

MPA program celebrates 20th year!

After 20 years, NKU's Master of Public Administration program is going strong and continuing to grow. The MPA program started offering classes in the Spring semester of 1989. The first class enrolled 30 students which included transfer students from Kentucky State University. KSU offered a remote program at NKU from 1986-1988.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky's Council on Higher Education authorized the NKU MPA Program in the fall of 1988. The MPA degree was needed because the public and not-for-profit sectors in the Greater Cincinnati area were developing a greater commitment to professional administration. The long-term economic and population growth in Northern Kentucky projected a strong need for new professional managers in NKU's own service region.

Three political science faculty members developed the NKU MPA program during the summer of 1988. The faculty, Drs. Fred Rhyhart, Dennis Sies and J. Michael Thompson worked in collaboration with chair Dr. Aldalberto Pinelo and the NKU administration to create an NKU MPA program. Dr. Rhyhart later became the first MPA Director. The current director is Dr. Shamima Ahmed. Other MPA directors were, Dr. Ali

Farazmand, Dr. J Michael Thompson, Dr. Dennis Sies, Dr. Dean Minix, and Dr. Gary Mattson.

The greater Cincinnati area does not have another MPA program. The University of Cincinnati had a small program which enrolled under 30 students but that program was terminated in 2002. Xavier University also had a program in the mid-80s, but it too was terminated.

Many of the core courses have remained constant over the years. However, early on the graduation options were: a thesis, an internship or taking an extra area of concentration. Students opting for an internship or extra area of concentration also took comprehensive written and oral exams administered each spring on a pass/fail basis. Between 1996 and 2000, changes were made regarding the thesis and comprehensive exams as the MPA faculty realized for our students it is much more meaningful to complete an applied project with a capstone experience.

The program was accredited in 2007 by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, one of 265 accredited schools in the country. The program currently has 102 students and more than 350 alumni.

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MPA partnership creates GIS graduate certificate program

Starting fall 2010, NKU will be offering a graduate certificate program in GIS. The program will be offered through a partnership of the MPA program, Departments of Geography & History, and Computer Science. The curriculum will include our existing PAD 650 (Introduction to GIS), PAD 651 (Advanced GIS), along with three new courses on Cartography (PAD 515), Introduction to Remote Sensing (PAD 519), and

Advanced Remote Sensing (PAD 520). Additional course include PAD 640 (Management of Public Information System), and several computer science courses that students can take as electives. Students, who are in both the MPA and the GIS certificate programs, can transfer up to nine credit hours of the certificate courses towards their MPA electives.



Alumni Carol Helmick and Brian Gilligan along with Dr. Gary Mattson share stories at the MPA Fall Reception in NKU's new Student Union.

MPA Faculty Accomplishments



Dr. Shamima Ahmed has presented papers at the Midwest Political Science and the Southeast Conference on Public Administration Conferences. She has published an article on “NGOs in International Politics” in the *Encyclopedia of NGOs and National Security*. Dr. Ahmed is currently the elected Vice-President of NKU’s Graduate Council.

Dr. Ed Kwon has published two research papers. The paper on “Financial Liberalization in Peoples’ Republic of China,” was published in the *Pacific Focus* 24, no. 2 (2009). The other research paper, “A Longitudinal Research on the DPRK’s Nuclear Weapons Program,” was published in *The Journal of Peace Studies* 9, no. 4 (2008).



Dr. Hongmei Wang presented papers at the 20th IEEE Int’l Conference on Tools with Artificial Intelligence and the 13th International Conference on Human-Computer Interaction. In addition, she has a journal paper that has been accepted. As a PI, she has successfully obtained a Faculty Summer Fellowship and a Faculty Project Grant.



Dr. Julie Olberding served as director of NKU’s Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project. In addition, three of her manuscripts were published or accepted by peer-reviewed academic journals, including the *International Journal of Public Administration*, the *Journal of Public Affairs Education and International Studies Perspective*.



Dr. Jayce Farmer presented papers at the Southern Political Science Association in New Orleans, LA and at the American Society for Public Administration conference in Miami, FL. He also served as the chair of the planning committee for the 2009 Southeastern Conference on Public Administration in Louisville.



