

**NASPAA PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**  
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I am very proud to serve as president of NASPAA during the first full year of tenure of our new Executive Director Ken Tolo. In just a few short months he has already proven to be the right choice for the job. I would also like to thank Kerry Ban for her leadership as president during this year of transition for NASPAA and Deborah Rosenbloom for her effective interim leadership over much of the past year.

Each year, the president's remarks provide an opportunity to highlight important issues facing our field and facing us as educators of future public service leaders. It also provides a forum for the incoming president to discuss themes for the coming year. After a meeting as rich as this, I think the critical issues are clear: how to facilitate our students' access to careers that let them act on their deep commitment to public service; awareness of the tremendous diversity of our society and the need to reflect this in our faculty, students and alumni; and the challenges we face as educators in linking our teaching, research and service to the changing world of public service practice.

I want to reinforce the importance of these issues and acknowledge the enormous creativity and enthusiasm with which you are tackling them in your teaching and research. By convening this meeting each year, NASPAA plays an important role in supporting these efforts that permit us to share what we are doing, learn from each other and debate the pros and cons of different approaches. I'm delighted that Jim Perry has agreed to serve as chair of next year's annual meeting program committee to continue to strengthen our work together.

Another important activity in the coming year is NASPAA's strategic planning process. Lead by Ken Tolo, this will be a major commitment of mine as President and of our Executive Council, and I hope it will be a major commitment of yours, as well.

After last year's annual meeting, Kerry Ban asked that we form a Strategic Planning Committee of the Executive Council to think about NASPAA's goals, how we were meeting them and how we measure performance. B. J. Reed, Genia Toma and Dan Mazmanian joined me in the process.

Because we felt that any effective process to answer these questions had to involve the new Executive Director, working with our members and consulting with key outside stakeholders, we decided to conduct a "mini-assessment" of NASPAA by talking with a small cross section of program directors and leaders with critical outside organizations important to our mission.

We presented the results of these conversations to the Executive Council in April, and Ken Tolo and I will be holding a session tomorrow to present them to as many of you as can attend at the beginning of our work together. During this meeting, each section and committee has been asked to make suggestions on both the process and issues for strategic planning, and these reports will be brought to the Executive Council tomorrow.

Over the next months, through a combination of regional meetings, web/internet based interaction's with as many members as possible, and more detailed outreach to potential partners and stakeholders in our work, we will develop a draft strategic plan, review this with you and use the result to shape NASPAA's future together.

As President-elect, B.J. Reed will take over as chair of the committee and Dan and Genia will continue as part of the core group, and I thank them. We will not stand still as an organization while this work is done and it will be a challenge for all of us, but the time seems right.

(Pause)

One theme that I would like to see embedded in whatever plan we develop is the importance of getting our message out, about who we are as schools, what our graduates do and how we can contribute to help society meet some of the big challenges we face. Frank Thompson's committee on Marketing the MPA has made enormous progress. I'd like to focus our attention on this issue because I think it is more urgent than ever for us to take concerted action on this agenda – as an organization, as schools and programs and as individual educators. A window of opportunity is open and, as is often the case, it won't be open for long.

What are the events that provide us with this opportunity?

First is the individual, social and economic toll of the deadliest terrorist attack in our history. It has challenged definitions of personal liberty in a democratic state; weakened our economy; triggered one war and rebuilding effort; and may be one reason for another.

Second, there is a crisis of confidence, credibility and values in Corporate America, which, festering for years, was recently exposed, and is taking its toll on our already weak economy, on the confidence of citizens in the leadership of some of the world's major institutions and in the "market values" that have driven our society.

It has made the public service values shaping work in the government and nonprofit sectors look more appealing.

But as these factors have forced the nation to face its own vulnerability and seek effective public service leadership, we face a third challenge, a major personnel crisis in government of retirements and quality of work life. The combination of a boomer generation getting ready to retire and a government that lacks the incentive structure necessary to attract and retain talented, dedicated public servants has created a "quiet crisis" that is now coming to a head.

As our society faces these challenges, what do we as programs and schools of public affairs and administration have to offer? What is our message?

First, we can and do contribute through civic engagement – getting involved in our communities.

In NYC, the aftermath of September 11 put the work for which we all prepare our graduates in the spotlight. The coordinated efforts of the public, nonprofit and private sectors provided the necessary services that got us through those first days and weeks, and have been fundamental to the recovery and rebuilding of Lower Manhattan. As a school a mile and a half from Ground Zero, we could and did contribute.

Most important, scores of NYU Wagner alumni were working on the front lines and behind the scenes in the recovery and rebuilding efforts as staff and leaders at the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, Federal Emergency Management Administration and other city, state and federal government agencies, hospitals that treated the injured, and nonprofits that assured the delivery of food and clothing, housing and other social services. Scores of students volunteered for extended periods to work on recovery in city agencies and nonprofits. Their commitment and the quality of their work made it clear to others what our educational programs can do.

Our faculty research and policy centers have been closely engaged in the rebuilding process. Our Institute for Civil Infrastructure Systems has played a major role as the contact point for National Science Foundation infrastructure research related to the WTC disaster. The Taub Urban Research Center engaged NYU Wagner urban planning students in an analysis of the hard choices policymakers will face as they try to address the competing demands of the site's diverse stakeholders.

And Our Center for Excellence in New York City Governance organized and cosponsored with Ed Blakely's New School program and city voluntary agencies "Listening to the City," an "electronic town hall" held in July in which over 5,000 citizens came together to express their opinions about the site plans for lower Manhattan. Because of access to the policymakers and decision makers charged with addressing these problems, the plans largely driven by developers were changed.

