

IMPACT

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER SUMMER • 2018

Managing in University Communities

A CONVERSATION WITH JEFF RICHARDSON '88

by MPA student Jim Hemphill

The University of Virginia (UVA) and UNC–Chapel Hill share several attributes and are often compared to one another. Both schools are among the most reputable public universities in the South, have exemplary professional schools, contribute noteworthy research in a variety of disciplines, and each serves as a major economic engine for its respective state.

Jeff Richardson '88 understands the similarities between these two entities better than most. Last fall, he was named county executive for Albemarle County, VA—home to UVA. I spoke with Richardson about his new role and some of the challenges and opportunities that come with managing a county with a large flagship public university presence.

JH: Universities are like small municipalities. How do you deal with competing interests and sharing space and resources?

JR: It's important to recognize the substantial contribution of the University to the overall economy of the Commonwealth of Virginia. To say that UVA is an economic engine for the state is really an understatement.

A tremendous effect on Virginia's economy is attributed to UVA—and the impact is quantifiable. From a

governmental point of view, living with UVA in the same community requires intentional, formalized communication—standing meetings with key stakeholders that set agendas that are meaningful. We are blessed to have one of the preeminent public universities in the nation.



Jeff Richardson (right), at a recent board of supervisors meeting. (Photo courtesy of Albemarle County)

UVA creates dynamic energy and the county needs to be a part of the conversations regarding growth. Those conversations are embedded in [the county's] day-to-day operations. Collaboration is key and has to do with the University taking an authentic interest in how things are going in

continued on page 3

CONTENTS

- 2 Director's Column: Bill Rivenbark
- 4 True Carolina Blue: Julia Da Silva
Congratulations, Class of 2018!
- 5 Diversity and Inclusion
- 6 Carolina MPA Alumni Forum and Deil Wright Lecture
- 7 On the Move
- 8 Save the Date for Upcoming Events

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN



Bill Rivenbark

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It is busy here in the MPA program and I am happy to report that we are making the transition from one academic year to the next by building on our accomplishments during the most recent academic year of 2017–2018.

We began the year in July 2017 by receiving an important letter from Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). After completing a two-year accreditation review process, NASPAA notified us that the MPA program is accredited for

another seven years. We were then successful in recruiting 27 on-campus students and 58 online students to the program. We continue to prepare those students as public service leaders.

The academic year had additional highlights, thanks to our outstanding faculty. In November 2017, we hosted our second immersion experience for students, focused on diversity and inclusion and led by faculty member Leisha DeHart-Davis. Immersion is an annual course which offers both online and on-campus students the opportunity to make connections with each other and learn from MPA faculty with expertise in government and nonprofit administration. It was extremely successful given the timely importance of the topic—like our Alumni Association's focus, this year's immersion focused on diversity and inclusion—and the networking that occurred between our students.

In March 2018, *US World News and Report* announced rankings of graduate schools in which the MPA program improved two positions since 2017, tying for 23rd in the public affairs category. The program also earned its highest ranking in the local government management specialty area, ranking third.

The MPA program has another impressive number to report—we graduated a record number 82 students, all of whom possess the necessary competencies to become the next generation of public service leaders.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the alumni who participated in the recent alumni survey, where we sought information on how to strengthen alumni engagement. Two highlights from the survey included that more than 65 percent of the respondents provided financial support to the MPA program over the past five years and alumni enjoy attending regional events, namely our happy hour hubs.

We graduated a record number 82 students, all of whom possess the necessary competencies to become the next generation of public service leaders.

In closing, let me thank you for your financial generosity as these funds are critical to providing the scholarships necessary to recruit the best to Carolina. Additionally, we will offer several happy hour hubs during academic year 2018–2019 in response to your feedback. Without question, we understand that our alumni represent a major strength of the MPA program and we want to continue to look for ways to maintain and strengthen our connection with you over time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Rivenbark". The signature is fluid and cursive.

William C. Rivenbark
Professor and Director



continued from Managing in University Communities, on page 1

Albemarle County, and vice versa. When identifying key partner agencies, the University is at the top of the list. We look at our county's values—which should reflect our community's values—and we have a value for innovation and learning. The quality of life in the Albemarle County community is directly connected with the quality of education and UVA plays a vital role in that equation.

JH: Coming in as an outsider to Virginia and Albemarle County, how have you gone about building relationships in the community?

JR: I need to be open and interested in anything I can learn about the community and region, and it's a steep learning curve. Six months in, I'm still having first-time conversations with key leaders and community stakeholders. Large universities have layers of complexity and multiple layers of relationships—between the University and town, University and county, county and state, and other counties.

