A Portfolio of Professional and Educational Artifacts

Community Building through Communication

The following manuscript includes several examples of Public Administration competencies, skills and successes I have accomplished both professionally and through educational opportunities. The artifacts and productions are organized in six classifications:

- Public Management
- Fundraising and Budgeting
- Communications
- Marketing
- Research
- Integrative Programming

Each of these concentrations contain specific project descriptions which exemplify various methods of development, application and implementation. Following each project caption, a list of specific competencies provides insight, not only to the project, but the learning process as well. All included projects and competencies are summarized on page 43.

Items listed as artifacts illustrate the past three years of my public administration experience and education. Productions were created from January 2009 to March 2009 to enhance the level of demonstrated Public Administration competencies.

Despite the comprehensive nature of this manuscript, the extent of my own personal, professional and educational experiences far exceeds these pages. Please consider a personal meeting and interview to better understand how my knowledge and skills may provide a valuable asset to your organization.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Philosophy of Professional Practices
Building a Legacy of Communication and Leadership

Professional Motivation

Through my experiences in municipal and non-profit sectors, I have witnessed the power of partnerships and cooperative initiatives. Yet, despite any track record of success, managers who proposed these creative or nontraditional ideas were consistently met with resistance. The managers who were able to push their ideas forward and ensure proper lower-level execution embodied a quality beyond managerial prowess. These individuals were leaders. They had the ability to appeal to decision makers, the citizenry, even their own employees and create an empowering spirit amongst all parties. My professional motivation is to learn and utilize these leadership attributes to facilitate public-private partnerships in an effort to improve communities on a local level.

The process of delineating between managerial skills and leadership attributes requires intuition rather than a formula or tangible equation. The professors, supervisors and civic officials who emerge as community leaders, rather than managers, incorporated values of communication, collaboration, transparency and integrity. Witnessing this through my educational and professional pursuits, I have identified management strategies which I believe to encourage leadership values of public administrators. It is through those strategies that I plan to direct my own career of public service.

I believe in a bottom-up approach of management with strong feedback tools and methods of communication and conflict management. I believe in forward thinking policies and plans which facilitate successful changes and transitions. Finally, I believe that an open-door policy for all administrators provides the first step to open communication and personal accountability.

Throughout my career in the public sector, I hope that I will have the honor to serve organizations which also hold such values. It is then that I feel I will lead by example and leave a legacy of civic leadership.

Goals and Objectives

It is my sincere goal to lead a public service career culminating in a community legacy of service, integrity and cooperation. I hope to attain a management position in a field of community development and although I have developed a sincere passion for developing strong and vibrant historic districts and integrating them successfully into a city-wide program.

My short-term goal is to attain a middle-management job in a public or non-profit administrative capacity. There, I hope to refine my human resources and personnel management skills by working to establish patterns of positive morale, 360 degree evaluation feedback systems and a culture of cooperative problem-solving.

Ultimately I hope to parlay these public management skills into a position which facilitates public and private partnerships within the local community. I have witnessed the power of these partnerships and how they can be mutually beneficial for all involved. Creativity, initiative and leading by example, I believe that I will leave my community a better place than when I found it.
II. Examination of Diversity

In Dr. Robert Roberts’ JMU course, Public Personnel Administration, weekly case-study scenarios allow students to contemplate instances which may arise in their public administration career and develop comprehensive solutions for personnel challenges. These solutions must not only exemplify knowledge of personnel law, but also show a level of leadership competency and integrity.

A case study from chapter 12 of, Cases in Public Human Resource Management, by T. Zane Reeves, discusses issues of diversity and discrimination. The literature includes a letter of a former US Forest Service employee who feels that despite a pristine work ethic, she was unfairly treated by her supervisors and co-workers because of her race. Her letter outlines her dedication to her job, the attempts she made to confront the injustices and the ultimate decision she made to leave the agency. Due to copyright restrictions, the content of this chapter is not included, however the following article outlines the questions posed by Reeves and my responses as to how I would handle a similar situation had I received such a letter.

(1) If you were appointed human resources representative for Hoosier National Forest, how would you go about investigating the allegations made by former employee Cheryl Boulden?

