This year, we’re thrilled to have thirteen graduate/Ph.D. students and nine undergraduate students from across UT Austin’s campus engage in policy-relevant research at the Strauss Center as Brumley Next Generation Fellows and Scholars. Our students hail from across the globe, and illustrate our dedication to interdisciplinary thinking and learning. We sincerely thank Jon and Rebecca Brumley for making this a reality for these promising students.

Robert M. Chesney
Strauss Center Director

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Meet Our Sponsors

JON AND REBECCA BRUMLEY

The Brumley Next Generation Fellows and Scholars programs are made possible due to the generous support of Jon and Rebecca Brumley of Fort Worth, Texas.

JON BRUMLEY

Mr. Brumley has had a distinguished career in the energy business. After earning a BBA from The University of Texas at Austin in 1961 and an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, he has served in leadership positions at a number of successful oil and gas companies. Throughout his tenure in the energy sector he has listed eight oil and gas companies, of which he founded six, on the New York Stock Exchange. He co-founded XTO Energy, which established Cross Timbers Royalty Trust, after working almost twenty years in various positions, including President, at Southland Royalty Company. He served as Chairman and CEO of Mesa Petroleum until it merged with Parker & Parsley to form Pioneer Natural Resources Company. Mr. Brumley served as Chairman of Pioneer until co-founding Encore Acquisition Company and Encore Acquisition Partners with his son, Jon S. Brumley. He is currently Chairman and CEO of Bounty Investments.

Mr. Brumley’s most recent accomplishments include a Distinguished Alumnus Award from the University of Texas at Austin, induction into the Petroleum Hall of Fame and, with his son, recognition as Forbes magazine’s 2005 “Entrepreneur of the Year”. Due to his commitment to public education, Governor Mark White appointed him Chairman of the Texas State Board of Education. In addition to education, Mr. Brumley has been involved in a multitude of philanthropic endeavors; most importantly, improving resources at children’s hospitals in Texas.

REBECCA BRUMLEY

Rebecca Brumley is an alumna of the University of Texas at Austin with a master’s degree and received a bachelor’s degree from Baylor University. Throughout her career she has been a leader and advocate for children and youth in education, children’s protective services and the juvenile justice system. She has served as superintendent of the Waco State Home, a Texas Youth Commission facility, vice-chairman of the State Board of Education, vice-chairman of the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards, the United Way of Texas Executive Board, vice-chairman of Paul Quinn College Board of Trustees and the Texas Health and Human Services Coordinating Council.

In 1991, Rebecca Brumley and her husband established the Red Oak Foundation in Fort Worth. She serves as its executive director. The foundation encourages reading to young children through programs in non-profit agencies and pediatric clinics and provides scholarships to prospective teachers. Currently Red Oak Books has given over 585,000 new, hardcover books to disadvantaged families.
The Brumley Next Generation Fellows program at the Strauss Center provides research training and mentorship opportunities to exceptional undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin. Involving students in international affairs early in their career is an important part of the Strauss Center’s mission to prepare the next generation of leaders to help develop solutions to the most pressing public policy challenges.

**GRADUATE STUDENTS: NEXT GENERATION FELLOWS**

Now in its fifth year, the Strauss Center’s Brumley Next Generation Graduate Fellows program is an exciting opportunity open to graduate and Ph.D. students from any program at UT who share our interest in international affairs and who wish to participate more directly in the intellectual life of the Strauss Center.

This Fellowship involves three key components:

- Fellows are paired with a Distinguished Scholar at the Strauss Center to provide mentorship and help guide the Fellows as they conduct research relevant to their degree. This research culminates in a final research project which could be a scholarly article, data set, presentation, etc.

- Maintain a deep level of engagement with the Strauss Center throughout the year, attending conferences and events. Each Fellow is given an opportunity to select an individual from the world of policy or academia, whom they view as an important figure in their prospective field, for a public talk that is then hosted by that student.

- Attend and participate in the Strauss Center’s monthly Colloquia, during which Fellows have the opportunity to discuss both substantive issues and career development in a private setting with visiting guest speakers.

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: NEXT GENERATION SCHOLARS**

Launched in 2010, the Next Generation Scholars (NGS) program’s goal is to provide new research and mentorship opportunities for promising UT undergraduate students interested in national security and law. This program now also includes a focus on civic engagement, expanding the reach of the program by engaging students on a wider range of local, national, and international policy issues. The NGS program this year is being headed up by Dr. Michael Mosser and Dr. Stephanie Holmsten.

