

Public Policy Bulletin

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Welcome New Students!

Benton Brown - Education Policy



Benton Brown is the Executive Director of the Arkansas Teacher Corps. Benton is a native of Northwest Arkansas and a Teach for America alum who has lived and taught in Northwest Arkansas and the Arkansas Delta. He has experience as a high school math teacher in both Helena-West Helena and Bentonville. Benton earned a Bachelor's degree in political science and sociology from George Washington University and a Master's degree in community and economic development from the University of Central Arkansas. Benton and his wife, Megan, have a dog named Abby.

Kabrina Gardner - Education Policy

Kabrina Gardner serves as the Outreach Support Supervisor for the Arkansas Alumni Association. In her position, she oversees forty Black Alumni Society and LaRew Scholars and works closely with the Black Alumni Society. She has worked in the Division of Advancement at the University of Arkansas since 2009, where she started as an intern. Upon graduating with her bachelor's degree, she became a senior graduate assistant in the division. Kabrina's research interests focus on the intersectionality of socioeconomic status and racial composition as it relates to policies that grant access to higher education. Kabrina is a native of Helena, Arkansas. She earned a B.A. in Psychology and African-American studies and M.Ed. in Higher Education from the University of Arkansas. As an undergraduate, she served as a board member for the Volunteer Action Center and helped create and implement the Campus Food Pantry. She also served as Vice President of Sankofa, the African and African-American Studies social group.





Bryan Hill - Higher Education Policy

Bryan Hill, a native of Louisiana earned a B.S. and M.S. in Industrial Engineering from the University of Arkansas. Currently, Bryan is the Assistant Dean for Student Recruiting, Honors, and International Programs at the University of Arkansas College of Engineering. He is also director of UA Teach, a secondary math and science teacher education program. He has more than 10 years of experience in engineering student recruitment, diversity, and K-12 outreach programs. Bryan Hill is Principal Investigator on grants from NSF, the Department of Education, and the National Math and Science Initiative.

Ryan Mullenix - Public Policy Management

Ryan Mullenix, an Arkansas native from Jonesboro, is a recent graduate of the University of Arkansas School of Law. Prior to earning his J.D., he received a B.S. in Corporate Finance from Arkansas State University. His main academic interest is policymaking in criminal law, especially in the areas of criminal procedure and civil remedies. Additionally, Ryan is interested in (1) policymaking and management by the judiciary; and (2) Arkansas landlord-tenant relations. Ryan serves as a research assistant to U.S. District Court Judge Price Marshall for updating Arkansas's Civil Practice and Procedure treatise. He recently assisted Arkansas State professor Dr. Hans Hacker by coding U.S. Supreme Court memos in a study on the Court's decisions to grant certiorari. While in law school, Ryan externed for U.S. Chief Magistrate, Judge James Marschewski of the Western District of Arkansas. Ryan likes to spend his free time arguing about movies, recording music, being mediocre at guitar and piano, and nerding out (with all that entails). He also enjoys canoeing and camping with his dog Céilidh.



The Public Policy Bulletin is edited by Sonia Kapur. Please email any comments or questions to Dr. Brinck Kerr at jbkerr@uark.edu

Everett A. Smith, a third year doctoral student in the Public Policy Program and Dr. Michael T. Miller, Professor of Higher Education, have spent the past two years involved in a collaborative research project on the role, function, effectiveness, and training of college and university trustees. The research sequence was first identified as an extension of the work Dr. Miller had begun on shared governance in higher education, specifically faculty involvement in governance, and Everett's interest in larger, inter-institutional decision-making.

The first year of the research project involved a significant literature review and the design and testing of a researcher-developed survey instrument. Involving Dr. Adam Morris from the College of Engineering, the three researchers met regularly and mapped out a survey strategy that included nearly 1,000 college administrators.

Data were initially collected from community college and private college leaders, and the first analysis resulted in the publication of "Leadership Perceptions of Trustee Involvement in Private College Decision Making" in the *Journal of Organizational Learning and Leadership* in late 2012.

Everett took primary responsibility for the second round of data analysis, extracting data related to how community college leaders view the current and desired roles and tasks of trustees. He presented his preliminary findings at the 2013 Graduate School From Abstract-to-Concept poster competition, winning second place in his division. He took feedback from the competition, refined his paper, and together with Dr. Miller, presented the findings at the Council for the Study of Community Colleges conference in San Francisco. With additional feedback, the manuscript was then submitted and accepted for publication in 2014, in the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*.

