

GW INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC POLICY

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

FALL 2009
VOLUME 3, NUMBER 2

805 21ST STREET, NW
MEDIA AND PUBLIC
AFFAIRS
6TH FLOOR

THE GWIPP REPORT



IN THIS ISSUE

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR	1
WHAT CAN GWIPP DO FOR YOU?	2
GWIPP RESEARCH CENTER	2
POLICY RESEARCH SCHOLAR PROGRAM	3
FOCUS ON GWIPP RESEARCH PROJECTS	
BUILDING RESILIENT REGIONS BY HAL WOLMAN	4
THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVANCED HIGH SCHOOL COURSES BY DYLAN CONGER	5
SELECTED ONGOING PROJECTS	6-7
STAFF PROFILE: CHARLOTTE KIRSCHNER	8
POLICY RESEARCH SCHOLAR PROFILE: DR. GREGORY SQUIRES	9
RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROFILE: MATT DARST	10
NEWS AND EVENTS	11-12
REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS	12-13
STAFF AND COMMITTEES	BACK COVER

COPY EDITOR
GARRY YOUNG

ARTICLE CONTRIBUTIONS
HAL WOLMAN, GARRY YOUNG, DYLAN CONGER, AND KATIE BRUDER

DESIGN AND LAYOUT
KATIE BRUDER

All rights reserved. Produced by the George Washington Institute of Public Policy.
The George Washington University; Washington, DC. Fall 2009.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



September marks the beginning of GWIPP's tenth year, and it is a good time to look at how far we have come. From its inception, GWIPP's mission has been to encourage and facilitate externally-funded public policy research at The George Washington University. In our first year, we brought in \$182,366 in external funding. During the past twelve months, \$1,717,346 in extra-mural research funding has flowed through GWIPP.

Over the years, GWIPP has received funding from a wide range of sources, including federal government agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Health, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; foundations such as the Lincoln Institute of Land

Policy, Ford, Sloan, Rockefeller, Spencer, Robert Wood Johnson, and Annie E. Casey; state and local governments, and professional associations like the National Education Association and the National Association of Realtors. Since the integration of the Center for Washington Area Studies (CWAS) in 2005, we have performed research on the DC region. Funders of these efforts include the District of Columbia, the Trellis Fund, and Our Nation's Capital.

While some of these projects have resulted from work done by GWIPP staff, many result from the operations of our Policy Research Scholar Program. In an annual competition, the Program selects 7-10 GW faculty and provides each with a course release or summer stipend to prepare a public policy research proposal for external funding. We are now in the ninth year of the program, and have supported Policy Research Scholars from every school in The University. Policy Research Scholars have written proposals and received funding from sources including NSF, NIH, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Smith-Richardson, and the Joyce Foundation. They have received more than \$3 million in funding as a consequence of proposals submitted through the program.

We have also established ongoing relationships with the Brookings Institution and the Urban Institute through our annual conference, Urban and Regional Policy and Its Effects. The conference results in an annual edited volume. The most recent conference was held from May 21st-22nd on GW's campus. Our longest-standing and most productive relationship has been with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. We are now in our fourth year of working with them on the "Significant Features of the Property Tax" project. The project has resulted in a data compendium on the property tax, available at <http://lincolninst.edu/subcenters/significant-features-property-tax/>. Additionally, the project has yielded research papers and publications on state and local fiscal issues as well as two roundtables on property tax issues. The first roundtable yielded a book – *The Erosion of the Property Tax Base*, published by Lincoln in 2009. A book stemming from the second roundtable is forthcoming.

What started ten years ago as an institute with a small presence now boasts a core professional staff of five, six research professors, twenty-four research assistants, and dozens of research affiliates. The current economic downturn has presented problems for our funders and consequently us. Nonetheless, we have been able to hold our own, and we stand ready to continue to provide assistance to GW faculty members and to produce high quality research products for our clients.

Sincerely yours,

WHAT CAN GWIPP DO FOR YOU?

