

# Public Administration Program *Newsletter*

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VSU offers both the Master of Public Administration and the Doctor of Public Administration Programs and both can be completed on-line. An outstanding faculty serve the Public Administration program. In addition to holding a terminal degree in their field, many of the faculty members have practical management experience in public and non-governmental organizations.

### Application Deadlines

DPA: April 15 for Fall Admission

MPA: July 15 for Fall Admission, November 15 for Spring Admission, April 15 for Summer Admission

**To submit information to future newsletters,  
Please click [here](#)**





# Public Administration Faculty Highlights

## Dr. Julie Lester

**ANNOUNCING THE CLASS OF 2025**

David Bell, Atlanta Jacobs	Brittany Jones, Sandy Springs Chattahoochee National Park Conservancy	Josh Puhlick, Newton The Jones Center at Ichauway
Cole Blackwell, Marietta Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority	<b>Julie Lester, Tifton Valdosta State University</b>	Joshua Raglin, Atlanta Norfolk Southern
Jay Boren, Newnan Coweta County Water and Sewerage Authority	Chris Manganiello, Mableton Chattahoochee Riverkeeper	Natasha Rice, Roswell Chattahoochee Nature Center
Brian Cooper, Peachtree City Widlands Engineering	Becca Mason, Dalton Mohawk	Lane Rivenbark, Athens Nutter & Associates, Inc.
Cynthia Curry, Decatur Metro Atlanta Chamber	Sam McDonald, Atlanta Delta Air Lines	Laura Schneider, Columbus River Valley Regional Commission
David Lloyd Davis, Atlanta Cascade Springs Nature Conservancy	Jennifer McNelly, Atlanta Georgia Power Company	Laura Solomon, Savannah ECO GEORGIA CORP
Eric Holder, Cumming Cox Enterprises, Inc	Lisa Myler, Albany GA Dept. of Natural Resources (EPD)	Joe Thomas, Savannah Sapelo Foundation
Amy Hou, Atlanta Southwire	Justin Nickelson, Lithia Springs The Conservation Fund	Bert Way, Atlanta Kennesaw State University
Allia Johnson, Decatur DeKalb County, Department of Watershed Management	Khalia Payton, Stone Mountain Kleinfelder Inc.	Karlie Webb, Marietta Troutman Pepper
	Clint Peacock, Watkinsville GA Dept. of Natural Resources (Fisheries)	Tom Wurzinger, Kennesaw Geosyntec Consultants
	Jon Phillipsborn, Atlanta Atlanta Regional Commission	

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info@igeleaders.org

Dr. Lester is part of the 2025 Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership (IGEL) class. The IGEL handpicks its leadership class each year through a competitive application process. Dr. Lester, and her colleagues in the cohort, will participate in a leadership development program over several months to help environmental leaders “start conversations and make the connections that help move Georgia forward.”



# Public Administration Faculty Highlights

## Dr. Joseph Robbins and Dr. Keith Lee



Dr. Joseph Robbins and Dr. Keith Lee presented their paper titled “Cyber Capabilities and Counterterrorism” at the Georgia Political Science Association (GPSA) Conference in St. Simons, GA.



## Public Administration Faculty Highlights

### Dr. Huiting Qi



Dr. Huiting Qi, Benjamin E Elliott (undergraduate student), and Reagin M Jones (undergraduate student) presented their research at the Southeastern Conference for Public Administration (SECoPA) in September 2024.

Dr. Huiting Qi presented her research at the Northeast Conference on Public Administration (NECoPA) in November 2024.

Dr. Huiting Qi presented her research at the annual conference of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) in November 2024.



## Public Administration Faculty Highlights

### Dr. Zack Karazsia

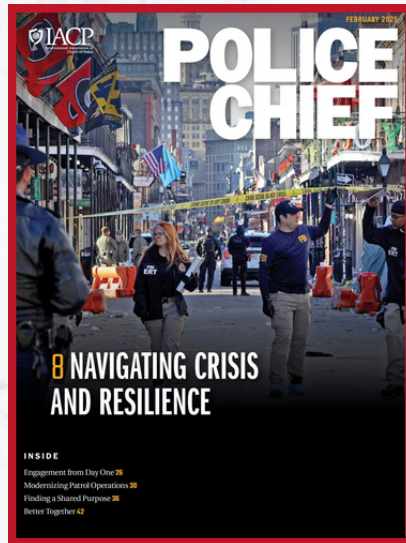


Dr. Zack Karazsia recently completed MIT's inaugural Wargaming Lab. This program was extremely competitive, and Zack interacted with esteemed military leaders and prestigious faculty across the globe. You can learn more about this interesting program by visiting their [site](#)

