On Campus

New Center for Political Economy to Promote Fairer, More Equitable Growth

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Columbia World Projects has launched a new Center for Political Economy, which will bring together faculty from across the University to reimagine economic policies to make them fairer and more inclusive.

The center, which is supported by a $10 million gift from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, aims to promote novel collaborations between economists and historians, legal scholars, political scientists, sociologists, public-health experts, engineers, and data scientists. Its organizers say the center is designed to correct for the overly narrow focus on the mathematical aspects of economics that has

dominated the field in recent decades and to direct attention to the social and political realities that ought to form the basis of economic policy.

Leading the center are four inaugural codirectors: Ira Katznelson ’66CC, the Ruggles Professor of Political Science and History and a deputy director at Columbia World Projects (a University-wide initiative that supports research to solve real-world problems); Suresh Naidu, a professor of economics and international and public affairs; Katharina Pistor, the Edwin B. Parker Professor of Comparative Law and director of the Center on Global Legal Transformation; and Kate Andrias, a professor of law and codirector of the Center for Constitutional Governance.

“With the creation of this center, Columbia University will be joining a critically important national and global effort to address the nature of political economy and how it determines matters such as the distribution of wealth and the relationship of the public and private spheres of our lives,” says President Lee C. Bollinger. “I can’t think of a subject more urgent or consequential, and I’m deeply grateful to the Hewlett Foundation for its support.”

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