This requires a tremendous amount of focus, energy, and discipline. I have had to be more interested than I am interesting—past experiences help to build an initial level of confidence that I am competent to do the job, but there are many past experiences that may not specifically resonate with this different community. I have to be focused on not trying to solve problems without having a full

understanding of the community. I have also had to differentiate between what needs my attention now, what I can entrust to the other professionals around me, and how I can build rapport and working relationships with the board.

I'm not afraid to say that it can be overwhelming, and I think that you should expect that in a vibrant and growing community. Coming into this role, I expected a frenetic pace and fast tempo, and I've tried to absorb and learn as much as I can as fast as I can.

JH: In the aftermath of the white nationalist protests in Charlottesville, what is Albemarle County doing to balance safety concerns with First Amendment protections to ensure that citizens can engage in protest without fear of violence?

JR: We're staying in close contact with the University, having regular and recurring meetings and opportunities to talk. We stay closely aligned with the county attorney's office to understand our ordinances on public events and public safety and prevailing state law specifically considering public assembly and use of public parks.

We try to consider the balance between protection of First Amendment rights of citizens with the right of public safety. Public safety is a cornerstone of local government. We are not as affected on a day-to-day basis

as the city and University have been, but at the same time, we understand that we're right in the middle of everything. We want to show a high level of community and political sensitivity and not ignore the things that are going on in our region and nation.

In general, we have a regional approach to public safety. Some examples are our regional communications center (911) and regional jail which serves the city, county, and University. We have commissions that oversee each of our regional public safety initiatives which meet with regularity to closely communicate with police.

For large events, we have standing meetings with city, county, and University representatives regarding large public gatherings, parades, and demonstrations. We have to be coordinated among these agencies because events are sometimes not prescriptive to being in just one jurisdiction. It takes intentional collaboration and systems in place for formal communication. These systems place an emphasis on lateral, cross-agency coordination and the diffusion of resources.

As an outsider to both to the state of Virginia and the unique management challenges present in Albemarle County, Richardson has his work cut out for him. His introspective approach to his role, his years of public service, and his Carolina MPA experience will ensure that Albemarle County is in good hands for years to come.

TRUE CAROLINA BLUE: JULIA DA SILVA

by Sarah Dickson '18

As an undergraduate student at UNC, Julia Da Silva developed a passion for social work. She was involved with a sexual assault survivor advocacy group called Project Dinah. Through this experience, Da Silva fostered a desire to work in advocacy. While an intern at the Orange County Rape Crisis Center, the staff there encouraged her to pursue a master's degree in social work (MSW) as well as an MPA to gain expertise on nonprofit management.



This mix of skillsets isn't an easy combination, and being viewed by classmates as "the student in another program" was challenging.

"I'm the feelings-oriented, social justice warrior in the MPA program and, at the same

time, a super Type-A person in the MSW program who is maybe not as open as my classmates."

She believes that exposure to MSW coursework could help MPA students become more well-rounded public officials. "Macro Social Work Practice, which is a required intro class for all MSW students, is the perfect crossover course for MPA/MSW students or MPA

students who want to think about systems of oppression, community assessments, and interventions."

Da Silva is confident that both degrees will be put to good use. "I think many of my technical management skills will come from what I learned in the MPA program. My MSW skills are ones that provide insight into the systems in which I use those technical skills. They also guide my interactions with individuals, such as clients or donors, and facilitation of work groups."

In the end, Da Silva could not be any happier with her decision to be a dual-degree student. "I really think the programs complement each other well. I feel confident in my ability and need to use knowledge from both programs and encourage others who have an interest in working to solve social inequities through systems-oriented work to pursue this path."

Congratulations, Class of 2018!

On Saturday, May 12, we honored and celebrated our graduates from Summer and Fall 2017 and Spring 2018. We welcome the most recent graduates to the Carolina MPA Alumni community.

Spring 2018

Dave Randall Allen
Diandria Lashell Barber
Samantha Anne Bauer
Levi Kenneth Carter
Kimberly Ruth Chuckray
Mark Thomas Coggins
Anthony Alan Coxie
Travis James Crayton
Julia Pivatto Da Silva
Sarah Ross Dickson
Michael Edward Doig
Kelly Estes
Bobby Fitzjohn
Bilal J. Green
Richelle Stefanie Grogg
Allison Colleen Hawkins
Anna Taylor Hawksworth

Zachary Joseph Heinrich
Jonathan Shane Holt
Matthew Graham Hughes
Ellis Gray Johnson II
Alexandra Sara Jones
Wad Sharafeldin Khalafalla
Kevin Douglas King Jr.
Leeanne Nickole Lawrence
Emily Caroline Maurer
Matthew T. McKirahan
Julia Spruill McNear
Audravette Diante Moore
Tara Ashley Nattress
Amanda Morganne Newton
Sarah Jordan O'Brien
Leah Crouch Price
Francesca Lea Ramsawak



Thomas Griffen Rice
Robin R. Ruscak
Elizabeth Wright Seguin
Rosemary Stump
Megan Tang
Toney Thompson Jr.

