

The PA Nexus

Annual Newsletter of the Master of Public Administration

By Julie Cencula Olberding
MPA Director

With accreditation comes gratitude and responsibility

This Fall, we learned that NKU's MPA program earned re-accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) for seven years - through the 2018-19 academic year - which is the maximum length of time. While some of you have probably heard the good news by now, we wanted to take note of this important landmark in our annual newsletter, especially for those who had not heard. Also, we want to formally thank and recognize those individuals who participated in the re-accreditation process: MPA faculty and staff who wrote the self-study report, MPA Advisory Board members who provided feedback over the years, students and alumni who completed surveys, and those individuals who met with the site visit team.

With that said, our MPA program will not rest on the laurels of the re-accreditation decision. Like many organizations in the public and nonprofit sectors, MPA programs now function in an environment where continuous assessment and improvement are expected. In particular, NASPAA requires that accredited programs each year assess student learning outcomes related to key competencies - i.e., sets of knowledge, skills and abilities - related to public administration. Further, we know that our alumni, current students, potential students, regional employers and other stakeholders are interested in seeing enhancements of the program.

One way that we assessed our program over the past year was an online survey of alumni. The results of the alumni survey indicate a high level of positive outcomes for both the MPA program and Nonprofit Management certificate program. For example, about 90 percent of alumni respondents indicated that: 1) they were satisfied with their experience in the MPA program, 2) the MPA program fulfilled their expectations and 3) they were satisfied with full-time faculty. The results for the NPM program were even more positive with 95 percent of alumni responding positively to the items above.

In addition, a large majority of alumni respondents indicated that NKU's MPA program had a positive impact on the achievement of "universal" or core competencies such as writing research papers (90.9%), critical thinking (87.2%) and understanding the uniqueness of the public sector (85.9%). Further, alumni responded positively to the program's impact on competencies in their area of concentration with most items having percentages in the 90 to 100 range.

The alumni survey also identified some areas in the MPA and NPM programs that could be improved. For example, fewer respondents felt positive about the program's impact on certain universal or core competencies such as: communicating productively with a diverse citizenry (61.5%) and a diverse workforce (61%) and managing diversity (56%). Also, fewer

alumni who graduated with the Local Government Management area of concentration responded positively to program's impact on specialized competencies in this area (70%). MPA faculty and staff will be examining these findings and considering ways to enhance learning in these areas.

A common theme in the qualitative results of the alumni survey is the strong interpersonal connections that have been established through NKU's MPA program. We, as faculty and staff, often see these connections when students collaborate on class assignments and PASS service projects and also when alumni work with students on Capstone research projects and internships. But it is encouraging to read statements about the value that alumni place on these experiences. One respondent wrote, "Learning to collaborate with colleagues on projects, writing, studying, etc. - it was truly a

blessing." Another said, "I had great classmates who still serve as resources to this day."

In closing, I want to thank all of you for your ongoing support of NKU's MPA program, especially for your efforts to get connected as students and stay connected as alumni. This network is a true strength of our program, which has potential benefits for all students and alumni in terms of job placement and career advancement and also, more generally, in terms of continuous learning, professional development, and long-term collegial relationships and friendships.

Wishing all of you a very positive and productive year!

The summary report of the 2012 alumni survey results is available on Blackboard to all current students and faculty.

Others can obtain a copy by contacting Julie Olberding (olberdingj@nku.edu) or Beth DeVantier (devantier@nku.edu).

Welcome, Dr. Marcos Misis!



Dr. Marcos L. Misis is the newest addition to the MPA program. Dr. Misis's areas of expertise are homeland security, terrorism and policing. Together with a Taiwanese police official, Dr. Misis is working on a paper on effectiveness of the Container Security Program (CSI) to prevent the illegal smuggling of explosives, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorist via maritime cargo. He is also working on different projects about terrorism, police stress and security on the Southern border of the United States. Dr. Misis will be presenting two of his new research projects at the annual conference of the Academy of Criminal Justice Studies (ACJS) in Dallas in March 2013.

Faculty Updates



Dr. Shamima Ahmed has published a book, titled, *Effective Nonprofit Management: Context, Competencies, and Strategies*. She was the chair of the Site Visit Team for Grambling State University's MPA program. Dr. Ahmed served as an external reviewer for a Ph.D. candidate's dissertation for Gomal University, Pakistan.



