

MPA Student & Alumni Newsletter

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Department of Political Science
Sam Houston State University
www.shsu.edu/mpa

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"...our MPA program would not be what it is today without your dedication and commitment to public service."

Director's Welcome

By Thomas W. Haase, PhD

Welcome to the first issue of the MPA Student and Alumni Newsletter, which became a reality due to the efforts of Dr. Wen-Jiun Wang and several of our alumni. Published twice a year, the Newsletter will provide updates on the MPA program and our faculty, students, and graduates.

The last year brought several positive developments to the MPA program, including a new website, the publication of a graduate student handbook, and the creation of new graduate courses such as Governing Complex Problems, which is taught by Dr. Fatih Demiroz. Our faculty have also worked to improve their craft. For example, our junior faculty have all earned their Certificates in Effective College Instruction from the Association of College and University Educators and the American Council of Education. Part of Sam Houston State University's Engaging Classrooms Quality Enhancement Plan, this national certificate program requires faculty to complete 25 one-hour online modules over an academic year. Our MPA students have also been busy, whether helping their organizations respond to the pandemic or serving as interns for the City of Conroe, the City of Bryan, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Many thanks to the faculty, staff, alumni, and students who helped our communities to navigate the challenges we have encountered over the last year. As we transition to new phases in our own lives, it is important to continue to recognize that our MPA program would not be what it is today without your commitment to public service. Prospective students interested in joining our MPA program are invited to visit our website: www.shsu.edu/mpa.

Alumni Spotlight: Kelda Clough

By Kelda Clough (MPA '06)

Kelda Clough is an analyst with Snohomish County Sheriff's Office in Snohomish County, WA. Located on the northern border of the Seattle metroplex, the department employs over 800 sworn and civilian personnel, and serves a population of over half a million residents and multiple globally recognizable corporations and their employees.

I was the first female graduate of the MPA Program, finishing in 2006. At the time, the program was small. I don't think any of us envisioned how large it would grow. However, we are delighted to see its impact on our communities. We were a diverse group. Some had long established careers in the private sector, some were first responders and emergency management, and a few had just completed their bachelor's degrees the spring before. Each of us had a different reason for enrolling. All of us had something different we wanted to do over the long term.

My career was "set on the path" it is today because of one conversation with a professor. At the time, our MPA Program required an internship. After class, my professor asked if I had lined up my internship because "[I] have an old colleague who is having a hard time lining up an intern to help with writing some annual reports and doing some fiscal audits. If you think you might be interested, I'll send him your resume. It's a paid position."

That set my career in motion. Fifteen years later, I've worked for law enforcement and health departments as an analyst / researcher in New Mexico, Texas, and now Washington State. The MPA program gave me the knowledge and experience to not just perform the work in my job description, but to also be able to consult on staffing studies, identify and secure grant funding for various projects, and truly understand the big picture on the inner workings of a department and what impacts crime and community as a whole.

"The MPA program's focus on the sciences of research methodology and implementation gave me the ability to ask the hard questions..."

As law enforcement enters a new era, words such as "defund police" and "social justice" have become marching orders. The MPA program's focus on the sciences of research methodology and implementation gave me the ability to ask the hard questions about what these phrases mean, what we hope to accomplish moving forward, and what the implementation of such goals would look like for front line workers.



Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Sungdae Lim

Sungdae Lim joined Sam Houston State University in 2019. He holds a PhD and MA in Public Administration from Florida State University. He was born and raised in South Korea and moved to the U.S. in 2012 to start his academic career. Dr. Lim specializes in nonprofit and public management with a particular focus on leadership theory, mission and value conceptions, innovation, coproduction, and community capacity.



Q: Can you tell us about your experience serving in the public sector?

Before joining academia, I served in the Air Force of South Korea for seven years as a staff sergeant, where I had a variety of public-service experiences. As an operations staff member in the Close Air Support Center, my role was to perform operation duties for Army-Air Force joint missions and Korea-U.S. Combined Forces drills. Through my active military service, I learned the value of public service, which helped to shape my public service motivations.

Q: Why did you decide to become an educator in the field of Public Administration and nonprofit management?

I left the Air Force in 2011 to pursue an academic career in the fields of public administration and policy. Driven by the public-service identity that I developed during my undergraduate studies and my seven year career in the Air Force, I thought that researching and teaching students how to serve the public would be the most exciting and meaningful thing I could do with my life. I was right. As I continued my studies, I became interested in understanding the value-enhancing roles of organizations and started to interact with professionals outside the government who worked to improve public-service provision performance. This eventually helped me decide to focus on nonprofit leadership, co-production, cross-sector partnerships, and the creation of social capital.

