



*Criminal
Disparities in
Health Care*

THE Briefing
RESEARCH 2014



On Our Research, Recognition and Why it Matters

The research issue of *The Briefing* always surprises me.

Throughout the year we hear news about this faculty member or that award or maybe an especially interesting project, but the information is truly amazing when it is aggregated over the entire year.

From the senior-most faculty member to the newest hire, Andrew Young School faculty members are recognized for analyzing the relevant issues for our local, national and global communities. And, more importantly, the work we do makes a difference in these communities.

Take, for example, the recently published book edited by economics professor Spencer Banzhaf, *The Political Economy of Environmental Justice* (Stanford University Press). This book incorporates research from top economists to help design more effective policy solutions for those marginalized communities disproportionately affected by pollution.

Or the National Institute of Justice grant that will allow criminology professor Mary Finn and doctoral candidate John Prevost to evaluate an intervention designed to improve the success rates for parole outcomes. Their research is timely, as a part of Gov. Nathan Deal's initiative to reform the state's criminal justice system redirects most parolee visits to the home.

Professor Katherine Willoughby was named to the National Academy of Public Administration last year. She is the third faculty member in three years to receive this honor.

Professor Katherine Willoughby was named to the National Academy of Public Administration last year. She is the third faculty member in three years to receive this honor.

And professor Greg Lewis received the Charles H. Levine Memorial Award for Excellence in Public Administration by the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) this year.

Our graduate students are also important to our recognition, such as public policy doctoral candidate Kelechi N. Uzochukwu, selected to receive ASPA's 2014 Walter W. Mode Scholarship.

Research in our Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology and School of Social Work also touches on the important issues of the day. In fact, associate professor Leah Daigle's work on campus assaults has been tapped to help evaluate current preventative programs at Georgia State University. And faculty members Daigle, Brent Teasdale and Timothy Brezina have been recognized for their productivity by their peers.

Last, but not least, we have long been recognized as home to one of the world's leading public finance programs. Monthly rankings by RePEc consistently place our institution among the top 10 percent in this field.

I've heard that some of our many excellent faculty members and students may feel uncomfortable when put in the spotlight. But we feel that every honor received is a tribute to our institutional strength and wisdom and our continuing work to advance the understanding and practice of policy around the world.

Mary Beth Walker

Dean

Georgia State University
Andrew Young School
of Policy Studies
The Briefing
Research 2014

The Office of the Dean publishes *The Briefing* three times a year for alumni, friends, faculty and staff of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Georgia State University, P.O. Box 3992, Atlanta, GA 30302-3992.

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Cover photo: Georgia State University
Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and
Health Professionals nursing students
Arden Benson, left, and Rahil Virani with
Criminal Justice and Criminology Interim
Chair Dean Dabney

Andrew Young School Ranks Among the World's Best Institutions in Public Economics

The Department of Economics at Georgia State University ranks No. 31 among the world's "Top 10% of Institutions in the Field of Public Economics" – and the top in the South – by IDEAS, a RePEc service hosted by the Research Division of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. More than 2,200 institutions like the World Bank Group, International Monetary Fund and National Bureau of Economic Research are considered for the rankings.

The rankings change monthly and are based on data about authors who have registered with the RePEc Author Service, institutions listed on EDIRC, bibliographic data collected by RePEc, citation analysis performed by CitEc and popularity data compiled by LogEc. To see the latest rankings, go to <http://ideas.repec.org/top/top.pbe.html>.

On Bookshelves Now

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
H. Spencer Banzhaf (Ed.)

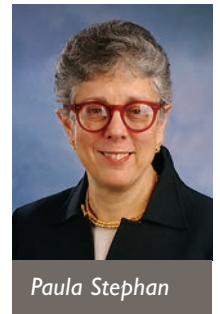


"The environmental justice literature convincingly shows that poor people and minorities live in more polluted neighborhoods than do other groups. These findings have sparked a broad activist movement, numerous local lawsuits and several federal policy reforms. In the first book-length examination of environmental justice from the perspective of economics, a cast of top

contributors evaluates why underprivileged citizens are over-exposed to toxic environments and what policy can do to help. While the text engages economic methods, it is written for an interdisciplinary audience." – Stanford University Press

296 pp · 2012 · ISBN:9780804780612

Stephan Elected to AAAS Section

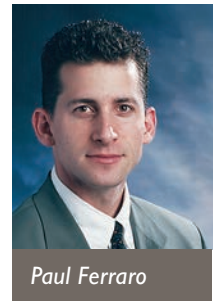


Paula Stephan

Economics professor Paula Stephan was elected to join the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Section on Social, Economic & Political Sciences as a Member-at-Large. Her four-year term began in February 2014. AAAS is the world's largest general scientific society and publisher of the journal *Science*, for which Stephan serves on the Board of Reviewing Editors.

Banzhaf and Ferraro Named Among Top 50 Authors in Environmental Economics

An article investigating the influence of articles, journals, authors and institutions in environmental and ecological economics during the years 2000-2009, a period of growing importance in the field, ranked Andrew Young School professors Paul J. Ferraro and Spencer Banzhaf among the top 50 authors in this field.



Paul Ferraro

The article, titled "Environmental and Ecological Economics in the 21st Century: An Age Adjusted Citation Analysis of the Influential Articles, Journals, Authors and



Spencer Banzhaf

Institutions" and published in *Ecological Economics* (May 2012), analyzes more than 6,500 studies from institutions and authors around the globe to produce its rankings. (<http://goo.gl/75Qqst>)

Banzhaf's work with co-author Wallace Oates (University of Maryland) was awarded the 2013 Richard Musgrave Prize for the most outstanding paper in the *National Tax Journal*. The article, "On Fiscal Illusion in Local Public Finance: Re-Examining Ricardian Equivalence and the Renter Effect," was published in September 2013.

Ferraro has also been appointed to the editorial board of *Land Economics*, published by the University of Wisconsin Press, in 2013. *Land Economics* is dedicated to the study of land use, natural resources, public utilities, housing and urban land issues.

Willoughby Elected a NAPA Fellow

Professor Katherine Willoughby was elected a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), an independent, non-partisan nonprofit chartered by the U.S. Congress. NAPA engages its fellows in research, Congressional testimony and technical assistance and through other avenues to advance effective public management, governance and policy.

Willoughby is the third member of Georgia State University's Department of Public Management and Policy faculty to be named to this prestigious honor, joining professor Greg Lewis, department chair, and professor W. Bartley Hildreth.

NAPA Fellows include past and present members of Congress and presidential cabinets, federal agency deputies and directors, governors and state agency heads, mayors and local government managers, and university chancellors, presidents, deans and faculty.

Uzochukwu Wins ASPA's Mode Scholarship



Kelechi Uzochukwu

Public policy doctoral candidate Kelechi N. Uzochukwu was selected by the American Society for Public Administration to receive the 2014 Walter W. Mode Scholarship. Named in honor of the ASPA's 30th national president, the \$1,500 scholarship is awarded each year to a public administration graduate student/ ASPA member who demonstrates a commitment to a career in public service.

Lewis Honored by ASPA for Outstanding Scholarship

Professor Gregory B. Lewis, chair of the Department of Public Management and Policy, was selected to receive the Charles H. Levine Memorial Award for Excellence in Public Administration by the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). Lewis received his award during ASPA's 2014 Annual Conference in March.

A year earlier, he was recognized for "Outstanding Scholarship in Public Sector Human Resources" by the ASPA Section on Personnel Administration and Labor Relations during its annual meeting in New Orleans.

Thomas Wins ASPA Best Book Award

Citizen, Customer, Partner: Engaging the Public in Public Management, professor John Clayton Thomas' latest book, was recently announced co-winner of the 2014 Best Book Award from the Section on Public Administration Research of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA).

"The SPAR Book Award Selection Committee unanimously praised the book as outstanding research, high-quality writing, offering a significant and lasting contribution to the public administration literature, with strong impact on the practice of public administration," ASPA wrote in its award notification. Thomas directs the master's programs for the Department of Public Management and Policy.



John C. Thomas

Kaufman Receives Major Australian Research Grant

Economics professor Bruce Kaufman and colleagues from Australia and Canada were awarded a \$255,000 grant from the Australian Research Council for a three-year comparative research study on how American and Australian employers and employees view their relationships and major problems in these relationships. Additionally, he has accepted invitations to join the boards of editors for the *Journal of Economic Issues* and the *Journal of the Association for Evolutionary Economics*.

Criminal Justice Article in Award-Winning Magazine Issue

Michael Shapiro, a clinical instructor of criminal justice and director of criminal justice for the Alpharetta Center, co-authored an article with Peter Fenton (Kennesaw State University) titled "The Class of '63: Major Supreme Court Cases of the 1963 Term" that was featured in the award-winning May 2013 issue of *The Champion Magazine*, a monthly publication of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. The issue, themed "Perspective on Brady at 50," was recognized with the Media Industry News' 2013 Editorial & Design Award for Print/Online Coverage of a Single Topic.

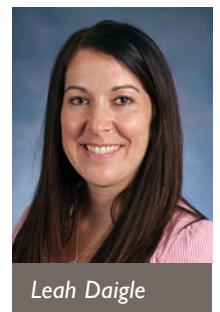
Shapiro was also recently elected to a two-year term as vice president/president-elect of the Criminal Justice Association of Georgia.

Finn and Prevost Receive Major Criminal Justice Research Grant

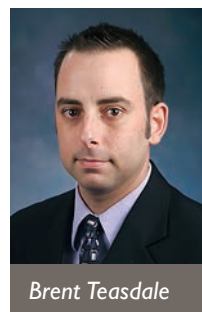
THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE awarded criminal justice and criminology professor Mary Finn and student John Prevost (Ph.D. in Criminal Justice and Criminology) a \$221,309 grant, in partnership with Applied Research Services, to examine the influence of parole officer home visits on offender outcomes. Their project, "Assessing the Influence of Home Visit Themes and Temporal Ordering on High-Risk Parolee Outcomes," focuses on the timing and ordering of events during community supervision that are most predictive of successful parole outcomes.

Andrew Young School Criminologists Among the Nation's Most Productive

In a study of productivity among criminal justice and criminology scholars, several Georgia State University faculty members were identified as rising stars. Associate professor Leah Daigle ranked No. 6 in the nation, and Brent Teasdale, associate professor and director of graduate studies, ranked No. 7. Timothy Brezina was ranked the twelfth most productive associate professor.



Leah Daigle



Brent Teasdale

The study, titled "Criminology and Criminal Justice Hit Parade," was published in the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* (December 2012). It ranked scholars based on their number of articles, articles per year, citations, and h-index (a measure comparing the number of published articles to the number of citations of published articles).

