Public SPAAce
A Newsletter for Friends of the Western Michigan University
School of Public Affairs and Administration

School of Public Affairs and Administration
College of Arts and Sciences
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Kalamazoo, MI 49008
www.wmich.edu/spaa

Mission: The School of Public Affairs and Administration is committed to improving the quality of public and nonprofit service. In a diverse and inclusive community, the mission of the School of Public Affairs and Administrations is to provide learning and discovery opportunities which advance the knowledge and use of professional ethics, best theories, policies, and practices for public and nonprofit organizations in order to create and support societies for respect, liberty, justice and quality.

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I am pleased to introduce this Fall 2017 edition of our annual newsletter. This comes at a time that is challenging to say the least of the current state of affairs from local to global. As the society journeys through the uncharted territory created by ever-changing technology—today’s technological breakthroughs remained unimaginable just a decade ago—the academy is always at the forefront of making sense of it all. Looking for solutions to today’s vexing problems also requires going beyond disciplinary silos. The field of public affairs, administration, and policy has experienced increasing calls to address modern problems that require insights from many relevant fields and disciplines. The role of public and nonprofit sectors has never been so central as it seeks to educate leaders who are up to the task of managing change and mitigating negative unintended consequences not just in passion but in their understanding and skill sets.

The mission of SPAA directly takes up these challenges: “to provide learning and discovery opportunities which advance the knowledge and use of professional ethics, best theories, policies and practices for public and nonprofit organizations in order to create and support societies of respect, liberty, justice, and equality.” The School’s contribution to addressing these ongoing problems can be directly observed through its output: graduates of its undergraduate minors, Master’s, and Ph.D. programs. Beyond this direct measurement is the quality of contribution these graduates as well as current students, faculty, and staff make through continuous education, research, consulting, and service. As the School and its many constituencies make important milestones on their programs and activities, this newsletter becomes the place to celebrate such accomplishments.

Of the many accomplishments during the past year (fall 2016 to summer 2017) are 22 graduates minoring in the nonprofit leadership programs, 29 graduates of the MPA program, and two Ph.D. graduates. SPAA is currently home to 51 undergraduate students maintaining active enrollment in the nonprofit minors, 142 in the MPA program, and 20 students in the Ph.D. program. Its signature MPA program has also witnessed growing diversity with 24 percent of its current students being minority (excluding international), 61 percent female, and 13 percent international. The Extended University offering of MPA courses in Lansing has also moved to a hybrid platform, requiring only four weekend face-to-face meetings per semester or summer term.

The School welcomed three new faculty members in fall of 2017. Dr. Vickie Edwards with a Ph.D. in public administration (University of Georgia, 2012) specializes in nonprofit management, civic engagement, and democratic governance. Dr. Eugene McKay with a Ph.D. in public administration (Western Michigan University, 2003) has extensive experience in public management and finance as well as adult and distance education. Ms. Alberta Griffin has an MA in family life education (Western Michigan University, 2012) and is pursuing her Ph.D. in interdisciplinary health science and has an extensive track record of public health service. Best wishes to Ms. Janice Maatman who retired after 16 years of productive service!

This newsletter reports on these and many other changes and accomplishments. Research and publications by faculty and students, student scholarships, professional accomplishments and awards of students and alumni, and outstanding alumni award are among other items covered here. The MPA program has also completed its performance assessment and self-study reports that are required for its ongoing Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) continuing accreditation. A brief report from a spring 2017 survey of the MPA alumni is also included.

This newsletter’s value is maximized when it can effectively report on the activities, accomplishments, and challenges from all of its immediate constituencies including students and alumni as well as employers and the larger community. It is only through our joint efforts that the School and its academic programs can flourish. I welcome items of collective and professional accomplishments for inclusion in its future editions. I also welcome suggestions, feedback, and comments about any aspect of the School and its academic programs as they can serve as valuable inputs to future planning and programing initiatives.

Udaya Wagle, Ph.D.
Director, School of Public Affairs and Administration
Ms. Beadle: Recipient of the 2017 SPAA Outstanding Alumna Award

Congratulations to Ms. Mirtha Beadle, a 1990 MPA alumna, who was awarded the SPAA Outstanding Alumni winner for 2017. In addition to receiving this departmental award, she was a recipient of a College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Achievement Award for 2017. Professor Matthew Mingus and CAS Dean Carla Koretsky extended the awards to Mirtha who made a special trip to Kalamazoo out of her busy nationwide schedule. Ms. Beadle’s talk at the SPAA Engagement Series on October 13, 2017, focused on Policy, Planning, and Innovation in the US Government with particular attention to policies and practices at the Department of Health and Human Services. Her career achievements highlighted below deserve special celebration!

Mirtha is currently the Acting Director of the Office of Policy, Planning, and Innovation (OPPI) within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) component of the US Department of Health and Human Services in Rockville, Maryland. She also serves as the Director of the Office of Tribal Affairs and Policy within the OPPI. Serving concurrently on these two roles, she leads regional operations and policy efforts on legislative affairs, health financing, international affairs, and behavioral health issues facing American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Ms. Mirtha Beadle received a Master of Public Administration degree with a concentration in Health Care Administration from WMU in 1990. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Management Systems from Andrews University (1984) and has attended the Federal Executive Institute on Leadership for a Democratic Society (2015) and the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (2002).

Mirtha pursued her MPA degree while serving as a child care worker in Michigan and moved to the Michigan Department of Public Health as a State Emergency Services Coordinator/Project Manager in 1990. Her service in the vast federal bureaucracy of HHS started with an assignment at the Bureau of Health Resources Development and she has been in various capacities including Public Health Analyst, Deputy Director, Senior Policy Specialist/Team Leader, and Deputy Administrator.

