



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
VIRGINIA TECH.

SPIA Community December Update

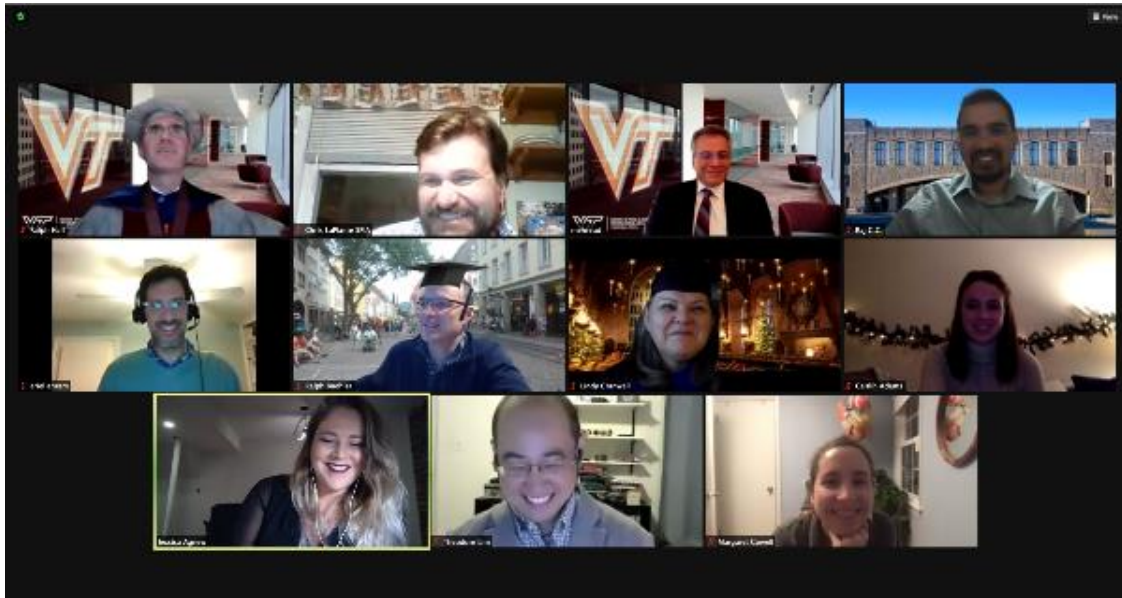
Dear SPIA Students, Faculty, Staff, and Alumni:

2020 was an extraordinary year due to a worldwide pandemic, large-scale civil protests, and a polarizing presidential election. As an academic institution, we had to switch to online teaching on short notice, while addressing the many challenges that we and our families were facing. One difficulty was the retirement and departure of five experienced staff members, which required a good amount of administrative reorganization. The Black Lives Matter movement also brought light to issues at our school and our university. In the midst of these challenges, our faculty, staff, and students conducted themselves with professionalism and care. I want to express my deep thanks to all of you for all that you accomplished and for your unwavering commitment to public service.

The American author Earl Nightingale (1921–1989) once said, “persistence is to the character of man what carbon is to steel.” Those SPIA students who graduated this year proved their persistence beyond any doubt and we salute them for that.

I wish everyone health, joy, and peace this holiday season.

Sincerely,
Mehrzaad Boroujerdi
SPIA Director



Congratulations to SPIA #Hokies graduating Fall 2020! We celebrate your academic achievements, especially during a time where you were challenged to adapt to extreme change. *(The photo above is from the SPIA graduation party held on December 18, 2020.)*



Spread the word about SPIA!

- Have you seen the buses spreading the good news about SPIA in the Washington D.C. Metro area? If so, snap a pic and post it on social with **#ispyVTSPIA @VTSPIA**
- Because it is an uncertain time for many, VT SPIA is waiving application fees for a limited time. Encourage those you know to use code **SPIA_2021** when applying.

Faculty and Student News

Nada Berrada (ASPECT Ph.D. program) successfully defended her dissertation (Dec. 14, 2020) entitled “Contextualizing Everyday Practices of Agency: Young Moroccans Navigating Life Spaces.” Dr. Max Stephenson, Jr., chaired Nada’s advisory committee. Nada is an SPIA alumna and current President of the Community Change Collaborative. Congratulations Dr. Berrada!

Mehrzad Boroujerdi published “Rethinking the Legacy of Intellectual-Statesmen in Iran,” in Ramin Jahanbegloo, ed., *Mapping the Role of Intellectuals in Iranian Modern and Contemporary History* (Lexington Books, 2020), pp. 111-127.



