

Graduate School Forum Career Development

When you are trying to conceptualize a career path for yourself, it is easy to identify high-profile jobs that look exciting and interesting but less easy to understand how you get from where you are now to there.

Rarely today is building a career straightforward or even a straight trajectory—particularly in the international affairs field. If there is one common characteristic I have seen among the careers of international affairs practitioners, it is the fluidity with which their career paths can navigate among various sectors. A person might leave graduate school for a position with their national government, then move on to a private sector company, only to later find themselves with an NGO. I have seen any combination of cross-sector career paths, and it is this wide variety of options that makes a professional education in international affairs so valuable.

As you will see in the following pages, these schools and others like them combine a sound mix of practical training in hard skills in such areas as management, policy analysis and quantitative calculation—that are necessary to be successful in any position—with issue-specific knowledge to address the myriad topics proliferating in the

international realm. In addition to providing curriculums that develop critical thinking, evaluation and leadership skills, these schools also include scholar practitioners on their faculties to ensure that students are exposed to the real-world application of the knowledge they develop during their Master's program. Such faculty along with strong alumni networks, career development offices, and opportunities to pursue substantive internships provide frameworks for building a successful career in the international affairs arena. These programs are designed to expose you to both the academic training and practical knowledge necessary to develop a career trajectory that will get you from here to there.

Leigh Morris Sloane

*Association of Professional Schools of
International Affairs (APSIA)*

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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A CONVERSATION WITH

Lori Garver

Deputy Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Advancing Space Policy

Working at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), I interact regularly with both the elected political leadership of the nation and the country's best technical and scientific minds, and I work to communicate effectively with both groups. Space policy is a constantly evolving field, and understanding the intricacies of space policy—from both a public policy and a technological perspective—is vital to success in this field.

Tell us about what you studied at the Elliott School and what your job currently entails at NASA.

At the Elliott School, I earned my master's degree in science and technology and public policy, with a focus on space policy. My coursework complemented and enhanced the work that I already had been doing in the public and non-profit sectors. While my early career was geared more towards public policy, working with Senator John Glenn piqued my interest in space and set me on my current path. At the Elliott School, I was able to combine my interests in space and policy and tailor my graduate study to suit my career goals.

As the Deputy Administrator at NASA, I am involved in a wide range of activities, from overseeing our functional offices to working closely with NASA's Administrator to set the organization's policy agenda. I represent NASA and its mission to the public as well as to other governmental entities—from Congress to the White House—and my job requires a daily balance between technical knowledge and public policy expertise.

How did your Elliott School education help you achieve your career goals?

The Elliott School provided me with the educational foundation for my career. The program actually had more to do with setting my professional trajectory than even the goals I had set for myself. I was able to combine my interests in public policy and space and to study with some of the leading experts in these two fields. In addition, the program allows for a strong mix of theoretical and practical work and gives students the opportunity to apply theory to the real-world issues that they will likely face after graduation. The Elliott School's Space Policy Institute is an invaluable resource for anyone who is considering a career in this field and is a tremendous asset for the space community.

What do you think sets the Elliott School apart from other international affairs programs?

The Elliott School combines a solid academic experience with the ability to simultaneously gain practical experience at some of the world's leading foreign policy institutions. Elliott School faculty are among the leaders in their fields, and the school's unique location in Foggy Bottom gives students the opportunity to work or intern in any area of international affairs—from government to non-profit to private sector organizations. Studying international affairs in the heart of Washington, DC provides an invaluable dimension to this field. This gave me the ability to see first-hand how the critical issues that we were examining from an academic perspective were being addressed in the international policy community.



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A CONVERSATION WITH

Glenn Fong

Thunderbird Associate Professor of Global Studies and
Academic Director of MA and MS Programs

A Truly Global Education

Why do diplomats need business skills?

Thunderbird offers more than traditional international relations or MBA programs because the grand global challenges of the 21st century call for mixed mode, cross-sector solutions. In practice, the public, private, and non-profit sectors are not demarcated from each other. No one company, NGO, or country can solve issues like sustainable development, human rights, conflict resolution, or global economic recovery. We need Doctors Without Borders and USAID and Dell and Microsoft.

