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**Virginia Tech Institute for Policy & Governance****Quarterly Newsletter****July 2018, Volume VII, Issue III**

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**From the Director: Tidings Quarterly Reflection:  
Considering the Critical Roles of Graduate Students**

**Max Stephenson**  
**Director, Virginia Tech Institute**  
**For Policy & Governance**

The formal publication date for this essay also marks the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Institute's founding. Much has happened in these dozen years as the Institute for Policy and Governance (IPG) has grown and matured. We have changed our reporting relationships within Virginia Tech (VT), served under two Presidents, two Vice Presidents, two Deans and four School Directors and seen our role in the School of Public and International Affairs and College of Architecture and Urban Studies evolve considerably. More, during this period, the University has set itself on a course to realize interdisciplinary possibilities in its curricula and research, and its leaders have decided, too, that the institution will need to compete still more aggressively for research dollars to survive, let alone thrive, in the midst of a continuing decline in support from the state.

All of this has changed the professorial role profoundly and placed faculty under enormous pressure to obtain external support for their research, whether from governments, foundations or private corporations. All of these entities carry their own accountabilities and risks and they all require enormous investments of faculty time and resources as well as the time and expertise of our Institute (for those we serve) and Virginia Tech's sponsored program support staff to help to realize them. In this sense, IPG's functional remit has never been more significant or more prominent and it looks set only to grow in importance in these terms.

I want here to focus briefly on the role graduate students today play within VT and IPG in the rapidly evolving environment that each now confronts. It is easy to argue that the modern research university, complex marvel that it is, could not exist without the faculty who constitute

( Continued on page 17)

### In This Issue

- Tidings (Director's Letter)...pp.1, 17-19
- Acknowledgements & Accomplishments ...pp.2-6
- News and Events ...pp. 6-9
- Conference & Print Representation ... pp. 10-11
- Community Voices ...pp. 12-14
- Faculty Spotlight: Gary Kirk ... pp. 15
- Student Spotlight: Danny White ... pp. 16
- Tidings (continued) ...pp. 17-19
- Commentaries & Essays ... pp. 19

## Acknowledgements & Accomplishments

Beth Olberding received her Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Tech on May 10, 2018. She successfully defended her thesis entitled "*REDD+and Costa Rica, another form of colonialism and commodification of natural resources? An indigenous perspective*" on May 9, 2018. Her advisory committee members included: Chair, Max Stephenson (Professor of Public and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Policy and Governance), Todd Schenk (Assistant Professor, Urban Affairs and Planning), and Nicholas Copeland (Assistant Professor, Sociology). Beth is working at the Office of Economic Development this summer and finishing up a second Master's degree in Natural Resources as she does so. As an alumna of the Peace Corps Master's International Program in Costa Rica, Beth remains very interested in that

nation and in South America more generally. She is planning an extended trip to the region this fall before pursuing professional opportunities. Best wishes Beth!

Henry Ayakwah (Urban and Regional Planning) successfully defended his major paper, entitled: "*An Analysis of Water Scarcity in the Nandom District of Ghana and Exploration of Possible Remedies*" With this defense, Henry completed requirements to receive his Master's, which was conferred May 10, 2018. His advisory committee members included: Chair, Max Stephenson, Jr., (Professor of Public and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Policy and Governance), George Norton (Professor, Agricultural Applied Economics), Ralph Hall (Associate Professor, Urban Affairs and Planning). Congratulations Henry!

## Acknowledgements & Accomplishments (continued)

Lindy Cranwell (PGG) successfully defended her PhD dissertation proposal on Monday, May 1, 2018. Her committee included: Chair Dr. Max Stephenson (Director Institute for Policy and Governance), Co-Chair Dr. Denise Simmons (Assistant Professor, Myers-Lawson School of Construction), Dr. David Knight (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Engineering Education) and Ralph Hall (Associate Professor, UPA). Lindy's Dissertation Title is *University Comprehensive Internationalization: Faculty Perspectives on Meaning-Making, Attitudes and Motivations for Engaging Globally*.

Congratulations and best wishes Lindy, as you move to the next phase.

