

# MPA

2020-21 MPA ANNUAL REPORT • BYU MARRIOTT SCHOOL OF BUSINESS







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◀ *Members of the Utah National Guard clean up after the northern Utah windstorms in September 2020. This photo and some others in the main feature are courtesy of the Utah National Guard and the American Red Cross.*



# MPA 2020-21 Year at a Glance



August

## A Race to Learn

During orientation, new EMPA students, masked and socially distanced, set out on an adventure race to learn little-known facts about BYU campus.

October

## Halloweek in the Tanner

Students enjoyed COVID-19-appropriate activities and festive decorations throughout the Tanner Building during the week of Halloween.



January

## Safety Swag

As a welcome-back gift, all MPA and EMPA students received a BYU Marriott MPA face mask, a reminder to be vigilant as the COVID-19 vaccine rolled out.



April

## Celebrating in MPA Style

Although 2021 graduates could not gather in person to celebrate the successful end of their two-year journey, each grad received a box of commemorative MPA swag, including a T-shirt, blanket, and padfolio.

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

September

## Conference Counsel

Elder Matthew S. Holland, a General Authority Seventy, addressed MPA city manager alumni and friends during the virtual ICMA Conference. He provided counsel, encouragement, and hope to these local government professionals.



November

## Hidden Socks

Students and alumni guessed where in Utah the MPA socks were during a "Where Are We Wednesday" social-media challenge. Winners received MPA swag.

December

## Handmade Gifts

Members of the Master of Public Administration Association (MPAA) celebrated the holidays by making Christmas ornaments for faculty, staff, and fellow students.



February

## An iMPact Connection

EMPA students met online for the semiannual winter 2021 iMPact Night to strengthen their connections and listen to professionals' experiences in the world of public administration. Each student received a box filled with items to promote self-care.

March

## A Meeting of the Minds

The Romney Institute Executive Advisory Board met virtually to discuss Romney Institute issues. Laura Kaloi was welcomed as the new advisory board chair.







# ON + THE FRONT LINES

*MPA Alumni Respond to Natural Disasters*

BY SHIRLEEN M. SAUNDERS



**Bud Barrow** has dealt with hurricanes before, probably five or six in the last twenty years. But none of those prepared him for 2020, when his community took a direct hit from Hurricane Laura and, just six weeks later, another hit from Hurricane Delta. Laura generated 120-mile-per-hour winds that left the area

looking like a war zone. Delta pounded it with fifteen inches of rain. “The first storm took the roofs off the houses, and the second storm filled them with water,” says Barrow. “It was pretty awful.”

As CEO of Beauregard Health System in DeRidder, Louisiana, Barrow (MPA 1980) spearheaded efforts to prepare for and recover from the disasters. Before the hurricanes hit, he and his team sourced fuel and



water; stockpiled food, medical supplies, and drugs; and prepared to house their workforce at the hospital or in accommodations nearby for as long as necessary. Afterward, they kept the hospital up and running with the help of dedicated personnel, daily deliveries from fuel and water tankers, and heroic efforts by the local fire department.

Barrow and his staff also focused on aid for hospital employees, many of whom “lost way too much,” he says. “Using money raised through our hospital foundation, we helped pay for everything from generators to childcare to getting roofs put back on houses. We also initiated food and clothing drives and assigned groups of employees to go and help their colleagues in need.”

What made recovery efforts particularly hard, recalls Barrow, was the added challenge of dealing with feelings of discouragement. “So many people were asking, ‘Why us? Why now? How much is enough?’ But we saw tender mercies as communities, governments, and volunteers from all over the country reached out to help. We saw reaffirmation of the goodness of mankind on so many levels. At the end of the day, most of us felt inspired and able to go on because of the love others showed to us.”

#### + AN UNPRECEDENTED YEAR

While most of the world was focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was also a year marked by unprecedented natural disasters across the globe. In the United States alone, there were twenty-two separate billion-dollar disasters, including wildfires, floods, hurricanes, drought, and tornadoes.

Like Barrow, alumni of BYU Marriott’s MPA program were on the front lines during many of those disasters. Their roles varied, but their mission was the same: to provide help and healing when their fellow citizens needed it most, and the knowledge they gained at the Romney Institute of Public Service and Ethics helped prepare them to take on this important work.

“I am so appreciative of the basic training I received in so many areas,” reflects **Bob Kindred** (MPA 1980). “It helped me have a strong grasp of what city government is and what it does in a broad array of situations. Learning from faculty and alumni who had been out applying their knowledge in difficult, real-world circumstances sparked my enthusiasm for responding to disasters and my ability to be effective when I was involved with them.”

#### + UNDERSTANDING THE SURVIVORS



As deputy county administrator of Butte County, California, since 2004, **Sang Kim** (MPA 1995) has dealt with more disasters than he wants to remember. Those include 2017’s Oroville Dam spillway crisis and 2018’s Camp Fire—the deadliest, most destructive fire in California history. When the North Complex Fire broke out in September 2020, Kim once again stepped into his role as director of the county’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which provides resources and information to the public in times of crisis.

The immediate challenge was finding places for thousands of evacuated residents to go, complicated by the fact that COVID-19 restrictions took traditional shelters, such as the county fairgrounds, out of the equation. Later, the focus turned to recovering from a fire that burned roughly 500 square miles, destroyed more than 2,000 structures, and claimed 16 lives.

The critical need after such a disaster, says Kim, is making sure communities are free from environmental hazards. Working together with the state and FEMA, his team of twenty specialists has overseen the process of removing debris and scraping away several inches of contaminated soil from more than 1,000



parcels of land and removing trees that pose danger to public rights-of-way.

“This is hard, complex, emotionally difficult work involving traumatized people,” says Kim. “Once a disaster hits, everything changes. It’s important that we try to understand what the survivors are going through and do our best to help people individually and help the community collectively.”

#### + CALLING OUT THE GUARD



Though their primary mission is to be prepared to go to war, the National Guard also has equipment that can be used to help citizens in the event of a disaster, explains **Tyler Smith** (EMPA 2006), brigadier general for the Utah National Guard. The guard also supports the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, an agreement between states to aid each other in the event of an emergency.

Personnel in Smith’s line of command responded to a number of natural disasters last year. In early September, two Black Hawk helicopters, along with pilots, crew, and maintenance personnel, were deployed to Northern California on an eight-day firefighting mission. Closer to home, helicopter crews dropped water on Utah wildfires and delivered supplies and equipment to ground crews battling blazes in remote areas. Later in the month, two hundred soldiers and airmen helped clean up after extreme winds hit northern Utah.

When the National Guard is mobilized, says Smith, “what we bring to the table is something nobody else can bring. We have a ready force that can be called up at a moment’s notice. If there’s a disaster that’s creating great hardship or people’s lives are in danger, we’re equipped to handle those responses.”

#### + FROM MACRO TO MICRO



When **Bob Kindred** and his wife, Sheila, heard storm sirens on the morning of 10 August 2020, they hunkered down and watched as “things got pretty wicked outside.”

It wasn’t until five days later, when power and communications networks were restored, that Kindred learned they had experienced a derecho—a violent, fast-moving windstorm that traveled from South Dakota to Ohio and caused an estimated \$11 billion of damage to homes, vehicles, businesses, and crops.



Kindred had retired from his job as assistant city manager of Ames, Iowa, a year earlier, so during the derecho his thoughts naturally went to his former work colleagues and the EOC. He wished he were there.

But after winds subsided, “people throughout our neighborhood immediately went out into the streets to survey the damage,” Kindred remembers. “Folks began checking up on each other, and crews formed spontaneously to pull trees off of streets, driveways, houses, and cars.”

Kindred enthusiastically joined in. In the following days, he volunteered on the city’s derecho hotline and worked with Helping Hands to clean up a neighboring city. “During the previous thirty-nine years, I’d spent my time in the EOC helping respond to emergencies at a macro level. This time I got to help others right where they live.”

#### + A SPECTRUM OF RELIEF



**Del Brady** (MPA 2010), executive director of the Greater Salt Lake Area Chapter of the American Red Cross, doesn’t necessarily wait to be called after a disaster. He proactively reaches out to communities so they

know “what services are available and that we stand ready,” he says.





What most people don't know is that the Red Cross offers a wide spectrum of relief. In addition to addressing immediate needs, the organization also looks at long-term recovery. "We work with people one-on-one to make sure that they don't just get a drink of water, a hot meal, or a place to sleep, but they are actually on the road to getting back on their feet," says Brady.

On a larger scale, Brady directs fundraising and blood collection efforts that support American Red Cross responses to large-scale disasters throughout the United States. "Our organization is an incredible mobilizer of human goodness," he says. "When you see people in Red Cross vests, 90 percent of them are volunteers helping their neighbors and doing good within their communities."

### + SALVAGE MISSION



As the Beachie Creek Fire raged just twelve miles from where **John Nichols** (MPA 1998) lives in Salem, Oregon, "the sky looked like Mars," he says. "Ash fell like snow, and air quality was so bad it was unsafe to go outside." For more than a week, Nichols's family was on edge, wondering if this was the day they would

be evacuated. In the end, the fire didn't reach their home, but it was a scary time—one that helped his family recognize what was truly irreplaceable.

A realty supervisor for the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Northwest Oregon District, Nichols had a front-row seat as his work colleagues managed firefighting efforts on the inferno that eventually claimed five lives, destroyed thousands of structures, and scorched nearly 200,000 acres. At its height, the fire was the largest in the country, and 2020 ended up as the worst fire season in Oregon's history.

Nichols's role in responding to the disaster came later, as he and his team dove into the task of removing thousands of acres of burned timber from public lands. In normal times, they oversee regular timber harvests from BLM lands, with plans laid out years in advance. Since the fires, Nichols's group has been racing against the clock to get burned trees removed before they become fuel for another fire. The team is also working overtime to sell as much salvaged timber as possible to assist Oregon counties that rely on profits from BLM timber sales.

### + A MASTER PLAN

Never underestimate the value of a solid plan and employees who give their all to carry it out. **Shane**



**Pace** (MPA 1991), city manager for Farmington, Utah, saw this principle in action after hurricane-force winds wreaked havoc in northern Utah early in September 2020, causing significant damage to structures and vehicles, toppling thousands of trees, and leaving almost 200,000 homes without power.

Because most members of Pace's EOC team have extensive training in emergency management operations and many had been through a similar storm in 2011, they had good ideas about next steps. Their recovery plan included designating a central drop-off point where residents could bring storm debris, then securing trucks to get debris from the staging site to nearby landfills.

