



# OUTREACH

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MARRIOTT SCHOOL | ROMNEY INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC SERVICE & ETHICS | FALL 2018

## Students Gain a Global Perspective

Romney Institute students and staff members had the opportunity to network internationally, explore worldwide issues, and gain a global perspective on a study abroad trip to Asia this May. The trip lasted three weeks, and the group travelled to China, Thailand, and Cambodia, visiting cultural sites, government organizations, US embassies, and private businesses.

Among the stops they made were the Cambodia Job Foundation, an organization that provides training, education, and jobs for Latter-day Saints; the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) regional office in Thailand, an arm of the UN that works on cultural heritage and environmental issues; the US embassies in China and Thailand; and the Cambodian Children's Fund, a nonprofit that educates children from the poorest areas in Cambodia.

MPA student Malissa Richardson says the Cambodian Children's Fund was the most impactful visit for her. "I was inspired when I learned how one person saw a need, decided to devote his life to a cause, and ended up changing the world," she says. "Through the fund, thousands of children have been able to leave the dumps in the streets, attend school, and live happier, healthier lives."

The eleven students also had the opportunity to participate in a service project at the Immigration Detention Center in Bangkok. The center houses people who enter the country trying to claim refugee status. Families are separated, and they aren't provided with much food. The only time a family can be reunited in the center is if someone comes to visit, because the whole family is allowed to see their visitor at the same time. The MPA students were able to join a weekly service project put on by a local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Relief Society group where they identify families, bring food, and go to visit those families so that they can spend time together.

"The experience was absolutely incredible and powerful," says David Hart, an associate professor in the Romney Institute who was the faculty advisor on the trip. "We got to see refugee and immigration issues in real time, affecting actual individuals."

Throughout the trip, the students made connections and broadened their network as they learned from international organizations. Some students even became interested in the possibility

of doing an international internship or working abroad post-graduation.

"I learned that you can learn something from everyone you meet and that the world is much smaller than it seems," Richardson says. "You can connect with anyone, even when you can't speak their language."

Richardson and her fellow students were able to feel a kinship among each other and among the people they met. She also said it was amazing to talk with people on the front lines dealing with real social issues.

"In the Romney Institute, we are making international experiences a signature strength of our program," Hart says. "We recognize how important it is to have a global perspective and be a global citizen. It's part of who we are as a program."



### CONTENTS

From the Associate Director . . . . .	2
Institute News:	
Welcoming Professor David Matkin . . . . .	3
Congratulating Professor Aaron Miller . . . . .	3

Alumni News:	
Alumni Fireside Touched Many . . . . .	4
Using an MPA Education to Make	
Dreams Come True . . . . .	5

Student News:	
Experiencing the Culture of Asia . . . . .	6
Networking in Baltimore . . . . .	7
Emeritus Fac. Spotlight: N. Dale Wright . . . . .	8

# From the Associate Director



BYU MPA alums and others closely associated with the Romney Institute are people making a positive impact, particularly in the public and nonprofit sectors. Together, we share a strong sense of community and camaraderie. Our connections with other like-minded students, alumni,

faculty, staff, and friends strengthen us and increase our capacity to provide effective governance.

Because one of our common traits is to ask how we can influence others for good, opportunities to do so arise regularly. With a focus on strengthening and growing the MPA culture and network, our objective is to actively build and cultivate relationships among students, alumni, faculty, and staff that are supportive, useful, and continue beyond the time spent in the BYU MPA program. We want a tightly knit, professional MPA community—and you are an important part of that community.

As many EMPA and MPA alumni interact with current students, we enjoy increased opportunities to make meaningful connections that impact individual lives. We want to help each other not only obtain jobs but also thrive in those jobs, as well as in our personal lives. As we continue to interact, share ideas and best

practices, and offer support and friendship to one another, our MPA family grows stronger.

We invite you to contribute as you can and keep and build connections with the BYU MPA family. Opportunities include participation in the annual Day of Service, new student orientation, lecture series classes, regular classes, information sessions, and mock interviews, as well as serving as class reps and responding to current student inquiries. In addition, you can connect on a social media platform (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn), host student visits on career trips, and attend alumni dinners. We genuinely thank all of you who have or are already contributing.

