

WE'RE USF'S SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS...

AND WE'RE ON THE RISE!

We're a School of Public Affairs that's on the rise. With dynamic new leadership, an engaged and energized faculty, new academic programs and strategic partnerships, and a vibrant and diverse student body, the University of South Florida's School of Public Affairs is on the move and on its way.

HERE'S WHY WE CAN MAKE THAT CLAIM...

DYNAMIC NEW LEADERSHIP

After an exhaustive nation-wide search, the University appointed Dr. Ronald (Ron) Sanders as the Director of the School. A Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration and highly decorated public servant, Dr. Sanders is returning home to his undergraduate alma mater (USF Class of 1973); in so doing, he'll continue his work as the Presidentially-appointed chair of the Federal Salary Council, as well as with such Federal agencies as the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Security Agency, as well as the Florida Center for Cybersecurity.

However, the success of our School of Public Affairs requires a high-performing leadership team, and one of Dr. Sanders' first acts in that regard was to name Associate Professor Dr. Stephen Aikins, newly returned from a prestigious Fulbright Fellowship in Africa, as the Director of our Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. In turn, they have named Assistant Professor Dr. Stephen Neely, one of the School's most popular and effective professors, as the Director of our Undergraduate Public Administration program (a new position intended to emphasize its importance as a pipeline into our graduate degree programs), and together with Dr. Mark Hafen, Director of our Master in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program, and Mrs. Angela Crist, who heads the local 'franchise' of the Florida Institute of Government (FIOG), they're dedicated to taking the School of Public Affairs to the next level.

NEW CUTTING-EDGE COURSES AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

While our School is relatively small compared to many of our peers, that doesn't mean we can't differentiate and distinguish ourselves, especially when we take advantage of our University's recent designation as one of Florida's three 'preeminent' institutions of higher learning. That translates to excellence in just about every academic field imaginable, and that means tremendous opportunities for our faculty and students to collaborate across USF. For example, we've just unveiled a number of exciting new interdisciplinary graduate certificate programs and courses that are designed to provide our students with state-of-the-art skills in Public Administration and Urban and Regional Planning...and that also sets us apart from other institutions.

- **Data Science for Public Administrators.** For example, in collaboration with our sister School of Information and the Muma College of Business, we've pioneered a new graduate certificate in Data Science for Public Administration; one of the first of its kind in the nation; designed by Assistant Professor Neely, it features state-of-the-art courses in quantitative methods, 'open source' analytic tradecraft, data mining and visualization, and geospatial and social network analysis.
- **Coastal Resiliency for Community Planners.** We've also put together a unique graduate certificate focusing on Leadership for Coastal Resiliency Planning; led by Associate Professor Dr. Elizabeth Strom, it features coursework designed to equip planning students and professionals with the tools to assist communities, like our own Tampa Bay area, to prepare for and deal with the unique natural and man-made risks—climatological, and otherwise—that are associated with living on a coastline.
- **Geospatial Information Systems.** Drawing on his extensive professional portfolio in this area, new Research Associate Professor Steven Fernandez (an FAA-licensed drone pilot) has put together a curriculum designed to equip both public administration and planning professionals with the very latest in GIS technologies and tools; the certificate, which includes basic and advanced technologies such as LIDAR, 3D, and drone-based applications, has been extended as a series of professional development seminars he's doing for our local Hillsborough County.
- **Sustainability Policy, NGOs, and Research Administration.** We've also partnered with the Patel College of Global Sustainability to offer a joint Master of Arts degree in Global Sustainability Policy (we teach the policy and planning parts of the curriculum); expanded our certificate program in Non-Profit Management to include the Management of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); and revitalized our graduate certificate in Research Administration to include a pilot internship program in Washington, D.C. with relevant committees in the U.S. Congress.

And finally, as part of our successful reaccreditation by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), we've completely revamped our core MPA curriculum to add courses in Organization Theory and Leadership, Policy Design and Implementation, and separate courses on Quantitative Analysis in Public Administration and Research Methods in Public Administration. Concurrently, as part of our MURP program—recently accepted as a candidate for accreditation by the Planning Accreditation Board—we've developed and added exciting new courses in Planning for Resilient Communities and the Disaster Resilient Community, both part of the graduate certificate in Leadership for Coastal Resiliency Planning. And finally, we're in the process of retooling our undergraduate minor in Public Administration to focus more broadly on leadership in public and community service, so stay tuned for details.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED FACULTY

Any School of Public Affairs must be judged by the strength of its faculty, and we believe that person for person, we have one of the best...with well-respected and established scholars now joined by a cadre of energetic newcomers to produce a chemistry that's downright exhilarating...for our students, faculty, and stakeholders alike.

