

Public Policy Bulletin

Fall 2010
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Welcome New Students!

The Public Policy Ph.D. Program admitted several new students in 2010. Brief biographies of five of our new students are featured below, reflecting, once again, the interdisciplinary nature of the PUBP Program.



Amanda Crandall - Family Policy

Amanda recently finished her Master's in Social Work at the University of Arkansas. She has had the privilege of holding internships with Senator Sue Madison (D-Fayetteville) and Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. Her undergraduate degree in comparative religion was completed at Hendrix College with a year abroad in Oxford, England. For three years she was Family Support Specialist for Arkansas Voices for Children Left Behind, a nonprofit supporting children being raised by grandparents. Her academic interests include social and economic justice for women and children.

Katy Evans - Education Policy

Katy grew up in the small town of Bigelow, Arkansas. She holds a Master's in Counseling Psychology from the University of Central Arkansas, and a Juris Doctor degree from William H. Bowen School of Law, University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR). After working for a telecommunications corporation for four years, Katy began working in higher education administration as a Student Development Specialist in Disability Support Services at UALR. Katy has spent the last six years in higher education administration working with students with disabilities in two-year colleges and universities. She currently serves as the Assistant Director of the Center for Educational Access at the University of Arkansas. Katy's research interests include disability policy in higher education, and student transition, involvement, and retention issues. Upon completion of her doctoral degree, Katy plans to continue working in higher education administration, teach, and research best practices for policy development that promotes more inclusive college communities.



Sonia Kapur - Family Policy

Sonia earned her doctorate in sociology from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India with research interests in social stratification, inequality and gender. After completing her academic pursuits, she has been working (2003-2010) in the non-profit sector. Sonia has managed, designed and implemented projects focusing on children's rights and gender. Her projects have focused on children in the most difficult and vulnerable circumstances like street and working children, trafficked and abused children and children affected/infected by HIV/AIDS. Sonia is the Assistant Editor of the Journal of Comparative Social Welfare and has experience teaching sociology at the undergraduate level. Sonia joined the Public Policy Ph.D. Program at the University of Arkansas to build on her knowledge and to analyze and develop successful policies. She also hopes to teach and conduct policy research leading to sustainable development.





Jonathan Manz - Higher Education

Jonathan earned a M.S. Ed. in Student Affairs Administration from Baylor University in Waco, Texas and a B.A. in Computer Science from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. Jonathan currently works as the coordinator for residence education, Maple Hill West, University of Arkansas Housing. He would like to continue to work in higher education administration and thinks this program will be valuable for his professional growth. Eventually, Jonathan would like to be a vice president of a college or university and take on teaching opportunities as well. Jonathan also likes playing guitar and piano, going to concerts (recently seeing U2!), and cheering for the Pittsburgh Steelers! Jonathan has been married to his amazing wife, Lyndsy, for two years and this summer they welcomed their first child, Heath.

Alexander Villarraga - Education Policy

A native of Funza, Cundinamarca, Columbia, Alexander Villarraga joined the Public Policy Ph.D. Program this fall as a recipient of a Fulbright Graduate Program for the Regions grant. He holds a B.A. and an M.A. in Economics, both from Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá, and is a professor in the Economics Department at the Universidad del Norte in Columbia. Earlier in his career he worked for the the Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá, where he was involved in projects regarding the improvement of access to formal education for children and youth who came from low socioeconomic levels. Alexander loves sports, mainly golf, tennis, and swimming, and he enjoys camping and watching movies. After completing his studies, Alexander hopes to continue his work with Universidad del Norte, and with the Ministry of Education in Columbia, or with international institutions like Inter-American Development Bank, United Nations, or CEPAL on education projects.



Research and Professional Development Series

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 in the alternative, as research presentations.

Thursday, October 21st, 2010
from noon to 1pm

The process of paper/article creation, submission and publication
by Karen Sebold and Dr. Andrew Dowdle

The session will be held in Upchurch Conference Room (Bell Engineering, room 3162).
Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

After graduating from the Public Policy Ph.D. Program in 2009, Dr. Barbara Warner began her faculty career at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. Dr. Warner is profiled below.



Dr. Barbara Warner

*Ph.D. in Public Policy
(Leadership Specialization),
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville (2009)*

*Master of Arts in Government,
Johns Hopkins University*

*Master of Science in Journalism,
University of Kansas*

*Bachelor of Arts in English,
University of Hawaii at Manoa*

In which department do you work?

I have been a Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro this past academic year, and was hired for the tenure-track position for this coming fall. I teach in the Master's in Public Administration program and in the undergraduate Political Science program.

What are your current research interests?

I am continuing to research how presidents try to talk us into war, but am also branching out in at least two areas. One is pay equity for women. A colleague of mine and I presented a paper at the 5th International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences in Cambridge, England, August 2-5. The paper is titled "Pay Equity for Women: Why Does the United States Lag So Far Behind Other Countries?" Eventually, we hope to survey members of Congress and Fortune 500 CEOs. The second area of research is in the area of the environment. Last spring, my Environmental Law and Administration class collaborated with students in Environmental Biology to produce a scientific article on the depletion of the aquifers in Eastern Arkansas.

Currently, I have a manuscript under review at a journal: "How Presidents Try to Talk Us into War Using Religious Rhetoric: A Study in Problem Definition Employed by Presidents George W. Bush and Lyndon B. Johnson," with Drs. Kerr and Dowdle.

