

# JHBC PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Fall 2024



Department of  
Public Administration



## NEWSLETTER

### MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT CHAIR, DR. ROBERT STOKES

Please enjoy the relaunch of the CSUSB Department of Public Administration's newsletter. It seemed like a good time, now that I have my feet wet as the Department chair! I wanted to use this format to feature the work of our students, alumni, faculty, and staff.



Robert Stokes  
Department Chair

Each edition will focus on a theme that helps to illustrate the great public service work of our CSUSB Public Administration community. For our return edition, I wanted to focus on a topic that is near and dear to my heart, that is, urban planning, and to highlight our new concentration in Community Planning and Management. I have a Ph.D. in urban planning and have taught planning, urban policy, and local government administration for a few decades now. So, I am very excited to be able to offer this new concentration.

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The new Community Planning and Management concentration kicked off this Fall, and is designed to offer opportunities for students interested in shaping the future of urban environments through planning and place management tools. This program is tailored for those aspiring to work in roles such as public planners, city managers, and community organizers. It provides specialized coursework focused on effective land use planning, environmentally sound transportation systems, equitable economic development, affordable housing strategies, and neighborhood revitalization. By nesting a planning concentration into an MPA degree, we can teach current and future planners about city management and leadership, while also exposing those who aspire to go into general city management positions about planning; community and economic development; and environmental sustainability policy. While planners are responsible for developing plans (in tandem with community voices), it is often city managers, staff and community partners who are responsible for implementing plans. Planners work hand in glove with other city staff, consultants, community members, and elected officials to produce better environments for residents.

In this newsletter, we will highlight the professors who will teach in this concentration, as well as some alums and current students who are seeking the concentration. Students in this concentration benefit from a curriculum that includes courses like Sustainability Policy and Management, which will be taught by Dr. Kimberly Collins in the Spring semester 2025; Community Planning and Management, taught by Dr. Robert Stokes in the Fall; and Economic and Community Development, being taught by Dr. Ki-Eun Kang in the Spring semester 2025. These courses equip students with the skills needed to address complex urban challenges and promote sustainable community growth. Moreover, the program offers flexibility through electives approved by the MPA Director, allowing students to tailor their education to specific career goals. This approach ensures graduates are well-prepared to contribute effectively to creating healthy, vibrant communities while navigating the intricacies of local government administration.

I want to thank everyone who helped with this newsletter, including our alumni, current students, faculty, and staff, for sharing their stories and ideas. I also appreciate the hard work of our Graduate Assistant Melisa Laci in putting this together. Finally, a special thank you to Dean Tomás Gomez-Arias for his support of the department and his encouragement in creating our Community Planning concentration.

**Hope you enjoy the newsletter!**

# New Concentration in Community Planning and Management

As of Fall 2024, the MPA program at CSUSB introduced a new concentration specifically designed for local government leaders and aspiring leaders who seek a deeper understanding of the community planning and management challenges facing local governments. These challenges include land use, transportation, housing, economic development, recreation, infrastructure, health, and environmental sustainability.

The demand for local government officials well-versed in these community planning and management issues is growing, regardless of whether they work in planning-specific roles. This new concentration combines the management and leadership skills embedded in the MPA degree with a focus on key planning and management issues, particularly as they relate to California.

The three courses in the concentration provide students with a broad understanding of community planning as practiced in the State of California. Additionally, two of these courses focus on essential policy areas: economic and community development—covering housing issues in greater depth—and environmental sustainability, where California has long been a policy leader in the U.S. with its push toward sustainable infrastructure.

These courses are available to all MPA students, even those not pursuing this concentration, as electives (see next page).



**Jack H. Brown**  
**College of Business &**  
**Public Administration**



## Course Descriptions

### **PA 5200 – Sustainability Policy and Management**

This course focuses on the sustainable management of natural and built environment systems, with a particular emphasis on California and the Inland Empire. It explores the current state of California's environment, including systemic threats to sustainability, and reviews the laws, regulations, and policy incentives aimed at sustainable development. Key topics include water and waste systems, transportation systems management and innovations, renewable energy adaptations, and green infrastructure planning and policy.