Kristin Kirk successfully defended her dissertation on April 9, 2018 entitled, "*Assessing Nonprofit Websites: Developing an Evaluation Model*"- and thereby completed requirements for her *PhD In Planning, Governance and Globalization*. Special thanks to Kristin's advisory committee members: Alan Abrahams, Department of Business Information Technology, Jason Kelly, Department of Po-

litical Science, Tom Sanchez, Urban Affairs and Planning Program/SPIA and Chris Zobel, Department of Business Information Technology. Max Stephenson served as chair of her committee. Kristin is the 31<sup>st</sup> student affiliated with VTIPG to complete their doctorate since the Institute's founding in 2006. Congratulations to Kristin!

Ashley Costello a *Master's student of Public Administration and Public Affairs (PAPA)*, passed her defense of her Capstone requirement and completed requirements for her degree on May 9, 2018. The title of her presentation was: "*Transitioning to Nonprofit Administrator*." The members of her committee included: Chair, Robin Lemaire, Associate Professor, Public Administration and Public Affairs, Laura Jensen, Associate Professor, Public Administration and Public Affairs and Max Stephenson, Jr., Professor of Public and International Affairs and Director, Institute for Policy and Governance. Ashley also earned a Certificate in Non-profit and Nongovernmental Organizational Management (through the School of Policy and International Affairs (SPIA)). Congratulations and best wishes to Ashley!

## Acknowledgements & Accomplishments(continued)

Congratulations to **Nathan Corso** ([Master of Public and International Affairs\( MPIA\)](#)). On May 8, 2018 Nathan passed his master's thesis proposal defense, titled "[Southwest University Students Volunteer Motivations and Views on Volunteering](#)". The thesis is based on volunteering at Southwest University in Chongqing, China, where Nathan has been for the past year. He will be returning to Blacksburg from China in July, and he is the last Peace Corps student.

His committee includes, chair Dr. Max Stephenson, (Urban Affairs and Planning in SPIA), Tim Luke, (Political Science) and Yang Zhang, (Urban Affairs and Planning in SPIA).

### [The School of Public and International Affairs \(SPIA\)](#)

held its annual Excellence Awards on Monday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, at the Graduate Life Center. Awards received by faculty and students with an association with the Institute for Policy and Governance (IPG) included:

- **Dr. Max Stephenson**, Professor in SPIA and Director of the Institute for Policy and Governance (IPG), received the Graduate School/ College of Architecture and Urban Studies [CAUS Outstanding Mentor Award](#). This award was created by the Graduate School to recognize one faculty member from each college for

their role in supporting, encouraging, and promoting a positive and inclusive scholarly and teaching environment, and for contributing to the professional and personal development of graduate students.

- **Hamza Safouane**, PGG-GG, Blacksburg received the Richard E. Zody Award for [Outstanding dissertation](#) in PGG. Hamza's dissertation was titled: Governing migrants in the European Union: A Critical Approach to Interrogating Migrants' Journey Narratives Dr. Stephenson served as a member of Dr. Safouane's advisory committee.
- **Beth Olberding**, MURP, Blacksburg, was awarded the [Brenda Crawford Award for the Program's Graduate Student who has embodied and demonstrated the ideals of public service and social justice](#). Dr. Stephenson is serving as chair of her advisory committee.
- **Lara Nagle**, MURP, Blacksburg, was awarded the [VA Chapter of the American Planning Association Certificate Award for Graduate Students for Outstanding Professional Promise](#). Dr. Stephenson is serving as chair of her advisory committee. Lara is also serving as a graduate assistant with the Institute.

***Congratulations to all!***

## Acknowledgements & Accomplishments (continued)

The **Virginia Tech Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment (ISCE)** recently awarded six interdisciplinary faculty teams funding for 2018-19 as they work to prepare applications for external support for their research initiatives. One of the teams that won ISCE support is studying age-friendly community initiatives and policies and includes: Eunju Hwang, assistant professor of apparel, housing, and resource management in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences; Nancy Brossoie, senior research associate in the Center for Gerontology; Sophie Wenzel, lecturer in population health sciences in the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine; and **Max Stephenson**, professor of Public and International Affairs and Director, Institute for Policy and Governance in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies. Congratulations to this group!

