

FOCUSED ON RESEARCH



OFFICE OF SPONSORED PROGRAMS

2017-18

ANNUAL REPORT

PURDUE
UNIVERSITY®
FORT WAYNE

FUNDED RESEARCH— SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE

Externally funded research—financial support of faculty and student projects—is essential to the success of Purdue University Fort Wayne, the region, and beyond, as it allows for the continued pursuit and application of knowledge.

The benefits of externally funded research are vast. Discoveries from research projects lead to innovation, improve society, and support business and industry. These projects connect the university with the community and the world, laying the groundwork for immediate and future improvements. Students take part in experiential learning opportunities, leading to increased graduation rates, retention, and engagement. Research projects also create different teaching opportunities, expanding the learning experience for students and improving the community as a whole.





OUR STUDY EXAMINES HOW LOCAL FOOD PRICES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE FOOD SECURITY OF SNAP PARTICIPANTS.”

JUNE KIM
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS

Differentiating SNAP Benefits by Local Food Prices

One of the most important government-assistance programs is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—but because the benefit amount is fixed in the United States (except in Alaska and Hawaii), the program has room for improvement. With this in mind, June Kim, assistant professor of economics, and her team, with funding from the United States Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service, set out to examine the real value of SNAP benefits.

“Our study examines how local food prices are associated with the food security [an index that measures a household’s ability to have enough food to live an active and healthy life] of SNAP participants,” Kim said.

The preliminary findings suggest that an increase in SNAP benefits helped households living in high-cost areas more than their counterparts living in low-cost areas. Furthermore, a cut in SNAP benefits was more harmful to households living in high-cost areas.

The research of Kim’s team is important, as it indicates that SNAP benefits should not be uniform across the country. They should be adjusted according to the living cost of the region. This would help improve the purchasing power and food choices of SNAP households across different regions.



SHANNON BISCHOFF

PROFESSOR OF LINGUISTICS; DIRECTOR OF TENL (TEACHING ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE PROGRAM); CODIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ENDEAVORS; AND INTERIM CHAIR OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

Using Technology to Promote Indigenous Languages

While there are more than 7,000 languages in the world, many do not benefit from a digital presence. Coeur d’Alene—thanks to a partnership between Purdue Fort Wayne, the University of Arizona, the American Indian Language Development Institute, and the Coeur d’Alene Tribal Language Programs Office—is not one of them.

The partnership, along with students and members of the indigenous community, is working to provide digital resources to help the Coeur d’Alene Language Programs Office teach the language and make cultural and linguistics material more accessible to the community for their revitalization and maintenance efforts.

“Purdue Fort Wayne hosts the server where this material is stored,” said Shannon Bischoff, professor of linguistics. “It’s one of the main reasons, along with other institutional support, that we have been successful.”

Bischoff also stressed the importance of the community effort in helping maintain and promote Coeur d’Alene heritage and language.

The project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Science Foundation, was successful in another way, as it was awarded the 2019 Ken Hale Prize, which “is presented in recognition of outstanding community language work and a deep commitment to the documentation, maintenance, promotion, and revitalization of indigenous languages in the Americas.”

Collaborating to Impact the World

In an effort to improve collaboration, Bischoff and Shanté Howard, secretary, English and Linguistics, along with colleagues at other institutions, brought over 60 Latin American, Central American, and North American indigenous community members, language speakers, and scholars together in New York City for discussions. The event, Bringing Latin American Perspectives on Community-Based Research to the Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of America, was a project funded by the National Science Foundation.

The project focused on communication and collaboration, data collection, and teaching and training, all in an effort to improve language documentation, maintenance, and preservation. “It impacts the world,” Bischoff said.

The project was the first global event in partnership with the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to celebrate the UN 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL).

Bischoff was thrilled that Diego Tituaña, Second Secretary Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations, joined the event. “Diego was the UN official who proposed the IYIL to the General Assembly on the floor of the UN. It was an honor to have him participate in the event,” Bischoff said.



BRUCE KINGSBURY

PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES CENTER, 2017–18 OUTSTANDING RESEARCH AWARD RECIPIENT

Making the Environment Safer—for Snakes and People

It goes without saying that Eastern Massasauga rattlesnakes are potentially dangerous, but they also need protection, since they are a federally threatened species. This is why Bruce Kingsbury, professor of biology, and his team—with the aid of a grant from the US Army Corps of Engineers—went to work studying the best way to relocate these reptiles within Department of Defense properties, where the information gained will be used to refine the practice of translocating wildlife.

