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Celebrating Silver...



Informing the **Public** & Guiding **Policy** by **Conducting** Research

2013 - 2014 Annual Report

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A Message from the Director...

It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report for the PPC's 25th Anniversary Year, a remarkable and rewarding year. The 2013-14 report highlights the center's achievements towards meeting its mission to provide policy makers and the public with nonpartisan, research-based information to make our lives and communities thrive in sustainable ways.

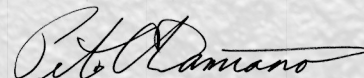
The center had a banner year for research funding, holding 37 active grants totaling over \$25 million - a record high for the center and the highest amount of research funding for any center on campus in AY 2013-14. This funding supported innovative research across our core research areas of [Environmental Policy](#), [Health Policy](#), [Housing & Land Use Policy](#), [Human Factors & Vehicle Safety Policy](#), [Social Science Policy](#), and [Transportation Policy](#). We also reorganized the staff structure of the [Iowa Social Science Research Center](#), including the hiring of new staff and the appointment of a new Interim Director. The reorganization will allow the staff to meet the demand for grant development and data collection services, as well as explore new opportunities to support social science research on campus.

Our researchers collaborated with individuals across all of UI's colleges as well as colleagues across the country and around the world to pursue inquiry into a wide range of topics including: assessing crash causes using naturalistic data; parental knowledge of school lunch programs; the impact of the Affordable Care Act and the expansion of Medicaid programs; economic prosperity and housing affordability; the diffusion of public policies across the states; travel impacts of rising fuel prices; and the impact of Water Smart Reader ownership. This research funding provided over 40 undergraduate and graduate students, from a wide variety of disciplines, with applied research training experience and opportunities to collaborate with and present to their peers and colleagues.

I am also proud of the partnerships we have developed to provide community engaged events to share the expertise and resources with policymakers and the public through speakers, and symposia. Our anniversary year of celebration included hosting and co-sponsoring several events aimed at stimulating discussion on pressing policy issues. All of our events, from our symposium on the Financial Implications of Extreme Weather Events to the film screening of *Inequality of for All* to our Women and Politics symposium, drew a diverse group of speakers and audience members to contemplate our most pressing and current issues.

So what lies ahead? The PPC National Advisory Committee will convene for the first time in December 2014 and I look forward to gaining insights from our esteemed colleagues from institutions across the nation. We will evaluate our research areas, honing our focus to capitalize on the strengths of our faculty and staff. We will continue to host and co-sponsor events that stimulate nonpartisan, policy-relevant discussion. We will develop our existing relationships and continue to seek new partnerships in our community and beyond.

I am grateful to the Public Policy Center's staff and faculty for all the hard work that led to these significant accomplishments. On behalf of all of us, thank you for your support and we look forward to working with you in 2014-15.



25 Years...



The Public Policy Center is proud and excited to celebrate our 25th year. David Forkenbrock founded the Center in 1987 to be an interdisciplinary academic research unit in the Office of the Vice President for Research, to investigate and inform policymakers about the most important issues affecting our daily lives. His nurturing hand guided the Center for 19 years into a well respected, non-partisan purveyor of information to policymakers, students, and the public. He served as its director until his retirement in September 2007.

Dr. Forkenbrock came to the UI in 1978 and became a nationally recognized transportation researcher and a prominent faculty member, serving as professor in the departments of Urban and Regional Planning and Civil and Environmental Engineering. He served as chair of Urban and Regional Planning, chair of the Faculty Senate budget committee, and head of a campus-wide effort to improve interdisciplinary research.

In 2005, as a result of his research, the PPC received a four-year, \$16.5 million federal grant to test his mileage-based approach to financing public roads. Dr. Forkenbrock developed the study, which uses data gathered by Global Positioning System receivers embedded in vehicles, as an alternative method (to declining fuel tax revenues) of paying for highway maintenance.

Dr. Forkenbrock's years of service to the university, and his vision in founding the PPC resulted in a center that brings together researchers from a variety of disciplines to inform the public and policy makers at the local, state and national level through sound academic research. Following his retirement, he continued to serve as professor emeritus. He died in January of 2008 from complications of lymphoma.

The interdisciplinary traditions continue to grow, with our research teams acting as conduits for bringing together scholars and policymakers to tackle these most challenging questions. We are proud of our heritage, and driven by our intellectual curiosity to want to learn more and share that knowledge with others.



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Highlights



The research programs of the PPC received 37 grants totaling \$25,395,063.

10 grants and \$1,830,966.00 are pending and soon to be awarded.

Over 170 journal articles, reports, presentations, proceedings, briefs and blog posts were published or delivered.



The Human Factors and Vehicle Safety Program received three grants as part of the Safety Research and Education Program established by the recent Toyota Economic Loss class action settlement.

The grants will fund automotive safety research and the development and implementation of a national education campaign to help drivers understand the safety systems in their vehicles.



