with U.S. leadership, Russia’s invasion has failed to achieve its objectives. But we were ready for a range of contingencies, and we remain ready.”

— from “U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan,” report from the National Security Council of the United States, April 6, 2023



In Fiji, a group of volcanic islands in the South Pacific Ocean, a village graveyard is now underwater due to rising sea levels worldwide. Climate change poses an extraordinary challenge for Fiji and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS). In 2022, Corporation grantee Perry World House convened leaders of SIDS nations from the Caribbean, Pacific, and Indian Ocean and South China Sea, along with other experts and stakeholders, to explore how these countries can respond to climate change.

FILLING THE GAP

In 2015, Bridging the Gap grantmaking expanded again to establish new opportunities for scholars and policymakers to communicate and collaborate with one another. Grants funded new outlets for intellectual exchange and dissemination, expanding the potential avenues for gap-bridging both inside and beyond academic institutions and government agencies.

“The gap needs to be bridged, and it needs to be two-way traffic. Academics need practitioners to situate what they are doing in reality. And practitioners need the broader view that can sometimes get lost in the whitewater rafting of policy. Both sides are not able to do their jobs as well if they do them without the input of the other.”

— **Barbara Bodine**, director of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University and former U.S. ambassador to Yemen

The Monkey Cage and The Conversation

In 2007, a few political scientists hopped on a do-it-yourself publishing trend and started a blog called ***The Monkey Cage***, or TMC. They examined the issues of the day through the lens of academic research in posts that often challenged the leading perspective of a political news event. Cofounder and publisher John Sides, an elections scholar then at George Washington University, recalls “arguing with journalists who were convinced that a candidate’s misstatement would become the gaffe that would derail their campaign... pushing back against that kind of reporting but also trying to say, ‘Here’s why that is not something we need to think a lot about, and we can instead focus on stuff that really does matter.’”

Over the next few years, the blog grew in popularity and found a home at the *Washington Post*. Starting in September 2013, the *Post* published TMC on its website, which had more than 20 million unique visitors each month at the time. The blog’s readership skyrocketed, and over nine years, TMC published 8,478 posts by 5,295 unique contributors.

TMC has received approximately \$900,000 from the Corporation since 2015, along with support from the Democracy Fund, the Hewlett Foundation, George Washington University, and Johns Hopkins University’s SNF Agora Institute. The funds paid for staff “who could give us editors some help and the benefit of having a nonspecialist set of eyes on everything we published,” said Sides. In 2021, TMC moved its institutional home to Vanderbilt University, which committed \$250,000 in university support over five years.

TMC posts have reached a wide and influential readership. Justice Stephen Breyer referenced a TMC post in his 2015 dissent in *Glossip v. Gross*. U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren cited a TMC post in a 2016 speech about corporate influence over policymaking. And in 2022, a group of military leaders filed an amicus brief in

Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard College that cited a TMC post about the benefits of inclusive military forces. The author, Jason Lyall of Dartmouth University, tweeted, “Some days I wonder whether it’s worth the effort to write for a more general audience. And then some days, like today, your @monkeycage article is cited in an amicus brief in front of the Supreme Court (!).”

While the *Washington Post* arrangement ended in 2022, TMC editors continue to publish detailed topic guides that link to relevant TMC posts, promote content through newsletters, and keep up an active TMC Twitter feed with more than 56,000 followers. TMC is planning to relaunch as an independent website in 2023.

The Corporation also has supported ***The Conversation***, an online explanatory journalism publication that pairs editors with scholars to reach a broad audience, with a 2016 grant of \$1 million. In addition to its editorial role, *The Conversation* maintains data dashboards that track reader engagement and demonstrate impact, which academic institutions can access as part of a fee-based membership.

More recently, Corporation support has focused on the Africa edition of *The Conversation*, which is published in English and French. ***The Conversation Africa*** has received \$1.3 million in support since 2018, including two grants related to Bridging the Gap and one under the Corporation’s Peacebuilding in Africa initiative. A recent report found it had published 626 peace and security articles with 7.72 million views. They were bylined or co-bylined by 742 authors, 70 percent of whom live and work in 19 African countries. The impact tracker showed that after publication, nearly 16 percent of authors received follow-up requests from government, private industry, or media organizations to speak about their work.