At the heart of this outstanding record remains Ms. Beadle’s passion for public service especially in reducing health disparities and achieving health equity. A high ranking official at the DHHSS puts her career achievement this way: “Mirtha has made significant contributions to the health and well-being of her fellow Americans. By giving voice to those who may otherwise not be heard, she has advanced the physical, spiritual, and behavioral health of tribal nations and communities of color across the country.” Another official working with her observes, “Mirtha is one of the most outstanding civil servants I have had the pleasure to work with during my 30 years of public service.” In selecting her for this award, the SPAA agreed with the assessment by her supervisors that “Mirtha is a committed and skilled leader who exemplifies the WMU mission of transforming wisdom into action.” In other words, Ms. Beadle truly exemplifies the “agent of change” that the SPAA strives to educate and graduate.
SPAA Engagement Series

Starting in Fall 2016, SPAA has been hosting an Engagement Series as a way to promote the culture of learning through professional exchange. A typical session occurring on second Mondays of each month (from 12:30 to 2:00 pm) includes a presentation on some contemporary topics or research ideas, projects, or publications, with participants from the SPAA as well as other members of the University and larger community (depending on the topic) exchanging ideas and offering constructive commentary and feedback. Topics are announced at least two weeks in advance and those planning to attend are asked to RSVP.

We would like to hear from you if you have ideas for presentations or are interested in attending these sessions.

Here is a list of the past five presenters and their topics:

Dr. Jan Fields, Assistant Professor, SPAA: (February 13)
Operation of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Behind the Curtains

Ms. Alberta Griffin, Faculty Specialist, SPAA: (September 11)
Using the County Health Rankings and the ALICE Report Model to Analyze Community Outcomes at the Neighborhood Level

Dr. Matthew Mingus, Professor, SPAA: (March 13)
Time Limited Bureaucracy: Switching the Burden of Proof as a Game Changer

Ms. Mirtha Beadle, Acting Director of the Office of Policy, Planning, and Innovation at DHHS, and the Director of the Office of Tribal Affairs and Policy: (October 13)
Policy, Planning, and Innovation in the US Government

Mr. Michael Stampfler, Former City Manager (various cities) and the Emergency Manager (Pontiac): (April 10)
Emergency Manager: Insights from the Michigan Experience

SPAA Guest Speakers

In addition, a number of the graduate and undergraduate classes invite guest speakers with diverse professional backgrounds. Guest speakers in the past year include:

**PADM 5830 - Spring 2017**
- Lanna Lewis, Community Investment Officer, Kalamazoo Community Foundation
- Sean Welsch, Regional President, PNC Financial
- Cykeiia Lee, Director of Learning Network, Kalamazoo Community Foundation
- Mark Hurwitz, Program Director, National Science Foundation (on leave from WMU)

**PADM 6390 - Spring 2017**
- Jodi Michaels, Executive Director of Colleagues International, Kalamazoo
- Judy Huth, President of the Board of Colleagues International, Kalamazoo

Jerry Potratz, prior Executive Director, President of the board, board member, and committed volunteer of Colleagues International, Kalamazoo

**PADM 6400 - Fall 2016**
- Susan Schmidt, President Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, Kansas City
- Dorothy Norris-Tirrell, PhD, Senior Director of Academic Affairs and Research, Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, Kansas City
- Troy Thrash, CEO of Air-Zoo, Portage
- Bill Gesaman, Strategic Growth Officer of Michigan Nonprofit Association, Lansing

**PADM 6431 - Fall 2016**
- Kristi Belmore, Controller for Bronson Healthcare, Kalamazoo
The Nonprofit Minor Students Making an Impact on the Community

As a valuable experiential exercise, students in the PADM 4000 Seminar for Nonprofit Leadership class raised $15,000 and awarded it to five community projects in Spring 2017. Designed and executed by 17 students enrolled in this course, the project involved soliciting applications for high-impact and low-cost service grants from the local community and reviewing, scoring, and awarding grants out of the funds they raised. Students reviewed 17 diverse applications for high impact, innovative, and worthy causes totaling $55,000 in request whereas the money to be awarded was $15,000 collected through small grants including from the School of Public Affairs and Administration and Irving S. Gilmore Foundation. The process of reviewing grants and making award decisions was systematic and rigorous since students found many of the proposals to present and justify worthy causes. The decision-making process involved evaluating each grant application by applying the theories and tools learned in the course as well as the Nonprofit Leadership program overall including data analysis, community practices, financial planning, and impact measurement. Based on a systematic evaluation of the proposal, site visits, and interviews, students presented the merits and shortcomings of each grant application and engaged in passionate dialogues in order to convince others on the ones they scored as worthy projects. Students had to go through a very interactive process to come to the decision which in some cases involved voting as well.

