

Public Policy Bulletin

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Meet Some of our New Students!

Dhia Ben Ali- Public Policy Management



Dhia is originally from Tunisia. He first came to the U.S. as a Fulbright scholar where he taught for a year at Drury University in Springfield, Missouri. He then got a scholarship from the King Fahd Center to continue his master's degree in political science at the University of Arkansas. Most of his research is focused on non-governmental and civil society organizations and their role in advancing democracy in the Middle East and North Africa. Just after the Tunisian Revolution, Dhia worked for two years for the International Republican Institute as a program coordinator, then as program manager. He also completed a two-semester internship with Impact Management Group, a public affairs firm in Little Rock.

Roslina Binti Ali- Agricultural Policy

Roslina is originally from Malaysia. She started her career as an agricultural economist and researcher for the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry. Later, she served as a committee member in the Malaysian Agricultural Economics Association (MAEA) where she led a number of research projects for both public and private research grants. Roslina has published numerous articles and book chapters. She has presented papers at several international conferences. Additionally, she has earned several research awards from MARDI during annual innovation events. Roslina graduated with a master's degree in agricultural economics from the University of Arkansas in 2008. Her research interests include food security, food marketing chains, and food policy. She found her work with MARDI valuable in contributing to policy decisions and formulation for the agricultural sector. Roslina's studies focus on the integration of agricultural policy and economics.



New Students Cont'd

Jennifer Dean- Education Policy



Jen received a B.A. in Journalism from the University of Texas at Arlington (2005) and an M.A. in Teaching (2014) from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Prior to her current professional and scholarly roles, Jen was the National Research Assistant at 826 National. In addition to working for several non-profit cultural organizations, Jen is currently teaching English at Fulbright Junior High in Bentonville. Jen's research seeks to link public policy and education in several areas. Her work examines the confluence of the charter school movement and the resurgence of segregation in public education. Additionally, she writes and researches on the implementation of national educational policy standards in the classroom. Her research interests also include examining legislation facilitating parent involvement in their child's school.

Nicholas Robbins- Health Policy

Nik is from Van Buren, Arkansas. He holds a bachelor's degree with a major in Sociology and a combined major in Political Science and European Studies from the University of Arkansas, and a master's degree in Political Science, also from the University of Arkansas. As an undergraduate, Nik studied German, and he is interested in German models of sustainable development. His main research interest is urban farming and community gardens, an example of which is Fayetteville's own Tri Cycle Farms, where Nik often does volunteer work.



Angela Uchechukwu Nwude- Community Development



Angela "Ella" Uchechukwu Nwude holds a Diploma in Educational Management from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, an LL.B. degree, with Honors, from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, and an LL.M degree in Agriculture and Food Law from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Angela has a rich professional experience as a licensed attorney in Nigeria, where she served as an Associate Attorney with Ossai and Co. and Hill City Associates as well as the Head of the legal department in Lease 8 Company Ltd. Prior to her acceptance into the PhD program in Public Policy, she served as an assistant to the Director of the Africa Trade desk and External Communication at the Arkansas World Trade Center. Angela is a member of the Nigerian Bar Association; the American Agricultural Law Association; the Organization of Women in International Trade; Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators, United Kingdom; and the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Nigeria. Angela works for the office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor of

Academic Affairs as a Graduate Assistant, and she is currently working on developing a curriculum on academic initiatives and integrity for international students at the University of Arkansas. She has an unquenchable interest and passion for public service and sustainable economic development for developing nations. Her academic interests lie primarily in community development policy, particularly in relation to natural resource exploitation in developing countries.

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 Fall of 2014, Kalynn Amundson, PUBP Ph.D. candidate, presented her dissertation research. The title of her talk was “Analysis of Social Construction in Welfare Drug Testing Policy: A Collaborative Approach.” She discussed details involved with data collection in a study of the discourse of public policy-makers.

We are thankful for Kalynn’s presentation as well as the positive response from the students.



From left to right: Dr. Anna Zajicek and Kalynn Amundson.



From left to right: Dr. Brinck Kerr, Dr. Geoboo Song, and Dr. Margaret Reid.

