



TEXAS LBJ School

The University of Texas at Austin

Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs

Inaugural Class of Retired State Employee Association Fellows

Sarah Dodamead

Master of Public Affairs

(Candidate)



When Sarah began her undergraduate career at Florida State University, she decided to study physics and astrophysics with a minor in mathematics. Throughout her undergraduate degree, she spent the summers abroad as a fellow and as a researcher under grant funding to pursue research topics related to the social impacts of climate change. She then applied for and received the critical language scholarship in the summer of 2016 through the US Department of State. With the scholarship, she went to West Bengal, India

for three months and studied at the American Institute for Indic Studies to learn the Bengali language and study their culture. The following year in 2017, she received FSU's Idea Grant, which allowed her to travel to Bangladesh to work as a visiting researcher at the International Center for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD).

In her graduate studies, she has been lucky enough to tie together her passion for addressing climate change and human development by delving into real-world actionable solutions. Her graduate thesis work within the Webber Energy Group focuses on decarbonization policy pathways in Texas. Working within the powerful Texas economy and energy market space has been exciting and fulfilling. Her current research has made her realize how much of an impact she can have working within Texas policy. Innovation is born here. Her favorite instance of innovation she has ever been aware of is the restructuring of the wholesale power market that was born through policy here in Texas. She wishes to continue a meaningful career leveraging her technical skills in energy policy, locally, and globally between Texas and the outside world.

She is excited to take the research she has been doing in the Webber group on decarbonization policies to the legislative session this coming January to present our findings and hopefully have an impact. She hopes to work at an agency within Texas' energy market.

“Thank you for so much the support as I pursue my research and career goals within Texas' power sector.” - Sarah Dodamead



Bethany Offer
Master of Public Affairs
(Candidate)

Bethany Offer is a second-year student at the LBJ School currently seeking a Master of Public Affairs. Before coming to LBJ, Bethany completed her undergraduate degree in English and Government at UT Austin and had multiple internships in the Texas Legislature. Upon graduation from undergrad, she completed an

AmeriCorps service year in Austin with Literacy First, a program that does literacy intervention with K-2 students. These experiences solidified her interest in education equity and policy, and motivated her to attend the LBJ School.

After her time at LBJ, Bethany hopes to continue to uplift student voices and support Texas teachers. Ideally, this will manifest within organizations such as the Texas Education Agency or the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Thank you for your assistance in achieving these goals.



Molly Ellsworth
Master of Public Affairs
(Candidate)

Molly Ellsworth is getting her Masters of Public Affairs, focusing on environmental policy. Before attending the LBJ School, she spent three years working at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in the Air Quality Division. Molly's passion for environmental justice issues ultimately led her to continue her education. Her internship this summer at the Environmental Defense Fund allowed her to work with communities in Houston that are disproportionately impacted by air emissions. She hopes to continue working in environmental policy

after graduation and knows that Texas is the place to be to make a significant impact.

She is incredibly grateful for this opportunity and for your support as she continues her education.



Brenna Lyles
Master of Public Affairs
(Candidate)

Brenna Lyles is a second year Master of Public Affairs candidate at the LBJ School. Prior to entering graduate school, Brenna worked as a journalist for a regional newspaper covering state and local issues; she then transitioned into a role as an associate for a national consulting firm, where she provided policy guidance and technical assistance to states and cities across the country seeking to improve their response to homelessness. Brenna decided to pursue her Masters at the LBJ School to sharpen her public policy analysis and decision-making skills, while broadening her exposure to new policy arenas beyond the realm of housing and homelessness. She has also used her time at the LBJ School to better understand Texas's unique policy environment and the intricacies of state government, as well as the modern challenges facing our rapidly expanding state — which will inevitably require smart statewide policy to address.

Over the summer, Brenna was given the opportunity to further explore Texas government through a role with the Government Affairs Division at the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), where she engaged with various transportation and legislative issues. Her work for TxDOT included analyzing the effectiveness of various safety measures in reducing roadway collisions and fatalities and exploring impacts of recent state revenue shortfalls due to COVID-19 and recent volatility in oil markets on long-term state highway funding. The position not only provided a richer understanding of critical issues facing the state but further solidified her interest in a career in state government. Following graduate school, Brenna hopes to pursue a long-term career in government affairs for TxDOT or another state agency and one day hold a director-level position. Brenna is passionate about creating policy that ensures Texas is equipped for continued economic and population growth – from building a smart, sustainable statewide transportation system, to ensuring public safety for all Texans, to fostering a resilient, diverse workforce.

Brenna is honored to be recognized as a Retired State Employees Association (RSEA) Fellow and wishes to express her sincere gratitude to RSEA for their support.