Overview:
This newsletter provides members of the Villanova University Chapter of Pi Alpha Alpha important information regarding the Chapter’s development and progress. In lieu of meeting minutes, this newsletter is posted tri-annually (August, January, June) to communicate to members the relevant topics discussed and decisions made by the Chapter’s officers.

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Annual Calendar of Events:
Save the dates for our upcoming events for the 2018-2019 year:

- Fall Networking Event (Thursday, September 27 @ 5:30 p.m.)
- Professional Development Webinars (TBA: November 2018; February 2019; April 2019)
- Spring Networking Event (Thursday, March 21, 2019 @ 5:30 p.m.)
- Induction Ceremony (Thursday, May 17, 2019 @ 5:30 p.m.)

* Please note that other events are being scheduled. VU-PAA members will be notified via e-mail.

Congratulations to the recently inducted VU-PAA Class of 2018!

Photo Credit: Michele Griffin
Welcome Our Newest Members!

Sidney Montez Aiken, II
Andrew Butash
Sydney Camisa
Kate Cohen
Andrew Coons
Kenneth M. DeTreux
Laura R. Elseroad
Larry Eugene Emmons
Jamila M. Feaster
Katie Fischer
Jennifer Putnam Ford
Joshua S. Goihl
Jonathan Heisler
Joany Higgins
Maureen M. Hollocker
Robert Hudak
Andrew T. Jones
John Kobel

Glen A. Luciano
Donald Miller
Aeryn Moorehead
Courtney Morrissette
Christine Ann O’Hare
Sara M. O’Leary
Alex Ostrom
Shanel Parette
Alan Thomas Pine
Jennifer Z. Pohlhaus
Ernest R. Rojas
Jeremy Rutter
Bailey R. Stark
Elizabeth M. Svenson
Catherine L. Thompson
Elise A. Turner
Nicholas Valla
Steven J. Welsh
1. Could you provide some biographical information about your current job?

In my current role as Plans Examiner/Engineer for the City of Tacoma in Washington State, I have to balance technical language with plain talk for the average customer regarding building code life safety and structural engineering design of commercial buildings (hospitals, schools, malls, etc.). For those working in the technical field can relate to the difficulty of translating certain technical terminology or jargon to something understandable by the average citizen brings certain challenges. Sometimes we cannot avoid using technical terms but we can phrase it in a way that would assist the other person understand.

The customers I meet with come in many forms. From your everyday entrepreneur attempting to open a restaurant to City Councilmembers asking why a project has been delayed for one of their constituents to architects and engineers who as some of us in our industry call it, “design by review” (designing a building up to sixty to eighty percentage of the building code and having city viewers help them finish the design, something we frown on). Depending on the customer will depend on how much I need to condense or expand how I communicate.

2. In what ways did VU’s MPA program assist in preparing you for it?

How does Villanova’s MPA fit in with all of this? Each course offered in the MPA program allowed me to understand the importance of condensing knowledge read through the textbooks into short essays that our classmates and professors can comprehend. Were there struggles in the beginning? Certainly. Through practice and repetitive writing throughout the courses made this practice more proficient at condensing and conveying knowledge as plainly as possible for my audience.

Trying to choose a course or professor that stands out most is almost as difficult choosing what flavor of ice cream you love the most (or hate the most depending on your perspective)! I have to admit that Organization Theory with Father Jacobs really pushed me towards a better communicator through his critiques in the assignments. Father Jacobs helped rebuild the confidence in myself towards writing with his positive inputs and critiques. Other professors were just as instrumental toward my education and confidence and they all deserve as much credit to my success at Villanova University’s MPA program.
3. What advice do you have for current MPA students?

If I had one advice to really give to current MPA students, that is to take the critique of your professors seriously and if you do not understand just ask. Every professor makes the time and effort to helping you understand what they want and if you have questions, they will respond promptly. Do not be afraid to ask questions. A favorite proverb of mine from Confucius, “The man who asks a question is a fool for a minute, the man who does not ask is a fool for life”.

4. Any “war stories” or anecdotes about your experience as an MPA student that you’d like to share?

You will laugh and cry throughout the MPA program. I know I did along with a few of the classmates I got to know throughout the program. Yet, these same classmates will also carry you through the courses. I remember after completing my first paper for Father Jacobs I felt proud and accomplished. After receiving our graded papers back my inflated ego popped like a water balloon and I wanted to go hide in a corner. After reading his comments though, I realized he was spot on and I knew my skills and knowledge needed a lot of work in order to improve (also helped that other classmates felt the same way I did). Do not feel like any of you are alone, I and many others have walked, currently walking, or will walk, this same path.

5. Anything else you want to share with our current students?

Study HARD. The things you are learning today will be IMMENSELY useful tomorrow. You WILL use ALL of it (if you haven't already), I promise.

“My MPA education gave me the tools to be successful because I was more adequately prepared to analyze, interpret, and understand grants, regulations, and interpersonal interactions in government environments.”
1. **Tell us a little bit about your experience in the MPA program. What made you choose Villanova for your MPA degree?**

Attending Villanova’s MPA program was off-the-charts fabulous! I have only positive memories and wonderful things to say about it. After completing my undergraduate degree, I had always intended to return to college for more learning and perhaps another degree. Twenty years later, I did it! And Villanova’s skilled, caring faculty, and administrators helped!

