Welcome.

As of June, we have spent the past 15 months living with COVID-19 at the center of our lives. The pandemic influenced and dominated the work that IPSR completed this past academic year. Since April 2020 IPSR has tracked the COVID-19 pandemic and the Kansas economy. We developed this website to provide updates on the virus and the Kansas economy to our students, policymakers, and the public. As of now, the COVID-19 website has had 26,333 visitors. Last July, the Governor implemented a mask mandate and most Kansas counties opted out. IPSR researchers tracked the impact of the Governor’s mask mandate on cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. We presented our research at the October Kansas Economic Policy Conference, and it was reported in the New York Times and featured on the Rachel Maddow Show. Our research on the mask mandate was published in the JAMA Open Network in June 2021. It shows that counties that adopted the mask mandate had 35,000 fewer COVID-19 cases, 1,500 fewer hospitalizations and 500 fewer deaths.

IPSR also coordinated the Faculty Advising on COVID-19 Team (FACT). This group of KU researchers surveyed and held focus groups with students, evaluated the characteristics of students who complied with COVID-19 testing and evaluated compliance with mask-wearing on- and off-campus. For example, a survey conducted by Tim Pleskac and Derek Reed found that KU students were very interested in taking the vaccine when it became available. Our data and analysis informed KU’s and Douglas County’s pandemic management efforts.

Despite working remotely, IPSR research and staff had a tremendous year of success. To stay connected, we instituted two Zoom water-cooler meetings a week to discuss our non-work lives. At these meetings we shared information on access to the COVID-19 vaccine, and several staff members volunteered at the Douglas County vaccine clinic this spring to help our community. Two staff members welcomed new baby boys to their households. We also said goodbye to Larry Hoyle, who had been a research scientist at IPSR and its precursors for the past 40 years. We will miss Larry’s extensive data management and documentation knowledge, and some of us will even miss his puns!

Despite working remotely, IPSR’s support of social science and policy research continued without serious interruption. Our grant development staff submitted 86 applications on behalf of KU faculty. Our research centers have been active in the intellectual life of the university. Our seven interdisciplinary research centers published new research, convened virtual events, and redoubled their efforts to train scientists of the next generation. This report features highlights of the work of each of our centers in the past year.

Now that we are fully vaccinated, some IPSR staff will return to the IPSR office in Blake Hall on a voluntary basis later this summer. We are hoping to return to our research lunches in the fall semester, and look forward to opportunities to meet with colleagues’s in person. IPSR is at your service to facilitate and support your work. Please feel free to reach out to me (dginther@ku.edu) or Associate Director, Jena Gunter (kujena@ku.edu) if you would like to participate in IPSR activities or need support for research proposal development.
Our 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.
Our affiliates, at work

IPSR thrives in supporting a rich network of student and faculty researchers. Today, IPSR includes a network of 154 faculty affiliates and 58 student affiliates. While mostly representing STEM fields, these individuals span numerous academic disciplines that touch nearly every part of KU. IPSR has been able to strengthen affiliate research by broadened interdisciplinary teams through its network of researchers across disciplines.

IPSR provides support to affiliates throughout the research process. From research development and post-award administration to evaluation and report design, IPSR is a one-stop shop aimed to help KU researchers contribute to the advancement of world-changing science. Under the direction of Donna Ginther, IPSR has invested in research that reflects a diverse funding landscape and supports evidence-based decisions that help people in many corners of society.

IPSR’s Affiliates by Academic Discipline

- social & behavioral sciences
- natural sciences
- engineering
- computer & info. sciences
- education
- business
- art, design & architecture
- humanities
- public admin., mgmt & law

58 Student Affiliates  154 Faculty Affiliates
IPSR is staffed by 15 dynamic staff. These individuals cross over in their roles to support faculty, staff and student research and to conduct original research. They also work together to support outreach and data services to the State of Kansas. The figure below shows the roles of each staff member and how they spend their time.
From campus to the State

**Kansas State Data Center.**
Through a partnership with the US Census Bureau, IPSR is the lead agency for the Kansas State Data Center. The SDC provides training and technical assistance to local governments, business leaders, researchers, and other data users working with Census data. In June 2021, Xan Wedel, who leads this effort, hosted a data workshop with over 100 registrants from across the state. As part of her Kansas State Data Center work, Wedel played a key role in ensuring a complete count of Kansans in the 2020 Census, serving on a governor-appointed committee and managing a multipronged effort to reach every household in the state.

