

From the Director: *Tidings* Quarterly Reflection: The “Beloved Community:” Aspiring to be a Truly Free and Self-Governing Society

As the Institute’s 11th anniversary, July 1, approached, I found myself thinking about the fact that democratic politics and policy-making are ultimately arbitrated by the character, norms, values and beliefs of the people who are entrusted with its practice. That is, the very survival of democratic governance is mediated by the culture in which it is ensconced. Perhaps no one in modern United States history understood that fact more deeply, nor articulated a clearer vision to secure the possibility of social justice and self-governance within that mediating culture, than Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. I have had the memorable privilege in recent weeks of interacting with Dr. Virgil Wood, a long-time friend and colleague of King. Wood will serve as a Ridenour Distinguished Faculty Fellow in the School of Public and International Affairs here at Virginia Tech in the coming year. The Institute will help him organize a writing competition for college students on civil rights as well as assist in his efforts to continue developing a national coalition for community change and social justice.

Wood routinely asks all with whom he speaks to ponder King’s vision for the United States to become a “beloved community.” As a result of our conversations, I have found myself reading about that construct in King’s writings, and have been much moved by the social and political ideal the concept represents. Here, I reflect briefly on what King’s vision portends for our country’s culture, and for its policy and politics. I also sketch several major trends that have appeared to



Max Stephenson

Director, Virginia Tech Institute for Policy & Governance

sideline popular and political interest in such nation-building projects in recent decades.

King shared, revisited and refined his view of the beloved community on many occasions from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. In a keynote address opening the week-long Montgomery, Alabama Improvement Association Institute on Nonviolence and Social Change on December 3, 1956, for example, King suggested this social ideal implied the death knell for systematic inequality on the basis of race or any other characteristic:

Now it is true, if I may speak figuratively, that old man segregation is on his death-bed. But history has proven that social systems have a great last minute breathing power, and the guardians of a status-quo are always on hand with their oxygen tents to keep the old order alive. Segregation is still a fact in America. We still confront it in the South in its glaring and conspicuous forms. We still confront it in the North in its hidden and subtle forms. But if Democracy is to live, segregation must die. Segregation is a glaring evil. It is utterly unchristian. It relegates the segregated to the status of a thing rather than elevate him to the status of a person.

In that same speech, King observed:

Finally, if we are to speed up the coming of the new age we must have the moral courage to stand up and protest against injustice wherever we find it. Wherever we find segregation we must have the fortitude to passively resist it. I realize that this will mean suffering and sacrifice. It might even mean going to jail. If such is the case we must be willing to fill up the jail houses of the South. It might even mean physical death. But if physical death is the price that some must pay to free their children from a permanent life of psychological death, then nothing could be more honorable. ... There is nothing in all the world greater than freedom. It is worth paying for; it is worth losing a job; it is worth going to jail for. I would rather be a free pauper than a rich slave. I would rather die in abject poverty with my convictions than live in inordinate riches with the lack of self-respect.

The beloved community would be constituted by men and women willing to sacrifice their lives if necessary to secure the benefits of freedom and equality for themselves and their fellow citizens. In King's conception, the singular aspiration for the nation should be political equality and freedom for all, and all should be prepared to work as one to help to ensure that possibility remained genuine for every one of the country's citizens.

In 1957 King remarked,

Love is creative and redemptive, Love builds up and unites; hate tears down and destroys. The aftermath of the 'fight with fire' method is bitterness and chaos; the aftermath of the love method is reconciliation and creation of the beloved community.

For King, if the aim was a society characterized by social and political equality and freedom, the means to realize and maintain it would be a disciplined love of humanity and the dignity that each individual represents. In his mind, the contrast between how citizens of a democratic nation should behave and humankind's too frequent and dogged pursuit of avarice and vengeance was complete. In this respect, his vision was surely consonant with that of our nation's Founders, who also saw humankind as a frail reed on which to predicate self-governance, but who nevertheless sought ways and means to secure just that possibility. King's ideal married political and religious aspiration into a powerful concept that would support the aims of both in a seamless way.