Each of us is needed as we continue to meet the BYU MPA Mission statement (emphasis mine):

*The purpose of the BYU Marriott MPA and EMPA programs is to prepare leaders of exceptional capability and integrity who are committed to serving their communities and making public service organizations better.*

Sincerely,

Catherine Cooper  
Associate Director  
Romney Institute of Public Service & Ethics

## GAG TIME

BY ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF, CLASS OF '01



## OUTREACH FALL 2018 ISSUE

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Published by the George W. Romney Institute of Public Service & Ethics  
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# Institute News

## Welcoming Professor David Matkin



The Romney Institute of Public Service and Ethics welcomes David Matkin to the institute as a new faculty member. Matkin graduated from BYU Marriott's EMPA program himself in 2003 and is excited to return.

"I'm happy to be back," Matkin says. "We love the area, we're glad to be close to family,

and I'm thrilled to work with Romney Institute students."

After graduating from BYU Marriott's EMPA program, Matkin earned his PhD in public administration from the University of Kansas. He taught at Florida State University's Askew School of Public Administration and Policy for six years, then at the University at Albany's Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy for the last five years. He was ecstatic when teaching at BYU Marriott became a possibility.

"Romney Institute students are sharp, earnest, and hardworking," Matkin says. "I'm excited to help them along in their careers."

Matkin dedicates himself to both researching and teaching. His research

mainly focuses on public pension systems, financial accountability and internal controls, municipal bonds, and debt management. This fall Matkin will teach MPA 620: Financial Toolkit, MPA 625: Debt Management, and MPA 626: Budgeting and Finance.

"Professor Matkin is highly regarded in the field of public administration, particularly in public financial management," says Lori Wadsworth, Romney Institute director. "His teaching preparation and his research match perfectly with the Romney Institute's needs. He understands the culture and mission of our department, will make significant contributions to the institute and to our students, and will represent us well to our external stakeholders."

## Congratulating Professor Aaron Miller

The Romney Institute congratulates Aaron Miller on receiving continuing faculty status. Miller has contributed greatly to the institute for twelve years and looks forward to his future at BYU Marriott.

"We are thrilled but not surprised that Professor Miller received continuing faculty status," says Lori Wadsworth, Romney Institute director. "He is a masterful and innovative teacher, a citizen who is critical to the mission of the Romney Institute and the Ballard Center, and a wonderfully supportive colleague. He is an important contributor, both inside the classroom and in other related activities."

In 2006, Miller graduated from BYU Marriott's JD/MPA program and has been at BYU ever since. He taught his first year after graduation; the next year, he taught and led

a study abroad trip to Ghana. The year after that, the institute started the Grantwell program, which Miller advises, and his responsibilities snowballed from there. He was an adjunct faculty for five years and has been a full-time faculty member for the past seven years.

The classes Miller currently teaches include a business ethics class for undergrads, a nonprofit structure and tax class in the MPA program, and a nonprofit finance class in the EMPA program. He also co-authored *The Business Ethics Field Guide* with Bill O'Rourke and Brad Agle.

Miller loves the versatility that his different responsibilities bring, but his favorite part of the job is teaching. "It's fun being with students, especially when you give them opportunities to shine," he says. "So many BYU Marriott students have knocked me



over with their creativity, hard work, goodness, and desire to change the world."

"This is my dream job," Miller says. "I hope to keep creating new things. The nature of my job is that I don't know what those new things will be, I don't know what the needs will be, but I hope to always create things that will make the world a better place."

# Alumni News

## Alumni Fireside Touched Many

Almost 150 students, faculty, staff, and alumni streamed into the Tanner building making small talk and greeting friends on 20 August. Acquaintances were renewed and relationships were built among guests at this year's BYU MPA alumni fireside and ethics panel.

The panel consisted of three speakers: Francine Giani Luczak, executive director of the Utah department of commerce; Derek Miller, president and CEO of the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce; and Kelleen Potter, mayor of Heber City. Professor Aaron Miller moderated the panel and gave opening remarks.

Miller began his remarks by asking the question, "What do we owe each other?" He responded by sharing how philosophers through the ages would respond, that we owe virtue, well-being, dignity, harmony, justice, authenticity, and care to one another. He went on to say that we owe Christ everything because without Him we are nothing, and we don't have to be perfect in order to learn from our experiences. The opening remarks concluded with the thought that a better mindset is to ask, "What can we give each other?"

The panel members shared their professional backgrounds and answered questions through the hour, starting with ethical dilemmas they had experienced personally and ending with follow-up questions. They covered topics from transparency to keeping coworkers' trust.

