



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
VIRGINIA TECH.

## October 2021 Newsletter

Dear SPIA Alumni, Faculty, Staff and Students,

The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once said that “one repays a teacher poorly by remaining a disciple.” It is such a pleasure to see so many of our former students emerge out of the shadow of their mentors and become their own scholars and practitioners. Our alumni are tackling novel problems, offering original solutions, and giving birth to new possibilities of hope. They truly embody SPIA’s mantra of “empowering future leaders to shape the world’s communities through public service.” We salute our trailblazing alumni and current students as they chart new pathways.

In this month’s newsletter we inform you about the latest accomplishments of our colleagues, celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Institute for Policy and Governance, and put a spotlight on new members of the SPIA community. I urge you to follow Virginia Tech School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) on LinkedIn so that you can network better with fellow members of the SPIA family.

Sincerely,  
Mehrzaad Boroujerdi  
SPIA Director

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### Alumni and Student News

[Xavier Harmony](#) (PGG PhD student) has recently been selected as a recipient of a 2021 Scholarship Award by the Washington, D.C. Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (WDCSITE). This scholarship is intended to appreciate and provide financial support to students who have demonstrated extraordinary interest in the transportation field.

[Isidoro Hazbun](#) (MPA student) gave a [presentation](#) (at around 44 minute) on protected areas and indigenous peoples in Colombia at a panel at the IUCN World Conservation Congress hosted in Marseille, France. The Conservation Congress is held every four years, and it is the largest conservation-focused event in the world.

[Jake Keyel](#) (Planning, Governance and Globalization PhD alumnus, 2019, and current Collegiate Professor in the Calhoun Center for Higher Education Innovation in the Virginia Tech Honors College)

published "[Community-Based Education Practices in Resettlement: Insights from the Blacksburg Refugee Partnership](#)," Migration Letters, September 2021, 18(5), pp. 551-561.

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## Faculty News

[David Bieri](#) (Associate Professor, UAP) was [interviewed](#) by FOX5 DC primetime news on the recent expiration of the extended Biden unemployment benefits and pandemic-related strains in the labor market.

[Mehrzaad Boroujerdi](#) (SPIA Director) took part in two panel discussions on Iran, first at the 25th Forum 2000 [Conference](#) held in Prague (virtually), and then at a [lecture series](#) at UCLA's Center for Near Eastern Studies.

[Ralph Buehler](#) (UAP Professor, UAP) was quoted in a story about bike share programs and sustainability on [NPR's Marketplace](#). Ralph also gave an invited presentation about his new book [Cycling for Sustainable Cities](#) to open the Bike Summit of the [California Bicycle Coalition](#). Moreover, he presented his work on [Cycling for Sustainable Cities during a webinar](#) with over 620 participants jointly hosted by the Heart Foundation, Cycling and Walking in Australia and New Zealand (CWANZ), We Ride Australia, and Austroads (the collective of the Australian and New Zealand transport agencies, representing all levels of government).

[Stephanie Davis](#) (Collegiate Assistant Professor, CPAP) presented a paper titled "Pandemic Impacts on Local Governments: Fund Balance Implications Now and in the Future" at the Association of Budgeting and Financial Management.

[Karen Hult](#) (Professor, CPAP) was quoted by various media outfits on the Virginia governor's race. See [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

[Tom Sanchez](#) (Professor, UAP) and [Trey Gordner](#) (MURP student) gave a presentation entitled "The Potential for AI in Urban Planning: An Approach" at the International Journal of Urban Sciences Symposium in Washington, DC on October 4th. Read more about Tom and Trey's collaboration with [Theo Lim](#) on a related project [here](#). In addition, Sanchez published his fifth book, [Knowledge Networks](#), with co-author Denise Bedford.

[Yang Zhang](#) (Associate Professor, UAP) received a Virginia Sea Grant for a project entitled "Developing a Resilience Quotient System for Flood Mitigation and Managed Retreat in Coastal Virginia." In this project, he and SPIA PGG student [Qiong Wang](#) will work with the City of Norfolk to study the Resilient Quotient System and other innovative zoning policies in facilitating market-based property buyout, transfer of development rights, and managing retreat in coastal high climate risk areas.

