

# BAUCUS

## I N S T I T U T E

### U N I V E R S I T Y O F M O N T A N A



## Dear Friends,

The late summer sun is streaming through my office window and there is a fall-like chill in the air as I write this note. Normally our Baucus Leaders and Baucus China Program participants would be stopping by my office daily to regale me with their wonder and gratitude for the life-altering experiences they had over the summer in Washington, DC and China. Our new Department of Public Administration and Policy students would stop me in the hallways to share their excitement about the academic journey they are about to undertake.

But aside from a trickle of masked students on campus, these cherished hallmarks of the beginning of fall are not happening in quite the same way. The global pandemic has impacted us here at the Institute and in Montana in ways familiar to all of you receiving this newsletter. It has been a strange and challenging year. But it has also been an incredibly inspiring and hopeful time to be running a public policy institute.

As you will see in this newsletter, we have not been standing still during the pandemic—far from it. The 2020 Baucus Leaders did not simply make do with remote internships this summer, they found creative ways to serve their legislative offices that added true value and improved the lives of their constituencies. The DPAP program has continued to grow this year, maintaining its place as one of the fastest-growing departments at the University of Montana. Our students found ways to engage in public service that helped keep critical local, state, and federal government entities running smoothly and eased the burden on those most impacted by the pandemic. Additionally, we're working to begin a new Institute program, the Baucus Climate Scholars, that pays tribute to Max's significant legislative accomplishments in preserving public lands and will give Montana's best and brightest students hands-on opportunities to intern with NGOs, think tanks, and state and federal agencies on the frontline of climate change response. In short, we have been busy working to fulfill our mission of inspiring people to engage in public service.

I will let you read more about these amazing individuals and programs in this newsletter. As always, we are so grateful for the support and encouragement of our friends. I am always happy to chat about our Institute and its programs, so please don't hesitate to reach out with your thoughts, suggestions, or just to say hello.

*Sam Panarella, Director*

## 2020 Baucus Leaders: Interning During a Pandemic

Despite an extremely tough spring for planning, communication, and travel, five of the ten selected 2020 Baucus Leaders were able to participate in internships with congressional and policy-related offices in Washington, D.C. this summer, whether in-person or remote.

Three Baucus Leaders worked remotely for the Department of Transportation: Shane Enzensperger worked with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Jacob Elder worked with the Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration (PHMSA), and Christa Street worked with the Office of International Programs (OIP).

“I feel that they brought me in and treated me like a qualified coworker as soon as day one,” said Enzensperger, who spoke highly of the “talented and dedicated people” at OIP. “The experience has been extremely positive.” He plans to apply to the IRS after graduation and use his supervisor from this internship as a primary work reference.

“It’s been fascinating to learn more about not just the OIP,” said Street, “but how state DOTs and other offices in the Federal Highway Administration (such as the Office of Technical Services) pursue international cooperation and exchange information on a wide variety of topics, particularly road safety.” Even though she was telecommuting, Street said that getting to know the team and their “fascinating international backgrounds” was the best part of her internship.

There are always serendipitous connections for Baucus Leaders. For Street, who is from New Mexico and has lived in Argentina and Mexico, it was having a supervisor who spoke Spanish and grew up in Latin America, and meeting another employee who had worked for the Mexican consulate in Tijuana. Her supervisors were equally impressed and wrote letters of recommendation for future opportunities.

Baucus Leader Clara McCrae worked remotely for Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio. “At first I was skeptical about doing it remotely,” she said, “but we’ve also had some opportunities to do things that we wouldn’t have been able to do if we were in-person, like joining in on office-wide staff calls with the Senator. Overall I would say it has been a good experience!”

One Baucus Leader was able to do in-person work: Isabelle Melton at Senator Daines’ office in Helena, Montana. “Some of my favorite work has been meeting with constituents,” said Melton. “I have enjoyed hearing from constituents with a wide spectrum of views; it has given me the opportunity to appreciate and understand almost all points of view.” Her work led to an offer for a paid internship on Daines’ campaign, and she also plans to intern in Washington, D.C. next summer.

“This internship has been an amazing experience,” she said.



# Public Service Academy: Sold Out and New Innovation Award

For the second year in a row, our annual Public Service Academy sold out. The purpose of the Public Service Academy is for our Baucus Institute's Department of Public Administration and Policy to provide training for public and nonprofit sector employees across the state and nation. This year's theme focused on forward thinking for our public and nonprofit sector futures. Training topics ranged from "punching through a pandemic," to "exploring revenue options," to "how non-elected and elected officials can work together." Typically offered in-person on the University of Montana's campus, due to COVID-19 we successfully pivoted to a fully online format.

The format shift offered participants the opportunity to continue to learn while maintaining public health and safety. To maintain social distancing, most trainers filmed separately and their videos were stitched together by University of Montana's KPCN videographer team with graphics, music, and closed captioning added.

