A photograph of a wooden bridge over a stream in a forest. The bridge is made of wooden planks and railings, crossing a small stream. The surrounding area is lush with green foliage and trees. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font.

# Guide to Graduation

A PhD Handbook for the School of Public  
Policy and Administration

September 2013 Edition

## Author's Comments

I'm not a particularly skilled or fast writer, so when I was asked by SPPA faculty to put this PhD Handbook together, I felt a certain level of anxiety and apprehension. My initial reaction was couched in the belief that this document had to be formal and professional, a reflection of the academic style of writing that I have become very familiar with over the past few years. But when I sat down to actually outline and then write the Handbook, I switched tactics and decided that a more informal tone and style was appropriate. In hindsight that turned out to be a good decision because I have to admit that I very much enjoyed writing this PhD Handbook for the School of Public Policy and Administration.

This Handbook is written expressly for you, the PhD student. It was commissioned by the SPPA PhD program and written specifically to support your scholarly and professional development. In that respect, the existence of this Handbook is testament to the fact that your peers in SPPA are committed to helping you succeed and excel as a PhD student. You have resources here at SPPA and at the University of Delaware that will assist you on your path toward graduation. This Handbook is just one of many that you will encounter along the way.

A number of individuals deserve recognition for their various contributions to the development of this Handbook. Many thanks go to Dr. Dan Rich for compiling the information on the SPPA curriculum and for pushing the entire project forward. Credit must also be given to Dr. Danilo Yanick and Linda Boyd for their positive feedback on early drafts as well as Barbara Vent for her editing of the Faculty Profiles section. Thanks are also due to Dr. Erin Knight, Dr. Kerrin Wolf, Dave Carter, and Yingying Zeng, for their excellent student-centered insights on the PhD process, all of which are now incorporated into this version.

Philip Barnes, SPPA PhD Candidate

September 2013

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## SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the School of Public Policy and Administration PhD program at the University of Delaware. You are about to embark on the enlightening and adventurous journey of a doctoral degree. Let this document be your initial guidebook.

Navigating through the arduous and (at times) confusing PhD process is a real challenge. Not only are you charged with making a significant and novel contribution to the field of knowledge in your discipline, you are asked to accomplish this feat while taking academically advanced courses, perhaps teaching them yourself, passing exams, publishing papers, defending your ideas to peers, collaborating on research with colleagues, and maintaining a personal life. Given the number of responsibilities you are asked to juggle, it is important to have a good understanding of when certain critical programmatic hurdles should be achieved. Perhaps the last thing you want to do is miss or delay a step in the process and have the responsibilities pile up; the more you have to juggle the more difficult and anxiety-inducing it all becomes. Staying on task and on schedule is essential if you want to graduate in a reasonable amount of time and with a minimal amount of grey hair.

As a PhD student, you are given a tremendous amount of leeway to set your own pace and work habits. While there are big advantages to having this freedom, namely the time and autonomy to pursue unrestricted intellectual avenues, there are also risks involved with getting off track and slowing down because of distractions. Because PhD students have an open-ended education without a set-in-stone date for graduation, all of that leeway to advance at their own pace can lead some to develop flâneur attitudes. This is not to suggest that they don't care about what they are doing, but it does imply that some students can fall into a state of PhD stasis. One certainly shouldn't sprint to complete a PhD, but neither should one set out on a leisurely and meandering stroll, especially since the latter pace will likely cause an infuriating backlog of responsibilities.



**Don't be this guy. "Le Flâneur"  
by Paul Gavarni, 1842**

The objectives of this School of Public Policy and Administration PhD Handbook are to explain the PhD process, provide clarification on the details and timing of some of the confusing logistical, administrative, and curricular checkpoints in the School, and offer practical advice on how to succeed as a PhD student. The impetus for writing the Handbook was borne of the recognition that some of the School's students were taking a long time to graduate, not because they were somehow unintelligent or inefficient, but because they simply didn't have a clear outline of their roles and responsibilities as a PhD student. This was leading to too much "learning-and-doing-on-the-fly" which is slow, painful, and at times counterproductive. While some level of experiential learning will still be necessary, it is hoped that this Handbook will provide you with a minimum level of initial support and guidance such that you have a much better picture of what is expected, thus affording you the ability to envision and plan the steps to graduation. This Handbook, written primarily by students for students, outlines those steps for you and it offers a timeline detailing the hurdles that must be overcome at particular points in the process. It is a living document so if you happen to reread it after spending several years in the School and you find the content outdated, lacking, or incorrect, please contact the director of the SPPA PhD program and ask that changes be made.

## **SECTION 2. LOGISTICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

*Many thanks to Dr. Dan Rich for assembling the content of this section.*

### **2.1 SPPA AT A GLANCE**

The University of Delaware's School of Public Policy and Administration (SPPA) is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration and ranks in the top tier of comprehensive public affairs schools.

Currently, the School has 31 faculty member, 32 professionals, 229 undergraduate majors, 149 undergraduate minors, and 151 graduate students. It offers a degrees including BA in Public Policy, BS in Organizational and Community Leadership, MA in Historic Preservation, MA in Urban Affairs and Public Policy, Master of Public Administration, MS in Disaster Science and Management, PhD in Urban Affairs and Public Policy, and PhD in Disaster Science and Management. More than 300 public, private, and nonprofit domestic and international institutions utilize SPPA's expert research services, with annual expenditures from externally funded projects exceeding \$6 million.

### **2.2 HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL**

When the School of Public Policy and Administration (SPPA) was established in 1961, it became one of the nation's first university centers focused on the challenges of urban America. It was an opportune moment. JFK had assumed the presidency, civil rights activists were leading "freedom rides" across the Deep South, and the country was on the verge of war in Vietnam. The goal then, at the historic time of its inception, was to create new knowledge that would expand the boundaries of human understanding and increase the possibilities for community enhancement in America's cities, and across our nation.

A half-century later, SPPA has emerged as a globally recognized, comprehensive school of public affairs. Our students, faculty, and professionals have created and disseminated usable knowledge that has informed decision-making and policy, improved leadership and management, and made a positive impact on the quality of life in communities in Delaware, the nation, and across the globe.

While the challenges we face today may be different than those a half century ago, our goal at the School of Public Policy and Administration remains the same: to translate research and scholarship

into practices and policies that will address the critical needs of our communities at all levels, from neighborhoods to nations. Our academic programs in urban affairs, public policy, public administration, organizational and community leadership, disaster science and management, and historic preservation prepare professionals and scholars to be innovators and capacity-builders. We understand that the challenges we face don't exist in silos. That is why we have long approached our questions with an interdisciplinary lens. Our academic model—known internationally as “the Delaware model”—combines theory and practice by linking classroom content with real-world experience.

The challenges of our times are not neatly bundled in disciplinary packages as political, economic, or sociological problems. The education of tomorrow's scholars must equip them intellectually to approach multifaceted challenges from creative vantage points, reflecting diverse perspectives that transcend disciplinary views and reflect the highest standards of scholarship with a truly global outlook. The added value of this scholarship is that it is designed to be translational, and it is designed to be applied to the policy challenges of our times.

The School's core research and public service centers carry out advanced research on critical public issues, offer an extraordinary range and depth of services to public, nonprofit, and community institutions at all levels, and provide students with important experiential learning opportunities, including externally funded assistantships and internships. These core centers are the engines that help drive our success. Through these centers, our students are able to work with school faculty and center staff to solve real-world problems.

## **2.3 AFFILIATED CENTERS AND INSTITUTES**

### *2.3.1 The Center for Community Research and Service (CCRS)*

Director: Steven W. Peuquet: <http://www.ccrs.udel.edu>

Established in 1972, the Center for Community Research and Service (CCRS) is the University of Delaware's focal point for community research, engagement and action. With locations in Wilmington and on the UD campus in Newark, CCRS works to strengthen the capabilities of organizations and individuals, aiming to enhance the economic, social, cultural and physical conditions of neighborhoods and communities in and outside of Delaware. The center uses state-of-the-art research methods to better understand community needs and assets, and provides high

quality training and technical assistance services that enhance the ability of government, nonprofit agencies, philanthropic organizations and citizens to envision and create better communities. CCRS carries out a variety of programs and projects, some that are localized, and others that are part of regional or national initiatives. Public Allies Delaware and the Nonprofit Management Certificate Course both prepare leaders interested in careers in the nonprofit sector. The KIDS COUNT program in Delaware generates important information and policy recommendations related to the health and welfare of children and their families. Working closely with citizens, nonprofits, businesses, and government to revitalize older neighborhoods is the primary function of the Blueprint Communities initiative. As an SPPA center, CCRS contributes to the education of graduate and undergraduate students with real-life experience for their futures as successful professionals, scholars, and leaders.

### *2.3.2 Institute for Public Administration (IPA)*

Director: Jerome R. Lewis: <http://www.ipa.udel.edu>

Established in 1973, the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) provides state and local governments with a wide range of services and research in areas such as land-use planning, education, water resources, professional development, telecommunications, transportation and infrastructure projects. IPA annually organizes public policy forums, bringing together leaders and decision-makers to address pressing public policy issues. IPA addresses the policy, planning, and management needs of its partners through the integration of applied research, professional development, and the education of tomorrow's leaders. Over the past decade, IPA has impacted the public through its work in the following areas: civic education, comprehensive planning, conflict resolution, economic development, education management, health policy, law and public policy, leadership development, local government training, transportation policy, and water resources.