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## Institute Spotlight

### SPIA's Institute for Policy and Governance Celebrates its 15th Anniversary

The Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance (VTIPG) was established formally by the university

on July 1, 2006 and thus celebrated its 15th anniversary on July 1 of this year. The Institute will commemorate this milestone throughout the year. Across those first 15 years, VTIPG has accomplished a great deal and worked at one point or another with individuals from every college at Virginia Tech and dozens of other governments and nonprofit organizations. The following is a brief list of a share of its achievements:

- Garnered \$26,959,427 in sponsored funding
- Worked with more than 125 partners
- Completed more than 95 sponsored projects
- Provided mentorship for 4 Post-Doctoral scholars
- Engaged and/or mentored 89 Ph.D. students in its work across a number of disciplines, including five on international research exchanges
- Engaged and/or mentored 119 master's students
- Developed more than 250 publications, including several books that arose from its projects and programs
- Created a podcast interview series addressing democracy and social change that has thus far resulted in more than 80 programs available to the general public.

You may find more about VTIPG and its evolution, range of activities and ongoing initiatives at <https://ipg.vt.edu/> and <https://ccc.ipg.vt.edu/>. We congratulate everyone involved with VTIPG on this anniversary.

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## Faculty Spotlight

Dr. **Dennis K. McBride** is Affiliate Professor of Practice, Center for Public Administration and Policy at SPIA, and Research Professor at Hume Center, National Security Institute at Virginia Tech. He recently joined the university with an agenda that includes expansion of relationships among Virginia Tech programs and faculty, particularly among Hume, SPIA, and our newly established National Security Institute. Dennis is currently teaching PAPA 5354: Disaster Management Response and Recovery.

Dr. McBride has forty years of experience at the intersection of public administration and scientific research – from the lowest, entry level position in local government, to board member of a federal credit union, to U.S. Senior Executive. He completed a twenty-year career as a Naval Officer – specifically as a Medical Service Corps aerospace experimental (engineering/ organizational) psychologist, retiring as Navy Captain (O-6) in 1999. His tours included five advanced research laboratories, as well as headquarters organizations including the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and the Office of Naval Research. He specializes in conducting and transitioning scientific research into actual fielding and practice. Dennis led tri-service and NATO-affiliated breakthrough programs in very large-scale modeling, simulation, gaming, and measurement, particularly as applied to organizational innovation. Three of the technologies he developed and transitioned account for more than \$10B, each, in annual revenue. McBride served as Executive Director, Institute for Simulation and Training at the University of Central Florida, where he was professor with joint appointments in colleges of engineering and arts & sciences. From 2001 to 2011, Dennis served as president (now *emeritus*) of the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies. This non-partisan, nonprofit think tank provides policy option and evaluation advice to Congress and the administration on issues of national defense and homeland security, and the role played by technological innovation.

