

Public Policy Bulletin

Spring 2010
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Welcome New Students!

Five new Public Policy Ph.D. students have been admitted into the program. Their brief bios are presented below.



Abdullah Al-Shanbri - Recreation Policy

Abdullah grew up in the western region of Saudi Arabia. He earned his bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture at King Abdul-Aziz University in Jeddah. He also earned his master's degree in Operation Management from University of Arkansas. His research interests are in urban planning, community development and parks law & management. His goal is to return to Saudi Arabia and to get involved in city management in order to create a new concept of community development through outdoor recreation. Abdullah has been married to his wife, Noha, for five years, and they have two wonderful girls, Juri, 3 1/2 years, and Juwana, 18 months. He enjoys hiking, camping, event planning, traveling, photography and cooking with his wife.

Katherine Birhead - Community Development

A native of Springdale, Kathryn has a B.A. and M.A. in Spanish from the University of Arkansas. She taught Spanish at Pikes Peak Community College in Colorado Springs, Colorado before moving back to Northwest Arkansas in 2005. She is currently the Director of Diversity and Inclusion at the Jones Center in Springdale, where her work centers on helping long-time residents and new arrivals to this country understand and appreciate each other. Her job allows her to work extensively with people from different cultures. Kathryn has been able to immediately apply to her work what she has learned in the Public Policy Program. Her sons, Nate (25) and Colin (23) grew up in Colorado, and Colin still lives there. Nate is in the fourth year of a Ph.D. program in Political Science at Indiana University. He and his wife, Shannon, are the proud parents of Kathryn's first grandson, Ethan, who was born on Dec. 1, 2009. When the family has the opportunity to spend time with each other, they enjoy planning and preparing really good meals together.



Deborah Brown - Agriculture Policy

Deborah is a native of Jamaica, a beautiful island in the Caribbean. After high school, she attended a teachers' college and the University of the West Indies. Deborah received a Diploma in Teacher Education and a bachelor's degree in Geography with a minor in International Relations. After completing her studies, she taught Geography at her alma mater and later moved on to lecture at Sam Sharpe Teachers' College in her hometown of Montego Bay. Her desire to explore the world outside of her island nation led her to Japan where she lived for a few years. During that time she continued to teach, but also took the opportunity to learn about different cultures by visiting various Asian countries. The experience in Japan prompted her to pursue a master's degree in Sociology and Cultural Studies from The University of London. After receiving her degree, Deborah returned to Jamaica to work with the Ministry of Agriculture as a Rural Sociologist. Her work experience at the Ministry of Agriculture led Deborah to apply for the U of A's Public Policy Ph.D. program. Her goal is to increase her capacity to assist with the development and analysis of agricultural policies in Jamaica. Upon completion of her doctoral degree, Deborah plans to return home and work with the Ministry of Agriculture or in academia, either lecturing at the College of Agriculture Science and Education or at the University of the West Indies.



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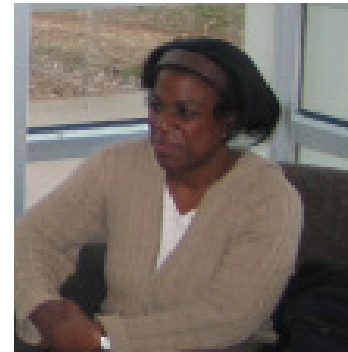
Danny Chand - Policy Leadership



Originally from Beaumont, Texas, Danny is in his second semester as a Public Policy Ph.D. student. Danny has more than five years experience working with political and development nonprofits in the United States and abroad. One of his more recent positions was as a Peace Corps volunteer in rural Zambia, where he educated villagers on sustainable agricultural practices. His domestic nonprofit work has ranged from fundraising to lobbying state governments for increased protections for public lands. Danny's research interests lie broadly in the study of nonprofits and NGOs and the empowerment of underrepresented communities. He is currently serving as a research assistant to Dr. Bill Schreckhise, for whom he has examined the impacts of public opinion on public policy. After earning his degree he hopes to continue to teach and conduct policy research. In addition to fulfilling his scholastic obligations, he is currently serving as the treasurer for SPARK and training for the Hogeye (Fayetteville's annual marathon). Danny and his wife Carol Cuccio, who currently lives in Texas, have been married for more than seven years. Danny's prior academic work includes a bachelor's degree in Journalism from Lamar University and a master's degree in Political Science with a specialization in Community Development from Illinois State University.

Renee Deshommes - Education Policy

Renee received a bachelor's in Business Economics from Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, FL, and a master's in Early Childhood Education from the University of Arkansas. Her research interests include educational reform efforts, as well as initiatives regarding narrowing the achievement gap for school-dependent children. Renee is currently employed by Fayetteville Public Schools as an elementary school teacher, and many of the projects or committees she is involved with are centered around school issues. She is a member of NEA-National Education Association, AEA-Arkansas Education Association, and FEA-Fayetteville Education Association. Renee plans to continue to serve as a representative within the educational arena, and hopes to learn more regarding education administration and policy. Renee is married, and has a 13-year-old child and hopes to be able to travel more in the future.