Employed by PPC & ISRC, FY 2013-2014:

Faculty - 38

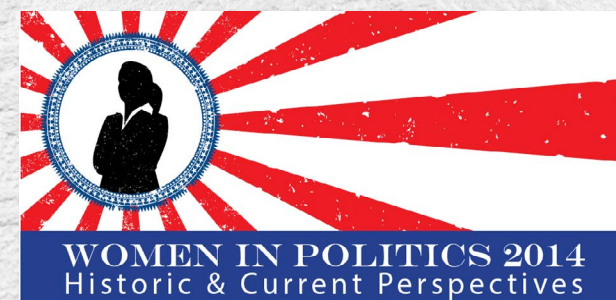
P&S - 38

GRA - 21

Hourly Student - 105



The Forkenbrock Series on Public Policy hosted a statewide symposium on Extreme Weather in Des Moines. Many state directors and legislators presented at the symposium, with over 150 in attendance.



The Women in Politics symposium in April drew a large audience, with thoughtful discussion and keynote presentation by U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar.

Four "What If?" public forums were held at the Iowa City Public Library in April. The events were very well-received and will be reprised next spring as a lead up to the Iowa caucuses.



Fred Boehmke, Professor of Political Science, took over the role of Director of the Iowa Social Science Research Program and Interim Director of the [Iowa Social Science Research Center](#).

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Research Programs

Interdisciplinary collaborative academic research is at the heart of the Public Policy Center. Our 2013-14 research policy areas were:

- Environmental
- Health
- Housing and Land Use
- Human Factors and Vehicle Safety
- Social Science
- Transportation

All PPC faculty have joint appointments in other academic departments across campus. Research is also conducted and supported by an outstanding staff within the PPC and a cadre of graduate and undergraduate students. PPC researchers disseminate their findings through journal articles, books, monographs, and policy briefs. They also interact regularly with state and federal policy makers and provide them with research support, testify before congressional committees, and host or participate in many public events each year.



Environmental Research Policy



Housing & Land Use Research Policy



Transportation & Vehicle Safety Research Policy

Health Research Policy



Social Science Research Policy



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Environmental Policy Research Program Highlights



The Environmental Policy research program received grants totaling \$439,989.

Over 30 journal articles, reports, presentations, proceedings, briefs and blog posts were published or delivered.



Coming up in 2014/2015: \$600K NSF Water Sustainability & Climate grant

- 7 early career faculty (including Spak, as c-PI, and Strong)
- Partnership with Iowa farmers
- Models the impact on water resources of climate change and processes by which decisions are made by local watershed management authorities and land owners/managers



Jon Carlson, Professor of Law & International Studies directs the Environmental Policy Research Program.



The Environmental Policy Program helped coordinate a statewide symposium on Extreme Weather for the Forkenbrock Series. In addition to state directors and legislators, Aaron Strong presented at the symposium.

Partnership with Urban & Regional Planning - three of four faculty have sole or joint appointment in URP



Lucie Laurian

Associate Professor,
Environmental planning processes; public impacts; public participation



Scott Spak

Assistant Professor
Application of science in environmental planning and policy; Earth and human system modeling



Aaron Strong

Assistant Professor
Environmental Economics

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Health Policy Research Program Highlights



The Health Policy research program received grants totaling \$3,652,391.

Over 100 journal articles, reports, presentations, proceedings, briefs and blog posts were published or delivered.



Better coordination of care is a theme in many research projects including:

- Medicaid Health Homes
- Integrated Health Homes
- Community Care Coordination Team Evaluation

Iowa Health & Wellness Plan: Iowa's Medicaid Expansion

\$4 million evaluation-begins soon

Includes many aspects of the heart of the PPC:

- Responsiveness
 - 4 month evaluation plan development
- Big Data
 - Medicaid claims and enrollment files (1.5 T of data)
- Iowa focused
 - Very important for state's ability to get Medicaid expansion
- National implications
 - Many interested in IA and AR for using private plans



Elizabeth Momany, Associate Research Scientist at the Public Policy Center, is the Assistant Director of the Health Policy Research Program.



Health Collaborations

- Iowa Department of Human Services
- Iowa Department of Public Health
- Iowa Department of Education
- The Dentaquest Foundation
- The Commonwealth Fund
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

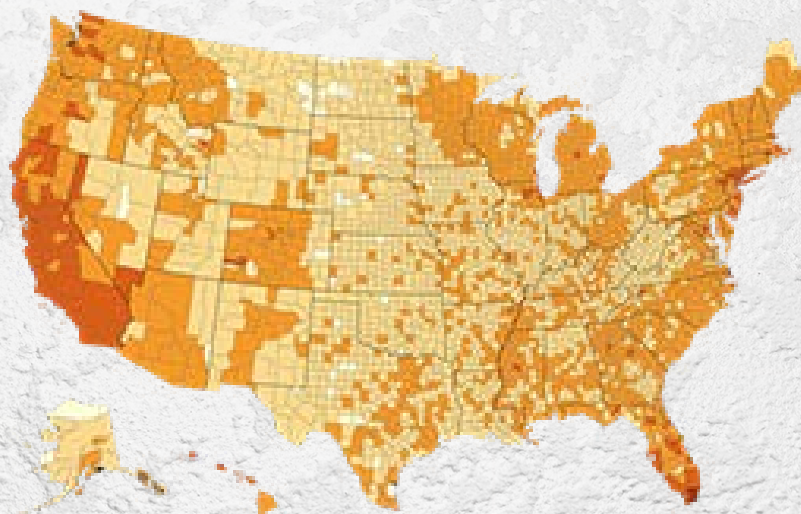
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Housing & Land Use Research Policy Program Highlights



The Housing & Land Use Policy research program received grants totaling \$81,864.