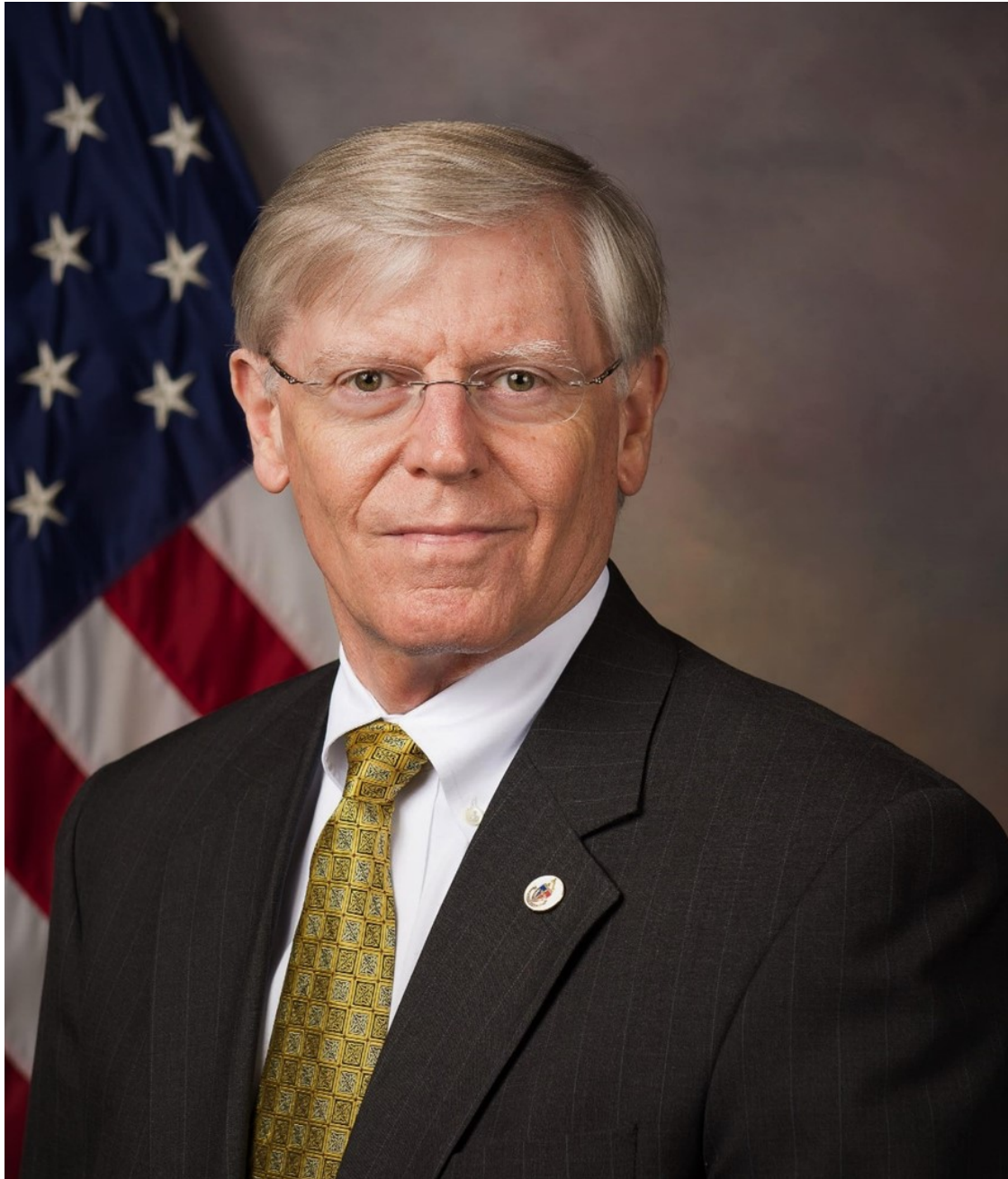
Dennis served as Associate and Acting Vice President for Research and Economic Development at George Mason University and affiliate research professor in the GMU School of Public Policy. Professor

McBride served a one-year appointment as Distinguished Scholar and Executive Director of the Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defense University. He serves voluntarily as president of the Institute for Regulatory Science and is active in the American Society for Public Administration, where he is currently a candidate for regional representative.

In 2003, Dr. McBride became an adjunct professor at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute, Georgetown University, as well as at the Georgetown Medical Center in 2006. He has taught courses in decision-making, government ethics, program evaluation, policy management, defense & foreign policy, public policy for scientists, regulatory science & public health, and science policy and advocacy. He supervised completions of 60+ graduate degree research/thesis projects. Dennis's academic editing responsibilities have included roles as editor-in-chief of *Review of Policy Research* and of the journal *Technology*. He has published some 150 peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, edited volumes, and technical reports. Dennis recently co-authored an invited article for the National Academy of Engineering's flagship journal, *The Bridge*.

Since 2015, McBride has served as Chief Strategy Officer and Senior Scientist for NeuroRx Pharmaceuticals, where he has co-led the regulatory-governed development of novel drug regimens that treat suicide-level bipolar depression, and medication for acute respiratory distress in ICU patients diagnosed with COVID. This leadership resulted very recently in securing membership into NASDAQ. McBride served from 2016 to 2021 as Vice President for Strategy & Innovation at Source America, the congressionally-designated Ability One central nonprofit agency that oversees the development of jobs, nationally, for people with disabilities, interfacing almost daily at the senior-most level with nearly every cabinet office, including departments of Labor, Justice, HHS, Veterans Affairs, Education, and Defense, as well as with the presidentially appointed commission.

