

Fall 2023 Cohort Directory



Nathnael Alazar

Nathnael is a second-year student at Columbia Law School. He received his B.A. from the University of Chicago in 2022. In college, Nathnael helped immigrants secure visas, petitioned UChicago's administration to divert police funding to mental health services, and helped lead his high school's renaming from Robert E. Lee to John Lewis. At Columbia, he explored affirmative action on the Frederick Douglass Moot Court and worked on police abuse and employment cases at Jenner & Block and Microsoft. Nathnael wants to tackle the school-to-prison pipeline and make schools more equitable.



Elizabeth Alfonso

Elizabeth is a third-year student at the University of Maryland, Francis King Carey School of Law. After receiving her B.S. from Boston University, Elizabeth worked in the restaurant industry as a server, bartender, manager, and beverage program director. During law school, Elizabeth has focused on workers' rights and education law. As a first-generation American, Elizabeth is passionate about reforming the education system to serve students from all backgrounds.



Sewit Beraki

UC Berkeley School of Law



Adelaida Brown

Addy is a third-year student at UC Irvine School of Law. She received her B.A. from Cal State Fullerton and worked in business management before attending law school. While in law school, she has focused on public interest, including special education law, school discipline, and education policy. After graduation, she plans to continue to work on juvenile discipline and educational equity issues in Los Angeles.



Alexandrea Chima

Alexandrea is a third-year student at Columbia Law School. She earned a B.A. in political science from UCLA in 2019. After graduating from UCLA, she worked as a special education teacher in Lynwood, California, teaching 7th grade math and science. During law school, Alexandria has served as social chair for the Black Law Student Association and worked with the Paralegal Pathways Initiative. Alexandria is passionate about ensuring that every student has access to quality education.



James Clinton Francis

James is in his last year pursuing degrees at both Columbia Law School and the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. His coursework covers agricultural and food systems, bankruptcy, comparative legal systems, private international law, and urban real estate economics. Previously, James spent nearly a decade analyzing sovereign debt and commodities at Eurasia Group and leading product lines at Cargill and Kraft Heinz. He holds a B.A. from Columbia University.



Gabriella Cory

Gabriella is a second-year student at Columbia Law School. After receiving her B.A. in psychology and politics from University of California Santa Cruz, she became a substitute teacher for the San Francisco Unified School District. During law school, she has focused on legislation and public policy, specifically around education and housing. Having studied developmental psychology, she understands the impact that a child's school environment has on their development and life outcome. She is interested in using public education policy to give every child the opportunity to live a good quality of life.



Selin Deldag

Selin is a third-year student at Columbia Law School. She holds a B.A. in English literature from the University of Chicago. During her undergraduate studies, she worked as a teaching assistant for Chicago Public Schools. Throughout law school, Selin has focused on immigration and education law. She is passionate about improving public education systems with a goal of achieving equity.



Kyra M. DeTone

Kyra is a third-year student at Columbia Law School. After receiving her B.A. from Union College, she joined the team at Saga Education, a nonprofit organization focused on tutoring low-income public school students. Kyra worked with Saga for five years, building out their grants and advancement department and collaborating with school districts on program contracts. During law school, Kyra has explored her commitment to public interest law through courses and internships addressing social policy, abolition, emotional intelligence in legal careers, and direct services. As a member of CPRL, she is excited to join this commitment with her experience in the public education space and her interest in the law.



Romanda Dobson

Romanda is a third-year student at NYU School of Law. She graduated from Rice University with a B.A. in economics and French studies. During her time at Rice, she taught English to rising ninth graders for two summers with Breakthrough Houston. She completed a law practicum with the Texas Center for Justice and Equity where she researched the effects of school policing on graduation rates and performance in high schools across Texas. Romanda is passionate about learning what she can do to remedy the effects of educational inequalities.



Dominique Dukes

Dominique Dukes is pursuing an M.P.A. at NYU Wagner and holds a B.A. in sociology from Columbia. She is interested in strengthening education policies, especially for marginalized groups. For six years, she researched postsecondary education policies at MDRC, collaborating with colleges to assess student success programs. Previously an education policy analyst for New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, she now works as a grad fellow in the NYC Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity. Her focus remains enhancing government services for New Yorkers, using research to drive change.



Luisa Gomez

Luisa is pursuing her J.D. at Duke University. She holds a B.A. in psychology and Spanish from University of California, Los Angeles. Before graduate school, she joined Teach for America and taught high school Spanish for two years in Los Angeles. During this time, she earned an M.A. in urban education with a concentration in policy and administration. Luisa is looking forward to finding ways to strengthen the education system through CPRL.



KD Harbeck

KD is a third-year student at UC Berkeley Law. He received his B.A. from NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Study, where he concentrated on educational policy and adolescent development. KD then went to Hong Kong on a Fulbright Fellowship, but this opportunity was cut short by the democratic protests and pandemic. KD is passionate about improving cross-cultural dynamics in the classroom and beyond.



Daniella Henry

Ella is a third-year student at University of California Gould School of Law. Ella holds a B.A. in mathematical economics and political theory from Scripps College. After college, she worked at the RAND Corporation. Ella is passionate about using their background in data analysis to address school finance and resource access issues for underfunded schools and districts.



