

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

## PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

### FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER

CENTENNIAL PLAZA

## Program Welcome

BY LUCI RODRIGUEZ, MPA SENIOR COORDINATOR

Another fall semester in the books, and the MPA community continues to expand and make an impact. This semester has seen both growth AND revitalization. We've remained committed to fostering a sense of community among students and alumni, as well as ensuring our students are connected to the broader region.

By the numbers, our community of students is growing. We welcomed 45 new students across our degree programs and graduate certificates, totaling a record number of 105 active students across all programs! In terms of revitalization- we are honored and excited to share that the Master of Public Administration Student Association (MPASA) has reorganized and is now an active student organization on campus once again. The group has hit the ground running with recruiting new members, hosting a successful donation drive for the UTEP Food Pantry and is in the planning process for more events in the Spring 2026 semester. We're happy to have MPASA back on campus!

The MPA faculty are also hard at work behind the scenes as the program prepares for re-accreditation, reviewing and revising our mission and strategic plans. We strive to continue equipping our students to effectively lead in organizations that serve the public interest and we look forward to sharing more with you throughout the process.

We hope you enjoy the semester's recap and remain connected to us in the new year.

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## Recent Faculty Publications in Public and Nonprofit Administration



### Dr. Ljubinka Andonoska

#### Publications and Presentations:

**Andonoska, L. & Alda, E. (2025).** Elections, opportunistic policies, and strategic use of decentralized local budgets in Macedonia. *Public Administration Quarterly* (2024 Scopus 1.; SJR 0.3). online first. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734914925136662>

Alda, E. & **Andonoska, A. (2025).** Assessing the Cost-Efficiency of Foreign Aid: A Stochastic Frontier Analysis. *The Empirical Economic Letters*, 24(6), 1-8. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15645974>

**Andonoska, L., & Xu, H. D. (2025).** Assessing the Impact of Tax and Expenditure Limitations on the US State's Debt and Pension Solvency: A Dynamic Model. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 25(2), e70033. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.70033> (2024 Scopus 8.6, 2024 SJR: 0.615).

Alda, E. & **Andonoska, L. (2025).** Policing the Process: A Relational Network DEA Approach to Law Enforcement Efficiency. *The Empirical Economic Letters*.24(3): 129-137. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15147511>

How does politics affect fiscal health in the U.S. states? The case of the Political Budget Cycle in the U.S. states (co-authored with Dr. Elaine Yi Lu). ABFM's 37th Annual Research Conference, Atlanta, GA, October 23-25, 2025

Elections and revenue collection in recently decentralized Macedonian municipalities (with E. Alda). ASPA (The American Society for Public Administration), March 28-April 1, 2025, Washington DC.

Evidence-Based Recruitment in Policing: An Efficiency Frontier Approach (presented by E. Alda), ASEBP (The American Society of Evidence-Based Policing), April 30-May 2, 2025, Tucson, AZ.

Gender Diversity and Police Productivity in US Police Agencies (presented by Dr. Alda, E.). American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting (ASC). November 2025. Washington DC.



### Dr. Eric Boyer

#### Publications and Presentations:

**Boyer, Eric J., Chen, Can, & Thomas, John Clayton. 2025.** "An Integrated Framework to Improve Public Involvement in Public-Private Partnerships: Aligning Participatory Modes with Informational Needs in PPPs." *Public Works Management & Policy*, O(O). doi: 10.1177/1087724X251391655.

**Boyer, Eric J.** "Hispanic Serving Institutions' Roles in the Education Ecosystem within the Context of Public Service and Society." Annual Conference of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). Flagstaff, AZ.

**Boyer, Eric J. and João Ricardo Faria. 2025.** "How does the Balance of Public and Private Investment in Public-Private Partnerships Affect the Likelihood of PPP Failure?" American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), Washington, DC.