### **PA 5210 – Community Planning and Management**

Serving as an introduction to local government management and community planning, this course centers on issues affecting California and the Inland Empire. Topics include the history of urban systems, local and regional governance structures, the fiscal basis for local governments, local government policy, planning laws and regulations, land use management, environmental impact review, transportation and mobility planning, place-making and design, and citizen engagement models.

### **PA 5640 – Economic and Community Development**

This course delves into economic and community development policies and practices, with a focus on California and the Inland Empire. Students will explore theories of economic growth, distribution, and community impact, as well as policy and program strategies for regional and local economic development. Other topics include financing and implementation of economic development programs, policy innovations for equitable growth, and the political economy of the housing market.

## Interview

### CASEY DAILEY



Casey Dailey is an accomplished public sector leader with nearly 20 years of experience in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Since 2017, he has been the Director of Energy & Environmental Programs at the Western Riverside Council of Governments, overseeing regional and statewide initiatives to reduce energy consumption, greenhouse gases, and landfill waste, while promoting clean energy and economic development.

He leads a team focused on clean energy finance, energy efficiency, zero emissions vehicles, recycling, and food recovery. Casey spearheaded the launch of the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN). He holds a Master of Public Administration from California State University, San Bernardino, and serves on multiple local committees, including the Planning Commission and Measure S Oversight Committee.

#### **Can you tell us about your career journey since graduating from the Public Administration program at CSUSB?**

My public service career began during my undergraduate years at CSUSB, where I secured a paid internship as a Planning Intern for the City of Adelanto. This led to a recommendation from a CSUSB professor for a position with the City of Colton's Finance Department, where I gained valuable experience in local government financial management, serving as a Management Intern and later a Graduate Management Intern during my first year of grad school. While completing my Master's, I secured my first full-time role as the sole Analyst in the City Manager's Office for the City of Calimesa. After two years there, I became Assistant to the Mayor in San Bernardino, where I was responsible for land use, transportation, sustainability, and government affairs. During this pivotal time, several major projects were launched, including the sbX Bus Rapid Transit, the Downtown San Bernardino Passenger Rail Project, and the establishment of Loma Linda University Health San Manuel Gateway College.

Following the city's bankruptcy, I transitioned to the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority as a Transit Analyst until 2014. After pursuing a personal passion briefly, I returned to public service in 2016 as Government Affairs Director for the Baldy View Chapter of the Building Industry Association. In 2017, I joined the Western Riverside Council of Governments, where I currently serve as Director of Energy & Environmental Programs.

## Don't be Afraid to Ask Questions!

### **What inspired you to pursue a career with WRCOG, and can you share more about your current role?**

When I began my public service career, I aimed to become a City Manager, but my time working in the Mayor's Office shifted my focus. I discovered a passion for regional governance, where collaboration across agencies can address shared challenges and create impactful solutions. This drew me to the Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG), one of only three Councils of Government in the region. At WRCOG, I oversee several regional programs that benefit our 18 member cities and parts of unincorporated Riverside County. These initiatives include the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN), the Western Riverside County Clean Cities Coalition, and the Regional Food Rescue Program, among others. I also collaborate with other COGs to serve the entire Inland Empire.

### **How did your time in the Public Administration program at CSUSB influence your career path?**

The MPA program gave me crucial skills in research, communication, finance, and law, which I apply daily. I've carried the "money and law" mantra throughout my career, understanding the importance of knowing funding sources and legal frameworks. My CSUSB connections were equally impactful—a professor's recommendation led to an internship in Colton, and relationships with classmates helped me secure later roles.

### **Were there any memorable experiences or mentors from your time at CSUSB that made an impact on you?**

Mentors like David Bellis, Audrey Matthews, Al Holliman, and Monty Van Wart made a lasting impact on my personal and professional growth. A memorable experience was my first MPA course, Local Economic Development with Dr. Matthews. Our group studied the West Hollywood Gateway Project, meeting with City staff to learn about its development. It was a fun and unforgettable experience.

