

Public Policy Bulletin

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Welcome New Students!



Christopher Harris- Higher Education Policy

Chris is a first-generation college student from Arkadelphia, Arkansas. He completed his B.G.S. in Social Sciences at Henderson State University, and an M.A. in Political Science at Arkansas State University. While at Arkansas State, Chris served as the President of Pi Gamma Mu and Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Societies. He has undertaken numerous research projects and has presented papers at professional conferences. His research interests are on the effects of internationalized American higher education on ethno-religious tensions in fractionalized countries.

Marei Houpert- Agricultural Policy

Marei is originally from Heidelberg, Germany. There she obtained a masters level degree in Business Administration with a specialization in Agricultural Trade from the University of Applied Sciences. She started her next degree program at Ghent University in Belgium. The International Master of Science in Rural Development is supported by the European Commission and is a joint degree. To earn this degree she also studied at the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra and attended summer school at University of Pisa in Italy. In addition to her European experience, she came to University of Arkansas to complete her Masters in Agricultural Economics. Her research interests are mainly in international agricultural policy and markets, agricultural prices and income of farmers, as well as the role of agriculture in developing countries and how agriculture is affected by trade policy. Back home in Germany she spent a lot of time with her student equestrian team competing in inter-collegiate competitions.



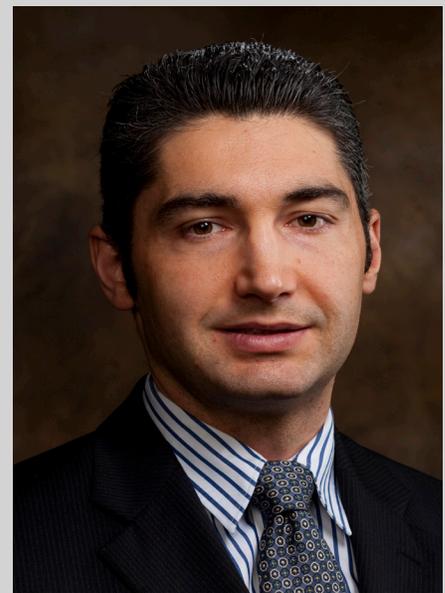
Sergio Santamaria- Policy Management



Originally from Spain, Sergio graduated with honors in 2004 from the Walton College at the University of Arkansas with an MBA in Finance. He has a BSBA and a Bachelor in Actuarial and Financial Sciences from the University Carlos III in Madrid, Spain. Besides holding his series 65 NASD license, he is a Chartered Financial Analyst and Chartered Market Technician. He has worked as a research associate at the University of Arkansas since 2006. Previously, he was an investment analyst and portfolio manager at Garrison Financial Advisors, a Fayetteville-based investment firm. His former professional experience includes different sales positions at Banesto and Avalmadrid, two major Spanish financial institutions. In July 2010 he began serving on the board of the CFA Society of Arkansas, where he has recently taken the position of Vice President. His research interests include the implications of prevalent income inequality and how policymakers utilize educational and tax policies to relieve social and economic differences.

Ventsi Stamenov- Policy Management

Ventsi Stamenov is a native of Bulgaria. He received his MBA from the Walton College of Business, University of Arkansas, and his Masters in International Economic Relations from the University of National and World Economy in Sofia, Bulgaria. He also has two professional designations – Chartered Financial Analyst and Chartered Market Technician. For the past 8 years, Ventsi has been working as a portfolio manager and investment analyst for Garrison Financial Institute in the Walton College of Business where he manages money for the University of Arkansas endowment. He also teaches Financial Modeling, Financial Analysis, and Portfolio Management classes. Before that, he worked for almost two years as a portfolio manager for Garrison Financial Advisors. Ventsi's research interests are income inequality and he is planning on publishing a paper on the factors that affect income inequality in Arkansas.



Dr. Sonia Kapur recently defended her dissertation, “Individual, Organizational, and Policy Related Aspects of Immigration and Domestic Violence: The Perspectives of Advocates Working with Asian Indian Marriage Migrants.” She and Dr. Anna Zajicek have been working together since 2010. The impetus behind this study and its three-article format was the lack of research examining the experiences of Asian Indian women who migrated to the U.S. with the goal of family unification.

Under the three-article format, different aspects of the Asian Indian marriage migrant experience with domestic violence, are explored in separate, journal-specific manuscripts.