Dr. Gary Mattson participated in the American Democracy Project: The Stewardship of Public Lands. Dr. Mattson was also part of a civic engagement study team of thirteen university professors at Yellowstone National Park to assist in a dispute conflict resolution between ranchers and environmentalists pertaining to buffalo/wolf eradication. A report is to be submitted to the US Department of Interior in January 2010.



MPA News and Updates

Focus groups provide valuable feedback

During the fall of 2009, we (MPA program) conducted several focus group sessions with area practitioners. The goals were to get their feedback on the MPA & Nonprofit Certificate programs and to identify the programs' strength and limitations in terms of the current knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) that are emphasized by employers (public and nonprofits). The sessions lasted for approx. one and a half to two hours. All MPA faculty along with Beth DeVantier, Bridgette Donnelly (Graduate Assistant), and Dr. Julie Kunselman (Dept. Chair) attended and participated in these sessions.

Participants emphasized the importance of the following KSAs for the MPA Program: Public sector ethics; Budgeting; Workforce diversity; Project Management; Soft skills (listening, body language); human relations (stress management, conflict resolutions); Leadership; Writing skills beyond writing research papers (memo, executive summary); Geographical Information System (GIS); Social media (Face Book, twitter, linkedin, etc.); Issue Management; Zoning; and Labor relations.

For the Nonprofit Certificate Program, they emphasized the following KSAs: Nonprofit leadership; Critical thinking; Collaboration; Social entrepreneurship; Customer Relations Management; Social media; Cultural competency; Encour-

age students to serve on boards. Several new workshop ideas were suggested including: organizational culture, developing partnerships, collaboration and merger, diversity management.

We are glad to see that most of the KSAs are already covered in our courses. However, we also realized that we need to emphasize some of the KSAs more, and explore options to integrate some of the other ideas into our existing curriculum. We look forward to start that conversation in Spring 2010.

We are grateful to the following participants for their valuable feedback on our programs: Larry Klein, Assistant City Manager, Covington; Christian Sigman, Assistant County Administrator, Hamilton County; Annalee Duganier, Assistant City Manager, Maderia; Dan Groth, City Administrator, Independence; Bernie Boraten, Village Administrator, Amberley Village; Patricia Schwartz, Court Administrator, Clermont County Common Pleas Court; Bryan Messmore, Dearborn County, IN; and Susan Ellerhorst, Assistant to the City Manager, Milford. Also, Roger Rolfes, City Manager, Edgewood; Judi Boyko, Township Administrator, West Chester; Dina Minneci, Liberty Township Administrator; Evelyn Sears, Hamilton County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board; Mike Hinnenkamp,

Springfield Township Administrator; Loretta Rokey, City Manager, Milford; Connie Roesch, Superintendent, Commercial Services Division, Greater Cincinnati Water Works; Jeff Earlywine, Boone County Administrator. Louise Kent, Planning Administrator, NKY Health Department; and Scott Stiles, Assistant City Manager, Cincinnati. Finally, Tom DiBello, Executive Director, Cen-

ter for Great Neighborhoods; Telly McGaha, Chief Development Officer, Redwood Rehabilitation Center; John Mitchell, CEO, Association for the Blind; Charles Wright, Director of Agenda Integration, United Way; and Tom Lottman Asst. Executive Director, Children Inc.

Shamima Ahmed, MPA Director



Dr. Julie Olberding's PAD 622 Volunteer Management class is working with Foundation for Ohio River Education to help them organize and manage their volunteer program.

Study abroad in Bangladesh slated for Summer 2010

Dr. Ahmed will offer a study abroad course (Grameen Bank & Micro-Credit) this summer in Bangladesh. Grameen Bank (GB) is one of the most effective and world-renowned micro-credit institutions, and is the recipient of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize. Students will travel to Bangladesh in July (for four weeks), will complete the GB's internship program and will participate in other learning activities. The course is designed with the following learning outcomes: (1)

exposure to Bangladeshi culture, tradition, language, and people, (2) learn in-depth, through field visits, the philosophy and operational procedures of GB, (3) learn about and experience the impact that microcredit has on the economic, social, and cultural lives of GB members and the community, and (4) engage students, through the GB international internship program, in a learning experience which includes students from educational institutions all over the world.

