

# MPA ANNUAL REPORT



George Mason University

Department of Public and International Affairs

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## Director's Update: Tim Conlan



This year, the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program celebrates the 25th anniversary of its first graduating class. Such an occasion is a useful time to reflect on the program's growth and accomplishments to date.

The MPA program was one of the first graduate programs at George Mason University (GMU), and today it is the largest graduate program in the College of Arts and Sciences with nearly 300 students. The quality of the program's fac-

ulty and students have earned it a national reputation for excellence. This was recognized once again with the latest rankings of public affairs programs by *U.S. News and World Report*, which once more placed GMU's MPA program among the top fifty in the country. What makes this accomplishment particularly impressive is that virtually all of the other top ranked programs are in doctoral granting departments. Thus, the University's approval this year of a new PhD program in Justice, Law, and Crime Policy, linked to our MPA concentration in Administration of Justice, and the advancement next year of a proposed PhD in Political Science, with a concentration in Public Administration, bode very well for the con-

tinued growth and reputation of the MPA program.

The accomplishments of this year's graduating students are another indication of the MPA program's success. As noted on page four of this report, three of our MPA students were selected as finalists in the federal government's elite Presidential Management Fellows program. In addition, 28 students were inducted into GMU's chapter of Pi Alpha Alpha--the national honor society of graduate public affairs programs. Finally, this academic year witnessed the graduation of our first class of Northern Virginia Public Service Fellows and the induction of our third cohort. This extraordinary group of practicing local government professionals has been sponsored by their employ-

ers to enhance the managerial skills of the next generation of senior managers in their respective jurisdictions. As the first cohort graduated in December, a new group of Local Government Fellows began their studies in January, with several new jurisdictions sponsoring employees in this prestigious program.

As you examine the rest of this report, I think you will be impressed by the MPA program's dynamism and excellence. From the addition of exceptional new faculty, to the publication of important new research, to the activities of committed students and alumni, the GMU MPA program is poised to make ever greater strides over the next twenty-five years.

## New Faculty: Lehn Benjamin



**Lehn M. Benjamin** is Assistant Professor of Non-Profit Management Studies. Dr. Benjamin earned her PhD in Regional Planning from Cornell University in 2004. She also has a Mas-

ters in Regional Planning (Cornell University, 1998) and a BA in Communications from the University of Minnesota, where she graduated *summa cum laude* in 1990.

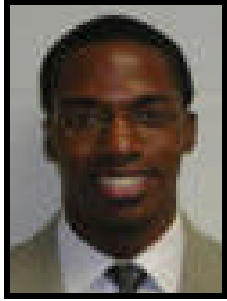
From 1999 to 2001, Professor Benjamin worked as a financial and program analyst with the U.S. Department of Treasury, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund, where she conducted

policy analyses of CDFI Fund programs. In the early 1990s, she was a researcher with the Foundation for Contemporary Research in South Africa, and later the University of the Western Cape, where she conducted research on women, education, and development.

Professor Benjamin's publications include "Community Development Financial Institutions: Cur-

rent Issues and Future Prospects," in the *Journal of Urban Affairs* (coauthored with Julia Rubin and Sean Zielenbach) and "The Merits of Mixing Methods in Evaluation" in *Evaluation* (with Jennifer Greene and Leslie Goodyear). Her current research focuses on the intersection between non-profit organizations, accountability, and democracy.

## New Faculty: Reuben Earl Brigety, II



**Reuben Earl Brigety, II**, is an Assistant Professor of Public Affairs. Dr. Brigety earned his PhD in International Affairs from Cambridge University, England, in 2003. He also has a

Masters in International Affairs (Cambridge University, 1997) and a BS in Political Science (1995) from the U.S. Naval Academy, where he was a Secretary of the Navy Distinguished Graduate and received the Thomas G. Pownall Scholarship for graduate study at Cambridge University.

From 2001 to 2003, Professor Brigety worked as a research analyst with Human Rights Watch, where he conducted research on civilian protec-

tions in warfare. He coordinated and served on research teams to assess civilian casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq. Prior to this, he served as Deputy Operations Officer, Expeditionary Warfare Group, U.S. Navy Atlantic Fleet, and as a Political-Military Analyst, Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel, the Pentagon.

