The Schaefer Center for Public Policy has been awarded a two-year, $500,000 research grant from the Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc., to provide a comprehensive study of stewardship of faith-based organizations. The study entitled, Maintaining Vital Connections Between Faith Communities and their Organizations, will explore the guidance and oversight of faith based organizations by their founding religious bodies and provide concrete products specific both to that religion, as well as more general theologically grounded materials to enhance those connections. The project will provide concrete guidance in the form of a series of practical tools that can be used by religious leaders, people responsible for stewardship of faith based organizations and faith based organization executives.

Leading the project will be Schaefer Center Research Associate Jo Anne Schneider. Schneider completed a pilot study in 2004-2006 and, as principal investigator for the project, is looking forward to the opportunity to further extend her research. “The project came out of the concerns of religious and faith-based organization leaders and we look forward to working with faith communities in this project.”

The need for materials reflecting their specific theology, culture and practice was raised by faith community leaders during the pilot project. They also voiced concern that federal government policy reflected strategies appropriate for some denominations, but not all. The current study intends to generate a wider understanding of ways that faith is made manifest as nonprofit activity and the most appropriate strategies each faith community could use to maintain the faith base for their organizations.

The project will compare stewardship among Catholics, Jews, several mainline Protestant and Evangelical denominations, Quakers, and the African American church. Research questions will explore:

- How do faith communities understand their practical theology, regarding work in the world, and how does that practical theology play out in stewardship organizations?
- How does stewardship differ among the various branches of Christianity (mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, Peace Churches, Catholics, African American churches) and Jews?
- What strategies can a faith community use to address concerns regarding the faith base in organizations under its care or affiliated with that religion?

The project will consist of two phases. Phase one will develop a comprehensive understanding of how each selected faith community envisions and operationalizes stewardship, including a comparison of stewardship practices for six organizations with different kinds of relationships to the founding religion for each faith. Phase two will involve an expansion of the project to between six and nine additional organizations per faith for less intensive research and testing of a self-assessment instrument.

Schaefer Center director, Ann Cotten, commented about the possibilities offered by this new avenue of research for the center. “This is a wonderful opportunity for the center to continue to build on our work in the nonprofit sector and contribute to the understanding and management of this important segment of the community.”

The Faith and Organizations study is scheduled to begin January 2007, and will be conducted in the Mid-Atlantic region, with sites ranging from Philadelphia through Northern Virginia. Significant portions of the research will take place in or around Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore and the Washington DC metropolitan area. The expansion phase of the project will also include Texas and the Midwest.

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The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Fellows Program
Announces 2007 AIM for Excellence Award

Fuel Fund takes top honors

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Fellows Program named the Fuel Fund of Central Maryland the winner of its annual AIM for Excellence Award, during its annual AIM for Excellence conference, held at the Tremont Grand Conference Center.

The AIM for Excellence conference culminates with the announcement of the AIM for Excellence Award. The 2007 winner, the Fuel Fund of Central Maryland, received an unrestricted grant for $20,000 in honor of its executive director, Mary Ellen Vanni, for results achieved through the organization’s collaboration with BG&E and city-based community outreach agencies. The project allows people in need of Fuel Fund assistance to apply for aid through a variety of social service providers. A Web-based application, developed and maintained by Constellation Energy, lets applicants know immediately if they are eligible for fuel payment assistance; those who are eligible receive immediate assistance with BG&E payments.

“The Weinberg Fellowship Program challenges executive directors to be more collaborative, efficient and productive,” Vanni said in accepting the award. “I am grateful for the vision of the trustees at the foundation for developing this effective program and the award, which will be a tremendous help in fulfilling our mission.”

Successfully utilized the knowledge and expertise they gained from the program to implement positive change within their organizations. The Students Sharing Coalition expanded the role of network partners and its number of volunteers to increase the outreach of its Halloween for Hunger program. The Maryland Mentoring Partnership applied key concepts and knowledge from the program in its executive director transition process.

The conference’s keynote speaker, Dr. Randal Pinkett, winner of NBC’s hit reality show The Apprentice, gave an entertaining and informative presentation, A Tale of Two Sectors: Perspectives on Nonprofit Capacity Building from a For-Profit Social Entrepreneur. Following his keynote address, Pinkett led an interactive breakout session, Using Technology to Build Communities. Fellows broke into teams and were then given a case study to work through, “hearing the different case studies allowed me to understand some of the technology challenges in our community,” commented several of the participants.

Breakout sessions continued throughout the day and were led by experienced speakers: Dr. Berit Lakey, of Board Source, Michele Wolff, Director, Shriver Center, UMBC, and Donna Butts. Executive Director, Generations United. The sessions focused primarily on intergenerational differences between board members, staff and volunteers. The conference closed with a well-attended resource fair and networking event. “This has been a terrific opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of our AIM Awardees and expand Fellows’ knowledge about intergenerational engagement,” commented, Schaefer Center Director and Weinberg Fellows Program Director, Ann Cotten. “The addition of Weinberg Fellows’ board members and staff members has allowed the program to further enhance the Fellows’ organizations.”

