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MPA Program Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 1

January, 2015

TROY Contingent Shines at SECoPA

By Dr. Leora Waldner

The September 2014 Southeast Conference on Public Administration (SECoPA) featured several Troy University students and faculty presenting on a variety of topics ranging from e-Internships to social media strategies of nonprofit agencies. The conference, held in Atlanta and hosted by the Georgia ASPA Chapter in partnership with Clark Atlanta University, spanned four days.



Dr. Leora Waldner

Dr. Charles Mitchell served as one of the conference organizers. Dr. LaKerri Mack and Dr. Kristie Roberts-Lewis co-presented a paper entitled “The Winding Journey to Justice: A Historical Analysis of the Voting Rights Act on Disenfranchised Populations and Its Impact on Voter Identification Laws in the South.” Dr. Roberts-Lewis presented “Childhood Prostitution, Public Policies and the Psychological Impacts of Childhood Sexual Exploitation in Georgia,” as well as “E-Internships: Virtual Career Experiential Learning in the 21st Century.” Dr. Leora Waldner co-chaired a roundtable regarding new city formation. Dr. Kirsten Loutzenhiser hosted a panel, along with Dr. Pamela Dunning, on the viability and growth of ASPA chapters, and Dr. Loutzenhiser presented a paper entitled “Social Media Strategies and Tactics of Nonprofit Advocacy: Going Public.”

Troy University MPA students played a special role at the conference presenting three outstanding MPA papers as part of a student panel session dedicated to exploring new cities. Many new cities are currently being proposed in the Atlanta metropolitan area. At the request of DeKalb County leadership, the Atlanta-based TROY MPA students studied several governance and policy alternatives to forming new cities.

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Important Dates:

Jan 30:
Deadline to file Intent to Graduate form for Term 4

Feb 13:
Deadline to drop classes or withdraw from the University for T3

Feb 23:
Registration for Term 4 begins

Mar 8:
Term 3 ends

Mar 16:
Term 4 begins



Dr. John Dunning

Faculty Profile—Dr. John Dunning

Dr. John Dunning is a member of TROY's adjunct faculty and teaches governmental budgeting and courses in the public human resource management concentration. He retired from "full time" teaching and administration from TROY in 2010. He served as the MPA program coordinator for the Atlantic Region which included Southeastern Virginia and the Washington DC area. Instructional systems design has been an area of special interest. He was a key participant in developing TROY's early online courses, their hybrid courses and the graduate government contracting certificate program.

His practitioner experience includes a career in the Air Force where he specialized in public human resource management, training, and readiness planning. His last two positions before retiring were as the Director of Personnel for the Pacific Air Forces (Hawaii) and as the USAF Chief of Personnel Readiness Planning (Pentagon). He also worked as an organizational and human resource consultant for Drake, Beam Morin (DBM) and as the Director of Human Resources for Medical Services Corporation International (MSCI).

His current professional and community service includes the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) where he is the web administrator for the Section on Public Administration Education (SPAEE), the National Teaching Public Administration Conference (TPAC), and as secretary for the Hampton Roads Chapter ASPA. He is on the board of directors for the Wesley Foundation at the College of William and Mary, and on the Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries for the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church.

John is married to Dr. Pam Dunning, an associate professor of public administration for Troy University. They live in Yorktown, VA. Their children are married, have families and live in Northern Virginia, Texas and Washington. Recreational interests include biking, sailing and skiing.

He has a doctorate in public policy and administration from Virginia Commonwealth University, a master's of public administration from Auburn University, and a bachelor of arts in psychology from Lawrence University. He is also a graduate of the Air War College and the Air Command and Staff College. He is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society (Interdisciplinary Studies) and the Pi Alpha Alpha (Public Affairs and Administration) Honor Society.

Pi Alpha Alpha (PAA) Inductions, Fall 2014

PAA is the National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration. The purpose of PAA is to encourage and recognize outstanding scholarship and accomplishment in public affairs and administration and to foster integrity, professionalism and creative performance in government and public service activities. Students in TROY's MPA program may be inducted provided they have maintained a GPA of at least 3.7; have completed at least 75% (27 hours) of their coursework, and have the recommendation of the faculty. Congratulations to the following students who were nominated and accepted for induction into PAA in Fall 2014:

Angenetta L. Anderson
Justin Brownlee
Kiona Byrd
Rondall L. Early
L. Frank Marbury.
Jody McCurry

Athens E. Pellegrino
Ashlee Printup
Jie Tao
Lester M. Thompson
Amber N. Tilley

TROY Contingent Shines at SECoPA (continued)

The students, working over the course of six months in their PA 6601 Research Methods and PA 6622 Public Policy courses, developed two research reports for the county, and utilized the reports as the foundation for their subsequent conference presentations.