The **Institute for Policy and Governance** researchers were awarded two [Vibrant Virginia](#) seed grants. **Mary Beth Dunkenberger** is working with [Center for Public Health Practice and Research](#) on *Building Healthy Families and Communities through Collaborative Strategies to Reduce Opioid SUD*. The project will focus on connecting population health expertise with policy and organizational assessment capabilities to provide a foundation on which to build community-engaged collaborations and strategic approaches for the prevention and treatment of

opioid and related substance use disorders. As the opioid epidemic continues to impact Virginia residents, the research will seek to determine impact and related strategies to reduce SUD at the individual, family, community, and regional levels in Southwest Virginia.

For the second award **Max Stephenson** is leading the *Community Change Collaborative (CCC)* which seeks to build a coalition of action around the development of regional partnerships to use theory and practical application to create long lasting partnerships. See more on CCC on page 8.

In the April 2018 Issue of the **Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC)** newsletter, new inductees into the **NU Lambda Mu International Honor Society** were recognized. Among the inductees was **Neda Moayerian**, PhD student in Planning, Governance and Globalization (PGG) – SPIA. Neda was one of 96 Spring Inductees. She was sponsored by Dr. Max Stephenson, Director of the Institute for Policy and Governance.

**Ben Grove** PhD student in Planning, Governance and Globalization (PGG) completed his Qualifying on May 9<sup>th</sup> 2018. His area of interest is the role of adaptive leadership in nongovernmental organizations involved in development efforts. His com-

## Acknowledgements & Accomplishments (continued)

mittee includes: Max Stephenson, Chair (Director of the Institute for Policy and Governance), Bruce Hull (Professor in Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation), Todd Schenk (Assistant Professor Urban Affairs & Planning), and Laura Zanotti (Associate Professor in Political Science). Congratulations Ben!

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## News and Events

On May 3, 2018 **Nada Berrada** of Morocco, a PhD. student in [ASPECT](#) (Alliance for Social Political, Ethical and Cultural Thought), whose advisory committee is chaired by Institute Director MaxStephenson, learned that she had been selected by Virginia Tech's Graduate School to serve as a Fellow and to complete a project for its Diversity Spotlight program. Berrada plans to survey the University's international students to collect their perceptions and experiences of inclusion and diversity at Virginia Tech for her project. She will share her findings with interested Graduate School and Cranwell International Center leaders and staff, and with the VT Office of Recruitment, Diversity and Inclusion. She is hopeful that what she learns will help those leading those offices better understand and more effectively serve the interests and needs of the University's international student community.

Berrada completed a master's degree in Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech in 2016 and received a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the Ecole de Gouvernance et d'Economie de Rabat in Morocco in 2014. She taught for VT's Department of Political Science in spring 2018 and also began her service on the Virginia Tech's International Student Advisory Board (ISAB) during that semester. Congratulations to Nada!

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### New book by Professor Laura Zanotti

A new book by IPG affiliated faculty member **Laura Zanotti**, Associate Professor of Political Science, will be published on July 10: *Ontological Entanglements, Agency and Ethics in International Relations: Exploring the Crossroads* (Oxford, England: Routledge Publishers). The volume treats Professor Zanotti's long-term interest in the importance of ontological and epistemological assumptions as central organizing elements of international relations. Interested readers may learn more about the book here: <https://www.routledge.com/Ontological-Entanglements-Agency-and-Ethics-in-International-Relations/Zanotti/p/book/9780415786355> Congratulations to Dr. Zanotti!



## News and Events (continued)

### Jake Keyel proudly announces a new arrival!

Ilana Anne Keyel was born on June 4. She is the daughter of Zibby and Jake Keyel. Ilana measured 20 inches and 7lbs 13oz. Jake is a PGG doctoral student. Congratulations Zibby and Jake! Jake is a PhD student (PGG) of Max Stephenson.



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[www.ipg.vt.edu](http://www.ipg.vt.edu)

The Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance (VTIPG) builds strategic relationships between the university and community by linking academic research and outreach efforts to address significant public policy issues. VTIPG, a university level institute, was created to blend theory with practice by a variety of policy-related services.

## News and Events (Continued)

### IPG Announces the “Community Change Collaborative (CCC)”

The Institute for Policy and Governance (IPG) is restructuring its existing Community Voices, Trustees Without Borders, *Community Change Journal* and community-based research programs into one overarching initiative, which will now be called the Community Change Collaborative (CCC – does this acronym ring a bell?). While still an evolving concept, the CCC aims to unite theory and praxis through projects, research, education and forums focused on community engagement, change and development issues.