City employees stepped up, working sixteen-hour days six days a week; everyone from Pace to administrative staff and off-duty firefighters and police officers helped direct traffic and unload residents' trucks and trailers. The city also sent equipment through the community to pick up debris that residents could bring to the street but not to the drop-off site. By the time the operation wound down, trucks from the city, UDOT, and the Utah National Guard had hauled more than 1,500 loads of debris. Because of the EOC's solid planning and quick action, Pace reports, "we were essentially cleaned up in three weeks."

### + AT THE READY



Emergency management is just one of the areas **Paul Dean** (MPA 2010) oversees as the public works customer and technical services director in Pinellas County, Florida. But it becomes his number-one priority during disasters because "public works accounts for probably 50 percent of the county effort," Dean says.

When Hurricane Eta passed north of Pinellas County in November 2020, it produced nine inches of rain and a storm surge that flooded homes and roads and washed 500,000 cubic feet of sand away from beaches. Coordinating with the county's emergency management department, Dean and his EOC team assigned employees on the ground to make sure main roads were clear, to close roads that were underwater, to clear debris, and to deploy pumps.

Responding to disasters gives Dean's team members occasion to perform at their peak, he says, but even more important, it provides the chance to "serve

citizens by keeping them safe and helping them get back to normal life."

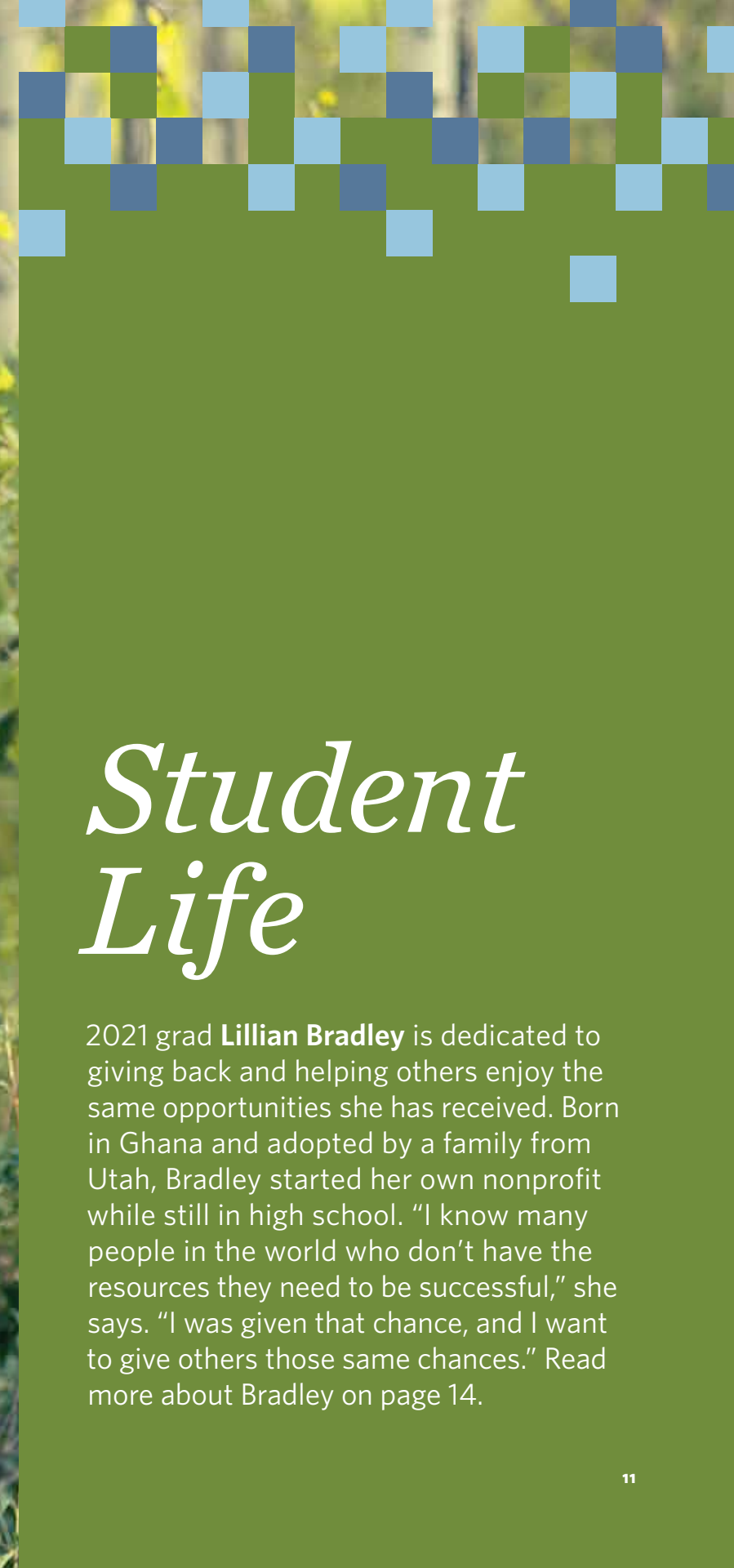
As MPA alumni reflect on their experiences with 2020's natural disasters, the common thread is a cognizance of their unique opportunity to serve others in times of crisis. They hope future graduates of BYU Marriott's MPA program will also feel drawn to help. "Aspire to be in positions where you can answer the call to serve," counsels Barrow. "Work hard to be where your professional judgment and, more importantly, your Christian caring can put you in a position to make a difference to those most in need. It is both the mind and the heart together that will make the difference."

## THE NEXT GENERATION

Second-year MPA students **Holmes Finau** and **Mark Eyo** hail from communities that were battered by 2020's disasters. In April, Cyclone Harold destroyed homes and crops and left people in Finau's hometown of Nuku'alofa, Tonga, without electricity or clean drinking water. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints played an important role in helping, Finau reports. "It is a blessing and miracle that out of all the places people could go when there is a natural disaster, they go to the Church's halls and chapels. It is a safe place for people regardless of their religion."

Eyo, from Gapan City, Philippines, says winds and flooding from Typhoon Rolly and Typhoon Ulysses not only damaged property but also caused residents to lose their livelihoods. "I see how government is criticized for lack of collaboration and capabilities to handle such a disaster, even if it is expected," says Eyo. "These events have inspired me to seek more knowledge about decision-making and intergovernmental relations." They also prompted Eyo to intern with the Utah Community Development Office so he could gain experience in helping rural areas plan and develop better communities. "I hope to go home to the Philippines and use my knowledge to help build a stronger country and community," he says.





# *Student Life*

2021 grad **Lillian Bradley** is dedicated to giving back and helping others enjoy the same opportunities she has received. Born in Ghana and adopted by a family from Utah, Bradley started her own nonprofit while still in high school. "I know many people in the world who don't have the resources they need to be successful," she says. "I was given that chance, and I want to give others those same chances." Read more about Bradley on page 14.



# Student Report

## Class of 2020-21

CATEGORY	MPA	EMPA
Students enrolled	110	103
Female	55%	55%
Married	66%	77%
International	33%	0%
Minority	16%	15%
Bilingual	55%	32%
Served mission	75%	35%
Average age	29	40
Average GPA	3.60	3.73

CLASS OF 2020	MPA
Average salary	\$56,350
Placed by 6 months after graduation	80%
Internship converted to job	19%

## BYU MPA Job Placement—Graduation Year 2020



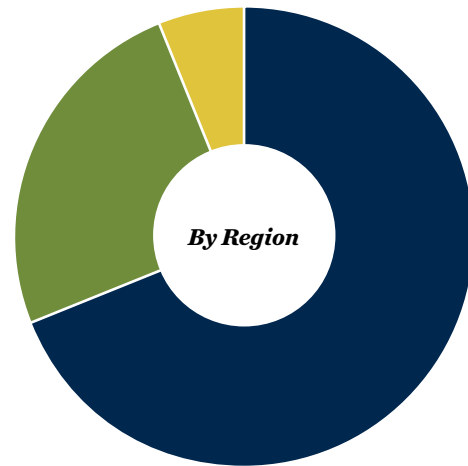
**13%** Federal Govt

**37%** State Govt

**13%** Local Govt

**25%** Nonprofit

**12%** Private-Public Partnership (PPP)



**69%** West

**25%** Southwest

**6%** Mid-Atlantic

# Learning a Different Playbook

Ten years ago, **Chad Lewis** successfully climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, but he has accomplished more than just summiting one of the world’s tallest peaks. Years later, his mountain-conquering experience encouraged him to continue to make and achieve goals, like earning his EMPA from the Romney Institute.

Before he climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, Lewis had a successful career as a tight end for BYU’s football team. After graduating from BYU in communications studies with a minor in Chinese in 1997, he played professional football in the National Football League for nine years, both for the Philadelphia Eagles and the St. Louis Rams. From 2002 to 2016, during his time as a player and after retiring, Lewis also served as an international NFL ambassador for Tanzania, China, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, and the state of Hawaii.

The opportunity to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in 2011 came because of his NFL ambassador responsibilities. To bring awareness to the Wounded Warrior Project, Lewis climbed the mountain with four war veterans. During the climb, he became acquainted with each one individually. Though they had lost much in war, each veteran still had goals even loftier than reaching the peak of the mountain that motivated them to keep moving forward.

The veterans’ determination encouraged Lewis to make and achieve his own goals. He thought, “They’ve been through some horrific stuff, and they’re not quitting. They’re still learning.” Lewis decided to continue his own learning by applying to BYU Marriott’s EMPA program.

To Lewis, talking about gaining knowledge is a lot easier than actually earning a graduate degree. “I have to learn new skills, which can be challenging,” says Lewis. “I have to budget my time and my resources.” This is especially true as he works for BYU as an associate athletic director while juggling his responsibilities as the father of seven children and the grandfather of one baby girl.

“Studying is a good test for me,” Lewis says. “Speaking of taking tests, I’m back in the Testing Center or taking tests online, and I have to study diligently to give learning my best effort. The experience of jumping back into a serious and intense learning format is something else.”

Since entering the program, Lewis has added to the skills he learned as a football player and undergraduate. “One skill I’ve strengthened is the ability to work in teams,” he says. “Learning how to better divide and take on responsibility in a group has been a great experience.” This lesson was especially important in Lewis’s MPA 631:



Public Program Evaluation class. While reflecting on a project that he worked on with five other classmates, he remarks, “Splitting up responsibilities is the only possible way we could succeed.”

In fact, Lewis isn’t tackling the project of earning a master’s degree alone. “My wife, Michele, and I both decided to attend BYU Marriott at the same time. She’s working on her MBA,” he says. “We work on homework together, share our workload outside of school with each other, and also discuss what we learn.”

