



# OUTREACH

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MARRIOTT SCHOOL | ROMNEY INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT | SUMMER 2017

## NEW LEADERSHIP AND A NEW ERA FOR THE ROMNEY INSTITUTE

Jeff Thompson and Lori Wadsworth first worked together in the BYU Graduate Studies office twenty-five years ago—he as an intern, she as an advisor. Now, the working dynamics have changed for the two seasoned professors of public management. Effective 1 July, Wadsworth will succeed Thompson as the new director of the Romney Institute of Public Management.

This change comes after three years of exemplary leadership by Thompson. During his term, the faculty dramatically increased their research productivity. Many now publish in top-tier journals, above that which is necessary to maintain continuing status. Another effort Thompson has spearheaded is increasing awareness of the program.

“When I first came into the office, I decided I wanted to focus on messaging and telling the MPA program’s story,” Thompson says. “We were the best-kept secret on campus—but you don’t want to be that. We’ve increased info sessions and launched an ad that has been well received.”

From his time as director, Thompson is also proud of the student-led refurbishment of the institute’s lobby display and the high-profile guests the program has brought in, such as Governor Mitt Romney and the presidents of the American Red Cross and the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

“I can’t take credit for the lobby display, but I am proud that I stepped aside and let the students create it,” Thompson says. “I think that embodies the spirit of the MPA program—volunteerism and striving for excellence.”

Once his term is complete, Thompson will get back to teaching ethics classes and focusing on his research—a change he’s looking forward to. Meanwhile, Wadsworth plans to pick up the baton and continue improving the program’s awareness and image.

“The department is in a great place,” Wadsworth says. “The past directors have done a good job of establishing who we are and getting the word out. In the next three years I see my job as continuing that legacy and broadening it.”



Wadsworth received her own MPA degree from BYU just before having twins—her seventh and eighth children—and later completed a PhD program in OBHR at the University of Utah. She also has an associate’s degree in business and a bachelor’s degree in family sciences. Wadsworth’s research focuses on work-family interaction, particularly how organizations can assist employees in balancing the two.

“I love the MPA program,” Wadsworth says. “As a student here it changed my life.”

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# From the Outgoing Director



At the close of my term as director of the Romney Institute, I've reflected on a few things I have learned about our program.

First, there is a wellspring of alumni support and loyalty that is simply awe-

inspiring. I have had a front-row seat to observe alumni mentoring our students and generously giving their time and means to the MPA and EMPA programs. I have loved working with a truly stellar advisory board that helps us stay abreast of a changing public sector. Our alumni network truly sets our program apart.

Second, I've learned how deeply dependent a leader is on his or her supporting team. Our staff and faculty have buoyed me up constantly as we strive to continuously strengthen the program. The excellence, commitment, and kindness of our staff and faculty have, frankly, astounded me.

Lastly, I marvel at our students. Although I have spent less time in the classroom than I used to, I have had a better view of how our students engage with the program, contribute ideas and energy to our administration, and exercise their generosity in ways that equip them to be outstanding public servants.

As much effort as we faculty and administrators invest, I have to humbly acknowledge that the "secret sauce" of our program walks in the door of its own accord. I would bet the farm that you won't find a stronger, more innately good-hearted group of students anywhere.

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**A big thank you to these alums who referred applicants to the 2017 MPA full-time program.**

Sam Brown	Carl Hernandez	Cory Leonard
John Cannon	Allison Hess	Shaun Nelson
Ray Christensen	Bill Hulterstrom	Heather Patterson
Clint Elison	Hinckley Jones-	Luke Peterson
Denise Haney	Sanpei	
Brad Harris	Jennifer Kajiya	

It has been an honor serving these past three years. It has only deepened my commitment to our program and solidified my desire to devote my career to producing world-changing MPA and EMPA grads. You haven't seen the last of me.

