



Inside this issue:

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Faculty Profile             | 2 |
| Hampton Roads ASPA Awards   | 2 |
| Strategic Planning Class    | 3 |
| Pi Alpha Alpha              | 4 |
| Phi Kappa Phi               | 4 |
| 2016 e-Celebration          | 4 |
| Start Your Job Search Early | 5 |
| Student News                | 6 |
| Faculty Updates             | 7 |
| Congratulations!            | 8 |
| Alumni News                 | 8 |

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# MPA Program Newsletter

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May, 2016

## Troy University's Master's at Work: MPA

Troy University's innovative Master's at Work program, available exclusively in downtown Atlanta, will launch in the Fall of 2016 with the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. Designed with working adults in mind, Master's at Work allows students to earn an MPA degree in a blended online and in-class format. The in-class portion will be taught at the Hampton Inn at 161 Spring Street NW in downtown Atlanta, putting classes within walking distance for many students working in the area.

"Master's at Work allows students to begin the MPA program in the classroom in close proximity to their own workplace in order to become acclimated to graduate level coursework as well as TROY's online learning platform," said Staci Hutto, area coordinator for Troy University in Atlanta.

Students will begin their program in-class, completing three classes in the classroom, and transition to nine online courses. "TROY's Master's at Work program will allow adult students to balance life's responsibilities with the pursuit of higher education," Hutto said. "One of the unique elements of a being a TROY student is the personal attention that our students receive from their professors, and the support they have."

The Master's at Work format will feature test fee waivers and a Horizon scholarship awarded upon admittance. If you know of someone in the Atlanta area looking to start their MPA degree, please have them contact Ms. Marie Baker at [efoster@troy.edu](mailto:efoster@troy.edu) or 770-730-0033 for more information.

**Important Dates:**

**May 31:**  
Deadline to add/drop classes

**Jul 24:**  
Term 5 classes end

**Jun 24:**  
Deadline to file Intent to Graduate form for Term I, 2016

**Jul 25:**  
Registration opens for Term I

**Jul 1:**  
Deadline to drop classes or withdraw

**Aug 15:**  
Term I starts



Dr. Vickie Edwards

## Faculty Profile— Dr. Vickie Edwards

Dr. Vickie Edwards is the MPA Program Director and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science. She previously worked as the coordinator for the Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management and the Center for Nonprofit Organizations at the Institute of Government, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and also taught as an adjunct instructor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and at Georgia College and State University. Dr. Edwards is a founding trustee of the Midwest Public Affairs Conference, and founded the Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs.

An Alabama native, Dr. Edwards earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of South Alabama, a master's of public administration degree from Georgia College and State University, and a doctorate in public administration and policy at the University of Georgia. She has previously worked as a consultant to public and nonprofit organizations, and has worked as a program evaluator in the fields of education and health care. She also has experience as a grant writer, having successfully obtained over \$40 million in federal stimulus package funding to build broadband networks in rural Mississippi.

As an active member of her local community, Dr. Edwards has been involved with a number of different nonprofit organizations that address a wide variety of issues, including animal rescues, sustainable agriculture, LGBT teen homelessness, and women's rights. Following the tornado outbreak on April 27, 2011, she spent six weeks providing disaster relief services in the city of Pleasant Grove, Alabama.

She lives in Montgomery with her two dogs and three cats, as well as her extensive collection of rubber duckies. She enjoys cooking and baking, gardening, home brewing, and lounging in the pool on hot summer days.

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## Hampton Roads ASPA Chapter Awards

The Hampton Roads Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) held their annual awards luncheon in Norfolk, VA, May 5, 2016, recognizing a TROY faculty member and MPA alumnus.

Dr. Pamela Gibson received the 2016 Dr. Wolfgang Pindur Award for Distinguished Service in Academia and Practice. This award recognizes outstanding service in the area of public administration education and was established in memory of Dr. Wolfgang Pindur, an academic whose lifelong efforts sought to bridge the worlds of the academic and the practitioner.



Pictured (l-r): Charlie Mills (ASPA President-Elect, Dr. Pamela Gibson, Dr. Pam Dunning



Pictured (l-r): Charlie Mills (ASPA President-Elect, Sergeant William Gervin, Captain Todd Jones

Sergeant William L. Gervin (MPA, 2012) of the Virginia Beach, VA Police Department was awarded the George Robert House, JR., Award For Outstanding Service. Recognizing an outstanding public administrator under age 40, the award is named after George Robert House, Jr. who served as City Manager of Bedford, Chesapeake, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Portsmouth, VA in addition to two managerial posts in North Carolina. He was tragically killed in an airplane crash in 1982.

