

The biannual newsletter of the public administration program at Eastern Michigan University



THE M.P.A. NETWORK

Note from the Director

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The fall semester is drawing to a close, and with it comes the rush of final papers, capstone defenses and advising for next semester. Despite all the busyness, I find myself in a reflective mood as I again prepare for students to turn in their final work and prepare to graduate. I am thankful for the opportunity they and others in the past have given me to do work I enjoy so much. I also find myself thinking of those who helped me get to where I am today: faculty mentors and colleagues, former co-workers in school administration, family and friends. I wish all of you the best, both professionally and personally, as we approach the New Year.



DR. GREG PLAGENS

The 2012-13 academic year for the MPA Program is a year of sincere introspection. In August we submitted our self-study for reaccreditation with the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. In October, while attending the annual NASPAA conference, I learned more about the annual program evaluation process we and others are being asked to implement. We expect to emerge from the process a stronger program, but we have much to do in the meantime to continue adapting our program to the standards that were adopted in 2009.

Among the many initiatives we will undertake is the formalization of clear competencies and learning outcomes for students who enter the program. Faculty began developing these for some content areas of the program several years ago, but by the end of the 2013-14 academic year we will have them for the entire program. Additionally, we will be developing a process for annual evaluation of student progress toward them. Those of you engaged in strategic management initiatives within your own organizations

will recognize the process and understand the emphasis on annual cycles of renewal. This will be a demanding and interactive process for us; we will be seeking input from representatives of our key stakeholder groups (alumni, professionals in the field, students and campus administrators) to be sure that the program's curriculum is current with trends in public and nonprofit administration.

I look forward to sharing updates with you in the year ahead and to working closely with you to shape the program to achieve our overall mission of preparing the next generation of managers and leaders for the state of Michigan and its many local government and nonprofit organizations.

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ALFREDA ROOKS-JORDAN, MPA '06

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & SERVICES-UMHS

Within the enormous framework of the University of Michigan Health System, Alfreda Rooks-Jordan has worked tirelessly to maintain the organization's focus on community. Currently serving as the Director of Community Programs and Services, Ms. Rooks-Jordan's journey has been characterized by a deep and relentless commitment to public service.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in political science and sociology from George Williams College in Dover, Illinois, Ms. Rooks-Jordan worked for several years in the UMHS prior to enrolling in the MPA program at EMU. On her decision to pursue an MPA, she explains that she felt as though pursuing a master's degree was the next step in building a strong foundation in leadership. Ms. Rooks-Jordan graduated with her MPA from EMU in 2006.

Ms. Rooks-Jordan expressed that one of the most valuable skills that she took from the MPA program was the ability to think critically and strategically as a leader. She states, "I have had special projects over the years that have required that I use these skills, to either find a solution or create an opportunity."

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ALFREDA ROOKS-JORDAN, CONT'D

In her current position, Ms. Rooks-Jordan oversees the overall leadership, promotion, and development of the Community Programs and Services Department. Her position requires that she work with local and state partners who support her department's programs, and that she act as a liaison to the community for the health system. Ms. Rooks-Jordan is responsible for developing and creating relationships and partnerships that benefit the health system and the communities that the UMHS serves. She also manages the department's resources in order to seek alternative funding streams from grantors, foundations, and donors to support the growth of numerous programs.

Ms. Rooks-Jordan explains that the UMHS Community Programs and Services Department "is a tangible demonstration of one of the values of our institution, *service to the community*, and is a key component for our hospital's community benefit efforts." She often describes her department through this analogy: "If you think of the health system as the human body, Community Programs and Services is the hand that reaches out to the community."

Her hopes for the future in her role as director include a focus on the promotion of programs and services within Community Programs and Services, both internally and externally, and to continue to create opportunities for students to learn and leaders to be developed.

An emphatic believer in the quote "Be the change you wish to see in the world," spoken by Mahatma Gandhi, Ms. Rooks-Jordan conveys her conviction for public service in these words: "It is so easy to stand off to the side and criticize leaders, the organizations, and each other. For me this quote means that I am empowered to be an active participant in creating positive change."



Alfreda Rooks

MPA OPPORTUNITIES



Mary Casey

Working for the federal government is a career aspiration for many current MPA students. For one recent graduate, it has become a reality. Mary Casey (MPA '12), an alumna of the healthcare administration concentration, found a perfect fit as a fellow in the Graduate Health Administration Training Program at the Veterans Administration Long Beach Healthcare System in California.

