

The Polis Center at IUPUI
1999 Annual Report

I. Administrative reorganization

The Polis Center accomplished a significant administrative reorganization in 1999.

As The Polis Center approached its 10th anniversary, it set out to evaluate its position and accomplishments thus far and to plan for its future. The administrative and organizational structures that had evolved over the years as the Center grew clearly needed rethinking if Polis was to continue growing in new directions. The reorganization process began with a months-long interview and evaluation process conducted with the aid of the consulting firm Strategies for Tomorrow, Inc. In September 1998, Strategies for Tomorrow facilitated a retreat for Polis staff in which ideas for the Center's future development were discussed at a daylong session. A number of suggestions that emerged from the self-evaluation process have been put into practice.

- In 1999, the Center hired its first chief operating officer (COO) to help put its project management on a more business-like footing.
- The Urban Analysis Group merged with the SAVI Project team to create a new department known as Community Analysis.
- The Advanced Information Technologies department was divided into a geographic information system (GIS) group and an information technology (IT) group.
- The Administration department devoted a full-time position to personnel matters.
- A department of Communications and Publications was created with the hiring of a director and the consolidation of the Center's communications personnel into one department.

Eventually the Center hopes to move toward a matrix organization based on professional work groups. Staff would be assigned to projects based on the need for specific skills rather than the project being assigned to a department and staffed by its personnel. Under this arrangement, staff roles and responsibilities could be defined more clearly and their strengths could be applied wherever they were most needed. Ultimately, professional

work groups would complete the Center's move from being a project-driven to a mission-driven organization.

II. Move to new facilities

The Polis Center moved to new facilities in 1999.

The Polis Center outgrew its facilities in Cavanaugh Hall, and no further expansion was possible in that building. The School of Liberal Arts needed the space occupied by The Polis Center to accommodate the expansion of other departments. After a thorough search for outside facilities, Polis entered into a three-year contractual agreement with SerVaas Corporation to lease space in its building at 1200 Waterway Boulevard. The site is near campus and affords the Center more than double the space it previously occupied, with the option of acquiring more space should it become necessary.

The move has consolidated the various Polis Center departments into one facility. (The Center's work, office, and meeting spaces in Cavanaugh were not only overcrowded, but scattered.) The Center now occupies a space more appropriate to its public role, with a lobby, two dedicated meeting rooms (the larger equipped with A-V), and a large training space. The SerVaas building has ample parking for staff and visitors adjacent to the building.

The Center has taken a number of steps to maintain its connection with SLA and the University. We remain connected to the University telephone, computing, and mail delivery systems. We keep a number of University parking permits on hand to facilitate staff trips to campus. We distribute our internal newsletter, *@Polis*, and other publications to key personnel in SLA and the University to keep them abreast of our work. Polis staff teach courses offered by SLA and regularly confer with their colleagues on campus.

The Polis Center moved into its new facilities in August 1999. In November, the Center hosted an open house attended by many prominent people from the University and the broader community.

III. Staffing

The Polis Center increased its staff in 1999.

Over the course of 1999, the number of full-time Polis staff increased from 30 to 37. At the writing of this report, March 2000, the Center had further increased its staff to 42. In addition, Polis employs several staffers on a part-time, intern, or work-study basis. Those hired in the past year bring new skills to the Center in some areas and enhance existing skills in others.

Don Brindle, named to the new position of Chief Operating Officer, brings impressive experience in managing large, complex projects. The new position of Director of Communications and Publications was filled by Jenine Nuwer, former Director of Publications at Anderson University; this move enables the Center to consolidate its communications, publications, Web site, and media relations efforts into a single department. In the Advanced Information Technologies department, the Center has acquired new strengths in programming, photogrammetry, and project management. The Religion department has added both research and support personnel. Community Analysis hired a GIS analyst to work on SAVI-related projects, a programmer for SAVI, and a GIS analyst for the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI).

