

THE MPA NETWORK

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ISSUE 44/WINTER 2019

EASTERN
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKSHOP BRINGS MICHIGAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS TO EMU'S CAMPUS

The Biannual
Newsletter of the
Master of Public
Administration
Program at Eastern
Michigan University



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The MPA Network is published biannually by the Department of Political Science at EMU to inform MPA alumni, current students, public officials, and academics about the activities of the MPA program and its graduates.

<http://www.emich.edu/mpa>

On February 8, 2019, Eastern Michigan University sparked meaningful discussions and a collaborative energy among public administrators from across Michigan at the Local Government Workshop "Partnerships & Collaborations in Local Government: Working Together to Build a Stronger Michigan."

City managers, elected officials, directors, and other essential personnel from more than 13 Michigan municipalities and agencies attended the event held at the EMU Student Center in Ypsilanti. Faculty and alumni from the EMU Political Science Department and Master of Public Administration Program presented concurrent workshops.

Dr. Charles Menifield, Dean of the School of Public Affairs and Administration at Rutgers University, delivered the keynote address on "Opportunities and Challenges to Local Prosperity in the Midst of the Changing Political Landscape."



Dr. Charles Menifield

As a researcher of budgeting and financial management, public health and welfare, and minority politics, he used examples from across the U.S. to demonstrate how cities in Michigan can adapt and thrive.

"While this workshop was focused on helping local government officials enhance their skills, it was a great networking opportunity for our graduate students," said Cameron Armstrong, EMU MPA student and student president of the Public Administration Club. "Getting to meet and hear from a national budgeting expert, Dr. Charles Menifield, was just icing on the cake."



TOP: Dr. Barbara Patrick welcomes the attendees. BOTTOM LEFT: Dr. Heather Khan Welsh discusses economic development. BOTTOM RIGHT: Dr. Gregory Plagens, Dr. Barbara Patrick, and Professor Bill Richards pose for a photo before the event.

"The local government workshop embodied the spirit of EMU. There was great dialogue between the public administration faculty and local government leaders from across Southeast Michigan. The sharing of ideas on budgeting and financial planning, economic development, grant opportunities, and social media engagement provided the opportunity to find practical solutions to ongoing problems."

- **Barbara Patrick**, Associate Professor and Director of Community Outreach for the Political Science Department and MPA Program

Dr. Patrick looks forward to continuing this work with local communities: "This event demonstrated our Master's of Public Administration Program and university's commitment to preparing students to meet the needs of local communities, as well as strengthening relationships with elected officials and administrators as we continue to work together to build a stronger Michigan!"

A CLOSER LOOK: MIKE KENNEDY

2005 EMU MPA Alumnus

Mike Kennedy is a 2005 EMU MPA graduate and the fire chief for the City of Ann Arbor. He has been in the fire chief position for a year and appreciates how much the MPA program has helped him in his career.

While in the MPA program, Chief Kennedy also worked full-time as a shift lieutenant with the Brighton Area Fire Authority. In 2010, he took on two part-time positions, as the fire chief in South Lyon and as the senior emergency management specialist with the Division of Public Safety and Security at the University of Michigan.

His enthusiasm for the program is undeniable. He has worked hard in different fire departments and authorities throughout Southeast Michigan, at times working 70-hour weeks. He said that in order to get to where he is, his MPA from EMU helped to open doors for him, especially at the interview stage of looking for a position. He said that

once the doors were open, he could sell his experience and what he could bring to the position.

The MPA program has helped him to understand how different players in city government interact and how to work with individuals who have different priorities than his own. The MPA



program has helped Chief Kennedy to look at problems from different perspectives.

Chief Kennedy spoke about how easy it is for a fire chief to say “no” to everything, but he understands the motivations behind the actions of administrators. This understanding helps him to not always say “no,” but to offer alternatives that might not have been considered.

He has many former classmates working in different capacities, and

having the option to contact those classmates has been an important piece. Mike Kennedy is extremely proud to be an MPA graduate from Eastern Michigan and says that the degree carries weight in the community because there are so many wonderful alumni making a difference in the community.

“The MPA is the most valuable investment I’ve ever made for myself in my entire life.”

- Mike Kennedy,
Fire Chief, City of Ann Arbor

MIKE'S ADVICE FOR CURRENT STUDENTS & NEW GRADUATES

“You never know where your career will take you. It is important to be open to new experiences, and networking can be an invaluable part of the program.”