CLIENTS AND FUNDERS

- GWIPP can apply the skills of GW faculty and graduate research assistants to your research
- GWIPP researchers have experience in the academic, government, and nonprofit areas, and can bring their strengths in each to your project
- GWIPP researchers have published extensively in their fields of expertise

GW FACULTY

- GWIPP's Policy Research Scholar program offers targeted assistance to faculty members pursuing policy research
- GWIPP can put together research teams by recruiting faculty with similar interests or pertinent skills
- GWIPP can assist in transforming a research interest into a viable research project
- GWIPP can assist in identifying external funding sources with relevant research interests, many of whom already have a funding relationship with GWIPP
- GWIPP can help construct funding proposals, develop budgets, and submit proposals
- GWIPP can administer and manage grants once awarded

GW GRADUATE STUDENTS

- GWIPP hires graduate research assistants from across campus for public policy research projects that provide valuable experience in funded or client-centered research
- GWIPP provides the opportunity to work closely with researchers on current policy issues, learn how to design and implement research projects, and convey findings to a target audience
- GWIPP offers opportunities to present research at conferences, submit articles for publication, and gain useful background information for your research interests, including dissertation work

For more information, contact Garry Young at YoungG@gwu.edu or 202-994-6494.

GWIPP RESEARCH CENTER

CENTER FOR WASHINGTON AREA STUDIES

The Center for Washington Area Studies (CWAS) undertakes and promotes policy research directly relevant to the District of Columbia and the Washington metropolitan area. Directed by Garry Young, the center is multi-disciplinary and university-wide, and is uniquely placed to draw from the wide range of expertise available at GW. Recent CWAS research includes an analysis of the factors that affect the economic competitiveness of the District of Columbia, a comparison of bicycling policies in three area counties, an analysis of the commercial property market in the District, a study of the policy impact of the District's lack of representation in Congress, two studies comparing Washington, D.C. to other nation's capitals, and an examination of the infrastructure needs of the District of Columbia. Recent funders of CWAS projects include the District of Columbia's Office of the Chief Financial Officer, the Trellis Fund, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Our Nation's Capital.

Aside from research carried out at CWAS, the center also supports efforts by GW faculty to seek external funding for research related to the Washington region. For example, CWAS participates in the Policy Research Scholar program by funding a Scholar doing Washington-relevant research.

POLICY RESEARCH SCHOLAR PROGRAM

The Policy Research Scholar program is a critical part of GWIPP's effort to facilitate public policy research at The George Washington University. In an annual competition, GW faculty submit proposals for policy-based research they hope to develop. Those selected are given the title of Policy Research Scholar and serve in that capacity for one year. During that year, each Scholar is required to develop their project and submit a proposal for external funding. Scholars receive \$10,000 that can be used as a summer stipend or \$5,000 in summer stipend coupled with one course release. Additionally, GWIPP staff help Scholars identify funders, develop proposals, construct budgets, navigate the human subjects review process, submit proposals, and administer grants once funded.

The ten Scholars who commence their term in Fall 2009 constitute the ninth cohort of Policy Research Scholars. Scholars have come from all campus schools and many of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences departments. They have worked on a range of policy-related projects, bringing in more than \$3 million in external funding to GW. See a list of current Scholars below.

The announcement for the next Policy Research Scholar competition will be distributed to faculty in early November 2009. Proposals will be due Friday, December 18th, 2009. For more information, consult the GWIPP website (www.gwu.edu/~gwipp) or contact Garry Young at YoungG@gwu.edu or 202-994-6494.

CONGRATULATIONS, 2009-2010 POLICY RESEARCH SCHOLARS!

Susan Aaronsen, Associate Research Professor of International Affairs, Elliot School of International Affairs
The Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative

Alasdair Bowie, Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences

Decentralization, Democracy, and Local Governance

Fran Buntman, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences

Challenging Mass Imprisonment: Policy Continuity and Change from Grassroots to Governance

Jennifer Brinkerhoff, Associate Professor of Public Policy and Public Administration, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences

Diasporas, Indigenous Governance, and Development

Angela Gore, Assistant Professor of Accountancy, Graduate School of Business

Municipal Debt Costs and Governance

Hiromi Ishizawa, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences

Trajectories of Civic Engagement Among Children of Immigrants

Jennifer Lee, Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine, School of Medicine and Health Sciences

The Prince William County Anti-Immigrant Resolution: Effects on Immigrant Health Care Utilization

Cynthia Rohrbeck, Associate Professor of Psychology, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences

Psychological Consequences of Terrorism: The Role of Terrorism Preparedness

Michelle Stock, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences

The Impact of Racial Discrimination and Masculinity on Health Disparities

Paul Wahlbeck, Professor of Political Science, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences

Shaping Legal Policy: The Role of Information and Persuasion in the Courts

FOCUS ON GWIPP RESEARCH PROJECTS: BUILDING RESILIENT REGIONS

BY: DR. HAL WOLMAN

Why are some regions “resilient” when faced with economic shocks, while others are not? In collaboration with the Brookings Institution and the College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University, GWIPP has been engaged in a project designed to answer that question. The project is funded by the MacArthur Foundation through the University of California-Berkeley, which serves as the coordinator for the project. I am the GWIPP PI on the project. Other GWIPP staff working on the project are Research Professor Pat Atkins and Research Assistants Pam Blumenthal, Sarah Ficenec, and Travis St. Clair.

Our research employs both quantitative and qualitative analysis. We begin by tracking economic performance (jobs and earnings) for all of the metropolitan areas in the United States over the past thirty years. The first objective is to identify those metropolitan regions that have experienced economic downturns (substantial declines from prior growth rates) and the year in which the downturn started. We then examine subsequent years to determine whether and how long it takes the area economy to recover by returning to previous growth rates. Regions experiencing downturns can thus be classified as either resilient or non-resilient depending upon whether they return to previous growth rates within a specified period of time (four years) and, if resilient, their degree of resiliency can be measured by the amount of time it takes for the recovery.

Our methodology also allows us to characterize shocks according to whether they were caused by national economic downturns, by factors related to the specific industrial sectors in which the area specializes, or by other forces. We can also identify “shock-resistant” regions by examining whether shocks to the industries in which an area specializes translate into an overall economic downturn.

The critical question is why some areas are shock-resistant, others are resilient to shocks, while still others are not resilient at all? We will employ multivariate statistical models to assess the effect of factors such as labor force skills (human capital), prior industrial structure, entrepreneurship, size of region, and others.

In addition, we will conduct six in-depth case studies of regions (Charlotte, NC; Cleveland, OH; Detroit, MI; Grand Forks, ND; Hartford, CT; and Seattle, WA). In these case studies we will try to identify what actions regions took to respond to shocks to their economy, who undertook them, and the likely impact these actions had.

At this point we have completed our initial data gathering and will shortly conduct our statistical analysis. The case study interview trips are being scheduled for this fall.

FOCUS ON GWIPP RESEARCH PROJECTS: THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVANCED HIGH SCHOOL COURSES

BY: DR. DYLAN CONGER



Ramping up the rigor and quantity of high school courses has become a major focus of U.S. federal and state education policymakers. Taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses and earning passing scores on the exams, for instance, is now nearly a prerequisite to gaining entry into selective universities. Students' scores on the AP exams are also being used in some states to evaluate and hold high schools accountable for student performance. Yet, not all students enroll in these courses at equal rates, and many are concerned that the growing importance of advanced courses will exacerbate educational attainment gaps among race, poverty, and gender groups in years to come. In response, the U.S. Department of Education began a program in 2006 designed to give high schools serving low-income and minority students incentives to offer more advanced courses.

With colleagues Patrice Iatarola (Florida State University) and Mark C. Long (University of Washington) and data from the Florida Department of Education, I received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences to study advanced high school course-taking in Florida. The major focus of our work is to understand the role that high school course-taking plays in educational outcome gaps among different racial, socioeconomic, and gender groups.

So far, the study has generated several important findings. First, we find that disparities in advanced course-taking between racial groups, and to some extent poverty groups, are largely driven by differences that are apparent before students reach high school. Conditional on prior achievement, black and Hispanic students are actually more likely than their white peers to enroll in advanced courses. Second, despite nationwide concerns that schools serving minority and low-income students are not offering advanced courses, there are currently few such disparities in Florida. In fact, black and Hispanic students in Florida are currently attending schools that are more likely to offer advanced courses. Third, demographic disparities in high-school course-taking are partially to blame for later demographic gaps in readiness for college-level math and other post-secondary outcomes.

Taken together, our research supports the value of advanced high school coursework in promoting student achievement. At the same time, it calls into question the current focus among some levels of policymaking on simply ensuring equity in access to the courses, rather than ensuring equity in preparation for these courses. Our findings call for greater investments in black, Hispanic, and poor children before they enter high school. They also suggest that a reallocation of students to different high schools is unlikely to remedy racial disparities in course-taking, and may in fact increase them.