### **What advice would you give to current Public Administration students as they prepare to graduate?**

Raise your hand; speak up; don't be afraid to ask questions. Look for the internship opportunities that align with your interests.

### **What skills or areas of focus do you believe are most important for students aspiring to a career in public administration?**

A genuine desire to serve is essential, as public sector work can be challenging and often goes unnoticed. You also need a balance of hard skills—research, data analysis, and financial management—with soft skills like communication and empathy. Being able to "tell the story" behind the data makes policies and their real-world impact more relatable and effective.

## Alumni Spotlight: From Ranger to Policy Advocate – Meet DE KARLEN



**De Karlen**

### Professional Biography

A public lands' conservation passion became a professional work opportunity for me in 2004 when I was hired as an interpretative hiking guide for the Colorado and Mojave Deserts' regions. That experience led to federal employment as an Interpretative Park Ranger in Yosemite National Park. After seven years in Yosemite, my husband and I returned to the desert where I re-joined the previous guiding company, this time as a trainer who classroom and field-trained incoming new guides. Also, I had the opportunity to write the company's training manuals for Joshua Tree National Park, Painted Canyons, San Andreas Fault, and Indian Canyons' hiking and tour adventures. In addition, I became certified as a California Naturalist, Master Gardener with Madera County, Joshua Tree Master Naturalist, and Interpretative Guide. That's a quick overview of the pathway leading to CSUSB.

### Current Involvement and how the MPA degree enhanced the environmental conservation journey:

I graduated from the MPA program in August 2024 and within a month I was appointed La Quinta's representative to the Trails Management Subcommittee to the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission. But that journey began while working as a ranger in Yosemite where I was introduced to federally designated wildernesses and the Wilderness Act of 1964, an epiphany. Long story, but I've been passionate about the importance of preserving public lands and natural and cultural resources since then. This is where the MPA program enters the picture. I came to understand it's those who make the laws and regulations concerning public land use, through collaborative decision making leading to policy, that make environmental protection and stewardship a reality. That level of education, I did not have. Years of field experience, yes: but navigating governmental agencies, negotiating among a myriad of stakeholders, the strategic planning process, policy development, and much, much more, no, these skills were unnecessary to learn and needed to exercise within today's environmental arena.



## Graduate school is not easy; it takes time and dedication, but it is supremely worth the effort!

That's when I found CSUSB, and it's the best decision I've ever made: to put work on hold and enroll in the university's Public Administration master's degree program. Without exception, every professor offered curriculum, discussions, and assignments that were meaningful and relevant to my overall plan. Needless to say, graduate school is not easy; it takes time and dedication, but it is supremely worth the effort.

I now serve on a committee that advises Coachella Valley's governing environmental regulation body concerning the region's trail usage, endangered and threatened species considerations, public access and safety issues, new trail potentials, signage, public dialog on trails concerning Leave No Trace and environmental education, etc. Not only formal committee involvement, but also field work, all thanks to earning a master's degree in Public Administration from CSUSB because that was likely La Quinta City Council's deciding factor in selecting me to represent them on the committee. Where it goes from here, who knows; but, **I will always be grateful for the learning experience provided through the MPA program at CSUSB.**



**Did you know?** The MPA program at CSU San Bernardino has a storied history at the university, originating in 1976. It emerged from an M.A. program in Administration, with a concentration in Public Administration, offered as one of the first graduate programs at the university in 1973. Back then, the newly formed School of Administration (the precursor to the Jack H. Brown College of Business and Public Administration) offered an MPA for the dear price of \$50 a quarter!

As we approach the golden anniversary of the MPA here at CSUSB in 2026, we can also celebrate 35 years of being a continuously accredited program, as the MPA gained its initial NASPAA accreditation in 1989. The program has just undergone another rigorous assessment by NASPAA this past year and has been found worthy of another seven-year extension of our accreditation.



