

# Public Policy Bulletin

Fall 2011  
Vol. 4, Issue 2

## Welcome New Students!

The Public Policy Ph.D. Program admitted seven 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.



### J. Michael Flanigan - Aging Policy

Michael Flanigan earned a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, a Master's degree in Mass Communications, and a Masters in Public Health focusing on Health Information Systems from the University of Minnesota. His research interests are related to the social benefits of a healthy elder population. Michael brings a broad range of business skills to his policy studies as he worked in healthcare, consumer goods, and manufacturing organizations. He managed projects such as development of computer projection technology, implementing of utilization review and medical transcription networks, pallet level tracking systems, and an intelligent grocery shopping cart. After his Ph.D. studies, Michael plans to work with Arkansas government and corporations in support of independent living and habilitation for the state's elder and dependent adults.

### Henry Brooks IV - Agriculture Policy

Henry Brooks IV is a native of Little Rock, Arkansas. He recently earned a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. His undergraduate degree in Psychology is from Auburn University, Montgomery. Henry has spent his professional career working as an institutional equity trader with Stephens Inc. Since 2008, Henry has served on the Arkansas Chapter Board of Governors for the Little Rock Zoo as well as on the boards of several other non-profit organizations. His research interests include food security, urban agriculture, and food system localization. Henry has been married to Arnetha for 12 years and they have two children. After completing his studies, Henry plans to teach and conduct research.



### Nathan P Kemper - Agriculture Policy

Nathan Kemper is a native of Missouri where he grew up on his family's dairy farm, a Missouri Century Farm. He earned a B.S. in Finance from Missouri State University, and an M.S. in Agricultural Economics from University of Arkansas (2005). Nathan worked for the Agricultural Experiment Station on the research side of the Division, focusing on economic impact analysis, sustainability, poultry/livestock, water quality, recreation/tourism, and development. In 2010, Nathan accepted a position with Southern Risk Management Education Center (SRMEC) as the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Coordinator. The SRMEC is part of the UA Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service and serves 13 Southern states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The TAA for Farmers program provides training and cash payments to farmers and fishermen in industries that have been negatively impacted by US trade policy. Nathan is married to Mauria Jackson Kemper, a family law attorney, and they have one child, Grace Ellen Kemper, born in May of 2010.





## Noah Pittman - Higher Education Policy

*A native of Memphis, Tennessee, Noah recently received his M.Ed. in Higher Education Leadership from the University of Arkansas. Prior to coming to Arkansas, Noah received his B.A. in political science from Rhodes College in Memphis. Noah currently works as Assistant Director of Recruitment for the U of A's Honors College. His responsibilities involve recruiting high-achieving students to the University. As a student in the Public Policy Ph.D. program, Noah hopes to conduct research on state scholarship programs and study their effectiveness in encouraging high-achieving students to remain in-state. Following graduate school, Noah plans to pursue a career in college enrollment services, and would like to teach a few college courses. During his free time, Noah enjoys working out, attending sporting events (Go Hogs!), discovering new restaurants in Fayetteville, and whenever it is possible, reading for fun.*



## SPARK updates:

SPARK members continued their commitment to serve the Northwest Arkansas community through a variety of service projects and activities in Spring 2011. In April, students volunteered for Peace at Home Family Shelter's conference on legal education. Peace at Home serves victims of domestic violence by providing emergency shelter and assistance to start a life independent of their abuser. SPARK volunteers helped organize the facilities for the group's annual conference on continuing legal education, which educates judges, law enforcement officers, and prosecutors on the dynamics of domestic violence.

In May, Karen Sebold and Tammy Overacker organized a drive to raise donations for victims of the tornado that hit nearby Joplin, Missouri. Drop boxes were placed at various locations across campus and at Harps on Garland Avenue. SPARK was able to raise more than 10 boxes worth of donations of clothes, and other necessary supplies. In the pictures above we see, Karen, Shankar, Danny, and Katy.

Dr. Linda Ketcher graduated from the Public Policy Ph.D. Program in 2008, and is currently the Supervisory Social Worker for the Indian Child Welfare Policy Office of Indian Services in Washington, D.C.

## Dr. Linda Ketcher



Dr. Linda Ketcher and Dr. Brinck Kerr

*Ph.D. in Public Policy (Specialization in Family Policy)  
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville (2008)*

*Master of Social Work  
University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma (1973)*

*Bachelor of Arts in Sociology  
Northeastern State University, Tahlequah,  
Oklahoma (1970)*

### **In which department do you work?**

*My present position is with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Indian Services, Washington DC. I work as the Supervisory Social Worker, Indian Child Welfare Policy. In this capacity, I have traveled extensively throughout the Indian country, presented at conferences and also met with the Regional Social Workers throughout Indian country. The primary purpose of these regional meetings is to review, change, and update current policy. When in the office, I provide technical assistance to both BIA Regional offices and tribal constituents; I am a member of the "Federal Interagency Work Group on Child Abuse and Neglect", which meets quarterly. We are planning a National Conference, which will be held in 2012. I also partner with the Children's Bureau and we are working jointly to enhance Tribal Title IV-E, foster care activity throughout Indian country.*

### **What are your current research interests?**

*I am interested in continuing to research "Child Abuse and neglect" in Indian country. I am also interested in poverty in Indian country and how this has impacted children and their well-being. My work has been published in American Indian Quarterly.*

### **Other interesting information**

*I am also a member of the Cherokee Nation, Tahlequah, Oklahoma. My parents were fluent speakers of our national language, my father could read and write Cherokee. I am also a member of the National Association of Social Worker's (NASW) Academy of Certified Social Worker's (ACSW), and I have my clinical license through the State of Oklahoma - Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW).*

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Correction Note - Spring 2011 PUBP Bulletin

In the section on Alumni highlights, the name of the university where Dr. Linda Blake received her Master's degree was incorrectly printed. It should read "Southern Arkansas University."