Note: assistant professor Scott Jacques was cited in the article as being among the top 10 assistant professors on the m-quotient measure, which assesses the number of citations and publications while controlling for the number of years spent as a scholar.



Timothy Brezina

Kropf Wins National Social Work Leadership Award

Professor Nancy Kropf, the associate dean for research and strategic planning, was presented the Association for Gerontology Education-Social Work's (AGE-SW) Leadership Award at the Gerontological Society of America meeting in New Orleans in November 2013. The award honors a faculty member who has made significant contributions in research, teaching and scholarship on aging.

School of Social Work faculty members Karen Watkins (left) and Terri Lewinson (right) with Nancy Kropf at the award ceremony.





Study Examines Tax Policy, Tax Evasion and Economic Responses

Raising taxes too high reduces compliance and drives economic activity underground, reducing the tax base. However, taxes that are low enough to eliminate the underground economy can result in unsustainable budget and trade deficits, write the authors of an Andrew Young School study funded by the World Bank.

In “A Computational General Equilibrium Approach to Sectoral Analysis for Tax Potential: An Application to Pakistan” (*Journal of Asian Economics*, August 2013), professor Andrew Feltenstein and alumnus Musharraf Cyan (Ph.D. in Economics '10), a senior research associate in the International Center for Public Policy, develop a dynamic general equilibrium model to examine Pakistan's large underground economy and the corresponding gap between potential and actual taxes collected.

They apply their model to Pakistani data over an eight-year period, 2004-2011, exploring the link between tax rates, access to credit and the extent of tax evasion, and the consequences for public finances and economic performance.

“Incorporating a value-added tax (VAT) without any other tax reductions greatly reduces the tax compliance of the ser-

vice sector,” they write. “If, on the other hand, the VAT introduction is accompanied by abolishing the goods and services tax, then tax compliance rises, but revenues from the non-services sector decline, interest rates rise and real GDP growth slows.

“The optimal rate of taxation, from a macroeconomic point of view, may lead to some underground activity.”

The authors note that their research has implications for policy changes. “Economic reform will depend upon policies that reduce the various forms of tax evasion.”

Download the article at <http://goo.gl/6nwZ1f>.

Andrew Feltenstein, above

Georgia's K-12 Spending Reductions

IMPACT INSTRUCTION



Nicholas Warner

A decline in funding public K-12 education in Georgia has hit instructional spending hard, reducing it by one-fifth of its 2001 level in 2012, according to a new Fiscal Research Center report.

This decline also narrowed the typically significant gap in instructional spending

between the state's high-wealth and low-wealth school districts, according to Fiscal Research Center analyst Nicholas Warner and associate director Carolyn Bourdeaux, an associate professor in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies.

Instructional spending includes all activities dealing directly with the interactions between teachers and students. Georgia's school districts generally spend two-thirds of their resources on instruction.

The report, "School District Education Expenditures in Response to the Great Recession" (FRC Report No. 265, January 2014), examines the structure of school district expenditures from 2001 to 2012 using DE-46 data from the Georgia Department of Education. It focuses on the cuts to instruction compared to cuts in other activities during the Great Recession.

Spending in almost all categories declined during this period, according to

the analysis. However, the decline in instructional spending led at 19 percent, largely driven by the 21.6 percent reduction in teacher salary expenditures. At the same time, system-wide payments for benefits increased 20 percent, mostly due to higher health insurance costs.

"School districts were unable to protect student instruction during the recent recession," says Warner. "And students in high-spending districts were disproportionately affected, largely because of the impact of the housing crisis and associated property tax declines."

Students in high-wealth districts saw instructional spending decline by 23 percent, while low-wealth districts saw an 18 percent reduction, narrowing the gap. Students living in areas with the highest property tax wealth in 2003 received \$500 more per student for instruction than students in districts with the lowest property tax wealth. By 2012, that gap had narrowed to \$79 per student.

"On average, instruction expenditures decreased proportionally during the earlier years we studied," says Warner. "More recently, during the latter part of the recession and recovery, this spending took a disproportionately large cut as federal funding ran out."

Download the report at <http://goo.gl/6FBkBX>.

Report Details the Impact of Preferential Tax Treatment on State Revenues for FY2015

WHAT DO FEDERAL AND STATE TAX DEDUCTIONS COST GEORGIA

in lost tax revenues? A new report produced for the State of Georgia by the Andrew Young School's Fiscal Research Center provides a comprehensive list and detailed analysis of the state's statutory tax provisions, known commonly as "tax expenditures," in Georgia's budget for Fiscal Year 2015.

"Georgia Tax Expenditure Report FY2015" estimates the reduction in state revenue caused by a variety of state and federal tax deductions, exemptions and credits. Now available online, it offers citizens a way to track the impact of government resources lost via preferential tax treatment in all of Georgia's major taxes, including the individual income tax, corporate income tax and sales tax.

Preparation of this report is required by Title 45, Chapter 12, Article 4 of the Official Code of Georgia.

The Georgia tax expenditure reports for FY2012, FY2013 and FY2014 are also available on the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget website at <http://goo.gl/MQTCqi>.



Another Proposed Georgia City is Found Financially Feasible Under Current Spending

A new report finds the proposed City of South Fulton financially feasible, even under conservative estimates. Using currently available data from Fulton County and the state, the Fiscal Research Center report shows the proposed city's expected revenues would exceed its expected expenditures, assuming its spending remains similar to current patterns.

The "Report on the City of South Fulton: Potential Revenues and Expenditures" (January 2014), written by Georgia State University Fiscal Research Center analysts Peter Bluestone and John Matthews, was commissioned by South Fulton United, Inc.

The proposed City of South Fulton, which represents about nine percent of Fulton County's population, should expect

annual revenue of approximately \$64.9 million and annual expenses of approximately \$61.9 million, according to the report. The remaining \$3 million may be used to provide additional contingency funds, reduce the millage rate, or expand the level of expenditures.

The authors approached the estimates based on actual expenditures in the South Fulton Special Services District, using conservative estimates when actual data was not available. "We likely underestimate potential revenues while overestimating potential costs," says Bluestone, a senior research associate with the Fiscal Research Center.

Download a copy at <http://goo.gl/vmTlx3>.

Peter Bluestone, above

Fewer Teachers and Administrators in Georgia's Public Schools

Those Remaining Often More Experienced, More Hold Advanced Degrees

Georgia public school students are more likely to be taught by experienced teachers who hold advanced degrees now than they were in 2001. They are also, for the most part, learning in classrooms holding more students and in schools operated by fewer administrators according to Fiscal Research Center analyst Nicholas Warner.

These trends began before the start of the Great Reces-

sion notes Warner. But they have accelerated in recent years as many school districts were forced to decrease their staffing under state and local budget pressures.

Warner's research appears in the FRC Policy Brief No. 266, "Trends in Georgia School Staffing 2001-2012" (January 2014).

"More than 7,800 full time equivalent (FTE) teaching

positions were eliminated in Georgia's public Schools, representing a 6.7 percent decline. During the same period, Georgia's student population grew by half a percentage point annually, increasing the demand on the teachers who remained," he says.

Schools also lost more than five percent of the total administrative positions statewide between 2010 and 2012, the study finds.

The share of teachers holding an advanced degree in Georgia's public schools rose from 50 percent to 67 percent during the period studied. Most of the growth in administrators with advanced degrees, from

90 percent in 2001 to 96 percent in 2012, occurred in those earning Ph.Ds.

"The Great Recession and subsequent reduction in available revenue for public education forced cuts in teaching and administrative positions across the state, accelerating the trend towards more educated and experienced teachers working in Georgia's schools," concludes Warner. "While likely facing larger class sizes and fewer administrators post-recession, students are more likely to be taught by educators holding higher degrees and more years of relevant experience."

Download the brief at <http://aysps.gsu.edu/frc/reports/2014>.

Study Shows Effect of Latino Immigrant Workers on Atlanta Wages



Atlanta, over several time periods – 1990, 2000 and 2008 – to investigate the changing dynamics and competition between low-skilled workers in different demographics over time.

“Atlanta has experienced phenomenal growth in its Latino population,” says Liu, “reaching a record high growth rate of 817 percent from 1980 to 2000.” Latino

immigrants make up more than half of the current immigrant population and are overly represented in the low-skilled labor force.

“None of the available evidence suggests that black low-skilled workers’ wages are hard hit by low-skilled immigrants,” Liu says of national studies. “With high-skilled workers, there is an effect on wages, but only minor. Low-skilled workers’ economic fortunes are tied largely to other factors – not to the inflow of immigrants.” Her findings agree with previous national studies, but provide more detailed evidence particular to Atlanta.

Liu finds competition, “but it’s not as direct,” she explains. “Sociology plays a part. Not everyone gravitates to the same job.”

Her study finds that in Atlanta, Latinos now occupy niches historically filled by low-skilled black workers. “Immigrants seem to be in labor-intensive jobs, such as construction and the restaurant industry. And low-skilled black workers have gravitated towards jobs and occupations where language skills and customer interaction are more important, such as sales and retail, or as cashiers and receptionists.”

Another factor impacting the concentration of low-skilled immigration workers is networking. “The hiring process is a network of people,” says Liu. “So, for example, if you are a cashier at a grocery store, a manager looking to hire or promote will ask for references, and workers will refer people like themselves. And Latinos in construction will hire others like themselves. With the networking process, it’s not surprising that different demographic groups become concentrated in these different types of jobs.

“What I’ve found in Atlanta is that these low-skilled workers are complementing each other instead of competing with each other. They are working their respective cluster,” says Liu. “If there’s competition, it’s more within each group than between groups.”

This study is available at <http://goo.gl/xFXiGX>.



Assistant professor Cathy Y. Liu examines the effect Latino immigrant workers have on the wages of comparable low-skilled American workers in her paper, “Latino Immigration and the Low-Skill Urban Labor Market: The Case of Atlanta,” published in *Social Science Quarterly* (2013).

Liu admits that studies similar to hers have been conducted before, across hundreds of cities. “However, they are often too abstract, leaving out more detailed questions about what’s really going on within each city,” she says. Using census data and other statistical population surveys, Liu focuses on one city,

As Congress debates immigration laws and citizenship, a central concern is whether immigrants hurt or help the economy. Are they taking wages or jobs from Americans, putting downward pressure on earnings of low-skill urban laborers?



