

Public Policy Bulletin

Spring 2012
Vol. 5, Issue 1

Welcome New Students!

Featured below are two students who joined the Public Policy Ph.D. Program in Fall 2011. Their brief biographies reflect the richness of experience that students bring with them to the program.

Everett Smith - Education Policy



Everett Smith is a native of Memphis, Tennessee. He earned a B.S. in Psychology with a double minor in Spanish and leadership studies from Middle Tennessee State University and a Master's degree in leadership and policy studies from the University of Memphis. After graduating from college, Everett taught high school Spanish in the Memphis city school system. He later worked in college administration at the University of Memphis and Christian Brothers University in student affairs and admissions. His research interests are politics of higher education and policy as well as political and administrative challenges of advancing higher education with particular emphasis on issues that impact low-income and minority communities. Everett plans to work on his research interests at the University of Arkansas. Currently, Everett is a research assistant in the college of education and health professions. During his spare time, Everett enjoys movies, playing the drums and sports.

Paxton Roberts - Terrorism/Criminology

*Paxton Roberts is a research associate at the Terrorism Research Center (TRC) in Fulbright College at the University of Arkansas. He began working as a research assistant providing geospatial analysis for research projects for the TRC when it was founded in 2003. Paxton earned his MA in Geography from the University of Arkansas in 2006, with a specialization in cartography and GIS. Starting in 2006, he became the research projects manager for all geospatial related projects for the center. He is currently managing projects funded by the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security that examine the geospatial and temporal patterns of American terrorists' preparatory behaviors and the measurement of government intervention strategies in counterterrorism. Paxton is a co-author of the chapter "The Unabomber: Theodore John Kaczynski" in *Crimes & Trials of the Century* (2007) by Chermak and Bailey. Additional publications on terrorism have appeared in the *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* and research reports for the National Institute of Justice. A frequent spokesperson for the Terrorism Research Center, he has given presentations to the FBI, MIPT, ASC, ACJS, and the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law. He has also taught undergraduate courses on Crime Mapping and Cartography.*



SPARK gatherings in November 2011, Diane Blair Library

From upper left to right: Picture 1: Amanda Crandall, Alexander Villaraga, J. Michael Flanigan;

Picture 2: Katy Evans, Henry Brooks, Amanda Crandall, Deborah Brown, J. Michael Flanigan, Danny Chand, Alexander Villaraga, Renee Deshommes, Anita Thompson, Everett Smith, Noah Pittman

Picture 3: J Michael Flanigan, Noah Pittman, Danny Chand, Alexander Villaraga, Amanda Crandall.



SPARK members hosted a welcome party for returning and new students. At the Fall Semester SPARK meeting plans were discussed for the next two semesters and new officers were elected: Everett Smith as President, and Amanda Crandall as Treasurer. A student representative position was created this year on the PUBP faculty committee in order to foster a stronger student voice on matters of interest to PUBP students. In addition, it was decided that SPARK would make efforts to provide input on revising the public policy program's website in order to create more visibility relating to student involvement (academically, philanthropically and socially) in the program. Among the upcoming SPARK activities is a community service project for the Northwest Arkansas area, presenting research at conferences, and discussions about the structure of SPARK. The latter would entail thinking about strategies to increase the membership of SPARK and develop a stronger network among students. We encourage you to contribute your ideas on how to improve SPARK. Please share your ideas with Everett Smith, President, SPARK (exs018@uark.edu).

Dr. Laura Connerly graduated from the Public Policy Ph.D. Program in 2011, and is currently Assistant Professor at University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service.



Dr. Laura Connerly

*Ph.D. in Public Policy (Family Policy specialization)
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville (2011)*

*M.S. Home Economics
University of Arkansas (1990)*

*B.S. Home Economics
University of Arkansas (1986)*

In which department do you work?

I am currently an Assistant Professor with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service. I work in the Family and Consumer Sciences section and my subject matter is personal finance. I write curriculum in personal finance and train Cooperative Extension Service county educators to teach personal finance.

What are your current research interests?

The mission of the Cooperative Extension Service is to take research-based information from the University of Arkansas to citizens across the state through non-formal education, in an effort to improve the quality of life for Arkansans. In my subject matter area, we strive to provide opportunities for people to gain the knowledge and skills to build financial security. My research interest focuses on evaluating the impact of Extension's educational efforts, specifically increased knowledge, intended behavior change, and behavior change of participants.

Other interesting information

In 2011, I was recognized as Extension Specialist of the Year by the Arkansas Association of Cooperative Extension Specialists, I received the Extension Excellence Diversity Award, and I was part of the team (along with Stacey McCullough who is also in the Public Policy Program) recognized by the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals for Arkansas Ballot Issues Education.

I live in Conway, Arkansas. My husband, Scott Connerly is a registered landscape architect and owner of landscape Associates in Little Rock. Scott is also a graduate of the University of Arkansas. I have two sons - Sloan and Nick. Sloan is an undergraduate student at the University of Arkansas and Nick is a junior at Conway High School.

