

GHANA TRIP CHANGES LIVES

Each spring a group of Romney Institute students travel to Ghana with the intent of helping others but find they benefit just as much.

“The students come away with a deeper appreciation of what is needed to help people overcome challenges. From a professional perspective, the trip helps them appreciate how deeply complex the problems are,” says Aaron Miller, MPA assistant teaching professor. “People have a romanticized view that you can easily solve all of the world’s problems, and that’s not how it works.”

The trip was first created to give students international experience, but as Romney Institute associate director Catherine Cooper says, the trip can provide more for the students. Each year the students return with deepened gratitude for their lives in the United States.

“The Ghana trip—and all international experience—is so valuable and changes the mindsets of our students,” Cooper says. “I can’t go an hour without thinking how grateful I am for the resources we have.”

Miller has coordinated the trip to Ghana the last five years. This year’s project revolved around the “Biofil” toilet, created by a Ghanaian engineer, Kweku Anno. The toilet, made out of porous concrete and living organisms, decomposes



waste within the box. Anno installed a Biofil in his own workshop five years ago and hasn’t had to clean it since.

For the semester prior to the trip and the three weeks in country, the MPA students completed research for Anno’s company—designing the marketing project, meeting with government officials, preparing interview questions, and delivering the final report to Anno.

“On the trip I realized we were doing something that was necessary,” says Sheila Mayne, an MPA student from Kaysville, Utah. “Even with all of the opportunities to explore Ghana, my favorite part was the project itself.”

The students took charge during the business meetings; they met with non-government organizations, local governments, and embassies to get a sense of what was important to each group and

how to best utilize the invention.

“The project was really theirs,” Miller says. “The purpose of the trip was to give them a sense of international development because a lot of them are interested in working internationally at some point.”

The Ghana trip began in 2004 and has grown each year. Students are drawn to the Romney Institute because of this project. The experience helped Chris Krzeminski, who went on the trip in 2007, land his job at Management and Training Corporation because of the management-skills training he gave Ghanaians.

“The trip was an extremely valuable experience for me; it helped me to develop skills in educating and in training others,” Krzeminski says. “I came to understand the environment and challenges specific to international development and gained greater insight into the operations of some of the organizations that I work with even today at my current job.”

Overall the MPA Ghana trip combines a professional element with human development in a way that is hard to replicate elsewhere.

“The students just fall in love with the people; Ghanaians are incredibly kind and friendly,” Miller says. “A lot of students point to this experience as a critical part of their professional development. This isn’t just a trip—it’s a consulting project.”

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From the Director



tations for the future, and we are eager to prepare our students to face these challenges.

An Expectation of Future Administrators

Where the public once got their information from newsletters and press releases, they now rely on social media, online web sites, and interactive apps. More and more organizations are communicating through advanced technology systems. The public now expects immediate access to information and technology, and professionals are expected to come equipped with an arsenal of tools to meet these demands.

Dustin Grabau, a second-year student in the program, recently found that working in the public sector can require a high level of technical understanding. As an intern with the City of Provo, he created and implemented “The Student’s Guide to Provo,” a student web site that has had almost thirteen thousand hits. He has also programmed an impact fee calculator and is working with a program developer to create an online dashboard for reporting city metrics.

Dustin said of his experience, “Without my technical knowledge, my ability to succeed in my internship would be severely limited.” Many of our students and recent alumni have been expected to use their knowledge to implement and utilize social media and advanced information systems. The way information is shared is continually changing, and we are excited that our students are meeting the challenge.

Preparing our Students

Technological advances also provide exciting challenges for us in the Romney Institute. For example, we have asked Jason Koop, a

Romney Institute alum (MPA 2000) and a public sector technology consultant, to teach an introductory course on information systems. The course is focused on the role of technology in the public and nonprofit sectors and provides an overview of information systems in the workplace.

This new course is the next step in qualifying our graduates to impact the public administration field with an ability to stay on the forefront of information systems technology. We are continually looking on the horizon for growth and development in how information is shared. The Romney Institute is committed to advancing with technology and preparing our students to go forth and serve with a competitive set of skills.

Sincerely,

DAVID W. HART

David Hart

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Alumni News

BILL DALEBOUT: EARN AN MPA, WORK WITH THE EPA



Though he grew up in Provo and attended BYU for his undergraduate degree, it wasn't until Bill Dalebout was in Washington, D.C., interning with FINCA International before his senior year, that he seriously considered BYU's MPA program.