The coordinated effort calls for global management across these sectors. We need leaders who not only can speak different languages, but who can talk business and international relations and understand the nature and dynamics of these other sectors.

Thunderbird has consistently been committed to the notion that global executives must understand culture, politics, and history. Our Master of Arts program is based upon the notion that diplomats need to understand business and management. It's essential for modern diplomats to speak the business language because all of these industries intersect.

Why should students consider work in the developing world?

At Thunderbird we have a required global experience whereby students study or work in a foreign country. I believe that is so valuable, because it can be career changing. How can you pick a career if you only know what you've bumped into in your own culture? Once you've exposed yourself to other cultures, you expand your career options.

One of my priorities is encouraging students to consider working in the developing world. Developed metropolitan centers around the world are actually very

similar. But in a developing country, you will see very different social and economic systems with expanded roles for the public, private, and non-profit sectors. One of the great things about Thunderbird is its entrepreneurial open-mindedness; students will find opportunities in areas most would overlook.

How can the Career Management Center help me?

For the last five to six years, Thunderbird has been running a program called Career TREKs. We get about fifteen students, selected through a competitive process, and plan a trip to a particular city for a number of company and organizational visits. These are essentially high-level informational interviews with great representatives.

Our Career Management Staff has been involved in outreach directly in the government, non-profit, and social enterprise realms, and says it has been really refreshing to see the response from these organizations. Many don't have a long tradition of hiring management-trained candidates, but see in our Thunderbird graduates the right mix of skills to make a difference.

What does it mean to be a Thunderbird?

The Thunderbird alumni network is integral to the institution. Our literature will tell you we have alumni in over 140 countries and that they are 40,000 strong, but what you can't necessarily see on the page is what that means when you land on the ground somewhere. We have come to rely greatly on alumni for insight and assistance regarding career management. True to our global reputation, Thunderbirds land in many countries, and they go to many types of companies and organizations. Students know they can rely on strong allies in the marketplace when they are trying to connect.



THUNDERBIRD
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A CONVERSATION WITH

Charles Wheelan, Ph.D. '98

Senior Lecturer

University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy Studies

Author of *Naked Economics: Undressing the Dismal Science*

Rigor Meets Relevance at the University of Chicago Harris School

You earned your Ph.D. at the University of Chicago Harris School and then returned to teach there. Can you describe how your studies prepared you for the challenges you encountered when you graduated?

The University of Chicago Harris School is a place that combines everything great about the University of Chicago: a world-class research university with faculty and students who at the end of the day care most about solving problems. I was able, as a student, to go deeper into subjects like school reform and the economics of regulation and so on, but I also knew that I would never be comfortable in a purely academic environment.

After graduation, I worked as the Midwest correspondent for *The Economist*. I also worked for Chicago Metropolis 2020, which is a civic group that works on transportation, land use, and housing issues for the Chicago region. I really liked rolling up my sleeves to work on those issues. In a lot of ways, that's exactly why I came back as a faculty member—I knew this was a place where the purely academic and the practical could come together.

Students today are seeking both intellectual challenges and experiential learning. How does Chicago Harris combine these very different sources of academic training and why is that important?

Students who enroll in our International Policy Practicum combine theory with on-the-ground practice. Every fall, we pick a place and a topic, such as income inequality in Brazil or rural health care delivery in Cambodia. Students study it just like they would any other academic topic.

The twist is that in December they get on a plane and go there and talk to the people affected.

There is absolutely no substitute for being on the ground. That's when you realize that some of the assumptions underlying your theories need to be relaxed—for example, when you learn that people might not be as rational in their decision-making as economists would like them to be. On the other hand, if you have no academic underpinnings to guide how you approach a problem, then it's not clear you are going to be able to add a whole lot of value. At Chicago Harris, we try to combine both.

How does Chicago Harris prepare students for leadership positions around the world?