IV. New and expanded projects

The Polis Center developed new and expanded existing major projects in 1999.

The Center received more than \$1.5 million in funding for 19 new or expanded projects during 1999. (See appendix for complete list.) Major new or expanded projects include:

- The Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI) is an international cooperative venture among major research universities to create GIS mapping of cultural data for all areas of the world. In January 1999 a team from The Polis Center attended the first international ECAI conference in Taiwan, where we shared our expertise in project management, cartographic and data standards, and data development strategies. As an outgrowth of the conference, The Polis Center was asked to lead the 20-member North American team, with initial emphasis on developing religion data. We have also been asked to advise on the overall project and to use our database as a model to test the system's architecture.
- In 1999, The Polis Center received a \$500,000 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to support and expand the annual Spirit & Place Festival. This "civic festival" brings major writers and artists to the city; forges lasting partnerships among arts, cultural, academic, and other institutions; and attracts tens of thousands to its public events. The 1999 Festival, held in November, featured the largest number of events and drew the largest number of attendees in the Festival's four-year history.

It has always been the intention of The Polis Center, since it founded the Spirit & Place Festival in 1996, to create a permanent and perhaps independent organization for the festival. The Lilly Endowment grant will allow the Center to work toward developing this structure.

- In 1999, The Polis Center received a \$475,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce to develop and expand the SAVI Project. The process for awarding these grants was highly competitive. This is the largest grant we have received from any federal agency.

The Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) grant will enable the Center to enhance public access to the SAVI Community Database by making it available over the World Wide Web. TOP aims to make information and advanced communications tools available to disadvantaged communities, enabling them to gauge their needs and available resources more effectively.

Under the TOP grant, we are partners with the United Way of Central Indiana/Community Service Council, the Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center, and the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library. The grant includes funding for purchasing computers; placing them in schools, libraries, and other public sites in communities that lack ready access to information technology; and training community residents to use them.

- We are working with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the United Way of Central Indiana/Community Service Council to provide two of the city's neighborhoods with critical analytical skills, computer training, and equipment. Ultimately, we will be helping these communities to gain access to information and to use it analytically for community development.
- The SAVI system has now expanded to eight of the nine counties in the greater metropolitan region, serving municipal and county councils of government in the region, as well as human service and faith-based organizations.
- We have created a new interactive Web interface for SAVI, partially supported by the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library Fund and a special fund of the Indianapolis Foundation. The IUPUI University Library is a partner in this effort and will provide a server for the system as part of the Electronic Atlas of Central Indiana.

V. Ongoing projects

The Polis Center built on the work of its large signature projects in 1999.

The Center's County GIS projects made substantial progress:

- The Polis Center is creating a comprehensive, county-wide geographic information system (GIS) for St. Joseph County. The Center has a three-year, \$3.3 million contract with the county, with work on the project to run through 2002.
- The Center also is coordinating a regional GIS effort for the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG), which includes St. Joseph, Elkhart, Marshal, and Kosciusco counties. The municipal governments of Goshen, Elkhart, South Bend, and Mishawaka are pursuing their individual GIS efforts in cooperation with the planning for a regional GIS, including the adoption of common standards proposed by The Polis Center.

- Work proceeds as well on creating a GIS for Wayne County. For this project, begun in 1996, the Center devised an innovative arrangement whereby Polis maintains ownership of the data developed for the GIS and licenses its use back to the various agencies involved. This arrangement (and a similar one for the St. Joseph County project) allows participants to share development costs as they share information.

Here, as elsewhere in our GIS work, we are concerned not only to create the system, but to involve local officials in the process and provide training in the technology. We don't simply deliver a turnkey product; we educate clients in its uses and possibilities—an essential, but often missing, element of technology transfer.

