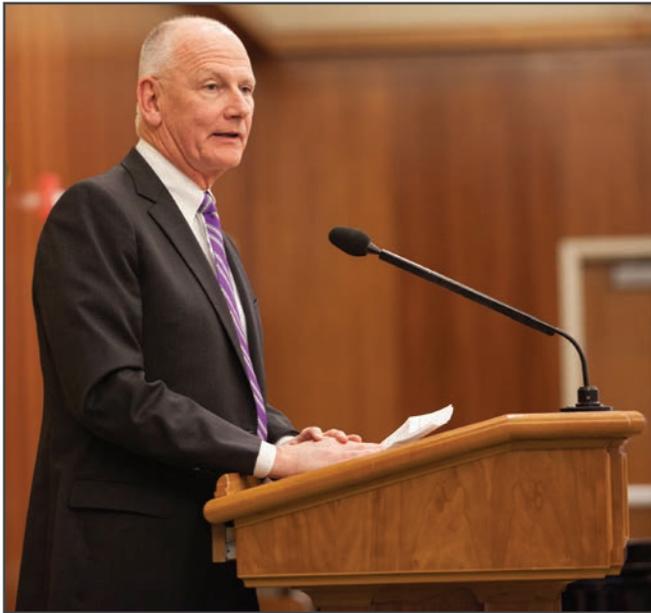




OUTREACH

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MARRIOTT SCHOOL | ROMNEY INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT | SUMMER 2016

ROBERT J. O'NEILL JR. NAMED ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR



Brigham Young University's Romney Institute of Public Management named Robert J. O'Neill Jr. as its 2016 Administrator of the Year. O'Neill, the executive director of the International City/County Management Association, has dedicated his career to strengthening local governments by improving management.

"Bob has shown thoughtfulness, vision, and commitment to public service

both at the local and international level," says Rex Facer, associate professor of public finance and management. "He has made innumerable differences while calling for better public service."

The Administrator of the Year Award honors outstanding public management professionals for their ethical and moral service in the

public sector and for the example that they set for BYU MPA students.

"It is humbling to accept this award given the people who have won it before," says O'Neill. "I may be getting the award, but I am getting it on behalf of all of the local government professionals who are working to make their communities better places to live, work, and play."

As executive director for ICMA, O'Neill leads the organization in advancing local government and creating excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional management. He has served in that position since 2002 and says he has enjoyed the learning opportunities it has given him.

"I get to see thousands of local governments and the work that they do," he says. "It's exciting and inspiring to see the energy that they have for improving their communities."

During his visit to BYU, O'Neill attended a banquet in his honor where he was presented with the award. He gave a speech to MPA students in attendance and encouraged them to explore careers in local government, stating that the next two decades will bring an extraordinary opportunity for local government officials to connect big policies and ideas with everyday people.

"It will be challenging yet exciting to fill the gap between what is politically

O'Neill, cont. p. 6



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From the Associate Director



U.S. News & World Report recently ranked the BYU MPA program nineteenth in city management. This ranking recognizes what we already knew—our alums are making an impact. This issue of the *Outreach* newsletter highlights

several alumni working in the public sector. Their experiences remind us of the ongoing need for good managers and leaders who contribute to good governance. Their experiences also remind us to honor and celebrate all of you who contribute to good governance in your communities, whether directly through your careers or indirectly as involved and contributing citizens.

The MPA degree provides the academic foundation for success. You add the passion and commitment. Those of you working in local government confidently and consistently confirm your job satisfaction is high because you see direct results. In this issue, read about M'kynzi Newbold's experience with the Alamo project in San Antonio, Beka Clement's fraud investigation in California state government, how Nate Checketts is making a difference with the affordable healthcare act, and about Kevin Watts' space-station project on the federal level.

Currently several billboards along I-15 in Utah tout the quality of the state's governance. Many of our alums and professors contribute to the quality of Utah state government. Professor Ray Nelson and retired professors Larry Walters and Gary Cornia continue to advise the state on fiscal and tax policies.

A big thank you to these alums who referred 2016 applicants to the MPA day program.