This one-year program has two requirements:

- Students take a 3-credit research training and professional development course in the fall semester. This course is designed to introduce students to policy work, including basic skills in policy research, analysis, and writing. Training includes designing research strategies and proposals, conducting policy analysis, writing resumes and statements of purpose, crafting op-eds and blog posts, and planning for next steps in their career development.

- NGS students work closely in the spring semester with the program’s faculty on a collaborative policy research project to further enhance their analytical abilities.
MOHAMED ABUFALGHA

Hometown: Misrata, Libya
Dream job: Libyan Foreign Affairs Ministry
Fun fact: Worked as an organizer for the National Front Party in Libya’s 2012 general elections

Mohamed Abufalgha is entering the second year of his master’s degree program at the LBJ School of Public Affairs. In the Global Policy Studies program, he focuses on conflict studies and diplomacy. Mohamed received his B.S. in Aerospace Engineering, and as an undergraduate he worked as a research assistant studying issues related to Syrian and Palestinian refugees in the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe. Mohamed is interested in religious and ideological movements across the MENA region.

OTITOALEKE “LEKE” AKINOLA

Hometown: Otan Ayegbaju, Nigeria
Dream job: Technology R&D for social change
Fun fact: Once worked/aspired to be a chess grandmaster

Ottioaleke (Leke) Akinola is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering. Leke received his B.S. in Electronic and Computer Engineering in Nigeria and has experience in solid state electronics, computer networking and security, telecommunications, embedded systems, robotics, and image processing. Presently, he is working on synthesizing new 2-dimensional magnetic materials for electronic applications and developing nanomagnetic devices for neuromorphic computing architecture. Leke’s research interests include physically unclonable functions with magnetic tunnel junctions and how international cybersecurity and intellectual property (IP) laws affects engineering design decisions.
MEAGAN BENNETT

Major: Master of Global Policy Studies, LBJ School of Public Affairs
Program: Intelligence Studies Project
Mentor: Alan Kessler

Hometown: Doylestown, Pennsylvania
Dream job: US Ambassador to Beirut
Fun fact: Climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro

Meagan Bennett is a third year dual-degree masters student in Global Policy Studies at the LBJ School of Public Affairs and Middle Eastern Studies in the Dual Language track for Arabic and Persian. Her research examines the intersection of intelligence, policy, and diplomacy, focused on national security, information warfare, creative insurgency, and strategic communications. In the summer of 2019, she was an intern with the State Department in the Office of Iranian Affairs at the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Previously, she worked as a federal and private contractor in the Middle East for several years. Meagan is a veteran of the U.S. Army where she served as an Arabic linguist in Military Intelligence including tours in the Middle East.

NATHAN BUMAGNY

Major: Master of Global Policy Studies, LBJ School of Public Affairs
Program: Intelligence Studies Project
Mentor: Steve Slick

Hometown: Sao Paulo, Brazil
Dream job: Foreign Service Officer
Fun fact: Has a blue heeler named Kila

Nathan Bumagny is a Master of Global Policy Studies candidate and Chancellor’s Scholar at the LBJ School of Public Affairs. His research interests include the Middle East, North Africa, and religious extremism. As a Graduate Archer Fellow, Nathan spent the summer in Washington, DC interning at the American Enterprise Institute’s Critical Threats Project. Prior to this, Nathan spent thirteen months living in Morocco as a Boren Scholar. He is a combat veteran and served in the Army National Guard for seven years, completing a tour in Afghanistan in 2012. Nathan is passionate about public service and hopes to contribute to US foreign policy upon graduating in 2020.
**Fei Guo**

**Major:** Ph.D. candidate, History Department  
**Program:** Understanding China  
**Mentor:** Scott Wolford

Fei Guo is a third-year Ph.D. student specializing in the history of modern China. Fei is interested in state power and development and his current research focuses on China in the early 1950s. Upon completion of his doctoral studies, Fei plans to be a professional academic and hopes to continue to bridge the gap between academic research and public policy.

