



CAREER PREPARATION HELPS MPA STUDENTS STAND OUT

With alumni in twenty-two countries around the world and in forty-six states, it appears the Romney Institute’s career preparation and recruitment plan is working. However, unique hiring practices among public organizations and the school’s geographic location call for an unconventional career strategy—and that is exactly what the Romney Institute has.

“The nature of employment in the public sector means that our students need to be extra prepared to stand out and be successful in their job searches,” says Tanya Harmon, director of MPA career services.

One way Romney Institute students stand out is by building their personal brands. The importance of doing so is emphasized each year at orientation and at networking events throughout the year.

Second-year student Andrew Nelson started building his personal brand when he noticed a gap in resources for aspiring local government workers. He created localgovernmenttoday.blogspot.com where he posts career development techniques, thoughts on current events, jobs openings around the country, and interviews with professionals. Since its launch in April 2011, the blog has received thousands of hits from around the world. Nelson uses the blog as a launching point for his career,

allowing him to learn and connect with industry influentials.

“The blog opens doors for me to interview professionals,” he says. “When my application for their fellowships come in a few months later, they can make the connection to who I am, and it hopefully will give me a leg up.”

First-year MPA students also gain an advantage through the Sherpa Program, which connects every first-year MPA student with an experienced second-year who has completed a summer internship. Like mountain-guiding Sherpas, the goal of the program is to use an experienced climber to navigate the path of networking and landing an internship and job.

“The Sherpas know the ropes,” says Oliver Crane, a second-year student and lead Sherpa. “They know what contacts a new student needs, what makes a good résumé, and what conferences to join.”

Because each public administration sector is so different, students get the benefit of a personalized experience by having a Sherpa in their same emphasis. Those interested in nonprofit management can



learn specialized interview and networking tips to land their dream internships.

Results in the past few years have been positive; many students say their Sherpas helped them better understand the industry and what it takes to succeed.

Another unique aspect of the Romney Institute career preparation comes as a result of BYU’s location. Being 600 miles away from a metropolitan area, the Romney Institute decided to bring students to the jobs. Seven or eight groups of MPA students go on career trips each year, traveling to cities such as San Antonio, Washington, D.C., and Seattle. Groups visit with a number of organizations in each city, giving students an inside look to

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From the Director



Each September faculty and students are excited by the prospects of a new academic year. It is a time of both potential and possibility. As we look forward to the future, I would like to share some developments here in the Romney Institute.

Accreditation

First and foremost, we recently received word that our MPA program accreditation was renewed for the next seven years. This sponsorship is critical to be nationally recognized as a legitimate graduate program. Furthermore, we were part of a pilot group reviewed under new standards that are substantially different than in the past. Fortunately, the heroic efforts of our accreditation coordinators, Heather Chewning and Rex Facer, helped us pass with ease.

Career Strategy

As the job market for our graduates turned much more competitive in early 2009 it became necessary to rethink our job placement stratagem. Led by Tanya Harmon, director of career services, we moved from a one-on-one placement strategy to a network-based method, shifting the responsibility of job placement to students. The premise of our new approach is to provide students with networking skills and avenues to utilize these tools. My mantra to our students is, “You never know where a handshake leads.” The result is a dramatic increase in the quality of internship and job opportunities.

Lecture Series

One development of the last few years that is addressed later in this newsletter is the Romney Institute Career Lecture Series. Our students have the opportunity to hear speakers from all walks of public and nonprofit life. The purpose is twofold: 1) expose students to the breadth of opportunity in the public and nonprofit service and 2) connect students and alums. The results have been very fruitful, including career path redirection and many new employment opportunities.

Board Restructure

We are particularly excited about a major restructuring of our advisory board. As you will read later, we have expanded the board to include class representatives from each graduating class of the MPA and EMPA programs. We are looking forward to our kickoff meeting this November and believe that our new and improved advisory board will offer more opportunities for our alumni to give back to the program. One of the most rewarding aspects of my job is to see how quickly our alumni help out with the program.

In short, we at the Romney Institute are excited by the prospects the future holds. We are excited by our new program initiatives, our new faculty, and, as usual, our incomparable students. It is a great time to be a part of the Romney Institute—whether as a student, faculty, staff, or alum.