The egregious allegations cited in Cheryl Boulden’s letter clearly violate the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and warrant a comprehensive investigation. I would request an audit of the human resources and personnel files from the involved offices. This would provide any written documentation related to the numerous allegations made by Ms. Boulden and what actions were taken to deal with the incidents. Individual interviews with employees and managers of the Hoosier National Forest office would be conducted to gain insight on the general opinion of workplace diversity as well as the treatment of Ms. Boulden. Finally, I would request an interview with Ms. Boulden herself. Although reports may be conflicting, it is important for all parties to be heard in addition to the investigation any written information.

(2) What approach would you take to make Hoosier National Forest’s Affirmative Action Plan more effective?

Following any findings of the reports and interviews, or any resulting disciplinary action, it becomes even more important to focus on implementing preventative measures. Clearly in this chapter, the US Forest Service demographics suggest a significant lack of diversity. The reasons for such an unbalanced personnel makeup could fall within the recruitment process, the interview methods, the job environment or management. All of these personnel processes would have to be investigated with regard to an Affirmative Action Plan.

Recruitment for the Forrest Service must focus on diverse pools of candidates so any marketing of employment options should cover broad regions, varied television channels or publication and school districts with diverse demographics. Public relations campaigns should be designed with these diverse target markets in mind not only in relation to where the campaign makes impressions but also the image of the message. Concepts of content, copy and graphic design elements require research with respect to diversity. Managers should review interview methods with a concerted focus on cultural norms and barriers such as language or disability (hearing-impaired). Finally, managers must implement a specific protocol for any complaints and any requisite action for violations. Consistent training for employees and managers would ensure that the order of operations for a complaint is understood at all levels.

(3) What type of Employee Development and Training Plan would you draw up for the managers, supervisors and employees of the Hoosier National Forest?

To address a discriminatory work environment, mandatory sensitivity training and educational workshops on diversity would benefit all levels of employment. Content for these sessions would incorporate not only explanation of violations, but also consequences. It is also imperative for a consistent disciplinary structure to implement immediate action. To support managers and discourage them from shying away from confrontation, they should also receive specific training about how to act as mediators and quell comments or derogatory behavior between staff members. It is the manager’s responsibility to lead by example, but it is also their responsibility to levy punishment and ensure fairness.

Finally I believe that a third-party auditing system should serve as an accountability system with periodic staff interviews, and file audits of personnel complaints and subsequent department actions. This system could also serve as a second option for employees if they feel that their discrimination reports and complaints are mismanaged within the department.

Concentrations

Public Management

Human Resources Management

Legal Environment

Social/Political/Economic Processes

Decision Making

Leadership

Cultural Competency

Ethical Action
III. Event-Driven Fundraising
Artifact dated: July 2008 to March 2009
Professional Origination

Block Party in the ‘Burg serves as the only student-focused event in the city of Harrisonburg. With four higher-education institutions along with trade and technical schools, the student population in Harrisonburg and the vicinity reaches approximately 21,000. This demographic represents a significant economic force within the community, therefore the event serves as a way to orient students to the local businesses of the downtown district at the beginning of the school year.

Managing the financial aspect of this event involves creative methods of promotion and sponsorship solicitation. After evaluating the budget from the previous year, it was clear that a slowing economy would necessitate a greater diversity of revenue sources.

As I created strategies for revenue, these ideas were brought before the Promotions Committee of Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance as well as the Block Party in the ‘Burg event committee. Pending approval from both groups of individuals, I then elicited assistance from volunteers and interns to accomplish fundraising goals. Strategies included scanning student newspapers and sending sponsorship letters to those businesses who target student populations, inviting downtown businesses to pay a small vendor fee to set up a booth and promote their business, locate businesses who may provide in-kind sponsorships for items such as printing, banners, prizes, stage set-up or AV service.

The following items include budget planning worksheets as well as promotional items which were used as leverage to attract sponsors.

Concentrations

Public Management
Public Budgeting
Social/Political/Economic Processes
Program Evaluation
Written Communication
Decision Making
Utilization of Technology
Leadership
Group Participation
COMMUNITY BUILDING THROUGH COMMUNICATION
VI. National Main Street Presentation

Each year, The National Trust hosts a conference for all communities across the United States who are managing downtown revitalization organizations. In 2009, I was selected as a guest speaker along with my co-worker Jessica Chase to present our accomplishments of utilizing online social networking resources to promote Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance.