TROY MPA students at SECoPA
 Pictured seated (l-r): Se'Veda Kent, Blake Allen, Leora Waldner
 Standing: (l-r) Kiona "Reece" Byrd, Aneta Lee

Kiona Byrd, Se'Veda Kent, and Blake Allen presented "New City or Bust? Alternatives to Municipal Incorporation for Unincorporated Communities." The three explored a variety of alternatives to forming new cities, including special districts, townships, city/county consolidation, intergovernmental agreements, and more. Aneta Lee presented "Leveling the Playing Field: Options for Enhancing State-Level Municipal Incorporation Laws," on behalf of her and her class research partner, Candacy Kassa. Their paper explored state-level policy options that could change the rules of the game for new city formation, including revenue neutrality provisions, enhanced state legislative requirements for new city formation, sphere of influences, and boundary review commissions, among other options. Dr. Waldner also participated in the student panel session, presenting "The Great Defection: How New City Clusters Form to Escape County Governance."

In addition, Ginger Taylor, a Troy University MSEBS student, presented her research on artesian well protection through land use management. With guidance from MSEBS and MPA faculty members, Ms. Taylor undertook this research project for her EBS 6635 Land Use Planning course, identifying, mapping, and testing the water quality to ensure safety in Prattville, Alabama's numerous artesian wells. Artesian wells are not regulated in Alabama, even though several are used as water sources. Though several of the wells were located in potentially risky areas such as gas stations, she discovered through rigorous testing that none of the wells were contaminated and thus presented little or no public health risk. Her report highlighted several land use techniques that the City of Prattville could use to protect both the wells and their sensitive recharge zones in the future, recommendations that are currently being considered by the city leaders.

Congratulations to all that participated in the 2014 event!

SECoPA 2015 will be held in Charleston, South Carolina, from September 30th to October 3rd, 2015. The conference theme will center around "Research & Application: Promoting Effective Public Service," and the deadline for conference proposals is May 15, 2015. More information can be found at: http://www.aspaonline.org/secopa/wordpress/?page_id=2



Photos by Ginger Taylor
 Artesian well near gas station, Prattville, AL

An Interview with MPA Student Melissa Vair

Name: Melissa Vair
Age: 26

Date of Birth: March 15, 1988
Favorite Food: Avocados!

Hometown: Oneida, NY but now living in
Dothan, AL

Tell us a little but about Ms. Melissa Vair?



Currently, I act as the Executive Director at a nonprofit yoga studio, Mesuva Studios, in Dothan, Alabama. I founded the studio in 2013 and have spent the last two years building our in-house programs (literally, they happen in our house!) and getting all of our paperwork in order while also teaching (almost) all of our classes! In November of this year, I filed our 501(c)3 application for tax-exempt status with the IRS.

Additionally, I have been working to complete my Master's in Public Administration degree with a concentration in Nonprofit Management. At the end of Term 2, I am only three classes away from graduation! Obtaining a master's degree has been an integral part of seeing my vision supported by an academic background. Next term I am taking grant writing and I will be paying extra special attention. I envision this nonprofit helping to sustain health and wellness in the community and also supporting people in taking the first radical steps toward self-love.

Yoga is about so much more than just the posture (asanas) or being in really great shape. Yoga literally means union, or to yoke, and is designed to help the practitioner join together the unconscious with the conscious, the body, mind and spirit, serving as a guide that can be applied to your life to help you find healing mentally, physically, and emotionally.

If you'd like to learn more check out our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/mesuvastudios or Instagram account: @Mesuva_Studios

What sparked your interest about TROY's MPA Program?

I was definitely looking for a program that I could do online from the comfort of my home while I underwent the process of creating a nonprofit. I was particularly attracted to TROY as an Alabama resident, as well. I never expected to do any degrees online so I wanted a school that I could physically drive to if I needed.