Put differently, in these and many other writings, Martin Luther King developed a construct that coupled individual freedom, social equality and opportunity for all Americans with a tough-minded assessment of just how difficult that would be to attain. Nonetheless, as a minister and theologian, throughout his life he remained deeply convinced that empathetic love could be the galvanizing agent for change.

Nelson Mandela would later echo King's passionate devotion to the ideal of human dignity when, in reflecting on why his 22-years of confinement by the South African apartheid regime had not left him hating his persecutors, he commented:

No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

As with Mandela's respect for humanity, King's vision was elegant in its apparent simplicity and yet, as he (and Mandela) well knew, it also was supremely challenging to attain in a large and heterogeneous society in which major segments of the population remained unprepared to believe that all people were created equal. Nonetheless, he never wavered in his commitment to the possibility that the ideals of freedom, equality and social justice, encapsulated in the beloved community, could be realized. I have found myself reflecting on King's undimmed hope as I have pondered several major trends that have shaped our society's politics and policy-making since his murder in April of 1968:

- We now are an even more deeply consumerist society than in 1968, abjured daily to believe that our personhood and dignity inhere not in our humanity, but instead in our possessions and perceived material success and how single-mindedly and callously we have pursued the same. Those in poverty or with less opportunities to gain material success are routinely regarded and despised by many Americans as losers, who deserve their circumstances.
- That same capitalistic individualism has likewise allowed millions to confuse and conflate consumer choice with political freedom, leaving many increasingly unwilling to imagine themselves a part of any collective larger than themselves.
- In consequence, we are now a people who increasingly find it difficult to share aspirations for our communities and nation as we worry constantly instead about our economic status and our fears for our individual futures.
- Meanwhile, too, millions of Americans have shown themselves willing to support political leaders who represent neither love in King's tough-minded terms, nor even comity, and who have won power in large measure by exploiting fear and scapegoating and slandering one group after another.
- Many Americans now view taxes as claims to be avoided, and many venerate and extol the rich for doing just that. For many, too, the wealthy are to be revered because they are rich, however they acquired that standing.
- Finally, we are increasingly a society so segregated by class, income and race (ironically, markedly more so now than in King's lifetime) that many Americans rarely interact with anyone who does not resemble themselves. In such a society, it becomes difficult to imagine the possibility that those quite unlike you might still merit your respect and be your equal in political and social terms.

This brief catalog of trends suggests the broader point of whether many of this nation's citizens see themselves as pursuing a shared ideal of freedom and self-governance characterized by social and political equality for all Americans; that is, the prospect of the beloved community. Ideals, attained or not, can ennoble and enliven, can lift one's eyes to something beyond self. It seems to me that any self-governing nation must do this if it is to ensure freedom and possibility for all of its citizens. It strikes me, too, that King's vision for our society is as appropriate now as when he first articulated it. The beloved community constitutes an expansive view of

the possibilities inherent in humankind united in self-governance and in pursuit of justice by a free and equal people. It opens, rather than forecloses possibilities, even as it requires that all people respect the dignity of all.

The United States is now full flush in the midst of an identity crisis wrought by rapid economic and social change. One may hope this nation can recommit itself to a shared aspiration of what it may become. Martin Luther King's bracing vision surely provides a suitable end for that process for anyone who takes the time to explore the elemental truths it embodies. In so many ways, King's vision of the beloved community is one for the ages as it reflects fundamental propositions essential for a democratic policy-politics. It seems especially fitting for the Institute, whose remit is to concern itself with just such matters, to be involved in a fresh examination of the power and human possibility that the ideal of the beloved community represents.



Notes

[1] King, Jr., Martin Luther. "Facing the Challenge of a New Age," in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Volume 3: Birth of a New Age, December 1955-December 1956*, https://swap.stanford.edu/20141218223303/http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/kingweb/publications/papers/vol3/561203.000-Facing_the_Challenge_of_a_New_Age_annual_address_at_the_first_annual_Institute_on_Nonviolence_and_Social_Change.htm Accessed, June 15, 2017.