Upcoming RPD Sessions

The second spring session will focus on the processes involved with conducting a community-based policy project. Topics will include community engagement, data collection, and stakeholder organization.

Title: “Age-Friendly Fayetteville: Community-based policy research”

Presented by Dr. Jean Henry and Dr. Alishia Ferguson

April 24th, Old Main 523, at 1pm

Lunch will be served.

Nathan Kemper is a current student in the Public Policy Ph.D. program preparing to complete all requirements by the end of the year. His specialization emphasizes food policy economics and the marketing and policy implications of genetic modification food labeling regimes. Nathan and Dr. Jennie Popp, his dissertation director, have collaborated on a number of projects beginning 10 years ago when Dr. Popp served as Nathan's master's thesis advisor. That project focused on the economics of water quality management in the Illinois River Basin. Post-graduation, Mr. Kemper took a position as research program associate working with Dr. Popp. From 2005-2009, Kemper and Popp worked together on a number of projects focusing on economic impact analysis, water quality, agricultural sustainability, recreation/tourism and regional development. Their collaborations in the area of genetically modified (GM) foods began in 2008, as part of their work with the



Nathan Kemper and Dr. Jennie Popp

Center for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability at the U of A. Popp and Kemper along with two others edited a book titled, *The Role of Biotechnology in a Sustainable Food Supply*. The book was an outcome of a workshop of the same name where authors and stakeholders from a variety of different backgrounds came together to discuss the challenge of creating an efficient system to provide sustainable food and fuel from the land whilst also preserving biodiversity and ecosystems. Feeding a world population that is expected to grow to more than nine billion by mid-century presents an enormous challenge and agricultural biotechnology is one tool that holds potential promise to alleviate hunger and poverty.

However, there are complex and interrelated scientific, social, political and ethical questions regarding the widespread use of biotechnology in the food supply. The edited book by Popp and Kemper discusses diverse perspectives on sustainable food production systems in terms of challenges, opportunities, success stories, barriers and risks associated with agricultural and food biotechnology.

In 2014 Mr. Kemper took a faculty position with the Agricultural Economics Department at the U of A and he and Dr. Popp are once again working on research relating to biotechnology. Kemper is co-PI on a

project funded by the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board to better understand the demand for non-genetically modified (GM) food products in order to assess the opportunities for Arkansas soybean farmers. Part of this project serves as the basis for Nathan's dissertation. Roughly 50% of Americans prefer to consume

non-GM foods over GM foods and consistently state a willingness-to-pay (WTP) a premium to avoid GM foods. However, this apparent reservoir of non-GM demand has not translated into large numbers of non-GM products being offered. This "gap" between demand and supply could partly be explained by the methods used to elicit WTP. Our project aims to better understand the non-GM market while at the same time exploring methods to provide more accurate WTP estimates of non-GM premiums. The team is also exploring the use of voluntary non-GM labeling programs (e.g. Non-GMO Project) versus federally mandatory labeling of GM ingredients and the policy and market outcomes associated with these respective regulatory frameworks.

Student Achievements

This section of the newsletter highlights notable achievement by students in the Public Policy program. Bryan Hill and Alexander Villaraga both received recognition for outstanding work in their fields.

Bryan Hill, Assistant Dean for Student Recruitment and Diversity, Honors and International Programs in the College of Engineering, and doctoral student in Public Policy, was one of three finalists selected for the 2014 GEDC Airbus Diversity Award. The three 2014 finalists were selected from more than 20 candidates from 12 countries. As a finalist, Hill presented his work in diversity to a distinguished jury at the World Education in Engineering Forum in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on December 3.

The award is sponsored by Airbus, a leading aircraft manufacturer, and the Global Engineering Dean's Council. It recognizes individuals who have proactively introduced more diversity into their engineering institutions, as well as initiatives that encourage students of all profiles and backgrounds to study and succeed in engineering. The long-term aim of the award is to increase diversity among the global community of

engineers so that the engineering industry reflects the diversity of the communities it supports.

Hill directs the Engineering Career Awareness Program, or ECAP, a College of Engineering initiative designed to recruit underrepresented, financially needy students into engineering, and give those students the support they need to graduate and begin engineering careers. ECAP provides financial assistance, as well as a summer bridge program and a network of academic and social support.

