

School of Public Policy and Administration

Weekly Newsletter

June 2013 – Volume 1, Issue 10

Important Reminders

SPPA Summer Hours of Operation

Please note that as of June 1, 2013 the hours of operation for the SPPA will change to 8:30am-4:30pm Monday-Thursday and 9:30am-3:30pm on Friday. This change will be in effect until August 31, 2013

Announcements

SPPA Hours of Operation Change F/W 2013-2014

Effective September 2013, the hours of operation for the School of Public Policy and Administration will change to 8:30am-4:30pm, Monday through Friday.

Seminars/Workshops

See next week's announcements...

SPPA Events

See next week's announcements...

Other Events

See next week's announcements...

Call for Papers/Proposals

Call for Proposals - Dupont Summit 2013

December 6, 2013

Historic Whittemore House

1526 New Hampshire Ave NW

Washington, DC 20036

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Proposals Due

September 30, 2013

**Call for Proposals: Dupont Summit on Science,
Technology and Environmental Policy**

The Policy Studies Organization (PSO) invites you to submit a proposal for the Dupont Summit 2013, to be held at the Historic Whittemore House in Washington, DC on Friday, December 6. The purpose of the conference is to promote dialogue about current science, technology and environmental policy concerns, and to provide a civil space for discussion across the political spectrum. We welcome proposals for panel discussions, round tables, individual talks, poster sessions, along with other types of presentations.

Proposals should be sent to PSO executive director Daniel Gutierrez-Sandoval at dgutierrez@ipsonet.org. A one-page summary/abstract of your topic and speaker/panelists (if applicable) is requested. Proposals will be accepted until **September 30, 2013** the final deadline. Please visit our [website](#) for more information.

The PSO disseminates policy scholarship through

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its numerous academic journals, book series, conferences, and programs.

Please contact me with any questions.

Regards,

Matthew Brewer
Conference Manager
Policy Studies Organization
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Contests

See next week's announcements...

Employment Opportunities

See next week's announcements...

Volunteer Opportunities

VOLUNTEER TUTORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS! (ON YOUR MARK TUTORING PROGRAM)

The *On Your Mark* Tutoring Program is a tutoring program that is offered in partnership with the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCSB) and also in partnership with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), the program offers academic assistance to students of **Portuguese-speaking descent and to students of Spanish-speaking descent**.

An ideal Volunteer Tutor would possess the following criteria:

- Student or graduate of a secondary or post-secondary institution
- Excellent Communication skills in English (knowledge of Portuguese and/or Spanish an asset but NOT necessary) Volunteers do not have to be of Portuguese or Spanish

speaking descent to become a tutor or tutor supervisor.

- Interest in the field of education and/or social services
- Some experience working with children at the elementary and/or high school level
- Flexible, innovative team player and self-motivated

Also, if you know of a parent looking for educational assistance for their child(ren) (of Portuguese-speaking descent or Spanish-speaking descent) please feel free to refer them to the *On Your Mark* Tutoring Program.

When Michael Ornstein's analysis of "Ethno-racial Inequality in the City of Toronto" was released in March of 2000, the report cited the Portuguese and the Spanish-speaking communities as two groups experiencing extreme disadvantage in the educational system. The report noted that the situation of the Portuguese community and the Spanish-speaking community involves a unique combination of factors including a high proportion of non-high school graduates and very few university graduates.

The *On Your Mark* Tutoring Program, an initiative established in 2001, was a direct response by the community to those stark statistics and has proven the community's ability to organize and work together to support its youth and address student academic underachievement and dropout rates. The program, which is free to parents, will be marking its 12th year of service to the community for the 2013/2014 school year. *On Your Mark* annually serves close to 300 students of Portuguese-speaking descent and Spanish-speaking descent. The program welcomes close to 200 volunteer tutors and site supervisors a year and operates out of 10 schools, with 68 schools involved from various school boards, including the Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, and the Dufferin-Peel District School Board.

Students in the program are in grades 1 to 12, are having significant difficulties in one or more subjects and are referred by a teacher. Eligible students work one-on-one with a tutor or in small groups of two with a tutor. Tutors focus the tutoring sessions on the students area(s) of academic difficulty, assist student(s) with their homework, help student(s) develop their basic learning skills and help students establish goals for their education. Tutoring sessions are held after school at one of eight school sites in the Metro Toronto Area and is in partnership with the TDSB & TCDSB. The *On Your Mark* Tutoring Program also offers Saturday morning tutoring at a high school in the community of Dufferin & Bloor.

Please feel free to contact Sonia Neves (Portuguese ext.34) sneves@workingwomenc.org or Mireya Arrechea (Spanish ext.46) marrechea@workingwomenc.org at the Working Women Community Centre (416) 532-2824 if you have any questions or concerns. Please feel free to visit our website at www.workingwomenc.org

Internship Opportunities

See next week's announcements...

Other

Canadian Government Executive June 2013 ~ Modern Times

Colleagues, please find my June column below and at <http://www.canadiangovernmentexecutive.ca/category/item/1270-modern-times-harnessing-ict-for-development.html>.

Your views on this article and ideas for future topics are most welcome. Special thanks to Marcel Chiasson and Dave Barrows for feedback and encouragement on May's article.

Cheers, John.

Modern Times: Harnessing ICT for development

Modern Times is the 1936 comedy starring, written, and directed by Charlie Chaplin in which his iconic Little Tramp character struggles to survive in the modern, machine world. The film satirizes the desperate conditions people faced during the Great Depression, caused in Chaplin's opinion by the efficiencies of industrialization.

There has been nothing short of an information and communication technology revolution in society since. Marshall McLuhan's 1960s musings on "the medium is the message" have been surpassed at the speed of light. People in this electronic age of robotics, artificial intelligence, and social media are obsessed with BlackBerry stock futures and becoming "early adopters" of the latest Z10 app.

e-Government takes many forms, whether an institutional tool for transparency and combating corruption in Tanzania, Canadian assistance for post-secondary distance education in the Caribbean, or self-service channels via mobile and web-based technologies "anywhere, anytime, any device." Government-to-business applications matured early, but government-to-citizen development shows greater promise.

Game-changing outcomes are at stake in the headlong rush towards ICT saturation:

- ICTs as a means for achieving government ends, not an end in themselves.
- ICTs as tools for managing information and disseminating knowledge.
- ICTs that enable accountability by promoting transparency.
- ICTs that protect privacy, as well as catalyze open government.
- ICTs that extend the reach of public consultations and inform good policy.
- ICTs that close the digital divide by bridging gaps in global, societal, and cultural access.

If viewed as an enabler and harnessed to the cause, ICTs can be instrumental in serving the public good. But value for money is not a sure bet – things are rarely what they seem in government. It is estimated that productivity gains from training public servants generate more than twice the return of the equivalent capital investment in ICT. Yet governments are reluctant to invest adequately in the people who use technology compared to the Chief Information Officers and "geek squads" who manage it.

A whole generation of technocrats has populated the ranks of the public service. They came with amazing aptitudes and high expectations only to find transient values and hollow opportunities – hidden and hard to navigate web sites, politically manipulated social media, bureaucracies struggling to adapt to digital era information networks.

Time perhaps to add value with soft-wired competencies rather than shackling bright, young professionals to hard-wired infrastructure? Time again for a renaissance in public service excellence, with leadership that renews the commitment to people and openness in a time of austerity?

John Wilkins was a Commonwealth diplomat and a career public servant in Canada. He is Associate Director with the Public Management Program in the Schulich School of Business at York University (jwilkins@schulich.yorku.ca or johnkwilkins@gmail.com).