### *2.3.3 The Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD)*

Director: David L. Ames: <http://www.udel.edu/chad>

In 1984, the Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD) was established to contribute to the preservation of important historic structures and landscapes in Delaware and the greater Delaware Valley. The Center's goals are to incorporate preservation as an important aspect of land use planning and public policy, and also to document the significance of Delaware's historic

buildings and landscapes. As a result of CHAD's efforts, more than 10,000 properties have been documented to date. For more than a decade, CHAD's collaboration with the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office has provided a statewide comprehensive plan to guide preservation decisions for a variety of threatened resources. The Center has recently undertaken other educational ventures in Montana and China. The Center continues to deal with the challenges of balancing preservation and development. More recently, CHAD has been investigating the growing need for sustainable development and the impact that global climate change conditions have on historic resources. The Center is presently conducting research on the effects of sea level rise in Delaware's low coastal areas. CHAD serves as a vehicle for the education of professional preservationists and has been a valuable training ground for many SPPA graduate students.

#### *2.3.4 The Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research (CADSR)*

Director: Edward C. Ratledge: <http://www.cadsr.udel.edu>

The Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research (CADSR) conducts demographic and survey research, performs economic analysis, and develops geographic information systems applications for local, state and national policymakers, as well as leaders of nonprofits and private agencies. For over 35 years, the Center's primary mission has been to provide the best possible data and information on important public policy issues to members of the University, its clients, and, most importantly, to the policymakers who affect the way we live and work in Delaware and beyond. This mission is accomplished in four different ways: by acting as a clearinghouse for large data sets supplied by local, state, regional, and federal agencies; by maintaining an active survey research capability; by developing and designing custom databases of text and graphical information; and by using an array of information system technologies. The Center employs a dynamic team of researchers, support staff, graduate students, and survey interviewers, all committed to the principles of scientific and impartial study of social phenomena with the ultimate goal of providing reliable data and information to policymakers.

#### *2.3.5 Disaster Research Center (DRC)*

Director: James Kendra: <http://www.udel.edu/DRC/>

With almost fifty years of experience, the Disaster Research Center (DRC) is widely recognized as one of the pioneering institutions in the area of disaster research. In particular, the DRC is known

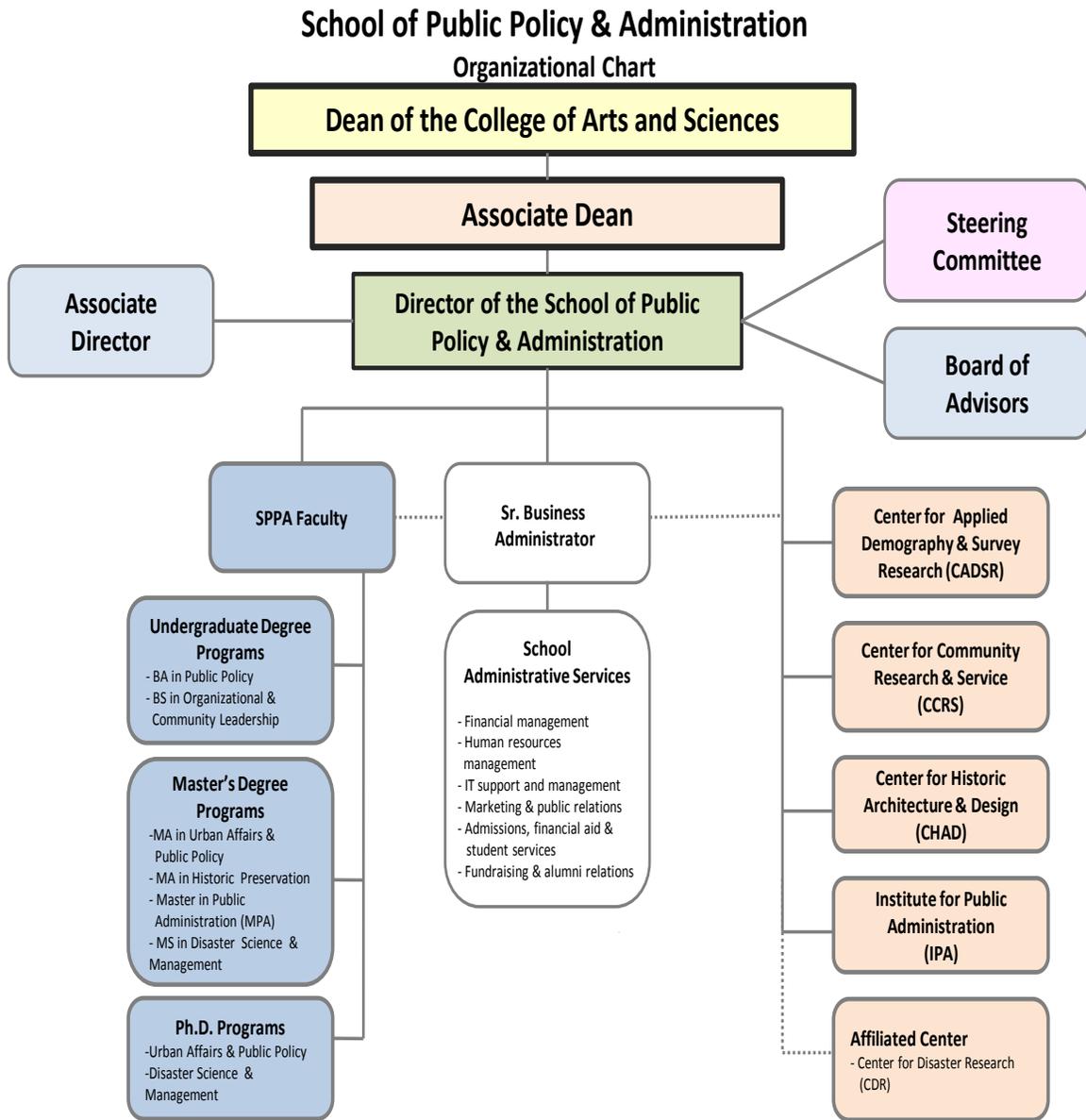
for insights into human behavioral and social scientific issues, the development of new research methodologies, a commitment to graduate and undergraduate research training; and for a portfolio of over six-hundred field studies in the aftermath of disasters, catastrophes, and community crises. Faculty members are commonly called upon by local, national, and international governments as well as the news media for consultation and commentary on critical contemporary events and issues related to disasters and emergency management.

While DRC has always worked with scholars from other disciplines, universities, and countries, it recently reaffirmed a commitment to an integrated multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research agenda. Some of the tangible signs of this focus include the appointment and integration of several engineers to the DRC core faculty and the development of new interdisciplinary MA and PhD graduate programs in Disaster Science and Emergency Management in partnership with the School of Public Policy and Administration.

## **2.4 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL**

SPPA is in the College of Arts and Sciences, the largest college of the University of Delaware. The College is headed by Dean George Watson and Interim Associate Dean David Wilson.

Dr. Maria Aristigueta, Charles P. Messick Professor of Public Administration serves as Director of the School of Public Policy and Administration. Professor Leland Ware, Louis Redding Chair of Law and Public Policy, serves as Associate Director. The Steering Committee advises the Director and Associate Director and includes the center directors and a small number of faculty representing the program diversity of the School.



## 2.5 PhD CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS AND TIMETABLE

The PhD *Plan of Study* form is a sort of curriculum checklist that was given to you in your welcome packet when you first came to the School. It must be completed by the student in consultation with your academic advisor, approved by the advisor and the PhD program director, and submitted to the School Office (184 Graham Hall) no later than the end of the second semester of study. This *Plan of Study* should be reviewed each semester and updated as necessary. Each update must be re-

approved and re-submitted to the School Office. You should consult with the PhD program director about possible course waivers or substitutions. For a detailed timeline of the PhD Plan of Study and curriculum requirements, see section 3.5.

### *2.5.1 First Year of Doctoral Study*

During the first year, you should complete the following required courses:

- UAPP 822 – Proseminar in Governance, Planning & Policy (3 credits)
- UAPP 830 – Proseminar in Public Management and Leadership (3 credits)
- UAPP 801 – Processes of Social Inquiry (3 credits)
- UAPP 861 – Academic and Professional Development for Doctoral Students (1 credit)

### **Research Design and Methods Requirements**

Upon admission, students are expected to have knowledge of statistics at the level of UAPP 691 – Quantitative Analysis in Public & Nonprofit Sectors. Those without such knowledge should enroll in UAPP691. Unless granted a waiver for prior graduate work, all doctoral students should enroll in UAPP 702 – Research Methods in Urban and Public Policy and UAPP808 – Qualitative Methods. In addition, students must take additional coursework in research methods as appropriate to their research plan and the advice of the student's academic advisor.

### **Qualifying Exam**

The qualifying exam is administered after the first year of full-time study and the completion of the core curriculum.

### *2.5.2 Second year of doctoral study*

The central requirement of the second year of doctoral study is the development and approval of the doctoral dissertation proposal. Students should enter the second year with a preliminary design based on the work completed in UAPP 801 and additional refinements over the summer.

All students must register for UAPP863 – Doctoral Dissertation Proposal in the fall semester of the second year. All doctoral students enrolled in UAPP863 will participate in a dissertation proposal

workshop that will continue in the spring semester through enrollment in UAPP867 – Doctoral Dissertation Workshop. The student’s prospective doctoral dissertation supervisor (who will become the chair of the doctoral dissertation committee) should be identified as early as possible in the second year of study. The doctoral dissertation supervisor must hold a faculty appointment in the School of Public Policy and Administration.

### **Coursework in Support of the Doctoral Dissertation Proposal**

All coursework selected in the second year should be in support of the development of the doctoral dissertation proposal.

