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NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
NYS Office of Mental Health
NYS Assembly, Office of Assemblymember Amy Paulin
NYS Assembly, Office of Assemblymember Pat Fahy
Bala is a first generation Filipinx-American, carved from a diaspora that planted its roots in Brooklyn and Spring Valley, New York. She is passionate about creating safe spaces in the community through public service, education, and art. She received her M.Sc. in Special Education from Long Island University: Brooklyn Campus with a concentration on Teaching Urban Adolescents with Disabilities; and holds a B.A. in Communications from the University at Albany. Bala taught and created a culturally responsive curriculum for high school students in Spring Valley, the Bronx, and Brooklyn, New York over the course of the last four years. She believes that honoring students and families first and teaching students in holistic ways is the most important role of educators in schools. Bala is also a member of a production team for a benefit show in New York City called “Raised Pinay” that will be held on April 24-25, 2020. The show provides Filipinx women and gender non-binary individuals an opportunity to write and tell their stories on stage. All proceeds will be donated to a nonprofit health organization called Ugat ng Kalusugan (Roots of Health) which provides reproductive health services to women in Palawan, Philippines. Bala strongly believes that women and gender non-conforming people everywhere deserve representation and full access to their rights. This has led her to volunteer with Raised Pinay, and eventually to the Fellowship on Women & Public Policy Program. As a 2020 Fellow on Women & Public Policy, Bala is completing her policy field placement at the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. In this position, she looks forward to a valuable experience in policy implementation and developing initiatives to help the most vulnerable populations in New York receive high-quality child care.

Sarah Davies is currently pursuing a Master’s in Political Science with a concentration in Public Law at the Rockefeller College of Public Policy and Public Affairs, University at Albany. Sarah holds a Bachelor of Arts in Public Affairs with a focus on Political Science from SUNY Empire State. She served as President of her local Phi Beta Lambda chapter while attending J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College in Richmond, VA, from where she graduated summa cum laude with an Associate of Arts in General Studies. Sarah is passionate about issues that disproportionately affect women. She has dedicated her professional career to improving women and girls' talents and encourage them to pursue careers where women are underrepresented. She has worked with Fort Drum Career Skills Program office; in this capacity, she worked to improve women's access to the program by redesigning the marketing strategy. Within one year, Sarah was able to increase women's participation rate by 6%. From a young age, she was interested in women's involvement in politics and policymaking. She would like to leverage this fellowship to strengthen her knowledge about the public policymaking process and enhance her advocacy skills to improve women's participation in politics and social programs. After completing her undergraduate degree, Sarah worked with U.S. Army Service members as they transitioned out of the military. In this capacity, she helped them identify job training and certification opportunities to facilitate a smoother transition into the civilian sector. She is the mother of two amazing daughters and enjoys reading and baking in her free time. As a 2020 Fellow on Women & Public Policy.
KELSEY DORADO  
MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION  
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY, SUNY  
POLICY FIELD PLACEMENT: NYS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS

Kelsey completed a Master of Arts in Communication from the University at Albany, SUNY, in December 2019; and received a Bachelor of Science in Communication Studies from SUNY Oneonta in May 2016. During her time at SUNY Oneonta, Kelsey completed an internship at the Guilderland Public Library. She served as a Communication & Marketing Manager at the New York Library Association (NYLA). Kelsey worked with NYLA for four years and was promoted to Director of Communication & Marketing. Throughout her experiences, Kelsey learned about the importance of broadband access, and the critical role librarians and public libraries play in their communities. During her work with NYLA, Kelsey developed a strong passion for broadband access, housing, and women’s rights policies. Kelsey hopes to use her background in communication and experience in public policy to serve as an advocate for the public good. She is completing her Fellowship policy field placement at the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