The concept of the presentation slowly evolved as we began piecing together all of the free marketing that HDR gains through social networking tools such as Facebook, Flickr, MySpace, Craigslist, YouTube, email blasts, blogging and cellphone text message blasts. Since the vast majority of the downtown revitalization organizations are non-profit, rather than under a municipal umbrella, identifying free marketing tools becomes a valuable mission.

This presentation was designed for the internet novice who knew of these applications, but had never accessed them. During the presentation, each application was displayed and step-by-step instructions were provided to all session attendees. This allowed them to visualize each application, how it could be implemented and then gave them detailed instructions.

Concentrations

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XII. Clean Indoor Air Act of New York State
Artifact dated: 3 December 2008
Educational Origin - PUAD 515

The Clean Indoor Air Act, passed by New York state in 2003 was a controversial piece of legislation outlawing smoking inside public places. This is an increasingly common concern for states and municipalities as health concerns and cost of health care become a problem for both individuals as well as employers. Through this research, the results of the program, albeit preliminary, appear to be overwhelmingly successful. Through this study I was able to utilize economic data, health care information and statistics as well as reports supplied by the New York state government to evaluate the success of the program.

Certainly programs which have a longer history will have more data to measure, however, this specific program was drastic enough that the immediate results are worth reporting. The information gathering was fairly involved, but the most complex part of this project was the synthesis of information between conflicting reports and differing opinions within the research and literature. Below is the paper in its entirety.

Concentrations

- Legal Environment
- Social/Political/Economic Processes
- Program Evaluation
- Written Communication
- Ethical Issues

New York State Clean Indoor Air Act
State Mandate, Local Responsibility

Section I – History, Context and Development

The New York State Department of Health was established in 1901 with Daniel Lewis, MD as the first Commissioner of Health (NY State Department of Health, 2001, 15-17). Dr. Lewis initiated the state-local partnership that still exists today with an initial meeting of one hundred and four physicians. The department has now grown into a complex organization consisting of more than 5700 employees in 2008 and an annual budget of $51 million dollars (Paterson, 2007).

In 1908, the short-lived Sullivan Ordinance passed by the New York City board of aldermen banned women from smoking in public (Wikipedia, 2008) resulting in one arrest and a speedy veto of the ordinance by the New York city mayor. With social stigma and gender inequality put to rest, with respect to public smoking, late twentieth century health studies and scientific research led to the relatively modern concern of second hand smoke in public places. Various states began to pass full or partial smoking laws to be enforced within their boundaries in the interest of protecting citizens from second-hand smoke inhalation, New York followed suit in 2003.
The New York State Department of Health finally took action at the turn of the century and implemented the Clean Indoor Air Act, becoming effective July 24th of 2003 through an amendment of Article 13-E of the New York Public Health Law (Schuman, 2008). The state legislature of New York now bans smoking in most public indoor spaces through this mandate. Although this act originates from state legislation, the New York State Department of Health calls on lower levels of government as well as citizens to help enforce the mandate. A report from the Public Health Workforce Task Force of New York cites many factors which inhibit health departments to act as the sole enforcing agency of this anti-smoking legislation. “New York was found to be in the lower third of states in public health workers per capita”, the report also cites an increasingly “graying workforce” with “20% of senior deputies eligible for retirement in 2005” which poses a potential to cause disruption of institutional knowledge (Public Health Workforce Taskforce, 2008, 9). These factors as well as fiscal concerns result in the allocation of mandate enforcement to local government officers in each county’s board of health as well as to owners and managers of the restricted sites and the citizens who patronize the businesses. (New York State, 2003).

For each of New York’s sixty-two counties, the local administration has the option to either name an “enforcement officer” for the Clean Indoor Air Act or if no individual is assigned this task, the entire department of health is considered the enforcement officer. In addition to named or unnamed enforcement officers, the public at large can also enforce the mandate by filing complaints with their local department of health. The enforcement officer provides the office from which fines, hearings and violation decisions emanate. Regarding citizen involvement, owners and managers have a specific set of requirements from this law. They must inform the patrons of their business about the smoking ban or appoint an individual to carry out this responsibility as well as post clear signs in all regulated areas. Although citizens do not carry a responsibility to report violations, the can represent a support for business owners who do carry the burden of this mandate by adhering to the rules when inside public spaces (New York State, 2003).