Before the start of the third year of full-time study, students should formally defend their doctoral dissertation proposals their full dissertation committees. Entry into official candidacy for the Ph.D. degree occurs after the dissertation proposal has been successfully defended and approved. To accomplish this, student should obtain the *Recommendation for Candidacy for Doctoral Degree* form from the School’s Academic Administration Office (184 Graham Hall) prior to their defense, and then obtain the signatures of committee members on this form upon the successful defense of their proposal. The completed form must then be submitted to the School’s Academic Administration Office. Once the dissertation proposal is approved, final grades are submitted for UAPP863 and UAPP867.

The committee must be composed of at least four and no more than six members. The committee chair and at least one other member must hold faculty appointments in the School of Public Policy and Administration. In close consultation with the faculty member who will be the chairperson of the committee, the student then identifies the remaining members of the dissertation proposal committee. Each dissertation committee must have one individual from outside of the School: from another academic department of the university or from outside the university.

#### *2.5.3 Third year of doctoral study*

The defended proposal must be approved by the beginning of the fall semester of the third year in order for the student to enter doctoral candidacy and to register for the required 9 credits of doctoral dissertation research (UAPP969) in the fall semester of the third year. After registering for these 9 credits, doctoral candidates may then enter sustaining status in the spring semester of the third year.

The focus of the third year is on carrying out the approved research design. The typical benchmark for the end of the third year is the completion of the conceptualization, data acquisition, and analysis approved in the dissertation proposal. At the end of the third year, this work should be completed. During the third year, portions of the dissertation manuscript (such as the problem statement, conceptualization, and literature review) should be drafted on a timetable agreed upon with the chair of the student's dissertation committee.

### **Teaching and Research Experience**

Because students are typically engaged in their doctoral research, the third year of study is also an appropriate time for doctoral students to fulfill the teaching and research experience requirements.

The Research Experience Requirement is satisfied by the student producing a paper of "publishable quality." The determination of "publishable quality" is made by the faculty member who supervised the preparation of the paper. Presentation of this paper by the student at an appropriate academic conference is encouraged but not required. The paper may be produced through the student's research assistantship, or by the student registering for UAPP 868 – Research.

The Teaching Experience Requirement is satisfied by the student being a Teaching Assistant (TA) for at least one semester, by approved prior teaching experience or by teaching a college level course. The requirement may also be completed through completion of the University's Higher Education Teaching Certification program (see section 4.6.4).

#### *2.5.4 Fourth year of doctoral study*

The fourth year of study should be devoted to completing the doctoral dissertation. Drafting the full dissertation manuscript is a formidable task and typically involves multiple revisions of chapters. Students should plan to submit a full draft of the manuscript to the dissertation committee chair for review by the end of the fall semester of the fourth year. The chair will advise the student on when the manuscript should be reviewed by other members of the committee, but in all cases, the members of the committee must have the opportunity to review and comment on a draft of the dissertation prior to the formal defense. The formal defense should be scheduled by March of the fourth year of full-time study in order to enable the student to make any necessary revisions prior to submitting the final manuscript for graduation in May of the fourth year. The defense of a doctoral

dissertation is a formal public event. The chair of each committee and the doctoral student must coordinate with Linda Boyd on the scheduling and public announcement of the dissertation defense.

## **SECTION 3. NUTS AND BOLTS OF THE SPPA PhD PROGRAM**

So, now that you know the SPPA curriculum and the structure of the School, it is time to explore the actual execution of the PhD degree. There are a number of stages that students must go through before graduation, from qualifying exams to proposal and dissertation defenses. These steps, along with more practical considerations such as conducting the doctoral research, funding your education, attending professional conferences, and publishing papers are outlined in this section.

### **3.1 QUALIFYING EXAMS**

At the end of your first year, you will take the qualifying exams along with the rest of your cohort. These exams are designed to ensure that you possess the requisite knowledge in your field of specialization. You are given two weeks to complete the exams. Exams will cover the material from the three required proseminars: UAPP 801, UAPP 822, and UAPP 830. Depending on the quality of the submission, students may be required to rewrite answers to particular questions before a final grade is assigned. Each student will receive a single grade for the qualifying exams as a whole: pass or fail. Students who pass the qualifying exams will move on to the next year of doctoral study. Students who do not pass the qualifying exams may not continue in the program. The opportunity to take the qualifying exams a second time rests with the PhD program director and examining faculty.

The qualifying exams are challenging but you should expect to be well prepared by the time you take them. Throughout the first year you will have done extensive writing as part of your course work, have conducted considerable scholarly research, and have reviewed a great deal of the literature in the discipline. It is helpful to develop a system for organizing and briefly summarizing the literature you have read throughout the year, especially the material from your proseminars. Having summaries on hand will make the qualifying exams a little easier because it will allow you to devote more time to thinking about the content and the relationships between them than to rereading the literature. Summaries will also help you develop a good literature base that will help with your other course work, the development of your dissertation, and future scholarly work.

## 3.2 THE PROPOSAL

Writing the dissertation proposal, and successfully defending it, is the second tallest hurdle you must jump over on your route toward graduation, the biggest being the full dissertation and its defense. In its most basic form, the proposal is a detailed roadmap of the path you intend to follow as you conduct your doctoral research. Among a number of other key elements, the proposal outlines the specific problem you wish to address, the research questions you intend to answer, the theories and methods informing and driving the research, and a literature review situating the research into a body of scholarly tradition. Once you and your committee chair believe the proposal is written to a “defensible” state, you present your research roadmap to your committee at a closed-door proposal defense. Here, the committee listens to your intended research plan and either gives you the green light or sends you back for revisions. Even if your research is approved by the committee, you will very likely be asked to revise, clarify, or elaborate certain grey areas of the roadmap. Essentially, the committee is verifying that the structure of your research design is sound, that the theories and methods you wish to employ are appropriate for answering your research questions, that there are no serious ethical issues with the research, and that the research is do-able within a reasonable time frame.

Although it may seem minor or insignificant in comparison to the mountain that is your full dissertation, successfully crafting and defending a proposal is in many ways more challenging than the dissertation. For starters, you have to rigorously research the topic and select theories and methods that are compatible with the questions you wish to answer. This is no small feat in the social sciences, as any experienced researcher will tell you, because of the sheer volume of available theories and methods. Therefore, do not downplay or underestimate the amount of effort, time, and energy that goes into crafting a solid proposal. Read, read, read, especially early on, and start exploring the relationships between the research topic, core theories, potential methods, and background literature. Write as often as you can. And seriously avoid taking extended breaks from engagement with your proposal. Designing an air tight proposal is difficult because ideas bounce off one another as intellectual avenues appear and close off during the *iterative* process. You should not expect the proposal to come together in a burst of creative expression – much more likely that it will evolve and emerge through countless rounds of reading, writing, and revision.

It is important to point out that the proposal, once it is written and successfully defended, will become a chapter (or two) in your final dissertation. Great care should be taken writing a strong proposal, as it will allow you to focus your efforts on data gathering, analysis, etc. Of course there will be post-defense revisions, deletions, and additions that will shape the content and focus, but you can expect that a good deal of the completed proposal will slot into the dissertation fairly seamlessly. After all, your proposal contains the roadmap for the research, and readers of your exit document will want to know how you got from here to there.

### *3.2.1 Why completing the proposal is so important financially*

As per the SPPA curriculum and official UD Office of Graduate and Professional Education policy, successfully defending your proposal is a prerequisite to being admitted into doctoral candidacy. Attaining candidacy means that you are officially in the process of conducting your research and are no longer taking courses or working on your proposal. Because you are no longer taking courses or writing your proposal, you will officially be enrolled, from the defense until graduation, as a “sustaining” student in the nine credit course “UNIV999 – Doctoral Sustaining” which carries with it a significant reduction in the cost of tuition. For those students not enrolled in UNIV999, the cost of a nine credit semester, at 2013 tuition rates, is over \$14,200. Sustaining PhD candidates enrolled in UNIV999 are charged \$911 per semester.<sup>1</sup> All full-time PhD students are expected to enter doctoral candidacy after five semesters.

Most full-time PhD students receive financial support from SPPA, another University of Delaware source, or an external source. Funding general includes a stipend for the 9-month academic year, now valued at \$16,600, and a tuition scholarship. PhD students remain eligible for SPPA support, pending performance and the availability of funds, for up to four years. **However, tuition funding is limited to the five semesters needed for full-time students to complete all course requirements and enter doctoral candidacy.**

Full-time PhD students are eligible for research assistantships (many with the affiliated centers and institutes), teaching assistantships, and doctoral research fellowships awarded by SPPA and by UD on a competitive basis.

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<sup>1</sup> This fee schedule is current for the 2013-2014 academic year.

### 3.2.2 Focusing in on a research topic

Searching for and identifying a research focus is a very personal, exhilarating, and at times mind numbing process. Some of you may arrive having a fairly strong idea of what you want to research while others may feel like you are about to walk through a dark and foreboding minefield. Fear not. In either case, in your courses and with conversations with peers you will be exposed to theories, concepts, and ideas that will likely shift your attention and focus in unintended and unanticipated ways. And that's a good thing!

You will take an initial stab at a research focus and topic when you enroll in UAPP801 during the spring semester of your first year. Throughout this class, you will be asked to develop a short research design where you begin exploring the research question(s) you will answer, the core



theories you will use to frame your analysis, and the methods you will employ to collect and evaluate the data. Even though it is not graded, you should take the research design assignment in UAPP801 very seriously. Use this opportunity to proactively search out and speak with faculty members about your ideas. Feedback by faculty at this early stage in the research process is invaluable and will greatly facilitate further refinement and narrowing of the focus later on.

