

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



THE M.P.A. NETWORK

Note from the Director

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I met my first EMU MPA alum in May while touring the condo he owns and had listed for lease. I was pleased to learn that the program and recent work experience led to his advancement to a prominent position in Michigan state government. I have since met many more alums under less random circumstances, and I continue to hear how much they value their time at EMU in the MPA program. Joining a strong program where faculty and students are committed to improving public service is a delight for me; my heart always has been and always will be in public service and public service training.



DR. GREG PLAGENS

In time we will get to know one another better, but to introduce myself I offer a few notes about my background. You might say I am Michigan born, Ohio raised and South Carolina trained. I spent 18 months as a newspaper reporter before my ten years as a cabinet-level administrator in South Carolina public school districts. I earned both my MPA and my PhD at The University of South Carolina. I have come to EMU from The University of Akron, where I taught for five years in MPA and PhD programs. My teaching and research interests, generally described, are in public management and public policy.

This semester we are preparing our self-study for reaccreditation with the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. We will be assessed on revised standards that were adopted in October 2009. NASPAA is raising the bar for programs by requiring increased accountability measurement, greater attention to public service values, increased transparency, and more intensive stakeholder involvement. The 2009 standards require annual assessment of core competencies. We will be reaching out to many of you as we seek to refine our existing competencies and to explore whether they cover all the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students need to succeed in public service today. One of our alums recently passed word to me through his intern (a student in our program) that we need to do more to prepare students for the complex municipal procurement process. We encourage and welcome your ideas as we seek to keep the program content highly relevant. In fact, we will need you to help us make all the right choices.

I look forward to working with you to raise the quality of public service in Michigan. It truly is a pleasure for me to be at EMU.

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

<http://www.emich.edu/polisci/pubad/>



JOE OHREN FUND LAUNCHED



DR. JOE OHREN

Dr. Joe Ohren recently stepped down as EMU's MPA Director, to continue his 26-year career teaching both graduate and undergraduate courses in the public administration program. The *Joe Ohren Student Internship Fund* has been established in honor of Joe's exceptional service. Once fully endowed, scholarship funds will be awarded to Political Science De-

partment undergraduate and graduate students who are completing unpaid internships as part of their course of study.

A kick-off fundraising event was hosted by Laura Shue, Bill Richards and Larry Kestenbaum at the Polo Fields in Ann Arbor on October 28. A brief program included remarks by the hosts, Department Head Arnold Fleischmann,

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JOHN MICHIRINA, MPA 07

CITY MANAGER, CENTER LINE, MICHIGAN

The city manager of Center Line, Michigan is no stranger to transitions. Although MPA graduate John Michrina has worked in public service for the tenure of his professional life, he started out in a very different position. Upon graduating from the police academy, he began his career as a Park Ranger with the Huron-Clinton Metro Park Authority. He was then hired as a police officer in the city of Monroe, Michigan. After years of hard work he eventually became the city's chief of police. Although he enjoyed this position, once he was able to retire he decided he was ready for a new challenge for the second half of his career.

While working as the chief of police in Monroe he had spent some time as the interim city manager and liked the responsibilities of that position, so upon retirement he applied to the city manager position in Center Line. He was hired and sworn into the position in March of 2010. Since then he has seen differences and similarities between being the head of one city department and overseeing all city departments.



JOHN MICHIRINA

As a department head in Monroe, the focus was on an area in which he was an expert. Now as the city manager he has the responsibility of overseeing operations for the entire city, including areas in which he is not an expert. He says that in this situation it is extremely important to listen to the experts in those areas, but still remember that he must make the final decision. He says it is also different to work for a council

and mayor as opposed to a fulltime administrator.

Almost all the skills John used in law enforcement were transferrable into his new position as city manager, especially dealing with people. Even the more specialized skills he gained in law enforcement have proven to be valuable in his newest position. In addition to being the city manager, John has been the acting director of public safety in Center Line for almost a year, requiring him to tap into some of these more specialized skills.