Here is a short description of each of the five funded projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount Requested</th>
<th>Amount Awarded</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can-Do Kitchen (Kalamazoo)</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>The Can-Do Kitchen works to build foundations and remove barriers to food business ownership through experiential education, commercial kitchen facilities, and connections to other essential resources. Recognizing many barriers including racial, language, legal status, and gender barriers, its mission is to create access to food business incubation services and education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kalamazoo Islamic Center (KIC)</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
<td>KIC is a nonprofit religious organization committed to providing a place of worship and a center for social activities for a diverse population including students and their families representing over 93 countries. The Islamic Center actively promotes interfaith activities, multi-cultural dialogue, community service, and social justice issues. KIC requested funds for programs aimed at helping the re-settlement of refugees in Kalamazoo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$1,549</td>
<td>This grant funded Kalamazoo Loaves &amp; Fishes’ efforts to provide refugee youth and families living in Kalamazoo County with culturally appropriate food assistance. Depending on comfort level and acclimation to our community, refugees would receive assistance either in the form of a pre-packaged four-day food supply picked up and delivered by volunteers or through personal access to the Loaves &amp; Fishes’ 24 hour pantry network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalamazoo Refugee Resource collaborative (KRRRC)</td>
<td>$3,951</td>
<td>$3,951</td>
<td>The Kalamazoo Refugee Resource Collaborative’s aim is to facilitate orientation, education, and support for refugees to become self-sufficient members of society. Helping refugees learn English as quickly as possible is critical to their success in finding a job and to their family’s overall success. KRRRC proposed to fill a gap in ESL program offerings by creating a 2017 Summer ESL Program (English as a Second Language) to continue the learning experience that occurs in various community sponsored ESL programs throughout the school year and to prevent refugee adults from forgetting the skills they have already learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma Recovery Associates (TRA) (Kalamazoo)</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>TRA educates and fosters the development of organizational leaders, human service providers, and trauma survivors to respond more effectively to the impact of childhood trauma on individuals and society. TRA’s vision is to bring healing to the world by assisting childhood trauma survivors through dissemination of the trauma model. This award would help translate their Healthy Living Skills manual into Arabic in order to work more effectively with local Arabic-speaking refugees.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Nonprofit Leadership Minor Graduates
Fall 2016 through Summer II 2017

Here is a list of our graduates from the Nonprofit Leadership Minor programs from Fall 2016 through Summer 2017.

**Fall 2016**
Amanda Cockroft, Jordan Johnson, Grayce Miller, and Erika Novar

**Spring 2017**
Theresa Bell, Jessica Bennane, Kate Dusenbury, Jessica Jarrett, Kandis Johnson, Stevie Parcell, Alexandra Rudoni, Margaret Slocum, Tyler Smikle, Emily Wood, and Hannah Zucker

**Summer 2017**
Sarah Callen, Tyler Hayes, Lillian Jackson, Katelyn McNemey, Elizabeth Mena, and James Richardson

Nonprofit Leadership Minor Programs Interaction

Dr. Vickie Edwards, Coordinator of the Undergraduate Nonprofit Leadership Minors, and NLSA President Dominique Bunker represented SPAA at Bronco Bash and Major Excitement program recruitment events with the program’s new “Be A Superhero” marketing campaign. Over 100 students expressed an interest in volunteer opportunities and/or the Nonprofit Leadership minors.

The Nonprofit Student Leadership Association hosted its first “Cookies and Canvas” paint night fundraiser on Wednesday, October 18th. Proceeds from registrations and cookie sales help support travel funding for NLSA students planning to attend the Alliance Management Institute conference in Kansas City, MO, this January 2018.
MPA and PhD Program Update
Matthew S. Mingus, MPA and Doctoral Director

MPA Program Update

Fall 2017 marks the beginning of a new era for the MPA program. Over the years this program has been taught face-to-face in as many as five cities at once, but Kalamazoo and Lansing have always been the keystones for the program.

Starting fall 2017 the program is being taught in Kalamazoo as a traditional face-to-face program, but in Lansing as an all hybrid, weekend-based program. In Lansing, each course is taught via four 3-hour live class sessions and extensive use of the eLearning system. The sessions are from 6-9 pm on Friday, 9-noon on Saturday, and 1-4 pm on Saturday – all on four weekends each semester. This design allows someone to attend classes once every 3 weeks during each semester and so students from Detroit, Flint, Jackson, Grand Rapids, and beyond are expected to pursue the degree through this flexible delivery approach. Each student can take 1, 2, or 3 courses per semester in this format, and summer sessions will still be condensed and thus more intense.

The Kalamazoo-based program still uses the traditional face-to-face delivery model that has attracted students to WMU’s U.S. News & World Report ranked MPA program for decades. While Kalamazoo offers concentrations in health care administration and human resources administration, both locations will offer concentrations in public management and nonprofit leadership and administration.

The same great curriculum is now offered in two very different delivery formats. Please refer your friends and colleagues to SPAA for their educational needs.

From fall 2016 through Summer 2017, 21 students completed the project paper seminar with analytical projects ranging from the impact of sex trafficking on its victims, municipal consolidation, and the cost-utility of long-term care to spending to support non-motorized transportation systems and the role of women in grassroots peace building. There were 29 MPA graduates during this same time frame, including 4 international students.

Ph.D. Program Update

The Ph.D. program is a small program compared to the MPA, and had two doctoral graduates in the 2016-17 academic year.

Emma Powell graduated in April 2017 and her dissertation was “A Corporate Model: Aligning National Nonprofit Expectations with Regional/Local Efforts to Serve the Mission.” This interesting project was an extensive case study of the National Wild Turkey Federation and focused on how a geographically large national nonprofit gets its regional and local offices to pursue a unified mission. Dr. Powell is now an Assistant Professor of Political Science and Public Administration at Central Michigan University.

Russell Panico graduated in December 2016 and is also one of our MPA alumni. His dissertation was “An Analysis of Campus Violence Threat Assessment Policy Implementation at Michigan Community Colleges” and he is the Student Relations Coordinator and Director of Athletics at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Dr. Panico’s career has been in academic planning and administration and he has experience in developing and helping to implement campus threat assessment plans.

A significant change this past year is that all courses in SPAA’s doctoral program are now taught at the main campus. It is a challenging 45-credit hour curriculum for working adults and full-time students. In August 2017, Diane Thompson, Derik VanBaale, and Brandon Koch each successfully passed the comprehensive examinations and so they’re now preparing their dissertation proposals. Congrats! Ms. Thompson is also an MPA alumna.
Congratulations to our MPA Graduates!
Spring and Summer 2017

Here is a list of our MPA graduates from Spring and Summer 2017, with project paper titles.

