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Board on Behavioral, Cognitive, and Sensory Sciences

Behavioral Economics: Policy Applications and Practical Guidance for State and Local Initiatives

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Biographical Sketches

Alison Buttenheim
University of Pennsylvania

Alison Buttenheim is a professor of nursing and health policy at the University of Pennsylvania. She is also the scientific director of the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Health Incentives and Behavioral Economics, as well as the behavioral design lead for Indlela, an HIV-focused nudge unit based in South Africa. As a leading expert in the application of behavioral economics to disease prevention, her research agenda has focused on vaccine acceptance and vaccine exemption policy in the United States, zoonotic disease prevention in Peru, and HIV prevention. She received her Ph.D. in public health from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Brent Packer
Utah Office of the Legislative Auditor General

Brent Packer has worked in several critical policy areas, including public health, public education, and criminal justice. In 2021, he was part of a team that was recognized by the National Conference of State Legislatures for the office's impact to Utah's criminal justice system. Recently, Brent spearheaded the establishment of the Division of Government Excellence within Utah's Office of the Legislative Auditor General. The Division improves government operations across the State of Utah through training, resources, and tool development. In 2023, the division published *The Best Practices Handbook* and *The Best Practices Toolbox*. In 2024, legislation was passed making the Best Practice Toolbox part of Utah's accountable budget process for all state agencies.

Brent and his spouse have two children, and reside just under the beautiful Wasatch Mountains of Sandy, UT. When he's not competing in local basketball tournaments that he's too old for, you'll find him quibbling over semantics in some philosophy forum.

Brian J. Dean
Utah Office of the Legislative Auditor General

Brian has worked for the Utah Legislative Auditor General's Office for 24 years, and currently serves as the Deputy Auditor General. He was born and raised in Dearborn, Michigan and attended the University of Utah where he obtained bachelor's degrees in both Political Science and Economics and a master's degree in public administration. Brian is both a Certified Internal Auditor and a Certified Fraud Examiner. Brian has served for a number of years with the Utah Association of Certified Fraud Examiners in positions such as Training Director and Association President. In his work with the Legislative Auditor General's Office, Brian has worked on a number of audits that cover an extremely broad range of operations including public safety, public and higher education, utility regulations, transportation, natural resources, and liquor control to name a few. Most recently Brian has been involved in audits covering Prison Medical, Adult Probation and Parole, and the Utah Board of Pardons.

Daniel J. Weiss
National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine

Daniel J. Weiss is the director of the Board on Behavioral, Cognitive, and Sensory Sciences at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. He oversees a broad portfolio of studies and activities at the nexus between these disciplines and public policy. Prior to joining the National Academies in 2022, he served as a professor of psychology and linguistics at Penn State for nearly two decades studying language acquisition and motor planning in children, adults, and nonhuman primates. He also served as the editor-in-chief for *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*. Weiss received his B.A. from the University of Maryland at College Park and his master's degree and Ph.D. from Harvard University. After graduation, he completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Rochester in the Brain and Cognitive Sciences program prior to his appointment at Penn State University.

David Yokum
Office of State Budget and Management, North Carolina & University of North Carolina

David Yokum, JD, PhD is Director of The Policy Lab at UNC-Chapel Hill and North Carolina's Chief Scientist in the Office of State Budget & Management. He works with governments across the country to help build capacity to generate and use evidence; this includes engagements with U.S. states participating in the newly created Governing for Results Network, co-lead with the National Council of State Legislators and the Council of State Governments. David was previously the founding director of The Lab @ DC in the D.C. Mayor's Office and, before that, a member of the White House's Social & Behavioral Sciences Team and inaugural director of the U.S. Office of Evaluation Sciences.

