Civic Engagement
Public Service, Personal Responsibility
Spring 2015

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The Dance Symposium Series at the Clement A. Price Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience at Rutgers University-Newark:
Bringing Exceptional Artists to an Urban Audience
Civic Engagement
Promoting Public Service, Personal Responsibility

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Ginger Swiston
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Shilpa Viswanath
Managing Editor
Madeleine Perez; Melissa Rivera
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Right: The Angkor Dance Troupe
On the Cover – Left: The Lula Washington Dance Theatre; Top Right: Ramya Ramanarayan (Indian dance); Bottom Right: AXIS Dance Company

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Rutgers SPAA Launches Rutgers Council on Public and International Affairs

A student-run nonpartisan organization at the Rutgers University-Newark School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA)

The Rutgers Council on Public and International Affairs (CPIA) is a platform for debate and dialogue at Rutgers and beyond. Sponsored by the School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) at Rutgers University-Newark, the Rutgers CPIA is a student-run center for public affairs and international relations. The Rutgers CPIA holds no institutional policy positions. Rather, it is a place for high-level discussion year-round.

Guided by a distinguished Board of Advisors, the Rutgers CPIA’s Founding President is Edmund J. Janninger, a Rutgers University Senator, member of the University Senate Executive Committee, and a student at the School of Public Affairs and Administration. The Chair of its Board of Advisors is Dr. Marc Holzer, the Founding Dean of the School of Public Affairs and Administration and Board of Governors Distinguished Professor of Public Affairs and Administration at Rutgers University-Newark.

The Board of Advisors consists of Kenyan Senator Peter Anyang’ Nyong’o; U.S. Congressman Glen Browder; U.S. Congressman Herbert C. Klein; U.S. Senator Robert C. Krueger; Vermont Governor Madeleine M. Kunin; U.S. Congresswoman Connie A. Morella; United Nations Under-Secretary-General José Antonio Ocampo; U.S. Secretary of State George P. Shultz; and U.K. Member of Parliament Anthony W. Wright.

The Rutgers CPIA’s Distinguished Lecture Series began with a presentation on “Vicissitudes and Perils of Immigration Reform” by Dr. Robert Krueger, a former U.S. Senator from Texas, U.S. Congressman, and three-time U.S. Ambassador, on December 9, 2014. Senator Krueger explained immigration is a sensitive issue. “Immigration does not concern things; it concerns people and it concerns who we are. It concerns our identity.”

On February 24, 2015, Polish parliamentary leader and former Minister of Internal Affairs Antoni Macierewicz, who spoke on “Peace and Security in Central Europe: Challenges and Opportunities,” inaugurated the Rutgers CPIA’s World Leaders Forum, a constituent program dedicated to promoting dynamic, unrestrained dialogue on large economic, political, and social issues. During the highly publicized standing-room-only lecture, Minister Macierewicz stipulated that Russian military aggression in Ukraine could have been avoided had the international community heeded late Polish President Lech Kaczynski’s warn-ings on Russian expansionism. The event was attended by Rutgers faculty, students, staff, and administrators, including Chancellor Nancy Cantor, as well as members of the Polish diaspora. This presentation made headlines nationally and internationally. The cover of Nowy Dziennik (Polish Daily News) featured it, as did Poland’s “most opinion-making portal,” WPoliityce.pl. The lecture was also discussed extensively on Polish television networks.

Congressman Herbert C. Klein addressed the Rutgers CPIA on March 23, 2015. Congressman Klein, who is committed to promoting democracy internationally and respectful dialogue domestically, discussed “Bipartisanship: Trials and Tribulations.” Dr. Todd Clear, Provost of Rutgers University-Newark, welcomed attendees. “I want to congratulate the Council on, first of all, getting such a distinguished person to come to speak to us, and also for the work that you do. Rutgers University-Newark, if you look around you will see, are the future of what the United States policymaking apparatus will look like down the road. And our job is not how to make the policies of the future, but how to make ourselves ready to be engaged in the policymaking of the future and that is what the School of Public Affairs and Administration is all about.”