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|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Anthony Bates | Kab-Pyo Hong | Crys Lee |
| Bryce Baker | Bryant Howe | Jeff Roberts |
| Liz Dixon | Jonah Humes | Erica Souza |
| Brittany Erikson | Curtis Isaak | Teran Taniuchi |
| Armand Glick | Jennifer Kajiyama | Ben Thurgood |
| Richards Hall | Hyeonseung Kim | Natalie Vogel |
| Brad Harris | Joel Kongaika | Kate Zeller |
| Carl Hernandez | Alan Larson | |

Alumni working in the public sector regularly give back to the MPA program by sharing career experiences with current students. They describe their real-life, day-to-day experiences, and talk about keeping up with community needs. From meeting the growing demands for electrical power and ensuring clean water at affordable prices to managing development to sustain growth and developing a solid tax base for residents, our alumni working in government make a difference and are capable, caring public servants. Others have shared the challenges related to the need for low-income housing, providing homes for children and young adults in foster care, and guiding economic growth and development in their communities.

At least twenty-two of our incoming students are already firmly committed to government careers, and we expect that number will grow as students learn about the opportunities working in this sector provides. Current students have a wealth of mentors to reach out and up to. The need for effective managers and leaders in government is great. We thank each of you who contribute to good governance in the public sector. Your contribution matters and is appreciated, and your effectiveness is noticed and needed on many levels.

Sincerely,

 Catherine Cooper
 Associate Director

If you would like to receive the MPA *Outreach* newsletter electronically, please email us at mpaalumni@byu.edu.

OUTREACH

Publisher Jeff Thompson
 Managing Editor Vicki Okerlund
 Editors Sara Atwood and Megan Hendrickson
 Graphic Designer Nina Whitehead
 Student Writers M'Leah Ricker Manuele,
 Angela Marler, and Aricka Wilde

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Alumni News

SIX SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS



By Bryce Baker

As a professional civil servant, my role is to promote good government. Whatever the size of government and whatever missions it assumes, the challenge for civil servants is to be efficient and effective in accomplishing their assigned missions. Each civil servant can have an impact on good government within his or her sphere. I would like to share six spiritual principles that have guided me in my temporal career to be an influence for good.

1. MAGNIFY

An appointment to public service is like a church calling: it needs to be “magnified” (D&C 84:33). During my career, I have seen public servants who truly magnified their roles—they enlarged the impact of their organizations; they made the programs they administered honorable and commendable; they were faithful to their assigned duties and accomplished important things; they diligently served. A manager who magnifies his mission will inspire and motivate.

2. PRAY

We are counseled to pray “when ye are in your fields . . . over all your flocks . . . over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them . . . over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase” (Alma 34:20–25). I have faced difficult work challenges that sent me to my knees, and I have been strengthened to meet those challenges. Yes, I believe that God gives grace to bureaucrats.

3. NOTE THE SMALL AND SIMPLE

By small and simple means, great things can be accomplished. In my work, attention to the details can be very important. The answer to a problem may be found by digging a little deeper and taking the extra little step. Small and simple actions that demonstrate a commitment to excellence can produce a reputation that puts you in a position of trust and respect.

4. LEARN FROM SETBACKS

Nephi experienced two failures before he obtained the brass plates—and those failures ultimately paved the way for success. I have learned that failures, dead ends, or detours can be stepping stones to a better result. We can learn from our failures things that will make us wiser. Public servants need to recognize that challenging experiences can be for their good (D&C 122:7) and increase their future effectiveness.

5. BE PREPARED

We are told that “if ye are prepared ye shall

not fear” (D&C 38:30). Public servants must deal with both the expected and the unexpected. Preparation requires a long-term, day-by-day diligence. Much of my workload is unplanned. We may be asked to review legislation with a short deadline or respond to an urgent problem. Without expertise developed over many years, it would be impossible to provide a good product in the time allotted.

6. ACT WITH SPEED—AND PATIENCE

After the prophet Alma was cast out by the people of Ammonihah, he “returned speedily” (Alma 8:10–18). The ability to act speedily when necessary is a great asset for a public servant. Sometimes in the policy world, if you are not able to act quickly, you will lose control of the agenda. Quick action may be needed to stop a bad idea. However, some circumstances may demand patient deliberation; policies developed too quickly may be flawed. Consider the example of Moses. He had to act quickly to part the Red Sea, but then he led his people around in the wilderness for forty years. Helping others to grow often requires patience.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Bryce Baker received his MPA from BYU in 1983 and has worked at the US Office of Personnel Management for thirty years. This text is adapted from remarks he gave in November 2015 when he received the Romney Institute’s N. Dale Wright Alumnus of the Year award.

SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR MPA ALUM

“Reach for the stars” is a figurative goal for most of us, but for 1986 MPA alum Kevin Watts, it is an everyday reality.

Watts, originally from Salt Lake City, has worked at NASA for thirty years. He had graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in geology in 1983 before completing BYU's MPA program. Watts can attribute his longevity with NASA to the innovative environment that draws on his background in science.

“There is so much going on that is just so cutting-edge and interesting,” Watts says. “With a degree in geology and an interest in engineering and all things space, I just love everything that goes on around me.”

While attending the Marriott School, Watts stumbled across a chance to apply for a NASA internship—for him it was the opportunity of a lifetime.

“I had always been really enthusiastic about NASA,” Watts says. “When I saw an avenue after graduation that might take me there, I knew I had to take it. I was in the right place at the right time. I never really thought I would be able to work for NASA, but I am so thankful I have.”

Watts started working at NASA as a presidential management intern, choosing the Johnson Space Center in Houston as his place to land. After his internship he worked as a resource analyst, dealing with budgets and department funding for about one year. Watts then moved with his family to Washington, DC, and got involved with the space-station program. This paved the

way for him to start working with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency on a laboratory module for the International Space Station.

“In my small way I have been very fortunate to work a lot of time in the development of the space station,” Watts says. “I speak Japanese and so I was able to work in that arena for many years and facilitate many of the agreements that took place in order for Japan to supply the module to the space station that they built.”

Eventually Watts became the space station liaison for Japan and moved his family to Tsukuba, Japan, for three years. He helped to get the space-station module constructed and operable, ready to help further research on the International Space Station.

Watts has worked in many capacities over the years, including project management, payload management, and contracting management. Eventually, Watts was pulled back home to the Johnson Space Center, where he is currently working on mission planning for human exploration of Mars.

Watts has loved the chance to be a part of the scientific and engineering contributions that NASA has made over the years.



Watts wearing a Mark III mockup spacesuit during Altair lunar-lander development testing.

He believes that such advancements have potential to change our perception of the world and how we can improve life on earth.

“I have been right in the middle of major space-station programs, and now I am working in the office that plans human missions to Mars,” Watts says. “I just really love the work because there is always something cool going on.”

EVERY TAXPAYER'S HERO



People usually picture a superhero as someone who wears a cape and flies civilians to safety; however, unbeknownst to many taxpayers, their financial protector wears a more inconspicuous uniform.

Beka Clement, a 2007 MPA graduate from Silverdale, Washington, is such a rescuer. Clement currently works for the State of California as a fraud investigator in the auditor's office and has conducted investigations that contributed to saving millions of taxpayer dollars.

"When we go in and find the bad guy, it sends a message to state employees,"

Clement says. "It provides a deterrent effect and brings correct policy and conduct to the forefront."

Clement's office takes on whistle-blower complaints, which include suspicions of fraud, waste, or abuse within the State of California. Clement focuses on smaller-scale issues, looking at individual state employees, departments, or contracts.

In one instance Clement got a tip on a governor-appointed employee who was supposed to help with the state's mental health programs but instead attended celebrity concerts and funerals. After Clement's

investigation, the individual decided to immediately resign.

"It's so rewarding for me as an investigator to see a direct impact because someone who was making very poor decisions with taxpayer dollars is now no longer there," Clement says.

Clement and her colleagues have had many investigations receive media coverage. Highlighting their successes has not only deterred would-be fraudsters, but also provides personal validation for the team's hard work.

"Many times the media will pick up these stories, and it is really rewarding to see something that I worked on be in the news," Clement says. "I get to see a direct impact from the investigations that I have conducted, and it feels like I made a difference."

Though Clement has enjoyed saving the world one investigation at a time, she didn't always dream of working in her current career.

"I never grew up saying I was going to be an auditor one day, but I have really enjoyed it and grown a lot professionally," Clement says. "I feel that there are so many benefits to this job that I had no idea of when I signed on, and I am so glad that I did."

Some of these benefits have included pensions, on top of a personal 401K, health benefits, and paid certifications and training for her position. The job's security has allowed her to feel safe when thinking about the futures of her husband, Bill, and their two sons, Tama and Kainoa.

"Now that I have a family, I realize this was a better deal than I ever thought," Clement says. "In the private sector you don't get as many benefits for retirement and the medical benefits are not as competitive. It definitely makes a big difference in deciding where you want to work."