Ms. Casey began her education with EMU as a student in the undergraduate public administration program. She entered into the accelerated 3/2 program and graduated with a bachelors degree and MPA in

less than 5 years. Working as a graduate assistant for the Political Science Department, Ms. Casey also completed internships at a rural community development organization in Rajasthan, India, as well as at St. Joseph Mercy Hospice and Homecare in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Transitioning into a fellowship was a natural choice upon graduation, as it would

complement her years in the classroom with real-world experience working under the guidance of the hospital's executive director. Ms. Casey explained, "I knew upon entering Eastern's MPA program that my end goal was to secure additional structured training when I graduated. Internship experiences are essential, but I knew a rigorous 12 month fellowship through the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) would be a way to stand out in this job market, and ensure my career trajectory toward executive healthcare management."

Using the search engine on the ACHE website, Ms. Casey was able to find numerous fellowships that matched her career objectives. She knew working at a VA hospital was her first choice, as she strongly identifies with the organization's mission of serving our nation's veterans. Ms. Casey was also aware of the opportunities within the VA system and the push to make succession plans to prime recent graduates for careers in leadership within the Veterans Health Administration.

Ms. Casey advises current MPA students and recent graduates to search out additional training programs that provide long-term mentoring or structured training in their areas of interest. Whether it is through your employer or an outside organization, deliberate guidance and mentoring can make all the dif-

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT – JENNIFER HAWES

RECIPIENT OF THE JOHN BARSON SCHOLARSHIP IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Jennifer Hawes personifies what is public service. As the 2012 recipient of the John Barson Scholarship in Public Administration, her story is one that truly inspires.

Raised in Marinette, Wisconsin, Ms. Hawes began her undergraduate degree at Northern Michigan University. Just two years into her program, she was forced to put her goals on hold. She explains, “I developed a life-threatening condition, which led to paralysis and the fight for my life.”

After six months, and against extraordinary odds, Ms. Hawes began to overcome her illness. She was eventually transferred to the University of Michigan for recovery and rehabilitation treatment. It was at this point that she relocated to Southeast Michigan.

Undeterred by this hardship, Ms. Hawes remained dedicated to completing her degree. She explains that the move to Ann Arbor “left me a junior in college needing to find a university to transfer to. I toured EMU and was impressed with how supportive the administration was, the beauty of the campus, the courses available, and the affordability.”

Having forfeited an internship in Washington, D.C. and abandoning her dream of law school as a result of her illness, Ms. Hawes was unsure of where her new journey would lead. It was not until she began classes at EMU that she discovered her passion for non-profit and healthcare work. Ms. Hawes received her bachelor’s degree in public administration and political science in 2004.

Upon graduation, Ms. Hawes was offered a position with the American Red Cross



Jennifer Hawes

of Washtenaw County. She began working as the chapter’s Young Adult Services Coordinator and First Aid Program Support Team Manager. Throughout the course of her five-year tenure, she also served as the University of Michigan Red Cross Club Advisor, Blood Services Volunteer Coordinator, and the Interim Marketing and Communications Coordinator.

Since 2009, Ms. Hawes has served as the Volunteer Coordinator and on the Leadership Team with St. Joseph Mercy Hospice. Once a hospice patient herself, she felt a connection with the purpose of the organization. In her first year, she tripled volunteer recruitment and patient matching. Ms. Hawes has worked extensively to build relationships with local university programs and departments, and was also responsible for initiating online in-service education, training, and social media interaction. She also oversaw the development of several new programs, including “Pet Therapy” and the “Patient’s Dream Come True” program. In 2011, she was

awarded the Michigan Hospice and Palliative Care Organization Volunteer Coordinator of the Year Award.

It was after accepting the position with St. Joe’s that she chose to enroll in the MPA program. “I decided I wanted to pursue my MPA to grow as a leader, become more educated, and be more marketable. I wanted to bring my creativity and experience to the table and make amazing things happen to benefit our community.”

In addition to her role as a mother, wife, MPA student, and full-time employee, Ms. Hawes continues to volunteer with the American Red Cross. She was recently honored as the American Red Cross Public Affairs Volunteer of the Year for 2012.

When asked what she finds most rewarding about public service, she says, “I have an inner-drive and a deep passion for community. I really wear my heart on my sleeve and am an empathetic and compassionate person by nature. My faith, my family, and my commitment to serving the community are three things I have a deep passion for. For me, it’s not about the money, the prestige, or the glory. It’s about serving my purpose in the world, contributing to it, and making my mark.”

As this year’s Barson Scholar, she explains that this scholarship will support her dreams and goals. “It will provide the investment for my education, which in return will give me the tools to be successful and represent my community.”

She says, “My goals in life are simple. Be an amazing mother and wife, be a stellar student and employee, and be remembered for living a life of service.”