SELECTED ONGOING PROJECTS

ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS OF WASHINGTON, DC AND THE REGION

SUPPORTER: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE OF REVENUE ANALYSIS

START DATE: JUNE 2008

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: GARRY YOUNG, HAL WOLMAN

This project asks what affects the economic competitiveness of the District of Columbia and why businesses locate (or do not locate) in the District. To answer these questions, we consider the factors that affect the overall regional economy and then takes into account the factors that affect the District, given the state or nature of the regional economy. We will create a profile of the District economy as it relates to the Washington metropolitan regional economy and the national economy. Also, the project will produce a set of statistical models that predict economic performance for the region, and then for the District, that take into account the factors that we know affect the economy. These include the nature of the local labor market, land costs, energy costs, taxation, transportation infrastructure, and so on. These models will give us the capacity to predict how changes in local conditions – including policy changes in areas such as taxation, education of the labor force, and business regulation – are likely to affect future economic performance.

ASSESSING THE DESIGN, ADOPTION, AND IMPACT OF STATE SOLAR FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

SUPPORTER: GW INSTITUTE FOR ANALYSIS OF SOLAR ENERGY

START DATE: OCTOBER 2008

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: ANDREA SARZYNSKI, GARRY YOUNG

As the nation considers ways to transition to a clean energy economy, it appears committed to utilizing financial incentives to encourage adoption of solar and other renewable technology. States have shown substantial policy leadership and innovation as they design and implement solar incentive programs.

Our research has three parts. The first catalogs and assesses the design and variation of state incentives, providing a research base for further analysis. The second assesses the impact of existing state incentives in terms of program participation and project costs. This will allow us to identify the characteristics of incentive design and implementation that are most likely to be successful in encouraging program participation and adoption of solar technology while keeping down costs. In the third part, we explore the diffusion of policy incentives, offering insights for advocates seeking expansion of state programs.

UNDERSTANDING NEW JERSEY'S STATE AND LOCAL TAX SYSTEM

SUPPORTER: THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION

START DATE: JUNE 2009

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: MICHAEL BELL, DAVID BRUNORI

This project is a study of the New Jersey state and local taxation system. The study is made up of two segments. The first will describe the generally accepted components of an ideal state and local tax structure, examining various models used to describe the ideal mix of taxes and non-tax revenue. We will review an extensive body of literature to describe the optimal structure of particular taxes and present what is generally thought to be the best way to structure individual income taxes, corporate income taxes, sales taxes, and property taxes. New Jersey's tax system will be compared to these widely accepted notions of sound tax policy.

SELECTED ONGOING PROJECTS

In the second segment of the study, we will examine particular aspects of the New Jersey tax system; including relative reliance on different types of taxes and non-tax revenue, relative tax levels, the mix of business and household taxes, as well as how New Jersey's tax rates compare with surrounding states.

PRIVATE TWO-YEAR COLLEGES AND THEIR STUDENTS: PATHWAYS, RETURNS, AND POLICY

SUPPORTER: FORD FOUNDATION

START DATE: MARCH 2009

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: STEPHANIE RIEGG CELLINI

In the United States, more than six million students enroll in two-year colleges every year. While much is known about the public community colleges that serve these students, their private sector counterparts (trade schools, occupational colleges, proprietary schools, or for-profit colleges) largely remain a mystery. A greater understanding of these colleges and their students is essential for the design of effective policies involving the regulation and licensing of for-profit colleges, the design of financial aid programs, and optimal investments in public education systems. The project is composed of four parts. The first paper will assess the labor market returns to these colleges, the second will examine student pathways into and out of these colleges, the third will highlight policy implications of the research, and the fourth will develop a larger proposal for further support of this research agenda.