Congressman Klein proclaimed, “Congress at its best can do a lot of great things for the country.” He praised the economic policy of Bill Clinton. “The Clinton economic and tax legislation was passed and ended a period of recession and a served as a springboard for the counties greatest period of economic growth in 40 years.” Congressman Klein also highlighted his involved with the Bipartisan Policy Center, a think tank founded by former party leaders of the U.S. Senate.

The intercollegiate Model United Nations team competing at the UN General Assembly.
For more than a decade, Earth Day volunteers from Rutgers University-Newark have donated “green” service to their campus’s home city while creating bird- and butterfly-friendly habitats on campus and a green oasis in Newark’s concrete canyons. That tradition continued when volunteers from the RU-N community helped beautify Norman Samuel Plaza on the campus on April 20, 2015. Then on April 22, 2015 the volunteers headed to the Greater Newark Conservancy to prepare its gardens.

Earth Day at Rutgers University-Newark

BY CARLA CAPIZZI

An Intense Conversation with Senator Cory Booker about Student Debt at Rutgers University-Newark

BY CARLA CAPIZZI


RU-N students Elijah Smith and Subroto Sinha faced each other in the debate, which was moderated by Christopher Kozak, Director of Debate at the School of Public Affairs and Administration.

Following the debate, Sen. Booker discussed his co-sponsorship of the FAST Act, a bill to simplify the process of applying for and receiving federal financial aid to attend college, allow year-round use of Pell Grants, discourage over-borrowing and simplify repayments. In the last Congress, Sen. Booker co-sponsored the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act, which would allow eligible students to refinance their federal loans. The senator also answered questions from the students, who all answered affirmatively when Sen. Booker asked if they were carrying significant student debt loads.

The free program was open to students, faculty and staff, as well as the public. The event was co-sponsored by the Office of the Chancellor; Academic Foundations Center; the Offices of University-Community Partnerships; Communications; Housing; Admissions; and Financial Aid; School of Public Affairs and Administration; School of Business-Newark and New Brunswick; School of Law; School of Criminal Justice; Faculty of Arts and Sciences-Newark; and the Paul Robeson Campus Center.

Share your service story

Civic Engagement Magazine seeks to deepen the discourse about, and underscore our shared commitment to, public service and features the exemplars of public service – people and projects – as well as publications, other resources for “doing” public service, and personal reflections.

Please share your public service stories and ideas of topics, organizations, and publications to be included in Civic Engagement.

Contact us at: pubserve@andromeda.rutgers.edu.
Bringing Exceptional Artists to an Urban Audience

The Dance Symposium Series at the Clement A. Price Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience at Rutgers University-Newark engages the community through its diverse program

BY MARISA PIERSON

Since 2005, dance has found a home on the Rutgers University-Newark campus in a series mounted by the Clement A. Price Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience. The Dance Symposium Series brings exceptional dance artists directly to an urban audience, including diverse groups of students, families, and lifelong learners. As the only regularly produced dance program at Rutgers University-Newark, the Institute’s Dance program has, over the years, brought Middle Eastern, Indian, African, Afro-Brazilian, North African, Flamenco, Cambodian, South African, Hip-Hop, Modern/Contemporary, Chinese, and Bharatnatyam dance to the campus and greater Newark community. Each symposium includes a public engagement activity such as a class or lecture/demo with one of the Institute’s community or education partners, including the Boys & Girls Club of Newark, the Newark Museum, NJPAC, Arts High School in Newark, Columbia High School, Maplewood, and others. For these activities, the Institute often brings the artists directly into the school or community facility, or offers workshops in Rutgers spaces such as the Robeson Campus Center's Dance Theater, open to both the campus and the general public. The symposium concludes with an evening performance in or near the Rutgers University-Newark campus. As part of the Institute’s mission, all workshop activities, and most performances, are offered free of charge and open to the community-at-large.

Over the past nine years, The Dance Symposium Series has received generous support, not only from the Cultural Programming Fund at Rutgers University-Newark, but also the Newark Arts Council, and Essex County Cultural and Historic Affairs. In celebration of its tenth anniversary in 2015, the Institute planned an ambitious season of three dance symposia, including engagements by the Atlantic City Ballet and two major professional West Coast companies: the Lula Washington Dance Theater, a nationally revered company that uses dance to explore social and humanitarian issues; and AXIS...
Dance Company, one of the world’s most innovative ensembles to include performers with disabilities.

