

# THE MPA NETWORK

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**EASTERN**  
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



## Note from the Director



Dr. Jeffrey L. Bernstein

I've now been teaching MPA classes for about fourteen years. Over that time, I have taught many of our students and alumni. While I have nowhere near the voluminous memory of our students that some of my senior colleagues have, I certainly know many of you, and take pride in the many accomplishments of EMU MPA students. You really are proof that this program has contributed to the public good in southeastern Michigan, and beyond, during the thirty-six years we have been in existence.

Perhaps you have heard me say this (and I apologize for repeating myself if you have): I have hardly ever asked an MPA student to help our program and been turned down. Our alumni have generously served on capstone committees, helped our students find internships and navigate the job market, and have provided advice about the "big world out there." You have guest-lectured in our classes, been panelists when we have done discussions, served on advisory boards, met with our job candidates, or contributed money to help our program grow. For this, and for so many other things, we are grateful!

During my year as director, I have devoted much attention to ways to harness the power of our alumni base to help out our students. I know I had a wonderful time in March at our two Alumni-Student-Faculty Networking events, one in Ypsilanti and one in Northville (right near the Livonia campus). It was great to see so many of my faculty colleagues come out, and to introduce so many of our alumni to our current students. The food was wonderful as well, although I hope you were smarter than me and did not overindulge on the absolutely FANTASTIC cheesy bread at Aubree's! I regret my lack of self-control.

In this context, I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Rose Soliven, our MPA coordinator, who handled all of the logistical details for these events with her typical effectiveness and good cheer. My role as MPA Director must fit within many other roles – professor, mentor, researcher, father, husband, baseball fan – and having Rose working on these details extends the reach of my position in considerable ways. These events would not have happened without Rose's support.

As we wrap up this academic year and look ahead to the summer, and to next year, Rose and I would love to hear from you about ways in which we can help to connect our students and our alumni. What help do current students need as they move through the program (and contemplate their future afterwards)? What more could we have done for you when you were students? To that end, how can our alumni network best support our current students? What type of events should we be holding? How can we help these mentoring relationships develop, and use these mentoring relationships to enhance the value that our students (and alumni) derive from the program? I thank you, in advance, for any suggestions you can offer for how we can do this better in the coming months and years. Feel free to contact me by email, [jeffrey.bernstein@emich.edu](mailto:jeffrey.bernstein@emich.edu).

*Jeffrey L. Bernstein*

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### THE MPA NETWORK

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

## ALUMNI NEWS

- Kimberly Dubbs ('91) is currently the Deputy Director/IMO for OCFO:ORIM at the US EPA.
- David Behen ('96) was selected by the Eastern Michigan University Alumni Association to receive the Alumni Achievement Award. He will be recognized at the 55th Annual Alumni Awards Ceremony, May 21, 2016. David holds dual roles as director of the Department of Technology, Management and Budget and as Michigan's chief information officer.
- Nate Geinzer ('06) now works as the City Manager of Brighton. Nate was previously the Assistant to the City Manager of Farmington Hills.
- John N. Nelson ('08) was promoted to Lieutenant with the City of Novi Police Department last December.
- Christopher Sadler ('13) began working this January as a Research Associate for the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission.
- Jennifer Paillon ('14) accepted a full-time position at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Detroit as a tax associate for this coming fall.
- Ambrozie Wells ('14) has been offered a position with the FEMA Office in Chicago. She had worked in Asheville, NC, for the state in public health emergency response.
- Reynaldo Martell ('15) recently accepted a position of Contract and Grant Specialist at the University of Michigan. The position is in research administration with an emphasis on creating budgets.

## A CLOSER LOOK: NATE GEINZER IS NEW MANAGER FOR CITY OF BRIGHTON



Nate Geinzer

Source: City of Brighton

Nate Geinzer, a 2006 MPA graduate, is just settling into his new position as City Manager for the City of Brighton. This is Geinzer's first position as a city manager, after serving more than eight years as the Assistant to the City Manager in Farmington Hills.

Geinzer is a Michigan native. He graduated from Pinckney High School in 1997, and has lived in Brighton with his wife and three children since 2004. Geinzer is also a former city intern and part time employee. During his tenure he "had the opportunity to work closely with staff, downtown business owners, elected officials, and other community stakeholders to implement the City's first Principal Shopping District (PSD)." The PSD still exists today and Geinzer forged relationships that he can draw on in his new position.

