

## Greetings from Cullowhee Message from the Department Head, Dr. Gibbs Knotts [GKNOTTS@WCU.EDU](mailto:GKNOTTS@WCU.EDU)

Our students, faculty and alumni continue to do amazing work. Here in Western North Carolina, the 2010 election cycle provided a number of opportunities for engaged learning by our students. Junior political science major Mitch Bridges, of Shelby, put in countless hours with the local tea party, and senior Brandon Hawks, of Sparta, played a key role in Jim Davis's successful election to the North Carolina Senate from District 50. Senior Tristan Artman, of Sharpsburg, Ga., was also heavily involved in the midterm elections and even spent considerable time as a poll worker here in Jackson County. The Model United Nations Team is thriving under the leadership of Dr. Jen Schiff and senior Hayden Smith, of Sylva. The group traveled to the international Model United Nations Conference in New York last spring and a regional conference this fall in Charlotte. You can learn more about the accomplishments of current students throughout this edition of our newsletter.

As director of the Public Policy Institute, Dr. Chris Cooper is moving the PPI in some very exciting directions – serving as one of the key outreach arms for our university and starting a North Carolina Politics and Policy blog ([wcuppi.blogspot.com](http://wcuppi.blogspot.com)) that provides some outstanding nonpartisan political analysis in the Tar Heel state. One of the most exciting developments in our department is the addition of three new faculty members this year. I wanted to say how fortunate we are to have Dr. Dan Bromberg, Dr. Roger Hartley and Dr. Jen Schiff in our department. It is also a pleasure to work with our talented group of adjunct faculty, such as Claudia Bryant, Andy Coburn, Mark Crawford, Paul Dezendorf and Don Kostelec '99. In addition, Vickey Wade



continues to provide outstanding leadership directing the Local Government Training Program and mentoring students. You can read more about the accomplishments of our faculty and profiles of our new folks below.

One of the best parts of my job is when we get to reconnect with our talented graduates. In October, we were very fortunate to receive

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## Student Spotlight

Michael Arriola, of Asheville, was named the Outstanding MPA Graduate. Arriola works for the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Katy Elders, of Sylva, was the inaugural winner of the C. Don Livingston Scholarship. Elders has received numerous awards from the department and has a co-authored paper, with Dr. Chris Cooper and Dr. Gibbs Knotts, on Appalachian identity that is under review at an academic journal.

Michael Fitzwater, of Concord, was named the Outstanding Freshman and Alex Templeton, of Garner, was the Outstanding Sophomore.

Shaylee Formanek, of Onalaska, Wis., received the 2009-10 Chan Carpenter Scholarship. Formanek is applying to schools and was recently accepted at The John Marshall Law School in Chicago.

Phillip Matulich, of Brevard, received the 2009-10 Outstanding Major Award. This award is given to the graduating senior with the highest grade point average.

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## Greetings from Cullowhee

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a visit from Doug Bailey '93, region vice president for state affairs at Anheuser-Busch Companies. Doug spoke to Dr. Cooper and Dr. Livingston's classes and held a meet-and-greet for students interested in government relations careers. Later in the fall semester, three distinguished alums, Mary Margaret Smith '03, Andrew MacRae '05 and Jim McCabe '04, returned to Cullowhee to visit classes and talk with students about interning and working in Washington, D.C. Catch up with some more of our alumni on page 4.

Just this fall, we honored one of our most accomplished alumnae, Leslie Anderson '72 MPA '85, with the second annual College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Alumni Award. Leslie has worked for more than 30 years in the public and nonprofit sectors in Western North Carolina. She played a crucial role in the redevelopment of downtown Asheville during her nine-year tenure as Asheville's director of downtown development. She has received numerous awards for her public service and was named in "Western North Carolina's 50 Most Influential People of the Century" by the Asheville Citizen-Times.

