



February 2022 Newsletter

Alumni and Student News

[Anna Erwin](#) (PGG alumni, 2017), who is currently an assistant professor in the School of Earth, Environmental and Marine Sciences at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, [published](#) an article drawing on her dissertation in *Geoforum* (February 2022), and another [article](#) in *Land Use Policy* (March 2022).

[Neda Moayerian](#) (PGG alumni, 2021 and Nonresident Research Associate at Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance) and [Max Stephenson](#) (UAP, Professor) published “Community cultural development: Exploring the connections between collective art making, capacity building and sustainable community-based tourism” in *Annals of Tourism Research* (March 2022).

John (Jack) Trainor (MURP student) has been awarded the 2022 APA Economic Development Division Holzheimer Scholarship. It comes with \$2,000 and an award to be handed out at the national APA conference in San Diego this spring. Jack submitted an excellent graphic novel that he worked on in an independent study with Professor Maggie Cowell. The graphic novel discusses the tradeoffs in economic development under large deals like Amazon’s HQ2.

Faculty News

[David Bieri](#) (Associate Professor, UAP), in a contribution to a [piece](#) on Bloomberg.com, discussed how the changing relationship between rent inflation and real wage growth has exacerbated the housing affordability problem in the U.S., and why the “30-percent rule” might not serve as a helpful benchmark for policy. In a TV [interview](#) for WFRX Roanoke, he contextualized the recent rise in gas prices, and in an [interview](#) for Fox 5 DC, he discussed the role of supply-side impacts on the Consumer Price Index.

[Mehrzad Boroujerdi](#) (SPIA Director) was quoted in an [article](#) about the sacking of humanities professors in Iran.

[Ralph Buehler](#) (Professor, UAP) received the “2021 Certificate of Outstanding Reviewer” from *Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment* – one of the most highly ranked peer-reviewed journals in transportation. Ralph was interviewed as an expert for [Wallet Hub’s series on best and worst states to drive in](#). Some of Buehler’s responses were [cited](#) in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. Buehler was also quoted in a Slate [article](#) on how to make traffic safer, and [Streetsblog SF](#) used a graph

from a published article by Buehler to demonstrate the lack of roadway safety in the United States.

[Margaret Cowell](#) (Associate Professor, UAP) and Sarah Lyon-Hill (Associate Director of the VT Center for Economic and Community Engagement) published a book entitled *Vibrant Virginia*. *Vibrant Virginia* explores the many ways that communities and regions across Virginia are bridging the urban-rural divide by working together. Chapters explore urgent topics including expanding K–12 education reform, supporting entrepreneurial ecosystems, immigrant incorporation, and expanding broadband access.

[Ralph Hall](#) (Associate Professor, UAP) was quoted in an [article](#) on the VT pedagogy conference.

[Steve Hankey](#) (Associate Professor, UAP), Tianjun Lu (former PGG student and current Assistant Professor at California State University, Dominguez Hills) and three other colleagues published an [article](#) entitled “Using crowd-sourced low-cost sensors in a land use regression of PM2.5 in 6 US cities” in *Air Quality, Atmosphere & Health* (2022). The article studies the feasibility of using crowd-sourced, low-cost sensors in traditional air quality models. The analysis suggests that crowd-sourced sensing deployed by community members has the potential to identify local hotspots of poor air quality that may be missed by traditional regulatory networks.

[Karen Hult](#) (Professor, CPAP) [commented](#) on whom Biden may appoint to the Supreme Court.

[Theo Lim](#) (Assistant Professor, UAP) gave an invited talk at the Environmental Behavior Change Forum, hosted by the Chesapeake Bay Trust. He presented on the effect of social influence between neighbors on voluntary green stormwater infrastructure (rain gardens, rain barrels, permeable pavers, etc.) adoption by urban residents.

[Gerard Toal](#) (Professor, GIA) provided commentary on the Russian-Ukrainian crisis in such venues as the [Canadian Dimension](#), [BBC News](#) (in Portuguese), [Irish Times](#), and [WDBJ TV](#) in Roanoke. He was a participant at Harvard University’s Ukrainian Research Institute [conference](#) entitled “Beyond Borderland: 30 Years of Ukrainian Sovereignty.” Gerard also co-authored a Monkey Cage [essay](#) in the *Washington Post*, and did interviews about the crisis with the [Jacobin](#), and the South Korean [Arirang TV](#).