These two programs in particular required larger stages and greater audience capacities than prior entries in the Series. In turn, these additional needs and substantially greater costs meant that the Institute needed to explore new funding opportunities. For the first time, the Series pursued federal funding for workshops and performances at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) with Lula Washington (February 2015) and for a symposium and performance by AXIS at the South Orange Performing Arts Center (November 2015). Last year, the Institute successfully applied for a $20,000 grant from the Art Works Program of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). NEA Art Works grants support the creation of art, public engagement with art, lifelong learning in the arts, and enhancement of the livability of communities through the arts. The NEA received 1,474 eligible applications under the Art Works category for 2015. Rutgers University was one of 919 nonprofit organizations nationwide to receive an NEA Art Works grant.

“We at the Institute were thrilled to receive this support from the NEA,” said Institute Associate Director Mark Krosovic. “We believe that the arts – in all their creative and critical rigor – have an essential role to play in cultivating a more livable city and world. This generous grant will help put this belief into action.”

With that grant secured, the Institute then approached the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation for additional funding of its 10th anniversary season, which also includes a production of the acclaimed Dracula ballet by the Atlantic City Ballet Company at NJIT’s Jim Wise Theater in October 2015. The Dodge Foundation agreed to support the entire 2015 season with a $10,000 grant.

The anniversary season is also supported by grants from Essex County, the Newark Arts Council, and the Cultural Programming Committee at Rutgers University-Newark, each of which has traditionally funded the Institute’s Dance Symposium Series.

The 2015 anniversary year is well underway. In February of 2015, the Institute launched the first of these programs, featuring the Lula Washington Dance Theater (LWDT). The company, which is celebrating its 35th anniversary, visited Newark one week after the Institute’s 35th annual Marion Thompson Wright Lecture Series, one of the nation’s most prestigious and longest-running celebrations of Black History Month. Through a special collaboration between the Institute and NJPAC, the dance company presented a concert to a near-capacity audience in NJPAC’s 500-seat Victoria Theater on February 26, 2015. While in Newark, LWDT artists also taught a master class to dance students from Arts High School and from Columbia High School in Maplewood on the Rutgers University-Newark campus.

In November 2015, the Institute will present the AXIS Dance Company in a special Dance Symposium which explores perceptions about disability and its relationship to dance. In partnership with the Alliance Center for Independence (ACI), a community-based nonprofit organization in Middlesex County, AXIS will present several community engagement activities, including a community class for participants of all abilities; a class at the Lakeview School in Edison, which provides one of the largest day programs for children and young adults with disabilities in the nation; and a workshop for veterans in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Veteran Affairs. On November 17, 2015, once again in partnership with the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, the Institute will present AXIS Dance Company in a theatrical performance at the Victoria Theater, NJPAC in Newark. The performance includes a new work by AXIS, To Go Again, that brings to light issues facing our nation’s veterans and addresses their resilience following severe life changes.

Thanks to the generous support of the NEA, Dodge Foundation, and other funders, entries in the Dance Symposium Series have matured into major events within the Newark arts community and an important part of the Institute’s community engagement work. Through the Series, the Institute has helped to open the arts to people of all backgrounds and abilities, especially for those traditionally underserved by them. By interweaving these many audiences, the Institute’s Dance Symposium Series has fostered a broader reflection on dance’s power to educate and-inspire, regardless of background and ability.
Dr. Lyons and his students are examining purchasing policies and procedures to assist the city of Newark.
A pelican was too busy gorging on fish to notice Barry Wise taking pictures 10 feet away on a beach in Cancun. He almost missed the chance to capture the pelican’s image. Initially, they played a game of chase. Each day, Wise would run to get his camera and the pelican would fly away. On the fourth day of vacation, when the game was over, Wise felt like he had something special.

He was right. His picture, titled “Beach Challenge,” received the Honorable Mention award during The National Arts Program (NAP) annual reception at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School (NJMS) earlier this year. Wise, a User Support Specialist II in Information Technology at NJMS, was one of 109 artists whose creations were featured.