Our faculty brought the knowledge gained from these experiences back to our classrooms and research in order to better prepare our students and develop innovative solutions to these important public service problems.

As we all know, the public service challenges today are hardly limited to Ground Zero. They are in every state, city and community in America. Many of our schools and programs are deeply engaged and others must begin to be involved in these challenges, take pride in the fact that we train the people who serve the public – in crisis and every day, and showcase these

activities and individuals to help elected officials, opinion leaders and the public know who we are and what we have to offer.

At the heart of this ability to deliver sound public service is the ability to adapt to the changing needs of those we serve. We are serving a population that is less homogeneous not just in its culture, religion, and upbringing, but also, importantly for us, in its perceptions and expectations of government and civil society, of the meaning of health and illness, and of the role of environment. Our curricula, our faculty and our students must not only reflect this diversity, not only understand what it means, but consider it as a fundamental challenge to the evolution of public service itself and bring this knowledge into the larger university so that its resources can be brought to the communities in which we live.

The sequelae of 9/11 – the war in and now efforts to rebuild Afghanistan, the threat of war elsewhere have raised our awareness of other cultures, their views of our society and the global interdependence of nations. It has helped us see how similar the challenges we face are to those faced by nations seeking to rebuild and renew.

These global and local challenges to societies require expertise that many of our schools and programs have in our faculties and students and that our graduates can bring - expertise in economic reform, in the structure of governance, in the ways to achieve trust and transparency, in strengthening social infrastructure of health, education and welfare, and the capacity of civil society to participate actively in the rebuilding of nations. Our willingness to act and expertise to address these challenges is sorely needed.

Those who will be effective in these efforts will need to bring together governments, businesses, NGOs and civil society into a constructive partnership for local progress in a particular country to ensure that the global market forces that produce technology, knowledge and prosperity, means opportunity for all, not profit for a few; that it promotes cooperation, not conflict, between nations; and that it facilitates the rapid spread of solutions to our health, social and environmental problems, not a rapid spread of those problems themselves. Again, we have important knowledge and expertise to contribute to these challenges.

Second, we contribute as programs and schools of public affairs and administration because of our public service values.

When we look at the Enrons and the Worldcoms and the Tycos, it's easy to feel superior. But no sector is immune to scandal, and every system can be corrupted given the wrong circumstances and set of people.

When it comes to promoting ethics and values, there's nothing like an ethics crisis involving leaders in their industry to prompt soul searching among the institutions that produced them. Indeed, there was recently a movement among the membership of the Academy of Management to issue a resolution holding business schools partially responsible for the corporate scandals that are taking place. The resolution was rejected, but the dilemma stands.

As stewards of public service, we need to affirm the values that are at the foundation of our work. We must continue to do everything possible to ensure that our students are entering public service for the right reasons, that they are well prepared to weigh their actions in complex ethical dilemmas carefully, and to meet standards for the quality of public service that may need to be strengthened. Most important, we must let our enthusiasm about our values infect individuals looking for renewed purpose and commitment in their lives and work.

Many of us have talked about the surge in applications and enrollment – we attribute much of it to the economy, but I think we sell ourselves short. We shouldn't underestimate the power that being of service can have in an individual's life and career.

And finally as programs and schools of Public Affairs and Administration, we can contribute to strong and effective government.

Though our graduates should be prepared for public service in any sector, ultimately, we must all be concerned about the health of government at local, state and national levels. Regardless of the swings in public opinion and funding, strong effective government agencies are fundamental to a strong democracy and the ability to bring the appropriate government role and expertise into partnerships with business, academia, and the nonprofit sector, to meet the public's needs.

A number of national organizations are mobilizing to respond to the "talent crisis" in government. At this meeting, we've heard about ICMA's national, state and local initiatives to educate potential students about government service. The Partnership for Public Service is active with the Congress and now on campuses advertising the values of federal service.

The Second National Commission on The Public Service, chaired by Paul Volcker, is about to release some major findings and recommendations on our public service crisis. The Commission will be recommending a major role for NASPAA and its member institutions to assist in the goal "to restore and renew public service."

As an organization, we should continue to actively collaborate with these and other critical public service professional organizations, especially NAPA, ASPA and APPAM to better coordinate our message about governmental public service and the times, places and audiences to whom it is delivered.

There are also opportunities to bring our message to and work with nonprofits, the private sector and the health care sector, through discussions and potential for collaborations with other national organizations who seek to promote public service broadly defined.

At the local level the leaders of our schools and programs can compliment NASPAA's work at the national level by engaging your elected officials and opinion leaders directly to educate them about our purpose and capabilities.

This includes raising the profile of our programs and schools within our universities to its leaders and trustees. The strategies will vary, but one goal must be having them serve as

champions for our programs, our budgets, and appreciating the unique role we can play in the life of the university. This acknowledgement is critical to a sense of pride in our faculty, students and alumni.

The most effective communicators in this effort are our students – the future of public service – and they must be front and center. They must see the challenges and opportunities and be able to express to those who have the power to change policies and give us support, the motivation behind their commitment to public service, the obstacles to fulfilling their dreams and their recommendations for overcoming those obstacles.

And so, as our society faces these challenges, we must seize this enormous opportunity to demonstrate what we have to contribute – our involvement and expertise, our values, and our commitment to good government. It is a challenge that will test our students, our faculty, our schools and programs, NASPAA, and, indeed, the field of public service itself. I look forward to our working together within NASPAA to take advantage of this window of opportunity and to make our response to the challenge even stronger than it could be as individual institutions.

Thank you.