I step aside with complete confidence in my successor, Lori Wadsworth. I have known Lori for twenty-five years, having worked with her as a student employee when she was a counselor in BYU's Graduate Studies Office.

With experience in both faculty and administration (inside and outside the Marriott School), Lori brings an unparalleled understanding of how things work at BYU. She is an extraordinarily conscientious and detail-oriented administrator. She is utterly unflappable (I count her calmness as one of the great blessings of my directorship). When she speaks, people listen. And, most importantly, she is deeply committed to the program and is a thoroughly good person in every sense. Under her leadership, the future of the Romney Institute is bright as ever.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Jeff Thompson".

Jeff Thompson  
Outgoing Director  
Romney Institute of Public Management

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# Faculty News

## SIMULATION HELPS DRIVE PROFESSOR'S RESEARCH

When Romney Institute associate professor Chris Silvia and Rachel Krause, an associate professor at the University of Kansas, dove into an energy policy research study that would require significant means to test, they were presented with an opportunity to try their hands at a computer simulation.

The question: which government policies most influence consumers to purchase battery-powered electric vehicles (BEVs) instead of traditional cars? Among the policies under consideration were buying a city fleet of BEVs, offering incentives to lower BEV purchase prices, installing public charging stations, and pursuing a hybrid approach by providing a mix of the other three policies.

Finding the answer would require \$5.5 million, three identical cities, and five to ten years of global measurement.

"We didn't have time or money for that," Silvia says. "We decided to do a simulation instead."

In the simulation the researchers created a generic city with cars (called agents) being driven around it. Each driver had different characteristics and could see his or her surroundings, which showed the policy implementations and influenced the driver's decision to buy an electric or traditional vehicle.

The researchers conducted the simulation 250 times for each policy. Although implementing any policy gave better results than no policy, they saw the biggest influx in electric cars purchased when they implemented a hybrid approach. Silvia and Krause's findings were published in the September 2016 issue of the journal *Energy Policy*.

The research took two years to complete, and Silvia says the experience was a great learning opportunity for him and his students.

"I've done some classes on simulations, but now I can give my students a real-world example," Silvia says. "One of the students was interested enough in it that he used this method to answer some questions for the city he interned with in the summer."

Prior to coming to BYU to teach, Silvia received a PhD in public affairs from the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He also holds an MPA from BYU and a master's degree in public health from the University of Utah.

"I think the thing that he brings that is most unique is a diverse set of life experiences," says outgoing Romney Institute director and associate professor Jeffery Thompson. "Chris spent time in the



military, and he has experience in the healthcare industry. He does a great job of bringing his past experience into both his research and his teaching."

Silvia's experiences have taken him to many different universities, but he says BYU stands apart.

"The BYU MPA program is very special," Silvia says. "The mission of the university and department is different, and that's important to me. Here there is a focus on both rigorous academics and spiritual development. I think we do a great job preparing students for their future careers."

Outside of his work, Silvia plays the bagpipes in the White Peaks Centennial Pipe Band. He also enjoys cooking, canoeing, watching Liverpool Football Club, and spending time with his wife and three children.

### "Williams" cont. from p. 8

his career: answer the "why" before the "what"; failure is not an option (or is it?); the five Ps: proper preparation prevents poor performance; leaders are readers; be a great listener; the importance of mentors; make the decision today to work harder; time management; figure out what melts your butter; and serve.

Williams closed his address with advice directed at the BYU MPA students who were preparing to embark on their careers, counseling them to become great leaders and public servants.

"We need great leaders," Williams said. "Look at the missions of nonprofit organizations—they are unbelievable missions. We need people who are prepared and who can make a difference in the world. . . . It's easy to make the mistake that great leaders are larger than life. Most are not. They care, they're committed to their profession, and they go the extra mile."

# Alumni News

## FRIENDSHIP AND HEALING IN A REFUGEE CAMP

For seven of the coldest weeks in Greece this past winter, 2007 BYU MPA alumna Tawna Fowler was serving a camp of five hundred Yazidi refugees from northern Iraq with Lifting Hands International, a nonprofit founded by another BYU graduate.