Part of his internship involved researching BYU's MPA program for FINCA. "I was intrigued by the curriculum," Dalebout says. "There was an added bonus too. I liked interning for the organization, and they had an interest in BYU MPA graduates."

After starting the program in 2007 and subsequently returning to D.C. for an internship with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Dalebout graduated from the program with a finance emphasis in 2009. He was later offered a job and returned to work in the same office at the EPA.

Dalebout's experience in the program did more than just help him get a job—it's also the place where he met his wife, Amy Brennan Dalebout, a 2010 graduate and change manager for Ashoka, shares several interests with Billy (as she refers to him). Among those interests, the two share a unique public service bond.

"We both think along the same lines," Dalebout says. "Whenever we see a public project, we're asking questions like, 'How was that funded?' We just have to laugh about it."

In his role as the planning, evaluation, and performance measures coordinator for the Superfund Remediation program, Dalebout leads efforts to assure that performance metrics represent the program's outputs and outcomes in a transparent and effective manner.

Created in 1980, the Superfund program seeks to clean up

most of the nation's hazardous toxic waste sites. In all, there are more than 1,600 top priority sites. The national office, located in Washington, D.C., manages the work happening in different regions across the nation.

The skills Dalebout developed in the MPA program have been instrumental to his success with the EPA.

"Bill is constantly using his analytical abilities to assess program progress and challenges," says Arthur Flaks, chief of the budget, planning, and evaluation branch in the Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation (OSRTI). "He writes high-level memos outlining areas of focus for the program and negotiates performance targets with the regions that reflect their performance goals for the upcoming year."

This past year, Dalebout and a team of three other analysts were recognized at the annual OSRTI awards banquet with the "Teamwork Award" for working together to provide enhancement and innovation to the regional work planning process in 2012.

"When you're working hard, getting recognized for your work is appreciated," he says. "I attribute a lot of that award to skills I learned in the MPA program."

Dalebout says he is happy to be celebrating his third anniversary with the EPA this fall and feels like he has a bright future.

"This job has been great for me because I enjoy what I do and there's great growth potential," he says. "Being involved in something that matters is very rewarding. It's been all and more than I can ask for my first job out of the program."

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: RAY NELSON

When Olene S. Walker was appointed as Utah's fifteenth governor in 2003, one of her first priorities was to initiate an in-depth review on how to improve Utah's tax system. Where was one of the first places she looked? The Marriott School of Management, of course.

Walker developed a task force of members with solid backgrounds in tax policy, the state budget, and economic analysis. Governor Walker invited Ray Nelson and Gary Cornia, Marriott School professors at the time—along with seven other individuals—to serve on the task force. Nelson and Cornia were chosen because of their research and experience with forecasting and taxation,

The group met together frequently during the course of two years, sometimes even two or three times a week, to give intense investigation within a quick time frame.

Nelson's biggest contribution on the task force came as he developed different models illustrating the potential impact changes in legislation would have on all taxpayers throughout the state.

"Ray's ability to use data mining to extract trends and patterns from millions of documents was instrumental in every decision that was made during two and a half years of efforts," says Cornia, Marriott School dean.

Many of the recommendations developed by the task force under Governor Walker were eventually finalized and implemented under Governor Huntsman, Utah's next governor.

"Ray's work with those models was remarkable, and I don't know anyone else who can do those models," Governor Walker says. "Ray and Gary's knowledge of tax policy and tax issues was extremely valuable, and I do not think we would have developed the excellent document we did without them."

Experiences such as the governor's task force have shaped Nelson as a professor in the Romney Institute. Initially, Nelson focused his research on forecasting revenue but has broadened his fields of expertise in other areas such as tax policy.

Since moving from the Marriott School's Finance Department to the Romney Institute in 2010, life has moved at a hectic pace. Nelson has been responsible for developing three new courses in forecasting, government finance, and using R in analysis. In addition, he was called as a BYU campus bishop again. He has even experienced some major family events, including a daughter who recently married and a son who left on a mission.

"There are a lot of new things to learn in this department, and I love that," Nel-



son says. "The students are great, and as much as I loved working in the finance department, working here has helped me to focus my research."

Recently, Nelson has published research on state tax revenue growth and volatility as well as stress testing state budgets under alternative business cycle scenarios. Currently, he is working with Eva Witesman on a study regarding financing over business cycles in nonprofits.

