You have reached a tremendous milestone, but your education doesn’t have to stop here.

Master’s programs
Community Resources and Development, MS
Crime Analysis, MS*
Criminal Justice, MA*
Criminology and Criminal Justice, MS
Emergency Management and Homeland Security, MA*
Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MNLMS*
Program Evaluation and Data Analytics, MS*
Public Administration, MPA
Public Policy, MPP
Public Safety Leadership and Administration, MPSLA*
Social Work, MSW*
Sustainable Tourism, MAS & MST*

Graduate certificates
Assessment of Integrative Health Modalities
Corrections Management*
Crime Analysis*
Criminal Sentencing and Sentencing Advocacy*
Domestic Violence and Evidence-based Practice
Emergency Management
Homeland Security*
Latino Cultural Competency in Social Work
Law Enforcement Administration*
Nonprofit Leadership and Management
Participatory Governance
Policy Informatics
Program Evaluation
Public Administration
Public Policy
Social Entrepreneurship and Community Development*
Sustainable Tourism*
Trauma and Bereavement

*Available online

Doctoral programs
Community Resources and Development, PhD
Criminology and Criminal Justice, PhD
Public Administration and Policy, PhD
Social Work, PhD

Graduate certificates
Assessment of Integrative Health Modalities
Corrections Management*
Crime Analysis*
Criminal Sentencing and Sentencing Advocacy*
Domestic Violence and Evidence-based Practice
Emergency Management
Homeland Security*
Latino Cultural Competency in Social Work
Law Enforcement Administration*
Nonprofit Leadership and Management
Participatory Governance
Policy Informatics
Program Evaluation
Public Administration
Public Policy
Social Entrepreneurship and Community Development*
Sustainable Tourism*
Trauma and Bereavement

*Available online

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Class of 2023
Convocation Ceremony
Tuesday, May 9, 2023

ASU Watts College
of Public Service and Community Solutions
Arizona State University
Dean’s congratulations

Every Watts College degree program starts with a premise: that which makes the individual stronger makes the collective stronger. And, that which makes the collective stronger benefits all of us. This means that we are interdependent; our well-being remains interconnected.

By choosing to earn a degree in the Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions, each of you chose to pursue a path to positively impact the community in your own way. I am grateful for your dedication to public service. Your aspiration to make the world a better place inspires me each and every day.

Today we celebrate your academic accomplishments and your dedication to serve. I am a believer that each person has the capacity to make a difference. And, when we do this together, that is how we change the world. Because of you and our collective will, together, we will realize the mission of the Watts College to build more healthy, vibrant, equitable communities.

Congratulations!

Cynthia Lietz, Dean & President’s Professor
Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions

Our schools

The **School of Community Resources and Development** advances the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our local and global communities through instruction, research and service. Our school — ranked #2 in the U.S. and #7 in the world for hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism research by the Center for World University Rankings — provides interdisciplinary expertise and innovative academic programs in nonprofit leadership and management, parks and recreation management, and tourism development and management.

The **School of Criminology and Criminal Justice** merges theory and practice. Ranked #2 in the nation by U.S. News & World Report for our Criminology and Criminal Justice PhD program and #7 for our online graduate program, the core of our instruction focuses on the theories of criminality and evidence-based best practices for responding to crime through the lenses of three interrelated structures — policing, courts and corrections — which comprise the criminal justice system.

The **School of Public Affairs** prepares students and professionals for ethical, inclusive and effective public service, while conducting cutting-edge research of public value and engaging locally, nationally and internationally with the communities we serve. We are ranked overall among the top 10 public affairs graduate schools in the country by U.S. News & World Report, with top 10-ranked specializations in local government, emergency management and homeland security, urban policy, IT management, and public management and leadership.

One of the largest and most diverse social work programs in the U.S., the **School of Social Work** is motivated by its steadfast commitment to promote social, political and economic justice with a special emphasis on populations of the Southwest. Our school, which U.S. News & World Report ranks among the top 30 in the country, prepares professional social work practitioners and scholars who are committed to enhancing individual, family and group problem-solving capacities, maximizing human potential and creating a more just and humane society.
“An investment in public service education is an investment in our shared future. The name Watts will now, and in the future, be synonymous with public service.”

- Former Dean Jonathan GS Koppell

Mike and Cindy Watts are known for their generous civic involvement and investment, a passion that began with their west Phoenix neighborhood of Maryvale and extends to the Arizona State University community and the college that bears their name.

In 2018, Mike and Cindy made a substantial gift to our college as an investment in the members of our diverse and mission-driven student body, who do not wait to graduate to start making a difference in the communities they serve. This gift was more than an investment in the College of Public Service and Community Solutions: It was — and remains — a significant contribution to community, opportunity and solutions.

The Wattses are co-founders of Sunstate Equipment, a highly successful equipment rental company that began in Arizona in 1977 and has expanded to 14 other states. They both grew up in Maryvale, at the time a newly-developed suburb. Maryvale began experiencing urban decline in the 1980s and ‘90s.

