

Newsletter - Summer 2022



President John F. Kennedy once said, “Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past and present are certain to miss the future.” John C. Maxwell, a leadership expert, said, “Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.”

So many things today are changing, especially in how we communicate and technology. The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy is adapting in ways that we hope will improve our civic engagement efforts.

The Polling Institute, under Research Associate Alyssa Maurice, will rely more on digital technology. Recently, we lost the call center space where more than 1,000 Stockton students since 2012 conducted telephone interviews. Telephone calls made by an outside firm will still be part of our polling mix.

But the change provides an opportunity to embrace online methods. A small crew will now text links for online polls to cellphones because more people will take surveys on their devices and fewer will answer calls.

We have increased use of the web to expose a bigger audience to our programming. Currently, all Hughes Center events are available as a live online stream or as a video on our [website](#). That has expanded our reach; more than 1,700 people have watched our March program on Ukraine with new Steering Committee member Admiral Kevin Sweeney.

Staffer Darya Hrybava enhances our work with short videos, such as the June [interview](#) of a student intern discussing her sponsored research. The Hughes Center continues to adopt technology and plans to engage the public in the coming year through podcasts.

Can we guarantee success with these changes? Of course not. But ignoring change can be disastrous. As John D. Rockefeller said, “Don’t be afraid to give up the good to go for the great.”

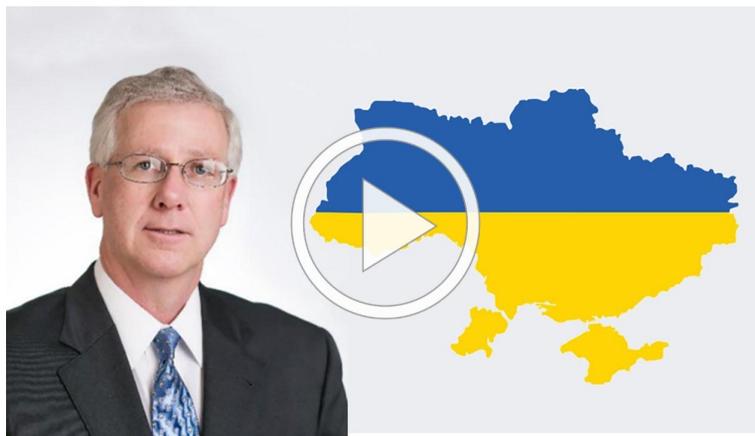
Dr. John Froomjian, Executive Director

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Hughes Center Policy Forums

Rear Admiral Kevin Sweeney, USN (Ret.), former chief of staff to U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis from 2017-2019, discussed Russia's war against Ukraine and the U.S. response in a live one-hour presentation via Zoom on April 6. Over 200 people watched the live stream, and the recording of the video was viewed over 1,500 times on YouTube (over 1,700 views total).



The forum, "A Conversation with Rear Admiral Kevin Sweeney," was sponsored by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University and The Press of Atlantic City. Panelists included William Hughes Jr., Principal, Porzio, Bromberg & Newman law firm, John Froomjian, Ed.D., executive director of The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University and W. Buzz Keough, executive editor, The Press of Atlantic City.

Sweeney is a highly respected national security expert with decades of leadership experience, in and out of government. He was the primary advisor to Mattis across the full spectrum of national security issues, from great power competition to counterterrorism

missions. In addition, he oversaw the Department of Defense's strategic initiatives and daily operations worldwide.

The Hughes Center and Atlantic County Advisory Commission on Women cosponsored a panel discussion, "The Many Faces of Homeless Women," which discussed the challenges facing area women who are homeless. The event was held on Thursday, April 14, at the Stockton Atlantic City John F. Scarpa Academic Center, 3711 Atlantic Ave. Atlantic City and was also livestreamed on the Hughes Center's [YouTube channel](#). Panelists included John McLernon, retired Director, Social Services Atlantic County Dept. of Family & Community Development; Christine Zoda-Egizi, LCSW, Director of Atlantic Homeless Alliance & Justice Involved Services for Jewish Family Services; Kay Petrecca, Community & Government Relations Representative at Atlantic City Rescue Mission; Claudia Ratzlaff, CEO, Avanzar (formerly The Women's Center).



