



Doctoral Program in Public Affairs



News from the Doctoral Program in Public Affairs • College of Health and Public Affairs

Fall 2008

A Message from Director Thomas T.H. Wan



If you were to ask me to encapsulate our mission in a few words, it would be an “evidence-based approach to public affairs.”

As we celebrate our 10th anniversary, the Doctoral Program in Public Affairs has reached a level of maturity that is admirable and challenging. The total number of graduates is now 59, after three Turkish students successfully defended

their dissertations this summer.

Our alumni are well-positioned in varying leadership posts in both academia and service organizations. Our research team has worked extremely hard to generate fundable research proposals. Several federal grant applications were considered competitive and they are pending awards in a couple of months, particularly the National Children’s Study–Orange County and the Capacity Building in Long-term Care Research in China. Our student-faculty collaboration in research has been actualized through joint publications and presentations at the national conferences. I am pleased to report that the paradigm in public affairs’ research has been completely shifted by our collaborative efforts. Two special issues on Public Affairs Informatics Research will be forthcoming in the *International Journal of Public Affairs*, for which I serve as a special guest editor. Our faculty continues to be productive and lead the way for fostering research collaboration and gaining national and international prominence.

The growth and maturity of the program is not without any constraints. The great challenge for us is maintaining and enhancing community linkages. We know that the program

and the community are built upon a symbiotic relationship. With the assistance of the Center for Community Partnerships, we developed a major theme for the forthcoming research conference: establishing community and academic partnership in research and practice. We are offering a very exciting conference scheduled for October 23 at the *FAIRWINDS* Alumni Center.

Supporting a large number of doctoral students who are in need of financial assistance is a real challenge. We will do our best to find part-time employment as well as submit training grants for support. One example is to prepare the National Institutes of Health research-training grant, “Enhancing Global Health in Reducing Health Disparities and Improving Minority Health.” If it is funded, we can support three minority students who are interested in minority health and health disparities.

The program currently has three core faculty members: Drs. Larry Martin, Jackie Zhang and myself. Fortunately, faculty members from the college are shouldering some teaching responsibilities through team teaching for our introductory public affairs’ course this fall. I am grateful for the support of Drs. John Bricout, Tom Bryer, Myron Fottler, Bob Langworthy, Larry Martin and Gene Paoline. I hope that we will be able to recruit a new core faculty member in the near future.

Lastly, I would like to introduce you to the new dean, Dr. Michael Frumkin. He is a very personable and well-rounded academic leader who has an excellent background in public policy and social welfare. He is committed to furthering our mission of delivering the highest quality of doctoral education.

Welcome back to school. I look forward to greeting and meeting with you when you are on campus.

Sincerely,

Thomas T.H. Wan
Director and Professor

Mark Your Calendars for the Fifth Annual Health and Public Affairs Research Conference

The College of Health and Public Affairs will hold its fifth research conference this fall. The one-day event, titled “The Challenges of Community-Based and Action-Oriented Research,” will be held on Thursday, October 23, at the *FAIRWINDS* Alumni Center on the UCF Orlando campus. (For more information, see p. 6.)

Welcome to the seventh issue of this newsletter from the Doctoral Program in Public Affairs. We appreciate receiving your questions, comments and suggestions. Contact Alisha Mays, editor, at amays@mail.ucf.edu, or Margaret Mlachak, managing editor, at mmlachak@mail.ucf.edu.

Meet the College's New Dean: Michael Frumkin, Ph.D.



Michael Frumkin, former dean of the School of Social Work and Human Services at Eastern Washington University, is the new dean of the College of Health and Public Affairs, effective July 1, 2008.

Frumkin had been a member of the faculty at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, Wash., since 1991. He has also held faculty positions at Boston University, the

University of Minnesota and Florida State University. From 1992 to 1995, he was president of the Council on Social Work Education, the sole accrediting agency for social work education in the nation.

He earned his doctorate in social policy from the Florence Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University.

"It is an honor to be named the dean of the College of Health and Public Affairs and to become part of a college and university that is committed to building community partnerships focused on improving people's lives," Frumkin said.

He replaces Joyce Dorner, who was interim dean of the college for two years, and is now an associate dean.

Public Affairs' Program Coordinators

John Bricout, Ph.D.

