

THE PPA *LITICUS*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RYERSON POLITICS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ALUMNI

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

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THE ANNUAL RYERSON PPA WORKSHOP: THE “NEW METRICS” OF GOVERNMENT

By Lisa Brylowski (MA'08)

Ryerson alumni, students, faculty, public servants and representatives from the private sector gathered on October 30 for the 2nd Annual Public Administration Workshop to discuss some of the latest trends in public sector management. The focus this year was on how governments measure their performance.

Prof. Bryan Evans kick started the event with a spirited demonstration that while government measurements were vital in policy making, they could also be the subject of distortion.

Introduced by Prof. Chris Gore, Eva Ligeti gave the keynote address. Ligeti, the Executive Director of the Clean Air Partnership and First Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, drew on her policy experience as an environmental lawyer and advisor to government to discuss the reporting of government performance in

the environment, and to impress upon attendees the danger of inaction and maintaining a ‘business as usual’ approach to climate change.

The first panel, chaired by Prof. Neil Thomlinson, examined current practices in measuring government performance.

Sylvanus Thompson—a Ryerson alumnus—explained how the City of Toronto’s food inspection

visible notices, and a website to help citizens make “informed choices” pointed to an important metric: increased patron confidence in the city’s restaurants.

Leo Tasca, a Team Leader (Special Projects) in the Ontario Ministry of Transportation described how the province of Ontario measures the safety of the provinces roads and how that information is used in an integrated policy approach to road safety. Dr.

Tasca said that while Ontario road safety ranks very well compared to other jurisdictions, “there is no finish line,” and road safety can always improve.

Measuring citizen satisfaction with government services with an eye to improving access through innovative service solutions was Karen Prokopec’s topic. As the Program Manager at the Institute for Citizen-Centred Service, she highlighted some of the results of *Citizens First 5*, the latest in a series of studies that examine how the public per-



“Cheers to metrics!” Aileen Baird, Lorne Turner, and Mark MacDonald

program, “Dine Safe,” was driven by performance measures that aim at reducing the incidence of food-borne illness in Toronto. Thompson, who is the Quality Assurance Manager, Toronto Public Health, City of Toronto, said that the system of regular inspections, highly

THE SECOND ANNUAL ALUMNI SPEED NETWORKING EVENT

When?

Monday, 2 March

6-9 pm

Where?

Oakham House (VIP)

ALL ALUMNI WELCOME

(see page 4 for more details)



ceives the quality of services it has received. “How citizens experience government services has become an important measure of how well public servants do their job,” she said.

The second panel on “the Search for New Metrics” was moderated by Rebekah Brannen, the chair of the Ryerson (see p.2)

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“POSTCARD FROM THE FIELD” : MARIELA ORELLANA

In October 2006, I was hired by the Ontario Ministry of Government Services. I started as a Policy Analyst on the regulation of alcohol and gaming in the Sector Liaison Branch. This junior role entailed doing research, updating briefing notes and house notes used to support the Minister and his staff when responding to questions in the media or in the Legislature.

I used the opportunity to build on key skills, such as writing, communication, multi-tasking, problem

solving, analysis, stakeholder management and interpersonal skills. As well, I became the back-up for the Team Leader on the wine and liquor file. As you may know, Ontario’s liquor industry is heavily regulated and taxed.

In December 2007, I became a Senior Policy Advisor. Since then, I’ve taken a lead role in the development of policy on the regulation of alcohol. I work closely with the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO), an arm’s length agency of the government that regulates the sale, service and consumption of liquor. I also work with Vintner’s Quality Alliance

Ontario, a delegated administrative authority, which enforces an appellation of origin system for VQA wines.

My job involves working with the agency and my Minister’s office to determine if changes in legislation, regulation or policy are necessary to ensure the protection of the public interest and for the agency to carry out its work effectively. But, we don’t just hear from the agency: a huge part of my job is stakeholder outreach and consultation. Our key stakeholder groups include police services, community groups, social responsibility groups, liquor importers and manufacturers, grape growers, wine makers, municipalities, associations in the tourism/



hospitality industry and internal stakeholders such as the LCBO, the Ministries of Finance, Community Safety and

(continued on page 4)

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FROM PLATO’S
“THE
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THE NEW METRICS: CONTINUED

Public Administration Alumni Association and a policy analyst in the Government of Ontario.

