

# THE ROSE REVIEW

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Spring 2025

**Kenneth P. Miller, J.D., Ph.D.**

At CMC, all research institutes undergo an external review about once per decade. The Rose Institute last went through this process in 2014 and now it's time for a fresh review.



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The exercise is valuable because it requires us to take a hard look at the Institute's strengths and weaknesses and to consider ways we can improve.

The review has several stages: an Institute Self-Study, a two-day campus visit by external reviewers, the reviewers' report, and the Institute's response to the report.

This spring, the Institute completed the first step: the Self-Study. Early in the year, we formed a Self-Study Task Force composed of senior staff and ten members of the Board of Governors (**Ryder Smith, Deborah Gonzalez, Jessica Witt, Sean Elsbernd, Eric Figueroa, Sue O'Bannon, Scott Ochoa, Sunil Rajaraman, Jacinth Sohi, and Darryl Wold**). Working with CMC's Associate Dean of Faculty **Andrew Schroeder**, this group developed a general plan for a Self-Study that would focus on the Rose Institute's community, research, public engagement, and resources/staffing.

Several key questions emerged for consideration:

- How can we maximize our research quality and the student learning experience?
- How should we order research priorities?
- How should we develop our polling program and data projects?
- How can we improve the visibility of the Rose Institute's work?
- How can we increase the Institute's financial resources?
- How can we best meet our professional staffing needs?

We sought input on these and related questions through surveys of the Board of Governors, current Rose students, and recent alumni. The Task Force also met twice over Zoom to discuss these topics in greater depth. Senior staff completed the Self-Study in mid-April.

Next, the External Review Committee will visit the campus on May 1 and 2. The committee members are **Christian Grose**, Professor of Political Science, International Relations, and Public Policy at USC and the Academic Director of the USC Schwarzenegger Institute; **Mark Baldassare**, Statewide Survey Director and former President of the Public Policy Institute of California; and **Jennifer Walsh**, Senior Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Chief Strategy Officer, Hawai'i Pacific University. While on campus, the committee will meet with Rose Institute staff, students, Board members, Faculty Advisors, and Research Affiliates, as



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# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

well as **President Chodosh, Dean Antecol**, and other members of the administration.

Based on their review of the Self-Study and their independent observations, the committee will produce a report that includes recommendations. The Institute staff will then respond to the report. Finally, senior staff will work with our Task Force convert insights from the review into a Rose Institute Strategic Plan for the coming years.

I'm grateful for our community's participation in this process, and I'm confident it will produce positive, long-term results.

As we've been engaged in the review process, a Rose Institute team led by Research Affiliate **Jessica Jin** has also collaborated with the CMC web development team led by **Helena Paulin** to design a new website for the Rose Institute. Notably, our website's name will change from [roseinstitute.org](http://roseinstitute.org) to [roseinstitute.cmc.edu](http://roseinstitute.cmc.edu). This change will align our website's domain name with the protocol followed by most other university-based research institutes and will improve our search engine optimization (SEO). Moreover, the new website's design will enhance the user experience by easing navigation and by presenting Rose Institute content in a more attractive, accessible way. We expect the new site will soon be ready for its launch.

As discussed in more detail in this issue, we've also been busy on the research front. This semester's highlights have included a housing policy report commissioned by The Olson Company titled *Building Back Better: Altadena's Recovery and Lessons from Santa Rosa*; a report titled *Mapping the Revolution in California's City Council Election Systems* and further research in this area; the Spring 2025 issue of the *Inland Empire Outlook*; our second Survey of California's city managers for the California City Management Foundation; research for the City of Ontario on affordable housing funds; further development of the Rose Institute DataHub and City Data Project; and various research projects for Rose Institute Faculty Advisors.

In mid-April, we also co-hosted with The Olson Company our third annual Housing Symposium, titled: *The Compounding Housing Crisis: Solutions for a Better Future*. The symposium featured a presentation by Rose RA **Jathan Pai '28** and discussions by prominent state and local officials and industry leaders who are struggling to solve one of the state's most vexing problems.

At Spring Break, the Institute marked a transition in Student Managers from **Ryan Lenney '25** and **George Ashford '25** to **Chad McElroy '26** and **Joan Hanson SC'26**. I want to thank Ryan and George for their outstanding leadership over the past year—and, indeed, during their four years at the Rose Institute. They have contributed to the Institute in many ways, from developing our expertise in housing policy to hosting ping pong tournaments in the student workroom. I'm also delighted with the new student management team and look forward to working closely with Chad and Joan over the coming year.

Finally, a note of farewell and best wishes to our twelve graduating seniors: **George Ashford, Audrey Donahue, Cary Dornier, Jack Gladson, Kat Jackson, Kat Lanzalotto, Ryan Lenney, Jemma Nazarali, Andrea Santillan, Noah Swanson, Nolan Windham, and Joseph Zhong**. I've enjoyed your class of Rosies and will miss you, but I'm eager to see the positive contributions you'll make in the years ahead.



# STUDENT MANAGERS' REPORT

As the new student managers for the 2025-2026 academic year, we are thrilled to build upon a strong legacy of research and institutional excellence and to lead the Rose Institute into the bright future ahead!

We would like to thank our predecessors, **Ryan Lenney** and **George Ashford**, for their fantastic tenure as student managers this past year. Ryan and George have left a profound impact on the Rose since joining as freshmen by both inspiring and leading many of the Rose's recent ventures into housing policy, as well as contributing their extensive leadership experience towards their roles as project managers, student managers, and community builders across the Institute. Additionally, we are so grateful to our senior staff team of **Dr. Ken Miller**, **Bipasa Nadon**, and **Marionette Moore** for continuing to lend their expertise and support.

This semester, the Rose has further expanded its institutional teams while continuing to explore new avenues for student research and engagement. Over the past semester, the Rose Data Team saw significant institutionalization under the direction of Data Director and Rose senior **Nolan Windham**. Notably, the team established a new Project Management role in the spring semester, and took on multiple internal projects alongside senior staff, including the creation of a forthcoming data repository for past and current Rose projects. In addition, a handful of students have begun working on projects initiated by their own interests, including projects on election administration and criminal justice. We are also excited to report that the Rose hosted its third annual Housing Symposium, in collaboration with The Olson Company, on April 9, 2025. Our housing projects have continued to grow over the past semester, and we are very proud to have continued contracts with both The Olson Company and the City of Ontario.