Immigrants, Unemployment and the Great Recession

UNEMPLOYMENT across the United States nearly doubled from 4.9 percent in 2007 to 9.7 percent in 2009, its highest level since 1983. While the Great Recession generated much discussion on this rise and its effects, little was revealed about the employment prospects of immigrants, according to urban policy expert Cathy Y. Liu, an assistant professor in public management and policy.

"Immigrants continue to settle in metropolitan areas across the United States and bring significant changes to various urban labor markets," she writes with public policy graduate student Jason Edwards in "Immigrant Employment Through the Great Recession," (WJ. Usury Workplace Research Group Paper No. 2012-4-1).

Immigrant outcomes and their evolving employment patterns are important to understand, they argue, because this knowledge can inform policies that target assistance to immigrants and the communities in which they live.

The authors look at American Community Survey data in 2007 and 2009 in the top 100 metropolitan areas, examining general trends in immigrant presence and growth. They conduct an empirical analysis of the characteristics that play a role in immigrant versus native-born employment outcomes, making distinc-

tions between the low-skilled and high-skilled and Asian and Latino immigrants.

"Minorities and immigrants are more likely than native-born workers to engage in various forms of contingent and flexible employment, as independent contractors, temporary help workers, day laborers, on-call workers and contract firm employees," says Liu. "If it is true that these workers are more vulnerable to economic shocks, this population may experience greater job losses during the recession.

"Add work authorization status issues, and their job security can be even worse.

"On the other hand, immigrants are mobile via their location and occupation. They tend to follow economic opportunities and are more likely to accept jobs at below-market pay and pay penalties. Those not entitled to unemployment benefits may consider a wider spectrum of jobs, so their unemployment rates through the recession may remain low."

Liu and Edwards find that while unemployment rose for all groups between 2007 and 2009, Latino immigrants – particularly low-skilled and female – are hit hardest across all groups. "The usual human capital attributes, including skill level, experience and English proficiency,

still hold in securing employment during this period," they write.

Immigrants are also less likely to find jobs in metro areas where their share of the population is larger. "Immigrant migration patterns are changing, and ethnic enclaves are losing prominence relative to more general indicators of an area's economic prospects," they write.

Another interesting finding, they write, is the role of state immigration policy on their outcomes. "The presence of E-Verify ... shows a negative effect on employment for Latino, but not Asian, immigrants," says Liu.

The authors identify the next important question in this line of research as how immigrants recover from the recession period and what policy tools are available to help those in need. "Unemployment insurance has many restrictions, making it ineffective for low-wage workers with nonstandard work arrangements: the self-employed, part-time work and contingent employment.

"Many immigrant workers fall into these categories."

Download this paper at <http://goo.gl/bssfHl>.

Cathy Liu, above

Local Pension Reform

Study Illustrates Difficult Actions Needed to Advance Fiscal Sustainability



Katherine Willoughby

Atlanta's latest reform of its general employee pension fund moved the city from the brink of budget disaster. The city's actions, begun in 2010, transferred unsustainable obligations into millions of dollars saved annually while making significant payments towards its long-underfunded liability.

"The reforms have set a new direction for the City," write Andrew Young School professor Katherine Willoughby, doctoral student Sarah Beth Gehl (Public Policy) and Michael J. Bell, the chief financial officer for an Atlanta-area school district, in an article published in *Public Budgeting & Finance* (2013), "Pension Reform in Atlanta: Funding Past Promises in an Uncertain Future."

Their research presents a thorough examination of state and local public pensions in the United States; concerns related to smaller, locally administered pensions; and actions taken to reform these pensions – specifically those taken by the City of Atlanta – to illustrate the depth of the problem and the difficult

decisions and actions necessary to advance fiscal sustainability.

Although Atlanta has not solved its pension problems, the city "offers an example of a large American city confronting unsustainable pension obligations yet achieving reform through analysis and negotiation," the authors write.

"We hope other systems will take note," says Willoughby.

American municipal pension plans around the country face large gaps between the benefits promised and the amount of funds they have set aside for retiree benefits. The average funding ratio for the pension plans of 61 cities in 2009 was 74 percent, the shortfall \$99 billion, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts' Center on the States.

Local pension plans face significant hurdles to reaching good fiscal health, the authors conclude. "Essentially, to keep promises made to employees, these plans will require strict discipline on the part of the politicians, pension boards and financial managers associated with them, as well as tempering the expectations of current and future system members to navigate what will be a very rocky road to sustainability."

Find the report at <http://goo.gl/qxvBOF>.

HOME PRICES:

In Search of the Best Values for Research

HOMES in "nicer" neighborhoods – neighborhoods with good schools, low crime rates, access to parks and green spaces, and so forth – are often more expensive than comparable homes in struggling neighborhoods. As realtors say, the three most important things about real estate are "location, location, location."

Consequently, economists frequently use home values to examine everything from demand for public goods to quality-of-life measures in education, racial segregation, air quality, environmental and health risks, and property taxes. For example, when people pay more to live in a better school district, they reveal something about their willingness to pay for schooling.

"The most fundamental step in any research of this type is an accurate estimate of housing prices," says economics professor Spencer Banzhaf.

But economists have not reached a consensus on the best source for such

data, which they can obtain from a variety of sources: self-reported from the census, transactions values, tax assessments and rental values. And while most researchers use micro-level data, some use summary statistics such as median household value.

"Each of these approaches has inherent benefits and shortcomings," write co-authors Banzhaf and Omar Farooque (Northwestern) in "Interjurisdictional Housing Prices and Spatial Amenities: Which Measures of Housing Prices Reflect Local Public Goods?" (*Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 2013).

GROWING CONNECTIONS



STUDY TO BRING MORE GEORGIA PRODUCE TO LOCAL CONSUMERS

Georgia's Department of Agriculture (DOA) owns and operates several state farmers markets statewide. Given the rapidly growing consumer market for locally grown and sourced food items, these markets should be expected to connect a large share of the state's nearly 48,000 farm producers with its local consumers.

With few exceptions, however, many of the stalls in the state markets are empty. And those filled with produce attract largely wholesalers and bulk buyers, according to professor Greg Streib.

Streib, director of the Andrew Young School's Public Performance and Management Group (PPM), is working with alumnus Matthew Kulinski (M.P.A. '10),

program manager for the Georgia Department of Agriculture, on a three-phase, \$55,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded research project to develop new marketing and distribution strategies that will help connect the state's agricultural producers to state-run, nonprofit and community farmers markets and their growing customer bases.

"Many consumers – particularly those from metro Atlanta – want to buy fresh produce," says Kulinski, "but markets are finding it difficult to attract farmers that want to sell directly to consumers. We want to identify the barriers that keep our farmers from selling through these markets."

The first phases of the research are described on the project's website, which includes links to "Strategy Brief One: Increasing the Supply of Georgia Grown Produce" and "Strategy Brief Two: Learning from Farmers and Market Personnel."

The next steps will entail surveying approximately 20,000 Georgia farmers, analyzing the responses and producing a final report.

"This study will help us identify the barriers and determine what steps we can take to overcome them," says Kulinski. "Before we invest in, for example, more cold storage at our state markets, we want to first confirm that farmers are interested in selling to consumers at these markets."

The authors began this project while Farooque was a visiting intern in the Andrew Young School's Research Experience for Undergraduates program.

For the study, Banzhaf and Farooque use two strategies to evaluate the data sources, examining home values in 99 communities in the Los Angeles area. They find that micro-level home values based on rents appear to perform best, with sales transaction prices and self-reports coming in second and third. Median home values and rents performed poorly.

"Our results suggest that rents represent current conditions better than asset

values do, since the home-owner value reflects expected future conditions," says Banzhaf. "And actual transaction prices appear to capture local amenities better than do self-reports, although they may be a practical alternative in some cases."

Find the article at www.nber.org/papers/w17809.



Spencer Banzhaf

"There are many practical implications that this research will give us to guide our decision making in the future."

"There's been a lot of talk about 'locally grown' in Atlanta, but these discussions are all focused on food production in the city," says Streib. "What has been missing is a better understanding of how to get more farmers engaged in bringing their product into the city."

"Nobody else is really thinking about it like the state does."

To learn more about this project and follow its progress, go to www.ppmgsu.org/cityfood.html.

Pursuing Both Earned and Donated Revenue Strategies is Not Sustainable

NONPROFITS seeking greater stability in their budget often consider adding earned income, also called commercial revenue, to their donated income. A desire to diversify and reduce their dependency on a single revenue stream has led a variety of organizations to support this idea.

When nonprofits pursue mixed revenue streams, do their budgets achieve greater revenue stability?

Not necessarily, suggests new research conducted by Andrew Young School of Policy Studies associate professor Janelle Kerlin, professor Dennis Young, doctoral student Jung-In Soh (Public Policy) and Simon Teasdale (Glasgow Caledonian University). These co-authors do, however, find some exceptions they name in the article, “Oil and Water Rarely Mix: Exploring the Relative Stability of Nonprofit Revenue Mixes Over Time” (*Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 2013).

“Nonprofit commercialization and the development of mixed revenue streams have recently received a lot of attention,” says Young. “The general assumption is that nonprofits funded entirely on grants and donations are more frequently diversifying into commercial revenue to deal with today’s general economic uncertainty and the recent flattening and reductions in charitable giving.

“However, combining a mixed revenue strategy may be difficult to sustain over time. These actions pull organizations in different directions. The operational priorities associated with securing such diverse sources of funds may compete against each other.”

The authors construct a panel using National Center for Charitable Statistics data from 1998 and 2007 to explore whether, in truth, more nonprofits are adopting mixed revenue strategies and the sustainability of this strategy over time.

“Given the preponderance of academic and practitioner-oriented literature highlight-

ing the benefits of diversifying into commercial revenue, one might expect that nonprofits are increasingly adopting this tactic at the expense of donated revenue,” says Young. “However, this assumption had not been studied, so little was known. In fact, much of the existing literature suggests that successful nonprofits are *not* adopting mixed revenue streams.”

Their research finds no evidence that nonprofits are increasingly adopting mixed revenue strategies and, in fact, that these strategies appear less sustainable over time than those that are predominantly commercial or predominantly donation-driven.

“For most nonprofits, relying on one strategy or the other offers more stability than attempting to achieve a balanced revenue mix,” says Young. “The exceptions may be found in nonprofits such as arts organizations, where there is a natural alliance between donors and customers.”

Find the article at <http://goo.gl/0NmcsU>.

Study Defines “Social Enterprise”

Social enterprise models are shaped to a great degree by traditional institutions like government, business and civil society in any given country suggests Janelle Kerlin in “Defining Social Enterprise Across Different Contexts: A Conceptual Framework Based on Institutional Factors” (*Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 2013).

