The Role of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) In Improving Teaching and Practice in Public Administration

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Introduction and Overview

The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) is the largest and most diverse professional association in the field of public management. ASPA’s membership of 10,000 practitioners, academics and students, represents every level of government as well as non-profits, and every major function and substantive area that exists in those sectors. ASPA is dedicated to advancing excellence in public service. As a focal point for intellectual and professional interaction, ASPA serves as an important catalyst for linking theory and practice within the profession of public management.

ASPA stands for pride in public service, exemplary ethical conduct, professionalism and accountability, performance, and a commitment to democratic governance. Our current activities through our 120 chapters and 20 sections are focused on supporting public managers to do their part to reduce the gap between citizens and their government, and building the public service workforce of the future by exposing young people to positive government experiences.

ASPA publishes the preeminent scholarly journal in public management, the Public Administration Review (PAR), as well as a monthly newspaper, the PA Times. The Society’s chapters, located throughout the United States, provide members with professional development and networking opportunities, and avidly support members’ commitment to public service. ASPA’s sections focus on particular areas of practice or study in public administration and provide a forum for academics and practitioners working in the same area of expertise. ASPA’s annual national conference also offers professional development and networking opportunities for people involved with public service.

ASPA was founded in 1939 to foster professionalization of the public service. Having played a major role in accomplishing that purpose, ASPA today continues to define the profession. ASPA is the only organization that brings together all segments of the public service community in an effort to address today’s complex issues. The Society does this by convening small and large groups to address single or multiple issues, and by providing access to solid, cutting edge research. ASPA’s conferences and publications provide context in a complex and multidisciplinary world.

ASPA’s Impact on the Teaching and Practice of Public Administration

During ASPA’s 61 years, the Society has ASPA has both influenced and been influenced by the field and profession of public administration. This paper will describe two areas of mutual impact between ASPA and public administration:

- Professionalism in public administration—both domestically and internationally
• Public administration education, theory and research

**Professionalism in public administration**

ASPA has promoted professionalism in public administration in three major areas: in American public administration; in public administration in other countries; and through its emphasis on high ethical standards.

**A. American Public Administration**

As noted above, advocacy of professionalism in the public service at all levels of government has been a dominant value since ASPA was founded. One of the reasons for establishing the Society was to promote professionalism in those who were being recruited to manage the federal executive branch agencies and programs that grew up during the New Deal. ASPA’s roots in the American progressive movement and its relationship to the early city manager and municipal research bureau movements through the Public Administration Clearinghouse (PACH) meant that the Society was established with a positive orientation toward professionalism. “By the time ASPA was a reality the concept of a professional American public service had become an orthodox belief for many in public administration.”

However, support for professionalism in public administration took a different twist with ASPA. In spite of its heavy emphasis on professionalism, “ASPA did not adopt the orthodox view of a profession of public administration. Instead the Society opted for the pursuit of professionalism among its members—a subtle but significant distinction. ASPA leaders sought to use their organization as a forum in which the broad diversity of public service occupations could be brought together through a mutual commitment to excellence in professional conduct among those involved in public service.”

To this day this decision continues to be controversial and continues to make it difficult to define the field of public administration that ASPA serves. The controversy focuses on whether the Society should be an advocate for public employee issues or an organization dedicated to excellence in public service. “Although these two objectives are not mutually exclusive, ASPA continues to recognize that neither are they synonymous. Consequently, the organization has been sympathetic to the former but unequivocally committed to the latter.”

ASPA has both influenced and been influenced by the evolution of public administration in America for all of its 61 years. ASPA was created to support the growing professionalism in public administration and to identify and support the development of professionalized government, particularly at the federal level in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The Society has contributed to this professionalization in five ways:

- publication of the premier journal in public administration
- support of chapters in major government centers;
- development of sections representing functional specializations and special interests;
- sponsorship of national and regional conferences; and
- support for graduate level education for aspiring public managers.

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2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.
The first four of these contributions are discussed in this segment. ASPA’s contributions to public administration education are treated separately later in this paper.

1. The Public Administration Review (PAR)
ASPA’s journal, the Public Administration Review (PAR) was first published in January 1941. PAR was intended to be both scholarly and practical. Over the years successive PAR editors have struggled to achieve and maintain a balance of rigorous scholarship and practicality in order to produce a journal respected by academicians and used by practitioners. The result has been a journal considered to be the premier journal in public administration and, because of its affiliation with ASPA, the most widely distributed.

