



OUTREACH

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MARRIOTT SCHOOL | ROMNEY INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT | FALL 2014

FIFTY YEARS OF ENTERING TO LEARN AND GOING FORTH TO SERVE



What started as a few professors teaching public administration skills within the political science department has grown into today's nationally recognized BYU MPA program, with fifty years of graduates impacting the communities they serve.

In 1963 political science professor

Stewart Grow established the first graduate program focused on public administration—a master's degree that would prepare students to serve in the public sector. Grow and fellow professors Dale Wright, Doyle Buckwalter, and later Karl Snow developed coursework that would help students apply what they learned in

my belief that there is something unique about public administration. Whether you are working in law, government, or city management, you need to be sensitive to the public interest as you conduct the public's business."

political science to work in local government.

"Our original goal was to create a professional program with a set core of required courses that we felt everyone in the field would shape the program while serving as a director of the Romney Institute from 1969 to 1978.

"It has always been

In 1965 the first group of students graduated, ready to put their degrees to use. Meanwhile the program continued to grow and soon split off from the political science department to join the School of Management—a move that brought new resources and renewed focus on developing specialized MPA curriculum.

Dale Wright, who was one of the MPA class of 1966, returned to BYU as a professor to help shape the public administration degree after receiving a PhD from the University of Southern California. The switch to the management school helped Wright and other professors create an MPA program that gave students practical skills to manage effectively.

"There are a lot of really successful

Fifty Years, cont. p. 3



Former MPA faculty circa 1985, back row from left: Bill Timmons, Gary Cornia, Bob Parsons, and Doyle Buckwalter. Front row from left: Dee Henderson, Gloria Wheeler, and Dale Wright.



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From the Director



Every year new students begin their academic journey toward an MPA degree, becoming familiar with public service and experiencing internships, while second-year students continue their studies and seek careers. Along the way faculty and staff watch individuals both struggle and flourish. Amid the inevitable challenges, the words of Spencer W. Kimball

are reassuring. He said, “Over the centuries universities [have] proved to be the most effective institutions . . . developed to find, conserve, and transmit knowledge across numerous fields of inquiry.”¹

Romney Institute professors are engaged in researching and teaching about good governance. New insights come to them as they continue learning and improving in the classroom and in their research. They hold themselves and their students to a high standard. Students come hungry for the skills and knowledge offered and are always hopeful that they will make a unique contribution to the world upon graduation.

This year forty-five MPA students and forty-seven EMPA students started the journey. Each student has a story and a reason for earning the MPA degree.

Yvonne Nsabimana, originally from Rwanda, saw war and death in her homeland. She was able to escape to Belgium with some of her family and began braiding hair to help support them. There she was introduced to the LDS church and was baptized. She married and then moved to Louisiana, where her husband was starting school. On the first night in Louisiana, their apartment building caught fire. Later Hurricane Katrina forced them to evacuate, eventually bringing them to Utah. After losing everything and starting over three times, Yvonne has demonstrated resilience under extraordinary pressure. Her life experience gives her valuable insight in the classroom.

James Ayuen is one of the “Lost Boys of Sudan,” displaced during the second Sudanese Civil War. Using his own pluck and intelligence, he made it to Ethiopia and the United States, where

he earned a bachelor’s degree at La Salle University. There he met missionaries and invited them to share their message so he could disprove what they believed. Instead he found precious truths and was baptized. James returned to Sudan and worked with the World Bank, but he found he needed an MPA degree to open more opportunities. He sought out our executive program.

Yvonne and James, like their classmates, know education and hard work provide the foundation for successful futures. These students will make significant contributions to communities where they have deep-rooted connections. The MPA degree provides the tools they seek, and they provide the grit and determination.

Successful preparation results in job opportunities of significance. Our gratitude for students and their hard work is renewed when we see alumni influencing countries and states through careers in all levels of government, nonprofits, universities, and consulting firms. The large number of individuals impacted stretches around the world. Each graduate contributes to making individuals, families, communities, governments, and nonprofits flourish.

Sincerely,

Catherine Cooper
Associate Director

If you would like to receive the MPA Outreach newsletter electronically, please let us know by emailing us at mpaalumni@byu.edu.

OUTREACH

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Published by the George W. Romney Institute of Public Management at Brigham Young University. © 2014 by Brigham Young University.

¹ *I Will Lead You Along: The Life of Henry B. Eyring* by Robert I. Eaton and Henry J. Eyring, page 202.