## Meet our Students: Building a Sustainable Future, Ciara Thrower's Journey Toward Environmental Justice and Community Impact



**Ciara Thrower** is an emerging environmental advocate and nonprofit professional with a passion for sustainability, clean energy, and environmental justice. With a background in policy, she has dedicated her career to fostering impactful public-private partnerships that address climate change and promote environmental equity. As an award-winning 'bridge-builder' Ciara seeks to impact the Inland Southern California region to become a more sustainable, equitable and developed community.

Ciara has been contracted by California Forward, the California Air Resources Board and the South Coast Air Quality Management District for her expertise in regional community engagement strategies.

"I chose the Community Planning concentration because it most closely aligns to my goals of creating a more sustainable and environmentally just region. Municipalities can have a monumental impact on the sustainability, community satisfaction and economic wellbeing of their cities and surrounding regions. Making the right zoning decisions or attracting the right businesses can be crucial for the growth of a city. Currently, I have aspirations of serving as a City Manager and would use this concentration to learn how to effectively plan communities while maintaining the triple bottom line."

# Meet our Students: Venessa Santiago, Aspiring MPA Candidate in Community Planning and Management



My name is **Venessa Santiago**, I am 37 years old and a proud mother of two. I am excited to be part of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program in Community Planning and Management at California State University, San Bernardino. This program aligns perfectly with my commitment to public service and leadership, allowing me to further develop my skills to make a meaningful impact in my community.

As a proud graduate of CSUSB, where I earned my bachelor's in political science, I have gained valuable insights into the importance of effective governance and community engagement.

My involvement in organizations like the Political Science Honor Society and The National Society of Leadership and Success has reinforced my passion for leadership and service.

Growing up in the foster care system, I faced significant challenges that instilled in me a deep desire to advocate for others and create positive change. My experiences have shaped my aspirations to work in public administration, where I can lead initiatives that support underserved communities. This program has inspired me to work as an Office Assistant at Cal Poly Pomona in the department of Electrical and Computer Engineering where I help various students succeed in their academics which will give them a better future.

Joining the MPA program is the next step in my journey, as I aim to enhance my skills in community planning and management. I am determined to leave my mark and inspire others along the way, ultimately pursuing a Ph.D. or law school in the future. I am eager to contribute to the CSUSB community and embark on this transformative journey. Thank you!

## INTERVIEW: DR. KIMBERLY COLLINS ON SUSTAINABILITY, LEADERSHIP, AND COMMUNITY IMPACT



**In-Depth with Dr. Kimberly Collins:  
We Took the Time to Sit Down and Discuss Key Insights  
on Public Administration and Community Leadership**

### **1. Can you tell us about your background and career journey, including your time at CSUSB and previous roles?**

I grew up in the LA region, but have lived in almost every county in Southern California as well as a couple of other countries and U.S. states. I enjoy observing the world around me, analyzing the good and the bad, and working to make things better. Traveling and living in many different areas of the world has provided me with an incredible opportunity to learn and hopefully make a positive impact.

I joined CSUSB about 15 years ago after working with San Diego State University. At SDSU, I started as a student graduate assistant and worked my way up to being the founding director of the California Center for Border and Regional Economic Studies (CCBRES) at the Imperial Valley Campus in Calexico, California. The goal of CCBRES was to provide data, local research, and community-based programming to inform decision-makers, stakeholders, and community members about the region's possibilities.

Additionally, I have run a couple of non-profit organizations and sit on a local non-profit board in the city where I live. I truly believe in the ability of people to improve the world by working together with government agencies, academia, community-based organizations, and businesses.

I am also the chair of the Good Neighbor Environmental Board, a federal advisory committee with members from multiple federal agencies, U.S. border state representatives, community-based organizations, and business representatives. We are writing four policy letters over the next year regarding environmental conditions and possible solutions in local communities at the border.

