Greetings,

This year we welcomed our new permanent director, Donna Ginther, Dean’s Professor of Economics, to IPSR. She has long served as the Director for the Center for Science, Technology, & Economic Policy. IPSR staff and affiliates are pleased to have Donna in this leadership role as we continue our efforts to collaborate across campus and the state on important social and policy issues. We are excited with what this past year has brought and looking forward to what lies ahead for IPSR and its affiliates.

JENA GUNTER
Assistant Director, IPSR

As part of the once-in-a-century pandemic, IPSR started the COVID-19 website which tracks data on the pandemic and the Kansas economy (ipsr.ku.edu/covid19). The economic downturn was sharp and sudden, as we have tracked the weekly increase in initial unemployment claims. As of this time, the economic recovery remains uncertain. We developed this website to provide weekly updates on the virus and the Kansas economy to our students, policymakers and the public. As of now, the COVID-19 website has had over 7,200 visitors.

Our research centers have been active in the intellectual life of the university. This report features highlights of the work of each of our centers in the past year.

We hope that at some point, we will return to the IPSR office in Blake Hall and can resume our monthly research lunches. While we may have to remain socially distant for the foreseeable future, that should not prevent us from forging the intellectual collaborations that are the lifeblood of social science and policy research at the University of Kansas. IPSR is at your service to facilitate and support your work. Please feel free to reach out to me (dginther@ku.edu) or Assistant Director, Jena Gunter (kjena@ku.edu) if you would like to participate in IPSR activities or need support for research proposal development.

DONNA GINther
Director, IPSR

“A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR”

What a year we’ve had! When I became interim Director of IPSR in June, 2019 I would have never predicted all of the change that we’re living through right now. In June of last year, the economy was stretching for the longest economic expansion on record, KU was about to welcome our new Vice Chancellor of Research, and IPSR was actively engaged in our summer activities of supporting KU researchers and hosting the HERS program. The Kansas State Data Center was gearing up for the 2020 Census and our grant development staff submitted 58 applications on behalf of KU researchers.

When I became permanent Director of IPSR in March of this year, one of my first acts was to move IPSR’s work from Blake Hall into the homes of all our staff members in response to COVID-19. I’m pleased to report that IPSR made this move without incident, and that our team has been incredibly productive as IPSR’s economic development data and research services are increasingly in demand. Our staff Zoom meetings have included curious cats and adorable children in addition to discussions about the research proposals under development and projects being completed.

"IPSR is at your service to facilitate & support your work."
Our Service to Kansas
How IPSR Serves the State of Kansas

Research Centers
Center for the Study of Injustice (CSI)
Center for Compassionate & Sustainable Communities (CCSC)
Center for Environmental Policy (CEP)
Center for Indigenous Research, Science, and Technology
Center for Military, War, and Society Studies
Center for Science, Technology & Economic Policy (CSTEP)
Surveillance Studies Research

Grants
Harnessing Energy
TANF Access Across the States
Understanding Police Decisions

Data Services
Kansas Statistical Abstract
2020 Census
State of Kansas Migration Flows

Fellows Program
IPSR Doctoral Research Fellows Program

2019–2020 Events
Kansas Health Economics Conference
Kansas Economic Policy Conference
Spotlight on Care

Looking Ahead
Save the Date: Kansas Economic Policy Conference

Work with IPSR
Research Development
Award Management
Data Services
Evaluation

Institute for Policy & Social Research
Helping our state reach its goals

Sunflowers stand tall at Grinter Family Farms outside Lawrence, Kansas, on September 1, 2014. Photo credit: Chuck France.

MISSION
The Institute for Policy & Social Research is a faculty-driven research center supporting social scientists who focus on social problems and policy-relevant questions. IPSR fosters independent researchers and collaborative teams within our network of faculty affiliates and seven interdisciplinary research centers.

SERVICE TO KANSAS

Institute for Policy & Social Research

Helping our state reach its goals

Sunflowers stand tall at Grinter Family Farms outside Lawrence, Kansas, on September 1, 2014. Photo credit: Chuck France.

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SERVICE TO KANSAS

IPSR center directors, affiliates, and staff have deep ties to Kansas, and their work reaches throughout the state.