The findings have practical implications for non-profit organizations that serve marriage migrants experiencing domestic violence and for domestic violence-related social policies, especially the Violence Against Women Act. In addition, by showing that Asian Indian marriage migrants are not a monolithic group and by shedding light on considerable variations in their experiences, the study makes theoretical contributions to the intersectionality perspective.

While reviewing her experiences with the three-article dissertation, Dr. Kapur said “As a student pursuing such a format for the dissertation, I believe I faced certain challenges and advantages. A major challenge was how best to develop three stand-alone articles while building each article on the findings from the two other manuscripts comprising the dissertation. I believe the key to successful accomplishment of such a research project is a well-developed plan at the inception stages. At the completion of this research, the advantage is that I have ‘killed two birds with one stone’ as I have a dissertation and three manuscripts ready for publication.”



Dr. Anna Zajicek and Dr. Sonia Kapur

Asked about the meaning of student-faculty collaboration and the experience with a three-article dissertation format from the faculty perspective, Dr. Zajicek emphasized that collaborations are always centered around student needs, especially their professional development. While a three-article format may be slightly more challenging to conceptualize than a traditional dissertation, it better

prepares students to engage in the type of writing that will be expected of them in the academy. This format not only enables students to develop the specific skills necessary to make a manuscript publishable, it also enhances their chances to be hired and meet subsequent publication requirements. Dr. Kapur is the first PUBP student who has completed a three-article dissertation under Dr. Zajicek.

Currently, Dr. Zajicek collaborates with two PUBP students, Kalynn Amundson and Rodica Lisnic, on three-article dissertations.

Asked about how this research contributed to her personal development, Dr. Kapur shared: “Growing up in India in a highly gender stratified society and having worked for non-profit organizations, I was exposed to issues of domestic violence. However, conducting this research about the problem of domestic violence among Asian Indians settled in the United States has highlighted that the problems for the Asian Indian marriage migrants are broader and more complex than what existing explanations articulate. I hope my future research will further advance knowledge to better address the problem of domestic violence in Asian Indian communities.”

Dr. Karen Sebold graduated from the Public Policy Ph.D. Program in 2013 and is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.



Dr. Karen Sebold

Dr. Karen Sebold

Ph.D., Public Policy, University of Arkansas, August 2013

M.A., Political Science, University of Arkansas, August 2008

B.A., Political Science and History, Rogers State University, Claremore, OK, May 2005

A.S., Political Science, Coffeyville Community College, Coffeyville, KS, May 1997

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

I am a Clinical Assistant Professor in the political science department at the U of A. My areas of expertise include the evolution of the campaign finance system and the presidential nomination process; the evolution of the institutional Congress; Public Administration and Public Policy; and American National Government. I have taught political science at the University of Arkansas since 2006. I currently teach the Congress simulation and a money politics course that involves a hands-on research project.

What are your current research interests?

I co-authored a book titled "The Invisible Hand of Political Parties in Presidential Elections" in 2013 and have published several articles in various areas including campaign finance and presidential personality in PS: Political Science and Politics and White House Studies. I have also worked on the Clinton History Project, and am currently working on my second co-authored book "The Political Geography of Campaign Finance: Fundraising and Contribution Patterns In Presidential Elections, 2004-2012." In this book, we examine the Federal Election Commission's records in order to determine geographic patterns of donor contributions to presidential campaigns, both at the national level and within key states such as California and Texas. This book is unique because it covers multiple elections (2004, 2008 and 2012) and both the presidential nomination process and the general election. It makes an important contribution in helping scholars understand individual donor behavior and how presidential campaigns court these donors. Finally, I recently participated in a lecture series on the dysfunctional world of Congress with former U.S. Senator David Pryor at the Osher Lifelong Learning Center and will conduct a lecture series in the fall on money and politics.

What are some other interesting facts about you?

I have been involved in SPARK and Sigma XI. I am a married, mother of three sons, ages 12-23. In my spare time, my husband David and I love to garden, remodel our home, and hike and bike. I was born in Fayetteville and raised in Springdale and I am very grateful to live and work in a vibrant community like Fayetteville and to remain on the UA campus where the student population is energetic and diverse. I love "calling the Hogs" and listening to sports radio.

On August 28th, SPARK members met in Old Main to elect a new president, new officers, and discuss future activities. There was a mix of new and senior Public Policy students. The new SPARK committee officers elected were Britni Ayers (president), Jonathan Langer (secretary), and NeCol Whitehead (student representative).