Sincerely,

DAVID W. HART

David Hart

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Retired Faculty News

REALLY BIG TIRES, WORLD TRAVEL, AND FAMILY

After a professor has completed his or her tenure at BYU, there are many other places to go, things to do, and people to serve. Here is a look at what some retired faculty are doing with their “free time.”

Neil Brady retired four years ago from both the Marriott School and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. He still sings but now with a younger crowd as a primary music director in his ward. Brady has loosened his tie quite a bit; he bought his first truck last year and spends time off-roading with his grandsons and discovering what can only be discovered with really big tires. He says that his four happy children are the greatest blessing of all. “I miss all my friends in the MPA program, and I hope the current students understand how lucky they are,” Brady says.

Doyle Buckwalter retired in 2000 and since has kept up with his eighteen grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Last year he and his family held a Buckwalter reunion in Aspen Grove, which totaled more than one hundred people. Buckwalter is recovering from two recent knee replacements but plans to start traveling with his wife again soon. The couple served a mission from 2008 to 2010 in Kirtland, Ohio, and gave tours to elementary schools and civic clubs and worked in local wards. “It was an incredible experience,” Buckwalter says.

Kirk Hart has used his retirement to take a break from constant traveling, but he still enjoys visiting his children in various locations. He recently had an article published, co-authored with Becky Nesbit and his son David Hart, that articulated a framework in ethics for the U.S. military, which continues to be one of his passions. Hart enjoys seeing the success of the MPA program. “It is exciting to see it improving year by year but still maintain the core values that have made it great for so many years,” Hart says.

Lennis Knighton is currently serving as president of the Porto Alegre Brazil Temple with his wife, Peggy, until 2012. After his retirement in 2004 the couple also took two church history trips as well as a Baltic Sea cruise to lands where they have strong ancestral connections. They look forward to seeing their eight children and thirty-one grandchildren again after completion of their mission, as well as renewing and continuing their associations with the Romney Institute. “We wish nothing but the best for the MPA program, the Romney Institute, and the Marriott School in the years ahead,” Knighton says.

Robert Parsons has taken to extensive traveling after his retirement in 2005. He and his wife have gone on several cruises to Australia, New Zealand, the Panama Canal, and his all-time



Back from left: Dale Wright, Lennis Knighton, Bob Parsons. Front: Doyle Buckwalter.

favorite, Antarctica. The couple served a mission in Washington, D.C., south from 2007 to 2008. Family is the focus of their recent adventures, and they plan on taking three of their eighteen grandchildren to California on a “Grandparents’ Camp,” a tradition when their grandkids turn eight. Between all of his expeditions, Parsons is doing family history, serving at the Provo Temple, and working the Meal on Wheels route in his neighborhood once a week. “Life is good,” Parsons says. “We enjoy spending time with our family.”

Karl Snow, a 1996 retiree, took his first assignment that same year with his wife to erect a bust of his great-grandfather, Erastus Snow, on the tabernacle grounds in St. George celebrating the church’s sesquicentennial year. He is currently collaborating with historian Thomas Alexander to write a book about his grandfather, the principle founder of Dixie College. The couple was then called to open the international affairs office in New York City. They also worked for a short time in Mozambique for a humanitarian service organization following a devastating flood, and in 2003–2005 they opened humanitarian service opportunities in Southeast Africa. Snow contributes to two professional organizations: Utahans for Ethical Government and Utah Citizens Counsel. He and his wife have since returned to Africa three times to help coordinate the church’s measles immunization efforts. “Africa is just another world, and we’ve fallen in love with it,” Snow says.

Gloria Wheeler retired July 2008 but was in Mongolia by the end of August with a Fulbright grant. She taught statistics and

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Faculty News

HART JOINS STATE OPTIMIZATION COUNCIL

Gov. Gary H. Herbert recently appointed David Hart, director of the Romney Institute, to join a new state council looking to give Utah an economic and a managerial boost. Hart and other Utah leaders will focus on cutting costs, streamlining services, and bettering the Beehive State.

“While Utah has been recognized as the best managed state in America, there is always room to evaluate and improve how we serve,” Gov. Herbert says. “This isn’t just about doing it cheaper; it’s about doing it better.”

The Advisory Council on Optimizing and Streamlining State Government is charged with reducing costs, consolidating agencies, and improving management practices in upwards of forty state agencies—essentially trimming

down expenses while beefing up benefits for Utahns.