According to Curator Noreen Gomez, this year marks the 16th year that exhibits have been held at NJMS. Artwork lines the walls and fills display cabinets in high traffic areas at the medical school. The creativity varies: colorful paintings, sculptures, framed photos, quilts and sketches.

“The Fall Arts Festival was a takeoff from the Spring Arts Festival, which started in 1999 with Dr. Ernesto Amaranto. That was a one week exhibit,” Gomez said. “Then, Dr. Joseph Benevenia led the arts program in 2004. Two years later I took over. At that time, we increased the number to three art shows. I have had the opportunity to work on the shows since 2000. In 2010, the program took on a new life when The National Arts Program was introduced at NJMS.”

The NAP exhibit, competition and reception are coordinated by Gomez, a facilities program specialist in the Office of the Dean at NJMS. The competition attracts artists who are eligible for prizes in the areas of best of show, amateur, intermediate, professional, teen, and youth.

Dr. Robert L. Johnson, the Sharon and Joseph L. Muscarelle Endowed Dean of New Jersey Medical School, said, “We are pleased to host the National Arts Program activities at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. The program gives our students, faculty, staff, and family members an opportunity to showcase their artistic gifts and come together during a reception that honors their talents. The program is intended to help create a greater sense of community on the Newark campus at Rutgers Biomedical Health Sciences.”

Gomez said, “The National Arts Program was the first art exhibit we’ve had where artists are acknowledged with awards during a reception. Support from the National Arts Program goes a long way toward making this a special occasion for our participants.” Although the national program requires sites to display art for at least two weeks, Gomez displays the exhibit for four-months. NJMS holds two other exhibits annually. She said, “It’s a joy watching people view and talk about the artwork that was created. The program is not just for adults, teens and children participate too.”

According to the NAP Director of Programs Robyn McGinley, 82 venues host shows in 38 states. Rutgers New Jersey Medical School is the first medical school to host the National Arts Program.
ith funding from Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) alumnus Ray Chambers and the charitable organization he founded, The MCJ Amelior Foundation, RU–N, and the Rutgers School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) launched a major mentorship program with students of Newark’s West Side High School (WSHS). During a series of focus group sessions facilitated by the Center for Supportive Schools, RU–N undergraduate and graduate students were given an opportunity to meet with WSHS students to become better acquainted and understand the purpose and importance of mentoring. The first three sessions were held on March 6, 10, and 12, 2015 and attracted a total of 70 RU–N students and 160 WSHS students. The fourth and final session was held April 8, 2015.

While many of the high school students initially expressed reservations about the usefulness of one-on-one mentoring, by the end of each session, most had been convinced of its intrinsic value, both personally and academically.

“By all indications, everyone who participated in the group sessions considered it time well spent,” noted Dr. Peter Hoontis, Associate Dean of Academic and Student Services at Rutgers SPAA. “The ultimate goal, in terms of numbers, is to pair 500 West Side High School students with 500 Rutgers University–Newark student mentors for an entire academic year.”

For more information – or if you are an RU-N student interested in being a mentor – contact Ms. Tugba Aksoy, Senior Student Programs Manager at Rutgers SPAA, at aksoy@rutgers.edu.

PHOTOS BY KEITH BRATCHER

Dr. Joe Benevenia (above), Chair and Professor of Orthopaedics at Rutgers NJMS, enjoys creating sculptures. His piece is called “Intersecting Forces.”
International Service Learning Program at Rutgers University-Newark Wins 2014 NASPAA Honorary Social Equity Award

(This article originally appeared in Rutgers Today.)

BY JADE MCCLAIN

On Nov. 5, 2014, The Rutgers University–Newark International Service Learning and Leadership Exchange (ISLLE) received the 2014 NASPAA Honorary Social Equity Award. The Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) awarded ISLLE for exemplifying “high standards in diversity through outstanding contributions in research, teaching, and service,” according to NASPAA.

Launched four years ago, the program developed as a collaboration between RU–N’s Paul Robeson Campus Center–Office of the Dean of Student Life and the School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) to cultivate students’ leadership skills within a global context. Through ISLLE, students participate in service learning initiatives in Tanzania, Nicaragua, and India, where they engage with the community on various projects to improve social and economic conditions. Last January, five students traveled to Nicaragua where they studied the country’s public health system and installed a solar panel for a maternity clinic plagued by power outages.

