



## January 2022 Newsletter

Dear Students, Staff, and Faculty,

Hope your Spring 2022 semester is off to a great start! 2022 marks two important milestones for the school: the 65th anniversary of MURP, and the 45th anniversary of the foundation of CPAP. We are proud of what our urban planning and public administration faculty and students – past and present – have accomplished over these time spans and hope to celebrate them in due time.

I also want to welcome the new students who have joined us this semester by asking them to remember the following sagacious words of Joseph Aoun (President of Northeastern University): “Learning is now an ongoing voyage with many ports of call but never a terminus.”

I hope everyone does their share in helping us stay safe as we enter the third year of the pandemic. Stay strong and vigilant.

Sincerely,  
Mehrzaad Boroujerdi  
SPIA Director

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### Alumni and Student News

[Nada Alwadi](#) (PGG doctoral candidate) launched her new podcast series, “[American Highlights](#),” sharing insights on American history and society with Arabic-speaking audiences.

**Bertha Anderson** (PhD, CPAP) talks about her work as the Chief of Public Engagement for the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman’s office in [this](#) interview.

[Laura Castro](#) (MURP student), the inaugural recipient of the Community Scholars Fellowship of the Master’s of Urban and Regional Planning program, attended the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association annual conference. There, she received a certificate recognizing her contributions to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the profession of urban planning. She was also featured in this month’s [Member Spotlight of the APA VA](#).

[Farhad Hassan](#) (PGG doctoral candidate) [published](#) “Party corruption in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Context and implications,” in *The Digest of Middle East Studies*.

[Lechuan Huang](#) (former SPIA undergraduate student mentored by Dr. Theo Lim and now a master’s

student of Urban Spatial Analytics at the University of Pennsylvania) published his first peer-reviewed article in *Sustainability*. The article, titled "[Interdisciplinary inquiry and spatial green stormwater infrastructure research](#)," uses mixed methods to explore how different disciplines frame and approach green stormwater infrastructure research. Co-authors include Dr. Theo Lim and Dr. Shalini Misra.

[Madeline Sefcik](#), who earned her graduate certificate in Local Government Management from SPIA in 2020, was [chosen](#) as a 40 Under 40 by *The Ronoaker*.

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## Faculty News

[Mehrzaad Boroujerdi](#) (SPIA Director) [published](#) an article entitled "Who's on Iran's current nuclear negotiating team?" in The Atlantic Council blog.

[Ralph Buehler](#) (UAP Professor, UAP): Only 10 months after the book's original release, MIT Press reprinted Ralph's edited book "[Cycling for Sustainable Cities](#)." The book gives a global overview on how to make city cycling—the most sustainable means of travel—safe, practical, and convenient for all. Buehler's research was mentioned in an article about the [future of bicycling](#). At the TRB annual meeting, Buehler gave two presentations of a [paper on bicycling in Washington, DC and Frankfurt, Germany](#), co-authored with MURP student Brian Shelton and PGG candidate Denis Teoman.

[Karen Hult](#) (Professor, CPAP) [commented](#) on the one year anniversary of the capitol riots and was also [interviewed](#) about it.

[Theo Lim](#) (Assistant Professor, UAP) published an [article](#) in *Environmental Science & Technology*. This article explores the conditions under which small-scale community energy infrastructure can be operated to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Also called "negative emissions technologies," carbon dioxide removal is usually presumed to occur through large, centralized facilities. Dr. Lim's research demonstrates a case where communities can maintain energy, carbon, and land sovereignty while contributing to climate mitigation. This interdisciplinary research was done in collaboration with Amanda Cuellar, Kyle Langseth, and Jeff Waldon, who specialize in thermochemical modeling, engineering, and land conservation, respectively, and was funded by a grant awarded to Theo Lim by the +Policy program at VT. Also, Theo and former PGG PhD student Kaidi Wang (now an assistant professor at Macao University of Science and Technology) published an [article](#) in *Computers and Geosciences*. This work contributes to understanding how to improve the speed and reduce the computational resources of spatial computer models using machine learning and artificial intelligence algorithms, which is important for spatial decision support. In December, Prof. Lim presented a [poster](#) at the American Geophysical Union's Fall Conference. Finally, Theo was also invited to give a talk titled "Building community resilience to extreme heat through youth engagement" at the Kiwanis Club of Roanoke.

[Gerard Toal](#) (Professor, GIA) published an [article](#) in *The Irish Times* entitled "Delusion on all sides has paved way for Russia-NATO standoff." Gerard also co-authored an [article](#) in the Washington Post's Monkey Cage on Ukrainians views on NATO exercises close to Russia.

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## Impactful Research

Over the past two years, a team from Virginia Tech, Egerton University, and the Australian startup AgUnity have been studying the African Indigenous Vegetable (AIV) value chain in Kakamega county (Western Kenya), to determine if a new blockchain-based smartphone app could help improve livelihoods, nutrition, and value chain efficiency for last-mile agricultural communities. See this short documentary [video](#) about the work.

## Digital Advertising

SPIA recently launched its first digital advertising campaigns to introduce more prospective students in Virginia and the Southwest region to its nationally recognized undergraduate and graduate programs. Advertisements began appearing in Google search results earlier this month to users in select areas searching for relevant keywords like “urban planning degree” and “public administration programs.” Event pages promoting upcoming virtual information sessions are also live on Eventbrite and Meetup. SPIA’s complete 2022 strategy will include Facebook and Instagram posts aimed at users with interests matching its programs, LinkedIn posts for job seekers in alumni industries, and personal LinkedIn messages encouraging highly qualified professionals to apply. This year’s strategy builds on a successful MURP digital marketing effort last year led by UAP program chair Dr. Ralph Buehler, SPIA administrative operations coordinator Natalia Gutierrez-Smith, and MURP student/marketing consultant Trey Gordner. “We expect SPIA’s first digital advertising campaigns to increase our applications and subsequent enrollment, and help promote our wonderful brand,” says Mehrzad Boroujerdi, Director of SPIA.