Hart’s background in public administration and strategic management makes for a unique and valuable addition to the cause. Gov. Herbert has also assembled an array of leaders from business, government, and community and state agencies to join Hart, the only academic on the council.



“I represent the educational side of management and the strategy behind public administration,” Hart says. “And because I work at a private university, I hope to contribute an objective perspective.”

The council will meet biweekly until December in hopes of submitting a proposal for next year’s legislative session.

“The state has a history of good management, but we cannot sit on our

laurels,” Harts says and adds that the council is not charged with massive restructuring. The council will further Utah’s ongoing efforts to cut costs and streamline services.

One example of recent restructuring includes Utah centralizing the Department of Human Resource Management, replacing agencies’ individual HR managers with HR representatives in the state office, saving thousands of dollars.

In addition to centralizing, the council will also consider consolidating agencies as an option for optimization. “We’re not looking to consolidate just to consolidate; we’re looking to identify opportunities to reduce costs and improve the delivery of services,” Hart says. “Utah is already moving in the right direction, and we want to maintain that momentum.”

WALTERS RELEASES TWO BOOKS

While most people take time to relax in the summer, Professor Larry Walters worked on two new books, both of which are the culmination of years of research.

In July, Walters released *Wicked Environmental Problems: Managing Uncertainty and Conflict*, co-authored with George Mason University’s Peter J. Balint and Ronald E. Stewart and Ohio State University’s Anand Desai. The book explores four examples of “wicked” problems—large-scale issues that have a num-

ber of alternatives and solutions that can’t be logically reached.

Investigating environmental problems in the Sierra Nevada, the Florida Everglades, Europe, and Africa, one of the book’s biggest takeaways is the need for a systematic model of public preferences to more easily predict outcomes and limit possible solutions.

The authors also created a series of

guidelines to work through any wicked problem, from health care to education.

“First of all, give up trying to find a solution; the nature of these problems are such that there is no one solution,” Walters says. “All you can do is manage the process for it and manage the steps as best you can.”

Walters’ other upcoming book is poised to make a global impact. Written



at the request of UN Habitat, the human settlement agency of the United Nations, *Land and Property Tax—A Policy Guide* is intended to help community leaders and policy makers in developing countries establish or strengthen tax systems.

“Land policy is becoming an increasingly important issue internationally, particularly in developing countries,” Walters

says, adding that a formal tax structure can strengthen economies and build communities.

The book outlines four factors to consider when constructing a tax policy, including property rights, registration, markets, and administrative capability.

Overall, Walters calls the book one of the highlights of his long career.

“I think this will have substantial impact on people’s lives around the world,” he says. “If countries will follow the advice that is here, they will have the resources necessary to meet people’s needs and improve their communities. When that happens, I will consider myself a roaring success.”

GRANTWELL CREATOR NOW FULL-TIME FACULTY

Since his BYU debut as an undergraduate in anthropology, Aaron Miller has always felt a need to know more about the world and how to make a difference.

And he definitely has.

Within a few short years, Miller became a part-time professor of public management. He was also voted outstanding professor more than once, served as faculty advisor to Ghana, and created Grantwell, an organization that is affecting lives worldwide. And starting this fall, Miller added one more accomplishment to his list. He joined the core faculty at the Romney Institute of Public Administration as a full-time professor.

“I’m definitely honored and feel like I’ve found a home in a lot of ways,” Miller says. “There’s no other place on earth like

BYU, and being able to teach here, especially in the Marriott School, is truly an amazing opportunity.”



Miller will teach eight classes every year and will keep pushing the nonprofit courses onward and upward. Thus far, he has already proven key in establishing nonprofit curriculum for the Romney Institute.

“Aaron has become the lynchpin of our nonprofit efforts,” says Dave Hart, director of the Romney Institute. “He brings creativity and innovation to our nonprofit endeavors that are singular and unique. Our students have and will continue to benefit from their interactions with him, both in the classroom and with him as their mentor.”

Miller will also maintain his profes-

sional credentials from his joint JD/MPA degree from BYU by doing additional work for nonprofit organizations and consulting. The experience he received from his education has cultivated his love for nonprofit organizations and his desire to instill this love in students.

“MPA students are so genuine and hardworking, and I love helping them during this stage of their lives,” Miller says. “They go off and accomplish so many amazing things. It’s satisfying to watch what they do.”

