

MCCLURE CENTER

NOVEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER



University of Idaho

McClure Center for
Public Policy Research

Dear Friends of the McClure Center,

One of the cornerstones of the McClure Center is fostering the next generation of civic and community leaders. We are honored to offer several robust, applied learning programs for University of Idaho students. These programs create opportunities for students to use the academic skills they have honed through coursework and apply them in experiences outside of the classroom. The time the students devote to connecting their studies with policy strengthens their resumes and allows exploration of career paths through direct engagement with industry professionals.

In 2021, the McClure Center hosted five undergraduate student programs, with a record number of nine undergraduate students and launched a doctoral fellowship program. In summer 2021, we welcomed three Martin-McClure Ambassadors, a Water Policy Intern and the McClure in History Fellow.

Martin-McClure Ambassadors, 2021

The Martin-McClure Ambassadorship is the McClure Center's longest standing summer student program and is held in partnership with the [University of Idaho Martin Institute](#). International studies undergraduate majors receive a research award to explore a topic at the intersection of international affairs and Idaho policy. Every Martin-McClure Ambassadorship is unique. The research topics and final products are guided by contemporary social issues, students' personal interests and McClure Center staff expertise. This applied learning experience offers an opportunity for students to travel to Boise and use the resources in the capital city to better understand local and international relationships throughout the world.

In 2021, Martin-McClure Ambassadors Stella Davidson, Natalie Mesplay and Matty Murphypartnered with the [International Rescue Committee](#), [Global Lounge](#), [Idaho Museum of International Diaspora](#) and [Idaho State Department of Education](#).

Stella Davidson

"Participating in the Martin-McClure Cultural Ambassador program this summer led me to an incredible internship with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) of Boise. Within my role as an IRC intern, I witnessed firsthand the day-to-day functions of a refugee assistance organization and was exposed to the complex legal processes of various customs/immigration matters. Thankfully, the COVID-19 pandemic did not prevent me from working in the IRC office space and I was able to safely spend several hours a week filing documents and working on the online case database. In addition to lending a hand in the office, I was tasked with writing a report informing legislative leaders about family reunification and the refugee experience in the United States, with a focus on individuals resettled in Idaho. Writing this report required me to gain an understanding of immigration law



Stella Davidson

and the refugee/asylee resettlement process here in the U.S. Diving into the immigration law universe can be daunting but I was able to find reputable sources to supplement my learning and had support from an IRC attorney whenever I needed clarification.”

Natalie Mesplay

“My project was focused on the diverse communities present in Boise and Idaho in general. I worked with the nonprofit Global Lounge to collect bios through interviews for many of the amazing artists, performers and dancers that frequently perform in Global Lounge events. Global Lounge was looking for help to create profiles on some artists; I was able to help fill that gap. I was able to learn so much about people from all over the world that have ended up in the small community of Boise and the surrounding area. This was really valuable for me and I met people with amazing stories and projects, learning a lot about the city I grew up in along the way.

I also was lucky enough to work with a second organization, the Idaho Museum of International Diaspora (IMID). They are an upcoming museum dedicated to preserving and sharing the cultures and stories of diaspora communities here in Idaho and around the world. I was able to fill a gap in research on the Bosnia-Herzegovinian conflict and my writing might be featured in the museum exhibit and in their library when I’m finished!”

Matty Murphy

“My experience working with the Idaho State Department of Education (ISDE) was two-fold. Firstly, I worked on matters of policy, specifically policy regarding students identified as English language learners—ELs for short. Secondly, I was lucky enough to have several firsthand experiences volunteering in school programs that implemented such policy on the local level. Largely, my work for the first portion of my ambassadorship consisted of evaluating a series of so-called “Mini-Manuals,” which had been published by the ISDE to communicate to the general public who an English learner is and what the state’s responsibilities are to them.



Natalie Mesplay

The second portion of my ambassadorship, however, is where I really felt able to push myself. I was surprised at how cosmopolitan English language programs feel in Idaho. Each of the ten or so classrooms I visited felt like a miniature UN, the teacher acting not unlike the Secretary-General as they directed the clamor of students to the task at hand.”

Water Policy Internship, 2021

In 2019, the McClure Center, in partnership with the [Idaho Water Resources Research Institute \(IWRRI\)](#), launched a summer undergraduate internship that centers on water science and policy in Idaho. This year, Sierra Brantz connected water quality with public policy construction, working with the University of Idaho Rangeland Center and the Idaho Conservation League.

Sierra Brantz

“This summer I had the opportunity to do a Water Policy Internship with the McClure Center and IWRRI working on aspects of water policy (specifically groundwater quality policy) with the Idaho Conservation League (ICL), as well as water research with the Rinker Rock Creek Ranch. This experience was intentional in the way that it was tailored to my interests of water quality along with public health. It also challenged me to figure out how to explain and promote information from ICL’s Groundwater Report and create useful materials on groundwater quality and nitrates in the Fort Hall area.”



Sierra Brantz

McClure in History Doctoral Fellowship, 2021

This summer also saw the launch of the McClure in History Doctoral Fellowship. This fellowship is a partnership with the [University of Idaho Department of History](#). This program explores public policy, public service and inflection points in Idaho, U.S. and world history through a public policy lens. The fellowship spans the summer and fall semester and includes five weeks of research (paid) and a required history graduate seminar course. The fellowship culminates in the curation and installation of a new McClure Center

Gallery exhibit. Paulette Brook, doctoral candidate in history, was chosen as the inaugural McClure in History Fellow and was able to spend over five weeks this summer in historical archives in Boise and Moscow.