Finally, I want to extend a special thanks to Dr. Gordon Mercer for his 30 years of service to the university. Dr. Mercer is ending three years of phased retirement in May. During his time in Cullowhee, Dr. Mercer mentored thousands of students both inside and outside the classroom. He served in numerous leadership positions, including department head from 1980-1992 and MPA director from 1992-1997 and 1999-2002. Perhaps most importantly, Dr. Mercer was founding director of the Public Policy Institute in 1999 and led the PPI to considerable heights during his 10 years as director. He assembled the state's most influential leaders to discuss significant public policy issues such as domestic terrorism, cultural diversity, economic development, and cultural and heritage tourism.

As always, our No. 1 goal is to create meaningful learning experiences for students. These experiences would not be possible without the help of wonderful teachers, dedicated students, and support from our alumni and departmental friends. If you have questions about the department, please do not hesitate to contact me or visit our website at <http://politicalscience.wcu.edu>. Please keep us posted on new developments in your life and let us know if you would like to get involved in the activities of our department.

# Message from the MPA Director

## Roger Hartley [REHARTLEY@WCU.EDU](mailto:REHARTLEY@WCU.EDU)



I am very pleased for the opportunity to write my first message to the Western Carolina MPA community as the new director. As a native of West Virginia, it has been a dream of mine to help build a program that produces public and nonprofit leaders committed to improving the

Appalachian region. Before I say anymore, I want to offer my deepest thanks to Dr. Chris Cooper for his excellent leadership of the program from 2005-10 and for his help and support as I transition into this job. Thankfully, Chris is still very involved in the MPA program and is just down the hall leading our Public Policy Institute, which is one of the most important community engagement arms of our university.

A number of our students and alumni have recently received honors or awards. Travis Ramsey MPA '10 won the 2010 Best Project Award from the North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association for a class project he completed under the direction of Don Kostelec. Emily Ball, a Mars Hill resident and a recent AmeriCorps volunteer, received a competitive internship with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, an initiative of the Obama administration. Some of our alumni also were recognized for their outstanding service. For example, Kendra Turner '04 MPA '06 of the City of Asheville received two awards for her community service work in the region. Sarah Nunez MPA '10 also received recognition in the Asheville Citizen-Times for her work in service to the Latino community. Finally, congratulations to alumnus Mike Morgan MPA '88, manager of the town of Weaverville, on his retirement. We are thrilled that Mike will be joining us as an adjunct professor in the spring of 2011. He will be teaching the core MPA budgeting and finance course.

Despite hard times, we have been able to provide financial aid to our students with the generous support of the university, our community partners and alumni. Eight MPA students are currently serving as graduate assistants. They work with faculty on teaching and research projects or provide valuable

research support to the Public Policy Institute. The City of Asheville has continued providing scholarship support to two city employees, and this year's recipients are Jessica Dunlap and Jackie Stepp of Asheville. In addition, the North Carolina City and County Management Association chose Paige Roberson of Sylva to receive its scholarship. She will be recognized in the spring at the association's annual meeting in Raleigh.

One of my goals is to connect our students and our alumni more closely to our program. This fall, we held a well-attended student orientation at the WCU Graduate Center in Asheville. We were especially grateful to have alums Brenda Mills MPA '09, Sarah Nunez MPA '10 and Laura Jeffords MPA '09 welcome our students. In October, Brenda, Sarah and Mike Arriola MPA '10 worked with our new Public Affairs Student Association to hold a student-alumni mixer at Mayfel's in Asheville. In the coming year, we hope to form an active alumni association to work with our student association to provide networking opportunities that will make our program even stronger. Finally, we are using social media to share news and internship and jobs announcements. We created a Facebook page (WCU MPA Program) and a group on LinkedIn.com (Western Carolina University Masters of Public Affairs). Please join our online community.