## Strategic Planning Class Delivers

The students in Dr. Pam Dunning's PA 6630 Strategic Planning course in Term 4 tackled the development of a strategic plan for The Wesley Foundation at The College of William & Mary. Working with the chair of the Board of Directors and a multitude of organizational documents, the students delivered a well-received strategic plan. The Director of the Wesley Foundation recognized their hard work in a note to the students:

"Dear Tabetha, Lashonda, Keyosha, Daniel, Lisa, and Dr. Dunning,

"It is always good to hear from folks back home in Alabama! It is even better when it comes from such gifted, intelligent, insightful people like y'all, who are doing such wonderful work. I am both amazed at the work and awed by such a gift to our campus ministry! Your work on this strategic plan is already starting the process of us being better able to live out God's call for us in mission and ministry here at William and Mary and beyond.

I am a native of Oneonta, and my family and I were living and serving in Birmingham before moving to Williamsburg and The College of William and Mary. I have admired the work of Troy University from afar for many years and have been aware of the significant contributions that Troy makes to improve the lives of those who attend and those living in Alabama. After the dedicated work and insight provided by your class, I can now say those contributions extend to Virginia and those we serve through the Wesley Foundation.

I appreciate the time and expertise involved in reviewing our mission and objectives, analyzing how well we were meeting these objectives, and recommending actions to fulfill our vision. The connection that you made between academic studies and practical application demonstrates the strength of your program of study and how you are empowered to bring the insights and inspiration of your lives and professional experiences to bear on such good work as this strategic plan.

Our board of directors reviewed your findings and recommendations at our May 7th meeting. They agreed with your internal and external analysis, and your recommendations for the top two strategic initiatives. Our Executive Committee, including students from our leadership team, will meet over the summer to work on the plan so that it can be approved and implemented this coming academic year.

Thank you so much for your willingness to partner with the Wesley Foundation! On behalf of the students, the board, and the entire Wesley community, I wish you continued success in your academic program and in even better living out your call to public service. May you continue to experience and share God's grace in all that you do! Also, if you are ever in the Williamsburg area, don't hesitate to call, text, or email me! I would love to meet you, show you around our campus ministry, and buy you lunch too!"

Students participating were Tabetha Getz, Lashonda Jackson, Keyosha Shuford-Jones, Dan Lyndall, and Lisa Powell.

## Pi Alpha Alpha (PAA) Inductions, Spring 2016

PAA is the National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration. The purpose of PAA is to encourage and recognize outstanding scholarship and accomplishment in public affairs and administration and to foster integrity, professionalism and creative performance in government and public service activities. Students in TROY's MPA program may be inducted provided they have maintained a GPA of at least 3.7; have completed at least 21 hours of their coursework, and have the recommendation of the faculty. Congratulations to the following students who were nominated and accepted for induction into PAA in Spring 2016:

Kyle Inman  
John Kilgore  
Sheri Lynne Law

Debbi Lewis  
John Lyndall

Angel Rodriquez  
Taris Woodall

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## Phi Kappa Phi (PKP) Inductions, Spring 2016

Founded in 1897 at the University of Maine, Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest, largest, and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines. The purpose of PKP is to recognize and promote academic excellence in all fields of higher education and to engage the community of scholars in service to others. Congratulations to the following students who were nominated and accepted induction into PKP in Spring 2016:

John Lyndall  
Maria Papayanki

Kunpeng Wang  
Michael Wright

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## 2016 MPA e-Celebration of Graduates

On May 20th, the MPA department held its second e-Celebration of Graduates, where the MPA faculty came together to congratulate our 2015-2016 graduating MPA students and new honor society inductees in a fun virtual event. Family and friends were in attendance as we celebrated and congratulated our graduates and wished them well on the next stage of their professional and academic journey. "For years, we have sought a way to celebrate with our MPA graduating students, regardless of location, in order to mark this significant milestone in their academic and professional career. This virtual event enables us to do exactly that," noted one MPA faculty member.

