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**2022**

**ANNUAL REPORT**



**WILLIAM & MARY**

**SOCIAL SCIENCE  
RESEARCH METHODS CENTER**

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# 01. MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS

To say the least, the last few years have been interesting, but the SSRMC has adapted to the changes and challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic began, we have continued the semestral Omnibus Project, reaching more than 1,000 participants. We've also hosted online events and developed the first course in the Methods Mastery Series. This Annual Report highlights some of our most recent endeavors.

As the needs of social science faculty and students at the university continue to evolve in response to changes in the broader world, we will, too, but our core mission will remain the same: to support the endeavors of faculty and students working together on collaborative research. We're proud of what we have accomplished since the SSRMC was founded in August 2014.

In the years ahead, we will continue to advance our plans to further support the innovative and interdisciplinary social science research being done by faculty and students. We encourage you to check out our webpage at [ssrmc.wm.edu](http://ssrmc.wm.edu) to learn about the SSRMC's latest events.

**Marcus Holmes & Jaime Settle**  
**Co-Directors, SSRMC**



# 02. COMMENT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

In early 2020, my sister told me she planned to read *A Tale of Two Cities*. Many people, myself included, have not read this tome, but collectively, we are familiar with its first line: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” This famous introduction characterizes what many of us experienced beginning in 2020: life slowed down (a change I appreciated), but it was also unnervingly unpredictable.

In Fall 2020, the SSRMC was fully remote, and I, joining the team as a doctoral student in the School of Education and the SSRMC's Director of Operations, adapted with them. The Omnibus, the SSRMC's semestral survey, shifted to fully-online engagement, and student participation remained strong. In Fall 2020, we also partnered with the University of Georgia to expand our reach.

I began organizing and updating the SSRMC's processes and records, laying the groundwork for the SSRMC's future after the pandemic. We created an alumni database, updated the website, and launched a Digital Archive for student work. I also archived the resources the SSRMC had produced since its founding.

Despite the pandemic, we have been productive here at the SSRMC, and I am proud of where we are going. This report highlights some of our achievements over the past two years, focusing on new initiatives, and most importantly, how the SSRMC prepares the students it serves to excel in their endeavors by using the analytical and data analysis skills they developed during their time with us.

**Rachel Smith**  
**Director of Operations**



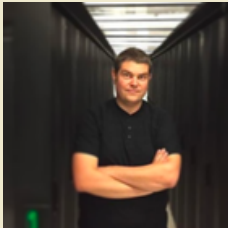
# 03. FACULTY AFFILIATES



**Mackenzie Israel-Trummel**  
Department of Government



**Paul Manna**  
Department of Government



**Dan Runfola**  
Department of Applied Science



**Maurits van der Veen**  
Department of Government

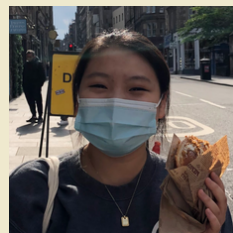
# 04. STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM



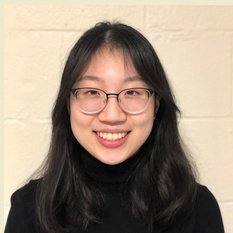
**Rachel Smith**  
Director of Operations



**Aaraj Vij**  
Technical Director



**Claudia Chen**  
Science Writer



**Jessica Liu**  
Omnibus Director



**Vera Choo**  
Methods Mastery Series Coordinator



**Salley Rowe**  
Outreach Coordinator

# 05. Faculty Feature: Dr. Kelebogile Zvobgo

by Jessica Liu



**Dr. Kelebogile Zvobgo**

Professor Kelebogile Zvobgo, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Government at William & Mary, began her work at W&M in the Fall of 2019. Professor Zvobgo received her B.A. in International Relations and French Language & Literature from Pomona College in 2014. Later, she received her PhD at the University of Southern California (USC). Her research focuses on human rights, transitional justice, and international law and courts. Transitional justice involves acknowledging past human rights abuses, providing redress, and taking measures to prevent repetition.

Professor Zvobgo’s research interests on international justice are rooted in her undergraduate days, specifically during her study abroad experience in Paris, France. At the Institute of Political Studies in Paris (Sciences Po), Professor Zvobgo situated her interest in transitional justice within the broad field of human rights.

Over time, her research began to focus on the role of commissions, which are non-judicial, non-retributive transitional justice measures that are implemented to gather evidence from witnesses, victims, and perpetrators about political violence. Commissions are used to construct a comprehensive narrative of the past and provide an authoritative national history that is fact-based, and to prevent past tragedies from reoccurring. These bodies also provide a range of policy recommendations, such as information disclosure, reparations, judicial reforms, and legal reforms.