“These institutions put pressure on social enterprises to fulfill particular needs and to be structured in specific ways,” she says.

This explains why, over time, countries and regions have come to identify different definitions and concepts with the term, adding to the debate among researchers and practitioners on how to define the concept.

Kerlin uses comparative historical analysis to examine social enterprises in five countries that differ greatly in their governance, economies and civil societies – Zimbabwe, Argentina, Italy, the United States and Sweden – to develop a practical

Naming Rights

A More Useful Way to Classify Social Enterprises for Research

The term “social enterprise” is new enough that there is no agreement on a common definition. As a result, researchers who study these organizations often find themselves comparing apples to oranges to pecans.

In the article, “Defining the Universe of Social Enterprise: Competing Metaphors” (*Voluntas*, 2013) authors professor Dennis Young and assistant professor Jesse Leczy examine the three major schools of thought by which these organizations are defined and classified. They then add a fourth.

“Each system – EMES network, the spectrum approach and the Schumpeterians – falls short of providing an adequate framework for future research, policy and practice,” says Leczy. “Using metaphor, we lay the ground-

work for a more meaningful research agenda in this area.”

The metaphor they propose is an alternative classification, the social enterprise zoo, within which they identify and describe six subspecies of social enterprise types:

- For-profit business corporations
- Social businesses
- Social cooperatives
- Commercial nonprofit organizations
- Public-private partnerships
- Hybrids

The authors also identify and summarize four different types of organizational logic by which these enterprises operate:

- Strategic profit maximization, as in the case of busi-

ness corporations with defined programs of corporate social responsibility

- Maximization of members' welfare, as in the case of cooperatives
- Social mission maximization, as in the case of nonprofits
- An explicit balance of social impact and commercial success, as in the case of social businesses

“The zoo metaphor will be helpful in guiding the study of how social enterprises are best managed, governed and financed,” says Young. “By acknowledging the different ‘animals’ in the social enterprise zoo, their operational strategies can be studied and developed with appropriate sensitivity to these distinctions.”

Young and Leczy describe a number of important

research questions and avenues of inquiry suggested by the metaphor and use it to examine public policy concerns such as tax policy, governance and other parameters. They also suggest a curatorial role for social entrepreneurs.

“We humbly propose that the zoo metaphor has the potential to add substantially to the understanding of social enterprise, but we do not argue that other schools of thought should be abandoned,” they conclude. “In fact, making their frames of reference explicit in future research will simply help scholars, practitioners and policymakers understand both the assumptions and the implications of their respective analyses.”

Find the article at <http://goo.gl/H2RA2S>.



Across Countries

approach to identifying country models for social enterprise as they exist around the globe.

“Though largely theoretical at this stage, this research leads to a broader conceptual framework – rather than a narrow definition – by which a range of social enterprise activity can be understood,” she says.

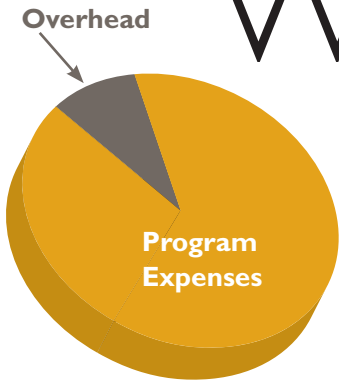
Kerlin's findings have practical implications for encouraging cross-regional dialogue on social enterprises, sharing and replicating ideas, and helping to develop structures necessary for their support.

And it apparently is getting a wide reach. “A member of the Canadian Parliament has requested a copy,” she reports.

Download the article at <http://goo.gl/EYhFCT>.

Where Did My Donation Go?

Increased donor pressures on nonprofits may deplete organizational capacity to deliver



Donors should be asking the question, how much impact is a nonprofit having? But impact is hard to measure, so overhead is often used as a proxy for effectiveness.

This practice may have unintended consequences according to Jesse Lecy, an assistant professor in the Department of Public Management and Policy, and doctoral candidate Elizabeth Searing (Public Policy).

A robust organizational infrastructure – one with solid management processes, financial controls, professional staff development, adequate fundraising and other essential overhead – is vital to the success of nonprofit organizations. But nonprofits are spending less, on average, on overhead, assert Lecy and Searing in their paper, “Anatomy of the Nonprofit Starvation Cycle.” (2012)

The move to make nonprofits more accountable fiscal stewards began in the late 1980s and has grown significantly in the last 25 years as the quality of information, strength of internal controls and expectations of funders have become more rigorous.

However, there is fear that nonprofits have slimmed down too far to be effective, in order to appear attractive to donors who have been told – often by charity information websites – that overhead should be minimal. The nonprofit starvation cycle then occurs as nonprofits skimp on vital systems and misrepresent their costs to compete with each other for charitable dollars, leading donors to develop unrealistic expectations about how much running a nonprofit really costs.

Nonprofit overhead ratios have declined since 1985, the authors find. Nonprofits today are spending 3.8 percentage points less on administrative costs, though they have increased fundraising expenses by 1.8 percentage points.

“Nonprofits cannot function without having some type of overhead, yet many are spending less on administrative and staff expenses,” says Lecy.

He and Searing explored the phenomenon of the nonprofit starvation cycle by analyzing nonprofit overhead expenditures

using IRS 990 data from the National Center for Charitable Statistics.

“This cycle is a debilitating trend of underinvestment in organizational infrastructure fed by potentially misleading financial reporting,” they report. “Moreover, donors expect and call for increasingly low overhead expenses which result in non-executive staff wages and professional fees bearing the brunt of the cuts.”

The research also highlights patterns in overhead expenditures across different organizational sizes. Nonprofits with less than \$100,000 in revenues tend to report very little in overhead expenses, but those in the \$100,000 to \$550,000 revenue range invest in more overhead. At \$550,000 and larger, overhead expenses begin to gradually fall.

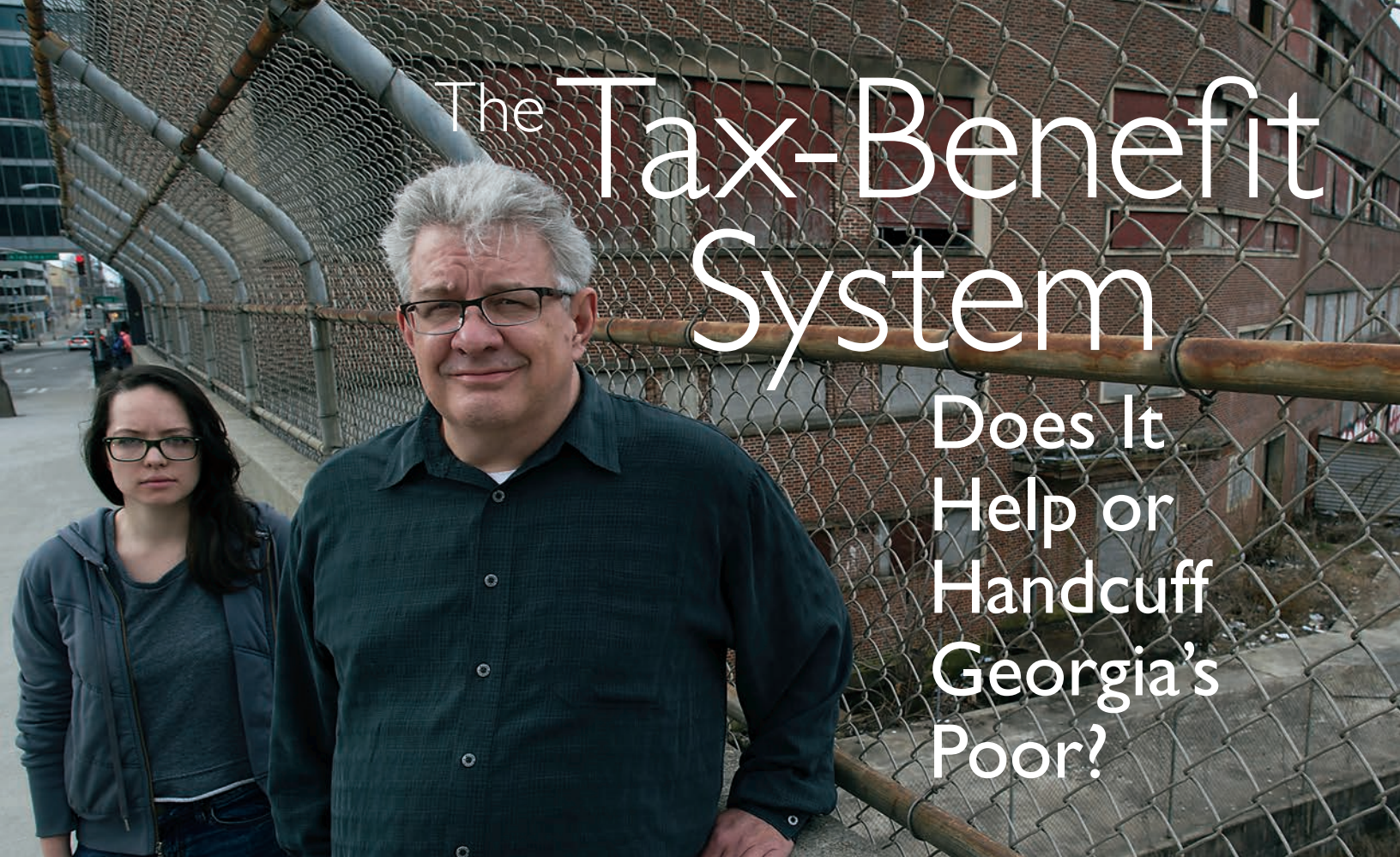
“Our research showed a steady decline in overhead expenditures within the nonprofit sector, with a consistency across all subsectors and most size groups except the smallest and the very largest,” says Lecy.

“We can say with certainty that there has been a downward trend in overhead reporting over the past two decades, which has the potential to impact the capacity of nonprofits to pursue mission-related activities in a meaningful way.”

Download this paper at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2170740>.



Jesse Lecy



The Tax-Benefit System

Does It Help or Handcuff Georgia's Poor?

The social safety net provides short-term relief, but does it promote long-term self-reliance?

In “The Incentives Created by the Tax-Benefit System Facing Low-Income Families in Georgia” (FRC Report No. 258 and FRC Brief No. 258, 2013), economist Mark Rider and Andrew Young School undergraduates Chelsea Coleman, Kendon Darlington and Morgan Sinclair examine the incentives created by the interplay of means-tested public assistance programs in Fulton County, Georgia, in 2012. Their purpose is to determine whether state and federal safety net policies and programs create incentives to achieve self-sufficiency.