The Hughes Center also co-sponsored a panel discussion, "Investing in New Jersey Families: Building School and Community Youth Mental Health Services," with the Atlantic County Council of Education Associations and The Kennedy Forum, which took place on May 31 at Stockton University's Campus Center Theatre. Panelists included Amy Kennedy from The Kennedy Forum; Stockton Professor of Psychology Sara Martino; Dr. Brian Isaacson from AtlantiCare; Greater Egg Harbor School District Superintendent James Reina; Leesa Seymour from Atlantic County Youth Services Commission and school nurse Victoria Druding. Melissa Tomlinson from the ACCEA served as moderator.

"Our Hughes Center poll in April highlighted the increased toll COVID-19 has taken on the mental health of New Jersey residents of all ages, related not just to health issues, but also education, employment and housing," said Executive Director John Froomjian. "It also indicated that residents believe more services are needed. In an effort to continue this conversation, we are pleased to collaborate in providing information to the public on this important topic with a focus on youth and schools."

Watch video of the event [here](#).

Senator Vincent J. Polistina visits Stockton as part of the Hughes Center's Legislator-in-Residence Program



Senator Vincent J. Polistina (R) visited Stockton University on March 9 as the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy Legislator-in-Residence. Polistina was sworn in on Nov. 8, 2021, as the new state senator for New Jersey's 2nd Legislative District in Atlantic County. He previously served from 2008 to 2012 in the New Jersey General Assembly.

During his visit to Stockton, the senator attended two classes, Introduction to Public Policy and State and Local Government, taught by Professor Lauren Rowlands.

"I encourage everyone to get an education and to stay involved. That's what put me in a place to make a clear decision about what I wanted to do," Polistina told over 20 students in Introduction to Public Policy class.

Polistina also met with staff of the Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality and Tourism and the Coastal Research Center, took a tour of the Sara and Sam Schoffer Holocaust Resource Center, interacted with student leaders, and had lunch with Stockton University President Harvey Kesselman, Executive Vice President Susan Davenport and Provost Leamor Kahanov.

The Legislator-in-Residence program is designed to bring New Jersey lawmakers to the university to engage with students and faculty, learn about Stockton and its programs, and share their experiences as legislators.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the visit.

Welcome our new Steering Committee members

Dr. Marissa P. Levy

Dr. Marissa P. Levy, Ph.D., is the Dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Professor of Criminal Justice at Stockton University. Her areas of research interest include crime mapping and crime prevention, successful offender reentry, and program and process evaluations. She also enjoys teaching statistics and courses

about crime data. She most recently co-authored a textbook aimed at reducing math anxiety and fear in college students called "Statistics for the Terrified Criminologist." She currently serves as a community partner for the Coalition for a Safe Community, a civic effort to reduce violence in Pleasantville, Atlantic City, Galloway and Egg Harbor City. She is also deeply committed to the Atlantic County Recovery Court, which serves to prepare its participants to be successful in the workforce and in life upon completion of the recovery court program, and the AC Collaborative which is a group of social service providers who use data-driven strategies to manage and resolve homelessness in Atlantic County.



Kevin M. Sweeney, Rear Admiral USN (ret.)

Rear Admiral Kevin Sweeney is a highly respected national security expert with decades of leadership experience both in and out of government. He is founder and Principal of KSweeney Consulting, LLC, a national security consulting firm, and a senior advisor at McKinsey & Company and The Roosevelt Group. He serves as an Independent Board Member for Fincantieri Marinette Marine Corporation, AIRBUS U.S. Space and Defense Inc., the U.S. Partnership for Assured Electronics, and the St. Patrick Catholic School in Norfolk, Virginia, as well as a Trustee for the James Barry-Robinson Home for Boys.



Rear Admiral Sweeney served as Chief of Staff to the 26th Secretary of Defense, James N. Mattis, from January 2017 to January 2019. He was the primary advisor to the Secretary across the full spectrum of national security issues, from great power competition to counterterrorism missions, and oversaw the Department of Defense's strategic initiatives and daily operations around the worldwide.

Rear Admiral Sweeney served over 32 years as a Surface Warfare Officer before retiring from the U.S. Navy in 2014. Highlights in uniform include two years as Commander of Carrier Strike Group TEN and the Harry S. Truman Strike Group; Commander of Destroyer Squadron 26; and Commanding Officer of the USS Cole, where he oversaw the ship's restoration and return to fleet operations following the 2000 terrorist attack in Yemen. He also closely advised senior civilian and military leaders within the Department of the Navy, U.S. Joint Forces Command, NATO's Allied Command for Transformation, and U.S. Central Command.