**Kansas Regional Data Portal.**
The Kansas Regional Data Portal, developed in collaboration with the Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations, offers county-level and regional at-a-glance summaries and access to data for leaders to incorporate in economic development planning. This year, the team also added integrated population time series graphs, population by age, intermodal freight hub data on the railway map, and time series graphs for housing units.

**KU for KS University Center and Broadband Study.**
In addition to its portfolio of programs to support small business development and retention, the Economic Development Administration-funded University Center took on a study of broadband in Kansas. The study will examine the extent to which better broadband access could aid in economic recovery and resilience and help maintain vibrant communities and regions in Kansas. And to understand broadband availability, access, and affordability, a team of IPSR staff members and faculty affiliates are conducting a large survey of residents on broadband speed and access across Kansas.

**Kansas Statistical Abstract.**
IPSR published the 54th edition of the Kansas Statistical Abstract, covering data from 2019 in sixteen categories of information ranging from vital statistics and health to energy and natural resources. The Abstract includes a compendium of data in a single electronic file and an online edition with downloadable spreadsheets and high-quality graphics. This edition of the Abstract was dedicated in memory of Thelma Helyar (1929–2019), who worked as the librarian during her time with the Institute from 1976 to 2003.
Celebrating Staff

Hellos, goodbyes, and big milestones

A bittersweet farewell.

IPSR wants to wish a big farewell to Larry Hoyle, now emeritus senior scientist. Larry retired from his position which began in 1980 at the Institute. Larry has long been involved in the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI), taught Managing Research Data, served as PI on sponsored research projects, and has over 45 years of computing experience. Larry will be sorely be missed by his colleagues and we wish him well on his new adventures.

An exciting welcome.

This year we welcomed a new postdoctoral researcher, Davut Ayan, to the IPSR team. Davut is an economist whose research focuses on topics in applied microeconomics and public economics. He received his doctorate in economics from KU in 2016. In his dissertation, he investigated the labor market outcomes of U.S. veterans, specifically exploring gender differential effects of the military as well as the causal impact of a federal wage subsidy program, Works Opportunity Tax Credit, on employment of veterans with disabilities. As a postdoctoral researcher, he provides IPSR support in all stages of research development, from data extraction to analysis. Prior to joining the IPSR research team, he worked as a planning officer in the Disaster and Emergency Planning Department in the Ministry of Defense of Turkey from 2016 to 2021.

IPSR celebrated milestones for staff service to the University. Pat Oslund has been at KU for 35 years, Nancy Cayton Myers for 20 years, and Whitney Onasch for 10 years. We are thankful for their work and commitment during this time. Three IPSR staff were also acknowledged by the University for outstanding performance and service. Whitney Onasch was honored as KU Employee of the Month in February 2021 while Carrie Caine and Jena Gunter were KU Center for Research Unsung Heroes in July 2020 and May 2021, respectively.
Documenting the impact of COVID-19 in Kansas

COVID-19 Resource Library Example

New COVID-19 Cases per Million Residents, 7-Day Rolling Average: Kansas & Missouri population-adjusted cases through March 7, 2021.


Mask Mandate Research. Kansas policy on masking during the pandemic created the conditions for a natural experiment on the efficacy of masks—some Kansas counties required masks, and others did not. So, Donna Ginther and IPSR staff member Carlos Zambrana gathered and analyzed data to understand the effect of masking on COVID-19 case rates, hospitalizations, and deaths. They found a significant effect: in counties without masking compared to those with mask mandates, case loads were 2.1 times higher, hospitalizations were 1.4 times higher, and deaths were 1.8 times higher. Their findings were published widely in the national media and in the peer-reviewed journal JAMA Network Open.

Research Presentations to Leadership Teams. Ginther, with IPSR staff support, delivered 24 presentations on the pandemic’s effects on health and the economy as well as the consequences of federal stimulus packages and key priorities for leaders to consider. Ginther advised Kansas state cabinet members, county-level leaders, university leadership, the University Economic Development Association, and the Mid-America Regional Council. In some cases, Ginther advised policymakers at multiple points in the pandemic as conditions and needs evolved.