Social Work

John Bricout is an associate professor and the associate director for research in the School of Social Work. He became the social work coordinator for the public affairs' program in the summer of 2008. In this role he is actively involved in admissions, advising students and serving on dissertation committees as either a member or the chair. In order to be more accessible to students, he will hold office hours one day a week in the IST building.



Bricout's research interests lie at the intersection of social learning, employment, person-environment adaptation and technology for persons with a disability. His research and scholarship clusters around three main topics: workplace social learning for

persons with a disability, technology and the social integration of persons with a disability, and knowledge translation and evidence-based practice. In this vein, he has completed or is currently conducting research involving persons with a disability on: classroom-workplace learning transitions, workplace socialization, telework, learning heuristics for adopting new technology, Web-based social networks and social learning, community social receptivity, and modified Delphi approaches for knowledge translation. His teaching interests include competencies for evidence-based practice research; ethical decision making and practice in human participants' research; evaluation research; methods and models for community-focused research, particularly, geographical information systems (GIS) and system dynamics' modeling (SDM); globalization; and information and communication technologies. Bricout enjoys mentoring students in research, as well as in instructional contexts. He has worked with student co-authors on scientific presentations and publications and has developed tools and strategies for student scholarly development.

Stephen Holmes, Ph.D.

Criminal Justice

Stephen Holmes is the associate dean of graduate studies and technology for the college and serves as the graduate coordinator for the Department of Criminal Justice and Legal Studies this year. He has extensive experience in running and managing graduate programs.



Holmes received his Ph.D. from the University of Cincinnati. As a researcher he has published more than nine books and 15 articles in the areas of policing, violence and homicide.

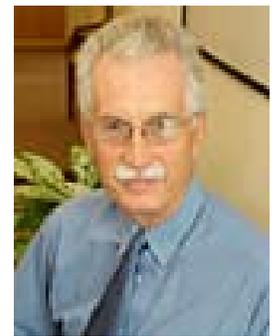
In the public affairs' program, Holmes has taught classes and chaired four dissertation committees. He looks forward to working with the program's students for years to come.

Wendell Lawther, Ph.D.

Public Administration

As public administration coordinator for the public affairs' program, Wendell Lawther is committed to the success of all doctoral students specializing in public administration. He said his primary role is twofold: to help students choose electives that will supplement their career and dissertation interests, and to assist in forming dissertation committees.

Lawther thinks the choice



of electives should be made carefully, to allow students the opportunity to gain further insights into possible dissertation topics, and to assist them in writing and defending a dissertation prospectus. "Throughout their course work, students become familiar with those professors in public administration who may be willing to serve as dissertation chairs and on dissertation committees. My role in part is to assist students in making that selection, helping to match student interests with faculty interests," he said.

Lawther's personal research agenda is always filled with current and future projects, "as there is always interesting research that can be accomplished." His current major focus is on public-private partnerships as they are formed in the creation and maintenance of roadways, bridges and other infrastructure. "Given the changing landscape of these partnerships in the United States, concerns of protecting the public interest and ensuring appropriate accountability are increasing," he explained.

One specific project relates to the changing role of private interests in providing financing for these structures, and the concurrent lack of familiarity by public officials with this type of complex partnership. Another related project focuses more on the transportation planning process and the nature of citizen participation in the planning and implementation of such partnerships. In both cases, Lawther thinks there is a need for new roles and modes of participation to ensure all stakeholders act in the public interest.

Lynn Unruh, Ph.D., RN, LHRM

Health Management and Informatics

Associate Professor Lynn Unruh is the new health management and informatics coordinator for the public affairs' program. She received a B.S. in nursing from the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Notre Dame. She is also a Licensed Healthcare Risk Manager in the state of Florida.



Unruh's research is in the following areas: nurse staffing in hospitals and nursing homes; the relationship between nurse staffing and quality, patient safety and costs of patient care; the nursing work force (measuring, assessing supply and demand, forecasting); the work environment in hospitals and nursing homes; and the responses of hospitals and nursing homes to reimbursement, regulatory and market forces. She has received funding from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Florida Center for Nursing, National Institute of Nursing Research, National Science Foundation and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Thomas Wan, Ph.D.