Perry World House and the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy

In 2016, a new intellectual home for interdisciplinary global scholarship and engagement opened at the University of Pennsylvania. Now in its seventh year, **Perry World House** has hosted policymakers, diplomats, and high-ranking former government officials as speakers and visiting fellows. It operates under the provost’s office, receives about two-thirds of its budget from Penn, and has received \$1.5 million in support from the Corporation since 2017.

Perry World House offers fellowship programs for faculty, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows. Faculty grants support expanding global content in courses across Penn’s 12 schools, and convenings allow faculty to share their work outside traditional discipline-driven academic venues. Perry World House also conducts research in two major areas: shifts in global population related to urbanization, migration, and climate change; and the role of technology and shifting power dynamics in global politics.

Creating a nonpartisan, interdisciplinary space where scholars and practitioners can meet face-to-face (even if it is via videoconference) is the power of Perry World House, according to senior executive director LaShawn Jefferson. “It allows people to cross-geminate, get to know one another, and push and follow ideas,” Jefferson said. “We are leveraging a footprint that is for the entire university without being beholden to what political science may want this year, or the economics department, or the Wharton School.”

At the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, the **Institute for the Study of Diplomacy** plays a similar role in bringing together practitioners and scholars. It is expanding a library of history and insights through three interrelated efforts funded by the Corporation: a series of about 250 case studies, a blog and podcast with 54 episodes to date, and reports

by cross-sector working groups on timely topics such as kleptocracy, global food insecurity, and religious intolerance. The institute has received about \$2.5 million in Corporation support since 2015.

The diplomacy case studies, modeled after cases used in business and law schools, are used around the world. Edited and reviewed by both an academic and a practitioner before publication, they cost about \$4.50 each for a 20-page digital download that shares an insider's understanding of a consequential topic or diplomatic crossroads. For example, *State Narratives in Complex Media Environments: The Case of Ukraine* (Case 331) was written by Vivian S. Walker, executive director of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy at the U.S. Department of State and an adjunct faculty member at Georgetown.

The case studies create a historical record and democratize access to insights and ideas that would typically only be available to a select few institutions, said institute director Barbara Bodine, a retired career foreign service officer and former ambassador to Yemen.

“If you are at a community college and you want to learn about the Arab Spring, we’ve got a case study written by Ambassador Gordon Gray, who was ambassador to Tunisia at the time. It’s a full case study with the background, his views, what happened, what it meant, what were the decision points. And it’s there forever,” Bodine said.

The case studies, working group reports, and dissemination outlets are tools for both education and gap-bridging, which benefits students and practitioners alike.

“At the institute, we’ve all been practitioners. So, in our classes, we take theory and say, ‘This is the macro of what you have been learning about conflict resolution. Now let’s talk about Yemen, and what does that mean? Or transitional justice — how do you apply that to South Sudan?’ These feed each other in immeasurably important ways.”

International Affairs Fellowship for Tenured International Affairs Scholars

An innovative fellowship program begun in 2017, the **International Affairs Fellowship for Tenured International Relations Scholars** embeds tenured scholars in government offices for yearlong appointments. The program is administered by the Council on Foreign Relations and funded by the Corporation. It is modeled after a longstanding fellowship program for early-career academics and offers a hands-on engagement opportunity for tenured faculty on sabbatical. To date, 27 scholars have participated, with \$3.1 million in Corporation support.

“There are brilliant scholars all over the country, and much of their work is theoretical or based on observing from the outside,” said program director Steven Cook, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. “I think it is a tremendous value-add to understand how foreign policy is developed and implemented from the inside.”



Michael Woldemariam, pictured on C-SPAN, spent a sabbatical year advising the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on security in the Horn of Africa.

For example, Michael Woldemariam, an African security expert and associate professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy, spent his 2020–21 fellowship year advising the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on security challenges in the Horn of Africa.

Woldemariam stressed the value of understanding how D.C. policymaking works, including the surprisingly influential role of the legislative branch, as both insight and training for effective policy engagement. He said his government experience was helpful in a subsequent job search, which brought him to Maryland’s public policy school. He also gained research contacts and opportunities to advise on African security.

“There is no real substitute for that kind of intimate, detailed, day-to-day knowledge of how foreign policy is being formulated,” Woldemariam said. “In government, you learn how to not get caught in the weeds, how to not let your expertise overwhelm the argument that’s being made.... In the academy, and particularly on the research side, our outputs are very long-term. We’ll work on something for months. In government, the deliverables are more like, ‘Give me this memo in an hour.’ And you have to do that, with all its imperfections.”