[2] King, "Facing the Challenge of a New Age."

[3] King, Jr., Martin Luther. "Quotes about the 'Beloved Community,'" *We Are the Beloved Community*, website. <http://www.wearethebelovedcommunity.org/bcquotes.html> Accessed June 15, 2017.

[4] Mandela, Nelson. *Long Walk to Freedom* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1995), p.622.

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www.ipg.vt.edu

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.

Opportunities

Call for Submissions (deadline **September 15, 2017**) [The Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development](#) is seeking submissions for publication in the Winter 2017-2018 Issue, Local Government in Food Systems Work (www.foodsystemsjournal.org/index.php/fsj/index)

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Call for Proposals (deadline **October 9, 2017**) The [2018 Appalachian Studies Conference](#) will be held at the Millennium Hotel in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio, April 5-8, 2018. The theme of the conference is "Re-stitching the Seams: Appalachia Beyond Its Borders." (appalachianstudies.org/annualconference/)

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Call for Submissions (deadline **October 27, 2017**) The [13th International Society for Third-Sector Research \(ISTR\) Conference](#) will take place July 10-13, 2018 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The theme of the conference is "Democracy and Legitimacy: The Role of the Third Sector in a Globalizing World."

Conference organizers are keenly interested in a wide range of submissions, especially on topics related to democracy and legitimacy. In addition, ISTR is also interested in research which advances our understanding of theory, policy, and practice of third sector organizations. Overall, the 2018 Amsterdam conference offers a unique, and particularly valuable, venue for engaging with its very diverse membership of scholars to deepen our knowledge of these important issues. (www.istr.org/?Amsterdam)

Acknowledgements & Accomplishments

Lindy Cranwell (PGG) successfully defended her preliminary examination on April 25, 2017, a significant milestone in her progress toward her PhD in Planning, Governance and Globalization (PGG). Her Committee members include co-chairs **Max Stephenson** (Director, VTIPG) and **Denise Simmons** (Myers-Lawson School of Construction), with committee members **Ralph Hall** (Urban Affairs and Planning) and **David Knight** (Engineering Education). Congratulations to Lindy!

Congratulations to **Kristin Haas** (MPIA) who received her Master's Degree on May 4. Her committee included **Max Stephenson** (Director, VTIPG) as committee chair, and committee members **Trish Nickel** (GIA), **Christian Matheis** (GIA), and **Timothy Luke** (Political Science).

Introducing VTIPG's Newest Member!

Introducing VTIPG's newest member, **Ada Briggs**, born March 22nd at 8pm. She is the daughter of **Maya Berinzon**, (VTIPG Research Associate) and **Ryan Briggs** (Associate Professor of Political Science), & is also welcomed by her big brother Isaac. Welcome to the team, Ada!



Acknowledgements & Accomplishments (continued)

Sarah Jonson (MPIA), who successfully defended her thesis and received her Master's in December 2016, sent along a note saying that she had accepted a Eurasia Program Coordinator position with International Youth Fellowship (IYF) and started on Monday, June 5! Currently the program has ongoing projects in Kazakhstan, Indonesia, and China. The organization specializes in technical and life skills training around the world and, in addition to U.S. Government funding, has very robust private partnerships. Sarah had just returned from a trip to Europe (The Netherlands and Belgium). Here is information on IYF (an NGO) for whom Sarah will be working: www.iyf.org/



Congratulations to **Chris Davidson** (PhD, Higher Education) who successfully defended his dissertation on June 8. The title of his work was *Veteran Influx: A Qualitative Study Examining the Transition Experiences of Student Veterans from the Military to College*. Chris' committee included **Steven Janosik** (Higher Education) as committee chair, and committee members **Claire K. Robbins** (Higher Education), **Gabriel R. Serna** (Higher Education) and **David Kniola** (Educational Research and Evaluation). Chris is the 30th doctoral student affiliated with the Institute for Policy and Governance to complete their work since the Institute's founding on July 1, 2006!



