SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
VIRGINIA TECH.

February 2021 Newsletter

Once again in this month's SPIA newsletter, you can receive a glimpse of the invigorating work of our alumni, faculty, students, staff, and advisory board members. Above all, it is this human capital that makes the School of Public and International Affairs such a vibrant place. Our competent staff members, caring faculty, and brilliant students each contribute in their own way to our Agora.
I sincerely hope that all Hokies who care about our Agora (SPIA) will demonstrate some generosity during these difficult times on the Giving Day.

E pluribus unun (Out of many, one).

Mehrzad Boroujerdi
SPIA Director

Faculty, Advisory Board and Student News

Ariel Ahram (associate professor, GIA) published a commentary on War on the Rocks entitled "Hybrid Security Governance and the Search for the State in the Middle East."

David Bieri (Associate Professor, UAP) discussed ending homelessness on WTOP DC (radio).

Mehrzad Boroujerdi (SPIA Director) was quoted in the New York Times and Augusta Free Press on the Iranian nuclear deal. He took part in a congressional poll briefing and discussion on U.S. policy options toward Iran, and did an interview with a TV program in Afghanistan. Boroujerdi also delivered talks to students at Sharif University of Technology (Iran), and addressed the topic of *U.S. Middle East Policy in the Post-Trump Era at an* event *organized by the* University of Alberta (Canada).

Ralph Buehler (Professor, UAP) published his co-edited book "Cycling for Sustainable Cities" with MIT Press. The book features contributions by 43 authors from around the world and provides practical lessons for making cycling safe, practical, and convenient. In January and February, Professor Buehler presented three peer-reviewed papers at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) annual meeting, gave invited lectures at the University of Dortmund (Germany) and the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, and presented on international trends in bicycling during and after the COVID

pandemic at HUBCycling in Vancouver (Canada) and at the World Bank/World Resources Institute's Transforming Transportation 21 conference. Ralph participated in the panel "Non-Car Transportation in the DC Suburbs: Challenges and Ideas" alongside other transportation experts and local officials from the DC region. Finally, Professor Buehler also participated as an outside member in a dissertation defense at TU Delft in the Netherlands.

Carmen Boggs-Parker (Ph.D. Candidate, Planning, Governance and Globalization) successfully defended her dissertation (on February 10, 2021) entitled, "Meeting the Self and the 'Other': Intercultural Learning During a Faculty-Led intensive Service Learning Course to Belize." Professor Max Stephenson, Jr. (VTIPG Director) chaired Carmen's committee and Professor Yang Zhang, SPIA, Professor Dale Wimberley, Department of Sociology and Dr. Nicole Sanderlin, College of Engineering, served as additional committee members. Congratulations Dr. Boggs-Parker!

Karen Hult (Professor, CPAP) was quoted in multiple media outlets including Augusta Free Press and WFXR on former President Trump's impeachment proceedings and violation of campaign finance laws.

Lynn Schnurr (Chair of SPIA's Advisory Board) has been inducted into the Military Intelligence Hall of Fame's Class of 2020. Her induction salutation reads: "As the Director of Information Management for the Deputy Chief of Staff G2, she was the driving force for developing, resourcing, and implementing all legacy and current MI Information Technology for more than 18 years. Ms. Schnurr led efforts to rapidly field new capabilities to tactical units for biometric collection, watchlist creation, Cloud data collection and dissemination, and document and media exploitation, and enhanced the synchronization capabilities of the Joint Intelligence Operations Capability in OIF/OEF." Ms. Schnurr was the Army Intelligence Chief Information Officer and made many trips to combat zones to gather requirements and develop technical solutions for rapid deployment to the battlefield.

Gerard Toal (Professor, GIA) co-authored a piece on Washington Post's Monkey Page on a new survey about the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

This month *Forbes* magazine ran an article entitled "GPS Only Exists Because Of Two People: Albert Einstein And Gladys West." The remarkable Dr. Gladys West is a SPIA alumni having earned her Ph.D. in Public Administration from CPAP. Thank you, Dr. West, for all that you have done for science and humanity

The Virginia Management Fellows (VMF) program was mentioned by the NBC TV local affiliate in Richmond.

News of SPIA receiving the University Exemplary Department or Program Awards for effective teaching with a global perspective was covered in VT NEWS
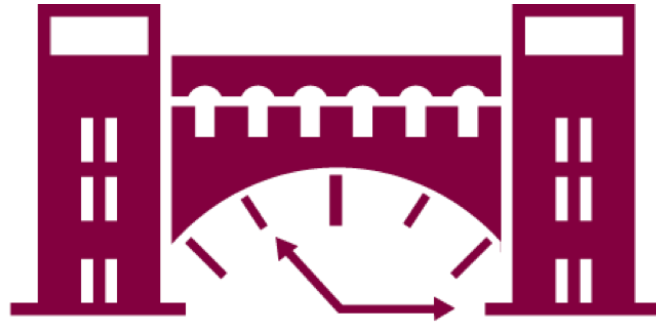

Giving Day

PLEASE help make this Giving Day our best one yet! To get an idea of how your giving can be used by SPIA and who has supported us during the last couple of years, please see here. Then,

go here and choose any of the following three options from the drop down "Search for an area to support":

- Center for Public Administration and Policy (CPAP) Annual Fund·
- School of Public and International Affairs Annual Fund·
- Urban Affairs and Planning Annual Fund

Remember that your participation and engagement on Giving Day is important to the overall success of the school.