Guarding against the “China Trap”

In early February 2023, U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken was scheduled to visit China and meet with President Xi Jinping – the first such meeting in six years. But days before the trip, reports of a Chinese balloon floating over Montana made their way into the media. U.S. officials tracked and ultimately shot down a 200-foot-tall, multiton, high-tech surveillance balloon. Blinken’s trip was canceled.

Throughout the news cycle, newspapers, magazines, and radio and television broadcasters called on **Jessica Chen Weiss**, a well-regarded China expert and professor at Cornell University, to share her perspective. Since completing a fellowship as a senior advisor on the policy planning staff at the U.S. Department of State, Weiss has shared her concerns about a relatively hawkish stance on China that has taken root throughout Washington.

“In some ways, the fellowship was career-defining,” said Weiss. “The exposure and experience that I had while in government, thinking about what U.S. foreign policy ought to be rather than just what China was doing, was a different way of thinking. It put me in a good position to offer both a policy critique and policy suggestions, lent a fair bit of credibility to things that I say, and it sharpened my understanding of the issue set.”

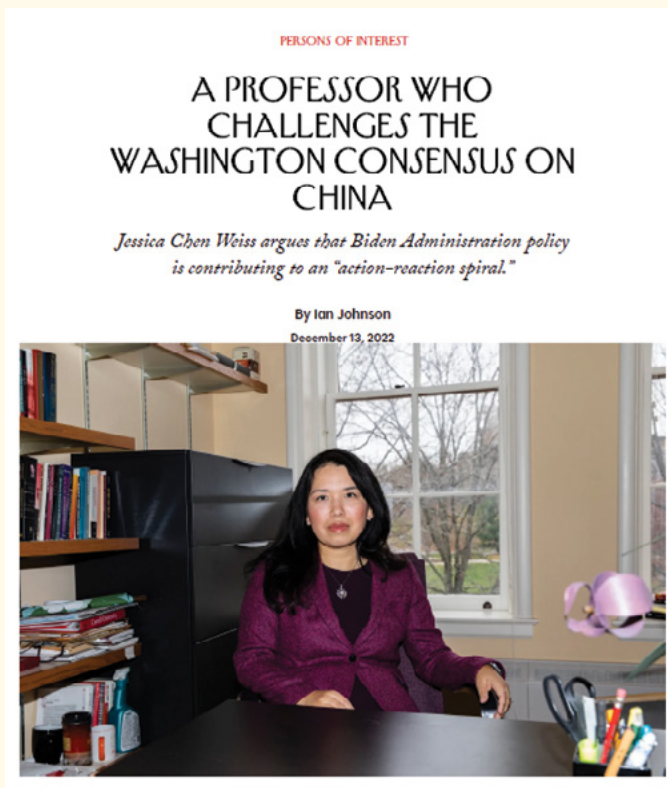
Weiss sought out the International Affairs Fellowship for Tenured International Relations Scholars during a sabbatical year in 2021–22, with an eye on contributing to China policy in a still-young Biden administration. At the end of the fellowship, she published a widely read essay in *Foreign Affairs* outlining the potential pitfalls of the nation’s confrontational approach. In addition, Weiss has written about the U.S.-China “action-reaction spiral” dynamic for the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, explained her thinking during in-depth podcasts with Ezra Klein and Jon Stewart, and been profiled in the *New Yorker*.

“I believe there is an important role for those with deep expertise on China to play, both in terms of training the next generation by teaching from an academic platform and also by contributing to the public conversation about China and our government’s policies toward China,” she said. “It can be challenging because academia is more analytical rather than prescriptive.”

“That work needs to continue,” she added, “but what I’m doing right now – which is trying to shape what should be, as opposed to understanding what is – requires deciding that it’s too important to only speak based on what the peer-reviewed research can show. I recognize that if I don’t speak, other people are going to fill that space on the basis of a lot less research and knowledge.”

“The stakes are too high to be on the sidelines.”

– **Jessica Chen Weiss**, Michael J. Zak Professor for China and Asia-Pacific Studies, Cornell University



Jessica Chen Weiss of Cornell University, who has written and spoken widely about U.S.-China relations, was profiled in *The New Yorker* in 2022.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After nearly two decades of Bridging the Gap grantmaking, Carnegie Corporation of New York has built robust networks of scholar-practitioners, created ongoing opportunities to bring academics and policymakers together, and produced a body of knowledge and expertise to guide gap-bridging across disciplines. Networking and ongoing mentorship, both among peers and between early-career and more experienced scholars, have prepared alumni currently advising or working in the White House, State and Defense Departments, and military and intelligence communities. Resources offering expertise and insights are readily available to interested policymakers and the public, and intellectual centers are bringing policymakers and experts together and sharing insights from those conversations across digital media.

