

# Master of Public Administration Alumni Newsletter

Spring 2022



## Director's Update

As we round out the 2022-2023 academic year, we want to honor our graduating students in addition to our inaugural public service award recipients. This year, we graduated twelve Master of Public Administration students, one of the largest cohorts to date. Many of our graduates will continue their commitment to public service working for the State of Arizona, nonprofits, the federal government, or county or city level government. Additionally, this year marks the first year we spotlighted our remarkable alumni and graduating students at our department's annual Celebrating Students Event.

We thank the alumni who nominated their peers for our inaugural public service award, recognizing the important work that you do to continue our strong public service ethic.

To continue the support for our students for the 2023-2024 academic year, we will offer our alumni mentorship program. The goal of this program is to meet with a student 1-2 times per semester and provide career advice. If you are interested in serving, please let me know ([sara.rinfret@nau.edu](mailto:sara.rinfret@nau.edu)).



— Sara Rinfret, PhD, MPA Director

## Follow us on social!

@nau\_mpa on Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn

# Alumni Corner

**Joanne Keene, Class of '11**



Joanne Keene is the current Deputy City Manager for Sedona. Her career is extensive – working for federal, state, and now local government. In regards to how she uses her MPA coursework and experience in her career she said, “My MPA from NAU has provided me with the ability to analyze issues critically and understand how to better make data driven decisions.” She is able to apply skills from her degree as Deputy City Manager, navigating daily responsibilities to make a difference in her community. Joanne is proud to work with such a committed group of individuals who are passionate about public service. The advice she has for future MPA students is to always be open to new opportunities.

**Jennifer Reichelt, Class of '00**



Jennifer Reichelt is the Deputy City Administrator for the City of Yuma and graduated from NAU with her MPA in 2000. Jenn chose to attend NAU for her MPA because she was able to customize her area of study to align with her professional goal of working in local government. Jenn has worked for local governments for the past 23 years and uses what she learned in the MPA program every day. In considering her future work in local government she is, “Excited to see how technology continues to change and evolve. There is no doubt that it will not only change how we work, but how we communicate and engage with those we serve.” She suggests that current and future MPA students should take advantage of every opportunity you may come across because it exposes students to the profession and apply theory to practice.

– **Jennifer Reichelt**

# Public Service Award Recipients

The 2022-2023 inaugural Public Service Award recipients include current students and alumni. The honorees were recognized during the Celebrating Students event during the department's graduation ceremony event.



**Public Service Award –  
Priscilla Gutierrez, Class of '23**

“It is an honor to be a recipient of NAU’s Public Service Award. I’ve worked for the City of Mesa for 16 years, providing a variety of services within various city departments. Earning a degree in Public Administration has provided me, and will continue to provide me, with opportunities to reach my career goal in leadership within the organization. Receiving this award is an indicator that commitment, determination, hard work, and continuous support from the people that surround you, leads to positive and successful outcomes.”

**– Priscilla Gutierrez**



**Alumni Public Service Award –  
Stacy Saltzburg, Class of '21**

“I graduated with my MPA in April of 2021. I had been working in local government for over ten years when I decided to seek out higher education to prepare myself for future opportunities. Since graduation, I have been able to secure a senior leadership position within my organization as the City Clerk and Director of the Communication and Civic Engagement Division. I am passionate about public service, particularly at the local level, and to receive the Public Service MPA Alumni Award is an honor that further fuels my dedication to the city that I both live in and serve.”

**– Stacy Saltzburg**

*Note: Kendra Cutright was awarded the MPA Public Service Award.*

# NASPAA Simulation



NAU's Department of Politics and International Affairs Master of Public Administration Program recently sent graduate students Halley McIntyre and Jessica Watson to compete in the global Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration's Student Simulation (NASPAA) Competition in Denver. The purpose of the simulation is to bring together students, across the globe, to tackle real-life public sector problems. This year's focus was on the management of wildlife fires, and Jessica Watson was part of the winning simulation team. Watson's team not only won the NASPAA Simulation, but also won 1st place in the Simulation Competition in the Global Super Judge Round! Looking back at the simulation, Jessica Watson stated the simulation helped her understand that solutions require great compromise and communication, and when you are striving to put your community first you have to put your personal interests aside. She recommends future participants should take advantage of networking with other students, because learning about each other's goals and education helps with the delegation of tasks.

# Mesa Project Team Highlights

The NAU MPA program sent two student teams to compete in the Mesa Project. The goal of the Mesa Project is for MPA students at NAU, ASU, and UA present solutions for issues the City of Mesa is confronting. We spotlight our two teams here.

## Phoenix Eskridge-Aldama and Eric Wise



Phoenix Eskridge-Aldama



Eric Wise

Phoenix Eskridge-Aldama and Eric Wise worked on a scalable tree cover project for the City of Mesa. Within their project they address climate change adaptation and mitigation as it pertains to thermal comfort and walkability in the city of Mesa, Arizona. Phoenix and Eric model and analyze a potential tree cover expansion effort in Mesa's downtown district, which aligns with several goals expressed by the City of Mesa. There is a 3D-rendered image of their project below!

