Welcome
Political Science and Public Administration at Mississippi State University has a rich curriculum and allied activities to provide a well-rounded education for its students, preparing them to be critical thinkers, productive citizens, and leaders in a wide range of careers: government and public service, the professorate, jurisprudence, as well as an array of managerial options in the private sector.
Opportunities Multiply During Sabbatical

Dr. Jerry Emison, professor of political science and public administration, spent the fall 2014 semester on sabbatical in Asheville, North Carolina. What began as a conventional research-oriented break from teaching became a kaleidoscope of projects that now extend well past the sabbatical.

The sabbatical’s original focus was to develop a book proposal on future environmental policies. Emison and his collaborator, John Morris of Old Dominion University, saw their proposal grow into a potential three-book series. As they developed the original book project, it became evident that it would take more than a single book to tackle the material. Under development now are books on future environmental institutional issues, future policy implementation techniques and an examination of national environmental leaders during periods of change.

Emison used Clemson University and Western Carolina University as bases for testing the book ideas. But as faculty and students at these universities learned of his background as a mix of scholar and experienced professional, Emison was asked to present talks at each school. At Clemson, Emison was asked to speak on the future of public policy and management as part of the John Calhoun Lecture Series. He also was asked to present to the university’s environmental toxicology graduate students on both professional career development and environmental leadership. At WCU, Emison presented a three lecture series to MPA students. This series covered professional attributes for effective public management.

The semester got even more complicated in October when the U.S. Department of State’s Fulbright Specialist program asked Emison to plan a journey to the Royal University of Phnom Penh in Cambodia. As a senior specialist, he will assist in developing a series of courses in natural resource management and environmental protection. While the consultation on-site will occur in April 2015, the fall’s preparations working with the RUPP faculty made the sabbatical even more multifaceted.

Emison noted that his sabbatical has been much like his previous career in research and public service. “When unexpected situations present themselves, public-service professionals have an obligation to adjust and adapt to take advantage of these unanticipated situations. I certainly did not expect the extent and variety of tasks that would occur during the sabbatical. However, these were exciting and offer the opportunity for me to improve my teaching at MSU.”
Earlier this semester, the Stennis Montgomery Association’s students had the opportunity to tour our state’s capitol. While in Jackson, the 36 students had the opportunity to take a tour of the capitol including the house chamber and were introduced in the senate chamber while it was in session. The Stennis Institute staff provided the speaking agenda, arranging for the visits by the gracious and hospitable members of the state government. SMA students were also able to hear from Governor Phil Bryant, Lt. Governor Tate Reeves, Speaker of the House Philip Gunn, State Treasurer Lynn Fitch, Representative Steve Holland, and our own Mississippi State University President Dr. Mark Keenum. This was the first opportunity for many students to meet and hear from our state’s leaders. During their time in Jackson, SMA students learned the value of public service, the difficulties of public leadership, and the passion of politics.

The Stennis Institute staff then led the SMA students to the Capital Club for lunch and an informative panel discussion. There the students were able to listen to Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal Mike Cheney’s keynote address prior to the opportunity for the students to interact with a panel of individuals who have devoted their lives to policy, politics, or public service. Pelahatchie Mayor Knox Ross led the panel comprised of Mr. Joel Yelverton, Mr. Steve Gray, Ms. Camille Young, Ms. Kelly Riley, and Mr. Patrick Sullivan. The students were encouraged to be interactive asking questions ranging from work/life balance and challenges to career path development.

The goal of the Stennis Montgomery Association is to encourage and support students’ growth of knowledge and passion in the fields of public service, policy, politics, and government. Opportunities such as this allow the students to be fully engaged in the process and witness firsthand the various ways individuals provide public service. For more information about the Stennis Montgomery Association or the Stennis Institute of Government and Community Development please visit www.sig.msstate.edu.
PSPA PROFESSOR WINS PRESTIGIOUS ARTS AND SCIENCE AWARD

Dr. Stephen Shaffer recently received the prestigious Arts and Sciences Robert E. Wolverton College Legacy Award. Dean Greg Dunaway said that the Wolverton Award was established to “recognize those individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the College of Arts and Sciences, and have advocated the ideals of liberal arts education.” Congratulations to Dr. Shaffer for a well-deserved recognition.