Alumni News

ON THE FRONT LINES OF REFORM

Whatever their political leanings, people from all parties have had a lot to say about national healthcare reform. Nathan Checketts, a BYU MPA 1998 graduate from Newark, California, has been right on the front-line of the debates.

"I am glad I work in state government because I have learned a lot," Checketts says. "I didn't always know what I wanted to do, but I knew I wanted to work in the public sector, so then it was about finding the right fit."

It took Checketts some time to discover the right place for him. His first full-time position out of school was working as an auditor for the State of California, where he rotated through departments and got a taste of the inner-workings of various state programs.

"It was a great entry-level job because I became very familiar with the details of the budget," Checketts says. "I feel that once you understand how the budget of any organization works, it gives understanding of how a program functions. You learn where the funding is coming from, what the rules are, how many people you need, and who your stakeholders are."

After working in California for two and a half years, Checketts was offered a job in the governor's budgeting office for the State

of Utah Department of Health. Currently Checketts works as its deputy director over Medicaid. He is responsible for all the staff, systems, and payments related to the Medicaid program.

"I think governors have a really interesting job to do and the work that their agencies do is interesting because they are on the front lines trying to figure out policies and care delivery in healthcare areas, transportation, and education," Checketts says. "They have very key roles to play."

Likewise, Checketts has been front and center in the healthcare discussion. After the Affordable Care Act expanded Medicaid coverage across the country, a Supreme Court ruling allowed states to address the issue and develop their own state strategies.

"I worked with Governor Herbert on what he called 'The Healthy Utah Option' to create a program that still covered people by Medicaid expansion, but in a slightly different way using private health insurance," Checketts says. "I helped work on it and negotiated the arrangement of the plan with the federal government."

Ultimately, the plan was not approved by state legislators because many were concerned about the healthcare expansion's



long-term outcome. Instead it helped state leaders pass a smaller, limited-expansion plan covering very needy individuals. Checketts explained how Utah is the only state that has this type of coverage.

"It is great because the way that our government is set up allows us to develop these different strategies to address problems when other states' ideas don't always apply to our situation," Checketts says. "Doing this has been a very fun part of my job and it has been one of the things that keeps me engaged and entertained while at work. I have been able to be a part of some profound changes."

O'Neill, cont. from p. 1

acceptable and what is administratively effective in running local governments," he says. "We need innovation and creativity in leadership in order to succeed."

O'Neill received a bachelor's degree in political science from Old Dominion University in 1973 and received a master's degree in public administration from Syracuse University in 1974. He began his career in management as a consultant

for the Management Improvement Corporation of America and later became the director of management consulting services for the Virginia offices of Coopers & Lybrand.

SHAPING A COMMUNITY THROUGH LOCAL GOVERNMENT



M'kynzi Newbold, a 2014 MPA graduate from Salt Lake City, isn't sure if she found her career in local government or if it found her.

"When I started the MPA program I didn't know what I wanted to do so I signed up for nearly every career trip my first year. During a trip to San Antonio, Texas, I listened to Colleen Swain talk about a people-centered strategy to managing cities," Newbold says. "While listening to her I realized I wanted to do what she does."

Following the initial meeting, Newbold returned to hand Swain a résumé and to convince her she should hire Newbold as an intern. After returning to Utah, Newbold followed up weekly until Swain hired her. Newbold then spent four months interning in San Antonio, where her budding passion for local government continued to grow.

"During my internship, I worked on the revitalization of Travis Park in downtown San Antonio. It is one of the oldest parks in the nation and was part of the original Alamo grounds," Newbold says. "However, the park

had become a hot-spot for undesirable activity, and the city wanted to change that."

Over the last three years, Travis Park has transformed into an award-winning park that now hosts hundreds of events annually with support from the city and several partners, including Southwest Airlines and a historic local hotel. Community members can now walk through the park and eat from a food truck, enjoy a book at its quaint reading spot, or watch a ballet on the park stage.

"I was just a small part of that transformation, but that park represents why I love local government," Newbold says. "Local government is one of the few places where you actually get to see how your work directly affects a community."

After her successful internship, Newbold was hired full time with the city and became a budget analyst. She monitored transportation and capital improvement projects such as street and sidewalk maintenance and storm water programs.

"Budgeting is not glamorous or enjoyable, but it is important work," Newbold

says. "It was a lot of long hours and a lot of stress, but I worked with great people and learned so much. It was a solid foundation for a career in local government."