2. **Could you provide some biographical information about your current job?**

I am the Home Certification Supervisor - Foster Care at Turning Points for Children, a PHMC Affiliate. My role involves working with Community Umbrella Agencies across the City to promote placement and permanency for children and youth in the Foster Care system. I have been with Turning Points for 5 years and served as the Quality Control Manager for a federally funded project in collaboration with the School District of Philadelphia from 2013-2017.

I graduated in 2017 and credit the MPA program at Villanova with helping me to appreciate the complexities of the Public and Non-Profit Sectors, and to define what I wanted my role to be.

3. **In what ways did VU’s MPA program assist in preparing you?**

As a recent migrant to the City of Philadelphia, the MPA Program created an opportunity for me to build on my past work experience and to bridge the cultural and professional gap I experienced working in the Non-Profit sector. The Program created a platform to gain the confidence I needed to be an advocate for my needs as an employee and to solidify my role as a valued member of the Turning Points team by working on advancing my knowledge, skills and abilities.

In addition, the shared experiences, interactions and relationships cultivated with classmates and professors continue to be a source of personal empowerment, pride, and motivation.
During my time at Villanova, I was privileged to encounter friendly, helpful people that ranged from professors to classmates. The spirited discussions in classes with Dr. Miltenberger, Father Jacobs, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Wilson and Dr. Arapis, have all had a significant impact on my thought process, and ultimately the way I approach challenges in my position while navigating common organizational issues such as staff turnover. I recall quoting a professor during a unit meeting while my colleagues discussing Public Service Motivation, which resulted in a debate that is not soon to be forgotten. This is what I loved most about the MPA Program, the ability to engage and promote thinking beyond established, often systemic structures, and encourages innovation and change."

“Dr. Miltenberger and Dr. Arapis were true role models and continue to be sources of many projects I am currently spearheading including the creation of a Job Registry for Youth aging out of the Foster care system and who are seeking employment. Dr. Miltenberger is the epitome of the “can-do attitude” and working to upgrade systems to a 2.0 version – I am now constantly seeking to upgrade the status quo! Dr. Arapis taught me the importance of fiscal responsibility and I am constantly looking at the bottom line while attempting to become a fiscal guard of public funds and seeking financial sustainability.”

4. What advice do you have for current students?

My advice to current students is this – be open to new ways of thinking as you progress through the MPA program. Share your ideas, experiences and expectations with your professors and classmates, in and out of the classroom. The MPA experience is one that can be enriching and empowering, personally and professionally but you have to be willing to participate and engage to fully gain an appreciation of what the program offers. More importantly, have an awareness of the supportive, nurturing environment of the MPA program (staff and faculty), and the focus on your overall growth.

5. What was your experience like as an online student?

I am grateful for the opportunity to have been tutored and mentored by the wonderful people of the MPA Program at Villanova University. My hope is that the work I do is a testament to their efforts and an example to others in my field.
Please consider joining the “Tolle Lege Circle”
during this year’s membership renewal drive!!

Current “Tolle Lege Circle” members:

Travis Akers
Ryan Heffernan
Christian Isham
Fr. Richard Jacobs, OSA
Adam Kuczynski
Kathryn Monet

Planning is already well underway for the two major Chapter events: The Networking Event and the Colloquium. The Networking Event will happen during the fall semester and the Colloquium will happen during the spring semester. Public service minors who are taking the capstone course during the spring semester will be in attendance at the 2019 Spring Colloquium, providing them an exemplar of someone whose life and work model “The Vocation to Public Service.”

In addition, three VU-PAA sponsored webinars are currently at various places in the planning process.

During the fall, the annual VU-PAA Membership Renewal Drive will begin. Since the Chapter was chartered in 2010, 219 members have been initiated. Of those members, 119 (or 54%) have maintained their membership and 100 (or 46%) have lapsed as members. The Membership Renewal Drive is an important Chapter activity which aims at building an active and involved membership base as well as an endowment of $100,000. The goal is to use the interest on the endowment to defray expenses for new members with the Chapter paying the cost of initiation. Last year’s successful Membership Renew Drive raised an additional $2,000 for the endowment which now boasts a balance of $14k.

As always, if you have any ideas or suggestions to further improve our Chapter, please do not hesitate to contact me at richard.jacobs@vilanova.edu.
Chapter Advisor’s Message

I am pleased to announce the Chapter’s new leaders for the 2018-2019 academic year:

Courtney Morrissette  
VU-AA President 2018-2019  
Sydney Camisa  
VU-PAA Secretary 2018-2019

Courtney Morrissette will be serving as the Chapter’s President. Courtney came to the MPA program because she envisions a world in which people from all lines of work and walks of life can come together to tackle our most pressing challenges and build a more just global community. Currently, Courtney is interning at B Lab, a nonprofit organization channeling the private sector to use business as a force for good and to create positive impact and promote the well-being of both people and the planet. Prior to pursuing her MPA, Courtney attended Villanova University and received her B.A. in Political Science. Courtney brings to her VU-PAA leadership role an ambitious mindset, a tenacious passion for justice, and an eagerness to learn.

Sydney Camisa will be serving as the Chapter’s Secretary. Sydney currently works as Development Associate at Pennsylvania Ballet. She has previously worked for a disability rights nonprofit and a rape crisis center. She earned her B.A. in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies from the University of Vermont in 2015 and moved to Philadelphia shortly after. She hopes that by pursuing her MPA at Villanova she can use her degree to find meaningful ways to improve the community through Philadelphia's robust nonprofit network. Sydney is a dedicated, diligent, and reliable MPA student, currently enrolled in the Nonprofit Management track. Those traits will enable Sydney to serve very capably in her Chapter leadership role.