

We build the policy infrastructure

I AM THRILLED to be given the opportunity to lead this unique school. My central job is to ensure that the Andrew Young School's start-up success – 13 years and counting – becomes a lasting brand.

How? The concept of “policy infrastructure” best conveys the policy foundation we are helping to put in place locally and around the globe through our teaching, research and outreach. Just as physical infrastructure is important to a community and country, so is the policy infrastructure that helps businesses flourish, communities grow and societies prosper.

Private interests depend upon a foundation of public goods for results – a public infrastructure that includes the provision of public safety, courts, public works, education programs, health networks, a thriving nonprofit sector and best-practices governance that safeguards public finances by demanding transparency and accountability.

Individuals and businesses want their governments to operate under predictable rules that do not necessarily interfere with private choices. They expect competent public managers to interpret and enforce those rules evenly. Developing leaders that meet both of these expectations falls under our education charter. Therefore, the efforts of the Andrew Young School will focus on four key initiatives:

- We will expand a policy infrastructure orientation informed by market incentives, best practices and good governance rules, leveraging our expertise to advance the practice of policymaking and management in public and nonprofit organizations, giving extra attention to those in Georgia.
- We will provide innovative programs, continue to improve our student outcomes and enrollment, and help more students learn about the market economy through master teachers in the economics principles courses.

- We will redouble our efforts to raise the school's profile and advance our academic and community recognition to a higher level that matches the true impact of our top-quality research and rich network of partnerships.
- We will jump-start a legacy initiative to better document and extend Andrew Young's contributions to his namesake school.

My vision is for the Andrew Young School to be the local and global leader in activities that effectively inform the development of policy infrastructure.

I believe that our school's three founding avenues to excellence make this vision possible:

- Unlike most policy schools, the academic departments of the Andrew Young School – both economics and public management and policy – are expected to be among the very best in their academic discipline and to do research that informs policy. Our external indicators confirm success in both endeavors.
- The AYS promotes an entrepreneurial research team. In fact, our faculty, centers and programs lead the campus in raising external funding as measured by dollars per tenure track faculty member; and do so without expensive lab facilities.
- Our highly productive research centers aim to be the “center of choice” for their targeted client groups, with the evidence indicating success both down the street and in more than 40 countries.

The Andrew Young School of Policy Studies has long been devoted to making a difference. I understand and embrace that challenge and look forward to working collaboratively with all interested parties – our faculty and students, alumni and friends – to achieve these results.

W. Bartley Hildreth
Dean

Q & A
with

Dean W. Bartley Hildreth



If Bart Hildreth is called anything besides the new dean of the Andrew Young School, it would be “policy engineer.” Infrastructure, the physical, fiscal and policy underpinnings that keep a society running smoothly, has always intrigued him. At the AYS, Dean Hildreth leads an extraordinary team of developers and managers – most would call them faculty – of one of the nation’s top policy infrastructure programs.

AN EXPERT in tax policy, public budgeting and financial management, with a specialty in municipal securities, Dean Hildreth has served on the boards of a state development finance authority and a municipal public building commission and as director of finance for an Ohio city while gaining recognition for an academic career that has been honored by key industry associations.

Editor in chief of the only professional journal devoted to state and local financing and municipal securities, he was awarded the 2008 Aaron Wildavsky Award for lifetime scholarly achievements in public budgeting and finance from the Association for Budgeting and Financial Management. In fact, he and Roy Bahl, the school’s founding dean, are the only two faculty members at the same university holding this award.

Dean Hildreth has spent the last several months forging connections within the critical network of Andrew Young School alumni, students, faculty, peers and friends who have propelled this school to the status it shares with the nation’s top policy schools. In these meetings, he often uses the term “policy infrastructure,” similar to Andrew Young’s focus on “public purpose capitalism,” which Young defines as a profit model guided by integrity, a genuine concern for workers and a commitment to providing a product that improves a community.

In a recent interview with *The Briefing*, Dean Hildreth described the Andrew Young School’s important role in promoting the public good, a.k.a. building policy infrastructure, down the street and around the world.