MELISSA DUQUETTE  
MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY & METHODOLOGY  
THE UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY  
POLICY FIELD PLACEMENT: NYS OFFICE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Melissa D.C. DuQuette is currently pursuing a Master’s in Educational Psychology & Methodology at the University at Albany. She also holds a Master’s in The Art of Teaching from Relay GSE-NY and a Bachelor’s in English from the University at Albany from which she graduated as Magna Cum Laude. Melissa joined the Peace Corps, where she served as an English Teacher in a rural community in Mongolia. After arriving in the U.S., Melissa joined Teach for America and taught in the Bronx for 3 years. Melissa has extensive experience as a teacher and teacher leader through her NYS and international work. While Melissa believes in working towards improving the lives of communities on a micro-level, she wishes to explore further opportunities to make contributions to the educational systems on a macro level. Melissa is interested in working on public policy pertaining to the education system and wellbeing of youth and children. As a 2020 Fellow on Women & Public Policy, Melissa is completing her policy field placement at the New York State Office for Children and Family Services.

Melissa was raised in Grafton, NY. She lives in upstate NY with her husband Kyle and her Chihuahua mix, Bertie. She enjoys hiking, bird watching, and loves the art of Edward Gorey.
SARAH FERRITTO
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
ROCKEFELLER COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS & POLICY, UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY, SUNY
POLICY FILED PLACEMENT: NYS OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE

Sarah is pursuing a Master of Public Administration at the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy, University at Albany, SUNY. She completed a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with minors in Philosophy and Women’s Studies from Siena College in 2015. Sarah participated in the AmeriCorps VISTA program for three years, serving in Albany and the Capital Region. During her AmeriCorps Vista, she worked at the Siena College Center for Academic Community Engagement (ACE), the Schenectady County Center for Juvenile Justice, and the New York State Department of State as a VISTA Leader. Sarah credits this experience with sparking her passion for public service. She spent the Fall 2019 semester at Bocconi University in Milan, Italy. She is interested in health policy, especially as it relates to women. Following her graduation in May 2020, Sarah hopes to continue to be a public servant in New York State.

MARY GREAGA
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND POLICY
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY, SUNY
POLICY FIELD PLACEMENT: NYS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKET

Mary Greagan is currently pursuing a Master’s in Biodiversity Conservation and Policy at University at Albany, SUNY. She received her Bachelor’s in Wildlife Management from SUNY Cobleskill in May 2018. She has worked with the Adirondack Mountain Club and Paul Smith’s College Visitor Interpretive Center as a Naturalist Educator and as a technician for SUNY Cobleskill in a long-term research study involving Carrion Burying Beetles. Her past research has involved nuisance wildlife restraint trapping. Mary has extensive and diverse professional experiences in environmental conservation. Her Master’s thesis involves developing a merit patch for Girl Scouts of America in Albany and focuses on invasive species education and prevention. During her internship with New York State’s Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Mary worked on the Human Dimensions of Aquatic Invasive Species. Her work at SUNY Cobleskill, SUNY Albany, and DEC has given her the opportunity to attend and present her work at various academic and professional conferences such as the North East Honors Student Conference in 2016 and the North American Invasive Species Management Association Conference in 2019. Her main areas of interest include educational outreach involving wildlife, invasive species control, Ornithology, and Herpetology. Her hobbies include hiking, cross country running, art, and photography. As a 2020 Fellow on Women & Public Policy, Mary is completing her policy field placement at the New York State’s Department of Agriculture and Market where she works on the Hemp Program.
ELIZABETH HAYES
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
POLICY FIELD PLACEMENT: NYS OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS

Elizabeth is pursuing a Master’s degree in Geographic Information Systems at University at Albany, SUNY. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Geography and Citizenship & Civic Engagement from Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. While at Syracuse University, Elizabeth studied and developed research in Capetown, South Africa on the effects of gentrification on Bo Kaap, a neighborhood on the periphery of Capetown’s center. She proposed and implemented a reusable bag program for Syracuse University’s Bookstore in partnership with the Sustainability Division; reducing the number of plastic bags bought and sold by the University incrementally to help move the school into a more sustainable future. After completing her bachelor’s degree, Elizabeth worked on several political campaigns through the East Coast. Through political campaigning, she learned creative and strategic ways of talking to the public about divisive topics and worked closely with campaign teams to develop messaging for different stakeholders and for environmental issues. Elizabeth works closely with the faculty in the Department of Geography to promote and encourage the practical uses of Geography across UAlbany’s campus. Elizabeth headed UAlbany’s committee for GIS Day and expanded past years’ program by creating a community-wide event that invited local organizations to share their use of the technology with students. As a 2020 Fellow on Women & Public Policy, Elizabeth is completing her policy field placement at the Department of Agriculture where she is working on food safety standards and regulations.

MICHALINA KULESZA
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY
ROCKEFELLER COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS & POLICY, UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY, SUNY
POLICY FIELD PLACEMENT: NYS ASSEMBLYWOMAN PAT FAHY

Michalina Kulesza is a Master of Public Administration Candidate at Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the University at Albany with a concentration in Global Affairs, graduating in May 2020. Michalina is passionate about connecting global and local communities. Michalina speaks four languages including Polish, Spanish, and Russian. She has worked on several state senate campaigns in a variety of roles, most recently as a political advisor. Michalina has also worked on a series of public policy research projects at the Center for Women in Government as a researcher. She has been participating in educational programs geared towards various audiences. She has also conducted quantitative and qualitative data analysis, most recently studying wage compensation of state and local public employees in New York State. Michalina is currently developing a manuscript that documents findings of research that identified the barriers and challenges that face women, while running for office. Michalina is especially interested in grassroots organizing, diplomacy, and community engagement in approaching global challenges. As a 2020 Fellow on Women & Public Policy, Michalina is working at the Office of New York State Assemblymember Pat Fahy.
SHELBI MCLLROY  
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY  
ROCKEFELLER COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS & POLICY, UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY, SUNY  
POLICY FIELD PLACEMENT: NYS ASSEMBLYWOMAN AMY PAULIN

Shelbi is currently pursuing a Master’s in Public Administration at the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy graduating in 2020. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Human Development from SUNY Oswego in May 2017. Post-graduation, Shelbi began working for Planned Parenthood of Western New York supporting and advocating for patients and the broader Rochester community on reproductive justice and women’s access to healthcare. While working for Planned Parenthood, Shelbi realized she wanted to immerse herself in the realm of public policy and relocated to Albany to pursue her graduate degree. Shelbi held several positions as a graduate assistant at the Rockefeller College in Admissions and Recruitment, and later within the Student Services Department, where she supported the organization of orientation programs and campus-wide events. Shelbi is the Elected President of the Public Administration Student Association, where she interacts with members of the campus community to encourage student engagement outside of the classroom. Since enrolling at Rockefeller College in August 2018, Shelbi has worked with several community organizations to help promote social justice for all. Shelbi has volunteered extensively at Unity House, a human services agency, to advance its development and fundraising goals. She helped secure funding for the organization to continue offering essential services to Troy and the surrounding community. Most recently, Shelbi worked at the Center for Women in Government and Civil Society on projects related to the social wellbeing of the immigrant population in the Capital Region and New York State. As a Fellow on Women & Public Policy, Shelbi is completing her policy field placement at the Office of New York State Assemblywoman Amy Paulin. In this position, she hopes to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to create, shape, and advocate for policies that promote social and economic justice for marginalized groups.

