WHAT IS THE MPA STUDENT GROUP?

The Master of Public Administration Student Group (MPASG) of UNC Charlotte acts as a liaison to the Graduate and Professional Student Government and the MPA Alumni Group. It also serves as a network and resource for MPA students and rising graduates interested in pursuing a career in Public Administration by offering professional development opportunities throughout the year.

The goal of this student-led group is to promote leadership and academic excellence by encouraging students to participate in various conferences and symposia in the area. The MPASG also strives to engage other MPA students in service projects to give back to the community.

The MPASG executive board meets monthly to plan events and set strategic goals to meet members’ expectations. The MPASG is using this academic year to implement some great networking and professional development opportunities for MPA students and alumni. Additionally, the board offers occasional social events where students can connect with one another and engage in peer-to-peer networking.

The executive board invites all students enrolled in the MPA program at UNC Charlotte to join MPASG in its efforts to promote public service and leadership.

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE MPASG?

Do you want to be more involved in the MPA program but you aren’t sure where to start?

The MPASG Executive Board invites all duly enrolled MPA and UNC Charlotte students interested in public service to join the MPASG. Official membership is FREE! Join us and attend conferences, symposia and social events to meet Charlotte and North Carolina public administrators and nonprofit leaders, as well as to expand your professional network.

For more information, please contact Tracy Martin at tmarti79@uncc.edu or Brittany Bumgarner at bbumga11@uncc.edu.

“We strive to provide the best possible educational and leadership opportunities for all MPA and UNC Charlotte students through conferences, research symposia, public and community events.”

MPASG Executive Board
Meet the MPASG Executive Board

**President: Kimberly Hill**
Kim has a B.S. from NC State in International Studies and is pursuing an MPA with a concentration in Public Budgeting and Finance. She works as a budget analyst for Lancaster, SC.

**Secretary: Brittany Bumgarner**
Brittany received her B.S. in Sports Management from Guilford College and is earning her MPA degree in Nonprofit Management. She is the Head Graduate Assistant in the Political Science and MPA Department.

**Vice-President: Tracy Martin**
Tracy serves as Graduate Assistant in the Political Science and MPA department. She has a B.S. in Political Science from Appalachian, and her MPA concentration is Public Budgeting and Finance.

**Treasurer: Christopher Sells**
Christopher holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Health from Western Carolina University and is in the Public Budgeting concentration in the UNC Charlotte MPA program. He is currently employed with Mecklenburg County Environmental Health in the Food and Facilities Program.

**Senator: Lief Fitzpatrick**
Lief represents the MPA Program as a Senator in the Graduate and Professional Student Government. He has a B.S. in English Literature from the College of Charleston and is pursuing an MPA degree with a concentration in Urban Management and Policy. Veteran of the U.S. Air Force, Lief currently works at the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Services as Maintenance Operations Specialist.

THE MPA FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The UNC Charlotte MPA program has teamed up with local public and nonprofit organizations to offer students experience in their field of interest through fellowship programs. This semester’s fellows are Barbara Gallo-Compton with the Arts and Science Council and Stephanie Whitley with the City of Concord.

**Barbara Gallo-Compton** started her fellowship in January 2015 and serves as the Public Sector Liaison at the Arts and Science Council. Her position involves assisting the Advocacy Leadership team and helping with other programs as necessary. She has been able to gain practical experience assisting with grant research and creating government contact logs to track ASC donors and program funders. She is currently organizing ASC’s participation in Arts Day 2015, a NC state-wide Art Advocacy event.

**Stephanie Whitley** is currently working as a Budget Analyst in the Budget and Performance Management office of the City of Concord. Her duties include handling budget process tasks, departmental requests, review and analysis of current budget offerings, balancing of funds, cost allocations and formal proposal of the FY15-16 budget.
Eric Gentzel had just completed 4 years of active duty as a U.S. Army officer when he entered the MPA program. His experience greatly contributed to his knowledge of key management and leadership practices, which were only reiterated throughout the program’s curriculum. “Taking valuable courses in statistics and management, as well as learning from an outstanding group of instructors really enhanced my career and provided on a number of projects,” Gentzel explained. “Additionally, the final capstone project was a great simulation for problem solving and consulting in the government sector, and provided a realistic and outstanding experience.”

Eric is currently a consultant at Navigator Management Partners and serves as Training Team Lead in the U.S. Army Reserve in Columbus, OH. His MPA from UNCC is complimented by a B.S. in engineering.

Dr. Sarah L. Pettijohn is the newest faculty member to join the MPA faculty. She studies the role, capacity, and financial well-being of nonprofit organizations in the United States. Her interest in the nonprofit sector started when she was an undergraduate at the University of Texas. Currently, her research focuses on government contracts and grants from the nonprofit perspective and the use of performance data to enhance organizational effectiveness.

Dr. Pettijohn’s doctoral dissertation examined how managers use performance data to develop strategies and modify operations to enhance services provided in nonprofit nursing homes. While pursuing a PhD in Public Administration at American University, Dr. Pettijohn worked as a research associate at the Urban Institute’s Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy in Washington DC. Her primary responsibilities involved evaluating the Strengthening Communities Fund Capacity-Building Program, the Community Services Block Grant program, and Head Start programs. Additionally, she led a team that studied how nonprofits view their relationship with government partners. Prior to entering her PhD program, Dr. Pettijohn held jobs in the private and nonprofit sectors. She spent time as a junior news and research analyst at a hedge fund and a grant coordinator for a medium-sized human service nonprofit.

