In an era of Congressional budget slashing:

HAS THE NIH LOST ITS HALO?
“This gives policy makers useful evidence that investments in early childhood education are a source of significant cost savings for the state.”


“A better way to spend that $60 billion would be to expand the existing federal Pell Grant program and empower students with greater resources to choose the college best for them.”


“On the one hand, you can say that the U.S. is the most generous because it is one of the biggest donors to foreign aid. But on the other hand, we have one of the lowest percentages of gross national income donated to foreign aid.”

PHYLLIS POMERANTZ, professor of the practice of public policy, on the less than 1 percent of the federal budget devoted to foreign aid, National Public Radio, Feb. 10, 2015.

“A growing army of fact-checkers around the world is busy debunking falsehoods from presidents, prime ministers and pundits—and if their results are indicative, 2014 was a banner year. Some of the claims were so absurd that fact-checking groups honored them with awards, like Australia’s Golden Zombie and Italy’s Insane Whopper of the Year.”


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Our cover photo of the beautiful and deadly Ebola virus points to the critical nature of research funded by the National Institutes for Health. In the article, “Has the NIH Lost Its Halo?” (pages 10-12) Robert Cook-Deegan traces the history of the NIH, its amazing growth and its role in making the United States a leader in health research. Recent stagnation in the level of NIH funding from Congress threatens that leadership, as pure research has moved from privately funded corporations to grant-dependent university researchers.

Our faculty’s research continues to be wide-ranging in scope and topics. In her research on human trafficking, Senior Associate Dean Judith Kelley examines how social pressure between nations can address this persistent problem (page 17.) Philip J. Cook finds a causal link between dropout, crime and the age at which students begin school (page 15). Charles Clotfelter shows the strength of ties between die-hard sports fans and colleges by exploring obituaries from across America.

One of the strengths of the Sanford School is that our small size allows for wonderful mentoring relationships between our faculty and students. Helen “Sunny” Ladd was the advisor for Allison Eisen’s senior honors project on N.C. charter schools. They collaborated on an op-ed based on Allison’s research (pages 8-9) that was published this spring in The News & Observer. Grady Lenkin PPS’14 joined Anirudh Krishna for his poverty research, helping to categorize slums in Bangalore as a student. He now works full-time in India as a research manager for the project.

For the past year, the Sanford strategic planning committee has been crafting a plan to keep the school at the forefront of innovation as an academic institution. In this issue, Frederick Mayer, Sanford’s associate dean for strategy and innovation, shares with you some of those plans (pages 6-7.) We will be creating a new center for politics at the school, to serve as a campus hub for political activities, speakers and applied research. The plan also calls for a renewed focus on policy issues affecting North Carolina and Durham and several methods for deepening the engagement of our faculty and students with the policy world.

As the school moves into this next phase, we strive to live up to Terry Sanford’s vision of a place that creates solutions as well as analyzes problems, while also offering a liberal arts education with a practical edge.

Kelly Brownell, Dean
Robert L. Flowers Professor of Public Policy, Psychology and Neuroscience
Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science

About the Cover: After multiplying inside a host cell, the stringlike Ebola virus is emerging to infect more cells. Credit: Heinz Feldmann, Peter Jahrling, Elizabeth Fischer and Anita Mora, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health
SCHOOL PARTNERS WITH SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

The Sanford School is partnering with Seoul National University in South Korea on a new program that enables students to acquire two degrees: a Master of International Development Policy at Sanford’s Duke Center for International Development and a Master of Public Administration from Seoul National University. Students will complete one year of study in each location beginning next fall.

CONNECT2POLITICS: SECOND SERVICE

The Hart Leadership Program is bringing four veterans to the Sanford School this spring for a series highlighting how veterans can continue to serve the public after their military careers. The speakers include Peter Buttigieg, mayor of South Bend, Ind., political writer Joe Klein of Time magazine, Patrick Murphy, former U.S. congressman and MSNBC host, and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawai‘i, a combat veteran and first member of the Hindu faith elected to Congress.

SANFORD JOURNAL PUBLISHES WINTER VOLUME


EXECUTIVE EDUCATION FOR ARMY SPECIAL OPS

Professor Tim Nichols was approached by leaders within the U.S. Army Special Operations Command about building a short, intensive program for mid-career soldiers involved in national strategy, interagency coordination and policy. With the help of Professors David Schanzer, Steve Kelly, Hal Brands and Tana Johnson, the first session was held at Sanford in the fall for 18 students.

The goals of the course were to expose special operations students to the national security policy process; to overlay national security decision-making processes onto contemporary issues; and to broaden their understanding on “whole of government” approaches to strategy implementation. Students had nightly reading
Sanford Welcomes Visiting Students from Brunei

Three students from Brunei are studying at the Sanford School for the spring 2015 semester as part of a new exchange program with the Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD).

The program enables up to five students who have successfully completed their first year in the master’s program in public policy and management at UBD to spend their third and final semester at Sanford. Students must have at least five years of work experience and demonstrated leadership potential to be selected for the program.

The exchange program was established with Joyce Teo Siew Yean, director of the Institute of Policy Studies at UBD, who visited and conducted research at the Duke Center for International Development in the fall of 2012.

Susi Kadir, left, works with the Energy Department in the Brunei Prime Minister’s Office. She spent three years as a project engineer with Brunei Shell Petroleum.

Hazarin Matyassin, right, who worked as a senior officer in the Management Services Department of the Prime Minister’s Office, said she chose to come to Sanford because of the curriculum’s practical focus.

Anisa Talib, center, has worked for Brunei’s Department of Labor since 2007. During her time at Sanford, she is studying human resource management and best practices in strengthening national food security.

Terror Threat Assessment

“This report is striking, however, for the data showing that hardly any Muslim-Americans—about eight per year—have been involved in terrorism offenses against targets inside the United States since 9/11,” said Schanzer.

136 people were killed in mass shooting incidents in the United States in 2014 alone.”

The center is a collaborative effort among Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and RTI International. The full report is online at the Triangle Center on Homeland Security website.
Students Begin New Master’s Program in Vietnam

Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCMC) recently welcomed the first students in its new master’s program in Public Policy for Environmental Protection. Eighteen students, all government officials in Dak Lak Province, began the two-year program in February.

VNU-HCMC partnered with the Duke Center for International Development (DCID) and Duke’s Nicholas School of the Environment (NSOE) in 2009 to build the new program, which will help Vietnamese officials address environmental issues caused by the country’s rapid industrialization and population growth.

Nine scholars from VNU-HCMC were paired with Nicholas faculty members and received guidance on policy analysis from DCID professors Natalia Mirovitskaya and Rosemary Fernholz.

The program was supported by grants totaling $300,000 from the GE Foundation.

KUDOS

Charles Clotfelter has been elected to the National Academy of Education. Academy members are selected “on the basis of outstanding scholarship related to education.” The Academy works to advance “high quality education research and its use in policy formation and practice.”

