

## History

When PURC was founded in 1972, Richard Nixon was president and Reuben Askew was Florida's governor. In the words of Dr. Sanford V. Berg, "inflation was severe, consumer unrest was on the rise, and both regulators and utility managers faced difficult decisions. After years of stable prices in the utility industry, developments in energy availability and telecommunications technology signaled the need for change."

In this uncertain environment, Dr. Robert Lanzillotti, then-Dean of the Warrington College of Business Administration at the University of Florida, and Dr. Eugene Brigham, PURC's founding director, garnered support from the Florida Public Service Commission and state utility executives for the formation of the Public Utility Research Center. In the spring of 1971, PURC Founding Sponsors included Florida Power Corporation (now Progress Energy); Florida Power & Light Company; Gulf Power Company; Tampa Electric Company; Florida Gas Company; General Telephone Company (GTE, now Verizon); Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company (now BellSouth); and Florida Municipal Utilities Association (now FMEA). Since the 70s, PURC has grown from a small group hosting a single conference each year to an interdisciplinary center with expanded training and development programs and internationally recognized research.

The 1980s brought additional concerns to the fore. PURC received funding by the Department of Energy through the FPSC to study electricity rate design. This study was a large-scale, interdisciplinary project involving researchers in Economics, Electrical Engineering, Industrial and Systems Engineering, and Management and Marketing. The findings were published in a series of articles and in *Innovative Electric Rates: Issues in Cost Benefit Analysis*, edited by Dr. Berg (Lexington Books, 1983).

Corporate culture changed drastically with the breakup of AT&T, which had been the largest company in the world before its massive divestiture effective January 1, 1984. Companies and utilities suddenly faced new competitive pressures. There was a general move toward international markets and technological innovation as mergers, joint ventures, restructuring, and acquisitions became common. During the Reagan/Thatcher era, deregulation and privatization were promoted.

During this period PURC's focus became more interdisciplinary, and collaboration with academics, utilities, and regulatory agencies became more common.

As the pace and pattern of innovations, particularly in telecommunications, disrupted traditional regulation, PURC received funding from the FPSC for a series of workshops to assist staff in addressing technical issues. The first series, completed in 1991, provided technical education regarding telecom costing and pricing. The second series in 1992-93 concerned the implications of new telecom technologies. Several papers by Dr. Berg and Dennis Weisman, a PURC Research Fellow for two years and now a professor of

economics at Kansas State University, emerged from the project, including one that received first place in the 1991 Public Utilities Reports competition.

Globalization was the watchword of the Clinton years, and PURC became increasingly involved with international activities as infrastructure investment and policy initiatives spread from developed to developing nations. In 1996, Dr. Berg collaborated with the World Bank in designing the curriculum for an intensive two-week program that would promote the economic, technical, and policy skills required to create and manage sustainable regulatory systems for infrastructure sectors. Mark Jamison joined the University of Florida from Sprint in 1996 to help design the program and coordinate deliveries. After an initial grant from The World Bank for the first program in 1997, the PURC/World Bank International Training Program on Utility Regulation and Strategy has been self-sustaining to this day. In 2002, PURC received the World Bank President's Award for Excellence for outstanding support and partnership provided to supporting infrastructure regulators.

Mark Jamison has been the principal investigator in another PURC initiative funded by The World Bank, the development of a body of knowledge on infrastructure regulation ([BoKIR](#)) for utility professionals. PURC is the lead institution for this project; other universities involved have been the University of Toulouse and Catholic University—Lima.

Dr. Jamison has also been closely involved in NetTel, a project to develop a curriculum in telecommunications policy for universities in southern Africa. This is a collaboration with the University of South Africa, University of Western Cape, University of Witwatersrand, and the University of Fort Hare (all in South Africa) as well as universities in Tanzania, Zambia, and Botswana. Other U.S. universities involved in this project are Washington State University, the University of Colorado, University of Maryland, and Michigan State University. The Telecommunications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa initiated this project.

Closer to home, Dr. Jamison has been active at the national and state level. For example, he has served as president of the Transportation and Utilities Group of the American Economic Association (2003-04), has directed workshops at the Federal Communications Commission and Department of Justice, and he has testified several times before the Florida Legislature on telecommunications matters.

Ted Kury joined PURC as director of Energy Studies in 2008. He previously served as a senior pricing and structuring analyst at the Energy Authority in Jacksonville, where he developed proprietary models for the management of system-wide cash flow risk, among other duties.

At PURC, Mr. Kury delivers regulatory training seminars in electricity for the PURC/World Bank program and provides training and consultation for energy regulators around the world and in Florida. He is frequently interviewed by the media regarding power issues, participates in the Harvard Electricity Policy Group's ongoing discussions

regarding current policy issues facing the electricity industry today, and regularly attends conferences and meetings to meet with key stakeholders.

Lynne Holt, formerly with the Kansas Legislative Research Department, began a joint appointment with PURC and the University of Florida Askew Institute on Politics and Society in 2001. As a policy analyst, Dr. Holt has assisted with preparation of studies and has facilitated interdisciplinary contacts with other subject specialists on the campus.

In 2004, Dr. Berg was named PURC's director of Water Studies. Water is a sector of increasing interest and importance, along with issues of wastewater and sewerage. Dr. Berg is a member of the International Advisory Committee for the Association of Water and Sanitation Regulatory Entities of the Americas and has delivered presentations at the association's conference.

With PURC now in its fourth decade, the challenges of the twenty-first century are many. As part of the PURC mission, we seek decisions in infrastructure that promote efficiency and social justice, including widely available clean energy that reflects good stewardship in our use of resources, ubiquitous telecommunications services to aid development, and access to clean water for community health worldwide. Achieving this vision will take generations. However, we believe that now is the time to educate decision-makers, design incentive mechanisms, develop institutional arrangements, and create improved organizational governance procedures that encourage wise investment in infrastructure.