Aileen Baird, Manager of the Strategic Innovation Office in the Peel Regional Government, described how they have been collecting data on employee engagement through a yearly survey. She said that Peel will use this information to focus on the drivers of employee satisfaction and create an attractive work climate at the Region.

Measuring qualitative and quantitative aspects of municipal service delivery was Lorne Turner’s topic. The Senior Financial Advisor (City Manager’s Office) of the City

of Toronto explained that the city benchmarks the quality of its service delivery against other municipalities in Canada, and suggested the future of measuring government performance will increasingly involve comparisons to other international cities.

Concluding the second panel discussion was Mark MacDonald, the Director of the Public Sector Practice at KPMG. Dr. MacDonald highlighted the global concern for better government management, and optimistically suggested that government performance management—based on solid measurements—is an achievable quest. He cautioned that the task invariably requires lead-

ership and vision.

Prof. Patrice Dutil concluded the afternoon workshop with the synthesis of the definitions offered by the various speakers. “The New Metrics of Government,” he said, “combine an increased appreciation of the necessary social and economic phenomena that affect government action, a better understanding of government outputs, a search for the advice and opinions of stakeholders and a serious effort to solicit citizens for their input and feedback on government programs and services.”

Lisa Brylowski received her MA in Politics and Public Administration from Ryerson during the October 2008 convocation.

MY BOOKSHELF...A WINTER'S READING

PROF. DUNCAN MACLELLAN



The act of reading requires a tough first decision: to choose! Selection is not always easy to do when there is so much choice. I find myself drawn to books that deal with noteworthy characters, especially when the cities within which they reside become “characters” in the stories. I wish I could say that I only read one book at a time. I tend to stack them and grab one depending on time, mood, what’s happening “out there,” and what just happens to sit on the table.

In compiling books for the graduate course in urban governance, I had purchased *Municipal mind: Manifestos for the Creative City* by Pier Giorgio Di Cicco, Toronto’s Poet Laureate. In this slender but engaging work, Di Cicco offers an eclectic mix of thoughts, ideas, and perspectives on what makes a city creative. While each reflection is about a page in length, its brevity actually strengthens the work. In one essay, “What a municipality owes its citizens”, he writes that “true creativity produces the legacy of an idea that does what funding cannot do: to foster the incentive to create again and again as a spontaneous civic gesture of expression”.

As I read this book, I was reminded of Jane Jacobs and her vision of what cities can be if we put people first. Di Cicco’s work kept bringing me back to the old chestnut of “think global/act local”, and I remembered that somewhere in my stack was a book of lec-

tures and interviews given by Marshall McLuhan, the “papa” of the global village.

My good intention to read *Understand Me: Lectures and Interviews by Marshall McLuhan*, edited by Stephanie McLuhan and David Staines, with an introduction by Tom Wolfe, had long been delayed. What spurred me to finally open it was reading in the *Globe and Mail* that McLuhan’s home in Wychwood Park, where he had written so many of his important lectures, had been sold by his family. While the lectures and interviews are organized chronologically, I decided to begin with “The Medium is the Message” to jolt me into “McLuhanism”. What impressed me again was the degree of knowledge that McLuhan possessed in topics that have later come to occupy so much public attention in relation to technology and its incessant push into all aspects of our lives. Reading the transcripts of his interviews made me imagine sitting in front of the television watching him speak as he used this medium to spread his message.

As I reflected on Obama’s Presidential inauguration, and his speech about the importance of liberty, I remembered Paul Collin’s book, *The Trouble With Tom: The Strange Afterlife and Times of Thomas Paine*. I enjoyed reading this book because it weaves, in both historical and contemporary contexts, the life of Thomas Paine into a mystery-like story. Paine moved to the

British American colonies and soon published his pamphlet *Common Sense*, which many claim laid the intellectual groundwork for the American Revolution. Paine was also a fierce opponent of slavery and he worked tirelessly to abolish its practice in the United States.

Paul Collins is especially good in recreating events in their space. He makes use of Paine’s house in Greenwich Village (now a trendy part of New York City), which is now a lively pub. Paine led an interesting life as he travelled the globe preaching liberty and causing general unrest within the ruling classes in London, Paris, Philadelphia, and New York. In fact, he became a “pain” to many elites who bristled at his ideas of giving the common people a voice in how government is run! Paine spent his later years spreading his message but suffered from poor health. He died destitute and to this day the place where his bones are buried remains a mystery!