Q: Could you describe your teaching philosophy?

I approach teaching with the purpose of engaging students to further their academic and career goals through classroom learning and participation. To show students that the concepts covered in class have practical utility, I tie my lessons to my working knowledge of the public and non-profit sectors. I also stress diversity and inclusion, as our university is committed to promoting a culture that embraces students from all backgrounds and perspectives. My goal is to make sure all students are well-served, both inside and outside the classroom, and that the diversity that students bring to class is viewed as a resource, a strength, and a benefit.

Q: What advice would you have for a first-semester student?

When they resume their studies, many MPA students have been away from campus for several years. This can be a challenge, especially for mid-career professionals, who need to manage their studies, professional careers, and families. To keep track of their school activities, students should keep a record of all their course-related deadlines in the same calendar. An easy way to do this is to use Outlook and to synchronize the calendar across active devices. Also, students who have questions or need guidance should contact their instructors as early as possible. This ensures that help can be provided in a timely manner. Don't ever let your classes get ahead of you.

New MPA Course: Governing Complex Policy Problems

By *Fatih Demiroz, Ph.D.*

I am excited to announce that I created a new course “Governing Complex Policy Problems” for the Summer 2021 semester. The course touches on two critical public administration and emergency management topics: governance and complex systems. You may wonder what these terms mean and why I would teach them. All me to explain.

As our societies get more complex, so do our problems. Every day, we reach new horizons in science, develop new technologies, and construct new facilities and infrastructure. These artifacts make our lives easier; however, they also make our social and technical systems more complex. Increasingly, as the social and technical systems that surround us break down (e.g., nuclear reactor accidents, power grid failures), we turn to our government authorities for solutions.

“...today’s complex policy problems and issues require unique and novel approaches and solutions.”

With their imperfect tools, incomplete information, limited authority, and inadequate resources, government agencies at all levels often struggle to handle such wicked problems. Furthermore, there is the constant pressure placed upon government agencies to do more with fewer resources, and increased demands for accountability and transparency (rightly so). Given this context, how can the field of public management address today’s issues and problems?

In this course, I argue that today’s complex policy problems and issues require novel approaches and solutions. This is because traditional public policy and management tools offer short-term solutions and create side effects that can cause even more problems. The concepts and theories explored in this class will help students recognize some of the shortcomings of traditional policy and management tools. This course will also help students to develop systems thinking skills. Although this course is built on the governance and complex systems theories, it is not a theory course. Rather, students have opportunities to analyze and discuss a variety of case studies that explore problems related to nuclear accidents, criminal networks, and market failures.

If you would like more information on this class, please to contact me at: fxd009@shsu.edu.



Recent MPA Graduates

[Spring 2020]

Hartmann, Taylor C.
Hebert, Brynne E.
Kroviak, Adam
Miksch, Ashley R.
Negrete, George S.
Norman, Donald A.
Powell, Cody R.
Redd, Dennis R.
Sanchez, Herbert A.

[Fall 2020]

Anderson, Jason F.
Ansley, Rebecca E.
Brinkley, Scott
Brooks, Debra J.
Cordon, Towanda
Furlong, Michael D.
Joiner, Travis D.
Killings, Jonathan P.
Perry, Xavier D.
Wagnon, April L.
Zitzmann, Jonathan E.

[Spring 2021]

Cunningham, Robert W.
Gibson, David A.
Hernandez, Devon M.
McDonald, Megan A.
Ray, Randy H.
Roy, Daniel P.



