



Speaker Biographies

Haris Alibasic

Dr. Haris Alibašić is an Associate Professor in the Public Administration Program. He researches and teaches strategic planning, resilience, governance, ethics, artificial intelligence, administration, and public policy. He brings a combination of almost 30 years of professional and teaching expertise, spanning governance, strategic planning, and management, artificial intelligence ethics, and cybersecurity planning for government leaders. His career includes significant service with NATO, the United Nations Mission, and the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where he contributed to governance reform and institutional capacity building in post-conflict regions.

In 2022, as a Fulbright Project Specialist through the US Department of State, Dr. Alibašić advised the Republic of Kosovo's Prime Minister and the Office of Strategic Planning on national development strategies, strategic management frameworks, national energy assessments and planning, policy implementation, and governance structures. This international engagement complements his extensive domestic strategic planning and public sector innovation work.

As the Legislative and Strategic Planning Director for Grand Rapids, Michigan's second-largest city, Dr. Alibašić served under three mayors, overseeing strategic planning, legislative affairs, and organizational development. His leadership strengthened municipal operations and improved public service delivery through innovative governance strategies and strategic management.

Currently serving as an Associate Professor in the Public Administration program at the University of West Florida, Dr. Alibašić has spent the past decade shaping future public sector leaders. He specializes in public-sector strategic planning, ethics, management, and AI governance and policies. His development and teaching of Florida's Cybersecurity Incident Response and Resilience Planning (CIRRP) program for public sector executives demonstrates his commitment to

preparing government leaders for emerging cyber threats and implementing the Florida Cybersecurity Act. His research on ethical AI frameworks, including his work on "Developing an Ethical Framework for Responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) Applications," demonstrates his commitment to responsible technology adoption in governance. His current research focuses on the effective use of AI and ML in government efficiency.

As an Associate Professor in the Public Administration program at the University of West Florida, Dr. Alibašić has taught doctoral, graduate-level, and undergraduate courses in Public Service and Administrative Ethics, Political Economy, Strategic Management, Public Budgeting and Finance, Leadership, and Graduate Capstone for the past 10 years.

Tyler Augst

Tyler Augst is a Government & Community Vitality Educator for Southwest Michigan with Michigan State University Extension focusing on land use, zoning, planning, and community development.

Prior to MSU Extension Tyler spent time working on increasing civic and democratic participation in a variety of K-12, post-secondary settings, including a year serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA with the Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District and working with 4-H. Tyler holds a B.A. degrees in Anthropology and Sociology from Michigan State University and a M.S. degree in Rural Sociology from Pennsylvania State University.

Michael Hicks

Michael J. Hicks, PhD is the George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics and the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at Ball State University. He previously served on the faculty of the Air Force Institute of Technology's Graduate School of Engineering and Management and at research centers at Marshall University and the University of Tennessee.

Hicks' research interest is in state and local public finance and the effect of public policy on the location, composition, and size of economic activity. He has authored three books and more than 50 scholarly papers and is best known for his work on tax incentives and the impact of Walmart.

Hicks received research and teaching awards from Tennessee, Marshall, AFIT, and Ball State, and his work has been highlighted in such outlets as Rolling Stone, The Economist, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and Washington Post. He has appeared nationally on CSPAN, MSNBC, NPR's "All Things Considered," and Fox Business News, and his weekly column on economics and current events is syndicated in several outlets across the state.

Hicks earned doctoral and master's degrees in economics from the University of Tennessee and a bachelor's degree in economics from Virginia Military Institute. He is a retired Army reserve infantryman having served in combat and peacekeeping operations in North Africa, Southwest Asia, Korea and Japan.

Ye-Rim Lee

Ye-Rim Lee is a Ph.D. Candidate in Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics at Michigan State University. She studies how climate shocks and disasters affect energy markets and regional resilience, with a focus on gasoline, hydropower, and infrastructure systems. Her dissertation

develops multi-country and high-frequency datasets to examine how wildfires, hurricanes, and droughts shape energy reliability, affordability, and long-term transition planning.

Her job market paper focuses on the short-term impact of wildfires on U.S. retail gasoline markets, using web-scraped station-level data to capture localized price dynamics. This paper received the 2025 M. Jarvin Emerson Student Paper Competition Award from the Mid-Continent Regional Science Association. Beyond her dissertation, Ye-Rim worked with the Inter-American Development Bank to build a multi-country power systems database across Latin America and collaborates on USDA-funded projects examining energy prices, inflation perceptions, and regional disparities.

Steven Miller

Fixed-term associate professor Dr. Steven R. Miller specializes in applied economic methods for forecasting and impact analysis. He is also the Director of the Center for Economic Analysis, which commonly engages Michigan stakeholders on addressing economic questions and promoting a better understanding of economic implications of development, and policy across many topics. Steven is highly skilled in the areas of data analysis, predictive analytics, and data management and splits his time as a predictive modeler with [MSU Enrollment Management](#). A common emphasis across Steven's projects is advancing the communication of economic value created by Michigan's industries, enterprises and natural resources, especially in rural Michigan, and understanding how that value intersects with policy and community. Steven has also worked with many local economic development agencies around the state, including that in Macomb and Mason Counties to understand how their respective natural and built up amenities impact tourism, tourism expenditures and the associated economies. Dr. Miller also maintains the [MSU Economic Forecast Model](#) of the national, state and regional economies. This ongoing effort is a useful resource for Michigan residents, businesses and governments for understanding key factors affecting the economy and for planning. Along with the economic forecast model, Steven tracks and reports on [current economic trends](#) and reports on the [economic impact of agriculture](#) for each of Michigan's 83 counties.