Sanford PhD graduate Eva Csaky defended her dissertation last fall, “Smallholder Global Value Chain Participation: The Role of Aggregation,” and graduated in December. She works as the director of the Hunt Institute for Engineering and Humanities and a research professor at Southern Methodist University. She also serves as a consultant to the World Bank Group, and recently was awarded the first IFC/World Bank Innovation Award.

Anna Gassman-Pines and Christina Gibson-Davis are co-principal investigators on the project “Meeting the Bar: A Propensity Score Analysis of BSF Impacts by Couples’ Economic Status” funded by a $99,492 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families.

Bruce W. Jentleson has been selected as the 15th Henry A. Kissinger Chair in Foreign Policy and International Relations at the Library of Congress Kluge Center, a distinguished senior research position. While in residence at the center during the 2015-2016 academic year, he will work on his forthcoming book, Transformational Statesmanship: Difficult, Possible, Necessary.

The book focuses on 20th century world leaders who made major breakthroughs for global peace and security, drawing lessons for key 21st century policy challenges. Jentleson will use Library of Congress holdings including the Harry Truman, Dag Hammarskjöld and Henry Kissinger papers, documents related to the Middle East peace process, and the Foreign Relations of the United States volumes to further his research. As Kissinger Chair, Jentleson also will share his international affairs expertise through public lectures and dialogues with Congress and other policymakers.

Tana Johnson won the 2015 Chadwick F. Alger Prize for her book Organizational Progeny: Why Governments Are Losing Control over the Proliferating Structures of Global Governance.

The award recognizes the best book published on international organization and multilateralism. Johnson received the award Feb. 19 at the International Studies Association conference in New Orleans.

Donald H. Taylor has been promoted from associate to full professor.

Helen Ladd received the Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEPF) 2015 Outstanding Service Award. This award reflects her contributions as a scholar to the field of education and to AEPF as co-editor of the revised edition of The Handbook of Research in Education and Finance, which is the official handbook of AEPF.

Foreign Affairs magazine featured a 2,500-word review of Professor Emeritus Ellen Mickiewicz’s book No Illusions: the Voices of Russia’s Future Leaders in the January/February issue.

Tommy Sowers has been appointed to the board of directors of Americans for the Arts, a nonprofit advocacy organization for the arts. He is also event chairman for the Lincoln Awards, which recognize excellence in providing opportunities and support to America’s veterans and military families. The first award ceremony and concert was held at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on Jan. 7, 2015.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Duke faculty member Dan Ariely has received a secondary appointment at Sanford. He is the James B. Duke Professor of Behavioral Economics, a professor of economics and professor of business administration at Fuqua School of Business.

Hal Brands is being promoted to Associate Professor with tenure, effective July 1, 2015.

Sanford School Director of Career Services Donna Dyer has been promoted to assistant dean for career and professional development.

Last fall, Linda Lytvinenko was appointed assistant dean of academic programs and student affairs.

Donald H. Taylor has been promoted from associate to full professor.
Module Courses: Bringing Practitioners and Graduate Students Together

By Jackie Ogburn

Imagine you are the CEO of a major internet company on the morning that the Edward Snowden story hit the news media. How do you guide your company’s response to the news that you may have been cooperating with the government in providing access to customer information?

That was the problem that Matt Perault MPP’08, head of public policy for Facebook, posed to the graduate students taking his short course, “Public Policy and Social Media” this spring. For the next 3½ hours, he led the class through the scenario, considering the legal, communications, customer service, technical and policy angles. At the end of the session, students drafted a news release giving the company’s response to the potentially damaging news.

Several similar 1.5-credit short courses, or modules, are offered each semester. The seven-week courses for master of public policy students cover specialized topics that are not part of the traditional curriculum. Many focus on management and professional skills, such as financial analysis, budgeting and project management. Both regular faculty and visiting lecturers who are current practitioners in their fields teach the modules.

“The modules expand our reach, allowing us to better meet the variation of students’ needs for particular skills,” said Professor of the Practice Mac McCorkle, director of the MPP program.

“It also allows us to bring in people, like Matt Perault, who want to teach at Duke, but who could never teach a full semester course. The students get the practitioner’s perspectives on current issues,” he said.

Local policy consultant John Quinterno taught “Regional Economic and Social Analysis,” designed to show students how to communicate policy analysis in both written and oral formats to civic leaders at the state and local levels.

“This is stuff I wish I had learned in graduate school, and I spent the early part of my career learning how to do,” Quinterno said.

He focused on how to find the pertinent data, especially labor and economic data, which is not as abundant for the local level as it is for the federal level. Students worked with national public statistical resources, such as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, extracting the data relevant to the metropolitan area they were assigned to prepare an analytical memo for regional policymakers.

“Most state and local leaders don’t have a background in quantitative and policy analysis and they don’t have staff to help them with it,” Quinterno said.

The modules also allow the program to test out courses that might turn into semester-long classes, McCorkle said.

In the fall, Lynn Holmes will teach on mentoring and the policy challenges of a changing workplace. There will be two sections on urban policy, one on transportation taught by Wib Gulley, former mayor of Durham and state senator, and one on housing taught by Terry Allebaugh, founder of Housing for New Hope.

“I really enjoyed taking the modules because both of mine were practitioner-based so I got some applicable real world skills out of it. The abbreviated nature of the courses create an environment where you try to soak up as much information as you can,” said Judy Sirykissoon MPP’16.

The MPP program is undergoing a curriculum review this year. The review committee, chaired by Billy Pizer, professor of public policy, economics and environment, is set to complete a draft report this spring and propose next steps to the Sanford faculty.

The flexibility of the modules will help the program to more quickly align with the priorities identified in the school’s strategic vision plan (see pages 8-9) with a focus on state and local issues and on politics.

“The modules allow us to more dynamic and flexible in our course offerings and help students build marketable skills,” said McCorkle.
Imagining Our Future: Sanford’s Strategic Vision

By Frederick Mayer
Associate Dean for Strategy and Innovation

Few times in the history of the Sanford School have been more dynamic or full of promise than today. With a new leadership team, an extraordinary faculty and staff, great students and a university committed to the creation of “knowledge in the service of society,” we are well positioned to make an even greater impact on the world.

Last spring, Dean Kelly Brownell offered me the privilege of chairing a strategic planning process that culminated in “A Strategic Vision for the Sanford School.” The vision articulated our community’s core values and aspirations, and identified a number of possible initiatives. In the spirit of Terry Sanford’s famous admonition to have “outrageous ambition,” we sought to be bold in our imagining and innovative in our approach.

This year, we have taken a number of steps to realize our strategic vision. We established a standing Committee on Diversity, co-chaired by professors Kate Whetten and Jay Pearson, and adopted changes in our faculty hiring procedures to strengthen diversity. John Burness, former Duke Vice President for Public Affairs and Government Relations, led a major review of our communications capacity. Other faculty-led studies are underway: A committee chaired by Billy Pizer is conducting a comprehensive review of the MPP curriculum while Bruce Jentleson is leading a review of Sanford’s Duke Center for International Development, now celebrating its 30th year.

Creating a New Center for Politics and Public Leadership

Last November, the Sanford faculty approved the creation of a center for politics and public leadership dedicated to stimulating greater student interest and engagement in politics and to improving political processes in North Carolina, the United States and the world. A suitably outrageous ambition, to be sure!

