

The Public Policy Degree Program: Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders Today
By Sosamma Samuel-Burnett, J.D.

Public Policy Department
Annual Report
June 2007

Serving the Kingdom Today

I was honored to take on the role of Chair of the Public Policy Department beginning in July 2006. In this role, I oversee all aspects of the degree program including teaching, curriculum, instructors, recruitment, outreach, and student advising. Prior to coming to WJU, I have had considerable experience in legal advocacy and policy education, particularly on international human rights and national civil rights issues. I have worked with law firms and various policy organizations at the state, national and international levels, including in San Francisco/Oakland/Sacramento, CA; Washington, DC; Minneapolis/St.Paul, MN; Jackson/Tupelo, MS; and at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

After moving to the Greater Sacramento region in 2001, I had a vision for developing a program that would prepare future leaders and advocates. As a lifelong Christian, my prayer was for Christians to make a broader impact on our world and on its issues. The Lord led me to William Jessup University in 2002. I was privileged to serve for a year on the Sacramento Advisory Member for the Genesis Campaign, helping to promote and equip the campus for its move to Rocklin. Following that experience, my vision focused on WJU's academic program. In 2003, I proposed the Public Policy Degree Program to WJU. Over the next two years as a consultant to WJU, I created the formal proposal for the program, established an advisory group, developed the curriculum, prepared the current courses, identified instructors, and conducted planning, outreach and recruitment meetings and events both at WJU and in other locations. It was an enriching and meaningful experience for me spiritually and professionally. The Lord answered my prayers and offered opportunities to integrate faith, learning, and service to advance the Kingdom in the public sector.

Preparing Future Leaders

The Public Policy Degree Program at WJU is unique in that integrates three disciplines: Biblical studies, political science, and public administration & policy analysis. In so doing, the program provides students a broader liberal arts degree that is founded in Christian principles and includes theoretical knowledge and practical application. This interdisciplinary approach includes a multifaceted, multicultural curriculum, an internship program, and guest lectures from policymakers and policy experts. The program is intended to prepare students for work in the public sector or for graduate studies in various professions in California and across the globe.

The Public Policy Program kicked off in Fall 2005 with the First Annual Constitution Day Forum featuring Former U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft. Throughout 2005-2006, I met with various policymakers, educators, community members, and students about the newly developing Public Policy Program.

Fall 2006 the Public Policy Degree Program started its inaugural academic year. The Program is focusing on serving our students and our community with excellence in a number of ways. Academic highlights of the Public Policy Department to date include:

- Engaging 12 students as inaugural public policy majors and minors at WJU.
- Offering to our students a strong selection of first, second, and third year courses that integrate faith and learning for public service, including several new WJU courses: Constitution & Civil Rights, Political Theory & Philosophy, Ethics in Public Policy, Political Process, Political Economy, American Government, American History*, and Management and Organizational Behavior (*existing courses)
- Engaging exceptional instructors for this year's public policy courses: Rhonda Capron (Assistant Professor, Business, WJU), Rex Gurney (Chair, General Education, History, WJU), Spencer Mills (Adjunct Faculty, Business/Public Policy, WJU), David Llewellyn (Adjunct Faculty, Partner, Llewellyn Spann).
- Providing a range of outstanding guest lectures from the following policy professionals: Abigail Bales (California Family Council), Ken Campbell (Placer County Republican Party), Brad Dacus (PJI), Jim Fitz (Peacemakers), Dan Dunmoyer (Cabinet Secretary to Gov. Schwarzenegger), Hon. Larry Gaddis (Placer County Superior Court), Kelly Garman (Sen. Harman's office), Karen Garner (City of Roseville), Wendy Gehrig (Roseville Chamber of Commerce), Bill Halldin (Halldin Public Relations), Vaughn LeMoss (WorldVision), Sen. Tim Leslie (CA State Legislature-ret.), Joe Pursch (Capitol Resource Institute), Lisa Rea (Justice and Reconciliation Project), Brent TenPas (Sen. Ackerman's office), David Zaragoza (Adventure-Natomas).
- Conducting student field experiences and site visits with key public offices and officials: Sacramento County Courthouse; Congressman Doolittle's District Office; CA Capitol and Treasury; Placer County Superior Court.
- Generating interest and support from educational institutions such as: USC's Graduate Program in Policy, Planning, and Development; Regent Graduate School and Law School; Liberty Law School; and Trinity Law School.
- Receiving recruitment opportunities from area community colleges including: Sierra College, American River College, Folsom Lake College, and Sacramento City College.

