



SOCIAL IMPACT INITIATIVE
Turner Social Impact Society

Faculty Advisors and Research Topics – 2021/2022

- ***Understanding Opportunities for High School Educated Workers - Professor Bidwell, Management***
 - I am interested to understand more about the opportunities available to high school educated workers, with a particular focus on how employers think about opportunities for this group. Among the questions that I am interested in are:
 - How do employers think about when roles will require a college degree? When are they willing to make exceptions to recognize different kinds of skills and accomplishment?
 - What do career paths within organizations look like for high school educated workers? Which organizations have built extensive progression opportunities? What do they see as the advantages? Why have other organizations not done this?

- ***Investing in BIPOC Communities: Promises and Follow-Through - Professor Erickson, Finance***
 - Following the George Floyd murder last year, many companies announced commitments to investing in and/or supporting the BIPOC community. Let's take stock:
 - Which companies made the biggest commitments? What did they commit to do?
 - A year+ later, what has each done (i.e., how much has been deployed; what are the types of investments made; etc.)? Why?
 - A year+ later, what are the major "lessons learned" (if any) by each company?
 - What is the plan for each from here?
 - What could and should companies do differently to support BIPOC communities and advance racial equity and inclusion?

- ***Living wages: What Businesses Pay Living Wages, and What Helps Them to Do This? - Professor Hughes, Legal Studies & Business Ethics***
 - We will explore the ethics of wages. To understand better what businesses *can* do for their workers, it would help to know more about what businesses have done. For instance:
 - What companies have successfully arranged for all their employees to earn a living wage?
 - What companies have successfully arranged for all their workers, including contract workers as well as employees, to earn a living wage?
 - Many companies based in high-income countries sell products grown or manufactured in low- or middle-income countries. Some of these companies have made efforts to improve wages (and working conditions) in the farms and factories that supply their products. What are some examples of successful efforts? What hasn't worked?



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- *and more!*
- ***The Role of Corporate Governance in Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability - Professor Guay, Accounting***
 - It is hard for stakeholders to know what corporations are doing with respect to CSR/sustainability without adequate disclosure. As a result, there has been a big push toward more transparent CSR/sustainability disclosure, and much ink has been spilled regarding sensible frameworks for mandatory disclosure on this topic. Students will identify a CSR/sustainability issue that they are passionate about, and then conduct research on what corporations are currently disclosing on that issue, and what the students believe would be a sensible framework for mandatory or best practices in disclosure.
- ***Exploring Issues at the Intersection of Corporate Governance, Corporate Political Activity, Social Movements, and Legal Punishment of Corporate Wrongs – Professor McDonnell, Management***
 - Using large archives of collected data on corporate political activity, judicial campaign contributions, and legal cases students can examine the any of the questions below by collecting, coding and comparing data on outcomes over time:
 - What factors determine how harshly companies are punished for legal harms like employment discrimination?
 - How has #Black Lives Matter affected awards to plaintiffs in racial discrimination cases?
 - In states where judges run for office, do firms that contribute to judicial campaigns have better legal outcomes?
 - How will NASDAQ's decision to require disclosure of board diversity statistics and enhanced board diversity standards affect how listed boards look and perform?
- ***What Causes Crime? Exploring Public Disorder in Philadelphia - Professor Jensen, Statistics and Data Science***
 - Theorists have argued that public disorder (for example, littered streets, broken windows, abandoned buildings, and empty lots) can encourage crime. But, are those theories true? In this project, we will take a look at the data, evaluating the relationship between measures of disorder and criminal incidence throughout the city of Philadelphia.
 - Students can explore datasets and create quantitative measures of public disorder in the many different neighborhoods of Philadelphia. These explorations will build towards an evaluation of the association between measures of public disorder and



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crime incidence as well as real estate value. As a part of our analyses, we can also explore and integrate publicly available data on the demographic, economic and land use characteristics of neighborhoods in Philadelphia.

- **Implementation of ESG: How to Bridge the Gap Between Academic Research and the Challenges of Implementation? - Professor Petkoski, Senior Fellow, Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research**
 - This project will help integrate and strengthen students' academic skills by applying them in cross-functional ways to ESG related issues. Students will explore current ethical and legal challenges that business organizations and entrepreneurs face, such as defining the purpose of a business, determining how to incorporate global standards like the SDGs and ESG into a business strategy, and designing mechanisms to promote ethical behavior and combat systemic challenges such as corruption.
 - Suggested topics:
 - ESG Implementation Challenges: How to Align Corporate and Investors Perspectives?
 - The Missing E in ESG: What is the Business Case? Do we need to reimagine the Business Case?
 - Intrapreneurship/Entrepreneurship and Organization Innovation Culture for ESG
 - The Ignored and/or Ill-defined G in ESG: What are the Missing Governance Dimensions? Does G Include Ethics and Human Nature?
 - ESG Stakeholder Engagement: Innovative and Nontraditional Partnerships

- **Gun Violence Prevention - Professor Small, Statistics and Data Science**
 - The goal of this project would be to have a team work on a research question whose answer would inform gun violence prevention efforts. Two ideas are below
 - Addressing racial disparities in gun homicide risk: Substantial racial disparities exist for gun homicide deaths in the US: the 2003 to 2017 age-adjusted rate was 7.4 times higher for Black individuals than for White individuals. By linking the Gun Violence Archive data to the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) researchers could then study how much of the association between neighborhood racial composition and gun homicides can be explained by individual socioeconomic variables.
 - Evaluating a gun violence prevention program in Philadelphia: Philadelphia has awarded grants grassroots organizations working on gun violence prevention. The goal would be to choose one of these programs and develop and carry out a research design for assessing how effective the program is.



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- ***Blockchain and Cryptocurrency: Are They Really Advancing Financial Inclusion?* - Professor Werbach, Legal Studies & Business Ethics**
 - Financial inclusion is often identified as a benefit of blockchain and cryptocurrencies, because they remove the barriers of the existing banking system. However, the vast majority of activity in the crypto space involves speculative trading. And despite great fanfare, blockchain solutions for remittances and the developing world have had very limited success. It's far from clear that blockchain will actually promote financial inclusion, as opposed to opening up vulnerable populations to new forms of risk and exploitation.
 - Now a new set of blockchain-based developments, such as those in El Salvador and the Philippines, promise to realize the financial inclusion promise. The research project would be digging into what's actually happening, and trying to give an unbiased picture – not assuming (as most people do) that blockchain is either wonderful or terrible.