



IMPACT Alumni Newsletter



Welcoming Our New Dean

As of February 27, 2023, the School of Government has a new dean: Aimee N. Wall. Wall was previously senior associate dean and a professor of public law and government at the school. She first joined the school in 2001 and is just the fifth person to lead the School in its 92-year history.

“I’m both thrilled and grateful for the opportunity to lead the School of Government,” Wall said upon her appointment. “This is a great opportunity to find new ways for the School to serve.”

One thing Wall aims to accomplish is to further integrate the MPA program into the work the School does with public officials. To that end, Wall added an associate dean for graduate studies to the leadership team at the School and promoted Willow Jacobson into the role. “The object of this role is to help the School identify and prioritize opportunities for connection and mutual learning between MPA and the people and organizations we serve around the state,” said Wall.

In her former role as senior associate dean, Wall helped oversee the school’s administration, finances, and strategic direction. Her expertise in human services law and policy

and legislative training and support made her a trusted adviser to officials across North Carolina. Wall has worked closely with legislators, state and county officials, and others to study the state human services systems and explore opportunities for change. She also spent a decade as the faculty lead for the Legislative Reporting Service, a 90-year partnership with the North Carolina General Assembly.

Prior to joining the Carolina faculty, Wall worked in health care law with Powell, Goldstein, Frazer, and Murphy in Washington, D.C., and served as a health policy analyst in the Office of the Secretary in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She is a member of the North Carolina State Bar and the District of Columbia State Bar. A two-time Carolina alumna, Wall earned a master of public health from the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health and a J.D. at the School of Law. She holds a bachelor of arts in English from The Ohio State University.

“The thing that makes me feel connected to this work every day is the service orientation of our organization and recognizing that everybody here is part of the same mission,” said Wall. “We’re all here to support each other in serving the state, and we all care deeply about doing that in the best way possible.”

From the Director



Willow S. Jacobson, Director • 919.966.4760 • jacobson@sog.unc.edu

Since the MPA program came to the School of Government in 1997, the program has benefited from being part of the School and has found a home where the MPA

program mission is consistent and reinforces the School's mission. Dean Mike Smith provided important support and leadership for the MPA program, and the program has grown and thrived at the School. Both the leadership and broader institutional support of the School has been critical for the MPA program. Being part of what I would argue is THE premier public service school in the United States helps our program recruit faculty who are truly committed to engaged scholarship and service and attract resources and opportunities for our students.

As the School engages in a significant transition with a new leader (after having one of the longest-serving deans in Carolina's modern history), the question naturally arises, how will a new dean impact the MPA program and the wonderful relationship that it has had with the School? Dean Aimee N. Wall has made it clear that she, like her predecessor, has a strong commitment to the success of the MPA program and fully supports

the program's mission "to prepare public service leaders and create useable knowledge that improves governance" and our newly adopted vision to be "a nationally recognized leader in engaged scholarship whose faculty, students, and alumni transform thought, organizations, communities, and lives." As one example, as Aimee has been putting together her leadership team, she has identified that the MPA director will also serve as the associate dean of graduate studies for the School of Government. This means the MPA director has the chance to be formally engaged in leadership, discussions, and decision-making for the School of Government.

I am excited to see Aimee's commitment to the success of the MPA program modeled through this recognition. Prior to taking over as dean, Aimee showed her support of the program and MPA students by serving on MPA thesis substitute committees and working with MPA students. While the future holds uncertainties and undoubtedly challenges, the MPA program continues to benefit from being part of the School of Government and having leadership that supports and is committed to the success of our program, our students, our faculty, and our alumni. I look forward to the chance to work with and be led by Aimee. It is a good day to be Tar Heel.

Sincerely,

Willow S. Jacobson
Director, UNC MPA

Associate Dean for Graduate Studies

Robert W. Bradshaw Jr. Distinguished Professor of
Public Administration and Government

To support the MPA program, visit GiveToMPA.unc.edu.

