

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER



Program Welcome

BY LUCI RODRIGUEZ, MPA PROGRAM COORDINATOR/MANAGER

This fall semester has seen a few developmental changes for our Public Administration program at UTEP. Most notably, we were able to launch our fully online MPA program that welcomed in 15 new students across the borderland and State of Texas. This access supports our working professionals and ensures that public servants near and far can advance in their educational and career journeys.

Our community is also getting stronger. Our alumni have made significant strides through the formal development of our Advisory Board, with the adoption of bylaws and elections of new leadership. The Board has enthusiastically been involved with serving on panels and as mentors, as well as helping us bring in exciting speakers for PA in Action. Speaking of alumni, we are thrilled to welcome 8 recent graduates into the rank of MPA alumni.

On the research front, our faculty have been actively busy presenting at conferences, publishing in major public administration journals, and are meeting the need of our growing student body. Which is wonderful because the upcoming 2024 year marks the MPA's 50th Year Anniversary. We hope that you stay connected to us to help us celebrate the past 50 years, as well as look forward to what we can do next.



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Welcome MPA-Online Students!

This fall marked the inaugural semester of the MPA-Online! We welcomed 16 new students, all stemming from a variety of education and professional backgrounds, and from various cities across Texas. Our online students are integrated into the same online courses as our traditional MPA and Certificate students, and are able to take advantage of UTEP's resources, our PA in Action hybrid events, and more! Same quality education, just more accessible!



MY FIRST SEMESTER WAS GREAT! I WAS A LITTLE STRESSED AT THE BEGINNING, CONSIDERING I'VE BEEN OUT OF SCHOOL FOR 4 YEARS, BUT ONCE I GOT A ROUTINE GOING AGAIN, IT GOT SO MUCH BETTER. WHAT I LIKE MOST ABOUT THE PROGRAM IS THAT IT'S 100% ONLINE. I CAN CONTINUE TO MAKE A LIVING AND FURTHER MY EDUCATION AT THE SAME TIME. IT ALSO ALLOWS ME TO HAVE TIME TO SPEND WITH MY FAMILY AND TO ENJOY MY HOBBIES. I ALSO APPRECIATE THAT THE COURSES ARE 8 WEEKS LONG INSTEAD OF A FULL SEMESTER.
- CYNTHIA SERRANO



[CLICK HERE](#)

TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION



Recent Faculty Publications in Public and Nonprofit Administration



Dr. Ljubinka Andonoska

Publications:

Andonoska, L., & Hu, D. X. (2023). Political budget cycle and pension funding in the U.S. States. *Public Money & Management*. Online first. (2022 Scopus: 4.4; SJR 0.667). [Link Here](#)

Alda, E. & Andonoska, L. (2023) Doing more with less? Assessing the cost efficiency of US local police organizations. *Applied Economic Letters*. (2021 Scopus: 1.8; SJR: 0.4)

Presentations:

Gender Responsive Budgeting in the U.S. states: Survey of state budgets. ABFM, October 26–28, 2023.

Implementation of Lean Six Sigma in local government: The case of El Paso. Presented at the 2023 ASPA conference, March 20–24, 2023 (online).

Measuring municipal budget performance in a transitional country: The case of Macedonian municipalities. WSSA Conference, April 12–15, 2023, Tempe, AZ.

Financial Condition and Credit Ratings of the US State Governments During the Great Recession. WSSA Conference, April 12–15, 2023, Tempe, AZ.



Erika Andresen

Presentations, Publication and Accomplishments:

Presented to the Business Resilience Professional Association in Chicago about the wide-ranging business continuity efforts as a practice, to include international and national focus with the allied professions involved (BC, EM, CM).

"World-wide importance of Business Continuity, Emergency Management and Crisis Management" at the Business Resilience Professional Association's (a Fortune-500 member organization) holiday luncheon, Chicago, IL.

Developed Business Continuity and National Security course for Capacity Building International's Crisis Lab. [Link Here](#)

Andresen, Erika L. 2023. "Legal Considerations when advising on business continuity." *The Journal of Business Continuity and Emergency Planning*, Winter 2024. [Link Here](#)

Presented webinars for American Family Insurance's Dream Bank and The Carolina Small Business Development Fund's Digital Library on Business Continuity and Risk Management.

Named lecturer for the MIT Professional Education's upcoming "Advanced Business Resiliency" short course in June 2024. [Link Here](#).



Recent Faculty Publications in Public and Nonprofit Administration



Dr. Eric Boyer

Publications:

Boyer, Eric J. 2023. "Responding to Environmental Uncertainties in Critical Supply Acquisition: An Examination of Contracting for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the Aftermath of COVID-19." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. [Link Here](#)

Presentations:

Boyer, Eric J. 2023. "Urban & Rural Serving? Opportunities and Challenges for Urban Serving MPA Programs with a Rural Reach." Annual Conference of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). Pittsburgh, PA.

