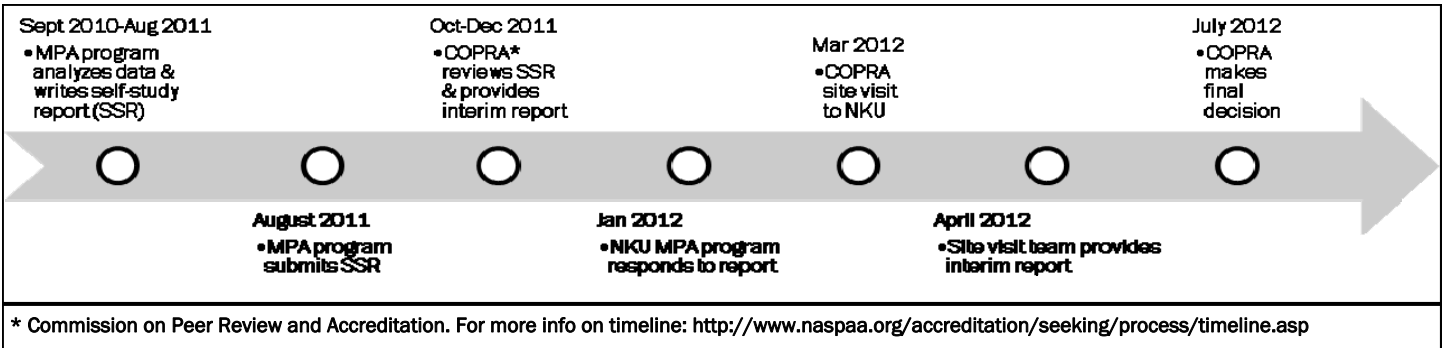


## Another big year for the MPA program



### By Julie Cencula Olberding MPA Director

During the past year, the MPA faculty and staff have focused much time and energy on the NASPAA re-accreditation process. We worked together to develop the self-study report (SSR), which provides a detailed description of the MPA program, including our history, mission, curriculum, resources, faculty, staff, students and alumni.

The SSR is available to all faculty and students on Blackboard. Also, we are happy to share it with alumni and others who are interested but – we should warn you upfront – it’s certainly not “light reading.” This report contains a lot of data that we have been collecting from students, alumni and regional employers on a three-year cycle. (Alumni: please be on the lookout for an online survey coming your way in Spring 2012.)

The re-accreditation process is illustrated in the timeline above. The next major step will be in March, when a NASPAA team consisting of two professors and one practitioner will visit our campus.

In terms of faculty in the MPA program, Dr. Tom Lambert began teaching full time in the program this Fall, bringing years of teaching and research experience in the areas of public policy, economics and data

analysis. In addition, Dr. Whitney McIntyre Miller began teaching Organizational Theory and Behavior (PAD 602). She is an assistant professor in the undergraduate Organizational Leadership program, and her research is in the areas of community development and community leadership.

More good news in terms of faculty is that our department recently hired Dr. Marcos Misis to teach in the MPA program and undergraduate criminal justice program. Dr. Misis’s research and teaching has been in police administration and criminology, and his professional experience includes 15 years in Spain’s NATO forces. He will be a valuable asset to our MPA program, especially the Homeland Security and Emergency Management area of concentration.

In light of all that is happening with the MPA program, I am amazed at the productivity of our faculty. You can read about their specific projects in this newsletter (p. 2), but I want to highlight a couple of them here. Dr. Shamima Ahmed has authored a second book on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), which will be published in 2012. Also, Dr. Lambert worked with NKU’s Scripps Howard Center on Civic Engagement to study governance in Kenton

County, Ky., particularly city-county cooperation.

Speaking of civic engagement, our students continue to work with public and nonprofit organizations in the region through research projects, fellowships and internships, and professional associations. Two of our students – Tracy Wilking and Stephanie Marston – served as fellows with the American Society for Public Administration’s Greater Cincinnati Chapter (ASPA-GCC) during the past year. Also, we have been working with the Northern Kentucky City County Managers Association (NKCCMA) to develop a new paid internship for an MPA student.

