

TARKINGTON

BUSINESS FUTURES INSTITUTE

FIELD NOTES · ISSUE 03 · OCTOBER 2026

Automation, Hurricanes, AI Ethics, and Two Student Fellowships

This issue recaps our inaugural Tarkington Research Horizons talk and follows our faculty to a climate finance conference in Montréal, an AI ethics panel on campus, and the pages of *Inc.* It also opens applications for our first Tarkington Student Fellows.

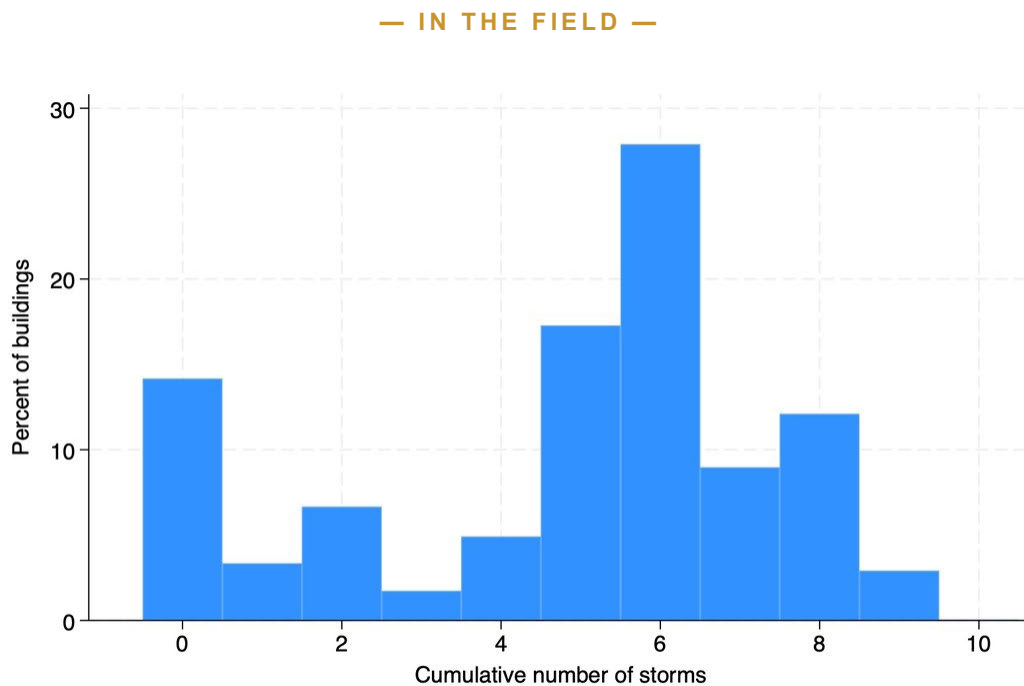
— RESEARCH HORIZONS —



Automation is arriving faster than the workforce to run it.

On September 17, Prof. Shokoufeh Mirzaei opened Tarkington Research Horizons with a talk on where automation is headed in manufacturing and logistics. She is Chair of Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering at Cal Poly Pomona and Director of the NSF-funded CREST-RASM Center. The takeaway for business is that a good automation strategy must have a good workforce strategy.

4.3M industrial robots operating worldwide	\$6.5B → \$25.4B projected warehouse robotics market by 2034	1.5–2M U.S. manufacturing jobs expected to go unfilled by the early 2030s
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Which rental housing units feel a hurricane most?

At the Climate Finance & Sustainability Conference at Concordia University's John Molson School of Business in Montréal, Tarkington Institute Director Anthony W. Orlando presented "How Hurricanes Reshape Rental Housing Markets." He uses a quarter century of building-level rent data from Florida to ask where storms raise rents and for whom. He compares studios with two-bedrooms, small buildings with large complexes, and older stock with new. He also compares storms that brush past with storms that cause severe damage, measured by wind speed and insurance claims. As the chart above shows, most buildings in the data have weathered several storms, so he can also measure

what repeated exposure does. Orlando also served as discussant for a paper on how homeowners insurance non-renewals affect foreclosures and local economies.

Inc.

When should a landlord let its tenants compete?

In *Inc.*, Orlando put a lawsuit between an ax-throwing chain and its former Las Vegas landlord in economic terms. Tenants in mixed-use developments want to be the only seller of their product, surrounded by complements. Owners may want some substitutes so customers feel they have choices. He also explained how losses at one location can spread through a company's internal capital market until even its profitable locations start losing money.

Read in *Inc.* →



Talking AI ethics with the people who speak for the university.

Tarkington Faculty Fellow L. Lin Ong joined an AI Ethics faculty panel at Cal Poly Pomona's annual Strategic Communications all-hands conference. The audience included staff from the Office of the President and marketing and communications specialists from every college.

NOW HIRING

We're hiring our first Tarkington Student Fellows.

We have two paid positions for Cal Poly Pomona students, running Fall 2026 through Spring 2027. Each is 10–15 hours a week at \$20/hour.

With L. Lin Ong: produce the Institute's podcast, create digital content, and support policy research and communications.

With Yufan (Frank) Lin: build and analyze an AI-powered market research dashboard.

APPLY: LIN ONG FELLOWSHIP

APPLY: YUFAN LIN FELLOWSHIP

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