Generalist

Thomas Wan is the director of and a professor in the Doctoral Program in Public Affairs. He is also the associate dean for research for the College of Health and Public Affairs here at UCF.

Summer Graduates

Congratulations to our three summer 2008 graduates: Erhan Beyhan, Bahadir Kucukuysal and Serdar Yildiz. These three gentlemen entered the Doctoral Program in Public Affairs together in the 2005 fall semester. We wish them the best of luck in all their future endeavors!

Dissertation Titles:

Erhan Beyhan: Impact of Higher Education on Officer's Job Performance in the Turkish National Police

Bahadir Kucukuysal: Determinants of the Turkish Police Officers Perception of Integrity: Impact of Organizational Culture

Serdar Yildiz: Quality of Life in the Turkish National Police



(Left to right) Drs. Larry Martin, Erhan Beyhan, Serdar Yildiz, Bahadir Kucukuysal and Thomas Wan

Sponsored Research

A total of eight grant applications were submitted this academic year. One has been funded to evaluate rural community health centers by the Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services. Professor Thomas Wan serves as a principal investigator and Judy Ortiz (Public Affairs, '02) is an investigator for this grant.

The National Children's Study-Orange County grant application, with a total of \$1.4 million for five years, has been recommended. Its final funding will be approved by the NICHD Council this month.

Several grant applications related to minority health and health disparities have been submitted: 1) "Reducing Disparities in Breast Cancer Care and Outcomes," 2) "Reducing Disparities in Prostate Cancer Care and Outcomes" and 3) "Health Disparities Research Training with International Studies."

The proposal titled “Capacity Building in Long-Term Care Research in China” has been approved by the NIH Study Section and was recommended for funding.

This collaborative research offers exciting opportunities for doctoral students.

Student Spotlight: Abiy Agiro



Abiy Agiro entered the public affairs’ program this fall semester. He was selected this past spring to be a recipient of the University of Central Florida’s Presidential Doctoral Fellowship. The fellowship is merit-based and recipients are selected by the UCF Graduate Fellowships Committee.

Agiro is from the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. Before joining the public affairs’ program at UCF, Agiro double-majored in architecture and urban planning at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia and received his master’s degree in human settlements from Catholic University in Belgium. More recently, Agiro received a post-graduate certificate in European Spatial Planning from the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne in the United Kingdom.

Agiro is following the generalist track in the doctoral program. His research interests include informatics research for evidence-based decision-making and the use of public affairs’ informatics in public policy advocacy efforts.

In the future, if he is not involved with research or academics, Agiro would like to become a policy consultant.

Presentations

Ali Unlu

On Friday, September 26, doctoral program student Ali Unlu will present a paper at the 2008 Southeastern Conference for Public Administration in Orlando. The conference will be hosted by the Central Florida Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration and the Department of Public Administration at UCF. The theme this year is “Surviving Change, Fostering Excellence and Enhancing Innovation in Public Administration.”

Unlu will present his paper, “A Successful Method for Preventing Substance Use: A Social Capital Perspective.” His paper covers social capitalism as a relationship between individuals, how it impacts our behaviors and its impact on who we interact with and how we interact with other people in the social environment.



Seung Chun Paek and Binyam Seblega

Assistant Professors Denise Gammonley and Ning “Jackie” Zhang, Kathryn Frahm, Seung Chun Paek and Binyam Seblega will attend the 61st Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America. The conference will be at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland, from November 21-24. This year’s conference title is “Resilience in an Aging Society: Risks and Opportunities.”

Paek, in conjunction with Zhang, will present a paper titled “State Requirement for Social Service Staffing and Psychosocial Care Quality in Nursing Homes.”

Seblega will present his paper titled “Evaluating Nursing Staff Levels in Nursing Homes: 1997 and 2005.”



Binyam Seblega (left) and Seung Chun Paek (right) will present their papers in November in Maryland.

Promotions

Jeffrey Goltz (Alumnus)

Jeff Goltz, a 2006 graduate, was selected in June as the new director of the Valencia Community College Criminal Justice Institute. This institute houses the Police Academy and all advanced police training programs. He has already pledged his support in building a better working relationship between Valencia Community College and the criminal justice program here at UCF.