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY VALUATION AND TAX REVENUE FORECASTING IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: A PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE TAX ADMINISTRATION AND REVENUE FORECASTING

SUPPORTER: DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE OF REVENUE ANALYSIS

START DATE: APRIL 2009

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: MICHAEL BELL

The goal of this project is to improve the ability of the District of Columbia to administer the property tax on commercial properties and to forecast property rents and capitalization rates. Property taxes are the largest single source of revenue to the District government. In fiscal year 2008, real property tax revenue was approximately \$1.7 billion and accounted for 36% percent of all operating revenue for the District of Columbia. Significantly, 47% of the total property tax revenue in the District came from 603 large office buildings. The fact that these 603 large office building are only 0.3% of the 176,000 taxable parcels in the District is also noteworthy. The value of large commercial buildings is based on the rental income streams they generate. One of the most significant challenges in determining the market value of large office buildings is estimating the appropriate property rate of return or capitalization rate in the valuation process. To reduce the number of appeals, enhance the perception of fairness in assessed values, and better project property tax revenues, both the derivation and application of property return rates and market values for the largest 603 office buildings are being analyzed. We will first produce a spatial presentation of commercial property sale price and capitalization rate data. Second, we will forecast values of large office buildings in the District by projecting two key variables: property rents and capitalization rates. The deliverable for this task will include two econometric models. These models will be tested for fit to historic downtown office market data. The resulting parameter estimates will be usable in budget projection applications.

STAFF PROFILE

CHARLOTTE KIRSCHNER

BY: KATIE BRUDER



Charlotte Kirschner is a GWIPP Research Associate and manager of Significant Features of the Property Tax, GWIPP's project with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Her responsibilities include managing GWIPP research assistants and their data collection as well as collaborating with Joan Youngman, Semida Munteanu, and Sally Powers of Lincoln. The purposes of this project are provision of scholarly research on the property tax, definition of the parameters of the property tax in all fifty states plus the District, and creation of a publicly available data set regarding those parameters.

Charlotte has a long history with GWIPP. In 2003, she served as a research assistant to Dr. Hal Wolman, collecting data on performance measures used by federal agencies. She was subsequently hired by Dr. Phil Joyce as a team leader for the Government Performance Project, which assessed the management of performance information by the fifty states. Afterward, Charlotte served as a research assistant for two years on the Significant Features project that she now manages. Over the last five years, she has also participated in research estimating the impacts of homeland security costs and methodologies for estimating the benefits of homeland security policies. Most recently, she worked with Dr. Marvin Phaup of the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration on a project for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on international practices of budgeting for disasters.

Charlotte began her education at Syracuse University with a double major in psychology and women's studies. She went on to gain her Masters in Clinical Social Service from Bryn Mawr College, and her goal was to work with victims of violent crime. She worked as a research and statistical analyst at the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts in Philadelphia, where she gained knowledge of domestic violence cases, courthouse security, and juvenile court rules. During this time, she realized that she enjoyed the statistical work and was interested in court provision of different services across jurisdictions. With these two realizations, her interest in public policy began to grow. Her focus shifted when she began her PhD work at GW, and she remembers that Dr. Joe Cordes confirmed that it was, in fact, all right to change your focus. Charlotte also became aware that she could serve victims of violent crime by doing research that influenced policy decisions relevant to these individuals, which she describes as "social work at a different level." Dr. Cordes is her dissertation advisor, and has been a constant source of encouragement throughout her involvement with GW and GWIPP.

Charlotte's work and education have taken her to many different areas. She has traveled to several parts of the US, including Kentucky for presenting a paper on financing homeland security, Seattle for the National Conference on State Legislatures, and Boston for consultation on the Lincoln project. She has also visited Paris twice for conferences on her OECD project with Dr. Phaup.

Charlotte's greatest enthusiasm for her work and education comes from conducting research that will have a policy impact in the real world. She credits her parents with much of her success, as they have always been extremely encouraging of her academic and professional career choices.

POLICY RESEARCH SCHOLAR PROFILE

DR. GREGORY SQUIRES

BY: KATIE BRUDER



Dr. Gregory Squires grew up in suburban Cleveland. He remembers being aware of the Civil Rights Movement at an early age, and how irrational it seemed that some might attribute so much importance to the color of another person's skin. However, as he got older he began to understand that it was not so irrational, as many people profited from this sort of discrimination and exploitation. Issues of racial inequality have subsequently been the focus of his professional activity. Dr. Squires attended college at Northwestern University where he majored in advertising, in the Medill School of Journalism. He wasn't sure what he wanted to do yet, and as he says, "Advertising had the fewest requirements of any major at Northwestern." His attention shifted when he saw the events of the '60s unfolding, and by his junior year, he knew he wanted to pursue sociology.