Dr. Boyer received a contract from NIGP: The Institute of Public Procurement to interview more than 20 public procurement professionals and to develop a white paper on the impacts of tariffs on public procurement in local government.

## Recent Faculty Publications (cont.)



### Prof. Erika Andresen

#### **Presentations:**

Media: "Some Texas Officials Didn't Respond to Flood Alerts, Echoing the Tragedies of Hurricane Helene" by Jennifer Berry Hawes *ProPublica*, July 22, 2025. *As quoted expert.*

#### **Speaking engagements:**

Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development. Mills River, NC. November 10, 2025.

Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Tucson, AZ, September 9-10, 2025.

#### **Webinars:**

Suburban Illini Club. Speaking to business owners about navigating leadership change and resilience. December 2, 2025.

Virtual Risk Community. Fall speaker to group of risk management professionals about the difference between risk management and business continuity. November 4, 2025.

Northwest Mutual. Speaking to financial advisory clients about protecting their business assets. September 24, 2025.

CPA Academy. Webinar for continuing education credits for accountants about the practice of leadership and business continuity. July 15, 2025. Rebroadcasts September 17 and November 5, 2025; January 6, 2026.

# PA in Action – Fall 2025

## About PA in Action

The *Public Administration in Action* series is an initiative by the MPA Program that seeks to connect our students with the broader professional and academic community in the realm of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. *PA in Action* brings professionals and academic experts to engage our students through presentations, discussions, and networking. This fall, our students got to hear from two outstanding community leaders who are making an impact on the borderland.

Mr. Robert Tinajero, the Director for Texas International Bridges at the City of El Paso visited with us in September and presented on the breadth of his department’s work, their partnerships within the city and across the border and state, as well as upcoming capital projects and improvement plans. It was impressive to hear how one department’s work intersects in multiple ways from day to day functions and maintenance, to playing a role in intergovernmental relations.

Diana Hastings, an MPA alum and current vice chair of the MPA Advisory Board, shared her personal and professional growth from college student to nonprofit leader. She highlighted courses in program evaluation and nonprofit executive leadership and starting points for her work, and shared how her team at the Underserved Community Foundation is striving to provide a hand up to some of El Paso’s most vulnerable.

PA in Action, coordinated by Dr. Ljubinka Andonoska, welcomes attendees from students, alumni, UTEP faculty, and public administration faculty members. Alumni: if you or someone you know would be a great speaker, please reach out to [Landonoska@utep.edu](mailto:Landonoska@utep.edu).



**Roberto Tinajero**  
Director, City of El Paso, Texas  
International Bridges Department

September 30, 2025  
“International Bridges Department  
Overview”



**Diana Hastings**  
Executive Director of the Underserved  
Communities Foundation

October 28, 2025  
“From Policies to Practice: Nonprofit  
Leadership Lessons in Public Administration”

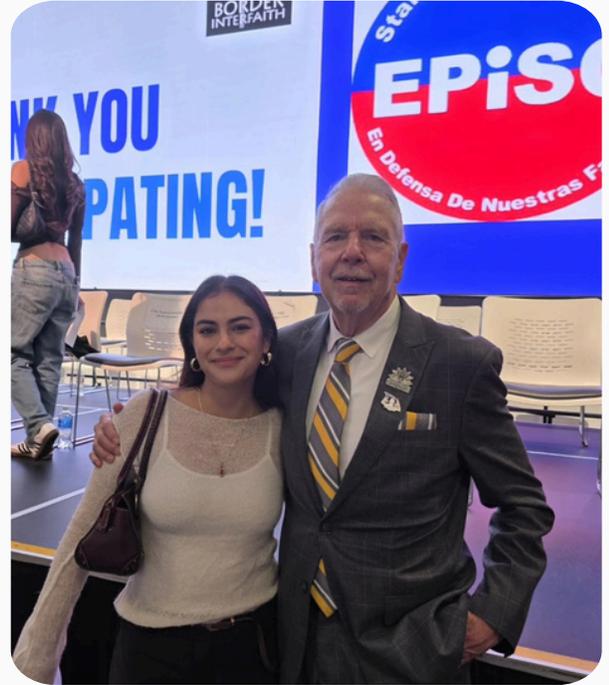
# Student Spotlights

## Fall 2025 Internship Reflection



This semester, I had the fulfilling opportunity to intern with the Office of County Commissioner Sergio Coronado, Precinct 4. During my time there, I got to dive into event planning and policy work centered around civic engagement, public welfare, our parks, and the El Paso Promise Program.

Commissioner Coronado and the incredible staff trusted me with real, meaningful projects that made a direct impact in the community. One of my absolute favorite Precinct 4 initiatives was installing Little Free Libraries in Gallegos Park and Westway Park. I helped plan the ribbon cutting, organize the installation, coordinate volunteers to build the libraries, and even collect the books. Other events and initiatives I took part in included community clean-ups, resource fairs, and working closely with Canutillo ISD to bring services to families in need. Ultimately, my internship taught me that meaningful work comes from knowing that what you do every day makes a difference. Having the opportunity to work so closely with policy was one of the most significant aspects of my professional growth.



Jimena Guerrero with County Judge Richard Samaniego



County Commissioner Sergio Coronado presenting the Healthy Food Financing Initiative award to Canutillo Fruits and Veggies

Sometimes, I didn't even feel like an intern because of how directly I was involved in discussions and research. If you're thinking about interning with El Paso County, do it! The environment is welcoming, energetic, and full of people who genuinely care about the community. I learned something new from every department and met so many amazing individuals along the way. Whether you're into policy, media, economics, or volunteering, there's a place for you here.

I also want to take a moment to thank Commissioner Coronado, my mentors Mari Nunez and Steven Garza, and Dr. Eric Boyer for their constant support and guidance. Each of them has shaped me professionally and personally, and I'm grateful to now call them not just mentors and colleagues, but friends.



# Student Engagement

## Join the Master of Public Administration Student Association (MPASA)

Graduate students in the Master of Public Administration program have officially relaunched the Masters of Public Administration Student Association (MPASA), reestablishing a student-led organization focused on professional development, peer support, and engagement within the public and nonprofit sectors. The revitalized MPASA aims to create meaningful opportunities for students to connect with faculty, alumni, and community partners while strengthening the MPA student experience.

MPASA is currently recruiting new members and welcomes all students interested in leadership, service, and career development. With new programming, networking opportunities, and collaborative initiatives already in planning, the organization looks ahead to an exciting slate of activities and growth in 2026. Follow them at @mpasa.utep on Instagram for more updates. To receive information on spring meetings, please scan the QR code/click [this link](#) and visit our page on [MineTracker!](#)



**UTEP MPA 50 YEARS**

**BUILD YOUR FUTURE BY BUILDING COMMUNITY!**

The UTEP Masters of Public Administration Program is relaunching the Master in Public Administration Student Association (MPASA) and you are invited to join us!

SCAN THE QR CODE TO JOIN OUR MAILING LIST AND STAY IN THE KNOW ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS, MEETINGS, AND WAYS TO GET INVOLVED WITH OUR STUDENT ASSOCIATION!

**LET'S BUILD SOMETHING GREAT — TOGETHER!**

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### Coming in Spring 2026:

- Textbook Turnaround
- Project Move
- Alumni-Student Mixers
- Sergeant Major Academy Appreciation



MPASA donation drive supporting the UTEP Food Pantry- thank you to all who helped make this possible

## Fall 2025 Capstone Showcase

The MPA curriculum concludes with a rigorous capstone project in PAD 5367, where students choose a research area, policy, or program to apply skills of 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 4, 2025, students in Dr. Andonoska's capstone course shared their projects at the Fall 2025 Capstone Showcase with MPA staff, faculty, alumni, and their families and friends. We are proud of their work and confident in their potential as future public servants.



Dr. Andonoska with this semester's students.



MPA student, Bernice Gonzalez sharing her research with attendees.



MPA student, Jessica Cardova sharing her team's research with audience members.

### Student Projects

**Grace Ariola:** "How animal welfare organizations can optimize their efforts on social media platforms to increase adoptions: developing an evidence-based strategy"

**Lily Brieno, Sylvia Perez:** "Equity at Risk: School Choice and the Future of Public Education in San Antonio"

**Diego Carlos:** "Governance and Representation in Unincorporated Santa Teresa, New Mexico"

**Jessica Cordova, Jessica Denise Tagle:** "Enhancing Economic Development Incentives in El Paso: A Policy Analysis"

**Maria Corella:** "Financial Stress and Its Implications on UTEP Students' Academic Performance and Mental Well-being"

**Bernice Gonzalez:** "Evaluating the Impact of Trauma-Informed Police Training Mandates on Sexual Assault Case Outcomes in Texas"

**Maritza Rodriguez Landess:** "Four Day School Week: The future for Clint ISD?"

**Crista Mary Mack:** "Sharing the Unified Load: The Good, the Bad, and the Complexities of Joint Military Bases"

**Joseph V. Pawloski:** "El Paso, TX: A Descriptive Study"

**Gianna Triplett:** "Federal Policy, Local Practice: Examining the Influence of ESSA and GEAR UP on Educational Equity and College Readiness"

To view Capstone Projects abstracts, please visit [Fall 2025 Capstones](#).



Clara McMullen, Rhonda and George Elsaesser (MPA Alum/Board Member) with Dr. Boyer at the Back to School Mixer.



Dr. Andonoska, front right, greets Capstone attendees on December 4, 2025.



MPA faculty, staff, alumni, students and friends at the Back to School Mixer at Hope and Anchor



Cynthia Serrano celebrates receiving her MPA this Fall!



MPA visits the Sergeant's Major Academy, November 2025.  
Dr. Eric Boyer, Dr. Esther Han, SGM Tim Reinker, SGM Johnny Ildefonso, SGM Clara McMullen, Dr. Andonoska, Luci Rodriguez, Dr. Euipto Lee, and Dr. Jose Villalobos



Students Joe Pawloski Bernice Gonzalez, Gianna Triplett, Jessica Tagle, Cynthia Serrano, and Jessica Cordova at the MPA hooding Ceremony

Each fall and spring, the MPA faculty and staff have the honor, and difficult decision, of nominating students for recognition in two awards categories. The *Outstanding Student Award* is bestowed upon a student for exceptional academic work, meaningful contributions in classroom discussion, and for demonstrating a commitment to enhancing the dialogue present in the field of public service. Recipients often have the highest GPAs, but also have made an impact on their classmates and professors. The *Public Service Award* is presented to students who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to public service- through their employment, volunteer work, and in their leadership values and actions.

We are honored to celebrate just two of our exceptional graduates with this year's awards. Congratulations!

## Outstanding Student Award Joe Pawloski



The Outstanding Student Award recognizes one student for extraordinary accomplishment in the study of public administration in the classroom. The award is based on the candidate's GPA (minimum 3.5) and academic accomplishments throughout the graduate degree, including the quality of research papers written by the candidate, the candidate's contributions to classroom discussions, and the candidate's promise for ongoing, intellectual, and academic-related achievement.

Joe Pawloski is currently assigned to U.S. Border Patrol Headquarters, Logistics Division, Asset Forfeiture Program in El Paso, Texas.

Dedicated federal professional with 15 years of experience in program administration and law enforcement. Successfully manages a \$2 million national contracts supporting two operational components of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Procured \$4.2 million in capital assets to enhance operational capabilities, managed government accountable property inventories, and previously served as a Series 1896 federal agent.

After graduation, Joe hopes to secure opportunities to leverage acquired knowledge to advance professionally, while working for the betterment of others.

He completed Bachelor's degrees in Criminal Justice and Spanish at NMSU as well as multiple professional certifications, from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, the Federal Acquisition Institute, and the U.S. Border Patrol's Academy.

## Public Service Award Jessica Cordova



Jessica Cordova serves as the main contact for the City of El Paso's incentive projects in the aerospace, defense, and advanced manufacturing sectors. She collaborates closely with regional partners to craft customized incentive packages for prospective tenants in the City's Advanced Manufacturing District. Jessica also manages resources and incentives within the Innovation Network for Manufacturers, supporting the growth and competitiveness of El Paso's small and medium-sized manufacturers and strengthening their ties to national aerospace and defense supply chains.

As Business Services Coordinator for the City of El Paso, she manages grant-funded programs, including components of the \$40M Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, ensuring compliance, tracking, and reporting while coordinating with UTEP and regional partners.

She has held previous positions with the El Paso Fire Department and the City Attorney's Office.

She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science with a Business concentration from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Jessica is committed to applying her public administration expertise to help organizations design and implement effective policies and programs that deliver meaningful public value.

*Congratulations to our  
award recipients!*



## Class of 2025



### Master of Public Administration

Grace Ariola\*\*  
Lily Brieno  
Jessica Cordova\*  
Bernice Gonzalez\*\*  
Joseph Pawloski\*\*  
Martiza Rodriguez Landess\*  
Cynthia Serrano  
Denise Tagle\*  
Gianna Triplett

### Graduate Certificates

Susan Carrillo- Nonprofit Administration  
Alfonso Rodriguez- Urban and Regional Planning

\*Denotes current Pi Alpha Alpha honor society member

\*\*Eligible Pi Alpha Alpha inductee to be inducted in Spring 2026 ceremony

Dr. Eric Boyer, Daniela Ochoa, Priscilla Reyes, Scott McDaniel, Lupe Chavez, Dr. Jimmie Andruska, Karina Soriano, Erika Guzman, and Lari Rodriguez

## Get Connected and Give Back!



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Know an alum who is making strides in their community? Nominate them (or yourself!) for our **Alumni Spotlight!** This helps us keep updated on your achievements and strengthens our community. If you're interested in supporting as a PA in Action speaker or have opportunities to share with students, please let us know!

[Alumni Connection Survey](#)

Our MPA Student Enhancement Fund supports MPA students needs whether textbook costs, or funding experiential learning opportunities. We appreciate being part of your annual giving efforts. Our fund is open year round, thank you for your contributions in supporting future public servants!

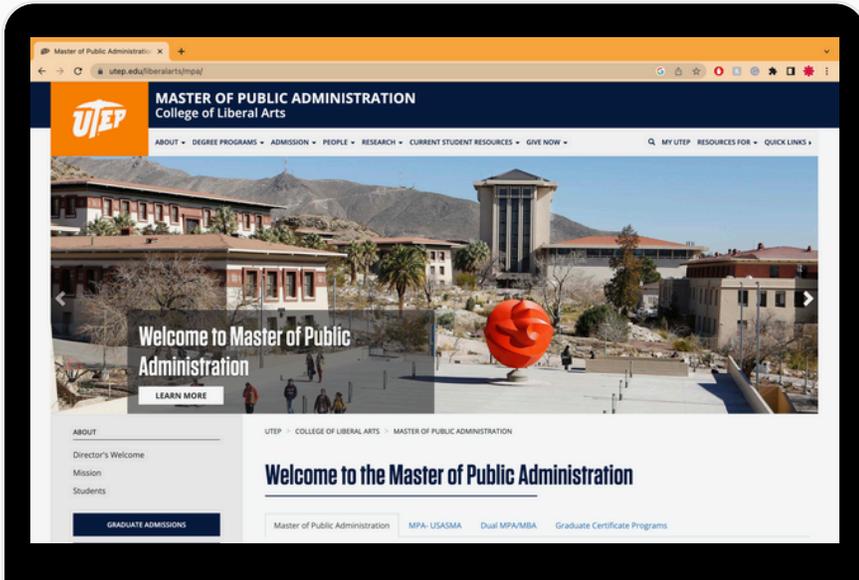
[Donate here.](#)



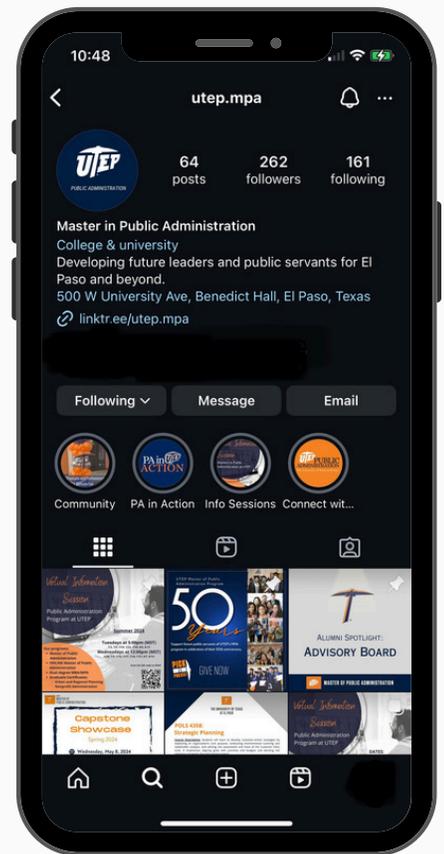
Join the [UTEP MPA Alumni, Students, & Friends Networking Group](#) on LinkedIn to remain connected, meet current students, and share job opportunities and successes. Thank you to the [MPA Advisory Board](#) for suggesting this networking group!

Have an event to promote or highlight to share? Email us at [larodriguez15@utep.edu](mailto:larodriguez15@utep.edu)

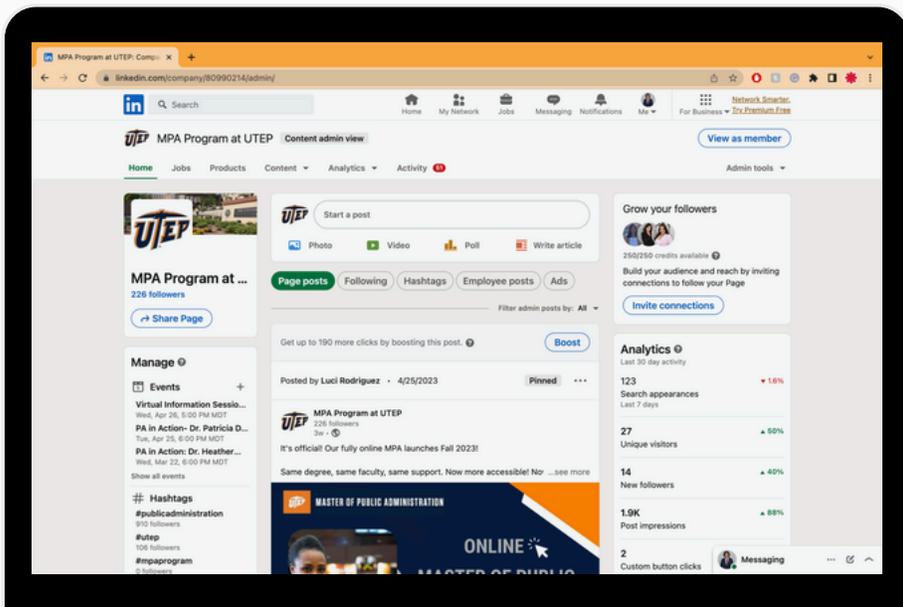
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