



OUTREACH

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MARRIOTT SCHOOL | ROMNEY INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT | SPRING 2018

A Decade of Grantwell

When the early Saints moved west, they planted crops they knew they would never harvest it, but they knew those following would. For the first group of Grantwell students, that same mentality was key. A decade later, the program has yielded increasing returns for each succeeding generation.

Grantwell is a hands-on program where MPA students consult with large donors to find a best-fit for their grants, evaluate past giving, and develop giving strategies. Since Grantwell began in 2008, student teams have worked with about thirty donors and advised nearly \$40 million in grants—more than any other student philanthropy program in the country.

The origins of the program can be traced back to one faculty meeting with Todd Manwaring, director of the BYU Marriott Ballard Center for Economic Self-Reliance, and MPA professors Jeffery Thompson and Aaron Miller in attendance.

“When we started talking, it felt like light filling the room,” says Miller, who now directs Grantwell. “I’m not exaggerating when I say that the whole vision for Grantwell was described in the room that day, and then it was just a matter of executing it.”

After a few pilot programs, the professors decided to dive in. The first semester, fifteen students signed up. Though they had no clients, these students caught the vision

and began making connections they knew wouldn’t bear fruit until after they had graduated. That precedent remains today.

“Every generation of Grantwell students has wanted to leave the program in better shape than they found it—stronger, more vibrant, more creative,” Miller says. “We almost entirely hit the reset button every year. Yet new team members come up with ideas of how to keep this alive and going. They feel invested in it well beyond the time that they’ll be there to take advantage of it.”

The success of the Grantwell program led to the creation of a Grantwell franchise at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The UNLV program, now in its fourth year, has advised more than half a million dollars in grants and plays a central role in the Vegas philanthropic community.

In Provo, Grantwell now has so many projects and opportunities that team members have to put some on hold. Miller attributes the program’s success to the quality of the students’ work.

“We are in a place right now where Grantwell is humming,” he says. “People know what to do, and they’re good at it.”

For many students, Grantwell is the résumé line that clinches the job offer. For 2014 alum Jackie Suggitt, her Grantwell experience got her an internship with the Walmart Foundation. She finished the summer not only with a full-time job offer



Grantwell student consultants

as a manager on Walmart’s sustainability team but also connections that led to more Grantwell projects.

“There’s something about working with organizations that you can’t learn in the classroom,” Suggitt says. “The language they speak, the pace at which they move, and the complex expectations they have can only be learned by being in it. For me, Grantwell was my first exposure to that world, and it left me a step ahead.”

Looking back on the first ten years, Miller is more than optimistic for the next decade.

“I know that this program is going to influence the future of philanthropy,” he says. “We have students who are going out and doing incredible things. I’m confident that the day will come when we have CEOs and directors of foundations who were trained through their Grantwell experience.”

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From the Associate Director



At a recent advising meeting, BYU Academic Vice President Jim Rasband shared insights about President Kevin J. Worthen's priorities for the university: First, focus on the BYU Aims and Mission because BYU has a critical role to play as an exemplary university; second, focus

on faith and the balanced development of the whole person. Learning occurs by study and faith—and by *doing*, which leads directly to the university's emphasis on experiential learning. It is the doing that helps us distinguish between and apply truth and light in significant ways,

Rasband also reminded those in attendance that there are students whose voices need to be heard and strengthened so they can represent and help grow people in their circles of influence.

At the department level, we value this clear direction and remain focused on these same concerns. The BYU Aims and Mission influence our decisions and inspire us to evaluate what we are doing to ensure that it is spiritually strengthening, intellectually enlarging, character building, and leading to lifelong learning and service.

Faculty members continue to engage in community learning opportunities and create ways for students to do things and apply their classroom learning in useful ways to assist individual and community growth. The department's emphasis on inclu-

sion and diversity influences the admission committee, whose members look carefully at the grades and test scores of applicants and at the applicants' experience and influence, seeking students who have or will have significant roles to play as they move into their future responsibilities.

This year's newly admitted applicants have amazing stories to share. For example, one applicant wrote about being the first from his country to serve an LDS mission. Another talked about a valuable lesson taught by her mother: look in your neighbor's rice bowl first, then share if they don't have enough. Even though her family lived on a meager income, she and her siblings recycled plastic bottles to help others. She recognizes the power education has to improve not only her life but the lives of others in her community. Another student started a nonprofit at age sixteen that is still helping rescue survivors of human trafficking.

The cycle continues. Wonderful applicants come to the Romney Institute, hungrily seeking to learn, then move forward into their futures to strengthen, enlarge, build, and serve. Thank you for being you—a student, an alum, a faculty, a friend. Unitedly we aim to make a significant impact for good.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CJC'.

