

WINTER – SPRING
2000

The Harris School Quarterly Research Report is a compilation of faculty and student research activities. This report is produced by the School's Office of External Affairs.

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FACULTY RESEARCH UPDATE

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Statistician **John Bailer** was featured in a February *Chicago Tribune* series on cancer studies and was interviewed for a Canadian television news show, challenging claims that indicate that medical advancements have “turned the corner” in the war on cancer. The former National Cancer Institute official says that scientists should “not claim a big success in the battle against cancer until we’ve had a big reduction in the mortality rate.”

Economist **Don Coursey** and Ph.D. Student Doug Noonan co-authored a study that examines the influence of environmental amenities in two south Chicago suburbs. The study finds that area home values, which are high because of nearby forests, lakes and wildlife refuges, could drop by about \$13,000 or 6.3% on average, if populations rise or preserved green space decreases. Separately, Coursey was awarded funding from the Chauncey and Marion D. McCormick Family Foundation in December for his study, “Measuring the Health of our Common Culture.”

Political Scientist **Charles Glaser** received renewal funding for the university’s Program in International Security Policy (PISP) from the Smith Richardson Foundation

Political Scientist **Lloyd Gruber’s** new book, *Ruling The World: Power Politics and the Rise of Supranational Institutions* was published in April by Princeton University Press. Gruber examines the rise of multinational institutions and organizations such as NAFTA and the European Monetary System and argues that the voluntary, cooperative nature of these associations does not necessarily mean that they work to the advantage of all parties.

Development Psychologist **Ariel Kalil** received a \$35,000 Spencer Foundation grant in March to investigate the sources of differences in standardized test scores between racial groups. Kalil and Northwestern University co-author, Mary Patillo-McCoy, will draw on sociological and psychological perspectives to investigate the source of disparities in test scores and school grades among 1,400 black and white public school students. Separately, on May 22, Kalil, presented her study, “Work Participation Among Mothers After TANF: Links to Family Economic and Emotional Well-Being” at the Northwestern University Institute for Policy Research’s Colloquia Series.

Economist **Helen Levy** and co-author Henry S. Farber found that employers continue to offer health insurance to core long-term employees but are restricting access to this benefit for short-term and temporary employees. The study, “Recent Trends in Employer Sponsored Health Insurance Coverage: Are Bad Jobs Getting Worse?” appeared in the January issue of the *Journal of Health Economics*.

Economist **Robert LaLonde** discussed job and skill training for low-income individuals and presented his recent paper, “The Promise of Public Sector-Sponsored Training Programs,” at the School's April Research Briefing. The briefing was sponsored by the Center for Human Potential and Public Policy.

Sociologist **Susan Mayer** received summer funding from the Russell Sage Foundation for the study, “Social Consequences of Economic Inequality and Economic Segregation.”

Economist **David Meltzer**, M.D., was part of an Institute of Medicine panel charged by the U.S. Congress to assess the potential impact of a 1998 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ruling on Organ Procurement Transplantation Network policies. Although no significant disparities for organ transplant rates were identified on a regional, gender or racial basis, researchers did call for more cohesive and attentive federal oversight for the nation’s organ transplant system.

Economist **Robert Michael** served as Principal Investigator on the newest wave of the popular social science survey, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 97 (NLSY97), which was conducted on behalf of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Health Economist **Tomas Philipson** and co-author Richard Posner completed the study “How Technology Has Influenced Worldwide Obesity” that suggests that the rise in obesity may be the result of the industrial revolution making food cheaper and transforming physical exercise from a vocational activity to an off-the-job leisure activity.

POLICY AND RESEARCH CENTERS UPDATE

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Following is an updated activity summary from four of the research centers affiliated with the Harris School.

CENTER FOR HUMAN POTENTIAL AND PUBLIC POLICY (CHPPP)

★ The Center for Human Potential and Public Policy (CHPPP) launched a Conversation Series in January 2000, which featured Aletha Huston, a child development expert at the University of Texas at Austin, who addressed the issue of “Television Viewing and the Informational and Educational Needs of Children.” The second presentation in this series was held in March, when Columbia University professor Larry Aber spoke on the influence of education on early childhood outcomes. The series, which is open to the public, brings prominent researchers and policy makers in the field to the Harris School for discussions of their work.

★ In February CHPPP received a \$1 million, three-year grant from the McCormick Tribune Foundation to help fund research projects and train students in child policy. The funding will support affiliated scholars on four new research projects and will subsidize training for 12 public policy masters and doctoral students during the next two years.

★ In April Economist Robert LaLonde discussed job and skill training for low income individuals and presented his recent paper “Job Change and Job Stability Among Less-Skilled Young Workers” at a Harris School Research Briefing that was sponsored by CHPPP.

CENTER FOR URBAN RESEARCH AND POLICY STUDIES (CURPS)

★ The Center for Urban Research and Policy Studies (CURPS) co-sponsored a January policy forum with the Illinois Learning Partnership that examined standards-based education reform. Panelists from the Illinois State Board of Education, the Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Teachers Union Quest Center and the Consortium on Chicago School Research discussed statewide and district-level learning standards, "high-stakes" testing to monitor student achievement, and efforts to enhance accountability for educational outcomes.

★ In April the Joyce Foundation awarded CURPS a three-year \$169,515 grant, which will be used to support a project entitled, “Monitoring Welfare Reform in Illinois.” This CURPS project is comprised of an annual Illinois Welfare Reform Symposium, a series of welfare research briefing sessions, and a welfare policy research web site.

CULTURAL POLICY PROGRAM (CPP)

★ In February the Cultural Policy Program (CPP) sponsored the second annual Arts and Humanities in Public Life conference, "Taking Funds, Giving Offense, Making Money: The Brooklyn Museum of Art Controversy and the Dilemmas of Arts Policy." The conference examined some of the issues raised by the recent "Sensation" art exhibit controversy and provided a forum for discussions regarding the arts and public funding, culture, and the public trust. Panelists included faculty from the University of Chicago's Law School and Humanities Division. A roundtable discussion, "Coping With Arts Controversies: What Works? What Doesn't?" was moderated by former Chicago Tonight host John Callaway.

★ During the spring quarter, the Cultural Policy Program held four workshops around the theme "Measuring Tastes and Values" at the University's Quad Club. The workshops are designed to provide a forum to discuss work in progress, and to explore the possibilities of interdisciplinary research partnerships.

JOINT CENTER FOR POVERTY RESEARCH (JCPR)

★ In January Senators Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-Del.) and Arlen Specter (R-Penn.) and the Joint Center for Poverty Research (JCPR) co-sponsored a congressional research briefing to examine the causes and consequences of juvenile crime. In May the JCPR co-sponsored a research briefing on early childhood intervention programs that was co-sponsored by Chairman Nancy Johnson (R-CT) and Ranking Minority Member Benjamin Cardin (D-MD) of the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means.

★ In May the JCPR named University of California, Davis Economist Marianne Page and Columbia University Professor of social work James Kunz as its 2000-01 Visiting Scholars. The competitive award, which includes full salary, benefits and up to \$10,000 in research funding, allows scholars to take a year's leave from their academic duties to concentrate on research and scholarship. Also in May, the JCPR awarded Graduate Fellowships to 14 prominent pre and post doctorate researchers at Northwestern University and the University of Chicago.

★ In May the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the JCPR and the Rural Policy Research Institute sponsored a conference in Washington, D.C. where researchers explored the rural dimensions of poverty and welfare reform and the effects of policy reforms on people living in rural areas.