The Spring 2011 Capstone Seminar completed an exploratory research project on natural gas drilling in Arkansas.

The Capstone Project culminates the coursework for the public policy Ph.D. 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.

In Spring 2011, the Capstone Team worked on natural gas drilling in Arkansas. Originally, the focus of this research project was to examine the issue of natural gas drilling through a comprehensive interpretive policy analysis. Unfortunately, because of time limitations and the complexity and extensive scope of natural gas drilling issue, the research project's range of analysis was limited to: identifying economic and environmental effects associated with natural gas drilling, a detailed analysis of the natural gas drilling process, a presentation of legislation related to natural gas drilling, and a federal and state stakeholder analysis.

In conducting this exploratory research it is clear that the issue of natural gas drilling is a relevant and important topic in the field of public policy, especially in the State of Arkansas. The range of issues and policies related to natural gas drilling can be far-reaching and with the increase of natural gas drilling over the last few years in Arkansas, these issues can directly affect the communities and residents of the state. It is our hope that future Capstone classes will expand upon this research to complete an interpretive policy analysis of this important public policy issue.

For more information on this report, please contact Dr. Valerie Hunt ([vhunt@uark.edu](mailto:vhunt@uark.edu)).

## Research and Professional Development (RPD) Series



The Research and Professional Development (RPD) series includes 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 Spring 2011; Dr. Mike Miller, Associate Dean, College of Education and Health Professions, discussed aspects of doctoral degree programs. Dr. Valerie Hunt, Research Assistant Professor and Associate Director, Public Policy Ph.D. Program, talked about the pursuit of the doctoral degree.

This section of the newsletter features the collaborative work of students and faculty affiliated with the PUBP program. This issue presents Dr. Gaber's project on Health Impact Assessment.

Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) are widely used throughout the world. An HIA is a sequential policy process that integrates government, impacted community residents, and policy analysts to identify and document possible health impacts associated with proposed and existing policy actions. Starting in 1999 with the Gothenburg Consensus the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) aggressively advocated for this public policy process to be a standard practice in assessing community health impacts around the world. In Australia, England, and New Zealand, HIAs have been mandated as part of their national public policy assessment and development process. In the last couple of years American public policy analysts have been getting more interested in putting HIAs into practice at the community level.

In the last two years I have been working with Ph.D. Public Policy students Tammy Overacker and Sonia Kapur on a series of HIA research projects in Arkansas and around the world. Below are brief descriptions of some of the projects we have already completed, other projects that we are currently working-on, and a thumbnail sketch of future of community research projects.

## Arkansas Preliminary Investigation of Statewide Community Health Initiative

The Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention (ArCOP) within the Arkansas State Department of Health funded a \$13,000 research project to help educate and lead five communities through the HIA process. The funded research was part of a larger statewide "Growing Healthy Communities" initiative to get Arkansas communities to be more active in improving the health of their neighborhoods and towns. The five communities that received HIA training and the application of mini-HIA workshops for their community were, Arkansas Baptist College in Little Rock, City of Batesville, City of Harrison, City of Helena / West Helena, and City of Magnolia. The research project ended in January 2011 and concluded with the published report entitled "Arkansas Growing Healthy Communities: A series of Rapid Health Impact Assessments for Five Arkansas Communities."

## Longitudinal Analysis of HIAs Conducted Around the World

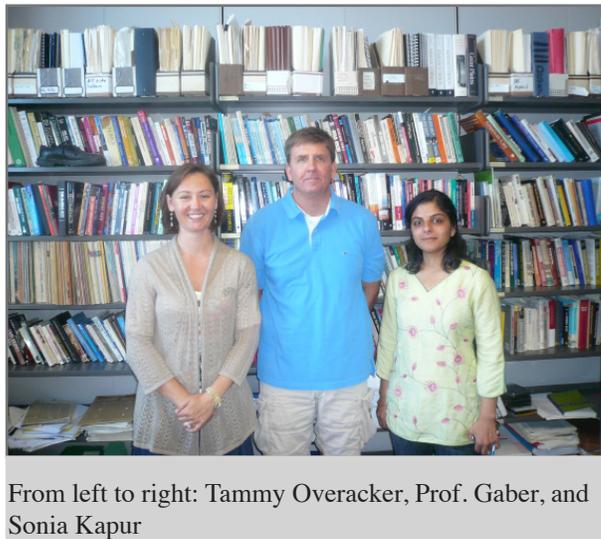
Tammy Overacker is currently building an international HIA database of electronically accessible HIAs conducted around the world starting in 1999. To date a little over 130 HIAs have been collected representing over 13 countries. She presented a joint-authored paper entitled "Meta-analysis of HIAs around the world" at the 2011 International Conference on Health, Wellness & Society held at University of California, Berkeley this past January. The paper provided an international and longitudinal snapshot of HIAs and how they have evolved over time and by country of origin. Over the next year Tammy will be expanding this line of research by adding more HIAs to the database.

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## Health Impact Assessment as a Policy Development Mechanism in South Asia

Sonia Kapur is building on the international HIA database and looking at HIAs as a policy creating mechanism in South Asia. In particular, she is taking a theoretical new institutionalism approach by comparing HIAs conducted in South Asia to HIAs conducted around the world. By isolating regional

variations and differences in how HIAs are implemented, Sonia is exploring the different mechanisms of policy innovation and diffusion in South Asia. It is anticipated that she will present her findings at an international public policy and community health conference sometime in fall 2011.



From left to right: Tammy Overacker, Prof. Gaber, and Sonia Kapur