



The MPA Network

SUMMER 2024

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

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“One of the most enjoyable parts of the mentorship has been getting more honest reactions from administrators. I have also been able to ask my mentor about stuff I am learning in class and for help with projects.”

Sam Howard, current bachelor's-MPA student

Building Relationships in the Mentorship & Professional Development Program

This year the EMU MPA Program launched the Mentorship & Professional Development Program, which was designed to provide public administration students with an opportunity to build a professional relationship with alumni from the EMU MPA program. In addition to gaining career advice from their mentors, students had the opportunity to job shadow, network, and attend professional meetings, conferences, or workshops with their mentors. During this pilot year, 14 MPA alumni were paired with undergraduate students from the Political Science Department or MPA students based on similar interests or career sectors.

where they met each other and worked together in developing a mentee-mentor commitment contract, which outlined expectations, goals, and action steps of the mentorship. Throughout the year, the MPA program checked in with the pairs, and the participants provided updates about their activities. Mentors and students were invited to the MPA alumni reception and the department's honors banquet to share their experiences. Based on the feedback received, the Mentorship & Professional Development Program was a meaningful and worthwhile experience for most participants, and we look forward to engaging students and alumni again this coming year.

On October 12, 2023, mentors and students attended an orientation

To become a mentor, please sign up on the [MPA Alumni webpage](#).

Mentors and students at the MPA Alumni Reception



emich.edu/mpa

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

Mentorship Program Experiences

“ This match has given me so much motivation as a nonprofit coach and consultant. My mentee is always prepared for our meetings and very open to my recommendations. I have learned through this process that the students from EMU are very prepared and highly professional.”

Tania James, EMU MPA alumna and Executive Director of Friends In Deed

“ This has been an amazing mentorship experience for me. I have been paired with a high achieving undergrad student, and I am extremely impressed by their goal-orientated mindset and communication skills. This mentorship has been a great learning experience of all the challenges this generation of college students face, and how more competitive the job market is now versus even 10 years ago. This mentorship program has helped to ignite my passion to continue to give back to EMU and this generation of college students by providing them opportunities to shadow my profession and learn about the nonprofit world.”

Joseph Yelick, EMU MPA alumnus and Community Engagement Manager for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southeast Michigan

ALUMNI NEWS



Joseph Yelick, 2012 EMU MPA alum and Community Engagement Manager for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southeast Michigan, spoke at a Student Alumni Association event on March 14, shared what brought him to EMU and what life has looked like since graduating, and offered some advice for students looking for public service careers.



EMU MPA alumna and Director of Community Health Services at Michigan Medicine **Alfreda Rooks** was named Women United's 2024 Washtenaw Woman of the Year.

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FACULTY NEWS

DR. TUCKER STALEY

Dr. Staley was on sabbatical during the 2024 winter semester, and during this time he worked with the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, VA, under an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) agreement. He was assigned to the Data Analytics Group-Resources (DAG-R), which falls under the Army National Guard's (ARNG) Resourcing Division (G8). The National Guard Bureau (NGB) administers policy, processes, and programming across the 54 states and territories (the 54) and provides advice and guidance across the Department of Defense. ARNG concurrently provides strategic depth and operational capacity at both the state and federal levels.

The DAG-R is a new branch established in 2023 which provides independent analysis, assessment, analytic insight, and advice throughout the Planning Programming Budgeting Execution (PPBE) budgeting process. The branch also works to collaborate, coordinate, evaluate, assess, and determine resourcing requirements, priorities, and associated risks across the ARNG enterprise. The DAG-R was created to help reduce silos and increase transparency in G8 resourcing decision-making



by incorporating the use of the scientific method to inform its recommendations.

Given both the past and current financial and organizational challenges faced by ARNG, Dr. Staley was tasked with providing an unbiased, independent analysis on the current state of the PPBE budgeting process within ARNG. He spent extensive time reading over formal guidance and regulation documents in addition to spending time interacting with program managers and leadership across all divisions within NGB and at Head Quarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) at the Pentagon. Dr. Staley also spent a week meeting with leadership from the Michigan National Guard to gain a better understanding of how things work at the street-level in our home state.

Based on his observational research, Dr. Staley compiled a series of primers for NGB leadership which offered recommendations based on various levels of organizational interactions. He also authored a formal report which grounded his observations within the academic literature and created a blueprint for how ARNG may move forward to address its financial and organizational challenges.