Miller holds the Marriott School’s MPA program in highest regard. He says that it produces accomplished students, and he wants to build on this reputation.

“As a full-time faculty, I want to make BYU and the Romney Institute one of the first places people turn when they want qualified nonprofit managers,” Miller says.

Career, cont.

their future careers. Nearly 30 percent of jobs and internships offers are due to these career trips.

“We could gauge the atmosphere of the agency and see the environment directly,” says Talia Strong, a second-year student who went on the Phoenix trip. “We had the opportunity to pitch ourselves at each place we went, which was very beneficial.”

The success of career preparation

programs within the Romney Institute has allowed students to land their dream jobs and internships. And although the approach is different from many other schools, it reflects the characteristics that make BYU students stand out.

“Our students go to work at organizations around the world, and these experiences help get them there,” Harmon says.



Career Services Director Tanya Harmon (third from left) and students visited many federal agencies while in Washington, D.C.

REBUILDING HOSPITAL AFTER JOPLIN'S TORNADO

With an accomplished career in the health care industry, Gary Pulsipher found himself where no one wants to be: in the middle of a natural disaster.

Pulsipher, a 1983 MPA graduate, is president and CEO of St. John's Hospital in Joplin, Missouri. When a massive EF5 tornado swept through town on 22 May 2011, Pulsipher's hospital was in the middle of the destruction path.

Pulsipher's youngest son had returned from serving a mission two days earlier and their entire family was in town to celebrate. They heard the storm warnings but didn't think much of something so ubiquitous in the Midwest. Pulsipher received a call that the hospital had been hit and drove over to make a routine check. He didn't realize the magnitude of the storm until he entered the destruction path just blocks from his house. From there it became difficult to maneuver through the traffic and debris.

"I saw the hospital had been devastated and couldn't imagine we didn't lose a lot of staff and patients," Pulsipher said. "It was like a bomb went off."

In forty-five seconds, two hundred mile per hour winds had decimated St. John's. Hospital staff, many injured themselves, immediately started putting into practice plans from their frequent disaster drills. When Pulsipher arrived, relief efforts were already underway. He got to work, helping carry patients out of the nine-story building and moving supplies to other treatment areas.

"It was one of those nights where you went to find where



you could help the most," he says. "I just jumped in, and it was exhilarating."

Even with communications completely down, all 183 patients were evacuated and dispersed to other area hospitals within ninety minutes. Five patients who were already in critical condition died in the disaster, but all hospital staff stayed safe with only minor injuries.

The building itself is a total loss, estimated at millions of dollars in damage. Winds from the tornado were so strong that hospital debris were found seventy miles away. Less than a week after the tornado hit, St. John's was operating as a field hospital across the street. After a sturdier temporary steel facility is ready in the coming months, the hospital will break ground in January 2012 to rebuild.

In the middle of everything is Pulsipher, whose job is markedly different now than it was just a few months ago. Instead of walking through the halls of a large hospital, he stoops as he walks through the tent labyrinth in the field hospital. Instead of focusing on budget and customer satisfaction scores, Pulsipher works on rebuilding and preserving jobs for his employees.

The difficult situation has brought out the best in this close-knit community and has proved a growing experience for all involved.

"I've been so impressed by the community's resolve," Pulsipher says. "We had a number of co-workers who lost everything, but they've accepted it and are ready to make the most of it and move on."



Photos courtesy of Sisters of Mercy Health System.

MAKING CONNECTIONS: LECTURE SERIES

Sometimes getting that perfect job or internship is all about who you know. But how do you get to know who you need to know?

For recent graduate Ryan Starks it was Public Management 642R, the MPA's career lecture series class. Here he met lecturer Jeffrey Baldwin-Bott who gave him specific tips on his résumé and coached him on how to get a job at the Government Accountability Office in Washing-

ton, D.C.—where Starks interned between his first and second year.

“Most presenters have your interests at heart so they're willing to tell you what's really involved with a job and provide candid advice,” Starks says. “Jeffrey helped me align my strengths and experiences with what an employer would look at.”

And that individualized experience with real-world professionals fits the goals of the career class, says Tanya Harmon, director of MPA career services. Speakers are invited to spend the day giving a lecture, offering mock inter-

views, and even joining a few lucky students for lunch.

