Economic Policy Will Be the Focus of Annual Dinner Speaker

Douglas Holtz-Eakin, President of the American Action Forum, will be the keynote speaker at the Center’s 2017 Annual Dinner on April 3. His talk will focus on economic policy under the new administration.

The Annual Dinner is also the occasion to present the Weidenbaum Center Award for Excellence to deserving policy leaders, community leaders, and students. This award was established in 2013 to honor individuals who exhibit the character, dedication, and excellence associated with Professor Murray Weidenbaum’s scholarship and public service. This year, Dr. Holtz-Eakin will receive the award for his commitment to public policy and academic scholarship. The recipients of the other awards will be revealed at the dinner.

Dr. Holtz-Eakin has built an international reputation as a scholar doing research in areas of applied economic policy, econometric methods, and entrepreneurship. He began his career at Columbia University in 1985 and moved to Syracuse University from 1990 to 2001. Since 2001, he has served in a variety of important policy positions. During 2001-2002, he was the Chief Economist of the President’s Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) (where he had also served during 1989-1990 as a Senior Staff Economist). From 2003-2005 he was the 6th Director of the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), which provides budgetary and policy analysis to the U.S. Congress. During 2007 and 2008 he was Director of Domestic and Economic Policy for the John McCain presidential campaign.

More information about the Weidenbaum Center’s annual dinner will be available later this spring.

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Calendar subject to change.

Please visit [http://wc.wustl.edu](http://wc.wustl.edu) for more information on Weidenbaum Center programs and activities.
The Weidenbaum Center continues both its academic and public policy efforts. Our mission remains to serve as a bridge between policymakers and scholars by supporting scholarly research, public affairs programs, and other activities at the intersection of business and government.

This newsletter provides insight into our upcoming public policy and public outreach programs, as well as some other special highlighted programs and activities. The academic research efforts and programs encouraged and supported by the Center can be viewed on our website and in our annual reports.

As always, we welcome your insights, comments, and/or recommendations for public policy issues that we might evaluate for future programs.

2017 Weidenbaum Center Media Retreat

June 25-28, 2017

On June 25-28, 2017, the Center will host its 16th annual Media Retreat. This program brings writers, reporters, editors, and producers together with academic and business experts. This intense, interactive seminar examines the role that numbers, statistics, and data analysis play in news, public policy, and politics. The Retreat seminars have four goals:

- to give journalists the tools and techniques to analyze how numbers come into being
- to help journalists better evaluate and investigate the validity of these numbers
- to help journalists utilize numbers to substantiate or refute a story, and
- to assist journalists with new story ideas for challenging conventional wisdom

2017 Weidenbaum Center Evidenced-Based Journalism Award

Entries for the Center’s 2017 Evidenced-Based Journalism award will be collected until early March 2017. The recipient(s) will be recognized and presented with a cash award and a recognition plaque at the opening dinner of the 2017 retreat.

This annual award recognizes a past participant whose work represents quality journalism on public policy that embodies the principles of the Media Retreat. Each year a committee of Media Retreat seminar leaders determines who receives the award.
Faculty from the Departments of Economics and Political Science serve as Research Fellows at the Center. Two Political Science faculty are highlighted below.

The Center will continue to support Professor Dan Butler’s project, “Laboratories of Democracy,” through the Spring and Fall of 2017. Since the project began, Professor Butler has had or will have articles published in American Journal of Political Science, Political Science Research and Methods, Political Research Quarterly, Journal of Politics, Comparative Political Studies, and Political Analysis.

Professor Butler and Professor Margit Tavits will continue their research on “Cooperation and Representation in Post-Conflict Societies” through fiscal year 2018. This involves three projects: 1) the effect of exposure to violence on political participation and ethnic voting, 2) the effect of wartime violence against women on cooperation and representation, and 3) the actions and attitudes of political elites in post-conflict societies. Their focus will be on Bosnia, due to its being the only Muslim society in Europe. Given the recent events that highlight the growing tensions between locals and Muslim immigrants in Europe and the difficulties that European countries face in integrating this minority, other countries can potentially learn a lot from Bosnia (both what they have done right and what they have done wrong).