Elana Safran
U.S. General Services Administration

Elana Safran is a Senior Portfolio Lead for Health & Aging in the Office of Evaluation Sciences (OES) in the U.S. General Services Administration. She coordinates OES's projects in the American Rescue Plan portfolio, as well as the health and aging portfolio. In 2023-2024, she is doing a detail to the Office of Management and Budget to lead the Approaching Retirement Life Experience. She has completed projects with the Veterans Administration to inform separating servicemembers about VA health care benefits, with the Social Security Administration to inform low-income adults 65 or older about Supplemental Security Income, and with the Department of Health and Human Services to inform pregnant women about the benefits of maternal immunizations. Prior to OES, she managed randomized evaluations in international development with Innovations for Poverty Action, and served as an AmeriCorps VISTA fellow, supporting older adults in New Yorke with Medicare and Medicaid benefits. She has a master's in public policy from Harvard Kennedy School, and a bachelor's in economics from Amherst College.

Elizabeth Linos
Harvard University

Elizabeth Linos is the Emma Bloomberg Associate Professor for Public Policy and Management, and Faculty Director of The People Lab at the Harvard Kennedy School. The majority of her research focuses on how to improve government by focusing on its people and the services they deliver. Specifically, she uses insights from behavioral science and evidence from public management to consider how to recruit, retain, and support the government workforce, how to reduce administrative burdens that low-income households face when they interact with their government, and how to better integrate evidence-based policymaking into government.

Her research has been published in various academic journals including The Journal for Public Administration Research and Theory, Public Administration Review, Econometrica, American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, Behavioural Public Policy, and others. Her work has also been highlighted in media outlets including The New York Times, The Economist, Forbes, BBC, NPR, Slate, and the Harvard Business Review.

As the former VP and Head of Research and Evaluation at the Behavioral Insights Team in North America, she worked with government agencies in the US and the UK to improve programs using behavioral science and to build capacity around rigorous evaluation. Prior to this role, Dr. Linos worked directly in government as a policy advisor to the Greek Prime Minister, George Papandreou, focusing on social innovation and public sector reform.

Elizabeth Tanner
Rhode Island Secretary of Commerce

Elizabeth ("Liz") Tanner was appointed Rhode Island Secretary of Commerce in June 2022, under Governor Daniel McKee. In that role, she administers the Executive Office of Commerce, the state agency charged with promoting commerce and fostering an economic environment in which Rhode Island's businesses can grow and prosper. Secretary Tanner oversees multiple state departments and quasi-governmental agencies. Among those, the Department of Business Regulation, of which she was Director prior to her appointment as Secretary, and the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, a quasi-state agency which collaborates with public, private and nonprofit partners to offer consulting and funding assistance to businesses. Known as a problem-solver with a passion for making it easier to do business in Rhode Island, Liz is a fierce advocate for governmental efficiency.

Emily Cardon
Behavioural Institute of Technology - Americas

Emily is the Director of Evaluation and Methods for BIT Americas. She oversees the quality and rigor of BIT's evaluations across its portfolio of partners. Emily specializes in experimental and quasi-experimental design and analysis and provides methodological support for the team to develop feasible and innovative research plans. Her research focuses on the application of behavioral insights to improve public administration and evidence-based policymaking.

Emily earned her PhD in Public Administration from Syracuse University, where she also completed her MPA. She also holds a BA in International Affairs from Boston College, where she graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa. Prior to her graduate studies, Emily worked as a legislative aide for Congressman Jim Himes in the U.S. House of Representatives, covering issues related to health, education, and social policy.

Gaby Saade
Behavioural Institute of Technology - Americas

Gaby is an Advisor with BIT Americas. She works with city governments and organizations to apply behavioral insights and embed evaluation practices across a wide range of policy areas. She holds a Master of Public Policy from the University of Chicago. Before joining BIT, Gaby worked at Mathematica Policy Research, The Economist Impact, where she used data and evidence to design policies and programs.