Our students have been selected for other prestigious positions and awards. Emily Lewis was selected for the

Seasongood Foundation’s Summer Internship, for which she worked in the City Manager’s Office in Cincinnati. And Hilary Blakemore won the “Outstanding Student” award from the ASPA-GCC. Please see page 5 for a more complete list of student and alumni awards, new positions, promotions, etc.

Finally, I want to recognize Hilary Blakemore, Ruth Nduta and Diana Rigg for their work with the Public Administration Student Society (PASS). Due to their strong commitment and leadership, PASS organized a number of excellent forums, service events and social gatherings this year (p. 4).

I look forward to another big – and great – year for the MPA program. I hope to see many of you at the MPA-ASPA dinner on January 26 (p. 6). Wishing all of you the best in 2012!



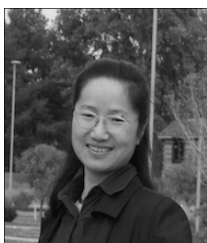
Sonya Thielman and Chris Streit socialize among other students, faculty, and alumni at the annual MPA Fall Reception in October 2011.

## Faculty Updates



During the past year, **Dr. Julie Olberding's** research continued to focus on student philanthropy and also the impact of major special events on host cities, including their image and other social assets. Two of her manuscripts were accepted for publication by the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* and *Innovative Higher Education*. In terms of teaching, Dr. Olberding continues to incorporate service learning and student philanthropy into the classroom. In her Volunteer Management class, students worked with four nonprofits to improve their volunteer efforts. And, once again, her class partnered with Toyota Motor Engineering and Manufacturing North America on the "indirect giving" model of student philanthropy, for which students reviewed and evaluated real grant applications submitted by real nonprofit organizations.

**Dr. Shamima Ahmed** has published an article, "The Impact of NGOs on International Organizations: Complexities & Considerations," in the *Brooklyn Journal of International Law*. She participated on a NASPAA site visit team to review the University of Western Michigan's MPA Program. Dr. Ahmed is a member of the NASPAA Nonprofit Section Executive Committee and has worked with the committee to develop a list of competencies (learning outcomes) for nonprofit programs, which will become standards for future accreditations.



**Dr. Hongmei Wang** published one paper in the *Journal of Applied Global Research*. She also has presented one peer-reviewed conference paper. As a primary investigator, she has successfully obtained two grants for NKU's Center for Integrative Natural Science and Mathematics (CINSAM). She serves as the program director and advisor of the graduate and undergraduate GIS certificate programs. In addition, she also serves on the Faculty Benefit Committee and the Presidential Policy Committee on Intellectual Property on campus.

**Dr. Gary Mattson** participated in three Midwest conferences in 2011, where he either presented on-going research on small cities facing fiscal stress or served as an invited panel discussant. In addition, Dr. Mattson was appointed to be a member of the Licking River/Banklick Watershed Advisory Board to review developmental, economic and environment impacts of public or private projects on the watershed and the Ohio River Basin. In June Dr. Mattson was invited to participate and attend a Community Development and Housing Foreclosures Symposium sponsored by the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank. Dr. Mattson has been re-appointed to the academic advisory board for McGraw-Hill's Urban Studies and State and Local Political Science sections.



**Dr. Edward Kwon** published a paper, "Managing a Financial Crisis: A Comparative Political Economy Analysis of Two Countries (the United States and South Korea)" in *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*. He presented a paper, "Multilateral Management of Global Financial Crisis," at the 52<sup>nd</sup> International Studies Association Annual Convention in Montreal, Quebec, Canada in March 2011. At the conference, he served as chair on three panels and as a panel discussant. He reviewed two research articles and two books, upon request from scholarly journals and book publishers. He is currently working on several research projects on corporate governance and international security.

Over the summer and this semester, **Dr. Thomas Lambert** has worked with NKU's Scripps-Howard Center for Civic Engagement, compiling a report on local governance issues and past governance studies in the Northern Kentucky area, especially with regard to past government consolidation and/or government service merger attempts.



