P&E move to EPSA

In her Winter 2011 letter to Teachers College, President Susan Fuhrman officially announced launching a new TC academic department, Education Policy and Social Analysis (EPSA). She announced that its main purpose is to become the pre-eminent training ground for future education policy leaders in academe, government, communities, and the non-profit education delivery sector.

Starting with Fall 2011 semester, the Politics & Education Program, will move into EPSA, along with two other nationally prominent discipline-based programs in Economics & Education and Sociology & Education. EPSA also plans to offer Masters and Doctoral interdisciplinary education policy degrees based on the ones offered currently by the Leadership, Policy, and Politics (LPP) concentration. The programs and institutes that will become a fixed part of the new department will offer core areas of expertise in early education, charter schools and vouchers, home schooling, K-12 education reform, higher education policy, law and education, and the role of non-school factors (such as demographic change, public health, and human services) in affecting education achievement and equality.

For further information about the department, please check an online news story at http://www.tc.columbia.edu/news/article.htm?id=7854 or visit our website at http://www.tc.edu/epsa/.

To sign on our listserve, email us your name, program, and a degree level at epsa@tc.columbia.edu.
P&E students willing to cross the established boundaries of education

Sayu Bhojwani, Politics & Education program doctoral student, was featured in a TC online news article on May 12, 2011.

Sayu was born in India, moved to Belize as a child and came to the United States two decades ago to attend college. She has previously earned TC master’s degrees in English Education and Comparative Education, punctuated by a stint teaching New York City’s public schools.

From 2002-2004, Bhojwani also served as New York City’s first-ever Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs. In her current stint at TC, Bhojwani is focusing on the role schools can play in introducing immigrant children to the political process. You can find the full article “Getting Them in the Game” by Suzanne Guillote at http://www.tc.columbia.edu/news/article.htm?id=8009&pub=6

In Sayu’s opinion, “One of the biggest challenges that our nation faces is engaging its citizens in civic and political life. And since such a great part of US population is either first, or second generation of immigrants, it is very important to empower them with the belief that they could also participate, with results, in making political decisions.” She believes the rest of the country stands to benefit, if the immigrants learn to advocate for themselves through the American political process.

To that end, Bhojwani has founded the New American Leaders Project (NALP), a non-profit organization that gives civic-minded immigrants the political skills and knowledge to represent their communities. The group will offer its first training sessions this summer in New York, Michigan and Illinois.

If you asked P&E doctoral student Jonathan Gyurko about his dissertation topic, you would probably get a summary of his study of how city district and charter school teachers quality of interaction with their colleagues and supervisors on professional issues affect teacher turnover. It’s no wonder Jonathan is so interested in this topic, since his career has put him in position to get valuable feedback from these teachers, while serving as director of Charter Schools for the NYCDE, working with the United Federation of Teachers, and founding the first union-supported charter school in the US.

However, that is not what attracted the authors of a special edition of TC Today magazine, to Jonathan. What lured Patricia Lamieill, the author of the piece entitled “Next Stop, Abu Dhabi” (full article appeared in TC Today magazine, Spring 11 edition) to Jonathan’s work is his other passion, his new education services and advisory firm, Leeds Global Partners and its partnership with the United Arab Emirates to improve their public schools. As Jonathan explains, by adopting the “New School Model,” his firm aims to adopt world-class standards, a transition to student-centered classrooms and pedagogies, and the introduction of a bi-literate curriculum.

Abu Dhabi, the capital and second-largest city in the United Arab Emirates, has 125,000 students in more than 250 schools. Leeds Global, which Gyurko co-founded in early 2010 with CUNY chairman Benno Schmidt, former Edison Learning chief executive John Chubb and Jeffrey Leeds, President of Leeds Equity Advisors, is spearheading the professional development of the system’s school head and lead teachers. Each month Leeds Global designs and delivers bilingual training to more than 700 educators. Their program assessment data indicate that the new approaches are quickly taking hold in schools.

