Burkhalter-Rassell Scholarship Endowed

Thanks to your support, our department has officially endowed the Burkhalter-Rassell Scholarship! The Burkhalter-Rassell Scholarship was established in honor of David Burkhalter, who served as the city manager of Charlotte from 1971 to 1981, and Faculty Emeritus and former MPA Director Gary Rassel, who taught in the MPA program from 1982–2013. This scholarship is awarded to an incoming or first-year student each fall semester. Endowing this scholarship means we can award it in perpetuity and always have scholarship assistance available for MPA students. This is an excellent way to attract talented students to our program.

Program Offers Inaugural Public Management Academy

The MPA program at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte is hosting its first MPA Public Management Academy. This academy is a three day program that is designed for frontline government and nonprofit supervisors or high potential staff. The focus during the program will be on key skills needed for management success in the unique environment of government and/or nonprofit. The academy will integrate concepts provided by MPA faculty with practical knowledge and experience from local community leaders. Some of the key topics include ‘Leading and Managing in a Government and Nonprofit Context’, ‘Setting Goals and Achieving Outcomes’, and ‘The Power of Data for Public Managers’. For more details and an application, visit the MPA website at mpa.uncc.edu

The MPA Program Welcomes New Director Tom Barth

Dr. Tom Barth was welcomed in the Fall as the new MPA Director. He joins us from UNC Wilmington, where he established and directed the MPA program for several years. Prior to that, he was MPA Director at the University of Memphis. Dr. Barth calls himself a “pracademic”, working in the federal government in D.C. (primarily HHS and EPA) while completing his Ph.D. at the Center for Public Administration and Policy at Virginia Tech. He teaches, conducts research, and consults in the areas of strategic planning, human resource management, leadership, and ethics. He is excited by the challenge of working at a vibrant urban university in a dynamic setting like Charlotte, and looks forward to working with the faculty, students, alumni, and community partners to build on the great foundation put in place by former directors such as Drs. Suzanne Leland and Jim Douglas. He’s always available for a coffee on him in the Fretwell building or UNC Charlotte Center City.
Recent Graduate Named Presidential Management Fellow Finalist

Hannah Shore (MPA ’16), who just graduated this December from the MPA program, has been named a Presidential Management Fellow Finalist (PMF). This is a highly competitive program (417 Finalists selected from 6,370 applicants) designed by the federal government to recruit top talent from graduate public affairs programs. Hannah will now be interviewing for placement in a PMF position in a federal agency that is consistent with her career interests.

MPA Program Spotlights Alumni

Christine Edwards is a local government professional with a passion for community outreach and development. Christine holds a B.A. in Sociology and African American Studies from UNC Greensboro, and graduated from the UNC Charlotte MPA program with a concentration in urban management and policy. She is currently the Community Relations Coordinator for Mecklenburg County where she works to collaborate with community leaders, coordinate events between the community and various county departments, and encourage an open and transparent framework for information sharing. If Christine could give advice to current students, she would want them to know that they should not be afraid to shop around when job hunting. “Look for opportunities that best utilize your past experiences and will put you on the path towards your long term career goals.”

Cameron Niedermayer joined the MPA program as a student and graduate assistant after working a variety of jobs. She later took a job as a grant writer for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department, and worked for the CMPD until she was offered her current position as Assistant to the County Manager for Mecklenburg County, where she assists Chris Peek, Deputy County Manager and Chief of Staff. If Cameron could give current students any advice, she would tell them to pay attention to professors and take classmates’ knowledge seriously. She would also want them to know that absolutely no job should be ‘beneath you’ and that every task you are given is an opportunity to show your skills.

MPA Fellowship Program Offers Engaged Learning

The UNC Charlotte MPA Program partners with local public and nonprofit organizations through the Public Service Fellowship Program to offer students experience in their field of interest through fellowships. The goal of this program is to encourage quality individuals to pursue careers in public organizations. This program can yield numerous benefits for both students and employers. If your organization is interested in hosting a fellow, you can visit mpa.uncc.edu/fellowship-program to learn more about the program and what it offers for employers and students.

