

# Public Policy Bulletin

Fall 2009  
Vol. 2, Issue 2

## Welcome New Students!

The Public Policy Ph.D. Program admitted several new students this fall. Brief bios of four of our new students are featured below. The interdisciplinary nature of the PUBP Program is reflected in the diversity of our new students, their backgrounds, and areas of emphasis.

### Anita Thompson - Higher Education

Anita has a Bachelor's in Mass Communication and a Master's in College Teaching/Student Personnel Services from Northeastern State University at Tahlequah, Okla. Her research interests are in the field of higher education. She is currently employed as a development officer for the College of Education at NSU where she seeks private and grant funding for the College. She is married to Kin, who is a Hospitality & Tourism Professor at NSU. The Thompson's are the parents of two wonderful children, McKinley, 5 and Meg, 7, and they also have two dogs, Callie and Chica. Anita plans to pursue higher education administration and work with state and national organizations to improve policies in higher education.

### Nelson Sella - Policy Leadership

Nelson is an international student from Botswana. He received a Bachelor's in Sociology and Economics from the University of Botswana and a Master's in Sociology from the University of Arkansas. Nelson's research interests are in economic and environmental development and social change. He is an active member of the University of Arkansas African Students Organization, and in 2008 Nelson was a recipient of the Compton Fellowship. He enjoys outdoor activities, traveling, and chatting with friends. Nelson hopes to pursue a career in academia and research, and he believes that Botswana would offer many opportunities to follow those pursuits.

### Daniel Ramon Cox - Native American Policy

Ramon earned a Bachelor's in Political Science and a MBA from Oklahoma City University. Ramon is originally from Philadelphia, Miss. and lived for a number of years in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His research interests are in Native American community development and health. Ramon is married to Renee and they have three children. Ramon enjoys spending time playing with his kids, and he is a fan of fantasy football. He aspires to teach at a tribal college or university that serves a large Native American population. Ramon wants to contribute to the Native American community by finding and providing opportunities that best serve their needs.

### Tammy Overacker - Health Policy

Tammy received a Bachelor's in Political Science from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and a Master's in Health and Sports Sciences from the University of Memphis. Her research interests are in the areas of community health initiatives, program evaluation and health marketing. Tammy lives with her husband, Brian Reed, and they have a "Beagle angel" named Katie who enjoys long walks with lots of sniff time. Tammy likes to travel and meet people, and also enjoys outdoor activities. She intends to pursue a career in academia and research with a focus on design and development of community-based health programs. One of Tammy's goals is to buy an old villa in Italy and open a bed and breakfast, if financial resources permit.

# Welcome New Faculty



The Public Policy Program recently added a new professor to its faculty. Below is a brief description of Dr. Gaber's role in the program as well as some other interesting information about his academic and personal life.



## Dr. John Gaber

*Ph.D. in Urban Planning,  
Columbia University*

*Master of Urban and Regional Planning,  
University of Southern California- Los Angeles*

### Which department do you work in?

*I work in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice*

### What is your role in the PUBP Program?

*I would like to teach a course on mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) to students with an interest in community planning and policy analysis.*

### What are your current research interests?

*My current research is looking at various venues to apply the mixed methods framework in research focusing on community development and planning policies.*

### What are some of your recent publications?

#### Books:

*Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy: Beyond the Numbers, Chicago: American Planning Association Press, Chicago, 2007 (with Sharon Gaber).*

#### Refereed Journal Articles:

*"Using Face Validity to Recognize Empirical Community Observations," in Evaluation and Program Planning, (with Sharon Gaber), (accepted for publication, 8/2009).*

*"Simulating Planning: SimCity as a Pedagogical Tool," in Journal of Planning Education and Research, Winter, 2007,27:2, 113-121*

*"Commercial Truck Parking Analysis: Method to the Madness in the Method", in Journal of Urban Planning and Development (with Sharon Gaber, A. Khattak), March 2005.*

