



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
VIRGINIA TECH.

May 2021 Newsletter

I would like to sincerely congratulate all SPIA students who graduated this month. To say that the last year was challenging for us all is an understatement. The American novelist James Baldwin once said that "beyond talent lie the usual words: discipline, love, luck, but, most of all, endurance." You have demonstrated your endurance and on behalf of the entire SPIA family I congratulate you on your accomplishment.

I also wish the best to students who are enrolled in summer courses. Once again in this month's newsletter you can read about the impressive accomplishments of our students and faculty who make SPIA the special place it is.

Sincerely,

Mehrzaad Boroujerdi
SPIA Director

Student and Alumni News

[Lydia Gilmer](#) and [Richard Donovan](#) received (UAP/MURP) the American Planning Association Virginia Chapter Award for Outstanding Graduate Student with Professional Promise. Lydia also received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award from CAUS.

On April 10, [Lechuan Huang](#) (Major: Smart and Sustainable Cities, with a Minor in Landscape Architecture), presented research that he has been working on at the American Association of Geographers (AAG) annual meeting. This is a very big accomplishment for an undergraduate! His presentation was titled "Trends in disciplinary research frameworks for spatial green stormwater infrastructure." Lechuan, who was advised by Professor Theo Lim, will be headed to the University of Pennsylvania in the fall to begin a master's degree in Urban Spatial Analytics.

[Thi Hong Nhung Nguyen](#) (Ph.D. candidate, CPAP) successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on May 7, 2021 entitled "Impact of Human Resource Management on Federal Employees' Positive Attitudes and Behaviors." Committee members were Professors **Matthew Dull** (chair), **Karen Hult**, **Adrienne Edisis**, and **Kris Wernstedt**. Congratulations Dr. Nguyen.

[David Moore](#) (Ph.D. candidate, CPAP) successfully defended his dissertation on May 3, 2021 entitled

“Making Sense of Networks: Exploring How Network Participants Understand and Use Information From Social Network Analysis.” Committee members were Professors **Robin Lemaire** (chair), **Max Stephenson** (co-chair), **Karen Hult**, and **Stephanie Smith**. Congratulations to **Dr. Moore** who has also been a long-time research faculty member in Institute for Policy and Governance (IPG).

[Emily Warwick](#) (double major in international relations and public and urban affairs) was [named](#) 2021 Outstanding Senior for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. She will be pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Virginia Woodrow Wilson Department of Politics.

[Regan Westwood](#) (double major in Environmental Policy & Planning and Smart & Sustainable Cities) became the 2020-21 ACC Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year. She also received SPIA’s Outstanding Senior Award.



[Zuleka Woods](#) (Graduate student, SPIA) published a co-authored [article](#) entitled “Brown Girl in the Lens” with Dr. [Kwame Harrison](#) from the Sociology Department.

Faculty News

[David Bieri](#) (Associate Professor, UAP) received the Alumni Award for Team Outreach Excellence presented by the Virginia Tech Alumni Association for his NSF-funded work for the UrbComp program. His work on digital currencies/blockchain was also [featured](#) in the cover story of the May issue of Virginia Business Magazine.

[Mehrzaad Boroujerdi](#) (SPIA Director) gave a [presentation](#) on Iran's upcoming presidential election at Georgetown University in Qatar and gave an interview to the *Political Memoirs Quarterly* published in Tehran.

[Ralph Buehler](#) (Professor, UAP) co-authored two newly published peer-reviewed papers respectively on E-Scooter riders and cycling behavior in [Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board](#) and [Transport Reviews](#). Ralph also gave two presentations about his recent [book](#) at Northeastern University in Boston and a joint event for the Piedmont Environmental Council (Charlottesville, VA) and the Coalition for Smarter Growth (Washington DC). He was also interviewed by [the Spokesman Cycling Podcast](#). Finally, Professor Buehler received the CAUS Certificate for Career Achievement.

[Brian J. Cook](#) (Professor Emeritus, CPAP) published [The Fourth Branch: Reconstructing the Administrative State for the Commercial Republic](#) with University Press of Kansas.

[Matthew Dull](#) (Associate Professor CPAP) and [Shalini Misra](#) (Associate Professor, UAP) received 2021 CAUS Instructional Innovation Awards.

[Theo Lim](#) (Assistant Professor, UAP) was [featured](#) in the science news magazine *Eos* (of the American Geophysical Union) in an article titled "Growing Equity in City Green Space".

[Joel Peters](#) (Professor, GIA) [commented](#) on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on 10News.

[Cecily Rodriguez](#) (Manager of Applied Research, SPIA Richmond) received the CAUS Diversity Recognition Award.

[Tom Sanchez](#) (Professor, UAP) had two papers published on the topic of how urban planning academics use Twitter. His articles "[Urban Planning Academics and Twitter: Who and What?](#)" (Journal of Altmetrics) and "What are Urban Planning Academics Talking About on Twitter?" (Urban Findings) are part of his research activities on social media and scholarly communications.

The following UAP faculty received 2021 awards for years of service at the university: [Margaret Cowell](#) (10 years), [Tom Sanchez](#) (15 years), [Diane Zahm](#) (25 years).

New Graduate Certificate in Urban Planning Analytics

The Graduate Certificate in Urban Planning Analytics is designed to teach students to engage cities with the skills to leverage data for enhanced, interdisciplinary decision-making problems. It trains students to make decisions that are not only technically efficient, economically sound, environmentally aware, but also

socially, ethically, and politically informed. In addition, the certificate equips students with essential foundational skills that arise from actively engaging in data science combined with an understanding of cities as systems. In doing so, the certificate promotes the educational mission of Virginia Tech to offer its students an innovative, interdisciplinary learning environment in which they can take leadership roles in data sciences for the cities of tomorrow. The certificate seeks to meet the increasing workforce demand for analytical skills and literacy.

