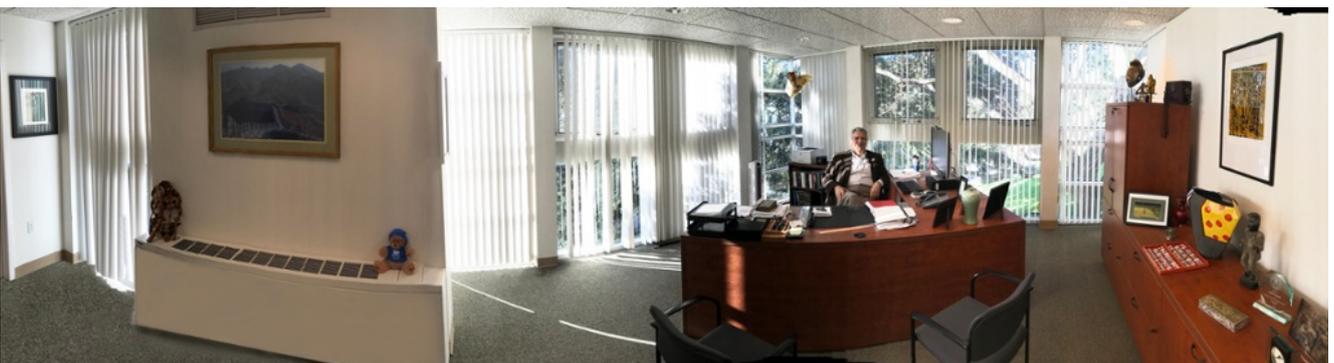


Office hours: Dean Peter Cowhey



The GPS Dean opens up about some of the dearest objects that adorn his office, painting a picture of his professional backstory and personal interests

By Rachel Hommel | GPS News



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As dean of the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS), [Peter Cowhey](#) is an expert on the future of communications and information technology markets and policy. A true global citizen, Cowhey has been at the forefront of advancing the Pacific Century since joining the UC San Diego faculty in 1976.

With artefacts spanning the globe, Cowhey is an avid art collector, showcasing objects from travels abroad and his extensive network of global dignitaries, politicians and humanitarians. Serving both in the Clinton and Obama administration, Cowhey negotiated many of the U.S. international agreements for telecommunications and satellite services, even collecting pieces from China's mobile past.

He joined the faculty of GPS in 1989 and was appointed dean in 2002, and this year as we celebrate three decades of excellence, he still remembers fondly when the school changed over its name and the impact GPS has had on crafting twenty-first century policy. As the Qualcomm Endowed Chair in Communications and Technology Policy, he is also a distinguished author, evident in his rich collection of books.

Hover over the images above for the big picture on his professional backstory and personal interests.

3 questions with Dean Peter Cowhey

What is your academic focus?

I study the economics and politics of technology policy. I have focused especially on the international rules governing digital markets. What explains why countries regulate information markets differently? What drives the choice of global rules governing those markets? I have analyzed issues involving telecommunications, Internet governance, competition in digital markets, cyber security and digital privacy. I also have worked on the determinants of successful national innovation policies.

What are the real-world impacts of your research?

I've been fortunate that my research led to invitations to serve in the U.S. Government—first as the head of international regulatory policy for the FCC in the Clinton Administration and then as the senior counselor to the U.S. Trade Representative in the Obama Administration. Those engagements led to many of the innovations in U.S. policy (and, subsequently, global policy) governing communications and information markets. Later, I served as the co-chair of the joint expert group on innovation policy that reported to the U.S. and Chinese governments at the annual Strategic and Economic Dialogue of the two countries.

And some of my work on the “digital divide” brought me to my many years of engagement on the board of the Grameen Foundation, a global anti-poverty organization using digital technology to advance its mission.

What skills or understanding do you hope students leave your class with?

Nowadays I teach a class jointly with Professor Stefan Savage on cyber security with students from GPS and computer science. We want our students to learn how to work in teams across the divides between policymaking and engineering. A key lesson is that rapidly evolving digital technology always seems like it is creating completely unprecedented classes of problems. But, in fact, these problems have many precedents in other policy domains that can inform digital policy.