The center will serve as a hub for political activities on campus—sponsoring speaker series, hosting visiting fellows, and providing a home for Duke political groups. It also will offer courses and experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, and work with Sanford Career Services to connect students with internships and employment opportunities in politics and public service.

The center will provide opportunities for our faculty and students to work to improve the state of politics. It will support applied research into problems of politics and public leadership; convene groups of thoughtful public leaders, academics and students to tackle major issues; and establish a “Democracy Lab,” where students and faculty can think creatively about solutions to political problems.

In keeping with the principle to “reflect our location,” part of the center’s focus will be on issues facing Durham and North Carolina.

The “Policy Bridge:” Deepening Sanford’s Policy Engagement

A major emphasis of the strategic vision was deepening our engagement with the policy world. To that end, a committee composed of professors Jenni Owen, Tim Profeta and Bruce Jentleson has developed a plan that includes a number of initiatives. They include:

Innovation and Impact Projects

- The Durham Children’s Data Center—Professor Ken Dodge (see page 7)
- Increasing the Policy Relevance and Visibility of the Study of the Tsunami Aftermath and Recovery (STAR)—Professor Elizabeth Frankenberg
- Public/Private Internship Initiative for Undergraduate Students—Senior Internship Director Elise Goldwasser
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Durham Children’s Data Center Aims to Improve Lives

Leaders seeking to improve the lives of Durham’s children are joining forces to create the Durham Children’s Data Center, a hub for research into vital policy and practice questions. Initial partners in the Data Center include Durham County, the Durham Public Schools and Duke University.

“With limited financial resources for local systems, the center enhances our ability to work smarter, to make sure our resources are spent in the wisest, most effective ways possible,” said Assistant County Manager Drew Cummings.

The Children’s Data Center will be housed at and administered by the Center for Child and Family Policy (CCFP) at the Sanford School. One of the first policy questions the research team will tackle concerns the community’s investment in pre-kindergarten programs. What characteristics of pre-k programs are associated with children’s educational progress? Would a greater investment improve children’s literacy? To answer these questions, Data Center Director Beth Gifford and Senior Data Analyst Yu Bai will assemble data on Durham’s pre-kindergarten programs and children’s progress through elementary school.

“Durham Public Schools has a wealth of student data that we can use to identify trends and support our children early in life, when it does the most good,” said Superintendent Bert L’Homme. “Our challenge has always been having sufficient resources to fully analyze that data.”

Co-organizer Kenneth Dodge, director of CCFP, called the new center a highly innovative way to bring the best policy and data analysis tools to bear on policy decisions affecting Durham’s children, families and schools. Faculty with expertise in a wide variety of fields, including public policy, psychology and business, will participate in the research. The center plans to disseminate its findings at public meetings.

Initial funding will be provided by Duke University, including the Sanford Innovation and Impact Fund. The center will be governed by a team of Durham community leaders and initially co-led by L’Homme, Cummings, Dodge and Sanford Assistant Research Professor Clara Muschkin.

The Policy Bridge: Developing capacity to connect Duke researchers with policymakers and other change agents, both to amplify the impact of our research and to help focus our research on questions of particular concern in the policy community.

Sanford Summits and other policy colloquia: Bringing together stakeholders in and out of government with researchers and students, we will convene working groups and commissions to develop new approaches to pressing issues.

Sanford Distinguished Fellows Program: Bringing distinguished practitioners to Sanford as fellows in residence.

Creating a Culture of Innovation

Looking a bit further to the future, we seek to position Sanford as a place distinguished by innovation. Our first steps in this direction include providing seed money to faculty, staff and students through our Innovation and Impact fund (see a partial list in the sidebar) and starting a Global Social Innovation program as a spinoff of our Geneva program.

Our discussions with leaders of innovation labs in government and the private sector have sparked ideas about the physical environment we might create at Sanford to foster a spirit of innovative problem solving. We are thinking, too, of how to bring innovation to our curriculum and engagement with the public sector. In that spirit, Fuqua School of Business Professor Dan Ariely will offer a new course next year that will train graduate students and public officials in the basics of behavioral economics, and then pair student teams with municipalities to develop innovative approaches to the problems they face.

Terry Sanford once said of the school that now bears his name, “this institute has always moved with a sense of innovation, a determination not to get boxed into doing things in predictable ways.” Although we have grown far beyond what perhaps even Terry imagined, we hope to stay true to his spirit of engagement and innovation.

“One thing about the future, it’s not static. We’d make a great mistake if we thought we could outline the future right now for the next ten years. I think this Institute has always moved with a sense of innovation, a determination not to get boxed into doing certain things in predictable ways. It’s going to be a vibrant place.”

Terry Sanford on the Sanford Institute of Public Policy, 1998
North Carolina’s charter schools are accountable to the State Board of Education for ensuring compliance with the provisions of their charters and applicable laws. But how well are they delivering on the promises that earned them the right to spend more than $380 million taxpayer dollars each year?

Our analysis shows many charters are not making the grade.

We reviewed the charter applications of all 100 charter schools operating in North Carolina during the 2010-2011 school year, just before the General Assembly removed the cap of 100 schools. (There are now 147 charter schools). Using information on school websites, in parent handbooks and in some cases telephone calls, we compared schools' performance during that year to the commitments they made in their initial charter applications.

On average, these pioneering schools promised in their applications to maintain an 18:1 ratio of students to teachers. By 2011 the average was closer to 22:1. Likewise, charter applicants predicted 80 percent of their students would achieve proficiency on standardized tests. In reality, 71 percent did so.

Most distressing are the findings related to the provision of transportation and lunch services, given that serving “at risk” and low-income students was an initial goal of the state’s charter school enabling legislation.

Although charter schools are not legally required to provide transportation to their students, 64 of the initial 100 charter schools in North Carolina pledged to do so in their charter applications. Yet only 33 (51 percent) were doing so in 2011.

Likewise, 62 of the original charters promised to provide lunch to their students even though they had no legal obligation to do so. In fact, only 43 of them (70 percent) were doing so.

These services are essential for any school hoping to attract substantial numbers of minority and low-income students. Largely because so many charter schools do not offer transportation and lunch, as a group they have increased racial and socio-economic segregation in North Carolina’s schools.

The North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board, the State Board of Education and various offices within the Department of Public Instruction are charged with monitor-
Student Examines Charter School Accountability

By Michelle Nguyen

As a North Carolina native, Allison Eisen PPS’15 wanted to focus her honors thesis on a hot-button issue in North Carolina education. Charter schools have experienced tremendous growth throughout the state and Eisen began looking at the Charter School Act of 1996.

“I looked for a hole in the research—something where my research could contribute to answering the bigger question about charter school policy,” says Eisen.

She realized that charter school accountability was determined only by financial competency and student performance on End of Grade tests (EOGs). A third measure of charter school success was largely overlooked.

“I found another ground for school termination was whether or not they violated their terms of contract, and this wasn’t something researchers were looking at,” Eisen said.