NEW FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. BARBARA PATRICK



This fall, the Political Science Department welcomed Dr. Barbara Patrick as assistant professor of political science. Previously, Dr. Patrick was an assistant professor of political science and public administration at Mississippi State University. Prior to her employment at Mississippi State, she received both her doctor of philosophy and master’s degree in public policy and administration, with areas of concentration including research methodology, public budgeting, and financial management, from Mississippi State University. Dr. Patrick received her

bachelor’s degree in political science from Rust College in Holly Springs, MS.

Dr. Patrick has published numerous articles in journals such as *Politics and Policy*, *Public Integrity*, and *Public Performance and Management Review*, among others. Her teaching and research interests include education policy, performance management, and budgeting. She says her favorite part about EMU so far is the students — they are very engaging and open to class discussions.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RECENT GRADUATES!

CAPSTONE TITLES

Nicolette Bateson, *The OPEB Problem: Analysis, Measurement, and Alternatives*

Brian Hawk, *Implementation of a Multijurisdictional Task Force Dedicated to Narcotics Enforcement in the Downriver Communities Surrounding the City of Detroit*

Andre Johnson, *A Comparative Analysis of Crime Rates in Oakland County and the Oakland Mall*

Andrew LaBarre, *Human Services Funding and Unemployment Rates*

Kimberly LaForge, *Extending the Life of the Sauk Trails Landfill*

John Pfeiffer, *Wayne County's Procurement Practices*

Zoraida Trott, *Quality Management Systems and Nonprofit Organizations*

Juliana Worthing, *Developing a Model for Efficiency in Selecting Jury Pools Juror Utilization*

FACULTY RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Jeffrey Bernstein has two articles forthcoming. "Overcoming Methods Anxiety: Qualitative First, Quantitative Next, Frequent Feedback Along the Way" (with Brooke Allen) will appear in the *Journal of Political Science Education*. "Plowing through Bottlenecks in Political Science: Experts and Novices at Work" is forthcoming in an Indiana University Press volume edited by Kathleen McKinney. Dr. Bernstein is working on a collaborative teaching project this semester with Professor Christopher Cooper of Western Carolina University, in which Campaigns and Elections classes on each campus work together on projects intended to teach students how the presidential election looks dramatically different across states.

Dr. Gregory Plagens has published a journal article with Ramona Ortega, Peggy Stephens, and RaJade M. Berry-James, titled "Mexican American Public Sector Professionals: Perceptions of Affirmative Action Policies and Workplace Discrimination." The article appeared in *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, volume 32.

GERMAN AND U.S. STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN JOINT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

This fall, under the direction of Dr. Joe Ohren, several MPA students are participating in a new special topics course: PLSC 591 Financial Management Seminar. This two-credit course is a joint project with students and faculty from the University of Applied Sciences in Kehl, Germany. Since the early 2000s, Kehl faculty and students have visited EMU for a few days in the winter as part of a study abroad program. This new seminar is designed to add a more direct academic exchange to that visit. The seminar requires students at both universities to develop research papers on a common set of topics revolving around municipal fi-

ancial management. Some of the paper topics include regulation of municipal finance, citizen participation in municipal budgeting, and contracting arrangements and privatization by municipalities. While focusing their studies on a common set of financial management topics, the students are exposed to the similarities and differences faced by professional local government managers in the two countries.

To facilitate this collaborative project, Dr. Ohren traveled to Germany in October to meet with his German counterparts at the University of Applied Sciences. While there, he taught two public finance classes,

conducted a seminar for German students on local government in the U.S., and presented a university-wide lecture on Sustainable Local Government Finance (one of the joint topics students are addressing). The final papers from both universities will be shared at the Joint Financial Management Conference in the EMU Student Center on February 8, 2013 when the German students are on the EMU campus. Plans for a similar effort have emerged for the 2014 visit by Kehl faculty and students focusing on a second topic of common concern, regional economic development.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK & LINKEDIN



Have you ever wondered what the MPA program was up to in between our bi-annual newsletters? The Public Administration program has Facebook and LinkedIn groups dedicated to connecting alumni, current students, and interested individuals from the surrounding communities. Join the groups to receive updates about program activities, networking opportunities, and current events affecting Michigan public administrators. Search for us on Facebook under **Eastern Michigan University MPA Students, Alumni & Friends**, or on LinkedIn under **Eastern Michigan University Master of Public Administration**.



M.P.A. DEVELOPMENT FUND

If you are wondering how you can give something back to the M.P.A. program, please consider making a contribution to the M.P.A. Development Fund. All contributions are tax-deductible and are used to support student and alumni planning and events.

Please mail contributions to:
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