To reverse this, Mike and Cindy made leadership gifts to the Maryvale YMCA and endowed the Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety, an initiative of ASU’s now-Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions.

They have been engaged with the university since 1988 and are lifetime members of the ASU President’s Club. They are dedicated to using their resources, both financial and personal, to elevate the quality of life for all in our community and state.

The investment by Mike and Cindy supports and expands the work of the college in community development, public policy, criminal justice and child well-being.

The gift and its impact

The Wattses’ generous investment supports three key areas:

- **Community impact.** One major initiative is to revitalize the Maryvale community with emphasis on collaborating directly with local leaders to bolster their efforts and increase community engagement.

- **Student success.** Funding also supports student-driven programs focused on policy and leadership training, service learning, social entrepreneurship, research and access to transformative experiences for first-generation students.

- **Academic excellence.** The gift funds five endowed professorships that will allow the college to attract established scholars who are focused on community development, public policy, criminal justice and child well-being.

“I have always felt that giving people a reason to be optimistic, to believe in dreams, is important. Part of the initiative that we hope to work with the college on is the development of that: a belief system — not just in themselves, but in the opportunities that exist.”

- Mike Watts
Outstanding graduates

Lauren Kuhman
School of Community Resources and Development

As Lauren Kuhman tackled her coursework in nonprofit leadership and management, she came upon what she called one of the biggest revelations in her time as an ASU undergraduate:

“People, not organizations, are responsible for effecting change.

“It isn’t that organizations aren’t effecting change, but ultimately real, positive change starts with individuals,” said Kuhman, who will receive her Bachelor of Science degree from the School of Community Resources and Development, with a minor in global health. She is the school’s spring 2023 Outstanding Graduate.

Kuhman, a Phoenix resident, said her decision to pursue a degree and career in nonprofit work stemmed from participating in her high school’s annual spring break volunteer trips to Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, in Mexico. During this three-day trip, the students were hosted by a nonprofit organization to engage in the local community and build a house from the ground up.

“A staff member was talking about how the organization started and was created. You hear ‘nonprofit’ and you don’t associate it with a job. But people go to work in it every day,” Kuhman said.

Before listening to the staff member’s presentation, Kuhman said she did not know what nonprofit meant, only associating it with charity or volunteerism.

“But after it, I began to consider it as an actual career,” she said.

Nonprofits are not ultimately about blind hope or optimism, Kuhman said.

“The sector does something that’s very good — but ultimately if you don’t acknowledge the flaws within it, it won’t live up to its potential,” she said.

As she graduates with her degree — along with a certificate in special events management and a certified nonprofit professional credential — Kuhman said she is researching nonprofit fundraising and development as a career, possibly in a health field or in economic development, somewhere policy and nonprofit can intersect. Data analysis may also be an option, she said.

“Cassie Harvey
School of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Cassie Harvey navigated the unsettled waters of academia as both an Indigenous person — she is Navajo and Zuni — and the first in her family to pursue a graduate degree.

“That whole experience of moving away from home, seeking financial assistance — aid and scholarships — and learning all that,” said Harvey, the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice’s (SCCJ) spring 2023 Outstanding Graduate. “I would not be here without the support I’ve had in my journey.” Harvey also was an Outstanding Graduate in May 2017, when she earned a bachelor’s degree from the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. At that time she also earned a bachelor’s degree in public service and public policy from the School of Public Affairs.

Harvey’s journey has led to her work addressing the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP), whose numbers in Arizona have increased over the past 40 years.

Harvey is from Lechee, Arizona, a small Navajo Nation community outside of Page near the Utah border. She is earning a Master of Science degree in criminology and criminal justice at SCCJ and a Master of Legal Studies degree from ASU’s Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law.

Harvey said her master’s thesis is about “the resilience and protective factors of people who experience violence,” such as MMIP, which was a part of a larger research project within the Research on Violent Victimization (ROVV) Lab.

Indigenous people are similar in many ways, she said, but their cultures are diverse. She is still learning the many ways of her own tribes and of others, including backgrounds, teachings, traditions, ceremonies and how culture is used to help people deal with negative experiences.

“It’s humbling. I’m in awe of all the students who participated in the research. One of the lessons, learning points, that even as a Native American, myself, I learned is we are very different, but in a lot of ways we are the same,” she said. “It involves fighting those stereotypes and dealing with people who don’t know anything about Indigenous populations. There are still a lot of people who don’t know or don’t understand. I try to enlighten people any way I can.”

“There are still a lot of people who don’t know or don’t understand. I try to enlighten people any way I can.”
Outstanding graduates

**Charles Cooney**

School of Public Affairs

Escaping natural disasters while growing up, then witnessing the ravages of violence during his deployment around the world, U.S. Marine Gunnery Sgt. Charles Cooney experienced a firsthand view of the emergency management field.

