

# MPA The Leader Reader

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

## Nicaragua – An Intersession Option for MPA Students

BY RUSSELL LIDMAN, PH.D., PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR

Students in the MPA program now have the option to experience Nicaragua. As a country that faces the challenges of extreme poverty bit-by-bit, or in Spanish *poco a poco*, it is making some headway in development.

Seattle University has had a faculty and staff immersion program in Nicaragua since 2001. Several MPA faculty have participated in the immersion week in Nicaragua, including Yvonne Harrison, James Sawyer, and me. Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in the Hemisphere, with a 2008 per capita income of just \$2,620. In contrast, the 2008 per capita income in Mexico is \$14,270. The US is \$46,970, or nearly 18 times the level of income in Nicaragua. In Nicaragua, just 2.8 percent of the population has access to the internet. In Mexico the usage rate is about eight times as high at 22.7 percent. In the US, the internet usage rate is close to 74.7 percent, or 27 times as high. Nicaragua is increasingly being left in the rear view mirror as other countries accelerate down the information superhighway.

Why has SU supported the annual faculty and staff travel to Nicaragua? As a Jesuit university with a concern for social justice, there is special attention to the Catholic social teaching of the preferential option for the poor. However, the focus of the SU immersion experience is not



RUSSELL LIDMAN

poverty *per se*. Instead, the emphasis is on countering poverty and promoting greater independence. A few immersion experiences are described below.

Michael Woodard was one of the finalists for the 2008 OPUS prize administered by SU. He is a member of a Christian community located in Ciudad Sandino, a poor city on the outskirts of Managua.

Woodard belongs to the Jubilee community, which promotes worker-owned businesses. Among other projects, it helped 1600 workers organize into an organic agricultural coop and supported a group of women who created a sewing coop. It also built and helped secure staffing for medical clinics. The immersion experience visits the Jubilee community to see first-hand what faith-in-action can accomplish.

The immersion also exposes SU staff and faculty to our sister Jesuit university in Managua, the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA), and the work it does on behalf of Nicaragua's rural poor. UCA runs a microlending system, providing funds and technical assistance to small and medium growers. Commercial banks have largely abandoned the small-scale farmers. Were it not for UCA's Nitlapan, an institute 'specializing in research on and the creation and publicizing of new local rural and urban development models and methodologies,'

smaller farmers would have no access to credit, leaving even more families impoverished and forcing them to migrate to the poorest barrios of Managua for work. The SU immersion experience visited some smaller coffee growers and an owners' marketing coop to learn what UCA has accomplished.

One of the values of an international experience is to see how problems are defined elsewhere and how the state and/or nongovernmental organizations address them (or not).

Through my teaching, I have had some direct experience with policy problems in Nicaragua. I have taught a version of the policy formation and implementation course at UCA. As I do at SU, I ask students to tell me about a policy problem and how they would go about addressing it. The problems that I have learned about in Nicaragua are truly serious. In my course at UCA in June, a student wrote about the violence and robberies perpetrated against university students by criminals driving what appear to be authorized taxis. Several students wrote about the lack of potable water in a poor community in the hills around Managua, a problem that has persisted for decades. One student wrote about the consequences of the absence of functioning storm sewers in a poor Managua neighborhood. The storm water can overwhelm the wastewater sewers, resulting in property damage and unsafe,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

WHAT'S INSIDE

ALUMNI AND STUDENT NEWS ..... 2  
 A LETTER FROM THE MPA STUDENT ASSOC. PRESIDENT ..... 2  
 PROFESSORS' CORNER..... 3  
 SEMINAR SERIES 2009 – 2010 ..... 4  
 SAVE THE DATE MPA FALL DINNER..... 4



## MPA Alumni and Student News



ELI KEVIN THOMAS TYSON LIN &amp; CAMERON

**Aaron Bert ('00)** returned from Afghanistan in December 2008, where he was a senior mentor to Afghanistan Police. Aaron, a Major in the Army National Guard, previously served in Iraq in 2004-2005. He recently received a promotion to Parks Resource Manager for Seattle Parks and Recreation. He will be responsible for half of the parks in Seattle and a staff of around 120 employees.