Haley Henscheid

Haley Henscheid is pursuing an M.A. in education and social policy at NYU. Following her studies in international business at the University of Iowa, she spent years organizing and leading educational trips for high school students around the globe. As an enrolled member of the Omaha Tribe, she advocates for Indigenous rights and racial equity. She previously worked for her tribal college providing technical assistance to Native American entrepreneurs. Haley is committed to fostering educational opportunities that uplift Native youth and empower Indigenous communities.



Imade Iyamu

Columbia Business School



Scott Johnson

Scott is a Bloomberg Fellow in NYU Wagner's Master of Public Administration program. He holds an M.A. in teaching from the Relay Graduate School of Education and a B.S. from Santa Clara University. For six years, he worked in schools as a teacher, curriculum writer, and PLC lead. Before teaching, he was a member of the supply chain analytics team at Levi's, acting as a technical lead on projects in Belgium, Poland, and Turkey. Leveraging his varied experience, Scott hopes to develop policy and processes that ensure all students thrive.



Lana James Kalfas

Lana is a second-year student at Columbia School of International and Public Affairs pursuing a Master's in Public Administration concentrating in urban and social policy. She is a recent graduate from Barnard College, where she received her B.A. in educational studies. Lana has served as a tutor and coordinator for youth-serving nonprofit organizations in NYC and North Carolina, and conducts academic research surrounding the racialization of immigrant youth in American schools. She is passionate about supporting educational reforms which target the roots of race-, class-, and gender-based inequities in schools.



Delancey King

Delancey is a second-year Master's student in the Education Policy & Social Analysis department at Teachers College, Columbia University. After receiving a B.A. in English and psychology from Amherst College, Delancey spent five years at an education technology and publishing company. In her role as a DEI content specialist, Delancey supported the creation of culturally responsive materials within the context of America's shifting sociopolitical landscape. She is approaching education policy through a sociological lens to better understand the social, political, and economic factors that mediate relationships across the educational ecosystem.



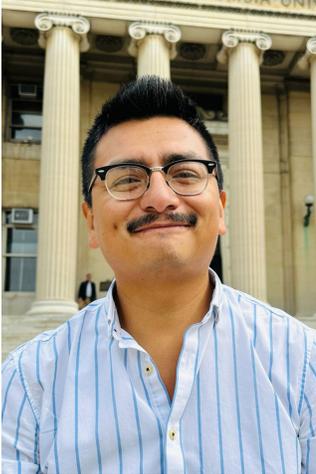
Shira Kogan

Shira is pursuing her Masters in Public Administration at NYU Wagner with a public policy specialization. She is passionate about shaping a world in which young people of all backgrounds and identities can reach their potential. This goal sets the stage for her educational and professional path: studying history and literature at Harvard College, working as a nonprofit relationship manager at LinkedIn, and leading the corporate partnerships team at The Trevor Project, a nonprofit working to end suicide among LGBTQ youth.



Emefa Kumaza

Emefa is a second-year Master's student studying International Education Policy and Management at Vanderbilt University. She earned a B.A. in English and theatre from the University of Ghana. Her passion for education and development began when she joined Lead for Ghana, formerly Teach for Ghana, as a Teaching Fellow in an underserved community. She enjoys working with young people. She is passionate about educational equity and currently runs a community-led social enterprise that through various initiatives is expanding educational opportunities to children in rural Ghana.



Jose La Rosa Villacorta

José is a second year Ph.D. student in international and comparative education at Teachers College, Columbia University. He holds a Master's in international education policy from Harvard University and a Master's in public policy from the University of Cambridge. Originally from Peru, he is a policymaker with eight years of experience working for the Ministry of Education of Peru, where he designed and implemented educational policies with a focus on introducing legislation to support teachers. His research examines how teachers are experiencing large scale policy reforms in Latin America.



Askhari Little

Askhari is a third-year student at Howard University School of Law. Askhari received her B.A. in education with a minor in international studies from Spelman College. Upon receiving her B.A., Askhari served as a learning experience designer at African Leadership University in Kigali, Rwanda. Afterwards, she taught 9th grade global history at Capital Preparatory Charter School in Harlem. Askhari is passionate about education, global citizenship, and technology law, and hopes to evoke systemic changes in each of these sectors with an equity focus.



Bennett Lunn

Columbia Law School



Claire Ma

Claire is a second-year student at Columbia Law School. She received a B.F.A. in film and television from NYU Tisch, and worked as a screenwriter during her gap year. In the pursuit of increasing access to educational opportunities, she founded the first public library in MaWangXiang, China, that now serves multiple under-resourced schools in the region. In law school, Claire has focused on diversity and inclusion initiatives and continues to be passionate about educational equity for students from marginalized communities.



Carrie Mannino

Carrie is a Master's student in education policy at Teachers College, Columbia University, specializing in education law. She received a B.A. in English with a certificate in Education studies from Yale University. Before pursuing graduate studies, she worked as a paralegal at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP, and as a tutor in her hometown of Pittsburgh, PA. She currently works as a research assistant at the Center for Educational Equity, and previously worked at Scholastic in their education solutions department. She is passionate about educational equity and student rights.