Professor Brigety's research interests include human rights in armed conflicts, humanitarian assis-

tance, and international NGOs. His publications include "Public Diplomacy and Human Rights," in Jeffrey Helsing and Julie Mertus, eds., *Human Rights and Conflict: New Actors, Strategies and Ethical Dilemmas* (United States Institute of Peace, 2004); and "International Humanitarian Law Issues in a Potential War in Iraq," *Human Rights Watch* (February 2003).

## New Faculty: Jane Kornblut

**Jane S. Kornblut** joined the GMU faculty in 2004 as the Nonprofit Professional-in-Residence, bringing twenty-five years of leadership and practical knowledge to this nationally recognized nonprofit management program. Her areas of expertise include board development and governance issues, strategic planning, organizational change, fund raising and volunteer management. She is an experienced facilitator and skilled professional development trainer. For eight years Professor

Kornblut served as executive director of Volunteer Fairfax (VF), a regional resource center for volunteerism and service, where she developed innovative programs in youth civic engagement, nonprofit capacity building and community emergency preparedness.

Prior to her tenure at VF, she was a senior associate of the National

Center for Nonprofit Boards (BoardSource) where she consulted with boards of

directors throughout the sector on a variety of governance issues and facilitated board retreats, conference roundtables and other community forums.

Professor Kornblut currently serves on the Fairfax County Community Council on Homelessness and the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory

Committee, the advisory board of the Northern Virginia Community Foundation and the steering committee of the newly-organized Virginia Network of Nonprofit Organizations. She is past president of the Northern Virginia Human Services Coalition, the Volunteer Council of the American Symphony Orchestra League and The McLean Orchestra. Professor Kornblut holds a BA degree from American University and a Master of Education degree from GMU.



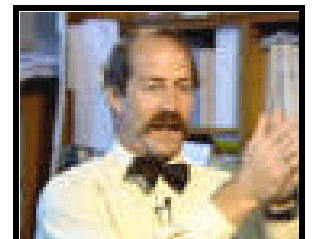
## Adjunct Spotlight: Frank Shafroth

**Frank Shafroth** is an Adjunct Professor of Public Administration, where he teaches courses on Public Finance and Association Public Affairs and Advocacy. Professor Shafroth currently serves as the Director of Federal Legislative Affairs for Arlington County,

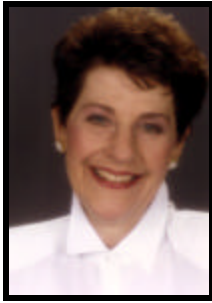
Virginia.

Prior to this, he served for four years as the Director of State-Federal Relations for the National Governors Association. Professor Shafroth also served with the National League of Cities (NLC) for nearly 15 years. He began as a lob-

byist working on energy, transportation and environmental issues, becoming NLC's director of the center for Policy and Federal relations in 1991. Professor Shafroth administered NLC's policy development process in addition to its advocacy work.



## Adjunct Spotlight: Enid Beaumont



**Enid Beaumont** is an Adjunct Professor of Public Administration and a member of the National Academy of Public Administration. Dr.

Beaumont has a distinguished career in public administration, both domestically and internationally. She is a past president of the American Society of Public Administration. She served for many years as the Director of the Academy of State and Local Government in Washington, D.C., where she oversaw joint research and legal projects for the "big seven" associations of state and local government officials. Interna-

tionally, Dr. Beaumont has also served as Senior Public Management Advisor and Chief of Party for the Central Government Project of the Republic of Macedonia where she focused on civil service reform, increasing participation of citizens in their government, the creation of an ethics program, and the development of modern administrative procedures. She has also worked in Korea, Iran, the Philippines, and China.



*Above: George Mason statue. "The statue serves as a constant reminder of the ideals most important to George Mason, both the man and the university: freedom and learning." Picture and text from GMU website.*

## Student News: First Class of Public Service Fellows Celebrates Graduation

2004 saw the graduation of the first cohort in the Northern Virginia Public Service Fellows program, a group of twenty-four mid-career professionals who were sponsored by their local governments to participate in GMU's MPA program. Leaders from local jurisdictions, university administrators, program faculty, friends and the twenty-four graduates attended a graduation reception for the Fellows in January, which was highlighted by a speech from Kate Hanley, outgoing chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

"It's a privilege to be involved with these students and this program," said MPA director Larry Walters. Eighty-two applicants, from Fairfax, Arlington, Loudon and Prince William counties, applied for the twenty-four slots in the Fellows program. Appli-

cants were nominated by their local governments and selected on the basis of essays, academic and professional backgrounds, in-

"Building that relationship is a key dimension of the MPA program at GMU," said Bob Dudley, Chair of the Department of Public and Interna-

age our complex communities," Carlee said.