#### **Keep it narrow and focused.**

Also, by developing personal and intellectual relationships with the faculty early on in the process, you are effectively accomplishing three tasks simultaneously: improving the academic quality of your initial design, informing the SPPA faculty on your research intentions, and performing a *de facto* committee member search (see section 4.2 for more detailed advice on the committee search process).

During your first year of coursework, you will be asked to complete a number of assignments and it is advisable to use these opportunities to build a foundation for your research topic. You can create opportunities to use course assignments to begin work for a literature review, test data collection and analysis approaches in your methods classes, and perhaps develop early drafts of a research proposal. Also during your first year, you should address practical issues such as the accessibility of

data and the feasibility of actually carrying out the research. Don't discover in your third or fourth year that the data you thought you'd use for your analysis is not applicable or unavailable.

Make full use of the first semester of your second year to further **refine and narrow** your research design developed in UAPP801. Take courses that can directly contribute to your research. You should meet regularly with your advisor to ensure that you are staying on track and it is helpful to set deadlines with her or him for when you will submit drafts for review. Keep reading and writing throughout the entire third and fourth semesters because toward the end of your fourth semester (late March or early April if you started in the fall), you should have a solid proposal that can be offered up to your committee as a rough draft. This last point is so important that it is worth repeating: **keep writing your proposal during your third and fourth semesters**. If you do that, you will likely be in good shape to defend the proposal at the end of the fourth semester (see section 3.3.1 and 0), something that is vitally important for your timely matriculation through the program and for the health of your bank account balance (see section 3.6).

### *3.2.3 Structure of the proposal*

The following outline, which has been reviewed and given the thumbs up by numerous SPPA faculty, represents a general framework for a successful dissertation proposal. Each dissertation proposal is distinctive, but all proposals typically include the elements described below. Faculty committees may require more or different components. Dissertation proposals typically are 40 to 50 double-spaced pages not including references and the annotated bibliography. Citations and references are generally done in APA style (see section 4.3.6 for tips on references).

**Statement of the Research Question:** What is being studied?

- What are you attempting to investigate?
- Why was this topic selected? What is the rationale for the research?
- What information/analysis is required to extend our knowledge of these questions/problems?

**Significance of the Research Question:** Why is this important?

- To whom and for what is the research useful?

- What is the societal significance of your research: scope, magnitude, impacts, consequences
- What is the scholarly significance of your research: contributions to/extensions of literature
- What is the personal significance of your research: value for your own intellectual, professional and career objectives?

**Literature Review and Analysis:** What is known and not known about the research problem?

- What is the current state of knowledge (theoretical, empirical and public knowledge) of the research problem?
- What are the gaps or limits in what is known?
- What will your research add to our knowledge?
- Will you build on earlier research or initiate a new line of analysis?

**Conceptual Framework:** What are your central/guiding concepts about this research question?

- What theories will you utilize in your research?
- Why were these theories chosen?
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, and limits of the concepts, models, or theories selected?
- What contribution do you intend to make to the further development of these or other concepts, models or theories?
- Do you have hypotheses/propositions to be tested in this research? What are they and what constitutes an appropriate scholarly test?

**Methodology and Data:** How will you go about the research?

- What data/information do you need to carry out your research?
- How will you obtain the needed data/information?
- What are the methods you will use to acquire, organize, analyze and interpret data?

- Why were these methods chosen?
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, and limits of these methods and how do these impact your research?
- What issues/obstacles do you face in carrying out this research methodology and how will these be addressed?
- Are there ethical/political considerations in carrying out your research? If so, how will those be addressed?

**Outcomes, Impacts, Implications:** What are the anticipated major scholarly contributions from your research? What are the anticipated major societal or policy implications and impacts?

**Chapter Outline:** Table of Contents for the Dissertation Manuscript. This should be in narrative form with at least a paragraph description of each chapter.

**Annotated Bibliography:** Provide a minimum of 50 scholarly publications (books, articles, monographs). Each annotation should include a complete citation using approved APA style, and should be no more than 1-2 paragraphs in length.

### 3.3 DEFENDING AND DEFENSES

Before you graduate with your PhD, you will be asked to undergo two defenses, one each for the proposal and the dissertation. In its most basic form, a defense is a presentation of your ideas to the gatekeepers on your committee. Most students choose to deliver their defense using PowerPoint or a similar presentation design software. After the defense, and depending on the quality of the material presented, the committee then agrees or disagrees to allow you to proceed to the next stage of the process. It is advisable to bring a copy of the form your committee members must sign to the defense so that you can get them to sign right away (assuming a successful defense) rather than having to try and track them down after the fact. After the proposal defense, your committee members must sign the [Candidacy Form](http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/candidacyform.pdf).<sup>2</sup> After the dissertation defense, they have to sign the [Doctoral Defense Form](http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/certificationdefense.pdf).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/candidacyform.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/certificationdefense.pdf>

### 3.3.1 *The proposal defense*

In the case of the proposal defense, you defend the actual written research proposal, the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological frameworks you employ to answer your research questions, the importance and relevance of the investigation, the contribution the research will make to the scholarly tradition of knowledge in the field, and any ethical considerations that may arise during the actual execution and subsequent publication of the research. Proposal defenses are generally about 30 minutes long. After listening to your presentation, if your committee is satisfied that you designed a well-reasoned and do-able research proposal, they admit you into doctoral candidacy and allow you to proceed to the actual research stage. The proposal defense is closed to the public and is presented only to your committee. Following your presentation, the committee will ask you questions on your research design to make sure you thought through the important points and considered potential obstacles.

Unless you wrote an absolutely airtight proposal, your committee members will ask you to make revisions to the written proposal before you begin the actual research, although that is not to say they will deny you candidacy simply because you have to make revisions. If the proposal is sloppy, unfocused, lacking theoretical or methodological support, or generally unachievable from a practical standpoint, then your committee will deny you



**How to fail a defense.**

candidacy and ask you to tighten up the loose network of strands before attempting another defense. Typically however, your committee chairperson will not allow you to schedule a defense unless they are confident in your proposal and are willing to let you proceed to the research stage. As a courtesy, some candidates purchase and bring food and drink to their proposal defense to share with the committee.

### 3.3.2 *The dissertation defense*

The dissertation defense is similar to the proposal defense in that you are asked to defend your research, but this time you are defending the research results and their implications – certainly much more than the roadmap for how you got there (note that you still briefly talk about your theoretical,

conceptual, and methodological frameworks at the dissertation defense). Dissertation defense presentations are typically 40-50 minutes long and are open to the public which means that your peers can (and will) attend and ask you questions. Like the proposal defense, you will give a presentation followed by a round of questions from your committee. After your committee has completed their questioning, attending members of the public will ask you questions. Following the dissertation defense, and when the questions and concerns of the committee and the public have been adequately incorporated into the dissertation through revisions, the committee makes the recommendation to the university that you have satisfied the doctoral degree requirements. Congratulations, you're now ready for graduation. Lastly, it is customary for dissertation defenders to provide food and drink at the defense. It doesn't need to be an extravagant smorgasbord, but finger food, or something like it, is always appreciated.

Below is a chart that summarizes the similarities and differences between the two defenses:

	<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>DISSERTATION</b>
<b>What is defended?</b>	The research proposal	The full dissertation
<b>How long?</b>	30 minute presentation	40-50 minute presentation
<b>Who is invited?</b>	Only the committee	Committee and the public
<b>If successful, what is the next stage?</b>	Conducting the research (candidacy)	Graduation!
<b>Revisions likely?</b>	Highly likely	Highly likely
<b>Should you provide food and drinks?</b>	Maybe, depends on you	Yes, it's customary

It is recommended that you attend the dissertation defenses of your peers in the program. Defenses provide a unique scholarly and intellectual opportunity while also providing insights into what to expect at your own defense. They are also a way to support your fellow PhD students during a critical point in their academic development.

### **3.4 CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH**

Once you've successfully written and defended your proposal, it is time for you to get down and dirty with the actual research. Everyone will have a different way they approach their research, but there are some very basic guidelines that all researchers should adhere to.

First, and this should go without saying, build on your proposal. In addition to being your roadmap, the proposal is basically the first few chapters of your final document. It is possible that as you get into the research you will need to revise your methods so you should keep detailed notes and discuss any changes with your chair. Be able to defend any changes or deviations you make from your proposal. Keep good notes, document your processes, and backup your files regularly!! Consider sharing preliminary findings at conferences or as part of SPPA seminars to give you an opportunity to present your work and get feedback. Presenting at conferences will also force you to adhere to deadlines – a fantastic motivator for getting the research done on time.

The Morris Library offers a wealth of resources for conducting your research. University librarians are more than willing to offer their assistance to you should you have trouble tracking down data or pertinent information. They are well-versed in database research and can point you in the right direction. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

### 3.5 TIMELINE TO GRADUATION

Although PhD programs are less structured and regimented than say undergraduate programs, there is good reason to lay out a timeline and a personal plan toward graduation. If you have a detailed timeline of when you will take certain courses and achieve certain milestones, and if you remain dedicated to following the timeline, you will be in a much better position to keep your momentum going all the way to graduation day. Having 'lost' semesters or even whole years where little or no progress is made on the dissertation is extremely costly financially and mentally. This is why a timeline is so important.