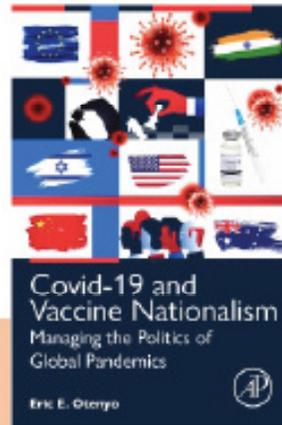




# MPA Faculty Highlights

## CONGRATULATIONS

to our colleague, Dr. Eric Otenyo, on publishing his new book!



His book is titled Covid-19 and Vaccine Nationalism: Managing the Politics of Global Pandemics

## CONGRATULATIONS, DR. RINFRET!

MPA Director, Dr. Sara Rinfret, has been selected as the co-chair for the NASPAA Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, PA, October 2023.



## COCONINO COUNTY **IS HIRING**

### **OPEN POSITION**

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER: FINANCIAL  
OPERATIONS - PARKS AND RECREATION

**APPLY NOW**

**LINK IN CAPTION!**

Jobs in Sedona, AZ 

The City of Sedona is  
**Hiring!**

The City of Sedona is hiring an  
Assistant City Attorney! More  
information on [sedonaaz.gov](http://sedonaaz.gov)!

**Suggest a colleague to apply for our programs!**



## **MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM**

Northern Arizona University's Master of Public Administration (MPA) is a NASPAA accredited program, which prepares you for leadership careers in the public and nonprofit administration. This program is available online, offering flexibility whether you are a continuing student or already working in public service. Our curriculum has been developed by our dedicated faculty, offering a deeper understanding of human resource management, public budgeting, ethics, public policy, policy analysis, organization behavior, performance management, to name a few.

### **ADVANTAGES OF NAU MPA PROGRAM**

#### **NAU'S MPA PROGRAM:**

- **Helps students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue public service careers**
- **Celebrates a low student-to-teacher ratio**
- **Provides opportunity to join alumni mentorship program**
- **Coursework offered year round**



### **REQUIRED COURSES**

- **Public Administration**
- **Policy Analysis**
- **Organization Behavior**
- **Budgeting and Finance**
- **Human Resource Management**
- **Ethics and Administration**
- **Research Methods**

### **APPLY TODAY**

<https://nau.edu/mpa/>

**Contact MPA Director, Dr. Sara Rinfret for more information!**  
**E-Mail: [sara.rinfret@nau.edu](mailto:sara.rinfret@nau.edu)**

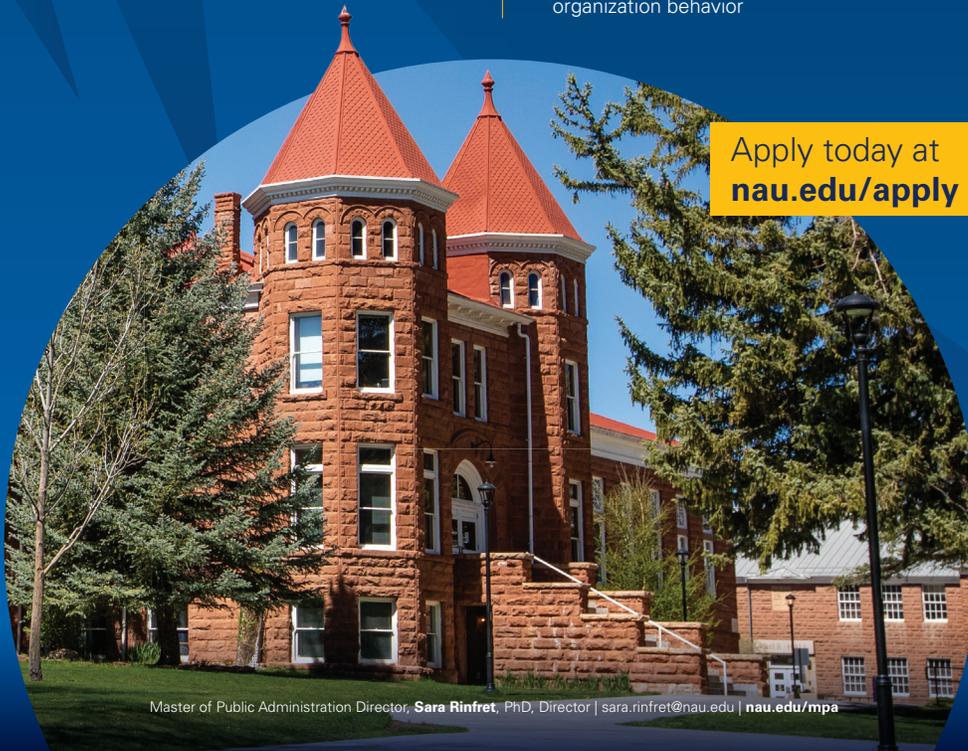
# ONLINE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

## Become a leader in public service

Northern Arizona University's fully online certificate in Public Administration provides an opportunity for public sector employees to gain skills, knowledge, and training through a program designed for working professionals. Our coursework will help you understand public organizations and enhance your public service career.

### Program details

- Rolling admission
- Affordable and flexible
- Complete online courses on your own time
- Full-time public administration faculty mentors
- 12 credits (four classes) in areas such as human resources, budgeting, policy, or organization behavior



## Apply for the Fall 2023 Semester!

The MPA Program Fall 2023 applications are open! Apply by July 1, 2023

**Thank you for reading!**

**Please contact Dr. Sara Rinfret with any follow-up questions or comments.**