Griffin believes the first class sets the bar high for future graduates. "This group is so promising, and as diverse in gender and background as we could have asked," he said. "We couldn't have picked a more diverse and qualified class."



*2004 graduates of inaugural Northern Virginia Public Service Fellows program.*

interviews and supervisors' recommendations.

The Local Government Fellows program is unique among MPA programs in building close collaboration between the university and local governments in the Northern Virginia region.

tional Affairs.

Ron Carlee and Tony Griffin, the County Managers of Arlington and Fairfax Counties, agreed. "This program educates emerging leaders to have the administrative skills and technical background to man-



*Dr. Priscilla Regan, outgoing chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Kate Hanley, Dr. Sheldon Edner, and GMU president Alan G. Merten at the graduation ceremony.*

## Student News: MPA Students Named Presidential Management Finalists

Three graduating GMU MPA students have been named Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF) finalists, which entitles them to paid internships within the federal government.

"This is a very prestigious program run by the Office of Personnel Management," says Bob Dudley, chair of Public and International Affairs (PIA). "For many, PMF is a fast track into the senior executive service in the federal government," he adds.

More than 3,500 applicants compete nationally for the PMF program, which selects recently

graduated master's and PhD students. The three students are T'Ronda

orientation. "It is quite exciting to be a PMF finalist. With encouragement from

the process," Hong said.

Flagg says Costello, Edner and Bill Combs (affiliated faculty member with Northrop Grumman) were mentors for her during the process. "The rotational aspect of the PMF program and professional development opportunities will help me make long-term career decisions," says Flagg. "My primary goal is to gain a position that will allow me to have the largest impact to help our children gain a strong sense of social justice and a healthy outlook on life."



*GMU PMF Finalists T'Ronda Flagg, Darla Tomes, and Kil-Jae Hong*

Flagg, Darla Tomes, and Kil-Jae Hong.

Hong learned of the program first through conversations with friends in the State Department and later through MPA student

my professors, especially Dr. Sheldon Edner [affiliated faculty member with the Federal Highway Administration] and Bernadette Costello [PIA graduate coordinator], I applied for the PMF and survived

## Student News: Public Service Fellows Study Subnational Governance in Europe

In August, 2003, fourteen of the MPA program's Public Service Fellows embarked on an international educational experience by participating in an intensive course on Subnational Governance in Europe. The course focused on how Western European countries are dealing with many of the same public policy issues and dilemmas that face local government officials in the United States. Specific topics included aspects of environmental policy, public infrastructure, information technology, and social service delivery, as well as issues of governmental reform and modernization.

The program was based at the School of Public Administration at Eras-

specialists, the Fellows had opportunities to meet with their counterparts in

sels, meeting with staff of the European Commission who deal with issues of local government finance and regional economic development.

It was a stimulating experience for many of the Fellows to learn about alternative approaches to governance and service delivery. "It opened my eyes to new ideas about governance," said one participant. It was "the most remarkable learning experience I've ever had," in the words of another. Based on the program's success, plans are underway to make this comparative governance course a regular feature of the MPA program.



*MPA Public Service Fellows on their international journey*

mus University in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. In addition to lectures by prominent Dutch academic

Dutch government in Rotterdam, the Hague, and Amsterdam. The group also spent time in Brus-

## Program News: Federal/State/Local Budget Conference

GMU's MPA program, in conjunction with the National Academy of Public Administration, sponsored an afternoon conference on "The Impact of the 2005 Budget on State and Local Governments," on February 6, 2004.

Speakers included Bill Hoagland, former Staff Director of the Senate Budget Committee and

currently the budget and appropriations liaison for Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist; Ray Scheppach, Executive Director of the National Governors' Association; Chris



*GMU MPA Adjunct Professor Paul Posner*

Hoene, Research Director for the National League of Cities; Theresa Gullo, Director of State and Local Cost Estimating for the Congressional Budget Office; and Frank Shafroth, Adjunct Professor of Public Administration at GMU

and former head of Public Affairs for the National Governors' Association and the National League of Cities. The session was moderated by Paul Posner, Director of Strategic Issues at the U.S. Government Accountability Office and an Adjunct Professor in the MPA program.