While the Corporation's Bridging the Gap grantmaking is focused on international relations, the problems it seeks to address are widespread. There are ample opportunities for funders and organizations to further the influence of academic research on a broad range of policy decisions. The following recommendations aim to promote academic-policy exchanges within and beyond international relations and point to strategies to extend the reach of such initiatives.

Develop the next generation of mentors.

Funders and organizations should establish peer communities and mentorships to support upcoming scholar-practitioners and build a foundation for their future leadership.

Preparing scholars to engage with policymaking is a multifaceted endeavor. Scholars need communication skills, connections to policymakers and media outlets, and an understanding of how policy works. But they also need confidence in their ability to contribute, which Corporation-funded programs have established as an explicit goal. Program cofounders and leaders serve as examples of successful gap-bridging and formally and informally mentor early-career scholars. The cohort model builds professional and peer connections across institutions, giving scholar-practitioners a reservoir of insights and support.

One key tactic is creating ongoing conversations and forums where alumni share successes and professional opportunities. IPSCON and Bridging the Gap Project convenings are not one-time enrichment exercises; rather, participants are actively in contact with one another and mentors over time. IPSCON features monthly online presentations and discussions for its cohorts, while the Bridging the Gap Project promotes alumni work in social media and through ongoing communications.

Both programs also have established pathways for especially engaged participants to move into leadership positions. Four of the five current Bridging the Gap fellows, who help organize and oversee seminars, are former participants. At IPSCON, senior scholars include top leaders in the federal government as well as selected former IPSCON junior scholars. When the cofounders of the Bridging the Gap Project looked to step back from active management, they tapped longtime fellows to serve as new directors and shifted Corporation support to a new university home.

Invest in public-facing tools and platforms for dissemination.

Funders and organizations should build accessible ways to disseminate knowledge and insights and use technology to encourage broad dissemination.

Several programs funded by Bridging the Gap grantmaking have created tools and resources that are available to unaffiliated individuals and institutions. For example, the University of Denver's Responsible Public Engagement initiative freely provides its training curriculum, including detailed lesson plans, slide presentations, and case studies. Similarly, the diplomacy case studies published by Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy are available to download for a nominal fee.

Much of the work published by Corporation-funded programs at the University of Washington, Notre Dame, the College of William & Mary, and Perry World House is publicly available in part or in its entirety, including data dashboards, white papers, research analyses, and contact information for experts on policy-relevant topics. In addition, Perry World House live streams many of its events and archives them on YouTube. Anyone can access events with ambassadors, former heads of state, military leaders, and experts from around the world.

Prioritize and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Program leaders must pursue an ambitious, equity-focused strategy to recruit and retain more diverse participants, and funders must make this a requirement of grants. For example, the current grant for Perry World House identifies engaging more visiting scholars from the Global South as an explicit goal. At the College of William & Mary, the Corporation supports the Global Research Institute's Post-Doctoral Fellow for Academic Diversity program. Support for *The Conversation Africa* includes goals for outreach and publications by Africa-based academics outside of South Africa.

In the two most recent cohorts at IPSCON, about one-quarter of junior scholars were from underrepresented groups, half were female, and about one in three attended institutions outside the program's typical reach, including public universities in Colorado, Minnesota, and Ohio. Such diversity also was reflected in the most recent Bridging the Gap Project cohorts. In addition, between half and three-quarters of participants were from universities outside of the top tier.

Encourage changes in academic incentives to support policy-relevant scholarship.

Funders need to encourage higher education institutions to amend their criteria for tenure and promotion to incentivize policy-engaged scholarship and outreach.

With some notable exceptions, these criteria remain tied to longstanding disciplinary norms and practices. Most universities still weight peer-reviewed scholarship in disciplinary journals heavily and relegate public or policy engagement to "service." An analysis of TRIP survey data published in 2018 found that international relations scholars — tenured and untenured alike — believe that nonacademic publications such as op-eds and policy reports should factor more into tenure decisions.