**Spring 2017**

**Adwoa Anderson:** Mental health awareness among African American college students: An analysis and recommendation

**Elisha DeFrain:** Evaluation of nonmotorized spending by local agencies and transportation equity in Michigan communities

**Stacey Fassett:** Referral process and known barriers for assistant payment workers in referring WIC eligible clients to local WIC agencies

**Michael Krombeen:** An evaluation of a non-emergency medical transportation pilot in Midland, Gladwin, and Clare counties

**Kevin Lenkart:** Efficiencies through consolidation: The Owosso and Corunna police departments

**Arica Nelson:** Impact of sex trafficking on its victims

**Sai Tejasvi Pagudala:** What could be the better treatment method for depression: Medical treatment or self treatment

**Stephanie Prellwitz:** #theartofsocialmedia: Measuring Facebook effectiveness in Kalamazoo area nonprofits

**Bridget Saxton:** Cost-utility of long-term care in the state of Michigan from 1980-2010

**Tiffany Welsh:** Prevalence of lead in public water supplies: Is it a concern in all Michigan local communities. A comparative analysis

**Summer 2017**

**Seth Anderson:** Social impact bonds for spinal manipulation as a primary intervention for chronic low back pain: A feasibility study

**Ryan Cyzman:** Michigan and Missouri rural hospital closures: Policy impacts of the ACA and house-passed AHCA

**Marcy Dix:** Best practices for Brownfield redevelopment in small-to-medium Michigan cities

**Nicholas Hefty:** Pride program evaluation: Congruence of implementation with recommended best practice and program operating modality

**LaTonya King:** Comparing patient satisfaction and quality care across Medicare reimbursed hospitals

**Brandon Morrill:** Exclusionary policies and the shift to improve school climate and discipline

**Annette Smith:** Managing the matrix organization structure in the healthcare industry: A contemplative treatise

**James Smith:** The nature of healthcare and the government’s role in its management and delivery: A contemplative treatise

**Scott Wyzgowski:** No exit leadership: Managing for nonprofit supports coordinator job satisfaction

**Ahmad Faisal Zahir:** Using human resources management to address the challenges of administrative reform in the Afghanistan public sector
Pi Alpha Alpha Induction of Students

Fall 2016-Spring 2017 Inductees:
Sean Chapman
Li Cheng
Patti Ferguson
Kevin Haynes
Jeffery Hillman
Antoinetta McKay
Brandon Meissner
Chandra Rouch
Bridget Saxton
Kathleen Springsteen
Christopher Surfus
Kathryn Wood
Scott Wyzgoski.

Pi Alpha Alpha is the only Global Honor Society in the field of Public Affairs and Administration. There are more than 160 chapters located at the member schools of Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) around the world. Pi Alpha Alpha is run by NASPAA: The Global Standard in Public Service Education and is directed by the NASPAA Pi Alpha Alpha Special Ad Hoc Committee by the NASPAA President.

The purpose of Pi Alpha Alpha is to encourage and recognize outstanding scholarship and accomplishments in public affairs and administration. Its objectives including fostering integrity, professionalism, and effective performance promote quality in the education and practice of public affairs and administration. Pi Alpha Alpha membership identifies those with the highest performance levels in educational programs preparing them for public service careers.

Scholarship Awards

Thanks to the donors and contributing alumni, we are pleased to offer scholarships and awards to many of our promising and deserving graduate and undergraduate students. The following list is prepared from the awards that were made in Fall 2016 through Summer 2017.

2016-17 M.P.A. student awards
- Margaret and Leo Stine Endowed Memorial Scholarship ($1,000; MPA student): Ryan Cyzman
- M.P.A. Scholar Awards ($250—$500 each):
  - Emerging Scholar Award: Tayler Zajac
  - Nonprofit Governance Award: Ryan Cyzman
  - Supervisory Skills/Community Engagement Award: Jeremy Byma
  - Organization Theory & Behavior Award: Peter Willis, Antoinetta McKay, Breanna Kevil
  - Research Proposal Award: Seth Anderson, Scott Wyzgoski
  - Performance/Info Technology Award: Breanna Kevil
  - Best Project Paper: Bridget Saxton
Ruth Bates-Hill (PhD Student) and Jeffrey Hillman (MPA Student)—NASPAA Batten: Student Simulation Competition—Participation in global competition focused on Food Security based on UN Sustainable Development Goal #2 at Indiana University Bloomington and Indiana Purdue University-Indianapolis—School of Public and Environmental Affairs (IUPUI and IUB), hosted in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA


Li Cheng (PhD Student)—American Society for Public Administration Conference, March 2017 in Atlanta, GA. Presented: “Flint, Michigan Water Crisis: Intergovernmental Disaster or Gubernatorial Campaign?”
Best Project Paper

The following MPA student was awarded the Best Project Paper award, with prime criterion being that the project papers were the best in the given term.

Spring 2017: Bridget Saxton
Title: Cost-Utility of Long-Term Care in the State of Michigan from 1980-2016

Summary: Using a cost utility design with a phenomenological approach, insight is gained into the concerns of long-term care moving into the future. As the baby-boomer generation ages, the expenses of long-term care are expected to rise compounding the problems of high turnover in health-field related employment, sky-rocketing medical costs, and greater public expectations of quality and affordable health care. With these conditions present, how can policy and health experts demonstrate the expectations of cost-utility related to health, affordability, improvements, and quality? Those questions are explored in this project paper.

PhD Dissertation and Graduation

Here is a brief profile, with dissertation title and summary, of the PhD completed in 2017.