**Claire Huitt**

**Major:** J.D. candidate, School of Law; Master of Global Policy Studies, LBJ School of Public Affairs  
**Program:** National Security Law  
**Mentor:** Derek Jinks

Claire Huitt is a third-year dual degree student with the University of Texas School of Law and the LBJ School of Public Affairs, pursuing her J.D. and M.A. in Global Policy Studies. She specializes in Security, Law, and Diplomacy and holds a Graduate Portfolio in Security Studies from the Clements Center for National Security. For the past two years, Claire worked as a Graduate Student Associate with the Strauss Center. She has also worked as an intern for the Department of State at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, the Department of Justice in the Office of International Affairs, and the Texas House of Representatives. Upon completion of her studies, Claire intends to practice law and hopes to make a career in government practice, ideally at the federal level utilizing her expertise in foreign policy and national security.
Matthew Preisser is a second year dual-degree student at the LBJ School of Public Affairs and the Cockrell School of Engineering. He received a B.Eng in Biosystems Engineering with a concentration in ecology as well as minors in Sustainability Studies and German from Auburn University. His research interests include the application of technology and applied sciences to benefit at-risk communities impacted by climate change and extreme weather events. In conjunction with Brumley, Matthew will be conducting research as a National Science Foundation Fellow on the uses of satellite imagery in disaster preparedness in Southern Asia. Upon graduation, Matthew will pursue work in international humanitarian aid with an emphasis on disaster preparedness or water security.

Sam Lee is a second-year Master of Global Policy student, where he specializes in human security and migration. In 2011, he earned dual bachelor’s degrees in business administration and Spanish from the University of Southern Mississippi. He then spent the next seven years working in various non-profits around the world before deciding to pivot away from direct service and move toward more policy-oriented solutions. He recently completed an internship at the Texas Legislature with the Office of State Representative César Blanco, where he worked on legislation relating to human trafficking and the 2020 census. Post-graduation, Sam plans to get involved in one of the intergovernmental regional organizations focused on human security and promoting deeper integration within the Americas.

Matthew Preisser is a second year dual-degree student at the LBJ School of Public Affairs and the Cockrell School of Engineering. He received a B.Eng in Biosystems Engineering with a concentration in ecology as well as minors in Sustainability Studies and German from Auburn University. His research interests include the application of technology and applied sciences to benefit at-risk communities impacted by climate change and extreme weather events. In conjunction with Brumley, Matthew will be conducting research as a National Science Foundation Fellow on the uses of satellite imagery in disaster preparedness in Southern Asia. Upon graduation, Matthew will pursue work in international humanitarian aid with an emphasis on disaster preparedness or water security.
Laura Quaglia is a third-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research interests include national security policymaking and agenda-setting from a comparative perspective, specifically the reform in the U.S. intelligence community after 9/11 and on the diffusion of national security policies from the U.S. to the G20 countries. Prior to joining the Brumley Fellowship, she served as a graduate research fellow with the Policy Agendas Project. Laura received her B.A. in International Relations and her M.A in International Strategic Studies from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) in Brazil. Upon completing her Ph.D., she plans to hold an academic position and maintain strong ties to public service.

Sarah Propst is a second-year law student at the University of Texas School of Law. She received her Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering from UT Austin. Prior to law school, Sarah worked as a senior scientist at Merck & Co. researching and developing novel biologic and vaccine therapies. Sarah is particularly interested in the intersection of law and technology. She will be researching potential engineering and legal approaches to space debris and traffic management.

Laura Quaglia

- Major: Ph.D. candidate, Department of Government
- Program: Terrorism and Counterterrorism
- Mentor: Paul Pope
- Hometown: Porto Alegre, Brazil
- Dream job: Academia (at the beach)
- Fun fact: Has bookshelves memorized and can tell if a book has moved within seconds

Sarah Propst

- Major: J.D. candidate, School of Law
- Program: Space Security and Safety
- Mentor: Moriba Jah
- Hometown: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Dream job: U.S. Senator or pastry chef
- Fun fact: Once went skydiving on Friday the 13th
Ari Tolany is entering the final year of her master’s program in Middle Eastern Studies, where she currently studies Persian. Her research focuses on intersections of gender, law, and the state in Iran, South, and Central Asia and her thesis examines how reforms to marriage law in India in the twentieth century shaped political parties and identities. Upon completion of her degree, Ari hopes to work for a non-profit outside the United States before earning her doctorate.