International affairs schools supported by Bridging the Gap grants have made progress in incorporating policy-relevant factors into their tenure and promotion processes in various ways to give more weight to public-facing scholarship and engagement, and there have been pockets of progress in other parts of the academy. At Stanford, the university-wide Stanford Impact Labs funds joint projects between social scientists and government, business, and community leaders. Duke’s academic strategic plan includes detailed recommendations regarding tenure reviews, including revising them to give more weight to public scholarship. Reforms are not aimed at replacing longstanding disciplinary criteria, but rather to broaden the conception of what is valued in the academy. Notwithstanding these advances, the challenge of altering entrenched practices and norms remains a work in progress.

Establish a set of ethics and best practices.

Funders, leaders, and organizations should invest in developing ethical best practices and educating academics about how to engage responsibly with policymaking. Exploring the potential ethical dilemmas that gap-bridging can raise involves research, the development and dissemination of ethics curricula, training, and real-time support and advice for scholars with ethics questions. The work of the Sié Chéou-Kang Center at the University of Denver can inform these efforts.

Workshops on ethical engagement can examine the ethical dimension of topics and share detailed examples of how ethics have informed ideas, engagement, and scholarly work. Case studies that capture the moral challenges — including ambiguous evidence, power dynamics, uncertainty, and complexity — can form the basis of curriculum and training.

Convene funders across academic disciplines and areas of study.

Opportunities exist for multi-foundation efforts to connect policy-relevant and socially impactful research and insights to inform policy decisions. The Transforming Evidence Funders Network (TEFN), which the Corporation is supporting with a \$400,000 grant, involves three dozen funders and research institutions focused on a broad range of issues in the physical and social sciences, economics, and education. It involves organizations such as the Hewlett Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the National Academy of Sciences, NASA, and UK Research and Innovation.

“Institutional change requires multiple funders with multiple interests because it is a systemic challenge that one foundation can’t hope to address in isolation,” said Del Rosso. “If you get 20 or more funders rowing in the same direction, there are economies of scale and possibilities of synergy that could not be realized otherwise. It’s a proposition worth testing over the next few years.”

In one current effort, TEFN is looking at examples of what it calls “enabling conditions” that support scholars to engage in policy-relevant work, such as the Oxford University Press book series begun by the Corporation-funded Bridging the Gap Project.

“Carnegie Corporation of New York’s Bridging the Gap stands out in its efforts to support scholars through the length of their academic careers and build a pipeline of scholars with relevant policy experience who can shape the political science and international relations fields,” said Angela Bednarek, project director of the Evidence Project at The Pew Charitable Trusts, the primary coordinator of TEFN. “What is so exciting about working with Carnegie and other TEFN participants is the chance to expand and scale these programs together.”

APPENDIX

Bridging the Gap Grants

2008

\$502,000 Duke University

2011

\$277,000 University of Notre Dame

\$50,000 University of Notre Dame

2012

\$500,000 Truman Center for National Policy

2013

\$307,500 College of William & Mary

2014

\$1,000,000 Columbia University

\$947,400 Syracuse University

\$1,000,000 Tufts University

\$999,300 University of Denver

\$1,000,000 University of Washington

\$50,000 University of Wisconsin, Madison

\$741,000 American University

\$947,000 Johns Hopkins University

2015

\$501,400 College of William & Mary

\$462,500 University of Notre Dame

\$839,500 Georgetown University

2016

\$1,000,000 Columbia University

\$1,000,000 Tufts University

\$999,500 University of Denver

\$741,000 American University

\$1,000,000 Council on Foreign Relations

2017

\$548,000 College of William & Mary

\$947,000 Johns Hopkins University

\$498,000 University of Pennsylvania

2018

\$1,000,000 University of Washington

\$704,000 American University

\$500,000 University of Denver

\$839,000 Georgetown University

\$500,000 The Conversation Africa

2019

\$550,000 College of William & Mary

\$50,000 University of Notre Dame

\$994,400 Council on Foreign Relations

\$500,000 University of Pennsylvania

\$120,000 Vanderbilt University

2020

\$200,000 University of Washington

\$575,000 American University

\$498,000 Johns Hopkins University

\$600,000 University of Denver

\$680,000 Georgetown University

\$300,000 Vanderbilt University

2021

\$1,000,000 College of William & Mary

\$500,000 University of Pennsylvania

2022

\$370,000 Johns Hopkins University

\$1,080,000 Council on Foreign Relations

\$650,000 Georgetown University

\$400,000 The Conversation Africa

2023

\$1,057,500 University of Denver

\$600,000 University of Denver

\$400,000 The Pew Charitable Trusts

\$300,000 Vanderbilt University

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