



METROPOLITAN POLICY CENTER

SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Metropolitan Policy Center is pleased to announce the three winners of the 2015 AU Faculty Grant Proposal competition. All three proposals involve interdisciplinary collaboration and focus on important urban research topics in Washington, DC. The research will tackle issues including historic preservation, gentrification, organizational change, and environmental sustainability. We expect these projects will make substantive contributions to metropolitan and urban theory and practice in the fields of law, geography, sociology, public policy, and African American Studies. Congratulations to our winning teams!

Preserving the History of African American Veterans in the District

PIs: Professors Brenda Smith (WCL) and Angela Chuang (SOC)

This project will comprehensively assess and preserve the archival record of a historic African American, DC-based American Legion post. After World War I, African American veterans faced discrimination by their countrymen. Returning African American veterans were not permitted to join white American Legion posts, so a group of DC African American veterans in 1919 created their own American Legion post, known as Post 5. A general preservation assessment of Post 5's materials will be conducted in four areas: (1) appraisal of the collection's historical value; (2) remedial improvements to storage and display; (3) options for making the collection available for future study; and (4) recommendations on integrating the preservation needs of the collection into a plan for the collection's future activities. Additionally, ethnographic oral histories of Post 5 members, historical experts and community partners will be gathered. Both the assessment of the archival materials and the documented narratives will be made publically available and will help to preserve and highlight an important part of DC's African American history.

Changing Landscapes: Intra-Metropolitan Population Shifts and the Responsiveness of Local Nonprofit Organizations

PIs: Professors Lewis Faulk (SPA) and Michael Bader (CAS)

This project will focus on understanding the emergence, expansion and funding challenges of nonprofit organizations in metropolitan neighborhoods that have experienced gentrification or an influx of poverty due to migration from gentrifying neighborhoods. The sample will include 300 community-based nonprofit human service and community organizations in five central DC neighborhoods that have experienced recent gentrification and five neighborhoods beyond the central city where people have moved from gentrifying neighborhoods. Research questions answered by the survey will focus on the responses of community-based organizations to those population changes in their neighborhoods, the emergence of new organizations, competition for funding to address new needs introduced by those population shifts, and the collaboration between existing organizations and local government in addressing those needs.

Tackling Urban Vulnerability: Lessons for Building Community Resilience and Climate Justice in Washington, DC

PIs: Professors Malini Ranganathan (SIS) and Eve Bratman (SIS)

This project will deploy a causal approach to analyzing social vulnerability in line with the broader goal of fostering climate justice in the DC region. The study will collect both qualitative and quantitative data at micro levels (household, neighborhood, community) to assess why certain populations and areas of the city may be more or less vulnerable in the face of climate events. The hope is to shed light on whether existing strategies around economic displacement and gentrification (for instance, community organizing, educational campaigns, policy, etc.) might be transferable for building climate resilience. Much of the existing research on social vulnerability to climate change has been examined in the context of the “Third World”. This project seeks to carefully apply the insights and concepts from this literature to assessing vulnerability in a seemingly “First World” context. The findings will be used to inform the literature on global cities, and strengthen conversations across the North-South theoretical divides.