“I wanted to help refugees, and I was feeling prompted to get involved,” Fowler says. “I remember having this conflicted feeling about whether I should just donate the money or go. But when everything lined up perfectly and friends and acquaintances offered to help fund the trip, it was just like every barrier was taken down, saying, ‘Go!’”

When she arrived, she quickly found her place teaching advanced English classes to teenage girls in the camp.

“They are just regular teenage girls,” Fowler says. “They love Shakira and they want to learn salsa dancing, and one of them is in love with Justin Bieber. They are some of my best friends. I still talk with them all the time.”

Fowler had recently completed another master’s degree in educational psychology and philosophy at Ohio State, so the teaching role was a natural fit. Occasionally, she also filled in roles for which she received no training. For example, when the trauma yoga instructor left, she briefly taught kids’ yoga classes. And then every day there was always the necessary sorting and distributing of supplies, food, and hygiene kits.

While volunteering, Fowler also received some unexpected training in how to quickly put out fires.

“Literally—we had three electrical fires—but also figuratively,” Fowler explains. “I had to be ready for anything. Everything was changing every minute of every day; emergencies would pop up, and I could count on almost nothing proceeding as originally planned.”

She learned that she had to be flexible beyond the normal definition of the word. She says the experience was filled with extremes.

“I expected this to be a very dark, hard time,” Fowler says. “There were a lot of hard things and stories, but I hadn’t expected the friendships I built and the laughter. The Yazidis are a very loving, giving people. When I was with them, I felt myself healing from previous personal things. It was whenever I stepped away from the Yazidis that I felt stressed and exhausted because everything else was chaotic.”

Managing in the chaos was no small feat, but Fowler’s BYU MPA program experience gave her perspective.

“I was able to reflect more on what I was seeing,” Fowler says. “I was able to be more honest about the experiences, and I was able to sit back and store up ideas for what I want to do with future organizations. I also learned that each group meets different needs; previously, I had idealized many of the bigger organizations that provide tents and some medical supplies, but in Greece I learned to really value the work of individual volunteers and grassroots movements to an even greater degree than I had before.”

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*More about Lifting Hands International’s work with Yazidi refugees in Greece can be found online at [youtu.be/Nvvc6wmBD00](https://youtu.be/Nvvc6wmBD00).*



# EMPA CHANGES CAREER AND LIFE



Greg Dettinger peeled back the flap of an envelope and pulled out a letter from his wife, Shelley. The message was just what he needed to hear: “Maybe you need to realize you’re not supposed to leave education and that you need to take everything you’ve learned in the EMPA program and use it to help others become better educators.”

It was 2008, and Dettinger was about to graduate from the BYU EMPA program. He had taught school for eight years and served as county commissioner of Utah’s Sanpete County, and now his sights were set on a career in government administration. The job search was proving more difficult than he had anticipated, however, and he was becoming discouraged. But his wife’s words helped him to redirect his ambitions and pursue a path back to education—this time as a school administrator.

“I was so fired up,” Dettinger says. “I wanted to help kids, and I wanted to help teachers help kids.”

Dettinger’s EMPA coursework enabled him to waive many of the requirements for the Administrative/Supervisory Certificate program at Utah State University. Following that program, he was hired to be the principal of Milford High School in Beaver County, Utah, in March 2010. He oversaw about two hundred students in that position, and his two years there helped prepare him for an opportunity at Truckee High School in Truckee, California.

After a year in California, Dettinger and his wife wanted to be closer to their adult children. In 2013, Dettinger took on the role of principal of New Prairie High School in New Carlisle, Indiana, overseeing 980 students.

“Because of the things I learned in the EMPA program and my former jobs as a principal, we were able to transform that school,” Dettinger says. “They used to call it ‘Cow Pie High,’ but when I walked away after three years, it ranked in the top 5 percent of Most Challenging Academic high schools nationally, as ranked by *The Washington Post*, and ranked at No. 8 of the best schools in the state of Indiana.”