10 journal articles, reports, presentations, proceedings, briefs and blog posts were published or delivered.

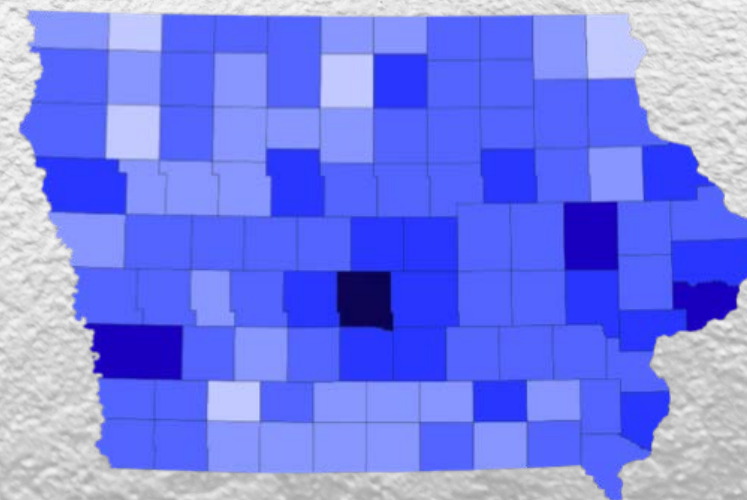


National Housing Cost-Burden Map

- Launched an interactive map of housing needs for all U.S. counties for 1990, 2000, and 2010
- Housing Costs have risen over the past two decades regardless of the state of the economy

Foreclosure Trends in Iowa

- Interactive map of foreclosures in Iowa counties, 2012-2015
- Report on foreclosure hot-spots in the state, 2006-2012



Jerry Anthony, Associate Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, directs the Housing & Land Use Policy Research Program.

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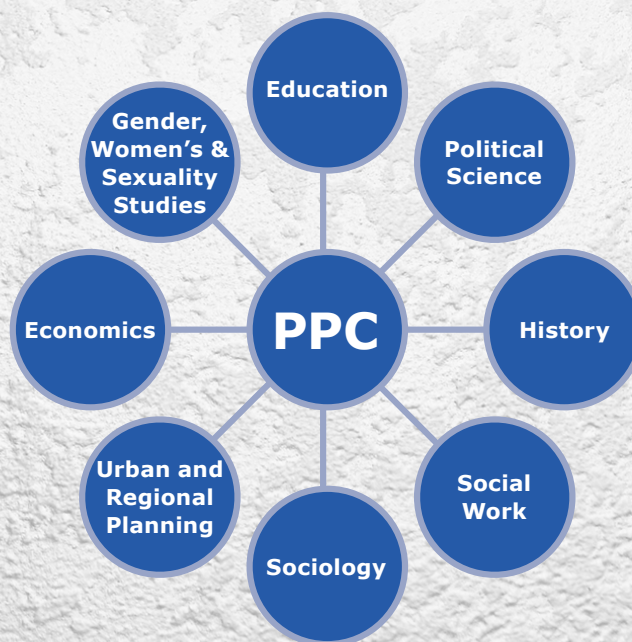
Social Science Research Policy Program Highlights

Networking of faculty working on policy-related social science:

- Seven faculty affiliates
- Two faculty with partial appointments



20 journal articles, reports, presentations, proceedings, briefs and blog posts were published or delivered.



Areas of research:

- STEM education policy
- Electoral policy and governance
- Social inequality
- Health policy and economics
- GIS and history of urban policy
- Domestic violence
- Criminal justice and race/gender disparities
- State Policy Innovation



Social Science Interdisciplinary Group (SSIG) Colloquia Topics:

- Fracking and Media Activism (Ion Bogdan Vasi, Sociology)
- Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (Chuck Connerly, Urban & Regional Planning)
- Kindergarten Class Size and Academic Achievement (David Frisvold, Economics)
- Women, Wood and Climate Change in Rajasthan, India (Meena Khandelwal, Anthropology & GWSS)
- Experiments in Election Reform (Caroline Tolbert, Political Science)



Fred Boehmke, Professor in the Department of Political Science, directs the Social Science Policy Research Program.