Though returning to school has been difficult, Lewis believes continuing his education is worth every challenge. Lewis says that those lessons he learns in the EMPA program are applicable to more than working in public administration. “I want to use the skills I’ve learned from each class to be a better person, husband, father, employee, and perhaps a future business owner,” he says.



# Becoming an Influence for Good

When she was three years old, **Lillian Bradley** was adopted from Ghana, a country then stricken with poverty. Her adoption by a family from Heber City, Utah, opened doors of limitless possibilities for her future. As a BYU Marriott MPA student, Bradley is intent on acquiring skills that will enable her to help citizens of similarly impoverished countries to find opportunities for success.

Even at a young age, Bradley was passionate about giving back to her home country. In 2014, when she was in high school, she started her own nonprofit called Fahodie for Friends. The nonprofit focused on raising awareness of and combating human trafficking in African countries.

“I’ve always felt a deep-seated desire to give back and return the opportunities I have been given,” Bradley says. “I know many people in the world who don’t have the resources they need to be successful. I was given that chance, and I want to give others those same chances.”

Bradley continued to pursue nonprofit work in her college years. After graduating with her bachelor’s degree in international cultural studies and a certificate in intercultural peacebuilding from BYU–Hawaii in 2016, she was not sure what her next step would be. However, when she heard about the MPA program in the Romney Institute, she knew heading to Provo was the right direction to go.

“What drew me to the MPA program was the specialization in nonprofit management,” Bradley says. “I also loved the program’s mission statement of creating global impact and emphasizing a service-based career. I knew the program’s goals would align with my personal aspirations.”

While Fahodie for Friends is no longer operating, Bradley has plans for another nonprofit. Her time spent in the MPA program has given her additional tools to succeed in the nonprofit sector. “My vision for combating trafficking has expanded,” she says. “I previously focused on two main components—advocacy



and housing survivors—but I now realize that there are other important aspects as well. Developing a multidimensional approach is crucial.”

One key element of nonprofit work that Bradley has learned about is policy change. “I’m passionate about that,” Bradley says. “In my future career, I would love to be in a position where I have the opportunity to influence or create policies that facilitate change that is needed in the world.”

Bradley’s service-based mindset also translates into her family life. Bradley and her husband, Gerritt, have three children. “Family is number one for me,” she says. “As a mom and a wife, I express my love for my family through serving and spending time with them. In all aspects of life, I love service. Serving others is at the heart of my passion for nonprofit work.”

Bradley says that by cultivating the skills and values taught in the MPA program, she feels empowered to change the world. “The world contains an abundance of goodness, but you can also find plenty of bad. However, I believe if you become an influential person for good, your influence will be contagious and inspire others around you to do the same.”

# Cultivating Hidden Potential

Whether he is working with employees or in an untamed backyard, **John Cowgill** enjoys helping people and plants realize their true potential, finding their ideal growth environment and cultivating hidden potential.

As an April 2021 EMPA graduate and a job coach at Deseret Industries (DI), Cowgill uses what he has learned in the EMPA program to create valuable connections with DI employees and help them reconnect with the job market. He believes that often the most effective way to connect with others is through reflective listening. “People’s responses to that kind of listening are amazing. They don’t feel judged,” he says. But he did not learn the importance of listening overnight.

Experiences throughout Cowgill’s life with friends and family have taught him how to show compassion to those with different opinions. “Sometimes we think, ‘Well, I need to let them know that I’m right.’ That never goes over

well,” says Cowgill. “A great life lesson for all of us is learning to pause and listen.”

As a job coach, Cowgill uses that compassionate approach to reach out to those he counsels. However, compassion is not the only thing that helps Cowgill connect with DI employees. The difficulties he faced while trying to find his place in the professional world fostered empathy for those he works with.

Cowgill, who grew up in both Montana and Utah, says, “I had a hard time deciding what to be when I grew up.” He knew he loved to create, so he decided to pursue what he believed to be a practical application of art: landscape architecture.

Cowgill began his degree in landscape architecture at Utah State University before transferring to Arizona State University, where he completed his degree in 2007. After graduation, he worked for MHTN Architects in Salt Lake City. Unfortunately, Cowgill was laid off in 2009 as a result of the Great Recession.

After being laid off, Cowgill found work at the city parks department in Bountiful, Utah, before switching jobs again, this time to the city’s power department, a job he admits was neither inspiring nor interesting to him.

Cowgill found new hope when a job coach helped him discover a desire to pursue nonprofit management. In order to do that, Cowgill applied to the BYU Marriott EMPA program. “I feel like I am on this trajectory to grow

exponentially because I had that time of resistance while working for the power department,” he says. “When I thought I was stagnant, I was actually building the energy that has propelled me in a whole new direction.”

The new direction has helped Cowgill re-create his career path and guide others to re-create their own paths as well. “My job at DI coincides perfectly with what I’m learning in school,” says Cowgill. “Not only do I use what I learn in class in my job, but I’ve also been able to apply a lot of my experiences from work to my classes.”

Though Cowgill spends a lot of time creating connections and work opportunities at work and school, he also enjoys creating in his own backyard. Eight years ago, when Cowgill and his family moved into their new home in Layton, Utah, Cowgill was excited to cultivate the untamed half-acre backyard. “Most people would have said, ‘This is a nightmare; I’ll never want to attack this,’” says Cowgill. “But my design brain kicked into gear, and I thought, ‘There’s so much potential here.’”

Through coaching, Cowgill helps DI employees shape their future career just as he has shaped his backyard. He helps them overcome what may have once been a nightmare so they can cultivate their own hidden potential. Cowgill says, “I’ve always wanted to be in a position where I could influence people—to connect, teach, guide, direct, and inspire.”





## Salt to Saint to Service



Applying for graduate school, much like biking a 430-mile relay, requires hard work, determination, and perseverance.

**Brandon Benally**, a second-year MPA student in the Romney Institute, has not been afraid to accept either challenge. Since his acceptance into the MPA program in 2020, he has continued to work hard and apply principles of perseverance as he has prepared to strengthen community health-care systems.

Benally works hard to train and compete in cycling races, both by himself and with his family. One

of his favorite events is the Salt to Saint Relay, a 430-mile race where teams bike from Salt Lake City to St. George, Utah. “Six of my family members participate in the ride, and we take turns biking,” he explains. “The ride lasts twenty-four hours, so we start on a Friday and bike all day and all night. There’s something special about riding with my family and spending time with them doing something that I love to do.”

When Benally is not on a bike, he works hard to achieve goals in his professional life, such as succeeding in the MPA program. “I didn’t get the best grades as an undergraduate student, but I felt like education was important, and I wanted to keep learning,” he says. “After earning my BS in molecular biology in 2017, I went back and took some additional undergraduate classes to improve my GPA before I applied to the MPA program. I consider getting into the BYU Marriott MPA program to be my proudest accomplishment because I had sacrificed time with my family in order to work and join the program.”

Benally chose to earn an MPA degree at the Romney Institute because he loves the program’s mission of building future leaders. “A friend told me about the MPA program, and I connected with the mission statement of providing service and being a beacon of change in the world,” he says. Since Benally earned his undergraduate degree in molecular biology, he

says that he wants to make an impact in the world of healthcare.

Benally has taught principles for a healthy life as he has volunteered with different organizations. “I recently was a program manager for a kids’ oral health program on a Native American reservation,” he says. “My fellow volunteers and I went around to different schools to teach kids how to brush and floss properly, and we taught them about other aspects of oral health.”

He hopes to apply lessons from experiences like these in his future career. “I’m Navajo, so I would love to be the liaison between the federal government and the tribal healthcare system,” says Benally. “The federal government controls and helps regulate the tribal system, and having the ability to build collaboration between the tribal system and the federal government can bridge gaps and help the relationship.”

As Benally works toward his career goals, he hopes to apply leadership lessons from the Romney Institute MPA program to impact the world of healthcare. “I used to think that people were natural-born leaders. However, as I’ve been involved with the MPA program, I’ve come to realize that people can develop the mindset or skill set to be a leader with the tools that the program gives them,” he says. “I’m thrilled to be developing the skill set that I’ll need to be able to lead and help others moving forward.”

## MPA Students Receive 2020 Buckwalter Award



Marieka Creek



Zachary Simons

Two MPA students received the Doyle W. Buckwalter Award for their outstanding internship performance during 2020. The winners, **Marieka Creek** and **Zachary Simons**, each received \$2,000.

Hailing from Cincinnati, Creek is an April 2021 graduate with an emphasis in the nonprofit sector. She received the Buckwalter award for her internship with Village Book Builders, a nonprofit that empowers communities around the world to end the cycle of poverty through education. While working for this nonprofit, she created the organization’s first development team and worked in relationship management. Using the fundraising knowledge she gained from her MPA classes, Creek created a strategy to help raise enough money to build a library at the Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi.

“The fundraiser I worked on was phenomenal. The amount of money we raised was miraculous,” she says. Donations doubled after she created social media posts to inform donors what their money would go toward in building the library, such as a certain number of library books or a door.

Creek recalls that the nonprofit’s founder and chief impact officer asked her various questions, including how to engage board members and how to address specific problems the nonprofit was facing. By applying

what she learned at the Romney Institute, Creek helped Village Book Builders move forward and find solutions to the problems they faced. “Witnessing how the lessons I’ve learned in my MPA program apply in real life was incredible,” she says.

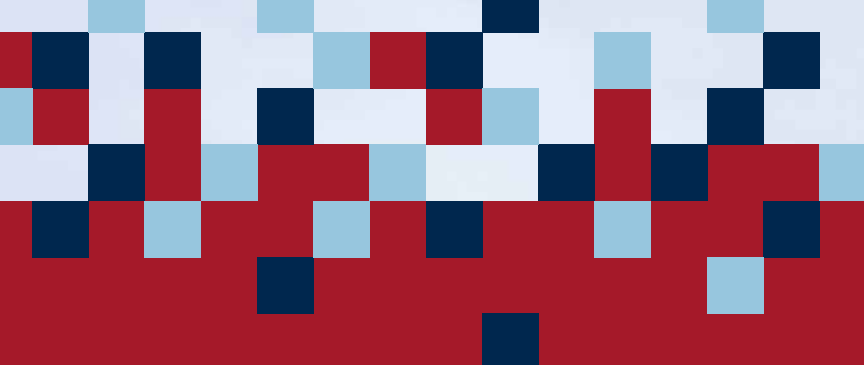
Simons is a 2021 MPA graduate from Alexandria, Virginia, emphasizing in state and federal government with a minor in information systems. He received the Buckwalter award for his outstanding performance at the Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit that strives for a more effective government for the American people. While working for the Partnership, he took part in five different leadership development programs for federal government employees.

