



Impacting education policy and improving the quality of education through research and evaluation

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EPEC Update

Education Policy and Evaluation Center
University of Georgia

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EPEC UPDATES

Al Cohen Named EPEC Interim Director

Dean Andy Horne has appointed Professor Al Cohen as interim director of EPEC effective October 1, 2008. Dr. Cohen has been at the university for over 15 years and is director of the Georgia Center for Assessment. Look for a profile of Dr. Cohen in the next newsletter.

Dr. Jori Hall Joins EPEC

Dr. Jori Hall, a recent graduate in Educational Policy Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, has joined EPEC as an Education Policy and Evaluation Center Affiliate. She is an assistant professor in the Qualitative Research Program within the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy. Her primary research interests include educational evaluation and accountability policies, mixed methods evaluations and research approaches, and K-12 urban education.

In a recent interview with Meca Mohammed, EPEC research assistant, Dr. Hall discussed her new role with the Center.

Mohammed: Tell me, how have your experiences prepared you for this position?

Hall: As a former elementary school teacher in Chicago, I have a passion for urban education and for understanding how to best engage students that are African American and low-income. That drives a lot of what I do in terms of my research and my work. Those experiences eventually led me to a master's program in educational administration at DePaul University. I later decided to pursue a doctoral degree, because I felt that understanding policy would be more influential with respect to school improvement efforts. My current position at the Center is a good fit, because it allows me to draw on my experiences as a teacher and to forge them with my graduate studies in administration and policy.

Mohammed: What do you hope to gain through your involvement with EPEC?

Hall: Because I am not from this state, on a very fundamental level, I would like to better understand the Georgia context. I'm familiar with the political landscape in Chicago, but I would like to familiarize myself with issues and concerns with respect to educational policy in the state of Georgia. I am also looking forward to collaborating across disciplines.

Mohammed: What do you hope to contribute to the UGA community and to the community-at-large?

Hall: My teaching experience offers the unique perspective of having been in "the trenches." Policy is often created without an understanding of how schools actually function on the ground and is not in light of how schools actually function. My grand hope is to provide insight in terms of that and to raise questions related to how teachers, parents, and administrators might interpret policy initiatives. In terms of evaluation, I can help schools address important questions like: what are the various ways that we can assess what is going on? Then, help schools work toward meaningful solutions.

Policy Impact News

Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act

On July 31, 2008 the House and Senate overwhelmingly passed the “*Higher Education Opportunity Act*” (H.R. 4137) to reauthorize the Higher Education Act (HEA) for the first time since 1998. On August 14, President Bush signed the bill into law. The law provides additional aid and benefits for students and requires a host of new reporting requirements and disclosures to help students and parents make better-informed decisions about higher education and higher education financing. NASFAA's HEA Implementation Resources page posts all HEA reauthorization information in one location. To access this document, copy and paste the following link into your browser: <http://www.nasfaa.org/SubHomes/HEA/home.html>

Commission for School Board Excellence

In April 2008, the Georgia State Board of Education commissioned a report on issues concerning local school board governance. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reports that the Commission for School Board Excellence – AdvancEd, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, and the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce – submitted [final recommendations](#) on September 10, 2008. According to Matteucci, “The State Board of Education will discuss the recommendations next month and look at possible legislation for the next session.” To access the full article, copy and paste the following link into your browser: <http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/printedition/2008/09/11/schoolboards.html> for “*Clayton Fiasco Sparks Reaction by State Board*” by Megan Matteucci.

From the Public Education Network (PEN) Weekly NewsBlast for September 12, 2008:

Three national policy organizations have joined ranks to ensure that states have a means to benchmark their K-12 education systems to those of top-performing nations. The National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Achieve, Inc., have formed the International Benchmarking Advisory Group. Its participants are education experts, members of the business community, researchers, former federal officials, and current state and local officials. The new group -- which will be co-chaired by Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano, Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue, and Craig Barrett, chairman of the board at Intel Corporation -- will provide guidance on education benchmarking in such areas as standards, accountability, the workforce, and assessments. Said Napolitano: “The most recent results of Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show U.S. students finished 21st in science skills and 25th in mathematics skills. In a globally competitive world, the U.S. must do better. We need students capable of competing for high-paying jobs with students from top-performing countries.” For more information and access to the full article, copy and paste the following link in to your browser: <http://www.achieve.org/node/1029/>

Resources for Review

Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002) Policy and Research Issues

ELS:2002 will serve the development and evaluation of educational policy at all governmental levels and inform decision makers, educational practitioners, and parents about the changes in the operation of the educational system over time, and the effects over time that elements of the system have on the lives of the individuals who pass through it. For more information and access to the report, copy and paste the following link into your browser: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/els2002/policy.asp>

Education Policy Primer 2008-09 Edition

Created by the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education in cooperation with the Georgia School Boards Association