In particular, they look at how benefits such as the Childcare and Parents Assistance Program, Section 8 housing vouchers, food stamps (SNAP), Temporary Aid to Needy Families, the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit help or hinder the families served when combined with state and federal income tax liabilities.

They find that the current patchwork system and its recipients would benefit greatly from improved collaboration and integration among relief programs at the federal, state and local levels.

Rider says the findings should encourage lawmakers to re-examine the intended goals of state and federal social safety policies to determine whether they truly help or handcuff low-income Georgians: “The research suggests policymakers at all levels take the action needed to clarify the tax-benefit system’s goals and address its shortcomings in light of those

goals. For example, in some income ranges the system unfairly equalizes the after-tax and benefits wage of skilled and unskilled labor and discourages behaviors that might help improve circumstances.

“Georgia has 1.83 million citizens living in poverty. If self-sufficiency is the desired outcome, the current tax-benefit system, as it stands, is failing its mission,” he continues.

“On the other hand, coupling fundamental tax reform with fundamental welfare reform could simplify the current system and incentivize desired behaviors like education, training, work and thrift. These changes would lead to greater efficiency and equity in how we finance the government and how we help the working poor,” he says.

Download the report at <http://goo.gl/AnBVQR>.

Chelsea Coleman and Mark Rider, above

Do HOPE Scholars Work in Georgia



When They Graduate?

Students who attend college in Georgia rather than out-of-state because of the HOPE scholarship award appear to be more likely to leave the state after college, according to professor David L. Sjoquist, the Dan E. Sweat Distinguished Chair in Educational and Community Policy, and alumnus John V. Winters, assistant professor of economics at the University of Cincinnati.

In their paper, "The Effects of HOPE on Post-College Retention in the Georgia Workforce," published in *Regional Science and Urban Economics* (2013), Sjoquist and Winters consider the effect of HOPE on post-college retention in two ways.

First, they looked at students who received HOPE scholarships using administrative data from the University System of Georgia (USG) and the Georgia Department of Labor. Using pre- and post-HOPE cohorts of freshmen, they measured the scholarship's effect on after-college retention (i.e., employment in the state several years after high school) in Georgia's workforce.

They find that the post-college retention rate fell as a result of HOPE, particularly for the best HOPE-eligible students. They attribute this to the change in the composition of in-state college students due to HOPE, suggesting that while HOPE kept many students in-state for college, many then left after college since they likely were predisposed to leave the state.

The in-state retention rate prior to HOPE was 80.7 percent three years after college graduation, while for HOPE scholars it was 77.5 percent.

Second, they examined those who graduated from high school when HOPE was available and relied on a variety of census data to measure the effect of HOPE on living in Georgia after college. In this approach, they looked at after-college residential retention in Georgia based on the number of college-educated persons born in Georgia and living in Georgia after they graduated, regardless of whether they attended college in the state. Using this approach, which controls for any change in the composition of in-state students, Sjoquist and Winters find no change in the retention rate due to HOPE.

When the HOPE Scholarship program was launched in 1993, student aid in Georgia was the third lowest in the country. Between 1993 and 2010, the number of HOPE recipients increased from 42,796 to 256,484, while the value of the awards increased from \$21.4 million to \$748.2 million. By 2010-11, total student aid in Georgia had grown 31 times larger compared to five times in the United States.

One of the primary objectives for these programs is increasing the quality of the workforce, in part by retaining the best and the brightest after they graduate from college. Prior research suggests that state merit scholarship programs increase college enrollment in states that adopt them. However, post-college migration may limit the effect these programs have on the stock of college-educated labor in those states.

The authors note that these results have policy implications for Georgia and other states that have adopted or are considering adopting merit-based financial aid programs since the public benefits to states investing in students this way are largely contingent on keeping them in the state's workforce after college. HOPE scholars who leave the state after attending college reduce the state's return on its expenditure.

Download the report at <http://goo.gl/2JIDCG>.



Are Voters Better Environmentalists?

Study Examines Individuals Most Motivated to Act Collectively

If voters will trek to a voting booth in the spirit of civic participation, despite any inconveniences, are they also more likely to contribute to other social calls to action? Economist Paul Ferraro thinks voters are so inclined, even when there is no personal benefit.

Ferraro, a professor in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, examines their motivation in the article, “Are Voters More Likely to Contribute to Other Public Goods? Evidence from a Large-Scale Randomized Policy Experiment” (*American Journal of Political Science*, 2014), with co-authors Toby Bolsen (Georgia State University) and alumnus Juan Jose Miranda (M.A. and Ph.D. in Economics '12) of the World Bank.

The paradox of voting is that if people are making rational decisions based on their own private benefit, they wouldn't vote, says Ferraro. “From a

cost-benefit perspective, it doesn't make any difference for one person to vote.”

“But people DO vote because it's a social norm; they feel they should do it,” he says, “In economics this is called ‘pro-social behavior,’ a catchall term to say we care about others and behave accordingly.”

Their research looks at the behavior of voters and non-voters during the 2007 drought in the southeastern United States. In a randomized controlled trial with more than 100,000 households, the authors ask whether frequent voters are more cooperative than non-voters in responding to a call to reduce water usage.

“One vote does not decide an election, so voting is not a rational decision. In the same sense, it does not make any difference for one person to change their water use in a drought. It's not a rational choice,” says Ferraro.

“But a smart decision for one is dumb for all. If no one restricts their water usage, then we all suffer from the water shortage.”

Their study finds that non-voters reduced their average water consumption by an average of only 691 gallons, whereas frequent voters reduced their water consumption by an average of 2,507 gallons.

The authors then explore a second question: Do conservatives and liberals respond differently to the public good? “All of the research and surveys suggest that Democrats are pro-environment and Republicans are not,” says Ferraro.

However, Republican and Democratic voters who were asked to reduce water consumption did so equally.

“This result is intriguing because it suggests that maybe the divide we imagine between Democrats and

Republicans is not as vast as one might have thought. There may be more agreement than we had thought,” says Ferraro.

“I also think our findings point to potential solutions for closing that divide, such as that communication is very important, or that there might be some environmental issues in which there is no divide. We can work on those issues and separate them from the more contentious environmental issues.”

Ferraro hopes his research on pro-social behavior is helpful to political scientists and politicians. “A lot of what government is about is getting us to act for the public good,” he explains. “Knowing what motivates people to act collectively can be important in helping government function effectively.”

The article is online: <http://goo.gl/bzjgg5>.

Neighborhood Nexus **MAKES** More Knowledge Accessible to Communities

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

need information to function effectively. Food distribution programs need to know where to locate, programs for low-weight infants need to know where to target their outreach, and neighborhood patrols need accurate crime data



David Sjoquist

to know whether they should take actions such as talking to police or establishing a new patrol.

Neighborhood Nexus (<http://neighborhoodnexus.org>) is a resource designed to supply information to a variety of groups to empower others to enhance Atlanta's quality of life.

"The Neighborhood Nexus is an attempt to democratize data, to make data more readily available to the community, so they can use that data for decision making," says Andrew Young School professor David Sjoquist, who holds the Dan E. Sweat Chair in Educational and Community Policy.

The website serves neighborhoods, nonprofits, foundations, community organizations, governments and the press, providing answers to important questions. It was developed in collaboration with five metro Atlanta organizations: Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Emory University's Office of Community Partnerships, Community Foundation for a Greater Atlanta, Atlanta Regional

Commission and The Civic League for Regional Atlanta.

Each of the Neighborhood Nexus's five partners has a unique role, Sjoquist says: "Emory is tasked with finding the data. Emory cleans up the data and turns it over to the Atlanta Regional Commission, which then puts the data on and maintains the website. Then our role at the Andrew Young School is to look at the policy side, to take the data and do analyses. We write reports and put them on the website.

"The Civic League's role is outreach to the community, making groups aware of what Neighborhood Nexus provides, and organizing training on how to use the website. And the Community Foundation is tasked with raising and managing the money to fund it."

Sjoquist notes the site is also helpful for charitable foundations deciding where to allocate their funds and those writing grant proposals. Its data can point to what needs should be addressed, or show recipients of charitable funds the results of allocated money.

"These are the kinds of things we'd like the data to be used for," Sjoquist says, while allowing that its use can be broadened.

"We also think this would be a very valuable tool for the press. It gives them the ability to pull up some agency data they might not otherwise have immediate access to. Also the mapping capabilities are an important benefit to the press and most users."

Financing is a challenge, as with any nonprofit.

And finally, he admits, "Since Neighborhood Nexus is new, there are still lots and lots of people and organizations that have never heard of it. So a major challenge is to get the word out so that more people can benefit from it."

Go to <http://neighborhoodnexus.org>.



TRADITIONAL VS. ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO TEACHING

Is One More Effective?

THREE HUNDRED K-12 TEACHERS earned licenses through alternative training in 1985-1986. Today, that number has ballooned to more than 59,000.

The traditional route into teaching requires completion of a formal teacher preparation program offered by a university or college and a major in education. However, alternative routes that require no formal training such as Teach for America (TFA) and the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence Passport (ABCTE) have become increasingly attractive and popular to prospective teachers.

Given the multiple pathways to entering the teaching profession, professor Tim Sass sought to measure the performance of traditionally prepared teachers in comparison with their alternatively trained counterparts. He shares his findings in new research titled, "Licensure and Worker Quality: A Comparison of Alternative Routes to Teaching" (2013).

"On average, education majors are not attracting the best undergraduate students and are not as strong academically as other majors. For example, the average SAT scores for teachers entering the ABCTE program were 180 points higher than the scores of traditional program graduates. Also, 100 percent of ABCTE students passed the math exam on the first try,

whereas less than 70 percent of traditional students passed on the first try," Sass says.

Attrition rates for alternatively prepared teachers are generally lower. They are more likely to remain in the profession because many are second-career individuals making a conscious choice to transition into teaching. In contrast, many of those who are traditionally certified are recent college graduates and may not be confident in their career choice. Sometimes they discover they are not good at teaching or simply don't like it, so they leave after the first year or two.

"The distinction seems to be parallel with the different investments people have to make in terms of preparation," Sass says. "If you're a college graduate with good opportunities outside of teaching, it is more likely you

would enter the alternative route because it's cheaper, less time-consuming and there is not a high cost to try teaching and switch. Lowering the barriers may lead to getting higher quality teachers into classrooms."

Generally, the effectiveness of teachers from different routes varies. Alternative programs produce teachers who may be more or less effective, overall, than their traditionally prepared counterparts. However, alternative options have been shown to produce teachers who are more effective in particular subjects than those entering teaching via the traditional route, he finds.

