About the Institute

The Institute of Public Utilities (IPU) was established in 1965 and operates within the College of Social Science at Michigan State University, the nation’s pioneer land-grant institution. We are located on MSU’s beautiful East Lansing campus and collaborate with faculty and researchers from various academic colleges, departments, and centers. IPU is an independent nonprofit unit of the University and financially self-sustaining.

IPU specializes in conducting applied research and providing exceptional learning and networking opportunities to professionals in the utility policy community. IPU’s neutral analytical and instructional practice is informed by a broad array of traditional and applied disciplines including economics, political science, law, accounting, finance, and engineering. IPU’s educational forums sharpen the skills needed to address today’s most salient challenges of infrastructure governance, including the integration of markets and economic regulation.

IPU is devoted to the ideals of regulatory independence and technical capacity. IPU’s diverse program faculty includes nationally recognized university educators and expert practitioners known for their insight, experience, and teaching ability. Program participation is typically eligible for continuing education credits and can lead to a Certificate of Continuing Regulatory Education (CCRE) issued by IPU.

IPU’s Mission

IPU supports informed, effective, and efficient regulation of the providers of essential utility services – electricity, natural gas, water, and telecommunications.

We fulfill our mission by providing to the utility policy community integrative and interdisciplinary educational curricula and applied research on the institutions, theory, and practice of modern utility regulation. Public utility services are fundamental to the human condition in terms of health, welfare, and development. Economic regulation is essential in the context of persistent market constraints and evolving social objectives. IPU is dedicated to regulation in the public interest and uncompromising with respect to the obligations of diligence and integrity in regulatory governance. IPU takes a principled approach to regulation, an empirical approach to regulatory research, and a reasoned approach to structural and regulatory change. IPU’s guiding philosophy is that regulation can be well served by university-based research and education.

Consistent with MSU’s land-grant heritage and commitment, IPU takes particular pride in a long tradition of stewardship, service, and responsiveness to the educational needs of federal, state, local, and international regulators. IPU programs provide highly specialized and integrative continuing education for practitioners with backgrounds in the variety of academic disciplines that are necessary to effective economic regulation in its quasi-judicial, quasi-legislative, and quasi-administrative capacities.

IPU curricula are inspired by the idea of life-long learning. The Institute’s flagship Annual Regulatory Studies Program (affectionately known as “Camp NARUC”) is particularly well regarded by regulatory practitioners. Since assuming responsibility for the program in 1972, IPU has provided this foundational training in the regulatory paradigm to thousands of commissioners and staff members. The Annual Program is well complemented by the hands-on experience provided by the NARUC Utility Rate Schools, for which IPU serves as the university host. IPU’s Advanced Regulatory Studies Program and Grid School are available to seasoned professionals. The Annual Michigan Forum on Regulatory Policy provides a unique conference opportunity for the local policy community. IPU also offers customized onsite training.

Dr. Janice Beecher (beecher@msu.edu) has served as IPU’s Director since 2002. She brings more than thirty years of practical and academic experience to the position.