To give participants a "live" experience, two Q&A sessions were held on August 5 and 6 through Zoom. Academy trainers joined these moderated sessions and answered questions submitted through Zoom's chat feature. These sessions were conversational and informal, with trainers sharing tips for collaboration, budgeting processes, and emphasizing the need for bipartisan cooperation.

Participants have six months to access the online courses. Once they have finished, they receive a signed personal certificate of completion in the mail. While the sold-out 2020 Public Service Academy has been a success, we're hopeful that 2021 will be back to in-person delivery.



This year the Public Service Academy introduced the Baucus Innovation Challenge—a competition offering public and nonprofit sector organizations the opportunity to create and present innovations. Academy participants watched video pitches submitted by organizations and voted for what they deemed to be the most innovative pitch. A \$500 cash prize was made possible through several sponsors: The MPA Alumni Advisory Committee, Baucus Institute, TM Group, and Washington Corporations.

The Baucus Institute's Department of Public Administration and Policy is honored to announce the winner of this year's Innovation Challenge: the Montana Department of Transportation's Motor Vehicle Division with a submission from Driver Services Bureau Chief Rebeca Connors.

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In the video pitch describing the Division's innovation, Connors stated, "A mobile driver licensing unit provided an immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We were able to maintain service in rural communities to ensure COVID didn't disrupt other aspects of their life."

Through the Baucus Innovation Challenge, we are creating a great community partnership and directly investing in innovative work by public servants in Montana.



## New Baucus Climate Scholars Program

Building on the success of its Baucus Leaders program, the Baucus Institute is expanding to train future leaders in issues of conservation and climate. The Baucus Climate Scholars program will place bright Montana students in internships with environmental think tanks, nonprofits, and government agencies. The program is currently solidifying internships with the Brookings Institute, the Nature Conservancy, the Center for American Progress, and others, and aims to start its first cohort in the summer of 2021.

This program reflects the spirit of bipartisan cooperation and environmental responsibility in Max Baucus' legacy, which includes his co-authorship of the Clean Air Act and organizing the Montana Legacy Project. The latter was the largest private conservation deal in American history.

The Baucus Institute is actively fundraising to support this new program and has an initial goal of \$25,000 to start the first cohort, and the ultimate goal to permanently fund the program with an endowment of \$500,000. Much like the Baucus Leaders program, which has a \$1 million endowment thanks to a generous donation by the Dennis



and Phyllis Washington Foundation, an endowed Climate Scholars program would provide summertime cost-of-living stipends for five Baucus Climate Scholars.

For more information on giving to this program, contact Erin Keenan, Blewett School of Law Development Director, at 406.243.4319 or [erin.keenan@supportum.org](mailto:erin.keenan@supportum.org).

To learn more or share ideas about our programs, contact Sam Panarella, Director of the Baucus Institute, at 406.243.6623 or [samuel.panarella@umontana.edu](mailto:samuel.panarella@umontana.edu).

# Creating Change with MPA Graduate Deserae Kill Eagle



When Deserae Kill Eagle '15 first enrolled in the Department of Public Administration and Policy's MPA program, she was an assistant recording clerk to the Fort Belknap Tribe and wanted to understand more about tribal governance and how the relationships worked with state and federal levels of government. But instead of only learning about policy, "those two years of grad school were the most growth I experienced," she said.

Kill Eagle had begun teaching elementary school immediately after obtaining her bachelor's degree in elementary education. As a single mom raising two daughters, she had also worked as an assistant recording clerk during summer breaks. On top of all this, she enrolled in Master's of Public Administration classes at the University of Montana. "I had to balance," she noted.

She recalled feeling overwhelmed at times. "I would think, I'm not good enough to be here," said Kill Eagle. "But Dr. Rinfret and Christina Barsky always believed in me." Dr. Rinfret would write on her papers, "Please say this in class," Kill Eagle recalled. "I had to learn to find my voice."

And she certainly did. Kill Eagle has given many presentations at the Montana School Board Indian Caucus Alliance summer symposiums. The MPA program taught her that "we can change things through policy, but we have to understand where we've come from." With this knowledge, she presented on historical trauma and resilience at UM's Diversity Symposium. She continues to give presentations for administration in the Dodson School District, where she has returned to teaching.

"The MPA program has made me become solution-based," she said. "It's kept me from complaining about the way things are, and instead understanding the steps needed for change. I know where I can help, how I can help, and when I need to learn more."

She says the MPA program has influenced every part of her life: as a parent, a teacher, a basketball coach, a tribal member, and a person working for change.

"The MPA program has helped me become a better citizen," she said. "The leadership, teamwork, analytical and networking skills—all important to becoming an influential citizen...I could never give a concrete value to the experience I gained."



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*Public service is the most  
noble human endeavor.*

*Max*