Olimpia Montserrat Valdivia Ramírez is a second-year Ph.D. student at the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies program. She holds a B.A. in Social Anthropology, and a M.A. in Asian and African Studies from El Colegio de México. Her broad areas of study are youth and violence, migration, and refugees. Currently, she is developing a transnational and qualitative dissertation research project regarding the experiences of Central American adolescents who have backgrounds as gang members as they leave their home countries and traverse the increasingly arcane asylum process through Mexico. The goal of this project is to analyze how those minors experience structural violence in their home countries, how their gang affiliation and an environment of generalized violence negatively affects their human rights, and which causes them to migrate in search of protection.
WILLY VASQUEZ

Major: Ph.D. candidate, Cockrell School of Engineering
Program: Cybersecurity
Mentor: Bobby Chesney

Willy Vasquez is entering the third year of his Ph.D. program in Electrical and Computer Engineering. His research is at the intersection of cryptography and systems security, designing provably secure systems based on advanced cryptographic primitives. Upon completion of his Ph.D., he plans to pursue a position in academia and transition his research into a startup.

Hometown: Mesquite, Texas
Dream job: Cryptographer
Fun fact: Is an avid whistler

BRUMLEY NEXT GENERATION SCHOLARS

JAY ANAND

Major(s): Accounting; Plan II Honors; History
Hometown: Plano, Texas
Dream job: High School Principal
Fun fact: Helped put out a fire in Normandy, France

Jay Anand is a fourth-year student majoring in Accounting, Plan II, and History. His work experience has primarily consisted of team-based projects, creating new initiatives, and helping Austin communities. His interest in volunteering led to him co-founding The Language Campaign, a nonprofit that pairs UT students with English as Second Language students in Austin to facilitate language exchange and mentorship. On campus, he is involved with the Texas Blazers, a men's service organization, and Consult Your Community, an organization that allows college students to use their skills to help local organizations. Jay is looking forward to the Brumley Next Generation Scholars program to research the experiences of Mexican and Latin American adolescents in the United States. After graduation, he plans to complete a graduate degree in Education Policy or Non-Profit Management and pursue a career in education equity.
AUDREY BALLIETTE

Audrey Balliette is a third-year student studying Plan II, Middle Eastern Studies, and Arabic via UT’s Flagship Program. Audrey’s interest in public policy and international relations developed through her experiences working with refugees both locally in Austin and abroad in Athens, Greece during the Syrian refugee crisis. Throughout her undergraduate studies, she has volunteered as a mentor to a middle school refugee student and has served as a student leader in Texas 4000 for Cancer. After graduation, Audrey plans to complete a Capstone year abroad in Meknes, Morocco, and later to pursue a joint J.D./M.A. in international relations. Her ultimate goal is to work in the field of immigration policy and humanitarian law, and she hopes to use her experience as a Brumley Next-Gen Scholar to help equip her to achieve these goals.

LUIS GARCIA

Luis Garcia is a third-year student pursuing degrees in International Relations & Global Studies, Government, and Economics, along with a minor in Business. At UT Austin, Luis is involved with the Hispanic Business Student Association and serves as the Community Liaison for the Central American Student Association. He also participated in the Austin City Hall Fellowship, where alongside his cohort he developed the foundation for a campus-based, community-serving Language Lab to help improve language accessibility in the city of Austin. Luis has previously worked at the River City Youth Foundation as a mentor and tutor to the youth of Dove Springs. Luis enjoys and finds purpose in working with underprivileged youth and attempting to advance their educational aspirations. Luis has also interned at the Equal Justice Center, a non-profit law firm in Austin. Upon graduation, Luis plans to attend law school and clerk for a federal court. His career interests lie within the fields surrounding law, policy, and international diplomacy. He hopes to use his time as a Brumley Next Gen Scholar to further research and explore policy solutions at the intersection of international migration and development in Latin America.
PARTH GUPTA

Parth Gupta is a senior at UT Austin studying Computational Engineering and Plan II Honors with a minor in Government. During his time at UT Austin, he has fostered an interest in public policy and national security, particularly related to intelligence and cyber security. His professional experiences have furthered his fascination with these subjects. From 2018-19, Parth was an Undergraduate Fellow with the Clements Center for National Security. He has previously interned with a congressional campaign and a Texas state representative. During the Spring 2020 semester, Parth will participate in the Archer Fellowship in Washington, D.C. Beyond national security, Parth has enjoyed a breadth of experiences through UT Austin. As a recipient of the inaugural President’s Award for Global Learning, Parth traveled to Tbilisi, Georgia in the summer of 2019 to conduct maternal healthcare research. Post-graduation, Parth hopes to pursue a career in government and national security.