Turning to the future, we look forward to welcoming another unique, talented new hire class this fall. Our goal is to increase our outreach to as many potential applicants as possible from all 5Cs through traditional and novel advertising efforts. Expanding the Rose's media footprint is another important component of next year's agenda, as the Media Team is currently building upon the success of projects such as Video Voter and housing projects to find new and creative ways to share our research. Continuing the work of our predecessors, another priority is to further improve the organizational structures of other institutional teams. These teams play essential roles at the Rose and provide fantastic opportunities for student skill development. We will be focused on ensuring that they receive the support and modernization that they deserve. Lastly, we look forward to creating more opportunities for student-faculty engagement, and strengthening our vibrant student community here on the 4th floor of Kravis.

In closing, we would like to thank and congratulate all of our graduating seniors: **George, Audrey, Cary, Jack, KatJack, Katherine, Ryan L., Jemma, Andrea, Noah, Nolan, and Joseph**. They contributed so much to the Rose throughout their time here as research assistants, project managers, institutional team leaders, and student managers. We wish them all of the best in their future endeavors, and we are so grateful for their hard work and all they have done to continue to make the Rose such a welcoming, tight-knit community.



*Chad McElroy '25, Student Manager and  
Joan Hanson SCR'25, Associate Student Manager*

# 3RD ANNUAL HOUSING SYMPOSIUM

On April 9, 2025, the Rose Institute and The Olson Company co-hosted the 3rd Annual Housing Policy Symposium at the Marian Miner Cook Athenaeum. Rose Director **Ken Miller** welcomed the 103 attendees, led by the Honorable **Gray Davis**, former governor of California.

**Katrina Foley**, Vice Chair of the Orange County Board of Supervisors and Chair of the Orange County Housing Finance Trust, delivered the opening remarks.

Buena Park **Mayor Joyce Ahn** accepted this year's Governor Davis Housing Leadership Award.

The Rose Institute report on the lessons from Santa Rosa's recovery was presented by **Jathan Pai '28**. The study was commissioned by The Olson Company and supervised by **Jessica Jin '16**.

A panel discussion between Sonoma County Supervisor **James Gore** and **Kelly Seyarto**, State Senator and former Battalion Chief of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, was moderated by Governor Davis. They discussed the impact of the local wildfires on regional housing supply and affordability.

**Richard Green**, director of USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, presented a housing forecast.

A second panel took place during lunch entitled "Building Together - State and Local Collaboration to Accelerate Housing Production in California." The panel consisted of **Jason Elliott**, President of Versus Solutions and former Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor Gavin Newsom moderated a discussion with **Alicia Velasco**, Planning Director for the City of Cypress, **Ted White**, Deputy City Manager for the City of Anaheim, **Thomas Wong**, Councilmember of the City of Monterey Park, and **John Reekstin**, Executive Vice President for Community Development for The Olson Company.

**Scott Laurie**, President and CEO of The Olson Company, wrapped up the conference with key takeaways and an invitation to take a tour of the company's new property in Claremont.

Photos courtesy of Claremont McKenna College

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present

## The Compounding Housing Crisis: Solutions for a Better Future

With Guest Speakers/Panelists:

**GOV. GRAY DAVIS, (Ret.)**  
Moderator

**JAMES GORE**  
Sonoma County Supervisor

**KELLY SEYARTO**  
State Senator, 32nd District

**KATRINA FOLEY**  
Orange County Supervisor  
(Welcome Remarks)

**JASON ELLIOTT**  
President, Versus Solutions  
Former Deputy Chief of Staff  
to Gov. Gavin Newsom

**ALICIA VELASCO**  
Planning Director  
City of Cypress

**RICHARD GREEN**  
Lusk Chair in Real Estate  
(Economic Forecast)

**TED WHITE**  
Deputy City Manager  
City of Anaheim

**THOMAS WONG**  
Councilmember  
City of Monterey Park

**JOHN REEKSTIN**  
EVP, Community Devt.  
The Olson Company

**Wed., April 9, 2025**  
**9:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**MMC Athenaeum**  
**Claremont McKenna College**



Jathan Pai '28 with Governor Gray Davis



# 3RD ANNUAL HOUSING SYMPOSIUM



Scott Laurie, from left, Governor Gray Davis, Supervisor Katrina Foley, Steve Olson, and Richard Green get together for this photo op.



Director Miller welcoming attendees.



Supervisor Foley delivering her opening remarks.



Governor Davis presenting the Housing Leadership Award to Buena Park Mayor Joyce Ahn.



Governor Davis, from left, with Senator Seyarto and Supervisor Gore.



Scott Laurie wrapping up the symposium.

# SENIOR FAREWELLS

## Ryan Lenney

It's hard to describe everything that the Rose has meant to me over the past four years. As a freshman, it was a place to learn from the upperclassmen, nerd out about policy, and find my footing at CMC. As a sophomore, the Rose helped me make some of my closest friends and allowed me to start exploring topics and issues that I remain passionate about to this day. As a junior, serving as a project manager and then as Student Manager allowed me to develop my leadership skills and deepened my appreciation for the incredible community we've built at the Rose. Now, as a senior, I spend most of my days hanging around the workroom, getting to know the next generation of Rosies whom I know will continue to grow and improve our Institute. I am incredibly grateful to senior staff and all the Rosies I've met over the years for making this place feel like home, and I will always remember my fourth-floor family.

## Joseph Zhong

It's a strange feeling to say farewell, especially to the Rose Institute—which has been a space of support, friendship, and family to me over the past three years. I've met many incredibly brilliant, optimistic, energetic, and frankly incredible people at the Rose Institute, including many in my class. Shoutout to Ryan, George, Andrea, Audrey, Jack, Kat Jack, Kat L, Cary, Jemma, Noah, and Nolan; thank you for being a fantastic class and creating an incredible community. I've assisted in many incredible projects that shed light on critical issues, including TogetherSF's attempt to reform San Francisco's city structure to make the city better fulfill its mission of serving the people. Most of all, I've been transformed through my engagement with the Rose Institute, becoming a more engaged and informed citizen. Thanks to Professor Miller, Mrs. Nadon, and Marionette for creating an incredible environment for all of us to bond, discuss politics, and spearhead research initiatives. Here's to the next chapter!