"We are all very proud that Airbus and the GEDC have recognized Bryan's contributions to diversity in the College of Engineering," said Dean John English. "He has been an integral part of the ECAP team from the beginning, and the strengths and skills he has brought to the program have been a major contributor to its success. Bryan's dedication to the cause, his networking and leadership abilities,

his organizational skills and his aptitude for research and data-gathering have made this program what it is: a model program on our campus and beyond."



Bryan Hill in front of Burj Khalifa, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

In the Fall of 2014 nearly 140 graduate students took part in the Graduate School's competition entitled "From Abstract to Contract." Alexander Villarraga won first place in the Education category.

The subject of his project was: "Educational Effects of State Actions Banning Access to In-State Resident Tuition Rates for Unauthorized Immigrant Students." The research evaluates the effects of state laws banning access to in-state resident tuition (ISRT) rates and other educational benefits for unauthorized immigrant students (UIS) in five states: Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, and Ohio. It measures the overall effect of policies denying ISRT that were implemented between 2005-2012.

Three potential effects are evaluated. First, the study estimates the policy effects on the college enrollment of UIS. Second, the policy effects on school drop out rates among unauthorized immigrants are estimated. Finally, the research estimates the effects of banning ISRT access for UIS on the enrollment of citizens and legal residents in higher education.

To answer the research questions a multivariate regression difference-in-differences identification strategy is advanced through the construction of a natural quasi-experiment using as the main data source the American Community Survey. The research finds significant negative policy effects on the college attendance rates of Hispanic foreign-born non-citizens who are highly likely to be unauthorized immigrants in policy states compared to their peers in non-policy states. The results also indicate that among the groups analyzed, policies have mainly affected recent high school graduates. With regard to dropping out of school, no statistically significant evidence was found to support the hypothesis of dynamic effects of the policies on the enrollment of unauthorized immigrants in secondary education. This research finds no evidence of college attendance benefits for U.S.-born citizens associated with the ISRT policy, save for suggestive evidence for African-American men.



SPARK News

In August 2014, SPARK gathered for their first meeting of the 2014-15 school year and new officers were elected. They are: Britni Ayers (president), Jonathan Langner (secretary), and NeCol Whitehead (student representative). In October, the group met to discuss possible avenues of creating charitable events, the upcoming ArkPSA conference, and to informally welcome new policy students.

Also in October, NeCol Whitehead attended the faculty meeting as PUBP student representative and formally suggested the creation of a support group for post-candidacy PUBP students.

The Public Policy Program recently welcomed two new Professors to its faculty. Below are brief descriptions of Dr. Chris Goering's and Dr. Timothy Killian's roles in the program as well as other interesting information about their academic and personal lives.



Dr. Chris Goering

Professional:

Dr. Chris Goering taught high school English and leadership courses at Washburn Rural High School in Topeka, Kansas before attending Kansas State University for a Ph.D. His special interests are helping secondary level students become interested and engaged in writing and reading through using popular music, helping teachers develop literacies in their students, and providing authentic writing opportunities for teacher-writers. He's currently the Co-Editor of SIGNAL Journal, Director of the Northwest Arkansas Writing Project and Center for Children and Youth, and Coordinator of English and Theatre/Speech Education.

Goering has authored or co-authored several articles and book chapters in the field of English education and education policy. In 2012, he was honored as the Klemmer Distinguished Lecturer at Washburn University and from 2010-2012 served on the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Secondary Section Steering Committee. He is a National Board Certified Teacher (2006-2016) in English/Language Arts/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, a former National Council of Teachers of English High School Teacher of Excellence (2004), and Judith C. Gilbert Outstanding Writing Teacher (2004). He was recognized by the College of Education & Health Professions with awards for Superior Service (2011) and Faculty STAR (2010).