The Institute’s participation in the Vibrant Virginia initiative is closely aligned with its choice to rethink the organization of its community change efforts. Vibrant Virginia is a “a unique partnership between Virginia Tech’s Office of Outreach and International Affairs, Virginia Cooperative Extension, the College Access Collaborative, the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA), and the Policy Strategic Growth Area (SGA)” aimed at connecting Virginia Tech researchers and development practitioners serving the Commonwealth (<https://econdev.vt.edu/vibrantvirginia.html>). The initiative highlights applied research, policy analysis, and community engagement projects.

Along with the [Community Voices speaker series](#), the Trustees Without Borders [podcasts](#), and the graduate student-managed [Community Change Journal](#), the CCC will host a bi-monthly forum featuring the work and methods of a range of faculty and practitioners focused on community change. In addition, the CCC will focus on:

- tailoring research, facilitation, and workshops for community development efforts in partnering Virginia towns;
- conducting ethnographic field tours exploring ways of knowing places within Virginia and neighboring states; and
- sharing and reflecting on those experiences to inform future research, community projects, and the development of relevant interdisciplinary curricula.

The CCC will hold planning meetings monthly during the coming academic year; interested graduate students and faculty from any discipline are invited to collaborate on community development projects in Virginia, to explore theories, methods and approaches to community change, and to share lessons learned from past programs and experiences. For more information, please contact IPG Director, Dr. Max Stephenson, [mstephen@vt.edu](mailto:mstephen@vt.edu).



## News and Events (Continued)

**Vera Smirnova** is Preparing to Defend her Dissertation - Community Change Collaborative participant Vera Smirnova (PGG) has written us from Madison, Wisconsin to say she is finishing up her doctoral dissertation, which she will defend in Blacksburg on August 16. Thereafter, she will begin a postdoctoral fellowship in the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Russia, where she will be collaborating with Irina Ilina from the Department for Spatial Development and Regional Studies. She will also be working with Oleg Golubchikov from the School of Geography at Cardiff University in Wales during the coming year. Her new position involves continuing her research concerning private property and land enclosure conflicts that have arisen in post-Soviet Russia during periods of economic and political crisis.

Vera and her husband Zak Ratajczak, a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, will reside in Madison and Vera will travel to Cardiff and Moscow periodically for her position. She tells us that it is all very exciting, but will also entail a lot of work. Good Luck Vera!

**Sarah (Crowder) Orren**, who completed the graduate certificate in Nonprofit and Nongovernmental Organization Management through SPIA in 2017 and worked with IPG Director Max Stephenson as she did so, has transitioned from a post In VT Student Affairs to a new role with the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine as its Communications Manager. Sarah is now responsible for planning, executing and evaluating digital and print communications for that College. She began her new position on May 25<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations Sarah!

**Lauren Mills**, former Administrative Assistant of Dr. Max Stephenson at IPG, graduated on May 10 with a Master's in Public Health. Lauren is currently working as a Program Support Technician at the Mechanical Engineering – Center for Energy Harvesting Materials and Systems

## Conference & Print Representation

On Saturday, April 7, 2018 the Seventh Annual Combating Racial Injustice Workshop on Juvenile (In) Justice sponsored by the [Race and Social Policy Research Center](#) was held at the Inn at Virginia Tech. It was directed by **Wornie Reed**, Professor of Sociology. Senior Fellow from the Institute for Policy and Governance (IPG) **Andy Morikawa** helped facilitate the event. The workshop addressed racial disparities in juvenile justice nationally and in Virginia. Andy Morikawa opened the workshop with welcoming remarks and introductions. Attended by community members, faculty and students, the workshop featured a presentation of national and Virginia data by **Donald Shoemaker**, Professor of Sociology. After the presentation, dialogue groups of participants focused on actions and activities that participants planned to pursue to address the issue of juvenile injustice.



Dr. Wornie Reed, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Race and Social Policy Research Center that sponsors the Combating Racial Injustice Workshops. Dr. Reed made closing remarks at the workshop, encouraging participants to pursue the plans they had developed during the dialogue sessions.