Carmen Boggs-Parker (PGG) successfully defended her dissertation proposal on April 3. The dissertation title was *Meeting the self and the other: The development of intercultural sensitivity during a faculty led intensive service-learning course to Belize*. Her committee includes **Max Stephenson** (Director, VTIPG) as committee chair, with committee members **Dale Wimberley** (Sociology), **John O. Browder** (Urban Affairs and Planning), and **Nicole Sanderlin** (Engineering).

Natalie Patterson (MURP) earned her Master's in May 2017. **Brian Britt** (Religion and Culture) and **Max Stephenson** (Director, VTIPG) co-chaired her committee along with **Thomas Skuzinski** (SPIA-UAP). Her thesis was entitled: *Creating Participatory Space through Partnership: Exploring the Relationship between a Faith-Based Day Programming Organization and a Cohousing Community for Individuals with and without Disabilities*. She has accepted a position as a Loan Analyst with the National Housing Trust in Washington, DC which she began on May 23rd.



Congratulations to **Anna Erwin** (PGG), who successfully defended her dissertation on April 24. The title of her work was *Participation in a Shifting Global Context? A Case Study of Labor and Faith in the American South*. Committee members included **Barbara Ellen Smith** (Sociology), **Kim Niewolny** (Agricultural, Leadership and Community Education), **Andrew Scerri** (Political Science) and by proxy for Professor Scerri, Anne Khademian (School of Public and International Affairs). Max Stephenson (Director, VTIPG) served as committee chair.

Anna recently accepted the position of Visiting Assistant Professor in American Politics at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Best wishes to Anna as she begins her new role! (www.miamioh.edu/)



Kristin Haas has accepted a position at Seed Change Tanzania located in Kigoma, Tanzania. Seed Change Tanzania (www.seedchangetanzania.org/) is a non-profit social enterprise working to build a smallholder focused sustainable oil palm industry in Kigoma. Best wishes to Kristin as she heads out on July 7 to begin her new role!



Acknowledgements & Accomplishments (continued)

Marya Barlow named director of communications for CAUS

The College of Architecture and Urban Studies (CAUS) recently announced its new Director of Communications. Welcome **Marya Barlow**! Featured in VT News on April 26 - vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2017/04/CAUS-Barlow.html. Barlow has been working with CAUS since last September in an interim capacity as a communications director, and after conducting a national search, CAUS was excited to announce that Barlow would be coming on board full-time. Congratulations and welcome, Marya!

Congratulations to **Rachael Kennedy**, who earned her PhD in the Department of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education on March 24. Her committee included **Eric Kaufman** (ALCE) as committee chair, with committee members **Nick Copeland** (Sociology), **Kim Niewolny** (ALCE), and **Max Stephenson** (Director, VTIPG). Her dissertation was entitled *Establishing Nourishing Networks in an Era of Global-Local Tensions: An Interdisciplinary Ethnography in Turkey*

Rachael is currently in Azerbaijan completing a U.S. State Department sponsored Critical Language Scholarship. This is a summer overseas language and cultural immersion program for undergraduate and graduate students.

Conference & Print Representation



Vanessa Guerra

Vanessa Guerra (PGG) recently lectured at TEDxQuito in Ecuador. This TEDx event's theme was *Realities*, and was held at local theatre [Teatro Sucre](http://TeatroSucre), a historic landmark in Quito established in the 1890's.

(www.ted.com/tedx/events/23037)



Community Change Journal Launch

At the beginning of this year VTIPG announced the launch of *Community Change*, an online, peer reviewed, graduate student journal that seeks to explore multiple approaches to democratic community development and change. Recently published was its first issue, Vol 1, No 1 (2017): Inaugural Issue: *Community Change Revisited*. VTIPG hosted a Launch Event to celebrate the occasion.

communitychange.ipg.vt.edu/index.php/commchange/issue/view/1

Conference & Print Representation (continued)

Three students from the VTIPG's Community Voices Group presented at this year's American Association of Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting (www.aag.org/annualmeeting), held April 5-9 in Boston, Massachusetts.

