

W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research
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From the Executive Director

The Institute over the years has forged lasting and productive associations with scholars and practitioners from many organizations and in many parts of the country. For 15 years starting in 1962, the Institute maintained an office in Washington, D.C., from which prominent policy experts such as Sar Levitan, Saul Blaustein, Herbert Striner, and Irving Siegel led the Institute staff on important projects related to federal employment policy.

Times have changed. We have seen a major shift in the locus of policy making, with state and local governments assuming much more responsibility for social programs and with private foundations promoting social initiatives.

We have also witnessed a revolution in information technology, particularly e-mail and Internet access to information. Both changes have drastically reduced the necessity of locating in the Washington area in order to be a prominent player in analyzing and evaluating policy and in informing the policy debate.

Currently, our research affiliations extend from Japan to Hungary and from Canada to Australia. For instance, we recently co-sponsored a conference with the Canadian International Labor Network (CILN), which brought together 20 prominent economists from six European countries, Japan, Australia, Canada, and the United States and was organized by Peter Kuhn of McMaster University. These scholars provided in-depth country comparisons of worker displacement and the extent of their unemployment spells and earnings losses, marking the first time that researchers have been able to use micro-level data across this many countries to address job displacement, which is currently a major concern to many European and Asian countries. This research will appear as an Institute publication.

Allan Hunt, Assistant Director of the Institute, has finished a project in Australia with the Victorian Workcover Authority. Dr. Hunt led a team of researchers to evaluate the performance and structure of Victoria's workers' compensation system and to provide recommendations for improving the system. This work is mentioned in his article in this issue of the newsletter.

Closer to home, we have had the privilege over the last six months of working with one of the nation's leading urbanologists, David Rusk. Author of the widely acclaimed book *Cities without Suburbs*, Mr. Rusk has worked with many communities to address issues of housing, neighborhoods, schools, urban redevelopment and revitalization, and urban sprawl. He is currently working in the Kalamazoo area and has been based at the Institute while conducting his research. Institute staff have worked closely with Mr. Rusk, collecting data and analyzing local trends and conducting in-depth studies of the performance of Michigan school districts and the feasibility of tax-base sharing arrangements among local cities and townships.

The Institute also keeps abreast of recent research through our annual Dissertation

Award. Each year we receive many excellent dissertations, and the selection committee is always challenged to choose the top three. As described in the column to the right, this year's award went to Steven Haider of the University of Michigan for his work on income inequality. Our congratulations to him and to the two runners-up.

Given the extensive involvement of the Institute with various agencies and organizations, it is safe to say that our location in the country's heartland has not impeded our ability to carry out our mission.