## Conference & Print Representation (continued)

### ASA 2018 Conference

**Neda Moayerian** (PGG) presented at the Appalachian Studies Association (ASA) 2018 conference. The ASA held it's 41<sup>st</sup> Annual conference on April 5-8 in Cincinnati, Ohio. The theme of the conference was "Re-stitching the Seams: Appalachia Beyond it Border". Neda presented the paper co-written by she and Dr. Max Stephenson, Director of the Institute for Policy and Governance. The title of the presentation was: "**Exploring the Connections between Community Cultural Development and Sustainable Tourism in Appalachia**". Other participants from Virginia Tech and affiliated with IPG include: Jordan Laney and Claudio D'Amato.

**Lyusyena Kirakosyan** will be presenting on the narrative identities of the Brazilian female Paralympian's at the 76th Annual Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA). The conference will be held in Chicago on April 5-8.

She also received a Developing Nations scholarship from the MPSA in the form of a complimentary membership.

**Nada Berrada** presented her paper, "**Surveying the Arab Youth Survey**" in the 2018 Virginia Social Science Association (VSSA) Conference which was held on Saturday, April 21, 2018 in Richmond, Virginia.

**Jake Keyel** (PGG) **Vera Smirnova** (PGG) and **Ashleigh** (PGG) attended the American Association of Geographers(AAG) which was held in New Orleans from April 11-April 14th. They co-chaired three paper sessions titled "**Contesting Border Formation(s): Territory, Crisis, Resistance**". Also attending was Dr. Lorien McAuley (ALCE).



Neda Moayerian,(PGG) attended the "7th International Conference on Environmental Future (7ICEF)" which was held in Hawaii on April 15th -20th. Her paper was about " Community-based Art Making and Environmental Conservation in Hormoz Island, Iran".



## William Cleveland comes to Virginia Tech—April 19



William Cleveland's visit to campus was sponsored by the School of Performing Arts Colloquium Series. His visit included a round table discussion arranged by the Institute for Policy and Governance Community Voices graduate student group.

Since 1991, William has been the Director of the Center for the Study of Art and Community, based on Bainbridge Island, WA. Principal consultant and founder of an arts consulting and research organization specializing in arts-based community development and management support and training. The Center provides programs and services in the following areas: strategic and

market planning, research and evaluation, and comprehensive training in support of arts based development and arts education. CSA&C's clients come from the arts, education, health/human services, criminal justice, government and philanthropic sectors.

William Cleveland is a pioneer in the community arts movement and one of its most poetic documenters. His books, *Art in Other Places: Artists at Work in America's Community and Social Institutions*, *Making Exact Change*, and *Art and Upheaval: Artists on the World's Frontlines* are considered seminal works in the field of arts-based community development. He is an activist, teacher, lecturer, and musician.



Photo L-R: Thomas Murray (MFA candidate, Directing and Public Dialogue), William Cleveland, Sarah Lyon Hill (PhD student in PGG) Interviewers Murray and Lyon Hill engaged Cleveland in conversation in about the nonprofit industrial complex, the arts, theater, community change.



## Community Voices (Continued)

On April 23, 2018, the Political Science Department, in partnership with the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, hosted the [Vietnam Graffiti Project](#). The project concerns young Americans who journeyed to Vietnam to take part in that war aboard a troopship and the messages they wrote on their canvas sleeping bunks. They never expected their musings and stories might one day be remembered, let alone become a source for deepening our understanding of a still divisive conflict, but with this Project both of these eventualities have come to pass. Military artifact historian Art Beltrone and photographer Lee Beltrone, architects and curators of this singular effort, presented these young people's reflections as they went to war through film and photographs.

The principal organizers of the Beltrones' visit asked the Institute's [Community Voices](#) group if they might interview the couple for their Trustees Without Borders podcast series, hosted by Institute Senior Fellow Andy Morikawa. The group agreed and Alex Stubberfield (PhD student in ASPECT) and Will Muessig, a Junior at Virginia Tech majoring in International Studies and minoring in Russian, interviewed the artists. The podcast of that conversation may be found [here](#).



Photo L-R back:: Alex Stubberfield, Will Muessig . Front:: Lee Beltrone and Al Beltrone

## Community Voices (Continued)

As 2018 academic year came to a close, a share of the members of Community Voices met at Rising Silo in Blacksburg to relax and celebrate. They also gathered to wish their colleague and friend Vera Smirnova Bon Voyage as she moved to Wisconsin to begin her new position (see page 8). They also discussed exciting changes afoot related to Community Voices (see page 7), which will be in place for the fall semester.