It has been a busy transition, but the Romney Institute is fortunate to have him.

"Ray is trained as a world-class economist and brings state-of-the-art forecasting skills into the classroom," Cornia says. "If I were a student in the Romney Institute I would take every class that Ray Nelson teaches."

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rock. Others went to Jackson Hole for the nightly town shoot-out. Another group found a dried-up reservoir near camp that made for a great—and muddy—hike.

As another highlight of the trip, some faculty members joined in on the fun. In addition to recreation management faculty, Harmon, Rex Facer, and Aaron Miller attended the trip.

"The trip went really well," Wilcox says. "Everyone who came had a great time and really got to start this school year with a bang. All the activities were great, but more than anything, I think everyone just enjoyed getting to know each other before school takes over their lives!"

MPA SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

Internships are an integral part of an MPA education. Students' experiences in their internships and in the program have led to new friendships, knowledge, and employment opportunities. Here are three notable students who share how their summer internships will benefit their upcoming careers.

An Asian Summer



Romney Institute students are willing to travel all over the world—even to China—to gain valuable experience through internships.

Kate Baxter spent her summer interning for the Utah-Qinghai Eco Partnership, a young organization in central China.

When Baxter arrived at the end of May, she immersed herself by speaking fluent Chinese. Her days as an intern included representing the organization, directing programs, and publishing research.

"My favorite part was working with the other people," says Baxter, an MPA candidate planning to graduate in April 2013. "It was exciting to watch them, work with them, and learn the Chinese way of doing things. It was very time-intensive but fulfilling."

Baxter's internship organization is an extension of the U.S. Department of State, established to strengthen the partnership between Utah and the Chinese province of Qinghai. It aims to advance energy security, increase economic growth, sustain the environment, and build trust.

A major event during her internship was the Xining International Forum, where Baxter addressed all conference

attendees. She says giving the speech to Xining and Qinghai government officials, along with officials from governments around the world, was a unique experience.

"Because I had prepared, I was confident in my message, and the officials were both welcoming and respectful," she says. "I felt no fear speaking to them."

Baxter applied what she has learned from her MPA classes to her internship, such as how local governments work and what kinds of problems leaders face.

"The knowledge I've gained in the program helped me in many ways," she says. "And my understanding from my economics, decision analysis, human resources, and statistical analysis classes increased my understanding, abilities, and adaptability required for the internship."

Baxter says she is proud to be part of the Romney Institute, where students can find internships through hard work and sincere networking. The MPA program does not require an internship to graduate, but most of the candidates completed internships last spring and summer semesters, a trend that occurs every year.

"When I look at the internships my fellow MPA students landed, I am amazed at the skills they are using and learning," Baxter says. "One of the great things about being a part of the Romney Institute is associating with students who are doing amazing things all around the world."

Setting the Standard

When Michael Coon accepted an internship with the city of Ellisville, Missouri, he learned he was the first BYU MPA intern the city had ever had.

"I put a lot of pressure on myself to suc-



ceed in this internship and to demonstrate what a BYU intern can do," Coon says. "I wanted to show that we have the skills to compete with

students from other top programs. Hopefully, I helped pave the way for other BYU students to land internships and jobs in the St. Louis area."

Having Coon as an intern paid off for the City of Ellisville—literally. While working on a big auditing project on the city's automobile sales tax receipts, Coon found more than \$14,500 in tax revenue that the state had given to wrong cities and was credited back to Ellisville.

"The assistant city manager was very excited that I was able to find so much money," Coon says. "She was also impressed with how quickly I performed the audit, completing it in two days."

The knowledge Coon gained through the MPA program equipped him for his internship more than he expected.

"Dr. Bill Baker's class prepared me the most. I never thought that I would use Microsoft Publisher, but I used it several times to create brochures for new residents and businesses," Coon says. "I also applied the skills I learned in his class to help write articles for and edit the city newsletter."

Coon, from Roy, Utah, wanted to gain experience outside of his home state and began looking at internships in the Midwest. He and his wife, Jocelyn, moved to Ellisville in May and enjoyed the local tourist attractions. They visited Nauvoo, Illinois; the historic courthouse in St.