Emma A. Powell, PhD
(Graduated: April 2017)
(Current employment: Assistant Professor, Central Michigan University)
Title: A Corporate Model: Aligning Nonprofit Expectations with Regional/Local Efforts to Serve the Mission

Summary: This study seeks to provide a body of knowledge and application of research to the national nonprofit audience. Its focus is to study conditions that could lead to better alignment between regional staff understanding and implementation of the national expectations, by identifying alignment behaviors in five indicator areas: fundraising, mission delivery, volunteer engagement, HR/operations, and PR/external communications. The context of this research is a comprehensive case study of the National Wild Turkey Federation, and thus the focus is on corporate model nonprofit organizations. Aligning local and regional behaviors to the national expectations should also take into account topics such as community needs, market-based research distinctions, demographics, strategic plans, or big-picture movements that can create a hiccup in momentum at either end of the organizational hierarchy. In this study, a three phase data collection process was used: 1) to understand national expectations of the senior leadership team, 2) to illustrate the perceptions of alignment from the direct-report management, 3) to survey all staff to seek to understand perceptions within the entire organization about alignment and the causes/effects using the five alignment indicators. This study reveals that alignment is caused by a shared understanding of the indicator expectations and clear information dissemination, allowing each level of the organization to demonstrate behaviors that are aligned.
Here is a sample of alumni news and updates. This list by no means is exhaustive and we encourage alumni as well as students to update us on their professional achievements.

2017 SPAA Outstanding Alumna Award Recipient and College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Achievement Award Recipient: **Mirtha Beadle** (Acting Director of the Office of Policy, Planning, and Innovation at DHHS, and Director of the Office of Tribal Affairs and Policy)

**Christie G. Bierlein** (MPA 2010) now holds the position of Assistant Director at the Center for English Language and Culture for International Students at Western Michigan University.

**John Blue** (MPA 2007) promoted to Senior Deputy Police Chief of Operations with the Portage Department of Public Safety in March 2017.

**Barb Dawson** (MPA 2016) is the Chief Information Officer at West Virginia University since July 2017.

**Javon Dobbs** (MPA 2016) was appointed as the Communication Analyst at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

**Tammy Eaton** (MPA 2008) holds the position as a Budget Liaison in the Information Technology Financial Service Division as the State of Michigan Department of Management and Budget.

**J. Ryan Grinnell-Ackerman** (MPA 2013) currently holds the position of Policy & Government Affairs Manager at the Michigan Primary Care Association.

**Matt Lechel** (MPA 2008) holds the position of Associate at ONEplace at the Kalamazoo Public Library.

**Antoinetta McKay** (MPA 2016) accepted the position as Education Program Manager at the Atlanta Habitat for Humanity. She was also recently accepted into the United Way Atlanta’s VIP Program (a 10-week nonprofit board training program).

**Felicia Owens** (MPA 2007) holds the position of Organ Donor Registry Coordinator for the Michigan Department of State.

**Holly Ramsdell** (MPA 2007) is in the position as Director of Community Affairs at the WMU Homer Stryker School M.D. School of Medicine (WMed).


**Timothy Unangst** (MPA 2013) holds a position at the WMU Department of Public Safety. In 2014 he was promoted to Captain and participated in EMU’s Executive Leadership School of Staff and Command where he graduated first in his class.

**Drew Voytal** (MPA 2013) holds a position as Government Affairs Analyst with the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) in Washington, DC.
The MPA program is a professionally-oriented, academic degree program seeking “to improve the quality of public service by developing professionals and leaders equipped with knowledge and skills in theories, methodology, and innovative practice in the interdisciplinary field of public administration.” Graduates of this program “lead and manage a diverse range of government, nonprofit, and health care organizations and make positive impacts on the lives of citizens locally, nationally, and globally.” But who are these graduates, what careers do they pursue, and what do they say about the program and its value to their careers?

A survey was conducted in spring 2017 as a part of the program’s self-study and evaluation in preparation for the 2017-2018 NASPAA accreditation review. This survey was sent electronically to over 400 MPA alumni graduating between 2007 and 2016 for whom the program had email addresses and of which 123 participated voluntarily. While the survey was not fully representative (details on survey methodology as well as the comprehensive program assessment documents can be obtained from SPAA), the purpose here is to draw attention to some key observations on the MPA alumni experience and success.

1. MPA Alumni on the Key Areas of Learning

Accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), MPA program’s graduates are expected at minimum to demonstrate competency in five universal domains: 1) lead and manage in public governance; 2) participate and contribute to the policy process; 3) analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions; 4) articulate and apply a public service perspective; and 5) communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry. The survey specifically asked graduates about their assessment of the degree to which the program prepared them on these core competency domains.

Reflecting on their experiences in the program, the MPA alumni rated generally higher than 6.0—on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely well)—on the perceived degree of preparation (Figure 1), suggesting that the program has been incorporating and addressing the core NASPAA competencies consistently well. While these competencies were developed by NASPAA in 2009, the alumni ratings are relatively consistent over time. There is some indication that the alumni perceived themselves more prepared on domains 3, 4, and 5 than on domains 1 and 2, providing inputs to rethink strategies for further improvement on the first two domains. But the program receives a relatively high mark on the ability to prepare graduates on the competency areas that are considered to be essential for successful professional career.