Vera Smirnova's (PGG) presentation, *Territorialization of Crisis: Enclosure and Capitalist Appropriation of Land in the Late Imperial and Post-Soviet Russia*, was given in a session themed *Contested Territories*, devoted to exploring the struggles around the triad of land, territory, and power.

Neda Moayerian's (PGG) presentation title was *Local Non-Governmental Organizations' Role in Globalization Process in Developing Countries*.

Lorien MacAuley's (ALCE) presentation title was *A Critical Ethnographic Case Study of On-Farm Apprentices at Work: Social Justice and Farm Labor Implications*.



Jared Keyel, Vera Smirnova,
and Neda Moayerian

This conference was a great chance to meet other prominent scholars working in the same area. The AAG is a nonprofit scientific and educational society founded in 1904. As one of the largest geographic conferences in the world, the AAG Annual Meeting and Exhibition hosted as many as 9,500 participants from different academic and professional backgrounds. This year's conference included internationally acclaimed featured speakers, such as **Noam Chomsky**, **David Harvey** and **James Hansen**.



Lyusyena Kirakosyan (VTIPG Senior Project Associate) had her paper entitled *Sport For All in Brazil: the evolution of discourse and its impact on social inclusion* accepted for presentation at the 25th European Association for Sport Management (EASM) Conference, *Challenges and Developments of Sport Organisations*, to be held September 5-8, 2017 in Bern, Switzerland (www.easm2017.com).



Natalie Patterson (MURP) presented at this year's Public Administration Theory Network conference, held June 1-4, 2017 in Laramie, Wyoming. Her presentation, *Creating Participatory Space Through Partnership*, is based on the findings of her thesis research. Her work observes a cohousing community and related ministry in North Carolina, examining how the partnership between these organizations has created capacity and opportunity for individuals with disabilities to demonstrate democratic agency (www.pattheory.net/index.php/2017-conference/)

Season Wrap Up

Community Voices wrapped up the spring 2017 season with returning guest lecturer Francesco Manca (Independent Political Analyst, Retired Senior United Nations Official). Manca was in residence on the Virginia Tech campus as a visiting scholar.

On April 10 Manca and Community Voices members convened for a roundtable luncheon and discussion around the theme “The Independency of the International Civil Servant: A Duty or an Option?” Manca was also a guest lecturer in Max Stephenson’s (Director, VTIPG) NGOs in International Development graduate seminar on April 24. He also co-taught two classes, International Organization and International Relations Theory, with Laura Zanotti (Political Science). Last, Community Voices members Vera Smirnova (PGG) and Neda Moayerian (PGG) had the opportunity to interview Manca to podcast on Trustees



Back: Neda Moayerian (PGG), Vera Smirnova (PGG)
Front: Max Stephenson (Director, VTIPG), Francesco Manca (Independent Political Analyst, Retired Senior United Nations Official)

Without Borders. A recording of this interview can be found here:

soundcloud.com/andy-morikawa/trustees-without-borders-francesco-manca-2017-04-10

Ideas For Change :: Ideas That Matter

Community Voices is an interdisciplinary group of Virginia Tech graduate students and faculty, and community representatives interested in innovative approaches to community building and engagement. The group organizes a series of public seminars by leaders from public, private, and nonprofit sectors who share their insights and experiences helping communities shape their futures. The speakers’ presentations, which include conversation with the audience, are free and open to the public (communityvoices.info).

Community Voices (continued)



Back: Anna Erwin (PGG), Cathy Grimes (Communications Manager, VT Graduate School),
Max Stephenson (Director, VTIPG)

Front: Serena MacAuley, Lorien MacAuley (ALCE), Regina Naff (VTIPG Administrative
Assistant), Neda Moyerian (PGG)

Retreat

On May 8, Community Voices held its annual Retreat at Riverstone Farm in Floyd Virginia. Attending this event included members Max Stephenson, Cathy Grimes, Alex Stubberfield, Neda Moyerian, Anna Erwin, Andy Morikawa, Regina Naff, Lorien MacAuley and the youngest of the group, Lorien's daughter, Serena. Lunch was provided by the Riverstone Farm kitchen. Described by attendees as an excellent day, with excellent discussions and fellowship in a wonderful quiet location by the river in Floyd.