Erika Rosebrook

Erika Rosebrook is the director of the Michigan State University Extension Center for Local Government Finance and Policy. Her research centers on the relationship between state and local governments and how residents engage with governments. She is particularly interested in understanding intergovernmental-, community-, and resident-level impacts of policy decisions, with a specific focus on ensuring inclusive approaches to public services.

Rosebrook previously served as a faculty member and the interim director of the Master of Public Policy program in MSU's Department of Political Science. Prior to arriving at MSU, she was the associate director of the Governor's Office of Urban Initiatives and served as assistant county administrator in Ottawa County, Michigan.

Her current work in the community includes service as the board president of REACH Studio Art Center in Lansing and as the government instruction coordinator for Michigan American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program. A Michigan native, Erika is a graduate of Michigan State University

(Ph.D, Political Science), Harvard University (Master of Public Administration), and University of Chicago (B.A., Sociology).

Robert Schneider

Bob is in his second stint with the Citizens Research Council, having worked for the organization from 2013 to 2015. He has spent most of his time in state government, having worked in the Office of Health and Human Services – State Budget Office and as Associate Director for the non-partisan Michigan House Fiscal Agency (HFA). He has extensive expertise and has provided non-partisan advice and analysis on state policy and budget matters in areas including corrections, human services, and transportation. Prior to joining HFA, he was a research assistant and project manager from 1994 to 1996 for Public Policy Associates, a Lansing-based policy research and consulting firm. He also served for two years within the Michigan Department of State working on department budget and financial issues. Bob received his B.S. in Economics from Central Michigan University and his M.A. in Economics from Michigan State University.

Mark Skidmore

Mark Skidmore is a tenured Professor and Morris Chair in State and Local Government Finance and Policy, while currently serving as a resident fellow with the MSU Extension Center for Local Government Finance and Policy. He holds tenure system appointments in the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics and Economics. He has served as a consultant on a range of issues including economic development, government finance and policy, and price determination. He has published the results of his research in journals such as *Economic Inquiry*, *Economics Letters*, *Journal of Urban Economics*, *National Tax Journal*, and *Public Choice*. Much of Skidmore's research and outreach focuses on public finance policy and the relationship between policy and economic development. Recent research areas include work on property taxation, regional development, and the economics of natural disasters.

Cory Smidt

Corwin D. Smidt is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University. He came to MSU in the fall of 2008 after receiving his Ph.D. from Ohio State University. He studies American electoral politics, presidential primaries, the political news media, campaign politics, and dynamics in American political behavior. His current research investigates the extent to which candidates, the news media, and voters respond to one another during political campaigns. He also has various methodological interests in applying methods such as state space models, nonlinear time series, natural language processing, dynamic panel data models, and survival models for recurrent events

Eric Walcott

Eric Walcott is a Senior Specialist with MSU Extension's Government and Community Vitality programs, where he contributes to the design and delivery of educational programs that strengthen local government capacity and support thriving communities across Michigan. His work focuses on fiscal sustainability, good governance, civic engagement, and inclusive leadership, with a particular

emphasis on supporting elected officials and government staff through training, facilitation, and technical assistance.

Eric plays a central role in key initiatives such as the Fiscally Ready Communities program and New Commissioner School, and collaborates extensively with state agencies, local governments, and professional associations. He has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications and curricula that support best practices in effective local governance. Eric holds a Master of Public Policy from Michigan State University.

Richard Werner

Professor Richard A. Werner, MA, D.Phil. (Oxon) is professor in economics and banking. He graduated from the London School of Economics with First Class Honours in Economics and holds a doctorate in Economics from the University of Oxford. Richard is a Member of Linacre College, Oxford.

From 2019 to 2021 he was Professor of Finance at the Fanhai International School of Finance at Fudan University, Shanghai (one of China's top universities). Before that he was Professor of International Banking at the University of Southampton, professor of economics at Goethe University, Frankfurt, visiting professor at Moscow University and at Budapest Metropolitan University, and from 1997 to 2004 assistant professor in economics and finance at Sophia University, Tokyo (one of Japan's top private universities). For several years he worked as senior consultant to the Asian Development Bank and was visiting scholar at the Japanese Ministry of Finance and visiting researcher the Bank of Japan. He was also the first Shimomura Fellow at the Development Bank of Japan.

Richard proposed the disaggregation of credit and its impact on asset markets and growth with his 'Quantity Theory of Credit'. In 1995, he advanced the concept of 'Quantitative Easing' in Japan (formulated to expand bank credit creation to the real economy; first published in the leading daily newspaper, the Nikkei, on 2 September 1995). This was adopted by major central banks. His book '[Princes of the Yen](#)' was a No. 1 bestseller in Japan. In its English edition of 2003, Richard Werner warned of the coming creation of credit bubbles and banking crises in the eurozone. His 2005 book '[New Paradigm in Macroeconomics](#)' (Palgrave Macmillan) expressed a timely warning of the 2008 banking crisis. In 2014, Richard published the first empirical proof of the fact that banks create new money when they grant loans.