NEWCOMERS.

After an intensive, open rank international search that brought us over 100 applicants, we've welcomed two new faculty members to our Public Administration department, as well as a new addition to our Urban and Regional Planning department:

- **Assistant Professor Dr. Christa Remington** has joined our Public Administration department from Florida International University (FIU) with a passion for emergency and non-profit management and a focus on cultural competence issues. She actually runs her own non-profit on the side, has spent many weeks in Haiti personally engaged in post-earthquake relief efforts, and speaks fluent Creole.
- **Assistant Professor Dr. Shinwoo Lee** joins her in our Public Administration department from Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He hails from South Korea, specializes in research in public management, organizational behavior and performance management, and has tutored a number of NBA stars in statistical methods.
- **Affiliate Professor Dr. Alan Bush** joins our Urban and Regional Planning department from USF's prestigious Honors College, where he teaches a number of unique interdisciplinary courses to the University's top undergraduates. A PhD from the University of Texas-Austin, he will be teaching courses for us on Resilient Cities, taking part in our research and community-engagement efforts in this key area.
- Finally, **Research Associate Professor Steven Fernandez** has also joined our Urban and Regional Planning department. A highly regarded expert in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) applications, urban spatial analysis, and 3D geospatial technology, he'll be teaching GIS classes and workshops that focus on the planning applications of these powerful tools, to include aerial/terrestrial LiDAR and unmanned aerial systems (Steven is an FAA-licensed drone pilot).

ESTABLISHED SCHOLARS.

Our three new members join a team of Public Affairs scholars who are well-established, highly respected, and deeply involved in academic and community affairs.

- **Urban and Regional Planning.** For example, **Associate Professor Dr. Robin Ersing** leads a National Science Foundation funded interdisciplinary faculty/student team that investigates (on-site!) how communities respond to disasters. The research of **Assistant Professor Dr. Evangeline (Van) Linkous** was featured, as a cover story no less, in the International City and County Managers Association's (ICMA) Public Management Magazine, as well as in the "Research You Can Use" column in the American Planning Association's (APA) Planning magazine. She was also awarded grant funding to present her research at the 2018 International Planning History Society conference in Yokohama, Japan and the 2017 Planning, Law, and Property Rights conference in Hong Kong.

In addition to her work on our coastal resiliency certificate, **Associate Professor Dr. Elizabeth Strom**, also back from her Fulbright Fellowship in Austria, is continuing to focus on affordable housing and has been named to a local government commission tackling that problem in our community. And finally, **MURP Program Director Dr. Mark Hafen** continues to be sought out as an expert in the effects of climate change on rising sea levels, a topic of considerable local interest. That's in addition to the hours he's put in to achieve the initial accreditation of our (relatively young) MURP program...we've officially been accepted as a candidate for accreditation by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB), so we're on our way!

- **Public Administration.** In addition to his undergraduate responsibilities, **Assistant Professor Dr. Stephen Neely** has assumed technical responsibility for the University’s vaunted Sunshine State Survey a joint project with the Nielson Company that provides a comprehensive annual look at the public policy issues that concern Florida citizens—as well as our unique and growing undergraduate program in leadership and public service.

Associate Professors Drs. John Daly and Stephen Aikins are continuing their focus on improving the public management capacity of developing nations in Africa—specifically Swaziland and Ghana, respectively—the latter based on Dr. Aikins’ Fulbright research. Dr. Daly is also completing a comprehensive review of all of Hillsborough County’s various boards, commissions, and councils to determine which should be continued.

And **School Director Dr. Ron Sanders** continues to be in demand at the state and national level, speaking to over 200 new Federal executives on his 2017 book, Building a 21st Century Senior Executive Service, serving on the team that prepared the first installment of the National Academy of Public Administration’s (NAPA) landmark civil service reform report, and providing the keynote address for the 50th anniversary of the Federal Executive Institute (FEI).