After college, Dr. Squires had several jobs that furthered his interest in sociology. He worked as a bartender at Friar Tuck's in Chicago, and found that the bar had an unwritten policy to keep the number of African-American patrons to a minimum. He wrote an article exposing the management's discriminatory practices for the *Chicago Sun-Times* but was not fired, he supposes, because he was one of the few honest bartenders. He also volunteer-taught at Cook County jail and did work for the research department of an advertising agency.

He later continued his education at Michigan State University, where he received his Masters and PhD in sociology. Afterwards, he worked as a research analyst for the U.S. Commission of Civil Rights in the Chicago Regional Office. He then taught sociology and urban studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for sixteen years, and was chair of the Sociology Department for four of those. After serving as chair, he spent two years on leave from the university working on fair housing policy with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 2000, he was hired as the chair of the Sociology Department at GW and served for seven years. He is now a Professor of Sociology as well as Public Policy and Public Administration at GW.

Dr. Squires's current research interests are race relations, urban sociology, and urban and metropolitan development. He recently coedited a book with Chester Hartman that was published earlier this summer called *The Integration Debate: Competing Futures for American Cities*. He has published many other books, most recently *Privileged Places: Race, Residence, and the Structure of Opportunity* (with Charis Kubrin) and *Capital Communities in Black and White*.

Throughout his career, Dr. Squires has worked with fair housing and civil rights groups including various government agencies and non-profit organizations, served as an expert witness in fair housing lawsuits, testified before Congress as well as state and local legislative bodies, written more than 100 op-eds for major newspapers, and reached a wide range of academic and non-academic audiences through his work. While he has produced thirteen scholarly books, more than fifty refereed journal articles, and more than 25 book chapters, he claims his greatest accomplishment has been his ability to communicate and work with diverse academic and non-academic audiences.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROFILE

MATT DARST



Matt Darst grew up in North Carolina and attended college at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He double-majored in Economics and Political Science, and was selected by the chair of the Economics Department to lead supplemental instruction for program participants. Dr. Michelle Sheran, one of his professors, helped inspire him to pursue his PhD in Economics. She made the subject matter interesting and engaging, and her course highlighted how economics works in the real world. Professor Sheran told Matt that she believed he would do very well in an economics doctoral program, as well as in the economics working world. His macroeconomics professor, Dr. Ken Snowden, also encouraged Matt to pursue an advanced economics degree. Both of these professors were mentors to Matt, and greatly influenced his academic and professional directions.

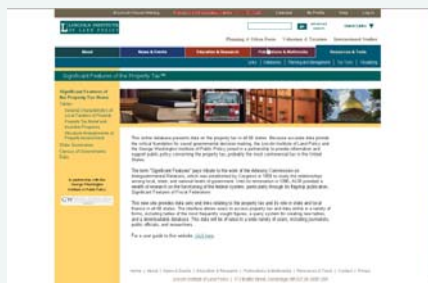
Matt's wife planned to go to law school at GW, so he began applying for government jobs in DC. He worked briefly as a research assistant for a think tank called The Group of 30, and then work as an economist at the Bureau of Labor Statistics for four years. He conducted market research. During this period, he took quantitative classes at American University, Georgetown, GW, and the University of Maryland to supplement the PhD he planned to pursue. Matt ultimately decided that GW was the best fit, and is currently in his second year of PhD classes.

Matt has been at GWIPP for one year. He is currently contributing to the DC Economic Competitiveness project and GWIPP's ongoing project with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. For both of these, he is completing literature reviews, collecting data, analyzing data, and providing feedback on the methods used in the current research in order to improve upon them in GWIPP's research. He is working with GWIPP Director Hal Wolman on the DC Competitiveness project and Charlotte Kirschner on the Lincoln project.

Matt is most interested in the interplay between public finance and macroeconomics, i.e., how public spending affects the larger economic picture. Ultimately, he'd like to teach economics and do research, and perhaps pursue employment with the World Bank or the Federal Reserve. He says his greatest academic accomplishment to date is being accepted to GW's Economics PhD program.