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Transportation and Vehicle Safety Policy Research Program Highlights

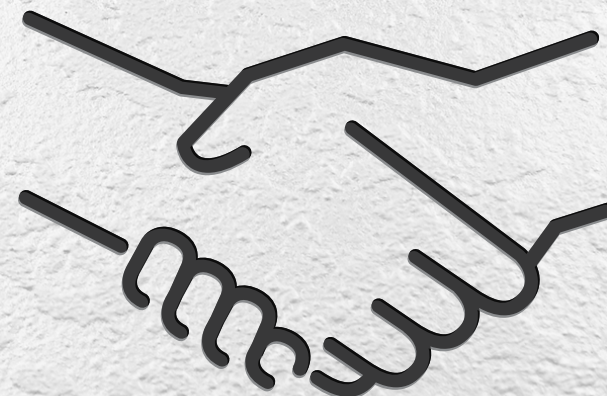


The Transportation & Vehicle Safety Policy research program received grants totaling \$21,220,819.



- National Driver Safety Survey
- National Driver Safety Campaign
- AAA Foundation: Crash Causation in Naturalistic Driving – analysis of >2,000 crash DriveCam crash videos
- NIH Teen driving video and parental communication intervention
- Toyota Collaborative Research Center foot pedal behaviors studies

20 journal articles, technical reports, and proceedings were published or delivered.



New Partnerships

- Chalmers University of Technology
- SAFER Vehicle and Traffic Safety Centre at Chalmers
- VOLVO



Traumahawk

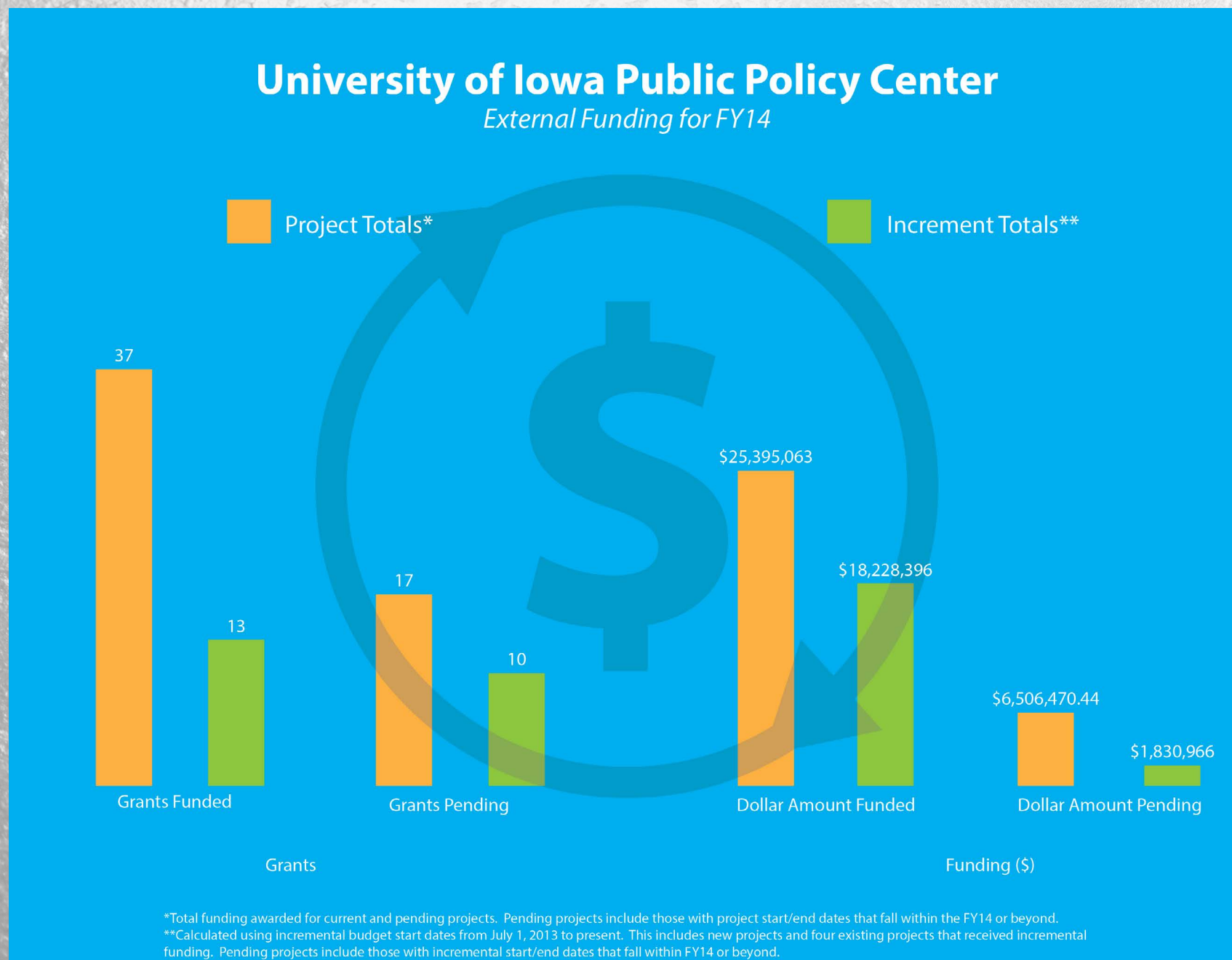
Traumahawk crash scene photo app helps ERs prepare more efficiently for incoming injuries.



