QIPSR 2010-11 Progress, and 2011-2012 Planning Report

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Overview

• By almost any standard, the inaugural year of the Quantitative Initiative for Policy and Social Research (QIPSR) must be considered a success. QIPSR was extremely busy organizing a large number of events—a Grant Workshop and Faculty Outreach reception, a Conference on Immigration Policy, five Statistical Workshops—two of which were 3-day summer workshops, and participation in a national survey. In addition, we’ve launched our new website for posting announcements for upcoming events and learning materials from past QIPSR events.

• Below, I present some of the highlights of the QIPSR events in terms of their attendance, monetary support and potential for developing research networks and external grants. This is followed by a discussion of the QIPSR website, staff and Advisory Board, and plans for the coming year.

• As detailed below, the numerous QIPSR events we scheduled were a success: 1) attendance was excellent from across the College and the University; 2) thanks to the generous level of College funding and the contributions from various institutes, centers, departments and individuals around campus (totaling $5,600), we were able to schedule more events with world-class speakers; 3) social and professional networking across various units and institutions helped lay the groundwork for research and grant performance, and 4) we expect a significant, long-term payoff in terms of fostering research groups, graduate and faculty training and the development of external grant proposals.

• The learning curve for my directorship was steep, as all the QIPSR activities required an enormous amount of time and effort to plan and execute effectively. I’ve learned more about budgets, event planning (i.e., catering, menus), software and hardware, and just plain planning than I ever wanted to know, frankly. The upside is that, with last year’s experience and increased support from a fulltime graduate assistant, we can expect another successful year from the Initiative. Also, as I discuss in the Conclusions, I plan to move to a more decentralized system for coordinating many events this year, where departments assume a larger role in assisting with some speakers. I close with suggestions for improvements and suggestions for QIPSR’s continued operation.

QIPSR Events, 2010-11

1. Grant workshop
   a. Description: February 18, Friday, Grant Workshop, "An Insider's Guide to Social Science Grants” 2:00-4:00 pm, Whitehall Classroom Building 102
      Panel: Janice Almasi (Education Curriculum and Instruction), Tom Janoski (Sociology), Genia Toma (Martin School), Jim Ziliak (Economics), Matthew Webster (Behavioral Science), Lawrence Gottlob (Psychology, NSF), Anna Secor (Geography), Margot McCullers (Proposal Development Office). 4:30 pm-Faculty Club Reception
   b. Focus: Based on a meeting with A&S Assoc. Deans, Mike Bardo and Betty Lorch, we asked UK social science faculty who regularly serve on review panels at major public funding agencies (NSF, NIH, IES) to give their “insider” advice on successful grant writing.
   c. Attendance: Sixty social science faculty and graduate students from 13 departments and 10 colleges (see the distribution in Figure 1) attended the workshop and reception, and the feedback from everyone was uniformly positive. The UK speakers were absolutely excellent!
d. The “Faculty Outreach” reception at the Faculty Club that followed the two-hour workshop was designed to network grant seekers with grant experts. This year, the faculty reception will be held earlier in the Fall Semester and will be a stand-alone event without following a two-hour workshop.

e. Planning:
   i. Prior to the workshop (in December), I polled faculty in Political Science and Sociology about their grant activity and plans, and discovered that several faculty have grant ideas and vague plans that need support and encouragement.
   ii. After the workshop, I followed up with those faculty, distributing and posting a [GRANT HELP! Menu of steps for turning grant ideas into an A&S proposal](https://example.com/grant-help).

f. Website: All learning materials, including videos, PowerPoints and text summaries were posted at the QIPSR [Grant Workshop page](https://example.com/qsipr-workshop) under Learning Materials.