With support from the Weidenbaum Center, Professor Guillermo Rosas has been conducting research on a project on representation and responsiveness in Latin American democracies. In collaboration with Brian Crisp (Washington University) and Santiago Olivella (UNC-Chapel Hill), they inspect whether and how political institutions—especially electoral rules and agenda-setting rules—facilitate congruence between the policy preferences of Latin American citizenries and the policy outputs implemented by Latin American elites. They address two important questions in this project: Are Latin American elected representatives really as unresponsive to the desires of their constituents as they are sometimes portrayed? And are differences in responsiveness driven by institutions that pattern how these representatives are elected and how they interact as presidents and congressional representatives? The project takes an ambitious long and broad view of policymaking in the region, as they analyze data from 1995 to 2014 for eighteen Latin American countries. They use sophisticated methodological tools and a treasure trove of citizen and elite surveys, along with an original collection of institutional data and policies, to build up the case that institutions matter in fostering congruence between citizen preferences, politicians’ programs, and public policy.

Professor Rosas will also be a coordinator, along with fellow faculty member Margit Tavits, of the 5th Comparative Politics Annual Conference (CPAC). This conference, held in late April, will examine issues broadly related to political identity. Political scientists from across the country will participate.
Murray Weidenbaum Scholars Program

Professor Murray Weidenbaum spent most of his distinguished career at Washington University working with undergraduate and graduate students. More than a thousand students benefited from his teaching and mentoring. This undergraduate student funding program was created to honor him for his many years of dedication.

Students work with faculty whose expertise lies in areas such as:

- Micro and macroeconomics
- Environmental economics
- Social choice, political economy, and democracy
- Industrial organization and medical economics
- Statistics
- Judicial politics
- Comparative political behavior democratic processes
- Democratic institutions
- International relations and political economy
- American politics and policy making

Who Benefits from the Program

The Murray Weidenbaum Scholars Program gives Washington University undergraduate students a unique and rewarding opportunity to learn and work under the guidance and mentoring of world-class academic experts in the fields of economics and political science. Previous scholars were Adam Caplan, Nay’chelle Harris, Ryan Mikkelsen, and Tianzan Pang. This program provides three primary types of support for undergraduate scholars:

- Research Assistantships
- Support for Honors Theses
- Conference Travel

Candidates for the Program

Undergraduates are chosen by academic standing, interests, or career goals. Stipends are determined by faculty mentors and vary based upon the hours needed to complete research projects. Requests for funds for travel/data are evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Center’s Director and Associate Director.

Michelle Torres Pacheco

Michelle Torres Pacheco is a fourth-year graduate student in the Political Science Department at Washington University in St. Louis. She is originally from Mexico City, where she obtained a B.A. in Political Science and International Relations from CIDE (Center for Research and Teaching in Economics).

Her broad research interests are in the fields of political methodology, public opinion, political behavior, and political psychology, with a special interest in survey methodology, computer vision, causal inference, and attitude formation. Her current research focuses on political methodology. In her dissertation, she analyzes images and pictures using computer vision and machine learning techniques in order to classify political visual messages such as the level of violence in images published in news articles about the Black Lives Matter movement.

She has worked under the direction of a number of faculty at Washington University, including Weidenbaum Center Director Steven Smith and Weidenbaum Center Fellow Betsy Sinclair. Her keen interest in developing tools and techniques to improve survey design and analysis led her to become part of the team that developed an R package that allows for dynamic weighting of The American Panel Survey (TAPS).
The Weidenbaum Center is pleased to announce that The American Panel Survey will continue for another four years. The panel is administered by GfK Custom Research.

The American Panel Survey (TAPS) is made up of a national probability sample from a panel of about 2,000 adults in the United States. TAPS is used for a variety of social science research projects, including survey experiments and long-term panel studies. Fourteen university faculty have had research modules on TAPS. In addition, seven graduate students have written papers or are planning dissertation projects using TAPS data. So far, 43 book chapters, journal articles, and papers have resulted from TAPS.

Research module questions on TAPS have included unilateral power and the presidency, attitudes toward disclosure of Alzheimer disease research results, implications of ideological dissatisfaction for Supreme Court legitimacy, the relationship between personal stability and ideological structure in the mass public, and the origins and limitations of systematic individual level changes in party identification. Many other projects are currently underway and will produce additional papers in the near future.