Catherine Cooper
Associate Director
Romney Institute of Public Management

GAG TIME

BY ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF, CLASS OF '01



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Institute News

Thompson's Class Act

Jeff Thompson stands on stage once again. All eyes are on him, but with eighteen years of teaching under his belt, Thompson remains unfazed. Whether he's in the classroom or on the stage, Thompson enjoys the thrill of engaging an audience. An associate professor and former director of the Romney Institute, he merges his acting and teaching skills to create the best learning atmosphere for his students.

Thompson dabbled in drama during high school, but he says spending time in showbiz didn't seem serious enough when he got further along in school and work.

"For years I wanted to do it again," says Thompson, "but I was raising my kids, and I have a job. Finally, about six years ago, I thought, 'I'm not getting any younger. If I'm going to do this, I should just do it.'"

His first attempt to return to the stage was at a small theater group in Pleasant Grove, Utah. He was terrified to audition but walked out with the lead role in "And Then There Were None." Since returning to the stage, he has performed in twelve different shows in theaters across Utah Valley.

"It's changed me as a teacher," Thompson says. "A lot of the skills that I've had

to develop on stage—such as timing and delivery, maintaining presence, keeping an audience engaged, and even standing and moving a certain way—are also the skills of a good teacher."

Along with his stage skills, Thompson uses role-playing, improv, and music to teach management concepts. His approach has earned him a captivated audience. Breck Wightman, a second-year MPA student from Rexburg, Idaho, felt frustrated at first by Thompson's policy of no laptops in the classroom. "It only took a week before I realized I don't need a laptop for note-taking in his class because he does a great job utilizing activities and group discussions," says Wightman. "I didn't have to refer to notes as much because the information stuck."

Thompson doesn't just stand out among his students; Catherine Cooper, the Romney Institute associate director, says Thompson's organizational behavior section is a "beloved class."

"He's a great professor, and I think his acting skills help," Cooper says. "He uses his eyebrows and every part of his face to engage students. When he's on, he's on. It's almost like he's performing, and peo-



Narrator Jeff Thompson in "Into the Woods"

ple are just leaning into it and learning. He loves what he does."

This winter semester the teacher will turn student as he audits a BYU acting class. He's also got a few auditions on the calendar and is planning to spend a chunk of the summer performing in the Nauvoo Pageant. Most recently, Thompson donned overalls and a farmer's hat for "Betty Blue Eyes" at the Orem Hale Center Theater.

BYU Marriott MPA EStore

The Romney Institute is excited to announce the new BYU Marriott MPA EStore. Now you can get BYU Marriott MPA apparel whenever you want. Check it out at:

marriottschool.byu.edu/mpa/estore



Alumni News

Kelleen Potter's Call to Public Service

When it comes to getting women to run for office, the secret is often in the “tapping.” Research shows that women are more likely to run for office if someone “taps” them—or suggests that they should. That was the case for Kelleen Potter, 2016 EMPA grad and the new mayor of Heber City, Utah.

Potter's first run at elected office began with an unexpected knock at her door. Several community members had been discussing who they could get to run for Heber's city council. Soon, one of them showed up at Potter's home with a \$50 check to pay for her filing fee. That was the tap that got her elected to the Heber City council in 2013. Now, after four years as a council member, she's beginning her term as the first female mayor of Heber.

“So much research shows that our organizations are better when women are in leadership and part of the conver-

sation,” Potter says. “We just get better outcomes. Not that women are better; we're just different. And we need all of the perspectives to come together. I've always felt like young girls need to see women in leadership positions, and then just follow their hearts and their inspiration.”

work out with having a family. Instead, Potter earned a BA in political science from BYU and became a government and history teacher, instructing students in public school, as well as the Utah State Prison's high school. She was then hired as the state elections director under former Utah Governor Mike Leavitt. It was in this role that she met one of her mentors, Olene Walker, the state's fifteenth governor.

While working in the Leavitt administration, Potter took a few MPA classes at the University of Utah but found she didn't love the classes. Shortly after that, she chose to leave her job and become a full-time mom. Fourteen years later, Potter discovered the BYU Executive MPA program, and this time the fit was just right.

“I'm so grateful that I was able to get my MPA,” she says. “Besides being inspired by the idea of public service and becoming more confident in my abilities, I gained a

lot of skills that I use all of the time—some consciously and some subconsciously.”

The call to run came knocking at about the same time that school was starting up. Once Potter was elected to the city council, Heber became a testing ground for everything she learned in class.