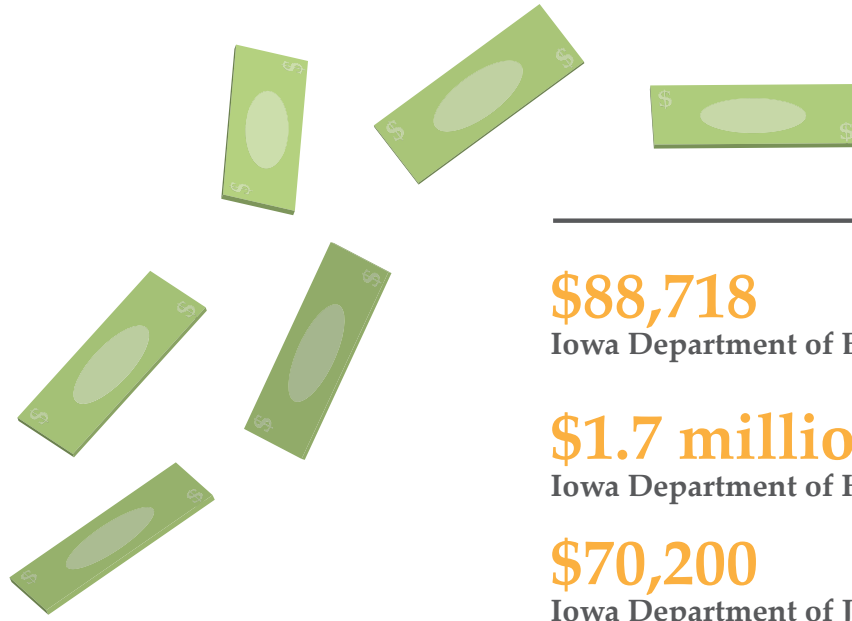
Dan McGehee, Adjunct Professor, Mechanical & Industrial Engineering, Occupational Health & Emergency Medicine, directs the Transportation & Vehicle Safety Policy Research Program.

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Externally Funded Research:



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External Funding Sponsors

External Funding for 2014 Grants & Contracts

\$388,170

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

\$169,766

Commonwealth Fund

\$118,547

Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation

\$367,852

DentaQuest Foundation

\$11,664

Iowa City, Iowa (City of)

\$88,718

Iowa Department of Education

\$1.7 million

Iowa Department of Human Services

\$70,200

Iowa Department of Justice

\$666,967

Iowa Department of Public Health

\$556,930

Iowa Department of Transportation

\$282,400

Iowa State University

\$197,227

Korea Institute of Construction
Technology

\$389,689

Magellan Behavioral Care of Iowa,
Inc.

\$592,731

Mid-America Transportation Center

\$766,787

NIH

\$20,000

Rural Solutions

\$18 million

Toyota Motor Corporation

\$389,989

U.S. National Science Foundation

\$14,925

University of Washington

\$20,000

Wellmark Foundation

\$398,754

Westat, Inc.

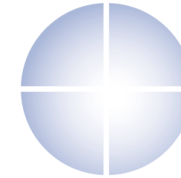
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Community Engagement

In 2008, the Forkenbrock Series on Public Policy was established to expand the public engagement activities of the PPC by providing interdisciplinary forums to share information on important policy-related topics with policymakers and the public. The series sponsors lectures, film screenings, panel discussions and symposia designed to bring together academic researchers, policymakers, and other key stakeholders such as business leaders, students and the public on the most pressing issues of our time.

Over the academic year, the Public Policy Center hosted and co-sponsored several public events. The events were well-attended and continue to grow in popularity and engagement with the University community and the corridor community.

Staff also engaged in several community outreach events throughout the year, including a Habitat for Humanity build, and service at the Iowa City Free Lunch program.



FORKENBROCK SERIES

ON PUBLIC POLICY

2013-2014 Forkenbrock Series on Public Policy Schedule of Events

Inequality for All Film Screening and Panel Discussion	November 19, 2013
Extreme Weather Symposium	December 3, 2013
What If? a Series of Public Forums	April 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2014
Women in Politics Symposium	April 18, 2014

Other Community Engagement Events

Habitat for Humanity Build	October 18, 2013
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INEQUALITY FOR ALL, Film Screening



On November 19, community members and University staff and students packed the seats of MacBride Auditorium to overflowing for the screening of Robert Reich's documentary, *Inequality for All*. Reich himself joined the audience via Skype for a Q&A, as a prelude to the screening.

The film examines the widening income inequality in the United States. Reich, a previous (and popular!) Forkenbrock Series presenter, is an American economist, author and professor at Harvard and Berkeley, and U.S. Secretary of Labor under Bill Clinton. The film premiered at Sundance Film Festival

and won a U.S. Documentary Special Jury Award for Achievement in Filmmaking.