The Weidenbaum Center allows all researchers one year of private access to the data collected using TAPS. After one year, all data becomes public and is placed on the TAPS website. This public data and screenshots of the surveys can be found on the website, http://taps.wustl.edu.

The panel was recruited using an address-based sampling (ABS) frame. That is, from a random selection of residential addresses, stratified using ancillary data on age and ethnic group, a panel of more than 2,000 was recruited. TAPS surveys are administered online; selected panelists who do not have a computer or online service are provided a computer and internet access by TAPS.

Questions about TAPS should be directed to Melinda Warren (warren@wustl.edu; 314-935-5652).

WEIDENBAUM SCHOLARS/RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Patrick Tucker

Patrick Tucker is a Ph.D candidate in political science at Washington University in St. Louis and a graduate fellow in the Weidenbaum Center. His research focuses on public opinion and Congress. In particular, he is interested in how the interactions between political elites and voters affect perceptions and expectations of representation. TAPS data is used extensively in his research.

Some of the current projects he is working on with faculty are: 1) gaining new insight into the variability and stability of congressional approval at the individual-level through a novel panel survey dataset; 2) providing evidence about how ideological differences at the mass level fuel affective and social polarization; 3) developing a new measure of candidates’ ideological consistency—voters are more likely to perceive the more consistent candidate as closer to their own ideological position—with the data results having important implications for candidate strategies in elections.

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Public Policy Breakfast Series - The Weidenbaum Center Eliot Society and Major Donors series consists of informative presentation by local and national experts who summarize and share their insights on key current public policy issues. Details on upcoming programs follow.

January 23—Economic Policy in the Age of Big Data
Tara Sinclair, Washington University alumnus and Professor of Economics and International Affairs at George Washington University, will discuss the big data revolution. Vast amounts of information on everything from what we look for in goods, services, houses, jobs, mates, etc., to how we really spend our time and money, have been and continue to be collected by many private companies such as search engines, social media sites, and credit card companies. Professor Sinclair will discuss how this information has the potential to improve public policy but its presence and how private companies are using it is also affecting how policy may work in this new age. She will provide an overview of the new world of big data and how it is transforming economic policy and tipping the balance of power in information from the government to the private sector.

February 13—Taxing and Spending in the Trump Administration
Joel Prakken, Washington University alumnus and Senior Managing Director and Co-Founder of Macroeconomic Advisers, will speak on the new administration’s economic agenda. Dr. Prakken’s talk will focus on the agenda for economic policy under a Trump Administration. His remarks will address the possibilities and prospects for tax and entitlement reform, infrastructure spending, trade policy, and regulatory reform.

March 8—Health Care Reform on the Bubble
William Peck is Co-Director, Center for Health Economics and Policy, and former dean of the School of Medicine at Washington University. The repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act is now being addressed by Congress. The two major questions are 1) what will be repealed and when will it happen, and 2) what will emerge as the replacement and when will it be operational? Dr. Peck will describe the status of this selection process and critically discuss the comparative specifics of the approaches under consideration (or the selected approach) including crucial variables such as accessibility, coverage, quality and cost.

April 18—President Trump and the Republican Congress After the First 100 Days
Steven Smith, Political Scientist at Washington University and Director of the Weidenbaum Center, will provide a review of the first few months of the new Trump administration and the outlook for the rest of 2017.

For additional information regarding the Weidenbaum Center’s major donor programs such as the public policy breakfasts, public policy luncheon series, or any Eliot Society events, contact Gloria Lucy (314-935-5689; glolucy@wustl.edu).
MAJOR DONOR PROGRAMS

Major Donors Public Policy Luncheon Series

The Center’s Major Donors roundtable discussions allow guests the unique opportunity to interact with leading scholars and industry experts from the University and the broader St. Louis community. Normally held every month during the academic year, the lunches provide a platform for participants to engage with both prominent intellectuals and one another in an open dialogue. Topics are selected from current events and address economic, political, legal, health, or international issues.

Upcoming meetings will be held on February 7, March 20, April 24, and May 9.

NOTE: These meetings are by invitation only and registration is required.