Understanding why these three books found their way onto my bookshelf is puzzling because they are quite different from each another. Each book focuses on a person writing about ideas and events that challenged their contemporaries.

I think it is healthy, particularly in thinking about politics, to read beyond what is predictable. Reading books

Duncan MacLellan joined the Department as Assistant Professor in 2005. He received his doctorate from the University of Toronto and his teaching and research interests range from educational politics and policy making at the local and provincial levels, to local and urban governance issues. He recently published “Diversity and Immigrant Needs: Examining Toronto Through a Place-Based Approach” in *Policy Matters* and an article on teacher unionism in *Canadian and International Education* and he is one of the authors of *Teachers’ Unions in Canada*. At the undergraduate level, he teaches POL122 “Local Government and Politics in Canada” and POG317 “Education Politics and Policy”. At the graduate level Duncan teaches PA8206: “Urban Governance”.

that may seem a little “off the wall” is sometimes most educational not because of what *they* teach, but because of what *we* teach ourselves when we reflect on them. Consider that the next time you hesitate on what might be a challenging work: let your radical side emerge.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS
AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

7th Floor
Jorgenson Hall
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, Ontario

Phone: 416-979-5057

Fax: 416-979-5289

WWW.RYERSON.CA/POLITICS/
AND

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PPAALUMNI@POLITICS.RYERSON.CA

MARIELLA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Correctional Services, Tourism, and Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I've been to wineries to learn about the wine making process and the marketing of wine. I've also been to industry conferences to learn about challenges and opportunities in the liquor industry.

I spend a considerable amount of time writing briefing notes with options and recommendations to address issues that arise. I brief the Minister and his staff on the various issues and obtain direction on how to proceed. For regulatory amendments, I work with the agency and our Ministry's legal services to draft the regulations and prepare materials to support the Minister when he takes these proposals to Cabinet standing committees.

I support our communications branch by providing policy advice and messaging for press releases, and help the Ministry's website and materials used by the Minister and his staff when

answering questions about a particular program or government position.

Most recently, I worked on an amendment to permit the sale and service of liquor at the World Junior Hockey Championship tournament held in Ottawa. The law only permits liquor service in the seating area of a stadium during live performances and professional sporting events. We had to make a one-time exemption for the tournament since it is an amateur sports event.

One of the best parts of working in the Ontario Public Service is having the ability to move around and get to know many facets of government. In the future, I would like to take a job opportunity that involves taking a more corporate, government-wide approach, such as Cabinet Office or a Deputy's office. I think that experience would enhance my knowledge of government as a whole.

GET CONNECTED: THE PPA ALUMNI "NING" SITE: <http://ryerson-ppa-alumni.ning.com/>

The Ryerson Politics & Public Administration (PPA) Alumni Association has launched its "Ning" site, an online social network that enables alumni to keep in touch with former classmates. The PPA Alumni site also features a calendar of events, RSS feeds from policy think tanks and government, pictures, videos, blogs and chat functions. It is an ideal platform for public and third sector workers to keep current on research, news and alumni events.

We welcome all current students and alumni to become members of the site and to visit often! Once you are a member you can chat with old friends, network with professionals in the private, public and third sectors and post your own content. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions please contact Elizabeth Fix (MA, '06) at elizabethfix@gmail.com

WHAT IS A SPEED NETWORKING EVENT?

It is free, for one thing (thanks to the generosity of the PPA Department). It's a relaxed evening where current Ryerson public admin. students and alumni get together in an informal setting to chat about the professional opportunities out there in the public and para-public service.

Two people will speak to get things going: Jeff Herle and Jennifer Stewart. They both work in the Ministry of Government Services of Ontario but in very different areas. The group then breaks out and the "speed mentoring", where each participant gets to meet a succession of people in different jobs and career-stages, begins. The clock runs fast! See you there! March 2nd!



This issue of *PPAliticus* was produced by **Dr. Patrice Dutil**. You can reach him at pdutil@politics.ryerson.ca

Dr. Neil Thomlinson is the Chair of the Department. You can reach him at: nthomlinson@politics.ryerson.ca