Goering counts advising doctoral students amongst the most interesting and rewarding parts of his work at the University of Arkansas. He's worked with students in Curriculum & Instruction, English, and Public Policy. In 2012, Goering started EduSanity along with colleague Jason Endacott, a blog with the mission of promoting civil discourse in education. He blogs for Huffington Post and his public writing is frequently reprinted by the National Education Policy Center. Goering teaches two graduate courses that offer Public Policy students an opportunity to explore aspects of progressive education policy and analysis: 1) CIED 5843: Representations of Education in Popular Film is a course that takes up a consideration of school films from several lenses, ultimately providing a model to analyze these and other cultural artifacts in academic ways (offered next in spring of 2017); and 2) CIED 694V: Progressive Education Policy (offered fall of 2015) critically examines the ways in which the policy narrative is being held hostage by privateers and those who do not have the best interest of children in mind.

Personal:

Goering enjoys a number of activities outside of his work in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, but none more than spending time with his partner and best friend, Emily and their 1 year-old daughter Katie Virginia. In 2009 he released a full-length compact disc of original music titled Where He's Going.

Dr. Timothy Killian

Professional:

Tim Killian received his Ph.D. from the University of Missouri in 2001. His interests focus on family relationships and intergenerational exchanges between adult children and their aging parents. In particular, he has focused on how variations in family structures are predictive of perceived obligations of upward intergenerational transfers of resources that include financial, caregiving, and other resources of exchange. In addition, he attempts to understand how active exchange relationships are related to aging well for older persons.

As the population is rapidly aging, his research has also focused on how social and physical engagement in activities is related to aging well, especially for those in long-term care. Persons in long-term care are particularly vulnerable to social isolation emphasizing the importance of providing opportunities for social connection in ways that validate their personal identities and histories. As the aging population is increasingly comprised of baby-boomers, Dr. Killian has begun to examine how technology facilitates or fails to facilitate the social connections linked to positive aging.

Dr. Killian's work has been funded by the USDA for his research on intergenerational exchanges. Additionally, Mather Lifeways has funded his inquiries into older persons' use of social media. He is active in the Gerontological Society of America and the National Conference of Family Relations. He teaches classes on human development, aging, and statistics.

Personal:

In his off time, he enjoys spending time with his wife and two young children.



*This Public Policy Bulletin is edited by Jonathan Langner.
Please email any comments or questions to
Dr. Brinck Kerr at jbkerr@uark.edu*

For the Fall 2014 Capstone Project, Britni Ayers, Nathan Kemper, and Lindsay Turner worked with the University's Full Circle Food Pantry to develop a framework to measure food security on campus.

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 Fall 2014 Capstone Project developed a framework for analysis of food security on the University of Arkansas (UA) campus. The characteristics of our state and the emerging awareness of food insecurity on college campuses makes this project a prime topic for analysis on the UA campus. Households in Arkansas currently have the second highest level of food insecurity nationwide and the highest level during the three year period of 2011-2013. To address food insecurity on the UA campus, the UA Full Circle Food Pantry has provided emergency food assistance to students, staff, and faculty since February 2011 in the form of two-to-three day supplies of food and personal products including household cleaning and personal hygiene items. Full Circle is student run under the Volunteer Action Center which is part of the Vice Provost for Student Affairs Office and was established to present a dignified environment to provide food assistance to anyone with a university ID. However, there was no research



Employees at the University of Arkansas Full Circle Food Pantry restock shelves.

on the food pantry or the prevalence or awareness of food insecurity on the UA campus. To address these needs, Ayers, Kemper, and Turner conducted three major areas of analysis. The team:

1. Conducted an extensive analysis of established food pantries on college campuses to contextually understand Full Circle. This was highly beneficial and presented a backdrop for a more comprehensive analysis of the issue at hand.
2. Worked with Full Circle and implemented qualitative in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and volunteers within Full Circle to understand the current policies and procedures of the establishment and better understand the experience of their patrons.
3. Employed and analyzed a quantitative survey of nearly 500 college students to establish both the prevalence and awareness of food insecurity on UA campus and to identify characteristics that put students at a greater risk of being food insecure.

As a result of their Capstone project, the framework was established to regularly assess UA campus food security prevalence, awareness, and response by: 1) monitoring the level of food insecurity among students, staff, and faculty, 2) evaluating campus response to alleviate food insecurity, and 3) using key attributes to identify high-risk populations on campus. Additionally, the Capstone team will be presenting their research at the Arkansas Political Science Association conference in Conway this semester and intend on submitting their research for publication this summer.

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