The decision to move to Brighton was easy for Geinzer and his wife: "[W]e were thinking about communities that provided the amenities that we wanted and would be a great place to raise our future family...Now we are in our second City of Brighton home and would not

change anything." Among the many reasons Geinzer cited were the walkable downtown and neighborhoods.

When the position opened up, Geinzer knew it was the perfect fit. He said about the decision, "I always felt Brighton would be the 'one' position that could pull me away from Farmington Hills. I have the rare opportunity to work in the place my family and I have called home for nearly 12 years—no move required. Who wouldn't want to walk or bike to work if they could?"

In his first weeks Geinzer intends to get familiar with the city itself, staff and operations. A top priority for Geinzer is building a collaborative atmosphere, "where staff at all levels are heard and have the opportunity to contribute. This has to begin day one."

Geinzer realistically acknowledges there will be a number of challenges awaiting him. In the short term will be "working through the dynamics of a large redevelopment project on the site of a former neighborhood elementary school," Geinzer said, "This will be a multi-story senior housing and memory care facility located in a low-density neighborhood. The impact on residents and neighboring townships will be great."

Geinzer's experiences as assistant to the city manager will prove valuable tools in his new position. He had much freedom in his role to "be creative in moving community priorities forward," he explained, "Nearly every project I worked on required the formation of multi-dimensional teams. Identifying and getting the right people...is not only essential for a successful project, but it's essential for leading a team of local government professionals."

For any current MPA students looking at the city manager profession, Geinzer advises, "It is not an easy track, but it is rewarding. The best advice I can offer is to find a great internship and get involved in the profession early." He offers MLGMA as a great place to build a network and invest time.

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## MELISSA BENSON 2016-2017 BARSON FELLOW



Melissa Benson

Melissa Benson will receive the 2016-2017 John Barson Fellowship. Benson graduated from EMU in 2010 with a combined Bachelor of Science and Masters in Occupational Therapy. After working in the public school system for five years, Benson decide to pursue her MPA to satisfy her curiosity about "how long-term decisions made at an administrative level affect day-to-day functioning."

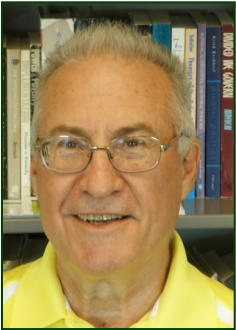
Within the broader MPA curriculum Benson is focusing on health administration and non-profit classes. Related to these interests, Benson shares, "My long-term career goal is to work in an administrative or management capacity, possibly in hospice care or a general hospital setting."

Benson currently works as a Graduate Assistant for the Political Science Department. Over the summer she will work at the University of Michigan with MPA Alum, Laura Shue. "I will be doing research, learning technology involving the electronic health records system, working with legal and compliance offices and stakeholders," Benson stated, "and learning project management skills."

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## MPA BLOG SERVES AS PLATFORM FOR PUBLIC SERVICE INSIGHTS

In February the EMU MPA Program launched a content marketing initiative. The EMU MPA Blog features short essays written by faculty, alumni, students, university partners, and community partners about trends, reflections, and advice regarding public and nonprofit administration. According to Advisory Board member and freelance writer and editor Natalie Burg, the idea is to engage prospective and current students with the community and the profession. The blog serves as a platform where we can showcase the experiences of our alumni and faculty and the impact of the MPA program. Check out some brief excerpts from recent posts:



Joe Ohren

EMU public administration professor **Dr. Joe Ohren** reflects on the local government manager's job.



*The job of the local government manager is not for everyone—the pay is not always great, job security can be a challenge, and in some communities the expectation is that a newly appointed manager would move into “their” community upon being offered a contract. But can you imagine any other role or position that offers the potential to personally influence and shape the quality of life in a community? As I would say to students, know what you are getting into, but the possibilities are endless.*

**April Calkovsky**, Career Coach and Certified Federal Advisor with the University Advising and Career Development Center, discusses career fair strategies.