In the past year, the Project on Religion and Urban Culture began to shift emphasis and resources toward public teaching and publication of its research efforts. Perhaps the most significant of the public teaching efforts involved the creation of a monthly newsletter and public meeting series entitled *Responsive Communities*. The series features faith-based responses to important social issues, using examples from local congregations. The monthly public meetings are led by Kevin Armstrong, senior public teacher at Polis. The various research efforts continued, with senior researchers working on their manuscripts and making presentations at professional meetings. Important developments in the Project include:

- We are working to create two capstone volumes for the project. The first is a group project written by four staff members and edited by Art Farnsley, with the theme: “Religion as Centering and De-Centering in Indianapolis.” The second is a volume on religion in mid-sized cities written by Jan Shipp, professor emeritus at IUPUI and senior research fellow at The Polis Center.
- There was more diversity in the writing of *Research Notes* to encompass contributions by all senior researchers. We also developed the “roundtable” format for discussing *Research Notes* topics as part of our public teaching efforts.
- We consolidated and improved the database. When completed, this will be the best existing database on religion in an American city.
- Bill Mirola, professor of religion at Marian College, and Art Farnsley conducted a scientific survey of religious ideas, attitudes, and practices in Indianapolis. A summary of these findings will be published in the April 2000 *Research Notes*. Mirola and Lynn Blake (Ph.D., University of British Columbia) began work on developing an atlas of Indianapolis religion based on data collected by the Project on Religion and Urban Culture.
- Project researchers continued to make substantial contributions to the civic life of the city through public teaching and involvement. Polis researchers serve as evaluators of and advisors to the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention, the

Indiana Youth Institute, and the Indiana Family Social Services Administration, among others.

- In addition to the various newsletters coming from RUC, project researchers moved toward publishing their research in other venues. Art Farnsley wrote “Ten Good Questions about Faith-Based Welfare Reform” that will be published this spring. Farnsley had a journal article accepted for publication by *Review of Religious Research* and wrote two other articles that are now under review at *Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* and *Harvard Educational Review*. Elfriede Wedam published two chapters in a volume from NYU Press. Project historians will publish a series of pamphlets for use by various audiences, including high school students, under the title *Prologue*. As well, researchers are gathering various working papers to come out of the Project for publication on the Web and as monographs.

The SAVI Project saw a number of significant changes in the past year, including the administrative reorganization that joined the Center’s SAVI team with the Urban Analysis department to form a new unit called Community Analysis. A major theme in Community Analysis this past year was the movement toward Web-based delivery of data, analysis, and training.

- The Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce enabled The Polis Center to move toward its goal of establishing a functional SAVI system on-line. TOP’s criteria fit well with The Polis Center’s goal of making GIS technology available to a broad public, particularly for community development. During 1999, the Center began work on creating an on-line version of SAVI, with an easy-to-use graphical interface and powerful mapping tools. The new, Web-based SAVI went on-line in February 2000.
- As a central element of the Electronic Atlas of Central Indiana, the SAVI Web site is housed on a server at IUPUI University Library. The Polis Center will manage and maintain the Web version of SAVI on behalf of the SAVI Community Connections Project (SCCP), working in partnership with United Way of Central Indiana/Community Service Council, the Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center, and the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library. SAVI has now established 22 public access sites, expanding from its Indianapolis base to include locations in eight of the nine counties of the metropolitan region.
- We have proposed a Landmark Planning Project to the Indianapolis Division of Planning, which is the regional transportation planning authority. We would devise GIS models to predict development patterns. The system has potential applications in facilities, transportation, and land use planning. This would take GIS beyond describing “what exists” to the interactive, predictive level of analysis.

We are moving to strengthen our ties with IUPUI, the University Library, and other colleges and universities.

- We created a next-generation prototype interface for the SAVI part of the Electronic Atlas of Central Indiana.
- We gave presentations on SAVI to the School of Nursing, School of Social Work, Sociology Department, Geography Department, School of Medicine, School of Public Health, and Surgery Department, all of which are becoming SAVI access sites.
- We also gave presentations on SAVI at Butler University, the University of Indianapolis, Martin University, and Marian College—and are moving toward establishing access sites at these places.
- We saw a significant growth in attendance at SAVI training sessions. We did much work this year on automating data processing, which frees up time for us to spend on training. We hope to do more Web-based training, including developing on-line tutorials for the business and social service communities.