The 2008-2009 Education Policy Primer is a quality reference tool for anyone who is involved in public education in our state. For more information and access to the online publication, copy and paste the following link into your browser: <http://www.gpee.org/2008-09-Education-Policy-Primer.126.0.html>

EPEC Activities

Policy Research Group

2008 EPEC Spring Conference

Around sixty attendees gathered for EPEC's first annual spring policy conference, co-sponsored with the Education Law Consortium on Friday, April 18 at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education, entitled, "The State of School Finance: Implications for Georgia and Beyond." Dean of the College Andy Horne and Associate Director of Policy Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot welcomed the group, highlighting the Center's aspirations to bring social science research to bear on critical educational policy issues. Panel summaries are posted in the policy section of the website.

Education in Georgia: First Annual State of the State Report

The College of Education, in collaboration with the Education Policy and Evaluation Center, will host its inaugural State of the State Conference at the Terry Education Center in Atlanta. The UGA Superintendents Advisory Committee, other superintendents in Georgia, top state agency officials, key legislators, and other UGA academics will convene to benchmark leading indicators related to P-16 education. Featured presenters include: Jeff Humphreys, James Johnson, Matthew Springer, Eric Houck, Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot, Catherine Sielke, Max Skidmore, and Sheneka Williams. The conference will be held on Thursday, October 2, 2008, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information, visit <http://www.coe.uga.edu/dean/stateofthestate/about.html>

EPEC to Host Presidential Debate Brown Bag Lunch

EPEC invites you to attend "Presidential Debate: What will Obama and McCain do to education policy?" featuring Drs. Elizabeth DeBray-Pelot & Eric Houck, moderated by Dr. Sheneka Williams. The debate will be held on Wednesday, October 22 (noon-1) in Aderhold G-23.

Program Evaluation Group

Georgia Supplemental Education Services (SES) Evaluation

EPEC continues to support the Georgia Department of Education in its annual evaluation of the SES program and providers in Georgia. This federal Title I program supports "free" after school tutoring to eligible low-income students by nearly 150 private and non-profit SES Provider organizations. PEG research personnel (Jana Thompson, Scott Pollack, and Cigdem Alagoz) evaluated client satisfaction, quality of services, and effectiveness of SES tutoring by providers to meet the federal requirements for SES evaluation. Evaluation included collection and reporting survey information from key stakeholders (parents, students, Title I directors, SES providers, and school administrators), and conducting comparative analyses of student academic achievement test scores for SES and non-SES students. Results are reported for the state as a whole and for each individual SES provider to determine the contribution of SES to increased student academic proficiency.

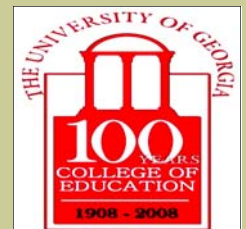
CTAE Annual Report

PEG is working with the Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) division of the Georgia Department of Education to assess statewide data on programs, participation, and impacts in order to describe key achievements and outcomes of CTAE in Georgia. Information will be presented in a CTAE Annual Report 2007 which focuses on the contributions of CTAE to student achievement and economic development, to be distributed to policy makers and education leaders throughout the state.

Support Services

Policy Research Group

The Policy Research Group is currently soliciting faculty members' working papers for posting on the Center website. These are generally papers that have been submitted to a scholarly journal for review or have been presented at a conference. The PRG is also interested in talking to faculty conducting policy-related research that could be featured in the policy section of the website.



Program Evaluation Group

EPEC has assisted with the development of the evaluation component of grant proposals for a number of UGA and COE departments and faculty, Clarke County School District, and Georgia Communities in Schools. EPEC can serve as the external evaluator or assist in designing and conducting evaluation activities required for grant and contract proposals. PEG personnel have been included as evaluators in more than ten different grant proposal submissions this year so far.

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About EPEC

Policy Research Group

The Policy Research Group within EPEC aims to provide resources to faculty seeking to share the results of their research studies with the policy community in the state. Dr. Elizabeth-DeBrayPelot, Associate Director, and Dr. Jori Hall, Dr. Eric Houck, and Dr. Sheneka Williams, are available to faculty to assist with writing policy briefs for prospective posting on the Center website and distribution to state policymakers.

Program Evaluation Group

The Program Evaluation Group within EPEC offers rigorous program evaluation, technical assistance, data collection, and information analysis for a variety of public and private stakeholder agencies, foundations, and institutions on local, state, national, and international levels. PEG core staff, under the direction of Dr. Dorothy Harnish, is comprised of professional staff skilled in carrying out multiple projects utilizing various research methods to assess the need for educational programs and their impact and effectiveness. Reports, research briefs, and presentations can be accessed by pasting the following address into your browser:

<http://www.coe.uga.edu/EPEC/projects/index.html>

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