COVID-19 Resource Library. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, prompting widespread lockdowns and business closures, IPSR recognized the need for accurate, timely, and reliable data on the effects of the pandemic in Kansas. Staff developed an online library of resources, with maps and graphs showing COVID-19 testing and cases, unemployment claims, businesses vulnerable to closure, increases in household food assistance program applications, and more. Staff update many of these assets each week. In addition, Ginther published a series of briefing videos. As of June 2021, the COVID-19 page had nearly 300,000 hits from over 26,000 unique IP addresses.

Relief Funds Support. IPSR staff partnered with the Public Management Center to assist several Kansas counties in determining how to distribute COVID-19 relief funds. Presenting county-specific data on population, housing, workforce, broadband access, and COVID-19 impacts on health and the economy, the team provided crucial information for county leaders faced with a complex series of decisions to make in short order.
UNIV. OF KANSAS STUDY: VIRUS SPREAD REDUCED BY HALF IN COUNTIES WITH MASK MANDATES

Describing the findings of IPSR Director Donna K. Ginther and staff member Carlos Zambrana’s research, MSNBC’s Rachel Maddow told her audience: “This is as simple as science gets.” Ginther appeared on Maddow’s national program on October 27, 2020, to discuss research on the efficacy of mask mandates in Kansas. This research, based on a natural experiment arising out of a statewide mask mandate that was taken up by some counties and rejected in others, showed that mask mandates significantly reduced COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. Maddow interviewed Ginther and walked the audience through a graph created by IPSR staff member Xan Wedel showing the divergence in COVID-19 cases after the mask mandate took effect in 20 counties. In those counties, case rates stayed relatively flat; in counties that did not take up the mask mandate, case rates climbed drastically. To date, the video of Ginther’s interview has been viewed nearly 40,000 times.

Ginther and Zambrana’s mask mandate research was also covered by numerous news and media outlets within and outside of Kansas, including the Kansas City Star, the HuffPost, and the New York Times.
Awards

University of Kansas COVID Research PIVOT Award & Steeples Service to Kansans Award

Donna K. Ginther, Roy A. Roberts Distinguished Professor of Economics and director of IPSR, won a COVID Research Pivot Award, a one-time recognition of researchers who took extraordinary measures to substantially refocus their expertise and effort on challenges related to the pandemic itself. Ginther also won a Steeples Service to Kansans award recognizing significant service to the people of Kansas as a purposeful extension to her teaching and research.

These honors reflected the significance of Ginther’s work on several initiatives related to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. She led IPSR staff in the development of a COVID-19 web resource center. Ginther counseled several leaders and leadership agencies on the economic impacts of COVID-19, re-focused the annual Kansas Economic Policy Conference on COVID-19 effects, and assisted state and local governments with economic strategic planning in the wake of the pandemic. In addition, Ginther convened a faculty team to advise on pandemic mitigation measures at KU from the perspective of social and behavioral scientists. Further, the research Ginther conducted with Carlos Zambrana on the effects of mask mandates in Kansas counties helped inform local and state-level policymaking and contributed to national conversations on the value of mask mandates.

Ginther carried out these extraordinary measures, and advanced her ongoing research agenda, with the support of IPSR staff.

Seven Day Moving Average of COVID-19 Cases per 100,000 population in counties with and without Mask Ordinances.

Cases through December 8, 2020

Source: Institute for Policy & Social Research, The University of Kansas; COVID-19 case data from The New York Times, mask counties complied with the Governor’s Mask Mandate in July, mask mandate information from the Kansas Health Institute.
Centers at IPSR

Ward Lyles, Ph.D.
Center for Compassionate & Sustainable Communities

Jay T. Johnson, Ph.D.
Center for Indigenous Research, Science, & Technology

Donna Ginther, Ph.D.
Center for Science, Technology & Economic Policy

Dietrich Earnhart, Ph.D.
Center for Environmental Policy

Beth Bailey, Ph.D.
Center for Military, War, & Society Studies

Hannah Britton, Ph.D.
Center for the Study of Injustice

Bill Staples, Ph.D.
Surveillance Studies Research Center
CSI is a network of scholars across the social sciences, journalism, law, public policy, and public health 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.

Hannah Britton

Center for Migration Research

CMR is currently housed within CSI and is led by a multi-disciplinary team of faculty members, staff, and students engaging with migration studies. This year, CMR coordinated with the Hall Center for the Humanities on their Migration Stories Lecture Series. This series included presentations from the 2020-2021 Migration Stories Lecture Series.

