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February 2018

Policy Talk

The Latest in Public Policy Center News and Events.



Dr. Nancy Shank

Journal Star Features Inspiring Women

[Dr. Nancy Shank](#) is featured in the *Lincoln Journal Star* for her work as an inspiring woman in the Lincoln community. Dr. Shank has served as Associate Director of the University of Nebraska's Public Policy Center since 1998. She occupies a role as a Research Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln,

conducting work on technology adoption, information sharing between organizations, economic and community development, and water and natural resources. In addition to academic research, Dr. Shank remains active in the Lincoln community, working with organizations like Lied Center Grow-A-Show, UNL Women's Club, and the Child Advocacy Center.

[Read her full interview here.](#)

Working to Improve Public Safety

University of Nebraska Public Policy Center Director, [Dr. Mario Scalora](#), presents in Orlando Florida.

A forensic psychologist and leading expert in threat assessment, Dr. Scalora has spent his career studying ways to prevent targeted acts of violence. Much of his research addresses threat assessment practices and promotes the development of effective policies to improve safety at public spaces and events. This January, Dr. Scalora presented at the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals Winter Conference in Florida. This month, Dr. Scalora joins Nebraska School Safety Director Dr. Jolene Palmer and PPC researcher Dr. Denise Bulling to present threat assessment training for school teams around the state of Nebraska.



Dr. Mario Scalora

[Watch this short video](#) to learn more.



Climate4Cities

[Tarik Abdel-Monem](#) of The Public Policy Center creates video for the climate4cities project.

A group of University of Nebraska-Lincoln researchers have banded together with the city of Lincoln, Nebraska, to help municipalities across the Midwest plan for changes in climate. [Watch Tarik's video.](#)

Our New Team Members

Stacie Kotschwar

Outreach Specialist & Graphic Designer.

Stacie's work focuses on print publication, corporate identity, photography, social media, and web design. Recently, she earned her AAS in Graphic Design and Media Arts from Southeast Community College. Prior to becoming a graphic designer, she earned a PhD in Philosophy, Interpretation and Culture from SUNY Binghamton University and an MA in English Film and Literature from Northern Illinois University. She earned her BA in French with minor emphases in English and women's studies at UNL.



Diane Kennedy

Executive Assistant & Administrative Team Lead.

Diane Kennedy joined the PPC in 2017 as Executive Assistant and Administrative Team Lead. Ms. Kennedy has over 40 years of experience in administrative support roles, including 18 years at UNMC and most recently as the Executive Assistant to North Carolina's Director of Aviation.



Research in Focus

Center Researcher Provides Ethics Training

Dr. Kate Speck Presents at Engineering Seminar.

Senior Research Manager, [Dr. Kate Speck](#), was recently invited to present at the 50th Annual REA Engineering Seminar in Kearney, Nebraska to speak about professional ethics. She provided an overview of ethics code, stages of moral development, and problem-solving processes for ethical decision-making in order to help provide essential training to engineering professionals. In November, Dr. Speck spoke on professional ethics to members of the Nebraska Department of Revenue, discussing legal versus ethical responsibilities as they relate to fraud and ethical decision-making models. Dr. Speck regularly travels around the country to provide ethics training and education. [Read about Dr. Speck's work.](#)



Dr. Kate Speck



Dr. Denise Bulling

California Wildfires and Mental Health

Dr. Denise Bulling Trains Crisis Counselors.

PPC researcher [Dr. Denise Bulling](#) traveled across the country in November to train California crisis counselors to respond to the psychological impacts of wildfires that decimated much of northern California. A senior research director and licensed mental health practitioner at the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, Dr. Bulling is a trainer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Crisis Counseling Program. Here in Nebraska, through a state-university partnership, Dr. Bulling and the Public Policy Center have helped create an infrastructure for a disaster behavioral health preparedness and response. Thanks to these measures, the state of Nebraska is more prepared to respond to social and psychological aspects of future disasters. [Read about Dr. Bulling's work.](#)

Perceptions of Drone Technology

Janell Walther Speaks on Public Perception of Drones.

Earlier this year, [Janell Walther](#) presented at the 2018 American Meteorological Society Annual Conference in Austin, which focused on the role of communication in weather, water, and climate enterprises and the challenges facing our sciences. Ms. Walther spoke on public perceptions and trust concerning the use of drones for collection of scientific data and other purposes. As the use of drones increases in commerce, scientific research, and aerial photography, it becomes more important to look at perceptions and trust of technology to guide drone design, communication, and regulation. The presentation was co-authored by lead researcher Dr. Lisa PytlikZillig and PPC student Jake Kawamoto in partnership with the NSF-funded, multi-university [CLOUD-MAP](#) project. [Read the abstract here.](#)



Janell Walther

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process & practice.

We team with policymakers and other stakeholders to actively inform public policy by bringing expertise in a variety of areas.



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