Figure 1, Alumni Perception of the MPA Program’s Preparation on Core NASPAA Competencies by Year of Graduation (Averages from scales 0 (none) to 10 (most))
2. MPA Alumni Employment

Table 2 provides a list of organizations where the MPA alumni are working currently. The list makes it clear that some of the organizations the alumni have been managing, leading, and serving at are also comprehensive and highly professionalized, impacting the way the government and nonprofit sectors operate and interact with and provide services to the greater public. The list also details the organizations of employment across all MPA concentrations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Health Care</th>
<th>Human Resources</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Nonprofit</th>
<th>Public Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Cancer Society</td>
<td>Department of Veterans Affairs</td>
<td>Multi Packaging Solutions</td>
<td>AARP MI</td>
<td>Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan</td>
<td>Baker College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Borgess Hospital</td>
<td>Family Health Center</td>
<td>City of Portage</td>
<td>BCBSM</td>
<td>Grand Valley State University</td>
<td>Banco del Progreso</td>
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<tr>
<td>Borgess Medical Center</td>
<td>MPI Research</td>
<td>GE Aviation</td>
<td>Borgess Hospital</td>
<td>Ivy Tech Community College</td>
<td>Children’s Trauma Assessment Center</td>
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<td>Bronson Healthcare Group</td>
<td>MI Health and Hospital Association</td>
<td>Integrated Community Based Initiatives</td>
<td>Bronson Hospital</td>
<td>Johns Hopkins University</td>
<td>City of Bronson, MI</td>
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<td>Bronson Methodist Hospital</td>
<td>Priority Health</td>
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<td>Building Blocks of Kalamazoo</td>
<td>Kalamazoo Loaves &amp; Fishes</td>
<td>City of Douglassville</td>
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<td>Colleagues International</td>
<td>Spectrum Health</td>
<td>GE Aviation</td>
<td>Buy Local Greater Kalamazoo</td>
<td>Kalamazoo RESA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated Community Based Initiatives</td>
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<td>Lansing Community College</td>
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3. MPA Alumni on their Career sectors and Functions

What career sectors and functions are the MPA alumni taking on? Figures 2 and 3 provide a list of career sectors and functions in which the graduates are engaged. Whereas the alumni carryout multiple job functions depending on their organizational contexts and responsibilities, the bars in Figure 2 represent the percentage of alumni who said their job functions revolve around different career sectors. It is also noteworthy that selecting multiple career sectors is also common since, for example, one’s job function can cut across health, human rights, education, and human or social services.
Graduates indicate government or regional issues, human and social services, health, education, and community and economic development as the sectors most widely represented. Many graduates also pursue careers involving such diverse sectors as human rights, science and technology, and trade or trade regulation. These are also areas that interact with communities and processes of policymaking and implementation affecting the wider population in a variety of contexts and levels.

Figure 2, Sectors of Career or Responsibility (% of alumni in each sector; multiple sectors are also common)

In part, the wide variety of career sectors pursued by the MPA alumni speaks for the program that has multiple concentrations. But this also speaks for the variety of professional and organizational contexts the program is expected to draw from so that its graduates are prepared to deal with programmatic and organizational challenges across multiple sectors. In fact, the demanding competencies of the program as well as the thematic coverage of its curriculum are consistent with the variety of career sectors reported by the MPA alumni.

MPA graduates also take on a wide variety of, and typically multiple, job functions and responsibilities simultaneously. As presented in Figure 3, the top four of such categories include program/project management, supervision, program implementation, and outreach/communications/public relations. These and many other responsibilities that the program graduates have taken on represent some of the demonstrably high impact responsibilities with a likelihood to make significant difference in the community. These responsibilities also depend on the specific concentrations with program implementation, program/project management, and supervision being the most popular for health care concentration, personnel/human resources management and supervision being the most popular for human resources concentration, program/project management and outreach/communications/public relations being most popular for nonprofit concentration, and supervision and program/project management being most popular for public management concentration (data not reported here). These are also responsibilities requiring effective application of the knowledge, skills, ethical norms, and competencies acquired in the program.

Figure 3, Share of Job Responsibility Across Different Functions (Average of % allocations by each alum)
4. MPA Alumni Earnings Then and Now

Figure 4 reports annual salaries of MPA alumni immediately after graduation as well as their current salaries as of 2017. While the intervals of $10,000 used to summarize this information are relatively wide and the salaries vary by many factors including the timing, geography, and location, these ballpark estimates suggest two things: first, that the starting salaries have typically ranged from $35,000 to $55,000 (which are truncated to their mid-points in the figure) and second, that these salaries have grown reasonably well over time. As expected, the difference between starting and current salaries is lower for more recent graduates. What is not reported in this figure is also the range of current salaries which is relatively wide (between $25,000 and $125,000) for these alumni graduating after 2006. But the upper bound of this range (which was truncated at $125,000) suggests that the salary prospect for some of the MPA alumni remains relatively high as well.

Figure 4, Immediate and Current Salary by Graduation Year ($ in ’000, rounded to mid-deciles)

5. MPA Alumni on the Value and Impact of the Program

The alumni rate highly the value and impact of the MPA degree and its coursework on their career success many years down the road. The data reported in Figure 5 suggest that promotion and changing employer as well as career have been rated on average between 4.5 and nine out of a possible 10 as the perceived contribution of the MPA degree. More importantly, the alumni have also rated the degree’s contribution to making a difference and improving public policy while in their career on average between five and 7.5. The temporal variations as well as the highly fluctuating impressions on two aspects of the career are noteworthy which emanate from the changing composition of graduates in terms of their concentration and career interest and trajectory. For example, only some graduates would be likely to start their own organizations whereas international graduates would be more likely to look for international mobility.

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(a) (b) (c) (d)

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6. MPA Alumni on their Job Satisfaction

The final piece of evidence of the application of professional competencies emanates from ratings of the current job satisfaction by program graduates. Data summarized in Figure 6 suggest that the graduates derive job satisfaction not necessarily because their jobs allow opportunities for promotion or command high salaries but because they are challenging, provide autonomy, involve a variety of job tasks, and have high levels of responsibility. Again, these ratings vary across concentrations as well as over time depending on the composition of graduates in their background, interest, and career trajectory. The most important observation, however, is that the MPA graduates assign the highest rating for the value to society that their jobs provide, something that is indicative of the kind of difference they are making in the community. After all, it is this notion of high level of responsibility and autonomy at addressing challenges and providing value to society that remains fully consistent with the program’s mission “to improve the quality of public service.” The School of Public Affairs and Administration and the MPA program are pleased to educate these highly motivated agents of change!