When students leave Chicago Harris, they're confident that they have a general set of tools that can be applied to a very broad set of circumstances. That's the benefit of having rigorous core courses that teach the crucial quantitative skills. Our students have studied with some of the world's most prominent researchers. As a student, I took four classes from Nobel Prize winners! What you quickly come to realize at Chicago Harris is that our focus on quantitative skills gives you the exact tools you can use to develop and assess evidence-based policy prescriptions. Our world is complex, and the best solutions to our myriad problems are not necessarily obvious. An education at Chicago Harris gives future leaders the critical skills they need to develop, assess, and promote innovative—and effective—programs and policies.



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A CONVERSATION WITH

René BuholzerHead Public Policy
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Taking Advantage of a Privileged Setting: International Affairs in Switzerland

The University of St. Gallen is one of Europe's leading institutions of higher learning. Its students invariably benefit from an acknowledged expertise in economics and business administration. Multidisciplinarity, a finely tuned blend of theory and practice, and an international faculty at the top of their respective areas of expertise are further assets of an International Affairs Program that prepares students for a wide range of career opportunities in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. MIA graduates go on to financial institutions, small consulting firms and large transnational corporations; public sector opportunities include international organizations, diplomacy, and government agencies at every level. In addition, dual degree programs with Sciences Po in Paris, The Fletcher School in Boston, and Yonsei GSIS in Seoul offer professional qualifications with a genuine cross-border reach.

How did the MIA Program help ease the transition from school to your first job?

With hindsight, I realize that MIA students are happily spoiled in this regard, as both the University and the Program offer an ever-growing array of career services. Throughout the academic year, employers from the public and private sectors visit the campus to present job opportunities and allow for informal contact. Moreover, the Program encourages internships in Switzerland and abroad. At the same time, the curriculum includes small group seminars offered by experienced practitioners, many of whom are MIA alumni. And even in the context of regular coursework, students don't get lost in the proverbial ivory tower. Take my economics tutor at the time: As one of Switzerland's foremost trade economists, he certainly knew his theory; yet he would take us to the World Trade Organization in Geneva or to the Bank for

International Settlements in Basle for extended stints. There, senior officials would join us to explain in detail what problems they were working on and how they meant to solve them. Today, I am thankful indeed to both the faculty and the Program for providing us with continuous exposure of this kind.

How has the International Affairs Program effectively prepared you for a career in the banking sector?

At first sight, choosing a multidisciplinary curriculum in graduate school may seem at odds with the vision of pursuing a career in the financial industry. Once you take a closer look, however, you realize that one is perfectly compatible with the other. In overseeing the public policy department of a multinational corporation, I have to come to terms with a wide range of political, economic, and regulatory issues on a daily basis. In very real ways, however, that is precisely what I was trained to do at the University of St. Gallen.

In cultivating co-teaching around core offerings from four fields—economics, public law, political science, and business administration—the MIA Program provides a tremendously fruitful experience of academic cross-insemination. While mandatory courses address conceptual foundations, research methods, and general knowledge, small group projects and electives across a large spectrum of topics enable students to hone their skills in specialized areas that they choose in light of individual preference. Combining breadth and depth is a genuine challenge. At St. Gallen, that marriage has always been a happy one.

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A CONVERSATION WITH

Hans Winkler

Director
Diplomatic Academy of Vienna
Vienna School of International Studies

Chances, Changes, Challenges

The Diplomatic Academy of Vienna (DA), also known as the Vienna School of International Studies, rests on 4 strong pillars: the tradition of an outstanding academic institution since 1754; intellectual and cultural diversity and the strength of a student body of 150, representing 50 countries; multidisciplinary teaching of global affairs by an international faculty of academics and practitioners; and strong institutional and professional ties to diplomacy on a national, European and global level.

What are the chances of getting a job with a Master of Advanced International Studies (MAIS) or a Master of Science in Environmental Technology and International Affairs (MSc in ETIA) with an undergraduate degree other than law, economics, or international relations?

One distinct characteristic of both our Master programmes is the multidisciplinary nature of studies. Students with undergraduate degrees in disciplines other than law, economics and international relations are offered a structured approach that teaches them the academic and practical knowledge necessary to pursue a career in international affairs.

The careers of Federica, Fernando and Bernice are three examples for the successful feasibility of this approach.

U.S. student Federica entered the MAIS programme with a BA in English literature. Because Federica grew up in Latin America, she wanted to converge her multicultural background and her passion for international diplomacy. She is now pursuing a career at the Inter-American Development Bank.