Rear Admiral Sweeney holds a B.S. in Resources Management from the U.S. Naval Academy. He graduated with distinction from the Naval Postgraduate School with an M.S. in Financial Management, holds an M.A. in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College, and completed the Senior Executive Fellows Program at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Irenonsen Juliet Eigbe

Irenonsen Juliet Eigbe is a Stockton senior majoring in Biology with a concentration in pre-professional studies. Eigbe is a Summa Cum Laude graduate of Oakcrest High School in Mays Landing, where she was a member of the National Honor Society and the Biomedical Magnet Program. A talented student who has shown lots of promise, she has demonstrated her abilities relating to teamwork, creativity, communication skills, conflict resolution, and leadership as a teacher's assistant, Girl Scout and Student Senator. Eigbe is also an accomplished dancer and choreographer, having performed at



Disney World, Carnegie Hall, the Miss America Parades, Hershey Park and the Cumann Rince Gaelach competition in Ireland.

At Stockton, Eigbe is the Governmental Affairs Committee Chairperson of the Student Senate, and an interviewer for the Polling Institute at the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy. She has volunteered at various local community events, including a Red Cross Blood Drive at the Community FoodBank of New Jersey, and as a third-grade Religious Education Teacher's Assistant.

Latest Hughes Center Poll Results on Issues of Economics, Legalized Marijuana, Mental Health and more

During the Spring 2022 semester, under the supervision of research associate Alyssa Maurice, the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy conducted four polls on economics, legalized marijuana, mental health and other issues important to southern New Jersey residents.

In a poll released at the end of April concerning various issues relating to public health, a majority of New Jersey adults (58%) said they or someone they know had experienced mental health problems during the coronavirus pandemic, and 68% of these said that their mental health had gotten worse over the course of the pandemic.

Regarding the issue of extending New Jersey's indoor smoking ban to include casinos, 62% supported the measure, although only 59% of South Jersey residents thought the ban should be extended.

As for drug addiction, 39% of respondents said they or someone they know personally had been affected by the opioid crisis. More than a third characterized drug addiction as a big problem in their community, and 40% said it is a minor problem where they live. On whether New Jersey provides adequate and affordable mental health treatment, 36% agreed strongly or somewhat, while 24% were unsure how to rate treatment services. About addiction treatment services, 36% agreed the state's options are adequate and affordable, while 33% disagreed and 31% were not sure. Regarding homelessness in New Jersey, 23% of state residents (and 32% in South Jersey) rated it as a big problem, while 38% (and only 27% in South Jersey) said it is not a problem at all.

In a poll that came out a week earlier on legal marijuana sales in New Jersey, 56% said they would support dispensaries selling legal recreational marijuana in their towns, while 36% would oppose it, with half of respondents wanting the state's hospitality industry to offer cannabis-related attractions, such as lounges and restaurants. A minority (22%) said the 18-month delay in legalizing recreational marijuana was acceptable after voters approved it in a referendum. About two-thirds of respondents said that over-the-counter, unregulated hemp products that some people use as a substitute for marijuana should be outlawed.

In another poll released in April, minority voters were consistently more moderate than Democrats across a wide range of issues: 64% of Black and multiracial respondents supported legalizing marijuana for recreational use, compared to 70% of Democrats; 73% percent of Democrats supported making it harder to buy guns, while 65% of Black and multiracial voters did; half of Democrats said immigration should be made less difficult, compared to 38% of Black and multiracial voters; 55% of Democrats support having abortion legal in all cases, compared to 47% of Black and multiracial voters. A Democratic

majority of 57% said the overturning of Roe v. Wade would affect their votes in the upcoming midterm elections, compared to 48% of Black and multiracial voters.

In a March poll regarding New Jersey residents' financial status during the pandemic, 51% said their overall fiscal status stayed the same, and it got better for 16%. Close to 60% were employed and 20% were retired, with 10% unemployed and looking for work. 32% said they are in worse financial straits. 19% saw household income go down, and 33% cut back on spending during the past six months. A majority of 51% said rising food, housing and fuel costs are making it more difficult to make ends meet.

Only 23% gave a positive rating to the state economy. Forty-one percent evaluated it as average, and 34% said it is in bad shape. Respondents were split about future economic conditions, with 48% somewhat or very optimistic and 47% somewhat or very pessimistic. Even 27% of those whose status improved and 31% of those whose income increased were pessimistic about the future.

To learn more about the Stockton Polling Institute, visit: stockton.edu/hughes-center/polling/polling-institute.html.