# Alumni Highlights



## Marcus Downey (MPA, 2024)



Marcus Downey was honored to receive the Martin Luther King Jr. Spirit Award from the City of Alexandria for work that I do in the community. Marcus also had an article posted in the IACP Police Chief magazine.

## Alumni Highlights



### Jennelle Baker (MPA, 2024)

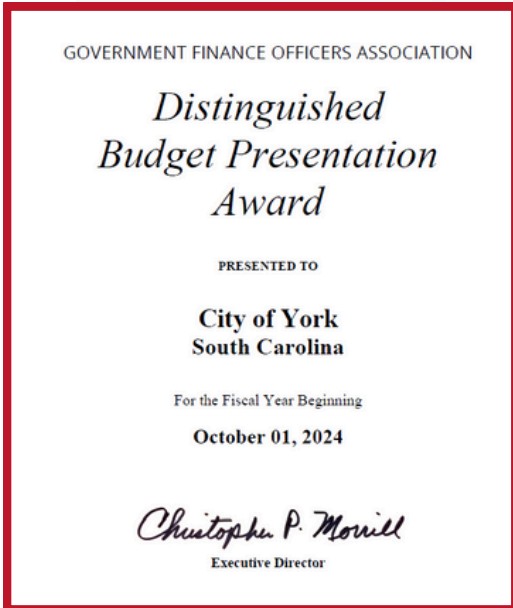


Please join me in congratulating Jennelle Baker on her selection as the City's next Budget Manager. She will take over the role following current Budget Manager Lisa Noffsinger's retirement on October 25. The City will begin the recruitment process to backfill Jenelle's Budget Analyst position in the coming week.

Jennelle has repeatedly demonstrated her value to the City in her time as an analyst in PD and Budget. In PD, she improved budgeting procedures in the department, streamlined administrative functions and kept track of various grant applications and reports among many other tasks. Since coming to budget she has implemented an improved public presentation of the budget to enhance transparency and make the budget more user friendly for the public. At the same time she has improved the internal budget development process making it easier for departments and budget staff to communicate through shared tools. Her efforts don't stop there as she is continuing to improve the City' purchasing and Cal Card programs through enhanced oversight. During her time in budget, she also completed her Master's Degree in Public Administration showing her dedication to continuing to improve her skills and abilities.

Jennelle is a great example of what makes Lodi great she is committed to the community, committed to bettering herself and always willing to step in to get the job done no matter how challenging the task. Looking forward to continuous improvement in the budget division under her leadership!

# Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) Scholar's Highlights



## Dalton Pierce

Dalton Pierce, City Manager of York, South Carolina, and current Doctor of Public Administration student, proudly announces a historic achievement for the City. For the first time in the City's history, the City has been awarded the prestigious Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

This exceptional recognition underscores the city's unwavering commitment to excellence in financial planning, transparency, and accountability. The award reflects the collaborative efforts and dedication of our entire municipal team, whose hard work has set a new benchmark for York's budget process.

Dalton Pierce's leadership and his team's tireless contributions have made this accomplishment possible, paving the way for continued improvements in service to our community. This proud moment marks a new chapter for the City of York, inspiring the organization to maintain and elevate the standards of public service.



# Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) Scholar's Highlights

## Darius Anthony



Darius Anthony from the Division of Student Affairs is the recipient of VSU's 2024 Blazer Creed Award for Integrity.

"This recognition not only reaffirms my commitment to upholding integrity but also inspires me to set even higher standards for myself in the months ahead," he said. "It encourages me to approach the new year with a renewed sense of purpose, focusing on meaningful interactions and contributing to positive change on campus. As I reflect on this achievement, I feel empowered to carry this momentum forward."

Anthony joined the VSU staff in September 2017. He currently serves as assistant director of the Office of Career Opportunities and Volunteer Services.