Fifty Years cont. from p. 1

MPA programs that are housed in political science departments, but we had the flexibility to develop the coursework that fit the needs of the MPA students and their careers,” he says.

Skills in accounting, knowledge of organizational behavior, and high ethical standards became the hallmarks of a BYU MPA. In 1998 the institute received an endowment from the George W. Romney family, officially becoming the George W. Romney Institute of Public Management. The added resources allowed the institute to evolve and keep pace with the changing world.

“For many years our focus was preparing leaders in all forms of government, and that is a precious legacy that we continue to foster,” says Jeffery Thompson, current director of the institute.

“We still place a lot of students in government, but we’re seeing a lot of growth in nonprofit management. Part of our charge as the Romney Institute is to expand our reach in the nonprofit sector, and we’re well positioned to do that.”

While the program has evolved over time, at its core are the values the original graduates and professors held—serving communities and the public interest.

“I watched alumni who worked as city managers, in state governments, and in federal agencies and saw the good that one can do in society,” Wright says. “That is why the MPA degree is important. You can make a difference in people’s lives.”

MPA THEN AND NOW

The world has changed a lot since 1964—the year President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, Martin Luther King Jr. received the Nobel Peace Prize, and The Beatles made their American debut. In an ever-evolving world it’s essential to keep up with the times, and the Romney Institute has done just that as it continues to prepare students to take on whatever comes their way.

	THEN—1964	NOW—2014
Average Price of a New House	\$20,983	\$147,955
Cost of a Loaf of Bread	\$0.21	\$2.43
MPA Exams	Thesis/project and oral exams	Written exams
Program Tuition per Semester	\$160	\$3,155
Required Credit Hours	30 hours with a thesis or 40 hours with a project	57 hours
Number of Faculty	4	19
Number of Students	10–20	40–50 in the day program; 46 in the EMPA program

Student News

SCHOOL'S NOT OUT FOR SUMMER

Summer often conjures images of hammocks and fresh-squeezed lemonade, but not for students at the Romney Institute. Hungry for firsthand experience, MPA candidates left Utah this summer to intern for organizations across the globe, putting into practice what they learned in the classroom. Here, three students share their experiences navigating nonprofit, federal government, and city management work.

FINDING OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE IN UGANDA

Finding a chef, security guards, and housing in Uganda were just the first things MPA student Todd Tapp was asked to do when he arrived in Africa for an internship with HELP International. Over the four months that he worked as a country director for the nonprofit, various projects kept him on his toes and taught him what managing a development organization is like in the real world.



"We basically had to set up camp, and then the volunteers came," he says. "That was when we really started doing work."

He and Jessie Maughan, a fellow BYU MPA student, were codirectors and oversaw the completion of more than thirty development projects while managing operations in

the city of Mbale, Uganda. Projects ranged from one-time events, such as HIV testing and dental camps, to long-term projects, including helping the owner of an orphanage start a garden and establishing a banking system in a small village.

"We were able to do some really impactful projects for the people in Mbale," he says. "We made sure that we were doing projects that would have a lasting benefit for the community."

Although he had experience working abroad, consulting international nonprofits, and managing interns, Tapp says his internship in Uganda was eye-opening. In addition to adjusting to living and working in another country, Tapp found the work challenging. He felt that the MPA program prepared him well, though.

"I was looking at my class schedule from my first year, and almost every class directly helped me while I was in Uganda," he says. "I had a grant-writing class; we wrote four grants. I had an organizational behavior class;

we managed twenty volunteers. I had a communications class; we had to write a 170-page year-end report."

Eventually Tapp hopes to work for an organization where he can help people become self-reliant.

"I get fulfillment out of helping people help themselves," he says.

TAKING STOCK OF NASA

They might have a firm understanding of jet propulsion, but even rocket scientists need auditors. Enter Tonya Johnson, who interned with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) this summer. She audited NASA's large systems projects, getting familiar with human space travel as she analyzed project budgets and timelines.



"It was cool that as grad student intern

I got to interview NASA project engineers,” says Johnson, a second-year MPA student. “I got to ask questions like ‘Why did you overspend your budget?’ It was a bit intimidating, but I definitely learned a lot.”

The GAO works for congress to investigate how the government spends taxpayer dollars. Johnson worked on several projects to ensure that the millions of dollars that go into NASA’s projects were wisely spent. Her favorite project to inspect was Orion, a capsule that will launch American crews into deep space.