Today, Dettinger is principal of Concord High School in Elkhart, Indiana, where he oversees a student body of 1,700 and a staff of more than one hundred teachers and seventy support personnel.

“The personal and HR skills the EMPA program taught me are the things that truly helped me become a leader,” Dettinger says. “I also use what I learned in the Excel and applied statistics classes on a daily basis. To

be a good principal, you need to be able to look at the data, manipulate it, and let it drive what you do to make decisions.”

While the EMPA program helped Dettinger find success in a new career path, it was not without sacrifice. Because he was working as a full-time teacher while in the program, he took night classes and commuted between Manti and Salt Lake City weekly, traveling a total of fifty-one thousand miles during his three-year road to graduation. But to him, it was worth it.

“This program isn’t just career-changing; it is life-changing,” Dettinger says. “This program has made me a better husband, a better father, a better church leader, and a better human being.”

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## “Wadsworth” cont. from p. 1

I love the idea that we take people with big hearts and plans to change the world and give them the hard skill set they need to actually accomplish that. Our job is to do that without defusing their enthusiasm.”

The faculty are excited for the experience and wisdom Wadsworth will bring to this leadership role.

“Lori comes into the directorship universally supported,” Thompson says. “She’s an incredibly nice person, but she’s got backbone. She can stand up for issues that matter to her with great confidence that never alienates anyone else. Lori is positive and loyal as the day is long, so I’m excited for her leadership.”



# Student News

## EXPLORING CAREER AND COUNTRY

Each year, MPA students explore cities and career possibilities with Tanya Harmon, the MPA career services manager. This year, twenty-four students took part in career trips to Washington, DC; Sacramento, California; Carson City, Nevada; and Phoenix.

“This brings the world to our students,” Harmon says. “It opens their eyes to things they didn’t know or consider before. It’s a career exploration opportunity for students as well as an opportunity to begin relationships with potential employers.”

The company visits, interviews, and networking opportunities during the trips paid off for six students in direct job or internship offers. Here are three success stories.

### DANIELLE DUFFY

Danielle Duffy, a first-year student from Phoenix, spent several years as a history and economics teacher. This experience led her to emphasize in nonprofit and education policy.

“I felt a calling to do something about the problems I saw in education, but I felt limited in my position as a



teacher,” Duffy says. “I realized an MPA degree could give me the skills to implement the changes I wanted to see.”

Attending the Washington, DC, career trip validated her career shift and

reminded her that she was a competitive applicant for the education policy niche. Networking on the trip landed her an internship as the education fellow of the McKeon Group, a lobbying firm that focuses on defense and education. Duffy now monitors and reports on education policy on the Hill that might affect the Kellogg Foundation, a client of the firm. She also meets with representatives and senators and monitors relevant Supreme Court cases.

### PETER HALL

Peter Hall, whose emphasis is in local government, hails from Yuba City, California, and he’s anxious to get back to the Golden State. He saw the career trip to Sacramento as the perfect opportunity to land an internship that aligned with his interests and that was located on his home turf.

“The career trip gave me a vision of what my future could be,” Hall says. “It let me see that I could collaborate and do things for my community. It gave me a good sense of what my future has for me.”

He took an internship with the City of Rancho Cordova, California, where his projects focus on human resources: benefit summaries, recognition programs, and annual reviews.



### JOSH MILLER

After attending a local government conference, Josh Miller, a student from Trabuco Canyon, California, realized that local government wasn’t his calling. So on a whim, he attended the Phoenix career trip, interviewed with the state auditor’s office, and landed an internship in state government instead.

“I want to make sure my career is centered on service,” Miller says. “I’ve loved state and federal government work; it suits my skill set. I see myself as a positive voice for the public sector.”