2. Chapters
Development of ASPA chapters began in 1940. Chapters were intended to provide broad-based forums for general public administration practitioners, scholars, and students at the local level. The first chapters to be established were in Sacramento, Chicago, Southern California, and Washington, DC. Today ASPA has 114 chapters throughout the country.

Chapters vary in their emphases. However, almost all of them hold annual recognition ceremonies honoring outstanding public managers and scholars—people who exemplify excellence in public administration. Most provide professional development for their members and others in their communities. Some do this through speakers at regularly scheduled meetings. Others hold annual conferences of one or two days on specific topics of interest in the local area. And others sponsor workshops that provide skill-building opportunities for public practitioners on topics such as performance measurement. Most chapters also publish newsletters to highlight their programs and keep members informed about local issues.

3. Sections
ASPA’s sections were developed much later than the chapters. In ASPA’s early years there were policies against creating sections based on occupational specialization. The purpose of these policies was to avoid competition with specialist organizations and associations.

In the early 1970s, there was a call from ASPA members to “recognize the diversity within ASPA—ethnic, gender, and racial, as well as occupational.” This came at a time when ASPA was making major changes to its structure and programs in response to severe financial conditions and membership decline. The first section to be established, in 1973, was The Section on International and Comparative Administration (SICA), which continues as one of ASPA’s stronger sections to this day.

Other special interest groups began as affiliates of ASPA. The Conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA) was established in 1971 and became an ASPA affiliate in 1973. The Women’s Task Force, also established in 1971, became the Section for Women in Public Administration (SWPA). Both have made significant contributions to professionalism and to diversity in American public administration.

Early in its tenure, COMPA, under a contract with the U.S. Department of Labor, established “a

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4 Ibid., pp. 28-29.
5 Ibid., pp.29-30.
6 Ibid., p.83.
national registry for minority public administrators to assist state and local jurisdictions in locating qualified minority candidates for key policy-making positions.”

When it was first established, SWPA created a “women’s national registry (modeled after COMPA’s minority registry).” In addition, it performed a survey of local government affirmative action programs and a survey of women in public administration education programs. COMPA and SWPA continue to this day as active sections of ASPA.

Today ASPA has 20 sections, three representing special demographic interests-COMPA, SWPA, and the National Young Professionals Forum (NYPF). The other 17 represent specializations within the field of public administration such as budget and finance, emergency management, and health. 37 percent of ASPA members belong to one or more sections. A complete list of ASPA’s 20 sections is in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 - ASPA Sections as of August 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Name</th>
<th>Year Established</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Section on International and Comparative Administration (SICA)</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Section on Criminal Justice Administration (SCJA)</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Section on Health and Human Services Administration (SHHSA)</td>
<td>1974</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Section on Management Science and Policy Analysis (SMSPA)</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>The Section for Professional and Organizational Development (SPOD)</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Section on Environmental and Natural Resources Administration (SENRA)</td>
<td>1976</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Section on Science and Technology in Government (SSTIG)</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA)</td>
<td>1977</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Section on Intergovernmental Administration and Management (SIAM)</td>
<td>1979</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Association on Budgeting and Financial Management (ABFM)</td>
<td>1979</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Section on Public Administration Education (SPAE)</td>
<td>1979</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Section on Personnel Administration and Labor Relations(SPALR)</td>
<td>1981</td>
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<tr>
<td>The National Young Professionals Forum (NYPF)</td>
<td>1983</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Section for Women in Public Administration (SWPA)</td>
<td>1984</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Section on Emergency and Crisis Management (SECM)</td>
<td>1986</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Section on Public Administration Research (SPAR)</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Section on Public Law and Administration (SPLA)</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Section on Historical, Artistic and Reflective Expression (SHARE)</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Section on Transportation Policy and Administration (STPA)</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Section on Ethics (ETHICS)</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Society for Public Administration

ASPA’s sections promote professionalism among subgroups in public administration by holding conferences, publishing journals and newsletters, and, more recently, providing information and networking opportunities through web sites and listservs.

4. Conferences

Interrupted only by the early years of World War II, ASPA has held an annual conference and a business meeting every year since 1939. Conferences in 1939-1941 and 1944 were held in conjunction with the American Political Science Association (APSA). (World War II emergency conditions required that ASPA’s 1942, 1943, and 1945 conferences be canceled.) However, some within ASPA

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7 Ibid., p. 85.
8 Ibid., p. 86.
9 Ibid.
were uneasy about this close relationship and argued that ASPA needed to meet separately to forge an identity of its own. In 1948, ASPA held its first conference independent of APSA.