2. Conference on “Immigration Policy in an Anti-Immigrant Era”

   a. Attendance: The conference was a great success, with approximately 70 attendees signing in from a number of departments and colleges (Martin School, Law, Social Work, Gatton), as well as Arts & Sciences and the Lexington community (e.g., Director, Maxwell Street Legal Clinic, LFUCG Multicultural Affairs, Fayette Co Public Schools). The roundtable discussions on Friday morning were also a success. (See the distribution of Conference Attendees in [Figure 2](https://example.com/fig2).

   b. Dinner: I organized a dinner for the 4 outside presenters and 8 UK discussants of the conference to help create a social and professional network of UK faculty and presenters linking the discussants and the presenters. The discussants were drawn from Geography, Sociology, Psychology, History, Economics, and Political Science.

   c. Prior to the conference:
      i. I met with Margot McCullers, Dir. of the Program Development Office, to determine what private and public agencies have funded immigration research in the past. I then worked with Susannah Denomme’s office to get suggestions for inviting grant officers from 6-8 funding agencies to the conference to cultivate contacts with the agencies. Although none of the invitees are able to attend, I received friendly “regret” messages from several. In the future, invitations will be sent out six months prior to the event.
      ii. With the help of Francie Chassen-Lopez, I contacted several local immigration policy activists and academics to invite them to the conference.
      iii. I also sent invitations, along with a program, to social science departments at nine colleges and universities in Kentucky.

   d. After the conference:
      i. Learning Materials, including papers, videos and PowerPoints for the presentations were posted at the QIPSR website, [here](https://example.com/qsipr).
      ii. The conference helped spur two internal grant proposals for the College’s 21st Century that were designed to develop external grant sources to fund research by UK faculty teams to study immigration. Although neither internal proposal was funded, QIPSR and others should make every effort to make sure that the momentum for bringing A&S immigration scholars together to spur external funding is not lost.

3. Statistical workshops (note: all the 2010-2011 workshops below are posted on this page)

   a. After meeting with faculty in Sociology and other departments around campus, I scheduled four statistical workshops described below in chronological order.
      i. A GIS Workshop and Research talk by Political Scientist, James Gimpel (University of Maryland) in December, 2010. Gimpel’s talks were extremely useful for showcasing a variety of examples of how GIS analysis can be used to study social, political and economic behavior.
      ii. "Automated Content Analysis for Social Scientists" by Daniel Hopkins (Political Scientist, Georgetown) in March, 2011 was attended by approximately 50 faculty and graduate
students from across the university. (See the distribution of Content Analysis Attendees in Figure 3). Co-sponsored with the College of Communications and Information Systems.

iii. “R Workshop: An Introduction,” presented in Spring, 2011, was a “pilot” software workshop for the Fall, 2011 Software Festival (see below) to be presented the first 3 Fridays of every semester at very little cost. In the R Workshop, taught by Grant Cavanaugh, an advanced PhD student in Agriculture Economics, on March 25th graduate students and faculty were introduced to “R,” a free, open-source software used in Statistics that is quickly become the software of choice in leading social science departments around the country. Gatton Lab was filled to capacity (53 seats).

iv. Two 3-day workshops were held in May, 2011, with conceptual sessions in the morning (Gatton 148), and afternoon sessions in the Gatton computer lab. The two workshops offered a more intensive setting for graduate students and faculty to acquire new statistical skills. Because registration for both workshops quickly exceeded seating capacity in the Gatton computer lab, we arranged to have the workshops broadcast and recorded with Adobe Pro Connect for viewing anywhere, even after the workshops. Setting up Adobe Pro Connect was more time-consuming than we expected, but we had the indispensable help of the A&S IT team.

1. “Spatial Regression Analysis” by Paul Voss (Sociologist, UNC, Chapel Hill, Odum Institute) May 17th to 19th (Tuesday to Thursday), in Gatton.
2. “Multilevel Modeling (MLM) using Stata” by Brandon Bartels (Political Science, GWU).

v. Attendance at all the statistical workshops was phenomenal. Averaging about 50 people per workshop, attendance was limited only by seating capacity in the computer lab. More than 80 faculty and graduate students from 6 colleges registered for Spatial Analysis (Figures 4.a and 4.b), and more than 60 registered for Multilevel Modeling with Stata (Figure 5). As the attendance graphs make plain, although Arts and Sciences faculty are the principal participants, several colleges, especially Agriculture, benefit from the workshops.

vi. Contributions:

1. The Spatial Econometrics workshop (May 17th to 19th by Paul Voss, Sociologist at UNC-Chapel Hill & the Odum Institute) was organized chiefly by QIPSR, but was underwritten primarily by a number of departments and programs interested in Geospatial Technology and analysis: QIPSR ($2,000), Tracy Farmer Institute ($1,500), Statistics ($2,000), the Geospatial Science & Technology (GST) Group, Plant and Soil Sciences ($500), Biosystems and Agricultural Eng. ($500), Agricultural Economics ($500), Geography ($150), and Earth and Environmental Sciences ($100).