Ryan Fertakos is a current student and one of our current fellows with the Mecklenburg County IT Department. As a fellow, Ryan assists with server management, data management, and user accounts. Ryan appreciates his opportunity as a fellow, because it has given him a chance to work in his first professional job environment and gain practical work experience while in the program. Ryan believes that the fellowship has taught him how to work inside a bureaucratic system and that this knowledge will prepare him well for a career after graduation.
Students Attend Annual NCCCMA Conference

The 56th Annual North Carolina City and County Management Seminar took place February 1-3, 2017 in Durham, NC. Ten students from the UNC Charlotte MPA program attended. Several UNC Charlotte MPA Alumni were represented among the city and county managers at the conference. During the seminar, students got the opportunity to network and learn from established local government professionals and fellow students. A majority of the students cited the speed coaching sessions—where the MPA students could connect one-on-one with city and county officials—as their favorite part of the seminar. The students used this opportunity to obtain vital information that they will carry with them throughout their careers. MPA student Shannon Reidlinger was recognized during the seminar for receiving the NCCMA Albert & Gladys Coates Scholarship.

MPA Alumni Join Peace Corps

Vanna Kealy and Marc Botero, both graduates from the MPA Program, have committed to serve in the Peace Corps as Literacy Instructors and Facilitators in Vanuatu. Vanna graduated in December of 2015 and Marc graduated in December of 2016. They promise to keep careful notes of their experiences and will prepare an exhibit for a future Alumni-Student conference.

Alumni/Student Conference Builds Network

The 2016 MPA Student/Alumni conference took place October 28, 2016 at UNC Charlotte Center City. This conference exists to build a strong and sustainable professional network, create learning opportunities within the MPA field, and keep alumni involved in program activities. We had our largest turnout to date, with around 100 students and alumni in attendance. The morning started with breakfast, and was followed by two panel options on ‘Using your MPA across Sectors’ or ‘Moving Ideas Forward’. The panelists included several alumni who represented various organizations in the Charlotte community. Dr. Brad Wright, Department Head of Public Administration and Policy at University of Georgia and former UNC Charlotte professor, gave the keynote address. During the morning, 11 students were inducted into the Pi Alpha Alpha honor society. This conference was an excellent way to engage both current and former students, and we appreciate everyone who participated this year.

Upcoming Events

⇒ MPA Reading Day Social: May 3
⇒ North Carolina City County Managers Summer Seminar: June 21-June 24, Concord
MPASG Tailgate Brings People Together

The MPA program hosted its first annual MPASG Tailgate on November 19th, 2016. Current students and MPA Alumni were invited to attend and cheer on UNC Charlotte against Middle Tennessee. We look forward to continuing this new tradition in the future.

Student Groups Serve as Liaisons

The ICMA Student Chapter at UNC Charlotte is dedicated to bridging the gap between academia and careers in local government. The group takes advantage of numerous resources, such as state-wide conferences and established professionals, to illuminate the limitless opportunities available to students. For more information, you can contact info@icmauncc.org. Additionally, The Masters of Public Administration Student Group acts as a liaison to the Graduate and Professional Student Government and MPA Alumni group, serves as a network and resource for MPA students, and works to enhance the MPA program in the Charlotte and national community. All MPA students are welcome to join monthly meetings. The 2016-2017 MPASG President is Alex Farmer. Alex can be contacted at afarmerg@uncc.edu.

Student Internships Provide Opportunities

MPA students are all required to complete an internship during their time in the program. This year, we have students represented at a variety of organizations, including: Centralina Council of Governments, the City of Troutman, Bessemer City, Sustain Charlotte, the City of Concord and Kannapolis, and the Board of Elections.

Connect With Us

We want to stay in touch with you! The UNC Charlotte Gerald G. Fox Master of Public Administration program is on Facebook and LinkedIn. We use these websites to share updates and achievements of our program, alumni, students, and faculty. Please join us using these links.