“I had this built-in thing,” she says, of coupling class projects with her council responsibilities. “Several times my team



Kelleen Potter

would say, ‘Well, let's do a Heber City project.’ So we did affordable housing, and we did a study on the police department, and I did my capstone. It was a great opportunity to dig into an issue and understand it thoroughly, as well as preparing a deliverable that I could use.”

Using what she learned in the program, Potter has helped update Heber's handling of HR issues. And that housing study? It's still making the rounds. Heber's police chief frequently uses her team's research to lobby for more affordable housing for his officers.

As she plans the next four years, Potter has her sights on improvements in both policy and process for the city. At the top of her list are increasing communication with citizens as well as developing a proactive approach to the tremendous growth happening in Heber.

Facing the Future

For Laura Palmer, the future after the MPA program looked unpredictable at first. After graduating in 2016, Palmer endured eleven months of applications and interviews before finally finding her fit in the city of San Antonio's Solid Waste Management Department. As a senior management analyst there, she's turning her old enemy—the future—into a friend.

The job turned out to be well worth the wait. Palmer now works in the Planning and Innovation Division, where she and six other employees work full-time on figuring out how innovation can shape the city.

"Our leadership team is focused on innovation and how we build that future," Palmer says. "We're forward thinking and collaborative as a department. We take pride in what we do and making sure we do it at a high quality."

That's no small task for a department that serves over 350,000 households and moves a total of 550,000 tons of material every year. Since services operate on such a large scale, Palmer faces many complex puzzles.

One such puzzle Palmer is tackling is the city's rate structure for collection services. Because the city's fees are designed to encourage recycling, she works to predict how behavior—and the budget—will change.

"As you can imagine, there's a lot of things to keep moving and integrate with each other," she says.

Luckily, looking toward the future is something she knows how to do. Recently, Palmer was responsible for preparing the department's budget presentation, or what she calls "the \$130-million, ten-minute speech." Palmer says the communications and analysis skills she learned in the MPA program, along with her minor in social innovation, proved to be the right combination for the job.

"Having that full breadth of skill set that

you get from the MPA program can really come together," she says. "You're able to do the writing but also able to turn around and do the math and make sure that what you're writing is correct."

Beginning this year, Palmer will join the latest cohort of the Women's Leadership Mentoring Program sponsored by the city. Palmer will be mentored by a female city executive, putting her on a leadership

track. In addition to being highly selective, this professional development program received a national award from the International City and County Managers Association in 2016.

Though the road to San Antonio was less direct than she might have hoped, Palmer feels that everything has fallen into place. And as far as she can predict, the future is definitely looking bright.



Laura Palmer

Share Your Story

Many of our alums have great stories just like Laura's. Please share your story with us! Send an email to mpaalumni@byu.edu—be sure to include the following:

- Name
- Job title
- Organization
- Brief description of job
- How you are using your MPA skills
- Your on-the-job photo

Student News

Make a **Difference** by the Millions

Megdalynn Fisher is ready to make a difference in the world—not by the thousands but by the millions.

With personal trials involving her health, loads of debt, and her husband failing to get residency after medical school, Fisher relied on Heavenly Father to guide her through. These experiences and guidance led Fisher to her first year in the BYU Marriott MPA program, where she is one step closer to making a lasting impact.

The Orem, Utah native, is a full-time student, in addition to being a mom of

four kids. When it comes to work and life balance, Fisher's family is her priority, but school is also important, so Fisher has learned to rely on communication, trust, and faith.

"Meg brings a great energy to class discussions," says Robert Christensen, associate professor of public management. "She comes prepared not only to share her insights but also to learn from others' perspectives as well. She understands and promotes graduate-level dialogue."

During her first semester in the MPA program, Fisher was put into teams for several of her classes. Fisher's past experiences of working in professional and volunteer teams typically ended with her doing all of the work, but that was not the case for her MPA teams.

"We worked together, and everyone pulled their weight," Fisher says. "It was amazing. We were tight-knit and supported each other. I anticipate the people on those teams will be my friends for the rest of my life."

Listening to Heavenly Father not only directed Fisher to go

back to school, it also physically saved her life. Right before Fisher was diagnosed with breast cancer, she was prompted to start working out and getting healthy. Exercise became her medicine and made dealing with health issues a lot easier—it was all interwoven.

During the years of treatment and the time her husband was unable to find residency, Fisher saw first-hand how the medical field functions and realized that, while being a doctor is a wonderful way to make a difference, she was not a fan of how the system operated.

"I started wondering if I could have a bigger impact if I approached this from a different angle than actually getting medical training and helping people with their problems one on one," Fisher says.

