

Wednesday, August 24, 2016

ACEEE Summer Study at Asilomar, California

## Reinvigorating Behavior Research at ACEEE: for Better Building Performance



**Reuven Sussman, Manager of Behavior and Human Dimensions Program, ACEEE**

As the new Behavior Program manager at ACEEE, I am thrilled to apply my knowledge of psychology to the important field of energy efficiency. As I follow in the footsteps of other excellent behavior program researchers at ACEEE, I hope to provide a new perspective on behavioral research, focusing on empirical rigor and questions that drive the field

forward in new and interesting ways.

My background in applied psychology, and experience working on environment-behavior problems, combines theory with practice by using evidence-based solutions to tackle real-world problems. Since assuming my new role in January, I've

been developing an ambitious research agenda. We'll release two reports in the fall: a white paper for policymakers about how to encourage people to reduce their energy use and act to mitigate climate change, and a report on the current status and impact of energy behavior-change programs in North America.

The second report updates our 2013 ACEEE Field Guide to Utility-Run Behavior Programs by evaluating the various types of behavior-change programs that have been implemented and assessed recently. The report explains why behavior programs work, and will assist program administrators in designing behavior programs for the future. I look forward to sharing and discussing my findings with others at the Summer Study, as well as formally presenting the work at the upcoming Behavior, Energy & Climate Change (BECC) conference this October 20–22 in Baltimore.

Continuing the tradition of behavior program managers at ACEEE, I'll also be co-chairing this year's BECC conference,

Continued on page 2

## Is Energy Efficiency Well-Targeted?

Hunt Alcott has looked closely at the real economics of energy efficiency over the years. As a recently tenured professor of Economics at NYU, he has the authority and background to make reasoned judgments. And what he has learned has sometimes gone against standard industry dogma.

Alcott's comments at the 2016 Summer Study revealed the trend of his current research: that market failures justify the development of energy efficiency programs to move society where the market cannot. He identified four common areas where markets for efficiency go astray.

**Credit constraints.** Money is not available where and when it's needed.

**Imperfect information.** Consumers are not provided with the accurate information needed to make purchase decisions.

**Consumer mistakes.** Consumers make irrational purchase decisions.

**Mispricing of energy.** Market pricing does not recognize externalized costs.

Alcott also revealed his three-part lens for evaluating programs.

**People.** Does the program serve people who would not otherwise engage in efficiency upgrades?

**Places.** Does the program serve areas that historically not been well served by efficiency programs?

**Policies.** Is the program effective as a policy instrument? He shared data that crunched through the current state of US programs when viewed through this lens. His summary: much of our current energy efficiency spending is not accurately targeted, and for a variety of reasons. He was clear to point out that his research does not identify solutions for this misdirecting of effort, but rather that there is simply some under-utilized efficiency resource available. He did note that, "At least some of our

Continued on page 2

## Reinvigorating Behavior Research, continued

along with co-chairs from Stanford and UC Berkeley. The conference boasts an impressive lineup of presenters and attendees. We are delighted to have Cass Sunstein, author of *Nudge*, as this year's keynote speaker. Eight years after its publication, *Nudge* is still cited as one of the most influential works on the topic of behavior change (researchers and policymakers still talk about "nudging" people to change their behavior). And I'm personally looking forward to the closing plenary with founder and director of the White House Social and Behavioral Science Team, Maya Shankar. Maya and her team have done important work integrating behavioral research into many government offices, including the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Department of Energy. The unique combination of policy

and research focus at BECC provides excellent opportunities to meet and connect with likeminded partners—and it's fun. If you have not yet attended, take a look at this year's program, and register, at [becccconference.org](http://becccconference.org).

Having established a strong foundation of psychology research in energy efficiency, ACEEE's Behavior and Human Dimensions Program will focus on cutting-edge behavior-change strategies that could further reduce energy consumption and increase well-being. Methods of shifting preferences toward long-term decision making, improving home energy reports, and shifting transportation choices of millennials are just a few of the ideas we plan to examine. If these or any other topics interest you, please find me at the Summer Study—I'd love to talk to you.