Henry Brooks has been the president since 2012. Since Henry has been president, SPARK has met twice a semester either in the home of a fellow SPARK member, on campus, at Tim's Pizza, or Hog Haus on Dickson. SPARK has been a good way for students to come together and discuss their diverse experiences with the interdisciplinary Public Policy Ph.D. program.

The new officers hope to have regular meetings and provide a venue for discussing academic topics and provide an overall cohesion to the SPARK Public Policy students. This fall we hope to organize a fundraiser, activities, and encourage participation in academic conferences. Our next meeting will be at the Hog Haus on the 16th of October at 6pm to vote on a fundraiser and discuss the upcoming Arkansas Political Science Association conference in Conway. There will be an announcement about the meeting at the first of the month.

Special Announcement

NeCol Whitehead, Ph.D. candidate in PUBP, has been elected to serve as the student representative on the PUBP Faculty Committee.

The next PUBP faculty meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 31st from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. If you have concerns or questions about PUBP, please contact NeCol before the meeting. Her email address is dnwhite@uark.edu.



New and senior Public Policy Students



Outgoing SPARK president Henry Brooks IV



New and senior Public Policy Students

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.

In the Spring of 2014, Camille Ferguson and Joni Teddleton with the Graduate School and International Education (GSIE), presided over the Research and Professional Development (RPD) seminar entitled “Preparing your Thesis or Dissertation for submission to GSIE.” All program candidates must go through this submission process. We are both thankful for Camille and Joni’s presentation as well as for the positive response from the students.



From left to right: Joni Teddleton, Camille Johnson, Dr. Valerie Hunt, and Dr. Brinck Kerr



From left to right: Erika Gergerich, Amanda Krotke-Crandall, and Michael Flanigan

Upcoming RPD Sessions

Friday, November 14 (11:30 a.m. -1:00 p.m. in Old Main 523) - Kalynn Amundson, PUBP Ph.D. Candidate, will present her dissertation research. The title of her talk is “Turning welfare recipients into drug abusers: An analysis of social construction in welfare drug-testing policies.”

Friday, November 21 (12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. in Old Main 523) – Jason Thorne, U of A Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) office, will preside over a seminar on the management of graduate student stressors.

Food and beverages will be provided. We hope that you will be able to join us!

*This Public Policy Bulletin is edited by Jonathan Langner. Please email any comments or questions to
Dr. Brinck Kerr at [jlbkerr@uark.edu](mailto:jbkerr@uark.edu)*

For the Spring 2014 Capstone Project, Pearl McElfish and Paxton Roberts worked with the Northwest Arkansas Council to develop a matrix to measure the success of the regional trail system.

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.

The Spring 2014 Capstone Project developed a matrix to measure the success of the regional trail system. The Northwest Arkansas Planning Commission (NWARPC) started the effort to create a long-range regional trails vision in 2000 with a task force dedicated to conducting public meetings and leading a community effort to build trail awareness. Funding to make the vision a reality was buoyed by a catalytic \$15 million contribution from the Walton Family Foundation in 2009 and a \$15 million federal TIGER II grant in 2010. The surge in trail building has created about 60+ miles of finished paved trails and just under 100 miles of mountain biking/hiking trails in Benton and Washington counties. Plans include adding another 100+ miles of paved trails and dozens of miles of mountain biking and hiking trails in the next 5 years.

In late 2013, the Northwest Arkansas Council hired a regional trails coordinator, created a Regional Trails Advisory Board, and developed a five-year strategic plan. However, little detail was provided on how to measure success and specifically how to operationalize the outcome variables of goals and objectives outlined in the plan. For their Capstone Project, McElfish and Roberts undertook three major project areas:

1. They researched information on potential peer trails to provide best practices information in a case study format.
2. They worked with the trail coordinator to identify the goals and objectives that were the most difficult to operationalize and created recommendations on how to gather and report these measures. Specifically, they created data capture tools and process recommendations.
3. They did extensive research on other trails' evaluation tools and matrices and provide these in

a tool kit of best practices documents that the trail coordinator could draw upon.

As a result of their Capstone project the Northwest Arkansas Council and the regional trails coordinator will be able to better measure success based on clear measures of success and best practices of other regional trails.

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



(left to right): Missy, Trails Coordinator for NWA Council, (Capstone members) Paxton Roberts, and Pearl McElfish