Fisher has always loved economics, so when she discovered the field of healthcare in economics, she thought to herself, "This is it!" She plans to use economics to study the healthcare system and make improvements, whether through research in a specific diagnosis or different processes in hospitals.

While she does not have a certain path to accomplish her goals yet, Fisher has several options she feels comfortable with: moving into the healthcare industry as a consultant, working with healthcare policy in the state, getting a PhD to do research and teach, or a combination.

"Doctors influence hundreds and thousands of lives by the time they retire," Fisher says. "I want to take it to the next level—I want to influence millions."



The Fisher family

MPA Women's Night

Girl power was in the air at Lori Wadsworth's home as she hosted a women's night along with Eva Witesman, both associate professors for the Romney Institute of Public Management.

On 7 December, thirteen female MPA students attended and learned from Wadsworth and Witesman about encouraging women in the workplace. The activity was initiated by the Master of Public Administration Association, based on an identical activity last year.

"The goal of the evening was to encourage students to move forward and make a difference in whichever path they follow," says MPAA president Starlee Holley, a second-year MPA student from Las Vegas.

The event setting was informal as Wadsworth and Witesman shared their personal and academic backgrounds. Students gained advice by asking questions related to working wives and mothers, work and life balance, and BYU and LDS culture involving women.

At the event, Wadsworth and Witesman emphasized how everyone's path will be different, and it is up to each individual woman to determine what is best for her. Shaye Simkins, a second-year MPA student from Marysville, Washington, loved learning from Wadsworth and Witesman.

"They are both great examples of relying on the Lord and learning what He would have us do," Simkins says. "As I move forward in life, especially with graduation approaching, I hope to follow their examples."

The MPA Women's Night was a meaningful and impactful event for students who witnessed the strength of the MPA program's female faculty.

"The perspectives shared during the MPA Women's Night give me a lot of hope for the future of women at BYU and in the LDS Church," says Carly Madsen, a second-year MPA student from Orem, Utah.



MPA students enjoy a women's night.

Hogle Zoo, a Learning Environment for Nonprofit Managers in Training

Lions, tigers, and red pandas ... oh, my!

A nonprofit relationship management class of fourteen MPA students went to Salt Lake City's Hogle Zoo on 27 October to learn more about relationships with nonprofits and take part in a fundraising project involving red pandas.

Before touring the zoo, students talked with two zoo administrators who asked them to help generate ideas on how to raise the final amount of money needed for the zoo's new red panda exhibit.

"We broke into teams to brainstorm,

then shared ideas with the whole group," says Vanessa Palmer, a second-year MPA student from Jackson, Wyoming. "I enjoyed being part of a real-life fundraising project."

Bill Hulterstrom, United Way of Utah County president and CEO, is an adjunct professor who organized the class field trip and taught students about Hogle Zoo's tremendous work.

The zoo has been nationally recognized for the great relationships it has created in the community; relationship builders are found throughout the organization.

"Everyone from the development staff and executive director to the veterinarian plays a significant role in forging these relationships," Hulterstrom says.

Hogle Zoo was the perfect destination to study relationships within nonprofits, because in addition to being an innovative and operative facility, almost everyone has memories of going to the zoo as a child.

"We showed students how institutions such as a zoo, which they have known for most of their lives, thrive and grow through strong relationships," Hulterstrom says.



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

MPA.BYU.EDU

PMF Finalists Share a Common Goal

Congratulations are in order for two current BYU Marriott MPA students and one alumnus who are part of the seven percent of applicants selected as finalists for this year's Presidential Management Fellows Program.

James Sinkovic from Santa Clara, California; Michelle Robertson from Henderson, Nevada; and Daniel Quick from Lexington, Kentucky, are finalists for the PMF—a highly selective, prestigious two-year leadership and development program administered by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Final selections will be made by December 2018.

"I was excited!" Robertson exclaims. "I know a lot of people apply and only a small group is selected, so I was honored."



Robertson is interested in the Department of Housing and Urban Development, primarily working with homelessness. Sinkovic hopes to work with foreign aid agencies such as Millennium Challenge Corporation, USAID, and the State Depart-

ment. Quick's ideal area of focus would be in land conservation, recreational management, community engagement, and land/forest planning.

While the finalists have different areas of interest, they all have a common goal: if chosen, make a difference in the agency they are appointed.

"I need to have an open mind to possibilities with other agencies," Sinkovic says. "I've heard from previous PMFs that they were surprised about the career potential and fulfillment offered by agencies they originally hadn't considered. No matter what position I get as a PMF, I want to make a difference in people's lives."