Bernice from the U.K. attended universities in China and England, earning a BA in Modern Chinese Studies. She wanted to contribute to sustainable development after witnessing the effects of pollution and climate change

while living in Asia, and the ETIA program provided her with the knowledge necessary for a career as Director of the Jane Goodall Institute in Singapore.

Fernando, a Mexican student with a BS in Industrial and System Engineering, wanted to work for an international organisation. Since graduating from MAIS he has worked as Programme Officer at the Office of the Executive Secretary at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Will studying at the DA help change my professional perspectives and deal with the challenges of finding a career?

Our graduates are generalists; they are able to understand and act in all aspects of international affairs using a broad basis of interdisciplinary knowledge, changing from one discipline to the other.

Vienna is a hub for international businesses, international organizations and agencies such as UNIDO, UNODC, IAEA, CTBTO, OPEC, OSCE, IOM, ICMPD, FRA, and hosts a great number of embassies, all of which offer a wide range of professional training possibilities for DA students, as previous generations of DA interns have built up an excellent reputation for their successors. These internships, as well as lectures, meetings and discussions with representatives of international affairs during conferences, and career talks at the DA will influence and change your professional perspectives. You are actively supported in this by the DA's Career Centre and by the network of alumni and mentors whose professional contacts will help you to meet the challenges of building a successful career.

Dr. Hans Winkler is the former State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and was one of the chief negotiators leading to the Washington Agreement for compensation and restitution for victims of the Nazi regime.



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A CONVERSATION WITH

Susan Holcombe

Professor of the Practice
 Graduate Programs in Sustainable International Development
 Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University

Creating a Framework for Development

The Graduate Programs in Sustainable International Development form a community of concerned students and faculty from around the world. Our mission is to help build a new generation of development planners, policy makers, and program managers in the U.S. and abroad for whom a global society free of poverty, inequity, preventable disease, and environmental degradation is the motivating driver.

What do you find challenging in international development?

I came to this position in 2001 after many years in the field working with UN agencies and here in Boston with Oxfam America. The most daunting challenge in sustainable development is the gap between what we want to achieve and what we are actually able to do. I became interested in this when I did research on the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

Twenty years ago I wondered: How is a large non-governmental organization able to send 11,000 workers to the field six days a week, walking or biking to villages, and still keep those workers focused on the two goals of poverty reduction and viable institutions for the poor? For Grameen, poverty reduction was about accumulating income and assets, but it was also about gaining dignity and a voice in the direction of one's life. Senior management focused on structuring daily work to ensure that bank workers reached, served, and enabled poor clients. They evolved effective standard operating procedures that kept the Bank on the road to commercial viability. For me a remarkable result was the visible confidence and initiative of women who had been with the Bank for 5 or more years, compared to the timidity of new members.

How does this relate to your own students?

I seek to incorporate into my teaching the knowledge and skills that help students bridge the gap between ideals and practice. Students need to be clear about their own definition of development and the values they bring. I teach a course called Frameworks for Development that introduces students to a range of concepts around sustainable development, and I ask them to strategize to reach particular development goals. Another course focuses on practical examples of implementing change. One of my interests is helping students realize how this theoretical knowledge applies to the practice of sustainability.

How will a degree from the Heller School help someone who is exploring this field?

The MA in SID is a professional degree grounded in both theory and practice, incorporating academic and internship components. It builds skills in planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Each class is intentionally diverse. Students from developing countries outnumber American students, and all bring practical development experience. Dr. Mimi Sesoko of Nelspruit, South Africa, is a Heller graduate and chief executive officer of Women's Development Businesses, a micro-finance and development institution that aims to support rural women with loans. Dr. Sesoko says of her work, "The areas where our branches operate, out of these 20,000 households, I think we have been able to create 60,000 jobs, because we have seen women create jobs in their own small businesses." The intersection between theory and practice provides a range of competencies students need to advance their career.

The Heller School
 for Social Policy and Management

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A CONVERSATION WITH

Bill Rigler, MIA '04Director of Special Initiatives
Millennium Promise

Keeping a Promise Made at SIPA

How has a graduate degree in public policy helped you address the goals of Millennium Promise?