SPARK NEWS



- SPARK met on January 27 at Arsagas Café. In the pictures above we see: Shankar, Karen, Abdullah, Erica, and Danny. Also present were Deborah and Renee. They introduced themselves, discussed SPARK activities, and talked about the PUBP program in general.
- The SPARK committee is in the process of organizing a Little Rock trip and a trip to the Southwest Social Science Association conference in Houston. If anyone is interested in attending the conference, please contact Karen Sebold at ksebold@uark.edu.

After graduating from the Public Policy Ph.D. Program in 2006, Dr. Holly Felix embarked on an academic career with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Dr. Felix is profiled below.



Pictured above: Barbara and Holly on their 100 mile walk

Dr. Holly C. Felix

Ph.D. in Public Policy (Health Policy Specialization), University of Arkansas, Fayetteville (2006)

Masters of Public Administration, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Which department do you work in?

I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management at the Fay. W. Boozman College of Public Health, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

What is your role in the Health Policy and Management Department?

I am primarily involved in research activities, currently serving as investigator on two randomized controlled trials assessing

the translation of evidence-based programs to the community, and will soon be launching two studies as principal investigator to explore the impact of obesity on nursing home care. I occasionally lecture in courses offered within the College and am currently serving as academic advisor for several MPH students.

What are your current research interests?

My current research is exploring the impact of obesity on the delivery of long-term care services in the US.

What are some of your recent publications?

Powell L, Felix HC, Bradway C, Miller E, Heivly A, Fleshner I. Forthcoming. Additional research on the cost of caring for obese nursing home residents is critical to maintaining adequate resources in the long-term care industry. *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*.

Felix HC, Bradway C, Miller E, Heivly A, Fleshner I, Powell L. Forthcoming. Staff time and estimated labor cost to bathe obese nursing home residents: A brief report. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

Felix HC, Wheeler JG, Pulley L, Stewart MK, Bursac Z, Mays GP. 2009. Making Hospital Grounds Smoke-Free: A Case Study of the Initiation of Arkansas Act 134 of 2005. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, 15(2):E9-E15.

Felix HC, Bronstein J, Bursac Z, Stewart MK, Foushee HR, Klapow J. 2009. Family planning provider referral and facilitation behavior and patient follow-up for abnormal Papanicolaou smears. *Public Health Reports*, 124(5): 733-744.

Felix HC. Personal care assistance needs of obese elders entering nursing homes in Arkansas. 2008. *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*, 9(5):319-26.

Other interesting information

Holly Felix grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas. She is an avid bird watcher and enjoys hiking. She and her partner, Barbara, recently completed a 100 mile walk along the Camino de Santiago (an 800-year-old pilgrimage trail), starting in Porto, Portugal and ending in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

Dr. Liliana Blum was the recipient of the 2008 Public Policy Ph.D. Program Distinguished Dissertation Award.



Dr. Anna Zajicek (Dissertation Chair) and Dr. Liliana Blum at the 2008 University of Arkansas Commencement ceremony.

*Dr. Liliana Blum (formerly Sireteanu) was the 2008 University of Arkansas Public Policy Ph.D. Program Distinguished Dissertation Award winner for her dissertation research entitled, **Sex Trafficking and Political Discourse: A Case Study of the Perceptions and Definition of the Problem and Its Victims in Moldova**. Because Dr. Blum was the sole award winner for 2008, she received the full \$500 award along with a certificate recognizing her achievement.*

After graduation, Dr. Blum went to her native country (Moldova) and worked as a International Consultant for UNAIDS (the Joint United Nations Program for HIV/AIDS) for a few months. She is currently working as Programs and Volunteer Coordinator for Women and

Children's Center of the Sierra. The organization is a non-profit for vulnerable women and children in Nevada. She is married to Justin Blum and they both live in Reno, Nevada.

The 2008-2011 PUBP Distinguished Dissertation Award Committee is composed of Valerie H. Hunt, JD, PhD (Chair); Andrew Dowdle, PhD; Patricia Koski, PhD; and Barbara Shadden, PhD, CCC-SLP, BC-NCD. The Award Committee receives nominations from Dissertation Committee Chairs, who may nominate dissertations in public policy from the previous academic year for this award. To be eligible, all degree requirements, including acceptance of the dissertation by the Graduate School must be completed by June 30. The Award Committee evaluates each submission for methodological and substantive quality, and scholarly significance.

Research and Professional Development Events

RPD sessions include on-going research presentations as well as discussions/presentations regarding professional development both inside and outside of the academy. These sessions are organized as faculty and student panel discussions or as research presentations.

March 12

"Three Article Dissertation Format"

Presentation by Dr. German Rodriguez (a 2009 graduate of our program) and Dr. Jennie Popp.

April 9

"Beyond the Dissertation: The Ingredients for a Successful Job Search"

Presentation by Dr. Brinck Kerr

All sessions, unless otherwise noted, are held on Fridays, in Old Main 523, and run from noon to 1:00 p.m. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

This section of the newsletter features an example of collaborative work between students and professors affiliated with the PUBP program.