“The projects were interesting, and I like the GAO’s mission to keep the government accountable for its spending,” she says. “I really appreciate the high quality of the work that the GAO does. It was awesome working for a group that was so experienced and professional.”

Her work consisted of scouring monthly reports to see how each project was doing, interviewing project managers, and compiling reports for congress. Johnson even helped present her findings to the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, even though she hadn’t planned on it.

“My boss was briefing on a project related to Orion, and someone asked what was going on with it,” she says. “So my boss looked at me and I told them about Orion. It was pretty nerve-racking, but I was really familiar with the project and it went well.”

Despite surprises, Johnson says she was well prepared for the tasks she was assigned, which included program auditing and per-

formance evaluation. She’s looking forward to working in a related field, saying that she enjoys the research environment and helping promote responsibility and accountability.

“The MPA program was definitely good preparation for my internship, in terms of research and critical-thinking skills,” she says. “Something I would really love to do in the future is use these skills for performance evaluation, either in the private or public sector.”

PUTTING LEARNING INTO PRACTICE

MPA student Brett Lee got a taste of public finance this summer after returning to his home state of Washington to intern for the city of Kenmore.

As the city’s first management intern, Lee was welcomed by his coworkers and quickly given the tasks of helping create a two-year budget and a five-year trend analysis for the city.

“I’m really interested in public finance, so this was exactly what I was looking for in an internship,” he says. “I was able to see how public budgets work and get prepared for a job in finance.”



While the job was challenging, Lee felt equipped to handle the projects he received. One of his most rewarding tasks was preparing a financial health report for the city, taking into account the city’s financial standing and how it compared with other cities in the region.

“For some of the specific projects I worked on, like forecasting next year’s salaries, I used the exact same model I learned in my public budgeting class,” he says. “There were a lot of examples like that, where something that I learned in class translated almost exactly to what I was doing at work.”

Lee says he benefited both from the Marriott School’s top-notch management classes and the BYU MPA alumni network when it came to finding an internship. Rob Karlinsey, Kenmore’s city manager, is a BYU MPA alumnus who hired Lee after several meetings and interviews. Lee says he is grateful for the mentorship he received this summer.

“Rob gave me a lot of autonomy to do some meaningful projects and make an impact on the city’s finances,” he says. “His commitment to me as an intern has provided me with the motivation to do the same thing: to reach out and help students in the MPA program reach their career goals.”

Alumni News

FUNDING FUSION

ALUM JOINS MULTINATIONAL PROJECT IN FRANCE

MPA alumnus Michael Francom looks to the power of the sun for inspiration in his work. As a budget officer for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), he and his team support the building of a nuclear fusion reactor that will create power the same way the sun does, combining particles to generate massive amounts of energy.

“If this project is successful, we will have a safer, more cost-effective way of producing power,” Francom says. “It will make a huge difference in the way the world views energy.”

An international project funded by China, the European Union, India, Japan, Korea, Russia, and the United States, ITER is based in southern France, far from Francom’s native Utah. Francom says the move has not been easy, but he has enjoyed the challenge of working overseas.

“Mike has worked hard to master the complex financial and project management systems of ITER and to gain the trust of the managers he supports as a financial officer,” says Joseph Onstott, budget section leader within the finance division of the department of administration. “He brings a positive attitude to

meetings and has done a superb job communicating problems or issues.”

Clear communication is key, Francom says, since only 9 percent of employees at ITER are from the United States. Meetings are microcosms of the United Nations with employees from around the world working together for a common goal.

“It’s been interesting working with leadership in the Office of the Director General and the Department of Administration because you get to see and work on issues that affect a huge multinational project,” Francom says. “It’s an informative place to be.”

Francom, who graduated from the Romney Institute in 2003, had been looking for an opportunity to work overseas when he heard ITER was in need of a budget officer based in France. Neither he nor his wife, Meredith, spoke French, but they were excited about the potential of living in Europe with their four children. He got the job, and in 2013 his family made the move from Provo to the French village of Gréoux-les-Bains.

It’s been an exciting year, Francom says, and the family is looking forward to spending the next four years in France as



he finishes his contract. Outside of the office, the Francoms have taken advantage of living in the South of France, enjoying vacations in neighboring countries and spending time hiking in the Alps.

The benefits extend far beyond the idyllic location, however. Francom’s enthusiasm for work is also fueled by his knowledge that ITER can make a difference in powering the world.