ADVISING POLICYMAKERS
IPSR staff and center directors contribute to statewide advisory committees:

• Hannah Britton, director of the Center for the Study of Injustice, which includes the Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Initiative, serves on the Human Trafficking Advisory Board.
• Donna Ginther, director of the Center for Science, Technology & Economic Policy and IPSR, advises the Council on Tax Reform.
• Xan Wedel, senior research data engineer, helps ensure that all Kansans are counted in the 2020 Census through the Kansas Complete Count Committee.

INFORMING THE PUBLIC
As the State Data Center lead agency, IPSR works with the US Census Bureau to connect the public to census data. In addition, the Kansas Statistical Abstract, with data on topics ranging from agriculture to population, is compiled by IPSR staff and used throughout the state. IPSR staff, with the Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations, also publish the Kansas Regional Data Portal, which helps inform regional economic development strategies.

At the onset of the novel coronavirus in the US, IPSR staff wanted to ensure that Kansans had good information about the spread of the virus in the state and its effect on the economy. Director Donna Ginther prepared and released a series of briefings and researcher Xan Wedel, compiled and published a library of data visualizations. This information has been accessed over 7,200 times as of June 2020.

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES
IPSR connects researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders through events such as the Kansas Economic Policy Conference. IPSR faculty and staff also research local questions through projects like the Kansas Entrepreneurship report, commissioned by the Enterprise Center of Johnson County, and an economic impact analysis of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas.

KU for KS, an Economic Development Administration-funded University Center, has a range of programs that support small business owners. These include services such as facilitating ownership changes for retirees, consulting for challenged businesses, helping faculty commercialize new technologies, and providing resources through a business accelerator for student-led startups. IPSR associate researcher Genna Hurd co-leads the University Center project.
Labor and sex trafficking involve extreme exploitation, propelled by socioeconomic inequalities and vulnerabilities, leading to acute and chronic health problems for trafficked persons. ASHTI is a multi-disciplinary research team on trafficking both internationally and domestically. ASHTI houses a “live lab,” or field school, for graduate and undergraduate students and creates research training that aligns with KU’s commitment to high-quality graduate teaching and engaged scholarship. Graduate student researchers in 2019 have prompted a recent focus on the role of faith communities and firefighters as key points of contact for vulnerable and exploited persons.

In the spring of 2019, we hosted our second national conference, Beyond Discourse focusing on ASHTI’s position in the anti-trafficking field as a hub for critical anti-trafficking work. Also in 2019, ASHTI Director Hannah Britton began serving as Governor Laura Kelly’s appointee on the Kansas Human Trafficking Advisory Board. She provides consultation and facilitates workshops with local and regional partners. In October 2019, Dr. Britton completed fieldwork in South Africa focusing on their national response to human trafficking.

CSI is a network of scholars across the social sciences, journalism, public policy, public health, and law who are interested in addressing labor exploitation, health inequalities, sexual violence, and vulnerability. CSI faculty are committed to strengthening the research capacity of graduate students and faculty, specifically by supporting scholarship and developing effectiveness in qualitative research. CSI houses the The Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Initiative, the Center for Migration Research and the Food Research Working Group.

Dr. Britton’s current research includes a partnership with the KU Center for Digital Inclusion on technology education for women in transition led by Hyunjin Seo and Baek-Young Choi. Other research includes a new book on gender-based violence (pictured left) and the KU Food Research Group. CSI additionally supports graduate-level research through a working group on qualitative research methods.
CCSC had a busy year partnering with Lawrence/Douglas County’s Sustainability Department to design a 2020 Climate Equity Planning Process. CCSC has also established multidisciplinary working groups, the Graduate Student Collective and Social Determinants of Health.

CCSC also continued its Spotlight on Care discussions to support well-being and balanced living among faculty, researchers and graduate students. Even with the transition to online sessions, Spotlight on Care held 33 sessions with 521 participants.

CCSC is continuing research and work through an NSF CAREER award. In addition to supporting five GRAs, Dr. Lyles published a manuscript on the emotional paradox of public engagement, which was highlighted in Planning Magazine and will soon be announced as the Journal of American Planning Association’s best paper for 2019. Dr. Lyles delivered a keynote speech on flood loss reductions and presented multiple presentations on pioneering flood reduction work at various conferences.

