



## The Center on Philanthropy & Public Policy UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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### The Center Hosts A Conversation with Jim Piereson on Philanthropy and the Role of Government

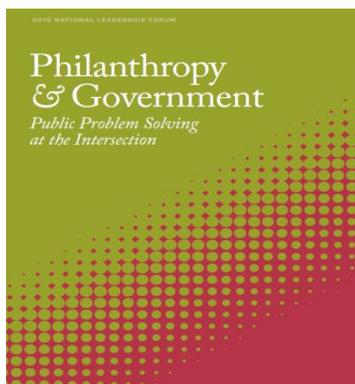
What are the appropriate roles of philanthropy in society and how do they intersect? Should foundations be encouraged to sunset, or close their doors, after a certain period of time? The USC Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy hosted William E. Simon President James Piereson on November 11th as part of its Conversations on Philanthropy series to discuss these and other compelling topics, such as maintaining donor intent and foundation independence.



Piereson stressed the importance of narrowly defining a foundation's mission and avoiding noble, but harder-to-define terms, like "promoting social justice" or "ending inequality," especially in work that intersects with government. He noted that the biggest challenge of tackling major societal issues through the public sector is that everything the government does is inherently controversial and increasingly polarized. "Government is driven by a whole set of factors that complicate the operations of foundations. It's called politics," said Piereson, who served on the political science faculty of several major universities before entering the field of philanthropy.

In addition to maintaining a clear, focused mission, Piereson discussed sunseting as another way to ensure a foundation doesn't drift away from a founding donor's intent, speaking directly from his experience helping to spend down the remaining assets of the John M. Olin Foundation. Sunseting also allows foundations to have a more immediate impact through their philanthropy, as larger sums of money can be spent rather than protecting foundation assets in perpetuity.

Now in its fifth year, the Conversations on Philanthropy series brings together experts with diverse points of view for intimate, in-depth discussions about issues facing both donors and foundations. Simon Foundation Co-chair, William E. Simon, Jr., moderated the lively discussion. More information and a video from the event can be found on [The Center's website](#).



### National Leadership Forum on Philanthropy and Government

The Center will host its 2016 National Leadership Forum on February 11-12 in downtown Los Angeles. This year's forum will explore an important theme that has run through The Center's work since its inception: how and where does the intersection of philanthropy and government lead to opportunities for greater impact. Philanthropic decision makers, policymakers and thought leaders from across the country will join to discuss their experiences in working on issues where the two sectors meet, the strategies and approaches to create greater impact, and the implications for philanthropy moving forward.

What can happen at the intersection between government and philanthropy? The opening plenary intends to answer this question in conversation with executives of some of the country's leading foundations who are challenging conventional wisdom and foundation practice to create greater impact. Breakout sessions on the first day will delve more deeply into critical policy issues where philanthropy and government come together: charter schools, immigrant integration, health care reform and rebuilding places and cities. A keynote from Monica Lozano, Chair, U.S. Hispanic Media and Chair, Aspen Institute Latinos and Society Program, will cap the first day of the program.

The second day of the forum will include a morning plenary session focused on reframing intractable problems as opportunities that can be addressed by leveraging the strengths of philanthropy and nonprofits, social entrepreneurs, businesses and government. Then, breakout sessions will consider the opportunities in which philanthropy can expand its impact by building the field of impact investing, supporting movements and networks, developing new partnership models, and leveraging strategic communications. The forum will close with a plenary panel with leading foundation executives answering the question of what philanthropy needs to do differently in working at the intersection with government.

The two day, invitation-only forum is generously sponsored by JP Morgan Chase, Wells Fargo, The Annenberg Foundation, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, Northrop Grumman, The California Wellness Foundation, as well as The California Endowment Gonring & Spahn, Green Hasson Janks, KPMG, and the PIMCO Foundation. Videos from the forum will be posted after the forum.



### **The Center Launches New Research Project on Detroit's Contributions to the Next Generation of Urban Policy and Practice**

Few cities have been hit as hard by a confluence of major economic, social, fiscal and political headwinds as Detroit. From long-term economic decline to social unrest, Detroit was already impacted by a series of challenges when the nationwide economic downturn began in 2007. In the eight years that have elapsed since then, a period that included Detroit's bankruptcy declaration in 2013, civic leaders have stepped up in new ways as the traditional boundaries between the public, private and philanthropic sectors are being reconfigured and recalibrated in an era of federal retrenchment and state and municipal austerity.