What I love most about my job is that we are doing things that no one is doing in ways that nobody has ever tried before. The opportunity to work on the frontier of many development challenges, combined with working on a world-class team led by Dr. John W. McArthur, CEO of Millennium Promise and Professor Jeffrey Sachs, the organization's co-founder and director of The Earth Institute at Columbia University, is humbling and presents an incredible responsibility to act for those without a voice.

The breadth and depth of my SIPA education, which stretches from performance-based budgeting to purpose-driven leadership, provided me with the skills to play a key role with Millennium Promise.

Which SIPA faculty members or internships contributed to your education and success?

There is no substitute for the opportunity to learn from the world's leading practitioners. One of my favorite days at SIPA was sitting in Professor Joseph Stiglitz's class on globalization and congratulating him on receiving the Nobel Prize in economics. My very next class was Intelligence and Foreign Policy, taught by the then-assistant director at the CIA, who flew up once a week to teach.

I continue to draw daily on my favorite classes: accounting and budgeting, economics, campaign management, and diplomacy. One of the most important aspects of SIPA is the rich diversity of the student body; I usually learned as much from my classmates as from my professors.

What programs or areas of study at SIPA were most instrumental in shaping your career path?

I attribute my career path to SIPA—opportunities to work for former vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro, to serve as the chief of staff at the Rockefeller Foundation and now as the director of special initiatives at Millennium Promise—my classes provided me with the skill sets, such as campaign management and accounting, needed to be a leader at these organizations. Other classes pulled me out of my comfort zone and challenged my traditional views of how the world works.

My graduate school experience also intersected with a time of profound social change in the United States: the heavily contested and emotional 2000 presidential election, September 11, and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each of these serves as a powerful and vivid reminder that the world needs trained practitioners who are experts in their field and are guided by a calling to make it better.

How has SIPA's alumni network created new opportunities for you?

The strength of the alumni network is sometimes overlooked when choosing a graduate school. In this regard, SIPA is best-in-class. Alumni are spread around the world. I have yet to visit a place where I could not connect with a SIPA alumnus through the online platform. The alumni network opens doors, presents career opportunities, and gives us the chance to make great friends.



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A CONVERSATION WITH

Andrew Billo

Master in Public Policy
Dual Degree Student, LKY School, NUS and
Columbia-SIPA

Power is Shifting to Asia. Are you?

With more than five years of experience working on migration issues in developing countries, I decided to further my knowledge by pursuing a Master's degree in Public Policy. I knew that a public policy degree would help me enhance my impact as a development practitioner, whether I was studying the economics of labor migration, applying statistical analysis to population change, or navigating the legal structures of the United Nations system. To maximize the benefit of a public policy education, I opted for a dual degree. I spent my first year at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University and my second year at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKY School) at the National University of Singapore. I had several reasons for choosing the LKY School:

First, the LKY School is the only school in Asia that is a part of the Global Public Policy Network that includes the LSE, Sciences Po Paris, and SIPA. This reassured me that the quality of the curriculum, faculty, and student body was benchmarked against some of the world's leading educational institutions.

Second, the LKY School is an integral part of the National University of Singapore (NUS), which is consistently ranked amongst the top 30 universities in the world and is one of the most respected global universities with a focus on Asia. For students who, like me, are interested in studying, working and traveling in Asia, I could think of no better place to come to than the LKY School at NUS.

Third, the LKY School is situated in Singapore, which provides one of the best gateways to Asia, with its easy access to other countries in the region. Today, Singapore is one of the world's most prosperous nations and is rapidly establishing itself as the region's financial, high-tech, entertainment, and education

hub. It is also arguably a top global city that uniquely combines first-world infrastructure with a vibrant multicultural setting.

Singapore is also widely recognized today as one of the best public policy laboratories in the world. The LKY School is a reflection of the country's vision to be at the cutting edge of policy, development, and international affairs, serving as a vital bridge between Asia's two rising giants, India and China, and the rest of the world. The LKY School classroom offers an unparalleled opportunity to network with a new generation of policymakers and leaders from Asia and beyond—my peers come from over 50 nations. Moreover, at the LKY School, you can join one of a number of career-oriented clubs and network in an industry or sector, in which you plan to pursue a future career.