McBride's academic background includes an M.S. and Ph.D. in experimental psychology, the University of Georgia; MPA/M.S.P.A., public administration, Troy State University, Alabama; M.S. in Systems Management, Viterbi School of Engineering, University of Southern California, and post-doctoral studies in management at the London School of Economics. Dennis is a graduate of the Naval Aerospace Medical Institute's resident student program in Aerospace Experimental Psychology and Navy primary flight training, and the University of Tennessee Space Institute - Navy Test Pilot School flight test engineering program. His awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, and Joint Service Meritorious Service Medal.



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### **New Staff Member**

**Christi King** joins SPIA as of November 1 as its news business manager replacing **Leslie Day**. She has an extensive background in business and financial affairs, primarily at Virginia Tech. Christi began working at Virginia Tech in 1995 in a fiscal role at the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference

Center. Her career within the university spans from working in an auxiliary unit, to facilities, university administration, and finally academic departments. Christi's fiscal experience includes budgeting, forecasting, analysis, and management of operating, overhead, and grant funds. She was a member of the leadership team at a local non-profit agency where she managed budgets with funding from numerous sources, coordinated independent audits, and prepared extensive reports required by the state. Her experience also includes recruiting, developing, and leading a team of customer service and financial staff. In her most recent role in VT's Office of University Planning, Christi has been involved with university governance processes and committees.

Christi is a native of the Blacksburg area where she currently resides with her husband and two children. In her spare time she enjoys reading, gardening, and spending time outdoors. We welcome Christi to SPIA.



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## Student Spotlight

**Tyler Wedrosky** is a master's degree candidate in the Public and International Affairs program at SPIA. His research focuses on several eclectic areas, such as the politics of oil extraction both domestically and internationally, U.S. environmental policy, and "on-the-ground" perceptions of climate change in rural communities. Tyler currently works as a graduate research and teaching assistant under both Dr.

Boroujerdi and Dr. **Levinson**; his assistantship is generously supported by the Ridenour Faculty Fellowship program to which he owes his utmost appreciation. His efforts under Dr. Boroujerdi include administrative coordination of the National Security Executive Leadership program.

Prior to pursuing his master's degree, Tyler graduated from Western Washington University, a small state school in Bellingham, Washington with a bachelor's degree in urban planning and environmental policy. Afterward, he toiled in the engineering field as a project coordinator at a small engineering firm in the Seattle suburbs for a few years. Realizing that the engineering field wasn't his calling in life, he decided to change course and pursue graduate degree studies. He is thankful to have had the opportunity to hold several interesting internships and job opportunities while at SPIA – including a stint as Legislative Intern in the United States Senate prior to the pandemic, and as a research associate at a leading environmental nonprofit. True to his Pacific Northwest roots, he enjoys hiking as much as possible in his spare time.



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## Miscellaneous

- See [here](#) for the list of 76 undergraduate and graduate courses SPIA is offering in Spring 2022.
- [Read](#) about the exciting collaboration between the Commonwealth of Virginia and SPIA to develop next generation of government leaders in the state.

- Check out this interactive Performance-Lecture exploring Community Wealth Building. Register [here](#).
  - The deadline for taking part in the Washington Semester in Global Engagement is October 30. Check out the program and a student testimonial video [here](#).
  - Interested in a summer study abroad program revolving around Sustainable Policy-Making & Planning in Europe and earning up to six credits? Check [here](#).
  - Want to take part in a webinar (October 26, 2021, 8am-10am, EDT) about Blockchain and food security? Register (for free) [here](#).
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### Worth Pondering

- [25% of all critical infrastructure in the US is at risk of failure due to flooding](#)
  - [The Technopolar Moment: How Digital Powers Will Reshape the Global Order](#)
  - [A prominent academic resigns after benefactors try to exert influence over her curriculum](#)
  - [Pakistan got its way in Afghanistan. Now what?](#)
  - [Pandora Papers](#)
  - [The best way to win a Nobel is to get nominated by another laureate](#)
  - [The science that isn't seen because it's not in English](#)
  - [What Gets Forgotten in Debates About the Liberal Arts](#)
  - [Why Can't Women End Wars?](#)
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