Sass says that despite the variation, providing different avenues into teaching seems worthwhile in training K-12 educators.

"I didn't expect to find large differences between traditional and alternative teachers or that the route with the least requirements would yield effective teachers by a fairly wide margin," he says, "but these findings tell us that we shouldn't close the door to alternative routes of teacher certification."

To read the full report, go to <http://goo.gl/sl3Yms>.

Tim Sass, above right, in the classroom



The Labor Force After the Recession

Behavioral Approach Used to Examine Declining Participation

Adjunct Professor Julie Hotchkiss, a policy advisor and research economist for the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, looks beyond the numbers of the Great Recession's declining labor force participation.

"Of interest to me is the behavioral perspective: what are the decisions of individuals that led to those numbers? What characteristics about 'me' cause me to participate (or not) in the labor market?" she says.

In a recent article written with alumnus Fernando Rios-Avila (Ph.D. in Economics '13) titled, "Identifying Factors Behind the Decline in the U.S. Labor Force Participation Rate" (*Business and Economic Research*, 2013), Hotchkiss uses the behavioral approach to examine reasons for the declining labor force participation and discover if the trend will be lasting or reverse itself.

"This is a big concern to monetary policy advisors, because the degree to which people choose to work in the labor market is important for fueling economic growth," she explains.

Since the early 1960s, a steady upward trend of the labor force participation rate was observed in the U.S. labor market, the authors note. This growth has been attributed to the rise in women entering the labor market, the progression of baby boomers into their primary working years, and the later retirement ages of workers.

However, this steadily rising participation stalled by the end of the 1990s and has been declining since then, with the most dramatic decline occurring during the 2008-2009 recession.

The authors attempt to explain what caused the decline: was it demographic

change, behavioral change or labor market conditions? They then attempt to determine whether it can be expected to continue.

"The answer matters," says Hotchkiss, "because if the labor force participation rate drops due to temporary cyclical conditions, it will be more likely to rebound when the economy improves. Otherwise, it may be a permanent structural change. This has implications for long-term economic growth."

The weak job market, which put a downward pressure on people's decision to enter it, accounted for more than 100 percent of the decline in labor force participation during the recession, the authors found.

However, the labor force participation rate did not drop as much as it might have because at the same time there was a shift in behavior, particularly among those who

usually have relatively low participation, Hotchkiss says. "Participation declined pretty much for all groups of workers, but less than would have been expected among those groups with traditionally lower participation rates, such as women, those with children and the elderly."

Hotchkiss says the good news is that most of the labor force participation rate decline seems to be cyclical, suggesting that improvements in the job market will arrest or reduce the decline. The bad news is that labor force participation may not return to what it was before the recession because strong demographic factors, such as the aging population, counteract this rate.

Find the article at <http://goo.gl/IW8ITK>.

Research Examines the Value & Effectiveness of Performance Management

Does performance management make a difference? That question has become the central issue in the field of public management, according to Andrew Young School professor Ted Poister.

In the article, “Does Performance Management Lead to Better Outcomes? Evidence from the U.S. Public Transit Industry” (*Public Administration Review*, 2013), Poister and his co-authors – alumna Lauren Edwards (Ph.D. in Public Policy ’11), now at Sam Houston State University, and public policy doctoral candidate Obed Pasha – seek answers.

Performance management is a process by which public programs and agencies formulate clear strategies, goals and objectives and use performance information to make decisions and manage more effectively in order to achieve them.

However, critics question the value of performance management, emphasizing barriers that may include the lack of available resources, institutional and procedural constraints, external forces that can impede performance, and the lack of innovative intervention strategies or service delivery systems that might improve performance.

For their study, the authors survey a sample of public transit system managers in the United States to examine how they formulate strategy and the extent to which they monitor and use performance measures. They hypothesize that

formal strategic planning coupled with performance measurement would lead to better outcomes.

By examining the association of performance management tools with performance data compiled by the Federal Transit Administration, the study produced generally positive results concerning their value.

“Our study shows that performance management practices can make a difference in improving performance, or at least some aspects of it. But it may not enrich all dimensions of performance,” says Poister.

“Managers need to pay close attention to the data, review performance trends and issues with subordinates, and use that information to improve performance in terms of service delivery, efficiency and effectiveness in generating desired outcomes.

“Improving performance is not easy. That’s the bottom line. But if top executives model effective behaviors in terms of using performance information and encourage a culture of performance more generally, that will filter down and lead other managers and employees throughout the organization to begin paying attention to the data. They will start asking questions about performance issues and how to address them.

“Top management can also conduct review sessions to evaluate performance

information with lower-level managers and staff, identify problems, develop action plans, implement them and then monitor and evaluate the results,” he says.

The authors suggest these outcomes cannot be generalized to all aspects of performance or program areas. For



example, strategic planning and performance measurement have proved to make a difference in performance management’s effectiveness, but not in operating efficiency. And public transit agencies may lend themselves to performance management more so than “softer” areas, such as human services, because transit managers have more influence over their intended results.

Almost all public agencies now operate under some kind of performance measurement regime. However, more research is needed to determine the efficacy of these tools, they conclude.

Download the article at <http://goo.gl/nNaL6S>.



Healthy Air = Healthy Babies

A Study of Air Pollution and Infant Mortality in Turkey

RAPID GROWTH AND

industrialization in developing countries unfortunately cause deterioration in environmental conditions and air quality due to a lack of stringent environmental regulations. While industrialization has caused improvements in living conditions, continuing economic growth usually takes precedence in many of these countries over adhering to international environmental guidelines.

In developing countries, natural gas, a clean and highly-efficient source of energy, is becoming a commonly used source of fuel. Historically,

developing countries have used coal as their main fuel source. Burning coal has been linked to many environmental and health concerns including emitting carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide which cause acid rain, smog, and contribute to global warming.

By looking at the variation of natural gas use across provinces and time in Turkey, Professor of Economics Erdal Tekin was able to determine the impact of air pollution on infant mortality.

In the article, "Air Pollution and Infant Mortality: Evidence from the Expansion of Natu-

ral Gas Infrastructure," Tekin, Resul Cesusur (University of Connecticut) and Aydogan Ulker (Deakin University) explain just how beneficial using natural gas is to a country's overall health.

Since 1988, when Turkey first introduced natural gas infrastructures in its capital, Ankara, it has expanded to 61 of the 81 provinces. According to the authors, "the expansion of natural gas networks has caused considerable improvements in air quality by reducing emissions of pollutants... and Turkey has also experienced significant reductions in its

infant mortality rate during the same period.

"For example, between 1990 and 2012, the infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) decreased from 33 to 10," the authors note.

The authors explain that "prenatal exposure to potent atmospheric pollutants, such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons released by the combustion of coal, has been linked to poorer birthweight and smaller head circumference."

After examining levels of particulate matter and sulfur dioxide in the air, the authors were able to relate the results to changing infant mortality rates over the past 10 years.

According to their findings, "a one-percentage point increase in the rate of subscriptions to natural gas services would cause the infant mortality rate to decline by four percent, which could result in 348 infant lives saved in 2011 alone."

The full article is at <http://ftp.iza.org/dp7179.pdf>.

ECOTOURISM REDUCES POVERTY NEAR

Protected natural areas in Costa Rica reduced poverty by 16 percent in neighboring communities, mainly by encouraging ecotourism, according to new Andrew Young School research recently published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Although earlier studies indicated that establishing protected areas in poor regions can lead to reductions in poverty, there was no clear understanding why or how it happens.

"Our goal was to show exactly how environmental protection can reduce poverty in poorer nations rather than exacerbate it, as many people fear," says co-author Paul Ferraro, a professor of economics and environmental policy.

In their article, "Quantifying Causal Mechanisms to Determine How Protected Areas Affect Poverty Through Changes in Ecosystem Services and Infrastructure," Ferraro and alumnus Merlin Hanauer (Ph.D. in Economics '11), now at Sonoma State University, examine three potential causes of poverty reduction linked to the establishment of protected areas:

All Strictly Protected Areas Are Not Necessarily More Protective



Paul Ferraro

NOT ALL PROTECTION IS EQUAL in national parks and other strictly protected areas according to an article recently published in *Environmental Research Letters*. Some areas have strict legal protection that limits extractive human uses, while other protected area designations permit a wider range of uses.

In their article, “More Strictly Protected Areas Are Not Necessarily More Protective: Evidence From Bolivia, Costa Rica, Indonesia, and Thailand” (2013), Paul Ferraro, a professor of economics in the Andrew Young School, and his

co-authors seek to build an evidence base for conservation policy by examining how these areas affect environmental and social outcomes.

“Past studies of ecosystem protection suffered from two weaknesses,” says Ferraro. “First, they often failed to isolate the effects of protected areas separate from all the other factors that also affect their environmental outcomes. Second, they treated ‘protection’ as if it were uniform within and across countries when, in reality, the rules that govern these areas vary greatly.

“We estimated the impacts that strictly and less-strictly protected areas had on deforestation in four countries using a design that aims to disentangle the areas’ impacts from confounding factors that also affect deforestation but have nothing to do with nature protection.”

Based on their research, which overcomes the weaknesses of earlier studies, Ferraro and his co-authors Merlin Hanauer (Sonoma State University), Daniela Miteva and Subhrendu Pattanayak (both from Duke University), Gustavo Canavire-Bacarreza (Centro de Investigaciones Economicas y Financieras) and Katherine R.E. Sims (Amherst College) come to the surprising conclusion that stricter regulatory protection is not necessarily better for the environment.

Their conclusion, which runs contrary to conventional wisdom, arises because of the political conflicts that are associated with protecting land from human uses. These conflicts can lead politicians to assign stricter rules to less-threatened areas, which can then result in citizens or enforcement agents ignoring such legal restrictions.

The authors also find that the impacts of protection vary greatly across countries.

“Given the great variation in the estimated impacts in just these four countries, we believe that a strong evidence base about what works to protect endangered ecosystems requires extending our study to more nations and to other forms of ecosystem protection, like community-managed protected areas,” says Ferraro.

“Moreover, politicians and citizens also care deeply about the social impacts of ecosystem protection. So extending our study to look at how strict legal rules affect humans is also a priority.”

The article is at <http://goo.gl/qqYjbk>.

PROTECTED PARKS

- changes in tourism and recreational services,
- changes in infrastructure including roads, health clinics and schools, and
- changes in ecosystem services such as the pollination and hydrological services a protected area may offer.

They find that increased tourism accounts for two-thirds of the 16 percent reduction in poverty caused by protected areas. Changes in infrastructure and land use had little effect on the poverty in surrounding communities.