Other interesting information

Recently I took a van down to Houston with the Public Policy Ph.D. students attending the Southwestern Social Science Association conference, where I presented a paper co-authored with Drs. Kerr and Dowdle titled "Preaching Us into War: How Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and George W. Bush Used Religious Rhetoric to Make the Case for War," and served as a discussant on a panel on the effects of media on tolerance and political knowledge. But the best part of the trip was being with the Ph.D. students on our wild ride. I felt like I had come home. Special thanks to Karen Sebold for letting me room with her and being so much fun. I was reminded what a great group of people we have in the program and what an amazing cohesiveness we have. We also met with program graduates who are teaching at other schools, so it was like old home week. I also enjoyed hosting Public Policy Ph.D. students at ASU for the Arkansas Political Science Association conference this spring, and coordinating the student paper presentations.

Finally, my husband, Gary, whose college newspaper just won best in the state again, retired in May from John Brown University as a journalism professor. He's moving here to Jonesboro, where I hope to convince him to adjunct. We are in the process of buying a house, and we invite anyone coming through this way to stay with us. We'll also be looking for a dog to replace our beloved (book chapter coming out shortly) Ginger Blue the Beagle.

In this issue, Dr. Marsha Shobe from School of Social Work presents examples of collaborative work between Public Policy Ph.D. students and professors.

Drs. Kameri Christy-McMullin, Yvette Murphy-Erby and I have had the opportunity to work with Leah Hamilton, Doctoral Candidate in Public Policy, for the past two years on the following three research projects. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to work with Leah, who has a graduate social work degree, through the generous support of the Public Policy Ph.D. program. Leah is bright, curious, hard working, self-motivated and uses good humor; in no time at all she became a valuable asset to our research team.

Research Project #1

The first project is titled "Comparative Study of Outcomes for IDA Participants, IDA Dropouts, and Non-IDA Members in Arkansas and New Mexico. This longitudinal, multi-state research project is funded by the Ford Foundation (2006-present) and compares health disparities and other outcomes between 930 low-income Latino, First Nation, African American and non-Hispanic white IDA savers and non-IDA savers in New Mexico and Arkansas. Leah has been involved in data collection, data entry, analysis, and the dissemination of findings through academic presentations and peer-reviewed publications. To date (2006-current), we have received nearly \$800,000 from the Ford Foundation for this project.

In the past two years, Ms. Hamilton has presented our findings at the following international conferences.

- Shobe, M. A., Christy-McMullin, K., Murphy-Erby, Y., Jordan, S., Hamilton, L., & Givens, A. (2010). Relationships between Household Assets and Individual Well-Being: Preliminary Findings from 904 Low-Income Participants in Arkansas and

New Mexico. International Journal of Arts and Sciences Conference, Orlando, FL, March 1-4.

- Shobe, M. A., Christy-McMullin, K., Jordan, S., Hamilton, L., & Givens, A. (March 2009). Expanding the boundaries of IDA research: Preliminary findings from a longitudinal, quasi-experimental research project. Social Justice: Pursuing an Elusive Goal – The Oxford Round Table, Oxford University, Oxford, England, March 22-27, 2009.

Leah is currently collaborating with us on two peer-reviewed articles for this research project.



From left to right: Dr. Kameri Christy-McMullin, Dr. Yvette Murphy-Erby, Dr. Marcia Shobe, Leah Hamilton (Ph.D. Candidate)

Research Project #2

Leah has also worked with us on our mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) research project titled "Evaluation Services Educational Development Account (EDA) Pilot Program" and funded (\$201,000) by the Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority. Leah will collaborate with us on content analysis,

preparation of peer-reviewed articles, and academic presentations.

Research Project #3

Finally, Leah is working on a small qualitative pilot project that is designed to examine the narrative experiences of adolescent Individual Development Account (IDA) savers in New Mexico and Arkansas. Leah has traveled with the Research Team to New Mexico to collect data and is currently completing the data collection process in Arkansas. Leah will take the lead on the peer-reviewed journal article to be submitted for future publication.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate with Leah as she completes her dissertation and hope to extend this professional partnership as she begins her career as a tenure-track faculty member.

SPARK (Students in the Public Policy Program at University of Arkansas) is the Public Policy Ph.D. student organization and its mission is to enrich the social and educational experience of its students. SPARK is administered by an executive board of students, who are elected by their peers at the beginning of each fall semester. SPARK board members serve one-year terms. SPARK members participate in campus and community service projects and their attendance at these events count toward meeting residency requirements.

On September 2, SPARK members met in the Political Science Library to elect a new president, new officers, and to discuss future activities. Fifteen students attended the meeting. SPARK is on Facebook, and you can see pictures from the events posted there.

Karen Sebold has been the president of SPARK since 2009. Among her favorite events of last year were the Southwest Social Science Association conference held in Houston and the SPARK fundraiser for the Food Pantry. SPARK's 2009 fall fundraiser was a canned food drive, and almost \$600 worth of canned foods were collected. SPARK meetings are held once a month, sometimes at Arsagas Café at the Law School. Karen said, "I would like to see that SPARK continues year after year."

Danny Chand (pictured at right), SPARK's newly elected president, hopes to make the meetings happen and seeks to bring cohesion to the Public Policy student body. On his agenda is a fall fundraiser, activities, and academic conferences.

New SPARK committee officers were elected: Tammy Overacker (social coordinator), Alexander Villarraga (treasurer), Karen Sebold (communications).



Students at SPARK's September 2 meeting.



Danny Chand, SPARK's 2010 President.



Sitting: Tammy Overacker, Rodica Lisnic, Danny Chand, Karen Sebold, Katy Evans. Standing: Shankar Ravi, Renée Deshommes, Alexander Villarraga, Deborah Brown, Sonia Kapur, Leland McQueen, Amanda Crandall.