In coordination with the Hall Center for the Humanities, CMR also hosted a Research Seminar Series for faculty from across the country to present their current, ongoing research.

CMR has partnered with Cheryl Holmes's project: “Migratory and Seasonal Agricultural Workers and Health Research: Developing Capacity for Patient-Centered Outcomes Research.” This two-year project is funded by a Eugene Washington PCORI (Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute) Engagement Award.

IPSR Graduate Student Working Group on Qualitative Methods

The working group is a resource for graduate students and faculty working with qualitative research methods. The group provides a clearinghouse of course offerings for graduate courses on qualitative methods. For the 2020-2021 academic year, the workshops focused on how qualitative methods research may be used with a social justice framework and community-engagement model. Previous and upcoming events are available on the CSI events page.

The Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Initiative: ASHTI

Labor and sex trafficking involve extreme exploitation, propelled by socio-economic 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. Research activities for the 2020-2021 were suspended due to COVID-19 safety protocols. ASHTI’s work was featured at a virtual conference hosted by the Georgia State Law Review’s annual symposium, entitled “Prioritizing Prevention in Human Trafficking Research.” An overview of ASHTI’s eight-year research project may be found on Georgia State University’s Law Review webpage under Volume 36, Issue 4. ASHTI Director Hannah Britton is serving as Governor Laura Kelly’s appointee on the Kansas Human Trafficking Advisory Board, and she provides consultation and facilitates workshops with local and regional partners.

Partnership with Center for Digital Literacy

CSI Director Hannah Britton’s current research includes a partnership with the KU Center for Digital Inclusion on “Technology Education for Women in Transition: Broadening Participation Through Innovation,” led by Hyunjin Seo, Professor and Oscar Stauffer Chair in Journalism, and in partnership with KU Medical Center Megha Ramaswamy, professor of population health, and Bernard Schuster, senior researcher, along with Baek-Young Choi and Sejun Song, associate professors of computing and engineering, of University of Missouri-Kansas City. KU students Darcey Altschwager, Matthew Blomberg, and Annalise Baines also contribute to this work. The project has over $1 million in funding from the National Science Foundation.
With an unprecedented year behind us, CCSC affiliates can be proud of multiple improvised activities to address the challenges presented by COVID-19 and of perseverance on ongoing projects. Multiple CCSC affiliates, as part of the Faculty Advisory on COVID Team (FACT), played a key role in bringing insights from social and behavioral science to COVID-19 decision-making at the state, local and university level. This work expanded our community on campus and awareness of our work beyond campus borders. It also generated new knowledge based on novel research designs and techniques put into the field during the school year.

CCSC’s Graduate Student Collective honed its identity, offering a suite of discussions with campus experts to help students navigate research life and build interdisciplinary community. The Spotlight on Care series we co-organize with The Commons and multiple other partners continued to provide programming well-matched to the intersecting intellectual, emotional, and equity needs that the pandemic generated on our campus and beyond.

Dr. Lyles’ research continued to generate new data sets, new findings, and new publications. Among other topics, the publications address the role of social and emotional intelligence in networks of professional tasked with reducing long-term risks of natural hazards, as well as innovative strategies for teaching climate change adaptation and hazard mitigation.

The CCSC website shows short videos highlighting new research from our affiliates. Also, it has publicly-available course materials in the realm of sustainability and compassion available for download.

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. CEP’s network of environmental NGOs includes Friends of the Kaw, the Jayhawk Audubon Society, and the Sierra Club, along with other organizations. The network of environmental agencies includes the Kansas Water Office, Douglas County Food Policy Council, and Lawrence/Douglas County Office of Sustainability, along with other agencies. As important, CEP is ready to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the EPA Region 7 office, located in Lenexa, which will facilitate research collaboration on various topics, including environmental equity and student involvement.