NEW STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Finally, we want our School to be known for its community engagement...after all, we are a faculty of public administrators and urban and regional planners, and that engagement should be part of our mission. It may range from research and technical assistance to a local, state, or Federal government agency, to student-led projects and internships in support of a local non-profit or NGO, but whatever its form, we want our faculty and students to be involved. And to support those efforts, we’ve established a number of formal strategic partnerships with area government and non-profit/non-governmental organizations, to include:

- **Hillsborough County**, where our MPA Capstone students are supporting the County’s five strategic priorities via series of continuing, semester-long projects involving such topics as client self-sufficiency, citizen and internal customer satisfaction, and suburban redevelopment.
- **Pasco County**, where our MURP student interns are helping that jurisdiction’s Planning Office completely transform its decades-old zoning codes to reflect the county’s transformation from a bedroom community to a thriving mix of urban, suburban, and rural enclaves.
- **The James A. Haley Veterans Hospital**, where students have helped rewrite the facility’s Emergency Staffing protocols just in time for the current hurricane season (and according to VA officials, their product has become a model for other VA facilities in the region).
- Other emerging partnerships include the **Tampa Aviation Authority** (for student internships); **Pinellas County** (where we’re in the process of restarting satellite programs for MPA students and other mid-career professionals), and smaller Florida cities like **Dunedin** (where our planning students prepared an affordable housing plan for the city), and **Zephyrhills** (where SPA students and faculty have helped officials redo its citizen satisfaction survey).

And then there's the **Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA)**, which has partnered with us to establish a student chapter on campus, conduct joint research on the most 'efficient' local forms of government, and sponsor a professional development workshop on cybersecurity for its members. That workshop is in conjunction with USF's Florida Center for Cybersecurity, with whom we're also partnering with to survey the 'cyber readiness' of local Florida jurisdictions, as well as to deliver a series of cybersecurity seminars for public and private sector executives in the region.

SO, WE REALLY ARE ON THE RISE!

For a professional school like SPA, those partnerships provide unparalleled opportunities for community-engaged research, technical assistance, and student-led projects and internships, not to mention a source of adjunct instructors and guest speakers for our courses.

In sum, it has been a transformational year for the School of Public Affairs, we've made tremendous progress in that regard, but while our progress has been remarkable, we're not stopping. We're a School on the move, and we intend to keep doing so!

RECENT FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

Aikins, S.K. (2017). "An Investigation of the Relationships Between Time Invested in Government Internal Audit Projects and Audit Outcomes." *Journal of Accounting and Finance*, 17(7): 159-173.

Daly, J.L., Hartley, R.E., & Neubauer, B.E. (2016). "Toward a Shared Services Model for the Delivery of Public Affairs Education." *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 22(4): 449-466.

Drolet, J., **Ersing, R.,** Wu, H., Alston, M., Hargreaves, D., Huang, Y., Huang, C.H., & Mathbor, G. (2018). "Rebuilding Lives and Communities Post-Disaster: Innovative Community Practices for Sustainable Disaster Recovery." *Australian Social Work*, 71(4): 444-456.

Reyes, M.J., van Beynen, P.E., & **Hafen, M.R. (2017).** "An Experimental Study of the Utility of Adventitious Roots for Determining the Hydroperiod in Isolated Wetlands." *Tropical Ecology*, 58(2): 369-377.

Lee, S. (2018). "Employee Turnover and Organizational Performance in U.S. Federal Agencies." *The American Review of Public Administration*, 48(6): 522-534.

Linkous, E. & Skuzinski, T. (2018). "Land Use Decision-Making in the Wake of State Property Rights Legislation: Examining the Institutional Response to Florida's Harris Act." *Land Use Policy*, 77(1): 603-612.

Neely, S.R. & Collins, M. (2018). "Social Media and Crisis Communications: A Survey of Local Governments in Florida." *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*, 15(1): 1-13.

Remington, C.L. & Ganapati, N.E. (2017). "Recovery Worker Skills in Post-Earthquake Haiti: The Disconnect Between Employer and Employee Perspectives." *Natural Hazards*, 87(3): 1673-1690.

Sanders, R. (2017). "Building a 21st Century Senior Executive Service: Ensuring Leadership Excellence in our Federal Government." National Academy of Public Administration.

Strom, E. (2018). "Brownfield Redevelopment: Recycling the Urban Environment." *The Palgrave Handbook of Sustainability: Case Studies and Practical Solutions*.

