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.
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Timothy Fair  PSPA Doctoral Candidate - Editor
For Patrick Exmeyer, misconceptions of public service are what drive his interest in the field of public administration.

“All too often, many students hear of public policy or legislation in class yet have a limited understanding of the wider impact of such action,” the third-year doctoral student said. “I make it a priority to clarify how public policy impacts our lives to both my students and to other public administration scholars.”

Exmeyer’s research focuses on ethics in public administration, whistleblowing in the public sector, administrative law and the impact of federal legislation on human resource management. He currently is developing manuscripts concerning employee perceptions of fairness and equality through formalized federal whistleblower mechanisms, as well as changes in whistleblower protections within states that utilize at-will employment systems.

In the process, Exmeyer said he has developed a interest in exploring the characterization of public administrators in popular culture mediums such as television, film, and electronic media.

Before relocating to Starkville, he completed a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and criminology from Ball State University and a master’s in public administration from the University of Southern Indiana.

Exmeyer credits a widespread reputation for professionalism and congeniality by members of MSU’s Department of Political Science and Public Administration faculty and staff as key factors in his decision to relocate to Starkville.

“I strongly believe that cooperation trumps competition,” he explained. “The PSPA faculty and staff work tirelessly to help students reach their full potential, and that cooperative spirit was something that I not only wanted to be a part of, but knew that I could thrive in as well.”
Akua Twumasi is a new student in the master of public policy and administration degree program. A native of the West African nation of Ghana, she is a political science and English graduate of the University of Ghana. At MSU, she works primarily with clinical assistant professor Whit Waide.

Twumasi said she considered a number of U.S. universities before choosing MSU. “I was looking for a prestigious school where I could gain knowledge and create great opportunities for myself later in my career,” she said.

While moving to a new country on the other side of the world, meeting new people there and undertaking the challenge of graduate study can present many challenges, Twumasi said hers has been a relatively smooth transition. Though adjusting well to her new life in Starkville, she admitted to missing her family, church services “and the food in Ghana.” She expressed appreciation for the support provided by members of the department in making her “feel part of the Bulldog family.”

“Since my arrival, I have had a great experience,” she said. “Everyone in PSPA has been very warm and helpful. I have experienced a great reception and I could not have chosen a better department.”

After graduating from PSPA, Twumasi plans to return to Ghana and work in the public sector.
PSPA Alumnus
Making Waves in State Government

PSPA alumnus Brian A. Pugh is Gov. Phil Bryant’s new fiscal policy adviser. In this role, he provides guidance to the state’s chief executive officer on all fiscal matters as they work with the Department of Finance and Administration to construct the annual Executive Budget Recommendation. He also helps lobby members of the Mississippi Legislature in gaining support for Bryant’s finance agenda items.

The former Harrison County resident is a 2007 cum laude graduate in political science who remained at Mississippi State to earn a master’s degree in public policy and administration the following year. He also holds a PPA doctorate from Jackson State University, where his dissertation explored the impact of spending stabilization rules on public budget stability and the delivery of public services.

“I really enjoy working in this role because it provides a way for me to contribute to public service,” he said. “Running for office is not the only way to serve; there are multiple contributors at all levels of government that are not elected, but are equally passionate about serving the public.”

Prior to joining Bryant’s staff, Pugh spent five years as a budget analyst with the Legislative Budget Office, where he was responsible for overseeing budgets of the economic development and public safety agencies.

He credits MSU and the PSPA department for helping prepare him well for the future. “Having in-class debates prepared me for dealing with people who do not agree with me,” he said. “I figured out early on that it is okay for people to have a difference of opinion. Similar to the discussions I had in class, I approach every debate with an open mind and stick to the facts.”

Beyond his official duties, Pugh serves as board president for the Mississippi Heritage Trust and as a member of the advisory board for MSU’s public policy and administration graduate degree program. He and wife Dominique are the parents of a 3-year-old daughter, Robin.
Professor Minion K.C. Morrison, PSPA department head, is the 2015 winner of the Frank J. Goodnow Award for Distinguished Service given by the American Political Science Association.

Recognizing exemplary achievements in scholarship and teaching, the award was created in 1996 as a tribute to APSA’s first president. Morrison accepted the honor during ceremonies preceding the organization annual conference in San Francisco, California.

A recent article in PSNow, the association’s online journal, cited Morrison’s commitment to the field of political science. In part, it said “KC Morrison has honored our discipline by the scholarship in African American Studies and the politics of race he has disseminated in books, journal articles, films, and even exhibition catalogues. His nominators from among his former colleagues in the University of Missouri system, current colleagues at Mississippi State, as well as former students, note that an even greater contribution as an ‘ambassador for the discipline’ is his wide-ranging, tireless mentorship of students.”

Morrison came to MSU in 2009 as department head. Beyond his administrative role there, he also serves as a senior associate in the campus’ African American Studies program.

