The 2009 intake of the GSG Graduate Diploma in Public Administration program brought a unique and diversified student body. This year’s cohort of students not only included employees from the NSW public sector, but also for the first time, employees from the Non-Government Organisation (NGO) sector. This year the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet sponsored five places to students from the NGO sector. Ms Sam Robinson, Corporate & Government Affairs Manager, Conservation Volunteers Australia said, Participation in the course has afforded me a warm welcome into the public sector world, providing extensive opportunities to learn first hand from leading academics and practitioners about the unique complexities, challenges and constraints of public sector leadership and administration. Studying alongside both Australian and International senior public servants and other senior NGO participants creates an environment where diverse experiences and perspectives can be shared and explored. This course is helping me to better navigate the public sector landscape through an improved understanding of the culture, expectations, freedoms and limitations of the sector, and where these intersect with NGOs. I hope to increase my capacity to create public value through new knowledge, networks, academic and practical experience.

The intake of international students this year included students from South Africa, China and Malaysia. GSG welcomes its first students from Uganda and Kiribati.

GSG asked several students to give their impression of studying public administration. Here Tony Houhlias from Sydney Olympic Park Authority and Neville Prior from Roads and Traffic Authority write on their experience with the first two core subjects.

Policy in Practice – Delivering Public Value - Tony Houhlias

Establishing a work/life balance is the key to managing expectations. At work it was important to manage my colleagues’ and external stakeholder’s expectations of workloads to complete projects and tasks.

The Policy in Practice – Delivering Public Value subject delivered by Dr Gaby Ramia and Professor Geoff Gallop has provided me with insights into policy theory but as the title suggests also in practice. Theory and practice have been combined and explored in a concise and engaging manner. Geoff’s own experiences as WA Premier and guest lecturers Graeme Head, Patricia Forsythe, John Aquilina, Dr Lyn Carson and Nick Greiner were experiences that have been invaluable to this program and have deepened my understanding and appreciation of this challenging and essential part of good government.

I was particularly drawn to Geoff’s style of collaborative leadership and examples of his Perth Dialogue with the City approach in 2003 as described by our guest lecturer Dr Lyn Carson. Her presentation on deliberative democracy and the whole notion of random sampling where citizens are involved in policy reflected the “Aristotle” democracy which is of relevance today. Both the 2020 Summit and recent 2009 Citizens Parliament are examples of this style of consultation.

I have already applied deliberative democracy to one particular issue. The continued issues facing the NRL Rugby League is potentially putting the game at risk at all levels. I have contacted the
NRL and suggested a process of a “Dialogue with the Nation – Creating a Positive Sports Team Culture”.

This has resulted in a preliminary meeting with Dr Lyn Carson and the NRL. The project is now currently under consideration by the NRL Player Education Committee. If successful, the project would involve Newslimited, Channel 9, sponsors, social behaviour experts, fans and players. The dialogue would be broadcast across the nation and would educate and create a series of strategies that will result in positive sport’s team culture.

Hopefully the project will be approved, but time will tell.

Public Sector Leadership - Neville Prior

Everyone knows what a leader is, until they are asked to define leadership. This elusive definition of leadership occupied 60 people in extensive reading and long days of vigorous debate. The debate was continued on a web site discussion forum. While the forum enabled ideas to be clarified, it was also a reminder of why letter writing went out of vogue when the telephone was invented.

The passionate leader of the debate was lecturer Stephen Mills. Stephen was a former speech writer for Prime Minister Bob Hawke (the “no child shall live in poverty” speech was not one of his 700 deliveries). Not only did the class learn about leadership, they heard words of English never before encountered (the list is available on request).

The exploration of leadership began with the distinctive craggy rhetoric of Winston Churchill in war-torn Europe. The journey swung through snapshots of people, place and time throughout history. Biblical King David and his successor Solomon showed charismatic leadership and its problems. The purpose and scope of leadership were dissected with a comparison of Australian cricket captain Ricky Ponting, and the Pope.

The meaning of leading “public value” was passed on the way to looking at the application of leadership in a disadvantaged aboriginal school in outback Queensland. The names of theorists Moore and Heifetz became household words (producing “whatever” responses from the household around the breakfast table on Friday mornings).