What all these projects—County GIS, RUC, SAVI, and ECAI—have in common is their large scope, complexity, and sophistication. All have resulted from—and depended on—the Center’s forming a large number of relationships nationally, in the community, and within the University. The Polis Center has now established working relationships with more than 600 groups, including several new ones in the past year. (See previous reports for details of ongoing relationships.) These partnerships, arrangements, and contacts are a prime source of the Center’s strength and working capital and represent continuing opportunities for research and teaching, both for the Center and for the larger University community.

VI. Opportunities

The Polis Center has attracted interest from governments, foundations, and other funders.

The Center’s work in neighborhoods has drawn the attention of government agencies, charitable foundations, citizens groups, and others. We are moving toward building critical capacities in neighborhoods instead of just gathering research data. For the University, as well as for outside groups, we are becoming a source of expertise in matters of neighborhoods and communities.

For neighborhoods, the Center offers tools and training in managing knowledge for community development. We have helped neighborhoods establish an identity through

explication of the neighborhood's heritage and culture. With SAVI, we offer neighborhood groups a powerful tool for understanding their strengths and challenges.

- We have taken a leading role in examining the movement toward providing social services through faith-based partnerships between government and religious organizations. The Center worked as evaluator and advisor with the Front Porch Alliance (an initiative of the Mayor's Office) as FPA forged partnerships between local government and congregations to build stronger neighborhoods. In addition, we have contributed to the national debate on these partnerships through our research, published articles, and public discussions.
- Our county GIS projects, in their scope, technical sophistication, and innovative partnership arrangements, have put the Center at the forefront of the drive to create a statewide GIS for Indiana. In all, 17 counties have asked for our assistance in creating a geographical information system.

People from outside Indianapolis are now calling on The Polis Center.

- The Center's major role in the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI) has joined us in partnership with major research universities in this country and abroad, including the University of California-Berkeley, University of Michigan, Academia Sinica (Taiwan), University of Sydney, Oxford University, and Kyoto University, among others.
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation of Baltimore recruited us, in partnership with the United Way of Central Indiana/Community Service Council, to provide information on Indianapolis neighborhoods as part of an initiative to spur community development through access to technology.
- The University of Baltimore invited the director to consult with it about setting up a Polis-like center in that city.
- The *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* is being used as the model for similar projects conducted by Ohio State University and the Southern California Studies Center at the University of Southern California. Representatives from both projects have sought the advice of the Center's director.
- The director of the Center has continued to serve as advisor and evaluator to the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California. The director also is advisor and evaluator to the Southern California Studies Center at USC in its efforts to develop a university-community initiative.

The Project on Religion and Urban Culture continues to attract attention far beyond this city.

- The *Falling Toward Grace* photo exhibit, originally shown at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, has since been exhibited at the Indianapolis Art Center, Butler University, and the Arts garden in Circle Center Mall. This year the exhibit will be on display at the Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences and possibly will travel to Cologne, Germany, in 2001.
- The *Religion as a Window on Culture* video series received a Telly Award from the Center on Creativity in Baltimore. An edited version of the series is being prepared for distribution to international broadcast markets. The six-episode series is currently distributed by Films for the Humanities & Sciences, Princeton, New Jersey.
- Our work on faith-based partnerships drew the interest of academic researchers. Ram Cnaan of the University of Pennsylvania referenced the work of the Center in his landmark study *Social and Community Involvement of Religious Congregations Housed in Historic Religious Properties: Findings from a Six-City Study*. We have an ongoing relationship with Mark Chavez of the University of Arizona regarding his and our work in surveying congregations.
- Professor Jay Demerath of the University of Massachusetts, president of the American Sociological Association, is working with the Center to produce a “capstone” book summarizing the work of the Project on Religion and Urban Culture. Yale University Press has expressed interest in publishing this book, as has the University of California Press. Yale also has inquired about publishing a companion RUC volume, Jan Shipps’s *Religion in Five Mid-sized American Cities* (working title).
- We are working in partnership with the premier PBS station in the country, WNET in New York, together with WFYI in Indianapolis, on a project involving the teaching of religion in public schools.
- The keynote event of the Spirit & Place Festival, a public discussion featuring the authors Barry Lopez, Sr. Helen Prejean, and Kathleen Norris, was broadcast on public television stations around the state.