Reich narrates the story of the widening income gap and examines what effects this growing inequality has not only on the U.S. economy, but American democracy itself. At the heart of the film is a simple proposition: What is a good society and what role does the widening income gap play in the deterioration of the nation's economic health?

The film was followed by a panel discussion with members of the Sociology Department's faculty and representatives of local charitable

agencies, and moderated by Ben Kieffer of Iowa Public Radio. The film generated much lively discussion among the audience.

Donations of non-perishable food, paper products or baby items were collected as "admission" to the event, and benefited The Crisis Center of Johnson County. The drive collected 345 pounds of food. In addition, guests donated \$304, the equivalent of another 1,216 pounds of food.

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Extreme Weather Symposium



"Iowans love to talk about the weather, and sometimes the more extreme the better... makes better conversation. When those extremes start becoming patterns, though, as we've been seeing of late, that becomes a little bit different." So kicked off Peter Damiano's welcome remarks at "Adapting to Weather Extremes: the Economic Impact in Iowa", a daylong symposium in Des Moines.

Befitting, then, that nearly a quarter of the 200 registered attendees were deterred by bad roads that wintery day in early December (3) - a precursor to one of the harshest Iowa winters on record in 35 years.

The symposium examined the extreme weather fluctuations the state has experienced over the past several years, and how those swings have negatively impacted Iowa

agriculture, business, government, and citizens. The topics were presented and dissected by panels made up of state, county and city department heads, academic experts, and policy makers.

Panel topics included natural resource management issues, agricultural issues, and infrastructure issues. These were rounded out by keynote presentations on severe weather patterns (Chris Anderson, ISU Climate Science Program), challenges from the insurance industry managing additional risk (Nick Gerhart, Iowa Insurance Commissioner), and anticipating impacts of the 2012 drought in Iowa (David Swenson, ISU Department of Economics).

The day wrapped up with policy discussions and the following takeaways: The impact of

extreme weather events in Iowa necessitates flexible policy for the sustainable support of key natural resources, agricultural practices, major utilities, and essential infrastructure across the state. Science must guide these policy discussions to ensure the practices, and standards that result will reflect weather and climate as it continues to change. The state must consider the ongoing dialogue among citizens, scientists, and policymakers to do more than mitigate past errors, and prepare for the future crop yields needed to support nearly two billion more people in the world. Finally, the consideration of climate when planning for a more resilient infrastructure is key.

To learn more about the symposium or to view presentations from the event, click [here](#), and then on the "Presentations" tab.

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What If?

The next time you're at the gas pump, ask yourself, "What if gas were \$10/gallon in the next two to five years?" The Public Policy Center pondered that very question in its very first "What If?" series of public forums at the Iowa City Public Library.

On four Tuesdays in April, PPC, university and community experts examined hypothetical questions and the unintended consequences of these eventualities in a casual, conversational setting with the 70-100 local citizens and "universitizens" who attended the weekly discussions. The topics drew thoughtful, animated discussion among the audience – which was the ultimate goal of the series.

The first of the series on April 8 covered the aforementioned \$10/gallon question, including its effects on individual travel, consumer choices and automation of vehicles. Audience members laughed and cringed at the possibility of giving over control to one's vehicle when Sue Chrysler showed a video simulation of an automated, controlled intersection from a bird's eye view and from a driver's perspective.

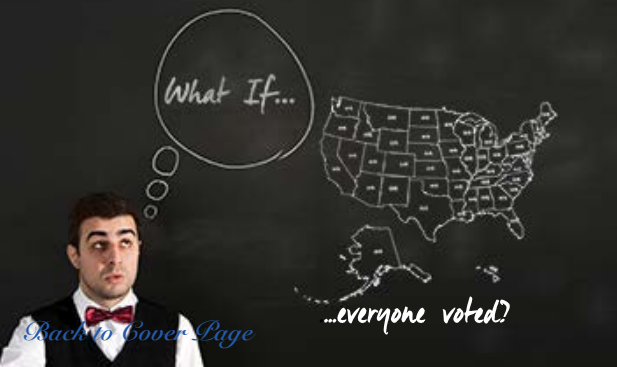
The second forum posed the more complex question, "What if we reached a sustainable economy/society?" The panel examined current and potential alternatives to the state of the economy, environment and society with regards to the role economics plays in shaping the future. Participants discussed the impact current economic trends have on income distribution, environmental impact and consumption, what those consequences can be, and alternative paths.

"What if everyone had health insurance?" was the third, and perhaps most topical question of the series, with the Affordable Care Act's inaugural enrollment period having just passed. Included in the discussion were the effects of full coverage for everyone: where and when people get care, who will provide their care, and the costs to our economy. Participants pondered, Will we end up rationing care? Will people be healthier or sicker? Where will the money come from?

The last in the series, "What if everyone voted?" imagined a scenario of 100% voter participation and its myriad consequences for our electoral system, political campaigns, and representation by government officials. Local experts provided thought-provoking reflections on this scenario in order to spur further discussion.

