



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
VIRGINIA TECH.

SPIA Community December Update

Dear SPIA Students, Faculty and Staff:

As we conclude the Fall semester, I want to congratulate all of our undergraduate, master's and doctoral students who just graduated. Each one of you have reached an important milestone in your lives and we are proud of the fact that you will forever be a member of the SPIA community. Go Hokies!

SPIA has a lot to celebrate these days. See below for the many prestigious funding opportunities that have been secured by SPIA members. They range from National Science Foundation (NSF) grants to funding approved by the Commonwealth of Virginia and more. Also included are photos of successful VT SPIA events and featured stories of recent graduates.

Professor Ralph Hall will be taking the reins from Professor Yang Zhang as SPIA's Associate Director starting in January 2020 as Yang goes on a research leave. Ralph will continue leading the undergrad program as well. I thank Yang for his noble service to SPIA and look forward to working even more closely with Ralph in the coming year.

After five years of selfless service to CPAP and SPIA, Professor Sara Jordan has resigned from her position. Sara wishes to have a better home for her research and all of us as academics can understand that. Fortunately for us, she will continue her affiliation with SPIA as an affiliated faculty member and will continue to advise and serve on a number of SPIA student committees. I thank Sara for her generous service to SPIA and wish her the best in her new career.

Warm wishes for the holiday season. Please enjoy your well deserved rest.



Sincerely,
Mehrzad

Mehrzad Boroujerdi, Director
School of Public and International Affairs
Virginia Tech

Funding News

Professor [Steven Hankey](#) has become the first SPIA and CAUS faculty member to receive the prestigious career award from the National Science Foundation (NSF). Steve received this \$500,000 grant for a project entitled "Leveraging mobile monitoring, low-cost sensors, and Google Street View imagery to identify and modify street-level determinants of exposure to particulate air pollution." The award starts in July 2020 and ends June 2025. Please join me in congratulating Steve on this fantastic accomplishment.

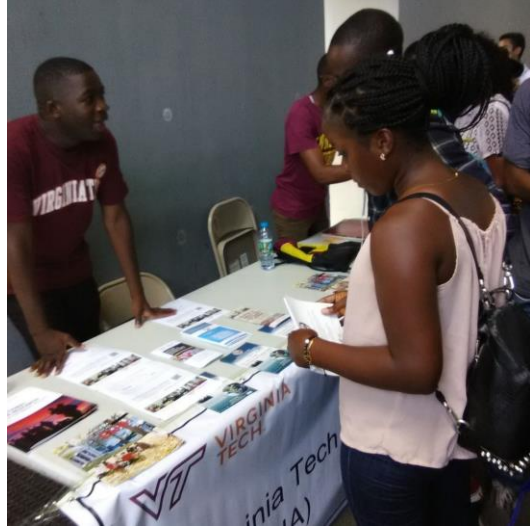
Our colleagues in SPIA Richmond also have ample cause for celebration. The Governor of Virginia has approved funding for the third cohort of the [Virginia Management Fellows \(VMF\)](#) Program. This sponsored program is a part of a larger research effort analyzing the succession planning projects and initiatives of the Commonwealth of Virginia. With the announcement of this new cohort, the Commonwealth -- by vote of the Virginia General Assembly -- has invested \$1,050,000 in sponsored research for SPIA's Applied Research Campus leadership and for study of the VMF program. We are proud of the signal this award sends and the contribution of our Richmond team to enhancing the bench strength for our wonderful state of Virginia.

The Virginia Higher Education Opioid Consortium (VHEOC) has awarded a grant to SPIA's [Institute for Policy & Governance](#) for a project entitled "The Regional Detox Community Action Plan (RDAP)." This project will support the Piedmont Community Service Board (CSB) and other stakeholder efforts in Martinsville to establish a regional detox center. After an initial review of the region's population health indicators and community engagement efforts to date, the project team will facilitate regional engagement for planning and implementing the detox center.

Upon the successful approval by the GO Virginia state board of funding for efforts to enhance the technology ecosystem in the Roanoke, New River Valley and Lynchburg regions, VT SPIA will be bringing on Ellen Plowman as a Program Associate to support this new project for the Spring 2020 semester.

As a community, let's recognize SPIA alumni like [Sabith Khan](#) (Ph.D., 2015), [Samantha Fenn](#) (MPA, 2019) and [Ellie Muraca](#) (BA, 2018) for the wonderful work they are doing and wish current students such as [Miles Polhamus](#) more success.

Thanks are also due to Nicolau Miguel, a 2019 [Mandela Washington Fellow](#), who represented SPIA at the U.S. College Fair in Luanda, Angola on November 20, 2019.



Big thank you to Sarkawt Shamsulddin (Shams) النائب سمر كحوت شمس الدين, Iraqi parliament member (and SPIA alum) & Dr. Abbas Kadhim, sr. fellow & Iraq Initiative director, Atlantic Council, for speaking to VT SPIA on the latest developments in Iraqi politics. We admire and appreciate your continued service and scholarship. A special shout out to the moderator and organizer of the event, Professor Ariel Ahram.



On January 10, VT SPIA will be hosting a seminar called **Congressional Oversight 2020** where you can hear from experts on congressional investigations and legislative capacity. This event is open to the public. Registration is free. Light breakfast and lunch will be provided. RSVP is required and space is limited. [More info here.](#)

WE'RE GROWING!

ONE YEAR SNAPSHOT: 2018 VS 2019

Over the course of one year, VT SPIA's social presence has grown considerably. Join the VT SPIA community online. Learn about faculty, student and campus news, while also staying connected to your colleagues.

Search "VTSPIA" on all platforms. On LinkedIn, be sure to list your affiliation as Virginia Tech School of Public and International Affairs to be linked to the SPIA-specific community.

