NASPAA Response

1. Name of Alumni?

   Debdeep Banerjee, Villanova University

2. Where are you currently working?

   I am currently working at the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities within the Bureau of Energy Programs and Assistance

3. What is your job title?

   I currently work as an analyst

4. What inspired you to pursue your MPA?

   During my time as undergraduate student I was able to partake in several community based activities within the city of Newark, NJ. This experience allowed me to get a true definition of what public service really meant and how I was able to be on the front lines to help the residents within that community. This would range from providing meals to those that were homeless to creating awareness of financial assistance programs that were available to residents. I was intrigued to see the role that nonprofits played along with government agencies. I wanted to get a further understanding of how grants were created, how local and state budgets were created, and how outreach was conducted all of these things coupled with the urge to help people made me decide to get my MPA.

5. How has your MPA/MPP degree helped you in your career?

   The MPA degree has provided me with the foundational knowledge of how to manage public service organizations that provide the most benefit for the people. Many of the classes that I have taken throughout the MPA program have touched on different aspects of public service delivery. A few classes that have been extremely beneficial were financial management, applied data analysis, strategic planning, and managing public networks. As an analyst at the NJ Board of Public Utilities within the Bureau of Energy Programs and Assistance my job responsibilities touch on all the aforementioned classes as I consistently review budget filings, financial reports, provide recommendations on improvements to existing energy assistance programs, and assist customers with energy assistance applications. The MPA degree has made me more comfortable working with data and has allowed me to become more analytical which helps my team and the agency ultimately deliver for the residents of the State of New Jersey.

6. What do you love about being an MPA/MPP alumni?

   I love that I am still able to stay in touch with my alma mater, the professors, my former classmates, and the alumni network. The best part about being an alumnus of the Villanova MPA program is that I am still able to help and assist prospective students who may want to start the MPA program or connect with current students. Another thing that I love about being an MPA alumnus is the vast alumni network and the resources available to me that I can access for professional development. A fun fact is that in my current organization my boss and I graduated from the same MPA program and we both had a few of the same professors.

8. What advice would you give to persons pursuing a career in public service?

   My advice to people pursuing a career in public service is to go out into the community you intend to serve and start having a conversation with the people. This will allow you to learn the systems that need improvement so that the community can thrive better. I would also urge those just looking to start their careers in public service to take any position they can within outreach or consumer-facing. This will help you communicate with various types of people in different ways so that everyone can receive the maximum benefit.