Scott Bollens is the Warmington Chair in Peace and International Cooperation and a Professor in the Department of Planning, Policy & Design at the University of California, Irvine. His specializations include ethnicity and urban planning, urban growth policy, metropolitan governance, intergovernmental approaches to planning, with a focus on the questions (1) what is the role and influence of urban planning and policy amidst deep inter-group conflict, (2) can bottom-up urbanism contribute to top-down peacemaking and efforts to democratize a multinational society, (3) what is the relationship between how governance is structured in metropolitan areas and the equality/inequality of opportunity across individuals and localities? He is the author of Cities, Nationalism, and Democratization (2007), On Narrow Ground: Urban Policy and Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast (2000), and Urban Peace-Building in Divided Societies: Belfast and Johannesburg (1999) as well as numerous articles in top journals.

For his lecture, Scott Bollens provides a comparative analysis of different institutional approaches to dealing with antagonistic group identity claims on the city, focusing on Brussels, Johannesburg, Belfast, Sarajevo, Jerusalem, Baghdad, and Kirkuk. These cities are broken down into three categories—(1) cities that have utilized power sharing and forms of transitional democratization effectively enough that stability of the local and national state has occurred, (2) cities that have made some progress but are vulnerable to regression because local political arrangements are not sufficiently stabilizing, and (3) cities where power sharing is itself contested and a potential contributor to further instability. The case studies point to their institutional diversity, frequent fragility, and the evolutionary nature of even the “best case” examples. A difficult predicament is faced by local government reform in cities of inter-group conflict. Shared local governance arrangements need to produce measurable differences on the ground in the short term sufficient to allow institutional legitimacy. Yet, necessary power-sharing limitations on local democracy may make local government less effective in producing these needed tangible changes.