The study is ongoing, but, using radio telemetry, the team is discovering that snakes that are “hard-released”—placed directly into a new location—are not faring any worse than those that are “soft-released,” when they are placed in an enclosure for two weeks before letting them go.

“This type of release [soft] was at the heart of the study,” Kingsbury said, “to see if it improved outcomes such as better survival and normal behaviors.”

This kind of project gives students important experience, and it helps put Purdue Fort Wayne on the map as a center of expertise for wildlife ecology, conservation, and management.

IMPROVING THE FUTURE THROUGH APPLIED KNOWLEDGE



RACHEL BLAKEMAN

DIRECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

A Team Effort—Taking on the Opioid Crisis

“The opioid crisis does not distinguish between groups,” said Rachel Blakeman, director of the Purdue Fort Wayne Community Research Institute (CRI). “All, regardless of income, education level, and race, are affected.”

Blakeman and the CRI, as a part of the Fort Wayne Allen County Task Force for Opioid Strategic Planning (FATOS) multidisciplinary team, with support from The Lutheran Foundation, are committed to helping prevent this disorder and connecting those who need treatment with recovery services.

Funded by The Lutheran Foundation, Blakeman and the CRI engaged four FATOS subcommittees to identify gaps in services and to listen to ideas. One important finding to come from these conversations: the issue is bigger than just opioids. This and other information will allow providers to identify priorities, build systems, and craft strategies to address the issue in Fort Wayne and Allen County.

Purdue Fort Wayne is but one community organization on FATOS.

“There are lots of good people working locally to address this problem,” Blakeman said. “I am honored that Purdue Fort Wayne and the CRI are part of the solution.”

Numbers Tell the Story

The CRI, through funding from the St. Joseph Community Health Foundation, was able to compile a list of more than 30 demographic, socioeconomic, and population indicators for every ZIP code in Allen County. The foundation was interested in place-based philanthropy, but it didn’t have reliable data about the community.

This report identified the census tracts with the lowest median household incomes and the largest number of households below the federal poverty level, using data from the US Census Bureau. And since access to healthy food is also a foundation priority, CRI looked at food deserts, as determined by the United States Department of Agriculture.

“We learned that no single ZIP code best represents Allen County,” Blakeman said. “Each area has a slightly different story to tell.”

The collected information, which will serve as a valuable resource for years to come, tells where the areas of need are, and will help the foundation, local government, social-service agencies, and other groups to direct assistance to where it is most needed.



JEANNIE DICLEMENTI

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

Training to Help Students

Purdue Fort Wayne is using a grant of nearly \$369,000 from the US Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for mental-health programming—to bring help to those who need it. A team, led by Jeannie DiClementi, associate professor of psychology and a licensed psychologist, is training faculty, staff, and students to recognize signs of emotional distress in others, ranging from problems with grades or relationships to serious mental illness.

“Early intervention helps people get help before they escalate to suicidality,” DiClementi said.

The university is working in collaboration with the Park Center and the Bowen Center for treatment options.

“We will measure success by the number of people we train, as well as how many we screen, assess, and refer for treatment,” DiClementi said. “We will also look at how we are supporting those in treatment or who are transitioning back to campus; we are finding people who need help and offering direction, options, and support.”



WE ARE FINDING PEOPLE WHO NEED HELP AND OFFERING DIRECTION, OPTIONS, AND SUPPORT.”

INSIDE THE NUMBERS

Grant Sources

Federal.....	\$1,142,762	(47%)
Foundations	\$456,527	(19%)
Industrials and Applied Research	\$367,376	(15%)
State and Local Government.....	\$243,829	(10%)
Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne.....	\$191,712	(8%)
Purdue University.....	\$38,800	(1%)
Indiana University.....	\$13,150	(< 1%)
Total.....	\$2,454,156	

Funding for Academic or Administrative Unit

College of Arts and Sciences	\$1,095,982	(45%)
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.....	\$533,508	(22%)
Health and Human Services	\$298,561	(12%)
Education and Public Policy.....	\$164,630	(7%)
Engineering, Technology, and Computer Science.....	\$153,426	(6%)
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.....	\$114,107	(5%)
Doermer School of Business.....	\$57,200	(2%)
College of Visual and Performing Arts	\$36,742	(1%)
Total.....	\$2,454,156	

Success Rate

Amount Requested.....	\$5,889,774
Amount Funded.....	\$2,454,156
Proposals Submitted.....	228
Proposals Funded.....	170
Success Rate	75%

Office of Sponsored Programs

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