Internships, cont. p. 7

EMPA STUDENT PROFILES

After three years of hard work, forty-seven graduates received their EMPA degrees from the Romney Institute this year. The graduates consisted of thirty-one males and sixteen females, and all students in the EMPA program work full time. The following profiles feature three students who recently completed the EMPA program.

Commuting for an MPA



Earning an EMPA degree requires commitment and dedication. Adding ten hours of traveling every Wednesday creates a whole new level

of perseverance.

Completing the program was no easy task for Doug McBride, living five hours away in Rexburg, Idaho, and commuting each Wednesday night for three years. He would catch a shuttle at 10:40 a.m., arriving in Salt Lake City at 4 p.m. Classes began an hour later and lasted until 10 p.m. He would hop back on the shuttle and arrive in Rexburg around 3 a.m.

“Even though it was a long commute, I actually enjoyed the study time it allowed,” McBride says. “I came to BYU because I wanted to put the effort into getting an education that would truly benefit my future.”

His final commuting trip came in August 2012 when McBride graduated with an MPA degree. He was offered the marketing and public relations position for the Madison Memorial Hospital one week after he finished his last class.

“I cannot help but think that this opportunity came to me due to completing this program,” McBride says.

McBride says he learned a great deal about teamwork in the program. Living out of state and not physically attending

group sessions put him at a disadvantage. Many hours of group work was possible through technologies like Skype.

“This program is highly oriented to team collaboration. Technology is a wonderful thing, but I felt I was much more interactive when I was able to be present,” McBride says. “I realized the importance of building and retaining relationships, whether that is with classmates or with my family.”

The skills McBride gained through the Romney Institute help him with his administrative responsibilities. Madison Memorial Hospital is a nonprofit entity, and McBride says his MPA classes went in depth on the nonprofit organization model.

“The program exposed us to the many different aspects of an organization and gave us tools to be successful in identifying and improving processes,” McBride says. “I work heavily with the volunteer base of the hospital and apply principles I learned to evaluate services and their benefits to the organization.”

Completing his MPA was tough, McBride says, but he finished with the help of his professors, classmates, and family members.

“Our professors not only had a genuine desire to teach us the concepts, but they also made every effort to help us understand them,” McBride says. “My fellow classmates were amazing as well—they constituted many different backgrounds and work experience, which added depth to the course materials and discussions.”

Back to the Books

It wasn't uncommon to find Shawn Seager with his books scattered over the kitchen table, doing his homework alongside his daughter and son. In addition to setting an example for his children, Seager was on his way to becoming an EMPA graduate.



Three years ago Seager, a June 2012 graduate, realized he was in the middle of his career and wanted to advance before his retirement age came.

“The Romney Institute’s reputation is excellent and that drew me in,” he says. “I found the institute had a good balance between policy and practice in which you understand the why and the how of public administration.”

Seager benefitted from his degree even before he received his diploma. Two years into the three-year program, Seager was promoted from senior planner to director of regional planning of the Mountainlands Association of Governments, focusing on transportation in the Provo and Orem area.

“My employer viewed my pursuit of an EMPA as an asset to the organization,” he says. “He saw what I was capable of as I became more familiar with management and accounting.”

In addition to the knowledge from the EMPA program, Seager’s friendships continue to be valuable as he sees classmates who also work for city or county government organizations during work meetings.

“My cohort was a very talented group of people,” he says. “The students in my class were amazing. It’s great to see some of them once a week and relive our experiences from the program.”

Seager’s job focuses on creating a thirty-year transportation plan that will address growth in Utah Valley. His projects include overseeing the new FrontRunner rail service that runs from Salt Lake City to Provo and helping with the I-15 expansion project, both opening in December 2012.

“I’m figuring out ways to move people

around in Provo, Orem, and up to Salt Lake City,” he says. “I am always wondering how to get people back and forth. It is a really fun job.”

Prepared for Success



Kim Struthers is a local government kind of man. But he could not have found success in his dream job without some administrative training. As of June, Struthers is the proud recipient of an EMPA degree, which has already helped in his employment.

“My MPA started boosting me the day I began the program,” Struthers says. “As I pursued my degree, I found so many new things that I could immediately implement at work.”

In 2009 Struthers started his BYU MPA classes and also began his job as planning director for the City of Lehi, Utah. Struthers says a primary factor in being hired was he was accepted in the EMPA program.

“This was the first time I had taken on a supervisory role. It was wonderful and crucial to my success as head of my department to implement what I learned,” Struthers says. “Earning an MPA has helped me progress in my career from a ‘survival’ mode to a ‘thriving’ mode.”