CEP has 19 faculty affiliates from disciplines spanning Economics, Law, Engineering, Urban Planning, Public Affairs and Administration, Geology, Psychology, Environmental Studies, and Geography and Atmospheric Sciences. Having built two networks of NGOs and environmental agencies, CEP offers faculty affiliates points of contact for community-based environmental research.

Although events and travel have been limited in the spring of 2020, CEP affiliates continued to connect with both faculty and agency networks through virtual meetings. In the Fall of 2020, the Center will continue to connect through small group research meetings with faculty affiliates and exploratory events with the established NGO and agency networks.
Each academic year, CMWSS hosts an international symposium on military history, policy, or civil-military relations. This year’s symposium on “The War on Drugs,” postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis, will yield an edited volume published by New York University Press. The first edited volume to result from a Center symposium (2016), Beyond Pearl Harbor: A Pacific History, was published in summer 2019. A second volume, “Managing Sex in the US Military,” from a 2018 symposium, is scheduled for 2021. Our next symposium, in conjunction with KU’s Center for the History of Environments and Borderlands, will focus on the United States, War, and the Environment in the Pacific World.

Dr. Brewer collaborates with the University of Alaska Fairbanks on their Gwich’in language project and plans to create a children’s Gwich’in language guide to teach and preserve the language. Dr. Brewer is working on his book that focuses on the process of tenuring Indigenous people’s land in the United States from a perspective beyond the common political or legal frameworks, but through the stories yet to be told by those who work on these issues. Also, Dr. Brewer has started a joint venture with colleagues at the Kansas Biological Survey and the Meskwaki tribal community in Iowa looking at land use legacies that contribute to water quality on the Iowa River.

The Center also works to build relations among scholars of military history in our region. This year, as in the past, CMWSS hosted a reception to bring together military historians from KU and Fort Leavenworth. In a new partnership, the Center is sponsoring a KU–K-State initiative to hold regular joint seminars; the initial one addressed techniques for teaching military history in college classrooms.

Dr. Johnson continues his work on the Facilitating Indigenous Research, Science, and Technology Network grant and is collaborating on a book about Indigenous research sovereignty. Dr. Johnson also co-directs the Haskell Environmental Research Studies (HERS) summer internship program with Cody Marshall, faculty at Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU). The HERS summer internship program had another successful summer in 2019 with 15 interns completing the eight-week program.

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The Center for Indigenous Research, Science, and Technology bridges Indigenous and Western sciences, through principles, protocols, and practices, to better understand the conditions of place-based vulnerability and the best strategies to achieve resilience by facilitating Indigenous-led research initiatives.

The Center for Military, War, and Society Studies fosters scholarship that examines the US military not only as an instrument of national defense but also as a central institution in American society.
Since its creation, the SSRC has generated more than $1 million in external funding from the Knight Foundation, Spencer Foundation, Aarhus University Foundation, and the National Science Foundation. Building on an ongoing collaboration with Professors Perry Alexander and Drew Davidson from KU’s School of Engineering, Staples is Principal Investigator on, “Safeguarding and Enhancing the Experience of Public Internet Users.” Roughly one in five people in the United States must rely on community-access computers, like those in public libraries, or smartphones for broadband internet access. But users of library computers are more vulnerable to security, privacy and surveillance threats than people who connect to the internet from home. In April 2020, the team received a new two-year, $516,000 grant from the National Science Foundation so that the researchers can continue their work and refine a promising new security device they are developing.

Donna K. Ginther advises Kansas Governor Laura Kelly’s Council on Tax Reform. Her presentations to the Council included an analysis of tax policy from the 2019 legislative session and a history of Kansas’ attempt to balance revenue from income, sales, and property taxes. In ongoing work, Ginther, Pat Oslund, and Thomas Becker study the implications of tax policy changes and set long- and short-term priorities for the state budget.