Finally, what makes the LKY School one of the best training grounds in the world is its outstanding faculty, which offer a blend of Asian and global perspectives across a range of issues that are of critical concern today for development practitioners. They also serve as excellent mentors for finding career opportunities in the region through their connections with multilateral institutions, think tanks, foundations, and NGOs in Asia.



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A CONVERSATION WITH

Peter Cowhey

Dean

School of International Relations and Pacific Studies
University of California, San Diego

Beyond the Public Sector: Careers for Today's and Tomorrow's Graduates

How have you seen graduate education in international relations respond to increased attention worldwide on the environment and corresponding demand for trained international professionals in this area?

The School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS) has prepared graduates for exactly these kinds of careers for many years. Peter Moritzburke (MPIA '96) focused on international management issues and has since been involved in the development of the clean energy market worldwide. He is currently the Business Development Manager for Sunpower, a global leader in the development of solar power technology.

Where do you feel the balance lies between educating policy makers and experts on environmental issues?

When thinking about the environment and known and unknown needs for the future from a policy perspective, it is important to educate students in the known areas, but also to do so in ways that help them to forecast and dissect the unknowns. At IR/PS, our core curriculum requires that all students push their limits in quantitative research methods, managerial economics and policy-making. With these hard skills, graduates can feel confident in facing a problem and knowing the steps needed to solve it.

Luke Nickerman (MPIA '06), was part of the international economics track at IR/PS and was a member of our Export Access student-run consulting group. Upon graduation, Luke was awarded a Presidential Management Fellowship at the US Department of Energy before transitioning to the private sector, where he is now a Senior Regulatory Analyst for Pacific Gas & Electric. Luke's experience displays a typical pathway for an IR/PS graduate and, more broadly, a successful professional in international relations.

You've emphasized the need for graduates to be problem solvers with the ability to work across disciplines. If graduates from IR programs are in some respects defined by their interdisciplinary education rather than expertise, how does the private sector view graduates as prospective employees?

Over 40% of IR/PS graduates are employed in the private sector, which is a significant vote of confidence in the education our students receive to be effective in that environment. IR/PS is known by top companies like eBay for providing graduates ready to contribute strong analytical and quantitative skills to international operations.

Given our proximity to the border and strong faculty expertise, Mexico is an ongoing area of focus for students interested in all sectors, but particularly the private sector. Pedro La Farga (MPIA '94) currently works as a Vice President for Sony of Mexico and we have a continuing relationship with Chevez, Ruiz, Zamarripa y Cia for internships for students interested in international trade issues.

How does your executive Master of Advanced Studies in International Affairs (MAS-IA) degree serve professionals working in the Pacific region?

The MAS-IA curriculum is designed so professionals from diverse backgrounds can customize the program to advance their careers. For example, Soo-Yeon Kim, General Manager for Citibank Korea, chose courses that were relevant for her work in global consumer public relations, while Ya-Ming Suen, a career diplomat for Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, designed a program germane to his position as a congressional liaison officer.



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A CONVERSATION WITH

Helmut K. Anheier, Ph.D.

Dean and Professor of Sociology
Hertie School of Governance

Make an Impact at the Interface of the Private, Public and Civil Society Sectors

The Hertie School of Governance's **Master of Public Policy (MPP)** has been designed to prepare students to take the lead at the intersection of the private, public and civil society sectors. The School's Dean, renowned sociologist Professor Helmut K. Anheier, tells us more about the programme.

Why did the Hertie School decide to offer the MPP?

The idea was to add value to traditional career paths in public and private administration. Lawyers and economists continue to dominate public administration in Germany and other countries in continental Europe. We identified the need for an interdisciplinary programme that practically equips individuals from a broader range of disciplines to pursue careers in the private, public and civil society sectors. This is exactly what the MPP is and does.

How does the MPP prepare students to work across sectors?