Boyer, Eric. 2023. "Examining Contract Changes in the Purchasing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Following COVID-19." Annual Conference of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), online.



Dr. Sergio Peña

Publications and Accomplishments:

Ortiz Sánchez, K. B., & Peña, S. (2023). Mobility and the right to the city: The BRT in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua 2010–2016. *Economía, Sociedad y Territorio*, 23(71), 281–307. [Link Here](#)

Peña, S. (2023). "From Territoriality to Borderscapes: The Conceptualisation of Space in Border Studies." *Geopolitics*, 28:2, 766–794. [Link Here](#)

Peña, S. (2023). Planning practice and the planning profession in Mexico. *Planning Practice & Research*. [Link Here](#)

- Appointed as Chair of the population studies department at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte.
- Co-editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Borderlands Studies (JBS)*.



About Public Administration in Action

The PA in Action series is an initiative by the Public Administration Program that seeks to connect our students with the broader professional and academic community in the realm of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Aligned with the UTEP Edge pillar of Community Engagement, PA in Action brings professionals and academic experts to engage our students through presentations, discussions, and networking. This fall semester afforded students an opportunity to engage in discussions about El Paso’s Climate & Sustainability Office, learn about how Raiz Federal Credit Union gives back to the community, and become exposed to the intricacies of gathering economic data in the Borderplex.



Dr. Eric Boyer and Alejandro Yu, VP of Marketing at Raiz Federal Credit Union



PA in Action attendees with Nicole Alderete Ferrini, The City of El Paso Climate and Sustainability Office

PA in Action, coordinated by Dr. Ljubinka Andonoska, has continued to evolve since Fall 2021. Now held in UTEP's new Interdisciplinary Research Building, the events see attendance from students, alumni, UTEP faculty, and public administration faculty members from ASPA (American Society of Public Administration). The hybrid speaker series seeks to be accessible to all UTEP MPA community and friends.

Alumni- if you or someone you know would be a great speaker, please reach out to landonoska@utep.edu.

Fall 2023 PA in Action Speakers



Nicole Alderete Ferrini

September 27, 2023

"Impactful Governance, Global Policy to Local Action"



Alejandro Yu

October 17, 2023

"Inclusive Branding: Honoring the Community You Serve"



Dr. Tom Fullerton

November 29, 2023

"Quantifying the Borderplex Economy"



Fall 2023 Capstone Showcase



Dr. Han and Prince Ofosu

The MPA curriculum concludes with a rigorous capstone project in PAD 5367, where students choose a research area, policy, or program to apply skills like data analysis and policy review. The course often involves collaboration with organizations or government agencies, enabling students to fully integrate classroom learning. Under the guidance of Dr. Andonoska, students formulate research, evaluation instruments, and recommendations. On December 7, 2023, students in Dr. Andonoska's capstone course shared their projects at the Fall 2023 Capstone Showcase with MPA staff, faculty, and their family and friends. We are proud of their work and confident in their potential as future public servants.

Student Projects

Amy Hernandez: "Does Texas have a Recidivism Problem?"

Cristopher M. Zubia Jr: "Beyond the Field: Analyzing the Influence of Youth Sports Programs on Crime"

Diego Andree Martinez Mojica: "Influence of the USMCA agreement in the Mexican employment rate after COVID-19: is there really an impact?"

Karina Soriano: "Advancing Nonprofits: The Power of Social Media to Drive Volunteer Engagement and Donor Participation"

Perfecto Zarate Zarate: "The role of Information and Communication Technologies in the education of undergraduate students in the University of Texas at El Paso: an evolution in academic performance or a setback"

Prince Ofosu: "Gender Mainstreaming in Local Governance in Ghana Post COVID: Are We Holding the Fort?"

Priscilla Reyes: "Employee Training and Retention".

Andrea Santana R: "Corporate Social Responsibility Delivered from the Mine to Your Home"



Perfecto Zarate Zarate



Prince Ofosu, Perfecto Zarate Zarate, Amy Hernandez, Dr. Ljubinka Andonoska, Priscilla Reyes, Andrea Santana, Karina Soriano, and Christopher Zubia



MPA attends El Paso Central Business Association (CBA) Luncheon

On November 1, 2023, the El Paso Central Business Association hosted their monthly luncheon, featuring a presentation by El Paso Mayor Oscar Leeser. In Mayor Leeser's remarks, he reflected on his experiences during his time in office and also addressed the important role that UTEP plays in developing the human capital needed to support our regional workforce.

The Central Business Association's (CBA) mission is to foster a dynamic and enterprising atmosphere that contributes to the city's overall quality of life. They seek to ensure economic and social prosperity in the area, while remaining dedicated to the growth and success of the community. These luncheons bring in speakers across both the business and public sector to highlight and promote change makers in the El Paso community.

MPA Program director, Dr. Eric Boyer, and several MPA students were in attendance for the luncheon, along with other students across UTEP's College of Liberal Arts and UTEP's Assistant Vice-President for International Relations, Arturo Barrio.



Dr. Eric Boyer with Brenda Cantu MBA/MPA Student, and Jessica Cordova MPA Online Student.



El Paso Mayor Oscar Leeser, November 2023



Dr. Arturo Barrio, and Dr. Eric Boyer with students from the College of Liberal Arts with El Paso Mayor, Oscar Leeser



MPA ADVISORY BOARD: NEW DIRECTION AND LEADERSHIP

This fall, the MPA Advisory Board made forward progress in establishing its governance and leadership structure to help ensure long-term success. On November 15, 2023, the Board held a special meeting to adopt bylaws and vote on leadership positions. The Board consists of 15 dynamic and active MPA alum from multiple sectors, and from El Paso and beyond. The group exists to support the MPA program by keeping us informed of industry trends and needs, providing mentoring opportunities, assisting with fundraising efforts, and provides curriculum feedback. To learn more about our Advisory Board Members, click [here](#).

Christian Lopez '21- Chair
Jorge Rodriguez '16- Vice Chair
Diana Hastings '20- Secretary

Aracelli Astorga, '15
Andrea Carrillo, '17
Alyssa Cervantes Benavides, '12
George Elsaesser, '20
Cassandra Hernandez, '13
Paulina Lopez, '16

Fred Lopez, '11
Alfonso Pacheco, '20
Teresa Quezada, '92
Jorge Reyes, '12
Sergio Venegas, '21
Tracy Yellen, '95



Present: Diana Hastings, Dr. Eric Boyer, Fred Lopez, and Luci Rodriguez
On Screen: Sergio Venegas, Christian Lopez, Andrea Carrillo, Cassandra Hernandez, George Elsaesser, Jorge Rodriguez, Paulina Lopez



PAA INDUCTEES NEW HONOR SOCIETY MEMBERS

Pi Alpha Alpha (PAA) Honor Society is the National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration. There are more than 160 chapters, located around the world, which recognize students who excel in their scholarship and commit to the values of integrity, professionalism, and public service. To be eligible for PAA induction, students must have at least 50% of their MPA coursework completed and maintain a GPA of 3.7 and above. Congratulations to this year's inductees:

Cierra Chenault- MPA
Karina Soriano- MPA
Fedra Soto Cazares- MPA
Daniela Ochoa- MPA
Priscilla Reyes- MPA
Perfecto Zarate Zarate- MPA
Damien Speaker- MBA/MPA
Edward Guzman- MBA/MPA



Dr. Eric Boyer leads new inductees in the recitation of the Pi Alpha Alpha Oath, December 2023.
Pictured (L-R): Dr. Boyer, Priscilla Reyes, Daniela Ochoa, Perfecto Zarate Zarate, Edward Guzman, Fedra Soto, and Karina Soriano



Celebrating our 2023 Graduates Summer 2023

Guadalupe Chavez Diaz*

Public Policy

Fall 2023

Yaqoub Ashkenani

Public Policy and Management

Edward Guzman

MBA/MPA

Leopoldo Hernandez

Homeland Security

Andrea Santana

Leadership

Karina Soriano**

Nonprofit Admin and Governance

Paola Villanueva

MBA/MPA

America Alvarez

Grad Certificate in Urban and
Regional Planning

*Recipient of Public Service Award

**Recipient of Outstanding Student Award



Dr. Eric Boyer, Daniela Ochoa, Priscilla Reyes, Dr. Scott McDonald, Lupe Chavez Diaz, Dr. Ljubinka Andonoska, Karina Soriano, Eddie Guzman, and Luci Rodriguez



HALF A CENTURY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

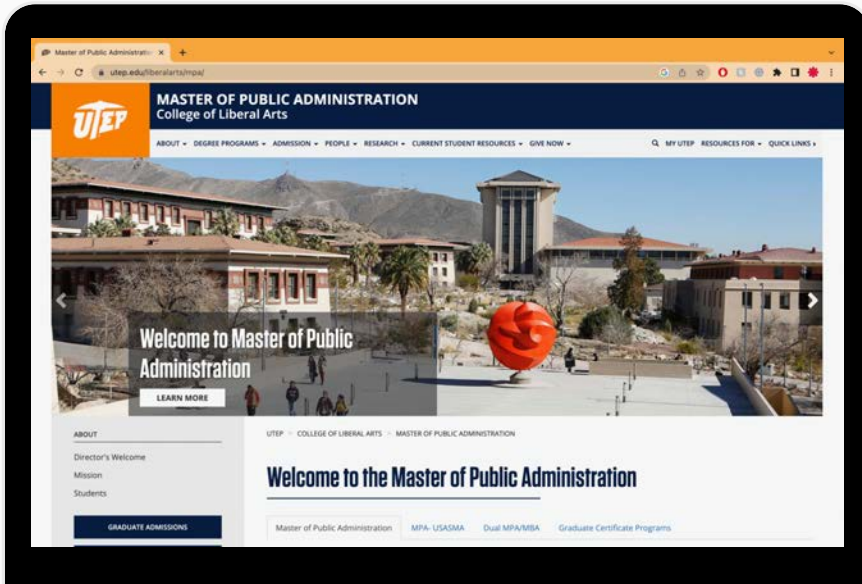
In 1974, under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Graves, the Master of Public Administration program came to fruition. Since then, the Public Administration program has graduated 573 students, many of whom went on to work in the Paso del Norte region, within local government and nonprofits (including those they have founded). The program has since expanded and now offers a dual degree with the Master of Business Administration, graduate certificates in Nonprofit Administration and Urban and Regional Planning, and just recently launched its online MPA in Fall 2023. We also established a strong partnership with the United States Sergeant's Major Academy (USASMA) at Fort Bliss in 2015, helping soldiers obtain their MPA while completing one of the Army's most intense leadership trainings.

In honor of this milestone, we invite you to celebrate our accomplishments and help us continue to support our students! Launching in February 2024, our Pick-A-Project will allow alumni and supporters to contribute to the MPA Student Excellence Fund. This fund aims to support our students with both financial and experiential learning needs such as emergency tuition support, internship stipends, conference attendance, etc..

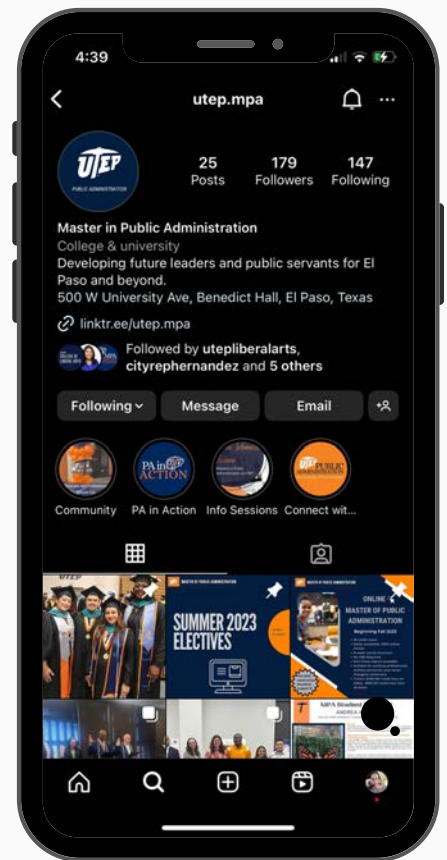
To learn more, visit [MPA Program Celebrates 50 Years \(under construction\)](#) and stay tuned for information about our Fall 2024 50th Anniversary event!



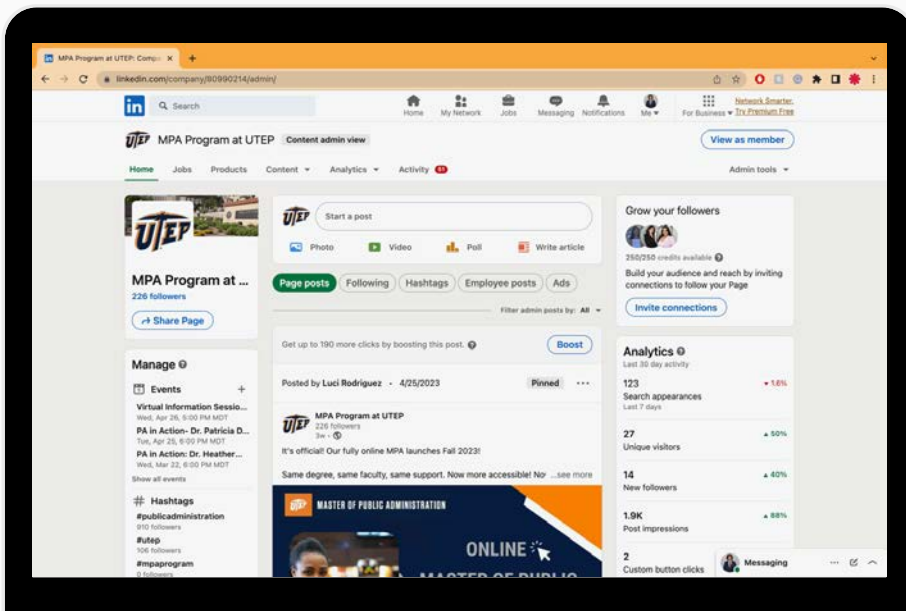
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