One responsibility Simons enjoyed was taking part in producing the final session of the Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows program. “I was able to interact with many federal employees and be part of their culminating experience with EIG,” says Simons. “I enjoyed hearing what they learned, what they wanted to apply to their careers, and what their plans were moving forward.”

After graduating, Simons accepted a job in Washington, DC. “I want to help improve organization within the government,” he says. “The thought of how much good public service can do continues to motivate me.”

The Doyle W. Buckwalter Award is given in memory of its namesake’s service in the Romney Institute of Public Service and Ethics. It is awarded annually to students who demonstrate excellent internship performance. “This award encourages its recipients to share the things they learned from their internship with other students so those students can continue to evolve and grow,” says **Rex Facer**, an associate professor in the Romney Institute and cochair of the awards committee. “Not only are the award recipients enhancing their own learning experience, but they’re enhancing the learning experience of other students as well.”





# *Faculty Spotlights*

Retired now after decades of teaching in the Romney Institute, **Karl Snow** has served students, family, friends, and the community in numerous ways. His experience as a research intern for Utah's governor eventually led to him becoming the Utah State Legislature's first fiscal analyst and eventually a legislator, where he was able to change the Utah Constitution, giving the governor control over proposing and executing the budget—a change that was widely acclaimed. Read more about Snow's impact on page 22.





# Faculty Involvement

## Selected Faculty Publications

### Brad Agle and Aaron Miller

- *A Special Operations Forces Ethics Field Guide*, United States Special Operations Command

### Rob Christensen

- “Additional Intervention Evidence on the Relationship between Public Service Motivation and Ethical Behavior,” *Journal of Behavioral Public Administration*
- “Can Budget Ambiguity Crowd Out Intrinsic Motivation? Longitudinal Evidence from Federal Executive Departments,” *Public Administration*

### Rex Facer

- “Developing Public Servants: International Trends in Human Resource Management,” *Handbook of Public Administration*

### David Matkin

- “The Demise of the Overhead Myth: Administrative Capacity and Financial Sustainability in Nonprofit Nursing Homes,” *Public Administration Review*
- “Financial Condition and Internal Control Deficiencies: Evidence from New York Counties,” *Public Budgeting & Finance*

### Brad Owens

- “Shaping Positive and Negative Ties to Improve Team Effectiveness: The Role of Leader Humility and Team Helping Norms,” *Human Relations*
- “Motivation to Lead: A Meta-Analysis and Distal-Proximal Model of Motivation and Leadership,” *Journal of Applied Psychology*

### Kurt Sandholtz

- “Challenges in BCOM: Student and Faculty Perceptions on English as an Additional Language,” *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*

### Jeff Thompson and Lori Wadsworth

- “The Moderating Role of Calling in the Work-Family Interface: Buffering and Substitution Effects on Employee Satisfaction,” *Journal of Organizational Behavior*

### Eva Witesman

- “Centralization and Decentralization: Compatible Governance Concepts and Practices,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia*
- “Values and Motivation: An Introduction,” *The Handbook of the Public Servant*

## Selected Faculty Citizenship Activities

### Brad Agle

- Provided ethics training for US Special Operations Forces
- Board of directors, BYU Management Society

### Rob Christensen

- Coauthored *Workplace Climate Report* with MPA alum and student for the National Waterway Transport Agency in Brazil

### Rex Facer

- Chair, State of Utah Independent Redistricting Commission

### David Hart

- BYU faculty athletic representative

### David Matkin

- Associate editor, *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting & Financial Management*
- Editorial board member, *Public Budgeting & Finance*

### Aaron Miller

- Board member and cofounder, University Impact
- Associate managing director of the Ballard Center for Social Impact
- Provided ethics training for Utah Chiefs of Police Association

### Chris Silvia

- Editorial board member, *Public Administration Review*
- Associate managing director of the Ballard Center for Social Impact

### Jeff Thompson

- Provided training for multiple organizations, including Brookings Institution, Lehi City, and AmeriCorps

### Eva Witesman

- Cochair, University Faculty Advisory Council
- Editorial board member, *Public Administration Review*, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, and *American Review of Public Administration*

# Teaching That Comes from Learning



Making taxes easier to manage and understand is one of the many things **Ray Nelson** is known for. Throughout his educational and professional career, he has served as a member of multiple boards and councils for the State of Utah and as a consultant for the Utah Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel. As an associate professor for the Romney Institute, Nelson is now working with an MPA student and members of the state government to create a web application to make it easier for state and local governments to track tax money.

Nelson began developing this app in 2020, with the goal of using forecasting to help tax commissions inform local governments about how much sales tax they will be allotted. This helps local governments budget and plan how they will allocate their money in a timely manner. Nelson plans to complete the app this year and hopes it will be adopted by the Utah State Tax Commission. “Since local government is an important part of the Romney Institute, I thought city managers could use a tool like the app,” he says.

Nelson’s expertise with state taxes comes in part from his work in Utah state government for more than a decade, forecasting revenues for the state legislature under former Utah governor Olene Walker. “The state legislature needed someone who could handle data, and that’s a skill that I had because I’m an econometrician. I worked with data all the time,” he says. So Nelson and his colleague Gary Cornia, a former Romney Institute professor and dean of BYU Marriott, spent years working with the state legislature.

“One of the best experiences of my life was the opportunity I had to create and use programming code that allowed legislators and the governor to simulate the outcome of different tax policy proposals,” says Nelson. “I could sit in a conference room and those

in the meeting would say, ‘What would happen if we did this?’” Instantly, Nelson could calculate how tax policy proposals would create tax increases or decreases.

Though Nelson no longer works directly with the state legislature, he is using his talents as a data scientist to finish his web application for tax revenue forecasting. Cornia continues to play a pivotal role in Nelson’s research. Nelson shares that together they are reaching out to the Utah League of Cities and Towns and the University of Utah Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute to use a multipronged approach of convincing city managers of the benefits of the app. Larry Walters, Utah state tax commissioner, and Laurel Galli, a BYU Marriott MPA student from Silver Spring, Maryland, have also helped Nelson with the app development.

As the application nears completion, Nelson anticipates retirement this summer. He hopes to continue expanding his knowledge of data science to different fields—in this case, fields of potatoes. From his home in Provo, Nelson will work on a project that involves tracking potato trucks to optimize pickup and delivery routes. “I’m moving into a realm that I haven’t been in before,” Nelson says. “But the most important thing is that I’m going to work with my kids. My daughter and son are data scientists as well. Working with them is what I want to do.”



## Ninety Years of Learning and Serving

Throughout his ninety years, **Karl Snow** has used his experiences to serve the community in many ways, including working for Utah state government, the Romney Institute, and South African humanitarian projects.

After receiving his master's degree in political science from BYU in 1956 and his MPA from the University of Minnesota two years later, Snow spent a summer in Utah working as a part-time research intern for then-Utah governor George Dewey Clyde. Unlike the way many states handled their budgets, Utah's finances were managed by a board instead of the governor, creating significant frustration for Clyde because he had little control over the state budget.

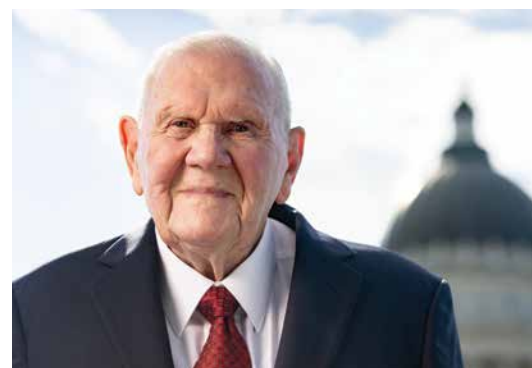
Snow recognized this as a problem that should be solved, and this issue later became the basis of his dissertation while earning a PhD at the University of Southern California. "As a member of the legislature and chairman of the Utah Constitutional Revision Commission, I was able to get a provision added to change the Utah Constitution so that the governor had full control over proposing and executing the budget," he says.

After finishing his doctoral classes and exams, Snow was hired as the Utah State Legislature's first fiscal analyst in 1966. At the same time, he began teaching in BYU Marriott's MPA program. Snow's

experiences helped him better explain concepts in the classroom, including the concept of compromise. "In public administration, you don't always get to do things exactly the way you want," says Snow. "But as you work with others, you're able to move a program forward. In the case of legislature, you compromise to find legislation everyone agrees to."

Snow's budget management changes are nationally acclaimed. During his service with the Utah Senate, Snow was even identified as one of ten outstanding legislators in America in 1984 by the National Federation of Federal Employees in Washington, DC. Last year, he was honored by the Utah Senate for his dissertation and work leading the state to better budget management.

Gary Cornia, former Romney Institute faculty member and BYU Marriott dean, explained the significance of Snow's contributions: "Karl Snow was the intellectual and operational leader to improve legislative functions in Utah. He conducted a study on local government management in Utah that led to his efforts to create the Office of Legislative Auditor General and Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel. Karl also helped streamline the functions of legislative committees in the Utah legislature. He is clearly deserving of this recognition."



Snow not only served the state but also served people around the world as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. After he retired, Snow and his wife, Donna, served three full-time missions and helped with a number of humanitarian projects. Following three years representing the Church at the United Nations, the couple served in South Africa as directors for the Church's humanitarian services over six different countries in the surrounding area. Snow recalls using many of the leadership skills he learned while working for the Utah State legislature as he communicated with international business and government leaders.

Now a nonagenarian, Snow has a wealth of experience to draw from. He uses that experience to improve the world in which he lives and serves. Whether solving problems on the state level, teaching university students, or maintaining international relations for the Church, Snow has continued to find ways to connect what he learns with who he serves.

## Guided Through Revelation to BYU

During her formative teenage years growing up in the midwestern United States, **Catherine Cooper** looked up to former three-term Michigan governor and presidential candidate George W. Romney. She enjoyed reading about him in the news as he ran for president of the United States in the 1968 election. She would proudly tell her friends, "We belong to the same church!" Now, nearly fifty years later, Cooper has had the opportunity to work for almost twenty years at an institute created in Romney's name.

As a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Cooper endeavored to follow spiritual promptings throughout her professional career. After she graduated from BYU in 1977 with a bachelor's degree in elementary education, those spiritual promptings guided her to find full-time work at WordPerfect and Novell and then part-time work as an independent consultant; the same promptings eventually led her to the Romney Institute of Public Management (later named the Romney Institute of Public Service and Ethics) at BYU Marriott.

Before applying to work at the Romney Institute, Cooper prayed for inspiration. "I received a clear impression," she says. "I was to find a full-time job that offered benefits and paid a specific amount."