“It is so valuable to get feedback on résumés and interview skills in a low-key setting,” Harmon says. “As the speakers are able to interact with students beyond the lecture, they have been impressed with our high-caliber students.”

Lecturers are selected from a variety of careers from a range of industries to expose students to avenues they may have not considered. Harmon says that a large percentage of students change their areas of focus as a direct result of the lecture series.

“It was nice because sometimes I would



“This lecture series was valuable to me because it broadened my network and helped me establish many connections.”

automatically be interested in a speaker's field of study,” Starks says. “Other times I

would come into the lecture thinking that it was something that I wanted to do, but after the lecture decided I wasn't interested anymore. It helped me target my job selection.”

Lecturers helped students fill another goal of the class—the opportunity to network. Harmon says the class tries to focus on building friendships and relationships. Sometimes the connections built result in an internship or job opportunity.

“So much of what you do in this industry is about relationships,” Starks says. “This lecture series was valuable to me because it broadened my network and helped me establish many connections.”

This year will bring a whole new set of professionals, including Pat Nicklin, CEO of Partnership of Public Service and personal friend of George Romney, and Moises Costa, who works with intergovernmental affairs at Volkswagen. According to Harmon, each lecturer will bring a professional perspective to the students.

“They help them better understand the breadth of the degree they're pursuing as well as the expectations they will have in their careers going forward,” she says.

Retirees, cont.

research methodology at the Mongolian Institute of Finance and Economics until 2009. She also worked with administration to help the school get accredited by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs. Wheeler was recently elected the neighborhood chair in the Provo/Dixon area. She is also president of Women in Leadership—an association of professional women who raise scholarship money for young women in Utah County. She misses the time she

spent with colleagues and students but has moved on to the next season of her life. “It was hard to leave in some ways, but I think it's been good all around,” Wheeler says.

Dale Wright retired in 2003 and left the country in 2004 with his wife to direct a humanitarian organization in Minsk, Belarus. They distributed wheelchairs and refurbished schools and orphanages. Additionally they assisted children with severe neurological or hearing problems, as well as elderly individuals. They also

survived two weeks of the coldest temperatures recorded there in 2006—minus fifty degrees Fahrenheit. They have traveled to Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Italy, France, England, Ireland, Scotland, Mexico, New England, and Canada. Wright and his wife returned to Europe from 2009 to 2010 as the office couple in the Moscow Mission. “We enjoyed both experiences in Eastern Europe as we met and worked with wonderful people,” Wright says.



"NATIONS AND PEOPLES CAN ONLY
REALIZE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL, THEIR
FULL CAPACITY, BY THE APPLICATION
OF THEIR OWN EFFORTS."

ADVISORY BOARD ADDS MORE ALUMNI

This fall the Romney Institute Advisory Board will add seventy new faces to its ranks with at least one commonality on their curriculum vitae: They are all MPA alumni.

Every Brigham Young University MPA class since 1965 and EMPA class since 1985 will be represented on this board. Members were nominated by fellow graduates and selected to serve on the restructured advisory board for a three-year term.

"Each graduating class is very tight-knit and forms relationships that last forever," says Vicki Okerlund, director of alumni relations.

"We wanted to utilize those relationships where the representative could be a more effective communication liaison to each class."

The previous advisory board was made up of twenty-four members—

including alumni and an array of professionals across a variety of industries. Brad Agle, a recent addition to the faculty, led the task force for restructuring and enlarging the board in efforts to expand current collaborations with graduates.

"Alumni are crucial to our success," Agle says. "They went through the pro-

"Each graduating class is very tight-knit and forms relationships that last forever."

gram, so they know the faculty and are invested in its reputation, which will be with them throughout their careers. They also have an ethic of service and want to see the Romney Institute thrive."

The group will now consist of an eighteen-person executive board—nine of which are alumni—that will meet twice a year, and one of those meetings will be with the new class representatives. The board will continue to provide advice and support to the Romney Institute as part of its mission statement.

Okerlund hopes the extended board will give students a greater opportunity to network and find internships with these mentors as well as keep the alumni involved.

"It's going to bring a better connection for alumni and have them be a stronger part of the Romney Institute,"

Okerlund says. "The response has been overwhelmingly supportive, and we are excited to work even more closely with alumni, because they are crucial to meeting the objectives we have as an institute."