2. The Multilevel Modeling workshop was co-sponsored with Sociology ($1,000), Political Science ($1,500) and the UK Center for Poverty Research ($1,000).

vii. Planning: The workshops required considerable consultation with interested faculty, lots of research to marry the statistical method with software that many (but not all!) social science faculty use, setting up the rooms with software and Adobe Pro Connect, registering attendees, and posting all the materials (e.g., videos, PowerPoint) on the website after the workshops.

viii. Benefits: The overwhelming demand for such workshops from faculty and grad students from across the university demonstrates their need. The cost of one 3-day workshop that can train 50 to 70 faculty and graduate students is equivalent to the cost of sending just 3 individuals to another university to attend a workshop there. With a little extra planning and Adobe Pro Connect, the benefit of such workshops is long-lasting, since the primary materials for learning (PowerPoints, papers, and lectures) remain online. The response at the end of the workshops was phenomenal and the speakers were first-rate. At the end of the workshop novices with some statistical background were ready to use the method in their research.
4. **Website.**
   a. As noted above, we now have a permanent, stand-alone website, thanks to the A&S IT team, that announces upcoming events (both QIPSR and other workshop series), provides online registration, links to learning materials from past events, and provides link for people to “Get Involved” by adding their name to our listserv. Further enhancements to the website are planned.
   b. I discontinued my separate QIPSR Blog since it is no longer necessary.

5. **Advisory Board**
   a. The Advisory Board consists of 17 members, a third of whom are carryovers from the temporary institute. I’ve added energetic faculty who want to see the initiative work.
   b. The Advisory Board met once in the Fall and once in the Spring, and I remain in constant communication with the Board throughout the year, soliciting their advice and participation. I’ve also set up a Discussion Board on the QIPSR website to assist with more efficient communication and planning.

6. **Staff**
   a. The staff presently consists of two halftime Research Assistants who are PhD students in Political Science—John Poe and Ramesh Sharma (ABD). John Poe worked during the summer, and John and Ramesh will alternate their duties in the Fall and Spring semesters. Last year, the graduate assistant was absolutely essential for making the events run smoothly—checking and rechecking event details (e.g., installing software in computer labs, sending announcements, posters, emails, setting up and monitoring registration, making sure the A-V setup is right, sending reminders to TASC and other A-V people, and just making sure the myriad details of the events don’t fall through the cracks). Both Assistants are extremely hard workers. Thankfully, I received a full-time RA for this year.
   b. Megan McCrosky and Pamela Thompson (A&S) have been excellent with budget matters.

7. **Cooperative Congressional Election Study** (**CCES**, see the link for a description).
   a. For Arts & Sciences faculty interested in surveying political attitudes, we are now a member of a consortium of between 15 to 40 universities that put together their own survey questions to be included on the annual Cooperative Congressional Election Study for the next three years. The national opt-in Internet survey is conducted by YouGov/Polimetrix and provides each university team with 1,000 respondents and 10 full minutes of survey time with another 10 minutes devoted to common items at an astonishingly low cost for assessing treatment effects in survey (question wording) experiments. Proposals were solicited from a small number of faculty (and a graduate student) in Arts and Sciences from Political Science and Psychology with an interest in political attitudes on issues such as immigration, crime, election fraud, foreign policy, racial and ethnic attitudes, and state court selection procedures. Since this is my area of expertise, I spent considerable time providing feedback on members’ questions, creating a pilot survey on Qualtrics, applying for IRB approval, and submitting all the questions with detailed instructions to YouGov’s programmers by August 1. The survey is pretested, the questions revised again, and the final survey goes into the field in October. Survey findings will be written up in journal articles and used as pilot data for external grant proposals.
Planning for 2011-2012

1. General plan
   a. I plan to employ greater decentralization in first consulting with others about speakers to invite and then asking different departments to help tend to the details of inviting and transporting speakers.
   b. I am making every effort to ensure that several women are invited to speak and participate in QIPSR events.
   c. With a tighter university budget this year, contributions from other units may be down this year, so we may need to plan fewer events.