**Dr. Whitney McIntyre Miller** has presented her work on postconflict community development in Sierra Leone at three conferences and her research on designing collegiate leadership programs and leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century at a fourth conference. She continues to write articles on her work in Sierra Leone, which should be published within the next year. She is also exploring research opportunities in her new home of Cincinnati. Dr. McIntyre Miller is also very active in international education and works with the Semester at Sea program. She will be taking a group of undergraduate and graduate students to Germany, France, and the Netherlands for Spring Break in 2012 as part of an International Human Rights and Law course.

## Research Methods: Is It Relevant?

By David Elmer  
NKU MPA alum (2004)

There have been many times in my academic career when I questioned the “real-world” value of theory-based curriculum. Such was the case back in Fall 2002 when I registered for Research Methods, an MPA core course that received little, if any, ardent fanfare from students. “When am I ever going to use this?” was a common concern.

Several years have passed since I graduated from the MPA program and, much to my surprise, I continue to use what I learned in Research Methods and other courses on a daily basis. As a Township Administrator, I am called upon to make various decisions every day. Public leaders must realize that all decisions, no matter how simple or difficult, have both intended and unintended consequences.

There are many factors to consider when deciding which policy, procedure or action is most appropriate when faced with a problem or opportunity.

In order to avoid making knee-jerk, uninformed or ill-advised decisions, public leaders must embrace a systematic, comprehensive and objective decision-making process.

Although I’ve stripped out the academic jargon, I regularly utilize the fundamental five-step decision-making process I learned in Research Methods, Public Policy and other courses: 1) clarify the decision to be made, 2) identify alternatives or options, 3) gather information and analyze each alternative, 4) make the decision and implement, and 5) evaluate. In addition, I have used this process to help my staff and elected officials in making more informed decisions on everything from community planning to budget appropriations.

Frankly, I remember very little technical details about the Research Methods class, and I have yet to use SPSS software outside the classroom. But this class and others taught me to recognize the need to identify direct and indirect influences that affect policy outcomes.

Similarly, I have yet to belabor Arrow’s impossibility theorem or struggle over choosing a rational-comprehensive approach to decision-making versus the disjointed-incremental approach. But Research Methods and other courses clearly demonstrated to me the need to surround myself with good people who can identify and articulate – using easy-to-understand terms – the pros and cons of practical policy options.

At the very least, Research Methods is an invaluable exercise in developing and enhancing critical thinking skills. On several occasions in both my professional career and personal life, I had a first instinct to move in a certain direction on an important matter, but it was proven miscalculated after I more closely and systematically analyzed the problem or opportunity.

Learning research methods and public policy models equips an individual with a decision-making toolbox that can be used to fix real-world problems and take advantage of real-world opportunities. In a time when public resources are strained but

service expectations remain high, government leaders owe it to their communities to make decisions that are as informed, thoughtful and rational as possible.

After nearly a decade of routinely applying what I learned in Research Methods, I can say without reservation that it is one of the most relevant and meaningful courses I’ve ever taken. I hope all of the MPA alumni and students find – and enjoy – the same value in Research Methods as I do.



**David Elmer is a 2004 Graduate of the MPA program, recipient of the 2007 Outstanding MPA Alumnus Award and current member of the MPA Advisory Board. He currently serves as Township Administrator for Pierce Township in Clermont County Ohio.**

## My Fellowship in the Ohio House of Representatives

By Alexander Kraemer  
NKU MPA student



In 2011, I had the opportunity to serve as a Fellow in the Legislative Service Commission (LSC) of the Ohio House of Representatives, as I continued working on my MPA at NKU. Going into the LSC Fellowship, I wasn’t sure what to expect. But coming out of it, I feel as if I learned more about politics and policy-making during this one year than my

entire career to this point.

Right from the start, I was thrown into the fire. In January, I was placed with (former) Rep. Bob Mecklenborg, who represented my hometown district in Cincinnati and who chaired the state government and elections committee. This committee handled two very important and high-profile bills – HB 1 (JobsOhio) and HB 2 (Audits of State Agencies).