Even though Dr. Staley had to wear a suit and tie to work every day during his sabbatical, he plans on continuing his work and research with the National Guard Bureau in the future and build a stronger, long-lasting partnership between the Michigan National Guard and Eastern Michigan University.

FACULTY & STUDENT NEWS

DR. BARBARA PATRICK

Dr. Patrick developed a diversity, equity, and inclusion training program for all EMU departments. The training, based on student experiences in the classroom and in the community, identifies vulnerable students and strategies for recruiting and retaining them. Work on this training concluded this winter after a 3-year process.



MPA Faculty Develop Strategic Plan for Chelsea Police

EMU MPA faculty members Barbara Patrick and Shu Wang worked with the Southeast Michigan Criminal Justice Policy Research Project (SMART) at Eastern Michigan University and the City of Chelsea to develop a 5-year plan of action for the Chelsea Police Department. Dr. Wang served as the project lead. Information was collected at community and employee input sessions, and the plan includes a series of short-term and long-term goals for the Chelsea Police Department that involve enhancing employee engagement, support, and satisfaction; enhancing operational efficiency and effectiveness; and building community partners and public trust.

MPA Faculty and Student Speak on Equality and Justice Panel

On January 17, EMU MPA faculty member Barbara Patrick and MPA student Kevin Fofanah participated in a panel discussion exploring the historical significance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Walk to Freedom" in Detroit. By examining the parallels between the walk and current social issues, the event sought to engage the community in meaningful dialogue and foster a deeper understanding of the ongoing struggle for equality and justice.



2023-24 MPA TEACHING FACULTY

Heather Khan Welsh, Ph.D.

Barbara Patrick, Ph.D.

Gregory Plagens, Ph.D.

Tucker Staley, Ph.D.

Shu Wang, Ph.D.

Kevin Welch, MPA

Stephanie Zorn-Kasprzak, MOL,
CCAP

Visit the Political Science
Department website to learn
more about our faculty: [www.
emich.edu/polisci](http://www.emich.edu/polisci)

“The MLK walk to freedom was an unreal experience. Three generations of Black excellence expressing their thoughts and beliefs isn't something that happens as often as it should; to be a part of that changed my perspective on a lot of issues that currently face our community. One thing I learned from the experience is that my generation, in particular, has been given everything we need to create a truly equal society and hold those in power accountable for their actions. We just need to realize the power we have.”

Kevin Fofanah, MPA Student

MPA Alumni Reception and Awards Ceremony

The annual MPA reception was held on March 25, 2024, in the EMU Student Center. A number of alumni, professors, current students, and friends of the program gathered to mingle and celebrate our honorees both in person and on Zoom. MPA students were inducted into the Pi Alpha Alpha honor society, and the MPA Intern of the Year award was presented. Participants in the pilot year of the Mentorship & Professional Development Program shared their experiences.



Dr. Charles Monsma, one of the founding faculty members of the EMU MPA program, stands in the audience.



MPA Coordinator Rose Jindal (3rd from left) with mentors and students who participated in the Mentorship & Professional Development Program



Faculty, students, alumni, family, friends, and university administrators at the MPA reception



Congratulations to this year's Pi Alpha Alpha Inductees

- Stacie M. Blakley**
- Nia D. Bonds**
- Maureen Feighan-Kurth**
- Preston Zacharias**

We are proud of you and your outstanding academic achievements!

Pi Alpha Alpha is the global honor society for public affairs and administration students in programs accredited by Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration.

Barson Fellow



Congratulations to Maureen Feighan-Kurth, who was awarded the John Barson Fellowship for the 2024-25 academic year. Maureen shared: “I’m really honored to be selected as this year’s Barson Fellow. In reading about Dr. Barson, I’ve learned how committed he was to effective administration, efficiency, and the application of public administration

skills. Efficiency is critical to my own life -- especially as a special needs mom. And Dr. Barson made a difference as a doctor and professor. I can only hope to do the same in my own career. I’m a longtime journalist in Southeast Michigan, but I’d love to use my MPA degree to transition into nonprofit work, specifically working in communications or for a health-related nonprofit. The program has broadened my understanding of not just the nonprofit sector, but administration in general.

I want to use my journalism foundation but use everything I’ve learned about collaboration, strategic planning, creating public policy, and budgeting in some kind of leadership role.”