Below is a timeline that lays out a plan for how SPPA PhD students can graduate in four years. It is a tight timeline, no doubt, but it is achievable. For each semester, you are shown the courses that you are required to take along with any milestones that must be achieved during that semester. For example, in the Spring semester of your first year, you will take UAPP801 and produce a research design paper and annotated bibliography which will get the ball rolling on your actual dissertation proposal. You and your cohort will also take your qualifying exams at the beginning June. It is just worth stressing once more that the success of this timeline **hinges on the proposal defense occurring at the end of your fourth semester.**

The second year is a challenging and busy year. You're just taken the energy intensive proseminars and passed your qualifying exams and you may have an urge to take a little break and decompress for a while. Ok, fine. But don't go overboard and let "a while" turn into a semester or a year. Enjoy your success on quals, but keep reading, researching, and writing during the summer between the first and second year and all throughout the second year. Get that proposal written and defended by the end of your second year (See section 0). If you do, and if the proposal clearly outlines the path you plan to take for the research, you can graduate in four years.

YEAR	SEMESTER	REGISTRATION	MILESTONES
1	Fall	702, 822, 861 (and one additional graduate course in area of research interest)	
	Spring	801, 808, 830	Research design for 801 (May), Qualifying exams (June)
2	Fall	863 plus 6 credits of additional courses in support of the dissertation proposal.	Completed rough draft of proposal
	Spring	867 plus 6 credits of additional courses in support of the dissertation proposal	<b>Proposal defense (May)</b>
3	Fall	969 (9 Credits)	First few chapters of the dissertation
	Spring	999 (Sustaining)	Data collection completed and a few more dissertation chapters completed
4	Fall	999 (Sustaining)	Submit dissertation draft (Sept.)
	Spring	999 (Sustaining)	Dissertation defense (Feb), Graduation (May)

One thing to always keep in mind is that there are elements of the program that are not part of this suggested timeline, namely writing and publishing papers, presenting at professional conferences, conducting research for one of the School's affiliated centers, and gaining teaching experience.

Also, life happens. What that means is that you should really make an effort to get ahead of the timeline and build up a buffer for yourself in case unintended or unanticipated events occur.

### 3.6 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

One thing that is surely on your mind is the level of financial support for your PhD degree. How will you pay the cost of your education and your research? There are essentially two options available: internal funding and external funding. Internal funds come from the School and are paid to you in exchange for the work you do for the School. External funds come from outside sources such as foundations and other grant-offering organizations.

When you enter the School of Public Policy and Administration, typical funding is offered for five semesters of full tuition assistance in return for the work you will do for the School. There are a number of roles that students assume in order to earn their tuition stipend: research assistants (RA) that work on projects for one of the School's affiliated institutes or centers, teaching assistants (TA) that either lead their own class sections or else work with the primary



#### **"Dolla dolla bill y'all" - Method Man**

instructor to teach, grade, and support student learning. The financial support from SPPA is applied to tuition only and you are responsible for paying the various fees that UD charges other than tuition such as the health service fee (\$252/semester), student center fee (\$119/semester), recreation fee (\$50/semester), and unless you complete a waiver because you have existing coverage, the health insurance fee (\$1473/year for non-contract positions, \$200/year for contract positions). Beyond the fifth semester of support, SPPA will cover your sustaining fee provided you have achieved sustaining status. While in sustaining, you are still responsible for covering the cost of the various fees listed above. If, at the time you begin your sixth semester you have not attained sustaining status, in other words if you are not registered for UNIV999 in the sixth semester, you will be responsible for paying the full cost of a nine credit tuition (\$14,200/semester). The bottom line is that it pays, quite literally, to successfully defend your proposal shortly after your fourth semester so you can register for UNIV969 in the fifth semester and hence UNIV999 in the sixth semester.

Another source of internal funding is the Dissertation Fellows program offered through the Office of Graduate and Professional Education. This fellowship is typically awarded to students who intend to complete their PhD within one year and who do not have TA or RA positions. More information on the award and how to apply can be found [here](#).<sup>4</sup>

### **3.7 ATTENDING PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES**

The professional conference is a common feature of the landscape traversed by a PhD student on their path toward graduation (and beyond). Annual conferences are typically organized around an organization, such as the Urban Affairs Association, and are a great way to keep yourself abreast of the recent research and knowledge-related developments in the field. Additionally, they are great networking and professional relationship building opportunities. It is advisable that you attend a conference per year, either as a simple attendee or as a presenter. Students who have been approved to present at a conference can seek approval from the School for travel funding to attend the conference. Please see Diana Simmons for more information.

### **3.8 PUBLISHING PAPERS**

Like it or not, publishing academic papers through the peer review process is standard practice for PhD students, particularly for those who wish to land a faculty position following graduation. Faculty search committees, even at community colleges, increasingly look for a strong record of academic publishing and a future research agenda that will translate to subsequent papers. The published article, therefore, is the results-based evidence that demonstrates your contribution to the field of knowledge. Even if you don't anticipate joining the academe after graduation, you should still consider publishing as a way to share your insights and knowledge with peers.

PhD students typically submit three types of manuscripts to journals for consideration: papers written for class such as policy briefs, papers written as part of a collaborative research project, or chapters taken from the full dissertation which stand alone as individual research documents. Of the three, the papers you write for class face a greater challenge to publication because they are written with the intent to satisfy the requirements of a professor, not an academic journal. Publishing the results of research conducted for one of the School's affiliated centers or publishing a dissertation chapter, both of which frequently contain original research and knowledge, are therefore

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/financial/dissfellows.html>

the preferred publishing materials for PhD students. Be aware that if you are submitting a chapter from your dissertation, you must be the primary author (if the piece is coauthored) because there are copyright protocols and you will need to substantially rewrite it before the full dissertation is published. Additionally, if you are submitting a dissertation chapter, you should absolutely make revisions and modifications that locate the substance of the paper in a specific context. Peer reviewers can quickly spot a dissertation chapter that is submitted wholesale without any effort to tailor the piece to a journal format and are likely to reject it outright.

Before you submit a manuscript to a journal for consideration, you should first identify the specific disciplinary and philosophical focus of the intended journal and the audience it reaches. You can do this by reviewing the types of articles the journal publishes and by reading its scope and mission statements. You will then have a better idea of how to customize your piece with this information in mind. Also, getting informal feedback on a manuscript before submitting it is invaluable, and one tried and true method for gathering constructive criticism on a piece is by giving the paper a trial run by presenting it at a professional conference. For additional information on publishing, Chapter 6 in Christopher Lucas and John Murry Jr.'s book *New Faculty: A Practical Guide for Academic Beginners* is highly instructive.<sup>5</sup> Although the book's intended audience is new faculty members, the authors do a great job of demystifying the publishing process.

### 3.8.1 *Academic Journals*

Fully peer reviewed journals are the standard bearers in the world of academic publishing. Most are discipline specific although there are a growing number of interdisciplinary journals providing outlets for scholars who cross or dissolve traditional disciplinary boundaries. Listed below are a number of journals that are broad in scope and are relevant to the intellectual interests present in the School. The following is a list of journals that have previously published SPPA faculty and student papers.

- Journal of Urban Affairs
- Public Administration Review
- Journal of Public Administration Education
- Public Performance and Management Review

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<sup>5</sup> Lucas, C., J., & Murry Jr., J. W. (2011). *New faculty: A practical guide for academic beginners*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Public Integrity
- Journal of Housing and Built Environment
- Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- Journal of Families and Society
- Journal of Policy Practice
- Urban Studies
- Energy Policy
- Global Environmental Change
- Journal of Broadcasting and Media
- Journal of Planning Education and Research
- Public Finance and Management

### 3.8.2 *New Visions for Public Affairs*

[\*New Visions for Public Affairs\*](#) (NVPA) is a peer-reviewed journal run and published by students at the School.<sup>6</sup> Entering its sixth year of publication, the academic focus of the journal includes public affairs sub-disciplines such as public policy, public administration, policy analysis, urban affairs and planning, non-profit management and administration, and international affairs. The types of works that are considered for publication are primary research articles, interviews with policymakers and practitioners, policy briefs, and book reviews. If you submit a paper to NVPA and if it is selected for publication, you will be asked to present the content of the article at the annual NVPA research symposium held each spring. Because NVPA is a student-run journal, you have the opportunity to get involved and become a member of the editorial board. If you want to see how the peer-review process operates from the inside, please feel free to contact the executive director of NVPA at [nvpajournal@gmail.com](mailto:nvpajournal@gmail.com).

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.sppa.udel.edu/nvpa/home>

## SECTION 4. PRACTICAL ADVICE

This section is dedicated to offering you practical advice on how to successfully navigate the SPPA PhD program. The focus is on academic advisement, committee assembly, writing, maintaining focus on the research, and teaching courses. Not all students will find it useful, and it is not a prescription or blueprint. Instead, the advice offered in this section should be thought of as general guidelines to help you navigate through the program with fewer impediments to graduation.

### 4.1 ADVISEMENT AND MENTORSHIP

When you enter the PhD program, you are matched with a member of the SPPA faculty who will serve as your academic advisor. This person will be able to inform you about the program and curricular requirements presented in this handbook and will offer suggestions on which classes to take given your preliminary ideas for research. You are free to change your advisor from the assigned faculty member to another of your choosing if you feel that you are not receiving the appropriate level of support or if you would



**Will had an advisor too.**

simply like an advisor whose academic and research interests more closely align with your own. Because the academic advisor will likely know a good deal about your doctoral research, many students opt to ask their advisors if they will serve on the dissertation committee. This is not a requirement however as you are free to populate your committee with whomever you chose.