The e-Celebration was held online via WebEx, and featured welcome remarks from the MPA Program Director and interactive recognition of the graduates and honor society inductees. The guest speaker was Rear Admiral Joseph Vojvodich, the Assistant Commandant for Acquisition & Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO), U.S. Coast Guard.

Congratulations to all of our 2015—2016 graduates and honor society inductees!

## Starting Your Job Search Early

Truth be told, it can take a long time to find a job in the public sector, especially a federal position. There are some students, even straight-A students, that may still not have a job in the public sector a year after graduating.

Starting your job search early will help prevent that scenario. “It breaks my heart when a student calls and says, “OK, I’ve graduated! I’m ready to start my job search!” says Dr. Waldner, an Atlanta-based MPA faculty member. “The time to start your job search is really in your third term—a good guideline is, for every 10 hours you spend on coursework, spend a minimum of 2-3 hours a week on your job search or career development. Treat it like a second class.”

Also, consider doing an internship even if you waived out of one. “My impression is that students that waived out of the internship have the toughest time getting that public sector job, because they get stuck in their current job or in a private sector job.” If an internship is related to your concentration, you can use PA 6694 (the internship class) as your third concentration elective, with permission of the MPA internship director.

Developing your personal network of contacts in public service is important. Look at joining one or two professional associations and go to the meetings. Local chapters of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) or the Conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA) are a good place to start. “Joining the Troy University MPA Connection in LinkedIn will connect you to over 150 individuals, expanding your professional network, and provide you with opportunities for internships and new positions” says Dr. Dunning, an MPA faculty member.

“Slowing down your program also helps sometimes,” added Dr. Waldner. “When you are a student, professionals in the field want to mentor you; they want to do informational interviews with you. However, once you graduate, they are not as interested in helping you.” Doing several informational interviews (interviews where you learn about the subject’s career path) can also help build a network, as these interviews allow you to meet local professionals in your field.

For more information on TROY’s Career services and MPA job listings, see the “Career” resource section on the MPA webpage at: [www.troy.edu/mpa](http://www.troy.edu/mpa).



*Dr. Leora Waldner*



*Dr. Pamela Dunning*

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## NASPAA Site Visit

As part of our program reaccreditation process with the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), a site visit team visited the Atlanta site and Troy campus to view our program and administration. The team met with students and alumni, both in person and via WebEx, along with the MPA faculty and other campus administrators. The final reaccreditation decision will be made in July 2016.

## Student News

Kunpeng Wang has been accepted into the University of Alabama's PhD program in political science for this fall and was awarded a graduate teaching assistantship.

Xiaofeng Chen was accepted into the PhD public administration and public policy program at Auburn University starting this fall.

Jeffrey DeWitt submitted the following: "I work for Parker Sewer & Fire Sub district, a special purpose district in Greenville County, South Carolina that provides (surprise!) fire protection and wastewater collection services to western, unincorporated Greenville County. We have 110 employees and an annual budget of \$9.5 million. I have worked for the District in the Wastewater Department since 2011, but was appointed to the position of Financial Administrator/Chief Financial Officer on April 4th. My predecessor resigned last December, and I am three months behind in a six month budget prep schedule - the new FY begins July 1st. Oh, I also received this appointment during the fourth week of capstone class, so sleep has been optional for the last few weeks. However, thanks to Dr. John Dunning's firm hand in PA 6650, I have a handle on the situation and will have a solid budget in place by July 1. I have found in the brief time in this position that I have used everything that I have learned thus far in the MPA program. As this edition of the Troy MPA newsletter is published, I am beginning my last class and have no doubt that it will be just as useful."

Marina Papayanki is originally from Odessa, Ukraine, but she moved to Texas with her mother and her sister when she was twelve years old. She graduated from Wimberley High School and then St. Edward's University with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration in Management. Now, she is pursuing her Master's degree in Public Administration with two concentrations in Government Contracting and Public Human Resource Management from Troy University. She is also planning to obtain a Government Contracting certificate as well. Marina has a perfect grade point average of 4.0 in all her graduate-level classes. Just recently, she also received a Student Spotlight Award, from NAIMES, for her scholarly achievement. This was not the only recognition that she received for her outstanding achievement at TROY. Marina's professors recognized her for her Outstanding Academic Performance through the StarFish Program.