## Program News: New Doctoral Program in Justice, Law, & Crime Policy

GMU's Board of Visitors has approved the creation of a doctoral program in Justice, Law, and Crime Policy (JLCP). Pending confirmation by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia in September, this venture will be the Commonwealth's first and only doctoral program in justice studies and policy.

Building upon the current Administration of Justice concentration in the

MPA program, the JLCP will be a multi-disciplinary program for studying the justice system, its processes, and policies. Like many graduate criminal justice programs, JLCP is concerned with understanding crime and how policies influence crime, but this program also addresses the organizations and processes by which justice is achieved. Students will investigate the theoretical bases of justice policy,

learn how to evaluate policy, and come to understand the legal rules that influence justice processes. The curriculum takes a broad approach to justice policymaking and addresses the organizational context in which law and justice policies are enforced. Students will also examine international institutions and non-government groups that are called to carry out justice.

A hallmark of the new doctoral program is its link to justice organizations in the Washington, D.C. area and Northern Virginia. The curriculum allows students to conduct research for and with public and private institutions, providing them with valuable insights into issues of concern to them while affording students the opportunity to develop and apply their research skills in an applied setting.

## Alumni News: The Wayne F. Anderson Award for Distinguished Public Service



*Award Recipient Ron Carlee, DOA '95 at the MPA alumni chapter banquet.*

During the alumni banquet on April 21, 2004, the MPA alumni chapter, to-

gether with the department, was proud to recognize Ron Carlee, DPA '95, with the Wayne F. Anderson Award for Distinguished Public Service.

Dr. Carlee, manager of Arlington County, Virginia, was honored for his career in public service and leadership in local government. He also serves on the MPA advisory committee.

Our fall program, held November 13, 2003, at the Thunder Grill in Union Sta-

tion, featured Bob O'Neill's presentation on the changing face of public administration. He is currently Executive Director of ICMA; former Executive Director of the National Academy of Public Administration; and former County Executive of Fairfax County.

The MPA alumni chapter hosts social hour networking and professional events such as this every fall and spring.



*Chapter President Mark Lerner, Interim MPA Director Tim Conlan, and Bob O'Neill at the fall MPA alumni chapter program held at Union Station.*

## Faculty Research: Evolution and Uses of Websites in Federal Agencies



*Dr. Priscilla Regan*



*Dr. Julianne Mahler*

GMU professors Priscilla Regan and Julie Mahler have been working on a series of research projects on the evolution and uses of websites in federal agencies.

Last summer they questioned congressional staff to examine congressional use of agency websites to oversee agency actions. Currently they are interviewing federal agency staff to uncover how the technical information and political content of websites are balanced in decisions about the content of websites.

In what ways do Administration actors control the political message of the sites? Do agencies differ in the degree of message control given to the Administration? They will interview staff in a sample of agencies whose sites are highly regarded and another sample with more modest websites as judged by professionals in the field.

They will compare agencies to highlight differences in the actors involved and the procedures for making decisions about web content. Based on their earlier research, they expect to find that the Administration has greater hierarchical control over the content of more modest websites, but less control over the more dispersed and elaborate sites.

## Faculty Research: Homeland Security

James Conant, Professor of Public Administration, was awarded a \$259,000 grant by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The three-year grant is designed to facilitate a close working relationship between TSA and GMU's MPA program in four main areas--the design and delivery of a graduate research seminar, paid internships, applied research, and academic research.



*Dr. James Conant*

## Faculty Research: Risk Analysis and the United States Forest Service

Over the past year, Professors Larry Walters and Peter Balint of the MPA program, Ron Stewart of Environmental Science and Public Policy, and Anand Desai of Ohio State University have collaborated on a project for the U.S. Forest Service entitled, "Risk and Uncertainty in the Policy Choices for the National Forests: The Sierra Nevada Case."

The purpose of the project was to help the agency improve its efforts to identify and communicate the risks and uncertainties associated with forest management in the Sierra Nevada region of California. The team considered the problem broadly and addressed risks and uncertainties related to science and ecology, economics and politics, budgetary and administrative concerns, and social and stakeholder values.

In completing its assignment, the team produced two reports for Forest Service administrators. Among its conclusions and recommendations, the team developed and proposed a process for integrating public values into ecological modeling. The researchers are now preparing several journal articles and a book related to their findings.



*Dr. Larry Walters*



*Dr. Peter Balint*