



COLLEGE of  
CHARLESTON

MASTER OF PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION

DECEMBER 2021 | ISSUE 2

# MPA NEWSLETTER



Congratulations to our fall graduates and

## PI ALPHA ALPHA INDUCTEES

We are proud of you and your outstanding academic achievements!

Pi Alpha Alpha is the global honor society for public affairs and administration students in program accredited by Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration



**Top:** William "Charlie" Hansen, Camryn Snell, Rebecca Tuten, ReZsaun Lewis; **Middle:** Kiril Sekulovski, Niki Grimball, Devon Bergen, Brett Wadford; **Bottom:** Carolyn Smith, Ken Granata, Taylor Holloway  
**Not Pictured:** Michael Cranford, Rachel Spitzmiller, Kelli Coleman Wood

# From the Director

## Dr. Judy Millesen, Professor and Director



As we close the fall 2021 semester, I am happy to share that the start of this academic year felt a bit closer to the traditional launch of a new school year at the College of Charleston, even with the masks and social distancing protocols. In spite of the continued uncertainty gripping our community and higher education more generally, we have much to celebrate at 14 Coming Street. Our students, staff, faculty and families are in good health; and Marla Robertson, the MPA Program Coordinator, CAP Director, and program alum welcoming a son, Khari, on December 8th.

This fall over 20 students started the MPA program and by all counts it looks like we will be admitting over 15 more in the spring. Additionally, I am proud to say, we were able to meet the assistantship expectations of all incoming students. We have also been making great progress on meeting goals established in our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan. Over the past 18 months we have diversified readings in all our courses; invited a diverse group of people as monthly luncheon speakers, and to enrich perspective in the classroom; hosted books clubs; and our faculty have participated in several different workshops and trainings focused on pedagogy and teaching.

The Program earned reaccreditation by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) for an additional seven years. We are grateful to the many students, alumni, MPA advisory committee members, staff, and faculty who took time to participate in and contribute to the reaccreditation process and site visit. We will pick up on the strategic planning work done by Dr. Jerry Gordon and students in his class this spring. I look forward to sharing our progress.

Although none of us can know how COVID-19 (or the new variants) will impact the remainder of this academic year or the next, I do know I am proud of our unwavering commitment to our students, to stewarding the local Charleston community, and to making the world a better place. I am grateful to be surrounded by outstanding professionals focused on helping us deliver on our mission to prepare the next generation of public service leaders.

I close with all the best wishes for a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season.

# Janet Key Memorial Award

The College of Charleston MPA program is pleased to announce the Janet Key Public Service Award. Established by a small group of alumni led by Elisa Mundis Strickler '09 and Natalie Martin '09, to honor her commitment to public service as well as her outstanding mentorship of countless College of Charleston MPA students, the Janet Key Public Service Award will recognize graduating MPA student(s) who share Janet's passion for public service.



To honor Janet's legacy and to advance her commitment to public service, please consider making a gift to the Janet L. Key Public Service Award. Your donation can be sent to the College of Charleston Foundation, MPA Fund at 66 George St., Charleston, SC 29424. Please be sure to make a notation that your gift should be directed to the Janet L. Key Public Service Award.

# Lunch and Learn

September 2021



**Jermaine Singletary**

Chief Executive Director  
Binding Ties

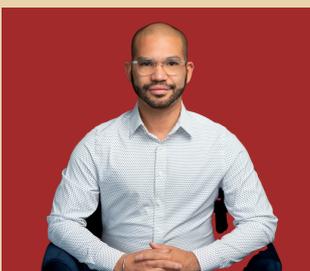
October 2021



**Dr. Natalea Scott**

Administrative Director  
USDA, Forest Service, Francis  
Marion & Sumter National Forest

November 2021



**Domenico Ruggerio**

Executive Director  
We Are Family

Held monthly during the academic year, the Lunch & Learn series presents informal seminars on a variety of topics focused on the intersection of public administration and marginalized groups and identities. These sessions bring to the fore important issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion and have provided an opportunity for participants to dialogue and think more deeply about issues related to what it means to create a more benevolent, just, and compassionate society. This fall we hosted three speakers. **Mr. Jermaine Singletary**, Chief Executive Director of [Binding Ties](#), a nonprofit organization committed to making a positive difference in the lives of low-income youth and families in communities throughout the greater Columbia region. Singletary talked about the lessons he and his team learned as they worked to maintain a steadfast commitment to bringing families together, fostering civic engagement, and strengthening the fabric of community amidst a global pandemic. **Dr. Natalea Scott**, Administrative Director USDA, Forest Service, Francis Marion & Sumter National Forest shared her career trajectory and how she has traversed the various peaks and valleys along the way while reminding us to time to focus on what is important to you so that time and energy can be freed up for what matters most. **Mr. Domenico Ruggerio** shared lessons learned from his personal and professional journey toward a vision of community that emphasizes intersectional and inclusive approaches, the building and bridging of communities, and one that empowers young people. Ruggerio, is the Executive Director of [We Are Family](#), a grassroots nonprofit that supports and empowers LGBTQI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, etc.) and ally youth.