DOCTORAL STUDENT SUNGCHAN KIM PUBLISHES FIRST ARTICLE

PSPA doctoral student Sungchan Kim recently published his first manuscript “Can Nonprofit Enterprises Lead to Better Revenue Conditions and Local Government?” The publication can be found in the latest edition of the American Review of Public Administration. Kim’s research looks at the role non-profit enterprises play in revenue diversification from a government perspective, especially when local governments suffer from revenue shortages. This study attempts to examine whether an increasing number of non-profit enterprises influence revenue diversification, as measured by the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI), as well as volatility using a panel data set from 2007-2012. His results indicate that local governments can secure more diversified and increased income sources as more nonprofit enterprises are created throughout the county. Moreover, known private enterprises with stable business categories contribute more and therefore actively improve revenue conditions of local governments.
PSPA INTRODUCES NEW PRE-LAW CHANGES

As part of the growth in PSPA, the department has recently replaced the pre-law concentration it has housed and restructured the program to now include a minor in pre-law. The pre-law minor is designed to prepare students for a career in law. Students enrolled in the minor are exposed to opportunities to research topics, analyze information and think critically. To declare a minor in pre-law, a student must take a total of 19 credit hours. As part of the prerequisites, a two-semester required course called “Introduction to Law I & II. In Law I, will expose students to the subjects encountered in the first year of law school. They will read many of the foundational cases from each first-year subject and learn to brief cases and be able to answer many legal questions sufficiently. This course is designed to give students some insight as to what the first year is really like. In Law II, each week students hear from attorneys from a variety of practice areas. Law II’s course is designed to show students the intricacies of the profession of law.

The minor also requires that a students take a philosophy course that introduces them to logic, a skill pertinent to anyone interested in legal education. This course will also help them prepare for logic games that they will see on the Law School Admissions Test. There is also a requirement that students take one constitutional law course. Nine hours of the pre-law minor are electives that students may choose from a variety of departments on campus that are either law-related courses or courses designed to help develop research and writing skills. For further information concerning the program or the Pre-Law Society, contact instructor Whit Waide or visit our website: www.pspa.msstate.edu.
Assistant Professor Ravi Perry recently was named a 2015 “Hero Citizen” by the Andrew Goodman Foundation. This award honors individual efforts that advance voting rights and social justice and was given as part of the organization’s Martin Luther King Day.

The Andrew Goodman Foundation is a memorial to one of the three American civil rights activists murdered near Philadelphia, Mississippi, while attempting to register black voters during Freedom Summer in 1964. The award also marked the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act and the demonstrations in Selma, Alabama.

Perry expressed great joy about the honor: “While I am humbled by the recognition of my political science teaching and research as a tool for comprehensive acknowledgement of the diversity of the human condition, I will yet continue to do the work of social justice. There remains far too much disparity, inequity and a polarizing inequality of conditions in communities throughout Mississippi. I hope others will join with the Andrew Goodman Foundation to continue this important work.”

He also serves on the foundation’s Millennial Advisory Committee that works to strengthen relationships with and encourage public service among members of the Millennial Generation—generally, persons born from 1981-97.

In addition to duties in PSPA, Perry also currently serves as vice president of the National Association for Ethnic Studies, secretary of the Section on Race, Ethnicity and Politics of the American Political Science Association and is a member of the executive council with the National Conference of Black Political Scientists.

A Toledo, Ohio, native, Perry is a University of Michigan graduate who went on to receive his masters and doctoral degrees from Brown University, all in political science. Among his recent publications is the edited book, “21st Century Urban Race Politics: Representing Minorities as Universal Interests” [Emerald Group Publishing, 2013.] an examination of efforts by African American, Latino and Asian mayors to represent the interests of minorities in historically white U.S. cities.
Jamie Aron, a senior double-majoring in PSPA and mathematics, has been named a winner of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship, the nation’s most prestigious awards for students who are committed to public service. She was one of four finalists from Mississippi, out of some 200 scholars representing 135 other institutions of higher learning. She was selected for an interview after a rigorous process of more than 700 applicants.

Established in 1975, the Washington, D.C.-based Truman Scholarship Foundation serves as a living memorial to President Harry S. Truman. Its mission is to Support the graduate education and professional development of young people committed to public service and leadership. Jamie is MSU’s 17th Harry S. Truman Scholar.

The Truman Scholarship is presented annually to between 55 and 65 students. The highly-coveted academic and leadership recognition provides $30,000 in graduate-study expenses. As part of the criteria, Truman Scholars must make a commitment to public service after completing their degrees.

Aron said, “Being a Truman winner is not only an honor for me, but also is an honor for the students, faculty and leadership who have had a meaningful impact on my growth in the past few years.”

Aron has worked extensively in student leadership positions. In the MSU Student Association, she serves as co-director of community and governmental relations. She also has served as a member of the campus President’s Commission on the Status of Women since 2013. Aspiring to some day work for the U.S. State Department or United Nations, Aron created and led MSU’s first Women Empowered Leadership Conference. Held in July, the five-day program encouraged female high school students to pursue higher education and to become strong and influential leaders on the community, state and national levels.
The research of Assistant Professor Jiahuan Lu is in public and nonprofit management, with a focus on government contracting, nonprofit-government relationships and performance management. In government contracting research, he examines the various challenges public managers face in becoming “smart buyers” throughout the contracting process. Current research focuses on service contractors as new street-level bureaucrats and accountability mechanisms in government contracting. In nonprofit management line, Lu is interested in two major functions of human service nonprofits: service delivery and policy advocacy. Among several of the research questions he explores: How can nonprofits cope with funding relationships with governments? How does such dependence affect nonprofit management and governance? How can nonprofits enhance advocacy participation and improve advocacy capacity? In another area, his performance management research explains why and how public organizations use performance information effectively to improve their organizational effectiveness. Lu has recently published “Governing Diversity: The Impact of Social Heterogeneity on Human Service Delivery.” [Public Organization Review, 2015.]