Dr. Alison Antes joined NKU in 2010. She teaches leadership, ethics and research methods courses. Dr. Antes's research focuses on leader cognition, ethical behavior, leadership development and ethics education. She is currently working on projects examining how firefighters learn from critical incidents and the impact of workplace stress on the leader-follower relationship. Dr. Antes has also been working on an NSF-funded grant where she focuses on professionalism and leadership development for students in the STEM disciplines. In 2012, Dr. Antes published works in *Ethics and Behavior* and *The Leadership Quarterly* and presented at the International Leadership Association and Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology conferences.



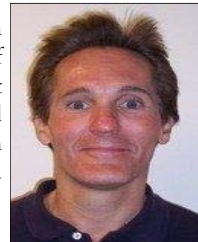
Dr. Edward Kwon published four papers, "Invisible Anxiety: Would the Rise of China Really Be a Security Threat to the United States?" in *Pacific Focus*, "The Future and Current Status of the Defense Cooperation Between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America" in *JPI PeaceNet*, "Flashback: Financial Liberalization in Mexico and South Korea"

in *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, and "International Capital Flows and Financial Crises in Emerging Market Economies" in the *Journal of Development Alternatives and Area Studies*. At the Midwest Political Science Association conference in April 2012, he presented his paper, "The Role of the G-20 in Global Financial Crisis Management," and served as chair and discussant. He also reviewed two research methods books (Sage and Routledge) and an American foreign policy book (Pearson and Longman).



Dr. Gary Mattson attended the National Urban Affairs Association conference held in Pittsburgh, where he presented a paper on "Responding to Fiscal Distress: Policy Choices of Midwestern Cities." He also participated as a discussant on the panel "Creating Livable, Healthy, and Sustainable Communities." Dr. Mattson attended the 2012 Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland's Policy Summit on "Housing, Human Capital and Inequality" sponsored by the Community Development Division. He served as a discussant on the "Idea Exchange-Emerging Planning Issues on Community Sustainability" panel at the OKI Midwest Planning Conference in Columbus, OH. Dr. Mattson was also appointed as a voting board member to the Banklick/Licking River Watershed Council by Governor Beshear.

Dr. Thomas Lambert applied for a Fulbright to teach and/or do research overseas during the summer of 2014 and also had a paper on fire department response and sprawl published, which received recognition on an U.S. Environmental Protection Agency funded website.



Professor **Bruce McClure** teaches Administrative Law. He continues to bring a practical approach to the classroom based on his over thirty years of practice, much of which has involved conflicts within state and federal administrative agencies. In the last several years he has been a component of a trial team that has litigated issues in federal court concerning the rights of a citizen to gain monetary sanctions against an overreaching federal agency. This is an ongoing case which touches on many aspects of constitutional and administrative law.



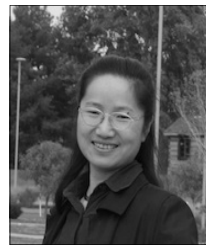
Dr. Whitney McIntyre Miller conducted a study abroad course to Germany, France and the Netherlands on Human Rights and International Law. Dr. McIntyre Miller published an article on community development in post conflict Sierra Leone, a book chapter with Dr. Shauna Reilly on petitioners and the community and had an additional publication on chieftaincy leadership in Sierra Leone accepted for print in 2013. She actively serves on the many international education committees on campus, is a member of Staff Administrators and Faculty for Equality and is the president of Phi Beta Delta—the international society for students and scholars. Dr. McIntyre Miller has also recently added to her family with the birth of her son.



Dr. Julie Olberding is collaborating with Dr. McIntyre Miller to examine the Community Entertainment District designation in Ohio and its implementation and early impacts in an urban neighborhood in Cincinnati. Also, Dr. Olberding presented at the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) conference in Austin, TX. In addition, she served on the NASPAA accreditation site visit team for the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Finally, she received a faculty excellence award this year for sustained outreach and public engagement activities during her career at NKU.