“Many people don’t know that nuclear energy is everywhere, and we use it a lot,” Francom says. “If we can make it cleaner, safer, and more readily available, then that’s a great thing. I’d love to be able to tell my children and grandchildren that the project worked, and the power they’re using right now is made from nuclear fusion.”

Chewing cont. from p. 8

“She understood her job and mastered it quickly, and then kept assuming responsibility,” he says. “Over the years she has taken on more and more and done it well. She is always improving, to the point of getting another master’s degree to allow her to do her job even better.”

Chewing is looking forward to continuing her work at the Rom-

ney Institute, where she enjoys learning from her coworkers and students. While surprised by the award, she is happy to be recognized by her coworkers and the university.

“It’s a true honor to receive this award,” Chewing says. “I love being a part of the Romney Institute. You couldn’t find a better place to work.”

TOGETHER AGAIN AFTER TEN YEARS

This year the MPA class of 2004 got back together for a ten-year reunion, organized by class members and assisted by the Romney Institute.

“Our class had a special bond,” says Andrea Hales, one of the event organizers. “We did so many things outside of the program that we became lifelong friends. Holding the reunion was something we just had to do.”

Twenty-six out of forty-eight classmates were able to attend, a feat Hales worked hard to help make happen. She and classmates Gioey Alisa and Kara Peterson put the event together, which included many phone calls and scouring the internet for old friends. The work paid

off when they came together—with families in tow—for two days in July.

Classmates came from both coasts to join in a dinner for graduates and their spouses, followed by a picnic for their families the next day. For those who were not able to attend, Hales compiled updates from each class member into a book. The book contains photos, stories, and career and family highlights from the past ten years.

“It was great to see them get together and to hear about how their MPA degrees have made a difference for their families and their communities,” says Lori Wadsworth, a Romney Institute professor who attended the reunion.

Wadsworth and other faculty members who taught the class also attended, including retired professors Gloria Wheeler, Lennis Knighton, and Don Adolphson.

“It was wonderful to see everyone and also a great networking opportunity because, for the most part, we don’t work with the people we graduated with,” Alisa says.

Any class can organize a reunion and the Romney Institute will assist with the event. Alisa says she and her classmates are already planning on holding a twenty-year reunion, and she’s looking forward to seeing everyone again.



Front row from left: MPA Faculty: Chris Silvia, Rex Facer, Don Adolphson, Lori Wadsworth, Gloria Wheeler, Lennis Knighton. Middle row from left: Class Members: Coralee Bernard, Andrea Hales, Daniela Alvarez, Brent Pearson, Wendy Gunnerson, Rebecca Mark, Natalie Field, Shari Grossarth, Kara Peterson. Back row from left: Debi Lee, Tami Harrison, Nikki Parshall, Mehana Kwong, David Jeppesen, Gioey Alisa, Danelle De Graw, Justin Allen, Toby Christensen.



*“It isn’t a great nation that breeds a great people.
It is a great people that build a great nation.”
—George W. Romney*

HEATHER CHEWNING RECEIVES PRESIDENT’S APPRECIATION AWARD

Heather Chewning, a program coordinator at the Marriott School, received the President’s Appreciation Award at BYU’s annual University Conference on August 26.

The award is presented annually to staff and administrative personnel for exceptional service, creativity, and competence. Chewning, who has worked as a program coordinator in the Romney Institute for six years, was among eight recipients of the award this year.

“Heather is a big-picture thinker,” says Jeff Thompson, director of the Romney Institute. “While she provides outstanding administrative support, she also provides leadership in our department. Her commitment to the students and the health of the program makes her an extremely valuable asset.”

BYU President Kevin Worthen presented Chewning with the award at a

banquet in June and recognized her again at the University Conference.

“It was nice to see the university recognize her for her efforts,” says David Hart, former director of the Romney Institute. “I think she’s done a tremendous job and she deserved the award.”

Chewning received her MPA in 2008 and completed the Executive MBA program in 2014, both from the Marriott School. As program coordinator for the Romney Institute, she oversees budgets, hiring, and events. She was nominated by Thompson, Hart, and other faculty and staff members for her ability to run the program efficiently while serving those around her.

Hart says he appreciates her ability to understand the details of the institute’s budget, saving thousands of dollars every year. He has seen her grow from a graduate



student working as an assistant in the office to the recipient of two master’s degrees who is always working to improve herself and the institute.

[Chewning, cont. p. 6](#)