# CAP Projects



**Brendan Standish**



**Kit Kelly**



**Lindsay Wallace**



**Caitlin Bolger**

***Community Foundation of the Lowcountry Vital Signs Report:***

Caitlin Bolger & Lindsay Wallace  
Analyzing data from various online sources and through focus group interviews, this report will identify issues, concerns, and disparities in the foundation's service area that can be used to inform future grantmaking

***Race Equity Project:***

Caitlin Bolger & Lindsay Wallace  
Working closely with the Diversity, Racial Reconciliation, and Tolerance Manager for the City of Charleston to design educational sessions to teach the Racial Equity Framework Worksheets to CORE Team Members and provide support as departments become more racially equitable.

***Neighborhood Services:***

Kit Kelly & Lindsay Wallace  
Supporting the City of Charleston Neighborhood Services initiative by researching similar initiatives, creating an organizational matrix, reworking the mission and vision statements, making equity-driven service recommendations, and evaluating current programs.

***Summerton Comprehensive Plan:***

Brendan Standish & Caitlin Bolger  
Developing a comprehensive plan for the Town of Summerton, SC through data acquisition, research, and analysis of comparable comprehensive plans. The project will also include creating a community engagement plan.

***Dorchester County Strategic Plan:***

Kit Kelly & Brendan Standish  
Working with Riley Center staff and the Public Safety department of Dorchester County to help develop a strategic plan.

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



**April Von Lehe**

April is a recent graduate from the MPA program. Shortly after graduating from the program she moved to New York City and worked for the nonprofit organization, Big Brothers Big Sisters. April worked in the communication department. But with April's love for local government, she then decided to accept a position with Manhattan Borough President's office as the deputy director for community affairs. The MPA program has helped April work in various capacities within government, such as policy, administration, and budgeting. The leadership skills she has gained throughout the MPA program has helped in her current role as deputy director. A memory April will always cherish from the MPA program was being recognized with the Outstanding Student Award. She has also cherished the connections she has made with the other MPA students in the program.

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Kristy is a 2009 graduate of the MPA Program. She is now working in the field of criminal justice. Kristy is a data-guided, collaborative reformer with over two decades of progressive experience. As the Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council's (CJCC) founding Director, she helped lead transformative efforts to safely reduce jail use, address inequities, and engage the community in improving the local system. She has also served as a probation and parole agent in SC, a program manager in the CT Judicial Branch, and as a Senior Associate with the Crime and Justice Institute, working across the country on legislative reforms and guiding change efforts in justice organizations. In addition to serving on the MPA advisory board, Ms. Danford serves on the Charleston Forum Board and the Executive Board of the National Network of CJCCs.



**Kristy Danford**

# Alumni News

## 1990

**Jerry Francis** transferred to the SC Commission for Minority Affairs February 2021 and currently works as the Native American Affairs Program Manager.

## 1996

**Duncan Harle** has been named Managing Attorney at the Law Firm of John Foy & Associates in Atlanta, Georgia.

## 2005

**Charmaine Palmer-Roberts**, EdD, MPA earned a doctorate in Organizational Leadership August 2020 from Northcentral University.



## 2006

**Bridget (Bettelli) Price** changed jobs, she is now a School Counselor at Lucy Beckham High School in Mt. Pleasant, SC.

**Michelle Mapp** was named an Equal Justice Works Fellow, representing the Charleston School of Law. She will spend the next two years serving at the ACLU of South Carolina working on tenant right to counsel legislation in South Carolina.



## 2008

**Eric Davis** recently embarked on a new challenge as Director of Greenbelt Programs for Charleston County after seven years as Director of Dorchester County Parks and Recreation Department.

## 2010

**Matt Irwin** joined a commercial construction firm one year ago as the Director of Business Development for Forge Commercial Construction, growing and thriving business in the Upstate. In addition, he recently joined the board of directors for two arts organizations: SC Children's Theatre and The International Ballet.



**Kate Tiller** was promoted to Senior Associate Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Success and Senior Woman Administrator at the College of Charleston.

## 2011

**Dan Burger** was recruited to a Senior Program Manager position with the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, Gulf Research Program. He is standing up a new program centered on equity in human health, climate adaptation and disaster recovery.



**Kyle Robertson** started Charleston Composites, Inc. He is also working in technical sales at Salesforce Industries focused on tech solutions for Government and Health Insurance Industries.

