

5-1-2005

## Editorial Comment

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### Recommended Citation

Balfour, Danny L. (2005) "Editorial Comment," *SPNA Review*: Vol. 1: Iss. 1, Article 1.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/spnareview/vol1/iss1/1>

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

Welcome to the inaugural volume of best papers by MPA students in the School of Public and Nonprofit Administration at Grand Valley State University. This publication recognizes the outstanding achievements of our students, while providing evidence of student learning and exemplars of research and writing for new MPA students to emulate. The papers chosen for publication come from across the spectrum of public and nonprofit management, public policy, and health administration. Each paper was initially written to fulfill a course requirement in the MPA curriculum, and then improved and submitted for publication as part of the MPA capstone course, Management Seminar. Finally, a panel of faculty members reviewed the papers and selected the finalists for publication. The papers show the extent to which students about to complete their MPA are able to master a substantive topic area, design and complete a research project, and present their findings in a clear and accessible manner.

This year, the best of the best is the paper by Barbara M. Taylor, "*Evaluating Strategies for Promoting Minority Construction Contracting*." It was originally written for the course PA 616: Policy Analysis, under the supervision of Professor Dan Immergluck. Barbara's paper was chosen for this distinction because of its careful and thorough analysis of a complex policy problem. The paper shows that Barbara is able to conduct professional level research and communicate the results in a way that is useful to policy makers and understandable to an informed public. These are among the most important learning objectives of the MPA program and are essential to effective leadership in public and nonprofit administration.

All of the papers chosen for this first volume of *SPNA REVIEW* achieve these objectives and reflect what students are learning in the MPA program at GVSU. In addition to these papers, the abstracts of all the papers submitted in 2005 can be found at our web site, [www.gvsu.edu/spna](http://www.gvsu.edu/spna) and full copies of the papers are available upon request. The faculty is proud of the achievements of our students and look forward to many future volumes of this journal.

*Danny L. Balfour*  
*March, 2005*