He is the author of several books, the most recent being a biography of a major figure in the state’s 1960s civil rights struggle who later was elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives. “Aaron Henry of Mississippi: Inside Agitator” is a July release of the University of Arkansas Press.
Rep. Bennie Thompson of Mississippi’s 2nd District was the 2015 speaker for the PSPA department’s Lamar Conerly Lecture Series.

A graduate of Tougaloo College and Jackson State University, he is a former Bolton mayor and Hinds County Board of Supervisors member now serving as the ranking Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives.

In his remarks at MSU, the Mississippi native encouraged students in the audience to think about politics as a career choice. In particular, he recommended a focus on homeland security, including the fields of cybersecurity and disaster relief, and, when possible, working in the state after graduation.

“We have to create that opportunity,” Thompson said. “We want to help create choices for you to stay if you so desire and that’s the challenge for us.”

On other topics, Thompson said he supports education and health initiatives, including Initiative 42 at the state level and the Affordable Care Act at the federal level.

“One of the reasons I’m supporting Initiative 42 is our young people are not competing with kids in the next district; they’re competing with young people in the next continent,” he said. “We’ve got to do the best job we can making sure that we’re providing the best education possible for our young people and not short circuiting.

“I’m convinced that if we invest more now, we’ll have to pay less later,” he emphasized.

Thompson’s presentation also touched on issues related to incarceration, gun control and homeland security threats. Specifically, he said:

“We lock too many people up in this country for doing little things. There are some mistakes that are made that should not follow you all of your life.”

As someone who grew up in the country, enjoys hunting and owns several guns for those purposes, “I think reasonable gun control makes sense.”

Emphasizing that there currently is a “dangerous, volatile situation in this country and in this world,” he encouraged students to heed the Department of Homeland Security’s awareness campaign. “If you see something, say something. I don’t want to scare you, but we have some challenges. We’ll work through them because America is still the greatest country.”

The lecture series is made possible by major support from Conerly, a 1971 MSU accounting/pre-law graduate and longtime partner in the Destin, Florida, law firm of Conerly, Bowman and Dykes LLP. He is both a former national MSU Alumni Association president and continuing College of Business Alumni Fellow.
In July, Mississippi State alumnus Patrick A. Young was named human resources manager for the City of Ferguson, Missouri. The St. Louis County municipality drew international attention earlier this year for racial turmoil that followed the fatal shooting of an African American teenager by a white city police officer.

Young came to the university from Sparta, Illinois. He went on to simultaneously earn 2009 bachelor’s degrees—both summa cum laude—in political science and communication/broadcasting. In 2012, he also completed a master’s in public policy and administration.

“I started working in HR in 2013 with a 26-year-old non-profit agency called Doorways,” he said, explaining that the St. Louis-based organization “provides housing and healthcare to those affected by HIV/AIDS.” After the organization had tripled in size in just one year, he was asked to create a formal human resources department and form a volunteer program to help meet its mission.

After achieving successful outcomes with Doorways, Young decided to leave and take on an even greater challenge with the City of Ferguson and its more than 21,000 residents. In that role, he has helped bring greater stability to the municipal workforce, especially its police department.

“We’ve put together a comprehensive recruitment plan that places an emphasis on community oriented policing and diversity,” Young explained. His other major responsibilities include benefit administration, overseeing the city’s health and wellness initiatives and finding new ways to save money, attract top talent and decrease risk.

Young said he is grateful to have a career where he enjoys coming in to work each day. While admitting that “most people see the HR office as a position that is mundane and even intimidating, through my experience, I think quite the opposite is true.

“Most of my days include ‘surprises’ or challenges that I can’t always anticipate and I love that,” he said.

Young attributes knowledge gained at MSU, in general, and the PSPA department, in particular, for the professional success he has enjoyed to date.

“As with all professional positions, I think being able to think critically and communicate well will serve anyone positively in a career,” he said. “I definitely improved in both areas while in the department. While learning theory and abstract concepts can be important, the abilities to think through a project or a problem and communicate your findings or thoughts are a vital skill that is often overlooked.”

Young said PSPA programs “definitely prepared me with these tools and they come in handy whenever I need to speak in front of elected officials or examine a personnel budget.”

Though now far from the Mississippi State campus, Young said he regularly reflects back on his time at the university.

“Simply put, MSU is a special place,” he said. “Not only did I get incredible opportunities that took me from Starkville to Meridian to even New York City, but I got to be challenged daily in PSPA classrooms that were diverse and full of differing mentalities.”

Although challenging, Young said he has approached his new municipal position with a sense of positive anticipation. “As a manager in Ferguson, I hope to stabilize the workforce, boost morale and implement policies that promote efficiency and diversity,” he said. “There is no shortage of challenges in Ferguson, but I want to be a part of the team that finds solutions and moves this community forward.