Dr. Pettijohn is an avid University of Texas sports fan, with orange pulsing through her veins. She spends her time enjoying and exploring her new home in Charlotte—especially its trails—and volunteering with multiple nonprofits to better understand the nonprofit landscape in Charlotte.

Public service is a common interest in Dr. Pettijohn’s family, with a brother in the Navy as a nuclear engineer and a sister who works for a contractor at NASA. “Yes, I am the disappointment in my family!” she said jokingly.

After earning a B.S. in English and political science from UNC-Chapel Hill, Shelley Clayton joined the UNC Charlotte University Advance- ment team as the Donor Stewardship Coordinator. While working full-time in higher education fundraising, she earned her MPA from UNC Charlotte.

“I knew I wanted to dedicate my career to serving the nonprofit sector in some capacity, and having found a love for higher educational fundraising here at UNC Charlotte, it seemed only fitting to take advantage of the wonderful opportunity right here on campus,” Clayton said.

In her current role as Director of Stewardship at UNC Charlotte, Shelley utilizes the knowledge she gained as an MPA student to acknowledge and engage donors while cultivating meaningful relationships. She acknowledges the value her MPA degree has added to her career. “The time management skills I learned have been helpful in my career and life. Beyond that, so many of the topics covered in the program, from specific subjects, like nonprofit management, budgeting, and human resources, to skills, like presenting and data analysis have come in handy throughout various points in my career.” Shelley is a member of the Charlotte Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, and she is co-chair of the National Philanthropy Day Committee.

Q&A WITH DR. PETTIJOHN

Q: Favorite place you have lived?
A: AUSTIN, TX...there are burnt orange, longhorn loving people everywhere!

Q: Favorite place to volunteer?
A: I did quite a bit of work with the DC chapter of the Celiac Foundation. Since I have celiac disease, I feel like I am working with people facing the same gluten free struggles. We advocated with other chapters to change the gluten-free label laws, which we were successful in doing, and we work to educate folks/restaurants on exciting topics such as cross contamination.

Q: A nonprofit that no one knows about but they should?
A: I am a big fan of children advocacy centers. They really work to provide a continuum of care to abused and neglected children and reduce the amount of trauma the child faces once authorities are made aware of the situation.

Q: What would you be doing if you weren’t a professor?
A: I think I would still be a grant writer. Ultimately, I would have loved to work for a foundation and been the grant maker!

Q: What is your favorite thing about Charlotte so far?
A: I really enjoy the people here. It reminds me so much more of home than DC. Plus, I enjoy the greenway/greenbelt in the university area and the food!
MPA-ICMA CHAPTER

The UNC Charlotte ICMA chapter is an affiliate of the International City/County Management Association and aims to introduce students to the profession of local government management. Through the national, state, and other University chapters, UNC Charlotte ICMA has the opportunity to attend numerous workshops, seminars, and conferences throughout the year in order to further their careers. Recently, several of our members attended the North Carolina City/County Management Association Winter Seminar in Durham alongside faculty, and participated in networking events with City and County Managers. Attendees participated in workshops on various topics, including Crisis Communication in Ferguson and Working Effectively with Legislatures.

Our chapter, chartered in spring 2014, grants all UNCC Masters of Public Administration Students a complimentary membership to ICMA and all the benefits therein. For more information on ICMA or for instructions on how to become an active member please visit www.icma.org or email MPA ICMA President Sam Ascunce at sascunce@uncc.edu.

NCCCMA CONFERENCE

The North Carolina City-County Manager’s Association winter session was very informative and pertinent to MPA students, with topics ranging from capital investment to communicating in a crisis, and from local government advocacy in action to strategic visioning. The biggest draw for MPA students is the “Speed Coaching” session, which provides students with one-on-one networking opportunities with five to six city and county managers and assistant managers. While the seminar is geared toward local government, students from all concentrations can could find it beneficial. As a student, this is a good opportunity to stand out and make an impression, as the person you meet may be an important contact or decision-maker with a strategic partner in economic development, funding for the arts, or emergency planning. For information about the NCCCMA or other networking opportunities, please visit mpa.uncc.edu or contact Britany Bumgarner at bbumga11@uncc.edu.

MPA STUDENT/ALUMNI CONFERENCE RECAP

The MPA Student/Alumni conference extends an open invitation to current MPA students and program alumni each year. The purpose of this student/alumni annual meeting is to build a strong and sustainable professional network, create learning opportunities within the MPA field, and keep alumni involved in program activities.

The 2014 conference was held on October 31 and was themed “Strategies to Help Public and Nonprofit Professionals Thrive.” It brought together a wide range of public and nonprofit professionals and leaders of the Charlotte community. Panelists included PMA Consultants, LLC founder Patton McDowell, Centralina COG Executive Director Jim Prosser, and Mecklenburg County Organizational Development Consultant Connie Curtis.

This year’s guest speakers facilitated conversation around sound interviewing practices, the increasing importance of the role of social media in public and nonprofit organizations, conflict resolution in the workplace, and meeting the training needs of the Charlotte region. Panelists discussed their professional experiences, presented suggestions for best practices, and engaged attendees in question and answer sessions.

Tune in for the 2015 Student/Alumni Conference in the fall. For more information, please contact smleland@uncc.edu.

MPASG UPCOMING EVENTS

- Graduate Research Symposium: April 11, 2015 at J. Murray Atkins Library from 9am -4pm.
- MPA Reading Day Social: April 29, 2015 at Hickory Tavern from 5pm-7pm
- North Carolina City County Managers Summer Seminar: June 18-20, 2015 at the Hilton Wilmington Riverside

For more information, visit mpa.uncc.edu.