Managed by UB’s Schaefer Center for Public Policy, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Fellows Program is a leadership development program for executive directors of agencies serving disadvantaged residents of the Baltimore metropolitan area.
The Schaefer Center for Public Policy released the annual Policy Choices Survey for 2008. The survey is a representative telephone survey of eight hundred Maryland adults, conducted November 27, 2007 through January 3, 2008, which assesses Marylander’s opinions on a wide range of policy-related issues.

This year, in a reversal of last year’s opinion survey, public education slipped from the top priority facing the state legislature. Instead, taxes and the state budget were seen as the most important issues facing the state legislature this year.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of a randomized list of priorities by program area for the State of Maryland. Controlling crime (82%), improving public education (72%), and developing and keeping jobs (71%) were deemed “very important” priorities by a vast majority of respondents.

According to Ann Cotten, Director of the Schaefer Center, the results of this year’s survey reflect a sense of increased pessimism among the respondents about Maryland’s economy and their personal economic situation. Forty-five percent of the respondents think Maryland’s economy will get worse during the next year. This is more than double the percentage of respondents who were pessimistic about the economy in 2006 (20%) and 2005 (18%). Only one quarter of the respondents think their personal economic situation will improve over the next year, down from 34% as reported in last year’s survey.


Faculty and Staff News

Mary Lovegrove, assistant director, joined the center in 2003 after working as a center consultant and accountant for several years. She is an attorney and the principal legal researcher for the National Obesity Report Card. In this role Lovegrove is responsible for the analysis of enacted, as well as proposed, legislation in determining the overall grade given to each state.

Lovegrove oversees the day-to-day legal and contractual obligations of the center. She is the coordinator for The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Fellows Program, and is responsible for the organization and logistics involved in the successful operation of activities and live-in retreats attended by the Weinberg Fellows.

Ed Gibson, an assistant professor specializing in public finance, joined the School of Public Affairs in Fall 2007. In addition to teaching courses in budgeting, finance, and organization theory, Gibson contributed a series of questions on energy and the environment to the Schaefer Center’s statewide survey, Policy Choices 2008. He plans to incorporate the survey results into research on how concerns over global warming are impacting the environmental community’s views on nuclear power. Gibson is also researching the recent effects of federal privatization initiatives on the civil service’s management capacity. Other projects involve performance management and social insurance policymaking.

Jo Anne Schneider, research associate, joined the center in 2007. Schneider has extensive experience as an urban anthropologist. Her primary area of expertise involves the relationship among government, nonprofits, faith communities and local communities in supporting communities, developing and implementing policies.

Schneider will be directing the national, interdisciplinary project on faith based organizations, Maintaining Vital Connections Between Faith and Communities and their Organizations, which explore the dynamic between founding communities and the nonprofits they create to provide education, social services, healthcare, senior services and community development.
2007 Weinberg Fellows Graduation

The 2007 Weinberg Fellows graduated from the program on October 19, 2007. The graduation ceremony took place on the last day of the Fellows’ fourth retreat of the year, at Turf Valley Resort and Conference Center in Ellicott City. The Weinberg Fellows Program, which is coordinated by the University of Baltimore's Schaefer Center for Public Policy, consists of a year-long professional development program designed to enhance leadership skills and promote collaboration among the region’s non-profit organizations.

The group of 17 executive directors from agencies that serve disadvantaged residents in the Baltimore metropolitan area was selected for the program through a competitive process. The members of the 2007 Weinberg Fellows include Salliann Alborn of Community Health Integrated Partnership, Inc.; Carolyn C. Ames of Community Housing Associates, Inc.; Bonnie Bessor, Rebuilding Together Baltimore; Kathryn Spencer Farinholt, NAMI-Metropolitan Baltimore; Margaret Footner, Creative Alliance; Lena M. Franklin, Recovery in Community, Inc.; Khalilah Harris, The Baltimore Freedom Academy Foundation, Inc.; Sheila Helgerson, United Ministries, Inc.; Virginia Knowlton, Maryland Disability Law Center; Debra Langseth, Spectrum Support, Inc.; Dale Eileen Meyer, People Encouraging People, Inc.; Alfreda Robinson-Dawkins, National Women’s Prison Project, Inc.; Lesley Anne Smith, Washington Village/Pigtown Neighborhood Planning Council; Joyce C. Smith, Operation ReachOut SouthWest; Shelly Terranova, Junior League of Baltimore; Steve Vassor, Hampden Family Center; and Kathleen O'Donnell Weiss, BioTechnical Institute of Maryland, Inc.

About the Center

The mission of the Schaefer Center is to serve the public and nonprofit sectors of the Baltimore metropolitan area and the state of Maryland by conducting program evaluations, performing policy analysis, facilitating strategic planning, providing management training programs, and engaging in public opinion research. In all of its endeavors, the emphasis of the Schaefer Center is on applying the knowledge and skills of the University community to real-world issues and producing high-quality, objective, tangible and useable results.

The center’s services include:
- Strategic planning
- Performance measurement
- Program evaluation
- Staffing analysis
- Phone, mail and web surveys
- Focus group moderation
- Policy analysis

Contracting the Center

There are two ways to contract with the center:
- For program evaluation, survey research and general policy analysis, state agencies can secure the center’s services via an Interagency Agreement.
- The center also responds to competitive solicitations.

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