

# The Community Servant

## NEWSLETTER OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



Fall

2007

### FROM THE DIRECTORS' DESKS

Karl Nollenberger – Academic Director

Rich Bonaccorsi – Program Director

In a survey of alumni conducted last year, one of the most often comments given by respondents to the question of what they liked best about the IIT MPA Program was the practitioner experience of the faculty that taught here. We thought that you would enjoy the following article that highlights the benefits of having adjunct faculty from the practitioner world!

#### What Makes a Good Teacher?

Raymond W. Cox III, Ph.D.

"What makes a good teacher?" At some point, every academic department or another asks itself that question. Particularly in natural sciences and engineering, the response to the question may focus on educational expertise and research competencies. However, when the department or program is a professional degree program, the answer is more complicated. Educational expertise and research competencies tell only part of the story.

Aristotle famously noted two and half millennia ago that some things must be *observed and experienced* to be understood. He was talking about ethics and ethical behavior, but I think the comment is equally pertinent to a range of organizational and interpersonal relationships. Therein lies the issue for those looking for "good teachers" for MPA programs. For certain types of courses that are

often at the core of MPA curricula (budgeting, personnel, intergovernmental relations, management), expertise is as likely to be the product of equal parts education and experience.

For many years, MPA programs, especially those that recruit "mid-career" students, have relied upon working professionals who teach part-time. Some in universities (especially those not in professional degree programs) view this as detrimental to the quality of the programs and degree. Even those in those professional programs view the use of nontraditional faculty as more of a budgetary necessity than as a key to enhancing the quality of the academic training. Yet that is what I am suggesting; the use of skilled and experienced working professionals may be the key to enhancing the quality of the academic experience of the students. This moves adjuncts closer to the center, not the periphery, of the learning process.

To more fully understand this assertion we need to, first, step back from the question of the adjuncts per se and look at the question of *understanding*. In a work written a few months ago on discretionary judgment, I explored the topic of understanding. It is worth exploring here.

Discretion represents the judgment as to what activities in an agency are to receive priority. The exercise of discretion *presumes* both the need for and the capacity to exercise judgment, which is not about simply implementing the "routine." The situation and circumstances drive the decision to exercise discretion. The fundamental question is how to ensure that the discretionary decision-making by bureaucrats is done

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## RECENT IIT MPA GRADUATES

IIT's Graduate Program in Public Administration is proud to recognize the following students who have successfully completed the requirements for the MPA degree and graduated during the Spring and Summer 2007 terms.

### SPRING AND SUMMER 2007 GRADUATES

<b>Tanisha Brooks</b>	U.S. Department of Defense
<b>Sirena Covington</b>	Senior Counselor, IIT Financial Aid Office
<b>Christina Drouet</b>	Manager, Safety Standards Branch, FAA
<b>Robert Elmore</b>	Supervising Detective Sergeant, Homicide Investigation Unit, CPD
<b>Nakia Fenner</b>	Officer, CPD
<b>Yanqing Han</b>	Assistant to the CEO, Cyrus Tang Foundation
<b>Kevin Miller</b>	Manager, Bursars Office, Triton College
<b>Ameya Pawar</b>	Management Intern, Village of Riverside
<b>Stanley Varghese</b>	

23 public officials from Liaoning Province and 30 from Zhejiang Province in China also graduated during the summer term.

**CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES TO OUR MPA GRADUATES!**

## SUCCESSFUL SPRING RECEPTION

The Spring 2007 MPA Reception was held on April 19<sup>th</sup> at the Downtown Campus and proved to be another successful event. It provided an opportunity for well over 100 students, faculty, and alumni of the MPA Program to socialize and hear a presentation given by IIT alumna and **Northfield Village Manager Stacy Sigman** (Spring '05). Stacy spoke on the value of an MPA degree as well as her experiences as a graduate student here at IIT.



*Prof. Marcus gathers with students and alumni for a picture.*



*Standing: Karl Nollenberger and Larry Ruffolo; Seated: Rich Bonaccorsi and speaker Stacy Sigman, who is the Northfield Village Manager and an MPA Graduate of 2005.*



*Students pose for a quick picture after Stacy's speech.*

## ALUMNI FEEDBACK AND RECRUITING MPA STUDENTS



Efforts to get the word out about our Non-profit Specialization continue. The above graphics were used in a direct mailing to over 5000 leaders in the non-profit sector.