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John Seto, Deputy Director of Operations, Division of Public Safety and Security, and Director of Housing Security, University of Michigan; Public Safety Administration adjunct faculty

Laura Shue, Health Information Services Director, Michigan Medicine

Caitlin Walton, Senior Business Manager/Financial Analyst, University of Michigan, College of Literature, Science and Arts

Jessica Warfield, Disaster Program Manager, American Red Cross

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



DR. JEFFREY BERNSTEIN

Dr. Jeffrey L. Bernstein enjoyed a productive and restorative sabbatical during the winter 2019 semester. He plans to return to the classroom in the fall to teach the stats class (hopefully with the right mix of rigor and compassion), and to continue on with multiple research projects he started during the sabbatical.



DR. GREGORY PLAGENS

Dr. Gregory Plagens recently published the article "Horseplay or sexual harassment: Discipline and due process in the Michigan Department of Corrections" in the *Journal of Public Affairs Education*. The article examines the organizational response to allegations of sexual harassment in the Michigan Department of Corrections. The case is useful for raising questions about sexual harassment, authority, grievance procedures, due process and organizational justice.



DR. TUCKER STALEY

Dr. Tucker Staley has received a highly competitive EMU Summer Research/Creative Activity Award to begin a new project examining the impact of the Washtenaw Coordinated Funders program on both the revenue streams and organizational capacity of nonprofit organizations in Washtenaw County.

Congratulations also to Dr. Staley, as he became the proud father of Theodore Robert Eaton Staley, who goes by Teddy, on March 17, 2019.

2018-19 TEACHING FACULTY

Jeffrey Bernstein, Ph.D.
Arnold Fleischmann, Ph.D.
James (Dave) Ivers, Ph.D.
Heather Khan Welsh, Ph.D.
Barbara Patrick, Ph.D.
Gregory Plagens, Ph.D.
Bill Richards, MA
Raymond Rosenfeld, Ph.D.
Tucker Staley, Ph.D.

Visit the Political Science Department website to learn more about our faculty:

www.emich.edu/polisci

WINTER STUDENT EVENT HIGHLIGHT

THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CLUB PRESENTS A WORKSHOP ON SALARY NEGOTIATIONS

On April 9, 2019, undergraduate and graduate students heard personal stories and advice from EMU faculty and staff at a workshop presented by the Public Administration Club. During the panel discussion, Political Science Department Faculty Dr. Barbara Patrick, Dr. Gregory Plagens, and Dr. Barry Pyle shared their experiences negotiating their salaries.

April Calkovsky, a Senior Career Coach with EMU's University Advising and Career Development Center, also presented tips on how to succeed in the workplace. Students look forward to similar events in the future.



Dr. Barbara Patrick, Dr. Gregory Plagens, Dr. Barry Pyle, and April Calkovsky share their salary negotiation experiences with students.

MPA ALUMNI RECEPTION AND AWARDS CEREMONY

PI ALPHA ALPHA INDUCTEES

Ian Hatch

Megan Keefer

Colleen Klus-Salisbury

Patrick Maguire

William Oldham Jr.

Henry Outlaw

Shaun Pawlus

Jeremy Waechter

Phillis Webb

Bradley Wheelock



Faculty Dr. Heather Khan Welsh, Dr. Arnold Fleischmann, Dr. Tucker Staley, and Dr. Gregory Plagens smiled for a photo with Pi Alpha Alpha inductees Phillis Webb, Henry Outlaw, Ian Hatch, Colleen Klus-Salisbury, and Jeremy Waechter.

The annual MPA reception was held on April 1, 2019, in McKenny Hall. A number of alumni, professors, current students, and friends of the program gathered to mingle and celebrate our honorees. Thomas Skrobola, the Finance Director of the City of Toledo, Ohio, received the Outstanding Public Administrator award. MPA students were inducted into Pi Alpha Alpha honor society, and awards were presented for the MPA Intern of the Year and the John Barson Fellowship Award. This reception marked the end of a great year.

OUTSTANDING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR AWARD RECIPIENT, THOMAS C. SKROBOLA

Thomas Skrobola currently serves as the Finance Director of the City of Toledo, Ohio, after having more than two decades of government finance experience in Michigan.

Skrobola earned both his bachelor's degree and MPA from EMU. His first full-time position after graduate school was that of Village Manager in the Village of Cassopolis (approximate population of 1,700). His work experience includes serving as Finance Director in the City of Rochester for 9 years, as Director of Finance and Management Services in the City of Kalamazoo for 11 years, and as Financial Analyst Manager in the City of Detroit, before being named Toledo's Finance Director.

"From Cassopolis and its 1,700 residents to Toledo with 275,000, Tom epitomizes one of the common but difficult paths of MPA students who are looking for a career in local government," said Dr. Raymond A. Rosenfeld. "Tom's challenges in Toledo will be similar to those of his previous positions, but of much greater complexity."



