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Policy Specialist Joins UMaine Research Center

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Selected News Releases

Policy Specialist Joins UMaine Research Center

ORONO, Maine -- A new researcher specializing in educational policy, funding and intergovernmental relations, is expanding the expertise of the Center for Research and Evaluation at the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development. Pushpam Jain, who recently completed his Ph.D. in Education Policy at the University of Chicago, joined the CRE, the Maine Education Policy Research Institute and the College in October as an assistant research professor.

“Jain brings skills in policy research and analysis and an insightful perspective that will help us compare Maine's practices and plans for reform to those in other states,” says CRE director Walter Harris. Harris notes that the coming legislative session is expected to consider many questions related to the work of the Essential Programs and Services model, which is being explored as a funding alternative by the State Board of Education. “Jain will be heavily involved in this issue and others including equity, adequacy and the movement toward increasing accountability and assessment of school district capabilities to support students' achievement of learning standards,” says Harris.

Policy issues in New England is one of Jain's major interests, as reflected in his dissertation, which examined non-incremental changes in Vermont's state policy. Examining education and land use policy, Jain analyzed what factors brought about major, comprehensive policy change in a traditionally conservative state. His discussion focuses on whether these changes were entrenched in the state political culture or were related to forces of global economic competition.

Jain was actively involved in University of Chicago public school policy and evaluation research. Most recently, he served as project manager for UC's Education Reform in Cities project, which involved creating a database of over 400 cities, combining census and school district information to evaluate the impact of current reform measures. He also conducted case studies on the role of 10 major city mayors in education.

“It's important to understand policy alternatives from a research perspective, as opposed to simply political bargaining, particularly as states struggle with standards and accountability issues,” says Jain. “Strong analysis grounded in good data enables us to understand the policy alternatives, what may be feasible for our state and what our chances are in successfully implementing these policies.”

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