In February, I was placed with Assistant Majority Whip Cheryl Grossman of Grove City, and I worked for her for the remainder of my fellowship. During this time, the now infamous Senate Bill 5 took over my life. Every week I would receive hundreds of phone calls and email messages from

constituents – either for or against SB 5. I will always remember the mass of people in the Statehouse shouting anti-SB-5 cheers and the Speaker of the House having to gavel down the audience in the House Chamber. I may never experience more contentious issue at the state level than SB 5.

Rep. Grossman gradually gave me additional responsibilities, including working on more legislation, writing testimony and House Floor speeches, travelling around the district for special events and being active in party meetings. My most memorable events included reading a commendation to 15 World War II veterans on Veterans Day, presenting a commendation to an

Army Battalion leaving for Afghanistan, and attending a ceremony to name part of I-71 after a fallen police officer from Grove City.

Through all of this work, I must have proven myself, as Rep. Grossman offered me a long-term position in the Ohio House of Representatives. So I will continue to work in state politics for the foreseeable future.

I highly recommend the LSC Fellowship to other MPA students at NKU. It exceeded my expectations and provided me with many different experiences that honed my skills and increased my knowledge of state government and politics.

## The PASS Page

*Public Administration Student Society (PASS) is an organization created to enhance the MPA student experience as well as represent the graduate program. PASS is open to any MPA student in good standing. Members participate in social networking events and community service projects and also schedule guest lectures on topics of interest to MPA students.*

### Gillespie presents personal branding and networking ideas

By **Tori Vogelgesang**  
NKU MPA student

In November 2011, PASS hosted guest speaker April Gillespie who presented "Personal Branding and Networking as a Lifestyle: How to Turn Your Everyday Interactions into Opportunities." Ms. Gillespie is founder of Starseed Consulting, a personal development consulting company. Starseed aims to help individuals become the best versions of themselves and realize that everything they need is already within them. She is also VP of Membership at District 40/Downtown Toastmasters, Director of Membership and Retention at Black Data Processors Association Cincinnati Chapter,

and Director of Business Development at NAS Recruitment Communications.

Ms. Gillespie's first topic was personal branding, specifically creating a brand for yourself on the Internet. Ms. Gillespie urged the audience to consider creating a personal web page, which can be something simple that conveys your passions, vision and philosophy to viewers.

Next Ms. Gillespie discussed the job market and networking. She said that you should challenge yourself to talk to two new people each day—either by saying "hello," introducing yourself or just giving a compliment. When you meet someone interesting and successful, ask them out for lunch or coffee. For job seekers,



April Gillespie and PASS members at a forum in November 2011.

the number one thing to do to improve your chances of being hired is to differentiate yourself from the competition. One suggestion Ms. Gillespie makes is to request recommendations on LinkedIn and make them visible so prospective employers can see how highly others regard you.

Finally, Ms. Gillespie spoke about personal development and investing money, time and other resources into yourself. Read something that will improve you for ten minutes a day, listen to an inspirational or motivational CD for 15 minutes a day, and seize opportunities for leadership. Also,

she suggested writing down your long-term professional and personal goals, reviewing them every day for 30 days and then, after that, reviewing them annually. Studies have proven this is one of the most effective means of professional and personal goal achievement.

Special thanks to Ruth Nduta for inviting this wonderful speaker. To learn more about April Gillespie and Starseed Consulting, visit <http://iamstarseed.com/> and be on the lookout for her leadership series launching in 2012!

### Meet the new Graduate Assistant



Tori Vogelgesang is a first year student in the MPA program with a concentration in Nonprofit Management. Tori graduated in May 2010 with a BA in Sociology from Wittenberg University, where she played field hockey and was a member of Chi Omega. In her free time, Tori enjoys coaching field hockey at her alma mater St. Ursula Academy and reading.

### Ethics in Public Administration



In March 2011, PASS presented a forum with speakers from the Northern Kentucky Regional Ethics Authority. The NKREA enforces the ethics ordinances for 14 cities and Pendleton County.