Section II - Mandate Overview

In 2002, before the implementation of the state-wide legislation, 75% of local ordinances within the state already imposed anti-smoking restrictions on restaurant and places of employment (Juster, 2007, 1). Then, The Clean Indoor Air Act, passed by the New York state legislature set a state-wide standard for anti-smoking regulations in most public enclosed areas. The act states that the following locations qualify for smoking restrictions:

- Places of employment
- Bars
- Restaurants
- Enclosed indoor swimming areas
- Public transportation, including all ticketing, boarding and waiting areas; buses, vans, taxicabs and limousines
- All places of employment where services are offered to children
- All schools, including school grounds
- All public and private colleges, universities and other educational and vocational institutions
- General hospitals
- Bingo facilities
- Residential health-care facilities, except separately designated smoking rooms for adult patients
- Commercial establishments used for the purpose of carrying on or exercising any trade, profession, vocation or charitable activity
- All indoor arenas
- Zoos

The law also regulates the outdoor dining sections of restaurants by requiring a designation of 75% of outdoor dining space as non-smoking. The few exceptions include specific grandfathered tobacco retailers and cigar bars, designated smoking hotel rooms and membership associations in which no individual receives any form of wages. (New York State, 2003)

The Clean Indoor Air Act specifies that “The provisions of this article shall apply to the legislative, executive and judicial branches of state government and any political subdivision of the state” (New York State, 2003). This statement within the legislation then allows for the development of enforcement and levying penalties using the branches of local government and, when necessary, the New York state government.

The establishments or individuals who refuse to adhere to the smoking regulations of this mandate run the risk of fiscal penalties up to $2,000 per violation. Citations originate from local departments of health. Business managers and owners represent the primary enforcing officers of this mandate with the local board of health acting as both an enforcing officer as well as a prosecutor for violators.

Despite the controversial nature of state-wide smoking bans and arguments of declining business revenue, health studies have observed a negative correlation of the passing of the legislation with the number of heart attacks and respiratory hospitalizations in the state. Rates for Acute Myocardial Infarction dropped 8% in 2004 for the state of New York, representing a decrease of health costs by about $36 million (Juster, 2007, 3). Positive results like these encourage the general population of the state as well as lawmakers and enforcement officers to continue and expand their efforts, which is just what they did.

To date, the New York State Department of Health reported 1,533 violations of the Clean Indoor Air Act either under investigation or with the results of the conducted hearing and penalty if applicable. As the legislation began in late 2003, only sixteen violations appear in the report for that year with a little over sixty in 2004 and 2005, Jumping to over three hundred for 2006 and more than six hundred in 2007 (New York State, 2008).

Section III - The State Rules
Section IV - Executive Tools and Enforcement

The enforcement segment of the Clean Indoor Air Act clearly states that enforcement officers or inspectors designated by local county administrations provide the executive authority to cite violators. However, citizens also have the authority to file complaints against violators and, in effect, act as a support to the enforcement officers. Some localities have a simple hotline set up as in Nassau (Nassau County, 2008) or in the case of New York City, an online form allows anyone to report violations (New York City, 2008). This method of self-enforcement appears in “The Implementation and Enforcement of Tobacco Control Laws: Policy Implications for Activists and the Industry”, in Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law, “The overwhelming consensus among respondents was that state clean indoor air laws were not systematically enforced by state, or local authorities, but were largely self-enforcing. By self-enforcing, we mean that people voluntarily complied with the law in the absence of a systematic enforcement effort . . .” (Jacobson, 1999, 570).

As noted, the termed “enforcement officer” can refer to an appointed individual within local government, or if unnamed or if the municipality is greater that one million in population, then the board of health serves as the enforcement officer. The type of enforcement officer then determines the type of hearing in which violations will be heard. As referred in section 2 of 1399-t:

When the enforcement officer is the commissioner, the hearing shall be conducted pursuant to the provisions of section twelve-A of this chapter. When the enforcement officer is a board of health or in a city with a population of more than one million, the department of health and mental hygiene, or an officer designated to enforce the provisions of this article, the hearing shall be conducted pursuant to procedures set forth in the county sanitary code, or health code of such city, or in the absence thereof, pursuant to procedures established by the elected county legislature or board of supervisors.

As in the case of Dodester’s v. Cynthia B. Morrow M.D., Commissioner of the County of Onodaga Heath Department, the hearing officer of the locality found the owner of Dodester’s bar to be in violation of the act when health inspectors observed two separate occasions of patrons smoking inside the establishment. The owner brought suit and the New York Supreme Court held that the bar did not comply with the Clean Indoor Air Act and denied the motion to dismiss the petition. According to an article in Rochester’s Daily Record, the court determined that the health department’s actions were not arbitrary or capricious, nor in excess of authority or unsupported by evidence (Feingold, 2006).