In Memoriam

By students enrolled during the MPA Program's inaugural semester

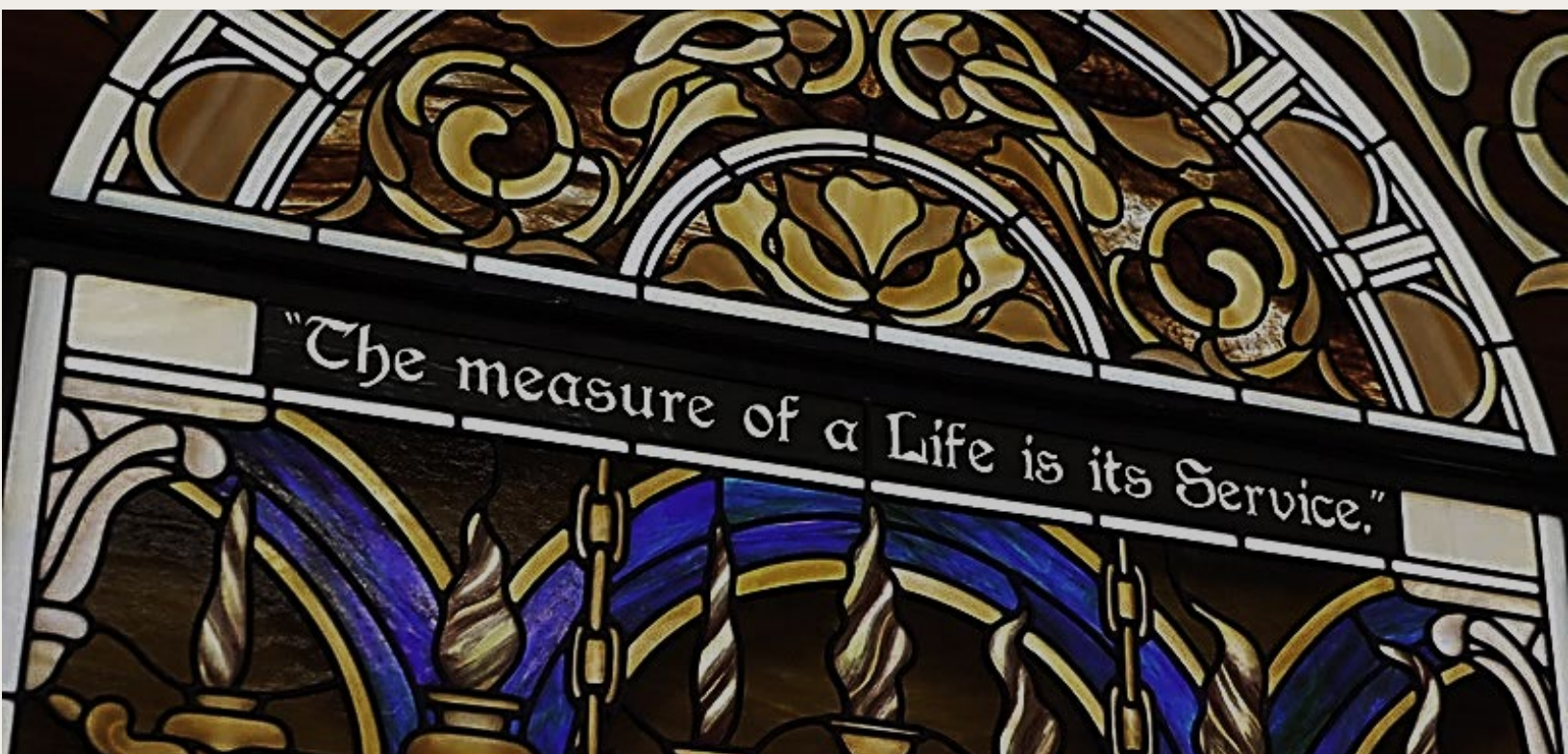
It is with a heavy heart that his classmates announce the passing of our friend Dan Rathe. One of the first students in the MPA Program, Dan's life embodied the SHSU motto: *The Measure of a Life is its Service.*

His almost 20 years at Lone Star College, first as a professor, then a program director of emergency management, saw him prepare countless paramedics to serve our communities. Outside of work, he spent time teaching thru his consulting firm, serving as a volunteer fire fighter for 30 years with Klein Fire Department, as a Cub Scout troop leader, and as an active member in his church, and spending time with his family, who he loved dearly. His classmates take great comfort in the knowledge that his eldest child has followed in his footsteps onto our campus at SHSU.

We'd like to share with you one of our classroom memories of Dan. Our first semester a professor asked, "If you could tell management in your field one thing, tell the group, what it would be"? Dan replied "I can tell at the end of day which three of my students will be chiefs someday, and which will be line men their entire careers. The problem today is folks forget; we need both."

"I can tell at the end of day which three of my students will be chiefs someday, and which will be line men their entire careers. The problem today is folks forget; we need both."

