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*Behavioural and Policy Sciences Seminar Series*
*(with support from Mr Chan Hon Pun)*

# The Impact of Government Shutdowns on Personnel, Policy, and Presidents

## Dr. Bill Resh

Sol Price School of Public Policy
University of Southern California

Date:        Monday, March 14, 2022
Time:        11:00am - 12:00pm HKT
Zoom :    Please register by scanning the QR code or using the link below. Zoom details will be provided by email before the seminar.
             https://bit.ly/3HscWYm
Language:   English

## Abstract

For 35 days from December 2018 to January 2019, the United States federal government experienced the longest shutdown in its history. While the economic effects of government shutdowns have been widely studied, the internal effects on agency policy processes and personnel have not. With increased polarization and frequently divided government, much of national policymaking in the US has shifted to the administrative level through rulemaking and executive discretion. Shutdowns should not only affect bureaucrats, but the agencies that are key to a president's (and their party's) policy agendas. We examine the impact of shutdowns in three different studies that employ survey data from the perspective of the several hundred thousand federal employees. We treat shutdowns as exogenous shocks, applied to agencies depending on the timing of their appropriations, allowing for a natural experiment. We compare agencies by the extent to which their workforce was furloughed. The first study employs a cross-sectional model to gauge the effect of the shutdown on specific agency inputs and outputs. In the second study, we use a difference-in-difference model to understand the relative impact of the shutdown on various barometers of employee morale. In the third study, we construct a synthetic control model to understand whether shutdowns have the potential for lasting impacts on the federal workforce. The aggregate results provide the most systematic assessment to date of the short- and long-term effects of government shutdowns on personnel and a president's ability to advance (or hinder) policy administratively across agencies of different ideological orientations.

## Biography

Bill Resh is the C. C. Crawford Professor of Management and Performance and Associate Professor at the University of Southern California's Sol Price School of Public Policy. He is the Director of the Price School's Civic Leadership Education and Research (CLEAR) Initiative and the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Behavioral Public Administration. His research covers executive politics and public administration. He publishes across the fields of public administration, public policy, and political science. His book, Rethinking the Administrative Presidency (JHU Press), won the 2019 Herbert Simon Best Book Award from the American Political Science Association. His latest book (coauthored with Heejin Cho), Revisiting JQ Wilson's Bureaucracy, is under contract with Cambridge University Press with an expected release in early 2023.

# All are welcome!

Enquiries: Dr. Nick Petrovsky
Email: npetrovs@cityu.edu.hk