Ryan and George at the Rose paintball event on November 8, 2024. Photo courtesy of Ryan Lenney '25.

## George Ashford

The Rose is the center of my CMC experience. As I wrap up my senior year, I can see clearer now than ever before that this Institute has given me opportunities for personal and academic growth that no other institution could. I have never encountered a more passionate and capable group of people than the Rosies, and the friends I have made among them will last me a lifetime. The discussions I have had over dinner at Walters and over games of ping pong up in the workroom could not have happened anywhere else. I am entering the workforce confident that the skills and network I have built here will allow me to make an impact on the issues I care about, and I know how lucky I am to be doing so. For that, and so much more, I have my Rose family to thank.

# SENIOR FAREWELLS

## Jemma Nazarali

I am so grateful for the opportunities and connections the Rose Institute has provided me during my time at CMC. I have been able to conduct research related to personal areas of interest, learn about a variety of issues related to state and local government, and work on projects that challenge and engage me as both a student and a member of the community. I have had the privilege of learning from professors, senior staff members, and my fellow Rosies about their unique areas of interest, and am so grateful to all the managers I have had for their deep knowledge and passion for the subject at hand. In particular, I want to thank Professor Miller, Mrs. Nadon, and Marionette for always supporting and encouraging us, and for taking the time to help us learn and grow. Finally, I am also so grateful for the student connections I have been able to make at the Rose. I am lucky to have been surrounded by so many intelligent and passionate people, and I wish everyone the best of luck in their remaining time at CMC and as they move into the world. I am sure all of you will go on to do amazing things!

## Audrey Donahue

I am immensely grateful for the four years I have spent at the Rose Institute. Being part of such an exceptional community has profoundly shaped my CMC experience, teaching me invaluable lessons in research, collaboration, and leadership. The friendships formed during discussions and collaborative projects have been some of the most rewarding and enduring parts of my college journey. The skills I have gained through the Rose have already served me immensely, and I am sure will continue to do so. I owe special thanks to Professor Miller, Mrs. Nadon, and Marionette, whose leadership of the Rose have made it the special place it is today. Additionally, I extend my gratitude to all my fellow research assistants whose support and mentorship have guided me along the way. As I move forward, the Rose Institute will always hold a special place in my heart.

## Nolan Windham

After four amazing years at the Rose Institute, it's time to say goodbye. I'll always treasure my time in the workroom and the lasting friendships I've made. I'm proud of what we've accomplished together: national polls, impactful research featured in the media, the creation of the Data Team, pushing our data science capabilities forward, and so much more.

A sincere thank you to my mentors, fellow researchers, professors, senior staff, the board, our peer institutions, and every supporter of the Rose.

As I move on to my next chapters, I look forward to cheering on the Rose—and Rosies everywhere—from afar. I can't wait to see what's next for us all. Until next time.

## Noah Swanson

The Rose Institute has played a central role in my time at CMC. No where else would an undergrad have the opportunity to conduct meaningful, substantive research and meet wonderfully interesting and important people. I can confidently say that the Rose Institute has well prepared me for a budding career in public service. To Senior Staff: I cannot thank you enough for all of the support and guidance you have given me over the past few years. I will always be grateful for letting me into the Rose and the community I've found here. To my fellow Rosies: I am so glad to have met all of you. From grinding out survey data to shooting each other with paintballs I have shared some unforgettable moments with these dear friends. Finally, to the Workroom: It's so hard to say goodbye. I'll always miss the view of the snow capped mountains and the ability to (literally) look down on the other institutes.

Thank you for the years - I hope to see you all again soon.



# SENIOR FAREWELLS

## Katherine Lanzalotto

Thank you so much to my fellow Rosie's and senior staff for making my time at the Rose so lovely! The workroom snacks got me through my years at CMC and I will use my knowledge from the Rose for years to come!

## Andrea Santillan-Galindo

I am incredibly grateful for the three years I've spent at the Rose Institute. As a first-generation college student, the Rose was more than just a place to work, it was a gateway into the world of meaningful research, public policy, and community impact. It gave me the chance to grow not only as a student, but as a collaborator, a communicator, and academic. The projects I've worked on and the people I've worked alongside have shaped my college experience in very profound ways. I'm especially thankful to Professor Miller, Mrs. Nadon, and Marionette for their unwavering support, mentorship, and belief in each of us. Your leadership created a space where I felt both challenged and supported where I could learn, stumble, and grow. I'm also deeply appreciative of my fellow research assistants, whose friendship, encouragement, and dedication made every project so meaningful. The Rose Institute has played a defining role in my time at CMC, and I carry with me not only the skills and lessons it taught me, but also a deep sense of gratitude for having been part of such a special community.

## Katherine Jackson

I have greatly enjoyed my four years as a Student Research Assistant. Rose has been a big part of my CMC experience and allowed me to make incredible connections with faculty and students in different years. Thank you to Rose's senior staff for guiding me across this journey and teaching me so much! I learned so many technical and soft skills that I know I will use throughout my career. I am very excited for

the next chapter, and I know that I will always look back at my experience at Rose with gratitude and fond memories. Thank you very much to everyone who has been part of my Rose family!

## Cary Dornier PZ

I am so thankful to the Rose Institute and the talented and kind people behind it for welcoming me into a community where I learned and grew as an individual and for playing a formative role in honing my interest in government and public service. By allowing me to support several projects over my three years, the Institute was instrumental in helping me build a broad knowledge of public policy so that I can tackle problems and handle projects across a wide range of issue areas. I also credit the Rose for providing a space for me to build out my passion for national security policy. The research I conducted for my New Hire Project on homeland security appropriations inspired me to apply for my first congressional internship which sparked my love for the Hill and the legislative process. I extend my deep gratitude and appreciation to Professor Miller, Mrs. Nadon, and Marionette for their kind guidance and for their steadfast support and encouragement even as my journey of intellectual and personal development saw me spend much time off-campus away from the Rose (first by interning in D.C. through the Washington Program and then subsequently studying abroad in Hong Kong). I'll always look back on my time here fondly as nurturing and deeply consequential and look forward to cheering on the Rose and its phenomenal contributions for many years to come.