Dr. Hongmei Wang continued focusing her research on GIS over the past year. She published one paper in the *Journal of Information Systems Technology and Planning* and also presented one peer-reviewed conference paper. She continued to serve as the program director and advisor of the graduate and undergraduate GIS certificate programs. In addition, she also served on the Faculty Benefits Committee and the Presidential Policy Committee on Intellectual Property on campus.



Semester-long service-learning project has long-term impacts

By Sean Wagner

When I enrolled in NKU's MPA and Nonprofit Management Certificate programs in 2005, I fully expected to learn about board governance, structure, policies and fiduciary responsibilities. At that point in my career, I was a mid-level professional with my employer, Phi Delta Theta Fraternity, and one of my educational goals was to better manage the governing board of this organization. I anticipated that my learning would come from a mix of text book study and lessons learned from MPA faculty and classmates. While I certainly did gain such experience, it was the "hands-on" experience of a service-learning project with the Inner City Tennis Project (ICTP) that had a powerful impact on my education in board management, which has extended well past my days at NKU.

In Fall 2006, I took Volunteer Management (PAD 622) with Dr. Julie Olberding, who had organized service-learning projects with the Inner City Tennis Project (ICTP) and one other small nonprofit organization. The ICTP's mission is to foster the development of citizenship, scholarship and fair play in inner-city youth through the use of tennis training, academic assistance and a nurturing social environment. The organization was created in 1986 by Rachel Fair and Tony Pack, who were employees of the Cincinnati Recreation Commission at the time.

During the early years, the ICTP had limited financial support from others, but it still served hundreds of students, resulting in athletic scholarships for a number of them who would not have gone to college otherwise. Fair and Pack contributed thousands of dollars of their own personal funds to pay for the expenses of taking children



to tennis tournaments, including entry fees, gas, hotel rooms and food.

The ICTP had many volunteers who helped on a casual and limited basis, but it did not have much structure to support, sustain and enhance these efforts. In the PAD 622 class, my group developed a plan for a new governing board and job descriptions for key volunteer positions in the organization.

A year later, I re-connected with the ICTP because I wanted to do an internship as an elective in the MPA program. I had no idea if the organization had adopted or implemented any of our recommendations. I was happy to see that not only had the ICTP created a board, but it was beginning stages of developing a volunteer resource guide. So we decided that my internship would involve putting this guide together. In doing so, I needed to better understand the organization and began to attend board meetings. When my internship ended, I was asked to serve as a board member for the ICTP.

I believe that our Volunteer Management class laid a foundation for the ICTP and, four years later, there stands a well-constructed house. We helped this nonprofit organization to become an established structure, and it has become truly

sustainable with new funding opportunities. Through basic governing documents and job descriptions, the organization has recruited community and business leaders, created an annual fundraiser called the "Sneaker Ball" that has raised more money each year of its existence, and provided leadership that focuses on new funding opportunities, strategic partnerships and long-term planning.

Ultimately, the resulting fruits of this organization have come through the passion, commitment and hard work of Fair, Pack and dedicated board members. I am proud to say that I will assume the role of ICTP's board president in 2013, and we will continue to focus on enabling Pack and Fair's vision to flourish and hopefully take it beyond their wildest dreams.

The ICTP's story is a noteworthy one about the survival and strengthening of a small nonprofit organization in our region and, for me personally, it has been a valuable and practical leadership experience. But it is just one of many ways that NKU's MPA program makes an impact on the Greater Cincinnati community through experiential offerings and strong relationships with those dedicated to improving the world around them.

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Sean is a 2009 graduate of NKU's MPA program. Currently, he serves as Associate Executive Vice President of Phi Delta Theta Fraternity, which is a collegiate male fraternity located in Oxford, OH, with 178 chapters and 165,000 members throughout the United States and Canada.

Public Administration Student Society (PASS) is an organization created to enhance the MPA student experience as well as represent the graduate program. PASS is open to any MPA student in good standing.

2013 Officers

President:
Neil Kelly

Vice President:
Erika Jay

Secretary:
Whitney Hacker

Treasurer:
Charlsé Brown

PASS Highlights

Members participate in social networking events,

In August 2012, 25 PASS members, family and friends attended a Reds game at Great American Ball Park. In addition to the game, they enjoyed the Barry Larkin celebration, Friday Fireworks and, of course, the good company!



community service projects,

During the second half of the Fall 2012 semester, PASS collected over 700 pounds of books to donate to Worldwide Book Drive, which promotes global literacy and helps the environment through book recycling and redistribution efforts.

and guest lectures on topics of interest to MPA students.

