
DANA FORUM 2022



Wednesday, April 20, 2022

Event Space, Seegers Union

5:00 PM

Thursday, April 21, 2022

Miller Forum, Moyer Hall

5:00 PM

About the Dana Scholars Program

Mission Statement

The Dana Program offers outstanding, intellectually versatile students an opportunity to belong to a community of scholars that fosters conversations across disciplines, rigorous academic inquiry, and promotes engaged citizenship and leadership. Each Dana scholar can major in any academic department or program. All Dana seniors engage in collaborative research projects on issues of public concern and interest.

Director: Dr. Mohsin Hashim

Forum Director, 2021-2022: Dr. Ioanna Chatzidimitriou

Faculty Advisory Committee:

Dr. Irene Chien, Dr. Gretchen Gotthard
Dr. Cassandra Hartford, Dr. Tad Robinson

Student Advisory Committee:

Class of 2022

Rebekka Broyles
Lindsey Harris

Class of 2023

Jodie Goldberg
Alexa Ufberg

Class of 2024

Giana Anzalone
Arielle Toiutou

Class of 2025

Danya Helperin
Matthew Klinger

The Dana Forum

The Dana Forum is designed as a senior year capstone experience (0.5 credit each semester) to promote engaged citizenship and leadership to enrich the intellectual climate on campus. Each year the Forum oversees the development and execution of collaborative research projects as Dana seniors pursue rigorous academic inquiry on issues of public concern and interest tied to the Center for Ethics' annual theme. In the Fall semester, under the supervision of the Director of the Dana Forum, students engage with academic questions related to the annual theme chosen by the Center for Ethics and form working groups to research a topic of their choice. The collaborative research component of the Dana Forum is completed during the Spring semester of the Dana Scholar's senior year under the mentorship of a faculty member chosen by each group. The specific nature of each team's project depends on the students' background, interests, and goals. Because of the goals of the Dana program, projects that also serve the community are strongly encouraged.

Dr. Ioanna Chatzidimitriou, Forum Director, 2021–2022

Center for Ethics 2021—2022 Program

The onset of the current global pandemic has upended life for many people. It has wrought economic hardship, devastated families, strained global healthcare systems and exaggerated social inequalities. It has also presented moments of possibility, including incredible scientific collaboration and research on treatments and vaccines, the emergence of local, mutual aid networks to provide essential resources for assisting neighbors and inspired innovations in work and education.

This Center for Ethics program explores some of the ethical questions that arise when we pause to think about the global pandemic including: What lessons can be learned from the scientific collaboration on Covid-19 treatments and vaccines? From receiving a vaccine to wearing masks, how has the pandemic exposed the limits and obligations of individual and collective ethical behavior? How should we respond to the ways in which the pandemic has had disparate impacts based on race and class? How do we think about the rationing of care when health systems get overwhelmed?

Center Director

Brian Mello, Professor of Political Science

Program Directors:

Chrysan Cronin, Associate Professor of Public Health

Lindsay Nagy, Associate Professor of Economics

Schedule of Events

Wednesday, April 20

- 5:00—5:15 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres Served
- 5:15—5:25 p.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks
Dr. Ioanna Chatzidimitriou, Dana Forum
Director
- 5:30—6:05 p.m. *Accessibility Unmasked: COVID's Reveal of
Inequity in Performance Spaces*
Dani Barrett, Fran Bixby, Hallie Hoffman,
Celeste Samson
- 6:05—6:40 p.m. *Women and Disease: An American Experience*
Rebekka Broyles, Elizabeth Gershater,
Jennifer Moretti
- 6:40—7:15 p.m. *Comment Wars: Scientific Communication in
the Facebook Forum*
Katie Behling, Shivani Iyer, Victoria
Retterholt, Eliana Schuster
- 7:15—7:50 p.m. *Effects of COVID-19 on ICU Healthcare Worker
Burnout*
Marielle Avola, Kevan Shah,
Jonah Silverman, Christina Xu
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Schedule of Events

Thursday, April 21

- 5:00—5:15 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres Served
- 5:15—5:25 p.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks
Dr. Brian Mello, Director, Center for Ethics
- 5:30—6:05 p.m. *How to Stage Difficult Conversations: Implementing Vaccine Mandates in Performing Arts Venues*
Ara Ludwig, Brandon Herbst, Alex Whittington
- 6:05—6:40 p.m. *COVID-19's Impact on the Risk Perception of People with Opioid Use Disorders*
Caroline Armknecht, Corinne Battistelli, Owen Mendes
- 6:40—7:15 p.m. *COVID-19 & Elementary Education in the Lehigh Valley*
Natalie David, Rose Glantz, Lindsey Harris, Viet Le
- 7:15 p.m. Closing Remarks
Dr. Mohsin Hashim, Director, Dana Scholars Program
-
-