The findings of the community college trustee research project indicated that college leaders see a disconnect between trustee behaviors and actions and what they identify as what trustees should be doing. For example, community college leaders believed that trustees should be focused on engaging in strategic mission development and handling senior personnel matters, but trustees often view their roles as

determining financial priorities and raising money and visibility for an institution.

The third manuscript to be developed relates to comprehensive university administrators and trustees perceptions of the challenges of leading open-access institutions. The conceptual framework of the manuscript was presented as a roundtable discussion at the Critical Questions in Higher

Education conference last year, and the full paper will be submitted for presentation at the 2013-2014 Eastern Education Research Association conference. After receiving feedback, it will be submitted to *Teacher-Scholar* for possible publication.



Dr. Michael T. Miller and Everett A. Smith

Noah Pittman and Everett Smith received first and second place, respectively, for poster presentations at the 2013 From Abstract to Contract: Graduate Student Research and Creative Expression Competition.



Left to right: Dean Todd Shields, Vice Provost James M. Rankin, Noah Pittman, and Provost Sharon Gaber

Noah Pittman's research was entitled "Evaluating the Distributional Effects of the Arkansas Scholarship Lottery." Previous researchers focus on socioeconomic distributional issues with previous lottery scholarship programs. One argument is that people who buy lottery tickets come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and have lower levels of educational attainment. High school graduates who benefit from the program by receiving a lottery scholarship, however, often come from affluent families with parents that have high levels of educational attainment. Noah decided to investigate these relationships with the newly implemented Arkansas scholarship lottery using weighted least squares regression. His county-level data came from two sources: the Arkansas Department of Higher Education's report on the first year of the lottery scholarship program

and the 2010 U.S. Census. The results indicate that counties with higher minority populations and lower levels of bachelor's degree attainment purchased lottery tickets at significantly higher rates than other counties in the state. It was also found that high school graduates from counties with low minority populations and high-levels of bachelor's degree attainment were more successful at securing lottery scholarships. Noah concluded that although the data focused only on the first year of the program, there is already evidence that the Arkansas Scholarship Lottery has some of the same socioeconomic distributional concerns as other statewide lottery scholarship programs.

Everett A. Smith's research was entitled "Presidential Perceptions of Trustee Involvement in College Decision-Making." Community college trustees play a variety of roles in governing their colleges, but there is little consistency in interpreting these actions. Defining the specific responsibilities of trustee involvement has increasingly developed into a priority for community college leaders. The extent to which trustees should be involved in different decision-making processes is crucial for college presidents and leaders, and the ability to use them as a resource to advance the college is important to help ensure the welfare and protect the mission of the college. The research examined the involvement of community college trustees in making key institutional decisions, identifying college leaders' perceptions of trustee involvement in comparison to desired roles that community college leaders prefer. Findings indicated a disconnect between the desired and actual role of trustees, specifically in the area of trustees raising money for the institution, having a voice in curriculum, determining financial priorities, and making decisions on programs of study.



Left to right: Vice Provost James M. Rankin, Everett A. Smith, and Provost Sharon Gaber

Dr. Daniel Chand graduated from the Public Policy Ph.D. Program in 2013 and is currently an Assistant Professor at New Mexico State University.

Dr. Daniel Chand



Dr. Daniel Chand with his mother, Sue Chand

Ph.D. in Public Policy (Policy Management specialization), University of Arkansas, Fayetteville (2013)

Masters of Science in Political Science, Community Development specialization, Illinois State University (2005)

Bachelor of Science in Journalism, Lamar University (2002)

In which department are you presently working and what is your role?

I have just started a tenure-track position at New Mexico State University. I am teaching in the Masters of Public Administration and the undergraduate Political Science programs. This fall I am scheduled to teach American National Government and graduate Research Methods.

What are your current research interests?

Actually, I have found that one of my greatest problems is that I tend to be interested in such a wide variety of topics. While working on my Ph.D. I focused primarily on the political activities of nonprofits. My interest in the topic stems from my community development background and time working with various charitable and public interest groups. Currently, I am researching the use of 501(c)(4)s and super PACs in federal elections following the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United v. FEC (2010) ruling.

I also have several side projects. One of the more interesting ones is an evaluation of local implementation of the federal immigration programs 287(g) and Secure Communities. I started working with this project in Arkansas and am excited to continue examining the issue in southern New Mexico.