In March 2012, Roxanne Qualls, Cincinnati Vice Mayor and former NKU MPA instructor, spoke to PASS members about building inclusive organizations. For more on inclusivity, see Tynisha's article on page 5.



Mayor Scheper (center right) talks with NKU's new president, Geoffrey Mearns, Dr. Shamima Ahmed and Dr. Julie Olberding.

MPA Fall Dinner

In October 2012, City of Covington Mayor Chuck Scheper addressed MPA students, faculty and alumni at the annual MPA Fall Dinner. Mayor Scheper took office in October 2011 and immediately implemented a social contract with City Commissioners. In his 14 months as mayor, he moved the fiscally strapped city toward sustainability and economic development. In addition to discussing this process, he also gave a preview of Covington's plan to turn its historic City Hall into a luxury boutique hotel.

Choosing inclusivity in the public and nonprofit sectors

By Tynisha N. Worthy



From 2003 to 2012, I participated in Public Allies Cincinnati, first as a volunteer/participant and then as a staff member. Public Allies is an AmeriCorps program that identifies talented young adults from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, who have a passion to make a difference and helps them develop viable career paths in the public and nonprofit sectors. It has three components for each participant: an apprenticeship at a local nonprofit organization, weekly skill development training and participation in a large-scale community service project.

A unique element of the Public Allies program is the creation of an intentionally diverse community. Program staff foster conversations among Allies related to diversity and inclusion, power and privilege, and individual and collective responsibility. We discussed race, class, gender, sexual orientation and faith – topics that are rarely encouraged in mixed company. As an Ally, I found myself in a room with 24 other people who were of different races, ethnic groups, religious affiliations, socioeconomic statuses and sexual orientations. I was completely out of my comfort zone and worried that I would say the wrong thing or be unduly influenced by the knowledge of some previously taboo topic.

Through these conversations, I learned some important lessons. First and foremost, I learned that my perspective is not the only perspective; other people's points of view are equally valid. Additionally, I learned that

difficult but necessary conversations are catalysts for growth and change, both on individual and organizational levels.

In addition, my experience as a Public Ally introduced me to the following key concepts: core values, mission statements and responsibility. One lesson was the importance of a personal mission statement. We were encouraged to reflect on who we were, what we stood for and our actions to that end. An equally memorable training was "Nonprofit 101," which taught us about mission statements in the context of organizations. These two trainings indelibly shaped my subsequent personal and professional endeavors because they gave me a framework for assessing people and organizations and, based on what they say about the value and the purpose of their work, determining what I could offer.

Five years later, when I joined the staff of Public Allies, I intentionally crafted lesson plans and program activities that would expose the Allies to new ideas and challenge previously unchecked assumptions. Of course, these activities often caused confusion, tension and frustration; however, they also brought out new perspectives, new questions and new opportunities. The most important outcome of all these conversations was an enhanced sense of responsibility – that is, the realization we all have a responsibility to live our values, all the time.

In facilitating the conversations, my mentor and colleague would offer the following principle: diversity happens, inclusion is a choice. Our neighborhoods, workplaces and institutions are increasingly diverse, so it is important to consider how welcoming and inclusive they are and what, if any, proactive measures can be taken to adapt and evolve them.

We need to continuously ask ourselves questions about our values and responsibilities. What are our core values? What lessons do we need to learn? What conversations do we need to have? Are we seeking opportunities to dialogue with people who are different than ourselves? What choices will we make now that will equip us and our organizations to foster equitable and inclusive environments?

As public administration students and professionals, our challenge and – more importantly

– our responsibility is to always be intentional in our actions and interactions. We should know and purposefully advance both our personal and professional missions. And we should always ask who is best served by any decision, rule or policy and to what degree is it inclusive and, thus, truly in the public interest.

Tynisha is a 2008 graduate of NKU's MPA program. Currently, she is a doctoral student in the Public Affairs program at the University of Texas at Dallas.