Although events and travel were limited in the fall of 2020 and the spring of 2021, CEP affiliates participated in three large research endeavors exploring environmental resilience, adaptation, and management. In the coming academic year, CEP is coordinating events with the Hall Center for the Humanities on the topic of the natural world.
Dr. Jay T. Johnson, director of the Center for Indigenous Research, Science, and Technology, and professor and associate chair in the Department of Geography & Atmospheric Science, continued work on the RCN: Facilitating Indigenous Research, Science, and Technology Network grant, and to co-direct of the Haskell Environmental Research Studies (HERS) program with Cody Marshall, faculty in the Indigenous and American Indian Studies Department at Haskell Indian Nations University. HERS 2020 was postponed. HERS faculty and staff re-oriented their work to research & publication, resource development, and HERS 2021 planning. Five student mentors developed resources for HERS, including critical spatial thinking, research proposal poster development, qualitative and quantitative research method toolboxes, and an implementation guide for developing writing groups in graduate school. HERS 2021 will be in-person at KU with 14 interns, including three interns from Hawaii.

Dr. Joseph Brewer, director of the Indigenous Studies Program and associate professor in the Department of Environmental Studies, worked with colleagues at the Kansas Biological Survey, and the Meskwaki tribal community in Iowa, studying land use legacies that contribute to water quality on the Iowa River. Dr. Brewer continues work on a book project that focuses on the process of tenuring Indigenous people’s land in the US, and his collaboration with the University of Alaska Fairbanks on their Gwich’in language project.

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.

Each academic year, CMWSS hosts an international symposium on military history, policy, or civil-military relations. The planned international symposium for 2020-21, “The United States, War, and the Environment in the Twentieth-Century Pacific World,” was deferred because of COVID-19 restrictions and has been rescheduled for October 2021. Meanwhile, an edited collection based on “The War on Drugs” symposium and edited by Professor David Farber is forthcoming from New York University Press in fall 2021, and Managing Sex in the US Military is forthcoming from the University of Nebraska Press in early 2022.

The Center also launched a major project, spearheaded by Marjorie Galelli, associate director, to create a website supporting the teaching of military history. We plan to host a conference on the topic in the coming year. We will also sponsor visiting scholars from Japan and Australia and continue our efforts to strengthen the community of scholars of the US military and military history in the region, bringing together faculty and graduate students from KU, K-State, and Fort Leavenworth.
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.

Center for Science, Technology & Economic Policy

Governor’s Council on Tax Reform. Donna Ginther advises the Kansas Governor’s Council on Tax Reform, connecting changes in the Kansas economy to implications for tax policy. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, CSTEP staff collected, analyzed, and presented data on statewide economic trends and the likely outcomes of tax policy proposals.

County Work on Economic Impact. With the Public Management Center, CSTEP assisted leaders in several Kansas counties with making data-driven decisions about how best to distribute COVID-19 relief funds. Ginther, with support from the team, presented on the economic impacts of COVID-19 to several county, state, and university leadership teams.

Science Publications Study. CSTEP completed a research project leading to a more accurate understanding of the accomplishments and career paths of doctoral degree-holding scientists and engineers. A team of students and staff gathered and analyzed data to validate publication data in the Survey of Doctorate Recipients and to assist a firm in validating its own data. This research resulted in a scientific manuscript on measurement error and a report on the quality of matched data.

Broadband Study. The pandemic showed the significance of accessible and reliable broadband as well as service gaps in rural and urban communities. Current data on broadband are insufficient for effective policymaking. CSTEP is gathering that data through a statewide survey to offer a better understanding of broadband reliability and accessibility across the state.

Surveillance Studies Research Center

The Center’s National Science Foundation-sponsored research into the how public internet users navigate the internet and what security threats they face continues to generate new knowledge. The research team, which includes KU Information & Technology Telecommunications Center faculty Perry Alexander and Drew Davidson, a number of graduate researchers, and Staples as PI, is wrapping-up a one-year NSF RAPID investigation into how public libraries and their computer patrons have coped with the COVID-19 pandemic. Preliminary findings suggest that wealthy communities were better able to serve clients during the pandemic while the most economically vulnerable patrons were the most negatively impacted by service restrictions. The team is midway through their NSF Secure and Trustworthy Cyberspace grant. One outcome of this work has been the development of a device the team calls the PUPS—public user privacy and security appliance; an isolated, portable, virtual computing environment on a USB stick. The PUPS provide a “digital home” to those experiencing what the team has called “digital homelessness.” PUPS will provide users with a functional, seamless computing experience from one session and device to the next. The team has a working prototype of the PUPS and is currently engaged in user testing at regional libraries.