Marina Papayanki

Not only is Marina a student at Troy University, but she also works for Troy University, San Antonio, TX location as an Administrative Support Specialist. At her job, she offers administrative and human resources-related support; she manages the budget, inventory, and the office, and assists many current and potential students in determining the best career opportunities for them. In other words, she keeps the office in check. She also loves her job because she knows that she is helping students to discover the best learning opportunities available for them. During her job at TROY, Marina received several recognitions, such as a Staff Spirit Award and a Reward Caller for her outstanding service, positive attitude, initiative, motivation and dedication to Troy University!

## Faculty Updates

Congratulations to Dr. Leora Waldner who received promotion to Professor, effective August 1, 2016.



*Dr. Leora Waldner*

Dr. Pamela Dunning was elected as Chair-Elect of the ASPA Section on Public Administration Education, effective March 2016.

Dr. Pamela Dunning presented "Creating inclusive classrooms in online courses using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles" at the 39th Annual Teaching PA Conference at Rutgers University, Newark, NJ, May 24, 2016.

Dr. Vickie Edwards was a panelist on "Teaching Trek: Pedagogy and *Star Trek*" at a *Star Trek* conference at DePaul University on May 7, 2016.

Dr. Pamela Gibson presented "From compliant to concordant: Foucault's technologies of the self & moral maturity" at the 39th Annual Teaching PA Conference at Rutgers University, Newark, NJ, May 25, 2016.

Dr. Manfred Meine presented "Dissolving the divides generated by the growing number of stakeholders in the lucrative arena of online education" with Dr. Tom Dunn at the 2016 Online Learning Consortium & MERLOT Innovate Conference, April 21, 2016, New Orleans, LA.

Dr. Manfred Meine, with Dr. Tom Dunn, made two presentations at the Sociological Society Conference, April 13-16, 2016, Atlanta, GA: "Online education at a crossroads: The implications for sociology programs" and a roundtable presentation "Marriage and the military, The current and potential ramifications of LGBTQ."

Hal Moeller, Adjunct Instructor, presented a draft of a paper-in-progress, "Enforcing transparency: Lessons from complying with requirements on tax-exempt hospitals under the Affordable Care Act"

## Faculty Present the MPA eQuad at Regional Advising Conference



Pictured (l-r): Dr. Dayna McDaniel & Dr. Leora Waldner

On April 6th, Dr. Dayna McDaniel and other MPA faculty teamed up with colleagues from Wake Tech Community College to teach other colleges how eQuads can work as virtual advising centers at a departmental level. In a presentation for the Region 3 National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), Dr. McDaniel gave a live tour of the MPA eQuad, demonstrating how it can serve as an invaluable resource for students by providing on-demand access to orientations, program requirements, registration guidance, and advising webinars. The team discussed how to create a virtual advising center such as the MPA eQuad, and how eQuads can promote advising access for both online and in-class students.



The mission of Troy University's Master of Public Administration Program is to strengthen the quality of public service by facilitating learning, promoting scholarship, improving practice and engaging in public service. The program strives to develop graduates who bring to the public work force the intellectual acuity, ethical commitment, and professional competence to effectively serve the public interest.

## Congratulations!

Dr. Maryam Stevenson and family welcomed a new edition—Sara Elizabeth Stevenson—on April 1, 2016. She weighed in at 8 lbs 6 oz. and was 20 1/4" long.



Sara Elizabeth Stevenson

## Alumni News

James (Jimmy) Gray (2000) was recently elected to the Hampton, VA city council to fill the remaining two year term that became vacant due to the recent resignation of Councilman Donnie R. Tuck who entered and won the mayoral race.

Jimmy was a former Hampton assistant city manager and fire chief and has over 36 years of local government experience and an extensive track record in community service. He is an active member of the Hampton Roads community where he serves in various leadership positions including President and CEO of the Hampton Roads Committee of 200+ Men, Inc., President of the 200+ Men Foundation, Inc., board chair of The Healing Place of Hampton Roads and board member of nonprofits that include the Y.H. Thomas Community Center, LEAD Hampton Roads, and the Hampton—Newport News Community Service Board.



James Gray

## Share Your News!

Our next issue will be September 2016 and we need your help to fill it. Please e-mail the new Editor, Dr. Terry Anderson ([tanderson@troy.edu](mailto:tanderson@troy.edu)) if you have recent news that you would like to have included in the newsletter.

*A special thanks to everyone who contributed to this newsletter. Your help is greatly appreciated.*