SPIA Students From an Undergraduate Student Society

The SPIA Student Society was formed in October 2020 by a few SPIA students who were in UAP 1004: Introduction to Careers in Urban Affairs and Planning class together. The idea came from Professor **Ralph Hall** and **Chris LaPlante**, who had envisioned the potential for an organization like this and had been trying to get something off the ground for a few years. Several students took charge and went through the formal process to get the organization approved.

The main goals of the society are to foster a sense of community among SPIA students as well as to provide networking and career opportunities. We hope that the society serves as a place where SPIA

students can come together to serve the community and make the school their own. Currently, there is no clear way for students to voice their concerns and opinions and the society gives them a place to be heard by the SPIA and Virginia Tech faculty and administrators.

We are currently building the framework of the society, strengthening bonds between students, and trying to grow membership. In the future, we hope to hold networking events as well as hosting our own career fair – one that is specifically catered to our students.

All SPIA students are welcome! We want this society to be one that fosters discussion and hears the voices and ideas of all. If anyone has any questions, feel free to contact **Amy Lynne Denny**, the society president, at aldenny@vt.edu.

Here are the bios of officers:

President - Amy Lynne Denny

Amy Lynne Denny is a junior majoring in Environmental Policy and Planning. She has a particular interest in the intersection between economically feasible and environmentally sustainable community planning. Her main goal for the SPIA Student Society is that it connects students to each other and the faculty and that the community built within extends past graduation.

Vice President – Kevin Jenks

Kevin Jenks is a sophomore majoring in Smart and Sustainable Cities and he looks forward to working on projects that specifically relate to sustainable land usage and development. His main goal for the SPIA Student Society is to provide each member with the resources and connections they need to be successful post-graduation.

Treasurer – Kelsey Drake

Kelsey Drake is a Navy Veteran and a Junior majoring in Environmental Policy and Planning and minoring in Spanish. Her major interests are Global Sustainable Development and International Policy. She wants to help shape the SPIA Student Society into a community for the betterment of students, faculty, and alumni.

Secretary – Rachel Inman

Rachel Inman is a sophomore majoring in Smart and Sustainable Cities and minoring in Landscape Architecture. Her main interests are in sustainable design and development, green infrastructure, and urban analytics. Her main goal for the SPIA Student Society is to help connect SPIA students with each other, faculty, and other professionals.

Alumni Profile

Dr. **Raj K. GC** obtained his doctoral degree in the Planning, Governance, and Globalization (PGG) program within SPIA in December 2020. He completed the degree under the guidance and supervision of Professors Hall, Stephenson, Hammett, and Ranganathan. Prior to studying at Virginia Tech, Raj earned a Masters of Science (MSc) degree in International Land and Water Management with a specialization in integrated water management from the Wageningen University in the Netherlands, where he was a Netherlands Fellowship Program Fellow. Raj has worked for more than eight years with different development agencies in Nepal. In these roles, he led their efforts to reduce poverty through community-based water resource and smallholder agriculture development, primarily supported by USAID, DFID, and EU funding.

Raj's doctoral dissertation was entitled, "Exploring the Potential of Multiple-Use Water Services for Smallholder Farmers in the Western Middle Hills of Nepal." His research focused on the productive use of rural water systems, the sustainability of these systems, and water-related public policy under Nepal's new governance system. The research included an in-depth study of ten rural communities (including 202 household surveys and 50 key informant interviews) in the middle hills of Nepal. More generally, Raj's research lies at the nexus of water, technology, and local economy and culture. His work often draws upon mixed-methods to understand how local water resources can be planned and

used for multiple uses (i.e., domestic and productive activities) to improve rural livelihoods in developing/underdeveloped countries.

So far, Raj has published three of his doctoral dissertation chapters in peer-reviewed journals: *Water; Agriculture; and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene for Development*. He has also co-authored three additional peer-reviewed publications. His research makes an important contribution to the literature on multiple-use water services and will shape rural water supply policy and practice in Nepal. His research findings have also captured the attention of senior government officials in Nepal who have shared his findings with the appropriate government agencies. International NGOs have also been utilizing his research findings in their program development efforts. Raj has been invited to share his results with water experts at USAID, IWMI, and the global and Nepal MUS network.

SPIA Trivia

What year was the Center for Public Administration and Policy (CPAP) established and the Ph.D. in Public Administration and Public Affairs created within it?

Answer: 45 years ago (1977).

Staff Profile

Amanda Fawkes is a Program Coordinator in the School of Public and International Affairs. She provides leadership for the business and administrative operations for programs based at the Richmond, VA campus. In addition, Amanda leads efforts for events and programs associated with the Ridenour Faculty Fellowship. She is also a liaison for the Nonprofit and Nongovernmental Management Graduate Certificate. Amanda joined Virginia Tech in September 2007, and in her

immediate past positions had managed business affairs for the Global Forum on Urban and Regional Resilience, and the Office of the Senior Fellow for Resource Development. Amanda is a graduate of Virginia Tech who received her MPA and Graduate Certificate in Public and Nonprofit Financial Management in December 2018.

Donors

We thank the following donors for their recent gifts to SPIA:

Mr. **Jerry E. Cox**
Mr. **Matthew S. Worner**

Worth Pondering

- Earth is now losing 1.2 trillion tons of ice each year. And it's going to get worse
- Global democracy has a very bad year
- How Much Has Covid Cost Colleges? $183 Billion
- Our Amazing Clean Energy Future Has Arrived
- There will be enough vaccines for all—if rich countries share
- When will the electric car rule the road?
- World Economic Outlook