Meet regularly with your academic advisor and committee members to discuss your ideas and research progress. Faculty members are busy people too and at research-oriented institutions like UD, significant demands are placed on their time. So don't expect your advisor or your committee members to be contacting you periodically to ask you how your research is going or to set up meetings with you so you can discuss it together. As a PhD student, you will likely have to be proactive and initiate contact with these individuals to set up meetings. You should not feel guilty asking your advisor or committee members for meetings and you should not feel like you are an

annoyance to them. One of the *primary* faculty responsibilities is PhD student advisement and mentorship. Once an advisor or a committee member accepts your invitation to serve you, they accept a responsibility to help you navigate through the roller coaster process of research, writing, and graduation. If they are not fulfilling their responsibility to you, then you should discreetly seek advice from a trustworthy and knowledgeable colleague.

## 4.2 ASSEMBLING A COMMITTEE

The process of selecting faculty members to serve on your dissertation committee should not be taken lightly. There are a number of factors to consider when you go looking for dissertation committee members and it is vital that you take as much information as possible into account so you make well-reasoned decisions.

The first thing to know is that the University of Delaware places certain restrictions on the composition of dissertation committees. First, each member of the committee must be the holder of a terminal degree which is another way of saying they have to have a PhD. Rare exceptions to this rule are made in instances where a prospective committee member is not a PhD holder but is nonetheless highly regarded and well respected in the field. Second, a committee is made up of a minimum of four people and a maximum of six (not recommended), and at least two must hold faculty appointments in SPPA (see this handbook for the SPPA faculty listing). Of the remaining committee members, at least one must be external, meaning they come from outside of SPPA. You can select an external committee member that practices professionally - they do not necessarily have to be a faculty member at another university - but that person should still possess a terminal degree. It is advisable that your committee be composed of individuals who are actively engaged in scholarship since they will ensure you stay abreast of the latest intellectual developments. The official UD policy on committee composition and the form used to confirm committee membership is found [here](#).<sup>7</sup>

Dissertation committees are organized hierarchically, with the committee chair serving as the leading member. The committee chair drives the research and is typically deferred to by the other committee members where obstacles or challenges – scholarly or otherwise – arise. For this reason, the selection of a committee chair is the single most important decision you will make regarding the

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/committeeconfirmation.pdf>

composition of your committee and your prospective path toward completion and defense of your dissertation.

It goes without saying that you should identify faculty whose research and academic expertise align with your own area of interest. Know that you were selected into the SPPA PhD program in part because your proposed research interests dovetail with the resources already existing among the School's faculty (again, see the faculty list at the end of this handbook). Seek out those faculty members whose academic and research interests parallel your own, take or audit their classes, read their published works, ask to meet with them one-on-one, and get a general sense of their perspectives and philosophies on the discipline/topic area. You should be comfortable around and have a familiar working relationship with faculty members before approaching them to ask if they are willing to serve on your committee. Often, committee members are selected to fulfill different roles on the committee. For instance, you may choose one faculty member based upon her/his methodological expertise, while another is selected for her/his content expertise. Potential committee members may ask you what role they will fill or what your purpose is in selecting them, and you should be prepared to answer this question.

In addition to doing your own research to gather information on faculty members, a great source of insider information on faculty performance is the existing SPPA student body. If you are considering a faculty member for your committee, ask around and find out which PhD students have the same faculty member on their committee and then ask those students about their experience with that person. If you question three students about their level of satisfaction with a prospective committee member and each one tells you they are very happy, chances are you will have a similar experience.

It is also important to consider a committee that will work well together. While you will benefit from a diverse committee that can bring different perspectives, it is very important that the committee members work well together as they provide you with invaluable guidance. Once you settle on a committee chair, you will want to speak with her/him about the other faculty members you are considering as readers and why you think they would be helpful. You may also ask your advisor if they have worked with potential committee members in the past, and whether or not she/he thinks they would be good members of the committee.

Finally, one thing to consider is that faculty members get old and, although it may not seem like it, they retire. The policy governing retiring faculty members and committee service is as follows: a faculty member can continue to serve on your committee after they retire *only if* they began serving before retirement. This means they must sign UD's [official committee member form](#) before retiring.<sup>8</sup>

### 4.3 WRITING ADVICE

Your dissertation will not write itself. When you sit down at the beginning of the process, open up a Word document, and stare at the blank page, you may get the feeling that composing a dissertation is equivalent to scaling Mount Everest. With such a monumental task at hand and with little direction on which way to initiate the process, how should you start writing? Getting over that initial mental block and setting out on the writing journey can be a challenge. Here are some tips to get the ball rolling and to keep it rolling once you are in motion.

#### 4.3.1 *Outlines*

Some writers are able to sit down with a completely blank page and just spit out a full document. Most can't. Outlining the structure and substance of a paper before you start writing is an extremely useful technique for organizing your thoughts and to get the creative juices flowing. If you are not familiar with outlining, you should be. Purdue University's [OWL writing lab](#) offers practical advice on composing an outline, and it is certainly worth visiting if you are an outlining novice or if you need a refresher.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4.3.2 *Write, think, write, think...*

We tend to believe that the relationship between thinking and writing (or revising) is unilinear, that first we have to collect our thoughts and neatly sort them in our heads before we can put them out into the world. The model describing that situation looks something like this: THINKING → WRITING. Yet it can be argued that you don't *really* know a topic until you actually sit down and write about it. Writing forces you to externalize and assemble the strands of ideas in your head into something that is coherent and holistic. When you write, you are (hopefully) forced to self-reflect and consider how your knowledge will be presented and communicated to the reader. Are my ideas

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/forms/committeeconfirmation.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/544/1/>

coming through clearly? Is my argument logically sound? What is missing from my story and what is extraneous? Asking yourself these questions when you write and revise will compel you to think critically about the style and substance of your work. In other words, as the art historian Lynn Hunt argues, “[writing leads to thinking, and not the other way around.](#)”<sup>10</sup> Our model can just as easily be reversed: WRITING → THINKING. But let’s take it further because the two actions really coevolve with each other in a virtuous cycle. Of course you have to think before you write, but once you start writing you will (hopefully) be thinking and reflecting, thus propelling you into more writing. Our model is now iterative: THINKING → WRITING → THINKING → WRITING → THINKING ... → DISSERTATION.

#### 4.3.3 *Academic writing*

Few people like the pretentious academic writing style. Even pretentious academics don’t like pretentious academic writing. George Douglas from the University of Illinois critiqued the wordiness of academic writing by arguing that most of it is a “weak gruel of dead abstractions occasionally seasoned with obscure pomposities.” You may find a touch of irony in Douglas’s statement. So feel free to bake a dissertation cake with dead abstractions and obscure pomposity sprinkles, but don’t expect everyone to eat it. That being said, if you are a rhetorical maestro who relishes every opportunity to proudly demonstrate your verbosity skills, then pretense away!

“If, for a while, the ruse of desire is calculable for the uses of discipline soon the repetition of guilt, justification, pseudo-scientific theories, superstition, spurious authorities, and classifications can be seen as the desperate effort to ‘normalize’ formally the disturbance of a discourse of splitting that violates the rational, enlightened claims of its enunciatory modality.”

**Enunciatory modality, indeed! From *The Location of Culture* by Homi K. Bhabha (Routledge, 1994).**

#### 4.3.4 *Set deadlines*

Accountability to others is a great motivator and setting milestones and deadlines for submitting material to your chair and the rest of your committee is a simple and effective method of holding yourself accountable. It may be helpful if you set a goal for when you would like to graduate and then work backwards from there to plan when you will need to accomplish certain tasks such as conducting the research, completing drafts of chapters, and publishing papers. Once you have

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2010/1002/1002art1.cfm>

identified tentative dates for when these milestones are accomplished, you can set realistic deadlines for when written drafts are to be handed over to your chair and/or committee for review and feedback. You should share this information with your committee so they can anticipate your submissions and so you are more motivated to hold yourself accountable to the deadlines.

#### *4.3.5 Dissertation boot camp*

Several times per year, generally once toward the end of the summer semester and once during the winter semester, the UD Office of Graduate and Professional Education holds a [dissertation boot camp](#).<sup>11</sup> Each boot camp is a 10:00 am to 2:30 pm, five days per week, two-week long writing workshop where PhD students gather together to do nothing except sit down and write their dissertations or proposals. Short discussions kick off each writing session and are designed around strategies you can use to overcome barriers to writing like procrastination, writer's block, and distractions. The boot camps are offered completely free to PhD students and lunch is provided.

#### *4.3.6 Citations and References*

One sign of a well-executed and credible research project is the appropriate and correct use of in-text citations and an accompanying reference list. Every effort should be made to painstakingly document your research in an established format, for example MLA, APA, or Chicago. Many students and researchers alike use the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition APA (American Psychological Association) format, although you are free to use whichever citation and reference style you wish. For more information on APA format, the [Purdue OWL writing lab](#) offers a great primer.<sup>12</sup>

It is highly recommended that you start using some type of reference management software early in your PhD career. Reference management software packages allow you to quickly and easily create bibliographies in nearly any established reference format from your stored reference database and they will save you boat loads of time. [RefWorks](#), one example of an online reference management software package, is supported by the University of Delaware Library.<sup>13</sup> The library periodically holds RefWorks workshops and as a student, you are entitled to attend the workshops and use the software for free. Another popular software package is [Zotero](#).<sup>14</sup> Once you start using one of these software packages, you'll begin to ask yourself just how time consuming it must have been to

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cas.udel.edu/writing-center/Pages/Dissertation-Boot-Camp.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.refworks.com/refworks2/default.aspx?groupcode=RWUDel>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.zotero.org/>

manually develop a bibliography before they came around. The answer is: a heck of a lot longer than creating one with RefWorks or Zotero.

