

# **Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy**

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## **2021 Annual Report**



## AT A GLANCE

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# 13

RESEARCH CENTERS  
AND PROGRAMS

# 168

EXPERTS AND RESEARCHERS

# 322

PUBLICATIONS

# 37,714

MEDIA CITATIONS

### MOST QUOTED



**MARK JONES**  
*Elections and Texas Politics*



**VIVIAN HO**  
*Health Economics*



**TONY PAYAN**  
*U.S.-Mexico Relations*



**QUIANTA MOORE**  
*Child Health Policy*



**PETER HOTEZ**  
*Disease and Poverty*



**KRISTIAN COATES ULRICHSEN**  
*Middle East Policy*



**FRANCISCO MONALDI**  
*Latin American Energy*

# 16,225

VIRTUAL EVENT ATTENDANCE

# 137

EVENTS AND WEBINARS



# 214

COUNTRIES AND  
TERRITORIES REACHED

# 6.46M

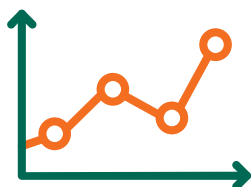
TWITTER IMPRESSIONS

# 16,524

PODCAST DOWNLOADS

# 11.5K

YOUTUBE SUBSCRIBERS



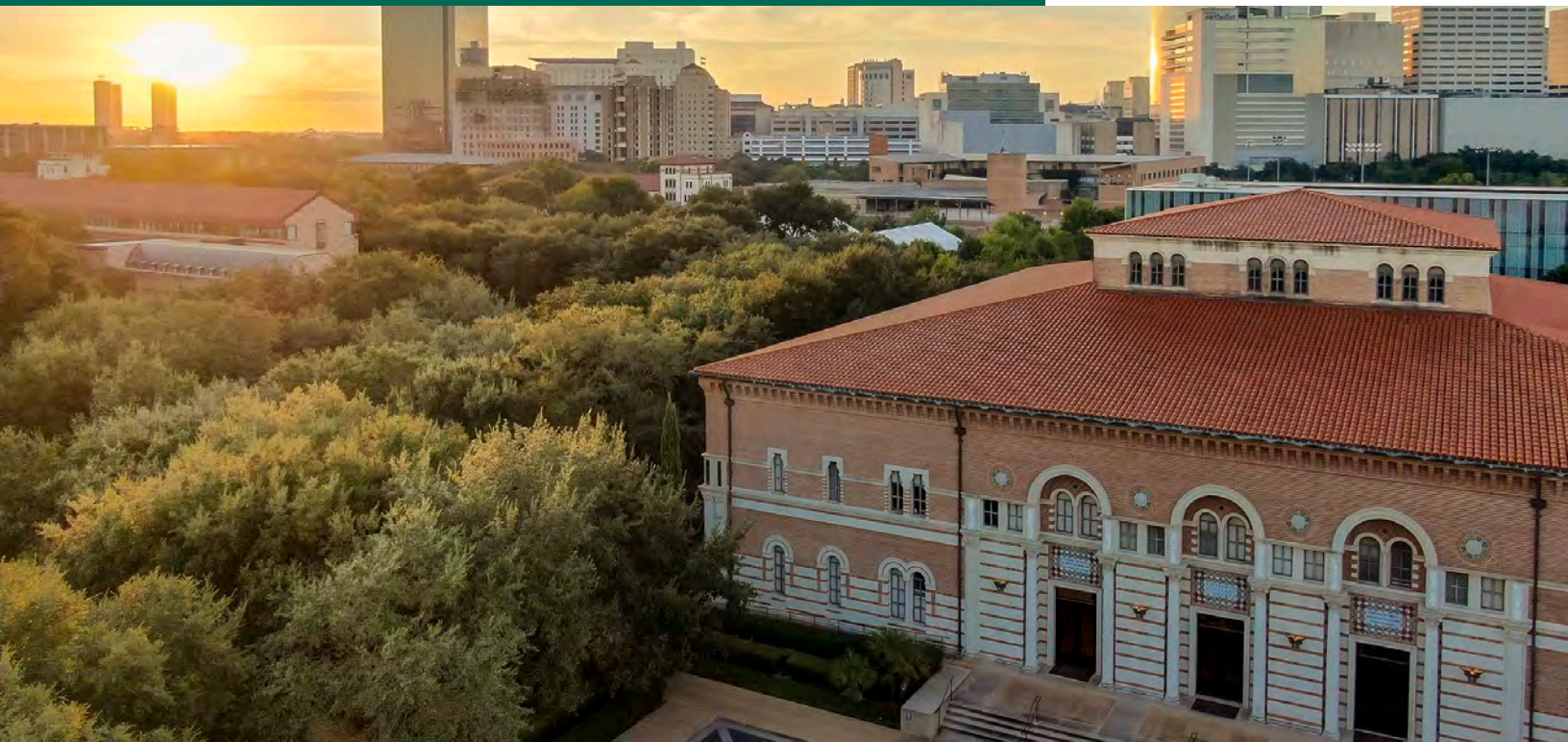
# 249

CLASSES TAUGHT

# 74

STUDENT INTERNS

*The Baker Institute bridges the gap between ideas and action. We are committed to advancing pragmatic, achievable policies that improve lives and the world we share.*



## RESEARCH TOPICS

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*Above*

*The Baker Institute for Public Policy is located on the campus of Rice University.*



Above  
Secretary James A. Baker, III,  
with Ambassador  
Edward P. Djerejian.

***“Our founding principle of nonpartisan, data-driven policy analysis has served us well over the years, and will continue to guide and differentiate the institute. We believe the future is bright.”***

**THE HONORABLE JAMES A. BAKER, III**  
Honorary Chair

Back in 1994, I came to Houston to take on a new challenge at the invitation of Secretary James A. Baker, III, after a long and meaningful diplomatic career. My “mission” was to establish a public policy institute on the campus of Rice University. I could never have anticipated the success we achieved nor how rewarding the process would be along the way. In a relatively short 27 years we have surpassed all expectations and have been ranked by our peers as the No. 1 university-affiliated think tank in the world.