“Our results suggest that by using existing data sets such as poverty estimates from census data, the impacts of conservation programs and policies on human populations can be better defined,” says Ferraro. “Our findings may result in improved conservation programs and policies, and better impacts on the communities adjacent to these sites, locally and around the globe.”

Find the article at www.pnas.org.

I Just HAD Surgery.

Are You Sure I'm Ready to Be Discharged?



What criteria do surgeons use to make the decision to send patients home? Are they discharging patients too early after having surgery?

In a recent article in the *Journal of Surgical Research*, “Assessing Clinical Discharge Data Preferences Among Practicing Surgeons” (2013), the authors report that early hospital discharges have resulted in more than 20 percent of these patients being readmitted within 30 days. And readmissions cost hospitals more than an estimated \$17 billion per year.

“If a surgeon chooses to discharge too early, the patient will be at an increased risk of hospital readmission,” says co-author and Andrew Young School (AYSPS) economics professor James C. Cox. “If patients are discharged beyond the optimal time, health care resources are wasted on a patient whose care did not require it.” Cox is also the Noah Langdale Jr. Chair in Economics and a Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar.

“Increased mortality rates and health-care costs have been associated with hospital readmission,” co-author and AYSPS economist Vjollca Sadiraj adds. “Hospitals and physicians are under increasing pressure to reduce hospital readmission rates because of pay-for-performance reimbursement schemes that refuse payment for related readmissions.”

In research funded by the National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Aging, Cox and his co-authors use survey responses of 88 physicians from Emory University School of Medicine.

Along with Cox and Sadiraj, the co-authors include Kurt Schnier (former AYSPS faculty, now at University of California, Merced), Dr. Ira Leeds (Johns Hopkins School of Medicine) and Dr. John Sweeney (Emory University School of Medicine).

The authors find surgeons use a wide variety of data when making discharge decisions, including vital signs, overall medical factors from the time the patient is admitted through recovery, and other criteria such as the patient's overall condition. They rely less on common laboratory tests and patient demographics. They also find subtle variations in what discharge criteria are used based on the surgeon's years of clinical education, gender and race.

“We believe that the information provided in this article is the first step in creating modern tools for assisting clinicians to deal with uncertainty,” says Cox. “Understanding what clinicians think they use to make discharge decisions is as important as understanding the trends behavioral monitoring may demonstrate in how clinicians are actually making these decisions.”

Because the study was limited to survey responses from one institution, the authors plan to conduct future studies with larger regional and national populations of surgeons to elicit more data for study of this important question.

Find this article at: <http://goo.gl/Li3wpt>.

Making House Calls in Pakistan

SIMPLE CELLULAR TECHNOLOGIES MAY SAVE LIVES

More than half of the world's maternal and child deaths every year occur in six countries. Pakistan, among them, has the third largest number of newborn deaths; the maternal mortality rate in its Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces alone is 260 deaths per 100,000 births. In contrast, maternal deaths in Chile, another developing country, are nine per 100,000 births.

Alumnus Musharraf Cyan (Ph.D., 2012) is a medical doctor and economist. Currently an assistant research professor in the Andrew Young School's International Center for Public Policy, he is determined to find a way to end these preventable deaths.

Cyan and colleagues Richard Rothenberg from Georgia State's School of Public Health and Aisha Malik (King Edward Medical University, Lahore) recently received a \$285,849 grant from National Academy of Sciences' Pakistan's Science and Technology Cooperation Program to conduct research under the title, "Affordable Technology for Saving Maternal and Child Lives." The project will lead them closer to a solution to the United Nations' Millennium Development Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health, they believe. It is one of three research projects on maternal and child health in Pakistan led by Cyan and his colleagues at Georgia State University.

"Traditionally, public health systems pick up successful solutions from the lab and just roll them out," says Cyan. "But time and again the results show

us that human behavior matters. Real-life analysis is the key to speedier uptake and sustainable solutions."

Cyan, who is also a public health professional, worked in rural communities for ten years as a public administrator in northwest Pakistan. "Maternal deaths occur because of a failure of care among the 15-to-22 percent of women who develop complications," says Cyan. Many fail to get necessary vaccinations, or they lack prenatal care during pregnancy for reasons ranging from income to culture to transportation. Many deliver babies without skilled birth attendants, so no one is present to provide lifesaving procedures when there are obstetric complications.

"These deaths and illnesses could be prevented with timely interventions that would be a valuable investment in the human resources in these countries."

Previous public health campaigns have failed. "Over the years the government has sent out a lot of health-related messages, but the demand for care has not gone up," he says. "Literacy and functional literacy research demonstrates that the effect of these messages is very weak."

However, with phone coverage nearly universal in Pakistan, Cyan and his co-authors believe that text and voice messages delivered to pregnant and new mothers – prerecorded in local dialects and timed to their developmental stages – will cause them to seek life-saving pre- and post-natal care.

They will conduct field experiments using this technology with nearly 3,500 families in the Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa provinces through 2015, hoping to improve their health outcomes.

"Given the context of what we're trying to do, there is some evidence that messages targeting a person's own condition may improve their health. When a vaccination is needed, they receive a message about it. Another message about the health of their child at six months is a very different message." They are also testing whether messages by Pakistani celebrities – local and national – produce better outcomes.

By the end of the field test, Cyan and his colleagues expect to demonstrate improvements in the use of prenatal care and skilled birth attendants, child vaccination rates and overall health outcomes for the mothers and infants.

"The problem is very big, but improvements are also very achievable. We are trying to demonstrate a different approach to public health, where governments could use modern technology at a very low cost," he says. "Our goal is to make the solution effective and get results."

Cyan is also working on two related projects: Technology for Identifying Willingness to Access Healthcare in Pakistan (<http://goo.gl/HgrGrg>) and Priming Rural Health Facilities for Optimal Service Delivery.



Addressing the Adaptive Challenges in Public Health

GHPC's Online Guided Planning Tool Aids Professionals in Strategic Planning

Public health leaders at local, state and national levels are dealing with a sea change in the goals for and implementation of public health. And with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act health reform, they have questions, many of which are being asked for the first time.

"The role of public health – even without health reform – is changing. Its mission is moving more towards population health," says Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC) analyst Glenn M. Landers. "It is becoming more about public health's roles in assurance, assessment and convening, and less about direct, individual services.

"Given this redirection, the role of public health departments and clinics is changing. Our contacts in the national policy office were concerned that, as they traveled the country, they saw many people in public health professions with lots of questions and no one answering."

In response, Landers and other researchers at the GHPC developed a planning tutorial and interactive toolkit, "Leading through Health System Change: A Public Health Opportunity," that offers public health professionals a new way to strategically plan for the future. It is supported by the National Network of Public Health Institutes and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"The Affordable Care Act impacts almost all aspects of the U.S. health care system, from financing and quality to coverage and access," says GHPC Director Karen Minyard. "Public health officials are in a unique position to think strategically about how they should function moving forward."

Minyard helped plan and now promotes the toolkit. "This planning tool is a launching pad for leaders to begin to think adaptively, have important conversations and plan strategically with their teams."

The toolkit does not provide answers, but rather, shows public health officials how to develop new, strategic actions to address public health's challenges through a five-step planning process.

Its guided planning approach walks users through one of three questions about the role of public health and through research related to the question selected. It then leads them to the analysis and strategic thinking they must do to arrive at a conclusion.

"The key to shifting how we think about public health is in understanding that most of the challenges in health care today are adaptive challenges, and yet we try to fix them with technical solutions. But there are no ideal solutions yet, no existing approaches that have already been designed and adopted," says Landers.

Adaptive solutions require experimentation and innovation. The idea behind the guided practice approach

Glenn Landers, above

used in the toolkit, he continues, is that it teaches users to learn a new process about how to approach the questions they have, in this case, health care reform or health system change.

“You give them a few examples to work through – individually or as a team – to get the process down. The idea is that if they go through the process, the five steps, they’ll be better equipped to handle adaptive challenges and lead with an adaptive mindset.

“We want public health leaders who are better prepared to lead in a changing environment,” he says.

By March 2014, more than 600 users from 49 states had registered to use the toolkit.

“Its impact is being felt all over,” says Landers. “We’ve presented it to many audiences. There are hundreds of public health leaders engaged around it.”

But he measures the tool’s ultimate success in those who have used it to learn this new way of thinking.

“Public health professionals who have used this planning tool are better equipped to answer questions on their own. They are not paralyzed by the uncertainty that health reform brings. They can move forward more confidently with this adaptive mindset,” he says.

“Leading Through Health System Change” is available on the web in both online and printed workbook forms. Go to www.acaplanningtool.com to learn more.

Fusing Different Worlds Together

Economic Approach Improves Medical Decision-Making

When a patient’s body rejects an organ from a transplant operation, the work of the surgeon and the attendant transplant facility are deemed unsuccessful. Organ rejections draw negative attention and can position these institutions for regulatory review.

Seeking to avoid regulatory review, transplant facilities can leave patients unattended on the waiting list and available organs go unused.

In the article, “Transplantation at the Nexus of Behavioral Economics and Health Care Delivery” (*American Journal of Transplantation*, 2013), authors James C. Cox and Vjolca Sadiraj of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, former faculty member Kurt Schnier (University of California, Merced), and C. McIntyre, R. Ruhil and N. Turgeon of the Emory University School of Medicine seek to show what the transplantation field can gain from an economic approach. Their research fosters collaboration among transplant physicians and economists to develop new behavioral insights specific to the transplantation process.

To date, the theory that has dominated medical decision-making research asserts that transplant surgeons are risk-neutral, when extensive medical literature suggests that these surgeons seek to avoid losses. According to professor Cox, the Noah Langdale Jr. Chair in Economics and a Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar, their loss aversion results because “losses loom larger in the mind than gains.”

The divergence between current practice and best-case scenario heightens the need for new avenues of understanding and application, he believes.

Economist Sadiraj, an associate professor, illustrates the point. “A kidney that is rated as having a good chance of successful transplantation can nevertheless be rejected by a surgeon who is worried about the possibility that an additional bad outcome could trigger regulatory review of his or her transplant center.”

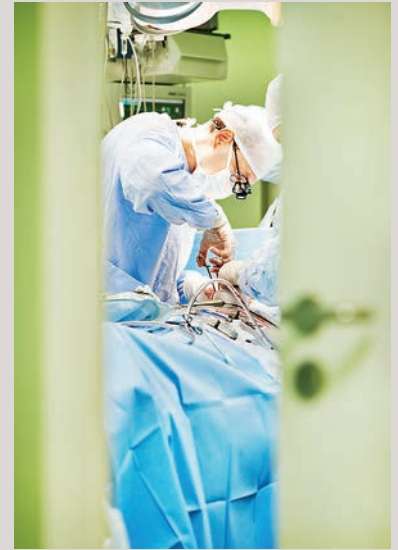
The authors further examine decision-making under risk in this article in areas that include accessing total costs, quantifying distinct levels of risk sensitivity in surgeons and determining how criteria used by the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services negatively influence their behavior.