Philip J. Tonseth
Rebecca Lynne Truluck
Ashley Sharmane Tucker
Kaitlyn Rose Warren
Stephanie Watkins-Cruz
Ebony Nicole West

Diversity Committee Hosts Racial Equity Institute Training

by MPA students *Ebony West* and *Jim Hemphill*

In March 2018, 23 students and several MPA faculty and staff members attended a workshop led by professionals from the Racial Equity Institute (REI). This introductory workshop, titled *Groundwater*, is one of many training sessions offered by REI, focused on addressing root causes of systemic racism in governmental, healthcare, educational, and business environments.

In this data-driven presentation, REI organizers walked participants through a variety of stories and studies that illustrated how racial disparities continue to persist across

systems, including education, healthcare, and criminal justice.

The workshop was well-received, with several students commenting on the relevance of the presentation to the field of public service. "The training made me realize that the world of public service cannot operate in a silo. It has to work with other programs and schools of thought in order to address the systematic problem of racism," said student Josette Ferguson.

Student organizers and attendees were grateful for the support of a number of Carolina MPA alumni who

provided funding for the workshop. "REI was a monumental event for me and my time at UNC. Knowing our alumni association funded REI made me feel heard and connected with them," said student Libby Seguin.

Overall, the lessons learned from this training were beneficial in assisting participants in thinking critically about root causes of inequity and how we can take a systems approach to solving the racial disparities in our roles in public administration and in our local communities across the state and the country.

Educating the Next Wave of Community Development Leaders

MPA students receive first-class instruction in the classroom, but many also get on-the-job experience. Since 2011, the Development Finance Initiative (DFI) at the School of Government has offered graduate student fellowships in real estate and community economic development. Public administration students, as well as students who are working

toward their MBA or planning degree, join multi-disciplinary teams that work with faculty, staff, and local government clients on DFI projects.

DFI partners with local governments by providing development and finance expertise on building reuse and downtown revitalization, economic development, and master planning and execution.

and economic development as well as familiarity working with counties and municipalities. To learn more about the Development Finance Initiative, visit sog.unc.edu/dfi.



Ashley Tucker, MPA '18 MCRP '18 served as DFI Community Revitalization Fellow.

Several MPA alumni have served as DFI Community Revitalization Fellows while they were students, working 15–20 hours per week through the academic year.

This on-the-ground education of graduate students has an impact beyond the work of local government clients by preparing the public servants of tomorrow. Through this experience, MPA students gain valuable skills in community

MPA Alumni who have served as DFI Community Revitalization Fellows

Jordan Jones	MPA '14, MCRP '14
Omar Kashef	MPA '17, MSIS '17
Maggie Parker	MPA '15, MCRP '15
Ricky Ruvio	MPA '17
Andrew Trump	MPA '16, MCRP '16
Ashley Tucker	MPA '18, MCRP '18
Stephanie Watkins-Cruz	MPA '18, MCRP '18

Timely Topics Discussed at Carolina MPA Alumni Forum

On April 6, MPA alumni, faculty, and students gathered to hear alumni present about their roles in public administration at the Carolina MPA Alumni Forum.

Tyler Thomas '09, manager for the Town of Pembroke, spoke about his unique perspective on diversity and inclusion. Pembroke is regarded as the economic, cultural, and political center for the Lumbee Tribe, of which Thomas is a member. He also serves as a member of the UNC-Chapel Hill Alumni Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity (ACRED).

Amy Huffman '12, research and policy specialist for the Broadband Infrastructure Office of the NC Division of Information Technology, focused on the cost of technological exclusion—specifically the challenges of bringing broadband services to rural areas—and innovative ways to bridge that divide.

The forum also afforded an opportunity for then-current students Sarah Dickson, Libby



Tyler Thomas '09



Amy Huffman '12



Alice Rivlin

Seguin, Rosemary Stump, and Toney Thompson to present their research on diversity in chief administrator officer (CAO) roles. The students had done the research with Emerging Leaders in Local Government (ELGL), which is producing a “diversity dashboard.”