## Well Targeted? continued

energy efficiency programs target people and places that need energy efficiency the least.”

During the Q&A session, attendees delved deeply into the methodology of Alcott's work. But however you critique his research, there is a lot here to consider for anyone who wants to

help fine tune the efficiency programs that we rely upon so much to improve the performance of our economy. Given how much new research Hunt Alcott has underway at present, he may have some new insights to share, or for us to review, by the time of the next Summer Study.



## 2016 Latham Scholars

ACEEE Board Member Clay Nessler introduced the 2016 Latham Scholars to the Summer Study. Their attendance was made possible because of the generosity of 2014 attendees who contributed over \$8,000 to fund their participation this year. The Linda Latham Scholarship Fund was created in memory of Linda Latham, former Chief Operating Officer for ACEEE and a visionary leader who helped to change the way we think about energy consumption by expanding the Energy Star program. ACEEE established the Scholarship Fund in recognition of Linda's lifelong commitment to protecting our country's energy and environmental future.

### *Here is our next generation of energy efficiency professionals:*

Colm Gallagher, Univ. College Cork; Kurt Borth, Univ. of Alberta; Oluwatobi Adekanye, Carnegie Mellon University; Anayo Azubuike Ezeamama, Brandenburg Univ. of Technology; Brittany Carl, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder; Darren Bingham, Utah State Univ.; Emily Howell, Univ of Wisconsin-Madison; Jin Guo



Renmin, Univ. of China; Julianna Fischer, Western Washington Univ.; Michaela Neuberger Univ. of British Columbia; Annie Secrest, California State Univ., Fullerton; Dakota Pekerti, Swarthmore College; Ellen Abramowitz, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies; Imran Sheikh, UC Berkeley.

Help support the 2018 Linda Latham Scholars! To donate, go to <http://aceee.org/about/latham-scholarship/donate>.

# Glee Murray: Profile of an Energy Efficiency Champion

The Grapevine staff met with Glee Murray to talk about her accomplishments and challenges spreading the word and work of ACEEE.

Murray started work at ACEEE as a Publications Manager, working closely with conference co-chairs from the Berkeley and Pacific Northwest National Labs. She soon took on budget and logistics for the Summer Study at Asilomar.

Why Asilomar? “The attendees work on solutions to hard problems, and this locale provides a serene and quiet place to regenerate and rejuvenate. Asilomar is part of the ACEEE brand, so we’ll never move from here.”

Murray was trained as an actress, which she says was very beneficial to her work at ACEEE. “In the theater, you learn that everybody has a role and a part. There’s no better training for collaboration and working with people.” In her home state of Montana, she volunteered with the Northern Plains Resource Council, to work against the establishment of a big coal strip mine which would have destroyed land around Billings. She was taken with genuineness and coalition of farmers and ranchers, Crow and Cheyenne Indian tribes. “I later tried to go to school at UC Davis, but after a year [pursuing her MFA] I couldn’t stop thinking about people in Montana who were losing their lands. So I went back.”

On the role of communications in energy efficiency, Murray said “The real challenge is how to make energy efficiency part of people’s natural choice. We must not waste what we have, and find better ways of achieving a life that is gentler to the planet, that will allow us to adapt to changing conditions.”

On the role of renewables, “Policymakers are ACEEE’s core audience, but they don’t have a clue about energy efficiency.

They’ll respond to questions of efficiency by saying ‘I just put PV on my house.’ I would like to see energy efficiency and renewables fused and talked about in the same breath. We can’t stand alone just focused on savings—we may find ourselves irrelevant. Renewable energy is our natural partner in the same goal of living on earth.”



Murray has had a strong role in supporting the publication of the Grapevine newsletter. “I credit Alan Meier for initiating the Grapevine newsletter. I think it’s brilliant – it’s such an important communications tool, and it allows people to feel connected to the event.”