Donna Ginther

Bill Staples
Integrating Research and Education. Brandon Davis, assistant professor of public affairs & administration, aims to build an undergraduate research training program focused on oral history. As a starting point, Davis will interview members of the Alabama Democratic Conference and review archival records to document its history. Through this work, he seeks to understand the organization’s strategic capacity and its unique ability to capitalize on the support structure for legal mobilization within Alabama in the post-Civil Rights era. This research is funded by the Center for Governance and Markets at the University of Pittsburgh.

Connecting Scholarship and Policy. Morgan Farnworth, doctoral student in public affairs & administration, was selected to be a member of the 2020 cohort of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Health Policy Research Scholars. This program helps researchers from all fields apply their work to policies that advance equity and health while building a diverse field of leaders. Farnworth will focus on the role of government in advancing health equity. Applying an interdisciplinary lens to the opioid overdose crisis, her work will examine its socioeconomic and policy causes, the gendered and racialized barriers to substance use treatment, and the promise of collaboration between courts and the treatment sector. Her research speaks to government as a determinant of health and asks how public organizations can improve health outcomes for vulnerable communities.

Adapting Research Amidst Quarantine. Bill Staples, research professor and director of the Surveillance Studies Research Center, leads an interdisciplinary team studying “digital homelessness”—situations where someone doesn’t have consistent computer or internet access. The team has received funding from the National Science Foundation to explore the challenges these users face and to create a device to help users maintain a secure computing environment. More recently, the team was awarded a grant to examine how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting Americans who don’t have easy access to the internet.

Uncovering the Effects of Incivility. Ashley Muddiman, associate professor of communication studies, received funding from the Social Science Research Council to investigate whether social media incivility puts women candidates for political office at a disadvantage. Muddiman and her team will use quantitative content analysis and an experiment to understand whether women candidates are more heavily targeted than men. They will also study whether incivility differs across social media platforms and whether incivility leads to short-term electoral effects or other long-term consequences for women in politics.

In 2021, IPSR assisted with 86 funding proposals and received notice of 36 funding awards. Four awards supported students’ research and five were funded internally. IPSR assisted students and research affiliates with bringing $2,541,564 to KU in FY 2021.
Making research stand out

Below (left): IPSR supported the work of Cheryl Holmes and Hannah Britton by designing their COVID-19 providers’ guide aimed to assist with vaccine decision-making among Migratory and Seasonal Farmworkers. More information about their PCORI-funded engagement project is available on the KU School of Social Welfare’s website.

Below (right): Funded by NSF, IPSR designed a framework for KU researchers seeking to simplify the complicated process of matching scientific publications to authors who obtained doctorates from US universities.

In 2021, we continued to connect Kansans to high-quality data while expanding our report design and data visualization services. Through the latter, IPSR helped fuse outstanding research with aesthetic appeal. Our data services and support span many areas that meet vital research needs at KU and beyond:

- The Kansas Statistical Abstract
- 2020 Census
- The Kansas Regional Data Portal
- “Big Data” Extraction & Analysis
- Map Creation and Development
- Data Visualization and Information Design
- Report and Proposal Development (example provided)
- Framework Construction & Visualization (example provided)

To inquire about our services or view examples of our work, contact Jena Gunter at kujena@ku.edu.

COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence: Gathering Information to Assist with Decision-Making

Approach

Create Space for Questions
Migratory and Seasonal Agricultural Workers (MSAWs) have questions but may need to be invited and encouraged to ask them.

Review Current Resources
Information about COVID-19 and the vaccines is often complex, at high reading level, and usually available only in English. These materials are not suitable resources for populations who may have lower literacy in any language and possibly less experience with the medical field.

Be a Partner in Shared Decision-Making
Some farmworkers may come across as hesitant or questioning. This is likely an indication that they want to be informed and need more information to make a good decision based on their health, work, and life situation. Having their questions addressed can strengthen their trust and help them move to a place of confidence with their decision. One idea is to mention the COVID vaccination at the beginning of the appointment and then circle back to it near the end to see if they have questions that you could answer.

We used a total of eight categories and narrow each category through the same decision framework.
Supporting KU students

“The program provided excellent professional development that was responsive to student interests. The conversations were practical and insightful. I loved getting to build community with Ph.D. students in different fields.”