Partnering with Policy Leaders

The Public Policy Degree Program would not be possible without the tremendous support of WJU of policymakers and community members. Highlights of these partnerships and collaborations include:

- Ongoing support and input from numerous advisory policymakers including: Willard Black (Christian Resource Institute), Ken Campbell (Placer County Republican Party), Tim Capron (CSUS); Hon. Larry Gaddis (Placer County Superior Court), Bill Halldin (Halldin Public Relations), Peter Henderson (California Family Council), Elisabeth Kersten (California Institute for Public Affairs), Bruce Lee (Dept. of Finance); Tim Leslie (CA Assembly), David Llewellyn (Llewellyn Spann) Joe Pursch (Capitol

Resource Institute), Lisa Rea (Justice and Reconciliation Project), Ken Shepard (Shepard & Haven), and Susan Spann (Llewellyn Spann).

- Collaborations with advocacy groups including: California Family Council, Capitol Resource Institute, Justice and Reconciliation Project, Pacific Justice Institute.
- Internship opportunities and support from numerous legislators and staff and other public sector offices including: Congressman John Doolittle (Richard Robinson, Brian Jensen), Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (Dan Dunmoyer), State Senator Sam Anested (Christine Rydell); Assemblyman Ted Gaines (Adam Willoughby), State Senator Tom Harman (Kelly Garman), State Senator Dick Ackerman (Brent TenPas), Legislative Analyst's Office (Elizabeth Hill), Halldin Public Relations (Bill Halldin), Placer County Superior Court (Hon. Larry Gaddis), Mendocino County Superior Court.

Educating our Community

The Public Policy Department also sponsored or facilitated the following events from summer 2006 to present:

City on the Hill. Over 60 high school students participated in a week long conference sponsored by the Capitol Resource Institute in collaboration with the Public Policy Department. This Christian conference was dedicated to teaching and training on the legislative process. Students learned how to review, research, prepare, and debate a bill before the California Legislature. The week culminated with the students presenting their proposed bills in model session on the floor of the California Assembly.

Second Annual Constitution Day Forum. The Public Policy Department was honored to host Congressman John Doolittle for a policy forum that focused on the enduring significance of the US Constitution. Having served in Congress for 16 years, Congressman Doolittle shared from his considerable experience and dedication to public service. Students in the Constitution & Civil Rights course (including Maria Demas, Tom Harrer, JoyLynn Miller, and Tom Harrer) had an opportunity to inquire about his many insights and perspectives on key Constitutional issues of today. Several of the student government representatives participated in the event including Jose Perez, President, who led a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and Azizi Dotson, Freshman Representative, who led the recitation of the Preamble to the Constitution. The forum drew approximately 60 students and community members.

State of California Politics and Policy. The Public Policy Department was privileged to collaborate on this education and outreach forum at Sacramento City College. The forum featured Assemblyman Tim Leslie and Elisabeth Kersten of the California Institute for Public Affairs. Prior to the November elections, 50 political science and international relations students heard first hand about the legislative system and key legislative measures on the ballot. This event spotlighted WJU's Public Policy Degree Program and future policy careers.

California Republican Party's Rally featuring First Lady Laura Bush. WJU served as the venue for a special visit from First Lady Laura Bush. The Public Policy Department worked collaboratively with the WJU Advancement Office, Congressman John Doolittle's Staff, the California Republican Party, and the White House Staff to facilitate this tremendous event.

Approximately 1500 community members and students attended and learned first hand about the political process. President Bryce Jessup provided a stirring invocation. Musical performances featured WJU students Natali Corrington for the National Anthem and The Way for four songs. Maj. Eric Eglund led the community in a rousing recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Numerous Republican leaders including Duff Sundheim, Sam Aanested, Tim Leslie, and Ted Gaines presented. The highlight of the evening was the focused and gracious remarks of First Lady Laura Bush.

International Justice Day. This campus wide event launched the new WJU student chapter of International Justice Mission. Various activities were held throughout the day including a chapel service featuring Larry Martin, Vice President of IJM; informational table and materials after chapel and during lunch; and an international missions panel and prayer vigil featuring Willard Black (Institute for Christian Resources); Edgar Elliston (Degree Completion Program); Frank Schattner (Jonathan Project); and student Sarah Nelson. This tremendous day of events kicked off the chapter's goals of educating, motivating, and mobilizing the community to address justice issues such as child labor, sexual exploitation, and trafficking.