Professor Zvobgo's undergraduate senior thesis was based on the research she began in France, focusing on the role of perpetrators at truth commissions and how the design of these commissions can facilitate or hinder their participation. "The idea is to construct a comprehensive narrative on the past so that you can have an authoritative national history that is fact-based." This focus pivoted her broader research and interests in transitional justice.

At W&M, Professor Zvobgo founded the International Justice Lab (IJL), which is based at the Global Research Institute. IJL has allowed students to work side-by-side with Professor Zvobgo. Students have published academic papers in peer-reviewed journals and published articles in mainstream outlets like *Foreign Policy Magazine* and *The Washington Post*. Professor Zvobgo wanted to introduce a new and innovative research field that W&M students could explore within the Global Research Institute.

"In the Fall of 2019, I wanted to create opportunities for students to engage in research with me and on research on topics that ... were not part of the focus of other labs at the Global Research Institute," said Professor Zvobgo.



The pandemic shifted how IJL members engage. However, Professor Zvobgo said that the transition from in-person to online meetings was seamless, with weekly meetings conducted online in the spring of 2020 and the 2020-2021 academic year. In-person meetings resumed last fall. The lab outlines plans and discusses individual progress on research projects and other individual tasks. Although the online setting can inhibit the human connections the lab facilitated, working over Zoom opened many avenues for research and created a broader network for student research opportunities that were not limited to geographical location.

“My co-author [Daniel Posthumus, a student working at the IJL] was based in Japan. It was six in the morning for him when we would meet at 5 pm here in Eastern Time,” said Professor Zvobgo. “Had we not been using remote technologies, we potentially might not have been able to work together. We were able to have students based in Williamsburg, or who were zooming in from home, outside of Williamsburg, or half a world away.”

Currently, she is completing her book, *Governing Truths: NGOs and the Politics of Transitional Justice*, using data collected with IJL fellows and, previously, students at the University of Southern California’s Security and Political Economy (SPEC) Lab. She hopes that in the following years, she and her student researchers will be able to travel to conferences to present their research together, similar to what Professor Zvobgo previously did with students in the SPEC Lab. Additionally, Professor Zvobgo plans to publish more research within the IJL, and chase more intriguing and vital questions revolving around transitional justice and human rights.

# 06. Methods Mastery Series: Reaching Students Beyond the SSRMC

by Rachel Smith



**Vera Choo**

In Fall 2021, Jaime Settle, SSRMC Co-Director, and Vera Choo, a William & Mary alumnus, partnered to produce the Methods Mastery Series (MMS). Choo is an American Studies master's student and a Junior Data Analyst for AidData's Policy Analysis Unit.

The MMS is a series on R, which is an open-source programming language used for statistical analysis. It's often a substitute for subscription-based statistical analysis platforms like SPSS. Settle and Choo decided to produce the MMS because resources for learning R at W&M are limited.

**UPDATES**

Several years ago, Settle recorded lectures on R, but she knew it was time to update the content and make it more accessible. Choo, who had worked with Settle at the Social Networks and Political Psychology (SNaPP) Lab, was thinking about ways to offer more R courses to W&M students. She approached Settle with an idea for expanding the SSRMC's reach. The MMS was born.

In Fall 2021, Settle and Choo partnered to create the MMS curriculum, craft the syllabus, and record lectures. Then, they trialed the MMS with SNaPP Lab members. In Spring 2022, Settle and Choo used the MSM series to launch GOV 390: Using R for Data Science, a course that includes students the SSRMC traditionally serves and others, such as biology, kinesiology, psychology, who want to learn R.

Students watch a pre-recorded lecture before each class. In class, Choo reviews key concepts, and students ask questions about concepts that confused them and work on problem sets. There are 32 students in the course.

Choo, who plans to be a professor, says she has enjoyed developing the course and teaching it. The process has helped her develop her pedagogy.

"I'm learning how to teach," says Choo. "I'm learning how to take feedback. I'm figuring out what works and what doesn't. I'm learning how to explain concepts to students in a way they will understand. My personal strategies for learning may not work for everyone else."

Ultimately, Settle and Choo hope that the MMS will serve as a free data analysis resource for a wide audience. Currently, the lectures are housed on Learn Worlds, which is a platform hosted by the W&M Studio for Teaching & Learning Innovation.

# 07. Broadening the SSRMC's Academic Reach Via Its Digital Archive

by Jessica Liu



**Aaraj Vij**

The SSRMC helps students develop their research methods and data analysis skills in the social sciences. Student members of the SSRMC's affiliated research labs produce excellent research, but often, it's challenging to publish research as an undergraduate student.

