



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
INDIANA UNIVERSITY



VirginiaTech

Appointee Politics and the Implications for Government Effectiveness

Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs
and
The Center for Public Administration and Policy and
the School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech

Dates: May 4 and 5, 2012

Location: Alexandria, Virginia

Conveners:

Matthew Dull and Patrick Roberts, *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Center for Public Administration and Policy, School of Public and International Affairs*
William Resh, *Indiana University, School of Public and Environmental Affairs*

Registration: Andina Nagler, Virginia Tech (anagler@vt.edu)

Local Host: Patrick Roberts, Virginia Tech, (robertsp@vt.edu), 202-549-4987

Overview:

The workshop will engage scholars and government officials in empirical and theoretical questions about the role of Senate-confirmed appointees in American government. The workshop aims to build a community of scholars working on appointees, and it aims to connect scholars and government officials concerned about reforms to the appointment process. We hope this will be the first in a series of events.

Workshop

Over past three decades, increased partisanship, interbranch competition, and recognition of appointments as an effective tool of presidential power have combined to produce extensive delays in Senate confirmation of presidential appointees, as well as the increased use of recess appointments and the president's power to retain acting officials. Controversy over appointee politics has produced calls for reform including legislation under consideration in Congress. Underlying proposed reforms are basic empirical and theoretical questions about the role of administration in a democratically-elected representative government. For instance, many observers worry that federal government agencies have become politicized, preventing agencies from effectively fulfilling their missions. However, empirical evidence of these purported consequences is limited.

This workshop attempts to address the following questions in the empirical and theoretical study of appointees: What factors contribute to appointees' length of service? What drives appointees' decisions to remain in office or depart? How have length of tenure, turnover, and vacancies among appointees changed over time? What can be done about

lengthy vacancies in appointed positions? Is the concept of “appointees” useful, or is it more useful to consider subgroups of appointee types?

Beyond analyzing who appointees are and how long they serve, the workshop will link appointee continuity to agency performance. The link between continuity of service and organizational performance is the subject of extensive analysis in the private sector literature, but evidence among public sector organizations is lacking. The workshop will ask: How are appointee characteristics such as background, experience, and length of service related to agency and program performance? How can network and biographical data be brought to bear upon the study of appointee politics? The workshop will conclude with a discussion of the most important empirical and theoretical issues in the study of appointees.

Location: All workshop sessions and events held at The Center for Public Administration and Policy, Virginia Tech, 3rd floor, 1021 Prince Street, Alexandria, Virginia

Program

Friday, May 4

2:30-4:00pm

Scholars Meet the Hill

(late-developing, optional session)

Bill Resh and Matthew Dull, Appointee Vacancy Database

Kristine Lam and Jennifer Tarr, U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

4:30-6:00pm

Appointee Delay and Vacancies – Implications for Practitioners and Policymakers

Panelists:

Mark Abramson (Leadership, Inc.)

Maeve Carey (Congressional Research Service)

Henry Hogue (Congressional Research Service)

Martha Joynt Kumar (Towson University)

Thomas Weko (National Center for Education Statistics)

Discussant:

Anne Khademian (Virginia Tech)

6:00-8:30pm

Reception, Dinner and Evening Keynote,

Appointments in the President's First Year: The Problem and Solution

Clay Johnson III, Bush for President Transition Planner

and Former Deputy Director for Management at the Office of Management and Budget at the White House

9:00pm. Van to Sheraton conference hotel. (You may also walk on your own, and Matt Dull has backup transportation).

Saturday, May 5

8:00 am. Van from Sheraton conference hotel to Virginia Tech. (You may also walk on your own.)

8:30am-10am

New Directions in Empirical Research on Appointees

Panelists:

Matthew Dull (Virginia Tech)

Marissa Golden (Bryn Mawr College)

David Nixon (University of Hawaii)

William Resh (Indiana University)

Discussants:

Bert Rockman (Purdue University)

Richard Waterman (University of Kentucky)

10-10:15am

break

10:15am-12:30pm

Theoretical Issues in the Study of Appointees

Panelists:

Matthew Dickinson (Middlebury College)

Karen Hult (Virginia Tech)

Patrick Roberts (Virginia Tech)

Andrew Rudalevige (Dickinson College)

Discussants:

Robert Durant (American University)

James Pfiffner (George Mason University)

12:45pm

Buffet lunch and concluding remarks

2:30pm

Conclusion