Ralph Buehler (Professor, UAP) published a book [review](#) in *European Planning Studies*, and his research on sustainable transportation was [featured](#) in Inside Climate News. He was interviewed by a local ABC-affiliate TV station (WJLA) and a local radio station (WMAL) about budget cuts for Metro, and [commented](#) on the effects of COVID-19 on travel behavior in VT News.

Professor Buehler also presented his work on cyclists fatalities during the Danish Cycling Embassy's [webinar](#) "Pop-up infra from Berlin to Bogota—what’s the status?" with co-presenters from Germany, Ireland, and Colombia.

Lindy Cranwell (PGG Ph.D. program) successfully defended her dissertation (December 17, 2020) entitled, “University Comprehensive Internationalization (CI): Faculty Meaning-Making, Motivations, and Perceptions for Engaging Globally.” Professor Max Stephenson, Jr., SPIA and VTIPG Director, chaired Lindy’s committee and Professor Ralph Hall was a committee member. Congratulations Dr. Cranwell!

Karen Hult (Professor, CPAP) [commented](#) on the Virginia gubernatorial race for NBC 10 News.

Congratulations to G.C., **Raj Kumar** (PGG) for successfully defending (Nov. 30) his dissertation entitled “Exploring the Potential of Multiple-Use Water Services for Smallholder Farmers in the Western Middle Hills of Nepal.” Dr. Ralph Hall served as his dissertation advisor.

Gerard Toal [commented](#) on the political situation in Belarus at a virtual event hosted by New York University’s Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia and the Harriman Institute at Columbia University.



Shahidur Rashid Talukdar (PhD candidate, CPAP) won the Best Student Paper Award at the annual meeting of the Northeast Conference on Public Administration in mid-November. Shahidur's paper is part of his in-progress dissertation that he is writing under the supervision of **Professors Karen Hult** and **Tom Skuzinski**.

New Staff



Elia Amegashie will be joining SPIA as of January 10, 2021 as Graduate Enrollment Coordinator/Academic Advisor in our Arlington campus. In this capacity, she will be responsible for providing information and support for students seeking graduate education primarily in the Washington Metro Region and the Richmond Campus.

Elia resides in Woodbridge, Virginia with her husband Ebenezer and two children, Camilla and Alexander. When she is not spending time with her family and friends, she enjoys working out, cooking, and traveling. While on a soccer scholarship to Liberty University, she obtained a BS in Health Education, and an MA in Human Service Management. She first discovered her passion for supporting students in 2014 while working as an Education Coordinator for the University of Maryland. Five years of experience supporting students and educational departments has laid the foundation for Elia's strong skill set in program management, counseling, and workforce development.

Elia is a proponent of servant leadership; she is dedicated to serving and helping others. With a passion for higher education and graduate program support, she is thrilled to join SPIA as an asset for students, faculty, and program services. Elia also looks forward to representing the 'Hokie nation' as her brother, husband, and sister-in-law are VT alumni!

Departures

Dr. [Elizabeth Morton](#) (Associate Professor of Practice, UAP) is leaving SPIA at the end of this semester after fifteen years of service. An expert in urban design and historic preservation, Elizabeth taught such courses as Arts, Culture and Society; Topics in City Design Policy; and Urban Design Studio at our Northern Virginia Campus.

Dr. [Randall \(Randy\) S. Murch](#), a Professor of Practice at SPIA, will be retiring from the university on December 31, 2020 after sixteen years of service. Randy, an expert on biosecurity, worked as a Special Agent and Senior Executive at the FBI for 23 years and was a Research Staff Member at the Institute for Defense Analyses for two years.

Eunju Namkung (MPA '20 and MURP) has been helping lead SPIA's marketing and communications activities as a graduate assistant and as a Ridenour Faculty Fellow for nearly 3 years. She was instrumental in implementing SPIA's new website and CRM system. She designed paid advertisement for buses, magazines, and more. She revived SPIA's social channels, including starting the [LinkedIn](#) community of 400+ followers and 100+ alumni. Overall, she served as a steward of SPIA's brand and aligned our strategies with those of the College and University.

On behalf of everyone at SPIA, I would like to thank Elizabeth, Randy and Eunju for their tremendous contributions to SPIA over the years and wish every one of them the best in their future endeavors.

Advisor Spotlight



I am Chris LaPlante and am the Undergraduate Academic Advisor for the School of Public and International Affairs. I advise the Environmental Policy and Planning majors and minors, the Smart and Sustainable Cities majors and minors, and the Community Systems and Engagement minors. I have served as the Undergraduate Advisor since Spring 2016. The one thing that all of the students I advise have in common is that they want to make a difference in the world – they want to make a positive contribution. It's a privilege for me to be part of their journey to discover how they're going to go about doing that.

