Alongside Graduate School of Government’s Graduate Diploma and Executive Teaching programs, the School has been building its research profile through our PhD programs. Currently the GSG has six candidates enrolled, completing Doctoral research in public administration. Some are former Masters and Executive Masters students from within the NSW Government. Others come from overseas. Supervision of students is undertaken by GSG academic staff.

This issue of the GSG newsletter profiles of some of our PhD candidates.

SPEAK UP BECOMES PHD

Pam Hansford’s doctoral research focuses on Aboriginal child sexual assault. It aims to strengthen ways of engaging Aboriginal communities and service providers in more open and informed dialogue to build partnerships and assist in prevention.

Pam’s research acknowledges the unique challenges and constraints faced by Aboriginal communities. These include mistrust of government, racism, shame and fear. There is also significant under-reporting of incidents that contributes to an existing culture of silence, denial and inappropriate responses, such as protecting the perpetrator rather than the child, allowing cycles of abuse to continue.

The research also builds on the experience of producing Speak Up, an innovative multimedia awareness raising project designed to assist in the prevention of Aboriginal child sexual assault.

Speak Up is the result of over two years of community and cross-agency collaborative involvement. It was co-produced by Pam and Luke Grant, Assistant Commissioner Corrective Services, in partnership with Aboriginal community members, NSW Health, the Education Centre Against Violence, the Department of Community Services and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Pam’s doctorate will reflect on Speak Up as a cultural artefact of current child sexual assault prevention policy, and simultaneously focus on the project as a case study. The goal is to learn more about the factors that enhance community and government dialogue about preventing Aboriginal child sexual assaults.

Pam (pictured above) is a part-time PhD student and Senior Project Officer with the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet. She is supervised by Associate Professor Joanne Kelly, Director of the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (NSW).
MANAGING THE PUBLIC SERVICE MARKET

Through examining long-term care in Japan, Yoshihiko Kadoya hopes to close the gap between theory and practice.

The goal of Yoshi’s research is to help close the gap between practice and theory in the public service market. For the last few decades, the governments of OECD countries have gradually outsourced the provision of social services to non-government organisations in order to respond to increasing welfare needs with a limited budget. Much research has been done on this topic, presenting new governance-framework theories to fit the trend. However, the serious concern remains that competition among these non-government players has negative consequences for the quality of service. A notable example of the gap between practice and theory is that a great number of elderly people have suffered from unsatisfactory care for decades in the public long-term care market.

Yoshi’s doctoral research focuses on accountability policy in the public service market using the case of public long-term care provision in Japan. It aims to direct the market competition to enhance the quality of the service, not just to save costs. His research first investigates whether an accountability policy (measuring service performance) can direct market competition to enhance the quality of service. It specifically analyses quantitative data collected from long-term care in Japan, where care services. Yoshi’s research fills this gap in knowledge by investigating how these cleaning contracts are implemented and what impacts the terms of the contract have on the cleaners.

Sasha’s research involves in-depth interviews with school cleaners, contracted cleaning firms, peak industry bodies and government departments managing the contracts, as well as a wide-scale survey of NSW public schools to understand how school cleaning work is performed. The findings will build an understanding of how procurement policies impact the workers and their labour standards.

Sasha’s doctorate is supervised by Senior Lecturer Dr Gaby Ramia, GSG and Associate Professor Bradon Ellem from the School of Work and Organisational Studies.

BUYING SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Sasha Holley’s PhD research examines how government spending impacts on labour standards for Australia’s working poor.

Sasha’s doctoral research focuses on labour standards for contracted cleaners in New South Wales public schools. Since the privatization of the New South Wales government cleaning service in the early 1990s, contracted cleaners are increasingly poorly managed, undervalued and earn minimal wages as employers compete for contracts in a ‘race-to-the-bottom’. The inclusion of social justice provisions, such as required labour standards, in government procurement contracts is a possible solution to the problem that the procurement or outsourcing itself introduced.

Sasha’s research demonstrates how governments can use their purchasing power as a policy tool by including specific provisions in the contracts that create incentives for the private sector to operate within defined parameters, such as ensuring specified labour standards are provided for workers.

Sasha’s research is at the forefront of Australian government policy to use public procurement to improve labour standards, with the Australian government stepping into the role of ‘model purchaser’. In January 2010 the Australian Government introduced guidelines for the federal government to set the example of model purchaser by engaging suppliers that abide by the Fair Work Act (2009) under the Fair Work Principles (2010). The contracted cleaning industry is given special consideration, in the Fair Work Principles User Guide (2010), on account of the history of labour exploitation, underpayment and poor workplace safety.