School of Government Relaunches a Revitalized "Benchmarking 2.0"

Restructured and revitalized as Benchmarking 2.0, the North Carolina Benchmarking Project returned in 2022 under the direction of faculty member Obed Pasha.

Established in 1995 and placed under the leadership of Professor William Rivenbark in 1999, the project is the longest-running of its kind in the United States. It allows participating local governments a comparative basis by which to assess service delivery and costs.

Pasha takes the helm as director from Dale Roenigk, who taught *Tools for Decision Making* and led the project until his retirement from the School.

Benchmarking 2.0 enables municipalities to compare themselves with other units and with their internal operations over time. The aim is simple—yet crucial—for communities: help provide improved services to residents.

The benchmarked services reflect disciplines and responsibilities local governments employ:

<i>Central human resources</i>	<i>Building inspections</i>
<i>Solid waste management</i>	<i>Parks and recreation</i>
<i>Emergency communication</i>	<i>Fleet maintenance</i>
<i>Fire services</i>	<i>Water services</i>
<i>Police services</i>	<i>Wastewater services</i>
<i>Asphalt maintenance and repair</i>	

Through access to an intuitive, visual dashboard of data, performance strategy sessions, and annual benchmarking reports, project partners can develop solutions to systemic organizational issues and replicate successes throughout other sectors.

As the lead of the relaunch, Pasha steered the second iteration to retain a focus on its overarching "big picture"—ensuring municipalities can make needed changes to improve service delivery—while also introducing new features to improve its efficacy and outcomes. Benchmarking 2.0's new features include streamlined data collection, immediate analysis and reporting, and enhanced interaction between participating departments.

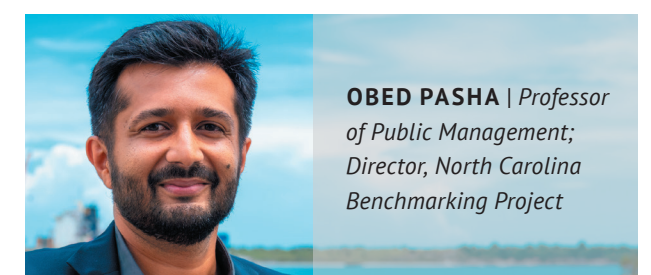
"Our focus has really pivoted to organizational outcomes and service delivery, fewer metrics, streamlined data collection through the online tool, flexible dashboards for analysis, and performance strategy sessions that bring departments together for discussions and interactions," he said.

Ten municipalities across the state are currently participating in Benchmarking 2.0, with five out of the 10 largest North Carolina municipalities among them. Many local government employees of participating units have already seen the positive effects.

"Being a part of the Benchmarking project, and process, allows us to see how we compare to agencies that are similar. It shows us areas we can improve upon, but also where we exceed," said Christine Moore, operations manager for the City of Greensboro's Emergency Management department. "Having such a detailed report will, no doubt, help us in the future as we approach our local government for higher wages, increased staffing, technology, and more."

Looking ahead, Pasha and his team aim to amplify results like these to communities across North Carolina. Benchmarking 2.0 is looking to expand its services to potential new partners, with each being granted access to the program cost-free for one year.

To learn more about Benchmarking 2.0 and explore the benefits of becoming a partner, visit benchmarking.sog.unc.edu.



OBED PASHA | Professor
of Public Management;
Director, North Carolina
Benchmarking Project

BENCHMARKING 2.0 MUNICIPALITIES

UNC MPA Celebrates Spring 2023 Commencement

by Andrea Parra De Leon

The UNC MPA Class of 2023 gathered with faculty, staff, family, and friends on May 13 to celebrate their graduation from the program. The ceremony, held at the William and Ida Friday Center, honored 66 graduates, both in-person and online students.

Honoring graduates

UNC MPA Director Willow S. Jacobson and School of Government Dean Aimee N. Wall welcomed and congratulated graduates for their achievements.

Carl W. Stenberg, James E. Holshouser Jr. Distinguished Professor of Public Administration and Government, presented the Wright Research Paper Award, honoring the legacy of its namesake—former faculty member and public administration visionary Deil S. Wright.

Stenberg presented the 2023 honor to Ben Lasley for his applied research project on Exploring Criteria for Assessing Collaborative Practices and Performance. Following graduation, Lasley will continue his career as an Environmental Protection Specialist with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Exploring what is meaningful

Peggy Merriss '82, executive director for the Georgia City-County Management Association, served as keynote speaker and discussed the importance of graduates exploring what work will be purposeful and fulfilling to them.

“Think about what meaningful work is to you and why you want to do it so that you have a guiding principle and true north—because while there are plenty of days ahead of you, there will be some that are extremely challenging,” she remarked.

Merriss encouraged graduates to think beyond the basic and simple and to commit to creating positive change.

She closed remarks by urging the public service leaders sitting before her to contribute to making this positive change for all community members they serve. “It is incumbent [of them] to do it not just for some people, but for the most people in the most equitable, engaging way.”



From left: Daisy Calixtro Badillo, Mallory Verez, and Lauren Duncan celebrate graduation with a selfie.

Student takeaways

Following the ceremony, graduates Danielle Badaki, Sherese Bonner, Ben Lasley, and Adam Moore expressed what they will take away from the MPA program.

“This program has taught me the power of relationships, the ability to work across boundaries, and a passion for helping others,” said Lasley. “I’m incredibly thankful that I found a wonderful support system in our cohort—lifelong friends.”

Bonner, a Presidential Management Fellow at the U.S. Department of Commerce, shared her gratitude for the program laying the groundwork to build a successful public service career.

“This program taught me how to translate my passions into purpose. As a result of the exposure I received in public administration through my jobs, professional work experience, and coursework, I now have a more defined career path that will set me up for success in the future.”

Badaki, a client specialist for Fountainworks, reflected upon the strength of community within the program.

“The MPA program allowed me to cultivate relationships and build critical skills to become a public servant. Through this program, I was able to build a community that supported me short-term, in my education, and long-term, through my career.”

Online student and Deputy Director of Elections for Davidson County Adam Moore shared “The UNC MPA program was the perfect match for me because public service, real people, and real issues are at the heart of the work for everyone at the School of Government. This program not only provided me with a meaningful, practical education but also instilled in me the values of ethical public service that will guide the work I do each day.”

The School of Government and UNC MPA program extend their congratulations and warm wishes to all graduates of the Class of 2023.

Spring 2023 GRADUATES

- Adrienne-Nicole Abija
- Jamie Andrews
- Danielle Badaki
- Daisy Calixtro Badillo
- Sydni Collins Behm
- Sherese LaKailin Bonner
- Liam Brailey
- Elisabeth Butler
- Charlie Chapman
- Lillian Copley
- Bradley Craig Downs
- Cierren Edmondson
- Sara M. Ellis-Sanborn
- Rory C. Howard
- Joe Iadonisi
- Delaney Allegra King
- Jessica Melvin King
- Michelle Bloch Kirsh
- Kellie Landauer
- Benjamin James Lasley
- Elizabeth Lo
- Taryn Macaylee McDonald
- Meghan Moody
- Adam Bryson Moore
- Sally Moore
- Jacob Orman
- Andrea Parra DeLeon
- Jack Pendergraph
- Elizabeth Ivey Purcell
- Amie Snow
- Francesco Tassi
- Brian Deane Taylor
- Maurice Blaine Tosé II (Bear)
- Elise Traywick
- Mallory Verez
- Amy Rochelle Watson
- Lauren Williams



Life Events

On the Move

Lori Armstrong '22

Federal Program Specialist, Commonwealth of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

Rachel Snyder Miller '22

Senior Government Consultant, Milepost, Knoxville, TN

Jacob Watson '22

Fire Engineer, City of Winston-Salem, NC

Angelika Cortes '21

Client Account Manager, Deloitte, Atlanta, GA (Remote)

Mimi Clemens '20

Grants Management Specialist, FEMA Region 1 Office, Boston, MA

Matt Hutton '20

Assistant Vice President, Economic Research and Policy, New York City Economic Development Corporation, New York, NY

Jake Levitas '20

Planning Supervisor, Urban Projects Group, City of Raleigh, NC

Brian Murphy '20

Budget and Performance Analyst, Town of Apex, NC

Elizabeth Anderson '19

Director, NC Center for Afterschool Programs, Public School Forum of North Carolina, Raleigh

Lindsey Bineau '19

Communications Consultant, Washington State Department of Ecology, Lacey, WA

James Owen '19

Policy Advisor and Special Projects Manager, City of Little Rock, AR

Julia Da Silva '18

Co-founder and Principal Consultant, Students First Consulting, Durham, NC

Jason Hyatt '18

Public Library Director, Buncombe County, NC

Wad Khalafalla '18

Director of Internal Communications, Huge, Inc., Brooklyn, NY

Griffen Rice '18

Senior Associate, Capital Markets, Carbon Disclosure Project North America, New York, NY

Kizito Wenani '18

Assistant Nurse Manager, Inpatient Mental Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Louisville, KY

James Hoppe '17

Development, Security, and Operations Engineer, Ekos, Charlotte, NC

Paul Moon '17

Program Manager, LeadersAtlas, Boston, MA

Dipika Mouli '17

Principal, Common Group, Washington, D.C.

Nick Smith '17

Project Planner, City of Winston-Salem, NC

Luisa Agathon '16

Neighbor Support Manager, City of Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Chaz Offenburg '16

Deputy Finance Officer, Orange County, NC

Andrea Ponkivar '16

Director of Advancement, Cleveland Zoological Society, Cleveland, OH

Ryan Rotundo '16

Director of Programs, National Down Syndrome Society, Washington, DC

David Goldberg '15

Vice President, Disaster Resilience and Recovery, Case Strategies Group, Dania Beach, FL

John O'Daniel '15

Manager, Town of Atlantic Beach, NC

Caroline Simpson '15

Senior Business Analyst, Wake County Community Services, Raleigh, NC

Ryan Regan '14

Project Developer, Azimuth Renewables, St. Louis, MO

Casselle Smith McCoy '12

Partner, Troutman Pepper, Raleigh, NC

Scott Sherrill '12

Associate Wealth Advisor, Bradshaw Financial Planning, Inc., Salisbury, NC

Kevin Bryant '09

Managing Director, GoodCitizen, Los Angeles, CA

Amanda Kaufman '09

Assistant Manager, City of Staunton, VA

Chris Riddick '07

Principal Technical Advisor, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, Logistics Management Institute, Tysons, VA

Mary Tiger '07

Assistant Director, Department of Water Management, City of Durham, NC

Emily Anderson Ward '07

Director of Institutional Giving and Government Relations, New York Legal Assistance Group, New York, NY

Jamie McCall '06

Research and Insights Manager, Center for Board Effectiveness, Deloitte, Raleigh, NC

Alicia James '04

Program Manager, NC Office of Strategic Partnerships, Raleigh, NC

Andrew Dollar '03

Chief Operating Officer, Huntsville Committee of 100, Huntsville, AL

Owen Franklin '03

Vice President and Regional Director, Trust for Public Land, Philadelphia, PA

Ben Mount '03

Senior Assistant General Counsel, North Carolina League of Municipalities, Raleigh, NC

Delvin Davis '00

Senior Policy Analyst, Decarceration and Criminal Legal System Reform, Southern Poverty Law Center, Montgomery, AL

Katie Loovis '00

Executive Director, North Carolina Community Colleges Foundation, Raleigh, NC

Kyle Gray '95

Major Gifts Officer, Columbia University, New York, NY

Jennifer Heaton-Amrhein '92

Energy Policy Advisor, Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

New Additions

Alex Lamperti '18

and Trevor Lamperti welcomed Camille Jane Lamperti on November 3, 2022

Adora Whitney Thayer '17

and Jeremiah Thayer welcomed Maven Amilyn Thayer on February 23, 2023

Jonathan Griffin '16

and Kitty Kendall welcomed Thomas Anthony Griffin on November 30, 2022

Nick Byrne '15

and Mary Irvine welcomed Leo Francis Byrne on October 12, 2022

Rachel Meyerson Chester '12

and Stephen Chester welcomed Judah Miles Chester on August 8, 2022

Amanda Stafford McRell '12

and David McRell welcomed Kinsley Gail McRell on January 18, 2023 and Henry James McRell on February 11, 2023

Nuptials

Michael Waters '97

married Cynthia Latimer Mathews December 16, 2022

A Successful GiveUNC 2023

On March 28th, the School of Government held its first GiveUNC event since the Campaign for Carolina ended. Despite the break, the event was a huge success, with 275 individuals from the School's community—including friends, alumni, students, faculty, and staff—contributing \$140,780. Of this amount, more than \$114,000 was designated to MPA endowments and funds, with \$87,000 going towards scholarships and \$17,975 being allocated to the new UNC MPA Director's Innovation Endowment Fund.

This newly established endowment will provide funding that supports co- and extra-curricular opportunities for

students, innovative instructional and developmental events for students and alumni, and administrative projects for faculty and staff. The money raised during GiveUNC was a huge step in establishing this new funding source.

We are so grateful for all the support we received during this amazing day and hope you'll save the date—March 26, 2024—and plan to celebrate GiveUNC with us next year!



We still need help establishing the UNC MPA Director's Fund.

If you'd like to make a gift and enable us to continue our agile, proactive, and responsive approach to developing public service leaders, visit give.unc.edu/donate?p=SOGM.

2022–23 MPA by the numbers

180
STUDENTS

132 online
48 on campus



76 COURSES
47 online
29 on campus

69
SCHOOL OF
GOVERNMENT
COURSES
TAUGHT BY MPA
FACULTY

40 in person | **25**
online | **4** hybrid

90%
ONLINE
STUDENTS
WORKING FULL-
OR PART-TIME

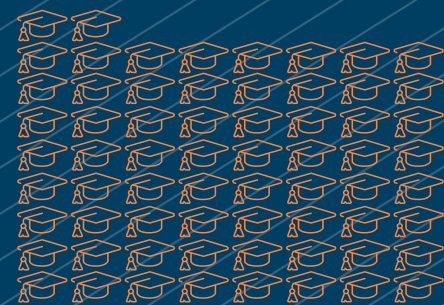


7
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
GRANTS

SUPPORTING
21 research assistants
7 graduate assistants
4 on campus
3 online

\$450,221
AWARDED
\$159,500 on campus
\$290,721 online

66 GRADUATES



1,354
ALUMNI

WORK SECTORS
Government
Local **313**
State **102**
Federal **122**

Military **17**
Nonprofit **220**
Higher education **88**
Private **308**
Other **11**

LOCATIONS
47 U.S. States
19 countries

UNC MPA Graduate Carries Program Experiences to Presidential Management Fellowship

When North Carolina native Sherese Bonner earned her undergraduate degree in public policy from the University of Virginia, she came to two conclusions. “I wanted to learn how we bring programs and policies to life through implementation,” Bonner said. “I am also from North Carolina and grew up right outside of Charlotte. I knew I wanted to come back, and a great way to do that was to complete my graduate studies here.” Those conclusions led her to the UNC MPA program.

Bonner is one of 37 UNC MPA graduates who earned degrees this past May. She has used her rich and varied experiences—including a Professional Work Experience (PWE) with the Federal Reserve Board, a John M. Belk Impact Fellowship, serving on the program’s Diversity Committee, and serving as a research assistant for the Local Government Workplaces Initiative (LGWI)—to secure a finalist position with the U.S. Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) program. The inaugural Flo Miller Diversity in Public Service Scholarship recipient, Bonner has found many ways to apply her experiences in the MPA classroom to practical, real-world work.

Among her most meaningful experiences was her summer PWE practicum with the Federal Reserve Board, which she continued during the academic year. Bonner began assisting with operations in the Large Institution Supervision Coordinating Committee. While working with human resources, she created a senior leadership onboarding manual, planned a training expo for bank regulators, and planned and hosted team-building activities. When the fall semester began, she transitioned to work with the Corporate Governance and Secretariat Team, where she worked on a policy gap analysis and participated in senior leadership meetings.

“I have been able to apply what I’ve learned in courses like Organizational Theory and Human Resources Management,” Bonner said. “It’s one of the best experiences of my graduate school career.”



Sherese Bonner '23

With ongoing economic instability in the post-COVID era, Bonner also values the opportunity to watch the Federal Reserve’s response. “There is so much going on in our financial system, and I’ve had a front seat to what top decision-makers are thinking and doing in this unique time. It has been an amazing experience.”

Relationships with School of Government faculty, including Kimalee Dickerson and Leisha DeHart-Davis, were a valuable part of Bonner’s experience. She worked with DeHart-Davis in LGWI to carry out workplace climate surveys and

advise local governments on best practices to improve workplaces. Her time with the initiative provided a hands-on experience that translated to internships and fellowships.

“Dr. DeHart-Davis trusts her research assistants to take on important projects, communicate with clients, and assist with deliverables,” Bonner said. “We’re meeting a critical need for local governments and that experience was very impactful. It added so many tools to my toolkit that I can carry forward in my career.”

Bonner also credits Dickerson for impacting her graduate school experience as an advisor to the program’s Student Diversity Committee. Through Dickerson’s “fantastic advice and support,” the committee held several events for MPA students this year that tied diversity and equity to the public administration workplace.

Bonner also served as a John M. Belk Impact Fellow during her time in the MPA program. The fellowship serves as a training ground for future social impact leaders. It places students from graduate schools, four-year institutions, and community colleges in positions to support and advance education initiatives. Working in the Office of Governor Roy Cooper, Bonner assisted with an array of initiatives under the workforce policy advisor.

“I was able to work on projects related to early childhood transportation, youth apprenticeships, HBCU

Continued on page 10

and minority-serving institutions, and prison education programs,” Bonner said. “It was great to apply much of what I studied during my undergraduate career and there were many connections to commerce that I’m hoping to use in my future work.”

The next chapter in Bonner’s journey will take her to Washington D.C. as a Presidential Management Fellow. PMF is the premier leadership development program for individuals launching careers in the federal government. After a rigorous testing and interview process, Bonner landed a position in the Department of Commerce, working in the Office of Secretary Gina M. Raimondo. Her work as a program analyst will allow her to apply her MPA and professional experiences to policy implementation

MPA Professional Development Grant Program

During the last academic year, UNC MPA piloted a Student Professional Development Grant program. This initiative provides funding of up to \$250 to every student for professional development expenses. These expenses include conference attendance, professional meetings, workshops, and professional organization memberships. This funding is in addition to program-sponsored professional development such as registration for the NCCCMA Winter Seminar and School of Government courses. During the pilot year, nine students applied for and received funding.

To receive funding, students must apply for development opportunities, and discuss with Alison Binkley, associate director of career services and professional development, how the experience fits with their professional goals. Afterward, students reflect upon their experiences. These sponsored experiences provided tremendous value to students, as shown by the following statements:

“I was able to network and meet with alumni, learn about skills needed for MPA students, and attend coaching sessions with current managers.”

Shane Digan '24

within the department’s 13 bureaus.

“Many bureaus need support with policy implementation, financial management, HR and contracts, risk management, and data governance,” Bonner said. “I’ll be working on a cross-cutting team to assist with this work in the Implementation Coordination Office.”

Bonner’s time in the classroom may be complete, but she will take her UNC MPA experiences with her every step of the way.

“I love North Carolina. UNC is a top-tier institution, and it was my dream school growing up. It felt like a full circle moment to end my time in higher education with a degree from Carolina.”

“Prior to the conference, I knew almost nothing about the structure and behavior of a budget office. The conference sessions introduced me to concepts like zero-based budgeting and participatory budgeting. The sessions were helpful, but nothing compares to connecting with budget professionals from across the state.” | Scott Powell '24

“I attended presentations from the chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, regional artists, and community development advocates, and public art funders. I also networked with arts administrators from across the South. Some of my takeaways include: grant processes for public art (specifically focusing on the story to be told with the art rather than the artists’ resume. Considerations for equitable pay for guest artists from near and far, and how to engage communities who have been impacted or will be impacted. These takeaways were important to me as I consider foundation funding, leading proposal reviews, and equitably building community through the arts.”

Lauren Duncan '22

After a very successful pilot year, the MPA program is excited to continue to pilot this initiative for a second year and encourage professional development relating to students’ unique interests.

UNC MPA Student Eugene Bradley Wins NASPAA Student Simulation Competition



Each year, the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) holds a competition for students in NASPAA-affiliated programs called the NASPAA Student Simulation Competition. This annual competition allows students to learn through experience to solve public sector challenges for a cash prize. For years, including through the pandemic, UNC MPA students have competed. This year six students participated, including online student Eugene Bradley. Registration for all the students as well as travel for Bradley and Perisco to compete with funds provided by an endowment established by Mal '69 and Amanda Watlington.

Bradley grew up close to Morehead City, NC, where he lived until 2012 when he accepted a full-time position in the Kansas Air National Guard. He has been an active advocate for Guardsmen in Kansas and across the country and would like to continue serving the public when he retires at 20 years. Having served in the military for 16 years, he says, “I am trying to seek out opportunities that will challenge me while also allowing me to work with a new set of people.” Through the UNC MPA program and the NASPAA Student Simulation Competition, Bradley has gained experience working in a non-military setting.

Bradley’s simulation team addressed wildfire mitigation. Bradley and five other students from around the country played various roles on a simulated town task force to create a wildfire mitigation plan. As with real-life public sector roles, each task force member had to balance competing interests in their roles and priorities as a group while working together to solve the problem.

Bradley found reassurance from the event that he can succeed when he steps out of his comfort zone. “More often than not, I bring back new tools or lessons that I can apply to my full-time position,” he said. He also

shared that he felt fortunate to have a diverse team from various backgrounds, including wildland firefighters and graduate students fresh out of undergrad. Bradley was able to use his military experience in the competition. “I learned a lot from this experience, especially from my teammates,” said Bradley. “We had respect for each other and balanced our competition goals well while also having fun, ensuring it was an effective mitigation plan.”

2023 PARTICIPANTS FROM UNC MPA

Eugene Bradley | Liam Brailey | Mariah Canup
Melissa Cordell | Shane Digan | Thomas Persico

The competition emphasizes creating equitable policies and Bradley’s team learned how many underserved populations are often forgotten in the mitigation process. They also noted disadvantaged community members faced additional fire-related risks, including property loss and health concerns resulting from inhalation and burns. Bradley reflected on the impact the UNC MPA program had in teaching him the importance of equitable policies that balance the needs of all interested parties. “The opportunities in class to debate and discuss our material helped prepare me for intense discussions we tackled during our mitigation plan with people I had never met. I’m a better communicator and listener, and I can analyze things far better now when I hear from multiple sides.”

Bradley plans to say with the military for at least five to six years after he graduates in December 2023. After his service, he hopes to return to North Carolina and work in local government somewhere along the coast and enjoy retirement on the beach.



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Upcoming **EVENTS**

REGISTER NOW

2023 Alumni Kick-Off Picnic

Saturday, August 26 | 5–7 p.m.

UNC School of Government

Join MPA alumni, faculty, staff, friends of the program, and their families at the School of Government to welcome the newest cohort to the program and kick off the academic year at the annual UNC MPA Alumni Kick-Off Picnic! This is a family-friendly event with tasty food and great conversation!

Register at give.unc.edu/sog/events/mpa-kickoff

COMING SOON

Deil S. Wright Public Service Forum and Reception

The Deil S. Wright Lecture is evolving, and we're excited to invite you to join us in person for the inaugural Deil S. Wright Public Service Forum—an interactive panel discussion held during the UNC MPA Immersion Weekend. The Forum will be followed by the annual Alumni Reception. Look for details and registration information soon!