NEWS AND EVENTS

LAUNCH OF WEBSITE: SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF THE PROPERTY TAX



On June 8, 2009, GWIPP and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy held an event to celebrate the official release of the Significant Features of the Property Tax website, a product of multi-year collaboration. Dr. Robert Reischauer, president of the Urban Institute and former director of the Congressional Budget Office, addressed the attendees. He lauded the effort for bringing back a valuable resource that many have missed since 1996, when the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations was disbanded.

The website provides a rich compendium of information for policymakers, practitioners, elected officials, researchers, and journalists on the property tax in the fifty states and the District of Columbia. It is available at <http://lincolnst.edu/subcenters/significant-features-property-tax/>. The project has also contributed to property tax research through commissioned papers by GWIPP researchers and other top scholars.

Over the next year, the research team at GWIPP will be updating the Significant Features database to include data from 2008 and 2009 as well as adding information on effective tax rates, classified property tax systems, ratio studies, and centrally-assessed properties.

URBANIZATION AND ECOSYSTEMS

Research Professor Andrea Sarzynski participated in a week-long workshop on Urbanization and Ecosystems sponsored by the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis and the Nature Conservancy. The workshop brought together a multi-disciplinary and international group of scholars to consider the impacts that 2 billion more urbanites would have on ecosystem services. Sarzynski will now be working with a small team to estimate impacts from urban greenhouse gas and criteria pollutant emissions. Workshop participants will reconvene in early 2010 with a goal to complete a manuscript for publication by July 2010.

PORTLAND AND THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION (APSA) CONFERENCE

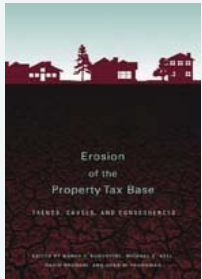
Hal Wolman, GWIPP Director, presented preliminary results for our study on regional economic resilience at a meeting of the MacArthur Foundation's Building Resilient Regions group in Portland, ME this past August. The results identified regions that faced economic shocks over the past thirty year period and whether they were resistant to those shocks, i.e., they were able, within a relatively short period, to return to their prior rate of economic growth.

Hal also chaired a panel on "Obama and the Cities" at the annual conference of the American Political Science Association in Toronto in early September.

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

BELL AND BRUNORI

EROSION OF THE PROPERTY TAX BASE: TRENDS, CAUSES, AND CONSEQUENCES



Edited by GWIPP Research Professors Michael Bell and David Brunori, former GWIPP Senior Research Associate Nancy Augustine, and Joan Youngman of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, this book addresses the causes and consequences of property tax erosion in the United States. Several current and former GWIPP staffers contributed to book chapters, including Nancy Augustine, Michael Bell, David Brunori, Richard Green, Hal Wolman, Elaine Weiss, and Garry Young. Joe Cordes of GW's Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration (TSPPPA) co-authored a chapter as did TSPPPA graduate students Kelly Brown, Lori Metcalf, Jessica Menter, Meghan Salas, Elaine Weiss, and Bing Yuan.

Below is the book's table of contents:

Chapter 1: The Property Tax under Siege

Nancy Augustine, Michael Bell, David Brunori, and Joan Youngman

Chapter 2: Overview of the Trends in Property Tax Base Erosion

Jennifer Gravelle and Sally Wallace (Commentary by Richard Bird)

Chapter 3: Property Tax Exemptions, Revenues, and Equity: Some Lessons from Wisconsin

Richard Green and Elaine Weiss (Commentary by Robert Schwab)

Chapter 4: Residential Property Tax Relief Measures: A Review and Assessment

John Bowman (Commentary by John Anderson)

Chapter 5: Assessment Limits as a Means of Limiting Homeowner Property Taxes

Terri Sexton (Commentary by Jon Sonstelie)

Chapter 6: Tax and Expenditure Limitations and Local Public Finances

Bing Yuan, Joseph Cordes, David Brunori, and Michael Bell (Commentary by Tracy Gordon)

Chapter 7: Efforts to Override School District Property Tax Limitations

Garry Young, Margaret Salas, Kelly Brown (Commentary by Jessica Menter)

Chapter 8: Tax Abatement as a Means of Promoting State and Local Economic Activity

Robert Wassmer (Commentary by Nathan Anderson)

Chapter 9: Preferential Tax Treatment of Property Used for Social Purposes: Fiscal Impacts and Public Policy Implications