Pictured left to right: Vanessa Gurreara, Vera Smirnova, her husband, Zak Ratajczak, , Hani Awni, Regina Naff, Neda Moayerian, Max Stephenson, Alex Stubberfield, Cathy Grimes. The photo was taken by Reza Fateminasab , Neda's fiancé.

<https://communityvoices.info/>



## Faculty Spotlight: Gary Kirk

Dr. Gary Kirk returned to Virginia Tech in 2011 as director of the Center for Student Engagement and Community Partnerships (VT Engage). In 2017, he began splitting his time between the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) and VT Engage. He is teaching and leading development of a Pathways minor in Community Systems and Engagement for SPIA. He previously served as an assistant professor and director of programs in public policy and administration at James Madison University (JMU).



Gary has several active research projects underway linked by an interest in, and focus on, individual and collective capacity for community change. His jointly authored article to develop a model and scenario-based tool to assess systemic thinking competency was recently published in [\*Thinking Systems and Creativity\*](#). Much of his current work explores community-level civic infrastructure in several policy areas, including refugee resettlement, food security, and education. Working with colleagues in the Department of Engineering Education on the NSF-funded [VT PEERS project](#), Gary leads efforts to document the formation of multi-sector, collaborative networks engaged in developing curricula for rural middle schools.

At JMU, he was the principle investigator (PI) for the MATCH project (DOJ-OJJDP), which investigated the relationship between mentor training and outcomes for at-risk youth via a community-based research partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters. Additionally, Gary has been the PI or Co-PI for several other sponsored research projects, including a 9/11 National Day of Service grant from the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS) and two national service programs housed at Virginia Tech, VISTA (CNCS) and AmeriCorps (Virginia Department of Social Services).

An advocate for high-quality community engaged pedagogy, Gary has also been actively involved in Virginia Tech's Experiential Learning Visioning Committee. His faculty development efforts include directing the VT Engage Faculty Fellows program and serving as the inaugural chair of Mobilize NRV, an initiative to create sustainable partnerships between regional nonprofits and faculty members at VT, Radford University, and New River Community College. His efforts to strengthen global community partnerships have supported the establishment of sustainable service immersion programs in the Dominican Republic and Peru, and he is traveling to Cambodia and Indonesia in summer 2018 to continue building relationships with local research and education partners. Gary currently serves as associate editor for the Journal of Experiential Education. A recipient of the Provost's Award for Excellence in Outreach and Engagement at JMU, Gary was

## Faculty Spotlight: Gary Kirk (continued)

awarded a Ph.D. in environmental design and planning and an MPIA from VT and a B.A. in ecology and evolutionary biology from the New College of Florida. He is a long-time resident of southwest Virginia and lives in Blacksburg with his family: Carrie is Deputy Director of Philanthropy for The Nature Conservancy of Virginia; Lauren is a rising junior studying political science and religion at Emory University in Atlanta; and, Reed is a rising sophomore at Blacksburg High School where he pursues his love of fine art, the Spanish language, lacrosse, and football. On summer evenings, Gary and various family members, including Isis the rescue dog, can often be found in the glider on their front porch.

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## Student Spotlight: Danny White

Danny is a doctoral candidate in the Planning, Governance, and Globalization program in the School of Public and International Affairs and is also employed as an Associate Athletic Director for Virginia Tech Athletics.



He has had the opportunity in recent years to pursue his doctoral research and interest in teaching while engaged in a number of exciting projects. Danny's interests center on civil society organization roles in international development. By developing and leading study abroad courses, he has formed relationships with a number of institutions involved in such initiatives. These have ranged in scale from large multilaterals to smaller nongovernmental entities. More particularly, his work has lead him to partner with the International Olympic Committee, the United States Agency for International Development, various United Nations agencies, Right to Play, Kids Play International, and Deportes Para la Vida (Sports for Life—a nongovernmental organization in the Dominican Republic), among others.

Danny's doctoral dissertation focuses on a sample of civil society organizations employing sport in Rwanda as a strategy to encourage community-building and community change. Over his time at Virginia Tech, Danny has been influenced by many individuals (including his advisory committee chair, Max Stephenson), and is deeply grateful for the opportunity to combine international service and research.