#### 4.3.7 *Formatting*

The University stipulates the formatting style you must use in your final dissertation, from the font size and the margin dimensions to the look of the title page. Many PhD graduates have recommended that when you begin writing your proposal and then your dissertation, you use this format so as to avoid unnecessary and lengthy reformatting later on in the process. For a copy of UD's thesis/dissertation formatting manual, visit [this page](#).<sup>15</sup>

## 4.4 STAYING FOCUSED

Once you begin your inquiry, you may very well have the feeling that you want to leave no stone unturned, that you have to investigate all the literature on your research topic no matter how tangentially related it may be. Reading books and articles is absolutely necessary as it helps to stimulate thinking and catalyzes writing. Yet at the same time, it is easy and tempting to get caught up creating an overly broad reverse bibliography where you read a relevant article or book, spot an interesting reference contained within it, and then backtrack by reading the piece that was



Could this happen to you?

referenced. When you read that piece, you're sure to identify further interesting references and feel compelled to read them as well. While it may feel like you are exercising academic rigor, the simple truth is that too much reverse bibliographing causes you to lose focus on your original ideas. **When you make reading-related decisions, you should target and select readings because they are relevant for your research, not simply because you find the topic interesting.**

This is not to suggest that reverse bibliographing is both harmful and distracting. When used sparingly and selectively, reverse bibliographing can be a very useful technique for exploring valuable theoretical, conceptual, and methodological pathways that you may have overlooked or been unfamiliar with. But please bear in mind that downward spirals

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.udel.edu/gradoffice/polproc/manual.html>

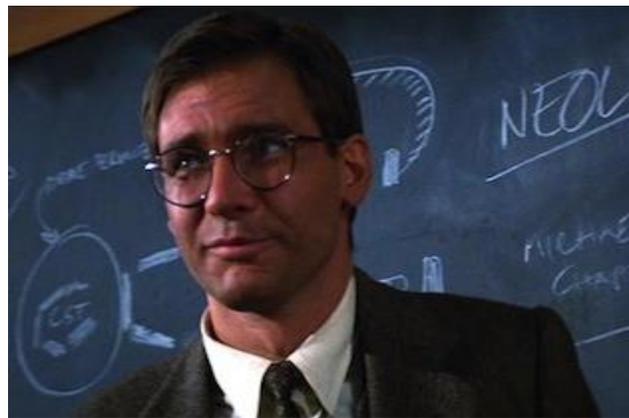
into the rabbit hole of scholarly literature can be time consuming, mentally exhausting, and unfruitful. If you are trying to read everything under the sun in an effort to check off all the boxes or satisfy your rapidly expanding curiosity, it is quite likely you will lose focus on your research and you will certainly lose time that could be better spent writing, revising, or reading more relevant literature.

#### 4.5 RESPECTING OPINIONS

In social science disciplines such as public policy and public administration, it is inevitable that within any group of individuals you will find contrasting and divergent views on the definition of social problems and the most appropriate way to resolve them. Divergent perspectives leading to intellectual and philosophical differences of opinion are no different. Professional differences of opinion should be respected and cherished – our system of democratic governance is strong because we are afforded the right to disagree and dissent.

#### 4.6 TEACHING COURSES

One of the main advantages of graduating with a PhD is that you will have the opportunity to enter the world of academia as a full-fledged faculty member. Indeed, you may be seeking your doctoral degree because you have ambitions to pursue a career in academe. If that is the case, you should make a serious effort to prepare yourself for a faculty career while you are enrolled as a student by serving as a Teaching Assistant (co-instructor along with the named instructor) for a SPPA undergraduate course or even leading an entire section on your own. Take full advantage of the teaching-related opportunities while you are here because the



**Indiana was a professor.**

market for higher education careers is tremendously competitive and selective. If you want to be a faculty member after you receive your PhD, you had better teach now since most schools you apply to won't even look at your application if your CV is devoid of a teaching section. Luckily, both SPPA and UD provide ample opportunities and resources for you to develop teaching experience and refine your instructional skills.

#### *4.6.1 Teaching assistantships*

PhD students who have passed their qualifying exams are eligible to be considered for SPPA paid teaching assistantships. These teaching assistantships are typically awarded to students in the third or fourth year of study based on the recommendation of the PhD program director and other faculty. It is expected that these paid teaching assistantships will be awarded to students who have a career commitment to a faculty position that includes university level teaching and who are preparing themselves for that career through such programs as the University's Higher Education Teaching Certificate Program (see below). Students with an interest in this career path should discuss their priorities with the PhD program director as early as feasible. SPPA paid teaching assistants assist with undergraduate course in public policy and in organizational and community leadership. Advanced doctoral students with documented teaching accomplishments may be invited to teach their own section of an undergraduate course. SPPA paid teaching assistantships include a full stipend for the academic year and full tuition (as needed).

#### *4.6.2 Research assistantships*

Research assistantships typically engage PhD students in working with faculty and research and public service professionals on programs and projects with the SPPA affiliated centers. PhD students work 20 hours a week as members of the project teams, gaining valuable experience with applied research and public service programs that are usually supported by external grants and contracts. These appointments are made by the directors of the affiliated centers in consultation with the PhD program director. For example, the Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research supports a limited number of doctoral research fellowships that are awarded to students in the latter stages of doctoral study upon the recommendation of the PhD program director.

PhD students are encouraged to apply for external funding to support their doctoral research. The PhD program director and the faculty supervisors should be consulted on the assistance available to support such applications.

#### *4.6.3 UD's annual TA conference*

When you become a TA for the first time, you are required to attend the [TA Conference](#) organized by the Center for Teaching and Assessment of Learning.<sup>16</sup> The conference runs for one day only

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<sup>16</sup> <http://cte.udel.edu/programs/graduate-ta-conference.html>

and is hosted annually in late August. It is designed to help orient new TAs to their instructional roles and responsibilities at UD as well as introduce them to effective practices and central aspects of learning and teaching. Experienced TAs run the conference and lead the individual sessions so there is ample opportunity for you to learn from and have your questions answered by veterans of the TA game.

#### *4.6.4 Higher Education and Teaching Certification program (HETC)*

(This program is currently postponed pending a search for a new program leader. You can contact the Center for Teaching and Assessment of Learning for an update.) If you have serious ambitions to become a faculty member upon completion of your dissertation, then it is highly recommended that you apply to the [Higher Education and Teaching Certification](#) program offered through the Center for Teaching and Assessment of Learning.<sup>17</sup> The program is a sequence of four pass/fail seminars that focus on the various aspects of teaching and working in a university setting. Individual seminars address pedagogy and student-centered teaching methods, course and syllabus design, academic job searches, and faculty expectations and roles. If accepted into the program, you become an HETC Fellow and must successfully complete all four seminars in order to graduate.

Throughout the program, all HETC Fellows will develop the most commonly requested job application documents and an academic ePortfolio. Application documents that you will be asked to write and refine include a CV, cover letter, research statement, teaching statement, and student assessment materials. You develop these documents throughout the program and as you do, you will receive extensive feedback from both your fellow Fellows (pun intended), the seminar's instructor, and academic job search experts within the Center for Teaching and Assessment of Learning who know exactly what faculty search committees look for when they review your application. In addition to the application documents, you will be asked to develop an academic ePortfolio which is essentially a personalized online expansion of your teaching, research, and service activities. Typically created with Google Sites, the academic ePortfolio assembles all of your application documents into one easy-to-navigate website. The ePortfolio also offers detailed and contextual information on your abilities as an educator and researcher in your discipline. For example, many people who develop ePortfolios choose to post the results of course evaluations they receive from students at the end of each semester.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://cte.udel.edu/programs/hetc/higher-education-teaching-certification-program.html>

Just to reiterate, the HETC program is highly recommended if you wish to pursue a career in academia. Given the increasing number of qualified PhD holders coupled with the decline in state support for higher education, the higher education job market is getting squeezed (especially tenure-track positions) and is now highly competitive. To greatly improve your chances of landing your dream job, you should seriously consider the HETC program because it will not only demystify and prepare you for the academic job search process, it will demonstrate to your future department that you possess the knowledge and skills to hit the ground running once they hire you. There is no substitute for being able to demonstrate to a search committee that you have taken a seminar on student-centered learning and course design

## SECTION 5. FACULTY PROFILES

**David L. Ames** is a Professor of Urban Affairs and Public Policy, Geography, and Material Culture Studies. He serves as the director of the Center for Historic Architecture and Design, an interdisciplinary research and public service unit oriented to historic preservation, and is an affiliated faculty member of the University Transportation Center, the Center for Material Culture Studies, the Delaware Design Center and the doctoral program in Preservation Studies. He also directs the University Byways Research Program sponsored by the Delaware Department of Transportation. Professor Ames co-founded the master's program in Historic Preservation. He conducts research on the evolution of historic urban and suburban landscapes, including historic roads and heritage tourism, and preservation policy. His transportation-related research has dealt with megapolitan development and the effects of projected sea-level rise on the I-95 corridor, with an emphasis on the mid-Atlantic region. He instructs courses in the areas of historic preservation, sustainable planning, and architectural photography.