ASHA JAIN

Asha Jain is currently a sophomore at the University of Texas at Austin, pursuing a major in Aerospace Engineering, Space Track, and two certificates, one in Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship and the other in Computational Engineering. In the spring of 2019, during her study abroad at Ecole Centrale Paris, Asha conducted research on planetary space law and its application to regulating space debris formation around other planets. She hopes to publish her research, as a student article, in the Journal of Space Law in the coming months. On campus, Asha works in a research lab engaged in humanoid robotics and is investigating robot navigation in crowds for her engineering honors thesis. Asha is a member of the Tau Beta Engineering Honors Society, and often volunteers with the group at Feed My People or Clean Shoal Creek events. In addition to world cultures and travel, Asha is passionate about innovation, space exploration, and how international policy shapes the two. Asha plans to attend graduate school in a dual masters/JD program to earn an upper degree in Aerospace Engineering and Law.
**PAIGE JOHNSON**

Paige Johnson is a rising senior studying International Relations and Global Studies with a specialization in International Security and Latin American Studies. Paige has had the opportunity to work with the research organization Innovations for Peace and Development (IPD). With IPD, Paige works as a research affiliate and co-leader for the Latin American Audits team, where she and her colleagues utilize their translation skills and investigate corruption throughout Latin America. Sharing her passion for the Spanish language and bilingualism, Paige serves as the Outreach Coordinator for The Language Campaign. In her efforts to support the refugee and immigrant community, Paige has also worked as the Education and Outreach Intern for The Refugee and Immigrant Center for Legal and Educational Services and serves as the Development Coordinator for the Liberal Arts Refugee Alliance on campus. Her experience studying abroad in Queretaro, Mexico afforded her the opportunity to broaden her understanding of US/Mexico migration as she interned with the Centro de Apoyo Marista al Migrante (The Marista Migrant Support Center). In the future, Paige hopes to work with the Organization of American States and has considered pursuing a legal career.

**SHYAM MADHANI**

Shyam Madhani is a rising sophomore at UT Austin where he is studying in the Plan II Honors program. In addition to majoring in Plan II, Shyam is expected to graduate with a B.S. in Communication and Leadership as well as a certificate in Environment and Sustainability. In the summer of 2018, Shyam interned with the Plano Mayor, Harry LaRosiliere. He has also served as a marketing intern at technology training company, Award Solutions. Shyam is passionate about decreasing education inequality as well as mitigating climate change, and after his undergraduate studies he hopes to aide policy makers in order to make these goals a reality. In his free time, Shyam is active in many activities such as PlanTutoring, the UT Concert Chorale, the Campus Environmental Center, as well as going to the gym with friends.
LIAM VERSES

Liam Verses is a rising junior in both the Environmental Engineering and Plan II Honors programs. He is also pursuing a certificate in Core Texts and Ideas. Liam is a member of the Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society and has been named a Distinguished College Scholar in both the College of Liberal Arts and Cockrell School of Engineering. Prior to his freshman year, Liam worked as a staff writer for the American Conservation Coalition and the Conservatives for Environmental Reform PAC, both of which push for bipartisan involvement in environmental reform. Liam has worked at The Daily Texan as an opinion columnist and associate editor of opinion. Liam has also worked on the Tax Policy staff of the House Ways and Means Committee in Washington, DC, where he analyzed the solvency of a federal pension program and prepared findings for both Ways and Means and the Senate Finance Committee. Liam plans to pursue a Master’s in Public Administration and Master’s in Engineering, ideally in Environmental Science and Policy and Earth Resources Engineering. Ultimately, Liam would like to work at the nexus of environmental policy and national security, specifically relating to global water stresses and water scarcity.

ROSALEEN XIONG

Rosaleen Xiong is a rising junior pursuing a degree in Computer Science and a certificate in Digital Arts and Media. Her primary academic and career interest is in applying her technical skills to her passion for service, particularly in the areas of civic engagement and the environment. After college, she plans to pursue a career in policy research or non-profit work using her knowledge of data science and programming.