

W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research

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From the Executive Director

This issue marks the fifth anniversary of the Institute's newsletter. We started this newsletter to highlight the current research and other activities of the Institute in a timely and easily accessible manner. In my column, I have tried to provide an overview of the Institute by describing the wide variety of our activities within the Institute and in collaboration with other researchers and organizations. In this issue, I would like to bring four items to your attention.

Director of Publications

Last month, leadership of our publications unit changed hands. After 18 years, Dr. Allan Hunt stepped down to pursue an exciting research opportunity (described below). We were fortunate that we did not have to look beyond our current senior staff to find his successor. I am pleased to announce that Dr. Kevin Hollenbeck has agreed to assume this position. Dr. Hollenbeck has been with the Institute for 10 years as a senior staff economist, with specialties in program evaluation, job training, and education.

I am confident that with Dr. Hollenbeck's excellent management and communications skills and his innovative ideas, the Institute's publishing program will continue to grow and build from the excellent foundation that Dr. Hunt created. Dr. Hunt transformed publications from basically an in-house program to a full-fledged publishing operation. Under his leadership, we have published more than 100 titles authored by prominent researchers from major research organizations. We are indebted to Dr. Hunt for his vision and skills, and we look forward to the new and exciting opportunities before us under the leadership of Dr. Hollenbeck.

Manuscript Solicitation

I'd like to remind you that we invite submission of publishable book-length manuscripts or proposals for books from scholars and policy analysts outside the Institute. We strive to publish books for the reader who is not an expert but who seeks a book that lays out issues, reviews what is already known, and offers additional research that expands our knowledge of a topic. We entertain submissions that complement the Institute's research agenda; specific information on our research areas can be found on our Web site, <http://www.upjohninst.org>. We will give your manuscripts and proposals prompt attention. They will be reviewed by Institute staff, and promising manuscripts are forwarded for external, anonymous peer review. Once manuscripts are accepted, a royalty contract is signed, and the book is published, promoted, and distributed by the Institute. Our books are also distributed through the American Association of University Presses Web site and by the Internet booksellers.

Web site

We are pleased with the large volume of visitors to our Web site. We are constantly looking for ways to make the information there more accessible to our visitors and for the Web site to be a more effective resource for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. Therefore, you will periodically find modifications to the layout of the home page and the organization of the topic areas. Most recently, we have constructed "hubs" for each of the major research areas that our senior staff pursues. These hubs list the senior staff who specializes in these areas and relevant Institute publications, as well as links to other

sites that can provide additional resources related to these research areas. We hope this new way of presenting information produced by the Institute will help you locate current information more quickly and efficiently.

Disability evaluation study

Dr. Allan Hunt recently received a contract from the Social Security Administration to estimate the number and characteristics of disabled adults in the United States. The Institute's partner in the Disability Evaluation Study is Westat, Inc., a survey and statistical research firm in the Washington, D.C. area. Westat will organize the surveys and collect the data, and the Upjohn Institute will provide the policy analysis.

This 45-month project will involve the most in-depth assessment of disabled persons in the United States to date. Westat will screen a random sample of 100,000 individuals by telephone to find 10,000 individuals who span the range from slightly impaired to qualifying for SSA disability benefits. These individuals will be invited to face-to-face interviews about their work experience and other relevant factors. From these, some 5,500 will be targeted for physical exams, mental evaluations, functional assessments, and additional interviews. The project will seek to gather as much data as is feasible about the impairments and work histories of these individuals.

The research team, which includes researchers from Michigan State and Cornell universities, will help to design the survey instrument and analyze results. The study is designed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the number of people who, but for work or other reasons, are severely impaired enough to be considered disabled for Social Security benefit purposes?
2. What enables some disabled persons to remain in the workforce despite their impairments?
3. How can future changes in the number of disability benefit claimants be cost-effectively monitored and predicted?
4. How many persons, and what types of persons, would be affected by changes in the disability decision process?

This is an exciting opportunity to participate in a cutting-edge study that address critical questions for the disabled population and for the Social Security Administration in addressing their needs. We are pleased to be a major part of this effort.