Professor Helen Ladd, a leading expert in the field, worked with Eisen to develop a coding system that grouped charter schools into four categories: those targeting at-risk or minority students, those targeting academically gifted students, those with specific pedagogical focuses, and those with alternative teaching or Montessori structures.

Eisen looked at variables such as transportation, lunch, and Gifted & Talented services in each charter school’s contracts to determine whether or not they were fulfilling their self-prescribed contract obligations. She hypothesized that schools targeting minority populations would be least aligned to their contracts’ goals and services; however, she found that those schools were highly successful.

The charter school advisory board has created relatively few hurdles for groups hoping to start a charter school. They initially only need to demonstrate that they can implement the integral parts of a school such as hiring faculty and renting space. Eisen hopes her research will encourage the advisory board to enforce more stringent guidelines and shorten charter school audits from 10 to five years.

Overall, Eisen was surprised by the general lack of oversight from the state.

“Fifty percent of schools could say they’re going to do one thing and not do it. It never raised a red flag for the local government or researchers,” said Eisen.

Schools promised in their applications to maintain an 18:1 ratio of students to teachers. By 2011 the average was closer to 22:1.

1. Strengthen the application guidelines for charter schools. Charter applicants should be required to carefully consider their operating model with particular attention to the costs of providing lunch and transportation services and their recruitment strategies for disadvantaged students. More detailed applications should help the Advisory Board identify flaws before the school is approved and should help school administrators better adhere to their contracts once the school is open.

2. Shorten the timeline for state review from the current 10-year period to five years. A shorter window would strike a balance between ensuring N.C. schools are successful and allowing charters to operate with a sense of autonomy.

3. Expand the capacity of the various offices within the Department of Public Instruction, including, but not limited to, the Office for Charter Schools. DPI will need more personnel to support and monitor the growing number of charter schools.

4. Impose consequences when a charter school fails to meet its contractual obligations. These consequences might include financial penalties or school closure. Organizations applying for a charter need to understand that they will be held accountable for their commitments.

Ladd is a professor at the Sanford School of Public Policy. Eisen is a Duke senior majoring in public policy who gathered the data presented here for her senior thesis. This op-ed was published in The News & Observer on March 9, 2015.

THE SCIENCE OF INVESTING IN CHILDREN

Federal spending on children fell recently for the first time in three decades. In that austere climate, policymakers increasingly want guidance on how to spend wisely to help children succeed. A new research network convened by Max Crowley, NIH research fellow at the Center for Child and Family Policy, and Kenneth Dodge, Sanford Professor and CCFP Director, will respond to that need by encouraging research on costs and benefits of prevention.

“This network will allow us to translate scientific research on prevention into information that policymakers can actually use,” Crowley said.

The Prevention Economics Planning and Research Network (PEPR) gathered for the first time on December 8 and 9 at the White House, at the invitation of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. Leading scientists, federal and state lawmakers and private sector representatives discussed research priorities in the prevention field.

The new transdisciplinary network is supported by the National Institutes of Health, the Duke Center for Child and Family Policy and the Duke Population Research Institute.
Has the NIH

After decades of strong budget growth, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) was the darling of Congress, a jewel in the crown of the federal government that basked in bipartisan splendor. Each year brought concrete accomplishments, examples of how federal dollars had advanced the conquest of disease, such as cancer, heart disease and childhood leukemia. The stories were simple and easy to understand, and there was truly a line from NIH research to clinical advances.

Six decades after World War II, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) was the darling of Congress, a jewel in the crown of the federal government that basked in bipartisan splendor. Each year brought concrete accomplishments, examples of how federal dollars had advanced the conquest of disease, such as cancer, heart disease and childhood leukemia. The stories were simple and easy to understand, and there was truly a line from NIH research to clinical advances.

Today, NIH politics have changed. NIH’s purchasing power dropped by double digits after the 2003 peak, and even fear of disease does not seem to overcome the partisan gridlock that besets Congress. Is this inattention specific to NIH or is NIH merely suffering collateral damage from the larger and deeper paralysis of national government? Are political undercurrents permanently changing how federal support for all research will carry into the future? And what might the answers to such questions mean for scientists and decision makers?
Has the NIH Lost Its Halo?

Scale escalation

When the NIH budget was $700,000 going into World War II, it was easy to quadruple the budget to $3.4 million by the war’s end, and to boost it another tenfold by the early 1950s. Until the 1970s, the U.S. economy was generally healthy, discretionary budgets floated on rising waters, and NIH got disproportionate increases. From 1970 through 2003, NIH’s research funding consistently and significantly outgrew other federal research accounts.

The rise of molecular biology and the continued efforts of disease-research advocates help explain this growth. NIH grew, but so did health expenditures. As a fraction of U.S. health expenditures, the federal health research budget has hovered around 2 percent since 1980.

With NIH’s budget at $30 billion annually, it is harder to increase it without pinching other agencies. Appropriations to the Departments of Labor and of Education come out of the same appropriation subcommittee allocation, so NIH also competes directly with other, non-health programs. It is hard to argue that NIH is more deserving of increases than other key agencies.

Fractured constituencies

Health activist Mary Lasker discovered a political strategy for using private philanthropic capital to leverage biomedical research funding from Congress in the years after World War II. She was married to Albert Lasker, a pioneer of the nascent advertising business whose accounts included Lucky Strike, and they started the Lasker Foundation and ran the American Cancer Society. By the time of the AIDS crisis, hundreds of disease groups following the same script that Lasker used to boost cancer research, lobbying to create institutes for their own conditions.

As NIH grew, so did the institutions it funded to do research. NIH-funded research is an industry that sustains academic health centers throughout the nation. That industry sometimes behaves as political scientists predict, as

By Robert Cook-Deegan

NIH-funded research is an industry that sustains academic health centers throughout the nation.
Universities and research clearly are important sources of ideas, information and technologies that matter immensely in the innovation ecosystem.

There are very large imbalances in the health research portfolio, with health services research and prevention the perennial stepchildren, and biomedical research the favored biological child.

an interest group, building national organizations and crafting political strategies to influence elected and executive branch officials in Washington. Academic health centers have expanded remarkably over the decades, and entire careers are devoted to biomedical research lobbying.

When NIH’s budget was up for discussion soon after its doubling, in March 2004, Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM), a long-time supporter of NIH and passionate advocate for mental health exclaimed, “I hate to say it, but the NIH is one of the best agencies in the world, but they’ve turned into pigs. You know, pigs! They can’t keep their oinks closed. They send a Senator down there [to] argue as if they’re broke.” He spoke in opposition to an amendment by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) to boost NIH funding by $1.5 billion.

Despite its name, NIH’s mission has not generally been current health per se, but rather research for tomorrow’s health and progress against intratable diseases. And that is surely an appropriate government mission, since it is inherently long-term, the main output is information and knowledge, and the financial benefits are hard for private firms to appropriate. These are all features of public goods that only collective action and patient, public capital can supply.