Danny earned a B.S. from the University of South Carolina, an M.A. from Virginia Tech, and a graduate certificate in Collaborative Community Leadership from Virginia Tech.

Danny enjoys running, reading, surfing, good coffee, and spending time with his wife Meredith and their children, Addie, Will, Amelia, and Abigail.

## Max Stephenson's Tidings (continued)

its beating heart. But it is equally the case that today's research institutions could not function without the graduate students who come to them to pursue knowledge and advanced degrees in their chosen fields. If faculty constitute the metaphorical heart of the world's leading universities, graduate students may be understood as the arteries attached to them. They complete the organism that serves as the center of the modern research university. Indeed, for many scientists and engineers, graduate students literally act as extensions of their work, helping them to carry out projects or experiments they could not otherwise complete alone in their labs. Graduate students also lead undergraduate courses and discussion sections across many disciplines and help faculty with advising and grading chores related to large classes as well. Further, graduate students assist professors with field research and sponsored project reports, and many also publish the results of those efforts in academic journals with their mentors, as an integral part of their educational experience.

By implication, this partial list of the ways graduate students are enmeshed in the University's life suggests that these individuals also likely play vital roles in the Institute<sup>3/4</sup> and so they do. One way of illustrating how post-graduates are integrated into the warp and woof of IPG's daily activities is to outline how those individuals have shaped and continue to chart the Community Change Collaborative (CCC) research initiative within the Institute. The CCC is an ongoing multi-dimensional interdisciplinary project aimed at exploring the dynamics of community and civic change at multiple analytic scales. The effort is comprised of the following parts:

- *An Academic Forum*: A weekly substantive seminar-style discussion investigating central questions related to community change. Graduate student participants come from multiple disciplines and academic programs and share their own inquiry, research foci and conceptual frames as they address key concerns related to theorizing and examining democratic change processes. All participate voluntarily and without academic credit.
- *A Speakers Series*: Engaged students select, invite and host individuals involved in community development or change work to visit campus each semester to share insights from their experience and practice. Guests offer a public address, which is recorded, and a roundtable, also open to the community, which is recorded, too. These are available on a public website and a group of CCC students and I will use them to produce a forthcoming analytical volume based on the series.<sup>1</sup>
- *A Podcast Series*: Two or three student volunteers interview each Collaborative project speaker for the Institute's Trustees without Borders podcast series. These are professionally produced and hosted by IPG Senior Fellow Andrew Morikawa and available to the public. Many guests have indicated this opportunity proved a high point of their visit to campus. The quality of these sessions has proven to be routinely excellent.<sup>2</sup>
- *An Academic Journal*: A group of IPG-affiliated graduate students have successfully launched a refereed academic journal called, appropriately enough, *Community Change*, which will shortly publish its

## Max Stephenson's Tidings (continued)

second issue.<sup>3</sup>

- *Cross-University Sharing of Ideas Concerning Community Change*: The Collaborative strives actively to bring faculty members interested in community change together for forums to share their research interests and theoretical frames in order to catalyze learning and continued dialogue across disciplinary boundaries.
- *Field Research*: Finally, CCC participants have participated in field work to assist Appalachian communities during this past year. I hope we will be able to continue to deepen and enlarge those opportunities in coming months as they permit students to consider the concepts, constructs and concerns on which they have reflected in the Forum and during speaker visits as these are revealed or may be applied in community contexts. We hope, too, to add one or two CCC-sponsored field visits per semester to Appalachian towns that will be aimed at equipping participants with a deeper understanding of the complex interplay of social, cultural, economic and political issues in communities in this vital region. Again, these forays will be designed intentionally to encourage participating to seek to make sense of what they experience through the theoretical and conceptual frames they have discussed in other CCC events and activities.

In addition to the many ways graduate students are involved in the Community Change Collaborative, the Institute also routinely seeks to involve interested students in sponsored projects, where they may obtain robust professional experience in preparing analyses or delivering programs for clients. In some cases, these have led to Ph.D. dissertation or master's degree thesis topics for those individuals so involved. More, Institute faculty members are chairs and members of graduate student advisory committees across a number of disciplines, and the reach of those individuals' intellectual interests and topics lend richness daily to the intellectual life of IPG. They also bring alternative theoretical formulations and ways of knowing that can illuminate Institute work, whether arising from agriculture, public health, landscape architecture, the arts and humanities, or international politics and development. Finally, student engagement in IPG in these various ways often results in their mentors becoming involved in Institute activities as well, an always welcome and enriching turn.