In partnership with The Kresge Foundation, The Center is undertaking an inquiry that examines the lessons learned from Detroit's recent experience and new approaches that are emerging across the country to drive a next-generation approach to how philanthropy and public policy can revitalize American cities. The inquiry is being directed by The Center's Director Jim Ferris and Elwood Hopkins, Managing Director of Emerging Markets, Inc. It is informed by an advisory board of national thought leaders from government, philanthropy, and urban planning and practice.

The Center will hold roundtable discussions that touch on five areas where there have been innovative twists that have helped revitalize the city this month, hold a national forum on the implications of these ideas for American cities in May 2016, and facilitate city-to-city exchanges around strategies of shared interest in the summer of 2016. More information on the inquiry is available on the [Center's website](#).

## The Center and Festival of Children Foundation Co-Host “Get Into The Mind Of The Donor” in Orange County

The Center’s Director Jim Ferris moderated a panel at the Westin South Coast Plaza that discussed philanthropic perspectives from private foundations and corporate funders. Sandy Segerstrom Daniels welcomed those in attendance and shared some experiences from the Festival of Children Foundation and their work with partners of the foundation. Panelists included Sarah Middleton, Vice President, Community Outreach of the PIMCO Foundation, Steve Muzzy, Executive Director of The Roberto Foundation and Cara Esposito, Executive Director of The Leonetti/O’Connell Family Foundation. Over 100 participants, including individual donors, foundations and non-profit leaders, listened in as the panel discussed their organization’s strategy for charitable giving, collaboration, capacity building and program evaluation. After the conclusion of the interactive segment of the program, in which the panelists and attendees shared challenges and opportunities, everybody in the room felt a shared sense of journey. This was a great opportunity for The Center to collaborate with partners in the Orange County area and continue to build peer networks.



## The Center Participates in National Governors Association Roundtable



In November, The Center presented findings from a new report at an expert roundtable in Washington, D.C. organized by the National Governor’s Association. Drawing experts from across the country, the roundtable explored how state government could support place-based efforts. In his remarks, Ferris noted that leading practitioners and scholars are moving past the notion of place-based initiatives as self-contained projects or laboratory experiments toward more expansive and “connective” approaches that account for local community dynamics.

The recent paper [Looking Ahead](#), co-authored by Elwood Hopkins, Founder and Managing Director of Emerging Markets, Inc. examines the implications for funder strategy and practice. He noted future efforts would benefit from: creating new policy- and action-oriented organizational structures; forging cross-sector partnerships with government and business; and adapting evaluation methods and measures of success to be more inclusive, adaptive and systems-oriented. Ferris concluded his remarks by underscoring the importance of using equity as key organizing principle and focal point for such efforts. These recommendations emerged from The Center’s earlier work on place-based initiatives. This follow-up paper was possible with the support of The California Endowment.

## New Publication on the Lessons from Place Based Initiatives

An article by James M. Ferris and Elwood Hopkins, “Place-Based Initiatives: Lessons from Five Decades of Experimentation and Experiences,” is featured in the December 2015 issue of *The Foundation Review*, a peer-reviewed journal on philanthropy. The article distills key learnings and strategies about place-based work and develops implications for foundation practice. It builds on findings from The Center’s year-long inquiry into the state of place-based initiatives that concluded with a forum at USC in December 2014 – Prioritizing Place – and the subsequent publication of a monograph: *Place-based*



*Initiatives in the Context of Public Policy and Markets: Moving to Higher Ground* in May of 2015. The full article can be downloaded from the [Foundation Review's](#) website.



### **Nonprofit Research Series Set for Spring**

The Center's Nonprofit Research Seminars, which are designed to stimulate academic thought in philanthropy among faculty and students, are now underway. The semester began with a presentation by Brian Galle, Professor of Law from Georgetown University, on the laws guiding foundation payout rates, and the costs and benefits of restricted-spending. The series continues with a seminar by Johanna Mair, Professor, Hertie School of Governance, Visiting Scholar at the Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, and academic editor for the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, on January 26; Abigail Payne, Professor of Economics and Director, Public Economic Data Analysis Laboratory at McMaster University on March 28; Christine Exley, Assistant Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School on April 11; and Nicolas Duquette, Assistant Professor, and Center Fellow, University of Southern California on April 25. To attend or learn more about this series, please email [cphp@usc.edu](mailto:cphp@usc.edu)

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