The SSRC was founded in the Fall 2013 by Professor of Sociology Bill Staples. The mission of the Center is to facilitate scholarship and collaborative partnerships in the study of contemporary forms of surveillance, social monitoring, and data gathering.
HIGHLIGHTED GRANTS

HARNESSING ENERGY

Mary Hill, professor of geology, and a team of researchers are exploring the economic viability of using renewable energy to increase usable water resources by treating degraded and unused water supplies, and produce ammonia that can both store energy and be used as fertilizer. They will study the potential of these systems to create a multifaceted economic system able to sustain small town and rural communities and maintain needed agricultural production. The National Science Foundation awarded a $2.5 million grant to support their project, “FEWtures: Innovation Analysis Framework for Resilient Futures, with Application to the Central Arkansas River Basin.”

TANF ACCESS ACROSS THE STATES

Together with collaborator Michelle Johnson-Motoyama (The Ohio State University), Donna K. Ginther, Dean’s Professor, Economics, is investigating how states chose Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) policies related to work requirements, incentives, diversion, exemptions, and sanctions. Their work, supported with a $75,000 grant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, also examines how these policies affected the equity of access to TANF across states from 1999 to 2018.

UNDERSTANDING POLICE DECISIONS

Patricia L. Sattler, a doctoral candidate in the School of Social Welfare, was awarded a $78,783 fellowship from the National Institute of Justice to study the structural influences that shape police decision-making and engagement with victims of violent crimes. Her long career as a practitioner informed her research questions for this study. She is exploring the factors that influence officer decision-making and case processing and how these factors shape their engagement with victims of serious violent crimes in two states.
The participant statistical area program is an opportunity for state and local input on statistical boundaries for the 2020 Census. As the statewide contact, Xan Wedel, lead, Kansas State Data Center, reviewed the boundaries in 82 Kansas counties. Without participation from IPSR, these areas would have had no local input in the boundaries that will be place until the 2030 Census.

Count review is a funded program from the U.S. Census Bureau which allows local input of residential addresses. Wedel secured data from the Kansas NG911 database and filtered based on tax status to identify residential units. She uploaded 1,009,643 addresses to ensure a complete count of Kansas in the 2020 Census. In January 2020, Wedel reviewed and provided evidence for any units that were not in the Master Address File. In July 2020, she similarly reviewed the same for group quarters. Since the Census informs distribution of billions of dollars in funding to Kansas, Wedel’s efforts to ensure a complete count are crucial.

KANSAS STATISTICAL ABSTRACT

The Kansas Statistical Abstract 2018, contains the latest available state, county, and city-level data for Kansas on population, vital statistics and health, housing, education, business and manufacturing, exports, employment, income, finance, state and local government, crime, recreation, communications, transportation, climate, agriculture, and energy and natural resources. The Kansas Statistical Abstract is a PDF file and will require Adobe Acrobat Reader.

2020 CENSUS

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STATE OF KANSAS MIGRATION FLOWS

The State of Kansas Migration Flows is an animated data visualization meant to help bring greater understanding to role migration plays in Kansas population change. The data from the 2017 American Community Survey were summarized for the states adjacent the Kansas and remaining states by region to depict clearer migration paths. The visualization and accompanying table show Kansas lost 2,023 people due to outbound migration primarily to southern states.
OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The IPSR Doctoral Fellows program started in 2013 in response to graduate students’ expressed need for a place to discuss research outside of their home departments. Ongoing now for seven years, the program trains interdisciplinary social science scholars and creates a community of scholars from different fields.

The program has served more than 60 doctoral students from the Schools of Education, Social Welfare, and Public Affairs & Administration, as well as social science disciplines within KU’s College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

A YEAR IN THE PROGRAM

A cohort of eight to ten fellows is selected each summer based on feedback from the previous year’s cohort. The new program year starts in August, and the fellows meet for ten sessions through the academic year. Participants’ academic and career goals inform the session topics, focused on four areas: research methods, professional skills, navigating the job market, and communicating research.

WHAT ALUMNI SAY

“The IPSR Fellows program has provided me with the opportunity to gain knowledge about a variety of research methods and learn about best practices in research from experienced and successful IPSR-affiliated faculty and fellowship alumni.”

“Through the program I have gained valuable insight into successful navigation of the job market and routes to achieving professional academic goals (such as publishing and dissertation completion). I expect that these tools will benefit me immensely as I enter a competitive job market and continue to develop as an academic.”