In addition to the ASPA national conference, two sections and one geographic district hold conferences every year: COMPA, the Association on Budget and Financial Management (ABFM), and the Southeast Conference of Public Administrators (SECOPA). Other districts and subdistricts hold conferences every other year. In addition, as noted above, many chapters hold one-day development or special issue conferences annually or biannually.

B. **International Public Administration**

Although ASPA’s primary emphasis was on American public administration, the organization has “maintained an active . . . interest in international public administration beginning with World War II.”10 However, the level of effort the Society has been able to commit to international activities has been driven by financial resources. Therefore activity has been intense when grant funds have been available, and greatly reduced when ASPA has been in financial straits.

Pugh describes ASPA’s increased involvement in international public administration after World War II as follows:

“In 1946 ASPA accepted membership in the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS), and, in 1948, it became the IIAS’s official American Section. As such, ASPA had the exclusive authority to represent the United States at all IIAS international conferences and congresses, the right to participate in IIAS research activities, and the opportunity to receive an exchange of international information on public affairs and administration. . . . in 1955, the general interest in international activities among ASPA members increased due to the United States’ expanded role in the United Nations. This interest led to the development of important international program activities including the hosting of a series of conferences on the international aspects of administration and the creation of a Standing Committee on International Public Administration . . . These activities were sponsored by [a] . . . Ford [Foundation] grant specifically designed for ASPA’s international functions.”11

“As participation in international activities grew [in ASPA], special interest in developing analytical works for the cross-cultural study of public administration emerged within the Standing Committee among a small group of academicians. This group was formally recognized by ASPA in March 1958 as the Committee on Comparative Administration and charged with examining the growing material on administration in other countries.”12

However, in 1959, due to financial problems in ASPA, major cuts were made in ASPA’s international activities. “ASPA’s special section of the [IIAS] was eliminated in favor of substantially reduced general Society support.”13 In addition, a single International Committee took the place of the multiple committees that preceded it.14

In 1962, ASPA formed a Comparative Administration Group (CAG), a successor to the Committee on

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10 Ibid., p. 48.  
11 Ibid.  
12 Ibid., pp. 48-49.  
13 Ibid., p. 50.  
14 Ibid.
Comparative Administration. The same year CAG was awarded a $250,000 Ford Foundation grant “to develop a program in comparative and international public administration that would lead to improved teaching of comparative administration and to a better understanding of American administration vis-à-vis other countries. CAG used these grant monies to sponsor seminars, fellowships, and publications.”15

In 1965 CAG was awarded another Ford grant to develop a comprehensive three-year program of six seminars “staged at nationally recognized universities throughout the United States” and “a series of special publications [including nine books], in the comparative area.”16 It also cosponsored, with the Ford Foundation and the Inter-American World Bank, a conference on the role of Latin American universities in improving public service education, training, and research.17

In addition, CAG “spearheaded the publication of the Journal of Comparative Administration and promoted a cross-disciplinary approach to the analysis of governmental bureaucracies.”18 CAG also “sponsored the creation of the Committee on Research and Education Administration (CREDA). . . . CREDA secured grants from several government agencies to study the involvement of United States schools of public administration in teaching and research activities related to the field of international administration. Finally, CAG negotiated a contract with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to study the feasibility of establishing a legislative reference service for all law-making bodies of developing nations.”19

In 1966, 200 practitioners and scholars from all over the world evaluated CAG’s performance in comparative administration. CAG was given “sole credit for having pioneered significant advancements in a field that many regarded as too long neglected.”20

Throughout the 1960s, ASPA’s International Committee was also very active. It “secured a grant from the Ford Foundation to develop a training program for improved public administration training in emerging nations.”21 Under that grant, the Committee “assembled the best available collection of teaching materials on development administration and distributed them among developing nations upon request.”22

ASPA’s International Committee also played a major role in “salvaging public administration in the United Nations (UN) during its major reorganization in 1966. That reorganization had proposed the elimination of the Division of Public Administration at the UN due to an apparent attempt to downgrade the significance of the field in facilitating the economic and social development of Third World countries. The Committee . . . lobbied forcefully for the retention of public administration through the creation of the UN’s Public Administration Branch—an entity whose purpose was to promote effective public administration in UN member countries, support technical cooperation projects in public administration, and conduct research on administration problems and practices.”23