Public Policy Day: Christian Perspectives on the Iraq War. This event featured Christian military officers with experience in ground and air operations in Iraq and in Beltway politics at the Capitol and at the Pentagon. Major Eric Eglund, Major Zack Samuel-Burnett, and Lt. Col. Quinn Gummel offered their insights as Christian servicemen. Over 60 students, community members gained from these insights and engaged the speakers with a range of questions and answers from students and community members. The discussion was followed by and a prayer vigil for our troops, the people of Iraq, and the democratic future of the Iraq.

Developing Student Leaders

The Public Policy Department has also worked with various other campus departments and personnel in developing student leadership and advocacy opportunities:

Student Government

As Advisor to the Student Government, I have been privileged in working with a group of student leaders who exemplify faith and service. These students not only represent the broader student body, but play significant roles in facilitating discussion and collaboration between students and administration. Highlights for this year's student government included: developing and establishing an updated Associated Student Body Constitution; participating in a academic planning workshop; organizing a campus Winter Banquet; conducting two successful elections, one drawing participation from 2/3 of the campus; facilitating two Town Hall forums – one on academic programs and the other on facilities and athletics; and providing senior class planning and a senior class gift.

International Justice Mission

As Advisor to the new WJU chapter of the International Justice Mission, I also had the privilege of establishing a first of its kind student advocacy organization on our campus. This program has drawn together over 30 students who are committed to bringing justice to the oppressed worldwide. The chapter's kick off event, International Justice Day, allowed the Public Policy Department to sponsor educational events in collaboration with students in many other academic programs.

Spiritual Formation and Discipleship for Culture

In my Discipleship for Culture course, the Public Policy Department had the opportunity to collaborate with instructors in Bible & Theology, English, and History, to give students an opportunity to understand faith and worship in the context of many other cultures. In my Spiritual Formation group, students were dedicated to prayer and service and supported our campus and surrounding community in the following ways: served as a clean up crew for the entrance areas to campus; hosted a group of homeless teens in the WIND program and provides games and dinner at our campus; and served communion and supported the children's ministry at Adventure Christian Church of North Natomas.

Inaugural Year-End Celebration

The Public Policy Department celebrated the year's accomplishments with an inaugural year end luncheon featuring presentations by our rising seniors: Sarah Brown, Maria Demas, JoyLynn Miller, and Andrew Tillman. These students prepared their presentation and honed their speaking skills in the Public Policy Internship Studies course. Each student did an exceptional job conveying their faith and their focus for public service.

Serving the Kingdom Tomorrow

Throughout the inaugural academic year, I had the opportunity to serve on a number of university committees, attend various conferences, and present at community events. These opportunities allowed me to collaborate with professionals and community members in the Greater Sacramento Area and across the country and share about the work of the Public Policy Department for today and tomorrow:

- Sept 2006-present: Served as Co-Chair of WJU's Multicultural Education Committee. Conducted a campus wide survey of multiculturalism and diversity in the context of Christian higher education.
- Sept 2006-present: Served as member of Faculty Senate, including on the Faculty Development Committee and the Intercultural Studies Search Committee.
- October 2006: Served as Chapel speaker at WJU presenting a message about the power of prayer, power of faith, and the power of love for Christian service and achievement.
- November 2006: Served as model class lecturer for Preview Day. Presented on the First Amendment to over 100 prospective students.
- February 2007: Attended the American Political Science Association's Teaching and Learning Conference in Charlotte, N.C. Participated in the Globalizing the Curriculum Working Group.
- February 2007: Served as model class lecturer for Preview Day. Presented on Ethics to over 100 prospective students.
- March 2007: Attended Regent Law School's Christian Pre-Law Conference in Virginia Beach, VA. Participated in several sessions for preparing undergraduates for Law School. Met with Paul Corts, President of the CCCU.

- May 2007: Served as guest speaker for the National Day of Prayer Breakfast held in Auburn, CA. Shared a message about the significance of prayer for our families, our communities, and our country.
- May 2007: Attended the California Prayer Breakfast featuring Governor Schwarzenegger and guest speaker Ken Blanchard.
- June 2006: Presided as Speaker for a Mock Assembly at California Focus, a youth conference held by the 4H.

The accomplishments and opportunities of the Public Policy Department's inaugural academic year have been for the glory of God and for the future of our students. These accomplishments would not have been possible without the hard work of our students, the tremendous support of our community members, and the guiding hand of our Lord. I am so grateful to so many for your commitment to the Public Policy Department and our vision for future policymakers. I am humbled by and thankful for the honor of preparing future Christian leaders to address the world's many concerns of today and tomorrow.