VII. Publications and presentations

The Polis Center has reached a wide audience through its publications, presentations, and other media.

The Polis Center now publishes seven newsletters aimed at local, state, and national audiences. The Center operates a Web site that is being thoroughly redesigned to be more attractive, more substantial, and more useful to visitors. This redesign project is nearing completion. As well, the Center hosts the SAVI Web site, which (as we noted elsewhere) has undergone a major redesign.

Four newsletters come from the Project on Religion and Urban Culture:

- *Religion & Community* is published for researchers, community leaders, opinion makers, and those in the religious community. The newsletter includes articles informed by RUC research, historical pieces, and case studies of emerging developments in Indianapolis congregations and neighborhoods.
- *Clergy Notes*, which goes to all members of the clergy in Greater Indianapolis, was revamped and expanded this year to cover issues in more depth.
- *Research Notes* was redesigned to accommodate a new strategy whereby local experts from the academy, the media, religious organizations, government, and social service organizations are invited to respond to an essay based on research at the Center. The essay and an edited transcript of the roundtable discussion are published in the newsletter.
- A new publication, *Responsive Communities*, was launched as part of the RUC Project's public teaching component. The newsletter highlights faith-based responses to important social issues, using local congregations and other religious organizations as examples. The Center sponsors a monthly public meeting at which the topic of the latest *Responsive Communities* is discussed by experts in the field.

The Center launched two additional newsletters in 1999:

- *Technology & Community*, a general newsletter of The Polis Center, reports on the uses of GIS and other technologies as tools for community development. The newsletter covers our county GIS projects, SAVI, and RUC. A "white paper" in each issue examines important trends and issues in information technology. We mail about 5,000 copies of the newsletter to government officials and agencies, social service providers, business and community leaders, researchers, and others.
- *SAVI Solutions* is published jointly with the United Way of Central Indiana/Community Service Council. The newsletter reports on how organizations and individuals are using SAVI to solve community problems, on how researchers are

using SAVI, on new technical developments in SAVI, and other topics. The newsletter is proposed and written by Polis staff and produced by United Way.

The Center also publishes an internal newsletter, *@Polis*. Published primarily for our staff, *@Polis* contains current news regarding the Center, including reports on new projects and organizational matters. The newsletter is distributed to a selected audience in the University community.

Polis Center staff published and presented their work in local, state, national, and international venues:*

- “Can Churches Save the City? A Look at Resources,” by Arthur E. Farnsley, director of research in RUC, was published as the lead article in the December 9, 1998, issue of *The Christian Century*. Farnsley’s article was an important contribution to the national debate about faith-based partnerships—in particular, addressing the capacity of congregations to administer government-funded social programs.
- Polis sociologist Elfriede Wedam contributed two chapters to the volume *Public Religion and Urban Transformation: Faith in the City*, published by New York University Press. Wedam’s contributions were: “Catholic Spirituality in a New Urban Church” and “‘God Doesn’t Care What Language I Pray In’: Community and Culture on Chicago’s Southwest Side.”

Academic presentations:

- David Bodenhamer: “Creating University-Community Connections: Using New Technologies to Build a Research-Service Continuum.” National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, San Francisco, November.

“Applying Geographic Information Systems to American Historical and Contemporary Religion Data.” International Symposium on Geoinformatics and Socioinformatics, Ann Arbor, June.