The Crestline, California, resident said that during the many times he had been evacuated from wildfires, he observed emergency management staff responding, “doing everything they could to help everyone.”

Later, Cooney, a Marine since 2008, said he participated in missions ranging “from offensive to humanitarian aid” that included helping Havelock, N.C., recover from Hurricane Florence’s destruction, as well as assignments in the Middle East.

Cooney, the School of Public Affairs Outstanding Graduate and the Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions Outstanding Undergraduate Student for spring 2023, said he and his wife worked with his military unit and a military spouses organization to organize a donation drive for the Havelock community. “We’d take goods and items for those who needed them, cleaned up places that suffered mold and patched holes in roofs,” he said.

The aftermath was eye-opening, Cooney said, and demonstrated how long and how complicated the recovery process can be, as the Havelock area suffered from three weeks of pouring rain and flood surge.

More recently, he was deployed in Bahrain, where emergencies ran the spectrum from potential armed attacks to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We had to adapt and flex from potential attacks from Iran into Iraq and help individuals seek medical aid and assistance,” Cooney said. “These experiences have propelled me to want to become a professional in emergency management and get my degree in it.”

Cooney will receive his Bachelor of Science degree in public service and public policy with a concentration in emergency management and homeland security before returning to duty at Camp Pendleton, California.

He said he learned from his internship with the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs that emergency management involves an entire community. To create an effective emergency plan, emergency management staff must be prepared to work with local communities, to assess their strengths, weaknesses and how they have dealt with past events, he said.

“The experiences have propelled me to want to become a professional in emergency management.”

**Makiyah Murray**

School of Social Work

Makiyah Murray decided she was going to get a college degree, in part, because so few people in her town had one.

Murray, who is Black, said she grew up in “a tiny community where fewer than 50% had college degrees. Of those, only 14% were Black.

“My mom was a single mom with two jobs and came from a disadvantaged and impoverished background. Being poor in a disadvantaged community, I grew up dealing with the child welfare system,” said Murray, the School of Social Work’s spring 2023 Outstanding Graduate. “At 16, I entered the foster care system until I aged out of foster care at 18.”

While in foster care, Murray described feeling disconnected from the caseworkers assigned to her who all were white.

“They didn’t treat me badly. It just felt like they really couldn’t connect with me or understand what I was going through,” Murray said. “It’s not that they didn’t want to help; they couldn’t understand how to help.”

In fall 2006, the Ypsilanti, Michigan, resident started college in her home state but dropped out by summer 2007. She worked as a hairstylist for many years until recently, when she decided to try college again, encouraged by a Black female therapist and psychologist.

“She challenged me to go back to school. She believed in me and in my story and could see that I wanted to do something bigger,” Murray said. “(Social work) is one thing I could do in life, without thinking: to fight for other people and help them navigate complex situations.”

Even then, as a 30-year-old ASU student, she said she didn’t fully understand financial aid and was forced to withdraw from school after she ran out of money.

About a year later, still feeling “low and hopeless,” she was determined to continue her education at ASU. Murray found a way forward through the Starbucks College Achievement Plan, the university’s partnership with the nationwide coffeeshop chain.

“I didn’t believe it was true, because it was ASU,” where she had just withdrawn. “I was astonished. I came out of my shock and applied, and I became a partner,” she said. Murray earns her Bachelor of Arts degree in community advocacy and social policy this spring.

“(Social work) is one thing I could do in life, without thinking: to fight for other people and help them navigate complex situations.”
Moeur Award winners

Tomás Mesquita  Cindy Gutierrez  Turbold Munkhbold
Bailee Buche  Evan Handeland  Cynthia Phan
Halah Berglin  Madison Howe  Chase Smith
Maria Boby  Lauren Kuhman  Kaelyn Starks
Grace Doolittle  Sophia Looney  Ivy Ton
Hannah Etnyre  Abney  Jared Weidner
Jordan Fezler  Alyssa Lopez  Molly Woodward
Kendall Gehrs  Vanessa Martinovici  Natasha Zdrnja

The Moeur Award was named for Dr. B.B. Moeur, a physician and businessman in Tempe in the early 1900s. He was a business owner and was active in local politics, including eight years on the Tempe School Board, as well as serving on the Board of Education of the Tempe Normal School (predecessor of ASU). As Governor of Arizona from 1933-1937, he provided leadership during the Great Depression.

Since 1901, the Alumni Association has presented the Moeur Award to those graduates with the highest academic standing who have completed their course work toward their degree while attending ASU with eight consecutive fall and spring semesters. Award recipients are honored at each commencement ceremony, receiving an award certificate; the recipients receive a plaque after degrees are formally conferred in the alumni database.
Celebrate your graduation with us!

Visit graduation.asu.edu/get-social for assets you can use to showcase this achievement online, including on your social media and with your friends and family. Share #ASUgrad

The Watts College congratulates the class of 2023.

We are so proud of all you have accomplished!