In many ways, IPG now serves as a forum in which an interdisciplinary group of interested graduate students and faculty can come together to explore common concerns linked to policy or governance and to discern ways of addressing them that traverse traditional intellectual boundaries. Ultimately, the special province and provenance of their vocations allow these professors and graduate students to be driven foremost by their curiosity and limited only by the reach of their individual and collective imaginations. Perhaps the Institute today constitutes something of a microcosm of the vibrancy and determinedly polyglot character of the larger institution of which it is a part. Ideally, both are engaged in the relent-

## Max Stephenson's Tidings (continued)

listen and passionately desirous of learning, engage one another with openness and good will. The results of such interaction can be, and often are, surprising and bracing. They intrigue, pique and provoke, and constantly renew those so engaged. Graduate students are vital and essential interlocutors and participants in this special forum of exchange, this unique educational possibility. Indeed, they are critical to its potentials, and to the life of the Institute and of the larger institution they have elected to attend.

Overall, I fondly hope that IPG can serve graduate students and faculty members interested in our mission and involved in our work in whatever form best suits their aims, in a fashion identical to that one-time Yale University President A. Bartlett Giamatti (1938-1989) once remarked should be true of universities generally:

*Universities are not here to be mediums for the coercion of other people, they're here to be mediums for the free exchange of ideas.*

Just so. And they (and we at the Institute) cannot thrive without that possibility, in which graduate students do and must play an integral role.

### Notes

1. Past speakers, Community Voices website. <https://communityvoices.info/past-speakers/> Accessed June 20, 2018.
2. Trustees without Borders, Community Voices website. <https://communityvoices.info/event-recordings/main-events/> Accessed June 19, 2018.
3. Community Change, website. <https://communitychange.ipg.vt.edu/> Accessed June 19, 2018.
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## Commentaries & Essays

less pursuit of knowledge and are open to the magic that can transpire when human beings, willing **Soundings** - a commentary from VTIPG Director **Max Stephenson** to

June 18 - The Fearsome Power of Hate

<https://www.ipg.vt.edu/ipg/2018/6/15/the-fearsome-power-of-hate>

June 4 - Pondering Kintsugi and Community Change in Appalachia

<https://www.ipg.vt.edu/ipg/2018/6/7/pondering-kintsugi-and-community-change-in-appalachia>

May 21- Taking a break

May 2 - "In Memoriam: Wolfgang Natter, May 22, 1955-April 29, 2018" <https://www.ipg.vt.edu/soundings/in-memoriam-wolfgang-natter-may-22-1955-april-29-2018>

April 22- "Seeking what No Other Man has Found or can Find" <https://www.ipg.vt.edu/soundings/seeking-what-no-other-man-has-found-or-can-find>

April 8- Revisiting the Foundations of Democratic Self Governance <https://www.ipg.vt.edu/soundings/revisiting-the-foundations-of-democratic-self-governance>

**Tidings** - a quarterly reflection from VTIPG Director Max Stephenson, now featured as the Director's Letter in our Quarterly Newsletters beginning October 2014.

**RE: Reflections & Explorations** - Online essay series hosted by VTIPG, written by graduate students across the University to reflect on their ongoing work in governance and policy related concerns.

April 19-: [Conflict, Communication and Collaboration: Is There Really a Middle Ground?](#) By Neda Moy-erian, PhD student in Planning, Governance, and Globalization.

April 12- [Reflections on a Greenhouse Project with which I Worked as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Costa Rica](#), by Beth Olberding, Masters student in Urban and Regional Planning and Natural Resources.

April 5- [Planning: A Profession with An Identity Crisis in The Absence of a Core Paradigm](#), by Efon Ep-anty, a PhD student in Planning, Governance, and Globalization.

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Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance (VTIPG) builds strategic relationships between the university and community by linking academic research and outreach efforts to address significant public policy issues. VTIPG, a university level institute, was created to blend theory with practice by a variety of policy-related services.