After interviewing for many positions in Utah County, Cooper arrived at an interview for a position as department secretary with the Romney Institute. When her salary was finalized, "the pay was the same to-the-dollar amount that my prayer had specified earlier," says Cooper.

Working for the Romney Institute as department secretary, director of student services, and eventually associate director has done more for Cooper than merely confirm the reality of the spiritual promptings she has received throughout her life. While working in her first position with the Romney Institute, Cooper earned her EMPA in 2006. Her work has also blessed her with a love for students earning the MPA degree. Her responsibilities as associate director include chairing the admissions committee, monitoring the status of students' applications, and advising students about their classes and lives.

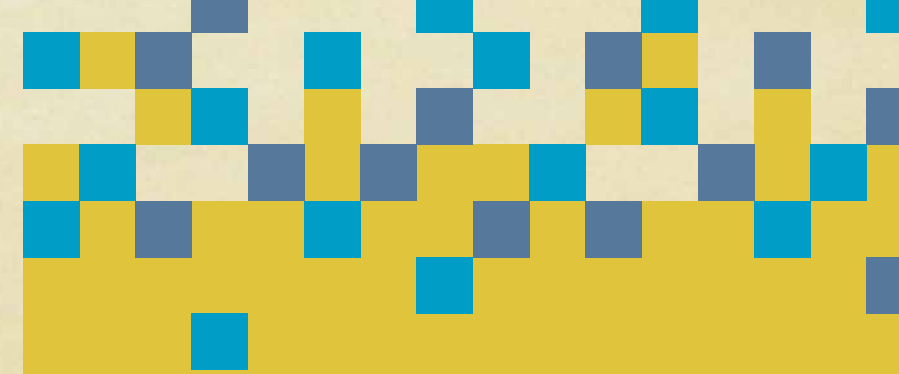
"By doing a lot of listening and a little bit of talking, I've seen miracles happen," Cooper says. "I truly feel that Heavenly Father has given me impressions of things I need to tell or ask students." When she is helping students achieve success, Cooper doesn't give minimal effort. "My heart has been fully invested in helping MPA and EMPA students find academic success," she says.

Cooper's success in her own quest for lifelong learning has been reinforced as she has worked for the Romney Institute. "I've had experiences that have surprised, changed, and blessed me," says Cooper. Whether that learning came from advising students or discussing ethics with professors who are part of the Romney Institute, those experiences changed the way she views the world.

Though Cooper will be retiring in September 2021, the difference she has made in the lives of students will remain. "Most of our students come to BYU with a hunger to learn and make the world a better place," says Cooper. As she advises and directs them, she has helped them make a positive impact in the world.







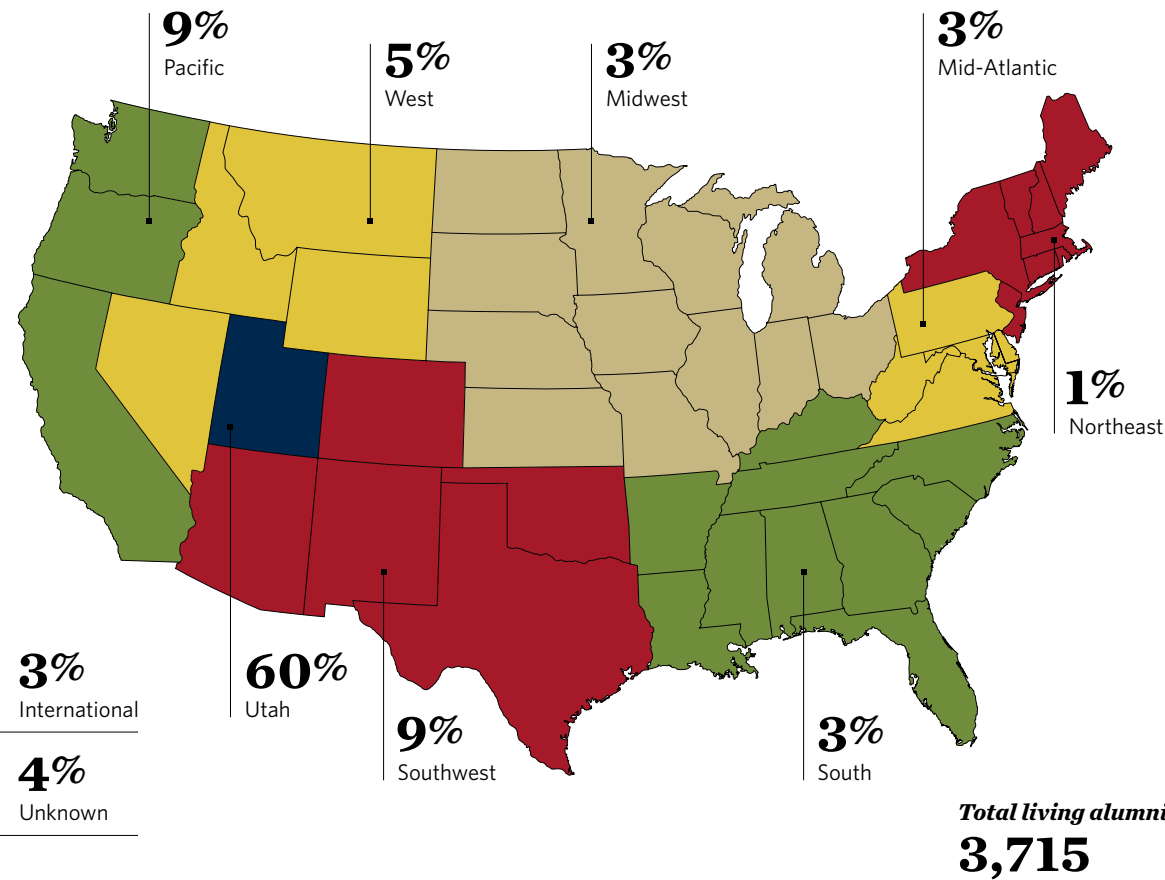
# *Alumni Updates*

Romney Institute alum **Lina Abdallah** has a deep desire to connect with others. Those connections, made during her time as a student at BYU and continuing throughout her career, have led her to create a network that stretches across the world to countries such as Egypt, Iraq, and Kuwait. Now as a senior urban specialist in Jordan, Abdallah is dedicated to putting what she learned in the MPA program into practice as she connects with and cares for others. Read more about her international journey on page 33.



# Alumni Report

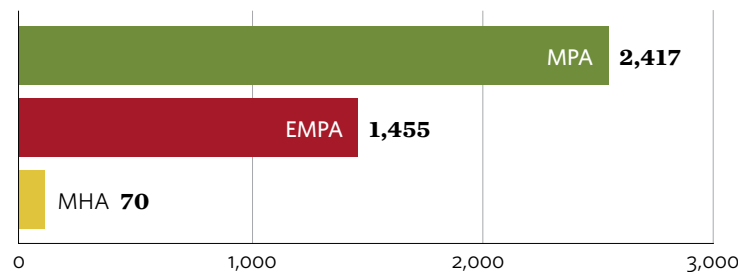
## Where BYU Marriott MPA Alumni Reside



## Top 10 States Where Alumni Reside

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Utah       | 6. Virginia   |
| 2. California | 7. Washington |
| 3. Arizona    | 8. Nevada     |
| 4. Idaho      | 9. Colorado   |
| 5. Texas      | 10. Oregon    |

## Degrees Granted\*



\* Degree numbers may differ slightly from past reports because data sources have been updated.

# The Power of a Smile



**Jennifer Tinkham**, a JD/MPA alumna of BYU Marriott's Romney Institute, understands the power of a simple smile to change the world. As an educator, Tinkham shares the joy of smiles, service, and education with her students at BYU-Hawaii.

Tinkham first learned lessons about the power of a smile from her father, a survivor of the atomic bombing in Hiroshima, Japan. Years after that traumatic event, one smile changed his life forever. "If my father saw foreigners, he avoided them because they reminded him of the war. However, one day, while my father was walking down the street, a missionary from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints did something simple that changed my father's life forever—he smiled," she says. "This act caught my father's attention and allowed the Light of Christ to reach him, which eventually led to his conversion to the gospel."

Tinkham seeks to share that Light of Christ with others, and she recognizes that her time in the MPA program gave her the tools to do so. When she was in her last year at the J. Reuben Clark Law School, she felt a strong prompting to earn her MPA degree as well. In the MPA program, Tinkham had the opportunity to participate in service opportunities with others. "I became one of the founding members of Grantwell, a student-led program that connects donors with

nonprofit groups. My team created the governance, evaluation, and decision analysis structures for grant proposals that matched nonprofit groups with donor money," says Tinkham, who graduated with her JD/MPA degree in 2008.

Tinkham's time in the MPA program didn't only open up opportunities to learn about nonprofits; her degree also became the deciding factor in obtaining a job. When Tinkham moved to Laie, Hawaii, she found a position teaching in the political science program at BYU-Hawaii. "One of the individuals who viewed my file told me that I got the position because of my MPA degree," she says.

In her role at BYU-Hawaii, Tinkham helps students earn legal studies certificates, and she teaches nonprofit management courses where students create their own organizations. "For example, one recent student nonprofit focused on the elderly confined to their homes due to COVID-19 restrictions," she says. "Students wrote letters, sent videos, and put together care packages for each person."

Students in the group also connected with Mark and Betty Cannon, longtime supporters of BYU-Hawaii as well as the Romney Institute and the MPA program. "Students organized a Zoom video conference where students and alumni expressed their appreciation for the couple," Tinkham says. "This event was a special time to show our gratitude, as Brother Cannon passed away a few days later. I am so proud of these BYU-Hawaii students for spreading their light and influence all over the world."

As Tinkham shares principles of lifelong learning and service with her students from her home in Laie, Hawaii, she aims to create an environment of support and smiles similar to the one that she experienced in the MPA program. "When I went to the MPA program, I felt loved and supported right away. My fellow students and I were united in a desire to bless the lives of other people," she says. "Now I'm at BYU-Hawaii, which is a great place full of diversity with a community that has the same type of feel. The other faculty members and I strive to create a nurturing place where students can grow academically and in their faith."



# Putting Down Roots in Health



Each tree in an orchard has different needs. Similarly, so does each member in a community. **Ralph Clegg**, former executive director of the Utah County Health Department, self-described gentleman farmer, and Romney Institute EMPA alumnus, solves problems in both his garden and his community by understanding diversity and recognizing different people's needs.

A native of Orem, Clegg began learning about caring for a garden when he was a child. Because he grew up working in an orchard on his family's property, he and his two siblings spent a lot of time learning to care for trees. When Clegg graduated from Orem High School in 1973 and began attending BYU, he moved from tending trees to tending to his education. Clegg channeled his love for the environment into his 1979 bachelor's degree in environmental health science.