Woods Bowman, Joseph Cordes, and Lori Metcalf (Commentary by Julia Friedman)

Chapter 10: The Politics of the Property Tax Base

John Witte (Commentary by Michael Pagano)

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

BELL AND KIRSCHNER

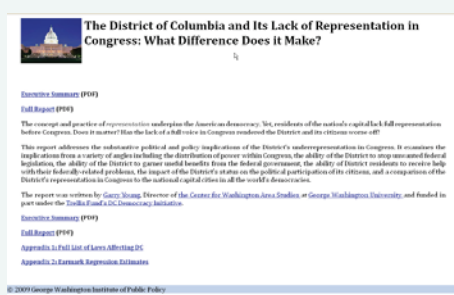
Research Professor Michael Bell and Research Associate Charlotte Kirschner recently wrote an article called “A Reconnaissance of Alternative Measures of Effective Property Tax Rates” for the Summer 2009 issue of *Public Budgeting and Finance*. This paper reviews the strengths and limitations of two popular measures of property tax burdens. The paper then reports the results of a reconnaissance of measures of effective property tax rates and how they vary across the fifty states. The paper also reports the findings of a fifty-state survey that indicates how states calculated and reported effective property tax rates. These comparisons led to a suggested framework for certain methodologies for calculating effective property tax rates.

SARZYNSKI

Research Professor Andrea Sarzynski continues to publish papers on U.S. metropolitan carbon footprints with coauthors Marilyn Brown and Frank Southworth from the Georgia Institute of Technology. One paper was published in the March 2009 issue of *Policy & Society* and the other is a chapter in a forthcoming book on energy security from the Brookings Press.

YOUNG

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND ITS LACK OF REPRESENTATION IN CONGRESS: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?



The concept and practice of representation underpins the American democracy, yet, residents of the nation’s capital lack full representation before Congress. Does it matter? Has the lack of a full voice in Congress rendered the District and its citizens worse off?

The Center for Washington Area Studies, a center within GWIPP, recently released a report written by Garry Young that addresses the substantive political and policy implications of the District’s underrepresentation in Congress. It examines the implications from a variety of angles including

the distribution of power within Congress, the ability of the District to stop unwanted federal legislation, the ability of the District to garner useful benefits from the federal government, the ability of District residents to receive help with their federally-related problems, the impact of the District’s status on the political participation of its citizens, and a comparison of the District’s representation in Congress to the national capital cities in all the world’s democracies.

The was funded in part under the Trellis Fund’s DC Democracy Initiative. To see the report go to <http://www.gwu.edu/~gwipp/research/dcrep/index.htm>.

GW INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC POLICY

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

805 21ST STREET, NW, SIXTH FLOOR
WASHINGTON, DC 20052

(T) 202.994.0970 (F) 202.994.8913 WWW.GWU.EDU/~GWIPP

Non Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Great Falls, MT
Permit No 66

GWIPP CORE STAFF

Hal Wolman, Director
Garry Young, Associate Director
Kimberly Rycroft, Manager, Research Services &
Fiscal Affairs
Charlotte Kirschner, Research Associate
Katie Bruder, Executive Coordinator

STEERING COMMITTEE

2009-2010

School of Business
Vanessa Perry

Columbian College of Arts and
Sciences

Joseph Cordes
Charis Kubrin
Kathy Newcomer
Donald Parsons
Robert Stoker

Graduate School of Education
and Human Development
Yas Nakib

Elliot School of International
Affairs

Martha Finnemore
Nick Vonortas

School of Engineering and

Applied Sciences
Jonathan Deason
Law School
Cynthia Lee

School of Public Health and
Health Services
Sara Rosenbaum

GWIPP RESEARCH PROFESSORS

Patricia Atkins
Michael Bell
David Brunori
Andreea Sarzynski
Clarence Stone
Michael Wiseman

EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Don Borut, National League of Cities
Alan Ehrenhalt, Governing Magazine
Royce Hanson, Montgomery County (MD)
Planning Board
Jeff Henig, Columbia University Teachers
College
William Hudnut, Urban Land Institute
John Kingdon, University of Michigan
Faith Mitchell, Grantmakers in Health
David Robertson, Metropolitan Washington
Council of
Governments
James Robinson, GWU
Bob Schwab, University of Maryland
Margery Turner, The Urban Institute

MAIL TO: