

# Master of Public Administration Newsletter

Fall 2018  
Issue 3



## MPA Program News

### Director's Update

The MPA program is excited to announce it is in now housed within the Max S. Baucus Institute. Established in the spring of 2017, the Baucus Institute aims “to prepare our next generation of public servants and engage in work that makes a meaningful difference for today’s leaders.” Under the Baucus Institute, MPA students gain new opportunities such as the Baucus Leaders Program, Summer Study Abroad in China, and the Big Sky Poll. According to Professor Sam Panarella, director of the Institute, the move presents better recruitment for both the MPA program and the law school. In addition, it serves as a model to provide a quality public service education for our students. The Baucus Institute not only offers the MPA program added faculty and new facilities, but stronger programming opportunities for our students. This year we earned two national rankings for the affordability of our



program and faculty focus on students. For updates, please view our [new website](#).

Sara Rinfret, MPA Director



The 2nd Annual Celebrating Students Event is on May 2 in Brantly Hall!  
RSVP today.

**Online MPA degree option rated as one of the best in the nation for 2018.**

### Certificate in Public Administration

Certificate in Public Administration The MPA Program now offers a Certificate in Public Administration to any person holding a baccalaureate degree. By completing a short set of courses such as public administration, human resource management, budgeting, and organization theory, the certificate program strengthens basic knowledge and skills pertaining to public service. According to student Sonny Mazullo, “After three terms of AmeriCorps and six years working in the nonprofit sector, I realized I really enjoyed public administration. The University of Montana’s Certificate in Public Administration offers the opportunity to refine my professional skill set while gaining new insights into the realm of government and nonprofit work.” In only four classes, students can obtain a graduate level certificate in public administration.

## Alumni Corner



Attorney General Tim Fox has served as Montana's 24th Attorney General since his induction in January 2013. Tim began his MPA journey in 1983, but left his final paper unfinished as he dove into law school. "It haunted me for many years," Tim said, referring to his incomplete degree. Encouraged by President Seth Bodnar and Dr. Sara Rinfret, Tim returned to school in 2018 and completed his degree remotely. "The university made it easy and affordable to finish," Tim said. "With technology there are no excuses." Despite a battle with colon cancer, Tim was able to complete much of his schoolwork while going through chemotherapy. He is now fully recovered and satisfied to have finally earned his degree thirty-four years later. As the president-elect of the National Association of Attorneys General, a position he will assume in January 2020, Tim aims to leave behind a legacy of civility and statesmanship in a time of deteriorated political rhetoric.

## Student Spotlight

Becca MacLean is a second semester online student in the MPA program. Becca was interested in the MPA program after conversations with Professor Andrea Vernon at a Montana Nonprofit Association Conference. Becca works for Arts Missoula, an arts advocacy non-profit in Missoula, as both the Public Art Coordinator and the liaison to the City of Missoula Public Art Committee. She is responsible for project administration and public correspondence, and helps facilitate Arts Missoula's wide range of events and programming. As a student in the Nonprofit Administration Track, Becca finds her courses to be especially applicable to her current job. She states, "Although it is challenging to juggle full-time work and full-time school, I feel extremely supported in my schoolwork and know that the professors and administration are only an email or phone call away."



## Robots and Virtual Reality Technology



The MPA program strives to advance the use of cutting-edge technology in the classroom, and has been utilizing robots since Fall 2017. From a webcam at home, the robots allow students to engage remotely with classmates and instructors with ease. Students connected from home can even move the robot

around the classroom! Kristin Sleeper, a doctoral candidate in the W.A. Franke College of Forestry & Conservation and a Certificate in Public Administration student, details her experience: “I am currently based in Lincoln, Nebraska, taking our foundation course via robot. With the robot, I am an active member of the classroom, able to join discussions and complete small group work and even present when needed. I am on a level playing field with the students in Missoula, with the added flexibility of being remote. I would not be able to complete my degree requirements and field research without this ability.” In addition to the robots, the MPA program has been experimenting with virtual reality goggles, providing students with approaches to become better prepared in the public administration profession. This pilot program is in two core classes – Public Administration and Human Resource Management.

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