The centerpiece of the program is a capstone event held every spring. This event is a fast-paced research symposium for the KU community and the public. Each fellow discusses some aspect of their dissertation in a five-minute presentation and answers audience questions. The symposium spotlights the excellent scholarly contributions of these doctoral candidates. It also gives the fellows an opportunity to practice a critical professional skill: concisely communicating the value of their research to an interdisciplinary audience.
Care and well-being are central to living a balanced life, but how do research and practice align? This series considers aspects of well-being, with special attention to the demands and expectations of higher education. This also features opportunities to incorporate practice with learning. Spotlight on Care met over lunch at The Commons until it shifted to Zoom due to COVID-19. A total of 33 sessions were offered during FY20 with 521 total attendees. Presenters came from 16 KU departments and 11 community organizations. With help from seven staff, the successful series will continue through FY21.

KANSAS HEALTH ECONOMICS CONFERENCE

In March 2020, IPSR’s work moved to an online-only format. The first major event to take place in an all-remote format was the Kansas Health Economics Conference, convened by David Slusky (Economics) and a committee of faculty from KU, K-State, UMKC, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, with support from Christie Holland (IPSR) and funding from the National Science Foundation. The conference took place via Zoom on March 23 (the tenth anniversary of President Obama signing the Affordable Care Act), with presentations from faculty and students joining from across the country. Presentations included discussions of both completed research and work in progress, and topics ranged from Medicaid and inequality to the effects of maternity leave and maternal health programs.

KANSAS ECONOMIC POLICY CONFERENCE

Each year, the Kansas Economic Policy Conference convenes scholars, practitioners and policymakers to discuss an issue of significance to the Kansas economy. In 2019, conference speakers addressed the question “What Counts for Economic Development in Kansas?” from a number of angles: population changes, statewide economic development strategy, workforce development, sustainable communities and industries. As it does each year, the conference concluded with a discussion among policymakers about effective legislative and other strategies.

EVENTS FROM THE YEAR

SPOTLIGHT ON CARE

Since 2019

Looking Ahead

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN A CRISIS?

On October 22, 2020, the Kansas Economic Policy Conference will convene remotely to ask “What is the role of the government in a crisis?” Session topics will include a State of the State address on the current Kansas economy, broadband access, public health, and rethinking economic development. The concluding policy conversation will address how the state has fared on these key issues during the novel coronavirus pandemic and will explore what policy tools can help Kansas endure this health and economic crisis.

IPSR IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-21

For the foreseeable future, IPSR will continue to work remotely, helping faculty and students identify and apply for funding to support their research, managing sponsored projects, and providing robust data and evaluation services for social science and policy researchers. A key part of our work—building a community of these researchers at the University of Kansas—has shifted as conferences and other events move online. The needs of researchers have also changed, as the global pandemic has temporarily halted most travel, stifling fieldwork opportunities, and as we all try to balance moving work forward with managing personal commitments. Our team will continue supporting and facilitating social science research, in whatever format is needed, throughout the upcoming academic year and beyond.
The Institute for Policy & Social Research is scientists who focus on social problems and independent researchers and collaborative seven interdisciplinary research centers.

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT
IPSR staff offer services to KU faculty and graduate students who seek to fund their research. These services include planning a research agenda, identifying funding opportunities, and assisting with the preparation and submission of funding proposals.

Learn More

AWARD MANAGEMENT
Staff support sponsored research projects with assistance on hiring, purchasing, travel planning, financial reporting, and managing changes to projects. IPSR can help plan conferences and events and disseminate research achievements through press releases, web development, and social media.

Learn More

DATA SERVICES
IPSR is a repository for Kansas data and a hub of interdisciplinary policy and social research. Staff are available to assist affiliated faculty and student researchers with locating public data, data collection, data management, data visualization data documentation, and data dissemination.

Learn More

EVALUATION
IPSR provides affiliated faculty, students, staff, and the public with a range of services including evaluation planning, data collection, analysis and and reporting. We specialize in designing evaluation plans that are inclusive and population-specific.

Learn More

“IPSR staff are amazing. Everyone is helpful with a problem solving orientation. From grant application to grant administration, I am fortunate to be able to work with such qualified people.”
Connect with us.
ipsr.ku.edu