2. Grant initiatives
   a. Last Spring, I followed up with faculty in Political Science and Sociology who were thinking about submitting proposals for external funding. I and others in Political Science (e.g., Clayton Thyne) met with the Sharmi Ray, the CGO in A&S, to develop a budget for an NSF proposal. Sharmi was extremely helpful.
   b. I developed a GRANT HELP! Menu outlining a timeline for completing the stages of proposal submissions.
   c. I am developing a grant proposal library in Political Science and Sociology.
   d. I intend to schedule a trip to DC to meet with NSF program directors in Law and Social Sciences, Sociology and Political Science, and possibly the Pew Foundation.
   e. Grant Workshops
      i. I scheduled a Workshop on “Writing Successful NSF Dissertation Improvement Grants” for Friday, October 28, 2011 presented by Anna Secor and Tom Janoski.
      ii. QIPSR will help advertise an NSF Grant Workshop organized by Psychology and the Program Development Office.
      iii. I met with Acting Associate Dean for Research, Mike Bardo, to plan another grant workshop and faculty reception in the Spring.
   f. Results: In Political Science alone, large external grant submissions will be up this year, with one NSF grant submitted over the summer, another NSF proposal in January, 2012, and 1-2 more in the Spring.

3. Software workshops: First Fridays
   a. Based on meetings last year with Arny Stromberg (Statistics) and Ani Katchova (Ag Economics), QIPSR is coordinating a series of introductory software workshops offered by UK Agricultural Economics faculty and graduate students. These are short, two-hour courses on Stata, SAS, Matlab, and R that are intended for people with limited or no previous experience with the software. The Fall workshops were held on Fridays from August 26 to September 9 in B&E 105. Workshop syllabi and descriptions can be found here. This is an inexpensive way to introduce students and faculty to different software options to expand their repertoire.

   a. After consulting with the Advisory Board faculty in several departments (Sociology, Political Science, Psychology and Economics), we decided to organize a conference on the antecedents and consequences of “Rising Economic Inequality in the 21st Century (working title)” March 2, 2012. Like the last conference, one purpose will be to network faculty and graduate students to foster research and external grant submissions.
   b. The following social scientists from different disciplines have agreed to participate:
      - Leslie McCall (Sociologist, Northwestern). Author of Complex Inequality: Gender, Class, and Race in the New Economy (Routledge, 2001), and is completing a book on American public opinion about income inequality, economic opportunity, and redistribution/social policy.
      - Rashmita Mistry (Psychologist, UCLA). Author of numerous articles on the consequences of poverty and economic stress on child and family well-being and young children's reasoning about social class and economic inequality.
      - Lane Kenworthy (Sociologist, U AZ). Author of “Progress for the Poor” (forthcoming, Oxford).
• Martin Gilens (Political Science, Princeton), author of “Affluence & Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America” (forthcoming, Princeton).

c. We’re interested in getting the Colleges of A&S and B&E involved in order to plan a town/gown type of event.

5. **Statistical Workshops**
   a. Two are scheduled in the Fall (Philip A. Schrodt at Penn State University, and Yanna Krupnikov at Indiana University); others will be invited for the Spring. Speakers use innovative quantitative methods to study substantive problems that bring social scientists together across departments, with the **goal of raising research and encouraging external grant activity.**
Figure 1. Grant Workshop Attendance by Department

- Faculty (31)
- Grad/ Post Doc (28)
- Total (61)

Figure 2. Immigration Conference Attendees by Department

(Total = 60)
Figure 3. Content Analysis Workshop Attendance by Department

- Faculty (10)
- Grad Students (26)
- Total (36)

Figure 4.a. Spatial Regression Workshop Registration by Department

- Faculty (22)
- Grad Students (49)
- Total (71)
Figure 4.b. Spatial Regression Workshop Registration by College

- Faculty (22)
- Grad Students (49)
- Total (71)

Figure 5. Multi-Level Modeling Workshop Registration by Department

- Faculty (20)
- Grad Students (32)
- Total (52)