Dr. Jiahuan Lu

Assistant Professor Daniel Fay has worked on a collaborative research project with a research team from Syracuse University’s Institute of Military Veterans and Families, examining the influence of postsecondary education on successful transition back to civilian life among U.S. service members. His team received funding from the National Science Foundation and Google to pursue this line of inquiry. Over the past year, they surveyed more than 9,000 military service members with a comprehensive online survey instrument and in depth focus group interviews from military liaisons at several colleges and universities across the country. Using the massive datasets, he pursued research questions ranging from the take-up of GI Bill education benefits among different service member populations to the influence of college and university culture on academic success among service members. Military service members represent an important, albeit often overlooked, population in the public management and policy literatures. His research aims to improve the education and career outcomes for the current and future military service members. Fay recently published “Planning for a Payout Effectiveness of Special Purpose Entities as State Lottery Administrations.” [The American Review of Public Administration, 2014.]

Dr. Daniel Fay
Dr. James Chamberlain

Asstistant Professor James Chamberlain currently is working on two essays that examine the relationship between community and work through the lens of migration. “As a society, we try to steer a course between two perceived risks: potentially undermining the domestic labor market by allowing anyone to live and work here, and missing out on the world's most economically productive individuals by closing our borders to everyone. While it is generally assumed that nation-states should have the right to determine their own conditions of membership, this principle can be challenged on various grounds, including equality and democracy: Why should something as arbitrary as place of birth or the nationality of your parents entitle you to more opportunities than anyone else? Don’t migrants deserve a say over immigration policies, since the latter profoundly affect their lives?”

Dr. Chamberlain said of his research: “If you find these challenges persuasive, as I do, then you soon realize that we need alternative ways of thinking and enacting not only community and ‘our’ relations with ‘others,’ but also life itself. Only by privileging some lives (ours) over others (theirs) do current efforts to regulate immigration appear legitimate. If we reject this tendency to parcel out and hierarchically order forms of life, and instead view all life as interconnected and equally valuable, almost all regulation of migration becomes unjustifiable. The two essays on which Chamberlain is working are: “Immigration, Immunization, and Community: On the Perverse Effects of Regulating Migration” & “Migration, Biopolitics, Nomadism: Toward a Theory of Diversity as Freedom.”

Dr. Christine Rush

The research of Assistant Professor Christine Rush focuses on equal employment opportunity laws and public workforce diversity. By emphasizing the goals of federal EEO laws, public employers have the opportunity to develop a diverse workforce that more closely mirrors society. This diversity enables citizens to gain a greater connection with their public servants and helps government organizations increase resilience and creativity. Her work has considered how key EEO laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, both strengthen diversity and require public managers to protect employees from discrimination. Recently, public employers have enhanced these mandated EEO law protections with additional family-friendly policies in order to meet the needs of employees with substantial family responsibilities. Her current co-authored project with Daniel Fay (Mississippi State) and Vicky Wilkins (American University) examines whether public colleges and universities that adopt family-friendly policies encourage female faculty and staff to stay. Public administration research indicates that greater female representation in the college and university workforce increases female student success. Their study examines how organizational changes such as explicit family-friendly policies may enable colleges and universities to retain a diverse workforce that can improve student outcomes.
Public Personnel Management (PPM) is committed to bridging the nexus between public administration practice and management research by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas between scholars from the academic and practitioner communities. The primary emphasis is a focus on research exploring all aspects of the work environments, organizations, individuals, and decisions that are part of the theory and practice of public human resource management. The interests of academic and practitioner audiences are served through refereed articles, case studies, and commentaries that explore a broad spectrum of timely management issues and concerns at the local, state, federal, and international levels.
Ethnic Studies Review is a peer-reviewed, multi-disciplinary, international journal devoted to the study of ethnicity, ethnic groups and their cultures, and inter-group relations.

The journal is published twice a year, although manuscripts are received on a rolling basis. All works are subjected to a double-blind, peer-review editorial process. We strive for the highest quality work from any discipline on topics relevant to an inter/multi-disciplinary readership.

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Tip Allen Scholarship

To honor the contribution of this extraordinary man to PSPA and MSU, the Allen family and PSPA department have established the Dr. Tip Allen Undergraduate Scholarship. Up to three awards will be provided to majors toward participation in a public service internship.

We currently are soliciting donations and pledges in support of this effort. Please help us honor the rich legacy of Professor Allen by making your contribution or pledge today.

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