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15 Ibid., p. 52.
16 Ibid., p. 61.
17 Ibid., p. 62.
19 Pugh, Ibid., p. 61.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., p. 60.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
In the 1970s and 1980s, a change in political climate combined with a recurrence of ASPA’s financial problems to reduce the activity in comparative administration across the field. Uveges and Keller ascribe the changes to the “aftermath of doubt and pessimism that arose [after Viet Nam and Watergate] later in the decade and existed throughout most of the 1970s”. They go on to say that “Although comparative administration remained on the agenda of public administration into the 1970s, the focus became more middle range and institutional. The change in the name of the Journal of Comparative Administration to Administration and Society in 1974 was indicative of the declining interest in the area.”

At the same time, ASPA’s financial situation required a series of austerity measures, including eliminating funding for the IIAS and the CAG in the 1970s. Similar financial problems in the early 1980s resulting from a continued retrenchment at all levels of government, a recession, and declining membership meant that, in 1982, “ASPA was forced to forego participation in the prestigious North American Seminar series-a cooperative effort among Canada, Mexico, and the United States (ASPA represented the US) to examine critical policy issues. Canada and Mexico had hosted conferences on energy policy and food policy, respectively, in the previous two years. However, when it became the US’ turn to host the conference, ASPA was unable to underwrite the seminar and this international program was terminated.”

Today international activities in ASPA are carried on by the Section on International and Comparative Administration (SICA) and by the Campaign for International Relations (CIR). SICA was founded in 1974, and was ASPA’s first section. SICA was a product of a merger of the old International Committee, a remnant of the former US section of the IIAS, and the CAG.

CIR was created as an ASPA standing committee in December 1992 to coordinate international activities across ASPA and to encourage an international perspective in all aspects of the Society. Among CIR's accomplishments are a series of ten affiliation agreements, eight with public administration organizations in eight countries, one with the United Nations Association, and another with the United Nations Division for Governance, Public Administration and Finance. Figure 2 lists the 10 agreements.

A major objective of these agreements is to provide for networking, information sharing, and participation in conferences and other professional development opportunities that will benefit all parties’ abilities to teach and practice public administration. The ASPA strategic plan adopted in December 1998 is committed to operationalizing these agreements. The two that are the focus of attention in 1999-2001 are the agreements with Mexico and the United Nations. In both cases early implementation of the agreements involves exchanging professional publications, inviting panels at ASPA conferences, sending ASPA representatives to their conferences, and planning for joint conferences and other exchanges.

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24 Uveges and Keller, Ibid., p. 18.
25 Ibid.
26 Pugh, Ibid., p. 102.
27 Ibid., p. 86.
C. Ethics

Another area where ASPA has contributed significantly to professionalism in public administration is with its emphasis on ethics. In 1979, ASPA’s “Professional Standards and Ethics Committee sponsored the publication of Professional Standards and Ethics: A Workbook for Public Administrators, and launched efforts to produce specific standards for ASPA.”28 The Committee “sought to develop a code that would fit with ASPA’s basic mission and goals and reflect the ‘... principles and moral standards that must guide the conduct of ASPA members not merely in preventing wrong, but in pursuing right through timely and energetic execution of responsibilities.’”29 In 1981 ASPA’s National Council adopted a set of moral principles. Three years later in 1984, the Council approved a 13-point Code of Ethics for ASPA members. In 1994 the Code was revised. A copy of ASPA’s current code of ethics is in Figure 3.

Figure 3. ASPA Code of Ethics

The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) exists to advance the science, processes, and art of public administration. The Society affirms its responsibility to develop the spirit of professionalism within its membership, and to increase public awareness of ethical principles in public service by its example. To this end, we, the members of the Society, commit ourselves to the following principles:

1. Serve the Public Interest

Serve the public, beyond serving oneself.

ASPA members are committed to:
1. Exercise discretionary authority to promote the public interest.
2. Oppose all forms of discrimination and harassment, and promote affirmative action.
3. Recognize and support the public's right to know the public's business.
4. Involve citizens in policy decision-making.
5. Exercise compassion, benevolence, fairness and optimism.
6. Respond to the public in ways that are complete, clear, and easy to understand.
7. Assist citizens in their dealings with government.
8. Be prepared to make decisions that may not be popular.