New positions and awards

Hilary Blakemore, Annual Fund Officer, Columbus College of Art and Design

Renee Brossart, Intern, Seasingood Good Government Foundation

Drake Bryan, Visitor Research Coordinator, Cincinnati Art Museum

Leo Calderon, Latino Student Affairs Director at NKU, new member of the Kentucky Board of Education

Kayla Camp-Warner, Community Development Analyst, City of Cincinnati, and Early Careerist Award, ASPA-GCC

Travis Crawford, Supplier Diversity Manager, Delaware River and Bay Authority

Lisa Desmarais, Executive Director, Family Promise of Northern Kentucky, and Outstanding MPA Student, NKU

Christine Grimmelman, co-developer of the RAVEN911 mapping system, which is a finalist for the 2012 Harvard Government Innovation Award

Laura Johnson, VISTA Leader, Kentucky Campus Compact

Jane Keller, Distinguished MPA Alumna, NKU

Steve Kelly, Outstanding MPA Student, NKU

Dustin Lester, Business Retention and Expansion Manager, Northern Kentucky Tri-County Economic Development Corporation

Marcus McGhee, Outstanding Student Award, ASPA-GCC

Daniel Meloy, Achievement in Innovation, ASPA-GCC

Danielle Nelson, Voluntary Services Supervisor, Disabled American Veterans

Allyn Reinecke, Edith Schwab Memorial Scholarship

Jeremy Roberts, Kentucky College Coaches Program Director, Kentucky Campus Compact

Rina Saperstein, Distinguished Alumna Award, NKU's Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice

Meghan Schneeman, Alumnae Coordinator, Notre Dame Academy

Christopher Schutte, Police Chief, Lakeside Park-Crestview Hills Police Department

Jennifer Steele, Community Partnerships Director, Freestore Foodbank

Sonya Turner Thielmann, Distinguished MPA Graduate, NKU

Tori Vogelgesang, Seasingood Good Government Foundation Summer Internship, City of Cincinnati

Rebecca Volpe, Small Business Development Director, NKU

Our Mission

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

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E-mail: mpa@nku.edu

The MPA program at NKU provides professional managerial, communication, and human relations skills and knowledge in preparation for or advancement in a variety of public sector and related careers. The program advances public sector values of effectiveness, efficiency, honesty, accountability, fairness, diversity and public service in the curriculum, extra-curricular events and speakers, and partnerships with area practitioners through the MPA Advisory Board, the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), and other professional associations and individuals. The goal of the program is to develop competent public service practitioners to serve governments, nonprofit organizations and citizens in the Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati metropolitan region and beyond.

<http://psc-cj.nku.edu/programs/public/masters/>

We're also on:



Upcoming events — Mark your calendar!

MPA-ASPA Annual Dinner: Wednesday,
February 6, 5:30 to 7:15 p.m., NKU's
Student Union

The guest speaker will be Rina Saperstein, Executive Director of Power Inspires Progress, 2006 MPA graduate and recipient of the 2012 PSC/CJ Outstanding Alumni Award. Power Inspires Progress operates small businesses that provide paid on-the-job training to inner city residents who face obstacles pursuing and maintaining stable employment. Trainees gain the knowledge and experience necessary to be successful in the workforce. If you plan to attend, please RSVP at devantier@nku.edu or (859) 572-5326.

Job Expo 2013: Wednesday, February 27, 3 to 6 p.m., NKU's Student Union Ballroom

MPA Spring Banquet: Tuesday, April 16, 5:30 to 7:15 p.m., NKU's Student Union

ASPA Public Administrators of the Year Luncheon: Friday, April 19, 12 to 1:30 p.m., The Phoenix in Downtown Cincinnati

MPA Advisory Board 2012-2013

Melanie Bates
Development Liaison
Life Center Organ Donor Network

David Elmer
Administrator
Pierce Township, OH

Anthony Ficarra
Strategic Vision Consultant
Cincinnati, OH

Joan Gilmore
Funding Support Manager
Hamilton County MRDD

Deborah Kittner
Ph.D. Student
University of Cincinnati

David Moore
Fire Chief
Glendale, OH

Melissa Williams
Director of Administration
Campbell County Fiscal Court