The Romney Institute came highly recommended from previous Lehi City administrator Jamie Davidson, also a graduate of the program.

“He gave me a lot of support and encouragement to make it through the program, and I looked up to him a lot for his great leadership qualities and technical skills and abilities in managing the city,” Struthers says. “He is

a great mentor and helped me get to where I am in my career.”

In the program, Struthers also learned about leadership, ethics, organizational behavior, and decision making. Whether he is preparing for a planning commission or a city council meeting, Struthers uses this knowledge on a daily basis. Not only did Struthers learn the skills he needed to succeed in his career, but he also built friendships with his classmates and faculty.

“There were many memorable experiences that have changed my life for the better,” he says. “I could tell that the Romney Institute faculty and staff care about their students, have a real passion and love for teaching, and are truly interested in our long-term success.”

Internships, cont.

Louis where the Dred Scott trial took place; and Forest Park, which houses the St. Louis Zoo, the art museum, and the science center.

“After graduation, moving back is a possibility,” Coon says. “Two of the biggest reasons that my wife and I like the St. Louis area are because the people are all friendly and the land is beautiful.”

A World of Difference



Liz Fukui found an internship that exactly matched her interests. She landed a finance position with Ashoka, an organization that invests in social entrepreneurs who have sustainable ideas for solving social issues.

Fukui, an MPA candidate graduating in April 2013, used what she had learned in classes in her internship. Specifically, she

oversaw the budgets of twenty-nine offices around the world and allocated funds to fulfill the needs of the offices.

“Countries vary in the ways that they handle money, depending not only upon the culture of the country and the economic standing but other dynamic factors,” she says. “My major projects were completing an evaluation of the different countries and comparing them to the executive team’s goals.”

Being an intern brought Fukui new appreciation for what she is learning at BYU.

“I’ve recognized how the program has taught me how to think, to analyze a problem, to set priorities, and to work hard to accomplish my goals,” she says.

Working as an intern teaches Romney Institute students technical and business skills and also cultural lessons. Last summer Fukui worked in Washington, D.C., with fifty-six other interns from a variety

of backgrounds.

“I worked with the greatest people,” Fukui says. “I celebrated Ramadan, attended a religious forum with my Jewish friend, visited the consulates with my Indian friends, and went Latin dancing with the Argentinian/Peruvian group. I learned much more than I taught.”

In addition to the opportunities she found through the Romney Institute and the focus in the MPA classes, Fukui enjoys being a part of the Romney Institute because of the network of people she has met. She found her internship with Ashoka through an alumnus of the MPA program, Julie Wiscombe.

“It was only through Julie’s influence and her help that I was able to become a part of the Ashoka team,” Fukui says. “I’ve met so many alumni and professors who were willing to help and connect me with different people.”



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

RAFTING TRIP ADDED TO ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES

For most MPA students, staying afloat in the first semester of the program is more difficult than any other. Now with a white water rafting trip added to the orientation activities, staying above water has become even more of a challenge.

For the second year, in addition to a high ropes course and many activities on campus, incoming students also had the option to raft down the Snake River the weekend before school started.

"We wanted to develop stronger ties between first-years and also between first- and second-years from the outset of the semester," says Tanya Harmon, MPA director of career services. "The rafting trip has been a great way to ease some of the anxiety that comes with starting the program."

Kristy Wilcox, a second-year student, was commissioned to organize this year's trip. Planning such an activity can be difficult and expensive. But

with the help of the recreation management program, the trip became a reality.

"The recreation management program has the experience to not only take care of the essential logistics of the trip like camping and rafting," Harmon says, "but they are great at using these activities to build unity and facilitate learning. We loved sharing the trip with them."

Between both programs, more than sixty students and faculty members attended the trip 24-25 August.

The highlight of the trip, of course, was the rafting. With three rafts, thirty students were able to participate at a time. Doing one run on Friday afternoon and two on Saturday, everyone had the chance to face the rapids, many even



going on multiple runs.

"The most fun part of the trip was the river rafting, hands down," says Scott Aylett, a first-year student from Sandy, Utah. "I'd never been rafting before, and it was a blast."

As one group rafted, the other groups were off on adventures of their own. Some groups drove to nearby Phelps Lake for a two-mile hike and cliff jumping off a twenty-five-foot high