And the winners are...

Chris Lawson receives 40 under 40 award

Chris Lawson (2008, NKU MPA) was a recipient of the Cincinnati Business Courier's Forty under Forty award. Forty Under 40 recognizes the Tri-State's next generation of young leaders and innovators – people who have already made a mark professionally and in the community. This year's class was chosen from more than 470 nominations. This is the 13th year the awards have been given.

Chris and other recipients were honored at a luncheon at Cincinnati Music Hall on September 24, 2009. Chris is the Campaign Director for Community Shares of Greater Cincinnati. Community Shares is a partnership of 27 local nonprofit organizations build-

ing social and economic equity and healthy environment in Greater Cincinnati. A graduate of Miami University with a degree in Urban and Regional Planning, Chris has experience as a zoning commissioner, political campaign coordinator/researcher, lending banking client specialist and as an intern with the ACLU & the Cincinnati Collaborative Agreement. While at Miami University he co-founded and led the Planners Network Chapter of Miami University in Cincinnati. He is Vice-Chairman of Mayor Mallory's Young Professionals Kitchen Cabinet: Civic Engagement Committee.



Chris Lawson and Dr. Shamima Ahmed

Dustin Lester awarded 2009 Heisel Scholarship



Robert Johnson and Dustin Lester

The Cincinnati-based Center for Local Government (CLG) is pleased to announce that current NKU MPA student Dustin Lester was awarded the 2009 W.D. Heisel Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000. The purpose of the scholarship is to encourage a commitment to excellence in public service. Masters in Public Administration (MPA) students from Southwest Ohio or Northern Kentucky are eligible to apply.

Donald Heisel, the namesake of the scholarship, has been referred to as "The Father of

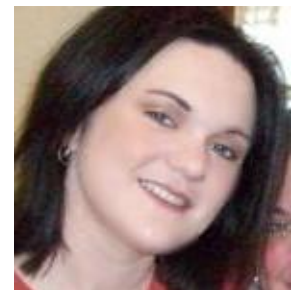
Public Administration" in Southwest Ohio. At the time of his death in 1998, Heisel's students held management positions in many of the local governments in the Greater Cincinnati region. Don Heisel's students and mentees are still to be found in many of the cities, villages, townships, and counties in Ohio and Northern Kentucky.

Lester is a 2002 graduate of Bowling Green State University. He is employed as an Account Executive with Huntington National Bank and serves as a Village Councilmember in Fairfax. "Dustin is an enthusiastic proponent of professional local government management and has a passion for public service," stated CLG Executive Director Robert Johnson. "This was evident to us as we selected a scholarship recipient for 2009."

The Center for Local Government was established in 1991 by Cincinnati-area local government managers to develop and manage shared services, provide information, and develop programs that save members money. It currently has 50 participating local governments from Hamilton, Clermont, Butler, Warren, Montgomery and Greene Counties.

Meet the new Graduate Assistant

Bridgette Donnelly is the new graduate assistant for the MPA program and a first year student. She graduated with her bachelors in History in May of 2008 from NKU. She enjoys work and school but loves being with her five year old daughter, Quinn, the most. Her focus is Metropolitan Governance and she hopes to work for a local government someday.



Student gains valuable insight from internship

This summer I had the privilege of completing an internship with Pretrial Services at the Kenton County Detention Center. It was a life-changing experience, as nothing I have ever done in the past prepared me for what I encountered. It was very difficult and emotional and it helped me to better appreciate the great life I have been blessed with.

As a pretrial officer, part of my responsibilities included interviewing people who were recently arrested. Being arrested and taken to jail involves a series of steps. Upon arrest, defendants forfeit their personal belongings to the arresting officer. Depending on the nature of the arrest, if they are in a vehicle the car will be searched as well; they are then transported to the jail. Most often the arresting officer can hand the defendant right over to a corrections officer (CO) upon arrival. Once the CO takes responsibility for the defendant, a thorough search is conducted;

the individual is photographed, fingerprinted and interviewed. All personal items are removed in the main booking area in front of all of the other recently arrested defendants waiting to be taken to the holding cell. There is no privacy. Defendants then speak with booking officers and finally with the pretrial officers after the booking process is complete.