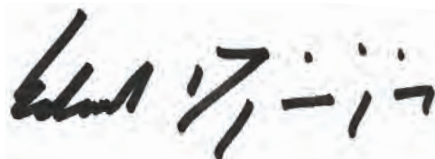
To create a public policy institute on a university campus in under three decades was no small feat. I recruited a dedicated team of the best and the brightest experts and scholars, built an effective administrative staff, and constructed a permanent home for the institute at Baker Hall. By extending an open door and our hand — first and foremost — to the Rice faculty, they overcame their reservations about our endeavor to foster academic collaboration directly with our research centers and programs, including through the creation of a **Master of Global Affairs** graduate degree program with the School of Social Sciences and a **Master of Energy Economics**.

We thus became an integral part of the university's educational mission. The **Baker Institute Student Forum**, the **Jesse Jones Summer in D.C. Fellowship**, and several other internship opportunities now connect the institute with hundreds of Rice students and help foster a generation of policy-minded leaders. I am particularly proud of the many Rice graduates who have used their experiences at the Baker Institute to pursue distinguished careers in public service.

Moreover, our outreach extends well beyond our campus and local community to the nation and the world. The Baker Institute has become a global forum for national and world leaders, including all former U.S. presidents from Gerald Ford to Barack Obama. Our data-driven, nonpartisan policy research and recommendations have consistently reached the highest levels of decision-makers — including the landmark [Iraq Study Group](#) report in 2006 and a recent report on [American scientific competitiveness](#) with China, which was presented to Congress last spring and contributed to the introduction of bipartisan legislation proposing historic increases to federally funded science and technology research.

Having now accomplished my mission and thus feeling comfortable passing on the responsibility of the institute to new leadership, I announced my retirement and look forward to being steady at the helm until it takes effect in June 2022 to ensure, along with my colleagues, our Board of Advisors and Rice University leaders, a flawless succession. I shall remain enormously grateful to all, past and present, who contributed to the institute's success with their unstinting support as well as to the immense generosity of our donors who have made this all possible.

Last, but not least, I wish to address my and Françoise's profound gratitude for the trust the institute's honorary chair, James A. Baker, III, always placed in us. In return, I give him my promise that the future of what we have created, Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, is on a solid foundation to pursue its path of excellence.



**EDWARD P. DJEREJIAN**

Director

## ABOUT US

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The Baker Institute for Public Policy is a nonpartisan, data-driven think tank located on the campus of Rice University. We conduct widely respected research and analysis, offer timely and relevant policy expertise, and inform decision-making by providing fact-based recommendations to policymakers, business leaders, academics, and the public.

Our experts' rigorous scholarship has brought us to the top of the world rankings among university-affiliated think tanks. Distinguished leaders, including every living U.S. president, have spoken at the institute and inspired audiences with their authoritative insights.

And students, the next generation of decision-makers, have been enriched by internships in Houston, Washington, D.C., Paris, and Moscow. None of this would have been possible without our donors, whose generosity and commitment support a global public policy think tank here in Houston.

This annual report provides a window into our work over the past year. We invite you to learn more about the Baker Institute — and to join us in the years ahead as we continue our mission to develop policies and research that promote the public good.



***For more than 25 years,  
the Baker Institute has kept a  
steady focus on some of the most  
pressing policy issues affecting  
the U.S. and the world.***

*Above  
One of five tiled messages  
that adorn the entrances  
to James A. Baker III Hall.*

## A YEAR OF CHANGE AND IMPACT

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The Baker Institute is constantly evolving. Each year adds fresh ideas and new faces as we uphold our founding values of independence, accuracy, and civility. Highlighted below are some of the activities and milestones that have characterized the past 12 months.



### THE BAKER INSTITUTE AT TOP OF GLOBAL THINK TANK RANKINGS

The institute rose to the No. 1 ranking among the best university-affiliated think tanks in the world, up from No. 2 the previous year, according to a Global Go To Think Tank Index Report released in early 2021. Our **Center for Energy Studies** maintained its standing as the top energy and resource policy think tank and was recognized as a Center of Excellence for being ranked No. 1 for three consecutive years. Read more [here](#).



### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

As it has since 2008, the Baker Institute released a series of [policy recommendations](#) for the incoming presidential administration. Focusing on issues from energy and U.S. economic growth to climate change and immigration, the briefs are intended to provide innovative ideas for navigating a complex domestic and foreign policy environment — and are as relevant today as they were on Inauguration Day.



### LESSONS FROM THE TEXAS FREEZE

In February 2021, a massive winter storm swept through Texas, bringing record-low temperatures and causing millions of residents to lose power for days. Experts at the **Center for Energy Studies** shifted into high gear to determine the reasons for the catastrophic failure and how to prevent it from happening again. Their work ranged from research on [factors](#) leading to the blackout to op-eds in the [Washington Post](#). CES' innovative [time-lapse videos](#) of power generation and statewide customer outages shed further light on what transpired.



### EL-SERAG NAMED CENTER FOR HEALTH & BIOSCIENCES DIRECTOR

The Baker Institute welcomed **Rola El-Serag, M.D.**, this fall as the L.E. and Virginia Simmons Senior Fellow in Health Policy and the director of the **Center for Health and Biosciences**. El-Serag joined the institute from the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center, where she was the medical director of the Women Veterans Health Program. She is also an associate professor of medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.





## HOW DOES URBAN REVITALIZATION AFFECT SMALL BUSINESSES?

In August, the **McNair Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth** won a \$300,000 Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation Community-Engaged Research grant to study the effects of economic and demographic change on small businesses in Houston's Second and Third wards. The project will involve those who live and work in the wards, and look to discover factors that have helped small businesses survive and thrive. The center will use the findings to recommend policy measures to government decision-makers and stakeholders.



## WHY IMMIGRATION REFORM MATTERS

The **Center for the U.S. and Mexico's** important work on immigration brought fact-based insights to a charged national conversation. Through [research](#), [webinars](#), and [op-eds](#), center experts demonstrated the economic and societal value of resolving the status of America's 10.5 million undocumented immigrants. Among other benefits, immigrants working in the legal market will generate billions in taxes and reduce the deficit, the center showed. Not least, a compassionate immigration policy will keep families together, supporting our core ideals.



## BUILDING VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

The institute's [online presence](#) continued to expand this year, with our [Twitter](#) following growing by 48% and [Facebook](#) likes rising by 259%. [YouTube](#) views climbed to 2.3 million, due in part to our steady stream of webinars. Our [blog](#) and [email newsletter](#) were other important sources of expert insights, as were the "[Policy Matters](#)" and "[Judy Ley Allen Mexico Centered](#)" podcasts. Each drew on our research from fiscal policy to the Middle East. Finally, the institute staff is hard at work on a redesigned website that's coming to your screen in 2022.