Q. What have you learned about the Andrew Young School?

B.H. The AYS has many things going for it. Student credit hours are up, research quality is up and the quality of our admissions continues to rise. Our school is nationally recognized, and we have a hiring strategy that maximizes our strengths.

Our faculty generates highly prestigious published articles, high recognition in our disciplines and a sense that we can thrive in a policy school. All of our faculty and researchers work to translate their research and teaching into policy impact. That’s why they come to this school.

It has been clear coming in that the AYS is a very successful enterprise – that’s what attracted me in the first place. Everyone here wants to be a part of greatness, something exciting. That’s what the AYS has shown over its history. It is considered a gem among everyone who knows about the school.

Q. What sets our policy school apart?

B.H. People know about the Andrew Young School. It is a pace-setting institution in certain fields, those that rank highly in the U.S. News & World Report. I believe it is the school’s strong academic disciplines tied to our entrepreneurial approach – our centers for applied research – that help achieve these top rankings. These centers have high visibility in their topic areas. They provide channels for our energy and a way to put the flag up and say, “This is Georgia State.” And they have succeeded in ways that you don’t see in other universities.

The challenge for me, coming in after our founding dean put this academic enterprise model in place, is to continue to generate the excitement and entrepreneurial nature that sets our school apart from other policy schools.

Q. What stands out about the school’s faculty? Its programs?

B.H. Academic settings are notorious for individualized effort and the lack of a collective or coherent center. Our senior faculty members are very experienced as team leaders and entrepreneurial scholars. Our younger senior faculty and junior faculty have bought into this model. It’s somewhat unusual to find this many people who want to partake in a collective experience. It really stands out that we have that here.

Our faculty is also known for striving for excellence: indicators are the rankings and studies that show our research productivity.

The programs in both departments – Public Management and Policy and Economics – are consistent with our school’s entrepreneurial nature. We develop new programs and revise existing ones to meet the market.

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Q. Looking forward – what will be your emphasis?

B.H. The Andrew Young School is essentially a 13-year-old start-up in a growth mode and already very successful. My role is to transition the school into its next level in the university

and the community, a setting informed by the rich traditions of an urban research university environment, and to do this while continuing to

fuel the entrepreneurial passion that has led the AYS to the top of the rankings.

The world calls the AYS to lead, which we will continue to do through our founding paths of excellence:

- Two strong academic disciplines with focused fields of excellence to inform policy
- Engaged scholar-entrepreneurs and highly regarded research centers
- Extensive network of partnerships on campus, locally, and throughout Georgia, the nation and the world

We have begun work on four key initiatives that will carry the school forward.

First, our “Legacy Project” will ensure that we extend the value of the name on our door beyond the current generation, which is particularly important as we continue to expand our work in developing countries. People today know the Andrew Young name and have some idea of his history and the scope of his contributions. But will the next generation

know it? It is in our best interest, long-term, to expand this “brand.”

Second, we plan to place more master teachers, our best teachers, in the economics courses that students attend first, as undergraduates. If you can excite students early on to the market, macro- and microeconomics, you will enrich their lives. Whether they major in business or music or social sciences is immaterial. It's important that they get a good foundation in the market.

All it takes is one experience to change a person's life.

Third, we will engage the community, broadly defined, in what it takes to build a policy infrastructure that is informed by market incentives, best practices and good governance.

And fourth, we want more people to know about the high level of accomplishment at the AYS. We will work to raise the public perception and recognition of the school to better match its significant impact.

Q. Would you like to share any closing thoughts?

B.H. We build policy infrastructure. We're not involved in the physical infrastructure of life, but we analyze, design, build and evaluate the policy infrastructure – the rules – and a competent managerial group to interpret and apply those rules.

Public infrastructure is that public good, that social good, that collective exercise that, once it is in place, allows private parties to do what they want to do, which is move into the environment and build thriving businesses, thriving communities.

The Andrew Young School performs a public good that advances private interests. This is the message that will resound with our business and civic community.



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Michael Mescon (left), Andrew Young and W. Bartley Hildreth