Alumni heard from Alice Rivlin, former director of the Office of Management and Budget and founding director of the Congressional Budget Office, who delivered the 2018 Deil Wright lecture. In addition to making the case

for “bipartisan buy-in” for economic policy, she had advice for program administrators: “Classes in an MPA program could include not just a class in conflict resolution but actual practice in finding solutions.”

Watch video of the alumni presentations and the Deil Wright lecture online at sog.unc.edu/resources/microsites/deil-s-wright-lecture.

A Note from Lib Wanner, Alumni Association Chair



The Carolina MPA Alumni Association's theme for 2018 and 2019 is diversity and inclusion. We will be exploring various facets of the topic over the next two years in events sponsored and supported by the Alumni Association and in our interactions with students, faculty, and friends of the Association.

At the Alumni Forum, third-year studio and dramatic art student Livian Kennedy created a piece of artwork from inspiration she gained from Forum attendees' responses to the question, “What does diversity and inclusion mean to you?”

Our hope is that this piece of art will remind you to invite and engage perspectives of all kinds in the public service work you do.

On the Move

Alex Ashton '04 is director of real estate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Jill Auditori '17 is a town council member in Mebane, NC, and adjunct instructor of world languages and culture at Elon University.

Casheif Belvin '17 is the assistant director of Leake and Watts Services in Bronx, NY.

Stephanie Benson '82 has been named an inaugural Woman of Excellence by the *Rochester Business Journal*.

Matthew Boyer '08 is co-founder and chief operating officer of Zylter.

Quince Brinkley '89 is the chief operating officer with GROWTH by NCRC in Washington, DC.

Jasmin Cook '17 is a program coordinator at the Federal Judicial Center in Washington, DC.

Calvin Dawson '75 has retired from his role as a program specialist with the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Matthew Duchesne '95 is chief of the Office of Native Affairs and Policy for the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, DC.

Emily Edmonds '15 is a senior consultant and grant administrator/writer with WithersRavenel in Sylva, NC.

Aaron Frank '94 is manager of the Town of Colchester, VT.

Douglas Fountain '88 is the interim executive director of Christian Communities for International Health in Sterling, VA.

Lt. Col. Sean Gallagher '08 is a professor and faculty chair at Loyola University of Maryland in Baltimore.

Richard Grogan '04 is the executive director of Community Capital of Vermont.

Barbara Gunn '74 has retired from her role as president and CEO of Seedco.

Emily Hall Bausch '17 is the chief deputy marshal for the Florida Fourth District Court of Appeals in West Palm Beach.

John Honeycutt '05 is a partner with Lucas and Kite PLC in Roanoke, VA.

Matt Hughes '18 is commissioner with the Town of Hillsborough, NC.

Sherick Hughes '99 was promoted to full professor with tenure in the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Education.

Jamie Johnson '85 is a Medicaid fiscal manager with the state of Delaware Department of Health and Human Services in New Castle.

Sana Khan '13 is operations officer for The Family and Youth Institute in Canton, MI.

Nick Lewin '96 is a founding partner with Krieger, Kim and Lewin LLP in New York, NY.

Patrick Madej '16 is a corporate budget and management analyst for the City of Durham, NC.

Mark Mallon '13 is an assistant professor of strategic management at Elon University.

David Parrish '03 is manager of the City of Greensboro, NC.

Ricky Ruvio '17 is a business analyst with the City of Winston-Salem, NC, Utilities Division.

Christine Sadler '16 is a program manager for the US Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration in Washington, DC.

Taylor Smith '16 is a management analyst with the City of Boston, MA.

Alex Terry '09 is a financial strategy analyst with the Town of Cary, NC.

Donna Warner '78 has retired from her role as director of the Local Elected Leaders Academy with the UNC School of Government.

Daniel Widenhouse '15 is an asset management consultant with Miller Spatial Services LLC in Saratoga Springs, UT.

Connor Winstead '15 is a Virginia Management Fellow with the Virginia State Corporation Commission in Richmond.



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IMPACT

Save the Date

Network with fellow MPA alumni at one of these upcoming events.

AUGUST 25

**Day of Service and
Kickoff Picnic**
School of Government

OCTOBER 26

Networking Reception
School of Government



HAPPY HOUR HUBS

SEPTEMBER 20

(Location TBD)
Charlotte, NC

SEPTEMBER 25

(Location TBD)
Atlanta, GA

OCTOBER 2

(Location TBD)
Washington, DC