Were there any helpful tips that guided you in your quest into the MPA program?

I can't think of any off of the top of my head. When I started here though my advisor, Dr. Shetterly, advised me to only take one class at a time. I am glad I heeded that advice.

Do you have any information for potential or new students that are interested in or accepted into the MPA program?

Yes! First, organization is key. However it works best for you, make sure to set up a system and stick to it. Also, it should go without saying, but READ! This is a master's program and it moves quickly. Don't check Facebook. Read! You are very likely paying to be in in this program so don't waste your own time or money (or other students, or the professor). If it works for you, read with a highlighter and a pen in your hand and as you read ask yourself what is important and look for that in the text. Take notes! Additionally, for me, making an outline helps so much. It doesn't have to be super detailed but a few bulleted points, especially course concepts that you will apply, can actually end up making the bulk of your writing. Knowing how to organize your information is half the battle. Finally, ask for help if you need it! Our professors are so easily available in this type of learning environment. Use Blackboard IM, email them, or call during their office hours. They are here to help you and you aren't expected to know all of this from the beginning, so get the help you need.

Recent Graduates

Congratulations to the following Terms 1 and 2 and Fall Semester graduates:

Melanie Anderson
Kourtney D. Brown
Kiona Byrd
Vanessa S. Cunningham
Jamila R. Downs
Dorothy Ecklund
Cary E. Elder
Lezlie V. Garcia
Quandra D. Glenn
Chantel Hartman
Valerie L. Hunter
Jasmine A. Johnson
Lasaundra Jones
Seveda Y. Kent

David D. Leon
Jiawen Li
Jody L. McCurry
Christopher D. Moore (4.0 GPA)
Janifer M. Morgan
Rebekah M. Morgan
Nakema S. Moss
Marlisa Y. Price
Kristen M. Robinson
Monica L. Scott
Jie Tao
Lester M. Thompson
Vanessa C. White

New Students

Please welcome the following new students who were admitted between August and December 2014:

Jerome Ayoade
Wendell Blakely
Shanay Bowen
Anthony Bryant
Monique Caldwell
April Childs
Hei Choi
Cayla Coleman
Daniel Dash
Donna Dixon
William Dukes
Samuel Dunlap
Deborah Edwards
Katie Emblem
Rahimat Emozozo
Dewana Fields
Stephen Gallagher
Nicole Green
Rakeim Hadley
Tiara Hardaway
Clarence Harris
Angela Hartman
Kimberly Howard
Angela Hurst

Latoya Jeffries
Christian Jensen
Allen Johnson
Lastarr Johnson
Joshua Jopling
John Kilgore
Ed Lee
Jerry Lewis
Maria Lindauer
Ashley Lofton
Yahira Lugo-Lugo
Authorine Mathurin
Ashley McCoy
Brandi McGee
Kimberly Pappas
Shacole Pearman
Tiffany Pouncey-Baker
Kelsey D. Powell
Kendall Rhoe
Angel Rodriguez
Kelly Sanders
Kimberly Scruggs
Kermilia Shepherd
Victoria Stephens

Robert Stoll
Craig Tapley
Erna Tegreeny
Enrique Villegas-Gonzalez
Tina Webb
Mary Welch
Nicole Williams
Isiah Williams
Jacqueline Williams
Courtney Williams
Ricky Wilson
Adrienne Wood
Linda York
Laverne Zephir

Performance and eGovernance...what are they?

PA 6607 Performance Measurement and Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations and PA 6679 eGovernance. Sound new? Well, yes and no. These two courses are part of the public management concentration and PA 6607 is also listed in the nonprofit concentration. While PA 6607 is relatively new, PA 6679 is a new take on the topic of technology.

The concept of performance measurement is touched on in budgeting, program evaluation and strategic planning. PA 6607 provides students the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of performance measurement systems. It covers not only how to select appropriate measures, but also how to implement a performance measurement system and use performance measures in managing an organization. In addition, the course will highlight the need for leadership and management acumen to ensure success in achieving meaningful, significant and lasting results.