The truth is that there is no overarching theory of biomedical innovation sufficient to specify a “right” balance with any precision. At the macro level, Congress appropriates to institutes and centers that focus on particular diseases, health missions or health constituencies — factors that weigh in the political assessment of social value. At the micro level, most project funding decisions are made by merit review — usually peer review — as a fair way to assess scientific opportunity. This is a political process solution to a wicked problem with no reliable predictive theory. It is probably not optimal; but the question of what would work better has no agreed-upon answer.

Time for Rethinking

NIH is an effective agency, and it was no small feat to establish and sustain its excellence. But there are very large imbalances in the health research portfolio, with health services research and prevention the perennial stepchildren, and biomedical research the favored biological child.

If we turn explicit attention to fostering economic growth and to more tightly connecting research to its intended goal of improving health, then there is the possibility of more fully integrating it into the national economy as a matter of national policy.

The prospect is exciting but daunting. Current policies of regulating and paying for health goods and services reward introduction and overuse of expensive technologies that add incremental improvements in health, but with scant attention to cost or relative effectiveness. The Medicare statute, for example, explicitly denies authority to consider cost-effectiveness in medical practice, which sets up perverse incentives which favor expensive new drugs and devices that command high profit, and discourage low-cost innovation. To call this a “system” or a “market” is to stretch those words beyond coherence.

The importance of research as a component of economic growth commands bipartisan consensus. Although research universities have had strong and productive ties with industry since the late 19th century, only recently have they explicitly taken on the mantle of fostering economic growth as key components in a national system of innovation. Recent reports such as Restoring the Foundation from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Research Council’s Rising Above the Gathering Storm and its sequels build on this theme. Universities and research clearly are important sources of ideas, information, and technologies that matter immensely in the innovation ecosystem.

One difficulty with the framework, however, is that it relies on open-ended arguments that support increased funding but offer less guidance about how to make investments in economic growth more effective. No coherent theories predict how best to spend public dollars — or tell us how many dollars are enough. The reports are persuasive in documenting stagnation, and about the danger of under-investment and trends pointing to the emergence of R&D-driven economic policies in Asia that could overtake U.S. pre-eminence in research and knowledge-based economic growth. But “more money for research” is an incomplete response, as it fails to address the imbalances and inefficiencies that have accumulated over six decades.

The open question for NIH is whether these arguments about economic growth, when combined with the attractive logic of boosting support for research to address the burden of diseases for which current public health and medical care are inadequate, will build political momentum to reverse a decade of neglect. Has NIH lost its halo, or will it begin to shine again?

Robert Cook-Deegan is a research professor at the Sanford School of Public Policy. This is an excerpt from a longer article published in Issues in Science and Technology, Winter, 2015, and is reprinted by permission.
After completing her honors thesis on vaccine refusal, Charlotte Lee PPS’15 has gained a new perspective. Although she disagrees with parents and policymakers who reject vaccines, she no longer sees them as irrational. “The narrative of vaccines being ‘too many, too soon’ fits into the dominant parenting narrative described by Eula Biss in On Immunity. Too much candy, too soon; too much indulgence, too soon,” Lee says. Lee came to Duke as a biomedical engineering and pre-med student, hoping to design vaccines. She switched her major to public policy after realizing she was interested in big-picture problem solving. “I really found vaccines to be one of the most important public health innovations. It changed our world and life expectancy…It’s just really one of the most amazing movements in health,” Lee says. Lee became interested in the vaccine refusal issue after media attention on the whooping cough outbreak in California. She searched anti-vaccine blogs online and paid attention to the voices of distrustful parents. “It’s a really interesting problem where health, policy and psychology overlap. It’s a very emotional issue,” says Lee. For her honors thesis research, she worked with Professor Kathryn Whetten and was able to connect with Dan Salmon at Johns Hopkins and Saad Omer at Emory University, premier experts on vaccine refusal. She analyzed a survey that the two researchers had conducted, examining the viewpoints of parents who opposed or supported vaccines for their children. For the most part, her hypotheses were confirmed. People who distrusted government and health care providers were less likely to accept vaccines. She discovered that an anti-vaccine organization called Dissatisfied Parents Together attempted to gain credibility by changing their name to the National Vaccine Information Center. However, anti-vaccinators were less likely to trust this new source of information because of the word “National.” Parents who distrusted the government assumed the group was federally created, and immediately discredited it. One of Lee’s main recommendations deals with drastically transforming health marketing for vaccines. “If a population distrusts the government, then pamphlets from the CDC and FDA are not going to cut it,” says Lee. Lee recommended increasing the amount of parent-to-parent interaction on the issue. She believes positive peer pressure can encourage parents to have more constructive conversations. It’s extremely important for empathy and understanding to exist before there can be a conversation about vaccines, she says. “You cannot demonize the people you’re trying to change.”

Honors Student Wins ‘Gap Year’ Award

Charlotte Lee PPS’15 conducted HIV/AIDS and nutrition research in Kenya, health research in Peru, and coordinated the first New York City Hepatitis B Awareness Week during her internship. She also wrote an honors thesis on the anti-vaccine movement. Lee recently won a scholarship that will provide her with a terrific “gap year” between graduation and medical school. The award, from the Henry Luce Foundation, provides a stipend for living and working in Asia for a year. Eighteen scholars were chosen from 156 nominees. “People ask me why I wanted to take a gap year, and I feel like I have a lot of skills and it’s hard to keep doing exercises, problem sets and papers [after graduation.] I’m excited to get my hands dirty in real field work. I’ve always loved traveling—it brings out the best side of myself: curiosity, humility,” Lee said.

Lee is a certified emergency medical technician. She plans to become an OB/GYN with a focus on international maternal and child health issues.
Die Hard Fans and Ivory Tower Ties

By Jackie Ogburn

Collegiate sports draw legions of intensely loyal fans, more than just the alumni and students of any one school, and surpassed in number only by professional football fans. In a new study, Charles Clotfelter, professor of public policy, economics and law, used an unusual source to identify the true “die-hard” fan — obituaries.

The article, “Die-Hard Fans and Ivory Tower’s Ties That Bind,” was published online by The Social Science Quarterly on January 19th.

To find these die-hard fans, Clotfelter picked 26 colleges with unusual team names, such as the Crimson Tide or the Jayhawks, and searched online obituaries for references. He and his student assistants collected 1,300 obituaries, 50 for each team.

She enjoyed family traditions, knitting, and Penn State football.

“Accounts such as these, written to celebrate the life of a loved one, suggest that the decedent’s interest in this college team was no casual thing, but rather a noteworthy source of identity. To refer to these individuals merely as fans of college football or basketball is surely inadequate. These were true believers,” Clotfelter wrote.

Clotfelter compared the obituaries to a random sample of obituaries from the same states as the fans. Both sets contained information such as gender, age, occupation, military service, college attendance, religious affiliation, civic and volunteer activity and residence.

He also loved sailing, playing cards, singing in the church choir and was a devoted Duke Blue Devils fan.

These die-hard fans were rare, only about two percent of the published obituaries of adults. There were three times as many men as women. Compared to others featured in obituaries, they were more likely to be white and to be mainline Protestants. In terms of civic engagement and volunteering, more die-hard fans were coaches.