Max Stephenson (Director, VTIPG) and
newest Community Voices member Serena
(we start them young here at CV!)

Recent Events

Visit from Dr. Assem Faress

On March 29th, **Max Stephenson** (Director, VTIPG) and **Donald Back** (Director, Virginia Tech Language and Culture Institute), had the privilege of hosting **Dr. Assem Faress**, former Associate Dean of the University of Aleppo, and his wife, **Zaynab Alabed**, for a lunchtime meeting. Their discussion focused on the current Syrian conflict and its humanitarian consequences. Dr. Fariss was at the university in conjunction with a series of talks he was giving on campus at the end of that month. He is an expert in comparative literature and lectures on Arab/Middle Eastern culture and languages. Fariss' stay was sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs.

March 31 - April 1 The 2017 ASPECT Conference took place at Virginia Tech. This year's conference theme was *Aesthetics, Politics, and Ethnicity in Fractured Times*. The event consisted of panel presentations and discussions on a multitude of topics including Populism and Cosmopolitanism, Spaces of Cyberpolitics, Cultural Representations in Contemporary Media, Feminism and Otherness, Race in America, Politics of the Environment, and more. **Michael Shapiro** (Professor of Political Science, University of Hawai'i-Manoa) delivered the plenary address on *When the Earth Moves: Toward a Political Sublime*.

April 10 A panel discussion, themed *Ecologies of Injustice*, was hosted by The Global Forum on Urban and Regional Resilience. This panel discussion brought together scholars at Virginia Tech whose work intersects the concerns of environmental justice, with community members, and interested individuals to increase our understanding of the diffuse ways that environmental injustice is experienced in our contemporary world. The conversation encompassed political, economic, social, and environmental factors that precipitate disproportionate exposure to environmental risk or access to resources and is designed to build bridges across the Virginia Tech campus and greater-Blacksburg community.

April 12 **Andrew Light** (Professor of Philosophy, Public Policy, and Atmospheric Sciences, and Director of the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy at George Mason University) was on campus for a Program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) Talk, *The Road From the Paris Climate Agreement* (philosophy.gmu.edu/people/alight1).

April 18 Virginia Tech President **Timothy Sands** hosted **Sir David Greenaway** (vice-chancellor University of Nottingham) in a *Beyond Boundaries Lecture*, discussing how a top-100 global university can stimulate meaningful interdisciplinary and cross-sector partnerships and prepare students for an increasingly interconnected world.

April 19 World renowned Guatemalan visual artist **Daniel Hernández-Salazar** presented on *Photography, Memory, and Human Rights in Guatemala*, focusing on the power of photographic images to open up public discussions about violence in the wake of terror.

Recent Events (continued)

6th Annual Combating Racial Injustice Workshop

April 22 marked the “6th Annual Combating Racial Injustice Workshop” held at Virginia Tech. Presenting at the event was **Dr. Wornie Reed**, Professor of Sociology and African Studies and **Sarah Halvorson-Fried**, who received her Master’s Degree in Urban and Regional Planning at Virginia Tech in 2016. Sarah is a friend of VTIPG and prior member of Community Voices. According to Sarah, Dr. Reed, who is also the director of the Race and Social Policy Research Center at Virginia Tech, was on her thesis committee, Dr. Reed, who was a member of Sarah’s thesis committee, invited her to present her thesis research at this year’s Combating Racial Injustice Workshop. Sarah’s project centered on racial inequality in employment and income in the New River Valley. She worked with Montgomery County-based group Dialogue on Race to form research questions and define pieces of the inquiry. At the workshop, Dr. Reed presented his research on national and state costs of employment inequality, and Sarah followed with her analyses of local costs and motivations. Sarah is currently working in the evaluation department at the Harlem Children’s Zone, a nonprofit human services organization with a mission to end inter-generational poverty in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. It has also become a national model with the Promise Neighborhoods grant program.



Sarah Halvorson-Fried, Wornie Reed, Penny Franklin

Faculty Spotlight: Robin Lemaire

Dr. Robin Hargroder Lemaire joined Virginia Tech in 2012 as an Assistant Professor in the Center for Public Administration and Policy (CPAP) in the School of Public and International Affairs. Robin's areas of expertise are organization theory and the management of public and nonprofit organizations. Within these, she has focused particularly on network analysis and on understanding the dynamics of inter-organizational networks. Robin has examined organizational networks formed to address various public issues, including analyses of a child and youth health network in Alberta Canada, a network of Tobacco Quitlines in the United States and Canada and efforts aimed at increasing child and maternal health care coordination in India. Robin recently undertook a network analysis for the Early Child Education and Development Network in the New River Valley and is now guiding that group's efforts to strengthen the ties among its participants.



Robin Lemaire

Robin's research has addressed the governance and management challenges networks face when they work together as a formal collective concerning shared goals. To do so, she combines her knowledge of organization and network theory with her analytical skills. She has published her research in various journals including, *The American Review of Public Administration*, *International Public Management Journal* and *The American Journal of Public Health*.

Robin received the College of Architecture and Urban Studies Certificate for Excellence in Teaching for 2016-2017. In addition to teaching Master of Public Administration students, Robin advises Public Administration and Public Affairs PhD students on their efforts to study networks and/or use network analysis. She has also worked closely with VTIPG colleagues examining inter-organizational networks in various Virginia localities.

Although many of Robin's current research projects are locally focused, she is also interested in international issues. Robin learned French at a young age through an immersion program and also studied Spanish in high school and college. Her desire to use and develop further her facility with language and the importance she places on public service, led her to Chad, where she served as a Peace Corps volunteer and began to learn Arabic. Her experience in Chad and her first-hand acquaintance with the devastation wrought by hurricanes in her home state of Louisiana motivated her to pursue her current path in the hope that her research could help to improve the service delivery systems on which communities around the globe depend.

Robin earned a PhD from the University of Arizona, specializing in public management. She also has a Masters of Arts in French Literature from Vanderbilt University and two Bachelors of Arts degrees, in International Studies and French, from Louisiana State University.

Student Spotlight: Rebecca Powell-Doherty



Rebecca Powell-Doherty

I am originally from Charlotte, NC. I previously graduated from NC State University in 2005 with a B.S. in Biological Sciences and went on to obtain my PhD in Interdisciplinary Biology with a focus on immunology and infectious disease from UNC Charlotte in 2010. I came to VT in 2015 to pursue my MPH in infectious disease, but actually found a greater affinity for the certificate programs in Nonprofit and Nongovernmental Organization Management and Global Planning and International Development. I am excited to have recently completed all three.

During my somewhat extended academic career, I have had the good fortune to spend time working and studying in Lille, France (as an undergraduate) and throughout much of Romania (for my certification programs and MPH at VT). These opportunities have given me insight into the world beyond US borders, and I am most grateful for the experiences in both countries and the exposure to cultures and ideas different from my own.

Following the completion of my PhD, I went on to gain experience as a post-doctoral fellow, first in biochemistry at Wake Forest Baptist Hospital, and then in translational medicine at Carolinas Medical Center in my hometown. It was during my time at CMC working alongside the trauma surgical division as the research liaison where I identified a desire to connect basic bench science with policy, particularly with regard to disadvantaged and/or oppressed populations. This led to my relocation to VT to pursue additional training in preparation for a jump to the development world.