Figure 6, Satisfaction on Various Aspects of Career by Year or Graduation (Averages form scales 0 (none) to 10 (most))
The MPA alumni survey conducted in spring of 2017 asked for examples of the way the program has made them better professionals. Albeit selective in nature, the responses provided below are quite informative and insightful.

“I have a bigger picture understanding of working with other units of government and have helped my organization improve some relationships for better collaboration. I believe my local government classes helped me with ideas to help foster the relationships between county and township or city/village governments. They all have elected officials and constituents that they serve and having an understanding of that and how to communicate common goals and objectives has improved relationships as we all work together on economic redevelopment across several communities.”

“I think it has made me a better decision-maker. I make a big impact in my company by using data to chart progress and lobby for changes. I have also overlaid our operations with protocols, manuals, forms, internal policies, etc. that help us function more cohesively as a unit.”

“I work directly with educational funds through federal DOE [Department of Education] and in turn the implementation of public educational services. The MPA program has prepared me for every part of my work day.”

“The MPA degree I received allowed me to attain a higher degree of insight and experience looking at the kinds of issues my current and immediate past positions have dealt with. Through this course work, I felt prepared to address the issues and concerns facing non-profit healthcare organizations in Washington, DC.”

“While I was doing my MPA work, I was working on rebuilding a nonprofit organization (which I currently work for). Many things within the MPA program were applicable to policies and procedures we were looking to implement within the organization. The MPA program allowed me to see things from a different perspective and bring new ideas to the table.”

“The MPA program provided a solid foundation for public service and working in and around public agencies by demonstrating the levers of public administration and balancing it with nonprofit management.”

“It has given me all the tools I need to be an effective leader and committed administrator in the workplace. I have the tools from my studies to create change and evaluate that change. Being able to make a difference in an organization of many sectors.”

“Although I work in the healthcare field, I am the ONLY one in this privately-owned enterprise with a public service perspective. I think this helps them better understand the needs of patients, and I try to share perspectives of how policy shapes what we need to do and keeps our patients safer.”

(Source: 2017 MPA Program Alumni Survey)
Dr. Vickie Edwards earned her PhD from the University of Georgia’s Department of Public Administration and Policy. She also holds a Master of Public Administration degree from Georgia College and State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of South Alabama. She has previously taught at Troy University, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Georgia College and State University, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her research interests include nonprofit management, strategic planning and action, civic engagement, democratic governance, volunteerism, and organizational behavior. Dr. Edwards served as the Founding Managing Editor of the Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs and was a founding trustee of the Midwest Public Affairs Conference. She has previously worked as a consultant to public and nonprofit organizations and has worked as a program evaluator in the fields of education and health care. Dr. Edwards has been involved with a number of different nonprofit organizations that address a wide variety of issues, including animal rescues, sustainable agriculture, LGBT teen homelessness, and women’s rights. Dr. Edward’s teaching experience and interests include:

- PADM 3000: Nonprofit Advancement
- PADM 4000: Seminar for Nonprofit Leadership
- PADM 4100: Internship in Nonprofit Leadership
- PADM 5830: Grant Writing
- PADM 6080: Organization Theory and Behavior
- PADM 6400: Nonprofit Governance
- PADM 6481: Planning in NPOs
- PADM 6780: Program Evaluation

Ms. Alberta Griffin holds a BA in Dietetics and Biology and MA in Family Life Education and is currently pursuing a PhD in Interdisciplinary Health Science with a concentration in Statistics (Western Michigan University). She has an extensive track record of public service including most recently as the Coordinator of Kalamazoo County Program on Women, Infant, and Children, Director of Food and Nutrition for Community Action, and consultant to the County and State Departments of Public Health. She has served as lead consultant on many projects focused on data integration and strategic planning with an emphasis on best practices in analyzing health care and nonprofit programs. She has received funding for her dissertation through the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and was awarded a Thurgood Marshall Fellowship to complete her PhD at Western Michigan University. Ms. Griffin is also the President at AGS Data Analytics Consulting, LLC, a data science company, which she founded in 2012, to serve businesses and nonprofit organizations around southwest Michigan and Northern Indiana. Her teaching experience and interests include:

- PADM 5830: Grant Writing
- PADM 5990: Topics: Culture, Diversity, and Health Equity
- PADM 6390: Managing Public Performance and Technology
- PADM 6481: Planning in Nonprofit Organizations
- PADM 6515: Administration and Delivery of Health Services
- PADM 6532: Health Care Policy and Law
- PADM 6555: Managerial Epidemiology
New SPAA Faculty (continued)

Dr. Gene H. McKay holds a Ph.D. in Public Administration (Western Michigan University), Master’s degree in Adult Education/Teaching Online (Capella University), Graduate Professional Development Certificate in Distance Education (University of Wisconsin Madison), Master’s degree in Business Administration (Central Michigan University) and Bachelor’s degree in General Business (Michigan State University). He has extensive management and financial experience in business as well as research experience related to employee and customer relations. Dr. McKay was a Professor of Business and Economics for over 15 years at a local community college and has taught various Ph.D. and MPA courses at the School of Public Affairs and Administration. He has been on the boards of several area nonprofit organizations and served as the Interim Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer of a local township. His teaching experience and interests include:

PADM 6000: Historical and Legal Foundations of PA
PADM 6060: Analytical Methods
PADM 6070: Quantitative Data Analysis
PADM 6140: Managing Community Growth and Development
PADM 6180: Political and Economic Environment of PA
PADM 6290: Supervisory Skills for Administrators

New SPAA Professional Instructors in 2017

William Fleener (JD): Mr. Fleener has been an adjunct professor and attorney for many years. Mr. Fleener has a Bachelor of Science in Psychology (Western Michigan University) and Juris Doctor (Thomas M. Cooley Law School) and he joined the SPAA in summer 2017 to teach PADM 6110, Administrative Law and Government Regulation, in Lansing.