Event Schedule

**April 20
5:30 P.M.**

Accessibility Unmasked: COVID's Reveal of Inequity in Performance Spaces

Presenters
Dani Barrett
Fran Bixby
Hallie Hoffman
Celeste Samson

Mentor
Dr. Leticia Robles-
Moreno

When Broadway shut down on March 12, 2020, it signaled not only the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the unique impact it had on live theatre art makers and their audiences. Performance spaces were forced to radically change in order to adapt to this unprecedented event. In response, online performances became the new norm. This use of digital mediums to replace physical performance spaces had varying and contrastive effects: in some ways, creating additional barriers to arts participation, and in others ways, showcasing new methods of increasing accessibility in the arts. In doing so, the pandemic has revealed deeper, historical issues of accessibility in the arts. By making these barriers visible, and experimenting with new forms and practices, pandemic responses in the arts have inspired new ways of making the arts more accessible. Moreover, these responses have raised questions about the very meaning of accessibility, and the practice (and perhaps societal and artistic obligation) of creating accessible art. Through an analysis of accessibility, theatre, and media practices, as well as interviews with community members, our project seeks to explore these issues and consider the lessons we can learn from the pandemic in order to increase future accessibility in the arts.

Event Schedule

**April 20
6:05 P.M.**

Women and Disease: An American Experience

Presenters

Rebekka Broyles
Elizabeth Gershater
Jennifer Moretti

Mentor

Dr. Jacqueline
Antonovich

The COVID-19 epidemic in the United States has had disparate effects on various groups of Americans, with one especially-impacted group being women.* From being overrepresented in jobs that entail more exposure to COVID-19, to taking on the brunt of childcare amidst lockdowns, to experiencing increased exposure to interpersonal violence, women have suffered greatly during this epidemic. In this project, we will examine the COVID-19 epidemic in American history and literature, specifically the 1918 flu epidemic and the 1960s rubella epidemic, to explore to what extent women's finances, employment, interpersonal relationships, and childcare responsibilities have been disrupted by this health crisis. We will utilize the lenses of sociopolitics and intersectional feminism to ensure that the effects of this pandemic are considered in the context of current events and to account for other identities, such as those tied to race or motherhood, that influenced American women's experiences. Pandemic journals written by Muhlenberg students will be analyzed in the context of our research so we may gain a better understanding of how these issues may have affected the women of Muhlenberg College, and to what extent the institution provided support for female students, faculty, and staff during the COVID-19 epidemic.

*For the purposes of this project, we are defining women as any people identifying as such regardless of sex assigned at birth in order to be as inclusive as possible.

Event Schedule

**April 20
6:40 P.M.**

Comment Wars: Scientific Communication in the Facebook Forum

Presenters

Katie Behling
Shivani Iyer
Victoria Retterholt
Eliana Schuster

Mentor

Prof. Rachel
Hamelers

Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, the Facebook forum has served as a popular platform for communicating information about COVID-19 and related topics and engaging in discourse in real time. As we progress through the pandemic, scientific communication in the Facebook forum has become heavily debated, questioned and critiqued. This project aims to examine the social media presence of The City of Allentown and Pennsylvania Department of Health's Facebook pages to consider the relationship between official public health communications content and comment-section responses. Following a content analysis methodology, we will track common themes, misconceptions, questions, and language across posts and comment sections surrounding COVID-19, the COVID vaccine, and other public health measures that have been addressed, and/or implemented during the pandemic. Data was collected following a mixed methods analysis using the collaborative spreadsheet and coding platform, Airtable. We will situate this research in the context of the greater COVID-19 pandemic and the ways that scientific information was, and continues to be, disseminated to communities. This research will address vital questions about instances where scientific communication fails, why it does so, and identify spaces of improvement in the field of public health communication.