Cox criticizes the regulatory disparity that holds surgeons responsible for transplantations gone bad but shows leniency for keeping people on waiting lists.

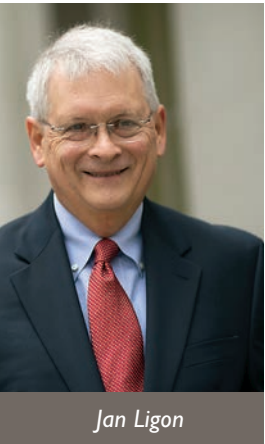
“Regulations are not the problem,” he says. “The problem lies in how the regulations are implemented. The current system decreases the number of transplants and causes patients on the waiting list to live lower quality lives.”

“We hope that the findings of our research will help with the design of better regulatory interventions,” says Sadiraj.

For the full study, visit <http://goo.gl/5xUi4c>.



Helping Families Cope with Older Adult Substance Abusers



Jan Ligon

Older adult substance abuse has accelerated at such alarming rates, particularly with aging baby boomers, that it is posing a significant challenge

for “concerned significant others” (CSOs), or the spouses, partners, parents, grandparents, children, siblings and others who may care for these seniors.

According to associate professor Jan Ligon, CSOs who find themselves in such situations are in need of more coping strategies to handle the emotional impact.

It is projected that by 2020, 4.4 million older adult substance abusers will require treatment, according to Ligon in his paper, “When Older Adult Substance Abuse Affects Others: What Helps and What Doesn’t” (*Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*, 2013). He says that the number of CSOs far exceeds the number of substance abusers, which is why more strategies need to be put in place to help them cope.

“CSOs have been referred to as the ‘silent majority’ in addiction prevention, treatment and recovery literature,” Ligon says. In past research, families of substance abusers have been viewed as being codependent people who are a part of a family disease, where each family member assumes defined roles. Ligon’s research provides compelling reasons for taking a family perspective on substance abuse rather than having the intervention resources target only the substance abuser.

“Having a senior family member with a substance abuse problem can be very difficult and challenging to CSOs who may experience anger, fear and frustration, even if they merely view it as a part of the aging process,” says Ligon.

He suggests additional types of support in the article: “More research is needed,

and the level of services and funding needs to be increased to support CSOs. First, providers of services can consider changing their approach with families and avoid the use of simplistic terms that do not capture the complexity of the problem. Second, we can infuse content on CSOs in articles, books, websites and other outlets so that we are able to reach more CSOs in our communities.

“Finally, we can avoid the trap of applying existing models that are familiar and widely accepted, including those that label families, but that are not helpful to many families. These approaches should be replaced by evidence-based ones while we continue to build our knowledge of how we can more effectively help affected CSOs.”

Find the article at <http://goo.gl/pXr0bz>.

Professors Develop Effective Tool for Assessing Consent

Social workers need the consent of their clients before administering treatment. But gaining this consent, given heightened ethical standards and time limitations, can present significant challenges to social workers whose clients have cognitive or emotional impairments.

In “The Capacity Evaluation Screen-Social Work (CES-SW): Development of a Brief Instrument” (*Journal of Social Service Research*, 2013), professor Nancy Kropf, Associate Dean for Research and Strategic Planning, and Minhong Lee (Dong-Eui University) describe a brief and reliable tool that allows for on-the-spot assessment of a client’s decision-making ability. They developed the tool to aid caseworkers in providing social services programs. It shows when clients are not capable to understand the process and consequences of service.

The authors started the process by analyzing existing instruments that were specific to health or mental health contexts.

They then developed a more concise instrument that could quickly be integrated into any social service content to rapidly determine a person’s inability to give voluntary consent.

The Capacity Evaluation Screen-Social Work (Capacity Screen) is a questionnaire fixed around four domains: Understanding, Appreciating, Reasoning and Expressing a Choice. The client’s responses to these four areas are indicative of their capacity to consent.

“In cases where clients do not achieve an acceptable capacity, practitioners need to be concerned that the individual does not have sufficient understanding of the program to participate in a voluntary way.

“In particular, social workers need to be aware of the relationship between education and capacity. Potential clients with low education levels are less likely to show the capacity, as educational experience might impact their understanding or decision-making about services,” the authors write.

For example, the terms of an employment training program require a client to regularly attend classes. However, when a

CRIMINAL DISPARITIES IN HEALTH CARE

High-status Health Care Professionals Face More Time and Higher Fines for White Collar Crime

Dean Dabney

caseworker shares these stipulations with the client, the language or terminology used may be unfamiliar or difficult for them to understand. The barrier this creates hinders the client's understanding of what will transpire during the program.

As a remedy, the social worker can use the Capacity Screen to assess where the lack of understanding lies and ways to increase their grasp of services. This tool will help them assess what level of language they should use or if other reasons such as psychiatric or cognitive impairments contribute to the client's inability to give consent.

What distinguishes the Capacity Screen from other such tools is its "brief administration protocol and time" to make accurate assessments. It is an effective tool for prescreening activities and continuous use at any juncture.

The authors suggest that though the Capacity Screen is rooted in the perspective of social work, with further empirical investigation it could prove beneficial to other arenas of social science.

Find the full study at <http://goo.gl/UVhsVs>.

HIGH-STATUS HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS ARE not immune from tougher criminal penalties when they commit white collar crimes like health care fraud, nursing home abuse or stealing drugs for personal use. Though the crimes are viewed as "nonviolent," a classification often given more lenient sentencing in other industries, high-status health care professionals who commit white collar crime should be prepared for more jail time and higher fines for their actions, according to a recently published Andrew Young School study.

In "Sentencing Disparity Among Upper and Lower Class Health Care Professionals Convicted of Misconduct" (*Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 2013), Dean Dabney and his co-authors Brian Payne (Old Dominion University) and alumna Jessica Ekhomu (B.S. in Criminal Justice '08) studied data from 1,200 criminal cases prosecuted by Medicaid Fraud Control Units across the country between 1987 and 2003. The goal was to determine the degree to which occupational status predicts the severity of an offender's sentence.

"We found that high-status health care offenders such as doctors, psychiatrists and pharmacists were more likely to be sentenced to prison and receive longer jail sentences than their lower-status counterparts," says Dabney, acting chair for the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology. "For example, nurses received longer probation sanctions than did aides.

"Not surprisingly, high-status offenders received higher fines than lower-status offenders. And community service and fines were more likely to be directed at these offenders."


According to the FBI, health care fraud costs the country an estimated \$80 billion a year. And it's a rising threat, with national health care spending topping \$2.7 trillion and expenses continuing to outpace inflation.

"The high proportion of high-status offenders being sentenced to prison suggests that prisons and jails must be prepared for the demands of incarcerating these offenders," says Payne, formerly on the faculty of the Andrew Young School. "The fact that they will make up such a small percentage of the total facility's population presents challenges to administrators in and of itself."

In looking at policy and practice implications, the authors warn that health care professionals should be made aware of the penalties given to white collar offenders for their misdeeds. By ensuring that current and future professionals know that these offenders are, in fact, caught and punished, sanctions may more effectively deter future criminal behavior.

Finally, they recommend that criminal justice officials use penalties and supervision strategies such as community service, fines and restitution that are linked to offender and offense characteristics.

Read the full article at <http://goo.gl/X1mmVj>.



Providing Caseworkers Better Knowledge

New Studies Improve Understanding of the Mind–Medicine Connection

Social workers are gatekeepers to – and often monitors of – drugs administered by the nation’s mental health care providers. For example, as caseworkers they conduct intake interviews and screen patients who seek psychiatric care, deciding whether they will be referred to a doctor who may then prescribe drug therapy. In foster care, they are often responsible for children who are prescribed multiple medications.

Associate professor Jill Littrell possesses a deep interest in the relationship between mind and body and the way medications impact this connection. She is licensed in both psychology and social work and holds a master’s degree in molecular biology from Georgia State University. She attends university biology lectures and edits an immunologist’s papers to stay current, often inserting what she learns into the evaluation research classes she teaches in the School of Social Work.

“Biology, psychology: it’s all connected,” she says.

Littrell became interested in this area when she took graduate classes in psychopharmacology and worked in the alcohol and drug dependency unit of a major insurer. She has spent more than 30 years examining research on the drugs used to treat mental disorders, their side effects and the policies that inform their distribution and administration.

And she believes that the system is broken.

“As a society, people need to wake up and listen,” she says. “Mental health pharmaceuticals are money-driven medicine. I think we need better watchdogs and need to do something about the current system.”

In her latest article, “Will the Treatment Protocols for Schizophrenia Be Changing Soon?” Littrell examines several newer studies that find current medications used to treat psychosis make the long-term outcomes for patients worse.

“In recent decades, the understanding of the core physiology giving rise to psychosis has advanced markedly,” Littrell says. For example, early research on medications used to treat schizophrenia looked only at relapse rates and hospital readmissions over relatively short periods of time. Newer, longer studies now evaluate the patients’ overall ability to function.

“The longer studies find worse outcomes in the medicated patients,” she continues. “They suggest that current drug interventions fail to target schizophrenia’s core problems. Researchers are also finding that these drugs can have negative, often life-threatening, side effects. For example, they have been found to shrink the cortex by 11 percent over a two-year period and can provoke cardiac arrhythmias, among other findings.”

Her article, which has been accepted for publication by *Social Work and Mental Health*, discusses the implication of these findings for social workers who work with the seriously mentally ill. It also reviews alternative treatments targeted more toward the core physiology of the disease.

Social workers have long been involved in what Littrell labels a “psycho-educational” role. She believes they can use this role to more broadly disseminate all information on the medicines used to treat mental illness.

“It remains an ethical question whether social workers should encourage medication compliance with drugs that have serious side effects. But I do believe it is the social worker’s role to give people choices and tell them about the drugs. I just don’t think they have to give them a hard sell.”

Littrell knows that her findings and teachings are controversial. She even admits that her message scares some of her students. But she continues in her goal to arm social workers with all of the information and critical thinking skills they need to do a better job gatekeeping in the social work environment.

“I’m hoping my research will inform the social work community so that social workers can advocate for better treatments for their clients,” she says.

Download the article at <http://goo.gl/D3Axk1>.

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