**Editorial Perspectives**

The legitimacy of government and public order is being challenged across the world. In the United States, the challenge comes from many who fail to see the value of public service or who otherwise challenge government’s capability of making a difference in the lives of the public. That challenge goes so deep as to raise suspicions about the validity and efficacy of vaccinations, or the benefits that government regulation of the market can have in terms of addressing market externalities such as inequality. Thomas Piketty’s *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* has touched off a global debate on economic inequalities and what government can do. And conflicts across the Middle East and in Ukraine, efforts to root out corruption in China, and work to abate Ebola in west Africa all point to questions about whether government can make a difference.

When I do training sessions for public officials or teach my students, I often tell them that government does a terrible job of telling its story. Businesses have lots of resources for marketing and advertising—governments do not. Most public officials think the best news story about them is no news story. Seldom does the media run pieces describing how successful governments have been in putting out fires, arresting the bad guys, paving the streets, or delivering fresh water. Yet governments across the world have a lot of successes to show. Across the world, the delivery of potable water, sanitation, and vaccinations has dramatically improved the quality of life for so many. In the United States, the simple act of fluoridating water has transformed dental health. I tell my students they should thank the government every time they turn on the water tap or flush a toilet. Mundane, yes, but acts that were made possible by governments and which transform the lives of the millions in the United States and the billions across the world.

Articulating “Why government?” is not only an issue of politics and political debate, but one central to public affairs programs. As professors entrusted with teaching the next generation of leaders, we need to instruct public affairs students to be proud of what they do, and also to be able to make the case for how and why what they do will make a difference in the lives of the people they serve. It is about making the case not simply with words, but also with deeds, with the competent and careful administration of programs they develop and manage. It is about the attitudes they express toward the public they serve, and it is about an understanding that they are trustees for the public good. The ability to find a persuasive answer to “Why government?” starts with those of us who teach public affairs, and helping us to do a better job at that is what the *Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAE)* is about. This issue of *JPAE* features both a symposium and a fine collection.

**ABOUT THE CO-EDITOR**

David Schultz is Hamline University professor in political science and School of Law. Professor Schultz is a two-time Fulbright Scholar and the author of more than 25 books and 100+ articles on various aspects of American politics, election law, and the media and politics. He is regularly interviewed and quoted on these subjects in local, national, and international media, including the *New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post*, the *Economist*, and National Public Radio. His most recent book is *Election Law and Democratic Theory* (Ashgate Publishing, 2014).
of articles that facilitate the case for why government, nonprofits, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can make a difference.

Ashley E. Nickels serves as the guest editor for a symposium on community development. Community development is a public administration and policy mainstay, tracing its roots back to 1960s programs such as the 1966 Model Cities Program, a part of President Johnson’s Great Society initiatives, if not earlier to the Housing Act of 1949. Community development efforts sought to eradicate slums, empower community residents, and strengthen social capital. Yet despite its centrality to the work that many local, if not state and federal, officials perform, little attention is given to community development in public affairs programs, at least from the perspective of how to teach it and what the critical issues are that envelop this policy area. This symposium is an effort to remedy that neglect. Nickels’ introduction superbly previews the topic and also points out that the development, administration, and implementation of community development has been intertwined with issues of race, class, and gender.

Workplaces are team enterprises. Individuals rarely work alone but instead tackle projects as part of teams. In many ways this suggests that at least part of a public affairs program should instruct and inculcate these team-building and work skills. This is the subject of Karina Moreno Saldivar’s “Team-Based Learning: A Model for Democratic and Culturally Competent 21st Century Public Administrators.” She describes how such a teaching program can be built, what the values are, and why such a pedagogic tool has both classroom and work-skill benefits for students. She connects this discussion to community development and democracy enhancement skills that administrators will find useful when working across diverse communities.

The other article in the symposium is “Teaching the Importance of Community Betterment to Public Managers: Community Development in NASPAA Member Programs,” by William Hatcher. This is a fun case study that describes how one course used a variety of methods to enhance student awareness of class as a factor that has an impact on community development specifically and public affairs work in general.

This issue of JPAE features also a diversity of engaging articles beyond the symposium. “Are We Getting Them Out of the Country? The State of Study Abroad Opportunities Within NASPAA Member Programs,” by Nadia Rubaii, Susan Appe, and Kerry Stamp, investigates an important topic. Study abroad programs have become a commonplace occurrence for many undergraduates, especially juniors. But to what extent do public affairs programs draw upon these study abroad opportunities to enhance specific learning skills or simply to acquaint students with comparative perspectives? In this article the authors survey NASPAA member programs, seeking to ascertain who does what when it comes to study abroad. The authors provide important conclusions about how different programs use these opportunities and where perhaps they fit into the curriculum.