## 2013

**Elizabeth (Atkinson) Johnson** was promoted to Business & Service Improvement Manager for Atlanta's Department of City Planning

## 2015

**Tyler Newman** changed jobs and is now a Zoning Administrator for the Town of Seabrook Island

## 2017

**Janna (Peterson) Bianculli** was promoted to Senior Planner in Henderson County, NC and married Robert Bianculli on May 8th.

**Michael Linsenmeyer** accepted a promotion to Community Development Senior Planner & Analyst at the City of Raleigh Housing and Neighborhoods Department in January 2021. In this new role he evaluates housing programs and policies, budgets, and grant administration - oversees and strategizes for neighborhood-based redevelopment projects - and participates in development of funding strategies, long-range action plans, and partnerships with other city departments. He initially joined the City of Raleigh in July 2019 as a Land Use Planner and began his municipal planning career as a Planning Specialist at the City of Durham after moving from Charleston to Durham in 2018. This promotion hasn't been his only blessing of 2021, as he and his wife, Jana, welcomed a baby girl Magnolia in February.



**April von Lehe** was promoted from Community Liaison to Deputy Director of Community Affairs in November 2020. She is employed at the City of New York – Manhattan

## 2018

**Michaela Abbott** started a PhD program in public administration at North Carolina State University in 2019.



## 2019

**Lee Bundrick** has a new job title. He serves as Senior Ecological Health and Conservation Coordinator at the Kiawah Conservancy. He also recently started as an Adjunct Professor, in the Department of Biology at the College of Charleston.



**Marla (Cochran) Robertson** welcomed a son. Khari Saran Robertson born on December 8, 2021.

**Mario Formisano** was hired by Dorchester County Government to serve as the Director of Emergency Management in September of 2011. In July 2021, he was appointed Deputy County Administrator for Public Safety. In this role, he supervises the Consolidated Dispatch Center, Emergency Management, EMS, and Fire Rescue, and is the liaison to Coroner and Sheriff.

**2020**

**Evan Back** started a new job as a project manager for the world's largest tech distributor, TD Synnex working with programmers and developers from all around the world.



**2021**

**Sarah Berry** accepted a full-time position as an Analyst for Capacity Interactive, a digital marketing consulting agency that serves arts and cultural organizations across the United States.



**Ryan Green** recently relocated to Gilbert, AZ to work as a planner for Pinal County.

**Charlton Brownell** started a new job as a Business & Neighborhood Services Project Assistant with the City of Charleston

**Please send us your alumni updates using the form at this [link](#)**

## Job Board Announcement



Meet Erin Wentz, she is the MPA Graduate Assistant and has been doing amazing work with us this year. One of her most recent projects is the creation of the MPA Job Board where you can find information about job vacancies, internships, and volunteer opportunities. If you have something to contribute to the board please send your information to Erin (wentze@g.cofc.edu), she updates the website twice each month.

# Faculty News



**Dr. Maren Trochmann**

*Transforming power with Pose: The challenge of state-sponsored services for LGBTQ Homeless Youth.* Administrative Theory & Praxis, Online First. With Judy Millesen

*Resistance or Reinforcement: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Racism and Anti-Blackness in Public Administration Scholarship.* Online First. Administrative Theory & Praxis, Online First. With Shilpa Viswanath, Stephanie Puello, and Samantha June Larson.

*Commentary: As eviction moratorium ends, focus on these solutions.* Post and Courier. With CofC Honors Student Belle Tolmich '21



**Dr. Gerald Gordon**

A new biography, *J's Way: The Life, Leadership, and Legacy of J Hamilton Lambert*, J L Publishing, LLC, of Reston, Virginia. (2021).



**Dr. Kendra Stewart**

*The Practice of Government Public Relations, Second Edition.* Taylor and Francis Press. 2021. Lee, M., G. Neeley, and K. Stewart editors.

*Brushing up on Civics.* PA Times Winter 2021 Volume 7 Issue 1

Local Government Review "Solving Wicked Problems Requires Regional Thinking" Winter 2021 issue

*How Prisoner Reentry Programs Influence Reentering Citizens' Trust in Government.* Journal of Political Science. April 2020. with and Latasha DeHaan and Danielle Bloom '19

*Kendra Stewart on Choosing What's Right for You, Communication in Government and the Future of PA.* Academics of PA podcast, June 23, 2021



**Dr. Bob O'Neill**

Will be serving on the board of directors for the newly established Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships. On September 7th, the National Academy of Public Administration announced the establishment of the Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships (CIP) to strengthen collaboration and cooperation among leaders at all levels of U.S. government in the face of the greatest challenges facing the nation.