While the boundaries of our program extend past Western North Carolina, the impact of the WCU MPA on the region is substantial. Of our 350 alums, many live and work in this part of the state. When I came to WCU this summer, I began meeting alums and friends of our program, and the welcome I have received has been inspiring. The WCU MPA community introduced me to the region and has invited me to meetings of regional policy makers. There has been a genuine expression of support for our program and an interest in helping our students. We have received offers to host student internships, contribute to capstone projects, serve as guest speakers, and to teach and mentor our students. Your help is deeply appreciated by our students and it is a critical part of the learning experience. I look forward to pouring my energy and hard work into improving our program. I also look forward to working with each of you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to say hello, meet our students or reconnect.

# Faculty Spotlight

**Dr. Todd Collins** continues to advise pre-law students and has recently published articles in *Political Research Quarterly*, *Politics and Religion* and *Law and Policy*. He teaches courses on judicial processes and constitutional law and has contributed to the op-ed pages of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and the *Asheville Citizen-Times*.

**Dr. Chris Cooper** heads the Public Policy Institute and continues his good work teaching, mentoring students and doing academic research. His research record includes recent publications in *Psychological Assessment*, *Political Research Quarterly*, and *Southern Cultures*. The Public Policy Institute continues to host the American Youth Congress and has worked on projects for local organizations including the town of Black Mountain.

**Professor Fred Fisher** continues to teach courses such as “American Government and Politics,” “Global Issues,” and the “Freshman Seminar: Active Citizenship.” Yes, he still has his Harley.

**Dr. Gibbs Knotts** was the 2010 Board of Governor’s Teaching Award winner and the 2010 University Scholar Award winner. He serves as vice president of the Southern Conference and as a member of the North Carolina Political Science Association executive committee. He recently had an article accepted for publication in *Southern Cultures* and op-ed pieces in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and the *(Raleigh) News & Observer*.

**Dr. Don Livingston** continues to be recognized for his high level of teaching. He was a finalist for the 2010 Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award and was

recently nominated for the 2011 Board of Governors Teaching Award. He recently had an article accepted for publication in *Politics and Religion*.

**Dr. Gordon Mercer** is staying busy in his third year of phased-retirement. He continues as president of Pi Gamma Mu International Honor Society and travels frequently for that organization. Mercer hosts a radio show, “Citizens Making a Difference,” on WFSC, which covers six counties, and along with his wife, Marcia, writes a column for *The Franklin Press*.

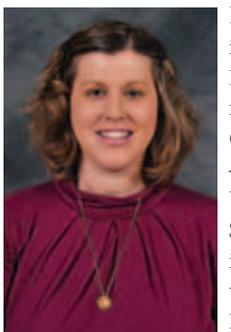
**Dr. Niall Michelsen** continues to serve the College of Arts and Sciences as associate dean. He spearheads a number of college initiatives, including enrollment and curriculum. He recently presented a paper on the “Obama effect” in Middelburg, Netherlands.

## New Faculty Profile



**Dr. Dan Bromberg** has a doctorate in public administration from Rutgers University, a master of public affairs from the University of Vermont and a bachelor of arts from the State University of New York at Albany. His specific teaching and research interests include public management, performance measurement, privatization, governance networks, public-private partnerships, and e-government. His dissertation focused on government contracting, and during his time in graduate school, he worked with the Public Performance Measurement & Reporting Network. Bromberg lives in West Asheville with his wife, Shira.

**Dr. Roger Hartley** arrived at WCU from the University of Arizona, where he was a tenured associate professor and director of the Rombach Institute of Justice within the School of Government and Public Policy. In addition, he served as interim director of the School of Public Administration and Policy and as an associate dean of the Eller College of Management. His research focuses on court issues and reforms such as alternative dispute resolution, drug courts, state court budgets, and the increased polarization of lower federal court nominees. He received his bachelor of science in public affairs from Indiana University and his master of arts and doctorate in political science from the University of Georgia. Hartley lives in Asheville with his wife, Melissa, and their 3-year-old son, Emmett.



