

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

# **2018 Best Conference Paper Award**

The Urban Affairs Association (UAA), the international professional association for urban scholars, researchers and public service professionals, convened its 48th Annual Conference in Toronto, Ontario, April 4-7, 2018. More than 1,000 participants, representing universities, research institutions, non-profit organizations, and public and private organizations/institutions from around the world met to discuss 21st century issues impacting urban populations and places. Conference participants represented institutions from North America, South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. The University of Toronto, York University, and Ryerson University served as the local sponsors for the event.

During the conference, awards were presented in recognition of outstanding scholarship and service. Among those honored was **Haifeng Qian** (University of Iowa) and **Shiqin Liu** (Northeastern University). Qian and Liu were awarded the Best Conference Paper Award (for a paper presented in 2017 at the UAA Minneapolis conference). Their paper was titled: "**Cultural Entrepreneurship in U.S. Cities.**"



Pictured from left to right: Haifeng Qian (University of Iowa), Renia Ehrenfeucht, Committee Chair (University of New Mexico) and Shiqin Liu (Northeastern University)  
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## **Award Committee Assessment:**

This is a timely topic that has relevance for cities across and beyond the U.S. The author(s) explored cultural activities from a multidimensional perspective, examining the roles of both regional location and other factors including ethnicity, firm size, industry concentration, patents, university presence, human capital, and unemployment rate in levels of cultural entrepreneurship. The committee recognizes the originality and strength of the research methods and analysis as well as the findings' usefulness for policy makers.

## **Award Committee:**

Renia Ehrenfeucht, Committee Chair (University of New Mexico), Debora Sotto (Grupo de Pesquisa Meio Ambiente Urbano - GPMAU PUC/SP), Donald Rosdil (Independent Scholar), Drew Westberg (Coe College), and Carol Atkinson-Palombo

## **Award Winners:**

**Haifeng Qian** is an assistant professor in the School of Urban & Regional Planning and Public Policy Center at the University of Iowa, where he teaches applied microeconomics, economic development policy, and spatial data analysis. He has published over 20 research articles in the areas of entrepreneurship, innovation, urban economic development, and science & technology policy. His co-edited book, entitled *Geographies of Entrepreneurship*, was published by Routledge in 2016. Dr. Qian is an editor of *Small Business Economics* (a Springer journal), an associate editor of *Economic Development Quarterly* (a Sage journal), and an associate editor of *Regional Studies*, *Regional Science* (a Taylor & Francis journal). He holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy (George Mason University), an M.S. in Management Science & Engineering (Tsinghua University), and a B.S. in Engineering Physics (Tsinghua University).

**Shiqin Liu** is a Ph.D. student in Public Policy in the Department of Urban Affairs and Public Policy at Northeastern University. Her primary research interests focus on regional economic analysis, creative economy, entrepreneurship development, and economic mobility. Her current research examines the spatial pattern of entrepreneurship activities and the effects of urban and regional factors on new firm formation in the U.S. Micropolitan and Metropolitan Statistical Areas. Shiqin has a great passion for researching urban development issues and is currently exploring her dissertation topic in the related field. In the future research study, she wants to evaluate the effectiveness of local development policy and explore resources to promote economic opportunity and mobility in cities. Shiqin received her MS in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Iowa, and BA in Urban Studies from the Cleveland State University joined Public Administration at the South China University of Technology.

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*The Urban Affairs Association (UAA) is the international professional organization for urban scholars, researchers, and public service providers. UAA is dedicated to creating interdisciplinary spaces for engaging in intellectual and practical discussions about urban life. Through theoretical, empirical, and action-oriented research, the UAA fosters diverse activities to understand and shape a more just and equitable urban world. UAA sponsors the Journal of Urban Affairs, a refereed annual journal, publishing manuscripts related to urban research and policy analysis of interest to both scholars and practitioners. UAA also sponsors Upsilon Sigma – The Urban Studies Honor Society, an international, multidisciplinary honor society dedicated to recognizing and encouraging excellence in scholarship, leadership, and engagement in urban studies and related fields. The Urban Affairs Association hosts a conference each spring in an urban center. The conference program features both topics of institutional concern and those related to urban issues.*

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