Section V - Agency Adjudication

The agency enforcing the Clean Indoor Air Act decides penalties within a hearing pursuant of previously established sanitary or health code. In the event of no such codes, the board of supervisors or legislature will conduct the hearing. Upon the decision regarding a violation, the party has the chance to repeal the decision and penalty to the commissioner in “any court of competent jurisdiction” (New York, 2003). Then it is the commissioner’s responsibility to request the attorney general to bring action against violators of the act. The violation, then, can appear before the New York Supreme Court for final review. As discussed in the Dodester’s v. Cynthia B. Morrow M.D., Commissioner of the County of Onodaga Heath Department case, for the supreme court to overturn local hearing regarding smoking infractions, the court must believe that there was abuse of the local authority, lack of evidence or a reason to believe that the agency acted in an arbitrary and capricious manner for the ruling to be overturned (Feingold, 2006).

Section VI - Summary

The Clean Indoor Air Act, passed by the New York state legislation acts as a state-wide mandate which requires local and citizen-based enforcement. The mandate bans smoking in almost all public places and requires that business owners, managers and employers to comply with the law through signage, informing patrons and taking steps to discourage smoking within their spaces. An inspector or appointed enforcement officer has the authority to cite individuals and/or businesses when in violation of the code and any individual can report a complaint to their local government enforcement officer, usually the county’s health department. These efforts relieve the burden of the state and local departments of health as well as create community support and personal investment in the law.

A party cited for violation of the law has the right to appeal all the way up to the New York Supreme Court as well as apply for a waiver from the law. Despite requiring a social adaptation and change in business structure, especially for bars and restaurants, the data suggests that health benefits outweigh the inconvenience.
Objective
To support and create public-sector development initiatives through public relations, marketing, fundraising campaigns and promotion of integrated programming.

Education
James Madison University - Harrisonburg, VA
- Bachelors of Science
- Masters of Public Administration

Employment
Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance  Position: Promotions Manager
Harrisonburg, VA  January 2007 - currently

- Advance downtown revitalization goals, working within the context of the Main Street Approach
- Create and implement a comprehensive marketing plan to promote image, events and businesses.
- Manage events, workshops and conferences for audiences of 10 to 5,000+.
- Develop and execute presentations and tours for events, business owners, tourists, potential investors and the populous at large.
- Develop and implement budgets, pursue sponsorships and create fundraising strategies.
- Serve as liaison between the downtown district and other public and private organizations.
- Effectively communicate with the public through multi-media relations and outreach initiatives.
- Design materials to compliment image ad campaigns, events, tourism and economic initiatives and downtown construction projects.

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Social Services  Position: Social Worker
Harrisonburg, VA  July 2005 - January 2007

- Manage client needs of health and dental care, education, employment, housing and legal issues.
- Locate and coordinate client services such as job skill development, language training and therapy.
- Author court orders and service plans; coordinate services and family visitations per approved plans.
- Manage funding and billing for caseload including both federal (IVE) and state (CSA) payment codes.
- Maintain federal, state and locally-mandated records in the OASIS database.
- Represent Department of Social Services in court and effectively communicate aspects of each case.

Avante at Harrisonburg  Position: Social Worker
Harrisonburg, VA 22801  October 2004 - June 2005

- Facilitate effective communication between patients, families, medical and legal professionals.
- Lead Careplan meetings to design and delegate appropriate therapeutic milieu for patients.
- Research medical language and summarize chart information to involved parties in laymen terms.
- Arrange medical subsidy programs, social security, Medicaid and Medicare along with private funding.

Skills and Activities
- Computer-literate with proficiency in MS Office applications, Leopard OSX, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Audition
- Guest speaker for the 2009 National Main Street Conference, Chicago
- Completed Entrepreneur Express and Plan It/Start It classes, SV Small Business Development Center, March 2008
- Public radio show host for WEMC and WMRA, Harrisonburg, 2007-currently
- Proficient in Spanish
- Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance events and promotions committee volunteer, 2006
Competencies

As noted in each caption, the following table outlines competencies gained through each professional and educational experience.

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