One third of the die-hard fans never attended college and many were in blue-collar jobs. The die-hard fans were twice as likely to have attended college than all adults covered in obituaries, and 22 percent were in high-level occupations such as law, medicine or engineering.

[He] was an independent thinker in all aspects of his life. This was no more evident than in his remaining the only Wolverine fan in a large family of Buckeyes.

Only one-third were alumni of their team’s universities; however most had been a resident of the state where the university is located. Fans of UCLA, Connecticut, and Texas A&M were tightly clustered near the campus. Notre Dame and Nebraska fans tend to be widely distributed across the country, perhaps because of the winning histories of their football programs.

These fans represent an authentic link between universities and everyday people, Clotfelter believes. Fandom is “a sign of the people’s affection, and a source of pride, even a kind of patriotism,” he said.

Clotfelter was also able to explore the political party registration of the fans through looking at state voting records. The die-hard fans were 5.5 percentage points more likely be registered as Republicans than similar adults, but there was no difference in the rate of registration as a Democrat. All fans were more likely to be affiliated with some party.

[She] was a lifelong Democrat and Tar Heels fan; among her last words was a faint “Go Heels!” during the recent Dook-Carolina football game.

Few scholars have studied big-time sports or their ultra-loyal fans. Fans are significant to universities as customers, followers and stakeholders. Fandom can offer social capital benefits similar to civic volunteerism and other engagement. Being a fan can provide a sense of ownership of the university that can extend to financial and political support.

“It’s my belief that commercial sports are a core function of universities such as these, even if it is not in their mission statements. Being a fan represents an authentic cultural tie. To call big-time college sports commercial is accurate but incomplete. It’s the truth, but not the whole truth,” Clotfelter said.
Schooling, Dropout and Crime: What’s the Link?

By Karen Kemp

Children born just after the cutoff date for entering kindergarten begin school a year older than their peers born just before, and that makes all kinds of difference.

The old-for-grade students do well in the short term, academically and socially. But as teenagers, they are more likely to drop out and commit serious crimes, says new research from the Sanford School. The negative outcomes are significantly more likely for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

“This research provides the first compelling evidence of a causal link between dropout and crime. It supports the view that crime outcomes should be considered in evaluating school reforms,” said lead author Philip J. Cook, ITT/Terry Sanford Professor of Public Policy.

“Dropouts are greatly over-represented in prison, so we know there is a strong association between dropping out and crime. But to establish causation requires an experiment. My analysis takes advantage of nature’s experiment associated with birth date.”

The research report, by Cook and Songman Kang of Hanyang University in Seoul, South Korea, is forthcoming in the American Economic Journal: Applied Economics. The study compared North Carolina public school students born 60 days before and 60 days after the school cutoff date. At the time of the study, North Carolina children had to turn 5 by Oct. 16 to be eligible to enter kindergarten that year.

Previous studies have established that children who enter school old for grade perform better academically than their younger classmates. As a result, a growing number of parents have delayed enrolling their children whose birthdays fall shortly before the cutoff date, seeking to gain academic and social advantages. “Academic redshirting” is more common for boys than girls and for whites than African Americans.

In addition to performing better academically, Cook’s study found old-for-grade students were one-third less likely to engage in delinquent behavior while still in school.

“Up until the 16th birthday, it is all positive,” Cook said. “They are doing better, relative to their classmates, by every measure. It makes sense, because they are more mature.”

But after age 16, the picture shifts. The old-for-grade students are more likely to drop out and be convicted of a felony before age 20. The explanation for the seeming contradiction lies in the age at which students may legally withdraw from school — 16 in North Carolina.

“If they were born before the cutoff date, they have just 19 months between their 16th birthday and graduation to be tempted to drop out,” Cook said. “If they were born just after and enter school later, they have 31 months, and for some of them, it is an irresistible temptation.”

“It’s human nature,” Cook said. “For a lot of adolescents, high school is a drag.”

Among the old-for-grade students, the likelihood of dropping out and being convicted of a serious crime is 3.4 times greater for those born to an unmarried mother and 2.7 times greater for those whose mothers were high school dropouts.

“Should you redshirt your kid? Well, on the one hand, he’ll do better while he’s in school and is less likely to become delinquent. On the other hand, he’ll be more likely to drop out before graduation, and bad things may follow that,” Cook said.

Policymakers should take notice, Cook added. “Even something as crude as a regulation that requires a kid stay in school to a fixed age, whether he wants to or not, has a considerable effect on criminal activity.”

Growing Up in the Shadow of Wealth: Worse for Boys
By Alison Jones

Low-income boys fare worse, not better, when they grow up alongside more affluent neighbors, according to new findings from a 12-year study in England and Wales. In fact, the greater the economic gap between the boys and their neighbors, the worse the effects.

“Our hope was that we would find economically mixed communities that allowed low-income children access to greater resources and the opportunity to thrive,” said Sanford Associate Professor Candice Odgers, associate director of the Duke Center for Child and Family Policy. “Instead, we found what appears to be the opposite effect.”

The findings appeared online January 22 in The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry.

Odgers and her colleagues followed 1,600 children in urban and suburban areas from birth to age 12. The research team conducted intensive home assessments, surveyed teachers and neighbors and collected additional data including census information and parent reports.

The team also used Google Street View images to gauge neighborhood conditions within a half-mile radius of each child’s home. The virtual survey yielded data about housing conditions, parks, the presence of graffiti and more.

The authors found that in economically mixed settings, low-income boys engaged in more antisocial behavior, including delinquent behavior such as lying, cheating and swearing, and aggressive behavior such as fighting.

The effect seems limited to boys, however. For low-income girls, growing up among more affluent neighbors had no discernible effect on behavior. Previous research in the United States has also suggested that neighborhood surroundings play a smaller role in girls’ development than in boys’, perhaps because many parents monitor their daughters more closely and keep them closer to home.

Among the low-income boys, those living in neighborhoods classified as “hard-pressed,” where 75 percent or more of the local area was poor, had the lowest rates of antisocial behavior. Poor boys’ behavior was worse in middle-income neighborhoods, and worse still in the wealthiest neighborhoods studied, said Odgers, a psychologist. She said the findings held true from ages 5 through 12.

The “relative position hypothesis” may help explain the findings, Odgers said. Previous studies have suggested that children often evaluate their social rank and self-worth based on comparisons with those around them. Simply put, being poor may be more distressing to a child when he is surrounded by others who are better off.

Many policymakers in England and the United States have viewed mixed-income neighborhoods as a potential remedy for poverty’s toxic effects, which include increased risks of crime and delinquency. But the new research sounds a cautionary note about a policy direction that many have viewed with hope.

Mixed-income neighborhoods are relatively uncommon in the U.S. but are an emerging policy direction. In Britain, by contrast, mixed neighborhoods enjoy broad support and represent a long-standing policy priority, reflecting a belief that they are socially just and will help struggling families. However, very little research to date has tested that belief.

Mixed-income neighborhoods may address some social ills, Odgers said. But the new research suggests mixed-income housing may not be a panacea.

