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Martin Horak
Director, Local Government Program
Multilevel Governance and Public Policy in Canadian Municipalities

Robert Young

MPA alumni might be interested to know about a big research project that has been based in the Political Science department for the past few years.

The project is about Multilevel Governance and Public Policy in Canadian Municipalities. It is funded mainly by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to the tune of $2.5 million.

The project was proposed because of the growing interest in municipalities, especially at the federal level. Several new initiatives were begun by the Harper government.

We are interested in explaining the shape of public policy in municipalities. We see policy as being formed through intergovernmental negotiations, which is the ‘multilevel’ part. But we hypothesize that policy making will also involve organized interests of many kinds. This is the ‘governance’ side.

The project has involved over 90 scholars and many graduate research assistants. Bob Young is the project leader, though the theoretical apparatus guiding the project was shaped by many people.

Andrew Sancton and Bob Young, is Foundations of Governance. It is a systematic survey of the municipal-provincial systems in each Canadian province.

The rest of the studies explore six policy fields - emergency planning, federal property, immigrant settlement, image-building, infrastructure and urban Aboriginal policy. Each is studied in a wide range of municipalities. There is also a collection, edited by Martin Horak and Bob Young, that examines policy making in each province’s biggest city. These are forthcoming.

You can learn more about the publications and the project as a whole by visiting our website (ppm-ppm.ca). Do have a look and tell us what you think!

Research Topic: Property Taxation Visibility and Municipal Revenues

Tim Cobban

Property taxation is widely considered to be among the most visible sources of government revenue, mostly because it has been traditionally collected through lump-sum payments made once or a few times per year. But in many jurisdictions, including most of Canada, citizens now also pay their property taxes more frequently and less directly, through remittances included in their monthly mortgage payment, for example, or through pre-arranged schedules of electronic bank deposits.

In a recent paper, I calculate the proportion of municipal voters in Canada for whom the property tax remains highly visible, estimate the rate of decline in property tax visibility, and explore the effects on municipal revenues. Property tax collection data were gathered from the one hundred most populous municipalities in Ontario and the five most populous in each other Canadian province for the years 2001 and 2006, a sample which represents about two-thirds of the Canadian population. Special tabulations from Statistics Canada on age, citizenship, and housing tenure by municipality were also used, as were data taken from municipal annual financial reports.

My analysis showed that the property tax remains highly visible for only a very thin majority of municipal voters, that the visibility of property tax is quickly declining, and that taxes appeared to be rising slightly faster in municipalities where tax visibility is declining.

Alumni Updates

Did you get a promotion? New Job? Have a baby or get married? Why not update your Alumni Colleagues by letting us know about it.

Alumni Updates will be posted to our website and a few will be featured in future newsletters.

Just send an e-mail to jmorga8@uwo.ca with a short (one paragraph) update.

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We have put out two survey volumes. One, *Spheres of Governance*, explores multilevel governance in eight other countries. The second, edited by Andrew Sancton and Bob Young, is *Foundations of Governance*. It is a systematic survey of the municipal-

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Local Government Program – Current Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Enrolled Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters of Public Administration (MPA)</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in Public Administration (DPA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Campus</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Toronto</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>GTA Program</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollent (all Programs)</td>
<td>177</td>
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</tbody>
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