Joseph Galardi (MPA): Mr. Galardi has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Economy (Tulane University) and an MPA (Western Michigan University). He is a human resources professional currently at Michigan State University with extensive experience in benefits, measurement, and strategy. He joined the SPAA in spring 2017 to teach PADM 6180, Political and Economic Environment of PA, in Lansing.

Julie A. Lowman (MPA): Ms. Lowman is the Director of Finance and Human Resources at Michigan State University. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in finance (Michigan State University) and MPA degree (Western Michigan University). She specializes in financial management, human resources, and research administration. She joined SPAA in Summer II 2017 to teach PADM 6150, State and Local Government Finance, in Lansing.

Maria Martin (MA): Ms. Martin has just completed her PhD in African and American Studies with a specialization in History and Women’s Studies (Michigan State University) and has an MA in liberal studies and a BA in history (University of Toledo). She is an emerging nonprofit professional with a track record in grant-writing. She joined SPAA as a part-time instructor in Fall 2016 to teach PADM 5830, Grant Writing for NPOs, in Lansing.

Nicole Milliman (MPA): Ms. Milliman is a recent graduate of our MPA program with concentration in nonprofit leadership and administration and has been active in a variety of nonprofit organizations and causes including at Young Women’s for Christian Association and WMU. She joined the SPAA in fall 2016 to teach PADM 3000, Nonprofit Advancement, in the undergraduate minor in nonprofit leadership and administration, in Kalamazoo.

Kathy Purnell (JD, PhD): Dr. Purnell has a JD (DePaul University College of Law) and a PhD in Political Theory (Cornell University). She has decades of experience working in research administration, grant writing, and nonprofit organizations. She joined the SPAA in Spring 2017 to teach PADM 5830, Grant Writing for NPOs, in Kalamazoo.

Michael L. Stampfer (MPA): Mr. Stampfer is currently the owner/managing partner of CivicQuest, LLC, specializing in governing and performance improvements in economic development. He has been a city manager in Alabama, Florida, Michigan, and Rhode Island and served as an emergency manager of Pontiac, Michigan. He holds a BA (Hope College) and MA in international studies and MPA (Western Michigan University). He joined SPAA in Summer I 2017 to teach PADM 6130, Local Government Administration, in Lansing.

Summary: This article discusses ethical issues surrounding the employment of Government-Organized NGOs, or GONGOs. These organizations are increasingly deployed abroad for the purpose of leveraging soft power in order to affect issues relating to national security or foreign policy. The suggestion is ethical standards for organizations supporting noncombat national security and foreign policy missions and provide prescriptive guidance for their operation.


Summary: This article discusses the relevance of Robert Behn’s questions on micromanagement, motivation, and measurement in the Chinese context and proposes alternate wordings of Behn’s questions to make them meaningful within the Chinese cultural and institutional context (while avoiding suggestions of replacing the basic Chinese political structure). This discussion is expected to spark a lively debate among the relevant Chinese research community.


Summary: The chapter delineates the process by which congressional delegations exploited a short phrase in the public assistance titles of the Social Security Act of 1935 to establish and dramatically expand the federal government’s financial participation in health care for the indigent. It also defines the way in which the original Social Security eligibility criteria and the South’s domination of key congressional leadership positions coalesced to create the forerunner of the Medicaid program and temporarily derail efforts to enact a Medicare program. It concludes that that the state’s efforts to expand the flow of federal dollars played a major role in establishing and expanding the federal role in health care.


In this study, faculty and graduate students systematically reviewed research on evaluation (ROE) published over a ten-year period in 14 evaluation-focused journals with the intent to examine convergences and divergences with existing taxonomies of research on evaluation (ROE). Findings across 257 studies indicated that descriptive studies are more prevalent than comparative studies of evaluation practice. Moreover, studies of values and valuing in evaluation, ethics, and consequences from evaluation are limited.

A random sample of American Evaluation Association (AEA) members and a purposive sample of prominent evaluation theorists and scholars were surveyed to examine whether published findings from research on evaluation are read by evaluators and whether such findings influence evaluators’ thinking about evaluation or their evaluation practice. Findings indicated that (a) the majority of AEA members as well as theorists and scholars are reading these publications, and (b) these studies influence their thinking about and practice of evaluation.


Summary: This paper shows that the limited and evolving composition and coverage of social protection policies vary significantly across 33 Asian countries and regions. Whereas the aggregate level data on public social transfer expenditures are far from perfect and do not detail the qualitative variations in policy design and implementation, findings from this analysis help fill the void in literature to understand the degree to which low and middle-income countries may count on social protection policies to address persistent poverty and growing inequalities.


Summary: This paper examines poverty dynamics and their socioeconomic determinants between 1996 and 2011 in Nepal and finds that with chronic and structural poverty headcount ratios of around 17 percent, poverty is mostly transient and stochastic affecting up to four-fifths of the population. While indigenous Janajatis and lower caste Hindus exhibit the highest rates of chronic and structural poverty, panel data models suggest significant roles of human capital and household assets in determining poverty with the evidence of caste/ethnic penalty limited mostly to Janajatis.


Summary: How do politics impact the way poverty is defined and assessed? Findings from a cross-sectional analysis of 75 low and middle-income countries suggest that while countries with higher private consumption expenditures or GDP per capita set relatively lower official poverty lines, countries with larger governments do the opposite. An extended analysis of data from five South Asian countries also suggests that countries setting higher poverty lines relative to consumption or GDP are likely to witness lower poverty.
Faculty Conference Presentations


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