In addition to the non-profit specialization, we recently added a public management specialization, increasing the number of specializations to 4: Non-profit Management, Public Management, Public Safety and Crisis Management, and Public Works.

A number of open houses were held during our spring and summer semesters. The success of these open houses, due to the involvement of faculty, staff, current students, and alumni, helped fuel record enrollment.



Prospective students meet with Assistant Director Larry Ruffolo, faculty, alumni, and students to discuss the program at one of several open houses.

The MPA Program is always looking for ways to improve our programs and provide more relevant training for public administration professionals. Your feedback would be greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact Karl Nollenberger, Academic Director, on ideas for improvements at 312-906-5196 or [nollenberger@iit.edu](mailto:nollenberger@iit.edu)

The MPA Program seeks qualified MPA candidates on a regular basis and encourages you to promote our program! It would be helpful if you could pass along information about our program to the appropriate office at your workplace so that it could be shared. We would be pleased to mail program information to you or the office that you designate. Just contact Larry Ruffolo, Assistant Director, at 312-906-5197 or [ruffolo@iit.edu](mailto:ruffolo@iit.edu). If you know a person interested in our program, please have him or her contact the MPA Program office.

## STUDENT NEWS

**Patrick Burelle**, (City Administrator, City of Aledo, IL) was honored for service to the community by the Illinois City/County Management Association (ILCMA). Over 1 year ago, Patrick came to the community that had little history with codes or code compliance. As a long time code professional, he recognized that codes were essential for life safety and the protection of property and that code enforcement was an important contributor to quality of life. Patrick coordinated committee and town meetings, sought to educate and encouraged audience participation. Through his diligent efforts and hard work, the City of Aledo now has codes and policies that guide development and re-development and enhance the overall quality of life in the City of Aledo.

## ALUMNI NEWS

**Christina Drouet**, (Summer '07), was recognized with the American Society of Public Administration Student of Year Award. It was presented at the University of Illinois - Chicago. Christina currently serves as the Manager of the Safety/Standards Branch within the Federal Aviation Administration regional airports division. She received her BS in Civil Engineering from the University of Illinois - Chicago and is a MPA degree candidate. She maintained a 4.0 GPA throughout her time here. She is a registered Professional Engineer in Illinois, Virginia and Maryland. She is married with one child and lives in Park Ridge, IL. She is also an amateur violinist and avid gardener.

## NEW STUDENTS

We welcome new students for the Summer and Fall of 2007! The following students have been admitted to the MPA Program:

<b>Clara Awosika</b>	Admin. Assistant, Northwestern Business College
<b>Courtney Beisel</b>	Communications Coordinator, IIT Chemical and Biological Engineering Dept.
<b>Katherine Fitzgibbon</b>	Asst. Director of Graduate Admissions, IIT Institute of Design
<b>Erin Fough</b>	Program Coordinator, IIT Stuart Graduate School of Business
<b>Jason Holly</b>	Assoc. Director of Admissions, Chicago-Kent College of Law
<b>Tartane Hutchinson</b>	Officer, Chicago Police Department
<b>Asli Kandemir</b>	Assistant to the Consul, Turkish Consulate General
<b>Stephanie Lampkin</b>	Self-Employed Human Resources Consultant
<b>Bingjing Liu</b>	Graduate, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics
<b>Tira McIntosh</b>	Public Benefits Advocate, Maximus, Inc.
<b>Lisa Montgomery</b>	Director, Women's Services and Diversity Education, IIT
<b>Xiaoxiao Qiu</b>	Graduate, Beijing Institute of Technology
<b>Anthony Roan</b>	Accounting Manager, The Safer Foundation
<b>Elisa Rodriguez</b>	Legal Secretary, Greenburg-Traurig
<b>Felicia Shallow Davis</b>	Dean of Student Affairs, Kendall College
<b>Qiao Song</b>	Graduate, Beijing Institute of Technology
<b>Bo Sun</b>	Graduate, Jinan University
<b>Fangwu Wei</b>	Graduate, Beijing Institute of Technology

