



In normal times, I don't get personal when writing the Director's note for the GRI newsletter. But this is not a normal time.

Two weeks ago, people across our country and the world reacted with horror to the murder of George Floyd. Like many of you, I was spending a lot of time at home with my family as a result of the current global pandemic. I remember sitting with my 25-year-old daughter, as we watched back-to-back videos of black men being murdered -- first George Floyd and then Ahmaud Arbery. I started to pontificate about ways we should help. My daughter was quiet. I went on... "We need to give money to bail out protestors, join Williamsburg Action, make posters, march..." And on I went, loudly. My daughter was quiet. I asked, "What do you think?" She said, "I think you need to listen. No Dad, really listen, before you do anything. Then you need to figure out how to do things that matter."

The next day I spoke with a young colleague who said she thought "this time might be different...people are actually paying attention. They are listening to Black people in a way they previously have not." These and countless other conversations with family, friends, current and former students, faculty, and staff at the GRI have caused me to reflect on the value of listening. Listening well is a value in itself, but listening well is also a means to an end. If we are open to listening, especially to voices that are too often unheard within existing institutions and hierarchies, we will ask different questions, explore different solutions, and increase the quality of our responses. This is the case when discussing institutionalized racism, but it is a lesson that travels well to other contexts as well.

At the bottom of the email I discuss some of our commitments moving forward -- things that, I hope, actually matter for those who are members of the GRI community and those who will be part of GRI in the future. These commitments will be grounded in research, but they will also reflect the specific suggestions of black, indigenous, and people of color who work at William & Mary and at other institutions of higher education...[KEEP READING.](#)



China's overseas spending now rivals that of the U.S., but very little was known about how and where this money was spent until AidData launched research in this area eight years ago. Learn about some of AidData's recent findings in a new W&M Alumni Magazine piece.

Austin Strange '12 is featured in a new video about AidData's approach to creating novel datasets and mentoring students with big ideas. AidData's willingness to take a bet on a student led to a significant research stream with a wide variety of funders, including the MacArthur Foundation and the State Department.

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In *Nature Sustainability*, AidData's Ariel BenYishay and his co-authors assess the impact of a large-scale land titling initiative called Terra Legal on deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon.

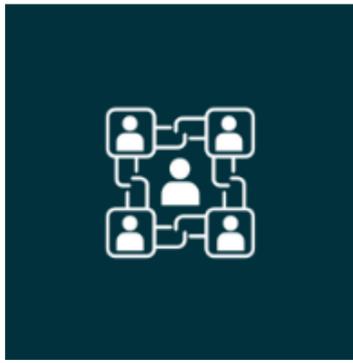
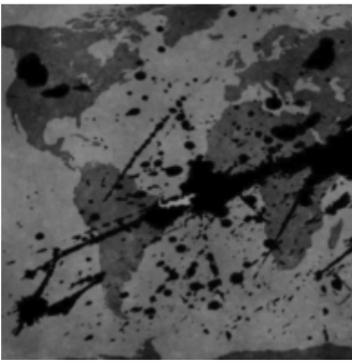
Some lawmakers are calling for truth commissions on racial violence. Learn more about how these commissions work in a *Washington Post* article co-authored by IJL Director Kelebogile Zvobgo.

What do foreign policy experts make of President Trump's Coronavirus response? Find out in a *Foreign Policy* piece highlighting results from a recent TRIP snap poll funded by the Carnegie Corporation.

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Explore students' PIPS presentations, which Gen. (Ret.) Wesley Clark recently called "...real national security, gut level spade work...brilliantly presented, scary, remarkably prescient and insightful analysis."

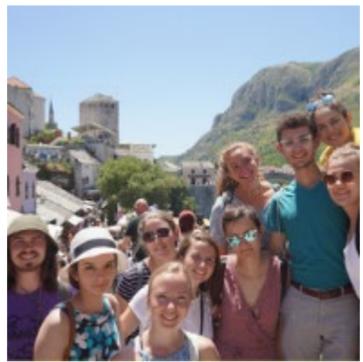
GRI's Blockchain Lab announced six faculty winners of a call for proposals designed to source empirical research in blockchain applications for international development, trade, and supply chains.

From gaining new skills to learning about academia's "leaky pipe" and from forming strong bonds with fellow researchers to bridging the academic-policy gap, Alexandra Byrne '23 describes her experience working for the IJL.

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A new AidData policy brief, *Overcoming Blind Spots*, works to bridge the gap in understanding between data production and use when it comes to refugee, displaced, and trafficked children, or "children on the move."

Experiential learning provides students with crucial hands-on experience. In a new feature, Elizabeth Sutterlin '20 and Henry Young '20 share stories about their transformational experiences as GRI Summer Fellows.

In the face of cancelled summer research and teaching in Bosnia, the ABC project pivoted rapidly in collaboration with their partners in Sarajevo to develop alternative cross-cultural engagement activities, writes Ethan Brown '21.

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