Luczak told a story about a board chair who asked for an audit and ended

up being the biggest violator. Miller's story dealt with the broader dilemma of being told something in confidence and knowing it should probably be shared. Potter shared multiple stories from her experiences as mayor that illustrated the importance of honesty and standing firm in your beliefs.

Each panel member concluded that the best way to make good decisions is to follow the Spirit.

"Ultimately the only way I end up doing the right thing is when I make sure I have the Spirit with me," Potter said.

Luczak noted that the hymn "Choose

the Right" is her mantra. "Because I've done what's right, I have trust among other agencies," she said.

Miller agreed and said that everyone has times when they don't make the right choice, but those times are learning experiences. "I've had times when I should've been more in tune with the Spirit," he said. "Sometimes those are hard lessons to learn, but I'm grateful for those experiences."

The fireside ended with a prayer, and guests spent valuable time mingling with friends, making connections, thanking the panel members, and snacking on brownies.





# Using an MPA Education to Make Dreams Come True

Granting wishes and rappelling from skyscrapers are everyday activities for Erika Takahashi. Since her graduation from the BYU MPA program in April 2017, Takahashi has been working for her local government in Raymond, Alberta, Canada—first in a fellowship position and now as a communications officer.

Networking relationships that Takahashi had built in the Romney Institute helped her land the fellowship, especially alumni she reached out to near her hometown. “I also still contact colleagues and professors at BYU MPA regularly for advice and direction,” she says. “It’s a program that keeps on giving.”

Takahashi had only been working in her fellowship position for about six weeks when she was hired as a full-time communications officer. “This work has been fulfilling and challenging,” she says. “No two days are the same, and it has been fun to be in the know.”

She also believes in giving back to her community, so she volunteers for the Make-A-Wish Foundation in her spare time and is on the board of a local nonprofit that helps young adults with disabilities adjust to living in society after graduating from high school.

Takahashi became interested in Make-A-Wish when she was privileged to sit next to David Williams, the CEO of Make-A-Wish USA, at the BYU MPA Administrator of the Year banquet in March 2017. Speaking with him piqued her interest, and she decided to look into becoming a volunteer after her graduation.



“I strongly believe in philanthropy and giving back, something that was solidified in the BYU MPA program,” Takahashi says. “I give of my time and the education I received in the MPA program on nonprofit management.”

Now as a wish granter, she interviews children, helps create plans to grant wishes, and makes children’s dreams come true. She also works as a liaison between the foundation and selected families, making sure communication is clear beforehand and following up with the families after the wish is granted.

“I love keeping magic alive for these kids, especially since there is so little I can do for them,” she says. “I have loved being a part of the process and have pushed myself to help with fundraising campaigns and other events.”

One of the fundraising campaigns she recently participated in was the Make-A-Wish Foundation’s ongoing

Rope for Hope fundraiser. Each participant who helps raise over \$1,500 for the foundation wins the opportunity to rappel down a landmark skyscraper. Takahashi was one of the participants who got to experience the unique adrenaline rush.

Though her life has been exciting and rewarding since graduation, Takahashi appreciates her connections and the support system she built in the Romney Institute. “My time in the BYU MPA community was such a haven for me,” she says. “I love my friends there who have done so much to support me.” She also says the team aspect of the MPA program was an invaluable experience for her.

“The best advice I can give students is to not limit what you learn about,” she says. “Every class, regardless of how relevant it seems right now, could be extremely valuable to you in the future. I use my BYU MPA education every day.”

# Student News

## Experiencing the Culture of Asia

On the Asia study abroad trip in May, students visited beautiful historical sites and saw the wonders of the East in the company of friends and fellow students.

In China, the group had the opportunity to visit the Summer Palace, the Forbidden City, and the Great Wall of China; in Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge Killing Fields, the S-21 Prison, and Angkor Wat; and in Thailand, Chiang Mai, the Grand Palace, and an elephant sanctuary.

Students who participated had favorite sites in each country they visited. Teresa Hwang, a second-year MPA student, was amazed by the Summer Palace in Beijing. “The palace was so beautiful,” she says. “Every day I got to have fun with people I enjoy being with.”

Kirsi Jarvis, also a second-year MPA student, loved hiking the Great Wall of China with her classmates. She felt like she was stepping back through history.