Other Eliot Society Member Programs

The Center also hosts other Eliot Society events and programs such as excursions, tours of print and painting collections with an expert guide, dinners with forum speakers, and receptions for members and prospective members. Many of these programs are graciously hosted by one of the Center’s Eliot Society members. These programs enable members to interact with each other on a more informal basis. Contact Gloria Lucy at 314-935-5689 (glolucy@wustl.edu) for more information.

In addition, Weidenbaum Center Eliot Society members are invited to Washington University Eliot Society lectures, travel series, the annual Eliot Society Dinner, and other special events and programs. For a list of upcoming events, contact Valerie Haffner, Eliot Society Office, 314-935-8096, or toll free 877-215-2727.

The William Greenleaf Eliot Society
Center Forums (conferences, debates, and single-speaker events) focus on major public policy issues in the news. Speakers consist of academics, government officials, and business leaders. They are frequently cosponsored with other organizations and are free and open to the public. These events are open to the public and free of charge.

March 9 — Interdisciplinary Symposium on the 2016 Election

The purpose of this symposium is to have a public and scholarly discussion of one of the most important events in our lifetime, namely, the election of Donald Trump as president. It will feature Washington University faculty and is designed to bring together a number of scholarly areas of study, including history, economics, sociology, political science, law, and political psychology.

Proposed as a half-day event beginning at 1 p.m., speakers will include David Cunningham, Professor of Sociology; Adrienne Davis, William M. Van Cleve Professor of Law; Steven Fazzari, Bert A. and Jeanette L. Lynch Distinguished Professor of Economics; Peter Kastor, Professor of History; Alan Lambert, Associate Professor of Psychology & Brain Sciences; and Steven Smith, Kate M. Gregg Professor of Social Sciences (and Director of the Weidenbaum Center).

Topics will range from what went wrong with polling prior to the election, tolerance and intolerance, media bias and its impact on the election, and the rise of Trump in historical perspective.

Funding and co-sponsorship of this symposium is interdisciplinary. More details will be forthcoming as the date approaches.

For additional information on Weidenbaum Center debates, forums, or lecture series, past or upcoming programs, program content, volunteer opportunities, or co-sponsorship of any of these events, please contact Melinda Warren (314-935-5652; warren@wustl.edu).
March 28 — Scientific View of Climate Change

David Easterling is Chief of the Global Climate Applications Division at NOAA’s National Climatic Data Center. His talk will focus on the scientific view of climate change. Dr. Easterling has authored or co-authored more than eighty research articles on climate science in journals such as Science, Nature, and the Journal of Climate. He was a Lead Author for the Nobel Prize winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report, a Convening Lead Author for the U.S. Climate Change Science Program Synthesis and Assessment Product 3.3 on Climate Extremes, and was a Contributing Author to the IPCC Second and Third Assessment Reports. He is currently a Lead Author on the IPCC Special Report on Climate Extremes and the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report. Dr. Easterling’s research interests include the detection of climate change in the observed record, particularly changes in extreme climate events and the assessment of climate model simulations for changes in extreme climate events.

This forum is cosponsored with Washington University’s Assembly Series and International Center for Advanced Renewable Energy and Sustainability (I-CARES).

LECTURES

Center Lectures are intellectually challenging programs which provide a platform for business leaders, government officials, media, and the public on economic and political issues that are important to the nation and the world. These programs are open to the general public at no cost.

April 10 — Sam B. Cook Visiting Professor Lecture

David Levine will be the Sam B. Cook Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Economics this spring. During his time here, he will speak on the topic, “Why Pollsters Lose but Lobbyists Never Do: The Uncertainty Principle in Economics and Politics,” at his April 10 Lecture at Washington University.


Professor Levine’s current research interests include the study of intellectual property and endogenous growth in dynamic general equilibrium models, models of self-control, of the endogenous formation of preferences, institutions and social norms, learning in games, evolutionary game theory, virtual economies, and the application of game theory to experimental economics. He received his Ph.D. in Economics at MIT in 1981.

This lecture is cosponsored with the Department of Economics.
Support

The Weidenbaum Center, while an integral part of Washington University, is responsible for its own financial support. It relies upon generous donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations.

General support is needed for its operating budget and designated funds are relied upon for its special programs—such as its Murray Weidenbaum Scholars Program and The American Panel Survey (TAPS) program. It relies upon generous donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations.

As a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, it falls under the University’s 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Anyone able to help provide support or assist in fundraising should contact:

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