Our MPP attracts students from over 40 countries worldwide and a wide spectrum of academic backgrounds. We've had students with first degrees in everything from micro-biology to medicine and law successfully complete the degree and pursue careers in research institutes, public health services or consulting agencies. This is possible because of the sound theoretical foundations that the programme puts in place. Firstly, we ensure that our students receive an equal level of training in subjects such as law, economics and political science through a range of core courses in these disciplines as well as in public management, statistical methods and research design. These foundations of public policy are complemented by courses that practically deal with policy challenges and equip students to develop policy recommendations by focusing on contemporary case studies.

How are MPP students taught to practically implement these policy recommendations?

In addition to the case study method our faculty use in their courses, MPP students are required to complete an internship between their first and second years of study. Our students typically choose internships in federal administration, international organizations, NGOs, private businesses or consultancies, with a focus on public affairs. We also encourage them to develop their master theses in cooperation with the internship organizations.

What are your graduates' professional destinations?

We find that most students apply for jobs in which they can have a positive impact. MPP graduates find employment in government, international organizations and NGOs, and ever more are pursuing careers in private business. About half of our graduates stay in Germany and the others go abroad—many to Brussels, Geneva or Washington D.C.

How do you support your students' transition to the labor market?

In addition to the MPP curriculum, we offer individual coaching and soft skills workshops such as media training, project management and negotiation training. We host events where practitioners from leading public and private institutions give our students insights into their daily working lives and their personal career paths. These events also provide our students with opportunities to build personal networks for their future careers. Furthermore, MPP students have the option of applying for a Professional Year in order to gain work experience between the first and second years of study, after which they resume their studies and finalize their degree.

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A CONVERSATION WITH

Brandon Mendoza

GSPIA '10

Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice

What makes a GSPIA degree ideal for a career in public or international affairs?

GSPIA provides a truly comprehensive education, offering academic programs in international affairs, international development and public administration. The School offers a multidisciplinary program preparing students for careers in the international arena—as policy makers, diplomats, intelligence officials, global business leaders and policy researchers.

Another attractive aspect of a GSPIA degree is the way the programs of study are tailored to meet students' career interests. Students may shape their degree with one of nine majors. Students also have the option to enhance their degree by earning a certificate from any of the University of Pittsburgh's renowned regional studies centers—Asian, European, Latin American and Russian/East European Studies.

How does GSPIA's curriculum prepare students to take on the challenges of a complex and global society?

My classroom experience helped me to understand the core principles of organizational behavior and general management, building skills in areas such as human resource management, financial management and planning. It also provided solid grounding in the dynamics of global governance and the analytical techniques useful for promoting organizational effectiveness and efficiency. The curriculum provides students with a domestic view but also an inherently international perspective. It is designed to advance the core value of social equity fundamental to today's complex society either through public policy, management or international relations.

How does GSPIA balance what's taught in the classroom with practical experience gained in the field?

GSPIA's research centers and institutes bridge the gap between theory and practice, allowing students to work directly with government officials, nonprofits and the private sector. During the fall 2010 semester, I had the opportunity to take what I was learning in my strategic management class and apply it to my internship. The coursework enhanced my ability to think critically about a wide range of subjects and increased my ability to effectively communicate my research.

As an intern with a global consulting firm, I received hands-on training and participated at a very high level with potential and existing clients. My supervisor expressed his enthusiasm for my contributions from the onset. In one instance, I was assigned to work with one of the group's newest clients, a leading forensic engineering firm. The firm develops engine analysis software for the military and was exploring potential new markets. My assignment was to research and collect data, draft a report and present it to the firm's lead decision maker. This project allowed me to hone my research skills and further develop my writing and presentation skills. Upon completing my internship, I was offered a full-time position as an associate project manager for the group's international team, which is in the process of facilitating the completion of several international power-generation projects. From my perspective, this is what GSPIA is all about: acquiring new skills in the classroom and applying them in the field.



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About APSIA

The Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA) comprises more than 60 members and affiliated programs around the world dedicated to the improvement of professional education in international affairs and the advancement there by of international understanding, prosperity, peace, and security.

APSIA members work to promote excellence in professional, international affairs education worldwide by sharing information and ideas among member schools and with other higher education institutions, the international affairs community, and the general public.

APSIA.org serves as a clearinghouse of information for prospective students and employers.

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