In 2004, Dr. Anna Zajicek (Sociology and Criminal Justice) and Dr. Yvette Murphy-Erby (Social Work), along with students from sociology, social work and the PUBP doctoral program, formed the Intersectional Research and Active Learning (IRAL) Team. Team membership has changed over the years, but the common threads connecting the various team activities remain. IRAL Team members share a common interest in examining various ways in which interacting social inequalities affect the experiences of marginalized as well as privileged populations. Also, team members are actively engaged in the understanding and critical examination of an intersectional perspective.

Since 2004, the team has published several journal articles, presented six papers at regional and national conferences, and has successfully published a recent book, *Incorporating Intersectionality in Social Work Practice, Research, Policy, and Education* (Washington, D.C., National Association of Social Workers Press, 2009).

Adele N. Norris, a doctoral candidate in the Public Policy program, and student member and co-founder of the IRAL Team, said that the team experience has been very valuable to her. "In addition to developing critical thinking and inquiry skills, I have been involved in scholarly activities that would be difficult to achieve in a traditional classroom," Norris said. The IRAL Team has helped Norris to develop her own research agen-

da, which has resulted in various conference presentations and publications in interdisciplinary journals such as *Journal of Poverty and Race, Class and Gender*.

As a faculty member and co-founder of the IRAL Team, Dr. Zajicek, Professor of Sociology and Family Specialization Coordinator for the Public Policy Ph.D. program, said, "My greatest personal and professional satisfaction comes from the fact that through my collaborations with both students and junior faculty, I

have not only had an opportunity to share my knowledge, expertise, and experiences, but I have also been able to share my passion for interdisciplinary research and scholarship."

When describing the impetus for her collaborations with students and junior faculty members, Zajicek said that she has a strong commitment to mentorship

and a "belief that such collaborations greatly benefit all involved." Dr. Zajicek sums up her IRAL Team experience in this way: "In all, for me," she said, "my research collaboration with students and junior faculty has been one of the most rewarding experiences during my 15 years in the academy."



IRAL Team members having fun and celebrating Dr. Murphy-Erby's birthday! Top row, from left to right: Dr. Anna Zajicek, Leah Hamilton, Adele N. Norris, Heather Schneller, Dr. Liliana Blum, and Bhavna Mahat. Bottom row, from left to right: Dr. Yvette Murphy-Erby and Dr. Valerie Hunt.

The Capstone Seminar in Public Policy offers an implementation analysis of the Arkansas System of Care (AR SOC) network.

The Capstone Seminar in Public Policy is the final (classroom) course in the Public Policy Ph.D. degree program. The course is intended to integrate various policy interests in a specific community based project. Students in the Capstone Seminar identify stakeholders and a policy issue of interest to them and to the community. Students research the issue and in consultation with classmates and the community, propose a range of policy options, implementation strategies, and evaluation tools.

Usually these projects take place over a two-semester timeframe. However, in Fall 2009, six Capstone team members, Wade Derden, Anne Diallo, Kalynn Heald, Tionna Jenkins, Aisha Kerner, and Rod Williams, were tasked to wrap-up a three-semester project examining linkages among youth-serving institutions in Arkansas. Their work ultimately culminated in a paper focusing on the Arkansas System of Care (AR SOC) network.

The authors offered an implementation analysis of the AR SOC network using an approach that combines an interpretative analysis of numerous data sources in relation to three goal congruence matrices. The purpose of the analysis was to understand the AR SOC network from the perspective of people involved in its implementation and to offer recommendations with regard to potential implementation pitfalls.

The Public Policy Bulletin is written and edited by Otilia Iancu. Please e-mail any comments or questions to Dr. Brinck Kerr at jbkerr@uark.edu

For more information on this report, please contact Dr. Valerie Hunt (vhunt@uark.edu) or, better yet, attend the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Arkansas Political Science Association (ArkPSA) on February 26-27 in Jonesboro, AR, where Wade Derden (mderden@uark.edu) and Kalynn Heald (kheald@uark.edu) will present this paper as part of the ArkPSA's *Arkansas Issues Panel*.

The Capstone Seminars for Spring 2010-Fall 2010 semesters are scheduled to focus on aging policies and issues related to their implementation in Arkansas.

SPARK Canned Food Drive a Success!

The SPARK committee's fall fundraiser was a canned food drive. Almost \$600 worth of canned food was collected between October and November 2009. The food was donated to Cooperative Emergency Outreach (CEO), which is a benevolent organization made up of 18 member churches in Washington County. A letter of thanks from CEO read in part: *The Board of Directors of CEO is very grateful for the three full grocery carts of food you donated to us. We are blessed by the continued support of the community that enables us to fulfill our mission* (of providing emergency help to residents of Washington County).

The canned food drive project was headed-up by SPARK President Karen Sebold, and the following SPARK committee officers assisted: Anne Diallo (scholarship), Bettie Miller (secretary), Shankar Ravi (communications), and Danny Chand (treasurer). The bulk of the canned goods were donated by Sebold's and Diallo's American National Government students.