# OFF-CAMPUS REFLECTIONS

## Sanskriti Kumar '26

I spent my fall semester in Rome, Italy primarily taking classes focused on international security and relations in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern regions. I enjoyed exploring the rich history of Rome as well as traveling across Europe. I really enjoyed a history class I took called “Rome as a Living Museum,” where I was able to visit many important historical sites and learn about their significance. I loved eating delicious food, exploring new places, and making lifelong friendships.



Photo courtesy of Sanskriti Kumar '26

## Cary Dornier PZ'25

I spent the Fall semester studying abroad in Hong Kong as an exchange student at Lingnan University where I was able to dive deep into East Asian geopolitics, U.S.-China great power competition, and other global security policy coursework with some fantastic professors. I made some lifelong friends and traveled to South Korea, Malaysia, and Cambodia. I'm so glad to have had the opportunity over these several months to get to know the city, culture, and people of Hong Kong and wrestle with the key issues facing the region.



Photo courtesy of  
Cary Dornier PZ'25

## David Taylor '26

I spent the fall semester studying Spanish in Córdoba, Spain with the Middlebury Language Schools program. While I was there, I had the chance to fully immerse myself in Spanish culture, taking classes in Spanish alongside the locals at the University of Córdoba, living in the heart of the city, and learning to live on my own! I also had the incredible opportunity to travel to seven different countries and fourteen different cities during my five months overseas. With getting to meet new people, see new places, master a language, and undergo immense personal growth, my time overseas was just about everything I could have asked for!



Photo courtesy of David Taylor '26



# OFF-CAMPUS REFLECTIONS

## Jada Cook '26

Fall semester, I had the privilege of interning with the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget in Washington, DC, at a pivotal moment in American politics. Working on legislative research surrounding the expiration of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and writing blogs for the organization allowed me to engage directly with policy issues that will shape the nation. I gained valuable insights by attending Capitol Hill hearings and helping to host informative budget policy sessions, experiences that deepened my understanding of fiscal responsibility and government ethics. Living in DC was incredible. I am excited to carry these experiences forward!



Photo courtesy of Jada Cook '26

## Kevin Bender '27

(Spring 2025) I studied at University College Cork in Ireland, where I took classes in literature, religion, history, and psychology. Beyond academics, I enjoyed exploring the country's stunning landscapes and rich history, visiting places like the Cliffs of Moher, the Aran Islands, Blarney Castle, and Kilkenny, to name a few. I have loved immersing myself in the new culture, cooking for myself, seeing historic sights, and being in the best city, Cork.



Photo courtesy of Kevin Bender '27

## Chad McElroy '26

In the fall of 2024, I served at the Office of Space Commerce as part of Claremont McKenna's Washington Program. The Office of Space Commerce, organized within NOAA and the Department of Commerce, serves to advance the interests of the commercial space industry through policy, regulation, and advocacy within the US Government interagency apparatus. Throughout the fall, I worked with OSC's administrative and communications teams, where I had the opportunity to organize various interagency and public meetings, research and prepare briefing memoranda for the Deputy Secretary of Commerce, write original content for OSC media channels, and attend various space industry symposiums and panels across the Washington DC. Highlights of my work included collaborating across the Department of Commerce to compile and edit the FY2024 Aeronautics and Space Report to the President, and attending a private rocket launch watch-party in Wallops, Virginia! Additionally, I attended the 75th Student Conference on US Affairs (SCUSA) hosted by the US Military Academy at West Point in October 2024, a three-day conference in which I was able to discuss the prospects of governing space and the lunar environment in an increasingly multipolar world. I had an amazing time engrossing myself within the small but incredibly tight-knit space community in Washington DC, and I cannot wait to return in the summer of 2025!



Photo courtesy of Chad McElroy '26

# FACULTY AFFILIATES SPOTLIGHT

**Michael Fortner** was installed as the Pamela B. Gann Associate Professor of Government and George R. Roberts Fellow by the CMC Board of Trustees on April 24, 2025. A member of CMC's Government Department since 2021, Professor Fortner's areas of expertise include American culture and politics, crime and criminal justice, history and public policy, public administration, race, social problems, and ethnicity. He has been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for his book, *Black Silent Majority: The Rockefeller Drug Laws and the Politics of Punishment*. He is a Faculty Advisor at the Rose Institute, where Rose students have the opportunity to work with him as research assistants. Professor Fortner also currently serves as the director of the Dreier Roundtable.



**Emily Pears '08**, Associate Professor of Government at CMC, was the featured speaker at the CMC Board of Trustees dinner on April 24, 2025. Professor Pears is a Rose Institute Faculty Advisor and was a Rose research assistant when she was a student. Her talk, "Coming Home to CMC," drew on her student experience and how it formed her work at her alma mater.





# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## Jessica Jin '16

*Interview by Olivia Frakt SC '27*

*Jessica Jin graduated from CMC in 2016 with a dual major in Studio Art and Government. She was a Capital Fellow immediately after graduating and then worked in the private sector for a number of years. She founded and now runs her own freelance graphic design business. She has been doing design work for the Rose Institute for a few years and recently began supervising Rose projects. Jessica lives with her husband in Utah.*

### **Was your plan always to become a graphic designer after graduating from CMC?**

No, it was not my plan. Graphic design was my hobby, and I initially did not view it as a part of my career path. The plan was actually to go to law school.

After graduating from CMC, I accepted a fellowship in the Assembly in Sacramento, which was a really good experience and a route I recommend if you're interested in working in California politics after graduation. The fellowship program was incredibly rewarding. I was basically paid to learn, and the Rose prepared me well for that role. Although I enjoyed my time in Sacramento, I was there during a large period of change and ultimately decided to leave. I was offered a position in operations management by another CMC alum, so I moved to Salt Lake for that role. Within six months of working there, I was asked to run the install team. It was really nice to be in a small organization because I could see the impact of my work. Only after working in politics and in operations management did I end up pursuing graphic design full-time.