## WHEN STUDENT PATHS LEAD TO BAKER HALL

From the start, the Baker Institute has pursued a core mission to engage [Rice students](#), our future leaders. In the past year, 74 undergraduate and graduate students interned at eight institute centers and programs. They included Daphne Flores, a **Child Health Policy Program** intern for nearly four years who now holds a Pickering Fellowship at the State Dept. "Rice University prepared me for the workforce, but the Baker Institute made me a professional," Flores said. The experience "cemented my passion for policy and dedication to public service."

# NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION

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The global energy landscape is rapidly changing, shaped by economics, policy, geopolitics and technology. This dynamism highlights the continuing need for data-driven, nonpartisan research on energy and environmental issues that the **Center for Energy Studies** continues to provide policymakers, corporate leaders and the public.

### EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF CES RESEARCH

- In 2016, the CES established some key programmatic areas to drive research — Electricity Markets and Policy, Energy and Environment, Global Natural Gas, Global Oil, Geopolitics of Energy, and regional focus programs in [Latin America](#) and Asia.
- CES has since expanded to incorporate new programs on (i) [Energy, Minerals and Materials](#) and (ii) Energy and Transportation, and has redefined the Energy and Environment program to (iii) Water and Energy and (iv) Environment and Sustainability.
- Within these frameworks the center has expanded its work on energy transitions to include research on hydrogen, resilience, nature-based climate solutions, ecosystem services, and carbon capture, use or storage.

### A CRITICAL CES PRINCIPLE: RESEARCH GUIDES DISCOURSE

- CES activity in each of the core programmatic areas includes policy research papers and other publications; roundtable dialogues; meetings with U.S. and foreign dignitaries and other key stakeholders; and conferences, webinars and lectures.
- CES experts conduct both short-term analysis and long-term studies on the myriad factors that are impacting energy transitions.
- The CES working groups and roundtable dialogues have been a highlight of the past year. The CES-led working groups on [carbon capture in Texas](#) and on [soil carbon capture](#) both led to very significant, high-level engagements.
- The [Latin American Energy Roundtable](#) and the [Energy, Minerals and Materials Roundtable](#) have each been very successful in driving high level engagement with leadership from both the public and private sectors.
- Building on that success, CES is launching the Oil in Energy Transitions Roundtable as well as a joint roundtable with the **Center for Middle East** on Energy and Politics in the Middle East. The center looks forward to where these discussions will lead.
- CES' leading position in global think tank rankings and, since 2020, its special status as a Center of Excellence attest to its commitment to quality and the relevance of its research.

## VISUALIZING DATA

- As part of its evolving efforts, CES has also launched several new data visualization tools to help demystify the complexities of energy markets and policy.
- Each of these tools is connected to broader research and is intended to support constructive dialogue that can elevate the content of policy discussions.
- Examples include a [China Energy Map](#); [Global Minerals Production Map](#); an [Energy Environment and Policy in the U.S. Map](#); and time-lapse videos on “[Electricity in Texas](#)” and “[2021 Freeze: Texas Generation by Fuels and Outages](#).”

## OUTREACH: PUBLICATIONS, THE MEDIA AND MORE

- Over the last year, the fellows and scholars of CES published about 125 working papers, issue briefs, peer-reviewed articles, blogs, and commentaries across a wide range of disciplines and topics. A full collection can be seen at our [website library](#) and on [Forbes](#).
- CES experts appeared in various media outlets over 11,000 times, and have maintained a robust dialogue on the most pressing issues of the day. In fact, since March 2020, CES has conducted over 60 [webinars](#) attracting, on average, 350 live participants plus 55,000 viewers of event recordings on [YouTube](#).
- Several of these engagements have led to more rigorous discussions with policymakers and regulators at the state and federal levels in the U.S., as well as with leaders from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Guyana, India, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, UAE and the UK, among others.
- Follow the CES on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) as it navigates the path toward the energy future.

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***“CES fellows and scholars look forward to addressing the challenges that lie ahead, and they will continue to do so rooted in data with an aim to elevate policy discourse.”***

**KENNETH B. MEDLOCK III**

Senior Director, Center for Energy Studies

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# BALANCING PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITIES IN A TIME OF COVID-19

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While **Center for Health and Biosciences** experts continued to address the ongoing threat of COVID-19 this year, they also maintained a wider perspective on other pressing health policy issues: the quality and cost of U.S. health care, control of global neglected diseases, and maternal and child health.

### AN ONGOING COMMITMENT TO EXPERT ANALYSIS

In the second year of COVID-19, experts at the Center for Health and Biosciences focused on the science behind viral mutations, breakthrough infections and other developments that concerned policymakers and their fellow Americans alike.

- Fellow **Peter Hotez** remained a national voice of reason as he explained why COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective — and, as variants persisted — why masks and social distancing are viable protective measures against infection.
- As vaccine misinformation spread across the U.S., Hotez repeatedly called for an ambitious counteroffensive. “This is a moment to prioritize health over short-term political calculations,” wrote Hotez, contributor **Rekha Lakshmanan**, and nine other health policy experts in a [Lancet op-ed](#).
- Hotez also turned his attention to the [global health threat](#) of the many countries without vaccines and the pandemic’s effect on [communities of color](#). His [Baker Institute webinar](#) on the possible emergence of another deadly virus brought season-high viewership numbers.
- Fellow **Vivian Ho** and her CHB colleagues were also reliable sources for the media, providing countless interviews throughout the year, including weekly COVID-19 updates for Houston’s NPR station.
- [C-SPAN interviewed Ho](#) for an hour-long live show on her co-authored analyses of the Center for Disease Control’s [case reporting system](#) and the effects of state [lockdown restrictions](#).

### A HEALTH COST CRISIS DURING A PANDEMIC

As the COVID threat waxed and waned, pre-pandemic health care issues persisted. Among other concerns, the CHB sought to identify when high health care prices might be justified, versus cases when prices solely increased to boost profits.