“Publish or Perish? Examining Academic Tenure Standards in Public Affairs and Administration Programs,” by Jerrell D. Coggburn and Stephen R. Neely, is an important professional development and career piece for public affairs professors. It discusses the diversity of tenure standards for professors in the public affairs field. With a response from 144 academic leaders, the authors describe the standards that public affairs faculty set for their peers and examine what mix of writing, teaching, and service is expected to merit tenure. This article should serve as a benchmark for programs to evaluate themselves against; it not only asks how specific programs stack up compared to others, but also queries whether there should be more uniformity across institutions.

Diversity is a complex term, both in its meaning and in how charged and contentious it can be, especially when it addresses issues such as
affirmative action. Yet the reality is that the demographics in the United States and across the world are changing, demanding that the public affairs leaders we train reflect the diversity—in all meanings—of the constituents they will be serving. “Diversity in Master of Public Administration Programs at Minority-Serving Institutions,” by Sarmistha R. Majumdar and Michael O. Adams, tackles the diversity issue from a unique angle: diversity at institutions traditionally serving minority populations. This survey of historically black colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutions provides valuable insights into what diversity means at these schools, and also sets up good lessons and contrasts to what diversity means in institutions that have historically served white populations.

Kuan Heong Woo’s “Recruitment Practices in the Malaysian Public Sector: Innovations or Political Responses?” is an important article on several fronts. First, it is an engaging analysis of how Malaysia as a multiethnic country seeks to recruit non-Malays to work in government. But the article also can be generalized, offering itself as a case study for how other countries and governments can reach out to new, growing, or traditionally neglected groups within their country and bring them into public service. Woo’s narrative about what Malaysia has done may not be the solution for all countries, but there is certainly a lot others can learn and it serves as a useful case study for class discussion.

All public affairs professors want their students to succeed. It would be terrific if there were tools faculty could use to help identify and predict those students most at risk, thereby developing interventions to bolster students’ chances of academic success. In “Using Learning Analytics to Predict At-Risk Students in Online Graduate Public Affairs and Administration Education,” Jay Bainbridge, James Melitski, Anne Zahradnik, Eitel Lauría, Sandeep Jayaprakash, and Josh Baron draw upon data sets created by the Marist College Open Academic Analytics Initiative, which was partially funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The authors describe the testing and formulation of some potential predictors of graduate success and ways to identify at-risk students. They offer a model of a program that other schools will want to emulate.

Internships and service learning are major components in many public affairs programs. They are viewed as important forms of hands-on learning that link the classroom to the “real world.” But how valuable are these programs to the clients and settings where the students are placed? This is the question explored in “Assessing the Value to Client Organizations of Student Practicum Projects” by Mary Sprague and Olivia Hu. Their discussion is based on results from surveys of government agencies and nonprofits that participated in the Public Policy Practicum Program at Stanford University. Clients reported that the students’ work was high quality, their policy recommendations were helpful, and their practicum projects had a positive impact on the organizations. The article offers recommendations for creating a successful practicum from the perspective of the client.

Finance, accounting, and auditing are major components of the administration and oversight of programs. Yet often times administrators have little training in these areas, including even something as basic and simple as reading financial reports. There is a strong case that public affairs programs need to do a better job teaching financial literacy. This is the subject of “Public Administrators’ Understanding of External Financial Reporting: It Begins With Curriculum” by Tammy R. Waymire, Shannon N. Sohl, and Brandy Howard. This article, as the authors describe it, is designed to serve as a resource for teaching external financial reporting in public affairs programs. It describes the key elements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board financial model. This article

The End of Government

To Our Readers

The End of Government
covers a topic long ignored by public affairs programs, and the authors make a good case for why more financial literacy is necessary.

Finally, this issue concludes with Billie Sandberg’s review of Interactive Evaluation Practice: Mastering the Interpersonal Dynamics of Program Evaluation by Jean A. King and Laurie Stevahn. The reviewer makes the case for why this is a terrific book on the subject of why interpersonal or people skills are important, especially when doing program evaluation. It is not an introductory book, and Sandberg describes it as a comprehensive, well-organized, and detailed discussion suitable for more advanced students, practitioners, and professors.

As always, I welcome suggestions for book reviews, symposia, or simply articles or ideas you would be interested in and that you think would make JPAE a stronger journal.

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