After graduation, Clegg grew his love of working with others, first through working in management at BYU Food Services and then at the Utah County Health Department, where he worked as an environmental health inspector. However, Clegg wasn't ready to put down roots in his career. He felt that additional experience within the health department would allow him more room to grow.

In order to qualify for advancement, Clegg turned to the Romney Institute and BYU Marriott, where he earned his EMPA in 1992. One of the most valuable lessons he learned from his experience in the program was conflict resolution. "How you deal with

conflict is probably one of the biggest challenges you face in your career," says Clegg. "You have to find a way to work your way through it."

After being promoted to deputy director in the Utah County Health Department, Clegg recognized that the conflict he encountered often came from the vast differences in opinions within the Utah County community. Thanks to his EMPA experience, Clegg knew what to do. "You have to treat people from where they have come," Clegg says. "Respecting others is important, but that doesn't mean you always agree. You can't always agree. Just make sure to respect and take note of others' feelings."

Clegg remembers listening to many community opinions when he worked to address complaints and minimize conflict regarding Utah County's high carbon monoxide levels in 1986. Because Utah exceeded the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, the federal Clean Air Act required Utah to start a vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance program.

"A lot of unhappy people called me to tell me how they felt," remembers Clegg. Clegg's experience in the EMPA program helped him resolve conflict and find solutions that impacted the way Utah County eventually responded to the Clean Air Act.

When faced with the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Clegg says his background in conflict resolution continued to benefit him as he made plans for Utah County's response. As he worked to find ways to best address the community's needs, he advocated for the need to treat people with respect and love. He knows that everyone has challenges, especially during a worldwide pandemic. "Hopefully 2021 is better—a good harvest," says Clegg, who retired at the end of 2020 after nearly thirty-eight years of service for Utah County.

Clegg and his wife, Diane, live in Orem, where he still owns a portion of the orchard he worked in as a youth; he continues to tend to his peach and apple trees, and even a corn patch. "Sometimes it's not a good crop due to weather," Clegg says. "Just like in growing crops, every year is different. You have adversity at all points in life, but you learn to address it and grow."

# Saving the World, One Milk Carton at a Time

Since graduating from the Romney Institute MPA program at BYU Marriott, alumna **Jackie Suggitt** has worked at both a company with 1.5 million employees and a nonprofit with twelve employees. Whether she's driving social change from Walmart headquarters or a nonprofit board meeting, she aims to create a more sustainable future for the planet. Currently, she's working to help industries to reduce their food waste, one milk carton or loaf of bread at a time.

Suggitt's fellow students in the Romney Institute MPA program helped prepare her to make an impact wherever she goes. "I have amazing memories of interacting with smart people," she says. "Those people valued a blend of both religious and secular education, which is a unique aspect of BYU as a whole."

As a student, Suggitt had already started to put her MPA education into action as she worked with Grantwell, a student-run program in which MPA students consult with nonprofits and advise donors on the best ways to spend their money. "One of my favorite projects with Grantwell was working with the Tyler Robinson Foundation, which was started by a man who worked with Imagine Dragons," she says. "He started the foundation in honor of his younger brother who had cancer,

and we helped him strategically set his foundation up for success."

Suggitt's work with Grantwell opened the door for her opportunity to work with Walmart. "I'm from Bentonville, Arkansas, the home of Walmart headquarters. I went home for the summer and took my Grantwell portfolio into the Walmart Foundation," she says. "I got a summer position with the foundation, and I worked closely with the corporate social responsibility and sustainability teams. I started working full-time with the corporate sustainability team after I graduated."

After working at Walmart for three years, Suggitt moved to her current home in Vancouver, British Columbia. She now works at ReFED, a local nonprofit that focuses on reducing food waste. "Something I like about the small nonprofit space is that there's a lot of autonomy in the role, which allows me to create my own work," she says. "If I want to take a risk, I don't have to go through seven layers of bureaucracy to get approval."

As Suggitt and her team build the nonprofit, they have opportunities to make a difference in their corner of the world. "I've been part of launching initiatives that are fundamentally changing how businesses and other entities act on environmental issues in their supply chains," she says. "We recently launched a project to

identify economically viable solutions for reducing waste. We have been working on this for eighteen months and hope to implement those solutions."

As Suggitt aims to make a difference through her work, she continues to value the lessons she learned from the Romney Institute MPA program that have helped her succeed in her professional and personal life. "The MPA provides a well-rounded education. I felt prepared when I left to go into the public, private, or nonprofit sectors, and knew I could contribute in any of them," she says. "The MPA program set me up to continue learning in a work environment and in my family."







### 1976

**Susan Wakefield Dal Porto** was one of only five women earning a graduate degree from BYU Marriott MPA program when she attended the school from 1974 to

1976. While a student, she helped start what is now called Women in Management. Dal Porto is proud to see that the number of women at the Romney Institute has increased to 50 percent. Since graduating in 1976, Dal Porto participated in the Utah State House Fellows Program and has worked in many different capacities. This included working as the leader for an MK Partners consulting group, customer acquisition manager for American Girl, marketing consultant for MeritDirect, and assistant to the dean of liberal education and student affairs at the University of Utah. Dal Porto and her husband, Rick, live in Roselle, Illinois, and have two children. Now retired, Dal Porto is heavily involved in volunteer work focusing on racial justice, mental health, criminal justice, and food insecurity.



### 1987

**Rob Tonkinson** decided he wanted to work for healthcare organizations when he recognized his love for reading medical articles during his senior year at

BYU. Prompted by this discovery, he graduated from BYU Marriott with his MHA in 1987. Tonkinson currently works as the vice president of finance and chief financial officer of Baptist Health Care's healthcare division, where he oversees financial planning, analytics, treasury, and supply chain. One of his most satisfying work experiences was when he built valuable relationships with a healthcare consumer group. Those relationships and his expertise have enabled the company he works for to provide invaluable assistance to patients with modest financial resources. When not fulfilling his duties as CFO, Tonkinson enjoys reading, cooking, traveling, and researching his family's history. He and his wife, Cameo, have six children and six grandchildren and live in Pace, Florida.



### 1991

**J. Kelly Sessions** wants to make a difference in the world. After an internship at the South Lake Tahoe, California, city manager's office, Sessions knew local govern-

ment was where he needed to be. After graduating with his MPA in 1991 with an emphasis in finance, Sessions worked in many different managerial capacities for cities and towns in California. He now works in executive management for the City of San Ramon, California. His proudest accomplishment is managing a long-distance relationship with his wife, Emily, between California and Utah. Together they have a blended family of six children and two grandchildren. Sessions has participated in a variety of volunteer roles including being a Scoutmaster, volleyball coach, and little league coach. When he is not busy working or volunteering for his community, Sessions enjoys "anything that gets me outdoors and gets the blood pumping," including hiking, surfing, volleyball, and home and yard improvement projects.



### 2011

**Corey Riley** didn't know he wanted to earn his MPA until he had the opportunity to meet with an MPA recruiter during a BYU Marriott dinner. Because

of the recession in 2009, Riley knew landing a job would be difficult, so he decided to apply to the program. Riley, a first-generation college student, says that graduating with his MPA in 2011 was one of his proudest accomplishments. After graduation, Riley worked for a number of companies and organizations, including the State of Idaho, Disney, Technicolor, and Esri. He currently works as senior HR business partner for Procore Technologies, where he collaborates with various department managers to improve employee experience. When Riley is not busy at work, he enjoys spending time at home in Camarillo, California, with his wife, Patricia, playing outside and playing video games with his two sons, and watching BYU and Texas Longhorn football and basketball games.



### 2014

**ShaLae Steadman** graduated with a bachelor of science in business management from Southern Utah University (SUU) in 2010. Following her graduation from

SUU, she attended BYU Marriott School of Business and received her MPA in May 2014. Steadman currently works for the city of Mesa, Arizona, as a strategic planning and analysis program coordinator, bringing understanding and organization to data gathered for the city. She appreciates that no two days at work are the same, that she is able to use data to break biases, and that she can daily see the difference her work makes. Her love for problem solving, diversity, and adventure has also taken her to different countries around the world. Whether it's boating across Lake Bled in Slovenia, swinging on the world's largest swing in New Zealand, or watching a bull fight in Spain, Steadman loves exploring new places and trying new things.



### 2015

**Lacey Nay Hall** loved her statistics and program evaluation courses while pursuing her MPA in the Romney Institute, and she knew she wanted to work in

that realm. After graduating in 2015, she landed a position as a research and evaluation coordinator at the Provo Missionary Training Center, where she was able to use and improve the skills she learned in those courses. After she had her first child, she felt inspired to move to a part-time position and was hired into a field she didn't know existed: institutional research, which is data analysis and reporting for higher education. "I'll be forever thankful for that inspiration," she says, "because this work is where my passion and skills meet." Since discovering this career, Hall has gone on to work for Utah Valley University as a research analyst and now works for the University of Alaska Southeast as a data manager. She and her husband, Jacob, live in Juneau, Alaska, with their two daughters, where they enjoy hiking, seeing the wildlife, and picking berries.



### 2018

**Martina Ming Huntington** uses the skills she learned while earning her EMPA on a daily basis as an IT project manager for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-

day Saints. While working as a project manager, Huntington loves to see the impact of her work on the future of technology within the Church. She also uses her professional and personal experiences to promote equality within the workplace. As a wheelchair user, she hopes to encourage and create equal opportunities for those with disabilities through her blog and social media accounts. Huntington lives in Orem with her husband, A.J., and their three children. She enjoys handcycling, monoskiing, and traveling. She and her husband have traveled to twenty-nine different countries and have journaled about their experiences on her Instagram account and blog.



### 2020

**Daniel Dudley** helps make wishes come true as chief development officer for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. He knew that was the career path he wanted

to take after starting his own nonprofit during the end of his time as an undergrad. The nonprofit was called Good in the Neighborhood, and it created opportunities for young adults to participate in volunteer activities. Dudley was then encouraged to apply for a job at Make-A-Wish and has been working in various positions within the foundation for more than eight years. While working for Make-A-Wish, Dudley helped create a new corporate fundraising program that changed the way company partners support Make-A-Wish's mission. During his time at Make-A-Wish, he graduated from the University of Utah with a bachelor's degree in business management in 2015 and from BYU with an EMPA in 2020. Dudley resides in Salt Lake City with his family; in his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his two daughters and watching European mysteries with his wife, Hilary.



## Cultivating His Own Future



**B**YU Marriott MPA alum **Ed Thatcher** grew up on a farm, and he learned that farming was long, hard work that lasted from early in the morning to late in the evening. Thatcher worked six days a week and even had a few chores that had to be done on Sunday. There wasn't even time for summer vacation. Though many enjoy the farming lifestyle, Thatcher decided it wasn't for him.