Paulette Brook

“Through reading the papers of James McClure, I have learned so much about Idaho. McClure was really committed to helping his fellow Idahoans whether they were farmers, ranchers, businessmen, environmentalists, postal workers, miners, etc. I have read letters he received from constituents and the responses he wrote. I am amazed by what he was able to accomplish and look forward to having more time to follow-up my fellowship study with additional research about Idaho.”



Paulette Brook

McClure Legislative Research Scholars, 2021-2022

This year we welcomed four McClure Legislative Research Scholars. This program spans the fall and spring semesters.

Jake Espeland, a junior from Coeur d’Alene studying political science, is assessing the state of Idaho’s Indigent Defense System. He hopes that “by examining the funding, capacity and outcomes of Idaho’s many public defense offices, we can ensure Idaho not only meets constitutional compliance standards, but also maximizes institutional efficiency to improve outcomes.”



Jake Espeland

Katelyn Hettinga, from Kuna, is a junior double majoring in political science and agricultural economics. She is researching the history of initiatives and referenda in the state of Idaho. “I chose to research this topic because the electorate’s power to enact or reject laws is enshrined in our



Katelyn Hettinga

state constitution. Citizen-led movements to change the law are the foundation of democracy in our state government.”

Sara Murphy, a chemical engineering senior from Boise, is researching local and state government authority to create water policy and the innovative ways in which localities are tackling water-related issues. “Water is critical to Idaho from our recreation to our economy and I am intrigued to discover how water policy is established in Idaho.”



Sara Murphy

Hart Parr Dal Pra grew up in Coeur d’Alene Idaho. He will be graduating this spring (2022) and then plans on attending Law school. “My topic is the legal structure around divorce and custody matters in Idaho, with emphasis on the holes that allow abuse to occur. This issue impacts an unseen minority of single parents that seem to not be able to find their voice.”



Hart Parr Dal Pra

Faculty Partner Highlight: Markie McBrayer, Ph.D.

Our student programs are successful because of our faculty partners. The McClure Legislative Research Scholars are led by their faculty advisor, assistant professor of political science [Markie McBrayer, Ph.D.](#)



Markie McBrayer

Markie McBrayer, Ph.D. is an assistant professor in the [Department of Politics and Philosophy](#) where she teaches research methods, American politics and American policy classes. Before academia, Professor McBrayer was an urban planner in the Boston area where she received her master’s degree. Wanting to hone her methodological skills, she returned to graduate school and received her Ph.D. in political science from the University of Houston, with a focus on American politics, policy and statistics. Most of her published research centers on political institutions, representation and social inequality in the American context, particularly at the local level.

For the past three years, Professor McBrayer has overseen the McClure Legislative Research Scholars at the University of Idaho; she guides the students through topic selection, report drafting and graphic design. The class tends to emphasize the cultivation of research skills, relying on Idaho-specific reports and academic literature broadly. She very much enjoys teaching this class, as it helps incredibly talented students develop connections and skills that can take them beyond their undergraduate career.

Partnership with the University of Idaho Rangeland Center – Rangeland Fall Forum



For the past five years, the McClure Center has partnered with the [University of Idaho Rangeland Center](#) to host the annual Rangeland Fall Forum. The 2021 Rangeland Fall Forum “From Drought to Resilience” focused on the current drought gripping western rangelands. The Forum was held virtually October 5-7. During the three sessions, nearly 200 attendees came together to learn and share ideas to endure and adapt to our common experience of drought.

The event began by examining how drought has always been a part of our western existence. Periods of below average rainfall are the norm, not the exception, in a land where annual precipitation is low and highly variable from year to year. Plenary speakers, Kit Kimball and Ed Galindo, spoke about how communities have adapted to periods of scarcity and variability with cultural, educational and political strategies.

Resilience is an ability to spring back after a destructive period or event. This year’s Rangeland Fall Forum endeavored to build resilience on rangelands and the human communities that value and live on these lands. Recordings of this virtual forum are available on the [Rangeland Fall Forum](#) page.

In the Media

We are pleased to feature recent press on our [In the Media](#) page.

Second Cohort of Science and Technology Policy Fellows Named (16 Sept. 2021) ISTPF second cohort announced, welcoming Jared Talley, Ph.D. and Samantha Werth, Ph.D. as the 2021-2022 ISTP fellows.

[Read more>>](#)

‘True Idaho Icon’: Louise McClure Dies after Leaving Mark in Public Service, The Arts (21 Sept. 2021)

Idaho leaders note the life and impact of Louise Miller McClure.

[Read more>>](#)

To get the latest news, we encourage you to follow us on [@UIMcClure](#) and [@Science Idaho](#).

We Need Your Support

Our student programs would not be possible without our donors’ support and generosity. We are expanding our student programs and ask you to consider including the McClure Center in your charitable donations this year.

To donate, visit the McClure Center’s [website](#) or contact me at 208-364-4549.

Warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine".

*Katherine Himes, Ph.D.
Director, James A. and Louise McClure Center for Public Policy Research*

Based in Boise, the [University of Idaho’s James A. and Louise McClure Center for Public Policy Research](#) conducts nonpartisan public policy research, informs public dialogue and policy and engages students in learning about public policymaking. The Center’s approach to addressing society’s complex issues sustains Senator and Louise McClure’s legacy of thoughtfully pursuing bipartisan collaboration and sound public policy.

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