One step the SSRMC has taken to archive student research and make it accessible to the public is overseen by the SSRMC Technical Director, Aaraj Vij, who developed the SSRMC's Digital Archive.

Vij first joined the SSRMC through the SSRMC's Political Psychology and International Relations (PPIR) Lab, directed by Professor Marcus Holmes. Later, Vij became the SSRMC's Technical Director and is responsible for managing the SSRMC's webpage.

Since Vij joined the SSRMC, he has focused on building and maintaining the tools that support the SSRMC's mission in developing undergraduate students' skills in social science research. In addition to his tasks as the Technical Director, Vij works with the SSRMC leadership team to keep the SSRMC's website up-to-date with research method training modules, student opportunities, interviews, and podcasts.

Additionally, Vij is developing the Digital Archive. The Digital Archive is designed to uphold the SSRMC's mission of disseminating political and social science resources to undergraduate students, and serving as a hub for the research students and faculty affiliated with the SSRMC produce. With higher education learning and resources facing an unprecedented shift to online platforms, the establishment of the Digital Archive will become a valuable tool in providing supplementary resources to developing and promoting undergraduate political and social science research.

The Digital Archive will function like other databases, but its primary focus will be political and social science research for undergraduate students. Users will be able to search using keywords and categories to find research manuscripts. The SSRMC aims to curate a cohesive and accessible resource for undergraduate students and its broader audience.

"While students in groups like the Political Psychology and International Relations Lab and the Social Networks and Political Psychology Lab conduct amazing research, it can be difficult to publish as an undergraduate student," says Vij.

"We wanted to build a platform that allows students to both share their own work and read their peers'."

Vij is currently working on a new feature for the Digital Archive: the ability to upload reports from the Social Networks and Political Psychology (SNaPP) and PPIR labs. Once each lab report is submitted to the Digital Archive, it will go through the SSRMC's editing processes before a finalized product is entered into the system.

If you are interested in the process of uploading your research and/or the status of the Digital Archive, please subscribe to the SSRMC email network by emailing [ssrmc@wm.edu](mailto:ssrmc@wm.edu). You can also find the Digital Archive at the SSRMC website.

# 08. Preparing Student Researchers for the Workforce

by Rachel Smith

Claudia Chen, a senior at William & Mary majoring in Government and minoring in Psychology, has held a variety of roles at the SSRMC since she joined the Social Networks and Political Psychology (SNaPP) Lab in Spring 2020 as a political rhetoric undergraduate research assistant.

Since then, Chen has continued with the SNaPP Lab and is now part of a team studying data analysis. Chen's involvement with the SSRMC also includes the Omnibus Project. In Spring 2021, Chen fielded an original study on the relationship between social media activism and offline political participation. She wanted to determine if social media is a tool for increasing political engagement among young people.

Additionally, Chen serves as the Omnibus Student Director for the 2021-2022 academic year, and is responsible for coordinating the compilation and distribution of the Omnibus.



**Claudia Chen**

What has Chen gleaned from the variety of roles and experiences she has had at the SSRMC? Combined, Chen says that the knowledge and skills she has developed as a member of the SSRMC community have helped her develop as a student, an academic researcher, and a budding data analyst. And, the skills she has developed via the SSRMC are intersecting as she enters the job market.

One of the primary skills Chen developed through the SNaPP lab was mastery of R, an open-source programming language used for statistical analysis.

"When I was interviewing for a job as a paralegal, they asked if I knew how to use Excel," Chen says. "I said, 'I can use R to conduct data analysis.'"

"I've realized that a lot of people in my age group don't know how to do data analysis. It will be a great skill to bring with me when I leave William & Mary." The firm offered Chen the job, and she accepted.

In her interview, the firm also asked Claudia about how she manages detailed projects. She told them about the Omnibus Project. In Fall 2021, about 600 students completed the survey. To run the Omnibus Project, she reviewed a student research proposal, built the survey, and coordinated with faculty members and students to ensure that the project ran seamlessly and the students who completed the survey received credit.

During her job search, Chen realized that the SSRMC provides an excellent alumni community. She communicated with graduates who are using the skills they developed at the SSRMC, and they provided Chen with tips on how to market her skills to potential employers.



Chen speaks highly of the scholarly community she found in the SSRMC. “In SNaPP Lab, we share interesting articles we find with each other. It’s really fun to talk about what we’re interested in and to learn from each other,” she says. “It’s important to collaborate as members of the same community.”

The SSRMC has provided Chen with a strong research community in which she has expanded her research and data analysis skills, learned to collaborate with others, and gained skills she can apply to future employment and education.

Chen plans to work with the firm for at least two years and is considering law school.



## Contact Us

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