Jonathan believes that Abu Dhabi is well on its way to becoming a world-class city and that central to their plan is a thriving system of education and research. He is proud to be part of that project and believes that his work can help the city achieve its goal to be the economic and cultural standard-bearer in the Middle East. There is no doubt that other students in our program are able to learn from him as well.

STUDENTS AND ALUMS: PLEASE EMAIL US AT epsa@tc.columbia.edu AND LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR JOBS AND ACTIVITIES SO WE MIGHT SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH OUR TC EDUCATION POLICY COMMUNITY IN FUTURE ISSUES OF OUR NEWSLETTER.
Policy Partnerships at Teachers College.

The Policy Student Network (PSN) [http://www.tc.columbia.edu/edpolicy/?Info=Policy+Student+Network](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/edpolicy/?Info=Policy+Student+Network)

Responding to the need to extend the study of policy beyond TC classrooms, students from across the College and Columbia University have organized this forum for the purpose of sharing their academic and professional interests and organizing events that enrich their education.

PSN provides a vehicle for the exchange of information and ideas among policy students from diverse disciplines, programs, and schools; creates opportunities for students to actively shape policy-related activities, and finally inspires the faculty-student discourse around policy issues of importance to the Columbia community. In addition, PSN, has been an informal medium to share policy experiences, internships, job opportunities, course advice, and recent work experiences. It is in these capacities that the PSN links students to one another and to policy activities that transcend the formal educational experience. Furthermore, because the Network includes Columbia social work, public affairs, and arts and sciences graduate students among its ranks, the PSN listserv is a valuable resource for the continued interdisciplinary contact among diverse policy students.

Launched in 2006 by graduate students under the auspices of TC’s Office of Policy & Research, the PSN currently is overseen by EPSA and counts almost 500 students in its membership. The PSN is run by two Ph.D. student co-coordinators, Michelle Hodara and Vikash Reddy, who organize events and strive to strengthen the links between TC and other Columbia University graduate schools in order to expand the interdisciplinary offerings available to policy-inclined students. For more information about the PSN, or to be added to the PSN listserv, contact Michelle Hodara at [hodara@tc.edu](mailto:hodara@tc.edu) or Vikash Reddy at [vtr2107@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:vtr2107@tc.columbia.edu).

TC Policy Colloquia

Each year TC sponsors colloquia that bring renowned policy experts to campus. These colloquia provide students with an extracurricular opportunity for study and interaction with both the speaker and the colloquium audience, which includes TC faculty and the broader New York City education community.

The colloquium series expands the education dialogue at TC by introducing students to noted academics, researchers, and policymakers from across the country. Colloquia are not just for TC students, however. They are open to the wider New York City and state education community. Administrators, teachers, parents, and community members bring valuable insights to education policy deliberations, thereby further enriching the experiences of TC faculty, students, and colloquium speakers. For example, on April 28, TC hosted a panel of TC alumni, involved in different education policy research topics: Ms. Pilar Carpenter, the Research Assistant II at the Center for Children and Technology at Education Development Center, Ms. Kara Chesal, a Research Analyst at the New York City-Department of Education Office of Innovation, Ms. Ariella Goodman, a Program Officer at the Institute of International Education, and Dr. Frank Grossman, an Assistant Professor of Education, Department of Educational Studies, Swarthmore College, who discussed "Producing Policy Research for Multiple Audiences: Examining communication and information use in the Pennsylvania Department of Education" (see the photo).