Thomas Skrobola, recipient of the Public Administrator of the Year Award, and some of his family

On behalf of my colleagues in the EMU MPA Program, I want to wish Tom continued success in his career in public administration and public finance. His accomplishments to date have been exceptional. He continues to contribute to the quality of life in Southeastern Michigan and the quality of the practice of public administration.

- Raymond A. Rosenfeld, Professor

FEATURED STUDENTS

BARSON FELLOWSHIP AWARD

Cameron Armstrong, first-year MPA student, was awarded the John Barson Fellowship Award for the 2019-20 academic year. **“I am honored and truly grateful I was selected for the Barson Fellowship and hope it can propel me toward my next educational opportunity,”** says Cameron.



Dr. Arnold Fleischmann and Cameron Armstrong

In addition to gaining federal government work experience, he plans to pursue a PhD related to policy, with a particular interest in security studies. Ultimately, he would like to teach, and the award will support him as he applies for programs and engages in research with EMU MPA faculty.

MPA INTERN OF THE YEAR

Johnna Thompson, MPA student, was selected to be the 2019 MPA Intern of the Year for her work with the Office of Detroit City Council President Brenda Jones during the Fall 2018 semester. During the award ceremony, Linda Welsey, Community Relations Manager for the Detroit City Council and Johnna’s supervisor for the internship, presented Johnna with a special award of recognition on behalf of the Detroit City Council.



Johnna Thompson (center) with her former supervisor Linda Welsey from the Detroit City Council (left) and Johnna’s mother Christle Thompson (right)

GAINING EXPERIENCE AND CONNECTIONS THROUGH INTERNSHIPS

Henry Outlaw, currently in his second year of the MPA program, plans to graduate in May 2020. Henry worked as a Systems Planning and Public Engagement Intern with the City of Ann Arbor during the Winter 2019 semester, under the supervision of Kayla Coleman, a 2016 EMU MPA graduate.



“This internship is very helpful because it allows me to put lessons from school to practice in the field. The internship has given me a great opportunity to give context to lessons from school. Being able to make those connections between theory and practice have proven to be highly valuable. **From a career perspective, being an intern allows me to explore other areas of local government outside of my current role.** I feel to be effective in local government, you should have basic idea of how each department works. Additionally, working in Ann Arbor has allowed me to network with many different people I may not have met otherwise.”

Johnna reflects on her experience:

“As a former Community Relations & Constituent Concerns Intern for the Office of Detroit City Council President, Brenda Jones, I gained a lot of exposure. I am grateful that I was able to obtain experience within the local government field. This internship has helped me gain a better understanding of what I would like to do within my future career.

After I graduate from the Master of Public Administration program here at EMU, I hope to work for a politician at the state or federal level. My current internship for the Office of U.S. Senator Gary Peters has helped me gain a better understanding of the policies that I am the most passionate about. **I would like to help enforce policies that help end human trafficking, protect the American people from various threats including terrorism, and help enforce legal immigration while helping immigrants that are in need.”**

Do you have internship or job openings at your agency?

Feel free to send them to rsoliven@emich.edu, and we would be happy to share them with our students.

MPA STUDENT PRACTICES POLICY SKILLS AT NASPAA SIMULATION



EMU MPA student **Kinsey Roberts** participated in the NASPAA-Batten Student Simulation Competition at the Gerald Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan on February 23, 2019. The competition focused on Migration Policy and was a simulation based on real-world events. During the competition, Kinsey

had the opportunity to work on a team with four other students from the University of Michigan, Northern Illinois University, and DePaul University to make policy decisions that would impact their country of Capalla and the three other countries in the simulation.

“The competition allowed me the opportunity to develop policy-making skills through my various roles as Prime Minister, Minister of Health and Human Services, and Minister of Labor,” said Kinsey. “I collaborated with my team to make decisions that ensured our country was providing the best resources to our citizens and refugees. Overall, my team placed 5th out of 12 teams, and we presented on our policy making decisions during the last round of the competition.”



Kinsey Roberts (center) with her team at the NASPAA-Batten Student Simulation Competition

Update Your Contact & Career Information

Do we have your updated contact and career information? Do you have news you would like to share with us? Would you like to be more involved in the EMU MPA Program? Let us know by completing our online [alumni contact form](#).

MAKE A GIFT *and help our program grow*

If you would like to give back to the MPA program, please consider making a contribution to the [MPA Program Support Fund](#), which supports student and alumni programming. The [Joe Ohren Student Internship Fund](#) supports students who are doing an unpaid internship for academic credit. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Donations can be made online: www.emich.edu/polisci/donate

Please mail contributions to Eastern Michigan University Foundation, 112 Welch Hall, 850 W. Cross St., Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Please make checks payable to “Eastern Michigan University” and designate “MPA Development Fund” on your checks to ensure your contribution will go to the MPA program.

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