“Words can’t describe how grateful I am to have been given this opportunity to travel and see not only health disparities, but the living conditions, the way of life, and the motivation for those in other parts of the world,” says nursing student, Asia Robertson (Class of 2015). “I couldn’t believe just how much our contribution of light was going to change the lives of so many families in Rio Blanco.”

This award comes on the heels of the Champion of Sustainability Award that the program received in March from the American College Personnel Association, validating the efforts of ISLLE and its impact, not only on students, but on the global community. Nikita Pandit, the assistant director for Service Learning and Student Development and SPAA alumna, says that ISLLE is distinctive because of the intensity that the program offers in a limited time span. “We try to challenge our students in every aspect possible, there are physical, emotional, and social challenges and [students] are at the stage of identity development where all these things really matter. They come back as changed individuals,” Pandit says. “Within those seven to 10 days, it is hard to create that particular change in people, and we have been successfully doing it for the past four years. Pandit, with Clayton Walton, Dean of Student Life and Director of the Paul Robeson Campus Center, and Farzana Katideen, coordinator of Judicial Affairs and Student Development, organizes and oversees every expedition. Katideen says that the trio’s responsiveness to students’ needs is unique because she and her team are more than educators and chaperones. “We all play roles as student advisors when we’re overseas, we don’t see that often in service learning and study abroad trips. Students go and they study at a university and they have some sort of cultural immersion, but there’s not that guidance and advisement that we give,” Katideen states. Katideen says that research has shown that the most successful service learning programs are those that include frequent reflective activities. While overseas, students maintain video blogs and attend multiple debriefing sessions where they wrestle with their thoughts and emotions. “They’ll share things that they’ve never shared with anybody. They feed off of each other’s energy, so if one person is feeling [a certain way] and talks about it, there’s a likely possibility that someone else is also feeling that way,” says Pandit. Pandit says that she and her colleagues would like to see ISLLE expand. She states that Dean Marc Holzer from the School of Public Affairs and Administration envisions providing a global experience to every SPAA student, a vision that her office embraces. “We realize how important it is to have that global mindset. It would be great to have all undergraduate students at RU–N have that international experience. It’s a big, big goal, but we’re definitely working toward it,” she says.

American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) Honors Rutgers University-Newark Professor Frank Thompson with Two Awards

Frank Thompson, Distinguished Professor at the School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) at Rutgers University-Newark, was the recipient of the 2015 American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) Dwight Waldo Award which is presented to persons who have made outstanding contributions to the professional literature of public administration over an extended career. Thompson was also the recipient of the 2015 ASPA/NASPAA Charles H. Levine Memorial Award for Excellence in Public Administration which recognizes a public administration faculty member who has demonstrated excellence in teaching, research, and service to the wider community.
What Dry Cleaners Can Tell Us About the Job Market

Introducing the RBS-DCI: Rutgers Business School launches a new economic index to anticipate employment trends

BY DANIEL L. STOLL

Working together with Rutgers MBA students in his macroeconomics classes, Professor Farrokh Langdana, professor of finance and economics, and the director of the Rutgers Executive MBA program, devised a new economic index to get a better sense of whether people are working, looking for work, or have given up looking for work: the Rutgers Business School-Dry Cleaning Index (RBS-DCI).

"With the unemployment rate falling, my students were asking why people still felt so anxious about the economy and, in particular, the job market," said Langdana. "The unemployment rate is one of our most eagerly anticipated statistics, yet it is fraught with deficiencies and limitations." Officially, the unemployment rate is the percentage of the Civilian Labor Force (CLF) that is unemployed. The CLF is the over-16 population minus any/all individuals not actively looking for work. "Hence, discouraged workers are excluded from the CLF and are missing from the official unemployment rate," said Langdana. "As more and more workers simply give up looking for work and stop searching, the CLF drops. This confuses matters when, for example, the unemployment rate falls from, say, 6.1% to 5.9% (as in did in September 2014). This may not necessarily mean that fewer workers are unemployed. If the denominator, the CLF, or the 'size of the pie' shrinks too, it then muddies the picture," explained Langdana.