### **How was the decision to become a freelance graphic designer made, and how do you approach continuing your career growth, especially when working independently?**

I first started freelancing to make extra money while backpacking in Europe. Once I started working in operations in Utah, I realized I was managing teams and working all the time while still trying to keep up with my freelance work. As my freelance contacts continued to reach out with more projects, I decided to leave the job and transition to remote freelance graphic design full-time.

Since then, I've worked with clients like Amazon, RapidSOS, Intel, and various other companies. I've contributed to pitches for major advertising agencies and worked on social good initiatives. I see myself as business- and operations-first, then creative. Effective communication is essential to me—being able to communicate visually is an important and powerful way to convey ideas.

When working independently, it's important to continue to challenge yourself. I've enjoyed all the hats I've worn, in part, because every role has been a new opportunity to learn.

### **What brought you back to working at CMC for the Rose Institute?**

Under Dr. Miller's guidance, the Rose Institute has been taking on more contract work, and he asked me to do the design work for the San Francisco Project in 2023. My first love, however, is policy work, and when he recently invited me to supervise projects for the Rose, I was more than happy to say yes. As rewarding as it is to successfully run and build my own business, the opportunity to think and talk about policy and work with students is something you don't find in the private sector.

While I enjoyed building my business, I needed a change of pace. Returning to the Rose offered me a space to think



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

critically. Working in an academic setting again has also allowed me to consider problems from multiple lenses, rather than the narrower perspectives I had been working with.

**During your semester as New Hire Manager, you overhauled the New Hire training program. The big change was that the students each choose a research project to apply the new skills that they are learning. That structure continues today largely in place. Can you speak on your vision for the project and the thought process behind its reworking?**

The New Hire Manager position was not my first choice. I initially wanted to be an RA or Student Manager in order to give back to the student community at CMC and the Rose. However, I quickly realized that the formal title had very little impact on whether or not I could achieve that goal. So, I set about building a program and a culture that I would have wanted to be a part of as a freshman.

I invited professors to come in and give new hires a sampling of what they could do at the Rose Institute. My goal was to show them the breadth of opportunities available and help them understand how to bring a project to life. I saw the Rose as a place that was willing to invest in me if I put in the time and knew what I wanted. My vision for the New Hire project was to create a structure where people could succeed.

**As a pretty recent CMC alum, what advice would you offer current students who are interested in freelancing or are just graduating from college and unsure of where to go?**

I'm 30 and have already tried three different career paths. I want to emphasize that you don't have to lock into one path early, despite the anxiety many people feel about it. You have plenty of time to explore different careers and pivot if you find something isn't the right fit—and that flexibility is a luxury in the U.S.

It's okay to try something, not like it, and move on. It's also okay to prioritize personal goals over professional ones. There's a lot of pressure to shape your life through the lens of work, but that's not the only way to find fulfillment. Be open to exploring and allow yourself the grace to change directions when needed.



Left: Utah backcountry skiing  
Above: Rose Disneyland Trip 2016

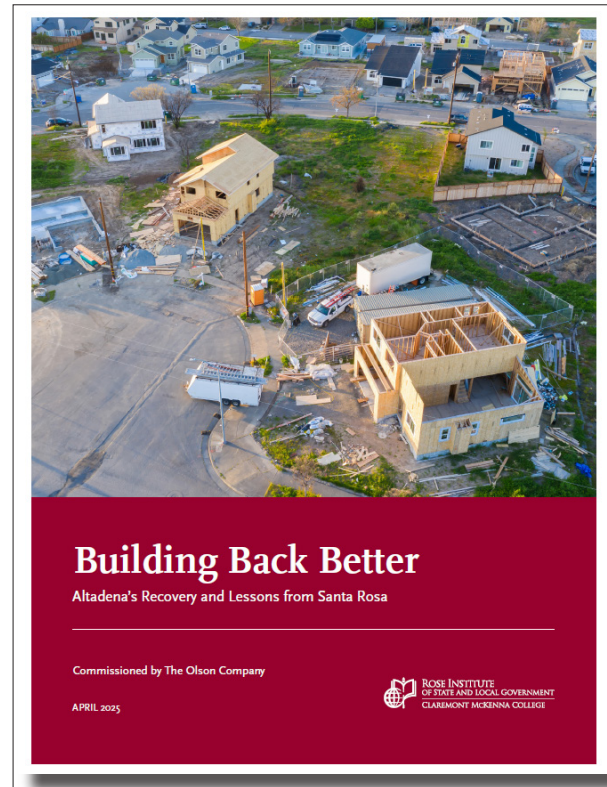
Photos courtesy of Jessica Jin'16

# PROJECT UPDATES

## Building Back Better: Altadena's Recovery and Lessons from Santa Rosa

The Olson Company commissioned the Rose Institute to conduct an in-depth analysis of wildfire recovery and its intersection with California housing policy, using Santa Rosa's response to the 2017 Tubbs Fire as a case study. Supervised by Rose Research Affiliate **Jessica Jin '16**, the team of Rose students who contributed to this study included **Alex Bishop '26**, **Stephanie Li PZ '28**, **Jathan Pai '28**, **Andrea Santillan '25**, and **Sam Yao '27**. The resulting report, *Building Back Better: Altadena's Recovery and Lessons from Santa Rosa*, evaluates how local governments can navigate the complex tradeoffs between accelerating housing production and mitigating wildfire risk.

The report focuses on three strategic approaches to post-fire reconstruction: like-for-like rebuilding, which streamlines permitting for replacement homes that match what was lost, managed retreat, which incentivizes relocation away from high-risk areas, and higher density in place, which allows for infill development and denser housing in safer areas. These strategies were developed in part by drawing on the example of Santa Rosa, a city in Northern California that lost over 3,000 homes during the 2017 Tubbs Fire. Within just three years, Santa Rosa had rebuilt more than 80% of the homes destroyed, a recovery widely recognized as a model of post-disaster planning and execution.



The report highlights key actions taken by Santa Rosa that contributed to its success, including the creation of a dedicated rebuilding office, the implementation of expedited permitting processes, and early coordination between city officials and utility providers to mitigate secondary hazards like water contamination. These lessons offer a blueprint for Altadena and other communities recovering from catastrophic wildfires. Altadena's response includes similar steps: the use of streamlined, like-for-like rebuilding permits and adoption of the West San Gabriel Valley Area Plan, which encourages denser development in lower-risk interior corridors while limiting rebuilding in the highest fire-hazard zones.