-Dan Rathe



Internship Opportunity

City of Conroe

The City of Conroe initiated a Management Intern position during the Fall 2020 semester. The intern position is geared toward MPA students that are seeking internship credits and city management experience. We designed the program for students to get a flavor of various areas of Finance and Administration by spending a few weeks in each department. This provides a broad perspective of how city management operates, exposing them to diverse areas of business. For example, a student will assist department managers on projects from Accounting, Finance, Fleet Services, Information Technology, Purchasing/Warehouse, Municipal Court, and Utility Billing. The main objective for the internship is to provide students who are interested in city management with the opportunity to acquire a real-world experience. For more information, contact Sam Masiel at:

Office number: 936-522-3838

Office email: smasiel@cityofconroe.org



Alumni Update

Cody Powell [MPA '20]

Nominated for the *Person of the Year Award* by the Wise County Messenger and named a *Finalist for Citizen of The Year Award* through the Wise County Chamber of Commerce in 2020.

Stan Standridge [MPA '19]

After serving more than 25 years with the Abilene Police Department, Standridge became the Chief of the San Marcos Police Department in November 2020.

Eloy Vega [MPA '19]

Retired from the Laredo Fire Department after 22 years of service and accepted an offer for the position of Fire Chief/EMC/Fire Marshal for the City of Port Neches, TX. Also served on the American Association of Aquatic Professional's Diversity and Inclusion Committee.



Faculty Update

Fatih Demiroz, Ph.D.

Recent Publications:

- Unlu, A., Demiroz, F., Tammi, T., & Hakkarainen, P. (2021). The Complexity of Drug Consumption Room Policy and Progress in Finland. *Contemporary Drug Problems*, 1-17.
- Demiroz, Fatih. (2020). The Use of Social Media During Disasters: The Development of the Literature, its Current Topography, and Future Challenges. *Journal of Emergency Management*, 18(3), 221- 235.

Thomas W. Haase, JD, Ph.D.

Recent Publications:

- Haase, Thomas W. (2020) "Structural Change in Disaster Response Networks: Indonesia and the 2004 Indian Earthquake and Tsunami." *The Taiwanese Political Science Review*, 24 (1): 163- 219.
- Wang, Wen-Jiun, Thomas W. Haase, and Chia-Hsuan Yang. (2020) "Warning Message Elements and Retweet Counts: An Analysis of Tweets Sent during Hurricane Irma." *Natural Hazards Review*, 21 (1): 2160-185.

Sungdae Lim, Ph.D.

Recent Publications:

- Lim, S., Brower, R. S., & Berlan, D. G. (2021). Interpretive leadership skill in meaning-making by nonprofit leaders. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 1- 22.

Recent Activities:

- Credentialed in *Effective College Instruction*, Association of College and University Educators
- Program Committee Member, 2021 ARNOVA-Asia Conference

Wen-Jiun Wang, Ph.D.

Recent Publications:

- Wang, Wen-Jiun & Li, T.S (2020). Responding to Typhoon Risk: Factors That Influence Taiwan Local Elected Official's Suspension Decisions. *Taiwanese Political Science Review*, 24 (2): 151-197.
- Wang, Wen-Jiun, Haase, T.H. & Yang, C.H. (2020). Warning message elements and retweet counts: An analysis of tweets sent during Hurricane Irma. *Natural Hazards Review*, 21 (1): 160-185.

Call for Submission

Published twice a year, the MPA Student and Alumni Newsletter will provide updates on the MPA program, our faculty and staff, current students, and graduates. To ensure the Newsletter reflects your interests and celebrates your accomplishments, we welcome your contributions in the following areas:

Personal Announcements related to moves, births, marriages, deaths, etc.

Professional Announcements related to promotions, career transitions, graduations, certifications, accomplishments, awards, etc.

Activities and Events: information related to activities and events that you, your organization, or another organization plan to hold or sponsor over the next few months.

Job Opportunities: announcements related to job opportunities that you, your organization, or another organization plan to open over the next few months.

Grant Opportunities: announcements related to grant opportunities that you, your organization, or another organization plan to open over the next few months.

Information Briefs: We invite alumni to submit information briefs (400-500 words) that covers a topic that would be of interest to our student and alumni community.

Publication Reviews: We invite alumni to submit short reviews (400-500 words) of a recently published book or report that would be of interest to our student and alumni community.

Submission Deadline

The next issue of the newsletter will be published in December 2021. Submit content to Dr. Wang (wjwang@shsu.edu) by November 1, 2021.



Sam Houston
State University

Department of Political Science
1901 Avenue I Box 2149
Huntsville, TX 77341
www.shsu.edu/mpa