Workers who have dropped out of the CLF are said to be not participating, so the "participation rate" is defined as a percentage of the over-16 population that constitutes the CLF. In fact, the participation rate in the US has dropped to February 1978 levels at the moment, a record low of 62.8% as of October, 2014. This may not necessarily mean that fewer workers are unemployed. If the denominator, the CLF, or the 'size of the pie' shrinks too, it then muddies the picture," explained Langdana.

The RBS-DCI index captures part of this elusive change in the "participation" rate. An index of 50 indicates "no change" in the volume of the laundry of shirts and blouses. The RBS-DCI index was found to be 62.5. The result: The RBS-DCI tells us that in New Jersey, a macroeconomic recovery, is under way. "Though workers with home offices, and those that dress down, etc., are not captured, the index provides information that was not previously available, and it captures, to some extent, the mobility of workers back into the work force to look for work," said Langdana.

The RBS-DCI will be released every six months, with the next announcement due in June 2015. Visit business.rutgers.edu/faculty-research/rbs-dci for more information. For more of Professor Langdana’s macro blogs visit business.rutgers.edu/Langdanamacro, or follow him on twitter.com/FSCwithFarrokh.
Interview with Todd Clear: Provost of Rutgers University-Newark; Recipient of the 2014 Founder’s Award of the Academy of Criminal Justice

BY SHILPA VISWANATH

You took over as Provost of Rutgers University-Newark in 2014. Can you talk to us about your personal reflections in your first year in office?

Being Provost at Rutgers University-Newark is a new kind of job and it has been such an interesting time since so much has been going on at Rutgers, in Newark and specifically at Rutgers University-Newark. We have a new chancellor, Nancy Cantor, and she has a strategic vision of strengthening education at the undergraduate level and using the diversity of this campus as an extremely important resource for moving forward as a national leader of education. Rutgers University-Newark, as a system is undergoing enormous changes both under the leadership of President Robert Barchi and the leadership of Chancellor Cantor. Besides all the things that Provosts usually do, I have a special interest in public safety on campus and I’ve been developing strong relationships with public around Newark on public safety agenda and have been working on issues that focus on strong and healthy neighborhoods that are safe places for people to live and work. So, I’ve been using my background in criminal justice to do some of the more important jobs of the provost.

Can you talk to us about your career in Criminal Justice Higher Education?

I came to Rutgers-Newark in 1979 as an untenured Assistant Professor. I was here from 1979 through 1996, and I was promoted to an Associate Professor and given tenure and became a full Professor. It was the formative years of my career and in that time period I was active in the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences and also in the earnings of the Management of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. I then went to Florida State as an Associate Dean and started getting involved in higher education in criminal justice more generally and started working on policies regarding Criminal Justice in Higher Education. Eventually, I came back to New York City to John Jay College of Criminal Justice and was elected president of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. There I worked on higher education issues both attached to the undergraduate and the graduate program and in my Presidential address in 2000, I discussed the importance of productivity levels of criminal justice faculty around the country in PhD granting institutions. I also became the president of the Association of Doctoral Programs in Criminal Justice, and started working with the National Research Council and made substantial efforts in organizing to advance postgraduate higher education in criminal justice. I have been extensively involved in the higher education side of criminal justice since the early 1990s and then came back here to Rutgers-Newark as Dean and for a short time was on the board of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. During my term as board member I was involved in implementing standards for graduate education in criminal justice. Since then I’ve been on the review committees of half a dozen criminal justice evaluation committees around the country. I’ve been actively involved in criminal justice higher education since the 1990s.

You’ve moved across lots of institutions across the country. Why did you choose to come back to Rutgers-Newark?

