



JUNE 2011

www.localgovernment.uwo.ca



PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

Letter from the Director

This academic year has brought some significant ‘firsts’ for the Local Government Program. Our Greater Toronto Area DPA Program was launched, and the first cohort of 29 students from GTA municipalities has now completed two courses. Meanwhile, on campus, we welcomed among our full-time MPA group the first two students to come from China on Kenneth Chu scholarships – Flora Fu and Michelle Zhong.

We saw unprecedented new interest in our program offerings this year. Applications for the MPA were up 21% over last year, and an information session for prospective Toronto DPA students, organized by our City of Toronto partners, attracted close to 100 interested individuals. Such interest means that application process has been very competitive, with only a select group of top applicants accepted.

Our teaching faculty, students and alumni are an exceptionally accomplished group. In this edition of News & Views, we spotlight some of their accomplishments. We launch what will be a regular feature on faculty research. Tim Cobban and Bob Young tell us about the results of some of their latest work on local government. In addition, we briefly profile some of the many accomplishments of our current students and our alumni.

As we head into summer, I will be going on a year of sabbatical leave. I am happy to say that Andrew Sancton will reprise his role as Program Director while I am away. I wish him and everyone associated with the Program a great year, and look forward to returning as Director in July of 2012.

Martin Horak

Director, Local Government Program

Local Government Program – Current Enrollment

Program	Enrolled Students
Masters of Public Administration (MPA)	66
Diploma in Public Administration (DPA)	
On Campus	54
City of Toronto	28
GTA Program	28
Total Enrollent (all Programs)	177

NEWS and VIEWS

Multilevel Governance and Public Policy in Canadian Municipalities

Robert Young

MPA alumni might be interested to know about a big research project that has been based in the Political Science department for the past few years.

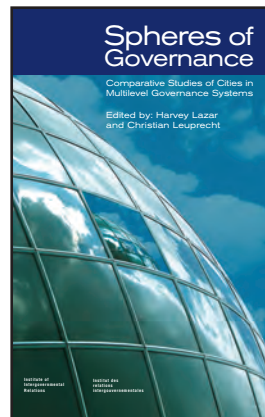
The project is about Multilevel Governance and Public Policy in Canadian Municipalities. It is funded mainly by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to the tune of \$2.5 million.

The project was proposed because of the growing interest in municipalities, especially at the federal level. Several new initiatives were begun by the Martin government. Interestingly, we find that most of these programs, such as the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, have been continued by the Harper government.

We are interested in explaining the shape of public policy in municipalities. We see policy as being

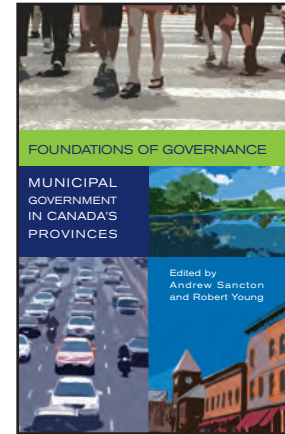
formed through intergovernmental negotiations, which is the ‘multilevel’ part. But we hypothesize that policy making will also involve organized interests of many kinds. This is the ‘governance’ side.

The project has involved over 90 scholars and many graduate research assistants. Bob Young is the project leader, though the theoretical apparatus guiding the project was shaped by many people.



We have put out two survey volumes. One, *Spheres of Governance*, explores multilevel governance in eight other countries. The second, edited by

Andrew Sancton and Bob Young, is *Foundations of Governance*. It is a systematic survey of the municipal-



provincial systems in each Canadian province.

The rest of the studies explore six policy fields – emergency planning, federal

property, immigrant settlement, image-building, infrastructure and urban Aboriginal policy. Each is studied in a wide range of municipalities. There is also a collection, edited by Martin Horak and Bob Young, that examines policy making in each province’s biggest city. These are forthcoming.

You can learn more about the publications and the project as a whole by visiting our website (ppm-ppm.ca). Do have a look and tell us what you think!

SAVE THE DATE

Alumni Society Annual Conference – 2011

Friday, November 4, 2011

8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Lamplighter Inn, 591 Wellington Road, London, ON

Western’s Local Government Program Alumni Society is pleased to announce our 2011 Annual Conference – **Navigating Change in the Public Sector**. Online registration will be available in the coming weeks, but for now please save the date.

For further information on the upcoming 2011 conference please visit:

www.localgovernment.uwo.ca/alumni/annualconference.asp

Research Topic: Property Taxation Visibility and Municipal Revenues

Tim Cobban

Property taxation is widely considered to be among the most visible sources of government revenue, mostly because it has been traditionally collected through lump-sum payments made once or a few times per year. But in many jurisdictions, including most of Canada, citizens now also pay their property taxes more frequently and less directly, through remittances included in their monthly mortgage payment, for example, or through pre-arranged schedules of electronic bank deposits.

In a recent paper, I calculate the proportion of municipal voters in Canada for whom the property tax remains highly visible, estimate the rate of decline in property tax visibility, and explore the effects on municipal revenues. Property tax collection data were gathered from the one hundred most populous municipalities in Ontario and the five most populous in each other Canadian province for the years 2001 and 2006, a sample which represents about two-thirds of the Canadian population. Special tabulations from Statistics Canada on age, citizenship, and housing tenure by municipality were also used, as were data taken from municipal annual financial reports.



My analysis showed that the property tax remains highly visible for only a very thin majority of municipal voters, that the visibility of property tax is quickly declining, and that taxes appeared to be rising slightly faster in municipalities where tax visibility is declining.

Alumni Updates

Did you get a promotion? New Job? Have a baby or get married? Why not update your Alumni Colleagues by letting us know about it.

Alumni Updates will be posted to our website and a few will be featured in future newsletters.

Just send an e-mail to jmorga8@uwo.ca with a short (one paragraph) update.

www.localgovernment.uwo.ca/alumni/memberupdates.asp

Also please be sure to update your program contact information at: www.localgovernment.uwo.ca/contact/

Current Student Accomplishments

Brad McRoberts was recently promoted to Director of Operations for City of Owen Sound on April 5, 2011.

Jim Jessop was selected as one of the two Canadian representatives to sit on the technical committee for the development of the NFPA 1730 Standard for Fire Prevention Activities. This Standard will be referenced across North America.

Joe Nethery had an article published in the March/April edition of the Ontario Planning Journal. He also presented on the Development Permit System (his MRP topic) at this year's Creative Cities Conference in London.

Jasmin Ralph accepted a position at the Town of St Marys through the AMCTO Internship program.

Klaudia Gonzalez was awarded the honorary "Central European University Alumni Hero" award for her contribution to the university's mission, values and aspirations. She traveled to Hungary to receive the award.