“Using Geographic Information Systems for Urban Study: Lessons from Indianapolis.” Pacific Neighborhood Consortium, Taipei, Taiwan, January.

- Elfriede Wedam addressed the Illinois Sociology Association on “Ethnoracial Diversity in Indianapolis Congregations.”

* In addition to the listed Polis-related publications, David Bodenhamer published “Martin Van Buren: A Reassessment,” in Melvin I. Urofsky, ed., *The American Presidency: Critical Essays* (Garland Publishing, 1999), 100-109.

Also, “Lost Vision: The Shifting Construction of Fair Trial,” in David V. Kyvig, ed., *The Unintended Consequences of Constitutional Amendments* (University of Georgia Press, forthcoming, 2000).

- Social historian Mary Mapes addressed the Indiana Association of Historians on “Private Voluntary Organizations and the Welfare State, Indianapolis, 1930-1970.”

Professional and community presentations:

- David Bodenhamer: “Developing Public Collaborations with Arts and Cultural Institutions.” Association of Midwest Museums, Indianapolis.
- Religious historian David Vanderstel addressed the Indiana Historical Society and the Vermont Historical Society on the shaping role of religion in American history.
- Cynthia Cunningham of the Community Analysis department gave a presentation on SAVI to the American Planning Association at its annual meeting in Washington, D.C. She also addressed the Indianapolis Housing Strategy Task Force regarding the Center’s analysis of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data.
- Karen Frederickson, director of Community Analysis, presented “GIS and American Religious Data” to the GIS Information ’99 Symposium at the University of Michigan. She also presented “Introduction to SAVI” at the GIS Day Conference held at IUPUI.
- Kevin Mickey, quality assurance manager in the AIT department, addressed the St. Joseph County GIS Technical Committee on “How to Lie with Maps—Cartographic Design Issues” and on “Emergency Management Systems Application of GIS.”

Teaching and training:

- David Vanderstel taught an introductory course in American history and an upper-level course entitled “The Nature of History.”
- Elfriede Wedam taught “Introduction to Sociology,” a survey of the discipline and its methods.
- Mary Mapes taught a senior-level Special Topics history course, “American Women to 1865,” focusing on women’s public and private roles in society.
- Ann Alley of Community Analysis conducted several introductory and training sessions for users of SAVI to groups including State of Indiana employees, the Hamilton County Foundation, and the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce.

VIII. Concerns

The Polis Center faces challenges related to growth.

With an annual operating budget of almost \$5.6 million, including annual payroll expenses of \$2.3 million, the Center must continue to attract new funding at a substantial and increasing level. The director will continue to take the lead in obtaining funding to support the Center's work, but increasingly the responsibility will shift to staff members to propose new projects, obtain new contracts, and secure funding for the Center.

We face an increasing need for developing standard operating procedures as we grow. The project management experience of the Center's COO will be invaluable in this regard.

Now that we have moved off campus, we need to work conscientiously to maintain and even expand our contacts with the University. At present we are working closely with the Department of Geography on the SAVI Project; we will be forging similar relationships with other divisions within the University, including the School of Sociology and the School of Nursing.

We hope the University community will be more receptive to our overtures. When we held our Open House, we invited many people personally, but only four showed up from the School of Liberal Arts, though the event was otherwise well attended.

As the pace of change quickens, particularly in technology, we have to react quickly to new opportunities. We are hiring nationally now, competing with other universities and the public and private sectors to attract the best people. However, we have been frustrated that the University reacts slowly in approving research contracts. We have been especially disappointed in the time it takes the Human Resources Administration to react to requests for new hires. We need to remain technologically innovative and stay abreast of advances in equipment, programming, and training.

The work of The Polis Center presents the University with great opportunities for collaborative research. Our continuing work in neighborhoods fosters positive connections between the University and the community. We work locally, but our work has broad application and is drawing national and international attention.