Although labour related clauses are being introduced into procurement contracts, Sasha has found that there remains little understanding of the effectiveness of introducing these clauses for the workers providing the services. Sasha’s research fills this gap in knowledge by investigating how these cleaning contracts are implemented and what impacts the terms of the contract have on the cleaners.

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recipients can choose a provider based solely on quality of service. Second, the research reveals that the unsatisfactory service problem is rooted in current governance theory that heavily weights “top-down” approach. It then suggests theoretical modifications that will result in better public service provision, emphasising the element of “bottom-up,” street-level bureaucracy.

Yoshi is an international PhD student on the Faculty’s International PhD Scholarship. His research is supervised by Associate Professor Joanne Kelly, Director, Australia and New Zealand School of Government (NSW).

A BRIEF LOOK

GSG’s has another three PhD candidates.

Sophana Meach, a Major General with the Cambodian Police, is undertaking his doctoral research on the difficulties facing policing organisations in post conflict countries and in particular the problems of transforming institutions which have until recently been structured around maintaining the power base of authoritarian governments.

Fan Jiang commenced her PhD with the GSG this year and is researching social security in China looking at the challenges China faces with an aging population, regional economic inequalities, and rural and urban differences.

Marlene Krasovitsky, from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, will use as the basis of her PhD research the NSW Government response to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection. The study will explore how public inquiries act as a catalyst for public policy reform, how public policy changes, and the contribution to public value (see GSG Newsletter Nov 2008).

An expanded profile of these students can be found on the GSG website www.sydney.edu.au/gsg

ALUMNI AND PRACTITIONERS’ NETWORKING FUNCTION

Hosted by Deloitte over 100 alumni and supporters of the GSG attended the end of year function. In attendance were Dr Michael Spence, Vice-Chancellor and Principal University of Sydney; Dr Dhale Suggett, Deputy Director General, Policy and Strategy, Department of Premier and Cabinet; Simon Cook from Deloitte and Paul Doorn CEO of IPAA (NSW) and former Graduate Diploma Alumnus.

The evening also saw the presentation of three inaugural prizes in the GSG. IPAA NSW, FA Bland Prize for academic excellence in Strategic Administration (2009). This was won by Paul Gaynor from the Ministry of Transport.

Deloitte prize for academic excellence in the Work Based Project (2009). This was won by David Walsh, from the Department of Community Services. This was for his Work Based Project which was an evaluation of Parental Responsibility Contracts.

Dept of Premier and Cabinet award in Public Administration for overall academic performance in the Graduate Diploma of Public Administration, which includes a travelling scholarship. The winner was Natalie Camilleri who plans to use the scholarship for her project Researching Federal and State Relations in Road Transport Policy in the USA with a focus on the importance of strategic planning to guide investment decisions.
STEPHEN MILLS
Coordinater of GSG unit Public Sector Leadership, Stephen is completing a PhD in the Faculty of Arts

Stephen Mills comes to his PhD research via the long way. He embarked on his doctoral research into Australian federal election campaigns only after earlier first-hand experience of the campaign trail as a Canberra journalist and as a political speechwriter.

Stephen is researching how Australia’s two major political parties have conducted election campaigns since the pioneering 1972 “It’s Time” campaign. Specifically, he is focusing on the role of the parties’ Head Offices, which have become more professionalised as campaigns themselves have become more centralised, capital intensive, media-oriented and continuous.

A former Canberra journalist with the Fairfax newspaper group, and speechwriter for Prime Minister Bob Hawke from 1986 to 1991, Stephen is a part-time PhD student in the Department of Government and International Relations, supervised by Professor Rod Tiffen.

Stephen’s research follows up on his 1986 book The New Machine Men which traced the emerging professionalisation of election campaigns, based on interviews in Australia and the United States with market researchers, advertisers and other campaign consultants. In returning to the subject, he notes that Australia’s political parties – unlike their counterparts in the USA – continue to be strong and influential elements of the political landscape.

“Party membership has declined in size and influence to the point where members are all but irrelevant to the way they operate. But party Head Offices continue to play a crucial role, especially at campaign time - and increasingly, this means all the time.”

Volunteer labour by party activists has been supplanted by professional expertise by external consultants, and declining members subscriptions have been more than made up for by public financing from the taxpayer.

For all their differences of history, structure, and policies, the Labor and Liberal parties appear to converge when it comes to implementing a successful election campaign. For both parties, election victory is of paramount importance and appears to involve a combination of factors including close coordination of the Head Office and the political leadership, extensive and imaginative use of the electronic and digital media, and a political strategy derived from market research.

ALUMNI
GSG continues to support all former GSG and ANZSOG students through the Alumni and Practitioners Network. The Network is a life long 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.