Jarom Robertson, now an MPA graduate, will never forget the Killing Fields in Cambodia because the guide was a victim of the Khmer Rouge regime. “It would be like touring a concentration camp with a Holocaust survivor,” he says. “It made a lasting impression that I will never forget.”

Cameron Reed Segura, a second-year MPA student, was asked to help plan the trip because he served his mission in Thailand, spent a year working for a non-profit in Nepal and Thailand, and helped BYU–Hawaii plan its first study abroad trip, which also happened to be in Thailand. “It was cool to offer insight from a student’s perspective,” he says.

As to be expected during international travel, there were bumps on the road, including people getting sick or losing possessions, but everyone was helpful and understanding of each other. “We not only learned about the cultures and made some good connections but also learned to develop and practice Christ-like attributes regardless of the situation,” Hwang says.

“We all enjoyed the experience of traveling and navigating different cultures,” Robertson says. “Plus, doing it with my great MPA friends made the whole thing even more fun and exciting.”





# Networking in Baltimore During ICMA Conference

Nine BYU MPA students attended classes, listened to keynote speakers, and networked with city managers and local government employees from around the country at the 104th annual International City/County Management Association conference, one of the largest conferences for local government professionals. The conference took place in Baltimore on 23-26 September.

In light of the many natural disasters that have taken place over the last year, one main focus of the conference was emergency management to help prepare the next generation of leaders.

Many different networking venues were available, including dinners with city managers from all over the country; the Romney Institute hosted one of these dinners for students and alumni. “Some years students lock down their summer internships during ICMA,” says second-year MPA student Melanie Davidson. “More importantly, many students made connec-

tions with people who helped them learn more about the industry.”

The Romney Institute also had a booth where the students could go during free time to tell people about BYU’s MPA program, connect with alumni, and market themselves as potential employees to government professionals.

While creating connections, the students learned from the experiences of professionals and were given time to reflect at the end of classes on how they would apply what they’d learned in their future careers.

“I am always amazed at the willingness of current managers to spend time answering questions from the next generation of managers,” says associate Romney Institute professor Rex Facer. “The ICMA conference is an incredible opportunity to learn about current issues facing local governments and, more importantly, to build professional networks.”

This year was Davidson’s second time attending the conference. “It is inspiring to interact with city managers and other city employees who love their careers and want to make their communities great,” she says.

Another ICMA experience, unique to BYU attendees, takes place on the Sunday morning of each annual conference, when they hold their own sacrament and testimony meeting with the students and alumni who are there, with permission from local stake authorities. “The sacrament meeting is always a special experience,” Davidson says. “It’s fun to hear stories and testimonies from colleagues.”

The ICMA conference is a great way for MPA students to kindle their passion for local government and get excited about their careers, says Davidson. Facer agrees and would encourage all MPA students to check out the conference next year. “If I were a student, I would jump at the chance,” he says.







*"There is no substitute for one human being who cares enough about another human being to get out and help him." —George W. Romney*

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## Emeritus Faculty Spotlight: N. Dale Wright

For a long time, N. Dale Wright knew everyone who graduated from the MPA program. He was in the first Romney Institute graduating class, and he taught at the institute until his retirement in 2002. He was also the Romney Institute director for thirteen years. So what has he been up to since then?

"My favorite thing about retirement is doing what I want to do when I want to do it," Wright says with a smile. This has included serving a mission with his wife, Virginia, in Moscow, Russia, for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; helping run a humanitarian organization sponsored by the Church with his wife for two years in Belarus; traveling the world with his family; serving as a worker in the Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple; and painting while Virginia weaves.

Wright's painting hobby started when his parents gave him an oil painting set in seventh grade, but he didn't get serious about his talent until his wife gifted him a workshop in Jackson Hole when he was in his fifties. To enhance his skills and fulfill a lifelong dream, he spent a month in 2003 painting in northern Italy; Provence, France; and Cornwall, England. He has been amazing people with his skills ever since. Every year, Wright gifts a beautiful landscape painting to the institute's alumnus of the year.

Though he's enjoyed his retirement and having freedom in his schedule, Wright misses interacting with his students and colleagues at the Romney Institute. He is grateful for his time as a professor at BYU Marriott.

"If I could give one piece of advice to MPA students and alumni, it would be this: always be completely honest, helpful, and

kind to everyone you meet," he says. "That's the only way to be truly successful."