The Fall 2012 Capstone Seminar completed research on local enforcement of Federal immigration policies.

The Capstone Project culminates the coursework for the public policy Ph.D. degree program. An intrinsic component of this course is the appreciation of the interdisciplinary factors affecting policy research and decisions. The course integrates various policy interests in a specific community-based project. Students of this course identify stakeholders and a policy issue of interest to them and to the community. They research the issue, and in consultation with classmates and the community, propose a range of policy options, implementation strategies, and evaluation tools. Students are expected to integrate relevant theory from their core and specialization coursework into the capstone process and into the outcome of their work.

Immigration regulation has traditionally been viewed as a federal responsibility, but recent federal policies have delegated some immigration duties to state and local law enforcement agencies. These policies have blurred the distinction between federal and state responsibilities and between immigration and traditional criminal justice enforcement. In Fall 2011, the Capstone team worked on “Local Enforcement of Federal Immigration Policies: An Analysis of the 287 (g) and Secure Communities Programs in Arkansas.” The research discusses Arkansas’s participation in 287 (g) and secure Communities, two programs falling under the Immigration and Custom Enforcement’s ACCESS initiative.

It is concluded that these federal-local partnerships have overwhelmingly been applied to non-criminal immigration offenders - especially in Arkansas - despite the claim that they were created to target dangerous criminal aliens. Furthermore, evidence was found to suggest that these policies have fostered a climate of fear of law enforcement among some Hispanics and Latinos. Such a climate has potentially serious implications.

For more information on this report please contact Dr. Valerie Hunt (vhunt@uark.edu).

Research and Professional Development (RPD) Series



The Research and Professional Development (RPD) series includes 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 in the alternative, as research presentations.

Two RPD sessions were held in Fall 2011. During the first session, Dr. Brinck Kerr, Director, Public Policy Program discussed goals and strategies for a successful job search. The second session was a presentation on collaborative research on health impact assessments by Dr. John Gaber, and Ph.D. students, Tammy Overacker and Sonia Kapur.

Student-Faculty Collaboration

This section of the newsletter features the collaborative work of students and faculty affiliated with the PUBP program. This issue presents Alexander Villaraga and Dr. Jeff Ryan's work on Colombian higher education policy.

Alexander Villaraga and Dr. Jeff Ryan have been collaborating since last year on a project focused on higher education policy in Colombia. The initial phase of the project is a research paper entitled, "Higher Education Policy in Colombia: Comparative Financing Strategies & Potential Adaptability of Imported Models," which will be presented at the annual Midwest Political Science Association conference in Chicago in April 2012.

The paper itself examines some of the challenges Colombia faces in the area of access to higher education. During the last few years, Colombia has made great strides in improving access to higher education, generating new educational opportunities for thousands of young people. According to the Colombian Ministry of Education, the percentage of people between 17 and 21 years old attending universities rose from 24.4% in 2002 to 35.5% in 2009. Despite these impressive gains, the Ministry estimates that more than 3.2 million potential students remained outside the system between 2000 and 2010. One particular component in addressing this inability to provide access at a level commensurate with the potential pool of students has to do with state funding mechanisms. Colombia has designated public resources assigned to this sector through two mechanisms. The first is 'supply' financing which covered 55.5% of the total university enrollment in 2009 to be served through the public system. The second mechanism has been 'demand' financing using government loans and subsidies to provide financial support to 19% of the students enrolled in 2010.

Though the policy under examination in the

paper pertains narrowly to higher education, there are distinct parallels to a number of other macro-political or macrosocial policy environments. What is the most efficient and effective balance of public and private capital in the provision of a public service? How can the state ensure an equitable distribution of public goods such that lower socio-economic strata are not perpetually shortchanged? These and other questions lie at the heart of Alexander and Jeff's research.

The project stems from a shared interest in comparative public administration, particularly as it relates to Latin America. Alexander is a professor of economics at the Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla, Colombia who is pursuing his Public Policy Ph.D. with an education policy track. He is being funded in his studies with the support of the Fulbright Commission, the Public Policy program and his home institution. Jeff

is an associate professor of Political Science and Latin American Studies and joined the University of Arkansas faculty in 1990.

In 2010, both Villaraga and Ryan were named to the Inter-American Development Bank's "Red de Expertos (PRODEV)," a network of policy experts from around the hemisphere and the rest of the world. This followed the September 2010 invited presentation Jeff gave at the IADB conference on subnational governing in Quito, Ecuador. Alexander also attended the meeting using funds provided by the PUBP program, the Graduate School, and the Fulbright Commission.



Alexander Villaraga and Dr. Jeff Ryan discuss their paper in advance of the April 2012 Midwest Political Science Association conference in Chicago. Alexander will present their research with funding from the UA Public Policy Ph.D. program and the Graduate School.