



**SCHOLARS**  
STRATEGY NETWORK

## Announcing Suzanne Mettler as SSN's New Academic Director

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As a membership-based organization made up of publicly engaged researchers, the Scholars Strategy Network has always been led by an Academic Director with deep experience bridging the gap between academic research and public policy. We are thrilled to announce that starting in 2025, SSN's new Academic Director will be [Professor Suzanne Mettler](#), an esteemed scholar of public policy who embodies this spirit like few others. Mettler brings her extraordinary talents, knowledge, and dedication to SSN's mission and will steer the organization through its next phase.



Mettler has always had a keen interest in public engagement. Before pursuing a career in higher education, she worked for the nonprofit NETWORK: Advocates for Social Justice upon graduating from Boston College. "In my role as the national organizer for NETWORK, I traveled the country to coordinate our members for political action. More recently, for my current book project on the rural-urban political divide, I've driven thousands of miles to rural counties that have changed the most politically in the past few decades," she said. "These experiences have given me a profound sense that building relationships through organizations across this vast nation is vital to strengthening democracy today. Now, taking on the role of SSN's Academic Director feels like 'coming full circle' in my life journey."

Following her early experience with policy engagement, Mettler pursued a PhD in Government from Cornell University, launching a career focused on studying public policy and how it matters for improving people's lives, citizenship, and democracy. After 13 years at Syracuse University, Mettler returned to Cornell in 2007 and is now the John L. Senior Professor of American Institutions. With six published books that have won numerous awards and dozens of academic articles, Mettler is an acclaimed voice on American political development, public policy, and political behavior. Leveraging this expertise, she has published essays in popular outlets including the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Foreign Affairs*, and been interviewed on

national broadcasts for NPR, the PBS NewsHour, and CBS Good Morning, among others.

One of SSN's first 50 members and an inaugural board member, Mettler has long helped other researchers across the country use their own work to have an impact on policy decisions. "I've been part of the board since 2011, and it has been incredible to see the organization grow ever since in size, reach, capacity, and impact. We now have a robust membership of publicly-engaged scholars with expertise in numerous areas of public policy, who regularly share their insights with policymakers, journalists, and the public," said Mettler. "It is more than a little humbling to assume the role that Theda Skocpol, who envisioned and founded SSN, has occupied so brilliantly and effectively from the start."

As Academic Director, Mettler aims to be a champion for SSN in key academic spaces, and ensure that the organization remains committed to working effectively with and on behalf of the scholars who make up its membership. Mettler is well positioned to take on this role, especially as U.S. democracy itself is threatened.

"Expertise, and its role in informing responsible governance, is under attack. Basic principles of democracy are being threatened," shared Mettler. "SSN is uniquely ready to meet this moment. The fact that we have members ensconced in communities far and wide, in red states and blue states, in rural places and urban places, will be a powerful source of strength for us. Both the process of our involvement in public life – and any policy effects it may have – will help protect and strengthen American democracy."