What are some other interesting facts about you?

Well, like I said, I tend to be interested in lots of different things, which has kept me quite busy. I am a runner. In fact, I ran a number of half marathons during my time in Fayetteville. I ran the Hogeye Half Marathon several times, and was hoping to finish in the top 10 overall during my last semester at the University of Arkansas. Unfortunately, I came up a little short, but that does give me a reason to return to Fayetteville.

I also love to travel. Now that I am working full time I hope to continue travelling internationally again. At the top of my travel list is a return to southern Africa, where I served as a Peace Corps volunteer from 2006 to 2008. In fact, my Master's thesis was on ecotourism in Africa; so I'd love to begin a new research project in Africa. See, I told you I have a lot of interests.

In March 2013, SPARK partnered with the Political Science Department to organize transportation to the Arkansas Political Science Association (ArkPSA) Conference on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas.



Daniel Chand, Elizabeth E. Smith, and Henry Brooks IV at the ArkPSA Conference

During this conference, four SPARK members presented papers: Karen Sebold, Elizabeth E. Smith, Henry Brooks IV, and Daniel Chand. Karen Sebold presented a co-authored paper (with Dr. Andrew Dowdle and Dr. Joshua Mitchell) titled “The Geography of Political Influence in the 2012 Presidential Nomination: Has the Demise of the Public Finance System Increased the Influence of a Few Densely-Populated States?” during the session on American Politics. Elizabeth E. Smith presented a paper titled “School Funding in Arkansas through the Lens of Lake View,” Henry Brooks IV presented “Food Deserts: Determining Access to Nutritious Foods in Pine Bluff, Arkansas,” and Daniel Chand presented a co-authored paper (with Deborah Brown and Renee Deshommes) titled “287(g) and Social Construction Theory: A Mixed Methods Analysis of Immigration Enforcement in Northwest Arkansas.”

Research and Professional Development (RPD) Series

The Research and Professional Development (RPD) series includes research presentations as well as discussions/presentations on 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 2013. The first session was on “Finding a job after graduation” presented by Dawn Farver, Ph.D. candidate, Civil Engineering, Graduate Assistant with the Graduate School and Career Development Center. At the second session, Camille Ferguson and Joni Teddleton from the University of Arkansas Graduate School and International Education presented on “Preparing your dissertation for (final) submission.”

The Spring 2013 Capstone course focused on organizing efforts and identifying ways to garner support from university students to eliminate exposure to second-hand smoke for residents of Washington and Benton Counties

The Capstone course is intended to integrate various policy interests in a specific community-based project. An intrinsic component of this course is the appreciation of interdisciplinary factors affecting policy research and decisions. The course integrates various policy interests in a specific community-based project. Students in 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.



Capstone member Erika Gergerich with
Dr. Valerie Hunt

The Spring 2013 Capstone project was on the Northwest Arkansas Tobacco Free Coalition which is a group that seeks to eliminate exposure to second-hand smoke for residents in Washington and Benton Counties. The coalition is composed of members from various health organizations, including HOPE Cancer Resources, the Health Department, Community Clinic, and the Prevention Resource Center.

In 2003, the Fayetteville City Council passed an ordinance banning smoking in restaurants and bars that serve food. Bars that do not serve food were exempted from this ban. The ordinance was passed by voters in 2004.

In 2011, an amendment was proposed to remove the exemption for bars. This amendment was not approved by the Fayetteville City Council.

The coalition hopes to again propose a ban on smoking in Fayetteville bars in 2013. In an attempt to gain local support for such a ban, the coalition requested assistance in organizing their efforts and identifying ways to garner support from University students. These were the goals set for spring 2013 capstone project. In 2011, three meetings were held before the city council to allow for public comment on the proposed amendment to ban smoking in Fayetteville bars. Recordings of these meetings were transcribed. These transcripts, a review of local media coverage, and interviews with three city council members were used to identify a comprehensive list of arguments for and against the proposed policy.

In addition to this information, the coalition requested that a focused group discussion be conducted with university students in an attempt to discover what arguments (on both sides of the issue) resonate with this particular population. Following a pre-screening survey, a small focused group was composed of students who were 21 years of age or older, bargaining, non-smokers, and “on the fence” concerning the issue of a potential ban on smoking in Fayetteville bars. The coalition plans to use the results of this focused group to more effectively reach out to the student population on this issue.

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