“My experiences at MSU have hopefully made me the right person to achieve this.”
Dr. Vasabjit Banerjee is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration. Prior to this, he served as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science, Public Administration and Nonprofit Management at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He earned a doctorate in political science from Indiana University, Bloomington in 2012, and undertook post-doctoral research at the Department of Sociology at University of Pretoria in South Africa during 2012-2013, and at the Department of International Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington during 2013-2014. He teaches courses in comparative politics and international relations.

Dr. Banerjee’s research interests include contentious politics, rebellions and insurgencies, state formation, electoral institutions, and foreign policy, with a regional focus on developing societies in Latin America, South Asia, and Africa. Among other venues, his research has appeared in the Journal of Asian and African Studies, Journal of Current Chinese Affairs (China Aktuell), and the International Journal on World Peace; articles are forthcoming in the International Political Science Review and the Journal of Asian and African Studies. He is currently working on two book-length research projects: on collective action and state formation in India, Mexico, and Zimbabwe; and, with Dr. Timothy S. Rich from Western Kentucky University, on Mixed Electoral Systems in new democracies.

Dr. Douglas Haugen is a visiting Professor of Political Science and Public Administration, where he specializes in American and International Politics. His research focuses on deep state politics, and to that end, he is currently working on a manuscript entitled Inside the Sacred Helix: Deep State Politics and Human Engineering in the 21st Century. His first book, How Late Nineteenth Century Naval Theorists Influenced Twentieth Century American Foreign Policy explores how military theorists and deep state politics influenced the direction of 20th Century geopolitics. Dr. Haugen has also held positions at Manhattan College, Brooklyn College, Wagner College, and most recently served as a Visiting Professor at the University of Alaska.

Professor Haugen appreciates the students, faculty, and unique culture of Mississippi State University. He invites all interested students to his American Foreign Policy and International Relations courses, Spring 2016.

Dr. Haugen earned his PhD at the City University of New York in Political Science in 2007. He also holds an MA in Government from Harvard University.
Recently, PSPA Assistant Professor Dr. Christine Rush assumed the role as the department’s Graduate Coordinator. Appointed this past January, Dr. Rush has worked to promote the educational and career success of graduate students within the department. In this position, Dr. Rush is responsible for the recruitment and admissions for our department’s three graduate programs, the development of the graduate class schedule, organizing with the core PA faculty to make changes to the curriculum and program requirements and ad PSPA’s graduate students on coursework, program concerns, comprehensive exam preparation, and dissertation committee formation.

“This has been a wonderful opportunity to work more closely with our students, and I sincerely appreciate their patience and support as I learn my new role. Helping our students to solve some of the challenges that they face gives me a renewed commitment to my work in public administration.”

Since her appointment, Rush has implemented a new orientation program that seeks to assist graduate students in their transition to the department. This fall, all new and continuing graduate students attended the orientation workshops—where they were able to learn from department faculty and other campus resources. In the future, Rush hopes to continue to advocate for our department graduate students. “Graduate school requires focus and commitment, and I want to assure our students that they have support they need, and to ensure they are well-prepared and excited to take on the challenges of public administration practice, research and scholarship.”

Prying to joining PSPA, Rush taught in the Maxaine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University. In addition to a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Georgia, she holds a law degree from Emory University and a masters and doctoral degrees in public administration, also from Georgia.

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Mississippi State’s 2015 Homecoming Court included (center) queen Christina Bostick of Hattiesburg, along with (l-r) freshman maid Stephanie “Stevie” Flynt of Brandon; sophomore maid Mackenzie Smith of Tupelo; junior maid Brooke Laizer of Metairie, Louisiana; senior maids Luz Martinez and Katherine “Kaylie” Mitchell, both of Pascagoula; junior maid Holly Travis of Starkville; sophomore maid Madison Rhodes of Petal; and freshman maid Mayah Emerson of Meridian. Martinez, Travis and Emerson are PSPA majors.
### Department Faculty

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Dr. K.C. Morrison</td>
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<td>Ms. Leslie Baker</td>
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<td>Dr. Vasabjit Banerjee</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
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<td>Dr. James Chamberlain</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
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<td>Dr. Jerry Emison</td>
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<td>Dr. Eddie French</td>
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<td>Dr. Douglas Haugen</td>
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<td>Dr. Jiahuan Lu</td>
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<td>Dr. Brian Shoup</td>
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<td>Dr. Dragan Stanishevski</td>
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<td>Atty. Whit Walde Jr.</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
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### Tip Allen Scholarship

In honor of 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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### Do you have a desire to give?

Make checks payable to:
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Mississippi State, MS 39762

OR

Contact Arts and Science Development Officer, Alex McIntosh, who will be delighted to assist you: 662-325-3240, or amcintosh@foundation.msstate.edu
Support the Department

The Department of Political Science & Public Administration relies on the generous support from our alumni and friends to carry out our mission and objectives. There are several ways you can support our Department. No donation is too small.

Gifts designated to the Dept. of Political Science & Public Administration help fill the gap for underfunded areas. These gifts are truly valuable because they grant the Department the flexibility to allocate funds to the areas with the most need.