*Career fairs are an opportunity to connect with employers face to face and make a great first impression. Many employers use online application systems that, once completed, seem to disappear into a black hole, and you are left to wonder if your application even made it to human resources personnel. At a career fair, you can make contact with a recruiter where you may establish a good rapport by demonstrating your communication skills and marketing your knowledge, skills, and abilities... Career fairs are excellent networking opportunities and great confidence builders. In-person networking is among the most productive activities you can do to increase your success in obtaining interviews and ultimately, your first job.*



April Calkovsky

**James Krizan**, '13 alum and Village Manager of Decatur, writes about how he applied his MPA education to his first public administration position.



James Krizan



*I entered EMU's MPA program fully anticipating that I would pursue a career in nonprofit management; I had spent the previous seven years working in the nonprofit sector. However, that changed with my first course in the program. It sparked my passion and desire for service and my life in public administration and local government.*

*I was appointed to the position of Decatur Village Manager on September 30, 2013, just five months after completing my MPA at EMU. It was an exciting time walking into my first public sector working experience, and I feel my education prepared me for the various challenges I faced in Decatur, located in Southwest Michigan.*

We invite our alumni and friends to read the blog (<http://www.emich.edu/polisci/programs/graduate/blog.php>), share posts on social media, direct your colleagues to the blog, and contribute your own experiences and reflections. Contact Rose Soliven ([rsoliven@emich.edu](mailto:rsoliven@emich.edu)) with your idea.



## ANNUAL MPA ALUMNI AND AWARD EVENT

On April 4 at the Ladies' Literary Club in Ypsilanti, the department held its annual MPA Alumni Chapter Reception and Pi Alpha Alpha Induction. Membership in PAA is limited to those with academic achievement and/or outstanding public service. This year's PAA inductees included: Madelyne Bernard-Diab, Eleanor Getschman, Jennifer Hawes, Joseph P. Martinez, Megan R. Petersen, Jeremy Rosenberg, and Clinton N. Smith.

At the ceremony, the scholarship and award winners for the year were also recognized. Verna McDaniel received the Outstanding Public Administrator Award for 33 years of service with Washtenaw County, the last six of which she served as County



This year's Pi Alpha Alpha inductees pictured above with MPA Faculty.

Administrator. Melissa Benson won the 2016-2017 Barson Fellowship (see Page 2 for more on Ms. Benson).

Dr. Raymond Rosenfeld, internship director and professor, presented the Intern of the Year Award to three exemplary interns. Eleanor Getschman interned with the City of Brighton's Community Development Department. Brian Rakovitis interned just outside of Lima, Peru for Building Dignity, a non-profit focused on education and neighborhood-led development. Joseph Martinez, not pictured, also received the award for his work with the City of Plymouth, under a Michigan Local Government Management Association (MLGMA) Fellowship.



Above Left: Verna McDaniel, recipient of the Outstanding Public Administrator Award, poses with Dr. Joe Ohren. Center: Eleanor Getschman and Brian Rakovitis receive the Intern of the Year Award from Dr. Raymond Rosenfeld. Not pictured is fellow award winner Joseph P. Martinez. Right: Melissa Benson receives the 2016-2017 Barson Fellowship from MPA Director Dr. Jeffrey Bernstein.

### OHREN STUDENT INTERNSHIP SCHOLARSHIP

The Joe Ohren Internship Scholarship helps students who are placed in unpaid internships gain valuable work experience, which can be a critical factor in the hiring process. Please show your support with a donation to the following link:

<https://www.emich.edu/foundation/give/index.php?fund=01868> (Click the title for hyperlink)

### FIND US ON LINKEDIN AND FACEBOOK

Have you ever wondered what the MPA program was up to in between our semiannual newsletters? The Public Administration program has a LinkedIn group and 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 LinkedIn under **Eastern Michigan University Master of Public Administration (MPA) Students, Alumni & Faculty**, or on Facebook under **Eastern Michigan University MPA Students, Alumni & Friends**.



### MPA DEVELOPMENT FUND

If you are wondering how you can give something back to the MPA program, please consider making a contribution to the MPA Development Fund. All contributions are tax-deductible and are used to support student and alumni planning and events. Click the title for hyperlink or visit: [www.emich.edu/polisci/donate](http://www.emich.edu/polisci/donate)

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*Thank you for your support!*