Joe Zhao
City of Mesa, AZ

Joe Zhao, PhD, is a Senior Performance Advisor with the City of Mesa, AZ. He co-founded the Mesa Nudge Team with Dr. Janet Woolum in Fall, 2020. Supported by the Executive Champions of the Mesa Nudge Team, Michael Kennington, Candace Cannistraro, and Jolene Pomeroy, the Mesa Nudge Team is one of the first city nudge teams in the nation. The team partner with the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) on capacity building and collaboration on citywide nudge projects. Since 2020, the Mesa Nudge Team has expanded its membership from 14 to 25 members, representing every public service department of the city, like Police, Fire, and Park. The Mesa Nudge Team work on cross-departmental, cross-functional projects utilizing nudge concepts and the E.A.S.T framework.

Mr. Zhao is a dedicated local government professional with over 16 years of experience in performance management, process improvement, management consulting, strategic planning, and policy research in local government. He has served in various roles in the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer of Richmond, VA, Mayor's Office of Kansas City, MO, State Deputy Comptroller's Office for New York City, NY, etc. Joe is a Certified Public Manager, a certified Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and a member of the Mesa Public Schools Equity Advisory Council. He is a member of the International Network of Asian Public Administrators (I-NAPA).

Joel V. Pope
San Antonio Police Department

Joel Pope is a San Antonio Police Officer who is currently assigned to the Chief's Office Community Engagement Unit.

Joel has spent 16 years developing police training programs centered around enhancing quality law enforcement services intended to bolster police legitimacy. These programs are based in realistic scenario training, with an emphasis on stress control techniques and performance phycology as it relates to critical police response. Joel supports data driven improvements in training and is a published author in this field. Joel supports officer career and life development by implementing Performance Recovery Optimization techniques, a first within the San Antonio Police Department. Based on Joel's work with San Antonio Police psychological services, San Antonio was chosen and presented to the U.S. Congress as an example of health and wellness programs designed to provide successful law enforcement mental health and wellness strategies. Joel has consulted for the International Association of Chiefs of Police working with major cities across the United States. Joel currently consults for The Department of Justice assisting with implementing community engagement and officer wellness programs internationally. Preparing police officers to be healthy and effective inspires Joel's work due to the direct impact it has on the community they are serving and their wellbeing.

Joel is a local, state, and federal trained police instructor with 28 years of law enforcement experience. Joel has trained and provided training programs for numerous local, state, national and international police agencies, corporate and community members alike. Joel works closely with multiple community youth groups and non-profit organizations throughout San Antonio.

Joel holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Texas State University (1996) and a TCOLE Master Peace Officer License.

Laurel Adams
University of Pennsylvania

Laurel Adams (she/they) is a senior design strategist with the Penn Medicine Nudge Unit. They guide teams through discovery research, problem definition, ideation, design, and validation of nudge interventions. At the Nudge Unit, Laurel has worked on projects aimed at providing text-based treatment for opioid use disorder patients, increasing adoption of firearm safety devices, and increasing medically-assisted treatment for alcohol use disorder patients.

Before joining Penn, Laurel spent over a decade product design. Most recently, she was a senior user experience (UX) researcher with Webex, an enterprise videoconferencing service, leading complex discovery research to define user needs. Their work guided UX designers and product managers towards a user-centered product direction. Prior to that, Laurel oversaw Webex's content design, managing a team of UX writers across all

user touchpoints to create a cohesive product voice. Alongside her tech industry experience, Laurel has been active in the civic design community, leading teams to develop gender-inclusive locker rooms at Oakland YMCA and helping public school districts create accessible websites during COVID-19.

Laurel holds an MBA in design strategy from the California College of the Arts.