He made that decision while standing in the middle of a field in Idaho. "I'm going to get a college degree," he remembers telling himself. "I'll get a job where I only have to work from eight to five o'clock, with my weekends off."

Following that moment, Thatcher's life became a series of changes. After graduating in 1977

from BYU with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a sociology minor, he earned his MPA in 1979. "I am so proud to be a graduate of BYU that I wear that pride on my sleeve, jacket, and bumper sticker," says Thatcher.

The education and guidance he received from Romney Institute professors helped him jump into working as an assistant city manager in Abilene, Texas, where he was mentored by Ed Seegmiller, the city manager. After working for the city of Abilene and then as city manager in Navasota, Texas, Thatcher took a job that would prove to be one of the biggest challenges he faced in city management.

Upon starting a position as city manager in Rosenberg, Texas, in 1986, Thatcher realized a lot of work had to be done to rebuild the city's management structure. For example, when he was heading to a meeting in the city's boardroom, his secretary stopped him, saying that the room was too small. After relocating to a larger council chamber, "there seemed to be two hundred employees and about forty-five directors," Thatcher remembers. Instead of one director being appointed to every department, there was a director in every office within each department. Thatcher had to divide everyone into different offices,

which required a lot of change.

Throughout the rest of his career, Thatcher continued to be known as a "change agent." He helped rebuild and strengthen city management throughout Texas, from Greenville to Garland to Mount Pleasant.

Although he's officially retired, Thatcher is currently working as a city manager for Mount Pleasant. He and his wife, Debbie, have six sons, five of whom are continuing his legacy as they serve the community by working in municipal government. A sixth son is serving as a neurointerventional surgeon.

Whether he's moving from city to city or watching his sons make a difference in the world, Thatcher continues to be an advocate for change. "You know what they say. 'There's only one thing that's constant, and that's change,'" Thatcher says. "If you see things that are good, leave them be. If you find things that can be improved, improve upon them. You want to be able to say, 'Things are better now because I was here—not because of what I did but because of what I enabled others to do.'"

Thatcher has certainly accomplished that in his life through his career as a city manager and in his roles as a student, husband, and father—a life that he couldn't have imagined as he stood in a vast farm field as a boy, wishing for change.

## An Expanding Perspective

**F**rom the mountains to the sea to BYU's Tanner building, **Lina Abdallah** is always searching for new ways to see the world and the people who live in it. She attributes much of this desire to the time she spent at the Romney Institute and BYU Marriott—an experience that led her to work for the World Bank, first in the West Bank and Gaza country office, and more recently in Jordan.

As a lover of the ocean, Abdallah is an avid and experienced scuba diver. Before COVID-19 led to travel restrictions, she would often spend her weekends diving in the Red Sea, just three and a half hours from where she lives in Amman, Jordan. She has also dived in the waters off the coast of Africa, Southeast Asia, Lebanon, and Tunisia. "Water makes up 71 percent of our earth," says Abdallah. "We need to explore it."

Diving isn't the only activity that has encouraged her to look at the world from a different perspective. Since her first week at BYU, she has enjoyed hiking. "My first hike ever was actually up Y Mountain," says Abdallah. "It was such a big deal to me." To her, the activity was an informal student orientation and an opportunity to make new friends.

Students weren't the only people Abdallah connected with at BYU. She recalls the humility that professors showed in the way they interacted with their students. "The faculty at the Romney Institute were amazing," says Abdallah. "I would address professors, and they would say, 'Oh, please, call me by my first name.' These are top-level professors."

After Abdallah graduated from BYU Marriott with her MPA in 2003, she expanded her network of connections from BYU across the world to countries such as Egypt, Iraq, and Kuwait. The relationships Abdallah developed with many people in the Middle East have resulted from the projects she has worked on in fragile and conflict-affected areas.

One project Abdallah recalls as being particularly impactful was being part of a team researching the economic and social impact of ISIS and the Syrian conflict in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. While visiting the region, she and her colleagues worked near refugees and internally displaced persons. The

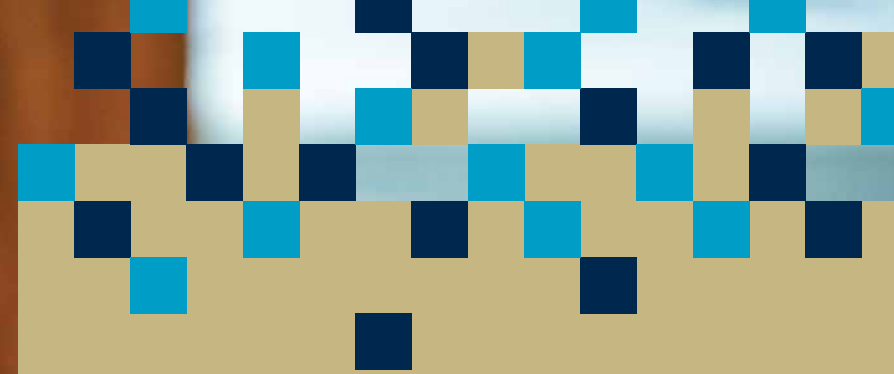


understanding she gained through that project has motivated and encouraged Abdallah to continue to serve those in needs, with a hope that she can help make their lives better.

Today, working as a senior urban specialist who coordinates the urban development, resilience, and municipal services program in Jordan, Abdallah continues to give back to the community and serve others, just as she received service at BYU. She is currently working with municipalities hosting 1.3 million Syrian refugees in Jordan; Abdallah is also a proponent of supporting youth empowerment. "My experience at BYU and particularly the Romney Institute MPA program was a life changer for me," says Abdallah. "My experience opened my eyes to community service."

The experience of working at the World Bank and serving communities across the world is an opportunity Abdallah attributes to her professors at the Romney Institute. "I owe my whole career to the trust the professors had in me," she says. "I want them to know that their efforts and their belief in me has not gone to waste—I'm actually using everything that I've learned, whether professionally or nonprofessionally, in my life."





# *Romney Institute Support*

The BYU Marriott MPA program works hard to prepare its students for a lifetime of public service, including professional and voluntary work in government, nonprofit, and public-interest-oriented private sector positions. In fall 2020, that commitment was exhibited when **Jeff Flake** spent a semester serving as a fellow at the Romney Institute. As a former US senator, Flake brought unique insight and perspective to what life as a public servant means. Read more about Flake's contributions to the MPA program on page 40.



# Institute Support

## Current Fundraising Priorities

Please consider giving to the following scholarships and funds:



### Gail S. Halvorsen MPA Endowed Scholarship

Funds scholarships for MPA and EMPA students who are first responders or who come from a first-responder household.

Please note: We are one-half of the way for this to be fully endowed and hope to fund this scholarship soon.



### EMPA Student Support Fund

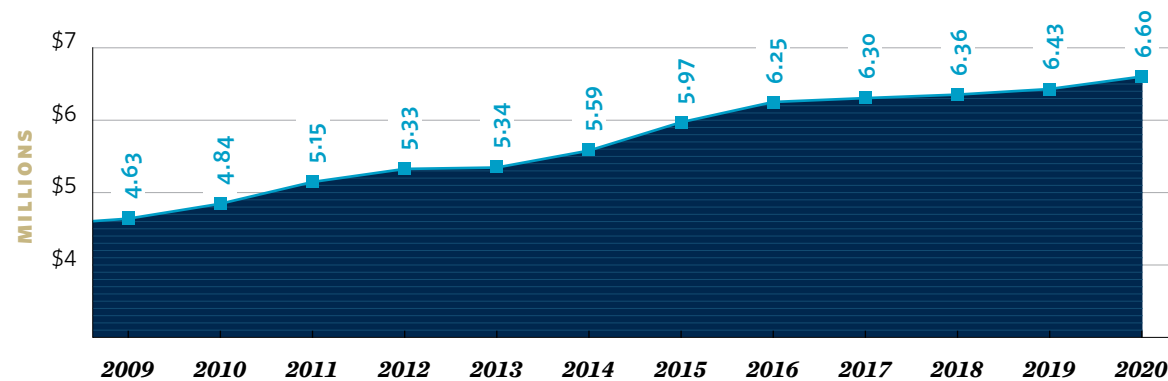
Funds scholarships for students in the EMPA program.

## Romney Endowment Growth

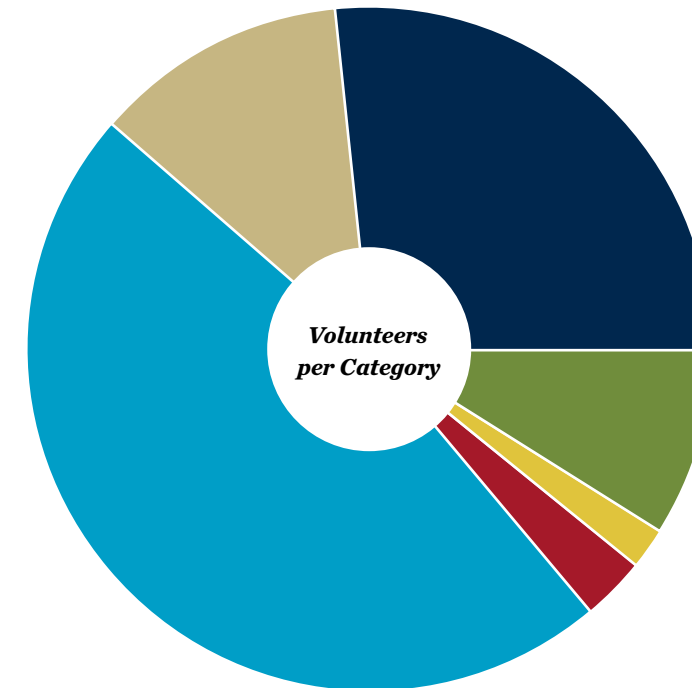
In 1998, the George W. Romney family provided the initial endowment of \$1 million, which was to be matched with money raised by the institute and the Romney family. That same year, the institute was renamed the George W. Romney Institute of Public Management. From 1998 to 2001, the initial endowment was increased to approximately \$3 million. By the end of 2020, this endowment had reached \$6.6 million. In 2005, Gary Cornia, then director of the MPA program and the Romney Institute, began an aggressive fundraising campaign to fund student scholarship endowments. The Romney Institute continues this mission.