The report also situates Altadena's recovery within the broader context of California's housing crisis and its ambitious production goals. Despite numerous pro-housing laws passed over the past decade, most jurisdictions have struggled to meet mandated targets. The report concludes with policy recommendations aimed at improving the alignment between wildfire resilience and housing development, including updating hazard mapping, promoting infill housing in lower-risk areas, and revisiting permitting requirements in fire-prone regions.

# PROJECT UPDATES

These findings were presented at the 3rd Annual Housing Policy Symposium (The Compounding Housing Crisis: Solutions for a Better Future) where policymakers, housing experts, and local leaders gathered to explore the future of homebuilding in a fire-prone California. The symposium offered a space to discuss Altadena's recovery and helped shape a broader vision for building safer, more resilient housing across California.

## 2025 Survey of California City Managers

The Rose Institute is teaming up with the California City Management Foundation (CCMF), Tripepi Smith Talent Solutions, and the California Joint Powers Insurance Authority for a second time to conduct a statewide city manager survey. City managers, who act as chief executive officers for hundreds of cities across California, are among the most important local government officials. This survey aims to collect the demographic characteristics of this position. Survey topics include racial, gender, and age demographics, educational and occupational backgrounds, and the issues city managers see as some of the most important facing their cities.

California has embraced the council-manager form of municipal government more completely than the rest of the nation, with 97 percent of cities using it instead of a "strong mayor." The system dates back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when critics of municipal governments decried corruption in cities across the country and argued they should be redeemed through non-partisan, professional management. City managers are expected to possess a high degree of education and training and to adhere to a set of professional values, norms, ethical standards, and practices. In 1985, CCMF was founded in part to strengthen these desired professional norms and promote city management education.

The Rose Institute conducted the first survey in 2023 and received responses from 321 cities, for a response rate of 67%. The team supplemented missing data from various sources across the web to more accurately assess the state of the profession. This year's version intends to follow the format of the 2023 Survey and examine how the profession has shifted within the past two years.

This project's student team is composed of **Sanskriti Kumar '26**, **David Taylor '26**, **Kahani Malhotra '27**, **Olivia Frakt SC'27**, and **Rhiannon Worline '28**, and supervised by Research Affiliate **Jessica Jin '16**.



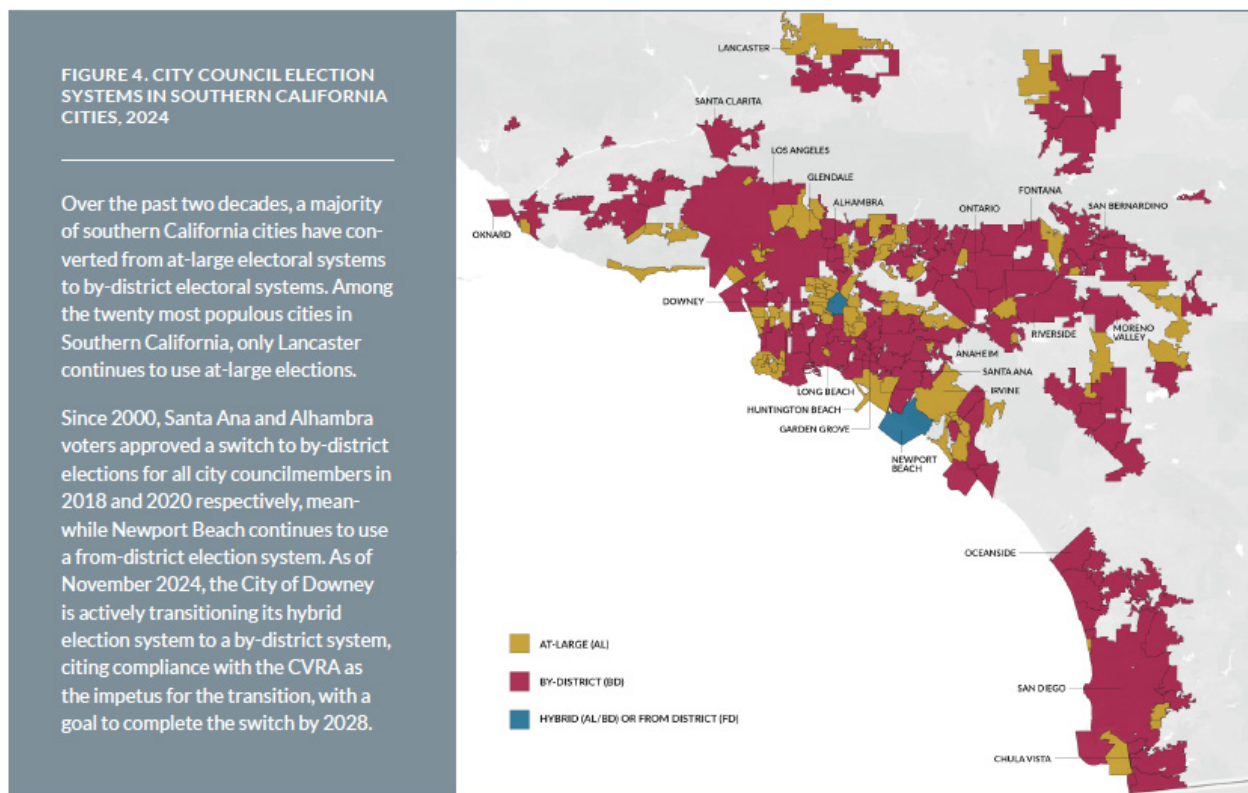


# PROJECT UPDATES

## Mapping the Revolution in California City Council Election Systems

The Rose Institute is extending its research on California's transition to district-based elections through the recent publication of the 2025 report, *Mapping the Revolution in California City Council Election Systems*. This report, which documents the shift of California cities from at-large to district-based electoral mechanisms, finds that larger cities have been more likely to adopt district-based systems. For instance, 90.9% of very large cities (population over 200,000) and 75.0% of large cities (population 75,001-200,000) now use district-based elections. In contrast, smaller cities have been slower to make the transition, with only 22.6% of cities with populations under 35,000 adopting the system. The report was co-authored by **Pieter van Wingerden '24** and **Aria Fafat '28**.