## Brent Friedman

Brent Friedman will be presenting a paper on Punctuated Equilibrium Theory and crisis budgeting at the Kentucky Political Science Association annual meeting in March.

# Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) Scholar's Highlights

## Congratulations to our Fall 2024 DPA Graduates!!

### Dr. Barbara Kimberly Berry

The CROWN Act of 2019 and the Possible  
Implementation of it in Title VII of the Civil Rights  
Act of 1964

Dr. Shani Wilfred, Sociology, Anthropology, and  
Criminal Justice



### Dr. Aaron Blair

Revisiting the Child Fitness Tax Credit Efficacy in Southwestern  
Ontario: A Qualitative Program Review  
Dr. William T. Watson, Political Science

# Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) Scholar's Highlights

## Congratulations to our Fall 2024 DPA Graduates!!

### **Dr. Jamie Lynnette Bush**

Readiness Programs in Title I High Schools: School Counselors'  
Perception of Preparedness and Access  
Dr. Odessa-Elisa Downing, Political Science

### **Dr. Mario Carreno**

Funding Charter Schools: A Safe Bet? An Analysis of Rhode  
Islands' Charter School Investments  
Dr. Nandan Jha, Political Science

# Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) Scholar's Highlights

## Congratulations to our Fall 2024 DPA Graduates!!

### **Dr. Phenix J. Culbertson**

Diffusion of Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence

Innovations in Career Centers: Perceptions of Acceptability, Appropriateness, and Expected Feasibility of Implementation

Dr. Bobbie Ticknor, Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice

### **Dr. Ethan E. Johnson**

Police Officers Decertification: A Comparative Analysis

Dr. Rudy Prine, Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice

# Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) Scholar's Highlights

## Congratulations to our Fall 2024 DPA Graduates!!

### **Dr. Barbara Anne Longo**

Impact of Government Policy Restrictiveness on COVID-19

Case and Death Rates in the United States

Dr. Keith Lee, Political Science

### **Dr. Thomas Patrick Peters**

Outsourcing Economic Development: Exploring the Efficacy of  
Economic Development Corporations in Rural North Carolina

Dr. Gerald Merwin, Political Science

# Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) Scholar's Highlights

## Congratulations to our Fall 2024 DPA Graduates!!

### **Dr. Charles Nathan Willingham**

Collaboration, Innovation, and Performance: Analyzing  
Collaborative Governance, Platforms, and Innovation in the  
Tennessee RiverLine

Dr. Keith Lee, Political Science

### **Dr. Brian Milton Wooten**

2015–2022 University System of Georgia Comprehensive  
University HOPE Scholarship Graduates, Their Majors, and the  
Majors Alignment with Georgia's Essential Workforce Needs

Dr. Christine Ziegler, Political Science

# Master of Public Administration (MPA) Scholar's Highlights

## Elizabeth (Liz) Haley

In November, Liz Haley presented her paper “The Rise and Impact of Right-Wing Populism in Central and Eastern Europe: A Case Study of Hungary and Viktor Orbán” at the Georgia Political Science Association (GPSA) Conference in St. Simons, GA. She presented her paper on a panel discussion about European Politics.



Liz Haley (far left) pictured at the GPSA  
Conference

# Master of Public Administration (MPA) Scholar's Highlights

## Congratulations to our Fall 2024 MPA Graduates!!

MARY BETH H. BENNETT

MICHAEL DAVID CONGER

SARAH BETHANY CORTINAS

TRINITY ANN DIANAT

KEVIN DOUGLAS DOORMAN

ANTOINETTE MIRANA ELAINE FORD

SCOTT JAMES GLINSKI

NAUTICA GRADDY

KIMBERLY RENE HENGHOLD

SUSAN MICHELLE JONES

JUDE JOSEPH

ALICIA MASSEY

FLORA SIMONE MAXWELL

CHASMINE MELVIN

VICTORIA JEAN NEWTON

MELISSA NEWTON

RACHEL RESTREPO

NEIL DEMARQUE ROBERTS

AKIMBEE TIUNA ROBINSON

LEOLA SHARP

JAMAYA KASHAUN SHELTON

TENIKA TIPPINS

SHERRY YUNETTE TURNER

MICHAEL MORGAN ULMER

LATASHA C. WEBSTER