Kenneth Stackpoole (Alumnus)

Ken Stackpoole, a 2005 graduate, was appointed as the new senior vice president for advancement at the Florida Institute of Technology last spring. Stackpoole, who was in his second year with the institute as the College of Aeronautics dean, replaces the retiring Thomas Fox.

“We are delighted that a person of Dr. Stackpoole’s talent and drive has agreed to become the newest member of Florida Tech’s executive team,” said Anthony Catanese, president of the institute. “Dr. Stackpoole will bring new vigor and vision to the advancement team as we continue our successful Golden Anniversary Campaign for Florida Tech.”

— Melinda Millsap, *Campus Observer*, Vo. 9 Issue 4

Kevin Sherin (Courtesy Appointment)

The director of the Orange County Health Department is now leading a national public health association dedicated to being the guardians of the public's health. Director Kevin Sherin officially became the president of the national American Association of Public Health Physicians (AAPHP) on June 14, 2008. The induction ceremony was held in Chicago at the meeting of the American Medical Association (AMA).

Sherin has been involved in the AAPHP since 1990. He was nominated as vice president of the organization in 2004 and later selected as president-elect by a membership vote. "It is an honor to serve this association as its leader for the term from 2008-2010, especially since this is a time when health once again is a major focus of dialog in America," Sherin said.

The mission of the AAPHP is to promote the public's health and to educate the nation on the role and importance of the public-health physician's knowledge and skills in practicing population-based medicine and fostering communications, education and scholarship in public health. The AAPHP played a major role in advocating for the tobacco settlement in 1998. The organization represents physicians from all specialties who work in public health and who have a passion and care about protecting the health of all Americans.

— Dain R. Weister, public information officer, Orange County Health Department



Recent Publications

Seung Chun Paek, Assistant Professor Ning "Jackie" Zhang and Professor Thomas Wan's publication titled "Reliability Estimates of Clinical Measures between Minimum Data Set and Online Survey Certification and Reporting Data of U.S. Nursing Homes" has been accepted for publication in *Medical Care*.

A new book manuscript, "An Evidence-Based Approach to Improving the Quality of Care in Nursing Homes," coauthored by Wan, Gerald-Mark Breen, Zhang and Associate Professor Lynn Unruh, has been submitted to the Health Professions Press for its editorial consideration. This manuscript highlights important findings from the NIH-funded project, "Nurse Staffing and Nursing Care Quality in Nursing Homes," conducted by the research team. This project has generated a total of 15 articles; most of them are considered as SCI or SSCI publications.

A third special issue of the *International Journal of Public Policy* on Public Affairs Informatics Research has been

released by Inderscience.com. Several papers on disaster management and planning presented at the Health and Public Affairs Research Conference in 2006 appear in this issue. A fourth special issue of the journal, on Global Health and Transformational Leadership, has been submitted to the publisher. The new issue will appear in 2009.

Wan is currently accepting manuscripts for a fifth special issue, on Evidence-Based Approaches to Health and Public Affairs, for the journal.

Faculty Spotlight: Thomas Wan, Ning "Jackie" Zhang and Lynn Unruh

UCF Rankings Can Help Nursing Homes Improve Quality, Efficiency

Nursing home operators already have access to a ranking system similar to what the federal government is creating to help consumers choose a nursing home for their loved ones.

UCF operates a database of all nursing home facilities nationwide that receive Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements. Professor Thomas Wan and his team created the database with funding from the NIH's National Institute of Nursing Research.

The collection contains more than 10 years of data and millions of records and ranks each facility based on quality and economic efficiency.

The new federal database, which the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced in June, will rank facilities on a five-star scale similar to the way hotels are ranked and is expected to be ready by the end of the year. UCF's database can help nursing homes prepare for what consumers will find in the federal rating system.

"Our approach is to help nursing home administrators to improve performance in efficiency and quality," Wan said. "The key is that the recommendations for improvement are research based. These are factors that we know matter. It is not theory."

Nursing homes can get individualized prescriptions for improvement through UCF's massive and searchable database, housed at the Informatics Research Lab. Nursing home administrators can see how they rank based on a variety of data from nurse-resident ratios to economic indicators.

The research team includes Assistant Professor Ning "Jackie" Zhang and Associate Professor Lynn Unruh. They have authored several journal articles based on the database and its analysis, most recently in the June 2008 edition of *Health Services Research*. In that study, they analyzed whether the payment system in place now has increased nursing home efficiency.