A new Rose student team including **Audrey Donahue '25**, **Andrew Cheung '28**, **Aria Fafat '28**, **Olivia Frakt SC'27**, and **Keith Maben '28**, and supervised by Research Affiliate **Justin Levitt '06**, is now delving deeper into the effects of this shift. The team is focusing on the impact of this transition on canceled and walk-on elections. It is also examining whether the shift to district-based systems has had an effect on incumbency advantage. This ongoing study will add a new layer of understanding to the broader trends identified in the previous report and help assess whether the shift to district-based elections has resulted in unintended consequences that might affect local political representation. The team's findings will provide valuable insights into the practical implications of this electoral change and contribute to the ongoing conversation about governance reforms across California's cities.



Source: *Mapping the Revolution in California City Council Election Systems* | Graphic: Jessica Jin '16



# PROJECT UPDATES

## Rose Institute DataHub | City Data Project

The Rose Institute Data Team has spent the spring semester designing a DataHub. Research Affiliate **Abhi Nemani '10** and Rose Faculty Advisor **Joseph Besette** are guiding a student team composed of **Nolan Windham '25**, **Ryan Shakiba '26**, **Maya Maranto HMC '26**, **Quinten Carney '26**, **Anuj Patel '27**, **Deborah Aguirre '28**, and **Arushi Goyal '28**.

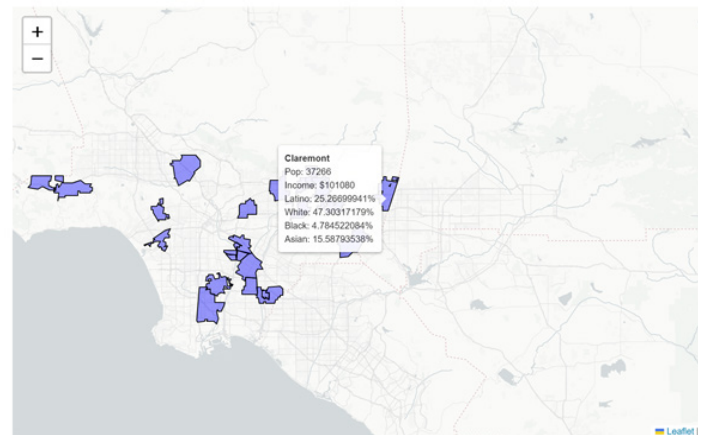
The DataHub is in the developmental stage. It seeks to leverage the Institute's long-standing expertise in state and local data collection and analysis, while developing our capacities in data science and data visualization. The project is designed to pull together numerous Rose Institute data projects and create a large publicly accessible repository of information on state and local government.

As part of the broader DataHub, we are developing the City Data Project, a new large-scale database that aggregates and presents city-level information regarding community demographics, voting, governance, fiscal health, economics, public safety, infrastructure, the environment, and more. We are presently limiting our scope to cities in four Southern California counties (LA, Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside). The City Data Project will emphasize accessibility and usability through interactive data visualizations, tools, and applications, while offering open access to researchers for further explorations.

This project builds on the type of data gathering and comparative analysis we have established for the Kosmont-Rose Institute Cost of Doing Business Surveys by expanding the number of metrics and adding innovative, interactive features.

### Interactive Map of Cities

Use the map below to explore demographic data by city. Hover over a city to view population, income, and racial/ethnic breakdowns.



Map created by Deborah Aguirre '28

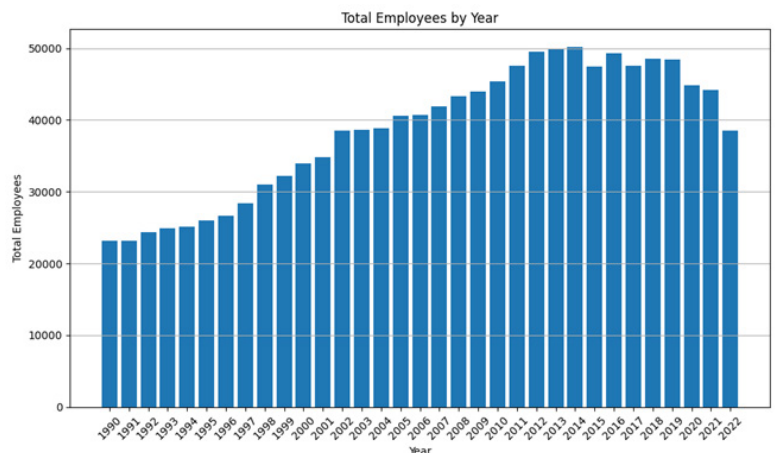
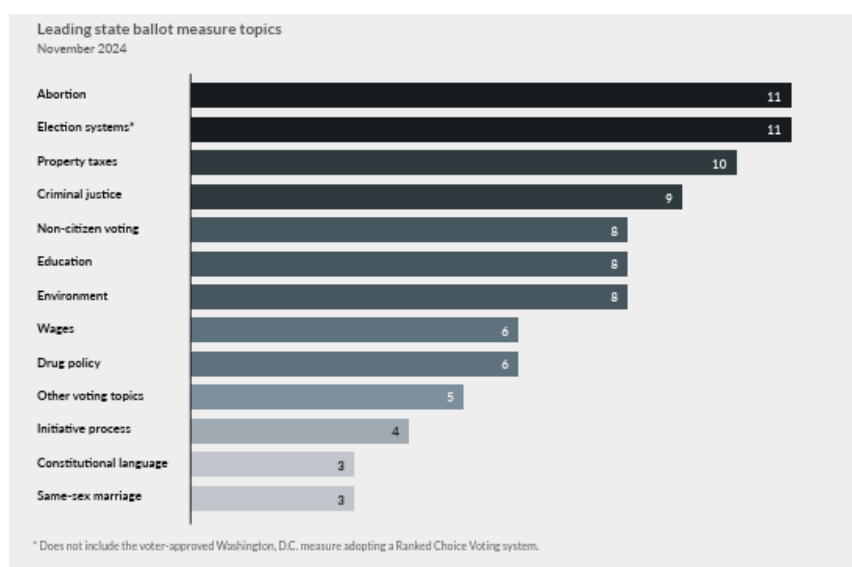
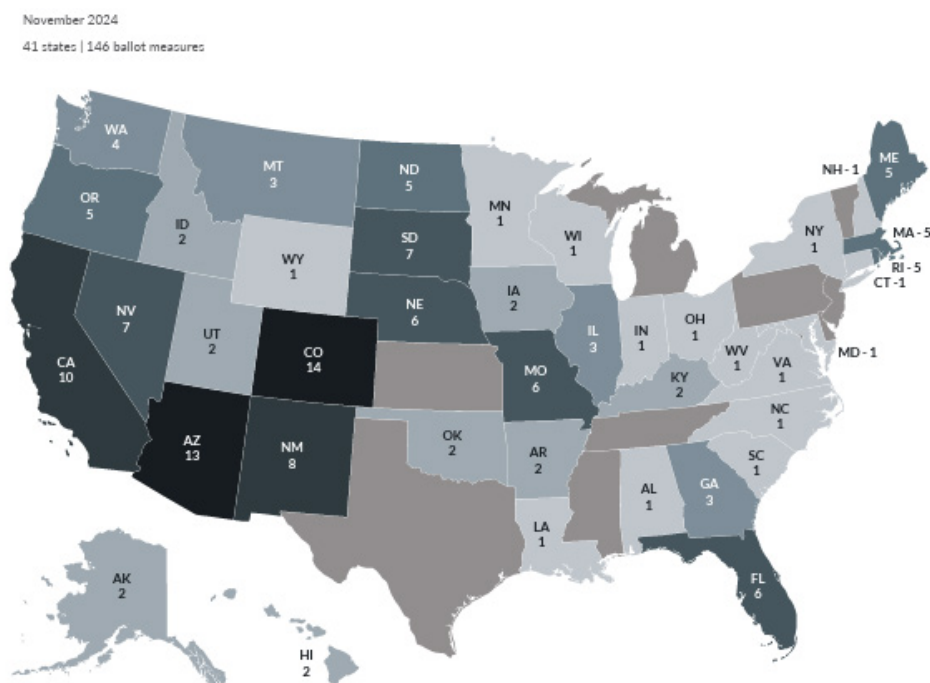