<b>Teresa Williams</b>	Sergeant, Chicago Police Department
<b>Gabriella Wurm</b>	Officer, Chicago Police Department
<b>Xiaozhi Yan</b>	Graduate, South China Normal University
<b>Han Yao</b>	Graduate, Beijing Institute of Technology

## FALL 2007 CHINESE COHORT ORIENTATION



WE ALSO EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO THE  
28 ZHEJIANG, THE 34 LIAONING AND THE  
37 DALIAN CITY CHINESE STUDENTS ADMITTED  
FOR A FULL-YEAR MPA DEGREE PROGRAM!

### THE MPA PROGRAM WELCOMES NEW STAFF

MPA Students Jennifer Meng Xia and Han Yao recently accepted the positions of China Programs Coordinator and China Programs Assistant respectively. Their dedication and hard work has proven them to be quite an asset to our team.

PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING THEM!

### BEIJING ANTI-CYBERCRIME PROGRAM



In September, the MPA program once again hosted an intensive anti-cybercrime program for Beijing public safety officials. Not pictured above is MPA instructor **Bill Disselhorst**, who played an important role in organizing the program. We thank Bill, as well as other instructors who contributed to this successful educational program, including **Timothy Koren, Alan Krok, Jennifer Lin, Ray Trygstad, and Wai Gen Yee (Computer Science Dept)**.

In September, over 100 students from three China governments and from two universities began full-time study in the program. They are: 1) Zhejiang Province; 2) Liaoning Province; 3) Dalian City; 4) Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT); and, 5) South China Normal University.

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“rightly.” [T]he capacity to exercise discretion *well* is not merely the result of thinking or wanting to do things well. The exercise of discretion is the result of *judging* events and circumstances at a moment in time and then acting on that judgment in a way that makes progress.

The exercise of discretion is preceded by three interrelated and intertwined *prerequisite* activities: experiencing or sense making, (which involves thinking and knowing), judging, and acting. In other words, an understanding (whether organizational or individual) is the result of the three activities. First, we make sense of a situation by thinking about it in the abstract and then knowing the situation by defining the current situation. Second, we judge (and, therefore, decide) based upon our understanding, all in order to take the third and most critical step—action.

Arendt (2003) asserts that thinking and judging are interrelated but separate. Thinking is the result of forming abstractions. Judging is the first step toward deciding (deciding to decide as it were). It is the product of understanding the situation in its fullest sense. She goes on to posit that some individuals are better at one activity than the other. Therefore, one could do well at abstract thinking and another could be better at judging. Judging follows thinking and knowing and emerges from understanding. It is the capacity to understand that is the key aspect of judging.

Successful organizational decision-making is predicated

upon what Arendt describes as the capacity to think to conclusions. As Arendt would explain it, we must think about our work, before we can do our work. But also, without a particular focus, abstract thinking cannot become tangible work. The obvious dilemma for organizations is in recognizing these different capacities and assigning persons roles that fit those capabilities. The “problem” of the exercise of discretion is embedded in this dilemma--we need those with the capacity for judging, not those with the capacity for thinking, to exercise discretion. It is a problem precisely because the need for discretion is when the situation is not-routine, i.e., when the situation and circumstances, not the abstractions such as SOPs, dictate. Those with the capacity to think can (and will) develop appropriate standards of performance and behavior, those with the capacity to judge will understand when it is time to step outside the routine.

In a commentary about policy analysis but focused on the application and utility of tacit knowledge, Dror (2004) notes:

.....a more advanced type of professional knowledge, which can be used with significant benefits for the benefit of public decision-making, is needed in today’s policy analysis process. There should be an extensive reliance on tacit understanding, Gestalt-images, qualitative models and qualitative methods (instead of main emphasis on explicit knowledge and quantitative models and tools). This involves imaginative thinking, systematic integration of trained intuition into policy analysis, development of qualitative tools and construction of broad qualitative models of complex issues in cooperation with social scientists and other professionals (p.253).