- Ho partnered with the National Academy of State Health Policy to automate a tool that will provide purchasers and regulators with detailed information on costs, profit margins, and charity care for all U.S. hospitals.
- Ho also advised legislators on Texas Senate Bill 1137, which strengthens requirements for hospitals to provide greater price transparency to Texas patients.
- The CHB continues to work with the Health Care Service Corporation to identify determinants of high emergency room costs.

## IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to additional challenges for children and their families, and a growing recognition of the virus' far-reaching effects on vulnerable populations. **Child Health Policy** expert **Quianta Moore** leveraged the program's expertise to inform policy discussions on the physical and mental health of high-risk communities that also face racial and socioeconomic barriers.

- Moore and project manager Jacquie Klotz partnered with the University of Texas School of Public Health to evaluate the effectiveness of two state-funded programs designed to increase mental health services to Texas children.
- Scholar **Chris Kulesza** worked with the Houston Independent School District to assess whether a community schools model improves the academic performance of at-risk students.
- Moore scaled up an early childhood parenting initiative to reach more women in Texas. This program increased parenting knowledge and skills and helped to reduce parental stress during the pandemic.
- Moore also presented policy recommendations to the Texas Workforce Commission on how to maximize the impact of American Rescue Plan dollars. Her [Baker Institute webinar](#) on the issue spotlighted funding strategies that support early childhood development.
- In a brief prepared for the Biden administration, Moore issued an urgent appeal to make [quality child care](#) more available and affordable in the U.S.

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***“We are a nation built on science and technology, and we are going to vaccinate our way out of this epidemic.”***

**PETER HOTEZ, M.D., PH.D.**  
Fellow in Disease and Poverty

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# A DIFFICULT YEAR TESTS THE U.S.–MEXICO RELATIONSHIP

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As waves of migrants, trade conflicts, and pandemic restrictions strained the binational partnership, the **Center for the United States and Mexico** developed actionable responses to challenges on both sides of the border.

## A JUMP–START FOR U.S. IMMIGRATION REFORMS

While a highly polarized political environment stalled efforts to fix America's broken immigration system, center director **Tony Payan**, scholar **Ivan Rodriguez**, and analyst **Pamela Lizette Cruz** sought to identify politically feasible ways to break the legislative impasse.

- In a brief charting a [path toward legalizing](#) America's unauthorized immigrants, the center proposed a focus on the millions who have been in the U.S. for decades — and operate as citizens in all but name.
- The center similarly highlighted DREAMers, who have called the U.S. home since childhood, as another logical priority for permanent U.S. residency.
- Using statistics from the Texas State Comptroller and others, the center showed the [positive economic effects](#) of undocumented workers' participation in the U.S. banking, health care, and social security systems. Journalists on both sides of the border covered the report, giving it wide coverage and international impact.
- Well before the Biden administration announced plans to revamp the moribund U.S. immigration court system, the center produced a detailed guide for [streamlining the courts](#) to limit backlogs, staff shortages, and long waits for cases to be heard.
- The center's virtual immigration reform workshops, featuring scholars, policy analysts, and on-the-ground practitioners, led to proposals for pragmatic and [actionable changes](#) to U.S. immigration policy.

## U.S.–MEXICO TRADE ENTERS A PROMISING NEW ERA

The 2020 entry into force of the USMCA — the successor to NAFTA — marked an important milestone for North American trade. But the pandemic and issues like ongoing corruption in Mexico threatened to undermine economic gains.

- Trade experts at a [webinar series](#) on the USMCA examined the agreement's effect on the environment and auto industry.
- Fellow **David Gantz** led a webinar on the [growing influence of China](#) and the pandemic's impact on supply chains. In related work, center experts explored the economic effect of pandemic restrictions at U.S.–Mexico [ports of entry](#). While research scholar **Rodrigo Montes de Oca** held webinars on the economic and social impact of corruption in Mexico.
- The center analyzed the 2022 prospects for business and investment in Mexico at its signature event, the annual [Mexico Outlook](#). This program and related [report](#) consider the impacts of politics, regulations, public safety concerns, and U.S. relations on the country's business environment.

## **BORDER MANAGEMENT: A CRITICAL BINATIONAL ISSUE**

Fifteen million border residents depend on the institutions responsible for a well-managed border region. At stake are water resources, safe infrastructure, security, public health and much more.

- Center experts prepared for the Biden administration recommendations for [improving border administration](#). Of special interest is water management, the source of many confrontations in border communities – especially in environmentally fragile regions impacted by climate change.
- “Without a thorough assessment of the institutions that oversee specific issues along the border, and how they come together as a comprehensive system, it is difficult to judge whether the areas they affect will prosper or their problems will grow,” said Payan.
- A center webinar on [cross-border governance](#) highlighted why sound management is essential for a prosperous and secure U.S. and Mexico.

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***“The biggest challenge, and the greatest opportunity, in immigration reform today is to address undocumented immigration – to chart a path forward that strengthens our economy and society while helping others improve their lives.”***

**TONY PAYAN, PH.D.**

Director, Center for the United States and Mexico

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# ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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Experts at the **Center for the Middle East** provide policymakers and the general public with analysis and recommendations on the region's enduring political, economic and societal concerns. Their objective research guides key stakeholders working to meet current crises and strategizing long-term policies that consider the root causes of some of the region's problems.

## WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Restarting the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations will take leadership from the United States and a host of new global actors. In the past year, the center's **Conflict Resolution Program** has assessed the current stalemate and recommended possible paths forward.

- **Ambassador Edward Djerejian** and other Middle East experts reflected on the future of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in the context of successes and failed efforts to resolve it. Watch the webinar [here](#).
- The Ambassador dealt with U.S. Middle East policy throughout his distinguished diplomatic career. As director of the Baker Institute, he continued to lead the Center for the Middle East's research programs. He also shared his expertise with the public through speaking events and webinars on topics such as [Lebanon](#) and [U.S. policy formulation](#) for the region. He was regularly interviewed by the global media.
- Fellow **Gilead Sher** outlined the framework for an Israeli-Palestinian permanent peace, with the objective of two states for two peoples, in a series of [policy briefs](#) and articles.
- Such a framework will require a series of [transitional phases](#), interim agreements, and independent steps, Sher wrote. "It is clearer now that there are no bypasses to Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolution."

## THE POLITICS AND ECONOMIES OF THE PERSIAN GULF STATES

Middle East fellow **Kristian Coates Ulrichsen**, a noted expert on the geopolitics of the Persian Gulf region, is a prolific author and sought-after source for the media.