## INTERVIEW: DR. KIMBERLY COLLINS ON SUSTAINABILITY, LEADERSHIP, AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

### **2. Your research focuses on place-based studies. Could you elaborate on your academic background and how it has shaped your approach to this type of research?**

My academic research is focused on the ability of local governments to manage the quality of life in their communities. Specifically, I have studied communities located in border regions or on the periphery of central cities. Institutions, leadership, and geography matter when considering public services and goods that improve quality of life. This becomes more critical as we look at how many local governments or communities are going to be able to respond to extreme weather events and work to reduce their impact on the climate.

### **3. You've been actively involved in publishing research related to governance, sustainability, and equity. Could you share a summary of some of your recent published studies and current research projects?**

My work here has a central focus on governance, sustainability, equity, and resiliency. In the summer of 2024, the LTC published a policy analysis of the transition of the medium- and heavy-duty truck fleet to zero-emission vehicles in the IE. In October 2024, I am presenting a paper published by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) journal NorteAmerica. This research paper reviews the recent history of federal border security. Its conclusions point to the consistent increase in security budgets and personnel since the 1990s

I am currently finalizing a few other research papers that include: the governance of Regional Transportation Planning in SoCal; Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) policy in California (SB 743) and its implications for the IE; and lastly, research that explores policies around sustainability, resiliency, and equity in peri-urban communities.

### **4. You'll be teaching a new course, PA 5200 (Sustainability Policy and Management), in the spring. What can students expect from this course, and why is sustainability policy such an important field today?**

This is a new class to our public administration curriculum and a topic that I have a passion for. Sustainability policy is applicable to many different areas – such as transportation, energy, land use, solid waste, water, air quality, climate change, and resilience. The idea of sustainability has changed over the years since the Brundtland Report and the Stockholm Declaration by the United Nations in 1972. This class will review how our understanding of sustainability policies has evolved by looking specifically at cases in the different policy areas.



## Driving Sustainable Solutions

### 5. As Director of the Leonard Transportation Center (LTC), what is your vision for the Center, and how do your interests in sustainable transportation and development drive its initiatives?

As the Director of the LTC, I have worked to develop a research center that provides research, community engagement, and student focused outcomes. A couple of the programs that highlight this work are the Student Research Challenge and the Regional Transportation Mobility Dialogues. The Student Research Challenge provides a diverse group of students from CSUSB, the UC Riverside, and Cal Poly Pomona the opportunity to intensely collaborate on a research question regarding transportation in the Inland Empire. The most recent group worked on a project that examined the nexus between housing and transportation in the Inland Empire. The final study is being edited for publication this fall.

For community engagement, the LTC produces a community conversation series called the Regional Transportation Dialogue Series. At our October event, we had the CEOs from the three largest airports in the IE to discuss the connections between air and surface transportation in the goods movement sector. We have also hosted a number of national and statewide transportation sector leaders.



#### Leonard Transportation Center (LTC)

The LTC is named after William E. and Barbara Leonard, San Bernardino residents, business owners, and philanthropists. William “Bill” E. Leonard served on several organization boards and on the California Transportation Commission. The LTC continues the Leonard family’s commitment to education and transportation issues. In 2006, CSUSB named the new federally funded university transportation center in honor of the Leonard family. The LTC seeks to balance transnational and local policy studies and solutions to improve life and commerce in the Inland Empire.

To review the schedule for upcoming community dialogues; the record of past dialogues; and research work of the LTC, please visit our website – [www.csusb.edu/ltc](http://www.csusb.edu/ltc) or contact me directly at [kimberly@csusb.edu](mailto:kimberly@csusb.edu).

## Interview: Building Resilient Communities with Dr. Ki-Eun Kang

### 1. Could you tell us a little about yourself and your current role at CSUSB?

My name is Ki Eun Kang and I am an assistant professor in the Department of Public Administration in the Jack H. Brown College of Business and Public Administration at California State University, San Bernardino.

### 2. What does your academic background look like, particularly your training in community planning and policy? How did it prepare you for your work today?