**Dr. Jen Schiff** comes to WCU after completing her doctorate in international studies at Old Dominion University. While at Old Dominion, she was recognized for her teaching and research excellence, receiving the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award and the Outstanding Paper Award from the International Studies Association – South meeting. Schiff has a bachelor of arts in history from the University of Virginia and a master of arts in history from Cleveland State University. She is a key contributor to the university’s new international studies major and recently created two new courses for the department – “International Political Economy” and “International Environmental Politics.” She lives in Sylva with her husband, Dan.

## Where Has My Professor Gone?

We often get asked about faculty who are no longer in the department. The following is a short list regarding some of those individuals.

Dr. Claudia Bryant is assistant director of International Programs and Services at WCU.

Dr. Bruce Carroll is assistant professor of Criminal Justice at Texas Christian University.

Professor Mickey Duvall was recently named county manager in Graham County.

Dr. Ken Wink was recently appointed interim dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of Texas at Tyler.

## Alumni Spotlight

Mike Blackmon '05 is a law student at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Andrew Brock '98 is a member of the North Carolina Senate and is president and CEO of Brock Communication in Mocksville.

Christopher Douglas '07 is working for the Veterans Administration in hospital administration in Augusta, Maine, and completing an MBA program with a human resources concentration at Thomas College in Waterville, Maine.

Tim Hines '10 was a regional field organizer for U.S. congressional candidate Carol Shea-Porter in New Hampshire.

Wade Livingston '04, who earned a doctorate in 2009 from Clemson University, is an assistant professor in the Department of Leadership, Counselor Education, and Human & Organizational Development at Clemson University.

Andrew MacRae '05 is a telecommunications policy analyst at the U.S. Department of Commerce in Washington.

Jim McCabe '04 is an intelligence analyst with the U.S. Department of Defense.

Sherry Melton MPA '95 is executive vice president at Ken Melton & Associates in Raleigh.

Mary Margaret Smith '03 is a legislative writer/congressional affairs specialist with the Office of Compliance.

Carrie Vickery '06 is associate attorney with Walter C. Holton Jr. PLLC in Winston-Salem.



Andrew Brock

## Giving Opportunities

### Political Science/Public Affairs Development Fund

We use the money from this fund to support initiatives we cannot afford with our state budget funds. Our primary goal is to enhance the educational experiences of our students and prepare them for life after WCU. We also support faculty participation in academic research, conferences and workshops.

### C. Don Livingston Scholarship

Thanks to the continued generosity of many individuals, the Livingston scholarship is now fully endowed. Additional contributions can be given to honor Livingston and increase the support we can provide to our students.

### Chan Carpenter Scholarship

An endowed scholarship awarded to pre-law political science students. Contributions can be given to honor the memory of Carpenter and will help provide additional resources to students interested in a legal career.

### Charles Stevens Scholarship

An endowed scholarship awarded to a political science student interested in international relations. Contributions can be given to honor the memory of Stevens and help students pursue international relations and study abroad opportunities.

If you have questions about making a gift, contact Gibbs Knotts, department head, at [gknotts@wcu.edu](mailto:gknotts@wcu.edu).

## Student Spotlight *(Continued from page 1)*

Matthew Neely, of Highlands, received the 2009-10 Harold Rogers Award. This award is given to the best all around political science graduate. Neely is working a security position in Highlands and contemplating his graduate school options.

MPA student Paige Roberson, of Sylva, received the 2010-11 North Carolina City and County Managers Association scholarship.

Hayden Smith, of Sylva, was presented with the 2009-10 Charles Stevens Scholarship. Hayden has been active in the Model United Nations Club and plans to attend graduate school to pursue a doctorate in political science.

Caroline Wright, of Chesapeake, Va., returned from a yearlong study abroad experience at the University of Glamorgan in Wales. Wright wrote a dissertation on the use of Twitter among members of the U.S. Congress and the British Parliament.

Ginny Volio, of Sylva, participated in a travel course in Kenya during the summer of 2010. She traveled with WCU sociology professors Dr. Tony Hickey and Dr. Nyaga Mwaniki.