- He also gives regular briefings to officials in the United States, the United Kingdom, and multiple units at the United Nations.
- Coates Ulrichsen wrote extensively on the impacts of a three-year economic embargo against Qatar by Saudi Arabia and three neighboring countries. His authoritative 2020 book on the standoff, *Qatar and the Gulf Crisis*, was followed by an Arabic edition published in 2021.
- Coates Ulrichsen's recent research also includes studies of the Houthi rebels in [Yemen](#), [Sudan's](#) path to democracy, and the normalization of relations between Israel and the [UAE](#), with in-depth analyses additionally published by the [Arab Center](#), the [Washington Post](#), and more.



## SPOTLIGHT ON REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

As the director of the center's **Women's Rights, Human Rights and Refugees** program, fellow **Kelsey Norman**'s mandate spans the globe.

- Norman is the author of *Reluctant Reception: Refugees, Migration and Governance in the Middle East and North Africa*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2021. She discussed the book's analysis of the politics of migration and asylum seeking with audiences in Europe, the UK, Washington, D.C., and Houston.
- Her wide-ranging reports this year included a critical look at the U.S. evacuation of [Afghans](#), [Mexico](#)'s problematic asylum system, and [Egypt](#)'s indifferent response to migrants from across sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.
- Norman's outreach also included interviews and podcasts on issues such as U.S. refugee policy under the [Biden administration](#) and the critical impact of [climate change](#) on displaced populations.

## THE RETURN OF AN EMBOLDENED IRAN

Fellow **Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar**'s perceptive analysis of developments in Iran differentiates his work from other experts in the field. His widely read writing appears in academic journals as well as publications such as *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.

- Tabaar's September 2021 article on Iran's new president, Ebrahim Raisi, considers the reasons right-wing leaders win elections in a country beset by political and economic troubles.
- This influential [Foreign Affairs](#) piece also analyzes how Raisi will change Iran's approach to critical issues and was circulated among administration officials in Washington.
- In "[Iran Won't Back Down](#)," also published in *Foreign Affairs*, he explains why Tehran isn't looking to compromise during reopened nuclear talks with the United States.
- Among Tabaar's scholarly research this year is a treatise on "[State Identities and Foreign Interventions in Violent Conflict](#)," which appeared in a co-authored report for the *Journal of Global Security Studies*.

## RELIGION AND RELIGIOSITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Fellow **A.Kadir Yildirim** contributed valuable insights into the social and religious fabric of the region in the past year.

- Yildirim secured a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation to study the health and religious effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Muslims in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Indonesia, and Pakistan.
- Using results from the study's extensive survey data, he published an article in the [Washington Post](#) and discussed the findings in a Harvard University [podcast](#).
- Yildirim also published on the impact of the Biden presidency on [U.S.-Turkey relations](#), Arab-Israeli [normalization](#) agreements, and [Islamist](#) groups in the Middle East.
- Along with other Center for the Middle East experts, Yildirim reflected on the "10 Years Since the Arab Uprisings" for a [two-part](#) Baker Institute webinar. The video was rebroadcast on "Arab Voices," a syndicated program that airs on radio stations across the U.S.

# LOOKING AHEAD TO A POST-PANDEMIC ECONOMY

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The **Center for Public Finance** continued building on its body of research on U.S. economic policy and the macroeconomic outlook. Its high-quality, evidence-based work reached policy- and decision-makers from Texas to Washington, D.C., influencing the policy path toward a robust economic future.

## HOW WILL THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PAY ITS BILLS?

As the U.S. entered a period of fiscal uncertainty related to a shift in political power and the pending expiration of the 2017 tax reforms, CPF fellows made key contributions to the analysis of government financing alternatives.

- CPF Director **John Diamond** and scholar **George Zodrow** examined several tax provisions proposed by the Biden administration and found significant adverse consequences for the U.S. labor market. [This finding](#) and its supporting evidence drew considerable interest, leading to a national conversation on *Fox News* as well as coverage in the *Wall Street Journal*.
- As the Biden administration's economic policy proposals became more concrete, Advisory Board Visiting Fellow **Richard Evans**, in conjunction with the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, provided a valuable [macroeconomic analysis](#) of the proposed tax plan.
- CPF fellow **Jorge Barro's** [research](#) found that the limitation of certain deductions in the 2017 tax reform contributed to the first decline in U.S. wealth inequality in nearly three decades — a widely distributed finding cited by the White House Council of Economic Advisers.
- In response to an evolving technology-based economy, CPF fellow **Joyce Beebe** explored the effects of [digital taxation](#) and related new regulations on businesses and American taxpayers.

## ADDRESSING AN UNSUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEBT

CPF fellows recommended how the government could meet the fiscal challenges of the rising federal debt.

- In a brief prepared for the Biden administration, Barro, Beebe, and Evans offered a menu of [fiscal resolutions](#).
- Barro's work on the effects of increased debt during a period of low interest rates drew extensive coverage from the media, including *The New York Times*, NPR's "Marketplace" and *CNN*.

## THE MACROECONOMIC OUTLOOK

CPF fellows also analyzed the evolving macroeconomic fallout of the pandemic and showed how certain policies could reshape long-term economic growth.

- Beebe explored the [more prominent role of remote work](#), [automation](#), and [independent contractors](#) in a post-pandemic economy.
- Diamond and Zodrow influenced the debate on President Biden's [proposed infrastructure plan](#), finding that the tax consequences of financing the plan outweigh its macroeconomic benefits.

# SMALL BUSINESSES SEEK TO RECOVER THEIR LOSSES

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As entrepreneurs worked to regain their footing this year, the **McNair Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth** focused on both new and old barriers to small business success, including the challenges of enduring the pandemic and obtaining a bank loan.

## IMPROVING SMALL BUSINESS LENDING

The McNair Center directed attention this year to access to capital, looking at the approaches of successful for-profit and nonprofit organizations and the application of blockchain technology.

- At a [June 2021 webinar](#), McNair Center Director **Jennifer Rabb** spoke with the CEO of an online platform for business owners about the company's innovative approach to the financial needs of entrepreneurs and their possible paths forward.
- A [brief](#) by **Alexander Hernandez** explored how the emerging use of blockchain technology in financial services could transform small business lending and improve capital access for businesses excluded by conventional lending processes.
- Scholar **Alisha Small** spoke with nonprofit executives about their approach to the financial and policy challenges faced by entrepreneurs at a [September 2021 webinar](#).
- Small is the McNair Center's new Scholar for Economic Growth. Previously an economist at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, she is a Rice graduate who holds a master's degree in economics from Cleveland State University.

## STAYING AFLOAT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- To understand the reach and effectiveness of the Paycheck Protection Program, research manager **Lebena Varghese** surveyed 600 Houston-area small business owners about their [experience with the PPP](#).
- As some small businesses struggled to access government funds through the PPP, student intern Maddy Scannell explored [why \\$130 billion remained available](#) but unallocated, and whether the PPP — with rapidly changing guidelines, lawsuits and uncertain forgiveness processes — would ultimately be [a boon or a headache for banks](#).

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***“Congress should extend expiring tax incentives for business investment and give small businesses more runway to make investments that will bolster their recovery.”***

**JENNIFER RABB, J.D.**

Director, McNair Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth

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# ADVANCING U.S. SCIENCE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

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The COVID-19 pandemic and increasing concerns about waning U.S. global scientific leadership put the role of science and scientists in sharp public focus — and helped set the course for the **Science and Technology Policy Program**'s research agenda.

## BUILDING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SCIENCE, FROM CLASSROOMS TO CONGRESS

Senior fellow **Neal Lane**, fellow **Kirstin R.W. Matthews**, and scholar **Kenneth Evans** dedicated the past year to working with congressional leaders and their staff to advance federal funding for university-based basic research and to bring science and technology issues closer to the general public.

- The Baker Institute and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences co-published a major policy report on the state of U.S. science and innovation. Chaired by Lane and Norman Augustine, the retired CEO and former chairman of Lockheed Martin, [\*The Perils of Complacency: America at a Tipping Point in Science and Engineering\*](#) outlined steps for the federal government to bolster U.S. scientific and industrial competitiveness in response to increased investment in research and development in China and other international competitors.
- This September 2020 report contributed to the passage last spring of a massive \$250 billion federal funding bill to boost U.S. technology research.
- Evans and Matthews researched recent trends in [national spending for scientific research and development](#) to further spotlight the current state and future of U.S. science and innovation.
- The center also organized webinars on science research as part of its [Civic Scientist Lecture Series](#), which connects the public with some of the field's greatest thinkers.
- Issues covered in the series included a call for increased [international scientific collaboration](#); a look at [who benefits](#) from government-funded science research; a review of challenges to technologies that underpin [U.S. competitiveness and security](#), featuring guests including former Google CEO Eric Schmidt; and an important discussion on [increasing diversity](#) in science and engineering.

## URGING GREATER OVERSIGHT FOR EMERGING BIOTECHNOLOGIES

Matthews and other CHB experts explored the ethical challenges of a number of advanced biotechnologies and recommended policy solutions that serve science and the public good.

- Sarah Hoover, **Ana Iltis** and Matthews analyzed controversial biomedical technologies like the genetic modification of human embryos, recommending that public stakeholders play [a critical role in developing policies](#) that govern them. In another report, Matthews and her co-authors called for a reassessment of a push by some scientists to [end the so-called 14-day limit](#) on culturing human embryos *in vitro* after fertilization.
- Matthews and Iltis also proposed a national bioethics [commission to examine the ethics](#) of research on lab-developed human embryos. A related S&T Policy Program report called for the World Health Organization to establish an expert [advisory committee](#) to help guide the growing direct-to-consumer stem cell therapy marketplace.
- In a comprehensive study, Matthews and Lakshmanan tracked vaccine-related bills in the Texas Legislature between 2009 and 2019 to determine the conditions that led to bipartisan support for such legislation.

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***“Science and technology investments enable our nation to compete aggressively in the global marketplace, protect our environment, safeguard our national security, and contribute to our economic prosperity and quality of life. All of us, but especially our children and our grandchildren, will reap the rewards.”***

**NEAL LANE, PH.D.**

Senior Fellow, Science and Technology Policy

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# A NONPARTISAN EXAMINATION OF U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

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The **Presidential Elections Program** is the nation's first program solely dedicated to the study of U.S. presidential campaigns and elections. Led by fellows **Mark P. Jones** and **John B. Williams**, the program provides timely analysis during and after each presidential election cycle, allowing stakeholders of all political parties and groups to better understand the changing dynamics of presidential campaigns.

## ASSESSING ELECTORAL REFORMS 16 YEARS AFTER THE CARTER–BAKER COMMISSION

- In 2005, President Jimmy Carter and Secretary of State James A. Baker, III, convened the bipartisan Commission on Federal Election Reform to recommend ways to raise confidence in the electoral system. With the legacy of the commission in mind, The Carter Center and the PEP organized a virtual conference featuring [five panel discussions](#) at which experts discussed electoral reform in a straightforward manner devoid of political rhetoric.
- Among the participants at the spring 2021 event were Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and New Mexico Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver, who also serves as president of the National Association of Secretaries of State.
- [Videos of the conference](#) and a [report](#) on the discussions are available at the Baker Institute website.
- A 2022 conference will study the content and initial implementation of the Georgia and Texas election reform laws.

## THE NOVEMBER 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

- At another major PEP conference, "[A Presidential Election During the Time of COVID-19](#)," academics, campaign consultants, and journalists examined the lead-up to the election and the ramifications of the aftermath.
- Veteran political consultants Stephanie Cutter, deputy campaign manager for President Barack Obama's 2012 reelection campaign, and Beth Myers, senior adviser to Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign, served as the conference's honorary directors.

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***“Genuine reform should put aside political hyperbole and focus on steps that can enable effective policymaking. We hope that the [[Carter Center–Baker Institute election reform conference](#)] can be part of a new direction in our national debate where we shout less and listen more.”***

**PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER  
SECRETARY JAMES A. BAKER, III**

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# SMARTER ALTERNATIVES TO THE WAR ON DRUGS

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The **Drug Policy Program** continues to research and promote policies that reduce the harms of drug use and drug policy. Criminal justice reform and racial equity are now at the forefront of public policy debates, and the program is well positioned to have a strong voice in these conversations.

## ANALYZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRUG POLICY AND SYSTEMIC RACISM

- The Drug Policy Program, in partnership with the Center for Health and Biosciences, hosted a series of webinars that included discussions on how the war on drugs contributes to [police violence](#) and on opportunities for prosecutors to spur [criminal justice reform](#). The panels featured key policy stakeholders, including Harris County District Attorney Kim Ogg, then-Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo, and Texas state Rep. Nicole Collier (D-Dallas).
- Fellow **William Martin** and **Katharine Neill Harris** published an article in the widely circulated *Judges' Journal* about persistent [inequities in the medical cannabis](#) industry.
- Nonresident scholar **Viridiana Edwards** and Harris conducted a survey of medical cannabis users in Texas. Their [report](#) and [one-page summary](#) were distributed to lawmakers and used to support medical cannabis bills in the 86th state legislative session.
- Harris and scholar **Christopher Kulesza** were awarded a grant to study the impact of state cannabis reform on criminal justice outcomes. The results will be available in 2022.
- The slow pace of change in Texas increases the urgency of the program's work, as millions of state residents are adversely impacted by punitive drug policies that criminalize addiction and create barriers to treatment.

## PUTTING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE THROUGH GOVERNMENT OUTREACH

- As one of the few academic voices in the Texas drug policy space, the program informs legislators about the social and economic benefits of treating drug use as a public health issue.
- In March 2021, [Harris testified](#) before the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security about fentanyl and the harms of drug war policies.
- During the 86th Texas legislative session, the program provided written and in-person testimony for over 20 [drug and criminal justice-related bills](#), including measures to [reduce penalties for possession](#) of marijuana and other drugs, expand access to medical cannabis, and authorize syringe service programs.
- Led by nonresident fellow **Lisa Pittman**, the program submitted an amicus brief to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in support of requiring the Drug Enforcement Administration to allow medical cannabis research.

# INSTITUTE EXPERTS AND ADVISORS HONORED WITH AWARDS, ACCOLADES

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- Texas Pediatric Society and American Academy of Pediatrics, Special Achievement Award for COVID-19
- Texas Society for Biomedical Research Distinguished Service Award

## **Christopher Kulesza, Ph.D.**

Scholar, Child Health Policy

- Texas Advisory Committee, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

## **Neal F. Lane, Ph.D.**

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Fellow for the Middle East

- Winner, 2021 Perry World House-*Foreign Affairs* Emerging Scholars Global Policy Prize

## **Annelle Sheline**

Nonresident Fellow, Center for the Middle East

- Awardee, "40 Under 40," Middle East Policy Council

## **Huda Zoghbi**

Director, Jan and Dan Duncan Neurological Research

- Institute; Member, Baker Institute Board of Advisors
- Lundbeck Foundation Brain Prize



# PROVIDING RICE STUDENTS WITH HANDS-ON POLICY EXPERIENCE

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The Baker Institute's student programs, central to its mission to engage the next generation of decision-makers, offer valuable experiences that students can build on throughout their lives.

## BALANCING SCHOOLWORK AND POLICY

As the pandemic stretched into its second year, students demonstrated resilience and adaptability while they pursued their interest in public policy.

- **Baker Institute Student Forum** (BISF) members examined key policy issues through virtual panel discussions and speaker events, the annual College Republicans vs. Young Democrats debate and an inaugural weekly International Relations Discussion Group. "Our goals are to educate students in public policy and encourage careers in public policy," said faculty advisor and Baker Institute fellow **Joe Barnes**.
- The BISF's eighth annual undergraduate public policy competition focused on the U.S. policy response to COVID-19. The winning entries proposed innovative policy solutions for food insecurity, racial discrimination in health care, and the centralization of vaccine data.
- For its first in-person event of 2021, the BISF offered a temporary reprieve from studies: a trivia night featuring prizes and the opportunity to impress friends with obscure political and policy knowledge.
- Since 2004, the **Jesse Jones Leadership Center Summer in D.C. Policy Research Internship Program** has provided undergraduates the chance to work with think tanks, NGOs and government agencies in the nation's capital, integrating classroom theory with on-the-ground policy research. During virtual and in-person summer internships, the students analyzed issues such as arms transfers and environmentally sustainable economic development, said program director and Baker Institute China studies fellow **Steve Lewis**.
- In a summer that precluded travel to Moscow, the **Space Policy Program** held a virtual version of its **Stafford-Leonov Student Exchange Program**. Student delegates participated in a space development workshop with Russian space leaders, continuing the spirit of international cooperation pioneered during the historic 1975 Apollo-Soyuz mission.

## FURTHERING EDUCATION THROUGH GRADUATE STUDIES

- The **Master of Global Affairs** program, co-sponsored by the Baker Institute and Rice's School of Social Sciences, integrates scholarship and practical training for global policymaking. Despite the pandemic, the program welcomed its largest entering class in fall 2020.
- Developed by the **Center for Energy Studies** and Rice's Economics Department, the one-year **Master of Energy Economics** program builds skills in energy market analysis to prepare graduates for leadership roles in the energy sector. In spring 2021, 13 students from six countries graduated from the program.



Above

*Pictured from left are James A. Baker, III, Edward P. Djerejian, Marc J. Shapiro, and Steven L. Miller.*

***“We have today a thriving institute that is recognized nationally and internationally, and is now prepared to go onto the next level of excellence within Rice University and the world.”***

**MARC J. SHAPIRO**

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## MESSAGE TO DONORS

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When I served as assistant dean at a legal higher education institution, I believed that societal underpinnings begin with law. I was wrong. I learned, through my affiliation with Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, that before law is enacted, there is public policy.

These past two years, we have seen how public policy affects our everyday lives. Government policies transformed overnight, state and national identities altered, ideals tested, and fundamental questions asked:

- How should we gather?
- How should we earn?
- How should we learn?
- How should we be cared for?
- What is fairness?
- What is liberty?
- What is security?
- What is opportunity?

Investigating and analyzing these issues, publishing recommendations, and educating the public is the work of Baker Institute fellows and scholars. At webinars, member-exclusive Roundtable Dialogues and through publications, research and outreach, they provide rationale, clarity, knowledge, and perspective.

The institute's historical data-driven approach and steadfast leadership were key to the Baker Institute's rise to the No. 1 ranking among the best university-affiliated think tanks in the world in 2021. But there is another, critical factor in the institute's climb: our supporters. Our work is not possible without the support of our donors, who are listed on the following pages. We extend our deepest gratitude to them. A few have been highlighted to show how and why they give, and to demonstrate how their giving has deepened the Baker Institute's impact.

