

Dear Fellow Dean, Director or Faculty Representative:

On behalf of the NASPAA Executive Council and myself I want to thank you for participating and being present for the first Deans & Directors Summit. The Council established the Policy Issues Committee to work on addressing national policy developments of importance to the member schools. The Council charged the committee to focus its work on a Human Capital Agenda for improving the quality and education of the federal public service. The Council saw this policy goal as a particularly significant way to link our schools' education programs, students, and alumni to help address the major public service challenges and opportunities facing the country. We have 3 goals for our meeting:

1. Each of us will become more knowledgeable about federal hiring, internships and careers, especially as this relates to our MPA/MPP's
2. Our voice will support 'good government' legislation that aims to improve the recruiting of qualified and professionally trained people
3. We will develop an understanding of current legislation on hiring reform and have the chance to analyze, discuss and comment.

We've already begun some of the effort outlined in the three points above. Over the past six months, the committee has worked with NASPAA staff to pursue a very productive set of activities which included meetings with OPM, Capitol Hill staff and other key entities. The committee could not have carried out these activities without the hard and effective work of Laurel McFarland, Scott Talan, and the NASPAA interns Graham Drake, Steve Erickson, and Neha Shah. I also want to express my sincere thanks for the active participation of a number of people on the Policy Issues Committee and Deans Summit, including Ken Apfel, Sandy Archibald, Jack Donovan, David Ellwood, Don Kettl, Steve Page, Paul Posner, Richard Pratt, and Charlie Wise. In addition, I thank Mitch Wallerstein for his participation in the OPM meeting and other contributions to the group, and I thank my Special Projects Director at USC, Richard Parks for his support of my involvement in working with the committee and NASPAA staff.

Part of the benefit of this effort is our own learning and education about the Federal hiring and internship system. Over the last six months it became clear how vital the "pipeline" into federal service is to our schools. Though the committee got into the human capital agenda because of the PMF, the more alarming and pressing issue is that the whole set of pathways and pipelines for graduate students to become employed by the federal government is broken. The demand is there: the government needs to hire GS-9s and 11s by the THOUSANDS every year, and we're seeing the strongest interest among our students in working for the federal government we've seen for decades. But the pipeline is so broken that very few will get through unless things change. The committee has come to believe that revamping and creating new student internship programs are vital for the future employment of our students, and for the future of the country!

While this is the first Deans Summit, it likely will not be the last effort we undertake to help influence the development of a sensible, flexible and effective Federal hiring system. NASPAA will continue to develop key relationships with decision-makers in the Executive Branch, Capitol Hill and with MPA/MPP alumni who are working in Washington and can assist our cause. I applaud your presence here at the Summit and appreciate your contributions.

Jack Knott, Dean, USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development
Chair, Policy Issues Committee and Deans Summit