Elaine Miao

Elaine is a second-year student at NYU Law. She graduated from UCLA in 2019 with a major in political science and minor in public health. She taught high school special education in south Brooklyn for three years before returning to graduate school. During law school, Elaine has focused on child and education law through her participation in NYU's Suspension Representation Project and is currently interning at a Title IX advocacy firm. She hopes to continue advocating for educational justice and equity after graduation.



Rebecca Nelson

Rebecca is a third-year student at UCLA School of Law specializing in critical race studies and public interest law and policy. She earned her undergraduate degree in peace and justice studies from Tufts University and her Master's degree in social justice and education at University College London. After graduate school, she taught middle school, ran an elementary literacy intervention program, and advised non-traditional adult learners in an education technology start-up. As a law student, Rebecca has focused on juvenile defense, impact litigation, higher education racial equity auditing, and sexuality education.



My Nguyen

My Nguyen is pursuing her Master's in Public Administration at NYU Wagner specializing in public policy analysis. She holds a B.A. in biology from the University of Washington and a Master's in secondary science teaching from the Relay Graduate School of Education. She has taught biology and physics to 9th, 10th, and 11th-graders for two years in Brooklyn, NY. She has focused on honing her technical skills in her graduate studies, including data analysis, data visualization, and econometrics methods. She aspires to be an education consultant, bridging the gap between students and their families and higher education opportunities.



Michael Orlando

Michael Orlando is a third-year law student at Columbia Law School. After receiving his B.S.A. from the University of Texas, he taught high school chemistry in Fort Worth, Texas. During his time as a teacher, Michael was a school organizing fellow for Leadership for Educational Equity, organizing community members to address inequities at the school level. He also served as a fellow for RESULTS, a grassroots advocacy organization that pushes for policies and legislation to address poverty. During law school, Michael has focused on the intersection of criminal justice, education, and poverty.



Ashleigh Rogers

Ashleigh Rogers is an MBA candidate at Rice University, focusing on strategy. With a B.S. in mechanical engineering from the University of Notre Dame, she brings a unique blend of technical and strategic skills. Passionate about equitable education, Ashleigh's experience as an English teacher drives her mission to improve the U.S. education system through the CPRL program. She aspires to be a strategy consultant post-MBA, using her expertise to guide organizations toward greater inclusivity. Ashleigh's dedication to bridging education and business highlights her potential to drive meaningful change in both spaces.



Kevin Thompson

Kevin is a second-year student at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law. While completing his B.S. in secondary education at Kansas State University, he completed a student teaching internship in a 6th grade social studies class. After graduating, Kevin substitute taught in schools in the Kansas City metro area and completed a legal internship at a health information company. During law school, Kevin has participated in several DEI affinity organizations, maintaining active involvement in First Generation Professionals and Asian Pacific-American Law Students Association, and serves on the executive board of the Black Law Students Association.



Angel Wamae

Angel is a third-year law student at Howard University School of Law. She holds a B.A. from Boston University where she majored in political science and minored in African American studies. During law school, Angel has focused on education law and intellectual property. She has a desire to use the legal system to improve educational outcomes for all children.



Yuting Wang

Yuting is a second-year master's student at NYU in education and social policy. She holds a B.A. in Chinese language and literature from Beijing Normal University. During her undergraduate studies, she worked as a program assistant at the International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education, where she has witnessed the imbalance of educational resources between regions and genders. This inspired Yuting to focus on the issue of educational inequality and seek solutions at the policy level to make change.



Penelope (Jiao) Wang

Jiao Wang is presently pursuing a master's degree in education and social policy at NYU. She has a B.A. in international business from Zhejiang International Studies University. In 2022, she showcased her research on the cross-cultural adjustment of Chinese international students at the NYU Student Affairs Conference. Her primary research focuses on censorship within educational contexts and educators' coping strategies. Jiao's aspiration centers around developing a more inclusive and progressive education system.



Bryanna Nicole Willis

Bryanna is a third-year student at Columbia Law School. After receiving a B.A. in English from Columbia College, and an M.A. in linguistics from the University of South Carolina, she briefly spent some time teaching in South Korea. While receiving her prior degrees, she spent extensive time teaching and working with various educational organizations. During law school, Bryanna has committed herself to making a difference through pro bono work in various fields, volunteering and working in animal welfare, gender and sexuality equality, police reform, and incarcerated person's rights advocacy.



Insia Zaidi

Insia Zaidi is a UC Berkeley Law JD candidate, active in the Womxn of Color Collective. She serves pro bono at Reentry Advocacy, Youth Advocacy, and FosterEd. Past internships include capital defense at the State Public Defender Office in Mississippi, and white collar criminal investigations at Ropes & Gray. Insia holds a B.A. in economics and psychology from NYU and earned her M.A. in education at Loyola Marymount while teaching math in Compton, CA, with Teach for America. She won "Rookie Teacher of the Year" and "Researcher of the Year." Insia also gained experience in sales and trading at UBS.