Rutgers is a really special place and Rutgers University-Newark is a particularly special place. Our location in state of New Jersey’s most important city in a vital part of who we are and our location in the Northeast region gives us a platform to demonstrate what higher education can be with the socio-economic and urban challenges. We’re a research university, which means we are at the forefront of research questions that our faculty and students engage in but, we are also a university with a strong commitment to student success which makes us an unusual kind of a research university and that has been recognized by academic peers around the country. Being part of Rutgers system is also very valuable as there are so many opportunities for Rutgers as the state university of New Jersey that Rutgers-Newark can benefit from. I’ve always had a fondness for Rutgers University and this is where I cut my teeth as an academic person when I wasn’t part of Rutgers. I kept track of what was going on here and so coming back was natural.

You’re currently involved in studies of criminological implications on economics of justice re-investment. Can you elaborate to our readers about it?

Somebody once said politics is all local. Similarly, crime is all local too. Crime is very much about the places where the crime occurs and how the places where crimes occur produce the risk factors that generate more or less crime. Justice for investment is the idea that putting a person in prison costs $60,000 a year, but if you’re able to manage that person in the community, it costs $1000 a year. If you can reduce the cost of the prison system and take that savings and invest in places that have large numbers of people living in poverty then you’ll reduce the need for prisons and the idea of prisons as a major drain on society’s resources. The idea of justice re-investment is only a decade old, but has taken off and a lot of people think is a great idea.

How does that tie into the current situation of both crime and socio-economic conditions of Newark?

Newark is an urban area that has pockets of high crime rates and the residents are highly involved in the criminal justice system with lots of residents going to prison and then returning to prison at a later point. There are heavy concentrations of not just crime, but also of criminal justice in the neighborhoods of Newark. Also, Newark does not have many wealthy neighborhoods and the city displays large variation in social and physical infrastructure, so Newark is interesting precisely for those reasons and there are innovative ways to approach this problem.

You’re a prolific writer and you were the editor of the Journal of Criminology and Public Policy. A lot of your books deal with issues at the intersection of public policy, community, and the criminal justice system. Can you talk to us about this?

I think the most successful academic careers are Careers where people or the person develops a particu- lar set of interests early on and explores those interests and follows those interests throughout their lives. And very early on in my career when I started out at Rutgers, I got interested in reducing the use of incarceration as a mechanism for dealing with criminal justice. And this was at a time when incarceration rates were growing around the country and it has really been growing for the past three decades. I started off in the area of strengthening parole systems and that lead me to rethink whether the formal mechanisms of state correction systems are capable of being responsive to the need for reform and that led me to think about community based justice systems and reimagining criminal justice as a community based justice approach. And all of this has been just taking one story from my 20s and then following it and exploring it as I got more opportunities to do so as I got ahead in my career. And I’m really lucky that I’ve been able to collaborate with terrific people. So, that means if everything I’ve done had to be done just by me, none of it would have got done. It’s all about creating vital relationships and then using them to build on academic scholarship.

Do you feel that the academic disciplines of public policy and public administration are far from collaborating with the discipline of criminal justice?

It always surprised me how easily universities create walls within themselves. I was a faculty member here back in the ‘80s and ‘90s, we had a very strong presence of public administration faculty at the School of Criminal Justice, but we did not work with them. One of the hallmarks of Chancellor Cantor is her effort towards breaking down the inter-departmental barriers in higher education and in human relationships and we’re beginning to see some success there. For instance, the School of Criminal Justice and the School of Public Affairs and Administration have already proposed a series of new degree programs and new initiatives because the commonality of public policy in the SPAA framework and public policy in the Criminal Justice framework is so strong and subsequently criminologists might not know what public administrators know and vice versa, but, in terms of what these scholars are trying to accomplish, there is almost a hand-in-glove type of a fit, so creating capacity for that collaborations to come along is very important.
The Nonprofit Technical Assistance Center
111 Washington Street | Newark, NJ
spaa.newark.rutgers.edu/ntac

This community-based resource offers Newark nonprofit organizations an opportunity to access technical assistance in areas such as:
- Budgeting
- Strategic Planning
- Fundraising
- Board Recruitment / Management
- Mergers / Acquisitions
- Financial Management

PLUS
- Free access through a virtual library for all resources available through the Funding Information Network of the Foundation Center of New York

A collaboration between Rutgers University-Newark School of Public Affairs and Administration and School of Law, this one-stop nonprofit assistance center is FREE TO ANY NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION IN NEWARK, NJ.