Sagacious advice from Professor Geoff Gallop to “never assume rationality” led on to a deeper personal look at the leader within, leadership styles and the differences in leadership by men and women.

Police Commander Robert Redfern, Wollongong administrator Gabrielle Kibble, former politician Susan Ryan, Aboriginal Affairs Director General Jody Broun, television presenter Peter Thompson and Air Vice Marshal Mark Skidmore were among distinguished guests providing personal leadership insights. They contrasted with illustrations of leadership from Machiavelli, Aristotle, President Kennedy and Mahatma Gandhi.

This exhausting journey finished with an ethical dilemma set amid the ice and rocky crags of the Himalayan Mountains in Nepal.

We now know that leadership has many facets. We can describe leadership styles and can recognise the skills. We can see how leadership is applied, but the complexity of leadership and the deeply personal nature of leaders will continue to defy a neat definition.

---

Staff Update

ANZSOG has appointed Associate Professor Joanne Kelly as Director ANZSOG (NSW), located at GSG. Dr Gaby Ramia is now also the co-ordinator for the Policy in Practice unit, whilst Stephen Mills co-ordinated Public Sector Leadership again this year. Honorary Associate Professor Richard Mills, who took Policy in Practice last year, led the Work Based Project.

Bart Denaro has been appointed as Geoff’s assistant, whilst Ann-Maree Ormiston is on leave. Fiona Leaf has been appointed as Executive Officer for ANZSOG (NSW).

---

GDPA & EMPA Information Session - 2010

NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, with the Graduate School of Government, University of Sydney and Australian and New Zealand School of Government are hosting an information session on courses available in public administration to commence study in 2010. The session is for those currently working in the NSW Government and interested in developing their career.

Date: Tuesday 28 July
Time: 9-11am
RSVP: assist@gsg.usyd.edu.au or 9036 5232

Location: William Wilkins Gallery
NSW Department of Education Building
(Level 7) Cnr Bridge & Loftus Sts, Sydney
Mentor Function

The annual Mentor Function was held on 19 March 2009.
International Development

In February, GSG Executive Officer Leanne Howie and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) Professor John Hearn visited South Africa and Kenya to pursue collaborations with the University of Cape Town, the University of Pretoria and the University of Nairobi. They also visited the Heads of Mission at the High Commission in both countries and senior government officials in ministries including Agriculture, Public Health and the Office of the President. Leanne visited Rwanda and met with the President and many members of Cabinet at the government’s executive retreat in Gisenyi. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rosemary Museminali responded by visiting the University in June with a delegation including their Ambassador and Directors-General from Education, Agriculture and Mining. The University hosted well-attended Alumni events in South Africa, Rwanda and Kenya.

In April Professor Geoff Gallop and Leanne visited Indonesia following up from the University delegation last year lead by Chancellor Professor Marie Bashir. Professor Gallop gave seminars on Leadership for Change to pre-departure Australian Development Scholarship recipients in Jakarta and Denpasar. Geoff and Leanne visited the University of Indonesia (UI), with whom the University signed an MOU in 2009 and plan to establish some joint programs with UI. They also visited the Embassy, the Secretary-General of Foreign Affairs, the Departments of Planning and Finance and the recently established Institute for Peace and Democracy.


Alumni and Practitioners’ Network

GSG continues to support all former ANZSOG and GSG students through the Alumni and Practitioners’ Network. The Network is a lifelong community that connects students, mentors and teaching staff throughout the government, industry and education sectors.

Register and Update Online

Former students can become a part of the GSG Alumni and Practitioners’ Network by registering your details online at the University of Sydney Alumni Web portal. The portal can also be used to update your details as well.

http://www.usyd.edu.au/alumni/

When updating your details, ensure that a current email address is provided. Many invitations to functions and events are sent out by email through our Alumni and Practitioners’ Network.

Contact

Graduate School of Government
N208, Institute Building H03
University of Sydney NSW 2006
P: +61 2 9351 8662
F: +61 2 9036 5183
E: administration@gsg.usyd.edu.au
www.gsg.usyd.edu.au

University of Sydney Graduate School of Government newsletter July 2009. Text: GSG
Photos: p3 Morgan Carpenter (lunas.net); p1, 4 GSG. CRICOS Provider No 00026A