Event Schedule

**April 20
7:15 P.M.**

Effects of COVID-19 on ICU Healthcare Worker Burnout

Presenters

Marielle Avola
Kevan Shah
Jonah Silverman
Christina Xu

Mentor

Dr. Erika Bagley

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought large scale changes to the work lives of almost all individuals across the country. This statement may be most salient for those working on the frontlines in hospital Intensive Care Units (ICU), tending to the sickest of COVID-19 patients. From longer shifts to worker shortages to virus exposure to witnessing unprecedented death tolls, COVID-19 has increased levels of stress and responsibility placed upon ICU workers. This unforeseen change in work-related stress and responsibility is likely to have exacerbated symptoms of burnout. In this project, we examine how the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to burnout and how it is experienced among ICU workers. We aim to identify how factors in employee lifestyle and work-life may influence symptoms of burnout. Additionally, we make recommendations for healthcare providers on best practices in the context of work-related burnout, to preserve physical and mental health. To address these questions, we review the literature produced prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. This literature review will be conducted in tandem with interviews and surveys of ICU workers within the Lehigh Valley. In this dual-pronged approach, we examine whether the trends and statistics reported in the literature align with the lived experiences of local healthcare workers.

Event Schedule

**April 21
5:30 P.M.**

How to Stage Difficult Conversations: Implementing Vaccine Mandates in Performing Arts Venues

Presenters

Ara Ludwig
Brandon Herbst
Alex Whittington

Mentor

Dr. Marten Edwards

During the pandemic, performing arts venues were severely impacted by necessary public health measures at a time when the catharsis and community of live performance was needed the most. Now that vaccines are having a positive impact on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is our responsibility to share vital information about vaccine efficacy with our community. In an effort to bring back live performing arts to our community, we researched how to help vaccination efforts among audiences and performers so that we can all return safely to these spaces. The primary questions that we will address are: how do vaccines function generally, and how was the COVID-19 vaccine developed specifically; what is the psychological reasoning behind the reluctance to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and what methods can we use to relay information to vaccine-hesitant individuals as well as performers, crew, and audience members in performing arts venues; and in what ways was the performing arts community affected by the pandemic. The goal of our research is to create a conversation guide for decision makers at performing arts venues who want to implement vaccine mandates, but find themselves facing pushback from employees and audience members.

Event Schedule

**April 21
6:05 P.M.**

COVID-19's Impact on the Risk Perception of People with Opioid Use Disorders

Presenters

Caroline Armknecht
Corinne Battistelli
Owen Mendes

Mentor

Dr. Jeff Rudski

COVID-19 had a profound impact on our nation as a whole, with everyone being affected in one way or another. We know however that certain populations were more significantly affected due to inequalities in our society. Accordingly, our project focuses on the pandemic's effect on a population that faces neglect and stigma at the best of times, people who have had an Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). This population was profoundly affected by the isolation necessitated by quarantine, with a large increase in the number of deaths and relapses. We intend to focus on the way in which people with a previous OUD perceive risk during the pandemic, seeking to understand how they attempted to balance the impact of isolation with the necessity to maintain a support network important in their recovery.

Event Schedule

**April 21
6:40 P.M.**

COVID-19 & Elementary Education in the Lehigh Valley

Presenters

Natalie David
Rose Glantz
Lindsey Harris
Viet Li

Mentor

Dr. Mark Emerick

COVID-19 has both positively and negatively impacted the educational experience of students in the Lehigh Valley, as most classrooms became students' own homes. Not all students experienced the pandemic the same way, particularly as children from low-income families are more likely to attend public schools that lack the resources to support teachers' efforts to provide high-quality online instruction (Diliberti & Kaufman, 2020). Additionally, black and Hispanic students were less likely to attend in-person instruction during the 2020-2021 school year (Camp & Zamarro 2021). In this project, we will examine elementary schools in the Lehigh Valley to understand their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspectives of teachers, district administrators, and parents. Our focus will be on the Allentown School District, the Parkland School District, and the Northern Lehigh School District. These three districts were chosen because they represent a diverse range of demographics and socioeconomic backgrounds. In our report, we provide comprehensive survey results surrounding opinions of pandemic responses and interviews underscoring personal experiences. By bringing the results from these three districts together, we hope to help inform specific support for teachers and young students by examining community, district, and school-level factors. The COVID-19 pandemic will have ramifications for students and educators for years to come. We hope that through constructive collaboration between parents, educators, and administrators we will be able to support the well-being of the Lehigh Valley community and the outcomes of its students.



Notes





Notes





Dana Class of 2022

Caroline Armknecht
Marielle Avola
Danielle Barrett
Corinne Battistelli
Katherine Behling
Frances Bixby
Rebekka Broyles
Natalie David
Elizabeth Gershater
Rose Glantz
Lindsey Harris
Brandon Herbst
Hallie Hoffman
Shivani Iyer
Viet Le
Ara Ludwig
Owen Mendes
Jennifer Moretti
Victoria Retterholt
Celeste Samson
Eliana Schuster
Kevan Shah
Jonah Silverman
Alexandra Whittington
Christina Xu