

- Name of alumnus:
  - **Nolan R. Ritchie**
  - **Master of Public Administration, Penn State Harrisburg, 2012**
- Where are you currently working?
  - I currently work in the Senate of Pennsylvania for Senator Judy Ward, who serves the 30<sup>th</sup> legislative district and chairs the Senate Transportation Committee.
- What is your job title?
  - Executive Director, Senate Transportation Committee, Office of Senator Judy Ward.
- What inspired you to pursue your MPA degree?
  - I was curious about government in high school, which led to a variety of volunteer-based internships in high school and college, such as the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the U.S. Congress and the United Nations. Besides my parents gracefully pushing me to excel, I interned for a congressman who held an MPA degree. Then, I made a personal commitment to complete graduate school before I turned 30.
- How has your MPA/MPP degree helped you in your career?
  - My MPA degree has tremendously shaped my public service career. I was working full-time in an administrative position at the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), including the State Transportation Commission (STC), when I started my MPA degree from Penn State Harrisburg. Fast forward to today, I serve on the STC board as the representative from the Senate Transportation Committee. Based on my experience, my MPA degree: (1) enriched my passion for the public service, (2) finetuned my research skills, analytic writing and public speaking and (3) opened new doors in the legislature.
- What do you love about being an MPA/MPP alumni?
  - Giving my time, attention and guidance to MPA/MPP students. Alumni of the Pennsylvania State University has a global outreach, and I am blessed to work in the beautiful Capitol of Pennsylvania near Penn State Harrisburg's campus.
- What advice would you give to persons pursuing a career in public service?
  - Agree, Commit and Master. First, agree to take on new professional tasks, which reflects an interest to learn, grow and accept challenges. Then, commit at least 10 years to your professional aspirations in an eligible public sector organization(s) to receive federal public service loan forgiveness (established by Congress in 2007). Last, master your area of expertise and balance the growth of yourself, both professionally and personally.