“We are not saying that economically mixed communities are universally harmful,” Odgers said. “However, additional care may need to be taken to ensure these communities achieve their intended outcomes for children.”

While the study focused on low-income children, the authors also gathered data on working class, middle class and more affluent children, and found that they fared worse when they grew up alongside poverty. As the amount of poverty in their neighborhoods rose, their levels of antisocial behavior rose.


“These findings are troubling given the growing divide between rich and poor,” Odgers said. “They suggest that additional supports may be needed for low-income children who are growing up in the shadow of wealth.”
‘Scorecard Diplomacy’
Rating Nations on the Fight Against Human Trafficking

By Becky Richards

Across the globe, 21 million people are victimized by human trafficking, a form of modern slavery. Judith Kelley has devoted much of the past three years to studying the United States’ efforts to fight this persistent problem. She has focused her analysis on the impact of the U.S. State Department’s Trafficking in Persons (TIP) annual report.

Kelley, a political scientist and senior associate dean at Sanford, coined the term “scorecard diplomacy” to describe the way the State Department researches and uses the TIP report. Since 2001, the TIP report has ranked countries’ enforcement of laws against human trafficking. The report now includes 190 nations, and is the world’s most comprehensive record of governmental anti-human trafficking efforts, Kelley said.

“It’s pretty unprecedented the way the State Department is going about its diplomacy on human trafficking,” she said.

The report originated in the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, enacted in 2000, which created the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons within the State Department. Initially, the United States was omitted from its own international grading system, a decision reversed by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, after years of complaints from other countries.

“Going far beyond any other prior practice, not only by the United States but by any country around the world, ever, this report was to not only monitor, but also categorize—essentially rate—countries on their relative performance on anti-trafficking efforts. This exercise was intentionally designed to be very public,” Kelley said.

Each country is ranked according to its level of effectiveness in combatting human trafficking on a scale from one to three, one being the best, three being the worst. The system is intended to incite countries to act.

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Each country is ranked according to its level of effectiveness in combatting human trafficking on a scale from one to three, one being the best, three being the worst. The system is intended to incite countries to act. The second level includes a “Watch List” subcategory for countries at risk of dropping to the lowest level in the following year.

“Instead of just your normal engagement with domestic officials on the ground, the U.S. is using this very overt public shaming, grading and monitoring of countries to get domestic officials to respond to the pressure that they’re trying to put on them,” she said.

Nations have used public shaming as a tactic in the past but not necessarily in this manner.

“Traditional shaming is very ad hoc. It happens one time. With ‘scorecard diplomacy’ there is the expectation that this grading and rating comes up every year. So not only can countries be shamed, but countries also have the opportunity to improve if they take certain actions,” she said.

The annual report motivates nations to continue addressing trafficking as a core issue.

“This type of diplomacy engenders a willingness to cooperate among national officials who want to avoid being shamed in the future. This repeated scoring is underlying the leverage the United States is gaining vis-à-vis other countries in this process,” Kelley said.

“By publishing this report, the U.S. has made certain demands: Countries should criminalize trafficking, enact domestic laws that make it illegal to sell people and enact appropriate sentences for that crime,” Kelley explained.

Predictably, public shaming tactics garner some negative feedback.

“It’s not a policy everybody is happy with,” Kelley said. “Some countries think the U.S. has no right doing this, or disagree with the way the recommendations are carried out or the content of the recommendations.”

With funding from the National Science Foundation and the Smith Richardson Foundation, Kelley analyzed more than 9,000 diplomatic cables, surveyed NGOs around the world and is now conducting case studies and interviews.

For the survey, she enlisted student researchers to compile a database of more than 1,000 NGOs working on human trafficking. Kelley then connected with the Polaris Project, which also was trying to create a database to facilitate inter-NGO communication and help trafficking victims return to their country of origin. Kelley offered them her database, and the data was published online as an interactive map.

“The Global Modern Slavery Directory
More than 1,000 publicly known organizations worldwide tackling aspects of modern slavery
www.globalmodernslavery.org.

The ‘Know-Do’ Gap

By Karen Kemp

Few health care providers in rural India know the correct treatments for childhood diarrhea and pneumonia—two leading killers of young children worldwide. But even when they do, they rarely prescribe the treatments properly, according to a new Duke University study.

Medical practitioners typically fail to prescribe lifesaving treatments such as oral rehydration salts (ORS). Instead, they prescribe unnecessary antibiotics or other potentially harmful drugs, said Manoj Mohanan, a professor in Duke’s Sanford School of Public Policy, and lead author of the study.

Diarrhea and pneumonia account for 24 percent of deaths among children 1 to 4 years old, totaling approximately 2 million deaths worldwide in 2011. Bihar, India—where the study was conducted—has an infant mortality rate of 55 per 1,000 live births, the highest in the country.

“Massive over-prescription of antibiotics is a major contributor to rising antibiotic resistance worldwide. Our studies aim to understand why providers who know they shouldn’t be prescribing antibiotics for conditions like simple diarrhea continue to do so.”

“We know from previous studies that providers in rural settings have little medical training and their knowledge of how to treat these two common and deadly ailments is low,” Mohanan said. “And, not surprisingly, 80 percent in our study had no medical degree. But much of India’s rural population receives care from such untrained providers, and very few studies have been able to rigorously measure the gap between what providers know and what they actually do—the “know-do” gap, Mohanan explained.

Providers exhibited low levels of knowledge about both diarrhea and pneumonia during the interviews and performed even worse in practice.

For example, for diarrhea, 72 percent of providers reported they would prescribe oral rehydration salts—a life-saving, low-cost and readily available intervention—but only 17 percent actually did so. Those who did prescribe ORS also added other unnecessary or harmful drugs. In practice, none of the providers gave the correct treatment: only ORS, with or without zinc. Instead, almost 72 percent of providers gave antibiotics or potentially harmful treatments without ORS.

“Massive over-prescription of antibiotics is a major contributor to rising antibiotic resistance worldwide,” Mohanan said. “Our ongoing studies aim to understand why providers who know they shouldn’t be prescribing antibiotics for conditions like simple diarrhea continue to do so.

“It clearly is not demand from patients alone, which is a common explanation, since none of our standardized patients asked for antibiotics but almost all of them got them,” he said.

Providers with formal medical training still had large gaps between what they knew and did, but were significantly less likely to prescribe harmful medical treatments.

“Our results show that in order to reduce child mortality, we need new strategies to improve diagnosis and treatment of these key childhood illnesses,” Mohanan said. “Our evidence on the gap between knowledge and practice suggests that training alone will be insufficient. We need to understand what incentives cause providers to diverge from proper diagnosis and treatment.”

Funding for the study was provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation as part of the Bihar Evaluation of Social Franchising and Telemedicine (BEST) project.