EDIDIONG MENDIE  
DOCTORAL CANDIDATE OF ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE  
TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY  
POLICY PLACEMENT: NYS ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Edidiong Mendie is a Nigerian licensed attorney. She is currently a doctoral candidate of Administration of Justice at Texas Southern University. Edidiong holds a Master of Laws (LL.M.) degree in Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources Law from the University of Houston Law Center, Barrister at Law (B.L.) degree from Nigerian Law School, and Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) from University of Benin, Nigeria. Edidiong has worked for both multinational and local corporations and implemented various compliance programs to help with organizational success. She is passionate about social justice issues, environmental protection, empowerment, and service to the community. She currently serves as a volunteer leader and a mentor to different individuals guiding them to achieve their goals. Edidiong plans to pursue a full-time management career path in order to implement policies, and compliance programs geared at ensuring environmental equality and social justice in society. She also has a keen interest in research and teaching. She is a proponent of enhancing partnerships between industry and academia, with the end goal of improving the wellbeing of citizens. Edidiong is completing her policy field placement at the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). She is part of the Clean Heating & Cooling team working to provide low to moderate-income (LMI) communities and households in New York with energy-efficient policies and programs.
CASEY O’NEILL  
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
ROCKEFELLER COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND POLICY  
POLICY FIELD PLACEMENT: NYS OFFICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Casey O’Neill graduated summa cum laude from the University at Albany with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a minor in Women’s, Gender and Sexuality studies. Casey will be graduating with concentrations in Nonprofit Management and Global Affairs in spring 2020. She possesses a rich array of experiences in the public sector, ranging from sexual violence advocacy and community development to project management, policy research and analysis. Casey spent over two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Republic of Moldova. While abroad, she advised a small woman-led non-profit for children with special needs in the areas of strategic planning, grant-writing and project management; promoted and organized girls’ leadership activities; and revised and facilitated interactive trainings for new volunteers. Working with a small nonprofit in the former Soviet Union proved to be a transformative and invaluable experience for Casey, highlighting the critical importance of communities’ access to quality resources and opportunities, the roles of and partnerships between nonprofits and government agencies in providing needed services to vulnerable populations, and the importance of fostering relationships in affecting true social change and development. Casey conducted research and data analysis on fiscal stress as a research unit assistant at the Office of the New York State Comptroller, and co-designed a diversity analysis of nonprofit boards in the Capital Region while working as a project lead with the University at Albany’s Institute of Nonprofit Leadership and Community Development. Casey is excited to fulfill her fellowship with the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV), where she will be focusing on the roles of economic stability and access to permanent housing support in addressing domestic violence. She hopes to use this fellowship as a means to strengthen her knowledge and skills to pursue a career dedicated to shaping policies that address gender inequality and gender-based violence.

LIANG SHEN  
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, BOCCONI UNIVERSITY  
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ROCKEFELLER COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND POLICY UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY  
POLICY FIELD PLACEMENT: NYS OFFICE OF STATE COMPTROLLER

Liang is currently completing a dual degree program: a Master of Science in Economics at Bocconi University in Milan, Italy, and a Master of Public Administration with concentrations on Women and Policy and Global Affairs at Rockefeller College, University at Albany. She will receive both degrees in 2020. Born and raised in China, Liang earned a Bachelor of Science in Economics and started her career in the personal banking business at China Construction Bank prior to moving to Australia. While working as an assistant manager in Australia, she worked with local indigenous communities, especially women, and developed a passion for tackling economic disparity issues emanating from the intersection of race and gender. Her thesis will focus on a comparison of gender budgeting policies among countries. Liang is passionate about addressing socio-economic problems facing LGBTQ+ communities and other marginalized groups using the tools of economics and public policy. In addition to her private sector experience, Liang has also completed an internship in the Tax & Fiscal Studies Bureau at the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, where she monitored the fiscal impact of Executive Budget legislation. As a Fellow on Women & Public Policy, she is working at the New York State Office of State Comptroller, the Division of Local Government and School Accountability. She hopes to strengthen her research, policy analysis, and leadership skills through the Fellowship Program.
Jessica is currently pursuing her Master’s in Public Health, at the University at Albany, SUNY, with a concentration on Social Behavior and Community Health. Jessica is also completing her Graduate Certificate in Maternal and Child Health. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Flagler College in Saint Augustine, Florida. Her experiences include working as a counselor for Planned Parenthood, offering intensive case management for people living with HIV & AIDS, as well as working in an obstetric unit (labor and delivery) at Bellevue Women's Hospital. Jessica is passionate about finding solutions to combat unmet health needs such as postpartum mood disorders and maternal and child care during the Fourth Trimester. Believing strongly in being a good steward of her community, she has been volunteering as a sexual assault counselor, was trained as a prepared childbirth education instructor, as well as collaborating as a board member of BirthNet, a local organization working to better birth outcomes for the residents of Albany. Jessica’s experience in the field of public policy further includes working in the Office of Primary Care and Health Systems Management (OPSCHM), as well as contributing to the Maternal Infant Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) with the Bureau of Women, Infant, and Adolescent Health. The combination of all these experiences has led her to be champion of person-centered care and a strong belief in elevating health equity by finding solutions to increase and enhance the social determinants of health. Jessica is placed with the New York State Office of Mental Health, Division of Managed Care.