TC Policy Brown Bag Lunches

Several times during each semester the PSN invites distinguished professors from TC and other institutions to share their expertise at these very informal gatherings. Here professors share their latest work, accumulated wisdom on research and funding, and life lessons from the field of education. In the past, brown bags have covered topics from health policy to No Child Left Behind to federal funding for field-based research. Students and TC Faculty are encouraged to attend and ask questions. During this spring 2011 Prof. Melanie Ehren discussed topic “Holding Schools to Account: How Do Principals and Teachers Respond to Different Measures of their School’s Performance?” and Prof. Michael Rebel discussed the topic “Do Rights Survive Recessions? - What happens to a student’s right to a sound basic education during economic downturns?” Also this semester, PSN organized the 5th Annual Student Research Round-Table, with 5 students presenting the following subjects: “The Social Logic of School Design: Japan’s Learning Environments in Comparative Perspective” by Stephen Chemsak; “Bigger Carrots and Bigger Sticks: A Mixed-Method Analysis of the Influences of Teacher and Student Absenteeism Across Nine Schools in Guyana...” by Travis Bristol; “Including teacher voice: Examining the influence of teachers on education policy working through nonunion channels” by David Braslow; “Examining teacher hiring decisions in NYC charter schools” by Jessica Stein; and “Do pay incentives for teachers in shortage-area subjects reduce teacher turn-over?” by Rachel Rosen.
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Internships

Another excellent idea is to link current TC policy and international students with internship opportunities in leading policy-related organizations. Various internship opportunities can expose TC policy students to authentic and professional policy experiences. At the same time, they create opportunities for stronger connections between TC and policy organizations and professionals, thereby bridging the gap between research and practice in educational policy. Finally, they provide advocacy, activist, and policy organizations with valuable assistance in formulating, enacting, implementing, and researching/evaluating public policies in the field of education.

In order to meet these three goals, TC Policy Connections has developed a data bank of highly qualified students interested in participating in field-based policy internships, along with a data bank of governmental, non-profit, and for-profit organizations interested in hiring TC student interns. Once these organizations have specific positions available, they send job descriptions and other relevant information to TC Policy Connections. Connections staff then advertise the offerings to students, who follow-up directly with the organization and undergo regular interviewing and hiring procedures. TC Policy Connections acts as a conduit between students and educational organizations, serving both by streamlining the internship search and recruiting processes.

Students who wish to be added to the data bank and receive information on policy-related internship opportunities should visit the Internship website at [http://www.tc.columbia.edu/edpolicy/?Info=Internships](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/edpolicy/?Info=Internships) and read more about this wonderful networking opportunity.

Please meet David Wright, a Ph.D. candidate and an instructor in the Politics & Education program at Teachers College.

During the fall 2011 semester, Dave again will offer his popular Democracy, Education and political Participation course (EDPP 6540), which is scheduled to meet on Wednesdays from 5:10 – 6:50 P.M. Drawing from historical, theoretical, and empirical evidence, this course explores US political participation primarily through an educational prism. The principal aims are to benchmark actual democratic practice against the democratic ideal and to identify opportunities to strengthen the role of education in promoting broader, better informed, and more equitable democratic participation.

Dave brings to the Politics and Education program extensive experience as a practitioner and academician. Prior to his retirement, his professional career spanned 35 years of leadership positions in politics, government, and business. This includes twenty-one years in charge of worldwide government and political affairs for a Fortune 20 company and prior service in senior staff positions at the White House, US House of Representatives, and agencies of the State of California. A Distinguished Military Graduate (ROTC), Dave served in the Army Reserve and was discharged at the rank of Captain (Armor Branch) in 1979. During his career, Dave served on numerous domestic and international boards and commissions that are closely associated with the pursuit of democracy and freedom.

Dave’s academic pursuits have been rich and varied. His initial undergraduate and graduate level studies were at the University of California-Davis, where he was awarded a Departmental Citation for outstanding undergraduate accomplishment in 1971. He studied legal research at the Georgetown University Law School before joining the White House staff in 1981. At Teachers College, he received his M.A. degree in 2008 and was awarded the M.Phil degree in 2011. In partnership with Teachers College professor Doug Ready, Dave co-authored innovative empirical research on the accuracy of teacher perceptions that was published in the April 2011 issue of the American Educational Research Journal. His dissertation interests center on the power of educational context as a promoter of young adult voter turnout.

Dave is married with four grown children. In his free time, he serves as a member of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee of the Green Mountain Valley School – an internationally recognized ski academy located in Waitsfield, Vermont. A former amateur sports car racer and competition driving instructor, his current non-academic pursuits include skiing, golf and other outdoor activities.