**Cheryl Strange ('00)** was promoted to Deputy Secretary, Department of Corrections July 15, 2008.

**Kasa Tupua Pierson ('05)**, MPA Coordinator, was awarded the College of Arts & Sciences *Outstanding Staff of the Year* for 2008-2009.

**Ryan Black ('06), Adam Aaseby ('07), and John Shepherd ('07)** were recruited to join the Washington State Office of Financial Management in 2007. Each serves as a Budget Assistant to the Governor and is responsible for different policy areas and components of the state budget. Ryan works on tax policy and government operations; Adam oversees the Department of Corrections' budget and other public safety issue areas; and John works on economic development and housing. They manage just over \$4.5 billion of the state's biennial budget and have the opportunity to help shape public policy for some of the state's most challenging issues.

**Megan (Ridout) Moreno ('06) and Ethan Moreno ('10)** are expecting their first child in August.

**Heather Thomas ('07)** and her husband, Jeremy, had their second son, Eli Kevin Thomas, on December 20, 2008. He was born 7lbs, 8oz and 21" long.

**Peter Diedrich ('09)** is working at State Department headquarters (Main State) on C Street—six blocks west of the White House and three blocks north of the Lincoln Memorial. He works for the Bureau of Legislative Affairs for the Department of State (DOS). Officially, he works under Assistant Secretary of State Richard Verma along with about forty others. During his first few weeks, Peter has

researched congressional issues and foreign affairs legislation, and worked on legislative issue research for Ambassadors Rice (United Nations) and Holbrooke (Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan). Peter is also working with a group to develop a strategy for improving relations between the DOS legislative liaison office and U.S. Senate members. He has been working with the Congressional Correspondent Unit (CCU), where he works on correspondence to members of the Senate and House. He assists with the confirmation process for President Obama's foreign affairs nominees and has helped build an access database for the plethora of nominations coming from the White House. Occasionally, Peter fills in as the administrative assistant for the Assistant Secretary and Ambassador Polt (Verma's top man).

**Rusty Horton ('09)** will begin Gonzaga's PhD program in Leadership Studies this fall.

**Tyson Lin ('11)** became an uncle to Cameron Lin on May 31. Cameron was born 7lbs 9oz and 20.5 inches.

*Please share your personal and/or professional updates for the Spring 2010 newsletter by contacting Danielle Potter at [potterd@seattleu.edu](mailto:potterd@seattleu.edu) or 206.296.6143.*

### FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

offensive and unsanitary conditions. Another student wrote about the overwhelming problem of dealing with Managua's solid waste. We have aspects of many of these problems in the US, but imagine the challenge of addressing these problems in a country whose per capita income is barely over five percent that of the US.

Nicaragua provides an especially rich experience for students of public administration. It is indeed the case that many policy and implementation problems are outsized. At the same time, one can see inspiring examples of problem solving. For example, street-level corruption among the police in Nicaragua is essentially non-existent. Unlike any other country in Central America, Nicaragua does not have a significant problem with street gangs because of the police's stellar reputation.

If you are a MPA student next summer, I encourage you to consider participating in the first MPA Nicaragua immersion during the 2010 summer intersession.

## 2009-2010 MPA Student Association President Felipe Roa



**G**reetings! The MPA Student Association (MPASA), is happy to accept the Student Association leadership as a complementary responsibility to our master's studies. We look forward to listening to and interacting with our MPA community. As the new MPASA, we have begun a transition process with the previous association. Ann Koepke and her team did a great job over the last year and we are trying to learn as much as possible from their experience. Now, it is our responsibility to continue to represent the MPA students.

Our main goals are to strengthen community-building processes and to create professional development opportunities for our fellow students. Our next step is to plan activities and events for the upcoming academic year. We encourage students, faculty and staff to actively participate in these events.

### MPA STUDENT OFFICERS 2009-2010:

**President:** Felipe Roa / **Co-Vice Presidents:** Tyson Lin and Melissa Hopkins

## Hot Topics in Public Service

### HEATHER THOMAS ('07) ASKS:

#### How can social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) be utilized for government?

Heather has been involved with social media at the City of Kent and has attended a few seminars on the topic. She is also a member of MuniGov2.0, which is a national coalition of governments sharing information about Web2.0 for the public sector.