**Maria P. Aristigueta** is the Charles P. Messick Professor and Director of the School of Public Policy and Administration and is a Senior Policy Fellow in the Institute for Public Administration. She recently served as a Fulbright Specialist at the University of Salerno, in Italy. Her research interests are in the areas of organizational behavior and performance management. Professor Aristigueta is the author of *Managing for Results in State Government* published by Quorum Books (1999); coauthor of *Organizational Behavior in the Public and Non-Profit Sectors* published by Sage in 2002, 2009, 2013, and translated to Chinese; *Civil Society in Cuba* published by the University of Miami (2008); and co-editor of *Practice-Based Performance Management: An International Handbook* published by Sage (2008). She has also written articles for scholarly journals and book chapters on topics including the use of social indicators, performance measurement, outcomes for student learning and the use of strategic planning for economic development.

**Nina David** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Public Policy and Administration. She has an undergraduate degree in Architecture from India, graduate degrees in Urban and Regional Planning and Environmental Science from Ohio State University, and a doctoral degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Michigan. Her research interests are at the nexus of public policy and urban planning in the broad areas of land use planning, regional planning and cooperation, growth management, and sustainability. Her focus is on the factors that impact

regional cooperation on land use issues, and the impact of regional land use cooperation on development patterns on the ground.

**Jonathan B. Justice** is an Associate Professor in the School of Public Policy and Administration with areas of specialization which include public budgeting and finance, accountability and decision-making, and local economic development. Recently, he has published articles examining the meaning and methods of fiscal transparency and the ethics of government debt; collaborated with Chris Skelcher and Catherine Durose on a the seminar series *Beyond the State: Third Party Government in Comparative Perspective*; and co-edited with Helisse Levine and Eric Scorsone the *Handbook of Local Government Fiscal Health*. Professor Justice has been a visiting research fellow at the University of Birmingham's Institute of Local Government Studies where he conducted research on British business improvement districts and town center management. Prior to earning his Ph.D. at Rutgers University-Newark in 2003, he worked for the City of New York as a capital program administrator, and as an economic development program manager for nonprofit organizations in the New York metropolitan area.

**James Kendra** is an Associate Professor and serves as Director of the Disaster Research Center. Previously, he was coordinator of the Emergency Administration and Planning Program in the Department of Public Administration at the University of North Texas. His research interests focus on individual and organizational responses to risk, improvisation and creativity during crisis, post-disaster shelter and housing, and planning for behavioral health services. Professor Kendra has participated in several quick response disaster reconnaissance trips, including the 2001 World Trade Center attacks, 2003 Midwest tornadoes, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and Hurricane Ike in 2008, as well as documenting maritime relief efforts in the U.S. following the 2010 Haiti earthquake. He has been involved in several emergency planning and exercise efforts, and is a Certified Emergency Manager. Dr. Kendra graduated from Massachusetts Maritime Academy with a degree in marine transportation and served several years at sea, attaining a Master Mariner license. He completed a master's degree in geography at the University of Massachusetts, and a Ph.D. in geography at Rutgers University.

**John McNutt** is a Professor in the School of Public Policy and Administration and coordinator of the nonprofit concentration in the MPA Program. Prior to coming to the University in 2007, he was Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Advanced Practice Concentration in Organizations

and Communities at the University of South Carolina College of Social Work. Professor McNutt's research efforts are in the areas of political use of the Internet and the use and adoption of technology by nonprofit organizations. He has co-authored or co-edited four books and many articles, book chapters and other works on advocacy, the digital divide, volunteerism, community development technology and nonprofit organizations and technology and public participation. His practice specialties are criminal justice and child welfare. Dr. McNutt earned a BA at Mars Hill College, an MSW from the University of Alabama and a Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee.

**Anthony Middlebrooks** is an Associate Professor in the Organizational and Community Leadership undergraduate degree program. He helped develop the doctoral program in leadership as a professor at Cardinal Stritch University, and spent ten years prior in non-profit leadership positions, culminating in writing, consulting, and presenting on a variety of leadership topics. Professor Middlebrooks teaches courses in leadership theory and practice, decision-making, creativity and innovation in leadership, and research methodology. His current research interests focus on methods of leadership education and the integration of leadership, creativity, and design thinking. Dr. Middlebrooks has a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

**Steven Peuquet** is an Associate Professor and also Director of the Center for Community Research and Service. He has served in a variety of leadership roles within the School and as a member of several governmental and nonprofit boards and commissions. Dr. Peuquet is a city planner and urban economist with expertise in housing, fair housing, homelessness, community revitalization and nonprofit agency management. In addition to leading the Center's efforts to develop new knowledge and approaches to reduce poverty and increase social and economic opportunity, he teaches courses in research design and data analysis, economics, housing policy and community analysis and development. Professor Peuquet has gained broad recognition for his public service work, including being the recipient in 2008 of the University's Ratledge Family Award for his outstanding service to the citizens of Delaware. He holds master's degrees in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Pittsburgh and in Regional Science (Urban and Regional Economics) from the University of Pennsylvania. He earned his doctorate in City Planning from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Chandra Reedy** received a Ph.D. from the interdisciplinary Archaeology Program at UCLA. She was a conservation scientist at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Conservation Center before coming to the University, where she initially served as Director of the Ph.D. program in Art Conservation Research. She joined the Center for Historic Architecture and Design, full-time, in 2007. She teaches history of Tibetan art, architecture, and material culture. Her current interests are in better understanding the history and cultural context of technological change in stone, ceramic, metal, and glass architectural materials and material culture, especially in Asia; developing new methods for documenting deterioration of those materials, and new approaches to preserving them; and the documentation and preservation of intangible cultural heritage, and the role of heritage tourism in those efforts. She has an active program of fieldwork in China, and holds two appointments in the Palace Museum (Forbidden City, Beijing) as Visiting Researcher in the Key Scientific Research Base of Ancient Ceramics, and Guest Fellow in the Research Center for Tibetan Buddhist Heritage. She has published six books and 55 journal articles and book chapters.

**Daniel Rich** is University Professor of Public Policy. A recipient of the University of Delaware's Medal of Distinction, he has served as University Provost (2001 to 2009), and as dean of two colleges (1991-2001). An elected fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, he served for a decade as visiting professor at the University of Strathclyde in Scotland and was a founding member of the University's Center for Energy and Environmental Policy. He now serves with the University's Institute for Public Administration (IPA), the Delaware Environment Institute, and the Science, Ethics and Public Policy Program. A recipient of the University's excellence-in-teaching award, he offers graduate courses in public policy and processes of social inquiry, and has supervised numerous doctoral dissertations. His research has focused on higher education policy, urban policy, energy policy, and science and technology policy. His publications include 13 books and edited volumes, and more than 100 articles, monographs and professional papers.

**Andrea Sarzynski** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Public Policy and Administration and a faculty affiliate at the Delaware Environmental Institute and the Disaster Research Center. Her research interests include urban land use, transportation, energy, and environmental policy. She worked formerly at the George Washington Institute of Public Policy (GWIPP), the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution, the Rochester Institute of Technology, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and the environmental law practice at Sidley Austin. Dr.

Sarzynski has published reports for GWIPP and Brookings, and academic articles in policy, geography, and urban affairs. She has a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Public Administration from The George Washington University and a B.S. in natural resources from Cornell University.

**Joseph Trainor** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Public Policy and Administration, teaching graduate courses in disaster science and management, international aspects of disasters, and qualitative research methods. He has authored or co-authored peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, reports and invited papers on disaster-related topics. His primary research interests include: international aspects of disasters, disaster researcher and practitioner integration, warnings and protective action, human behavioral response to disasters, effects of organizational design, and patterns of association in multi-organizational response networks. Dr. Trainor has assisted in developing an approach to writing EOP plans for small communities, provided input into the development of CMAS as an invited speaker at a joint Academy of Science DHS workshop, done a review of disaster research insights for public health emergencies, and developed a report on what role abandonment research findings means for emergency planners. He earned his Ph.D. in Sociology in 2009 from the University of Delaware, focusing on collective behavior, social movements and disasters.

**Leland Ware** is the Louis L. Redding Chair for the Study of Law and Public Policy. He was a professor at St. Louis University School of Law from 1987 to 2000, was a visiting professor at Boston College Law School in 1992, and at the Ruhr University in Bochum, Germany in 1997. Professor Ware was University Counsel at Howard University from 1984 to 1987 and was a trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Division. His research focuses on various aspects of Civil Rights law. He has authored more than 100 publications consisting of academic journal articles, book chapters, essays, book reviews, editorials and other publications in academic journals. Professor Ware has organized a number of academic symposia, professional programs and hosted many distinguished lectures. He is a co-author, with Robert Cottrol and Raymond Diamond, of *Brown v. Board of Education: Caste, Culture and the Constitution* (2003). He is the editor of *Choosing Equality: Essays and Narratives on the Desegregation Experience* (co-edited with Robert L. Hayman with a Foreword by Vice President Joe Biden) Penn State Press (2009). Professor Ware is a graduate of Fisk University and Boston College Law School.

**Danilo Yanich** is Associate Professor and Director of the MA Program in Urban Affairs & Public Policy. He is also Vice-President of the University of Delaware Chapter of the AAUP. He teaches in areas of research methods and media, citizenship and public policy. A two-time Presidential Fellow at the Salzburg Seminars, Dr. Yanich's research focuses on the relationship among media, citizenship and public policy. His most recent work regarding media market structure and news content has been used by the FCC and media reform groups to inform policy and to challenge the conventional wisdom of the media system. He is a charter member of the Communication Policy Research Network of Research, a group of media and policy scholars from around the U.S. who have advanced the importance of policy research in media issues. He has also done much research in crime and criminal justice policy.