Wan has published extensively and has served on NIH committees. He has also been a consultant to government agencies in Kazakhstan, the Czech Republic, South Africa and South Korea as they work to establish graduate health services management education and research.

— *Medical News Today*, June 21, 2008

10th Anniversary Donors

This past April, the Doctoral Program in Public Affairs celebrated its 10th anniversary. Students, alumni and friends of the program joined in the celebration of the past 10 years and the future as well.

The doctoral program would like to thank everyone who donated to the program during the celebration, helping ensure the future for current and new students. The donations received go to the Dr. Thomas T.H. Wan Scholarship. This scholarship will be given out to students in future years based on UCF Foundation requirements, once it develops over time.

Thank you to Kenneth and Susan M. Stackpoole; Carole B. Zugazaga; Michael W. Neidhart; Owen M. Beitsch; Traci Francis; Jeffrey W. Goltz; Thomas T. H. Wan; Shriram "Sam" Marathe, Medical Specialists, P.A.; and Covian Consulting, Inc.. The Doctoral Program in Public Affairs appreciates your donations and support.

New Public Affairs Student Association President

Vanessa Littleton will replace Tory Jennison as the president of the Public Affairs Student Association. Littleton is a second-year McKnight doctoral fellow in the public affairs' program. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Northwestern State University and a Master of Public Administration from Louisiana State University.

Littleton has served the Central Florida community in various capacities, including the executive director of the Seminole County Healthy Start program, director of community relations for Covenant House Florida and deputy executive director for the Health Care Center for the Homeless. She currently serves as vice president for both the Central Florida Research and Development Board Authority and the Homeless Services Network of Central Florida Board of Directors.

Fifth Annual Health and Public Affairs Research Conference

Background

Today's leaders must understand the challenges that impact community-based research endeavors. In facing the fiscal constraints and budget cuts from state and local agencies, community leaders and researchers must understand how to adapt by implementing new research partnership strategies and by effectively communicating best practices in community-based research to ensure the integrity and appropriateness of scientific research that will benefit the public. They also must learn how fiscal challenges facing local economics can provide the impetus to promote joint development of community partnership networks and increased social capital.

Academicians, publicly elected officials and public sector organizations must work together to identify ways to foster

university-community partnerships, the development of social networks and to identify the best practices in public affairs research.

The Conference

Community leaders, academics and supporters of community-based research will have the opportunity to help identify the challenges that hinder the development of collaborative research. To this end, the College of Health and Public Affairs at UCF will hold a one-day conference titled "The Challenges of Community-Based and Action-Oriented Research." The conference, to be held on **Thursday, October 23, at the FAIRWINDS Alumni Center** on the UCF Orlando campus, will focus on how to develop collaborative research partnerships in public affairs, using tools such as social network analysis as exemplified in fields such as health management and informatics, public and nonprofit administration, social services, mental health, criminal justice, literacy, and public health.

Conference speakers will possess academic and professional experience in community-based research and development. Several ongoing community projects will be showcased. Faculty members, students from UCF and community interest groups have been invited to present their work as it relates to the field of health and public affairs.

The Doctoral Program in Public Affairs will bring together the leading scholars to share their scholarship and strategic agenda for resolving the most urgent collaborative research development issues. This annual research forum will be a gathering of change agents, from a variety of public sector disciplines, to address best-practice solutions for perfecting our community and nation's proactive response for social and community problems and to identify successful stories in transforming community-based research. We invite your active participation in this exciting conference and sincerely hope that you may join us. This annual conference is sponsored by the UCF's Center for Community Partnerships and the Doctoral Program in Public Affairs.

The conference will generate debates on important issues pertaining to health and public affairs' research, build consensus on the domains of scientific inquiry relevant to public services, identify evidence-based approaches to enhance quality and efficiency of services organizations and guide the strategic development of research partnerships with community agencies.

The conference will be organized into four parts: 1) speakers and panelists presenting on community-based health and public affairs research and practice, 2) panelist discussions on research partnership projects, 3) community-based research methodologies and 4) faculty and student research poster presentations.

For more information on registering for the conference, please contact Margaret Mlachak at mmlachak@mail.ucf.edu. The registration deadline is October 17, 2008.