Who better to guide students (even the experienced, mid-career student) to understanding than those *doing the work*? What adjuncts offer is the understanding that they have gained through their experience. Nothing will substitute for that experience (though the student will have to *experience* the workplace before the lessons will be fully understood). Professional knowledge, as Dror asserts, helps foster “imaginative thinking, systematic integration of trained intuition.” In calling upon those with that professional knowledge, we are affirming the value of imagination and intuition in making public decisions. When working professionals share their stories and their insights, then students are one step closer to developing the understanding needed to be a “professional” themselves.

All of this is a long way around to suggesting that adjuncts are critical to our teaching mission. Their frequent lack of academic “credentials” might be a problem inside the academy. But their knowledge, judgment, and *understanding* make them an important and vital resource. Student evaluations often comment positively on how much they learned from the ‘professional’ teacher.

What makes a good teacher? For a professional degree program, it is having faculty (whether full- or part-time) who

can translate their own experiences into living examples of how to *understand* the nature, culture, and rhythms of the workplace.

*Dr. Cox is chair of NASPAA’s Local Government Management Education Committee, and professor at the Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies, The University of Akron. He can be reached at [rcox@uakron.edu](mailto:rcox@uakron.edu).*

## MPA PROGRAM OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

The MPA Program Office in Room 659 of the IIT Downtown Campus (565 W. Adams St., Chicago) is open on Monday through Thursday 9:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m and Fridays 8:30 am –5:00 p.m. Most forms and information you might need are available there.

<b>MPA Program Office</b>	312-906-5198
<b>Fax</b>	312-906-5199
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:mpa@iit.edu">mpa@iit.edu</a>
<b>Richard Bonaccorsi, Program Director</b>	312-906-5194 <a href="mailto:bonaccorsi@iit.edu">bonaccorsi@iit.edu</a>
<b>Karl Nollenberger, Academic Director</b>	312-906-5196 <a href="mailto:nollenberger@iit.edu">nollenberger@iit.edu</a>
<b>Scott Peters, Professor</b>	312-567-5130 <a href="mailto:peters@iit.edu">peters@iit.edu</a>
<b>Larry Ruffolo, Assistant Director</b>	312-906-5197 <a href="mailto:ruffolo@iit.edu">ruffolo@iit.edu</a>
<b>Patrick Ireland, Chair, Social Sciences Department</b>	312-567-5211 <a href="mailto:pireland@iit.edu">pireland@iit.edu</a>
<b>Karly Miller, Program Coordinator</b>	312-906-5198 <a href="mailto:karlyn.miller@iit.edu">karlyn.miller@iit.edu</a>
<b>Jennifer Meng Xia, China Programs Coordinator</b>	312-906-5198 <a href="mailto:mxia@iit.edu">mxia@iit.edu</a>
<b>Han Yao, China Programs Assistant</b>	<a href="mailto:hyao5@iit.edu">hyao5@iit.edu</a>

## FALL OPEN HOUSES

We will be holding open houses on November 29<sup>th</sup> and December 11<sup>th</sup>. They are to be held at our downtown campus from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. If you are interested in volunteering your time, please contact Larry Ruffolo at 312-906-5197 or [ruffolo@iit.edu](mailto:ruffolo@iit.edu). Please feel free to invite any prospective students. Please refer prospective students to [www.mpa.iit.edu/openhousefall07.php](http://www.mpa.iit.edu/openhousefall07.php).

## FALL 2007 RECEPTION

5:00 – 6:30 PM  
10<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR EVENT ROOM

The Fall 2007 Reception for alumni, students, faculty, and interested parties will be held from 5:00 - 6:30pm on Thursday, November 8th in the 10th floor Event Room of the Downtown Campus Building (565 W. Adams St., Chicago). **Illinois State Senator, Mattie Hunter**, will be our featured speaker.

We encourage you to invite any colleagues interested in public administration and any prospective students. If planning to attend, please RSVP online at <http://www.mpa.iit.edu/events/reception/rsvp.html> or to Larry Ruffolo, Assistant Director, at 312-906-5197 or [ruffolo@iit.edu](mailto:ruffolo@iit.edu).