The series proved to be popular with attendees, and will continue in the Spring 2015 semester. The PPC welcomes suggestions for topics, which can be sent to ppc@uiowa.edu.

To view video of the forums, click the pictures on the left.



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WOMEN IN POLITICS 2014

Historic & Current Perspectives

WOMEN IN POLITICS SYMPOSIUM

What barriers to running for political office are unique to women? Are women more, less or equally likely to get elected than men? How does hyper-partisanship affect the intent and ability for women to run for office?

These questions and more were asked at the *Women in Politics 2014: Current & Historical Perspectives*, an event that grew out of a 2011 Forkenbrock Series symposium, leading up to the Iowa caucuses, that addressed political discourse. One of the recurring themes of that symposium was women in politics, and at the conclusion it was clear there needed to be a separate event that examined women in politics in greater depth.

The symposium, held appropriately in the Old Capitol Senate Chambers on April 18, did just that: academicians, historians, and politicians examined why women do or do not run for political office, how they govern once elected to office, and the history of women in politics. The subject was especially germane because prior to the 2014 election, Iowa was one of only

three states never to have elected a woman to national office or governorship.

Headlining the event was afternoon keynote



speaker, US Senator Amy Klobuchar (D, Minnesota), who shared experiences unique to women in the political arena and discussed indicators that the nation may be primed to elect a female president in the near future.

To conclude the day, several state legislators,

academics, and University of Iowa students provided three points to consider in future policy: what can be done to recruit more women to office, how do we support women candidates, and how individuals can support women as they serve in public office. In a June 3 primary election, Iowa Republicans nominated Joni Ernst as their US Senate candidate. The election on November 4 of this year may show how ready Iowa is to have a woman hold its US Senate seat.

Women in Politics was presented in partnership with and in honor of the [Iowa Women's Archives](#). A reception was held the evening prior to the symposium as a fundraiser for the Iowa Women's Archives, with keynote speaker Iowa Senator Liz Mathis and other Iowa lawmakers in attendance.

For more information or to view videos of the symposium, [click here](#).

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Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity Build



On October 18, Public Policy Center staff and students exchanged their thinking caps for hard hats to participate in an [Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity](#) build on Iowa City's southeast side.

About 20 from PPC participated in this community outreach effort. The build was part of the [Christine Grant Women Build 5](#) project.



Frigid temperatures, an overcast sky and gusty winds served to keep the crew moving to stay warm as they worked on roofing, insulating the garage, weather-stripping, and caulking windows, under the supervision of Habitat's Weatherization Manager, Christy Shipley. A pair of local volunteers warmed them up with a hot meal at noon.

In order to include homeowners in every step of the homeownership process, Habitat requires the partner family to contribute 250 hours of sweat equity, or volunteer labor. One-fifth of these hours must be completed by the adults in the family — either through volunteering on the build site, in the Habitat office, or ReStore, or helping with special events or other activities. The remaining 200 hours can be completed by friends, family, and loved ones. Mohamad Hassan, the future homeowner, joined the PPC crew that day to fulfill some of his requirement.

Hassan moved to the United States in 2006 after civil war broke out in his native Sudan. His wife, Ryan, followed in 2010. In pursuit of their long-time dream to own a home, Mohamad was working two jobs while Ryan studied at Kirkwood Community College to become a phlebotomist.

The couple, along with their two-year-old daughter Jumana, were thrilled and grateful to move out of a poorly-ventilated, run-down apartment into their new home after its dedication, December 7, 2013. The move provided the family better safety, as well. Shootings and drug deals were a regular

occurrence in their former neighborhood. In their new environment the Hassans feel more comfortable making plans to expand their family.

Other outreach efforts this year included three shifts at the Free Lunch Program. Volunteers helped to set up, serve and clean up lunch for approximately 100 guests.



Pictured, front row, L to R: Betsy Momany, Natoshia Askelson, Kathy Holeton, Mohamad Hassan. Back row, L to R: Tony Paik, Pete Damiano, Erin Shane, Erin Robinson, Caitlin Shanahan, Sally Scott, Cher Carney, Suzanne Bentler, Leslie Gannon, Marv Holeton.

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Education

The PPC contributes to the educational mission of the University by offering applied research training opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students. There are currently over 40 students employed by the PPC through internships, graduate research assistantships and other opportunities to learn while assisting with research and other activities at the Center.

Read about our Graduate Research Assistants Mark Pooley, Vanessa Fixmer-Oraiz, and Morgan Price on the following pages.



Mark Pooley

MS, Urban & Regional Planning
PhD Candidate, Civil Engineering



Vanessa Fixmer-Oraiz

MS Candidate, Urban & Regional Planning



Morgan Price

BSE, Biomedical Engineering
MS Candidate, Epidemiology

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Mark Pooley and Vanessa Fixmer-Oraiz

Two of PPC's Graduate RAs combined their love for a recreation with their studies in and promotion of sustainability. Mark Pooley, MS, Urban & Regional Planning and PhD candidate in Civil Engineering at Iowa, and Vanessa Fixmer-Oraiz, a Masters student in the School of Urban & Regional Planning, each have a different focus of research, but use a common tool: the bicycle.