New Undergraduate Research Program

F.I.R.E. (Forging Interest in Research and Engagement) Starters is a new undergraduate research program that aims to increase access to and training for research opportunities for underrepresented minority students. Students will participate in cohort learning that introduces them to transdisciplinary research methods and prepares them to pursue further research opportunities in the future. In this inaugural year, students will be selected via an application process and will each receive a stipend of \$4,000 for full participation in the program (\$2,000 in Fall semester, \$2,000 in Spring semester). The selected students will undertake an independent research project the following summer with support from a research mentor, in which further work may be supported by up to \$4,000 of additional funding.

This program is a partnership between Student Opportunities and Achievement Resources Program (SOAR), Office of Undergraduate Research, Multicultural Academic Opportunities Program, the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, the Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment, and the Fralin Life Sciences Institute. More information about the program can be found [here](#).

New Partnership with UVA

We have initiated an exciting new partnership between the University of Virginia (UVA) and Virginia Tech (VT) that would allow students from either institution to participate in the 4+1 accelerated program at either institution! An informational meeting with faculty from both universities was held on February 17th via Zoom for VT students interested in UVA (see screenshot below). This partnership enables students to choose to complete their "+1" year at either institution. For example, a VT undergraduate student could complete their +1 year at UVA for the MUEP degree; similarly, a UVA student could complete their +1 year at VT for the MURP degree.

We're hoping to receive applications for the first cohort of students sometime in the spring semester of this year. Typical intake to the program is via application during students third year of studies. Those interested should email Prof. Steve Hankey (hankey@vt.edu) or Prof. Andrew Mondschein (mondschein@virginia.edu) with any questions.



New Graduate Certificate in Disaster Resilience

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) has approved the Graduate Certificate Program in Disaster Resilience (DRGC). This certificate provides graduate students at Virginia Tech with a trans-disciplinary learning opportunity that is needed to train future professional leaders in improving society's disaster resilience. By cross-cutting and uniting science, engineering, social science, and public policy, this certificate program teaches students the full complexity of disaster resilience and helps the students overcome discipline-specific conceptualizations, and generates new trans-disciplinary knowledge and solutions for achieving disaster resilience. The certificate, housed in the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA), is jointly supported by the faculty in the Virginia Tech Disaster Resilience and Risk Management Program and the Center for Coastal Studies. Prof. Yang Zhang (yang08@vt.edu) is the coordinator for this new certificate and can answer student questions.

Supporting a Worthy Cause



Urban Planners create healthy, sustainable, livable communities.

Your donation contributes to increasing diverse voices in Urban Planning.



\$5000 covers a scholarship for an underrepresented minority student seeking a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning. Give \$10, \$20, or \$100 today!



*From the dropdown menu, select **College of Architecture and Urban Studies**, then select the fund **UAP Diversity Scholarship***

In the News

- SPIA's National Security Executive Education Program was featured in a [story](#) by VT News.
- The *Vibrant Virginia* book co-authored by Professor **Maggie Cowell** was [featured](#) in a story by VT News and on [WDBJ7](#) Roanoke.
- Read about three SPIA students (**Claudia Budzyn**, **Mohsen Manteghi** and **Tyler Wedrosky**) in [this](#) VT News story.

Building Community



On February 16th Professor **Eric Malczewski** (CPAP) ended his Public Policy Design class a little early so students could all hang out at a nearby restaurant in Blacksburg. It was a great opportunity for everyone to get to know each other and build community.

Job Opportunity

SPIA has a job opening for an Administrative Operations Coordinator. Please see the job [announcement](#). The application deadline is March 9.

Worth Pondering

- [Does Inequality Provoke Populism?](#)
- [Explore Faculty Salaries at 3,500 Colleges, 2012-20](#)
- [Great Books, Graduate Students, and the Value of Fun in Higher Education](#)
- [How sex and race affect academic research](#)

- [Inflation falls hardest on low-income Americans](#)
- [Investors bought a record share of homes in 2021. See where](#)
- [The data are clear: The boys are not all right](#)
- [When a sudden, small expense threatens an entire college career](#)
- [Why Is Mainstream International Relations Blind to Racism?](#)
- [Why the Science of Teaching Is Often Ignored](#)

Follow SPIA



Make a Gift to SPIA

www.spia.vt.edu

[Unsubscribe from this list](#)