### Total Endowment Funds Growth



## Number of Volunteers in 2020



27% Advisory Board

9% Career Trips

2% Experiential Learning

3% Mock Interviews

47% Master of Public Administration Association

12% On-Campus Engagement

**Total hours volunteered: 2,579**

## Executive Board of Advisors

**Anthony Bates**  
Director,  
Student Leadership  
Brigham Young University

**Mike Bennett**  
City Manager  
Fruita, Colorado

**Earnie Broughton**  
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Budget Director  
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Y2 Analytics

**Koreen H. van Ravenhorst**  
Principal Program  
Budget Analyst  
California Department  
of Finance



# A World of Difference



One of **Marilee Clark's** main responsibilities when she was working at Orem City Library in the outreach department was to oversee the city's eight-week summer reading program. The highly successful program had served thousands of individuals for years, and Clark was tasked with updating it, preserving what worked well, and adapting it for the rapidly growing community.

"One of the things I had learned as an MPA student was the importance of a thoughtful, data-driven process that involved gathering good information from all the stakeholders before making key business decisions," explained Clark, who graduated from the EMPA program in 2015. "This was one of those decisions."

Clark reached out to Eva Witesman, an associate professor in the MPA program, who suggested a community partnership, which is when MPA students provide program evaluation planning and statistical analysis services to nonprofit and government partners. These partnerships allow students to serve at the federal, state, and local levels and develop a broad understanding of how quantitative skills can be applied in organizations of any size and in any policy area. To date, the program has served more than one hundred community partners.

"The experience was fantastic," reports Clark. "The students were wonderful about listening to our needs and understanding what we wanted to accomplish, and they came in and used skills they were learning in the classroom to design surveys, set up and conduct

focus groups, and talk with patrons. And then they took all the information they had gathered and presented it to my team in a way that was understandable, professional, and extremely usable."

Community partnerships are only one of several ways that MPA alumni can stay connected to their alma mater, give back to the MPA program and its students, and continue to benefit from their association with the Romney Institute. That involvement can be as simple as referring potential public administration students to the program, volunteering in the program, serving as a class representative, providing internships, or hiring graduates.

**Curtis Isaak**, an EMPA 2016 graduate who currently works as a senior manager of events and experience at BYU Alumni Relations, estimates he has had "serious conversations" with about fifty potential MPA students and has written letters of recommendation for a good number of those. "Probably about ten have completed the program or are currently enrolled," he says.

Isaak, who pays particular attention to students who are passionate about serving, notes that as an alumnus, he knows the quality of education the MPA program provides. "Having a BYU MPA degree makes students better leaders, employees, and volunteers who will have a positive impact," he says. "Additionally, the classes directly or indirectly incorporate the gospel, which helps students learn to navigate the workforce while staying true to their faith. Encouraging students to pursue a BYU MPA is a very small way I can make the world a better place."

**Mary Wintch** graduated from the MPA program in 1979, one of three women in a class of 102 students. She got a job with the federal government, worked on both the East and West Coasts, and finished up her



thirty-year career in Utah with the National Forest Service. Now she's retired and living in Manti, Utah, but she jumped at the chance when she was invited to return to the school and conduct mock interviews with MPA students.

When she was in the program, she practiced interviews with a group of fellow students before applying for internships. "It made a world of difference," she says. "Those who practiced got good offers, while some students who were every bit as qualified but didn't practice didn't get offers."

Wintch, who has also served as her class representative for years, now travels from Manti to Provo at least once a year for the mock interviews, although during COVID-19, the interviews were conducted on Zoom. "I hope maybe I can help a little bit," she says. "I've done a lot of interviews throughout my career, and I give the students insights and help prepare them."

She also unabashedly encourages students to consider working for the government. "There's a bazillion MPA programs, but only a few stellar ones," she observes, "and the Romney Institute is one of those. I would love to see a large portion of our grads go into government, because we need them."

**Dru Underwood**, a 1994 MPA graduate, agrees. As the deputy auditor general for the Utah State Legislature, Underwood has consistently provided internships and jobs to BYU Marriott MPA grads over the last fifteen years. "There is something special about Romney Institute MPAs," he explains. "I recognized it when I was in the program. Other programs are theoretical, almost like an advanced political science degree, but BYU Marriott MPAs have the tools to do the job and hit the ground running."

Underwood, who also volunteers as a panelist during new student orientation, says that MPA grads are what he calls a rare triple threat. "First, they know how to think, and conceptual skills are essential," he notes. "Second, they also possess hard skills, or knowledge about spreadsheets and databases and statistical programs. And third, they have communication skills; they know how to work effectively on a team and can vocalize themselves well."

Whether MPA grads give of their time, talents, or money, their efforts make a world of difference, says **Lori Wadsworth**, director of the MPA program.

Many alumni have set up monthly donations to the Romney Institute; although the donations are often modest, they have added up to a significant total through the years. On a larger scale, one MPA alum started a scholarship fund in honor of Colonel Gail S. Halvorsen that will assist students who are first responders or who come from a first-responder household. Other alumni have added to the fund and it is now halfway to the amount needed to endow the scholarship.

Sometimes, even more valuable is the time that alumni devote to students. Wadsworth recalls one instance during a conference when she observed an alum talking intently with a student.

"They were having a wonderful, engaging conversation," she recalls, "and I was reminded that as faculty our job is to teach principles and skills, but it's our alumni who teach what it's really like to be a public servant in the nonprofit, community, or government sector. That is an integral part of the education that the Romney Institute provides, and we can't do that without alumni who are so willing to give back and stay connected."

To share how you would like to make an iMPACT at the Romney Institute, go to the following survey link: [mpa.byu.edu/givingback](https://mpa.byu.edu/givingback). You can also scan the QR code shown on the inside back cover and donate to one of two student-focused scholarship funds that are priorities this year: the Gail S. Halvorsen MPA Endowed Scholarship and the EMPA Student Support Account.





# Lessons from Public Service

as an elected official and as a candidate, and I've drawn parallels to decisions that new graduates will be making in their careers and how they might frame those decisions," says Flake, who was recently nominated by President Joe Biden to serve as ambassador to Turkey.

Flake, who grew up on a cattle ranch in Snowflake, Arizona, earned a bachelor's degree in international relations and a master's degree in political science from BYU. After graduating, he gravitated to jobs where he could be involved in public policy, including director of the Foundation for Democracy in Namibia during the country's transition to independence and executive director for the Goldwater Institute, a Phoenix-based think tank. After his election to the US House of Representatives in 2000, Flake spent eighteen years in public office representing the state of Arizona, including six terms in the House and six years in the Senate.

Since retiring from the Senate, Flake has found his niche in teaching at the university level. He spent a semester as a fellow at Harvard University and has guest lectured at numerous universities, including Yale, Princeton, Stanford, the University of Chicago, and Notre Dame.

"It's refreshing to hear the perspective of young people," he says. "They don't see those who hold

different views or have different lifestyles as the enemy. And that's encouraging. I hope that they'll carry that frame of reference throughout their careers, whether or not they enter politics—that somebody can be your political opponent, but he or she is not your enemy."

During his stint as a fellow for the Romney Institute, Flake was a speaker for the MPA lecture series and was a guest lecturer in the MPA program's communications and organizational behavior courses, the MBA program's ethics courses, and BYU's Political Science Department. He also spoke at other events on campus and met with MPA, EMPA, and political science students one-on-one during regular office hours.

Flake often had the opportunity to talk with students who had questions about a career in public service or a future run for office. "Today, I think people look at the situation in Washington and say, 'I don't want any part of it,'" he says. "I hope to encourage students to still consider it. We need people to run for office, work on campaigns, support good candidates, implement policy, and go into the civil service or foreign service. We need good individuals who are willing to serve and to remind people it's a noble profession, and there are good people regardless of the party they belong to."

As the end of his term in the US Senate approached in 2017, **Jeff Flake** had a big decision to make—whether or not he would run for reelection. The way things stood at the time, Flake says, people in his political party expected him to support the sitting president, who was also a member of the party. But Flake disagreed with the president on many issues—important ones such as immigration, refugee policy, and trade policy. More than that, Flake felt that if he supported the president, he would be condoning behavior that he simply wasn't okay with. Ultimately, Flake decided not to run.

This was just one of the experiences from his time in public service that Flake shared with students as a visiting fellow at BYU Marriott's Romney Institute of Public Service and Ethics during Fall 2020 semester. "I've talked about decisions that I had to make

# You make an **iMPACT** when you

**I**nvest in a future MPA student by donating to the Romney Institute



**M**entor current students

**P**ass along job opportunities in your organization

**A**ttend an alumni event (fireside, day of service, or bootcamp)

**C**onnect with us on LinkedIn



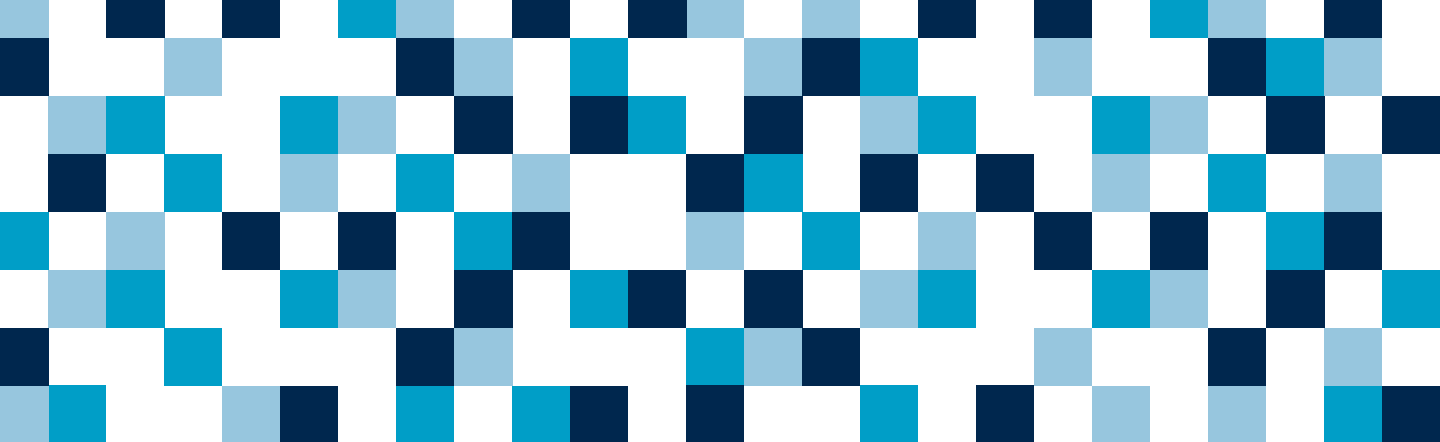
LinkedIn

**T**ake the MPA survey for other ideas to make an iMPACT



Survey





George W. Romney Institute of Public Service and Ethics

BYU Marriott School of Business