Chart created by Ryan Shakiba '26

# PROJECT UPDATES

## Statewide Ballot Measures, November 2024

Soon after the November 2024 Election, the Rose Institute published a brief report summarizing all statewide ballot measures in the United States. In 41 states, citizens voted on 146 measures, including citizen initiatives and measures placed on the ballot by legislatures. Colorado had the most crowded ballot (14 measures), followed by Arizona (13) and California (10). Some of the leading topics were abortion, election systems, property taxes, and criminal justice. The report was co-authored by **Professor Miller** and **Jemma Nazarali '25**.

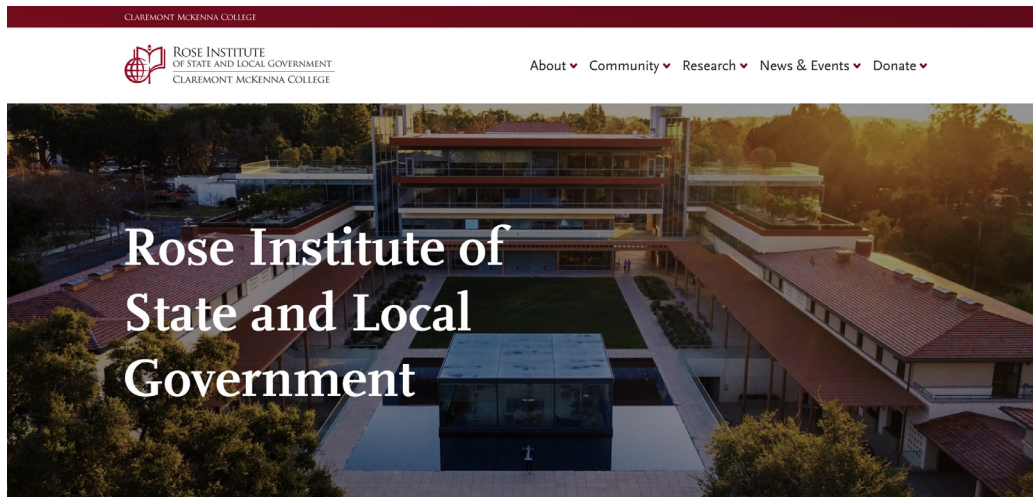


Source: *Overview of Statewide Ballot Measures, November 2024* | Graphic: Jessica Jin '16

# PROJECT UPDATES

## Rose Website

In 2024, the Rose Institute and CMC's web development team launched a process to design and build a new Rose Institute website. We have now nearly completed the project. Our goal is to create a new, dynamic, accessible, visually appealing website to effectively present our best content and promote it on the Internet. This transition includes changing the website's name from [www.roseinstitute.org](http://www.roseinstitute.org) to [www.roseinstitute.cmc.edu](http://www.roseinstitute.cmc.edu) (that is, making the Institute a subdomain of the College's domain, which is standard practice for university-based research institutes); shifting from WordPress to the College's Drupal content management system (CMS); and reorganizing the website's content and navigation. **Jessica Jin '16** took the lead for the Rose Institute on this project, supported by **Marionette Moore** and a student team that included **Jack Gladson '25**, **Katherine Jackson '25**, **Annie McDonald '26**, **Sanskriti Kumar '26**, **Ryan Shakiba '26**, and **Joseph Zhong '26**.



### Building Back Better: Altadena's Recovery and Lessons from Santa Rosa

Policymakers can learn from Santa Rosa's recovery from the 2017 Tubbs Fire. By balancing interests and streamlining processes, officials can not only guide their communities toward a swift recovery, but also can make meaningful headway in solving California's broader housing crisis.

[READ THE REPORT](#) ▶



# ROSE INSTITUTE AT THE ATHENAEUM



Jathan Pai '28 presenting at the Housing Policy Symposium held at the Marian Miner Cook Athenaeum on April 9.

PHOTO CREDIT: Ryan Lenney '25

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The mission of the Rose Institute is to enhance the education of students at Claremont McKenna College, to produce high quality research, and to promote public understanding on issues of state and local government, politics, and policy, with an emphasis on California.

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