Co-authors are Marcos Vera-Hernandez and Soledad Giardili of University College London; Veena Das of Johns Hopkins University; Jeremy D. Goldhaber-Fiebert of Stanford University School of Medicine; Tracy L. Rabin and Jeremy I. Schwartz of Yale School of Medicine; Sunil S. Raj of the Indian Institute of Public Health; and Aparna Seth of Sambodhi Research and Communications. Mohanan also holds appointments with the Duke Global Health Institute and the department of economics.
How the WTO Became an Arbiter of Environmental Policy

By Judy Sirykissoon

Most people know the World Trade Organization (WTO) for its promotion of free trade policies. Over the years the WTO also has become important — though not always appreciated — for its impact on environmental and energy policy.

Tana Johnson, assistant professor of public policy and political science, argues that the WTO’s prominent role in environmental and energy policy is traceable to two distinctive features of the organization. She describes these features in her article, “Information Revelation and Structural Supremacy: The World Trade Organization's Incorporation of Environmental Policy,” published in the February Review of International Organizations.

The first is its formal dispute settlement process, a court-like system through which the WTO hands down rulings when member-countries come into conflict over trade. None of the big intergovernmental environmental institutions have anything comparable — and that’s one reason why international environmental policy is often criticized as toothless. Increasingly, when countries have conflicts that involve both trade and the environment, the WTO is filling the void.

“Think of a Venn diagram, where the overlap between trade policy and environmental policy is being funneled through the WTO,” Johnson says. She refers to this as structural supremacy: although both areas of international law are supposedly equal — and that’s one reason why international environmental policy is often criticized as toothless. Increasingly, when countries have conflicts that involve both trade and the environment, the WTO is filling the void.

“In the short term the ruling threatened sea turtles, but in the longer term the pushback made the WTO more sensitive to areas of trade that affect environmental issues.”

Friends of the Earth protesting during a World Trade Organization session.

“Environmentalists are frustrated when they see trade lawyers making judgments about policies that could affect the environment,” says Johnson.

“It’s not just about whether WTO judges uphold trade-restricting environmental policies,” Johnson points out. “For environmentalists, the rub is that WTO judges get an opportunity to evaluate those policies in the first place.

As an example, she points to a 1998 case. The WTO ruled against a U.S. trade ban on wild shrimp imports from countries using fishing practices that did not adequately protect endangered sea turtles. This led to widespread protests in the Unites States and other parts of the world. The backlash raised the WTO’s awareness and care in environment-related trade disputes.

“The WTO has learned from previous experiences,” Johnson points out. “But the conundrum now is to change other people’s minds [about the organization].”

One way to do that is by a modest change to WTO rules. Current WTO dispute settlement staff must have expertise in trade law. For trade disputes related to the environment, Johnson argues that it would be useful to change the rules slightly so the group of “judges” includes at least one lawyer with environmental expertise as well.

Johnson believes this is a feasible, relatively easy-to-implement approach. And, as more and more trade disputes relate to environmental protection and renewable energy, she says it’s time for a change that would “provide more legitimacy and effectiveness in the process.”
Making Visible the Invisible

By Michelle Nguyen

The poorest slum-dwellers in Bangalore are invisible in the government’s eyes. Their neighborhoods don’t exist on government lists and, as a result, families do not receive government support services they desperately need.

Professor Anirudh Krishna discovered this problem during a research project on rural poverty, in which he examined the lives of family members who move into the city slums to work menial jobs and contribute to their family’s income. When he took a list of slums from the city government, he found to his surprise and horror that the people included were actually lower middle class.

“More than 80 percent owned TVs and motorcycles and more than half had title to their homes. They weren’t rich people, but they weren’t poor either. The types of homes they lived in, that were classified as slums by the city government, were three-story concrete buildings for the most part,” says Krishna.

Andrew Leon Hanna PPS’14 partnered with M.S. Sriram, a professor in Bangalore, and Janalakshmi, a microfinance organization, to expand on the idea of using satellite images to identify the real slums in Bangalore.

“I literally sat at my computer for days and scanned the entirety of Bangalore on Google Earth several times to get a better understanding of how the existing territories were selected and to look for more potential areas to consider,” says Hanna.

Hanna, Grady Lenkin PPS’14, and the rest of the project team then spent months examining the mapped areas in person. Witnessing the slums firsthand and interacting with the inhabitants was an emotional and difficult task.

“I really have a pet peeve with people who hear the word ‘slum’ and feel pity. I think pity is a placeholder for action. But when you’re actually face to face with the realities, the people, and the conditions in which they live… It’s tough stuff,” says Lenkin.

They categorized the neighborhoods into four types, ranging from three-story concrete structures on declared governmental land to new migrant settlements which appeared as blue polygons on satellite images. When they conducted field visits to examine the blue polygons, they found settlements made of blue tarps stretched over four poles, which were homes to thousands of people. These areas were inhabited by new immigrants in the city who had come from rural areas and typically worked basic construction jobs.

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Making Visible (continued from page 20)

These residences could barely be labeled as homes, yet after running detailed household surveys and interviewing about 650 migrants, the research team documented “this whole different type of slum (that) was not even recognized by government authorities,” says Krishna.

Urban slum growth is a phenomenon that has rarely been studied. Krishna’s goal for the project is to develop a sound methodology and evidence-based taxonomy that communities, NGOs and the government can use to effectively allocate funds and services such as sanitation and education.

Lenkin now works fulltime and lives in Bangalore as the research project manager. He and Krishna are gearing up for the next phases of household surveys in the three intermediate types of slums.

“The greatest driving force of me being here is the relationship I have maintained with Professor Krishna. I have a lot of respect for the work he does. I have a lot of respect for his capability as a mentor and a teacher,” says Lenkin.

Krishna, in turn, is proud of the work and contributions by the students.

“This may sound clichéd but one of the best parts of this project has been working with some really smart and dedicated students who helped make some very important breakthroughs. They took responsibility for part of the project and ran with it,” says Krishna.
Tony Kushner

2014 Crown Lecture in Ethics

Award-winning playwright Tony Kushner gave the 2015 Crown Lecture in Ethics at the Sanford School on March 18. In a fireside chat format, Kushner talked with Sanford Professor Philip Bennett about the intersections of ethics, art and politics.

As a college student, Kushner searched for “a way to be a theater artist and an activist.”

Asked why he wrote the screenplay for "Lincoln" as a "legislative procedural" about the passage of the 13th amendment, Kushner said it was what Lincoln saw as important. If slavery continued Lincoln believed, “the Civil War would be just a bloody interval before the next war, and it would be the end of the United States and of democracy,” said Kushner.

Kushner sees parallels between the Congress during Lincoln’s time and today’s Congress, with its gridlock and contempt for the federal government. On the issue of gay marriage, Obama “was Lincolnian in his ability to gauge what the nation could hear and when it could hear it,” Kushner said.

Mitt Romney

Ambassador Dave and Kay Phillips Family International Lecture

Former Republican presidential candidate and Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney gave the Ambassador Dave and Kay Phillips Family International Lecture at Duke University on April 8. In conversation with Peter Feaver, professor of political science and public policy, Romney discussed a range of topics including his political career and views on current events.

Previously, Romney was president and CEO of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City. He worked as a vice president of Bain & Company Inc. In 1984, he co-founded a spin-off private equity investment company, Bain Capital, and now serves on the board of directors.