- former research fellow

IPSР created the Doctoral Research Fellows Program in 2013 to provide doctoral students with an opportunity to forge relationships and discuss research outside their home departments. Now in its eighth year, the fellows program’s seminar series aims to develop interdisciplinary social science scholars through training in methods and professional skills and by creating a community of scholars that cuts across varied fields.

Since inception, the program has served 70+ doctoral students representing the Schools of Education, Social Welfare, and Public Affairs & Administration, as well as the full range of social science disciplines within KU’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Graduating 2019-2020 program alumni reviewed applications to join the incoming cohort in the summer of 2020. In the fall, ten successful applicants began attending seminars on professional development topics identified by the fellows in one-on-one meetings with the program’s faculty mentor, Dr. Steven Maynard-Moody, and program coordinator, Whitney Onasch. The fall series presented guidance on navigating the academic hiring process, non-academic job opportunities for doctoral degree-holders, a grant-writing discussion with successful student researchers, and a discussion with the IPSР director on positioning research to inform policy and practice.

As a capstone, all cohort members were invited to present their research to an interdisciplinary audience of faculty, staff and fellow students at an online, public symposium in spring 2021.

Accolades: With support from the fellows program and IPSР’s Research Development Office, three program alumni received dissertation research grants in 2020. IPSР congratulates Elise Higgins (2019-2020 cohort) on her grant from the Society for Family Planning for her qualitative study of abortion policy in Kansas. Morgan Farnworth (2019-2020 cohort) received the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s multi-year Health Policy Scholars award for her research on the opioid crisis. Finally, Matt Comi (2018-2019 cohort) received a National Science Foundation Science, Technology and Society grant for his research on farmers’ adaptation to a changing climate.

Coming in 2021: Dr. Jay T. Johnson is preparing to assume leadership of the program for the 2021-22 academic year. To find more information, visit IPSР’s Doctoral Research Fellows webpage.
Looking Ahead.

This past year has been a time of tremendous challenge and opportunity. We expanded our work to address some of our community’s needs during the pandemic. Like so many other people, we conducted countless online meetings and found new ways to connect with people from our home offices.

We look forward to gathering in person again over the coming year. Some of us have already returned to in-person work, and others are soon to follow. In some ways, the past year has been transformative, but our mission remains the same. We are ready and eager to support and advance social science and policy-relevant research—even in unusual and trying times.

Past & Upcoming KS Economic Policy Conference

In October 2020, IPSR held the first all-virtual KEPC on “What is the role of government in a crisis?” In the context of the ongoing pandemic, sessions addressed the Kansas economy, economic development, public health, education and broadband, and policy responses to COVID-19.

Speakers included Kansas Lt. Governor Lynn Rogers, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Dr. Lee Norman, Adjutant General of Kansas David Weishaar, a deputy secretary from the Kansas Dept of Commerce, two state representatives, one state senator, four KU faculty members, and representatives of a Kansas telecommunications firm, USD 497, and the Kansas Association of School Boards. Attendees joined from across the state for the conference sessions.

Tech and Social Justice Workshop

With support from a National Science Foundation-funded grant, the KU Center for Digital Inclusion hosted the virtual Tech and Social Justice Workshop in June. This event convened scholars, policymakers, practitioners and citizens concerned with how technology might be used to enhance social justice and better support marginalized populations.

The $1.4 million NSF grant, led by Hyunjin Seo, Professor and Oscar Stauffer Chair in Journalism, funds the RETURN project. Women recently released from jail or prison in Kansas and Missouri work with an interdisciplinary team of faculty members, graduate students and undergraduate students on technology education. Following community-based and co-design principles, the project team collaborates closely with program participants and community partners. Through this research, the team has developed evidence-based approaches to serving digitally disadvantaged populations. The workshop helped participants and attendees understand the barriers marginalized populations experience in accessing technology and learn ways to mitigate those barriers.

Events

From July 2020 to June 2021, events looked different than they have in years past. Even while physically distant, IPSR convened events throughout the year to showcase and advance policy-relevant and social science research.
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.

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.

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.

Information Design
IPSR provides information design services to make KU research stand out. Services include data visualization, report and proposal design, and framework development. Examples of our support include designing research proposals and final reports, developing data visualizations for websites, manuscripts or reports, and formatting research figures and frameworks.

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 documentation, and data dissemination.

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

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