Pooley is committed to making bicycle commuting more accessible, and as part of his graduate research on transportation,



Pooley crosses Highway 1 on a wintery day

organized a Winter Warrior Bike Challenge in Iowa City with the University of Iowa's Office of Sustainability and the UI Bicycle Advisory Committee. More than 200 people participated in the challenge over a three-week period in December 2013 - a particularly harsh December, even by Iowa standards.

"We were able to encourage people to ride during the winter months when temperatures reached negative 16 degrees. There were roughly 3,000 trips made and 8,300 miles ridden," says Pooley, about his project titled, "What Gears Bicycling Commuting?"

The project examined whether incentives would prompt people to change their bicycling habits, and was done through a survey to determine the importance of three incentives in choosing bicycles as a mode of transportation: infrastructure, parking, or financial reasons. Surprisingly, financial incentives were the least motivating, even though the easiest to implement. "It's not so easy to impact parking and infrastructure," says Pooley.



Pooley prepares for a winter bicycle commute

Pooley said the UI Bicycle Advisory Committee, started two years ago and comprised of a good mix of students, staff, and faculty, is a good model for building partnerships with mutually beneficial goals.

"Working to improve bikeability at the University of Iowa would be a daunting task for an individual, but working with a group to develop practical and realistic ideas and solutions makes this objective attainable."



Fixmer-Oraiz and Team Kawayan dip their tires in the Mississippi

Fixmer-Oraiz is focused on raising climate awareness through bicycling. She rode her bamboo bike, or "bambike" across Iowa in this year's RAGBRAI to raise money for climate justice in the Philippines. She also rode with the Great Climate March for Action that set out to "change the heart and mind of the American people, our elected leaders and people across the world to act now to address the climate crisis". She joined in as it passed through Iowa City on August 20 and accompanied the climate marchers to their stop in Davenport.

Pooley and Fixmer-Oraiz, cont.

Pooley and Fixmer-Oraiz work on the bambike

Fixmer-Oraiz's focus of research is on climate change impacts on farming communities. For this work, she earned a prestigious Fulbright scholarship to the Philippines, the birthplace of her mother. While there, she worked with local NGO InHand Abra, an organization empowering bamboo farmers to compete in national markets. Bamboo is not only a sustainable crop, but is especially fast-growing and provides a critical safety net for farmers facing increasingly common natural disasters.

Fixmer-Oraiz purchased the bamboo bike frame in the Philippines and built it locally with help from Mark Pooley and the Iowa City Bike Library. She is calling her ride B.O.N.G.G.A. (Bamboo on New Green Ground Ang) Ride for Climate Justice. The acronym also plays on the Filipino word for "fabulous." All money raised by Fixmer-Oraiz's ride will go directly to InHand Abra for the purchase of a bamboo processing tank (\$40,000 USD). This tank will increase efficiency and yield greater profits for the farmers.

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Morgan Price

The Public Policy Center's Human Factors and Vehicle Safety program is collaborating with Chalmers University's SAFER Vehicle and Traffic Safety Centre to develop an international standard on coding car crashes from naturalistic data. Graduate Research Assistant Morgan Price spent the summer at Chalmers in Goteborg, Sweden working on a crash causation project.

We asked Morgan to tell us a little more about her experience:

What is your degree/future education plans?

I have a BSE in Biomedical Engineering, I'm an MS candidate in Epidemiology, and I plan to get my PhD in Human Factors, Vehicle Safety with a focus in Injury Epidemiology.

How long have you worked with the PPC?

I have been working at the PPC since June 2012. My goodness, I can't believe it has already been two years. Time flies when you are working with some amazing people!

What do you do for PPC and what studies or projects have you worked on?

At the PPC I am part of the Human Factors and Vehicle Safety Research team. My interests are in quantifying human behavior in naturalistic environments. To this end, I have conducted naturalistic research in bicycle riders, teen drivers and distracted pedestrians. I first started working on geographically mapping sites of teen driving errors in Iowa City. From there, my interest in vehicle safety grew. I am currently working on a project in Sweden with naturalistic driving data.



Photo Credit: Tom Jorgensen, University Creative Services

Explain what you did over the summer?

The work we did with Chalmers was an extension of our crash causation work. We led an effort with our Swedish colleagues to develop an international standard on coding car crashes from naturalistic data— like the drive cam work that we are doing here for the AAA foundation.

How did you come across this opportunity?

My boss and mentor, Dan McGehee, was absolutely crucial in helping me secure this position. He wanted to create a partnership between the University of Iowa and Chalmers University in Goteborg Sweden. In order to solidify the relationship he decided to send a student for the summer to work at SAFER which is a collaboration of Chalmers University and Volvo. He asked me if I would like to go and of course I said yes! The rest is history!

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