I am thankful that there's a significant emphasis on undergraduate academic advising in SPIA. I genuinely believe that advising plays an important role in ensuring that our students get the most out of their experience at Virginia Tech. I do my best to inform students of opportunities both on and off campus, encourage students to engage relevant opportunities, and support them when they do. My ultimate goal is to ensure that our students will be exceptionally well prepared for their next step, whatever that might be.

Program Profile

The Graduate Certificate in Homeland Security Policy

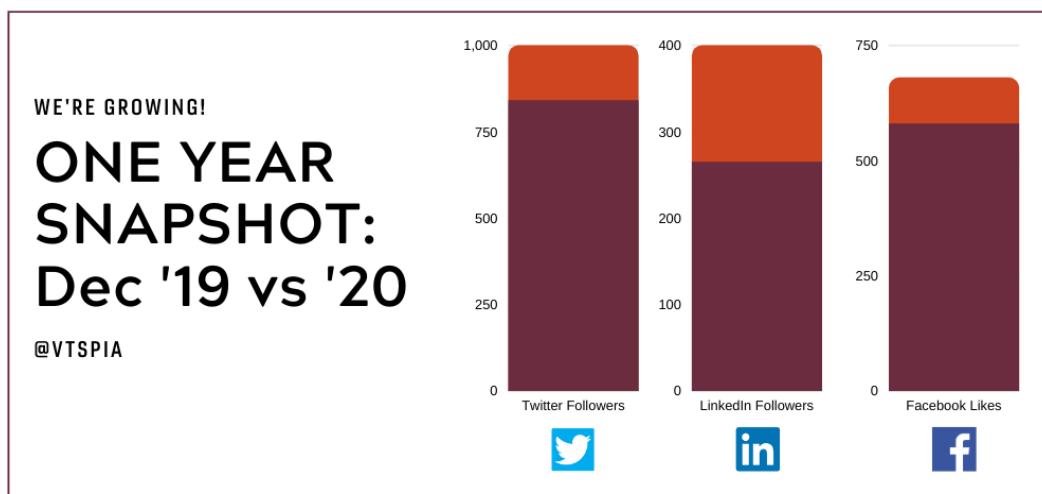
We live in tumultuous times. With increasingly severe natural disasters and pandemics, daily cyber-attacks, and possible terrorist events, the Virginia Tech Center for Public Administration and Policy (CPAP) has established a graduate [certificate in Homeland Security Policy](#). This certificate goes beyond the hype and confusion surrounding homeland security. Students will gain an intellectual foundation for understanding and assessing the diverse concepts and frameworks underpinning homeland security strategies, the policies and programs that address vulnerabilities, and possible threats to the United States and the international community.

The certificate consists of three 3-credit hour courses plus an elective for a total of twelve credit hours

of graduate study, covering a range of homeland security issues related to preparedness, protection and mitigation as well as response, recovery and resilience. Both successes and failures will be studied, with presentations made by a mix of scholars and practitioners who have first-hand knowledge of and experience with specific topics.

The certificate serves either as a supplement to a master's or doctoral degree, or as a stand-alone credential of advanced educational achievement for non-degree students. MPA students may use the certificate as their concentration and reflect upon the certificate and homeland security issues in their portfolio or internship. PhD students may use the certificate as a foundation for dissertation research in homeland security policy and management.

For more information, please contact the certificate director, Dr. Jeffrey Glick, jaglick@vt.edu.



Giving to SPIA

If you are interested in contributing to SPIA and are wondering what we can use your contributions for, please check out our [giving page](#). There you can also see the list of generous souls who have contributed to the school over the last two years including the following people who made donations over the course of the last month:

Cheng Hua Education Foundation

Mr. and Mrs. Taylor E. Chenery

Mr. Jose R. Delcid

Mr. Paul E. Drumwright

Ms. Brittnee M. Elliott

Mr. and Mrs. Michael J. Gallini

Dr. and Mrs. Bruce W. Glassco

Mr. John R. Grieser

Ms. Lisa K. Luedtke
Mr. William C. Mann III
Ms. Eunju Namkung
Ms. Sarah N. Nativi
Mr. and Mrs. Gregory H. Reif
Mr. and Mrs. Matthew A. Roylance
Mr. and Mrs. Todd E. Schenk
Mrs. Pamela G. Weintraub
Dr. Richard Zakour and Dr. Colleen A. Woodard
Mr. Ross E. Zelenske



Worth Pondering

- [America's Diplomats Should Look Like America](#)
- [Birth Death Approaches](#)
- [Impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [National Science Foundation's annual Survey of Earned Doctorates](#)
- [The Beautiful, Dumb Dream of McDonald's Peace Theory](#)

- Where economists focus their research