John says that the MPA program significantly strengthened the skills he uses in his current position, as well as broadening his perspective on public administration. John said it was as if it opened a second window into the world that changed how he previously saw things. Although the program changed his view slightly, his focus throughout his career, in all positions, has been to provide the best service possible.

DEPARTMENTAL FOCUS ON PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

The department will be focusing more attention on the importance of developing alumni connections in the coming year. To kick-start this effort we would like to remind you all of the upcoming MPA alumni event this coming spring. The event is combined with the Pi Alpha Alpha MPA honors society induction ceremony and works as a great way to connect our top students with alumni currently working in the field. As always, the event will be hosted in the University House near the main campus. We are anticipating a great event this year!

In addition, Drs. Fleischmann and Plagens are developing ideas for more frequent and less formal events to take

place throughout the year. One of these ideas is an EMU Eagles alumni baseball game on April 4th at 6:00 p.m. The other idea is to host quarterly gatherings at restaurants in the immediate area where students, faculty, alumni and friends of the program can gather for appetizers and a drink after work to socialize informally.

We look forward to developing these thoughts and creating an environment more beneficial for our program alumni. Maintaining alumni connections creates opportunities for growing professional contacts and we look forward to expanding our alumni relations efforts. We are excited to have you on board!

The Michigan Local Government Management Association (MLGMA) has launched a special program for new and mid-career public professionals. NextGen, which is a collaborative effort between the MLGMA, Eastern Michigan University, and other MPA programs, offers fellowship opportunities, development workshops, and networking events for members. In creating NextGen, the MLGMA hopes to provide future public managers with opportunities to expand their professional connections and develop critical skills. Although local government is facing significant cutbacks and layoffs, maintaining relevant skills and professional contacts will be crucial for the next generation. For more info visit

<http://mlgmanextgen.blogspot.com/>

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT— KRISTAL DAVIS

RECIPIENT OF THE JOHN BARSON SCHOLARSHIP IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Kristal Davis has proven herself to be a superior scholar well before she arrived at Eastern Michigan University. A Detroit native, she spent her freshman year at Tuskegee University in Alabama on an academic scholarship. Ms. Davis returned to Michigan to pursue a degree in political science and public administration in 2009 as a prestigious McNair Scholar. She enrolled as a student in EMU's competitive accelerated 3/2 master's program this past fall, and is currently concentrating in public management. She chose the MPA program because of its practical focus as well as the excellent support and encouragement she had received from Professors Arnold Fleischmann and Joe Ohren.

Kristal's career goals are in performance measurement and urban development, as well as her desire to play a part in the rebuilding of Detroit. This past summer she was enrolled in the American Political Science Association Ralph Bunch Institute at

Duke University, which hosts 20 promising students from across the country and aims at preparing them for entry into the field of academia. She spent her time researching the attitudes and perceptions surrounding the city of Detroit and was given the opportunity to present her findings at the annual APSA conference in Seattle this past September. While at first she was intimidated, during her time at the Institute Ms. Davis learned networking within the field of public administration is invaluable

to a successful career. Upon the completion of her MPA at Eastern, she intends to move into a PhD program to further her studies in political science.

Ms. Davis was awarded the Barson Scholarship for the 2011 academic year, made possible by Dee and Bill Brehm in memory of their dear friend John Barson, an EMU alumnus known best for his healthcare and public management legacy. Ms. Davis explained that, "being awarded the Barson Scholarship means that I have the support and encouragement from the MPA faculty to accomplish my academic and professional goals. I feel honored that they believe in me enough to grant me this scholarship. It is the result of all of my hard work, and I think it pushes me to do more and work harder to show I am worthy of the award."



**KRISTAL DAVIS AND EMU
PRESIDENT DR. SUSAN MARTIN**

OHREN FUND LAUNCHED— CONT'D

new MPA Director Greg Plagens, and the honoree himself. Approximately seventy people attended, including current and former students, EMU faculty, and members of the community. The event brought the total amount raised for the fund to \$7,700. To reach fully endowed status, only \$2,300 more is needed. Anyone wishing to contribute

the fund may do so online at www.emufoundation.org, by clicking on "Donate Now," and selecting "Fund #01868, Joe Ohren Internship Fund."