*If you would like to submit your ideas regarding this topic for the next newsletter, please send your responses to Danielle Potter at [potterd@seattleu.edu](mailto:potterd@seattleu.edu). Please limit your entry to 100 words; we reserve the right to edit for space and clarity.*

## Professors' Corner

**Yvonne Harrison, Assistant Professor**, represented Seattle University at the annual meeting of Catholic Relief Services and Catholic higher education partners at Cabrini College in June. At the meeting, she presented a paper documenting the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Global Solidarity Network Study eBroad Program (see [www.gsnstudyebroad.org](http://www.gsnstudyebroad.org)), an online community of practice that uses web-based tools to connect US students and faculty to CRS policy experts and staff working on the front lines of social justice in developing countries.

In April, Yvonne presented her research on board chair leadership as a special plenary session on the topic of *Boards in Uncertain Times* at the 2009 Nonprofit Board Governance Conference, hosted jointly by the Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership and the Nonprofit Quarterly on April 23-24 in Kansas City, Missouri. At the same conference, she also presented a co-authored paper with Chris Cornforth and Vic Murray titled "A Comparison of the Role and Impact of Board Chairs in United Kingdom and North American Nonprofit Organizations." The paper compares UK Chairs and the key actors that interact with North American samples. For a copy of this paper, please contact Yvonne at [yharriso@seattleu.edu](mailto:yharriso@seattleu.edu).

Yvonne has two single authored publications due out in the fall of 2009 and a co-authored article under review for publication in 2010. The first publication is a review of the 2008 book "Challenges in Volunteer Management" by Matthew Liao-Troth, which will appear in the *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. The second publication, a chapter titled "Optimizing the Potential of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Nonprofit Organizations," will appear in the second edition of *Management of Nonprofit and Charitable Organizations in Canada* (LexisNexis Butterworths Publisher). Finally, the article *Concept to Practice: The Case of the Global Solidarity Network Study e-Broad Program (GSNSeBP)* is under review for a

special issue of *The Internet and Higher Education*, examining the impact of academic globalization on e-learning.

On the service side, in an effort to optimize teaching and learning and board effectiveness, the Master of Nonprofit Leadership and the Master of Public Administration nonprofit governance classes will be conducting free confidential board effectiveness assessments during the winter quarter (January to March 2010). To sign up or obtain more information about this service, please contact Yvonne Harrison.

**Lee Holmer, Associate Professor**, presented a paper entitled "Taming the Lizard: The Implications of Neuroscience for Managing Defensiveness that Blocks Managerial and Organizational Learning" at the annual *Teaching Public Administration Conference* at Kentucky State University in Frankfort, Kentucky.

**Russ Lidman, Professor and Director**, visited Nicaragua in June as a Fulbright Senior Specialist. On June 9th, he gave a talk on the current economic crisis in Managua to a group of more than one hundred public and business leaders, and students. On June 10th, he gave a talk to an auditorium full of members of the university community that focused on why and how Obama won the presidential election. Visit <http://ni.globedia.com/recuperacion-economica-largo>.

**Jim Sawyer, Associate Professor**, was invited through the Fulbright Intercountry Lecturing Program to visit ISVOUGA — Instituto Superior de Entre Douro e Vouga in Santa Maria da Feira, Portugal, May 9-15. ISVOUGA was created two decades ago and serves as a private, nonprofit university responding to the unique, unserved needs of Santa Maria da Feira and vicinity, offering degrees in legal practice, accounting, business management, marketing, and industrial production engineering. ISVOUGA is contemplating adding two graduate professional programs. One ISVOUGA objective is to support an increasing proportion of their

graduates in gaining access to graduate study opportunities throughout Europe. On May 11, Jim participated with colleagues, former and current students, in the first annual conference on accounting and finance. A proposed study may evolve into a working partnership between ISVOUGA and Seattle University. It may also evolve into a new degree program at ISVOUGA, related to wine tourism marketing. Links: <http://portal.isvouga.com/>; <http://erasmus.isvouga.com/Mission/Mission.htm>; <http://erasmus.isvouga.com/Degrees/Degrees.htm>.