Course Requirements

Students will be required to complete coursework to develop knowledge and skills related to data analytics and public policy for cities and urbanized places. Students will gain an understanding of the fundamental competencies needed for data collection, cleaning, management, and analysis as well as manage teams that conduct analyses related to cities. Students seeking the Certificate must complete the following four courses:

UAP 5114: Computer Applications in Urban Planning and Management

UAP 5224: Planning Methods and Technologies

UAP 5494: Advanced Quantitative Techniques for Urban Research

UAP 5564: Information Technology, Society, and Public Policy

This certificate will be offered as of Fall 2021 and Professor [Tom Sanchez](#) will serve as its faculty coordinator.

Course Offerings for the STEP Certificate Program

Check out the exciting [courses](#) that will be offered next academic year as part of the newly launched STEP Graduate Certificate Program.

Research Projects

This month, MURP students gave their final capstone studio presentation to Alexandria Families for Safe Streets. This culminates a year-long project with AFSS to increase awareness and advocate for street safety issues in Northern Virginia. The project involved building a survey tool, data dashboard, and outreach strategies for data collection and organizational communications. The studio included **Melody Brown, Ariel Goldring, Kendra Hale, David Huaman, Jacob Landis, Behnaz Rauof, Abigail Sale, Azin Shahbeigi, and Jack Trainor**. See their presentation [here](#).

On May 10, 2021, Professor [Shelley Mastran](#)'s Land Use Planning Class presented the results of their semester-long studies to the Reston Comprehensive Plan Study Task Force. One student group planned the redevelopment of a suburban office park in Reston as prototypical of such developments; one group designed a dramatic enhancement of a stretch of the Washington and Old Dominion rail-trail through Reston. The presentations were very well received and will inform the update to the area's comprehensive

plan.

On May 19, an interdisciplinary student group (including three SPIA students: **Max Dillon**, **Lechuan Huang**, and **Caroline Smith**, along with 5 geography students) presented their semester-long design project on coastal resilience to sea-level rise for the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) 2021 Design Competition. The student group was advised by four faculty members: **Anamaria Bukvic** (Geography), **Theo Lim** (SPIA), **Klaus Moeltner** (Economics), and **Tom Pingel** (Geography).

Study Abroad Course - Winter 2022

Check out a new winter session study abroad [course](#) entitled “Migration and Remittances as the Forces Binding Mexico and the United States” offered by VT. The course will be taught by SPIA Alum Dr. Sabith Khan.



Featuring Faculty: David Bredenkamp

David M. Bredenkamp is an assistant professor with the Center for Public Administration and Policy's (CPAP) programs in Richmond. He obtained his Ph.D. in Public Affairs, with fields of study in public management and policy analysis, from Indiana University's Paul O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs in Bloomington. His Master of Public Affairs degree, also from IU, focused on public management and nonprofit management. His teaching focuses on management in public, nonprofit, and private settings with specific attention to organizational behavior and human resource topics.

David's research focuses generally on public management, organizational behavior, public service, and human resources. His current work investigates the relationships between government contracting decisions and civil servant employee attitudes on public service. David has published work on civil society and civic organizations, specifically in methodological approaches for systematic data collection in public social settings. Another collaborative stream of research with SPIA colleagues **Dr. Matthew Dull** and **Leisha LaRiviere**—as well as several of CPAP's PhD students—uses narrative inquiry of frontline employees in the behavioral health field to examine their core motivations and values for doing their jobs and staying in their profession.



Featuring Staff: Han Le

Han Le is the Fiscal Tech for the School of Public & International Affairs. Before joining SPIA, she was a Fiscal Analyst in the Dean's office of the College of Education and Human Development. Han is based in the VT Research Center campus in Arlington, and provides fiscal and HR support to faculty and students for all three SPIA programs (UAP, CPAP, GIA) located in Blacksburg, Arlington, and Richmond campuses. She graduated from George Mason University with a bachelor's degree in Biology and has completed graduate coursework in Microbiology.



Upcoming Conference

The schedule for the **12th Annual International Science of Team Science Conference** hosted by Virginia Tech has been posted on its [website](#). This year's fully online conference will feature:

- 4 international keynote [speakers](#)
- 6 invited [panels](#) on cutting edge topics
- 2 special [round tables](#)
- 71 pre-recorded individual splash talks
- 22 workshops (with preference selection available once you register!)
- 3 SIG panels and 9 collaborative panels
- And more!

Registration is [OPEN](#) and we encourage you to register at your earliest convenience to take advantage of all the wonderful content on the theme of Science of Team Science and the Human Condition. Registration closes on **June 2, 2021**. If you've always wanted to participate, but travel and registration costs held you back, here's your chance! The SciTS 2021 Online Conference has significantly subsidized registration rates:

- INSciTS Members: \$45
- Non-Members: \$95
- Virginia Tech Attendees: Free

Please view and share our 2021 [promotional video](#). If you have any questions, feel free to reach out at conference@inscits.org. Professor Shalini Misra is the Co-Chair of the SciTS2021 Conference.

Thanking Donors

We thank the following recent donors for their generosity.

Mr. and Mrs. **Philip E. Culpepper**
Dr. **Rhonda L. Russell**

Worth Pondering

- [The Cost of Economic and Racial Injustice in Postsecondary Education](#)
- [There have been 7m-13m excess deaths worldwide during the pandemic](#)
- [What it means to be an American](#) (series on Race in America)
- [How Arab Autocrats pick their opponents](#)
- [U.S. birthrate falls to its lowest rate in decades in wake of the pandemic](#)

Congratulations to All SPIA Graduates





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