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28 Ibid., p.97.
29 Ibid., p. 105.
II. Respect the Constitution and the Law

Respect, support, and study government constitutions and laws that define responsibilities of public agencies, employees, and all citizens.

**ASPA members are committed to:**

1. Understand and apply legislation and regulations relevant to their professional role.
2. Work to improve and change laws and policies that are counter-productive or obsolete.
3. Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
4. Prevent all forms of mismanagement of public funds by establishing and maintaining strong fiscal and management controls, and by supporting audits and investigative activities.
5. Respect and protect privileged information.
6. Encourage and facilitate legitimate dissent activities in government and protect the whistle-blowing rights of public employees.
7. Promote constitutional principles of equality, fairness, representativeness, responsiveness and due process in protecting citizens' rights.

III. Demonstrate Personal Integrity

Demonstrate the highest standards in all activities to inspire public confidence and trust in public service.

**ASPA members are committed to:**

1. Maintain truthfulness and honesty and to not compromise them for advancement, honor, or personal gain.
2. Ensure that others receive credit for their work and contributions.
3. Zealously guard against conflict of interest or its appearance: e.g., nepotism, improper outside employment, misuse of public resources or the acceptance of gifts.
4. Respect superiors, subordinates, colleagues and the public.
5. Take responsibility for their own errors.
6. Conduct official acts without partisanship.

IV. Promote Ethical Organizations

Strengthen organizational capabilities to apply ethics, efficiency and effectiveness in serving the public.

**ASPA members are committed to:**

1. Enhance organizational capacity for open communication, creativity, and dedication.
2. Subordinate institutional loyalties to the public good.
3. Establish procedures that promote ethical behavior and hold individuals and organizations accountable for their conduct.
4. Provide organization members with an administrative means for dissent, assurance of due process and safeguards against reprisal.
5. Promote merit principles that protect against arbitrary and capricious actions.
6. Promote organizational accountability through appropriate controls and procedures.
7. Encourage organizations to adopt, distribute, and periodically review a code of ethics as a living document.

V. Strive for Professional Excellence

Strengthen individual capabilities and encourage the professional development of others.

**ASPA members are committed to:**

1. Provide support and encouragement to upgrade competence.
2. Accept as a personal duty the responsibility to keep up to date on emerging issues and potential problems.
3. Encourage others, throughout their careers, to participate in professional activities and associations.
4. Allocate time to meet with students and provide a bridge between classroom studies and the realities of public service.

American Society for Public Administration
Public Administration Education, Theory and Research

ASPA has maintained a commitment to public administration education, theory, and research since its inception. Contributions to these areas have taken three forms over the years. First, ASPA’s commitment to formal graduate public administration education, theory building and research resulted ultimately in the establishment of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). Second, ASPA’s commitment to continuing professional development and education has been manifested in its national and regional conferences, chapter and section programs and conferences, and in various training institutes. Third, ASPA’s commitment to research in support of practice resulted in creation of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA).

A. Graduate Public Administration Education

In 1958 ASPA formed its Council on Graduate Education for Public Administration (CGEPA). CGEPA was an association composed of representatives from universities with academic programs in public administration. It “became a focal point for the development of opinions and activities that affected public administration education throughout the United States”.

Pugh argues that “CGEPA used its influence during the mid-1960s to improve the quality of education in public administration in three ways. First, it served as an advocate for the enhancement of public administration education, training, and research activities in both universities and government. . . . CGEPA actively lobbied government and universities to improve public administration education. Concerned that government agencies were unaware of the need to educate career public servants, CGEPA called on government at all levels to make greater use of educational opportunities for their employees as a way of achieving excellence in the public service. It also recommended that colleges and universities place greater emphasis and resources on developing, strengthening, and expanding educational programs for government service.”

Second, CGEPA sponsored a comprehensive study of the status of higher education for public administration/public service. The resulting report, Higher Education for Public Service, written by John Honey of the Maxwell School at Syracuse University under a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, was published in the Public Administration Review (PAR) in 1967.

The report “documented the inadequacy of public service education, especially in a time of increased opportunities and demands for public service professionals.” The report also made recommendations for eight steps for improving graduate education in public administration including internships and fellowship programs for students and faculty and expansion of the number of public administration programs in the United States.