Glee notes that one of the biggest outcomes of Obama’s presidency was the success of pushing through new fuel and appliance standards, which was part of a 30-year effort by many organizations, including ACEEE. Prior to her work at ACEEE, Murray published *Community Jobs*, which was credited as having been the media that helped Barack Obama find a community development job working with black churches in Chicago. So her story as a publisher and communicator has come full circle.

We echo her words of thanks to the plenary for furthering a “wonderful community who value yourselves, other people, and our planet.”



*“Architecture is a visual art, and the buildings speak for themselves.”*

Julia Morgan, the original YWCA architect for Asilomar

**Treat yourself to a relaxing, rejuvenating massage!**

**Massage Therapist: Kathleen Sinnott, CMT/LMT: For a res call: 831 331 1505 or use the sign-up sheet outside the massage room.**

**In Oak Knoll, 2nd Floor Living Room**

# 2016 Energy Efficiency Champions Award Winners

At tonight's plenary, ACEEE Board Chairman Carl Blumstein recognized leaders of energy efficiency in buildings, with awards to Margie Harris, Executive Director of Energy Trust of Oregon; John Cymbalsky, Manager of the U.S Department of Energy's Appliance and Equipment Standards Program; the Environmental Defense Fund Climate Corps fellowship program;

and Glee Murray, ACEEE's Senior Director for Outreach. Murray has worked in publications, conference management and communication for ACEEE since 1992 and will be leaving ACEEE later this year. See her Grapevine interview elsewhere in this issue.



## BECC Celebrates 10 Years of Bringing Research and Practice Together

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the annual Behavior, Energy & Climate Change (BECC) conference scheduled for October 20-22 in Baltimore. Prior to its inception, Summer Study was one of the only places (in addition to Buildings Summer Study) where the nexus of human behavior and energy efficiency was discussed. Today, BECC is the preeminent forum for this topic and exists to bring together influencers, researchers, and government decision makers to highlight the importance of social science research in this critical area.

In 2006, three organizations convened the first BECC conference: the California Institute for Energy and the Environment—now the Berkeley Energy and Climate Institute, Stanford Precourt Institute for Energy, and ACEEE. Organizers hoped to draw 150 attendees, but were overwhelmed by interest from participants and had to quickly expand the venue to accommodate everyone. In that first year, the conference attracted 500 attendees and had to turn away others. It remains a well-attended conference and a prime opportunity for participants to meet, connect, and network with each other.

BECC 2016 is sure to be another fantastic event, featuring many national and international participants. The keynote speaker, Cass Sunstein, is well known for his influential book on “nudging” people to change their behavior. Former congressman, Bob Inglis (R-SC), who famously acknowledged climate change when it was unfashionable for Republicans to do so, will discuss how he speaks to conservatives about climate change and what a Republican solution to climate change looks like. Founder and director of the Social and Behavioral Science Team at the White House, Maya Shankar, will talk about how she successfully integrated social science research into the political structure. These are just three of the incredible lineup of speakers and guests who plan to attend. Put them together with a film festival, fun social events, and exciting opportunities to network, and you have the makings of a fantastic conference now and for years to come!

Conference registration: [beccconference.org](http://beccconference.org)

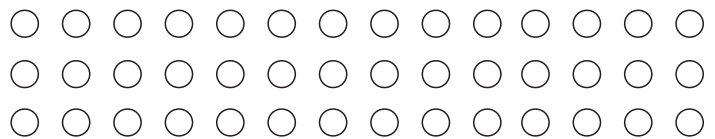
Discounted rate ends October 7, 2016

## Let's Make October 5th

### National Energy Efficiency Day!

ACEEE is working with a group of nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies to make October 5th National Energy Efficiency Day. If you would like to be part of the effort and help spread awareness of energy efficiency's benefits and promote energy savings success stories from families, businesses, and programs, please contact

Patrick Kiker at [pkiker@aceee.org](mailto:pkiker@aceee.org).



the grapevine

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