As of July 1, 2021, the page turned to fiscal year 2022. It will bring:

- Increased outreach, growth, and a continuation of compelling and relevant programming
- A return to in-person events for socializing and networking
- A reimagined, organized, and more navigable Baker Institute website

Fiscal year 2022 will also close the extraordinary, 28-year tenure of Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian as director of the Baker Institute for Public Policy. Let us honor him by continuing the work he started — there are many ways. Subscribe to our newsletter, attend an event, join us on social media, encourage a friend to join the Roundtable, or make a gift.

Gratefully,



**LEAH GROSS**

Director of Development

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The Baker Institute named endowment contributors provide permanent sustainable funds directed toward a specific purpose in support of public policy fellows, scholars, interns, and programmatic initiatives.

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Direct program support allows fellows, scholars, and researchers to investigate current and new research areas and creates opportunities to engage undergraduate and graduate students in the research and policy recommendation processes.

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***“The Huffington Foundation is pleased to provide the funding to establish a fellowship in child health policy at the Baker Institute, which works to bridge academic research, public policy and community outreach to investigate and improve health outcomes for all children.”***

**TERRY HUFFINGTON**

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**JASON BENNETT**

Partner, Baker Botts L.L.P.

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The Roundtable is our premier membership forum, dedicated to advancing the mission of the institute. Through annual giving, members of this group foster community engagement in vital public policy issues while interacting with world leaders, national decision-makers, and leading researchers.

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***“There is nothing more important for Texas than its relationship with Mexico. Tony Payan and the other experts at the Center for the United States and Mexico fully grasp the binational relationship, and their policy ideas for the future will prove vital to both economies.”***

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***“When I was a banker in Brazil, I served on several boards involving local and foreign affairs. The Baker Institute gives me a comprehensive view of public policy that touches everything from regional issues to global matters; it was an easy decision for me to support it by joining the Roundtable.”***

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***“I knew the Baker Institute offered excellent programs, but I did not realize that the community I would find would be so gratifying. In RYP I have found a community of peers who can discuss sensitive, and often polarizing, economic and public policy topics respectfully, and it has been such a value add.”***

**SHAVONNAH ROBERTS SCHREIBER**

RYP Member and Davoudi Scholar

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*Although we are only able to list those gifts that totaled \$50 or more from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, please accept our thanks for each gift, which helps to support the Baker Institute's programs and research.*

*We strive for accuracy in acknowledging those who have given to the Baker Institute, and we regret any omission or error, which we ask you to bring to our attention.*

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Baker Institute's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, the institute received \$12.81 million in revenue and spent \$11.40 million in expenses.

Distributed earnings from the Baker Institute's endowment and current use gifts from supporters represented the two largest sources of revenue during the year. Revenue from research grants constituted 15% of the institute's total revenue. The institute received less than 1% of total revenue from Rice University funds. As of June 30, 2021, the Baker Institute endowment market value was \$160 million, up from \$134 million on December 31, 2020.

Expenses from the institute's policy centers and programs continue to represent the largest expense category — 75% of all expenditures — including research staff salaries and sponsored research project expenses. Remaining costs consist of general operating expenses from administrative staff salaries, communications and fundraising expenses, as well as building maintenance and improvement costs.

## ENDOWMENT HISTORY

FISCAL YEAR	MARKET VALUE	EARNINGS DISTRIBUTED	NEW CONTRIBUTIONS TO ENDOWMENTS
2010	\$ 60.85	\$ 3.19	\$ 1.05
2011	\$ 65.19	\$ 3.26	\$ 1.44
2012	\$ 78.16	\$ 3.37	\$ 3.86
2013	\$ 81.31	\$ 3.33	\$ 1.08
2014	\$ 88.69	\$ 3.61	\$ —
2015	\$ 101.09	\$ 3.77	\$ 2.35
2016	\$ 104.24	\$ 4.43	\$ 0.01
2017	\$ 99.12	\$ 4.53	\$ 3.10
2018	\$ 113.05	\$ 4.69	\$ 1.10
2019	\$ 119.75	\$ 5.01	\$ 4.70
2020	\$ 130.06	\$ 5.27	\$ 1.00
<b>2021</b>	<b>\$ 122.92</b>	<b>\$ 5.36</b>	<b>\$ 0.50</b>

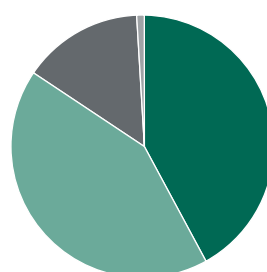
\*Market value as of June 30 of the previous fiscal year

(in millions of U.S. dollars)

## INCOME STATEMENT — FISCAL YEAR 2021

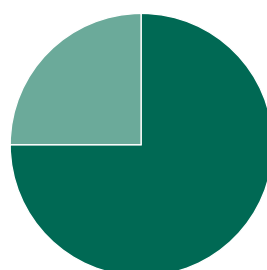
<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 12.81</b>
Baker Institute endowment distribution	\$ 5.36
Current use gifts from supporters	\$ 5.43
Research grants	\$ 1.92
Rice University funds	\$ 0.10
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 11.40</b>
Research programs and grants	\$ 8.57
Administration, communications, development and public affairs	\$ 2.83
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 1.41</b>

(in millions of U.S. dollars)



### REVENUE — FY2021

- Baker Institute endowment distribution (42%)
- Current use gifts from supporters (42%)
- Research grants (15%)
- Rice University funds (1%)



### EXPENSES — FY2021

- Research programs and grants (75%)
- Administration, communications, development and public affairs (25%)

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The image above titled “The ABCs of Growth,” is a section of a mural series by world renowned artist Ganzeer commissioned by the Baker Institute and housed on our second-floor. Ganzeer conceived the strictly black-and-white design consisting of pictograms like those of a bee or a tree woven in an invisible grid. Partially inspired by hieroglyphs — stylized images of an object representing a word, syllable or sound — Ganzeer created an original abstract visual language that symbolizes our research on “growth” and “energy.” His murals on the four corners of the hallways are unique and creative representations of the Baker Institute’s work. We encourage you to visit our [website](#) to learn more.

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