Third, CGEPA developed specific programs for improvement of the field of public administration. As the Higher Education for Public Service report was being developed, CGEPA was already creating fellowship programs. It formed the ASPA Fellows, the Urban Affairs Fellows program, and the Public Administration Fellows program in the mid-1960s, as well as the Urban Affairs Group. The latter spawned many urban studies programs to train generalists in urban affairs. CGEPA also influenced the passage of the Public Service Education Act of 1967, which established contracts with colleges and

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30 Ibid., p. 62.
31 Ibid.
33 Uveges and Keller, Ibid., p. 19.
34 Honey, Ibid., pp. 319-320.
universities for improving public administration graduate education and research. The Act also funded fellowships for graduate students planning to enter public service.\textsuperscript{35}

In 1970 CGEPA was succeeded by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), established as an affiliate of ASPA. NASPAA continued the programs originated by CGEPA and developed guidelines and standards for public administration masters’ degree programs. “NASPAA set about to create an educational and professional base for the development of public sector managers. NASPAA focused on building an identity based on a consensus regarding education curricula and programmatic characteristics.”\textsuperscript{36} By the mid-1970s, NASPAA had a membership of more than 140 schools and sufficient revenues to be independent of ASPA. In 1977, NASPAA was incorporated as an entity separate from ASPA.

B. Continuing Professional Development and Education

In the mid-1950s, ASPA’s development program, funded by a Ford Foundation grant, called for the creation of education programs that “could increase the number of well-trained people entering public service.”\textsuperscript{37} To accomplish this, ASPA created a speakers’ bureau as a service to the chapters, provided assistance in organizing, staffing and funding regional conferences, and developed a series of management institutes “composed of courses on a variety of topics, conducted by well-known practitioners and scholars throughout the country in university settings.”\textsuperscript{38} These institutes were discontinued in 1958 due to financial problems.

In 1971, an ASPA Task Force on Society Goals concluded that ASPA’s primary mission should be “to promote the development of executive leadership by providing program activity that would enhance the professional growth of individual public administrators.”\textsuperscript{39} The ASPA National Council approved this change in direction, and the Society proceeded to create a framework for the professional development emphasis. At the same time there was a movement within ASPA to recognize the diversity within the organization-ethnic, gender, racial, occupational. The change of emphasis combined with the move to recognize diversity in the Society resulted in establishment of sections, affiliates, and other special interest groups representing the various specialties and interests that comprised ASPA.

In keeping with the goal of professional development, in 1979 ASPA created the Public Administration Training Center (PATC). PATC was committed to providing quality professional development training through “general and specialized programs, pre-conference workshops, consultancies, national continuing education tours, and funded research activities.”\textsuperscript{40} However, PATC operated just one year before it was abolished due to financial problems and replaced by the ASPA Training Service (ATS), which was “to operate exclusively on the voluntary efforts of pro bono trainers.”\textsuperscript{41} Today ASPA’s continuing education and training efforts are carried out through its national, regional, chapter and section conferences and programs. In addition, ASPA’s Center for Accountability and Performance (CAP), established in 1997, is building a training capability using ASPA members as trainers. CAP’s efforts are focused on performance management, performance measurement, and performance budgeting. In addition, CAP has developed a workbook on performance management, the third edition of which is scheduled to be published in 2000. That workbook is used in the workshops and training

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[35] Pugh, \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 63-64.
\item[37] Pugh, \textit{Ibid.}, p. 44.
\item[38] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 45.
\item[39] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 77.
\item[40] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 97.
\item[41] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 101.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
performed by CAP.

C. Creation of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA)

Although ASPA’s commitment to excellence in public service primarily took the form of education and professional development of individual public administrators, there was a move in the 1960s to create a capability to provide government organizations with expert advice and assistance on “issues of organizational structure, interagency and intraagency relationships, and administrative management functions such as finance and personnel.” The National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) was formed in 1966 to fulfill this purpose.

The concept for NAPA was first proposed by James E. Webb, Administrator for the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) and ASPA President in 1966-1967. Webb saw a need for an organization of prominent practitioners and scholars in public administration, “modeled after the U. S. National Academy of Sciences, that could provide governmental organizations, like NASA, with technical assistance on complex administrative issues.”