Thank you to guest contributor Laura Ann Shue MPA '10



**DR. CHUCK MONSMA AND DR. GREG
PLAGENS**



**ARTHUR AND KAREN LINDENBERG
WITH DR. ARNOLD FLEISCHMANN**

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RECENT GRADUATES!

Matthew Gabrielle, *A Bright Idea for Local Governments: The Benefits of Switching to LED Street Lights*

Sarah K. Ponders, *Communication, Group Decision Making, And Natural Resource Management Collaborations: Exploring Best Practices for Effective Communication*

Tania L. James, *Working to End Chronic Homelessness: Assessing the Perceptions of Nonprofit Homeless Service Providers*

Huda O. Ahmed, *Recommended Evaluation Design for the PEPFAR Program*

Joseph Miller, *A Comprehensive Research Design to Assess the Economic Impact of Newly Constructed Sports Stadiums on their Host Economy*

Joshua Karanja, *Assessing the Impact of Needle Exchange Programs and Establishing Success Factors for Implementing such Programs*

FACULTY RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Jeffrey Bernstein recently published "The Citizenship Imperative and the Role of Faculty Development" (with Rebecca S. Nowacek and Michael B. Smith) in *To Improve the Academy*. His piece, "Signature Pedagogies in Political Science: Teaching Students How Political Actors Behave" has just come out in an edited volume entitled *More Signature Pedagogies*, published by Stylus Press.

Dr. Claudia Petrescu attended the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) conference in Toronto (November 2011) where she participated in the "Training Diverse Leaders for the Future – Today and Tomorrow" panel and presented a paper titled "Building Communication Capacity in and between Nonprofit Organizations."

Dr. Raymond Rosenfeld has received three outside research grants for a non-North American stage of his Comparative Civic Culture project for field work in Norway (Winter 2011), Latvia and Ukraine (Spring 2012): Leiv Eiriksson Mobility Grant, The Research Council of Norway; Small Research Grant, American Political Science Association; and Title VIII Short-Term Travel Grant (STG), United States Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research with IREX (International Research & Exchanges Board).

AMERICAN HUMANICS IS NOW THE NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE



NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE

The American Humanics program at EMU changed its name to the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance (NLA) program to reflect its mission of preparing students for successful careers in the nonprofit sector. The program is introducing the nationally recognized Certified Nonprofit Professional (CNP) certification to its alumni. Certified alumni use the professional credential CNP to denote their specialized skill-set in nonprofit management and leadership. The CNP certification can be listed after the person's name on a business card. Many students from the Master in Public Administration and Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Administration programs benefit from the NLA program. In addition to the

CNP certification, the program offers other benefits, such as completion of 14 skill-based competencies that complement a program of study, a mentorship program, and exciting internship opportunities. The program also encourages students to explore career options, develop connections within the community, but, most importantly, to develop new skills and to discover themselves.

The NLA office is located in 215 Rackham. For more information about the program, contact Dr. Claudia Petrescu at 734.487.1612 or nonprofit@emich.edu. For more information about the program visit our website www.emich.edu/nonprofit.

Contributed by Dr. Claudia Petrescu

FIND US ON FACEBOOK



Have you ever wondered what the MPA program was up to in between our bi-annual newsletters? The Public Administration program now has a Facebook group dedicated to connecting alumni, current students, and interested individuals from the surrounding communities. Join the group to receive updates about program activities, networking opportunities, and current events affecting Michigan public administrators. Search for us on Facebook under **Eastern Michigan University Students, Alumni & Friends** or type <https://www.facebook.com/groups/EMU.MPA.Group/> into your web browser.

M.P.A. DEVELOPMENT FUND

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

Please mail contributions to:

Eastern Michigan University
Foundation
1349 South Huron Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Please make checks payable to:

Eastern Michigan University

Please designate "M.P.A. Development Fund" on your checks so your contribution will go to the M.P.A. program.