My academic journey began with an undergraduate degree in law, where I developed a foundational understanding of environmental law and community-based legal cases. I went on to earn a Master's in Public Administration with a focus on public policy and a Master's in Law specializing in dispute resolution. These interdisciplinary programs equipped me with skills in policy analysis, community dispute resolution, and economic development. I later earned a Ph.D. in Community and Public Affairs, where I focused on regionalism and the dynamics of inter-municipal collaboration and competition in economic and community development. Before joining CSUSB, I worked as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Institute for Science, Technology, and Public Policy at Texas A&M University, engaging in research on various policy issues and public opinion surveys.



My goal is to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to drive positive change in their communities.

**Dr. Ki-Eun Kang**  
*Assistant Professor*

### 3. Can you summarize some of your key research and publications, including any current projects you're working on? What are the primary focus areas of your work?

My research interests encompass community and local economic development, resilience, environmental and policy issues, behavioral public policy, and conflict resolution. Much of my previous work has centered on intermunicipal competition in economic and community development. Several of my papers investigated how private developers leverage threats of relocation or project abandonment to secure favorable terms from local governments, often taking advantage of intermunicipal competition to obtain tax incentives and benefits. This research is grounded in quantitative methodology. My research consistently employs diverse quantitative methodologies to investigate these topics. Additionally, my work explored how collaboration and public participation influence municipal growth in land and economic development projects. Currently, my research centers on resilience policies and programs in mid-sized U.S. cities. While my earlier work focused on larger cities, mid-sized cities face unique challenges related to resource limitations and equity.

These cities often struggle to distribute resources fairly, support vulnerable populations, and foster community engagement due to funding and capacity constraints. Understanding their strategies for adapting to environmental, social, and economic shocks is important. To provide insights into these challenges, I am working on a national survey targeting public officials and planners in mid-sized cities. The survey aims to explore their understanding of resilience concepts, collaboration efforts, objective risks, and the various resilience policies in place, including those focused on economic resilience.

#### **4. Tell us more about PA 5640, the Economic and Community Development course you'll be teaching in the spring. What will students learn, and how will the course be structured?**

PA 5640 will cover key concepts, theories, and practices that drive economic and community development, with a particular focus on California and the Inland Empire region. The course will be divided into three main sections: community development, economic development, and housing. Throughout the course, students will develop analytical skills for accessing and analyzing economic and employment data. We will explore foundational theories to enhance our understanding of local economic dynamics and examine regional economic models to identify broader economic patterns. Additionally, I plan to bring in guest speakers who are experts in economic development to share their insights into current challenges and strategies. My ultimate goal for this class is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of economic and community development and equip them with the skills to positively influence their communities.



**Did You Know?**

#### **Wilson's Wild Idea**

Did you know that the modern field of public administration owes its origins to an 1887 essay by future U.S. President Woodrow Wilson?

In his essay, *The Study of Administration*, Wilson argued for a clear separation between politics and administration. He believed that while politicians should focus on crafting policies, skilled administrators should handle the practical task of implementing them efficiently and without political influence. Wilson advocated for a government run like a business, driven by merit, professionalism, and expertise. His vision laid the foundation for public administration as a distinct field and introduced the influential "politics-administration dichotomy," which continues to shape governance today.

## APA INLAND EMPIRE: SUPPORTING YOUNG AND EMERGING PLANNERS IN THE INLAND EMPIRE

The American Planning Association (APA) Inland Empire Section, part of the larger APA California Chapter, is dedicated to supporting planning professionals in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. However, the Inland Empire Section does not restrict membership based on location and welcomes all members who are in different counties. This collaborative section focuses on fostering a vibrant community of planners, providing resources and networking opportunities tailored to the unique needs of the Inland Empire. APA Inland Empire champions policies and projects that promote sustainable, equitable development and improved quality of life across the region. As part of APA, members gain access to a rich network of professionals, educational events, and up-to-date resources designed to navigate the unique challenges and opportunities present in the Inland Empire and the greater SoCal region.

For Young & Emerging Planners (YEP), membership with APA Inland Empire offers a significant advantage. Members have access to career development tools, including mentorship opportunities with experienced professionals, which are essential for career growth in the planning field. Networking events provide a chance to connect with other young planners, as well as seasoned experts, fostering a supportive community of peers and mentors. Additionally, YEP members can attend workshops and webinars focused on skill-building in areas like community engagement, development, and sustainability—helping them to stay current and build confidence in their roles.