On June 6, Jim was in Normandy for the 65th commemoration of the Allied Invasion. Jim will return to Seattle in mid-September.

## Congratulations to 2009 Graduate Commencement Award Recipient, Sheely Mauck!



Sheely Mauck received the Leadership and Social Justice Award from The College of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate Student Advisory

Council (GSAC). This award honors Sheely's commitment to bettering the lives of youth at the Rotary Boys and Girls Club of King County, where she serves as the Education Director. She has demonstrated leadership abilities within the community and in the classroom. Mauck is the first graduate student to receive the newly created Leadership and Social Justice Award.

## Congratulations to the Pi Alpha Alpha Inductees and 2009 MPA Graduates



LEFT TO RIGHT: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, LEE HOLMER AND PROGRAM COORDINATOR, KASA TUPUA PIERSON INDUCT PI ALPHA APLHA MEMBER, SHERRY WILLIAMS



BACK ROW: LEFT TO RIGHT: LINDSAY HERBST, RANDY NUNEZ, AMY ISAACSON, ARIC LANE, ANN KOEPKE, CATHY MCAVOY, KRISTEN LEIGHTER, COLIN WALKER, JOSH PEMBERTON, AND RUSTY HORTON. FRONT ROW: LEFT TO RIGHT: THERESA RIGOLI, SHEELY MAUCK, ANNA CONSTANT, JOANN RAMEZANZADEH, SHERRY WILLIAMS, BECKY CHOW, ZOE FITZGERALD, JESSE NELSON, AND NELSON CHEN.



**INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC SERVICE**  
901 12TH AVENUE  
P.O. BOX 222000  
SEATTLE, WA 98122-1090

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A PUBLICATION OF THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC SERVICE

FALL 2009

## Service in Action Seminar Series 2009–2010

### **Being an Effective Leader and Enjoying it Too (Even in the Hard Times)**

**Presenter:** Richard Baron  
Friday, October 16, 9am to 4pm

### **Laughter and Life Skills: Communication Tools Using Applied Improvisation**

**Presenter:** Andrew McMasters  
Friday, November 6, 9am to 4pm

### **Volunteer Wrangling: What to Do When You Are Looking a Volunteer in the Eye**

**Presenter:** Jillian Gross  
Friday, January 22, 9am to 4pm

### **From Fear to Fun: Fundraising Basics to New Innovations**

**Presenter:** Jule Meyer  
Friday, February 19, 9am to 4pm

### **Winning the Grant Game: For Beginning and Intermediate Players**

**Presenter:** Karen Porterfield  
Friday, March 19, 9am to 4pm

### **Working Within a Social Justice Framework**

**Presenter:** Seattle University Office of Multicultural Affairs  
Friday, April 23, 9am to 4pm

### **Storytelling for Effective Advocacy**

**Presenter:** Michael Shadow  
Friday, May 21, 9am to 4pm

**General Public:** \$125 (per seminar)  
**SU Student/Alumni/Employee:**

\$100 (per seminar)

**Three or more:** \$100 each

*Price includes lunch. All proceeds benefit the MPA/MNPL scholarship fund.*

Contact Danielle Potter at [potterd@seattleu.edu](mailto:potterd@seattleu.edu) or 206-296-6143 or visit <http://www2.seattleu.edu/artsci/mpa/events.aspx>.

## SAVE THE DATE!

**The Institute of Public Service will celebrate its 35th Anniversary!**

Help us bring in this year by attending the Fall Dinner and Celebration.

**Monday • September 21, 2009 • 6 to 9 pm**

Seattle University Student Center Room 160

RSVP to Alex Bush at [busha@seattleu.edu](mailto:busha@seattleu.edu) or 206-296-5440.

Special thanks to the MPA Fall Dinner Planning Committee:

Sandra Toussaint ('01), Ryan Black ('06), John Sheller ('07), Aric Lane ('09),  
Cathy McAvoy ('09), Joann Ramezanzadeh ('09), Kelly Lynch ('10) and Emma Meinig ('11)