The image shows a Facebook event post. The main graphic is a dark red rectangle with the VT logo and 'SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS VIRGINIA TECH.' in the top left. Below the logo is an illustration of a laptop. To the right of the laptop, the text reads 'VIRTUAL INFO SESSION GOVERNMENT & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS'. To the right of the main graphic, the event details are displayed: 'FEB 09', 'Government & International Affairs Graduate Degrees - Virtual Info Session', 'by VT School of Public & International Affairs', a 'Follow' button, and 'Free'. At the bottom right of the post is a green 'Register' button. Below the post are icons for sharing and liking, and a section for event details.

Learn about masters, PhD, and 4-class certificate programs in government and international affairs at Virginia Tech.

About this event

Date and time

Wed, February 9, 2022  
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM HST  
[Add to calendar](#)

urban planning masters 

## Study at Virginia Tech | **Masters in Urban Planning** | Learn How Cities Work

**Ad** [spia.vt.gov/masters/urban-planning](https://spia.vt.gov/masters/urban-planning)

Advance your career with a graduate degree in Urban & Regional Planning from Virginia Tech. Open new job opportunities in public service and the private sector through city planning.

Learn marketable skills - Real-world projects - Grow your network

[Browse Graduate Programs](#)  
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Tuesday, January 25, 2022


### **Public Administration & Policy Graduate Degrees - Virtual Info Session**


 Hosted By  
**Patrick R.**



Organizer tools 

 **Virginia Tech School of Public and International Affairs**  
Public group 

 Tuesday, January 25, 2022  
7:00 AM to 8:00 AM HST  
[Add to calendar](#)

 Online event  
<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/83790291782>

[Report this event](#)

#### **Details**

Learn about masters, PhD, and 4-class certificate programs in public administration and public policy at Virginia Tech.

TUE, JAN 25 @ 7:00 AM HST  
**Public Administration & Policy Graduate Degrees - Virtual Info Session**

**You're going!**  
[Edit RSVP](#) [Share](#) 

## Staff Spotlight



**Billy Parvatam** is a new Communications Coordinator and Administrative Specialist for the Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance (IPG). His job responsibilities include writing material and producing creative content for the Institute's website, posting commentaries and general updates, preparing quarterly newsletters, and creating media summaries regarding other initiatives and projects. In addition, he serves as Director Max Stephenson's administrative assistant overseeing his calendar, assisting with light research on publications, overseeing logistics of meetings and events, and providing backup to the Fiscal Technician as necessary.

Billy graduated from Virginia Tech in 2019 with a B.A. in Multimedia Journalism and in 2021 with an M.A. in Communication.

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## Exploring the Future of Work

By Professor Ralph Hall

During the Fall 2021 semester, I had the pleasure of teaching an honors course with [Prof. Daniel Sui](#) (Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation at Virginia Tech) that focused on the future of work. The course was designed to expose students to the wide variety of research that is undertaken at Virginia Tech on this topic (see the list below). The [news article](#) below provides some insight into the course and what the students thought of the experience. We are planning to offer a version of the course again during the Fall 2022 semester. The list below provides an overview of the subjects covered by our guest speakers during the semester:

- Robots, Computers, and the Gender Wage Gap - [Prof. Suqin Ge](#)
- Potential Impacts of Additive Manufacturing and Digital Fabrication Technologies - [Prof. Chris Williams](#)
- Historical Perspectives on the Future of Work - [Prof. Tom Ewing](#)
- Social Computing, Crowdsourcing, and Human-AI Teams - [Dr. Kurt Luther](#)
- Wearable and Pervasive Computing + Transdisciplinary Collaboration: Teams and Processes - [Prof. Tom Martin](#) and [Prof. Lisa McNair](#)
- Race, Technonationalism, and the Ethical Future of Work - [Prof. Sylvester Johnson](#)
- Future of Work for Clinicians in ICU - [Prof. Aki Ishida](#), [Dr. Sarah Parker](#), and [Prof. Tom Martin](#)
- Game Theory and the Future of Work - [Prof. Sudipta Sarangi](#)
- The Emerging Digital Nomads: Trends and Traps - [Dr. Zheng \(Phil\) Xiang](#)

- Exploring the Unintended Consequences of COVID-19's Acceleration of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and their Impacts on the Future of Work - [Ricardo E. Coleman](#) (Director, Counterintelligence and Security Integration, Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, Research and Technology)

A big thanks to Prof. Christopher Williams ([@VirginiaTech\\_ME](#)) for sharing his expertise on [#AdditiveManufacturing](#) during our [@VTHonorsCollege#futureofwork](#) course [pic.twitter.com/BqChaFc3g7](https://pic.twitter.com/BqChaFc3g7)

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## Gifts to SPIA

We would like to thank the following donors for their recent contributions to SPIA:

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## Worth Pondering

- [Divorce in the rich world is getting less nasty](#)
- [Drop in college enrollment threatens to cause long-term economic, social consequences](#)
- [How long can the global housing boom last?](#)
- [More than 1,700 congressmen once enslaved Black people](#)
- [This Isn't the California I Married](#)
- [Weather disasters have cost the US \\$750 billion over past 5 years](#)
- [The Overstretched Superpower: Does America Have More Rivals Than It Can Handle?](#)

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