Craig T. Bohman, NKREA staff member and MPA student, provided a brief history of the authority and the provisions of state ethics ordinances. Mary K. Molloy, an attorney and a long-serving member of the NKREA Enforcement Committee, followed with examples of common issues that come before the Enforcement Committee.



PASS members Michelle McMullen, Lauren Stieritz, Ruth Nduta, Stephanie Marston and Diana Rigg participated in NKU's "Service on Saturday" at Cincinnati Nature Center in October 2011.

## Capstone projects reach across policy areas and the region

About 30 MPA students completed the Capstone course (PAD 793) in Spring 2011 and Fall 2011. As part of the course requirements, the students worked on major projects that had potential impacts “beyond the classroom” and into government agencies and nonprofit organizations across the region. Here are summaries of these Capstone projects:

### Economic development

- A survey of corporations in the region involved in international trade to identify their use of the local chamber of commerce’s services and needs for new services. [Dustin Lester]
- An outcome assessment framework for the nonprofit ArtWorks to measure its economic and social impacts. [Deanna Kimball]
- A study of the economic and social impacts of festivals, fairs and other special events in small towns in Kentucky. [Travis Evans]

### Education

- A report of coordinated school improvement initiatives with housing efforts in other cities and the feasibility of a similar effort in Cincinnati. [Kayla Camp]
- A report for Northern Kentucky Montessori Center on special events appropriate for schools and assistance with organizing “get to know” events for parents, teachers and staff. [Ruth Nduta]
- An assessment of a high school mentoring program developed by Children Inc. on the mentors’ academic performance and personal virtues. [Laura Reynolds]

### Social services

- A resource guide for guests and clients of the Drop Inn Center, the largest homeless shelter in Greater Cincinnati. [Tyra Singer]
- A manual for foster parents in Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati. [Bonita Woods]
- An evaluation plan for a music program at the Cincinnati

Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. [Vicky Lorenz]

### Environment

- A report on two recent waste management strategies – “zero waste” and “pay as you throw” – including the advantages and disadvantages of each. [David Balz]

### Transportation

- A review of all street signs in Williamsburg, Ohio, to identify those that meet new national standards for sign retroreflectivity and those that do not. [Myron Smith and James Taft]
- Grant research and writing for the expansion of pedestrian and bike pathways in Deerfield Township, Ohio. [Joel Smiddy]

### Diversity

- A study that developed of a diversity index for Greater Cincinnati and compared information to competing regions, in cooperation with Agenda 360 and the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber. [Tracy Wilking]

### Citizen satisfaction & engagement

- A citizen satisfaction survey for government services in Florence, Kentucky. [Joe Graf, Rudy Howard and Jessica Tucker]
- A “stakeholder assessment” of local government services in Deerfield Township, Ohio. [Matt Clark and Eric Reinersman]
- A pilot study of citizen engagement in local government in Northern Kentucky via public hearings, service on boards and commissions, e-governance, etc. [Drew Tilow]

- A report on opportunities for WNKU – a public radio station – to engage with government agencies, nonprofit organizations and citizens. [Bridgette Donnelly]

### Government administration

- Development of job descriptions and performance appraisal forms for Common Pleas Court in Clermont County,

Ohio, based on interviews with staff. [Mark Ober]

- Review and update the Administrative Code and the Policy Manual for Kenton County, Kentucky. [Katharine Piaskowy and Cassandra Jordan]
- A pilot study of compensation practices in local government in Northern Kentucky and the factors that impact their usage. [Andrew Stoneking]

### Nonprofit management

- An analysis of nonprofit organizations in downtown Cincinnati, particularly their revenues, types of services and service areas. [Tori Ames]
- A proposal for a model of the implementation of best practices in nonprofit organizations and government agencies. [Gina King]