PA 6679 has been revised to address current issues in technology. With the advent of social media and technology, governance is no longer business as usual. This course examines the impacts of social media and technology, while developing an e-Government framework to help understand e-Democracy. Websites are reviewed at all levels of government and nonprofits to determine how well entities are connecting with, and being responsive to, citizens. The course also looks at the topics of smart governance, open data, crowdsourcing, gaming, apps, and GIS, as well as potential ethical concerns with privacy and the digital divide.

Have questions about either of these courses? Contact Dr. Pam Dunning (pdunning@troy.edu) for PA 6607 and Dr. Tammy Esteves (tlestesves@troy.edu) for PA 6679.

Alumni News

Shannon Haus graduated with an MPA degree with a non-profit management concentration from Troy in 2008, and has taken classes off and on for the past two years. Last year, after adopting two additional children from China, both special needs, she started a non-profit organization that has been working diligently to support special needs kids waiting to come to the USA. She spent time with foster parents in China who are from Western countries (yes, American, Dutch and Belgian families are permitted to foster in China). More information can be found at their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/plumblossomskids> and on their website: <http://plumblossoms.org/> Shannon set up the registered 501 (c) (3) organization and received IRS approval using information learned through her graduate studies at Troy!

Faculty Updates

Dr. Pamela Gibson made a presentation on a panel entitled, "The 21st Century Capstone: Innovative Pedagogy and Practices" at the Annual Conference for the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration, Albuquerque, N.M., November 4-6, 2014.

Dr. Bob Abbey completed final review of two learning modules (videos, quizzes, flash cards, PowerPoints) as a member of SAGE's Global Quantitative Methods Advisory Board Project.

Dr. Leora Waldner, Dr. Dave Shetterly & Dr. Pamela Gibson were recognized as "Instructional Design Champions" by the College of Arts and Sciences Instructional Design staff for Fall 2014.



The mission of Troy University's Master of Public Administration Program is to strengthen the quality of public service by facilitating learning, promoting scholarship, improving practice and engaging in public service. The program strives to develop graduates who bring to the public work force the intellectual acuity, ethical commitment, and professional competence to effectively serve the public interest.

An Interview with MPA Student Melissa Vair (continued)

What steps did you take to start your nonprofit?

There were a lot! It has been such a learning process because I didn't really know what I was doing before I started doing it. I started by simply teaching yoga in my home and asking friends to join me if they were interested. I was also hired to teach yoga at a local gym where I started to put my teaching chops truly into practice. As my vision for what I wanted to do started to take shape, we moved the classes to our home, making it much more affordable to teach classes on a donation basis, since we don't have to rent a space (aside from our mortgage which we already pay). Eventually, I made a Facebook page and people I didn't know started coming to classes. As my class sizes grew I also completed my teacher training certifying at the 200 hour level. I also received training in children's and prenatal yoga separately. With the continued support of my fiancé, and as my confidence grew I started to share my vision for what we could accomplish with more and more people until I met three others that I trusted with my dream, programmatically, financially, and legally. These people became Mesuva Studios Board of Directors with whom we drafted a mission, incorporated, drafted and signed a Bill of Rights, amended, and then just recently, submitted our 501(c)3. All along the way there have been various fees and government paperwork and city regulations that I haven't had the money for, or haven't understood. Luckily, others have believed in our mission and have supported us financially when we could not do it alone. Also, if you call the Alabama Secretary of State's office the people there are actually very helpful. So, there have been many steps and there are many more yet to go. Only recently have I begun to get very organized as everything has grown fairly organically for the most part. In a recent upgrade I bought a four-in-one printer. Every step itself has been small, but taking small steps to achieve big dreams is all part of a yoga practice and for me, personally, patience has always been my lesson!

What inspired you to name your nonprofit organization?

Haha! This is my one egoic stamp on this nonprofit. In PA 6667, Executive Leadership, I learned about founders' syndrome, something I will seek to avoid as hopefully this nonprofit grows and thrives well beyond my abilities and vision. In fact, I hope it lasts well beyond my life and is something I can leave to the world as my life's labor of love. Mesuva is thus the first two letters of my full name, Melissa Sue Vair.

Share Your News!

Our next issue will be May 2015 and we need your help to fill it. Please e-mail Dr. Pam Dunning (pdunning@troy.edu) if you have recent news that you would like to have included in the newsletter.

A special thanks to everyone who contributed to this newsletter. Your help is greatly appreciated.