The job of the pretrial officer is to conduct a criminal record search in three databases, print the results, enter the new charges into the database(s), interview the defendant, verify the information provided, and present all of the defendant's cases to the judge for consideration of bail. At the Kenton County Detention Center, pretrial officers either sit in the booking area with the defendant during the interview or conduct the interview through a small opening in a window or door of a jail cell. The environment in the jail leaves much to be desired as you can

imagine. The defendants in isolation cells are the most difficult to interview because there is no hole in the door or window to speak through, and most of them are suffering from some type of mental disorder. Defendants look forward to going upstairs into the general population because at least there; they have a place to sleep and a hot meal. Once inmates enter the general population, they surrender their clothing and wear prison outfits that are bright orange, pink and pink/white stripes depending on which floor you are assigned to.

Through all of this stood the pillars of strength, the individuals that work at the Kenton County Detention Center. I've never met individuals with such patience. Although corrections officers seldom seem to smile, and are very serious all of the time, they are the most compassionate people I've ever met. All of the individuals I worked with at the jail were very professional at all times:

corrections officers, booking agents and pretrial officers. Until you have been in that environment, you can't really appreciate the job of those who work there every day. Just as it takes a special person to work as a doctor or lawyer, it also takes a very special person to work in the jail. I will never forget the kindness that was shown to me during the time I completed the internship at the Kenton County Detention Center and highly recommend this experience to anyone. The trials and tribulations we struggle within our daily lives don't seem nearly as overwhelming when faced with the lifestyle of defendants and the environment at the jail. I guarantee that you will have a greater appreciation for the quality of your life after having been exposed to the lives of the people at the Kenton County Detention Center.

By Tammy Reams

Capstone projects continue to make impact in communities

Students in the capstone class, under Dr. Ahmed's supervision, continue to make contributions to their communities and to public service.

Spring 2009

Rob Thelen developed a Volunteer Handbook for the Covington Latin School Board of Education. The board did not have any handbook.

Michelle Eversole worked with NKU's Police Department to develop a formal internship program for them. Her report included

details of the internship program, a manual for interns that covers intern recruitment, selection, supervision and responsibilities, and job description. She also prepared a brochure on the department's internship program.

Brandon Vance conducted two surveys to assess the usefulness of the taser in Campbell County, KY. One survey was administered to all police departments in the county; the other one surveyed citizens of the county.

Robert Farrell conducted a citizen satisfaction survey for the City of Edgewood.

Fall 2009

James Pollitt and Hugh Bomske developed a community needs assessment survey for Pierce Township, Ohio.

Shannon Disbennett prepared a report on sustainable development practices for the City of Milford, Ohio. The report consists of several sustainable development methods feasible for the city to adopt.

Brandi List wrote a grant for the Boone County CASA (a small nonprofit agency). Boone County CASA is associated with National CASA based in Seattle.

Bonita Boren & Maggie Thornton conducted several surveys with current students and alumni of our department (PSC & CJ) on student retention. The objective was to gather feedback on ways to increase student retention in our department.

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Alumnus and MPA Advisory Board President, Anthony Ficarra talks with Glenn Laws, PASS President at the MPA Fall Reception.

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MPA Alumni Achievements

Congratulations to the following alumni on their recent career moves :

- Caroline Braden (2009), *Support Broker/ Case Manager*, NKADD.
- Michael Cayse (2008), *Fire Captain*, Cincinnati Fire Department, heading the Explosive Ordinance Disposal Unit.
- Phil Godel (2009), *Coordinator*, NKU, Office of Research, Grants & Contracts.
- Jennifer Millisor (2009). *Coordinator of Undergraduate Programs*, NKU, Department of Political Science & Criminal Justice. She also turned her capstone research project into a manuscript co-authored with Dr. Olberding entitled "Student Philanthropy at U.S. Colleges and Universities" which was accepted for publication in *Academic Exchange Quarterly* and was selected as one of the "Editors' Choice" articles in the Winter 2009 issue. It is one of five articles selected for this recognition, out of 30+ published in that issue.