Mark Lorie
City and County of Broomfield, CO

Mark Lorie is a water resources planner with a wide range of experience in resource and strategic planning, policy and risk analysis, risk communication, and group facilitation. He currently leads long-term water supply planning for the City and County of Broomfield, Colorado, including climate change risk analysis, capital investment planning, demand forecasting and conservation planning. Before joining Broomfield, Mr. Lorie worked as a consultant for 13 years in the areas of planning and policy analysis with state, local and federal government agencies. As a consultant Mr. Lorie contributed to work on flood risk communication, the impacts of climate change on water resources, collaborative decision-making processes, groundwater sustainability, and Federal project planning. He began his career working on river basin planning and climate change adaptation in the Great Lakes and the Potomac River Basin. Mr. Lorie holds a master's degree in environmental management and economics from The Johns Hopkins University and Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Connecticut.

Nellie Moore
The Lab @ DC

Nellie is a Civic Design Researcher at The Lab @ DC. She brings community engagement, user-testing, and evaluation expertise to the delivery of government services. Recently, she's led the Lab's work to redesign DC's housing voucher application, make recommendations for pilots to improve equity and safety through the city's traffic cameras, and send messages targeted to high-risk drivers. Before joining the Lab in 2019, Nellie was a research manager in Lusaka, Zambia and in Washington, DC with Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), an international nonprofit. Nellie managed studies focused on health, finances, and girls' education, and oversaw a $4 million competitive research fund for studies on financial inclusion. In addition, Nellie spent three years in Vietnam monitoring and evaluating road safety projects. She also volunteers with the Greater Brookland Intergenerational Village.

Nellie earned a Master of Development Practice from Sciences Po Paris School of International Affairs, and a Bachelor of Arts in Human Services and International Affairs from Northeastern University. Outside of work, she is an avid Orioles fan and a care partner to her dad.

Stephen Gushue
City of Mesa, AZ

Stephen Gushue is a Performance Advisor with the City of Mesa, focusing on departments' continuous improvement and performance plans. Through the last 25 years, his path has weaved through many disciplines, from archaeology to solid waste logistics. Still, the concepts of cognitive biases and behavioral economics were always there, whether he wittingly knew it or not. Stephen is fascinated by how artifacts like cognitive biases, systems thinking, and organizational physics play a role in helping and hindering local government services. Due to this, Stephen did not hesitate to start working with and serving on the City of Mesa's Nudge Team, helping staff to think like behavioral economists and deliver better services for our customers and residents. For him, the goal is to make the City of Mesa a place where Nudge concepts and their underlying science become part of the organizational fabric, giving Mesa more tools to deploy to address issues. Stephen is also obligated to say that, according to his daughter—who is unbiased in her beliefs—he is an excellent dad.

Weston Merrick
Minnesota Management and Budget

Weston Merrick is a Principal Manager at Minnesota Management & Budget (MMB) and leads the Impact Evaluation Unit, a team of data and social scientist that evaluate the impact of state programs. Prior, he led MMB's Results First project, an effort to increase the use of evidence in policymaking. He holds a PhD in Public Affairs from the University of Minnesota with a dissertation that explored how the theory and principles of behavioral design can lead to reduced eviction actions in public housing. Weston also holds a master's in public administration from Indiana University.
Email: weston.merrick@state.mn.us

William Toole
Office of North Carolina Secretary of State

William Toole serves as a Deputy to North Carolina Secretary of State Elaine Marshall, the first woman elected to North Carolina's Council of State in North Carolina. As Deputy he oversees the Department's Business Registration, UCC Filing, Charitable Solicitation Licensing, Notary Commissioning and Enforcement, and Land Records Divisions. In that role he evaluates filing processes and analyzes registration data to identify Departmental improvements and policies that can help attract and promote commercial and noncommercial capital formation in North Carolina.

Before joining the Department in 2020, he practiced environmental law for 27 years, focusing on mergers and acquisitions, compliance, high stakes litigation, complex stakeholder negotiation and rulemaking. Toole was a law clerk to North Carolina Supreme Court Justice Louis B. Meyer. He was also a Belmont City Council member and served on the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund's Board of Trustees.

He has a BA from Haverford College (1982) and a JD/MBA from Wake Forest University (1989). He has also been a commercial fisherman, carpenter, newspaper journalist and French chef.