ASPA’s National Council approved the creation of NAPA in March 1967. The decision was made to “treat NAPA as an ASPA affiliate for tax purposes but otherwise to operate it as an autonomous body with its own leadership and management. Furthermore, it was determined . . . that its membership would be limited to past presidents of ASPA and others elected by Academy members based on their contributions to the field of public administration.”

NAPA began operations in the summer of 1967 with its first Executive Director, and a comprehensive, three-year contract with NASA. “Over the following 14 months [NAPA] grew beyond expectation in size, members, and activities.” In addition to the NASA contract, NAPA “conducted a two-year study of major organizational problems within the federal government under the auspices of a major grant given by the Ford Foundation.” NAPA became an independent corporation in December of 1970.

Conclusion

The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) was formed in 1939 in response to the need for increased professionalism in public service and for managerial talent to staff the burgeoning federal executive branch. Over the years the Society has contributed significantly to the professionalism of the field in a wide variety of ways. Through its premier journal, the Public Administration Review (PAR) and other regular and special publications, ASPA has informed practitioners and scholars about the latest in public administration theory and research. Through its conferences, chapters, and sections ASPA helps maintain links between scholars and practitioners and among subfields of public administration, levels of government, and across national boundaries.

ASPA has also contributed significantly to the growth and quality of public administration graduate programs in the United States and in other countries. The Society spawned the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), now independent of ASPA, which continues...
to support and enhance public administration graduate education across the United States and in other parts of the world. ASPA also created the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), also now independent, which currently provides expert advice and assistance to government managers and agencies on administrative management issues.

The rise and fall of public administration in the United States has affected the fortunes of ASPA as government has grown or declined, gained or lost favor. Nevertheless, ASPA continues to this day to promote excellence in public service by linking academics and practitioners with each other and with their counterparts in other countries, by helping public managers stay in touch with each other and by informing members and non-members alike about the latest developments in the broad field of public administration.

References


Mary R. Hamilton

Dr. Hamilton is the Executive Director of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). ASPA is a national, non-partisan professional and educational organization dedicated to promoting excellence in public service. ASPA’s approximately 10,000 members are executives and managers from all levels of government and non-profit organizations, and academics and students from the more than 250 public administration and public policy programs across the United States. Dr. Hamilton has been in this position since January of 1997.

From 1979 through 1996, Dr. Hamilton was with the United States General Accounting Office (GAO), where she held a variety of executive positions. She was Regional Manager of GAO’s New York Office from 1985-1991. In that position, she was responsible for managing all aspects of a 130-person office with a $3.5 million budget and multiple sites. The office completed an average of 75 projects each year which resulted in written reports, testimony before Congress, and/or briefings of members of Congress and their staffs.

As GAO’s first Director for Quality Management from 1990-1993, Dr. Hamilton designed and implemented GAO’s approach to Total Quality Management, and was responsible for coordinating continual improvement across the 5,000-person agency.

From 1993 to 1995, Dr. Hamilton was Director of Operations for GAO’s largest division, the General Government Division. In that position, she was responsible for all aspects of human resources
management for the 550-person division, as well as for budget formulation and execution, procurement, upgrading of electronic technology, and facilities at 14 sites.

Dr. Hamilton was Director of Program Evaluation in Human Services in GAO’s Program Evaluation and Methodology Division from 1995-1996. There she managed research for the Congress on complex programmatic and methodological issues in health, education, and immigration, and testified before both Senate and House Committees during the 104th Congress.

Prior to joining GAO, Dr. Hamilton was Manager of Energy Policy Studies at The BDM Corporation in McLean, VA (1975-1979). Between 1969 and 1975, she taught sociology at St. Mary’s University and Incarnate Word College in San Antonio, TX, and was a Graduate Teaching Assistant in Sociology at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Dr. Hamilton served as a Senior Examiner for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award from 1996-1998. She was a member of the Board of Examiners from 1994-1998. She was a Judge for the President’s Quality Award in 1997 and 1998, and for the Secretary of the Air Force Quality Award in 1995-1997.

Dr. Hamilton received her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Maryland at College Park in 1976, her M.A. in Sociology and Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1969, and her B.A. in Sociology and Psychology from Bethel College, St. Paul, MN in 1966.

Dr. Hamilton lives in Falls Church, VA, with her husband, Dr. Irvin L. (“Jack”) White and their rescue greyhound, Winslow. She enjoys reading, jogging, fine food, and watching all sports, especially those involving her home state Nebraska Cornhuskers, and her alma mater North Carolina Tarheels!

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