The Hughes Center Supports Student Engagement

The Center is proud to sponsor research conducted by Stockton students. The Hughes Center established a student research internship in Fall 2019. Each semester, at least one student intern researches a public policy issue and produces a paper on that topic. The full list of student research papers can be found [here](#).



In the Spring 2022 semester the Center had two student interns. The paper by Stockton senior Emily Kramer used Census data to show the level of diversity found in the 2020 Census for each county and how the Hispanic/Latino and the non-Hispanic White, Black and Asian populations have changed in each group's share of the county population. According to the findings, New Jersey's population has become more diverse over the last 20 years, but that diversity is not spread evenly among the 21 counties.

Kramer is a double major at Stockton in Political Science with a concentration in International Affairs and Language and Culture Studies. She is also pursuing a minor in global studies. She is president of Stockton Amnesty International and vice president of Stockton Model United Nations. Kramer will graduate in Spring 2023 and hopes to attend law school to become an immigration lawyer.

[View a video on the Hughes Center YouTube channel of Emily Kramer discussing her research.](#)

The latest student research paper published in July of this year was produced by Rachel Fisher, a senior Sustainability Program major at Stockton University. She researched connections between rising sea levels and flooding along the New Jersey coast. Fisher pulled together relevant points from existing research and also reviewed long-term data from the National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration tidal gauges in Atlantic City and Cape May to document sea level rise.

Fisher, a resident of Galloway, is pursuing a major in Sustainability with a concentration in Policy and Economics, as well as a Political Science minor. At Stockton, she is the public relations officer for the Marine Science Club and Co-Director of Student Action Volunteers for the Environment. She is also the group leader for the South Jersey Chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby. Fisher is interested in climate change, environmental justice and food security, and hopes to pursue a career working on the intersection of these issues in the future. Her paper, "Studying the Effects of Sea Level Rise on Coastal Flooding in Southern New Jersey," can be found [here](#).



The Hughes Center also continues to financially support Stockton University students in the Washington Internship Program, which provides work experience through internships in government, business and nonprofits for participants in the nation's capital. Stockton has participated in the program since the mid-1970s, and more than 1,300 students have spent a semester living, working, and studying in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.



During the Spring 2022 semester, the Center awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to Frank Martinelli-Noble, a junior double majoring in Communication Studies with a concentration in Public Relations, and in Visual Arts, with a concentration in Graphic Design. He was a PR/marketing intern at the Borgen Project, as well as a Research Associate at Global Public Relations Firm. At Stockton, he is the social media organizer for Sunrise Movement, as well as the press and publicity member of Stockton University NAACP.

More Programming by the Hughes Center

On March 2, the Hughes Center, together with Stockton's Constitution Day Planning Committee and the American Democracy Project, hosted a special presentation, "Back to Basics: The First Amendment in the College Classroom," by Frank Corrado, Esq. (pictured at right) on constitutional protection for freedom of speech in the university setting. The discussion focused on First Amendment issues and covered the topic of hate speech.



Corrado is the past president of the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey. His legal practice concentrates on civil rights and constitutional law, with a special emphasis on the First Amendment. He has taught courses on the First Amendment at Rutgers Law School, served as Stockton's Visiting Specialist in Constitutional Law from 1998-2001 and subsequently taught a First Amendment course on campus.

"I am more on the side of allowing the speech," Corrado said. "It is not enough to let the government pick and choose among viewpoints. A classic example: If you can ban a Confederate flag, can you ban a rainbow flag? It would be a huge mistake in my opinion and from a free speech point of view." Learn more about the event [here](#).

On June 9, Executive Director John Froomjian welcomed participants in the Building One America leadership training program at Lakeside Lodge. The Hughes Center partnered with the New Jersey BOA chapter, which advocates for racial justice and equity in housing and education, to sponsor the training for community activists.



In the Fall 2022 semester, the Hughes Center team will be joined by a Stockton “Faculty Fellow” who will work with student interns to produce a year-long research project for the center. Justin Ostrofsky, associate professor of Psychology at the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, will lead a team of students researching the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on mental health among adults in New Jersey. The Hughes Center will publish the research in its first project with a Faculty Fellow. Ostrofsky's areas of expertise include perception, attention and memory-based processes supporting the ability to realistically draw objects from observation, statistics, research methods and cognitive psychology. His major research interest is understanding the psychological processes associated with the production of visual art (particularly, drawing).



Stay tuned for our upcoming programming and visit our website at stockton.edu/hughescenter to learn more about the center's events and projects.