CENTER FOR WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT & CIVIL SOCIETY
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For over 40 years, CWGCS has been a premier academic research and education center with a social change agenda. We expand opportunities and create possibilities for women and their families. We advance a vision of a society where all people participate equally in shaping the future. The staff and Board of Directors of the Center develop a rigorous research and education agenda that focuses on advancing women’s status in four emphasis areas: Women & Leadership; Economic Security, Health & Gender-Related Disparities and Safety & Wellbeing.

The Women’s Leadership Academy

Women’s leadership matters! In the past several decades, women have made tremendous progress in educational achievements and employment equity, but still occupy a small percentage of public service leadership positions throughout New York State and the nation. The Women’s Leadership Academy offers programs for undergraduate, graduate and professional women.

The purpose of the Women’s Leadership Academy (WLA) is to strengthen participants’ self-efficacy, leadership capacity and capabilities. Areas of emphasis include: knowledge of policy-making processes and ways women can influence these processes; leadership ethics, principles and approaches of women political and policy leaders; understanding of how political campaigns are organized and run; recognition of the critical importance of diversity in enriching democratic political participation; skills in community organizing and advocacy; and commitment to advancing women’s leadership on a personal and collective level. The Fellowship on Women & Public Policy and NEW Leadership™ New York are currently the two programs of the Women’s Leadership Academy.

THE FELLOWSHIP ON WOMEN & PUBLIC POLICY

The Fellowship is one of two program of the Women’s Leadership Academy. The Fellowship is a six-month, rigorous, and multi-faceted leadership development program primarily for graduate students. It is designed to provide a springboard for aspiring women leaders to pursue careers in public policy while increasing the capacity of New York State government and civil society. Now celebrating its 37th year, the Fellowship has graduated more than 350 women who occupy public policy leadership positions across the state and nation and around the globe.

NEW Leadership™ New York (NLNY)

In partnership with the National Education for Women’s (NEW) Leadership Network, a bi-partisan program to educate college women about the political process and teach them to become effective leaders, NEW Leadership™ New York is the first program of its kind in New York State. A week-long, residential undergraduate leadership development program for women, NLNY strives to instill the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for effective political engagement and community organizing. The goals of the NLNY are to increase self-efficacy of participants regarding leadership capacity and capabilities; knowledge of political and policy-making processes, and ways by which women can shape the public policy process; leadership principles and approaches of women political and policy leaders; how political campaigns are organized and run; the critical importance of diversity in enriching democratic political participation; awareness and preparedness of career options in the fields of politics and public policy; skills in developing and organizing a campus or community engagement project at home institutions or communities.
The Center for Women in Government & Civil Society

A premier research and education Center with a social change agenda

Promotes gender justice, creates an equal society locally & globally
  Fills the knowledge gaps about the status of women
  Advances gender equity through evidence-based approaches
  Raises awareness about existing inequities
  Opens doors for educational and economic opportunities for women

For further information about CWGCS, please contact us!

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