**Derek Meksavanh** serves as an Associate Transportation Analyst with the City of Irvine's Public Works & Sustainability department, where he contributes to sustainable urban planning initiatives. In addition to his work in Irvine, Derek plays a key role in the Inland Empire Section's Young & Emerging Planners (YEP) Group as the Coordinator and Vice-Chair.



American Planning Association  
**California Chapter**

**Derek Meksavanh**



## NASPAA ACCREDITATION

### Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration



As many students in the program may already be aware, the Master of Public Administration (MPA) at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) holds prestigious accreditation from the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). This accreditation is not simply a badge of honor; it represents a rigorous, voluntary, peer-reviewed process that underscores the program's unwavering commitment to excellence in public service education.

By meeting NASPAA's stringent standards, the program ensures that students receive a comprehensive and relevant education that is aligned with best practices in the field.

This accreditation not only enhances the credibility of the MPA program but also provides significant assurance to both students and employers regarding the quality of education received. Graduates can confidently enter the job market knowing that their education meets the highest field-wide standards, significantly boosting their employment opportunities and equipping them with the skills necessary to address the complex challenges faced in public service today. Furthermore, being part of an accredited program fosters a sense of pride and community among students, alumni, and faculty, as they collectively strive towards advancing the values of public service, leadership, and social responsibility.



Spring 2024 PAA Inductees

### PI ALPHA ALPHA HONOR SOCIETY: EVENT RECAP

Pi Alpha Alpha is the Global Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration. There are more than 160 chapters located around the world at NASPAA member schools. Pi Alpha Alpha is run by NASPAA: The Global Standard in Public Service Education and is directed by a National Council of 14 members. Information about the society can be found on [The National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration](https://www.piaa.org/) web page.

The purpose of Pi Alpha Alpha is to encourage and recognize outstanding scholarship and accomplishment in public affairs and administration. Its objectives, such as fostering integrity, professionalism, and effective performance, promote the advancement of quality in the education and practice of the art and science of public affairs and administration. PAA membership identifies those with the highest performance levels in educational programs preparing them for public service careers.



Spring 2023 PAA Inductees





## Fall Grad Days 2024: Preparing for Commencement

We're thrilled to see our students nearing the finish line as they prepare for graduation! Fall Grad Days 2024, held on October 8th and 9th, gave soon-to-be graduates a convenient way to get ready for Commencement. From selecting regalia to learning about alumni opportunities, students were able to check off key steps on their graduation to-do lists and connect with resources to support their next steps.

We're proud of our students and wish them every success in the future.

**Congratulations** to all our upcoming graduates—your hard work is inspiring, and we can't wait to see where you go from here!



### The Voice Behind the Phone: Meet Your Support Team Member ... Ana Sanchez



**Ana Sanchez**

Administrative Support Coordinator

Ana Sanchez has been a dedicated member of the Public Administration Department for two years, bringing a wealth of experience and commitment to her role.

She is an alumnus of the university, where she worked as a student assistant during her undergraduate studies from the JHB College. After graduating, she secured a staff position on campus and has been here since 2013.

Joining the Public Administration Department in 2022, she continues to go above and beyond to make sure students feel welcomed and supported. Please feel free to call or email her with questions.

## Newsletter Staff



**Melisa Laci**

Graduate Assistant

Melisa Laci is a dedicated graduate assistant in the Public Administration department, currently working toward her master's degree in Entrepreneurship and Innovation (MSEI). With a background in finance and industrial engineering, she combines analytical skills with creative problem-solving. Her international experience and love for travel give her a global perspective, which she brings to everything she does. Aspiring to start her own business, she is always exploring new ideas—whether in the classroom or out in the world.



Jack H. Brown College  
Business and Public Administration

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JACK H. BROWN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
A NEWSLETTER FROM THE MPA PROGRAM

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