During my time at Tech, I worked in conjunction with Drs. Andrea Bertke, Stephen Eubank, and Bryan Lewis to develop and implement a project that allows us to use a computerized synthetic population to identify geographical regions of need (and type of need required) in rural Romania based on the minority population in a given area, as well as model the burden of infectious disease experienced by individuals in those areas. Having not worked on a project of international scope before, I am grateful for the opportunity to lead the process from the beginning stages of design and fundraising all the way through field work, data analysis, and publication. My resulting capstone is entitled *Predictive Modeling and Quality of Life Indicators in the Romanian Roma Population*, and our results are in use by NGOs in Romania who work closely with the Roma, an ethnic minority who face rampant discrimination.

Student Spotlight: Rebecca Powell-Doherty (continued)

I additionally had the opportunity to serve as a member of the editorial board to establish the new *Community Change* journal at Virginia Tech. *Community Change* is an online, peer-reviewed, graduate student publication that seeks to explore development and change from multiple perspectives and disciplines, as well as provide graduate students an opportunity to become familiar with the publication process. Our first issue was published this past April.

Following graduation, I am relocating to the Oxford, UK area to pursue opportunities to work with international NGOs in global health.

Blogs & Commentaries

Soundings - a [commentary](#) from VTIPG Director **Max Stephenson**

June 19 - *A Remediable Choice or Continued Democratic Decline?*
soundings.spia.vt.edu/a-remediable-choice-or-continued-democratic-decline/

June 5 - *Privatism and Relentless Attacks on Democratic Values and Human Rights*
soundings.spia.vt.edu/privatism-and-relentless-attacks-on-democratic-values-and-human-rights/

May 22 - *Human Rationalization, Alterity and the Challenge of Moral Courage*
soundings.spia.vt.edu/human-rationalization-alterity-and-the-challenge-of-moral-courage/

May 8 - *Heedless Policy Cruelty*
soundings.spia.vt.edu/heedless-policy-cruelty/

April 24 - a reprint of *The Wayfaring Stranger*, first published on February 28, 2011.
soundings.spia.vt.edu/the-wayfaring-stranger-2/

April 10 - *Of Ignorance, Expertise, Demagoguery and Democracy*
soundings.spia.vt.edu/of-ignorance-expertise-demagoguery-and-democracy/

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

Read **Tidings** from previous quarterly newsletter, April 2017 – Liberal Democracy Confronts a Winter of Discontent (tidings.spia.vt.edu/liberal-democracy-confronts-a-winter-of-discontent/)

Blogs & Commentaries (continued)

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 13 - *Ethics Versus Efficiency in Global Healthcare*

(blogs.lt.vt.edu/reflectionsandexplorations/2017/04/13/ethics-versus-efficiency-in-global-healthcare/)

by **Rebecca Powell-Doherty** (MPH)

April 6 - *Evaluating the Meaning of Consent in the Gig-economy*

(blogs.lt.vt.edu/reflectionsandexplorations/2017/04/06/evaluating-the-meaning-of-consent-in-the-gig-economy/)

by **Putu Apriliani** (PGG)

March 30 - *Is Climate Change real? Greenhouse Gases, Climate Science and the Human Outlook*

(blogs.lt.vt.edu/reflectionsandexplorations/2017/03/30/is-climate-change-real-greenhouse-gases-climate-science-and-the-human-outlook/)

by **Kannikha Kolandaivelu** (Department of Geosciences)

Nathan in China

In conjunction with Virginia Tech's Masters of Public and International Affairs, **Nathan Corso** (MIP) will spend 2 years as a Peace Corps volunteer serving in China. Nathan is just finishing up teaching his second semester at Southwest University in Chongqing. He will be doing some traveling around China during summer break to see the Terracotta Warriors, the Great Wall and the Forbidden City, and also to a few other cities in eastern China to visit students. Overall, Nathan says it has been a great experience. Check out his blog for some amazing pictures about his experiences!

nathancorso.wordpress.com/

Beth in Costa Rica

VTIPG affiliated master's student **Beth Olberding** (MURP-MIP) has spent the past 2 years in the Peace Corps volunteering in the community economic development sector in Costa Rica. She is now home and working on transcribing interviews for her thesis research this summer. She will return to VT to complete her MURP and Master of Natural Resources degrees in the fall.

betholberding.wordpress.com/