While still with the budget office, Newbold participated in the city manager's Women's Leadership and Mentoring program. The program matches female city employees with female executives for one year, and all mentees participate in team projects. During the program Newbold led the project to develop the planning framework for San Antonio's three-hundredth anniversary. The project entailed researching similar celebrations and best practices and providing recommendations to community leaders.

"The program gave me an opportunity to develop as a leader and to work with great women throughout the city," Newbold explains. "I now have a network of women in local government I can rely on for professional and personal guidance."

Presently, Newbold works in the city manager's office, supporting one of the assistant city managers. She is working on the implementation of a work plan for the recent World Heritage designation of the San Antonio missions, the development of the film community, and HR leave policies.

"Many people look at the things I like best about my career—parks and city celebrations—as the fluff stuff of government," Newbold says. "I don't share that opinion. These are the things that make people fall in love with their cities."

O'Neill later jumped into local government, first serving as city manager in Hampton, Virginia, and then as Fairfax County executive. As Hampton city manager he was recognized by the National League of Cities and Public Technol-

ogy, Inc. for his leadership, and as Fairfax County executive he received credit for a series of successful community and commercial revitalization strategies.

After a temporary assignment to the

Office of Budget Management and Budget, he then served as the president of the National Academy of Public Administration from 2000-02 before serving in his current position.

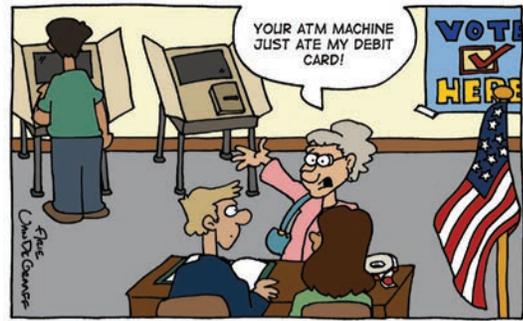
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MPA.BYU.EDU
760 TANNER BUILDING
PROVO, UT 84602



*"It isn't a great nation that breeds a great people.
It is a great people that build a great nation."
—George W. Romney*



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ROMNEY STUDENTS FIGHT REAL-WORLD WILDFIRES

BYU MPA students don't have to wait to graduate before tackling hot issues. In their second year, students enroll in a class that partners them with government or non-profit entities, giving them the chance to solve real problems for real organizations. And while it's no easy feat, they will tell you it's one of the most effective, exciting experiences of their graduate career.

Take Andrew Wallentine, for example—a 2015 MPA graduate from Lanark, Idaho, with experience in fire-fighting. Wallentine and a small team of students in his class landed a partnership with the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands. The division's wildfire reduction strategy component—which uses state funding to address the problem of catastrophic wildfires—focuses on fire mitigation and prevention.

"This was one of the neatest projects I worked on during my time at the institute," Wallentine says. "What the state of Utah has done with the division is pretty groundbreaking, but because it was so new, they

didn't really have a foundation of information to work with. That's where we came in."

Wallentine and his team started by determining the definition and cause of catastrophic wildfires, and then moved to figure out how to best mitigate those fires. They dove into third-party research, conducted surveys, and looked into rainfall, temperature, and vegetation.

Hundreds of hours of research and several months later, the team presented a system and recommendations to the division. The recommendations included a GIS mapping system and reporting structure to track fire frequency, intensity, and cost. The students also suggested the division create a database of peer-reviewed articles and information—resources to back up the division's actions and to present to the legislature for continued funding.

"To deal with students who, with one exception, had no knowledge of our agency, and to see them put together this cognitive, cohesive report, was incredible," says

Nate Barrons, catastrophic wildfire reduction strategy coordinator. "They gave us a phenomenal foundation to work from and move forward with."

Following the project, the division hired Laura Palmer, a 2016 MPA graduate from Ventura, California, as a full-time intern to implement the team's recommendations.

"Although the team's recommended program is a five-to-ten-year process," Palmer says, "it's cool to think that what I helped implement will have a long-term impact and be further built upon in the coming years."

The project not only had a positive impact on Palmer and the division, but on the entire team of students.

"We hit a lot of walls, but we learned a lot," Wallentine says. "The biggest things I pulled from the Romney Institute and this experience were the ability to think critically, to break down those barriers and walls, and to move forward. Once you master those things, you can really make a difference."