MPA Intern of the Year



Congratulations to Preston Zacharias, MPA Intern of the Year. During his internship with the City of Saline, Preston helped create business outreach packets to retain and attract local businesses, assisted in outsourcing the City of Saline’s Police Department

dispatching services, and worked on revising/standardizing Treasury Department policies. Preston shared: **“My internship experience was truly an invaluable experience for me! It has helped solidify my future career goals.**

Gaining exposure to local government operations and the various departments and positions was the most valuable aspect of my internship experience.”

Do you have internship or job openings at your agency?

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

Congratulations to our Summer 2023 - Winter 2024 MPA Graduates!

Fay Alshimmary

Stacie Blakley

Michelle Cole

Samantha Falco

Alexander Mackenzie

Jason Meier

Courtney Mills

Alyssa Newsome

Lisa Perschke

Sarah Scalabrino

Preston Zacharias



Pardee/MGFOA Scholarship

Award

Congratulations to Sam Howard, current bachelor's-MPA student, who was awarded the Jeffrey C. and Mary W. Pardee/MGFOA Scholarship. Sam shared: "I am honored to be selected as the award recipient for the Pardee/MGFOA



Scholarship. This scholarship will help me to continue my education, and it shows the confidence that the department has in me to complete my combined degree. I am thankful to the scholarship committee and all involved in the process. With my MPA, I would like to work in municipal government as a city manager. Within government, my interests include economic and community development, revitalization (including placemaking), and strategic planning.

My goal is to work in local government with these focal points to promote sustainability at all levels and ensure that our cities are advancing and prepared for the future."

Want to learn more about our graduate students?

Visit our website to view the profiles of students in our MPA program:

<https://www.emich.edu/political-science/grad/master/graduate-students.php>

MPA Student's Research on Sustainable Communities

In summer 2024, Sam Howard, current bachelor's-MPA student, participated in the Catalyst Leadership Circle (CLC) Fellowship, which is a program designed to help communities reach their climate and energy goals while developing a pipeline of passionate, capable students ready to enter the workforce in sustainability careers after gaining hands-on, applied knowledge.

This fellowship is supported by the state of Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Catalyst Communities program. Sam worked with the City of Rockford, MI, on making sustainability sustainable in small communities.

Sam shared: "The focus of this project is to research, perform a feasibility study, and recommend ways the city can hire a sustainability manager to help further the work they are accomplishing. For my shareable deliverable, I created a 'Guide to Hiring a Sustainability Manager,' listing the various structural options available for a position. This guide can help municipalities begin to think about their ability to hire a sustainability manager to help achieve sustainability-related goals. This project has helped introduce some of the challenges faced by smaller municipalities and how to creatively address those challenges. **Through**

my research, I have been able to gain a better understanding of both human resources and regional partnerships in municipal government. I have also been able to expand my professional network and knowledge through connections with leaders in Rockford and other communities involved in the fellowship."

EMU Graduate Research and Creativity Activity Conference



Sam Howard, current bachelor's-MPA student, presented his research "Politics-Administration Dichotomy: A Look at Strong Mayor vs. Council-Manager Systems" at the EMU Graduate Research and Creative Activity Conference on March 15, 2024.

Sam shared: "Having the opportunity to research and present allowed me to better understand the public administration field and gain insight into the role of city manager. I look forward to applying my research in my future career."

Be a mentor & help a student learn about public service careers

Want to help a public administration student by sharing your personal experience? Help us empower the next generation of public service leaders by serving as a mentor in the EMU MPA Mentorship & Professional Development Program. We are excited to connect our current students with alumni from

the MPA program so they can build professional relationships, gain career advice, job shadow, and attend professional meetings, conferences, or workshops with their mentors. To learn more and to sign up, please visit the [MPA Alumni webpage](#).

MAKE A GIFT and help our program grow

If you would like to give back to the MPA program, please consider making a contribution.

The **MPA Program Support Fund** supports student and alumni programming.

The **Joe Ohren Student Internship Fund** supports students who are doing an unpaid internship for academic credit.

The **Raymond Rosenfeld Professional Development Fund** supports student participation in conferences, workshops, and other opportunities that will help them excel in their public service careers.

All contributions are tax-deductible.

Donations can be made online: <https://www.emich.edu/political-science/alumni/donate.php>

Thank you for your support!

Update Your Contact & Career Information

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

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