This summer, he’ll be auditing the gaming department, which oversees casinos in Arizona. Miller’s team analyzes the department to make it more efficient and accountable to the state’s citizens. He and his coworkers look at the department top to bottom, including the department’s mission statement, the agency’s alignment with state laws, and the industry’s best practices.



## KRISTEN COX: AN ADVOCATE FOR IMPROVEMENT



Kristen Cox would be the last person to list her accomplishments and the first to promote the efforts of her team in the governor's office. But that's just Cox's leadership style and perspective on government: provide guidance, remove obstacles, and empower people with knowledge.

As executive director of the Utah Governor's Office of Management and Budget, Cox received *Governing* magazine's Public Officials of the Year Award in 2016 and is a member of the Romney Institute's Executive Advisory Board. Behind these titles is a woman whose philosophies and drive inspire confidence both in her and in others.

"I think people are inherently good," Cox says. "When they are struggling, it's because they're stuck in a process that isn't working very well. For that reason, we set a goal four years ago to improve government performance by 20 percent and today we celebrated hitting that."

The path to her latest achievement was not a direct one, rather a "natural progression." After studying educational psychology at BYU, she wound up in the nonprofit world direct-

ing the National Federation of the Blind of Utah. (Cox, herself, is legally blind.) Three years later, she was recruited to head the federation's governmental affairs in Washington, DC. The Bush administration hired Cox in 2001, and she spent several years in various federal and state positions. Cox's abilities caught the attention of then Utah governor John Huntsman, who enticed Cox back to Utah to run his Department of Workforce Services in 2007. This career shift brought her and her family home to the state she loves and planted her in the operations side of government.

"I have this obsession with improving things," Cox says. "One of the most

rewarding aspects of my position is seeing actual results—the fruits of our labors."

In the budget office, she views her current role as being a safeguard for the taxpayers' money. Cox believes this is best done with strategic focus and a competent team.

"What I'd like to be known for is thinking big," Cox says. "Sometimes we get so trapped up in what's hard and impossible. I'd like to make sure that government is thinking about what's possible, not what's impossible, and bringing results to the taxpayer."

She applies this kind of big thinking to BYU through her service on the Romney Institute's Executive Advisory Board.

"I've seen government from multiple perspectives," Cox says. "I'm in operations now, and I was the recipient of government services as I was going blind. With these perspectives, hopefully I can make a small contribution to producing students who are equipped to analyze policy, know how to get work done on the ground, and can turn a vision into reality."



# romney institute

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*"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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## MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION CEO HONORED



The Romney Institute of Public Management has named David Williams, CEO of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, its 2017 Administrator of the Year. Williams was recognized at a banquet on campus in March.

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 they set for BYU MPA students.

"David exemplifies this award through his history of work in the nonprofit sector," says Rex Facer, associate professor of public finance and management. "The effect of the Make-A-Wish Foundation on people in very difficult times is the kind of organizational effort we want our students to emulate."

Williams says he initially felt uncomfortable accepting the award because he believes working in the nonprofit sector should be about service, not recognition.

"What really changed my mind though was learning more about George Romney," Williams says. "He was a great business leader and an amazing public servant, and he valued his family and his faith. As I looked at some of the people this school has honored in his name, it felt like I should take another look at it. I'm glad I did, because he was a great

man, this is a great institution, and this is a wonderful award."

Williams, who has served as the foundation's CEO since 2005, did not always plan to work for a nonprofit. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in accounting from Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania and an MBA from the University of Houston, Williams realized he wanted to change course and pursue nonprofit work. After thirty-four years in the industry, including time with the Houston Food Bank and Habitat for Humanity, he has found great satisfaction with his work and the people he works with.

"In my job, I get to see people at their best, whether that's a celebrity granting a wish to a kid or whether it's a corporation or executive that's happy to be partnering with us," Williams says.

Williams's remarks at the banquet centered on ten things he has learned in

*"Williams" cont. p. 3*