## Awards and Accomplishments

- Hilary Blakemore, Greater Cincinnati Chapter-ASPA Outstanding Student Award
- Chris Lawson, Local Government Management Fellowship, Hamilton, Ohio
- Dustin Lester, 2011 Greater Cincinnati Finance Officers Association Scholarship
- Emily Lewis, Murray & Agnes Seasongood Good Government Foundation Internship with the City of Cincinnati, Ohio
- Melissa Williams ‘90, Director of Administration Campbell County Fiscal Court, NKU MPA Alumni of the Year

## Students and Alumni on the move

- Warner Allen, Executive Director, Interfaith Hospitality Network of Northern Kentucky
- Tori Ames, Community Relations Manager, Children’s Hospital Medical Center
- Barbara Bonney, Director, Jay County Public Library, Indiana
- Shannon Disbennett, Court Administrator, Clermont County Common Pleas Court, Ohio
- Tricia Dorman, Service Learning Coordinator, Children Inc.
- Gregory Edwards, Assistant Director of Library Services, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County
- Brooke Fugate, Volunteer Coordinator, Children Inc.
- Brian Gilligan, Assistant Chief Deputy, Special Projects, Hamilton County Clerk of Courts, Ohio
- Brian Houillion, Chief Administrative Officer, Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky
- Glenn Laws, Monitoring and Analysis Area Supervisor, Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services
- Holly Kelly, Deputy Director, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C.
- Rachel Leininger, Volunteer Coordinator, City of Wyoming Fire Department
- Eric Reiners, Director of Public Works, Deerfield Township, Ohio
- Andrew Stoneking, Benefits Specialist, Indiana Department of Personnel
- Drew Tilow, Executive/PR Assistant, Northern Kentucky Area Development District (NKADD)
- Wade Williams, Vice President, Business Retention & Expansion, Northern Kentucky Tri-County Economic Development Corporation
- Rick Wilson, Workforce Development Coordinator, Cincinnati Arts and Technology Center

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## Our Mission

*The MPA program at NKU provides professional managerial, communication, and human relations skills and knowledge in preparation for or advancement in a variety of public sector and related careers. The program advances public sector values of effectiveness, efficiency, honesty, accountability, fairness, diversity and public service in the curriculum, extra-curricular events and speakers, and partnerships with area practitioners through the MPA Advisory Board, the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), and other professional associations and individuals. The goal of the program is to develop competent public service practitioners to serve governments, nonprofit organizations and citizens in the Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati metropolitan region and beyond.*

*<http://psc-cj.nku.edu/programs/public/masters/>*

### Upcoming events – Mark your calendar!

- MPA-ASPA Annual Dinner: Thursday, January 26, 5:30 to 7:15 p.m., NKU's Student Union
- MPA Spring Banquet: Wednesday, April 11, 5:30 to 7:15 p.m., NKU's Student Union
- ASPA Public Administrators of the Year Luncheon: Friday, April 20, 12 to 1:30 p.m., The Phoenix in Downtown Cincinnati

### MPA-ASPA dinner on January 26

Please join us for the annual dinner sponsored jointly by NKU's MPA program and the American Society for Public Administration's Greater Cincinnati Chapter (ASPA-GCC). It will take place on Thursday, January 26 at 5:30 p.m. in NKU's Student Union Ballroom.

The guest speaker will be Joshua Smith, who is currently the city manager of Hamilton (OH) and formerly the administrator of Howard (WI), Cedarburg (WI) and Monticello (IA). The City of Hamilton hired Smith – who is 38 years old – with the expectation that his blending of management and multimedia skills will boost economic development, stabilize the city's budget and improve communication with the public. He has an MPA degree from Iowa State University and a bachelor's degree in Organizational Behavior and Management from the University of Sioux Falls.

The dinner will be a great opportunity to hear from an energetic and ambitious city manager and to network with old and new friends. If you plan to attend, please RSVP at [devantier@nku.edu](mailto:devantier@nku.edu) or (859) 572-5326.

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MPA student Gargi Sakar talks with Dr. Shrimati Das after the Spring Banquet. Dr. Das, who is the Project Director of the National Council on Women, Government of India, and a visiting scholar at NKU, shared her research on Cyber Crime and Women.