Katharine Travaleine  
International Travel Award Report 
7th International Conference in Interpretive Policy Analysis  
Tilburg University, the Netherlands  
July 5-7, 2012

With support from Drexel’s Office of International Program’s International Travel Award, I participated in the 7th International Conference in Interpretive Policy Analysis at Tilburg University in Tilburg, the Netherlands. The experience was more valuable than I had anticipated. Although the preparation and presentation of a paper was valuable on many levels, this conference gave me much more than writing and public speaking experience.

For the conference, I co-authored a paper with two Drexel faculty – Christian Hunold, Ph.D (Political Science) and Franco Montalto, P.E., Ph.D (Civil, Architectural, and Environmental Engineering). We developed this cross-disciplinary paper, entitled *Positivist and Interpretive Approaches to Urban Stormwater Infrastructure: Complexity, Uncertainty, and Inclusion*, to explore the impact that the Interpretive Policy Analysis research method might have on stormwater management here in Philadelphia. Dr. Hunold and I presented the paper on a panel about environmental issues and the interpretive method. We received some useful feedback from the panel discussion and we aim to revise the paper and submit it for publication. The process of writing and presenting this paper will prove especially useful as it informs the writing of my doctoral dissertation in Environmental Policy.

The International Interpretive Policy Analysis Conference is a gathering of the world’s leaders in the field. The organization of the conference was ideal for networking. Not only did I get to listen to keynote addresses and presentations by key scholars, I also interacted with them in workshops and panel discussions. I made new connections as well as reconnected with some colleagues who live overseas. It was especially useful to talk with other graduate students doing similar work for their doctoral dissertations. I also spoke with fellow researchers about the possibility of bringing expertise in deliberation facilitation processes to Drexel, and I discovered some post-doctorate opportunities. My advisor and I explored an opportunity for intercollegiate collaboration – editing a volume with others doing similar research on stormwater management, and we explored the idea of bringing a regional version of the conference to the Philadelphia area.
Beyond the conference, I cherished the chance to experience a new city – especially one so bicycle-oriented. I had no idea I would appreciate the small city of Tilburg and the Dutch culture so much. With some connections at Tilburg University and the University of Amsterdam now, I plan to consider opportunities for future collaboration and/or a post-doctorate position in the Netherlands.

In four short days, I experienced so much – on academic, professional, and personal levels. I cannot thank the Office of International Programs enough for helping to make this possible with an International Travel Award. I return to Drexel with enhanced confidence, new research ideas, and opportunities for future collaboration – a truly invaluable experience. Thank you!