

Appointed to Virginia
State Crime Commission
by Gov. Northam in 2020

GrowSouth Advisory
Council (Dallas); Second
Chance Community
Improvement Program
(Dallas); Community
Board, Bushwick
(Brooklyn)

Scholarly Focus:
Institutions, Public
Leadership & Local
Government

Applied Research in
Communities



Reimagining Public Service

Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service
2020-2025 Strategic Plan

Cooper Center: Our History, New Vision

Founded in 1931, Bureau of
Public Administration

Local Government Assistance and
Applied Research; VIG (1991)

New Strategic Plan, New Mission:
Recognizing the challenges of
21st century governance, we
deliver public impact research
and multi-sector leadership
development to build the capacity
of Virginia's communities,
organizations, and institutions to
serve the Commonwealth.

Wise County (Big Stone Gap), Virginia
Virginia Institute of Government member



UNIVERSITY
of VIRGINIA

Weldon Cooper Center
for Public Service

Reimagining Public Service: What is it and Why Now?

2020 and Wicked Problems: COVID-19, BLM, and the Politics of America

“The major challenge facing elected officials, public administrators, business leaders, nonprofit executives, community activists, and citizens is not managing complexity and turbulence. Rather, the challenge is how to address critical public problems successfully in a highly interdependent and interconnected world.”

- Catalytic Leadership: Strategies for an Interconnected World

- Let Values be your Compass
- Recognize the Intersection of Public Problems
- Governance Makes Government Better
- Community Stories Catalyze Empathy

Reimagining Public Service: Four Pathways for Progress

Let Values Be Your Compass

Our ability to identify, lift up, and be accountable to those values in action is significant; if values give us insight to what we find important as individuals, let alone organizations/institutions, we can have a better understanding of what we can expect from one another, and at a minimum, get a better understanding of what motivates people and their behavior.



Recognize the Intersection of Public Problems

Wicked problems don't operate in isolation or a vacuum and have varying affects on people; issues with transportation often impact affordable housing; as we are seeing in with COVID and the pandemic, issues with public health intersect with with mental health, physical well-being, the economy etc.



Governance Makes Government Better

How do we as public leaders and community members empower one another to be a part of decision-making in government and other institutions that impact us all? Who and where do our under utilized assets reside and how can we activate them?



Use Community Stories to Catalyze

Empathy Every person and community has a story to tell; how do we listen to them and assist in telling them in order to gain perspective is critical to decision making. Stories allow for us to connect with others we may not understand or disagree with, and illuminate the humanity we all want to be recognized.

Reimagining through Deliberative Democracy?

“...tying ourselves up in knots about what is right or wrong, civil or uncivil, is far less useful than educating Americans about how to debate and develop the thick skin that strong democratic debate demands. The real question is whether we want both depth of debate and the work that comes with it.”

- *Rude Democracy*, Susan Herbst

Let's Retreat, Reflect, and Reimagine!