#### Other interesting information

*John Gaber grew up in Los Angeles, California. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, with a specialization in Urban Studies from the University of California at Los Angeles. He is an AICP Certified Planner. Dr. Gaber moved to Arkansas in the summer of 2009. Dr. Gaber is married to Dr. Sharon Gaber with whom he coauthored the book titled Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy: Beyond the Numbers.*



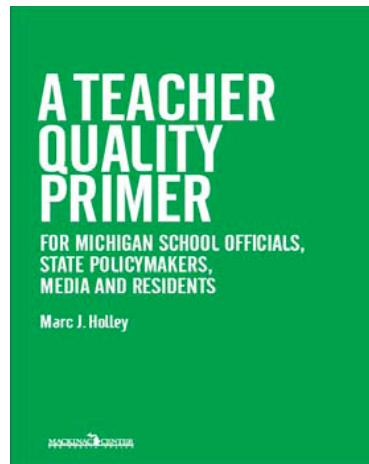
# Alumni Highlights

Alumni Highlights is a new section within the PUBP Bulletin. Graduates of the Public Policy Ph.D. Program are featured.



**Dr. Marc J. Holley** is a program officer at the Walton Family Foundation and an adjunct fellow at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. Dr. Holley joined the Walton Family Foundation in the summer of 2008. He is a member of the K-12 Education Reform team working on a variety of projects, including the foundation's district reform investments. He received a Ph.D. in Public Policy, with a specialization in higher education, from the University of Arkansas earlier this year. Dr. Holley earned a Master's in Education Policy and Administration from the University of Georgia and graduated, cum laude, from Harvard University with a Bachelor's in Classics. He has approximately ten years experience in education policy and administration at various institutions including his current appointment.

Dr. Holley's recent book, *A Teacher Quality Primer for Michigan School Officials, State Policymakers, Media and Residents* (2008), was published by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. The somewhat lackluster achievement levels of public school students in Michigan are cause for concern about the quality of public education in the state. In this primer, Holley poses reforms designed to improve K-12 education including a significant redefinition of "highly qualified." Holley concludes that "highly qualified" should refer to a teacher whose work improves student learning rather than referring to that teacher's years of experience or training. Holley offers a number of recommendations for Michigan policymakers such as annual evaluations of teachers based upon student achievement gains and principal observations, instituting performance pay and rewarding teachers based upon student achievement measured by standardized tests, and adopting differential pay for teachers in high-demand fields such as science and math.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

December

**12/11 – 5:30 p.m. PUBP End of Semester Party!**

Hosted by Dr. Kerr at his home.

RSVP to Reynelda Augustine  
(raugust@uark.edu)

# RPD and SPARK moments



As you may know, the Research and Professional Development Series not only includes on-going research presentations but also discussions/presentations regarding professional development both inside and outside of the academy. Below are some pictures taken at RPD events, as well as moments from SPARK life.



*October 16, Old Main 523. Faculty having a chat after the Research and Professional Development Series. From left to right, Dr. Bill Schreckhise and Dr. Brinck Kerr presented a paper they coauthored with Dr. Margaret Reid and Dr. Will Miller, titled "When Does Politics Matter?" Also present are Dr. Valerie Hunt and Grace Kerr.*

*PUBP students (from left to right): Anita Thompson, Tammy Overacker and Daniel Chand at the RPD session on October 16.*



*SPARK meeting attendees in front of the mural in Peabody Hall on October 20. Front row: Kalynn Heald, Nelson Sello, Karen Sebold. Back row: Daniel Chand, Tammy Overacker, Bettie Miller, and Anne Diallo.*

The Public Policy Bulletin is edited by  
Otilia Iancu and Shankar Ravi.  
Please e-mail any comments or questions  
to Dr. Brinck Kerr at [jbkerr@uark.edu](mailto:jbkerr@uark.edu)