



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
VIRGINIA TECH.

December 2021 Newsletter

As 2021 comes to a close, our school brims with inquisitiveness, brilliance, and creativity. You can see the evidence in the stories below. I particularly congratulate all of the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students graduating this month and wish them the best in their future endeavors. Promise not to be strangers!

I also sincerely thank all the faculty and staff who worked diligently during this calendar year to help our students succeed. We look forward to the new year ahead.

Wishing you all a peaceful and joyous holiday season,

With gratitude,

Mehrzad Boroujerdi
SPIA Director

Student and Alumni News

[Margaret Appleby](#) (PGG doctoral candidate) received a 2021-2022 CAUS Student-Initiated Research Grants Award for her proposal, "Trust the Game: Q-Anon and the Paranoid Style of American Politics in the New Millennium."

The Eno Center for Transportation, a transportation policy think tank, recently held an essay [competition](#). SPIA did extremely well. [Andrea Hamre](#) (PGG PhD 2017 alum) won the professional essay contest while [Xavier Harmony](#) (PGG PhD Student) [won](#) the student essay. Congratulations to Andrea and Xavier who the Eno Center now refers to as "Centennial Scholars."

[Edgar Hollandsworth](#) (CPAP PhD candidate) successfully defended his doctoral dissertation, "Institutionalizing Performance Management: Lessons for Government Leaders from the Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010," on December 16, 2021. His Committee members were Matthew Dull (chair), David Bredenkamp, Adrienne Edisis, Patrick Roberts, and Michael Meese.



The work of [Kuldeep Dixit](#) (1st year MURP student) on biomass burning was [mentioned](#) in *Indian Express*. Delhi suffers from high particulate concentrations that cause heavy haze events during the post-monsoon and winter seasons. His study used advanced instruments to capture the PM_{2.5} chemical composition and temporal trends at two urban locations in Delhi. The study has been accepted for publication in *Journal of Geophysical Research*. Kuldeep also received a 2021-2022 CAUS Student-Initiated Research Grants Award for his proposal, “The application of low-cost sensor network and satellite-based Aerosol Optical Depth (AOD) data in estimating long-term urban PM_{2.5} concentration over Virginia and nearby regions.”

[Jake Keyel](#) (PGG PhD, 2019) joined the [editorial board](#) of *The Sociological Review*. He will serve a 5-year term as an editor. Keyel, a current Virginia Tech Honors College Professor, has also officially accepted a position as a research fellow with the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences Department at Colorado State University. Jake will also be affiliated faculty with the political science department. He will begin remotely and plans to relocate officially in July 2022 to Fort Collins with his family.

[Arica Young](#) (PGG PhD candidate) successfully defended her dissertation entitled “Social Capital in Cohousing: Understanding How One Community Builds Ties” on December 1, 2021. Her Committee members were Ralph Buehler (chair), Shelley Mastran, Shalini Misra, Sonia Hirt, and Derek Hyra. Arica has also started a new position as Associate Director, Housing at the new Terwilligen Center housed at the Bipartisan Policy Center. The key focus of this center is on increasing the affordable housing supply.

Faculty News

[David Bieri](#) (Associate Professor, UAP) gave an invited talk entitled “From Bitcoin to Central Bank Digital Currencies: The Digitization of Money & Its Consequences,” at the [51st Annual Virginia Accounting & Auditing Conference](#). In this session, he examined the digital revolution in money and finance which is in the process of fundamentally transforming the traditional model of monetary exchange. Platform-based fintech and digital currencies enable near instantaneous peer-to-peer transfer of funds in ways that were hitherto not possible. The prospect of new digital currencies and other crypto-assets that go beyond national borders promises to redefine the way in which payment and settlement systems operate, reconstituting monetary-financial relations between users. This is likely to lead to changes in the architecture of the international monetary system and the role of government-issued money. Furthermore, Dr. Bieri’s research on the history of economic thought, in particular focusing on the German economist and spatial theorist Karl Wilhelm August Lösch, was also [featured](#) by The Kellogg Center for Philosophy, Politics, and Economics where David was a recent PPE Research Fellow.

[Mehrzaad Boroujerdi](#) (SPIA Director) was [quoted](#) in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* on the Iranian nuclear negotiations.

[Ralph Buehler](#) (Professor, UAP) was part of a national team of public health and transportation researchers who published a [paper](#) summarizing findings from a national conference on the relationship between public health and active travel--the second in a series of conferences that Buehler helped create in 2015. Together with [Todd Schenk](#) (Associate Professor, UAP), Buehler gave a presentation on sustainable transport in Europe for the Center for European Union, Transatlantic, and Trans-European Space Studies. Ralph also presented his research on bicycling during an invited presentation at Texas A&M.

[Maggie Cowell](#) (Associate Professor, UAP) co-authored an [Op-Ed](#) in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* on urban-rural ties in Virginia.

[Mary Beth Dunkenberger](#) (Associate Director, Institute for Policy and Governance) was [appointed](#) to the Virginia Data Advisory Commission. The commission will advise the Office of Data Governance and Analytics regarding data-sharing issues and will help develop solutions to improve the data-driven policy of Virginia. The commission also will review agency performance goals and accomplishments.

[Karen Hult](#) (Professor, CPAP) [commented](#) on the ending of the moratorium on student loan relief.

[Shalini Misra](#) (Associate Professor, UAP) was invited to participate in a webinar panel on “AI, Digitization, and Open Government” organized by the journal [Perspectives on Public Management and Governance](#) (the journal of the Public Management Research Association). She presented her collaborative paper with [Patrick Roberts](#) (Associate Professor, CPAP) and [Matthew Rhodes](#) (MURP alum, 2019) titled [“The Ecology of Emergency Management in the Digital Age.”](#)

[Patrick Roberts](#), [Shalini Misra](#), and [Joanne Tang](#) (CPAP PhD student) published “Crisis Governance, Emergency Management, and the Digital Revolution” as an article in the Oxford University Press Research Encyclopedia series. The chapter, which is available for free at this [link](#), outlines how digital technologies have transformed emergency and crisis management and proposes approaches to improve public managerial decision-making in the digital environment.

The community-driven projects of students in one of [Todd Schenk](#)’s (Associate Professor, UAP) courses was [featured](#) in the *Roanoke Times*.

[Gerard Toal](#) (Professor, GIA) [commented](#) on the possibility of a Russian invasion of Ukraine in Veteran News Report.

Events

On December 3, the SPIA Student Society held its inaugural ping pong tournament in the Squires Student Center Breakzone. Over twenty students and faculty entered with **Sean Rombach** (representing the Smart & Sustainable Cities major) and Dr. **Ralph Hall** (representing the SPIA faculty) making it to the final. After an intense ping pong battle, Dr. Hall emerged as the 2021 champion. Keep an eye open for future events run by the SPIA Student Society.



Worth Pondering

- [Cold, heat, fires, hurricanes and tornadoes: The year in weather disasters](#)
- [Executions, death sentences in U.S. reach historic lows in 2021](#)
- [How America wasted its unipolar moment](#)
- [Joe Biden's Summit for Democracy is not all that democratic](#)
- [Nature Is Becoming a Person](#)
- [Railway Lines Once Connected the Middle East](#)
- [Tel Aviv is the world's most expensive city](#)
- [Test results in American schools plummeted during the pandemic](#)
- [The Green Upheaval](#)

Follow SPIA



Make a Gift to SPIA

www.spia.vt.edu

[Unsubscribe from this list](#)